TECHNIUM
SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL

Vol. 26, 2021

A new decade for social changes

www.techniumscience.com

ISSN 2668-7798

Technium Social Sciences Journal
Vol. 26, 710-727, December, 2021
ISSN: 2668-7798
www.techniumscience.com

A Study of Employability Soft Skills of Final-Year Students: A Case of Gedu College of Business Studies

Sonam Loday, Dawa Drakpa

[1 2]Gedu College of Business Studies, Bhutan

sonamloday.gcbs@rub.edu.bt

Abstract. Employability soft skills is a set of highly desirable, transferable skills that turn one into an attractive employee. It can be defined as a set of skills employers want from a potential employee. This study was designed to evaluate the employability soft skills of Gedu College of Business Studies' Students and for evaluation, the quantitative research design was adopted. A proportionate sampling method was used and enumerated 228 B. Com and BBA students. Collected data were analyzed using a one-sample t-test and an independent sample t-test. The result reveals that Gedu College of Business Studies' students possess above-average employability soft skills where the mean score is greater than the test value (3). It further reveals that there is no statistically significant mean difference in employability soft skills between male and female students apart from problem-solving skills which were found statistically significant ($p=.046$, $p<0.05$).

Keywords. Employability soft skills, one sample t-test, independent sampe t-test

Introduction

The concept of employability is defined by Hillage and Pollard (1998) as an ability to be employed that is a) ability to gain initial employment b) ability to maintain employment c) ability to obtain new employment if the requirement arises. Yorke (2006), also defined employability as a set of achievements skills, understandings, and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community, and the economy. The graduates to gain employment depends upon caliber and employability skills that they have. Employment skills refer to those skills that make a graduate able to obtain, sustain, and perform well in a job (Agrawal & Dasgupta, 2018).

He states that employability is a serious phenomenon for both government and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) where the key reason why many students invest in university education is to improve their employment prospects. As per the Royal University of Bhutan Student Statistics 2018, there are 9652 under- graduates out of which 2000 plus got graduated last year from ten colleges. However, whilst the achievement of good academic qualifications is highly valued, it no longer appears sufficient to secure employment (Yorke, 2006). Nowadays, employers

Technium Social Sciences Journal
Vol. 26, 710-727, December, 2021
ISSN: 2668-7798
www.techniumscience.com

expect graduates to have well-developed skills, so that they can start making an immediate contribution to the workplace when recruited (Bok, 2006; Confederation of British Industry, 2008).

Looking at the present rate of youth unemployment (9.57% in 2017, 9.58% in 2018, and 9.69% in 2019 by Plecher, (2020) the most immediate impact of lack of employability skills are visible in the unemployment rate. City & Guilds Centre for Skills Development (CSD) (2010), a UK based education and training related organization, acknowledged that skills employers expect regardless of the specific jobs being done are - Basic literacy and numeracy skills; Critical thinking skills; Management skills; Leadership skills; Interpersonal skills; Information technology skills; Systems thinking skills; and Work ethic disposition. Therefore, it will be of paramount importance to know the kind of employability skills that university students have to have a positive impact on unemployment issues in Bhutan.

Problem Statement

In March 2014, Thimphu hosted a "Better Business Summit: Competitiveness through Collaboration" in which a document was released under the title of Factsheets: Education for the Future. The problem of unemployment in Bhutan is not a question of job availability, but a rather current education system that is not able to adequately supply the skills and specialization needed for a modern and competitive economy (Jafri, 2016). Further, Factsheet revealed that employers faced challenges when recruiting employees that were fresh out of schools and colleges and without much skill. One of the pressing problems Bhutan is facing is indeed the growing unemployment in the country (9.57% in 2017, 9.58% in 2018, and 9.69% in 2019) (Plecher, 2020). As per the World Bank and MoLHR (2016a), the unemployment rate for those without formal education is just 0.2%, 12.3% of those with higher education are unemployed where the most immediate impact of lack of employability skills are visible in the unemployment rate. The World Bank (2010) report pointed out that unemployment problems among graduates are not only because of the unavailability of jobs but also unavailability of required competencies and skills.

To the knowledge of the present researcher, though there are rampant unemployment problems and lack of employability skills no studies have been undertaken to date which addressed employability skills of university students in the Bhutanese context. With no such formal research has been undertaken to understand employability skills, the present study is an attempt to understand the skills of GCBS students in Bhutan. Thus, the study is designed to evaluate the employability skills of GCBS students.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

a. To examine whether the employability soft skills of GCBS students are above average.
b. To compare the possession of employability soft skills between B. Com and BBA students of GCBS.
c. To compare the possession of employability soft skills between male and female students of GCBS.

Research Questions

a. Are the employability soft skills of GCBS students above average?
b. Is there a difference in possession of employability soft skills between B. Com and BBA students of GCBS?

Technium Social Sciences Journal
Vol. 26, 710-727, December, 2021
ISSN: 2668-7798
www.techniumscience.com

c. Is there a difference in possession of employability soft skills between male and female students of GCBS?

Hypotheses

H1: The employability soft skills of GCBS students are above-average.

H1: There is a mean difference in employability soft skills between B. Com and BBA students of GCBS

H1: There is a mean difference in employability soft skills between Male and Female students of GCBS

Significance of study

Royal Decree on education reform bestowed on 113th National Day (2020) by 5th King explicitly states "It is imperative that our children not only acquire a world-class education but also thereafter find gainful employment, that provides meaning and satisfaction and meets their aspirations for better livelihoods". However, youth unemployment is one of the rampant issues. Thus, this study would indicate the concern areas for GCBS and may consider academic policy, strategies, and activities to augment the employability soft skills that are required by the employers.

Literature review

Employability can be defined as a set of achievements, skills, understanding, and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community, and the economy (Yorke, 2004). Employability is a dilemma and rather a question in the minds of each graduating student today which is mainly because of the confusion between their perception about what an employer expects and what the employer expects in reality.

According to the Ministry of Labor and Human Resources (MoLHR), the rate of unemployment has been rising yearly. The percentage of graduates against total unemployed is increasing sharply (9.57% in 2017, 9.58% in 2018, and 9.69% in 2019) (Plecher, 2020). This sharp increase in unemployment is not only because of the unavailability of jobs in the market but also because of the kind of competencies that a graduate acquires from higher education.

The increasing level of cutthroat competition and demands of a developing economy has made the possession of only academic aptitude insufficient to be absorbed in the job market but there is rather something that is beyond this basic requirement that is needed in the current scenario.

By the Tertiary Education Policy 2010, the quality of knowledge generated within higher education institutions, and its availability to the wider economy, is becoming increasingly critical to national competitiveness and survival. Today, global wealth is concentrated less and less in factories, land, tools, and machinery. The knowledge, skills, and resourcefulness of people are increasingly critical to the world economy. The tertiary education system in Bhutan, therefore, must respond adequately by creating an enabling environment for generating new knowledge and developing required competencies in support of a knowledge-based economy. The knowledge here is not only referred to the one which learns from the courses but also other skills and competencies which is even more vital.

Nowadays, soft skills such as communication, analytical, professional, and teamwork skills are expected by employers (Jones & Sin, 2003) and most employers prefer employees with life experience as well as work-related skills. However, graduates and employers reported that many

of the programs in universities lack to deliver both professional and non-technical skills (Kavanagh & Drennan, 2008). This is particularly true that universities play an important role to bridge the gap between the graduates and employers (Kelley Patterson & George, 2001). The main mediator who can create a clearer picture and perception about employability skills are the educational institutions.

According to a study conducted by Mutairi (2014), employability skills are divided into four categories such as graduate knowledge, soft skills, personal abilities, and teamwork skills. Among these four categories, the participants attach a low level of importance to their abilities. According to Harvey et al (2002), most employers are looking for proactive graduates, who could use higher-level skills including analysis, critique, synthesis, and multi-layered communication to facilitate innovative teamwork in catalyzing the transformation of their organization.

When employers were asked to rank the most important employability soft skills while recruiting the fresh graduates, communication was ranked as the most important skill, followed by team-working skills and integrity (Archer & Davison, 2008) and IOD 2007). Hinchcliffe and Jolly (2011) found that interpersonal skills are by far the most likely to be ranked as the most important skill by employers, with written communication skills being the second most likely. Interpersonal skills are ranked somewhat lower by the future track respondents, although this may reflect the separation of interpersonal and communication skills in the future track ranking.

Detya (2000) has conducted a study on employer satisfaction with graduates' soft skills and found out that both soft and hard skills as important skills to set apart successful from unsuccessful potential job applicants.

Higher education may emphasize the soft skills that a graduate acquires during their stay in higher education, besides knowledge, technical and academic grades achieved by the graduates (Mason, Williams, & Cranmer, 2006). A major challenge for higher education is to build a nice ambiance that fosters to acquisition and develop soft skills that are preferred by employers. There is a gap between a set of soft skills acquired by the graduates and the skills required by the employers in the employers in the job market (Somaligami & Shanthakumari, 2013). The role of higher education is not simply to enable graduates to find employment: it also serves a broader role in the personal enhancement and social integration (Atfield & Behle, 2010).

Brown and Hesketh (2004), skills are broadly categorized as hard and soft currencies. The hard currencies include evidence-based records like academic credentials and work experience whereas, soft currencies include personal qualities and attributes such as interpersonal skills, time-management skills, communication skills, teamwork skills, problem-solving skills, leadership skills, and work ethics. They have suggested that graduates who are aware of the importance placed by employers on soft skills and who know how to demonstrate these skills in their application forms are likely to be successful in finding employment – they are the 'players' who know how to 'play the game'.

Blackwell et al (2001) has conducted a study on employability from the employees' perspective, surveying 1176 graduates from a British University six months after graduation. The result indicates that teamwork, motivation, problem-solving, and oral communication skills are the factors which employers are considering as employability skills. Similarly, Gault et al (2000) have conducted a study on employability from employees' perspective surveying 223 business graduates' alumni who graduated less than 5 years ago. The result shows that their career success was benefited mostly from leadership skills, teamwork skills, oral communication skills, problem-solving skills, analytical skills, relationship-building abilities, and written communication skills.

Technium Social Sciences Journal
Vol. 26, 710-727, December, 2021
ISSN: 2668-7798
www.techniumscience.com

Wickramasighn and Pereira (2010) conducted a survey enumerating 26 employers and found out that the employers prefer a positive work attitude, working as a team, critical thinker and self-confidence as the topmost skills required. Finch et al. (2013) interviewed 30 hiring managers and others who were indulged in the selection process and concluded with five high order classifications of employability skills such as problem-solving skills, functional skills, interpersonal skills, pre-graduate experience, and academic reputation. According to Rosenberg et al. (2012) and Heimler et al. (2012) employability soft skills include work ethic, leadership skills, critical thinking skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills, numeracy skills, time management skills, planning, and organizing skills, ICT skills, and negotiation skills. These employability soft skills are statistically found significant and positively correlated with the perception of career advancement potential.

Table 1
Conceptual framework

Sl. No	Dimensions	Variables
1	Communication Skills	convey ideas and feelings
2	Problem-solving skills	the ability to solve problems
3	Teamwork skills	work well with others
4	Negotiation skills	able make a consensus decision
5	ICT skills	converse with people through technologies.
6	Time management skills	the skills of managing time effectively
7	Planning & organizing skills	can develop new ways to do the task faster and better
8	Critical thinking skills	to think clearly and rationally about what to do
9	Leadership skills	the ability of an individual or organization to lead or guide
10	Interpersonal skills	the ability to communicate or interact well with other people.
11	Work ethics	the principle that hard work is intrinsically virtuous

[Source: Mutairi˙ K (2014), Harvey et al (2002), Rosenberg et al. (2012) and Heimler et al. (2012)]

Research Methodology

Research Design

Research design is a blueprint or plans specially created to answer the research questions (Dulock, 1993). This study has adopted a quantitative research design, to evaluate the employability soft skills of GCBS students (Creswell, 2014). The reason for adopting this design is because it can be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through a more convenient conventional research design (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In the same way, it describes the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of the population and statistically analyzes the data to describe trends about responses to questions (Tanny, 2018).

Technium Social Sciences Journal
Vol. 26, 710-727, December, 2021
ISSN: 2668-7798
www.techniumscience.com

Sampling approach

This study has adopted the proportionate sampling method (Creswell, 2014) to examine the employability skills of Gedu College of Business Studies. There was a total of 535 final-year business students. The target audiences were the final-year business students considering that their options would be much realistic as they will be in the job market for immediate career choice. For this study, 228 was the sample size after using Yamane Taro's formula (Yamane, 1967), the detail of the formula is given below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where:
N= population which is 535
e = margin of error, which is 0.05
The detail of sample size from each college is given below:

Table 2
Sample size

Programs	Population	Proportionate
B. Com	347	148
BBA	188	80
Total sample		228

Data collection

The primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire (Gault, 1907) from the final year students of Gedu College of Business Studies. The primary data was collected online using the google survey form. The structured questionnaire was developed based on thematic areas identified from the literature review. The questionnaire has 11 anchors such as communication skills, problem-solving skills, ICT skills, critical thinking skills, negotiation skills, planning and organizing skills, Time Management skills, work ethics, leadership skills, interpersonal skills, and teamwork skills with 1-5 Likert rating scale, with 1 being strongly disagreed and 5 strongly agreeing with the given item

Data Analysis

At this stage, the data was organized in a file, coded, and entered. The data were cleaned and checked for accuracy, completeness, and consistency (Fowler, 2009). Further, the normality check was conducted to validate the sample. The data were analyzed using a one-sample t-test, and an independent-sample t-test. A Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and excel were be used. The information was presented in statistical tables. Denscombe (1999) advises presenting enough information without drowning the reader with information. Therefore, only required and vital information that is understandable to the user was presented.

TECHNIUM SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL

Technium Social Sciences Journal
Vol. 26, 710-727, December, 2021
ISSN: 2668-7798
www.techniumscience.com

Findings and discussions

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Q1	228	-.360	.161	-.405	.321
Q2	228	-.348	.161	-.072	.321
Q3	228	-.630	.161	.275	.321
Q4	228	-.642	.161	.569	.321
Q5	228	-.738	.161	.692	.321
Q6	228	-.484	.161	.433	.321
Q7	228	-.165	.161	-.461	.321
Q8	228	-.400	.161	-.086	.321
Q9	228	-.691	.161	.889	.321
Q10	228	-.979	.161	.565	.321
Q11	228	-.526	.161	.496	.321
Q12	228	-.380	.161	-.209	.321
Q13	228	-.169	.161	-.235	.321
Q14	228	-.238	.161	-.288	.321
Q15	228	-.631	.161	.322	.321
Q16	228	-.990	.161	.492	.321
Q17	228	-.518	.161	.052	.321
Q18	228	-.590	.161	.509	.321
Q19	228	-.512	.161	-.301	.321
Q20	228	-.645	.161	.007	.321
Q21	228	-.582	.161	-.052	.321
Q22	228	-.190	.161	-.592	.321
Q23	228	-.357	.161	-.306	.321
Q24	228	-.220	.161	-.321	.321
Q25	228	-.181	.161	-.461	.321
Q26	228	-.580	.161	.419	.321
Q27	228	-.509	.161	.211	.321
Q28	228	-.548	.161	.267	.321
Q29	228	-.588	.161	-.056	.321
Q30	228	-.531	.161	.030	.321
Q31	228	-.276	.161	-.714	.321
Q32	228	-.503	.161	-.355	.321
Q33	228	-.486	.161	-.109	.321

TECHNIUM SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL

Technium Social Sciences Journal
Vol. 26, 710-727, December, 2021
ISSN: 2668-7798
www.techniumscience.com

Q34	228	-.657	.161	.639	.321
Valid N (listwise)	228				

The Skewness test of this data falls in an acceptable range of - .990 to -.165. The Kurtosis test of this data also falls in an acceptable range of .889 to -.052. The values for skewness and kurtosis between -2 and +2 are considered acceptable to prove normal univariate distribution (George & Mallery, 2010). Thus, the data collected were considered normally distributed and further reliability test was conducted.

Table 4
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.937	34

The overall Cronbach Alpha is .937 signifying that the survey instrument is reliable and internally consistent to average and treat as a single scale item. A Cronbach Alpha of 0.70 is acceptable, 0.80 or greater is preferred however, Cronbach Alpha greater than .95 indicates that data is internally inconsistent (Cortina, 2011) and it could mean lengthy scales, parallel items, items redundancy, and narrow coverage of the construct (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Table 5
One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Communication skills	228	3.70	.635	.042
Problem solving skills	228	3.49	.741	.049
Team work skills	228	4.04	.666	.044
Negotiation skills	228	3.66	.766	.050
Planning & Organizing skills	228	3.62	.682	.045
ICT skills	228	3.71	.688	.045
Time management skills	228	3.55	.707	.046
Critical thinking skills	228	3.72	.728	.048
Interpersonal skills	228	3.87	.687	.045
Leadership skills	228	3.75	.761	.050
Work ethics	228	3.64	.734	.048

Table 6
One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Communication skills	16.738	227	.000	.703	.621	.786
Problem-solving skills	10.140	227	.000	.497	.401	.594

Technium Social Sciences Journal
Vol. 26, 710-727, December, 2021
ISSN: 2668-7798
www.techniumscience.com

Team work skills	23.707	227	.000	1.046	.959	1.133
Negotiation skills	13.001	227	.000	.660	.560	.760
Planning & Organizing skills	13.831	227	.000	.625	.536	.714
ICT skills	15.780	227	.000	.719	.629	.809
Time management skills	11.875	227	.000	.556	.464	.648
Critical thinking skills	14.992	227	.000	.723	.628	.818
Interpersonal skills	19.109	227	.000	.870	.780	.960
Leadership skills	14.952	227	.000	.754	.655	.853
Work ethics	13.300	227	.000	.646	.551	.742

A one-sample test of means compares the mean of a sample to a pre-specified value and tests for a deviation from that value (Boston University School of Public Health, 2016). The result reveals that the employability soft skills possessed by GCBS students are above average (test value = 3) with a mean score (3.70) for communication skills, (3.49) for problem-solving skills, (4.04) for teamwork skills, (3.66) for negotiation skills, (3.62) for Planning and organizing skills, (3.71) for ICT skills, (3.55) for time management skills, (3.72) for critical thinking skills, (3,87) for interpersonal skills, (3.75) for leadership skills, and (3.64) for work ethics. Of all, GCBS students possess good communication skills with the highest mean score. All the employability soft skills are found statistically significant ($p=.000$, $p<0.05$). A one-sample t-test is used to identify whether the mean value of a group is significantly different from a specified value (Howard, M. C., n.d.).

Table 7
Group Statistics

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Communication skills	B. Com	133	3.70	0.63	0.05
	BBA	95	3.71	0.65	0.07
Problem solving skills	B. Com	133	3.48	0.72	0.06
	BBA	95	3.53	0.79	0.09
Team work skills	B. Com	133	4.05	0.65	0.05
	BBA	95	4.04	0.70	0.08
Negotiation skills	B. Com	133	3.67	0.74	0.06
	BBA	95	3.64	0.81	0.09
Planning & organizing skills	B. Com	133	3.66	0.68	0.06
	BBA	95	3.57	0.69	0.08
ICT skills	B. Com	133	3.76	0.67	0.05
	BBA	95	3.64	0.72	0.08
Time management skills	B. Com	133	3.56	0.71	0.06
	BBA	95	3.54	0.71	0.08
Critical thinking skills	B. Com	133	3.79	0.72	0.06
	BBA	95	3.60	0.73	0.08
Interpersonal skills	B. Com	133	3.85	0.70	0.06

Technium Social Sciences Journal
Vol. 26, 710-727, December, 2021
ISSN: 2668-7798
www.techniumscience.com

	BBA	95	3.91	0.66	0.07
Leadership skills	B. Com	133	3.77	0.74	0.06
	BBA	95	3.73	0.81	0.09
Work ethics	B. Com	133	3.70	0.72	0.06
	BBA	95	3.55	0.76	0.08

Table 8
Independent Sample t-test (refer to an appendix, Table 1)

Employability soft skills	t-test for Equality of Means
Communication skills	F (.003) = t (-.186) p (.853)
Problem-solving skills	F (1.620) = t (-.500) p (.618)
Teamwork skills	F (.000) = t (.142) p (.887)
Negotiation Skills	F (.530) = t (.326) p (.744)
Planning and Organizing skills	F (.126) = t (.915) p (.362)
ICT skills	F (.214) = t (1.27) p (.205)
Time management skills	F (.285) = t (.196) p (.845)
Critical thinking skills	F (.145) = t (1. 89) p (.059)
Interpersonal skills	F (.300) = t (-.675) p (.500)
Leadership skills	F (2.106) = t (.336) p (.737)
Work ethics	F (.101) = t (1.42) p (.157)

The independent-samples t-test evaluates the difference between the means of two independent or unrelated groups. That is, to evaluate whether the means for two independent groups are significantly different from each other or not (Green, & Salkind, 2003). On average, BBA students (3.71) possess slightly better communication skills than B. Com students (3.70) however, there is no difference in communication skills (p=.853, p>0.05). On average, BBA students (3.53) possess slightly better problem-solving skills than B. Com students (3. 48) however, there is no difference in problem-solving skills (p=.618, p>0.05). On average, B. Com students (4.05) possess slightly better teamwork skills than BBA students (4.04) however, there is no difference in teamwork skills (p=.887, p>0.05). On average, B. Com students (3.67) possess slightly better negotiation skills than BBA students (3.64) however, there is no difference in negotiation skills (p=.744, p>0.05). On average, B. Com students (3.66) possess slightly better planning and organizing skills than BBA students (3.57) however, there is no difference in planning and organizing skills (p=.361, p>0.05). On average, B. Com students (3.76) possess slightly better ICT skills than BBA students (3.64) however, there is no difference in ICT skills (p=.205, p>0.05).

On average, B. Com students (3.56) possess slightly better time management skills than BBA students (3.54) however, there is no difference in time management skills (p=.845, p>0.05). On average, B. Com students (3.79) possess slightly better critical thinking skills than BBA students (3.60) however, there is no difference in critical thinking skills (p=.059, p>0.05). On average, BBA students (3.91) possess slightly better interpersonal skills than BBA students (3.85) however, there is no difference in interpersonal skills (p=.500, p>0.05). On average, B. Com students (3.77) possess slightly better leadership skills than BBA students (3.73) however, there is no difference in leadership skills (p=.737, p>0.05). On average, B. Com students (3.70) possess slightly better work ethics than BBA students (3.55) however, there is no difference in work ethics

Technium Social Sciences Journal
Vol. 26, 710-727, December, 2021
ISSN: 2668-7798
www.techniumscience.com

(p=.157, p>0.05). The result indicates that there is no statistically significant mean difference between B. Com and BBA students when compared on employability soft skills.

Table 9
Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Communication skills	Male	130	3.71	0.61	0.05
	Female	98	3.69	0.67	0.07
Problem solving skills	Male	130	3.57	0.74	0.06
	Female	98	3.37	0.72	0.08
Teamwork skills	Male	130	4.06	0.66	0.06
	Female	98	4.02	0.68	0.07
Negotiation skills	Male	130	3.69	0.78	0.07
	Female	98	3.60	0.74	0.08
Planning & organizing skills	Male	130	3.64	0.64	0.05
	Female	98	3.60	0.74	0.08
ICT skills	Male	130	3.78	0.71	0.06
	Female	98	3.61	0.64	0.07
Time management skills	Male	130	3.56	0.73	0.06
	Female	98	3.55	0.68	0.07
Critical thinking skills	Male	130	3.75	0.77	0.06
	Female	98	3.69	0.66	0.07
Interpersonal skills	Male	130	3.93	0.69	0.06
	Female	98	3.77	0.68	0.07
Leadership skills	Male	130	3.76	0.76	0.06
	Female	98	3.74	0.77	0.08
Work ethics	Male	130	3.66	0.76	0.06
	Female	98	3.63	0.70	0.08

Table 10
Independent Sample t-test (refer to an appendix, Table 2)

Employability soft skills	t-test for Equality of Means
Communication skills	F (1.281) = t (.295) p (.768)
Problem-solving skills	F (.014) = t (.906) p (.046)
Teamwork skills	F (.001) = t (.979) p (.689)
Negotiation Skills	F (.027) = t (.869) p (.397)
Planning and Organizing skills	F (3.327) = t (.069) p (.727)
ICT skills	F (.116) = t (.734) p (.070)
Time management skills	F (.853) = t (.357) p (.948)
Critical thinking skills	F (2.395) = t (.123) p (.545)
Interpersonal skills	F (.000) = t (.996) p (.078)
Leadership skills	F (.082) = t (.775) p (.806)
Work ethics	F (.686) = t (.408) p (.762)

Technium Social Sciences Journal
Vol. 26, 710-727, December, 2021
ISSN: 2668-7798
www.techniumscience.com

On average, the male students are slightly better in communication skills (3.71) than female students (3.69). There is no statistically significant mean difference in communication skills (p=.768, p>0.05). when it comes to problem-solving skills again the male students are slightly better (3.57) than female students (3.37) and it is found a statistically significant mean difference in problem-solving skills (p=.046, p<0.05). On average, the male students are slightly better in teamwork skills (4.06), negotiation skills (3.69), planning and organizing skills (3.64), ICT skills (3.78), time management skills (3.56), critical thinking skills (3.75), interpersonal skills (3.93), leadership skills (3.76) and work ethics (3.66) than female students teamwork skills (4.02), negotiation skills (3.60), planning and organizing skills (3.60), ICT skills (3.61), time management skills (3.55), critical thinking skills (3.69), interpersonal skills (3.77), leadership skills (3.74) and work ethics (3.63). There is no statistically significant mean difference in employability soft skills apart from problem-solving skills (p=.046, p<0.05).

Table 11
Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Result	Significance level
H1: The employability soft skills of GCBS students are above-average.	Accepted	Mean score are greater than test value (3) and found statistically signnificant (p=.000)
H1: There is a mean difference in employability soft skills between B. Com and BBA students of GCBS	Accepted	Found statistically Insignificant (p>0.05
H1: There is a mean difference in employability soft skills between male and female students of GCBS	Accepted except for problem-solving skills	Found statistically Insignificant except problem-solving skills (p=.046)

Suggestion

On average, final year students of GCBS (B. Com and BBA) possess above-average employability soft skills with a mean score slightly greater than test value = 3, however, need to enhance their soft skills. This study suggests that Gedu College of Business Studies may emphasize identified employability soft skills required by the employers along with the main learning courses. Harvey et al (2002), had found out that most employers are looking for proactive graduates, could use higher-level skills including analysis, critique, synthesis, and multi-layered communication to facilitate innovative teamwork for catalyzing the transformation of their organization.

Way forward

Had it been to the pandemic, a researcher could not cover other colleges under the Royal University of Bhutan as expected however, this study has focused only on Gedu College of Business Studies. Being a case study of one college, findings may not be valid to generalize. Future researchers may collect data from all the ten colleges and may study to evaluate whether the employability soft skills mismatch exited or not in Bhutan.

Conclusion

Employment soft skills refer to those skills that make a graduate able to obtain, sustain, and perform well in a job (Agrawal & Dasgupta, 2018). According to Rosenberg et al. (2012) and Heimler et al. (2012) employability soft skills include work ethic, leadership skills, critical thinking skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills, numeracy skills, time management skills, planning, and organizing skills, ICT skills, and negotiation skills. This study has found out that there is no statistically significant mean difference in employability soft skills between male and female students apart from problem-solving skills ($p=.046$, $p<0.05$). All the employability soft skills are found above average and statistically significant ($p=.000$, $p<0.05$).

References

[1] Agrawal, V., & Dasgupta, S. (2018). Identify the key employability skills: Evidence from the literature review. *Journal of Business and Management*. Amity University.
[2] Archer, W., & Davison, J. (2008). *Graduate Employability: What do employers think and want?* Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE)
[3] Atfield, G., & Behle, H. (2010). *Widening access and equal opportunities: The higher education experience of non-traditional students*. Future track Working Paper 6.
[4] Blackwell, A., Bowes, L., Harvey, L., Hesketh, A. J., & Knight, P. T. (2010), 7 17). Transforming work experience in higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*, *27, 2001*(3), 269–285.
[5] Bok, D. (2006). *Our underachieving colleges*. Princeton University Press.
[6] Boston University School of Public Health. (2016). One sample test of means. https://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/otlt/mph-modules/bs/sas/sas4-onesamplettest/SAS4-OneSampleTtest6.html
[7] Brown, P., & Hesketh, A. (2004). *The Mismanagement of Talent—Employability, and jobs in the knowledge economy*. Oxford University Press.
[8] City & Guilds Centre for Skills Development (CSD). (2010). Employability skills. http://www.skillsdevelopment.org.
[9] Confederation of British Industry. (2008). *Taking stock.CBI education and skills survey*.
[10] Creswell, j. W. (2014) V. Knight (Ed.). *Research design* (4th ed). SAGE Publications Ltd.
[11] Denscombe, M. (1999). The good research guides. .https://www.Cambridge.org/core/journals/sociology/article/abs/martyn-denscombe-the-good-research-guide-for-small-scale-research-projects-buckingham-open-university-press-1998-4000-1299-pbk-vii247-pp-isbn-0335198058/5C41B665F58E66FFDC7B32C6EF59444E
[12] Detya. (2000). Employer satisfaction with graduate skills. *Research Reports*. Evaluations and Investigations Program, Higher Education Division, *99/7*.
[13] Dulock, H. L. (1993, October 1). Research design: Descriptive research. *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing*, 10(4), 154–157. https://doi.org/10.1177/104345429301000406
[14] Facts sheet: Education for the Future. (March 2014), Better Business Summit: Competitiveness *through Collaboration*. (March 26–28, 2014). Thimphu, Bhutan.
[15] Finch, D. J., Hamilton, L. K., Baldwin, R., & Zehner, M. (2013). An exploratory study of factors affecting undergraduate employability. *Education + Training*, *55*(7), 681–704. https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-07-2012-0077

[16] Fowler, J. F. (2009). *Survey research methods* (4th ed). https://methods.sagepub.com/book/survey-research-methods
[17] Gault, J., Redington, J., & Schlager, T. (2000). Undergraduate business internships and career success: Are they related? *Journal of Marketing Education*, *22*(1), 45–53. https://doi.org/10.1177/0273475300221006
[18] George, D., & Mallery, M. (2010). *SPSS for Windows Step by Step: A Simple Guide and Reference, 17.0 update (10a ed.)*. Pearson.
[19] Green, S. B., & Salkind, N. J. (2003). *Using SPSS for Windows and macintosh: Analyzing and understanding data* (3rd ed). Prentice Hall.
[20] Harvey, L., Locke, W., & Morey, A. (2002). *Enhancing employability, recognizing diversity*. Universities UK.
[21] Hillage, J., & Pollard, E. (1998). *Employability: Developing a framework for policy analysis*. Department for Education and Employment.
[22] Hinchcliffe, G., & Jolly, A. (2010). HECSU pp 8 -13. Investigating graduate identity. In *Graduate labour market trends*.
[23] Howard, M. C. (ND). One sample t-test in SPSS. https://mattchoward.com/one-sample-t-test-in-spss/
[24] Jafri, M. H. (2016). A study on employability skills mismatch of new pass out graduates of Bhutan. *Bhutan Joutnal of Research and Development* (*bjrd*) , 1.
[25] Mason, G., Williams, G., & Cranmer, S. (2006). *Employability skills initiatives in higher education: What effects do they have on graduate labour market outcomes? London*. National Institute of Economic and Social Research. http://www.niesr.ac.uk/pdf/061006_91251.pdf.
[26] Mulder, M. (2001). Competence development—Some background thoughts. *Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension*, *7*(4), 147–158. https://doi.org/10.1080/13892240108438822
[27] National statistic Burea. (2019, May 21). *PRESS RELEASE for 2018 Labour Force Survey report*. Retrieved April 28, 2020 from. http://www.nsb.gov.bt. National Science Board.
[28] Plecher, H. (2020). Retrieved May 11, 2020. https://tradingeconomics.com/bhutan/unemployment-rate. Statista.
[29] Rosenberg, S., Heimler, R., & Morote, E. (2012). Basic employability skills: A traingular design approach. *Education + Training*, *54*(1), 7–20. https://doi.org/10.1108/00400911211198869
[30] Statista (ND). Global unemployment rate up to 2019. Retrieved April 29, 2020 from. https://www.statista.com
[31] Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed). SAGE India Ltd.
[32] Tanny, F. T. (2018). Survey research design. Retrieved May 8 2020. https://www.slideshare.net/TahminaTanny/survey-research-design
[33] Tavakol, M., & Dennick, R. (2011). Making sense of Cronbach's alpha. *International Journal of Medical Education*. https://www.ijme.net/archive/2/cronbachs-alpha.pdf, 2, 53–55.
[34] Trading economics. (n.d.). *Trending Economics* Retrieved April 28, 2020 from Unemployment Rate [1995-2018 Data]. https://tradingeconomics.com (pp. 2019–2020) forecast...- Trading Economics

[35] Wickkramasinghe, V., & Perera, L. (2010), 4 27). Graduates, university lecturers, and employers' perception towards employability skills. *Education + Training*, *52*(3), 226–244.
[36] World, B. (2010, September). *Bhutan investment climate assessment report*.
[37] World, B. (2016a). Bhutan PPP country profile. Retrieved May 06 2020. https://pppknowledgelab.org/countries/bhutan. World Bank.
[38] Yorke, M. (2006). *Employability in higher education: What it is not*. Higher Education Academy.

TECHNIUM SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL

Technium Social Sciences Journal
Vol. 26, 710-727, December, 2021
ISSN: 2668-7798
www.techniumscience.com

Appendix

Table 1: Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Communication skills	Equal variances assumed	.003	.957	-.186	226	.853	-.01639	.08831	-.19041	.15764
	Equal variances not assumed			-.184	157.448	.854	-.01639	.08920	-.19257	.15980
Problem solving skills	Equal variances assumed	1.620	.204	-.500	226	.618	-.05152	.10304	-.25457	.15153
	Equal variances not assumed			-.486	149.184	.628	-.05152	.10606	-.26109	.15805
Team work skills	Equal variances assumed	.000	.996	.142	226	.887	.01318	.09266	-.16941	.19576
	Equal variances not assumed			.139	152.870	.889	.01318	.09456	-.17363	.19998
Negotiation skills	Equal variances assumed	.530	.468	.326	226	.744	.03480	.10659	-.17524	.24484
	Equal variances not assumed			.318	150.444	.751	.03480	.10939	-.18133	.25093
Planning skills	Equal variances assumed	.126	.723	.915	226	.361	.08666	.09472	-.09999	.27330
	Equal variances not assumed			.912	160.413	.363	.08666	.09505	-.10106	.27438
ICT skills	Equal variances assumed	.214	.644	1.271	226	.205	.12120	.09538	-.06675	.30915
	Equal variances not assumed			1.242	151.771	.216	.12120	.09758	-.07160	.31399
Time management skills	Equal variances assumed	.285	.594	.196	226	.845	.01931	.09837	-.17452	.21315
	Equal variances not assumed			.196	162.014	.845	.01931	.09838	-.17495	.21358
Critical thinking skills	Equal variances assumed	.145	.704	1.895	226	.059	.19054	.10057	-.00764	.38872
	Equal variances not assumed			1.892	161.515	.060	.19054	.10069	-.00829	.38937
Interpersonal skills	Equal variances assumed	.300	.585	-.675	226	.500	-.06453	.09558	-.25287	.12382
	Equal variances not assumed			-.686	169.727	.494	-.06453	.09405	-.25018	.12112

TECHNIUM SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL

Technium Social Sciences Journal
Vol. 26, 710-727, December, 2021
ISSN: 2668-7798
www.techniumscience.com

Leadership skills	Equal variances assumed	2.106	.148	.336	226	.737	.03564	.10592	-.17308	.24437
	Equal variances not assumed			.328	150.173	.744	.03564	.10877	-.17928	.25056
Work ethics	Equal variances assumed	.101	.751	1.421	226	.157	.14451	.10169	-.05588	.34490
	Equal variances not assumed			1.397	154.375	.164	.14451	.10342	-.05980	.34882

Table 2: Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Communication skills	Equal variances assumed	1.281	.259	.295	226	.768	.02563	.08695	-.14570	.19696
	Equal variances not assumed			.288	166.765	.774	.02563	.08893	-.14994	.20120
Problem solving skills	Equal variances assumed	.014	.906	2.006	226	.046	.20185	.10063	.00357	.40013
	Equal variances not assumed			2.019	183.167	.045	.20185	.09997	.00460	.39910
Team work skills	Equal variances assumed	.001	.979	.401	226	.689	.03660	.09121	-.14312	.21633
	Equal variances not assumed			.398	174.798	.691	.03660	.09196	-.14488	.21809
Negotiation skills	Equal variances assumed	.027	.869	.849	226	.397	.08901	.10481	-.11753	.29555
	Equal variances not assumed			.859	186.215	.391	.08901	.10358	-.11533	.29335
Planning & organizing skills	Equal variances assumed	3.327	.069	.350	226	.727	.03267	.09341	-.15140	.21675
	Equal variances not assumed			.338	159.900	.736	.03267	.09676	-.15842	.22377
ICT skills	Equal variances assumed	.116	.734	1.818	226	.070	.17008	.09357	-.01431	.35446
	Equal variances not assumed			1.861	192.916	.064	.17008	.09139	-.01016	.35032
Time management skills	Equal variances assumed	.853	.357	.066	226	.948	.00636	.09687	-.18452	.19724
	Equal variances not assumed			.067	189.565	.947	.00636	.09517	-.18136	.19408

TECHNIUM SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL

Technium Social Sciences Journal
Vol. 26, 710-727, December, 2021
ISSN: 2668-7798
www.techniumscience.com

Critical thinking skills	Equal variances assumed	2.395	.123	.606	226	.545	.06043	.09973	-.13609	.25695
	Equal variances not assumed			.631	201.777	.529	.06043	.09584	-.12854	.24941
Interpersonal skills	Equal variances assumed	.000	.996	1.771	226	.078	.16566	.09356	-.01871	.35002
	Equal variances not assumed			1.779	182.316	.077	.16566	.09309	-.01802	.34934
Leadership skills	Equal variances assumed	.082	.775	.246	226	.806	.02571	.10431	-.17983	.23126
	Equal variances not assumed			.246	178.713	.806	.02571	.10445	-.18039	.23182
Work ethics	Equal variances assumed	.686	.408	.304	226	.762	.03054	.10056	-.16761	.22869
	Equal variances not assumed			.310	191.505	.757	.03054	.09845	-.16365	.22474