

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PLACEMENT OF MBA GRADUATES: A STUDY IN COASTAL KARNATAKA



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**Doctor of Philosophy
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Thesis entitled “Factors Associated with the Placement of MBA Graduates: A Study in Coastal Karnataka”, submitted to Srinivas University, Mukka, Mangaluru, Karnataka State, India, by Shwetha Pai, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Business Management, is a record of bonafide research work carried out by her under my supervision. The thesis has reached the standard of the regulations for the degree, and it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship, or any other title similar to the candidate or any other person(s).

Place: Mangaluru

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DECLARATION

This thesis, “Factors Associated with the Placement of MBA Graduates: A Study in Coastal Karnataka”, is the result of my own study carried out under the supervision of Dr Sureshramana Mayya, PhD, Research Professor, Institute of Management and Commerce, Srinivas University, Mangaluru and has not been submitted earlier to any University for any degree, Diploma or any other similar title. This Thesis is free from any plagiarism.



Place : Mangalore
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SYNOPSIS

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PLACEMENT OF MBA GRADUATES: A STUDY IN COASTAL KARNATAKA

Introduction

India's higher education system, especially in business management, has undergone significant changes in the 21st century due to globalization and liberalization. These forces have reshaped the economic value of academic courses and the demand for skilled management professionals. This study, titled "Factors Associated with the Placement of MBA Graduates: A Study in Coastal Karnataka," examines the placement challenges and opportunities MBA graduates face in a dynamically evolving business environment.

The diversification of India's business sector has created a growing need for industry-ready management professionals. In response, the number of management institutions has increased substantially. However, concerns remain regarding the quality of management education and the employability of graduates. This research investigates whether the MBA degree retains its prestige in the job market and evaluates the alignment of curricula and teaching methods with professional requirements.

Corporate restructuring has amplified the demand for diverse and adaptable skill sets, reflecting a shift in job market expectations. In a knowledge-driven economy, emerging markets, disruptive technologies, and global economic shifts influence employability. The study emphasizes the need for management education to adapt to these changes by integrating emerging trends and practical skills into academic programs.

Focusing on Coastal Karnataka, the research critically examines the gap between MBA graduates' skills and the competencies industries seek. It comprehensively explains the interplay between academia, industry expectations, and employability. It offers insights to prepare graduates for the challenges of a globalized business landscape and ensure their professional success.

Review of Literature

The placement of MBA graduates in today's dynamic business environment is influenced by many factors, which this review explores in depth. Over 200 sources have been systematically analyzed to examine the broader trends and regional nuances shaping employability in Coastal

Karnataka. This region's unique socio-economic and industrial landscape and the global shifts in MBA education and graduate expectations provide a fertile ground for studying the interplay between education and employability.

MBA education has long been considered a gateway to corporate leadership and entrepreneurship. In Coastal Karnataka, where industries such as IT, manufacturing, tourism, and agriculture thrive, MBA programs are pivotal in meeting the workforce demands of a growing economy. However, despite the region's potential, gaps in graduate employability persist. The literature underscores the importance of aligning MBA curricula with the evolving expectations of industries to ensure that graduates are well-prepared for real-world challenges.

Institutions across India have implemented various placement strategies to enhance employability. Campus placements remain a critical success metric, with premier institutions leveraging industry partnerships, skilled faculty, and robust infrastructure to secure attractive opportunities for their graduates. Efforts such as skill development programs, student feedback initiatives, and adaptability to online recruitment trends have proven instrumental in improving placement rates and aligning with market demands. However, the challenges posed by global disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have necessitated reevaluating recruitment practices and institutional strategies.

In Karnataka, the growth of MBA programs has mirrored the state's industrial development. The increasing number of management institutions reflects the growing demand for skilled professionals. Within this context, Coastal Karnataka stands out for its strong educational infrastructure and entrepreneurial ecosystem. This region, known for its high literacy rates and investments in technical education, has created a foundation for fostering managerial talent. Nevertheless, studies indicate a need for enhanced focus on entrepreneurship, practical training, and skill-building within MBA programs to address the challenges of unemployment and self-reliance.

The broader trends in MBA education and graduate placement reveal a complex interplay between institutional quality, industry alignment, and student competencies. Programs integrating experiential learning, soft skills training, and practical exposure are better positioned to prepare students for leadership roles in a rapidly changing job market. Emotional, social, and cognitive competencies have also emerged as critical factors in enhancing

employability, highlighting the need for curricula that balance technical knowledge with interpersonal skills.

Employers increasingly prioritize adaptability, problem-solving, teamwork, and digital literacy over traditional academic credentials. This shift reflects the demand for industry-ready graduates who can navigate the complexities of a globalized economy. Integrating practical experiences, such as internships and live projects, has been identified as a key strategy for bridging the gap between academia and industry.

Globally, MBA education is influenced by technological advancements, demographic shifts, and geopolitical changes. These factors have reshaped the expectations of employers and necessitated a shift in how institutions prepare their graduates. Regionally, Coastal Karnataka's entrepreneurial and industrial landscape offers unique opportunities but poses challenges requiring targeted interventions to enhance employability.

Despite extensive research on MBA placements, there is a paucity of studies that specifically address the regional characteristics of Coastal Karnataka. Existing literature often overlooks the nuanced interplay between local socio-economic factors and global market demands. This study aims to fill this gap by comprehensively understanding the factors influencing MBA graduate placements in this region.

This review offers a holistic perspective on the evolving dynamics of MBA education and placement by synthesising insights from theoretical frameworks and empirical findings. It highlights the need for continuous innovation in curricula and institutional practices to meet the demands of an ever-changing job market. This exploration sets the stage for further investigation into how MBA programs in Coastal Karnataka can better prepare graduates for professional success.

Research Gap

The review of existing literature reveals a significant gap in understanding the specific factors influencing MBA graduate placements within the unique context of Coastal Karnataka. This region's distinct economic, cultural, and educational dynamics present variables that require localized, empirical investigation to uncover their impact on graduate employability.

Key research gaps identified include:

- **Regional Specificity:** Current research does not focus on how local economic conditions, industry presence, and cultural factors in Coastal Karnataka influence MBA graduate placements.
- **Comprehensive Factor Integration:** While various studies explore isolated factors affecting placement, a holistic investigation combining demographic, academic, co-curricular, and soft skills variables within this region is absent.
- **Soft Skills and Self-esteem as Predictors:** Limited research examines the predictive value of soft skills and self-esteem on job placement success, leaving gaps in understanding the attributes of successful MBA graduates in Coastal Karnataka.
- **Institutional Ranking and Placement:** The relationship between the rankings of MBA institutions and their placement outcomes has not been adequately explored within the regional context, necessitating targeted studies to evaluate the influence of institutional prestige on employability.
- **Actionable Recommendations for Institutions:** Research providing practical strategies for MBA institutions in Coastal Karnataka to enhance their students' employability and align academic offerings with industry needs is minimal.

Addressing these gaps is critical to developing a nuanced understanding of the factors shaping MBA graduate placements and equipping institutions with data-driven strategies to improve regional outcomes.

Statement of Problem

The study, "Factors Associated with the Placement of MBA Graduates: A Study in Coastal Karnataka," addresses the persistent challenge of employability among MBA graduates in this region. Despite the growing popularity and enrollment in MBA programs, graduates often struggle to secure gainful employment due to a complex interplay of factors. Existing research has only partially explored these influences, focusing on individual elements like academic performance, extracurricular activities, or institutional prestige without an integrated analysis. Coastal Karnataka's evolving economic landscape and shifting labour market demands add further complexity to the employment scenario. This underscores the need for a comprehensive investigation into the diverse factors shaping job placement outcomes.

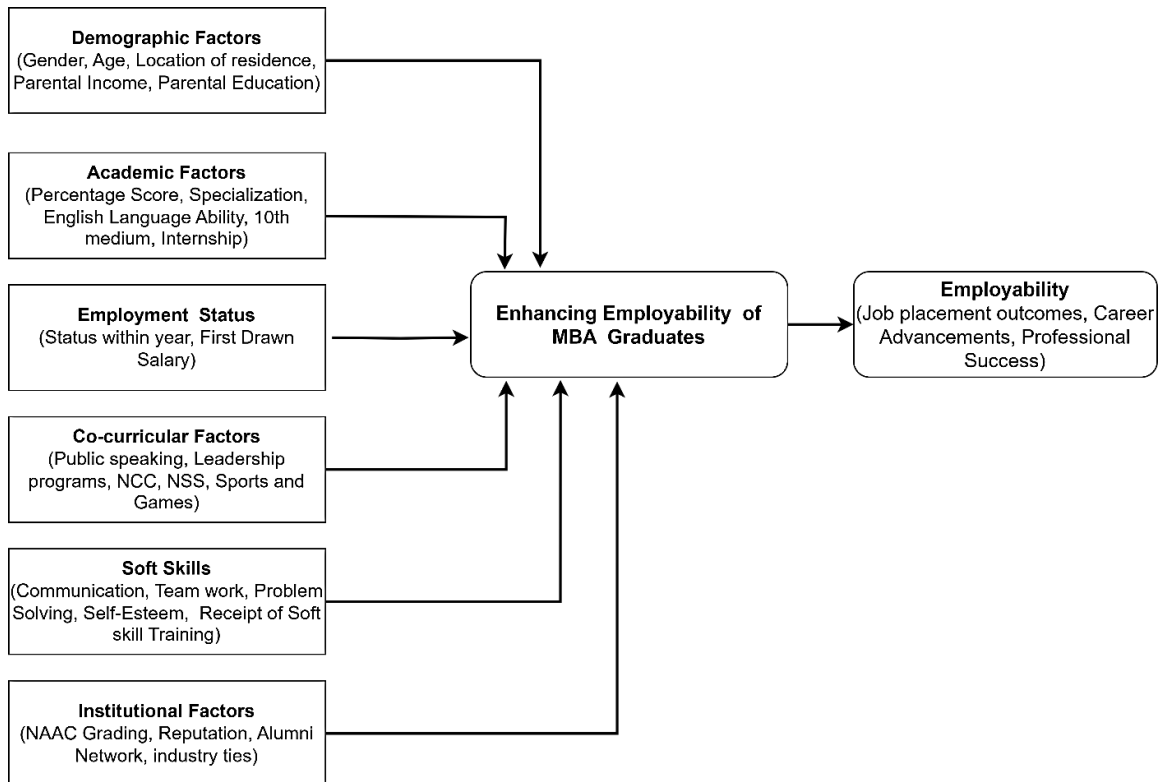
This research aims to bridge the gap by holistically analyzing demographic, academic, extracurricular, soft skills, institutional prestige, and self-perception factors. The findings will provide actionable insights for enhancing employability, guiding academia, students, and policymakers in aligning MBA education with industry requirements. By addressing these challenges, the study seeks to strengthen the link between academic preparation and professional success for MBA graduates in Coastal Karnataka.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the demographic variables associated with full-time jobs for MBA graduates after completing their degree.
2. To assess the academic variables associated with full-time job placement for MBA graduates after completing their degree
3. To explore the co-curricular variables associated with full-time jobs for MBA graduates after completing their degree
4. To evaluate whether soft skill level is a predictor of full-time job placement for MBA graduates after completing their degree
5. To investigate the predictive relationship between institutional ranking and the likelihood of securing full-time employment for MBA graduates.
6. To determine whether self-esteem score, as measured by the Rosenberg Self Esteem scale, is a predictor of placement.
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.

Conceptual Model and Presentation of Hypotheses

The visual representation of the conceptual model is crucial for understanding the interrelationships among the variables and constructs that influence the employability of MBA graduates in Coastal Karnataka. The Figure below provides a clear, organized depiction of these relationships.



Hypothesis 1: Demographic Factors

- **H1a:** Gender significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.
- **H1b:** Age significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.
- **H1c:** Location of residence significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.
- **H1d:** Parental income significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.
- **H1e:** Parental education significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.

Hypothesis 2: Educational Background

- **H2a:** The NAAC grade of the MBA institution significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.
- **H2b:** The overall percentage score in the MBA program significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.
- **H2c:** The specialization in the MBA program significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.
- **H2d:** The proficiency in the English language significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.

- **H2e:** The medium of instruction till 10th class significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.
- **H2f:** Internship completion during the MBA program significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.
- **H2g:** The impact of the internship on job security significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.

Hypothesis 3: Employment Status

- **H3a:** Employment status within one year of completing the MBA degree significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.
- **H3b:** The first drawn salary significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.

Hypothesis 4: Co-curricular and Extracurricular Activities

- **H4:** Participation in extracurricular activities during the MBA program significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.

Hypothesis 5: Soft Skills

- **H5a:** Proficiency in communication significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.
- **H5b:** Proficiency in teamwork significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.
- **H5c:** Proficiency in leadership significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.
- **H5d:** Proficiency in problem-solving significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.
- **H5e:** Self-esteem significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.
- **H5f:** Receipt of soft skill training during the MBA program significantly influences the employability of MBA graduates.

Hypothesis 6: Institutional Factors

- **H6:** Institutional factors such as NAAC grading, reputation, and alumni network significantly influence the employability of MBA graduates.

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design to identify factors influencing successful job placement for MBA graduates in Coastal Karnataka. A cross-sectional survey examines demographic, academic, co-curricular, soft skills, institutional ranking, and self-esteem variables. The study analyses response distribution and employment status and provides actionable insights for MBA institutions to enhance graduate employability and placement outcomes.

Population of the Study

The study zeroes in on MBA graduates across all institutions in Coastal Karnataka who have completed a two-year full-time MBA program. This distinct group is of particular interest due to the region's dynamic educational landscape and the diversity of industries it hosts, ranging from IT to tourism, making it an ideal setting for examining MBA graduate employability and the efficacy of their education in securing job placements.

Data Collection Strategy

Data collection for the study was conducted using a structured online survey via Google Forms, divided into four sections: demographic details, academic background, co-curricular activities, and soft skills assessment.

Primary and Secondary Data

- **Primary Data:** The survey gathered detailed information on demographic, academic, co-curricular, soft skills, institutional ranking, and self-esteem factors.
- **Secondary Data:** A comprehensive review of academic publications, industry reports, and employment statistics provided a theoretical foundation and contextual understanding of MBA graduate employability in Coastal Karnataka.

Ensuring Data Quality and Integrity

- **Pre-testing:** The survey was piloted with a small sample to refine questions for clarity and reliability.

- **Anonymity and Confidentiality:** Respondents were assured privacy to encourage honest feedback and reduce bias.
- **Data Cleaning:** Post-collection, the dataset was thoroughly reviewed to address inconsistencies, incomplete responses, and outliers.

These measures ensured that the data was accurate and reliable, supporting a robust analysis of factors influencing MBA graduate placements in Coastal Karnataka.

Variables of the Study

The study explores factors influencing the job placement success of MBA graduates in Coastal Karnataka, focusing on both dependent and independent variables.

Dependent Variable

- **Job Placement Success:** Defined as employment status within six months post-graduation, categorized as:
 - Full-time employment in the field of specialization.
 - Employment outside the field of specialization.
 - Part-time employment or unemployed.

Independent Variables

1. **Demographic Variables:**
 - Age, gender, and geographic location.
2. **Academic Background:**
 - GPA, area of specialization (e.g., finance, marketing), and academic achievements.
3. **Co-curricular Activities:**
 - Participation in internships, workshops, and relevant extracurricular engagements.
4. **Soft Skills:**
 - Communication, leadership, teamwork, and adaptability, assessed on a Likert scale (0 = poor to 4 = excellent).

5. Institutional Ranking:

- Perceived quality and ranking of the educational institution, based on accreditation or public rankings.

Operational Definitions

- **Job Placement Success:** Employment status within six months, categorized into employed (full-time/part-time, in or out of specialization) or unemployed.
- **Demographic Variables:** Age (in years), gender, and residential location in Coastal Karnataka.
- **Academic Background:** GPA (0–4.0), field of specialization, and academic achievements (e.g., awards).
- **Co-curricular Activities:** Participation in activities like internships and workshops relevant to MBA specialization.
- **Soft Skills:** Self-assessed on communication, leadership, teamwork, and adaptability.
- **Institutional Ranking:** Based on public rankings or accreditation, reflecting institutional quality.

These variables are rigorously defined to ensure precise measurement and analysis, enabling actionable insights into factors impacting MBA graduates' job placement outcomes in Coastal Karnataka.

Data Analysis Techniques

To explore the factors influencing successful job placement among MBA graduates in Coastal Karnataka, a comprehensive data analysis approach was adopted using Jamovi statistical software (version 2.4.11). This open-source tool, known for its user-friendly interface and robust analytical capabilities, was selected to ensure detailed and accessible analysis.

Statistical Tools and Software

- **Jamovi Version 2.4.11:** Chosen for its versatility and compatibility with advanced statistical techniques, Jamovi facilitated an in-depth exploration of quantitative data while maintaining clarity and precision in the results.

Techniques for Quantitative Data Analysis

1. Descriptive Statistics:

- Frequencies and percentages summarized categorical variables like demographic details, academic background, and co-curricular activities.
- Measures of central tendency (mean) and dispersion (standard deviation) were used for continuous variables, such as self-esteem and soft skills levels.

2. Inferential Statistics:

- **Chi-Square Test:** Examined relationships between employment status (dependent variable) and categorical independent variables (e.g., demographic and academic factors).
- **T-Test:** Analyzed differences in mean self-esteem and soft skills scores between employed and unemployed graduates, identifying statistically significant traits linked to job placement success.

Integrative Analysis Approach

This study harmonized quantitative methods with qualitative insights to achieve a holistic understanding. While statistical techniques revealed patterns and correlations, narrative interpretations of open-ended survey responses captured personal perspectives and subtleties not evident in numeric data. The combination of these methodologies provided a layered understanding of the factors propelling MBA graduates toward successful placements. This analysis not only contributes to academic knowledge but also offers actionable recommendations for institutions and policymakers to enhance the employability of future business leaders in Coastal Karnataka.

Findings and Suggestions

This study examines factors influencing MBA graduate placements in Coastal Karnataka, highlighting key insights such as the importance of networking, industry-specific trends, regional disparities, and global influences. While internship quality did not show direct statistical significance, it contributed to graduates' confidence and preparedness. The findings underscore the indirect impact of global economic trends on local job markets and recommend future research into broader influences and long-term career trajectories.

Findings Based on Objective 1

Objective: To identify demographic variables associated with full-time job placement for MBA graduates.

Key findings from the analysis are as follows:

- **Gender and Employment Status:** Male graduates were more likely to secure full-time employment (62.6%) than female graduates (52.8%). A chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 5.35$, $p = 0.021$) revealed a significant association, suggesting gender disparities in employment outcomes.
- **Age and Employment Outcomes:** Younger graduates (mean age 26.67) were more likely to be employed than older graduates (mean age 27.10). This difference was statistically significant ($t = 2.565$, $p = 0.011$), indicating age may impact employability.
- **Geographical Location:** Graduates from urban areas had a higher employment rate (62.2%) compared to those from rural areas (52.2%). This association was significant ($\chi^2 = 5.40$, $p = 0.020$), suggesting urban graduates benefit from better access to job opportunities.
- **Parental Income Levels:** Higher parental income showed a trend towards better employment rates (70.5% for families earning ₹25,00,000+), but the association was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 6.23$, $p = 0.284$).
- **Parental Education:** Graduates with fathers holding higher educational qualifications had slightly higher employment rates, but this was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 4.95$, $p = 0.292$). Similarly, maternal education had a minimal effect ($\chi^2 = 5.47$, $p = 0.243$).
- **NAAC Accreditation:** Graduates from higher NAAC-accredited institutions had slightly better employment rates, but the association was not significant ($\chi^2 = 3.32$, $p = 0.650$).

Demographic variables like gender, age, and geographical location significantly affect employability. Parental income, education, and institutional accreditation had observable trends but no significant impact.

Findings Based on Objective 2

Objective: To assess academic variables associated with full-time job placement for MBA graduates.

Key findings are as follows:

- **MBA Percentage Scores:** Higher academic scores showed a slight trend towards better employment, but the association was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 1.98$, $p = 0.739$).
- **Specialization:** Graduates in Logistics, Marketing, and HR had higher placement rates compared to those in Finance and Operations, but the association was not significant ($\chi^2 = 7.22$, $p = 0.205$).
- **Public Speaking and Leadership Programs:** Participation in both public speaking and leadership programs significantly enhanced employment rates (73.3%), with a statistically significant association ($\chi^2 = 9.926$, $p = 0.007$).
- **Academic Activities:** Graduates who participated in academic activities like workshops had a higher placement rate (65.6%), but the association was not significant ($\chi^2 = 1.881$, $p = 0.170$).
- **Team Management Skills:** Graduates with higher self-rated team management skills had better placement rates ($\chi^2 = 12.6$, $p = 0.014$), indicating the importance of leadership and collaboration.

Academic performance and specialization alone do not guarantee job placement, but participation in leadership and public speaking programs, and strong team management skills, are key factors in employability.

Hypothesis Testing Results for Objective 2:

- **Percentage Score:** Not significant ($p = 0.739$)
- **Specialization:** Not significant ($p = 0.205$)
- **English Language Ability:** Highly significant (<0.001)
- **Internship Experience:** Not significant ($p = 0.299$)

English language ability significantly influences employability, while other academic variables like percentage score, specialization, and internship experience have minimal impact. This emphasizes the importance of communication skills in securing employment for MBA graduates.

Findings Based on Objective 3: Co-curricular Variables and Full-Time Job Placement for MBA Graduates

The analysis of co-curricular activities revealed their varying influence on full-time job placements for MBA graduates. The key findings are as follows:

- **National Service Scheme (NSS) Participation:** Graduates involved in NSS showed a marginally higher placement rate (58.3%) compared to non-participants (57.4%). However, statistical analysis ($\chi^2 = 0.035$, $p = 0.851$) indicated no significant correlation, suggesting that while NSS promotes personal growth, it does not directly impact employability in this sample.
- **Sports and Games Participation:** Graduates engaged in sports had a slightly lower placement rate (56.5%) than non-participants (58.5%). The chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 0.208$, $p = 0.648$) confirmed no significant link, implying that sports participation, while useful for teamwork and discipline, does not have a direct effect on job placement.
- **Cultural Activities (Dance/Music):** Participation in cultural activities was associated with a lower placement rate (51.6%) compared to non-participants (58.0%). With $\chi^2 = 0.494$, $p = 0.482$, no significant impact was found, suggesting that cultural engagement does not significantly influence job placement outcomes in this study.
- **Public Speaking and Leadership Development Programs:** Participation in public speaking and leadership programs showed a significantly positive effect, with a placement rate of 73.3% for participants compared to 57.8% for those involved in one program, and 52.8% for those with no involvement. The chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 9.926$, $p = 0.007$) confirmed statistical significance, highlighting the importance of these programs in enhancing employability.
- **Workshops, Seminars, and Conferences:** While participation in academic events was associated with a higher placement rate (65.6%) compared to non-participants (56.6%), the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 1.881$, $p = 0.170$) did not find statistical significance. These

activities seem to provide indirect benefits by improving knowledge and expanding professional networks.

- **Teamwork and Collaboration Skills:** Graduates with higher self-rated teamwork skills (level 5) had a 72.3% placement rate, which was higher compared to those with lower ratings. However, the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 7.50$, $p = 0.112$) showed no statistical significance, suggesting that teamwork and collaboration skills, while beneficial, may not independently predict job placement success.

While activities such as NSS, sports, and cultural participation may not directly influence job placement, involvement in public speaking and leadership development programs plays a significant role in enhancing employability. Academic activities like workshops and seminars also contribute to employability indirectly, likely through knowledge enhancement and networking.

Hypothesis Testing Results for Objective 3:

Co-curricular Activity	Observation	P-Value	Statistical Significance	Conclusion
NCC Participation	Slight increase in placement rates, but not significant.	0.803	Not Significant	NCC participation does not impact job placement.
NSS Participation	Marginal increase in employment rates, not significant.	0.851	Not Significant	NSS does not affect job placement success.
Sports and Games Participation	Slight difference favoring participants, not significant.	0.648	Not Significant	Sports and games do not influence placement.
Public Speaking and Leadership Programs	Noticeable higher placement rates, significant.	0.007	Significant	Public speaking and leadership programs enhance placement outcomes.

Findings Based on Objective 4: Soft Skills and Full-Time Job Placement for MBA Graduates

The study analyzed the relationship between self-assessed soft skills and job placement outcomes. The findings indicate that certain soft skills significantly contribute to employability, while others show limited predictive power.

- **Communication Skills:** Graduates with higher self-assessed communication skills had higher placement rates, with level 5 graduates achieving 75% placement. The chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 14.5$, $p = 0.006$) confirmed statistical significance, making communication skills a strong predictor of employability.
- **Team Management Skills:** Graduates with higher self-ratings in team management (level 5) had a placement rate of 69.2%, significantly higher than those with lower ratings (40.7%). The chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 12.6$, $p = 0.014$) confirmed statistical significance, indicating the importance of leadership and team management skills for securing employment.
- **Teamwork and Collaboration:** Graduates with higher teamwork ratings showed improved placement rates, particularly at level 5 (72.3%). However, the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 7.50$, $p = 0.112$) did not find statistical significance, suggesting that teamwork, while valuable, may require additional factors to predict employability effectively.
- **Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking:** Graduates with high ratings in problem-solving (level 5) had a placement rate of 69.4%, but the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 7.61$, $p = 0.107$) did not reveal statistical significance, implying that these skills, although important to employers, do not directly predict job placement.
- **Adaptability and Flexibility:** Graduates who rated themselves highly in adaptability (level 5) had a placement rate of 60%, but the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 3.83$, $p = 0.430$) showed no significant association, suggesting that while these skills are beneficial, they may not independently predict placement success.

Communication and team management skills emerged as strong predictors of job placement, while other skills, such as teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability, showed limited direct predictive power in this study.

Hypothesis Testing Results for Objective 4:

Soft Skill	Observation	P-Value	Statistical Significance	Conclusion
Communication Skills	Higher ratings correlate with better placement.	0.006	Significant	Communication skills significantly impact placement.
Teamwork and Collaboration	Higher ratings among placed graduates, but no significant association.	0.112	Not Significant	Teamwork does not significantly affect placement.
Leadership Skills	Higher leadership ratings correlated with better employment outcomes.	0.006	Significant	Leadership skills are crucial for job placement.
Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking	Marginal association, not statistically significant.	0.107	Not Significant	Problem-solving skills do not significantly predict placement.

Key Insights:

- **Significant Impact:** Communication skills and leadership skills are crucial for job placement.
- **Non-Significant Impact:** Teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability, while important, do not show direct statistical significance in predicting job placement success in this study.

Findings Based on Objective 5: Investigating the Relationship Between Institutional Ranking and Employment Outcomes for MBA Graduates

The analysis aimed to assess whether institutional ranking, particularly NAAC accreditation, influenced the likelihood of MBA graduates securing full-time employment. The key findings are summarized below:

- **NAAC Accreditation and Employment Rates:** Employment rates varied according to NAAC accreditation levels. Graduates from A++ institutions had a placement rate of 58.5%, A-ranked institutions had 61.6%, and A+ graduates had 62.2%. Non-accredited institutions showed a much lower placement rate of 37.2%. This suggests a positive association between higher accreditation levels and improved employment outcomes.
- **Statistical Significance:** Although trends were observed, the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 3.32$, $p = 0.650$) revealed no statistically significant relationship between NAAC accreditation and job placement outcomes. This suggests that while accreditation may

shape perceptions of institutional quality, it does not independently predict employability.

- **Variations Across Institutions:** Non-accredited institutions had the lowest placement rates, suggesting challenges for graduates in securing employment. On the other hand, graduates from well-accredited institutions benefited from stronger industry connections, reputation, and placement support services.
- **Holistic Factors Beyond Rankings:** These results highlight the importance of factors beyond institutional rankings—such as individual competencies, industry demand, and networking opportunities—in determining employment outcomes. Institutional reputation, while valuable, is not a standalone determinant.

While graduates from higher-ranked institutions generally had better job placement rates, institutional ranking alone is not a definitive predictor of employability. Employers consider a mix of factors, including personal skills, experiences, and the alignment of qualifications with market needs. Educational institutions should focus on enhancing employability through skill-building programs, industry partnerships, and career services.

Hypothesis Testing Results for Objective 5:

Variable	Chi-Square Value	Degrees of Freedom (df)	P-Value	Sample Size (N)	Statistical Significance	Conclusion
Institutional Ranking (NAAC)	3.32	5	0.650	541	Not Significant	No significant relationship between NAAC grading and job placement outcomes.

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

Implications:

- **Graduates:** Focus on developing personal competencies and leveraging market opportunities to improve employability.
- **Educational Institutions:** Enhance career development programs alongside accreditation improvements.

- **Policymakers:** Explore additional factors influencing employability for more effective strategies.

Findings Based on Objective 6: The Role of Self-Esteem in Job Placement Outcomes for MBA Graduates

The study also aimed to assess whether self-esteem, measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, predicts job placement success for MBA graduates. The findings are as follows:

- **Self-Esteem Levels and Employment Rates:** Graduates with higher self-esteem scores showed better placement rates. Those with "high self-esteem" had a higher placement rate compared to "moderate" or "low self-esteem" graduates, suggesting that self-esteem can positively affect employability by boosting confidence and communication skills during job searches.
- **Statistical Significance:** The chi-square test results indicated a significant association ($p < 0.001$) between self-esteem levels and job placement outcomes. This indicates that self-esteem is a meaningful predictor of job placement success.
- **Influence on Employability Skills:** High self-esteem is linked to improved interpersonal interactions, interview confidence, and resilience in facing job search challenges. Graduates with higher self-esteem will likely market their skills more effectively to potential employers.
- **Non-Linear Effects:** While higher self-esteem correlates with better job placement outcomes, excessively high self-esteem may result in overconfidence, hindering employability.

Self-esteem is a critical predictor of job placement success. Educational institutions should integrate confidence-building initiatives such as career counselling, mock interviews, and self-esteem workshops to enhance students' ability to secure full-time employment.

Hypothesis Testing Results for Objective 6:

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

Graduates with higher self-esteem are more likely to secure job placements, highlighting the importance of self-esteem in employability.

Implications:

- **For Graduates:** Developing and maintaining high self-esteem can improve confidence and job performance during recruitment.
- **For Educational Institutions:** Integrating programs focused on self-esteem development can enhance placement outcomes.
- **For Employers:** Understanding the role of self-esteem can lead to more inclusive recruitment and training practices.

Findings Based on Objective 7: Recommendations for Improving Job Placement Outcomes

The study's findings offer actionable recommendations for MBA institutions in Coastal Karnataka to improve job placement outcomes. Based on the analysis, the following recommendations are made:

- **Emphasize Soft Skill Development:**
 - **Key Findings:** Communication, team management, and leadership were significant predictors of job placement. Communication skills had the strongest association ($\chi^2 = 14.5$, $p = 0.006$).
 - **Recommendation:** Integrate soft skills training, including communication, teamwork, and leadership, into the curriculum through workshops, role-playing, and public speaking.
- **Address Gender Disparities in Employability:**
 - **Key Findings:** Male graduates had higher placement rates than female graduates (62.6% vs. 52.8%), with gender differences being statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 5.35$, $p = 0.021$).
 - **Recommendation:** Offer mentorship programs for female students, raise awareness among recruiters to eliminate biases, and empower women in leadership and networking roles.

- **Strengthen Industry-Academia Collaboration:**
 - **Key Findings:** Graduates from specializations like Logistics and Marketing had higher placement rates compared to Finance and Operations graduates.
 - **Recommendation:** Collaborate with industries to align curricula with market demands, create placement programs for underrepresented specializations, and establish mentorship initiatives.
- **Enhance Placement Support for Rural Graduates:**
 - **Key Findings:** Urban graduates had higher placement rates compared to rural graduates (62.2% vs. 52.2%), with statistical significance ($\chi^2 = 5.40$, $p = 0.020$).
 - **Recommendation:** Provide tailored career counselling, digital platforms for job applications, and confidence-building initiatives for rural students.
- **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:** Increase opportunities for students to engage in co-curricular activities such as debate clubs and leadership challenges.
- **Integrate Experiential Learning Opportunities:**
 - **Key Findings:** Practical experience through internships and workshops showed positive trends toward higher placement outcomes.
 - **Recommendation:** Expand access to internships and industry projects to enhance job market readiness.
- **Focus on Self-Esteem and Confidence Building:**
 - **Key Findings:** High self-esteem was linked to better placement outcomes.

- **Recommendation:** Implement confidence-building programs, such as mock interviews, personality development workshops, and one-on-one coaching.
- **Leverage Institutional Branding:**
 - **Key Findings:** Graduates from higher NAAC-accredited institutions had better employment outcomes.
 - **Recommendation:** Institutions should highlight strengths like strong alumni networks and industry connections to attract top recruiters and improve institutional reputation.
- **Encourage Holistic Development:**
 - **Key Findings:** Employability is influenced by a combination of soft skills, academic performance, co-curricular participation, and institutional support.
 - **Recommendation:** Adopt a holistic approach to education that balances academic rigour with co-curricular activities, aligning program offerings with employer expectations.

These recommendations underscore the need for a multi-dimensional strategy to enhance MBA graduates' employability. By focusing on skill development, gender equity, industry alignment, and holistic education, institutions can better prepare their graduates for the competitive job market.

Conclusion

This study analyzes the factors influencing the employability of MBA graduates, highlighting the roles of self-esteem, soft skills, and other key competencies in job placement success. The findings reveal that both psychological factors, such as self-esteem and interpersonal skills, like communication and teamwork, significantly contribute to employability, with graduates possessing higher self-esteem and strong soft skills showing better job placement outcomes. The study suggests that MBA programs should prioritize the development of personal attributes, such as confidence and interpersonal effectiveness, alongside technical knowledge. Despite limitations like sample size and reliance on self-reported data, the study offers insights for future research on the long-term impacts of these factors and the integration of digital skills

into MBA curricula, ultimately helping institutions, employers, and policymakers enhance the career success of MBA graduates.

STRUCTURE OF DISSERTATION

Factors Associated with the Placement of MBA Graduates: A Study in Coastal Karnataka

1. Introduction and Design

This chapter introduces the study by providing an overview of management education, including its history, growth, and challenges in India, particularly in Karnataka and Coastal Karnataka. It outlines the research objectives, significance, and the study's scope, focusing on factors affecting the employability of MBA graduates. The chapter also details the research problem, objectives, and thesis organization.

2. Literature Review

This chapter reviews existing literature on MBA graduate placement scenarios, both globally and in Karnataka. It covers theoretical frameworks relevant to employability, factors influencing placement, and the role of soft skills training. The review identifies gaps in the current research, which this study aims to address.

3. Development of Conceptual Model

The chapter focuses on developing a conceptual model based on theoretical frameworks and relevant literature. It justifies the need for a new model and outlines the variables, constructs, and relationships that form the basis of the research. The chapter also provides a diagrammatic representation and critical analysis of the proposed model.

4. Research Methodology

This chapter details the research design, population, sampling methods, data collection strategies, and measurement scales. It describes the data analysis techniques used to address the study's objectives and ensures the rigour of the research methodology to ensure reliable and valid results.

5. Analysis and Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected, focusing on various demographic, academic, and extracurricular factors influencing MBA graduates' employability. It examines variables like parental income, internship experience, soft skills, and leadership abilities, providing insights into their impact on job placement success.

6. Findings, Suggestions, and Research Implications

The research findings are based on the study's objectives, highlighting key insights into factors influencing MBA graduate employability. The chapter discusses the research implications for educational institutions and provides suggestions for enhancing MBA programs to improve placement outcomes.

7. Limitations of the Study, Future Research, and Conclusion

This chapter addresses the limitations of the study, proposes avenues for future research, and concludes the thesis by summarizing the main findings and their implications for the field of management education and the employability of MBA graduates.

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Abbreviations

MBA	Master of Business Administration
IIM	Indian Institutes of Management
XLRI	Xavier Labour Relations Institute
IISWBM	Indian Institute of Social Welfare & Business Management
IIMA	Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad
AICTE	All-India Council for Technical Education
UGC	University Grants Commission
NBA	National Board of Accreditation
KSHEC	Karnataka State Higher Education Council
AIMS	Association of Indian Management Schools
PGCET	Post Graduate Common Entrance Test
KMAT	Karnataka Management Aptitude Test
MAT	Management Aptitude Test
XAT	Xavier Aptitude Test
CAT	Common Admission Test
IISc	Indian Institute of Science
PGDM	Post Graduate Diploma in Management
SWOC	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges
GPA	Grade Point Average
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
NAAC	National Assessment and Accreditation Council
NCC	National Cadet Corps
NSS	National Service Scheme
SD	Standard Deviation
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019