Employability Skills and Industry Readiness among Gen Z Graduates: A Study on the Role of Traditional and AI-Driven Talent Acquisition in Chennai City

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Abstract

Fresh graduates from Gen Z enter a working world unlike any past version. Technology pushes demand higher while hiring goals shift constantly. A deep dive here explores the link between learned abilities and actual workplace needs. Hiring paths were studied closely be it automated systems or face-to-face talks to see how each effect who gets picked. Looking at 200 grads from Chennai, one thing becomes obvious: speed improves with AI, yet human judgment stays essential when sizing up team fit. Machines sort fast, but people sense subtleties that algorithms miss. Mixing tech efficiency with gut feel works better than either alone. Younger workers know their tools well, though real-world experience often lags behind. Communication and teamwork grow slower than coding ability. What learners study must line up with workplace demands more closely. Guidance offered here aims straight at those mismatches' practical steps for schools, job sites, and students alike. Matching training to actual needs isn't optional anymore; it just makes sense.

Keywords: Employability Skills, Industry Readiness, Gen Z Graduates, Artificial Intelligence, Talent Acquisition

Introduction

In today's dynamic job market, employability skills and industry readiness have become critical determinants of career success for Gen Z graduates. Employers increasingly seek candidates who possess not only technical expertise but also soft skills such as communication, adaptability, and problem-solving.

At the same time, recruitment practices are evolving. Traditional hiring methods are being complemented and sometimes replaced by AI-driven talent acquisition tools. These changes significantly influence how graduates are evaluated and selected.

These days, getting hired goes beyond report cards. For Gen Z, diplomas aren't enough mainly because tools and office norms shift fast each month. Bosses need more than coders or number crunchers; teamwork matters just as much as skill. What stands out now? Workers who resolve tough issues while connecting with others.

Now hiring looks different than before. Machines take on tasks once done by human eyes scanning stacks of job applications. Speed matters here, no doubt about that. Yet judging character and spotting teamwork potential that remains tricky for code to grasp fully. Sometimes guesses are completely wrong. Into all of it, we dove headfirst.

This study focuses on understanding how recruitment transformation impacts employability skills and how well Gen Z graduates are prepared to meet industry expectations.

Study Objectives

The study aims to analyze employability skills and industry readiness among Gen Z graduates. It further seeks to identify key skills required by industry, evaluate the effectiveness of traditional versus AI-based recruitment methods, examine the role of AI in enhancing employability assessment, and suggest strategies for improving industry readiness among graduates

Literature Review

Landing a job goes beyond knowledge alone. These days, staying competitive means blending technical ability with personal strengths. Studies show employers value clear expression, working well with others, adapting quickly, and solving issues thoughtfully right alongside practical skills. What matters grows when both sides connect.

Most times, classrooms stick to ideas on paper. Yet what bosses actually want sits outside those pages. Are you jumping into work straight after school? That part trips many up. The truth hides in gaps between lectures given and real tasks faced. Fresh graduates show up eager, yet unready in ways that matter most.

Speed changed quickly when machines entered job picking. Resumes now move through filters quicker than any human ever could. Yet fairness isn't fully solved some gaps remain unseen by code. Understanding someone's nature? Machines often miss that. Team fit, trust, how a person shows up all still hard for circuits to grasp. So face-to-face talk stays, even as screens take more tasks.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive research design to analyze employability skills and industry readiness among Gen Z graduates. The sample size consists of 200 respondents, selected using a non-probability sampling technique. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire from the respondents.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Young adults aged 21 to 30 made up the largest share of those who responded, landing them squarely within Generation Z; many had only recently begun working full time.38 % leaned toward classic interviews personal talks still feel trustworthy to many. Yet 40 % believed machines cut down unfairness in job picks. 60 % have previously encountered tech tools during the hiring process. Clearly, digital shifts now shape how people make choices behind the scenes. Most folks' value tech know-how first yet many believe blending old-school ways with AI hits the sweet spot. Speed grabs attention, but still human judgment gets trusted when decisions land. 42 % rank technical ability highest, even as preference leans toward shared control. Whereas a significant 66% agreed that combining AI and traditional recruitment methods improves overall hiring efficiency. These findings suggest that while Gen Z graduates demonstrate a moderate level of industry readiness, there exists a gap in practical exposure and soft skill development. Young adults see shifts happening in job markets. Yet when career goals matter, hands-on practice becomes key so does learning to work well with others.

Findings

Out of nowhere, success shows up - not because someone polished their work history. Instead, hiring choices and practice routines shift everything. Firms push speed, lean on numbers. Still, software overlooks features like honesty or how effectively persons mix in groups.

Communication skills shine better when humans talk face to face. Machines might scan words, yet they miss tones and pauses that matter just as much. Hiring works best not by

picking sides but by combining methods. Old ways notice what algorithms overlook like honesty in hesitation or confidence behind silent eyes. The genuine answer is somewhere in the middle, where barriers meet authenticity typically, blending machines with human judgment works well. Machines handle enormous things quickly. People step in to choose what happens next. This mix helps firms find workers who do their jobs well. These hires also tend to fit into teams without problem.

Conclusion

Finally, acquiring hands-on practice together with tech know-how becomes vital for Gen Z. Hiring moves hurriedly and more unevenly thanks to AI however mortal sapience is crucial for comprehending surroundings. Most learners won't get far using only hard skills. Yet hands-on work, like internships or personal projects, carries equal weight. Real-world practice often shapes readiness more than lectures do. Instead of focusing solely on concepts, schools should link pupils with actual companies. Exposure to live environments helps bridge what's taught and what's needed. Start with trust, then bring in machines slowly. New hires grow strong when guidance comes early and often. Readying Gen Z for careers doesn't fall on a single shoulder learners must step up, schools have to adapt, and companies can't sit out either.

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Dr.A.Meenakshi holds a Doctorate degree in Commerce. She has more than 18 years of teaching and research experience. Now she is working as Professor in Department of Commerce at Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies, Chennai. She received the Best Professor 2021award for the rich experience in teaching and got Research Excellence 2024 award for her outstanding contribution in the research field, especially for authoring 40 academic research articles in Scopus and other UGC listed journals. She, as a competent result- oriented academician, possesses excellent interpersonal, communication and organizational skills with proven abilities to successfully manage a team and designing the curriculum. Dr. A. Meenakshi is a NAAC Criteria Co Ordinator and She produced two PhD scholars and guiding 6 scholars for their Doctorate.