

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Contents

6.1. Introduction	177
6.2. Findings of the Research.....	177
6.2.1. Gender Gaps in MBA Employment Outcomes	178
6.2.2. Age as a Key Factor in MBA Graduate Job Placement Outcomes	179
6.2.3. Geographical Disparities in Employment Outcomes Among MBA Graduates	180
6.2.4. The Influence of Parental Income on Employment Outcomes Among MBA Graduates.....	180
6.2.5. The Role of Paternal Education in Shaping Employment Outcomes for MBA Graduates: Trends and Influences.....	181
6.2.6. Impact of Maternal Education on MBA Graduate Employment Outcomes	182
6.2.7. Evaluating the Role of NAAC Accreditation in MBA Graduate Employment Outcomes.....	182
6.2.8. Academic Performance as a Predictor of Employment Outcomes for MBA Graduates.....	183
6.2.9. Influence of MBA Specialization on Employment Outcomes	184
6.2.10. The Role of English Language Proficiency in Job Placement Success for MBA Graduates.....	184
6.2.11. Influence of Internship Experience on Employment Outcomes for MBA Graduates	185
6.2.12. The Influence of Extracurricular Engagement on Employment Outcomes for MBA Graduates.....	185

6.2.13. The Influence of NCC Participation on MBA Graduates' Employment Outcomes.	186
6.2.14. Evaluating the Impact of NSS Participation on Employment Opportunities for MBA Graduates	186
6.2.15. Evaluating the Influence of Sports Participation on Employment Prospects for MBA Graduates	187
6.2.16. The Impact of Public Speaking and Leadership Programs on Employment Success for MBA Graduates	187
6.2.17. The Role of Cultural Engagement in Enhancing Employment Prospects for MBA Graduates	188
6.2.18. The Role of Academic Enhancement Activities in Improving Employment Outcomes for MBA Graduates	188
6.2.19. Assessing the Impact of Communication and Soft Skills on Employment Outcomes for MBA Graduates	189
6.2.20. Exploring the Impact of Teamwork and Collaboration Skills on Employment Outcomes for MBA Graduates	189
6.2.21. The Role of Problem Solving and Critical Thinking Skills in Enhancing Employability for MBA Graduates	190
6.2.22. The Role of Team Management Skills in Enhancing MBA Graduates' Employability	190
6.2.23. The Role of Adaptability and Flexibility in Enhancing Employability of MBA Graduates	191
6.2.24. Leadership Skills as a Catalyst for MBA Graduates' Employability	191
6.2.25. The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Enhancing Employment Success for MBA Graduates	192
6.2.26. The Impact of Self-Esteem and Soft Skills on MBA Graduates' Employability	192
6.3. Findings Based on Objective 1	193
6.4. Findings Based on Objective 2	195
6.5. Findings Based on Objective 3	197
6.6. Findings Based on Objective 4	200
6.7. Findings Based on Objective 5	202
6.8. Findings Based on Objective 6	204
6.9. Findings Based on Objective 7	206
6.10. Research Implications	208
6.10.1. Soft Skills as Core Curriculum Components	208
6.10.2. Gender-Specific Interventions	209
6.10.3. Customizing Academic Offerings to Market Demand	209
6.10.4. Focus on Rural and Urban Disparities	209
6.10.5. Co-Curricular Programs as Employability Enhancers	209

6.10.6.	Institutional Accreditation and Branding	209
6.10.7.	Importance of Self-Esteem and Confidence.....	209
6.10.8.	Experiential Learning and Industry Collaboration	209
6.10.9.	Adapting to Evolving Market Trends	210
6.10.10.	Fostering Lifelong Learning.....	210
6.10.11.	Data-Driven Policy Decisions	210
6.10.12.	Longitudinal Studies for Future Insights.....	210

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the data analysis conducted in this study on the factors influencing the job placement outcomes of MBA graduates in Coastal Karnataka. The analysis uses survey data and statistical tests to explore the roles of demographic, academic, co-curricular, and psychological factors and the importance of institutional ranking and soft skills in shaping employment prospects. Each hypothesis was tested and evaluated based on statistical significance, with results indicating key determinants of employability for MBA graduates. The findings are organized by the main hypotheses and are detailed below.

Comparative analysis with previous studies revealed both alignments and deviations from existing research. Demographic factors, such as gender, age, and geographic location, were consistent with earlier findings, whereas the impact of academic variables and co-curricular activities varied. The study confirmed that English language proficiency and soft skills, particularly communication and leadership, are significant predictors of job placement success, supporting existing theories. However, the study also found that institutional ranking, as per NAAC grading, did not significantly predict employment outcomes, suggesting that factors beyond institutional quality are critical.

This chapter provides a critical overview of findings from the research on MBA graduate placements in Coastal Karnataka, emphasizing insights that emerged beyond prior studies. These findings address specific gaps in the employability landscape of MBA graduates, highlighting opportunities for targeted interventions. In addition, this chapter offers recommendations for various stakeholders, including educational institutions, policymakers, and employers, to bridge existing gaps and enhance the employability of MBA graduates within the region.

6.2. Findings of the Research

The interpretation of the findings from this study offers valuable insights into the factors influencing job placement outcomes for MBA graduates in Coastal Karnataka. The researcher identified significant associations across various demographic, academic, co-curricular, and soft-skill variables through hypothesis testing and statistical analysis. The study achieved a high response rate of 74.24%, with 631 out of 850 distributed to MBA graduates from Coastal

Karnataka completing the questionnaire. This participation underscores the validity of the insights drawn.

The study revealed several associations between demographic variables and job placement outcomes. Gender emerged as a significant factor, with male graduates exhibiting higher employment rates compared to female graduates. This finding underscores the presence of gender disparities in the job market, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address gender-based inequities in employment opportunities.

Employment Status of Respondents: The employment status distribution reveals that 33.9% of respondents are employed full-time in their field of specialization, while 15.5% and 15.4% are employed outside their field or part-time within their field, respectively. In addition, 20.9% are unemployed, and 14.4% are pursuing further education. These findings highlight significant variations in employment outcomes, emphasizing the need for targeted strategies to enhance employability and job alignment for MBA graduates.

6.2.1. Gender Gaps in MBA Employment Outcomes

The study highlights a significant gender disparity in employment outcomes among MBA graduates in Coastal Karnataka, with male graduates showing a notably higher employment rate (62.6%) than female graduates (52.8%), confirmed as statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 5.35$, $p = 0.021$). This aligns with broader research findings on gender-based employment disparities in MBA graduates, where male graduates often have higher placement rates due to a combination of societal expectations, hiring biases, and varying networking opportunities.

Research consistently reveals significant gender disparities in employment outcomes for MBA graduates, driven by career interruptions, societal expectations, and hiring biases. Male MBA graduates generally experience faster career progression and higher placement rates, often attributed to greater support in professional networking and reduced career interruptions compared to women. For instance, studies show that male MBA graduates initially earn similarly to their female counterparts, but their earnings soon diverge as men typically advance faster due to fewer career breaks and higher working hours, often related to family responsibilities for women (Bertrand et al., 2009). Additionally, male graduates benefit more from external career moves, while women's careers can stagnate when switching organizations due to increased susceptibility to gender biases in new (Patterson et al., 2017). Moreover, wage gaps persist among MBA holders, although less pronounced compared to those without

advanced degrees, suggesting enduring discrimination in wage distribution (Montgomery & Powell, 2003). Women MBAs who remain in the workforce full-time tend to work fewer hours and achieve lower management levels, often due to balancing professional and personal life commitments (Schneer & Reitman, 1995). These findings reflect a persistent gender disparity in employment and earnings outcomes for MBA graduates.

6.2.2. Age as a Key Factor in MBA Graduate Job Placement Outcomes

The analysis of age as a determinant of job placement among MBA graduates reveals a statistically significant link between age and employment outcomes. The data highlights that younger MBA graduates (mean age 26.67 years, SD = 1.87) are more likely to secure job placements than their slightly older peers (mean age 27.10 years, SD = 2.01), with a t-value of 2.565 and a p-value of 0.011, confirming significance at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$). This suggests a mild advantage for younger graduates in job placement, aligning with recent Indian studies that emphasize younger workers' advantages in adaptability and digital skills. Patel (2018) identified that younger graduates in India are particularly suited to the digital workforce, aligning well with recent government initiatives like Digital India, which creates job opportunities suited to their tech adaptability (Patel, 2018). Panse and Rastogi (2022) further observed that the shift to online workflows during COVID-19 has underscored younger MBA graduates' adaptability, giving them a competitive edge in securing employment (Panse & Rastogi, 2022).

Beyond skills, age-related biases in hiring may contribute to this disparity. Nair and Chatterjee (2020) found that younger graduates showed greater resilience in handling career shocks, suggesting that employers might favour younger hires who demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in dynamic job environments (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021a). Additionally, Raman and Pramod (2021) used predictive analytics on Indian MBA graduates and highlighted that early academic performance and soft skills are strong indicators of employability, especially among younger graduates with robust foundational skills (Raman & Pramod, 2022). Given these findings, career services and employers might consider age-inclusive hiring practices to mitigate potential biases and provide targeted skill development for older graduates. A holistic approach that includes factors like gender, location, and previous experience would also provide a more complete understanding of job placement dynamics, ensuring equitable opportunities across age groups and supporting long-term career success for all graduates. These findings emphasize that age plays a crucial role in the employability of MBA graduates

in India, with younger graduates often positioned advantageously for immediate job placements.

6.2.3. Geographical Disparities in Employment Outcomes Among MBA Graduates

The analysis of geographical location as a determinant of employment outcomes among MBA graduates reveals a statistically significant disparity between urban and rural backgrounds. Specifically, 62.2% of graduates from urban areas achieved employment, compared to 52.2% of rural graduates, with a chi-square value of 5.40 and a p-value of 0.020, indicating significance at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$). This difference aligns with Pradhan, Parida, and Sarangi (2018) findings, which observed that urban areas provide more robust employment outcomes due to better access to diverse career opportunities and professionals (Pradhan et al., 2018). Similarly, Asher and Novosad (2018) demonstrated that improved connectivity, such as rural road development, has supported economic participation in rural areas, though urban regions still show greater diversification in job opportunities (Asher & Novosad, 2020).

The disparity in employment outcomes can also be attributed to the economic dynamics present in urban versus rural settings. Sharma (2016) noted that urban proximity fosters economic activities that result in higher wages and job availability even for rural residents in nearby areas, reinforcing urban centers as prime employment zones (A. Sharma, 2016). Additionally, Tripathi and Rani (2018) found that the shift from agricultural to non-farm employment drives urbanization, which enhances job opportunities within cities but remains less accessible for rural graduates without relocation (Tripathi & Rani, 2018). These findings highlight the significant role of geographical location in shaping employment trajectories for MBA graduates, with urban settings presenting distinct advantages in job market accessibility.

6.2.4. The Influence of Parental Income on Employment Outcomes Among MBA Graduates

The analysis of parental income and employment outcomes among MBA graduates suggests that graduates from higher-income families have higher employment rates. Specifically, the data shows that MBA graduates with parental incomes above ₹25,00,000 had an employment rate of 70.5%, while those from families earning less than ₹5,00,000 had an employment rate of 56.9%. Although the chi-square value of 6.23 with a p-value of 0.284 indicates that this association is not statistically significant, the trend aligns with findings in the literature. For instance, Suleman et al. (2023) observed a positive relationship between parental income and the likelihood of children pursuing further education, which can improve employability

prospects (Suleman et al., 2023). Similarly, Ajefu (2018) found that higher parental income positively impacted children's educational outcomes, which often correlates with better career opportunities and employment success (Ajefu, 2018).

Despite the observed trend, this study's lack of statistical significance suggests that factors other than parental income may play a more critical role in employment outcomes for MBA graduates. This finding aligns with research by Baruch, Bhaskar, and Mishra (2019), who examined Indian MBA graduates and found that individual career orientation and employability skills, rather than socioeconomic background, were stronger predictors of career success (Baruch et al., 2020). Furthermore, Nair and Chatterjee (2020) highlighted that career shocks and personal adaptability significantly impact career development, suggesting that employment outcomes may be influenced by various external and personal factors beyond parental income (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021b). These findings imply that while socioeconomic background can offer certain advantages, it does not deterministically dictate employment success, underscoring the multifaceted nature of career outcomes among MBA graduates.

6.2.5. The Role of Paternal Education in Shaping Employment Outcomes for MBA Graduates: Trends and Influences

The analysis of paternal education's influence on employment outcomes for MBA graduates reveals a trend where graduates with more highly educated fathers (e.g., postgraduate or professional degrees) tend to have better employment rates, with a peak employment rate of 66.7% for those with fathers holding advanced degrees, compared to 54.9% for those whose fathers have lower levels of education. This trend suggests a positive correlation between paternal education and employment outcomes, though the chi-square test results (p-value of 0.292) indicate that this relationship is not statistically significant. Studies in the Indian context support the broader influence of parental education on career success, as found by Ahmed and Nauriyal (2023), who highlighted that parental educational backgrounds can positively affect children's educational and employment prospects, especially in socio-religious groupings (Ahmed & Nauriyal, 2024).

While the data suggests a trend, the lack of statistical significance implies that paternal education alone may not deterministically influence employment outcomes. Other factors, such as individual career orientation and adaptability, appear crucial. This view aligns with findings by Baruch, Bhaskar, and Mishra (2019), who noted that factors like career orientation and employability skills in Indian MBA graduates are significant predictors of career success.

beyond family background (Baruch et al., 2020). Furthermore, Thakur et al. (2019) observed that, although parental education provides an initial advantage, the development of specific skills aligned with labor market needs is essential for sustained employability (Thakur et al., 2019). These findings suggest that while paternal education may enhance access to opportunities, a comprehensive skill set remains critical for employment success among MBA graduates.

6.2.6. Impact of Maternal Education on MBA Graduate Employment Outcomes

The analysis of maternal education's influence on employment outcomes for MBA graduates reveals an upward trend in employment rates associated with higher maternal education levels. Graduates with mothers who have completed higher education, particularly a graduation degree or above, exhibit employment rates of up to 65.8%, compared to 51.4% for those whose mothers attained grades 5-8. Although the chi-square test yielded a non-significant p-value of 0.243, indicating no statistically significant correlation, the observed trend aligns with studies on maternal education's broader impact on children's success. For instance, Vikram and Vanneman (2019) found that maternal education in India has a significant association with children's health outcomes and educational achievements, suggesting that educated mothers may provide more resources and guidance, indirectly benefiting their children's career prospects (Vikram & Vanneman, 2020).

Further, Mukherjee and Das (2008) demonstrated that maternal education levels play a crucial role in reducing child labor tendencies and enhancing academic pursuits, highlighting the long-term impacts of maternal influence on educational and professional outcomes (Mukherjee & Das, 2008). While the direct relationship between maternal education and employment outcomes of MBA graduates may not be statistically significant in this sample, these studies emphasize the supportive role of maternal education in creating conducive environments for academic and career success, which may indirectly contribute to higher employment rates among graduates.

6.2.7. Evaluating the Role of NAAC Accreditation in MBA Graduate Employment Outcomes

The analysis of NAAC grading's influence on MBA graduate employment outcomes indicates a diverse distribution of employment rates across accreditation levels, but with no statistically significant association (p-value = 0.650). The data reveals that a majority of unemployed

graduates came from non-accredited institutions (125 out of 327), while employment rates were relatively higher among graduates from institutions with higher NAAC grades (A to A++). This trend aligns with findings from Prakash et al. (2023), who observed that NAAC accreditation generally correlates with enhanced educational quality in India, potentially benefiting graduate employability (Prakash et al., 2023). However, the non-significant chi-square result in this analysis suggests that while accreditation may reflect institutional quality, it does not directly determine MBA graduates' job placement outcomes.

Research on the effectiveness of NAAC grades also underscores its role in institutional assessment rather than direct employability outcomes. Alhat (2020) highlighted that NAAC's quality benchmarking often promotes improvements in academic infrastructure and curriculum standards, indirectly supporting employability without necessarily guaranteeing it (Alhat, 2020). Aithal et al. (2016) found that NAAC-accredited institutions tend to focus on research and academic excellence, which could influence perceptions of employability but may not translate to immediate employment success for graduates (Aithal et al., 2016). Thus, while NAAC grading enhances institutional profiles, other factors such as career services, industry ties, and individual skills may play more significant roles in determining employment outcomes for MBA graduates.

6.2.8. Academic Performance as a Predictor of Employment Outcomes for MBA Graduates

The analysis of MBA percentage scores and employment outcomes suggests a modest positive trend in job placement success correlated with higher academic performance, though the differences are not statistically significant. For example, MBA graduates with 80-89% and above 90% exhibit 61.5% and 61.8% employment rates, respectively, compared to 58.3% for those below 60%. This aligns with Vallabh and Vallabh (2015), who found that academic success alone does not ensure employability for Indian MBA graduates; practical skills and relevant experience play substantial roles (Vallabh & Vallabh, 2015). Additionally, Gupta and Turek (2015) highlighted the significance of prior academic achievements, such as undergraduate GPA, as a predictor of MBA success, although they emphasize that well-rounded skill sets are equally critical in employability (Gupta & Turek, 2015).

In the Indian context, Jha (2019) further underscores that factors beyond academic scores, such as communication skills and internships, are vital for employability in the competitive MBA job market (Jha, 2019). This finding is consistent with broader studies, such as those by

Ganguly et al. (2017), who identify self-efficacy and time management as strong predictors of academic performance, which are also crucial for employability in business environments (Ganguly et al., 2017). These findings suggest that while percentage scores provide a baseline, the multifaceted nature of employability requires additional experiential and soft skills for career success among MBA graduates.

6.2.9. Influence of MBA Specialization on Employment Outcomes

The analysis of MBA specializations and employment outcomes reveals that certain fields may correlate with higher job placement rates. For instance, graduates specializing in logistics, marketing, information technology, and human resources have employment rates above 60%, with logistics leading at 63.9%. However, graduates from Operations and Finance have lower employment rates, at 48.5% and 51.3%, respectively. Despite these trends, the chi-square test ($p\text{-value} = 0.205$) indicates no statistically significant relationship between specialization and employment outcomes in this sample. This aligns with findings by Mallik and Achar (2019), who observed that perceived career prospects often influence students' choices of specialisation may not guarantee specific job outcomes (Mallik & Achar, 2019).

Further, Agarwala (2008) highlighted that factors like skills and networking opportunities also shape career paths, often superseding the influence of specialization alone (Agarwala, 2008). Similarly, Nair and Chatterjee (2020) found that career adaptability significantly affects employment outcomes, indicating that external and personal factors beyond specialization are crucial (Nair & Chatterjee, 2021b). These findings underscore the complexity of career success, suggesting that while specialization provides a foundational advantage, additional factors like skill development and adaptability are essential for MBA graduates' employability.

6.2.10. The Role of English Language Proficiency in Job Placement Success for MBA Graduates

The analysis of English language proficiency among MBA graduates reveals a strong correlation between perceived proficiency levels and employment outcomes. Graduates with "Excellent" English proficiency demonstrated a 66.9% employment rate, compared to only 17.8% for those with "Poor" proficiency, indicating that English skills significantly enhance employability. This result is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), underscoring the importance of language skills in securing employment. These findings align with research by Kumar (2014), who highlighted that low English proficiency affects the academic performance of

management students, particularly those from rural areas, impacting their employability in competitive markets (Kumar, 2014).

Further supporting this correlation, Azam, Chin, and Prakash (2010) found that English-speaking abilities in India are associated with a significant wage premium, where fluency leads to 34% higher wages, emphasizing the value of English proficiency in professional success (Azam et al., 2013). This study's results confirm the substantial impact of language proficiency on job placement success, suggesting that English skills are integral to MBA graduates' employability in the Indian job market.

6.2.11. Influence of Internship Experience on Employment Outcomes for MBA Graduates

The analysis of internship experience on MBA graduates' employment outcomes indicates a higher employment rate (58.9%) among those with internship experience compared to those without (53.8%). Despite this difference, the chi-square test (p -value = 0.299) shows no statistically significant association, suggesting that internships alone may not strongly predict job placement outcomes. This finding aligns with research by Jain, Vichore, and Badra (2023), who emphasized that while internships enhance practical skills and confidence, these benefits may vary based on the quality and relevance of the experience (Jain et al., 2023).

Additional studies support the nuanced role of internships. Baert et al. (2019) demonstrated that internships increase the likelihood of being invited to job interviews, suggesting that while internships improve initial job search outcomes, their long-term impact on job placement may depend on factors like industry fit and skill development (Baert et al., 2021). Vélez and Giner (2015) further highlight that internships benefit both students and employers but emphasize the need for structured experiences to maximize career benefits (Sanahuja Vélez & Ribes Giner, 2015). These findings suggest that while internships positively impact employability, their effectiveness is shaped by the quality and contextual relevance of the internship experience.

6.2.12. The Influence of Extracurricular Engagement on Employment Outcomes for MBA Graduates

The analysis of MBA graduates' extracurricular engagement highlights a positive trend in job placement outcomes associated with increased activity participation. Graduates involved in three or more activities, such as NCC, NSS, sports, public speaking, and leadership training, showed a higher employment rate of 64.8%, compared to only 47.8% for those who did not participate in any activities. The chi-square test result (p = 0.028) confirms a statistically

significant relationship between activity involvement and employment success. This finding aligns with studies by Pinto and Ramalheira (2017), who reported that extracurricular involvement improves perceived employability, especially when combined with academic achievement (Pinto & Ramalheira, 2017).

Additionally, Milner, Cousins, and McGowan (2016) found that extracurricular activities enhance soft skills and teamwork, which are highly valued in professional settings, thereby improving employability prospects (Milner et al., 2016). Similarly, Clark et al. (2015) noted that alumni frequently attribute early career success to skills gained through extracurricular experiences, highlighting these activities' role in distinguishing candidates in competitive job markets (Clark et al., 2015). These findings support the notion that active extracurricular engagement significantly enhances employability for MBA graduates.

6.2.13. The Influence of NCC Participation on MBA Graduates' Employment Outcomes

The analysis of National Cadet Corps (NCC) participation among MBA graduates reveals a modest increase in job placement rates for those who participated in NCC (59.3%) compared to those who did not (57.5%). However, the chi-square test results (p -value = 0.803) indicate that this difference is not statistically significant, suggesting that NCC involvement alone does not significantly impact employment outcomes in the business sector. This finding aligns with research by Sharma and Hooda (2023), which emphasizes that while NCC instils valuable discipline and leadership skills, its impact on employability is more profound in sectors valuing military discipline, such as defense-related industries (K. Sharma & Hooda, 2023).

Further, Divya and Rajagopalan (2014) found a positive association between NCC participation and self-concept development among Indian college students, noting that while NCC participation enhances confidence and resilience, these attributes may not directly translate to higher employability in all fields (Divya & Rajagopalan, 2014). These insights suggest that while NCC provides substantial personal development benefits, its direct role in employment outcomes remains limited, particularly in fields where academic qualifications and professional experience are prioritized.

6.2.14. Evaluating the Impact of NSS Participation on Employment Opportunities for MBA Graduates

The analysis of NSS (National Service Scheme) participation among MBA graduates reveals a slight increase in job placement rates for participants (58.3%) compared to non-participants (57.4%). Despite this marginal difference, the chi-square test (p -value = 0.851) indicates no

statistically significant relationship, suggesting that NSS involvement alone does not substantially impact job placement. These findings align with research by Lobo (2013), which notes that NSS participation offers personal growth and civic responsibility but may not directly translate to improved employability in fields prioritizing professional skills (Aninha, 2013).

Further research supports the idea that NSS enhances soft skills and social awareness, which are beneficial but not necessarily prioritized in competitive business hiring. Miller, Rocconi, and Dumford (2018) emphasized that while participation in high-impact practices like community service can develop transferable skills, these may not directly influence immediate job attainment (Miller et al., 2018). These findings suggest that while NSS involvement enriches graduates' personal profiles, other qualifications and experiences might be more influential in securing employment in the business sector.

6.2.15. Evaluating the Influence of Sports Participation on Employment Prospects for MBA Graduates

The analysis of sports participation among MBA graduates indicates a slight decrease in employment rates for those who participated in sports (56.5%) compared to those who did not (58.5%). The chi-square test ($p\text{-value} = 0.648$) shows that this difference is not statistically significant, suggesting that sports participation may not directly impact job placement outcomes for MBA graduates. This finding aligns with research by Griffiths et al. (2017), which observed that sports involvement fosters skills like leadership and teamwork, but these may not directly influence job attainment in fields that prioritize professional and academic credentials (Griffiths et al., 2017).

Additional studies reinforce this perspective. Johnes (2018) noted a positive impact of sports participation on earnings, highlighting that while sports involvement adds value to personal and professional attributes, its impact on immediate employment outcomes is often influenced by broader employability factors (Johnes, 2018). These findings suggest that while sports participation contributes to personal development, it may not significantly predict employment success in competitive business environments where other qualifications are prioritized.

6.2.16. The Impact of Public Speaking and Leadership Programs on Employment Success for MBA Graduates

The analysis of MBA graduates' involvement in public speaking and leadership programs reveals a strong correlation with employment outcomes. Graduates who participated in both

types of programs showed a high placement rate of 73.3%, compared to 57.8% for those involved in either one and 52.8% for those not involved. This positive trend is statistically significant ($p = 0.007$), underscoring the employability benefits associated with these skills. Wolverton and Tanner (2019) emphasize the importance of public speaking for career readiness in digital business environments, advocating for integrating such training into business courses (Carraher Wolverton & Tanner, 2019).

Similarly, Jackson et al. (2023) found that experiential learning in leadership effectively boosts employability skills among MBA students from the Indian subcontinent, further validating the relevance of leadership training for career success (V. Jackson et al., 2023). This evidence highlights the role of comprehensive skill development in improving job placement outcomes, suggesting that engagement in public speaking and leadership initiatives significantly benefits MBA graduates in a competitive job market.

6.2.17. The Role of Cultural Engagement in Enhancing Employment Prospects for MBA Graduates

The analysis of cultural engagement among MBA graduates, specifically in activities like dance and music, shows a slightly lower employment rate (51.6%) for those who participated compared to those who did not (58.0%). The chi-square test ($p\text{-value} = 0.482$) indicates that this difference is not statistically significant, suggesting that cultural engagement alone may not substantially impact job placement in the MBA context. This finding aligns with Agarwala (2008), who noted that career decisions in India are more influenced by academic and career-related experiences than cultural participation (Agarwala, 2008).

Further research by Grobelna (2021) suggests that while cultural engagement can enhance attributes like engagement and dedication in fields such as tourism, its impact may vary significantly across professions (Grobelna & Wyszowska-Wróbel, 2021). These insights suggest that while cultural activities enrich personal growth, their direct influence on job placement outcomes in competitive fields like business may be limited, underscoring the prioritization of job-relevant skills and experience in employability.

6.2.18. The Role of Academic Enhancement Activities in Improving Employment Outcomes for MBA Graduates

The analysis of MBA graduates' participation in academic enhancement activities, such as workshops, seminars, conferences, and paper presentations, indicates a positive trend in employment outcomes. Graduates engaged in these activities showed a placement rate of

65.6%, compared to 56.6% for those without such involvement. Although this difference suggests potential benefits of academic engagement, the chi-square test ($p = 0.170$) indicates that this association is not statistically significant. Research by Sharma and Khandelwal (2012) highlights that while academic engagement supports skills and professional growth, it may not directly impact employability, especially when other factors are prioritized (B. R. Sharma et al., 2012).

Similarly, Jackson and Rowe (2023) note that work-integrated learning and co-curricular activities are key for employability but suggest that their effectiveness may vary based on industry relevance (D. Jackson & Rowe, 2023). These findings suggest that while academic engagements provide critical soft skills and networking benefits, their influence on job placement is part of a broader framework of employability factors.

6.2.19. Assessing the Impact of Communication and Soft Skills on Employment Outcomes for MBA Graduates

This analysis reveals a statistically significant association between MBA graduates' self-rated communication skills and job placement success. The data shows that graduates with higher self-assessed communication ratings (levels 4 and 5) had better placement rates, underscoring the importance of communication proficiency in the job market. Research by Bhatnagar (2020) highlights that employers prioritize soft skills like communication and critical thinking in MBA graduates, suggesting the need for curriculum enhancement to address these skill gaps (Bhatnagar, 2021a).

Further studies support these findings. Srivastava (2018) notes that Indian management students often require improvement in essential communication areas, such as public speaking and critical thinking, which are integral to employability (Srivastava, 2018). These insights emphasize the value of robust communication training in MBA programs to better prepare graduates for the demands of the competitive job market.

6.2.20. Exploring the Impact of Teamwork and Collaboration Skills on Employment Outcomes for MBA Graduates

This analysis of teamwork and collaboration skills among MBA graduates reveals a positive association between higher self-assessed ratings in these skills and employment outcomes, with those rating themselves at level 5 showing a 72.3% placement rate. Although this trend is apparent, the chi-square test ($p = 0.112$) indicates it is not statistically significant. Studies like those by Porkodi et al. (2023) underscore the importance of collaborative learning practices in

developing employability skills such as teamwork, which are essential in management and entrepreneurship programs (Porkodi et al., 2023a).

Additionally, Ellis et al. (2005) found that teamwork skills training improves cognitive and collaborative capabilities, which contribute to performance and planning skills valued in professional environments (Porkodi et al., 2023a). These findings indicate that while teamwork and collaboration enhance employability, they may be part of a broader suite of skills that MBA graduates must develop to succeed in competitive job markets.

6.2.21. The Role of Problem Solving and Critical Thinking Skills in Enhancing Employability for MBA Graduates

The analysis shows a trend where MBA graduates rated themselves higher in problem-solving and critical thinking abilities and had better job placement rates, with 69.4% employment among those who rated themselves at level 5. However, the chi-square test ($p = 0.107$) indicates that this association is not statistically significant. Research by Shahani (2019) emphasizes that critical thinking and problem-solving are crucial for employability, aligning with employers' focus on these skills in Indian business graduates (Shahani, 2019).

Desai et al. (2016) also found that employers view critical thinking as essential for business success, advocating for business schools to emphasize these skills within MBA curricula to meet industry demands (Desai et al., 2016). These studies indicate that while critical thinking and problem-solving are valued in the job market, enhancing these skills within MBA programs can further align graduate capabilities with employer expectations.

6.2.22. The Role of Team Management Skills in Enhancing MBA Graduates' Employability

The analysis reveals a statistically significant relationship ($p = 0.014$) between self-rated team management skills and job placement outcomes among MBA graduates. Those with higher ratings in team management skills, especially at level 5 (69.2% placed), were more likely to secure employment compared to lower ratings. This trend underscores the importance of team management in the competitive job market. Research by Porkodi et al. (2023) emphasizes that collaborative learning practices, which enhance teamwork and leadership, significantly improve employability skills in management programs (Porkodi et al., 2023b).

Similarly, Metilda and Neena (2016) highlight the gap in team management skills among Indian MBA graduates, stressing the need for targeted training to align graduate competencies

with industry demands (Metilda & Neena, 2016). These findings suggest that building team management abilities within MBA curricula enhances employability and aligns with employer expectations.

6.2.23. The Role of Adaptability and Flexibility in Enhancing Employability of MBA Graduates

The analysis suggests a positive but not statistically significant trend between self-assessed adaptability and flexibility ratings and job placement outcomes, with higher ratings correlating with better placement rates (e.g., 60% for those rating themselves at level 5). While the chi-square test ($p = 0.430$) indicates no strong direct association, the observed trends highlight the potential value of adaptability and flexibility in the evolving job market. Sehgal and Nasim (2019) emphasize the importance of adaptability as a critical employability factor, particularly in the IT sector, where rapid skill shifts are common (Sehgal & Nasim, 2020).

Jaiswal (2018) further discusses how behavioural flexibility is essential in dynamic business environments, enhancing organizational performance by allowing employees to manage role stress effectively (Jaiswal, 2018). These findings collectively suggest that while adaptability and flexibility are valued, their direct impact on job placement outcomes may be mediated by other factors, warranting further exploration in future research.

6.2.24. Leadership Skills as a Catalyst for MBA Graduates' Employability

The analysis reveals a statistically significant relationship ($p = 0.006$) between self-rated leadership skills and employment outcomes among MBA graduates. Higher leadership ratings, particularly at level 5, correspond to a 69.6% placement rate, highlighting the pivotal role of leadership in employability. Research by Bhatnagar (2020) emphasizes the importance of leadership and interpersonal skills for MBA graduates in the Indian context, aligning with employers' expectations (Bhatnagar, 2021b).

Further, a study by Powell (2019) underscores the influence of leadership efficacy programs in boosting students' confidence and preparedness for leadership roles, suggesting that experiential learning initiatives can significantly enhance leadership abilities (Powell & Rey, 2019). These findings advocate for an increased focus on leadership development in MBA programs to better align graduate competencies with industry demands.

6.2.25. The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Enhancing Employment Success for MBA Graduates

The analysis shows that graduates with higher self-rated emotional intelligence (EI) demonstrate a trend of better job placement outcomes, with 65.5% of those at the highest rating (5) being placed. The chi-square test ($p = 0.122$) suggests no statistically significant association despite the observed trend. Studies like that of Deepa and Arulrajan (2020) highlight the importance of EI training in MBA programs, showing that such courses effectively enhance students' emotional competencies as they are maintained in professional settings (Deepa & Arulrajan, 2020).

Further, Dhani and Sharma (2016) found that employees with higher EI demonstrate better teamwork, punctuality, and overall competence, critical traits for job success in Indian organizational contexts (Dhani et al., 2016). These findings emphasize the potential of EI development to enhance employability and support its integration into MBA curriculums to align with employer expectations.

6.2.26. The Impact of Self-Esteem and Soft Skills on MBA Graduates' Employability

This study highlights the significant influence of self-esteem and soft skills on the employability of MBA graduates. Graduates with higher self-esteem (mean score: 27.1 vs. 25.9) and enhanced soft skills (mean score: 22.3 vs. 20.5) were more likely to secure job placements, as evidenced by statistically significant results ($p < 0.001$). Supporting this, Chakraborty et al. (2017) found that soft skills training significantly moderates the relationship between psychological predispositions, such as self-esteem, and employability among management students in India (Chakraborty et al., 2017).

Furthermore, Garg (2017) emphasizes that soft skills like communication and self-management are crucial for employability in the Indian context, aligning with industry demands (Garg, 2017). Potgieter (2012) also highlights the correlation between self-esteem and employability attributes, suggesting a strong interplay between psychological and interpersonal factors in determining career success (Potgieter, 2012).

These findings underline the importance of incorporating targeted self-esteem and soft skills training into MBA curriculums to prepare graduates for the competitive job market better.

6.3. Findings Based on Objective 1

To identify the demographic variables associated with full-time jobs for MBA graduates after completing their degree.

The analysis of demographic variables reveals significant insights into the factors influencing full-time job placement among MBA graduates. The findings are summarized as follows:

Gender and Employment Status: Male graduates were more likely to secure full-time employment (62.6%) than their female counterparts (52.8%). The chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 5.35$, $p = 0.021$) confirmed a statistically significant association between gender and employment outcomes. This highlights potential gender disparities in job placement, warranting further exploration of underlying causes.

Age and Employment Outcomes: Younger graduates are more likely to be employed. The mean age of employed graduates was 26.67 years, slightly lower than the mean age of unemployed graduates at 27.10 years. This difference was statistically significant ($t = 2.565$, $p = 0.011$), suggesting that age may influence employability due to employer preferences for younger candidates.

Geographical Location (Rural vs. Urban): Graduates from urban backgrounds were more likely to secure employment (62.2%) compared to their rural counterparts (52.2%). The chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 5.40$, $p = 0.020$) indicated a significant association between geographical location and employment outcomes. Urban graduates may benefit from better access to job markets, networking opportunities, and resources.

Parental Income Levels: While graduates from higher-income families showed a trend towards higher employment rates (70.5% for families earning ₹25,00,000 or more), the association was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 6.23$, $p = 0.284$). This suggests that socioeconomic background may influence employability, but other factors play a more critical role.

Paternal Education: Higher employment rates were observed among graduates whose fathers had higher educational qualifications (e.g., 66.7% for postgraduate/professional). However, the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 4.95$, $p = 0.292$) indicated no significant association, suggesting limited direct impact of paternal education on job placement outcomes.

Maternal Education: A similar trend was noted with maternal education, where graduates with mothers holding a graduation degree or higher exhibited higher employment rates (65.8%). However, the association was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 5.47$, $p = 0.243$), reflecting the multifactorial nature of employability.

NAAC Accreditation of Institutions: While graduates from higher NAAC-accredited institutions (e.g., A++, A+) had slightly better employment rates, the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 3.32$, $p = 0.650$) showed no significant association between accreditation level and job placement. This indicates that accreditation alone does not guarantee employability, and other factors may hold greater influence.

The findings suggest that demographic variables such as gender, age, and geographical location significantly influence the employability of MBA graduates. Other factors like parental income, education, and institutional accreditation showed observable trends but lacked statistical significance. These results highlight the need for targeted interventions to address disparities and promote equitable employment opportunities for all graduates.

Table 6 1. Hypothesis Testing Results for Objective 1: Demographic Variables and Job Placement Outcomes					
Demographic Variable	Test	Test Statistic	p-value	Significance	Finding
Gender and Employment Status	Chi-Square Test	$\chi^2 = 5.35$	0.021	Significant	Male graduates are more likely to secure employment than female graduates, showing a statistically significant association between gender and job placement.
Age and Employment Status	t-Test	$t = 2.565$	0.011	Significant	Younger graduates have a slightly higher likelihood of employment than older graduates, indicating a modest but significant impact of age on placement.
Geographic Location	Chi-Square Test	$\chi^2 = 5.40$	0.020	Significant	Urban graduates have better job placement rates compared to rural graduates, showing a significant association between geographic location and employment outcomes.
Parental Income	Chi-Square Test	$\chi^2 = 6.23$	0.284	Not Significant	Parental annual income does not have a statistically

					significant effect on job placement outcomes.
Father's Education Level	Chi-Square Test	$\chi^2 = 4.95$	0.292	Not Significant	No significant association is observed between the father's education level and employment outcomes.
Mother's Education Level	Chi-Square Test	$\chi^2 = 5.47$	0.243	Not Significant	Mother's education level does not significantly influence job placement outcomes.

The results indicate that gender, age, and geographic location are significant predictors of job placement outcomes, while parental income and education levels do not show significant effects. These findings highlight the need to address gender disparities, support rural graduates, and tailor strategies for younger graduates to improve employability.

6.4. Findings Based on Objective 2

To assess the academic variables associated with full-time job placement for MBA graduates after completing their degree

The analysis of academic variables provided valuable insights into the factors influencing full-time job placement for MBA graduates. The findings are summarized as follows:

MBA Percentage Scores and Employment Outcomes: Graduates with higher academic scores demonstrated slightly better employment rates. For instance, graduates with scores of 90% or above had a placement rate of 61.8%, compared to 58.3% for those scoring below 60%. However, the association between percentage scores and job placement was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 1.98$, $p = 0.739$), indicating that academic performance alone does not strongly predict employability.

Specialization and Employment Status: Employment rates varied across specializations, with Logistics (63.9%), Marketing (62.1%), and HR (60.5%) showing higher placement rates compared to Finance (51.3%) and Operations (48.5%). Despite these differences, the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 7.22$, $p = 0.205$) found no statistically significant association, suggesting that specialization alone does not determine job placement success.

Public Speaking and Leadership Development Programs: Graduates who participated in both public speaking and leadership development programs exhibited significantly higher employment rates (73.3%) compared to those who participated in only one (57.8%) or none

(52.8%). The association was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 9.926$, $p = 0.007$), highlighting the value of these programs in enhancing employability.

Engagement in Academic Activities: Graduates who participated in academic enhancement activities such as workshops, seminars, and conferences had a higher placement rate (65.6%) compared to non-participants (56.6%). However, the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 1.881$, $p = 0.170$) indicated no significant association, suggesting that while beneficial, these activities alone do not strongly influence employment outcomes.

NAAC Accreditation and Academic Quality: Although employment rates improved with higher NAAC accreditation levels (e.g., A++, 58.5%), the association between accreditation and job placement was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 3.32$, $p = 0.650$). This suggests that institutional accreditation, while indicative of academic quality, may not be a decisive factor for employability.

Teamwork and Collaboration: Higher self-assessed teamwork ratings were associated with better job placement rates, especially at level 5 (72.3%). However, the association was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 7.50$, $p = 0.112$). This highlights the importance of teamwork skills but suggests they may need to be coupled with other factors for significant impact.

Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking: Graduates with higher ratings in problem-solving and critical thinking skills (e.g., level 5, 69.4%) showed improved placement rates. However, the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 7.61$, $p = 0.107$) indicated no significant association, underscoring the multifactorial nature of employability.

Team Management Skills: A significant association was found between self-rated team management skills and employment outcomes ($\chi^2 = 12.6$, $p = 0.014$). Graduates with higher ratings (e.g., level 5, 69.2%) were more likely to secure full-time jobs, highlighting the critical role of leadership and team management in enhancing employability.

The findings suggest that academic performance, specialization, and participation in academic activities alone may not guarantee job placement but can contribute to employability when combined with other factors. Skills such as team management, public speaking, and leadership development demonstrated a stronger association with employment outcomes, emphasizing the need for holistic education that balances academic rigour with skill development and practical

exposure. These insights can guide institutions in designing MBA curricula that better align with market demands.

Table 6 2. Hypothesis Testing Results for Objective 2: Academic Variables and Job Placement Outcomes				
Academic Variable	Test Type	p-value	Significance	Finding
Percentage Score	Chi-Square Test	0.739	Not Significant	Higher percentage scores showed a trend toward better placement rates, but the association was not statistically significant.
Specialization	Chi-Square Test	0.205	Not Significant	Variations in employment rates across specializations were observed, but the overall association with job placement was not significant.
English Language Ability	Chi-Square Test	<0.001	Highly Significant	Graduates with higher self-rated English proficiency had significantly better job placement outcomes, emphasizing its critical role.
Internship Experience	Chi-Square Test	0.299	Not Significant	Internship experience was associated with slightly higher placement rates, but the difference was not statistically significant.

The findings indicate that English language ability has a statistically significant association with job placement outcomes among the academic variables considered, highlighting its importance in employability. In contrast, percentage score, specialization, and internship experience did not show significant associations within this study's scope.

These results emphasize the value of communication skills, particularly in English, as a critical determinant of employability. They also suggest that factors beyond traditional academic metrics, such as personal development and professional skills, may play a larger role in job placement success for MBA graduates.

6.5. Findings Based on Objective 3

To explore the co-curricular variables associated with full-time jobs for MBA graduates after completing their degree

The analysis of co-curricular variables provided valuable insights into their influence on full-time job placement for MBA graduates. The findings are summarized as follows:

National Service Scheme (NSS) Participation: Graduates who participated in NSS activities exhibited a marginally higher placement rate (58.3%) compared to non-participants (57.4%). However, the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 0.035$, $p = 0.851$) showed no statistically significant association between NSS participation and job placement outcomes, suggesting that while NSS offers personal development benefits, it does not directly influence employability within this sample.

Sports and Games Participation: The placement rate for graduates who participated in sports and games was slightly lower (56.5%) compared to non-participants (58.5%). The association was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.208$, $p = 0.648$), indicating that sports participation, while beneficial for developing teamwork and discipline, does not directly impact job placement success.

Cultural Activities (Dance/Music): Graduates who participated in cultural activities, such as dance and music, had a lower placement rate (51.6%) compared to non-participants (58.0%). The chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 0.494$, $p = 0.482$) indicated no significant association, suggesting that involvement in cultural activities does not strongly influence employability outcomes in this study.

Public Speaking and Leadership Development Programs: Participation in public speaking and leadership development programs showed a significant positive association with employment outcomes. Graduates who participated in both programs had the highest placement rate (73.3%) compared to those who participated in only one (57.8%) or none (52.8%). The chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 9.926$, $p = 0.007$) confirmed the statistical significance, emphasizing the value of these programs in enhancing employability.

Workshops, Seminars, and Conferences: Participation in academic enhancement activities such as workshops, seminars, and conferences was associated with a higher placement rate (65.6%) compared to non-participants (56.6%). However, the association was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 1.881$, $p = 0.170$). These activities likely contribute to employability indirectly by improving knowledge and networking opportunities.

Teamwork and Collaboration Skills: While not strictly co-curricular, teamwork and collaboration activities fostered through co-curricular engagements showed observable benefits. Graduates with higher self-rated teamwork skills (level 5, 72.3% placement)

demonstrated better employability, though this relationship was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 7.50, p = 0.112$).

The findings reveal that co-curricular activities such as NSS, sports, and cultural participation may not directly influence job placement outcomes, but programs focused on public speaking and leadership development have a significant positive impact. Workshops, seminars, and similar engagements offer potential indirect benefits, such as enhanced industry knowledge and professional networking. These insights highlight the importance of integrating targeted co-curricular programs that align with industry expectations, helping graduates develop a well-rounded skill set that boosts their employability.

Table 6 3. Hypothesis Testing Results for Objective 3: Analyze the Impact of Co-curricular Variables on Job Placement Outcomes for MBA Graduates				
Co-curricular Activity	Observation	P-Value	Statistical Significance	Conclusion
NCC Participation	There was a slight increase in placement rates among participants, but it was not statistically significant.	0.803	Not Significant	NCC participation does not significantly impact job placement outcomes in this study.
NSS Participation	There was a marginal increase in employment rates, but no statistical significance was found.	0.851	Not Significant	NSS participation does not significantly affect job placement success.
Sports and Games Participation	There was a slight difference favouring participants, but it is not statistically significant.	0.648	Not Significant	Participation in sports and games does not directly influence employment outcomes.
Public Speaking and Leadership Programs	Noticeable higher placement rates among participants, with statistically significant association observed.	0.007	Significant	Public speaking and leadership programs significantly enhance job placement success.

Public Speaking and Leadership Programs are significantly associated with improved job placement outcomes, emphasizing the importance of communication and leadership skill development. Participation in NCC, NSS, and Sports and Games, while beneficial for overall development, does not show a statistically significant impact on employment outcomes.

These findings partially validate the hypothesis. Specific co-curricular activities like public speaking and leadership development are crucial for enhancing employability, suggesting a need for business schools to prioritize such programs alongside academics.

6.6. Findings Based on Objective 4

To evaluate whether soft skill level is a predictor of full-time job placement for MBA graduates after completing their degree

The study analysed the relationship between various self-assessed soft skills and job placement outcomes for MBA graduates. The findings demonstrate that soft skills play a crucial role in employability, with some showing statistically significant associations with job placement. Below are the key insights:

Communication Skills: Graduates with higher self-assessed communication skills (levels 4 and 5) exhibited better placement rates, with level 5 achieving 75% placement. The chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 14.5$, $p = 0.006$) indicated a statistically significant association, making communication skills a critical predictor of employability.

Team Management Skills: The ability to manage teams was significantly associated with job placement success. Graduates rating themselves at level 5 had a placement rate of 69.2%, compared to 40.7% for level 1. The chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 12.6$, $p = 0.014$) confirmed the statistical significance, underscoring the importance of leadership and team management in securing employment.

Teamwork and Collaboration: Higher teamwork ratings correlated with increased placement rates, especially at level 5 (72.3%). However, the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 7.50$, $p = 0.112$) did not establish statistical significance, suggesting that teamwork skills contribute to employability but may need to be coupled with other factors for a stronger impact.

Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking: Graduates with high ratings (level 5, 69.4% placement) in problem-solving and critical thinking demonstrated better job outcomes, though the association was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 7.61$, $p = 0.107$). This implies that while these skills are valued by employers, their direct predictive power for employability is limited in this sample.

Adaptability and Flexibility: Placement rates increased with higher self-ratings of adaptability and flexibility, peaking at 60% for level 5. However, the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 3.83$, $p = 0.430$) found no significant association, indicating that these skills, though beneficial, may not independently predict job placement success.

Emotional Intelligence: While not explicitly detailed in the results, emotional intelligence is widely recognized as a component of employability. Its inclusion in the broader analysis emphasizes its importance in interpersonal interactions and workplace dynamics.

The findings suggest that certain soft skills, particularly communication skills and team management abilities, are significant predictors of full-time job placement for MBA graduates. Other skills, such as teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability, while positively associated with employability, showed limited direct predictive power in this study. These results highlight the need for MBA programs to focus on developing soft skills through practical training and experiential learning, ensuring graduates are well-prepared to meet employer expectations in a competitive job market.

Table 6 4. Hypothesis Testing Results for Objective 4: Analyze the Impact of Soft Skills on Job Placement Outcomes for MBA Graduates				
Soft Skill	Observation	P-Value	Statistical Significance	Conclusion
Communication Skills	Graduates with higher communication skill ratings were more likely to be placed.	0.006	Significant	Communication skills are significantly associated with job placement outcomes.
Teamwork and Collaboration	Higher ratings among placed graduates observed, but no statistically significant association.	0.112	Not Significant	Teamwork skills do not significantly affect job placement success.
Leadership Skills	Higher leadership skill ratings correlated with better employment outcomes.	0.006	Significant	Leadership skills are significantly associated with job placement outcomes.
Problem-solving and Critical Thinking	The marginal association was observed but not statistically significant.	0.107	Not Significant	Problem-solving skills show no significant direct correlation with job placement outcomes.

Significant Impact: Communication skills and leadership skills are key predictors of job placement success for MBA graduates in Coastal Karnataka.

Non-Significant Impact: Teamwork and collaboration, along with problem-solving and critical thinking, while valuable, do not show a statistically significant direct association with placement outcomes in this study.

The results partially validate Hypothesis 4, highlighting the critical role of communication and leadership skills in enhancing employability. This underscores the need for MBA programs to prioritize these skills through training and workshops. Other skills like teamwork and problem-solving, though important, might interact with other variables influencing employability, warranting further research to understand their role in job placement success.

6.7. Findings Based on Objective 5

To investigate the predictive relationship between institutional ranking and the likelihood of securing full-time employment for MBA graduates.

The analysis evaluated the impact of institutional ranking, specifically NAAC accreditation levels, on the likelihood of MBA graduates securing full-time employment. The findings are summarized as follows:

NAAC Accreditation and Employment Rates: Employment rates varied across different levels of NAAC accreditation. Graduates from A++ institutions had a placement rate of 58.5%, followed by A (61.6%) and A+ (62.2%). In contrast, non-accredited institutions had a much lower employment rate (37.2%). This suggests that higher NAAC accreditation levels are associated with improved employment outcomes.

Statistical Significance: Despite the observable trends, the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 3.32$, $p = 0.650$) indicated no statistically significant association between NAAC accreditation and job placement outcomes. This implies that while accreditation may influence perceptions of institutional quality, it does not serve as a strong independent predictor of employability in this sample.

Variations across Institutions: Non-accredited institutions showed the lowest placement rates, highlighting potential challenges faced by graduates from these institutions in accessing employment opportunities. Conversely, graduates from highly accredited institutions had better

outcomes, likely benefiting from stronger industry connections, reputation, and placement support services.

Holistic Factors beyond Rankings: The findings suggest that factors beyond institutional rankings, such as individual competencies, industry demand, and networking opportunities, play a critical role in determining employment outcomes. Institutional reputation may complement these factors but is insufficient as a standalone determinant.

The study indicates that while graduates from higher-ranked institutions (based on NAAC accreditation) generally have better job placement rates, institutional ranking alone is not a definitive predictor of employability. Employers may consider a combination of factors, including graduates' skills, experiences, and the alignment of their qualifications with market needs. These findings encourage educational institutions to focus not only on accreditation but also on enhancing employability through robust skill-building programs, industry engagement, and career services to support graduates in securing full-time employment.

Table 6 5. Hypothesis Testing Results for Objective 5: Assess the Predictive Role of Institutional Ranking (NAAC Grading) on Job Placement Outcomes for MBA Graduates

Variable	Chi-Square Value	Degrees of Freedom (df)	P-Value	Sample Size (N)	Statistical Significance	Conclusion
Institutional Ranking (NAAC Grading)	3.32	5	0.650	541	Not Significant	Institutional ranking (NAAC grading) is not significantly associated with job placement outcomes.

The statistical analysis indicates that NAAC grading of institutions does not significantly predict the likelihood of MBA graduates securing full-time employment in Coastal Karnataka.

This finding suggests that while institutional quality indicators such as NAAC grading are essential benchmarks, they do not directly correlate with individual employment success. Other factors, including personal skills, professional networking, and regional job market conditions, may be more influential in determining job placement outcomes.

Implications:

- MBA graduates should focus on developing personal competencies and leveraging market opportunities to enhance employability.
- Educational institutions may need to complement institutional quality improvements with targeted career development programs.
- Policymakers could investigate additional factors influencing employability to support more holistic strategies for enhancing employment outcomes.

This result highlights the complexity of the job market, emphasizing the need for a multi-dimensional approach to improving graduate employability.

6.8. Findings Based on Objective 6

To determine whether self-esteem score, as measured by the Rosenberg Self Esteem scale, is a predictor of placement.

The study explored the relationship between self-esteem, as measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and the likelihood of MBA graduates securing full-time employment. The findings are as follows:

Self-Esteem Levels and Employment Rates: Graduates with higher self-esteem scores exhibited better job placement outcomes. For example, those scoring in the "high self-esteem" category had a higher placement rate compared to those in the "moderate" or "low self-esteem" categories. This trend suggests that self-esteem may influence employability by boosting confidence and communication during job-seeking processes.

Statistical Significance: The chi-square test results indicated a statistically significant association between self-esteem levels and job placement outcomes. This finding suggests that self-esteem serves as a meaningful predictor of placement success for MBA graduates.

Influence on Employability Skills: High self-esteem is linked to improved interpersonal interactions, confidence in interviews, and resilience in navigating challenges during the job application process. Graduates with higher self-esteem may be better equipped to market their skills effectively to potential employers.

Non-Linear Effects: While high self-esteem positively correlates with job placement, excessively high self-esteem may have diminishing returns, potentially signalling overconfidence to employers. This balance reinforces the nuanced role self-esteem plays in employability.

The findings highlight self-esteem as a significant predictor of job placement success among MBA graduates. Educational institutions should consider integrating confidence-building initiatives into their programs, such as career counselling, mock interviews, and self-esteem workshops. These interventions can help students develop a healthy level of self-esteem, enhancing their ability to secure full-time employment and succeed in the competitive job market. Further research could explore the interaction between self-esteem and other soft skills to provide a comprehensive understanding of employability factors.

Table 6 6. Hypothesis Testing Results for Objective 6: Assess the Association Between Self-Esteem Scores and Job Placement Outcomes for MBA Graduates

Variable	Test	Value	P-Value	Significance	Conclusion
Self-Esteem Score	t-test	3.71	<0.001	Significant	Higher self-esteem scores are significantly associated with better job placement outcomes.

The analysis reveals a strong positive association between self-esteem, as measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and job placement outcomes.

MBA graduates with higher self-esteem scores are more likely to secure job placements, indicating that self-esteem is critical to employability.

Implications:

- For Graduates: Developing and maintaining high self-esteem could improve confidence and performance during recruitment processes.
- For Educational Institutions: Programs focusing on building self-esteem, such as workshops, mentoring, and counseling, could be integrated into the MBA curriculum to enhance placement outcomes.
- For Employers: Understanding the role of self-esteem may aid in developing more inclusive recruitment and training programs.

This result underscores the importance of psychological attributes like self-esteem in job market success. It suggests the need for holistic career readiness programs that address both technical and personal development skills.

6.9. Findings Based on Objective 7

To provide recommendations to MBA institutions in the Coastal region of Karnataka for improving their students' job placement outcomes based on the identified factors associated with successful job placement.

The analysis of factors influencing job placement outcomes for MBA graduates provides actionable insights to guide institutions in improving employability. Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are derived:

Emphasize Soft Skill Development:

- **Key Findings:** Communication skills, team management, and leadership were significant predictors of job placement, with communication skills showing the strongest association ($\chi^2 = 14.5$, $p = 0.006$).
- **Recommendation:** Institutions should integrate soft skill development into the curriculum, focusing on communication, teamwork, and leadership through workshops, role-playing exercises, and public speaking sessions. Leadership programs should include real-world simulations and group projects.

Address Gender Disparities in Employability:

- **Key Findings:** Male graduates were more likely to secure full-time employment (62.6%) compared to females (52.8%), with gender differences statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 5.35$, $p = 0.021$).
- **Recommendation:** Institutions should offer mentorship programs specifically for female students, create awareness among recruiters to eliminate biases, and promote initiatives that empower women in leadership and networking roles.

Strengthen Industry-Academia Collaboration:

- **Key Findings:** Specializations like Logistics and Marketing had higher placement rates, while others like Finance and Operations showed comparatively lower outcomes.

- **Recommendation:** Institutions should collaborate with industries to align curricula with market needs, create tailored placement programs for less-demand specializations, and establish industry mentorship initiatives to increase employment opportunities.

Enhance Placement Support for Rural Graduates:

- **Key Findings:** Urban graduates had higher placement rates (62.2%) compared to rural graduates (52.2%), with a significant association ($\chi^2 = 5.40$, $p = 0.020$).
- **Recommendation:** Offer tailored career counselling and placement assistance for rural students, focusing on networking, digital platforms for job applications, and building their confidence to compete in broader markets.

Promote Co-Curricular Engagement:

- **Key Findings:** Participation in public speaking and leadership development programs was significantly associated with higher placement rates (73.3% for participants in both programs, $\chi^2 = 9.926$, $p = 0.007$).
- **Recommendation:** Institutions should create more opportunities for students to engage in co-curricular activities, such as debate clubs, student government roles, and leadership challenges, to enhance their employability profiles.

Integrate Experiential Learning Opportunities:

- **Key Findings:** Practical experiences, such as internships and workshops, showed a positive trend toward higher placement outcomes, though not always statistically significant.
- **Recommendation:** Expand access to internships, on-the-job training, and industry projects to equip students with practical knowledge and real-world skills that increase job market readiness.

Focus on Self-Esteem and Confidence Building:

- **Key Findings:** High self-esteem was linked to better job placement outcomes, reflecting its importance in employability.

- **Recommendation:** Implement programs that boost students' confidence, such as mock interviews, personality development workshops, and one-on-one career coaching. Recognize and address signs of low self-esteem to build resilience in students.

Leverage Institutional Branding:

- **Key Findings:** Graduates from higher NAAC-accredited institutions tended to have better employment outcomes, though the association was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 3.32$, $p = 0.650$).
- **Recommendation:** Institutions should emphasize their strengths, such as strong alumni networks and industry connections, in promotional efforts to attract top recruiters. Pursue higher accreditation standards to improve institutional reputation.

Encourage Holistic Development:

1. **Key Findings:** Employability is influenced by a combination of soft skills, academic performance, co-curricular participation, and institutional support.
2. **Recommendation:** Adopt a holistic approach to education that balances academic rigor with co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Incorporate student feedback to refine program offerings and align them with evolving employer expectations.

These recommendations underscore the need for MBA institutions in Coastal Karnataka to adopt a multifaceted strategy to improve job placement outcomes. By focusing on skill development, gender equity, industry alignment, and holistic education, institutions can better equip their graduates to thrive in an increasingly competitive job market.

6.10. Research Implications

6.10.1. Soft Skills as Core Curriculum Components

The findings highlight the significant role of soft skills like communication, leadership, and team management in employability. MBA programs should integrate soft skill development into core curriculum; ensuring graduates meet the expectations of employers seeking well-rounded professionals.

6.10.2. Gender-Specific Interventions

The study reveals gender disparities in employment outcomes, suggesting the need for targeted interventions such as mentorship programs for female students, promoting inclusivity in campus activities, and addressing biases in recruitment processes.

6.10.3. Customizing Academic Offerings to Market Demand

Specializations like Logistics and Marketing showed better placement rates, emphasizing the need for institutions to align their academic offerings with industry trends. Developing niche specializations and providing targeted support for low-demand areas like Finance and Operations can enhance employability.

6.10.4. Focus on Rural and Urban Disparities

Graduates from rural areas face challenges in securing employment compared to their urban counterparts. Institutions should enhance career support for rural students, focusing on digital literacy, exposure to job markets, and networking opportunities.

6.10.5. Co-Curricular Programs as Employability Enhancers

Participation in activities like public speaking and leadership programs significantly improves employment outcomes. Institutions should promote and integrate co-curricular activities as essential components of student development to foster skills that align with market needs.

6.10.6. Institutional Accreditation and Branding

While NAAC accreditation showed limited statistical significance, its role in attracting recruiters and influencing employer perceptions cannot be ignored. Institutions should aim for higher accreditation standards and leverage branding to enhance graduate employability.

6.10.7. Importance of Self-Esteem and Confidence

Self-esteem was identified as a potential predictor of employability. Career counseling and personality development programs should be prioritized to build students' confidence, preparing them for competitive job markets.

6.10.8. Experiential Learning and Industry Collaboration

Internships, workshops, and real-world industry projects provide practical exposure, equipping graduates with skills that enhance employability. Institutions should strengthen partnerships with industries to offer robust experiential learning opportunities.

6.10.9. Adapting to Evolving Market Trends

The dynamic nature of the job market underscores the need for continuous adaptation in MBA programs. Institutions should regularly review and revise curricula, incorporating insights from industry stakeholders to ensure graduates remain competitive.

6.10.10. Fostering Lifelong Learning

The findings suggest that adaptability, problem-solving, and critical thinking are valued in the workforce. MBA programs should emphasize these skills, encouraging graduates to pursue continuous learning and professional development throughout their careers.

6.10.11. Data-Driven Policy Decisions

The research provides evidence-based insights that can guide institutional policies, emphasizing areas like gender equity, skill-building programs, and market-aligned specializations. Policymakers and educators can use these findings to make informed decisions for academic program improvements.

6.10.12. Longitudinal Studies for Future Insights

The study highlights the multifactorial nature of employability. Longitudinal research can provide deeper insights into the long-term impact of soft skills, co-curricular activities, and academic achievements on career progression, offering a broader perspective for institutional planning.