

DIGITAL SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The rapid advancement of digital technology has brought significant changes in the field of education and employment. Digital skills have become an important component of students' academic development, professional preparation, and career readiness. College students are expected to possess both basic and advanced digital competencies that enable them to access information, communicate effectively, complete academic tasks, collaborate with others, and adapt to technology-driven work environments. Digital skills may include the ability to use word-processing and presentation software, spreadsheets, online learning platforms, digital communication tools, information-searching techniques, data-related applications, and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. The present study focuses on digital skills and employability among college students and attempts to understand how digital competency can contribute to students' readiness for the changing world of work.

The primary objective of the study is to examine the level of digital skills among college students and understand their relationship with employability. The study will adopt a descriptive research design to examine the existing level of digital skills and employability among college students. Primary data will be collected from selected college students through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire will focus on students' use and confidence in digital tools, awareness of workplace-related digital skills, ability to adapt to new technologies, and perceptions of their own career readiness. The collected data will be organised and analysed using appropriate descriptive and statistical techniques to identify patterns and understand the relationship between digital skills and employability.

Keywords: Digital skills, Employability, Digital competency, Career readiness

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital world, digital technology has become an essential part of education, work, business, and daily life. The use of computers, mobile devices, the internet, and other digital tools is increasing continuously. Educational institutions and workplaces increasingly depend on digital platforms and technologies. Therefore, students need to develop digital skills alongside their academic knowledge.

Digital skills involve using computers and the internet, gathering and evaluating information, using email and online platforms, working with Microsoft Office and other software, managing digital information, and adapting to new technologies. These skills are important not only for academic activities but also for future employment opportunities.

Employability refers to an individual's ability to obtain employment and the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform effectively in the workplace. Employers increasingly consider technical knowledge, communication, problem-solving, adaptability, and digital competencies along with academic qualifications.

College is an important stage for developing these competencies. However, students may differ in their level of digital skills and confidence in using technology. Therefore, understanding students' digital skills and their relationship with perceived employability is important.

The present study focuses on **Digital Skills and Employability Among College Students**. It **aims** to understand the level of digital skills among college students and their perceived importance in improving employability.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the need for digital skills among college students.
2. To examine the importance of digital skills for students' employability.
3. To identify the uses of digital skills in academic and career-related activities.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Kim (2020): Kim examined the relationship between digital literacy and perceived employability among 916 Korean college students. The study found a positive relationship between digital literacy and perceived employability, with core competencies playing a mediating role.

Bejaković and Mrnjavac (2020): Their systematic literature review highlighted the importance of developing competencies that match workplace requirements and identified digital competence as an important area of employability development.

Morgan, Sibson and Jackson (2022): Their study examined digital literacy and digital skill requirements among higher-education students. The findings emphasised digital literacy, adaptability, and industry-relevant experience in preparing students for changing workplace expectations.

Caroline, Coun, Gunawan and Stoffers (2024): Their systematic literature review examined digital literacy, employability, and innovative work behaviour. The study highlighted the importance of digital literacy in increasing employability and supporting innovative behaviour.

Gao (2024): Gao examined the relationship between digital literacy and employability among vocational undergraduate students and reported a significant positive relationship between digital literacy and employment ability.

Jebaraj Suguna (2026): A study among college students in Tamil Nadu examined digital literacy through areas such as device use, information evaluation, data handling, online collaboration, and digital safety. The study highlighted digital literacy as an important competency for academic success, lifelong learning, and employability.

IV. RESEARCH GAP

Previous studies have established a positive connection between digital skills or digital literacy and employability. However, digital technologies and workplace requirements continue to change rapidly, and students may differ in their digital competencies. Therefore, the present study focuses on college students and their digital skills and perceived employability using primary data collected through a structured questionnaire.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a **descriptive research design** to understand the digital skills of college students and examine their relationship with employability.

Source of Data

The study primarily uses **primary data** collected directly from college students through a structured questionnaire. Secondary information from research papers, journals, books, reports, and reliable online sources is used to support the study.

Data Collection Method

Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire using **Google Forms**. The questionnaire covers digital skills, technology usage, academic learning, career readiness, and employability-related competencies.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of college students. The final sample size was based on the number of valid responses received through the questionnaire.

Sample Size: 105

Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling was adopted; respondents were selected who were readily available and willing to participate.

Study Area

The study was conducted among college students in **Chennai**.

Period of Study

The study was conducted during the academic year **2026–2027**.

Tools for Analysis

The collected data was organised and analysed using **Google Sheets / Microsoft Excel**. Frequency and percentage were used based on the nature of the collected data.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The primary data collected through Google Forms was organised and analysed using Google Sheets or Microsoft Excel. The analysis was focused on students' demographic characteristics, digital skills, technology usage, confidence in using digital tools, academic applications of technology, and perceptions regarding employability.

The responses were presented using frequency tables, percentages, and suitable charts such as bar charts and pie charts. The analysis helped to identify the level of digital skills among college students and their perceptions regarding the importance of digital competencies for employment and career readiness.

The final numerical results tables findings were as follows:

Age:

S.NO	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
1	17-18	61	58
2	19-20	42	40
3	21-23	2	02
4	24 Above	0	Nil

Result

The table shows that out of 105 respondents, 61 respondents (58.10%) belong to the age group of 17–18 years, followed by 42 respondents (40%) in the age group of 19–20 years. Only 2 respondents (1.90%) are in the 21–23 years age group, while there are no respondents aged 24 and above. Hence, many of the respondents are between 17 and 18 years of age.

Gender

S.NO	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	6	6
2	Female	99	94
3	Prefer Not To Say	0	0

Result

The table indicates that out of 105 respondents, 99 respondents (94.29%) are female and 6 respondents (5.71%) are male. There are no respondents who preferred not to disclose their gender. Hence, many of the respondents are female.

Year of Study

S.NO	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
1	1 st year	40	38
2	2 nd year	37	35
3	3 rd year	27	26
4	PG/ Other	1	01

Result

The table shows that 40 respondents (38.10%) are studying in the 1st year, followed by 37 respondents (35.24%) in the 2nd year and 27 respondents (25.71%) in the 3rd year. Only 1 respondent (0.95%) belongs to the PG/Other category. Hence, many of the respondents are 1st-year students.

Perception of digital skills of the respondents

S.NO	Particulars	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I am good at using digital tools	12	55	34	4	0
2	I can use a computer easily	16	51	34	4	0
3	I can use MS Word easily	22	55	25	2	1
4	I can use MS Excel easily	20	49	28	7	1
5	I can make PowerPoint presentations	13	51	26	15	0
6	I can use online learning apps easily	17	59	22	6	1
7	I can send professional emails	9	42	33	19	2
8	I can find useful information online	19	68	16	2	0
9	I can learn new digital tools quickly	13	69	19	4	0
10	I can solve simple computer problems	5	52	29	18	1
11	Digital skills help me in my studies	25	58	20	2	0
12	Digital skills make me more confident	25	61	16	3	0
13	My college helps me improve my digital skills	23	60	19	3	0
14	I need more digital skills training	37	58	8	1	1
15	I am ready to learn new digital skills	37	54	11	3	0

Result:

Overall, the findings reveal that the respondents have a positive perception of their digital skills. Most respondents selected “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” for the statements related to computer usage, MS Word, MS Excel, online learning, digital communication, information searching, and adapting to new technology. Although a small number of respondents expressed disagreement with some statements, the overall response indicates that the respondents possess a satisfactory level of digital skills and recognise the importance of continuously developing these skills.

Perception of employability skills of the respondents

S.NO	Particulars	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Digital skills help me get a good job	30	57	14	4	0
2	Employers look for digital skills	35	51	19	0	0
3	Digital skills are important for my future career	41	51	12	1	0
4	Digital skills help me work better in a team	26	61	12	6	0
5	Good skills can Improve my career opportunities	46	49	8	2	0

Result:

The findings show that the respondents have a highly positive perception of the relationship between digital skills and employability. A large majority selected “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” for all five statements. The respondents particularly recognise that digital skills are important for their future career, employment opportunities, teamwork, and career development. Therefore, the study indicates that digital skills are perceived as an important factor contributing to employability among college students.

VII. FINDINGS

The final findings were based entirely on the actual responses collected through the questionnaire.

The study identified that:

1. The level of digital skills among college students is high. Many respondents agreed that they are good at using digital tools, computers, MS Word, MS Excel, PowerPoint, online learning applications and other digital technologies. Most respondents also indicated that they could learn new digital tools quickly and solve simple computer-related problems.
2. The commonly used digital tools and technologies. The respondents reported good familiarity with commonly used digital tools such as computers, MS Word, MS Excel, PowerPoint, online learning applications, professional email and online information-searching tools. Among these, online information searching and basic office applications were widely used by the students.
3. Students' confidence in using digital technologies. The responses show that most students are confident in using digital technologies. A large number of respondents

agreed that digital skills make them more confident, and they also expressed their ability to learn and use new digital tools effectively.

4. The use of digital skills for academic and learning activities. The findings reveal that students use digital skills for their studies and learning activities. Most respondents agreed that digital skills help them in their studies, support online learning and enable them to access useful information for academic purposes.
5. Students' awareness of digital skills required in the workplace. The majority of respondents are aware that digital skills are important in the workplace. They understand the importance of using digital technologies, communicating through professional emails and possessing relevant digital skills for future employment.
6. Students' perceptions regarding the importance of digital skills for employment. The findings indicate that students strongly perceive digital skills as important for employment and career development. Most respondents agreed that digital skills can help them obtain a good job, improve their career opportunities, work effectively in a team and meet employers' expectations.
7. Areas where students may require further digital skill development. Although the overall level of digital skills is high, the responses indicate a need for further digital skill development and training. A considerable number of students agreed that they need more digital skills training and expressed their willingness to learn new digital skills to improve their confidence, academic performance and future employability.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Colleges should conduct regular digital skills training programmes to improve students' practical competencies.
2. Students should be provided with more opportunities to use digital tools through projects, presentations, assignments, internships, and practical activities.
3. Educational institutions should provide exposure to industry-relevant digital tools and technologies to improve students' career readiness.
4. Students should be encouraged to develop digital communication, data handling, online research, and collaboration skills.
5. Continuous learning, internships, workshops, and industry exposure should be encouraged to help students adapt to changing workplace technologies.

IX. CONCLUSION

Digital skills have become an important part of academic learning and career preparation in the modern employment environment. Along with academic qualifications, students need digital competencies, communication skills, problem-solving abilities, adaptability, and the ability to learn new technologies. The present study aims to understand the digital skills of college

students and their perceived importance in improving employability. By collecting primary data through a structured questionnaire, the study will provide an understanding of students' digital capabilities, technology usage, confidence, and awareness of workplace requirements. Educational institutions can play an important role by providing practical digital training, industry exposure, internships, workshops, and career-oriented learning opportunities. Continuous development of digital competencies can help students become better prepared for changing employment requirements.

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