Vocational Education: Determinants of Skill and its Relationship with Employability

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ABSTRACT

The focus on Vocational Education and Training (VET) for skill development has increased in the recent years. This paper investigates the constructs of skill development that affect employability skills of workforce after completing their VET Programme. It also examines the association of skill development and employability. The current study undertaken on the retail sector workers confirms the constructs of skill development - Integration Theory and Practice (ITS), Initiative and Enterprise Skills (IES), Workplace Skills (WS), Professional Practice and Standards (PPS) and Interpersonal Skills (IPS) earlier identified and confirmed for the student population. The paper identifies that employability skills of the workforce in the retail sector are enhanced by the skill development

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INTRODUCTION

Vocational education and Training (VET) are essentials in the country's education initiative. It involves applied courses through which one learns skills and gains knowledge associated to their jobs. It supports them to seek better job prospects. VET Courses are progressively becoming important as employers expect new entrants to possess all the applied knowledge to start work and for those who must take care of their kin, directly after completing their schooling.

The growth of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector in India is in response to challenges faced on account of conventional education. Though elementary education in India is almost general, the country encounters major trials at the secondary level, National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to enhance gross enrollment ratio in higher education by 50%. Increase in dropout rates affects the ability of large young populace contribute productively to the economy. The right to education has enabled in the development of the secondary and tertiary education systems. The absence of right skills for seeking meaningful employment in the formal sectors along with decrease in the job opportunities in the rural areas has led to high levels of urban migration with most of them seeking employment in the unorganized or informal sectors which currently employs about 90% of all workers.

The TVET system is considered a policy lever believed to act as a policy formulated to enhance equality & decrease rates of unemployment especially in youth, balance the demand for higher education, equip with skills to keep pace with technological changes for building Knowledge Economy. The TVET encounters with multiple obstacles and is losing ground on account of diverse political, social, and economic factors. The current policy initiatives of the government by introducing the NEP will provide the necessary impetus to Vocational education.

The NEP (2020) unveiled the role of vocational education by introducing, Pre-vocational education for children starting from 6th Class onwards. It aims to merge vocational with conventional education. National Committee for the Integration of Vocational Education (NCIVE) will be formulated by The Ministry of Education comprising of experts from vocational education, Ministries representatives, and industry to investigate different aspects. National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) and National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) in synchronization will work to integrate vocational and higher education. According to the Annual Report National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) 2019-20, since the commencement of NSDC in 2009, till 2020 approximately 2.5 crore have received skill development training through NSDC partnerships, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) and Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra (PMKK). In the year 2019-20 the performance of Short Term Training Scheme indicates that of the 7,68, 915 students who successfully completed their training 4,60,087 were placed while in the case of Special Project Scheme of the 64,497 students successfully completed 33,519 were placed. The UNESCO 2020 State of Education Report India on TVET states that the current annual training capacity of NSDC is above 5 million. Further the amount spent on training is around US $200 million from the National Skill Development Fund (NSDF) of MSDE along with over US $ 430 million private sector funds. The stimulus given to TVET will aid the workforce in also upskilling reskilling and lifelong learning. The current paper aims to confirm the Skill Development (S.D) constructs that influence employability skills in Vocational Education and identify the association amongst the identified factors of SD and Employability Skills of employed personnel after completing their VET.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vocational education is any high school, junior college, or adult education program that purposefully intends at structured manner acquisition of knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes & understanding that are essential for entry and successful progression in any occupation or job family. VET is formulated for preparing individuals for a trade or a specific occupation and is associated distinctly with the competitiveness and productivity of nation. VET can be segregated as under:

Pre-Employment VET: Most countries deploy contemporary VET in schools for entry level employment. They are also visible at workplaces and normally overseen by National Ministry of Education.

Upgrade Training: Employed individuals receive add on training, as their jobs change, to stay in tandem with changing technology and increasingly complex work environment on account of career progression.

Retraining: Aimed at reskilling people who are out of the job or to help those who choose new career prospects.

Remedial VET: Training provide to marginalized, inexperienced or unemployed personnel to seek meaningful employment

Working in this direction helps to have a continuous flow of skilled labour and enhances the employability of work force. Meaningful partnering of policies and academic shapers of TVE can be utilized for growth & upliftment of skilled workers. The major issue in TVE which has come to the forefront is Apprenticeship Evaluation and Use of Information & Communication Technology.   Educational Institutions must promote TVE and conduct more studies at the grass root level to identify and meet current and future demands. (Yasin et al. 2013). The concept of employability being the notable outcome of VET is gaining attention. Enhanced training results in greater earnings which improves quality of life, job-related safety (Hartl,2009). VET is intended to train employees who will fit into diverse fields of economy. Olayinka &Oyenuga (2010) opined that the curriculum for technical institutes in Nigeria expect graduates to undertake services, diagnose, test & repair. It is observed that Generic skills are the ones focused on University levels for enhancing employability. Generic skills like data literacy, oral and written communication, teamwork, and technology proficiency. Bennett (2002) investigated the relation between common skills and employability, researchers have examined graduate career announcements. Collective efforts are required from all stakeholders to equip individuals with personal skills and

employment qualities in order to handle the challenges of fast paced economy (Wye& Lim, 2009). Scholten & Tiben (2017) conducted a study in Germany found that pre-tertiary qualifications in vocational training serve as a security net in the event of loss of job. Students having pre-tertiary vocational qualification get jobs easily as compared to other counterparts. Agrawal & Agrawal (2017) investigated the labor market consequences of the vocationally trained Indian populace using the statistics from a nationwide study on employment and unemployment. They found that a vast segment of people in the age group of 15–59 years do not possess any form of formal training. Majority is accounted for by non-formal trainees. Further, earning of general education was found to be less than the earnings of vocational education. Kumar et. al, (2019) identified constructs which can affect contribution of an individual into VET. Secondly authors used logit and multi-nominal logit model to measure the outcome of formal training on pay of the respondents. They found that urban dwellers are more active in participation in comparison to their rural counterparts which indicates lack of proper vocational training amenities in the rural areas. (Banik& Kumar 2017) emphasized on quality, employability, and Government's role in vocational education programme implementation. (Ahmed, 2016) investigates wages, unemployment, and employment status in Indian Labour market post completion of VET and identified a significant positive return of VET to pay & individuals participating in salaried work is also significant. Further males are more participative as compared to females. Tiwari & Mdots, 2022 conducted study on students pursuing retail vocational education course and identified factors for skill development which includes Initiative and Enterprise Skills (IES), Workplace Skills (WS), Professional Practice and Standards (PPS), Interpersonal Skills (IPS) and Integration Theory and

Practice (ITP) using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. (Scharnhorst & Kammerman, 2020) discusses the role, challenges, and effectiveness of VET with respect to the addition of susceptible groups in Switzerland. Further they suggested that equity and inclusion of persons with a migration background in VET have been promoted but can be improved.

Retail sector touched 950 billion US dollars in 2018 and is expected to reach 1.1 trillion US dollars by 2020 as per report of IBEF published in the year 2019 for retail sector in India. But because of COVID pandemic it has witnessed a huge decline of 19% in January-March 2020. It started showing signs of improvement by showing growth of 1.6% in July-September 2020. Also, Foreign Direct Investment of 3.35 billion US dollars during April 2000- September 2020 has been received by Indian retail industry.

India witnesses a lower Organized Retail Penetration (ORP) in contrast to different nations. This validates the enormous growth potential for organized retail in India. Growing skill gaps in the retail sector have been detected with a projected requirement of 107 lakhs trained manpower by 2022. This is ranked second after construction sector thus enhancing the requirement for vocational education. Government of India is also emphasizing on employable skill and knowledge considering diverse demography of Indian population. As per the MSDE Annual report 2019-20, incremental human resource requirement for 2017-2022 is highest in building and real estate sector which is 30.7 million followed by retail sector which is 10.7 million and beauty and wellness is ranked third at 8.2 million whereas Incremental Training Need across all these sectors is 320 lakhs, 107 lakhs and 82 lakhs (overlapping with other sectors) respectively. Table 1 and Table 2 summarizes and support formulation of objective and hypothesis.

Table 1: Literature Summary

Authors	Region/ Country	Summary
Melo & Das, 2020)	India	Skill development in non-farm sector impacts employment and income generation whereas one-year-long skill development training was found to be more effective than less-than-a-year-long training.
(Kumar et al., 2019)	India	Paper derives that formal VET is linked with higher incomes with the effect being the highest in the primary sector. It also proposes that there are high economic returns with formal vocational training, and hence, it makes sense to invest resources in vocational training.
Ornellas et al., 2019)	Europe	It identifies a model that proves authentic learning approaches work as a catalyst to boost employability skills of higher education graduates
Karmel & Fieger, 2012)	Australia	Success of TVET depends upon objective of student, if the student wishes to be employed after training or intends to pursue further study or concerned about a job, then completion pays off (profitability) is around 98%, 99.9% and 60% respectively. Hence depicting the importance of completion of training.
(Ali et al., 2018)	Malaysia	The paper identifies graduate employability skill dimensions: skill applications, self-efficacy, metacognition, entrepreneurial skills, and soft skills. It also uses Technical and vocational education through the development of a model of graduates' employability.

(Raimi & Akhuemonkhan, 2014)	Nigeria	Authors found a limited impact of TVET on employability; however, they identified that its efficiency is hindered by funding, expertise, synergy with industry and public perception of TVET. Thus, they suggested that policymakers need to improve on the policy implementation and curriculum harmonization and all the above-mentioned parameters to stimulate employability through TVET.
(Aggarwal, 2016)	India	Study assessed skill capacity in traditional as well as vocational training. To make skill development programme successful, policy makers should take initiatives to overcome hindrances/ challenges.

Table 2: Descriptions of Measurement of Constructs for the Study Dimensions

	Constructs	Items	Sources	
Skill Development	Integration Theory and Practice (ITP)	I link together different theoretical perspectives when working on a workplace or professional task or problem	McLeish (2002), Jackson (2010), Idris et al. (2012), Smith et al. (2014), Harvey et al. (1997) Pool & Sewell (2007), Law & Watts (1977), UKCES (2010) report, Moon (2004),	Tiwari & Malati (2020)
		I set goals, plan and manage my time, money and other resources to achieve my goals.		
		I understand the practices and methods used in my discipline		
		I recognize and value the role of theoretical ideas in work or professional contexts.		
		I understand the theories and principles in my discipline		
		I am pretty good at balancing the demands of home and work		
		I apply knowledge and skills gained in my studies to the workplace.		
	Interpersonal Skills (IPS)	I collaborate with people representing diverse backgrounds or viewpoints		
		I Interact appropriately with people from different levels of management/ leadership/ seniority in workplace		
		I am independent and take initiative in identifying problems and solving them		
		I can transfer effectively between individual work and teamwork		
		I can peak clearly and directly		
		I can read and understand information in words, graphs, diagrams, or charts.		
		I give clear instructions or advice to colleagues to achieve an outcome.		
		I am able to share information using various communication technologies, like voice mail, e-mail and computers.		
	Professional Practice and Standards (PPS)	I present myself effectively in selection interviews and processes.		
		I like to take responsibility		
		I acknowledge and praise my co-workers		
		I can adapt to new circumstances or information.		
		I am honest toward the organization		
		I respect the thoughts, opinions and contributions of others.		
		I am the kind of person who has the energy to get the job done.		
	Initiative and Enterprise Skills (IES	I can better appraise the quality of information obtained e.g., from the web, from books or from other people.		
		I use information and my professional or workplace knowledge to come to rational decisions and then act on these.		
		I bring about a change in practices that will benefit the organization or enterprise that employs me		
		I seek clarification when I do not understand an instruction.		
	Employability Skills	Taking part in the scheme has given me new skills	Blades et al. (2012), Harvey (2001)	
		I feel more confident after doing my retail vocational education course		
		I feel that the things I have been doing will help me in the future		
		I feel more positive about the future, compared to previous year		
		I have clearer ideas about what I want to do in the future		

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has the following objectives in Indian context:

1. To study the current trends in vocational education.

2. To confirm the constructs of skill development for the employed workforce

3. To identify the impact of skill development on employability skills for the employed workforce after completing their VET.

HYPOTHESIS

For attaining the above-mentioned objectives, the understated hypotheses are framed:

1. There is a positive significance of interpersonal skills (IPS), initiative and enterprise skills (IES), workplace skills (WS), professional practice & standards (PPS) and integration theory & practice (ITP) on skills development (SD) for employed workforce.

2. Skill development of workforce positively impact their employability skills.

DATA COLLECTION AND CLEANING

The modified, final questionnaire was distributed to respondents who completed their retail vocational education course. Schedules were sent to different retails outlets in NCR and through convenience sampling a data of 513 personnel working in retail industry after completing their retail vocational education course was obtained. Screening of data to ensure the usability, reliability, and validity of data for testing relationship among variables was undertaken. Cases with high missing values and unengaged responses were removed which resulted in 453 usable responses. Thereafter, the socioeconomic profile of the 453 responses is given in Table 3.

Table 3: Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents

Socioeconomic Characteristics		Frequency	Percentages
Gender	Male	277	61.10%
	Female	176	38.90%
Age	18-20 years	76	16.80%
	21-23 years	192	42.40%
	More than 24 years	185	40.80%
Family Income (per month)	Less than 5000	0	0.00%
	5001-10000	77	17.00%
	10001-15000	132	29.10%
	15001-20000	116	25.60%
	More than 20000	128	28.30%
Members in Family	Less than 5	254	56.10%
	8-May	166	36.60%
	More than 8	33	7.30%
Number of family members earning	1	143	31.60%
	2	225	49.70%
	3	64	14.10%
	4	15	3.30%
	5	6	1.30%
Inspired to join retail vocational education course	Friends	286	63.10%
	Family member	117	25.80%
	Governmental advertisement	13	2.87%
	Others	30	6.62%
Place of Birth	National Capital Region	410	90.50%
	Outside Delhi	43	9.50%

CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

To establish the validity of scale formulated by Tiwari & Malati (2020) confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed on working population using AMOS 21 to evaluate the dimensionality and adequacy of the items that connect to corresponding latent variables.

Confirmatory Model: CFA was performed for the factors of skill development and employability skill. The preliminary was compared with alternative models to check goodness-of-fit of the preliminary. The constructs as identified by principal component analysis were then subjected to CFA on a sample of 453 respondents.

Figure 1 represents the output of the preliminary model. The model fitness of all the confirmatory models was assessed using fit indices such as chi square (χ^2) statistics, the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and Normed Fit Index (NFI).

Chi square (χ^2) statistics is 7176.068 and preliminary model is subjected to non-positive definite sample covariance matrices. Also, the preliminary model does not fit in the standardized values of the fit indices it satisfies the concerns of both convergent and discriminant validity as mentioned in Table 4.

Table 4: Convergent and Discriminant Validity, Construct Reliability of Preliminary CFA

Employability	CR	AVE	MSW	MaxR (H)	Employability	ITP	IPS	PPS	WS	IES
Employability	0.857	0.554	0.440	0.891	**0.745**					
ITP	0.921	0.629	0.403	0.957	0.635	**0.793**				
IPS	0.855	0.429	0.299	0.966	0.141	0.198	**0.655**			
PPS	0.864	0.476	0.268	0.972	0.138	0.371	0.399	**0.690**		
WS	0.868	0.528	0.299	0.977	0.224	0.323	0.547	0.518	**0.726**	
IES	0.799	0.499	0.440	0.979	0.663	0.609	0.126	0.209	0.286	**0.706**
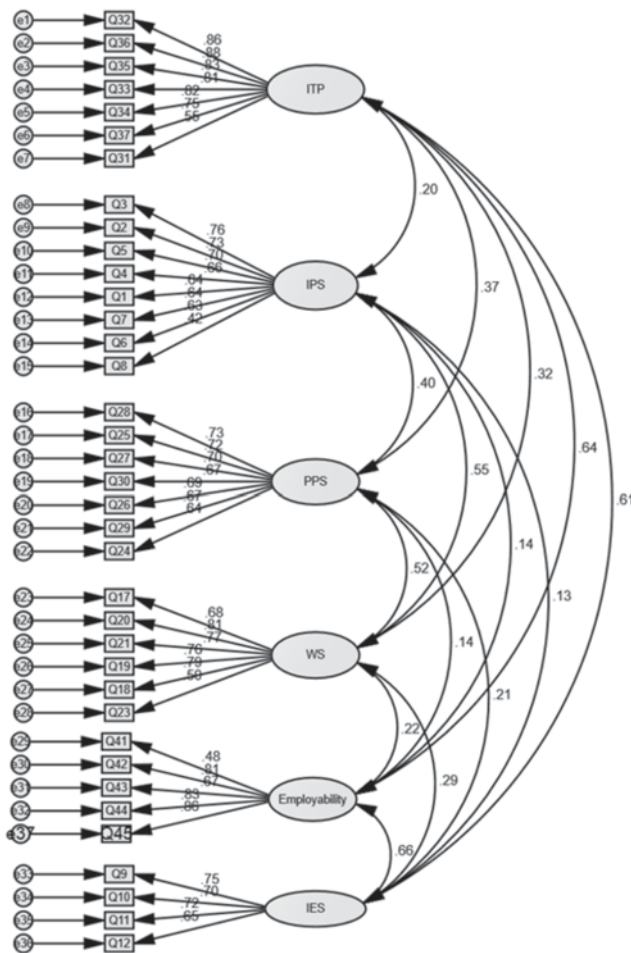
Figure 1: Output of Preliminary Model

Table 4 demonstrates that average variance extracted (AVE) for all the factors except IES, IPS and PPS is more than the threshold value of 0.5 (Hair et al. 2015). Construct reliability (CR) is as greater than the threshold value 0.7 (Hair et al. 2015). Discriminant Validity is established if variance estimates are greater than the squared correlation estimate (Fornell&Larcker, 1981). Thus, convergent and discriminant validity along with construct reliability has been established for preliminary model.

Modification indices and factor loadings were used to modify preliminary model. Firstly, big modification indices values were used to identify problems with construct. Secondly factor loading was used to identify unidimensionality of the construct, those items were dropped from the preliminary model to achieve final CFA model with a better fit as given in figure 2.

Output of the final CFA model is given in figure 2. goodness of fit indices (GOF) of measurement models was χ^2 statistics is 580.217, RMSEA is 0.048, CFI is 0.953, TLI is 0.946, and NFI is 0.912. All observed GOF indices were found to be significant as per threshold values except χ^2 value (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Bentler & Bonett, 1980).

Table 5 shows that average variance extracted (AVE) all four latent constructs is greater than threshold value of 0.5 (Hair et al. 2015). Construct reliability (CR) for all four constructs is greater than the threshold value of 0.7 (Hair et al. 2015). Discriminant Validity is established if variance estimates are greater than the squared correlation estimate (Fornell&Larcker, 1981). Thus, measurement model represented in figure 2 is an over identified model with GOF indices achieving threshold values having convergent and discriminant validity along with construct reliability.

Table 5: Convergent and Discriminant Validity, Construct Reliability of Final CFA Model

Employability	CR	AVE	MSW	MaxR (H)	Employability	ITP	IPS	PPS	WS	IES
Employability	0.877	0.642	0.387	0.890	**0.801**					
ITP	0.928	0.682	0.387	0.956	0.622	**0.826**				
IPS	0.803	0.506	0.295	0.963	0.123	0.144	**0.711**			
PPS	0.808	0.513	0.246	0.968	0.121	0.343	0.392	**0.716**		
WS	0.874	0.581	0.295	0.974	0.227	0.333	0.543	0.496	**0.763**	
IES	0.774	0.533	0.366	0.976	0.605	0.594	0.064	0.196	0.284	**0.730**
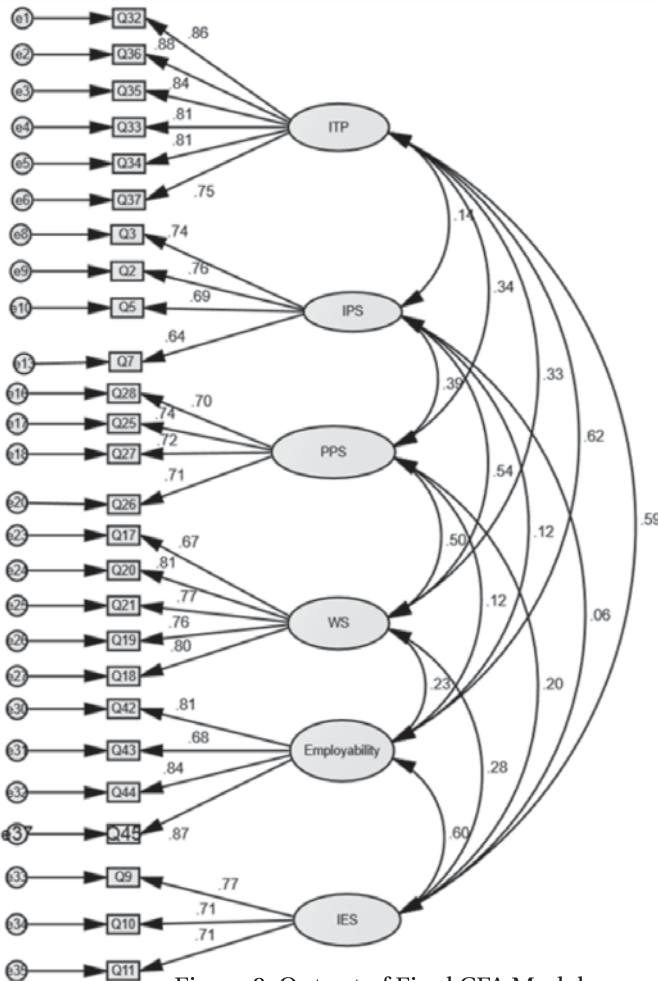
Figure 2: Output of Final CFA Model

Table 6: Confirmatory Factor Analysis: Items and Standardized Loadings

Construct and Scale Items	Standardized Loadings
Integration Theory and Practice (ITP)	
• Q32 I link together different theoretical erspectives when working on a workplace or professional task or problem	0.856
• Q36 I set goals, plan and manage my time, money and other resources to achieve my goals.	0.882
• Q35 I understand the practices and methods used in my discipline	0.839
• Q33 I recognize and value the role of theoretical ideas in work or professional contexts.	0.810
• Q34 I understand the theories and principles in my discipline	0.815
• Q37 I am pretty good at balancing the demands of home and work	0.748
Interpersonal Skills (IPS)	
• Q3 I collaborate with people representing diverse backgrounds or viewpoints	0.743
• Q2 I interact appropriately with people from different levels of management/ leadership/ seniority in a workplace	0.759
• Q5 I am independent and take initiative in identifying problems and solving them	0.695
• Q7 I can read and understand information in words, graphs, diagrams, or charts.	0.643
Professional Practice and Standards (PPS)	
• Q28 I present myself effectively in selection interviews and processes.	0.697
• Q25 I like to take responsibility	0.738
• Q27 I acknowledge and praise my co- workers	0.717
• Q 26 I am honest toward the organization	0.711
Workplace Skills (WS)	
• Q17 I am ready to take on new challenges at workplace	0.671
• Q20 I interpret and follow workplace procedures	0.807
• Q21 I demonstrate an awareness of the legislative and regulatory context in which the enterprise / profession operates.	0.770
• Q19 I identify the standards of performance or practice expected in the workplace / my profession.	0.757
• Q18 I can use professional knowledge for decision making	0.800
Initiative and Enterprise Skills (IES)	
• Q9 I can better appraise the quality of information obtained e.g., from the web, from books or from other people.	0.771
• Q10I use information and my professional or workplace knowledge to come to	0.707

reasonable decisions and then act on these.	
• Q11 I bring about a change in practices that will benefit the organization or enterprise that employs me	0.710
Employability Skills	
• Q45: Taking part in the scheme has given me new skills	0.866
• Q44: I feel more confident after doing my retail vocational education course	0.840
• Q42: I feel that the things I have been doing will help me in the future	0.809
• Q43 : I feel more positive about the future, compared to previous year	0.676

All the factor loadings (standardized regression coefficients in Table 6) ranging from 0.643 for Q7 to 0.882 were highly significant and exceeded the 0.5 level which is meaningful in factor analysis approach. The R^2 Statistic for Q36 (I set goals, plan and manage my time, money and other resources to achieve my goals.) was found to be highest (0.778) for **Integration Theory and Practice (ITP),** R^2 Statistic for Q2 (I interact appropriately with people from different levels of management/ leadership/ seniority in a workplace) was found to be highest (0.576) for **Inter Personal Skills (IPS),** R^2 Statistic for Q25 (I like to take responsibility) was found to be highest (0.545) for **Professional Practice and Standards (PPS),** R^2 Statistic for Q20 (I interpret and follow workplace procedures) was found to be highest (0.651) for **Workplace Skills (WS)** R^2 Statistic for Q9 (I can better appraise the quality of information obtained e.g. from the web, from books or from other people) was found to be highest (0.594) for **Initiative and**

Enterprise Skills (IES) and, R^2 Statistic for Q45(Taking part in the scheme has given me new skills) was found to be highest (0.75) for **Employability Skills (ES)**.

Measurement Model

Six constructs and twenty-six observed items were involved in the measurement model. Initially model was tested using SEM with AMOS. Output of the initial SEM model is given in figure 3. GOF indices for the initially SEM model presented an acceptable fit with the data (RMSEA = .060, CFI = .925, IFI = .925, TLI = .917; χ^2 (393) = 763.697, p< .00; χ^2 /df = 2.606). Therefore, the model was modified to achieve better model fit to the data based on the modification index. A revised SEM model was obtained. The revised model (figure 4) was compared with initial SEM model based on GOF indices. The revised model proved to have a better GOF indices (RMSEA = .056, CFI = .934, IFI = .935, TLI = 0.926; χ^2 (289)= 700.567, p < .00; CMIN = 2.424). χ^2 difference test: comparing the initial and revised SEM models based on χ^2 difference statistic ($\Delta \chi^2$), indicated that the χ^2 difference was statistically significant ($\Delta \chi^2$ =63.13, Δdf=4). Thus, the revised SEM model was more parsimonious and fit the data better, making it superior to the proposed model. Table 7 shows the overall fit indices of initial and revised structural model.

Significance of Skill Development on Identified Factors

To examine the significance of skill development on IES, IPS, PPS, ITP and WS in the revised SEM model. Unstandardized regression coefficients for the same are given in Table 8. P value in Table 8 illustrates that the all factors -IES, IPS, IPS, ITP, PPS, ITP and WS are significant for Skill Development.

Table 7: Goodness of Fit Indices Initial and Revised Structural Models

GOF Indices	Initial SEM Model	Revised SEM Model	Characteristics of Fit Indices demonstrating Goodness of Fit For N > 250 and < 12 < 30
χ^2 *(df)*	763.697 (293)	700.567 (289*)*	*Significant p – values expected*
CMIN	2.606	2.424	(3 good; < 5 Moderate
RMSEA	0.06	0.056	< 0.07
CFI	0.925	0.934	Above 0.92
IFI	0.925	0.935	Above 0.92
TLI	0.917	0.926	Above 0.92

Table 8: Regression Coefficient (Unstandardized) and its Significance

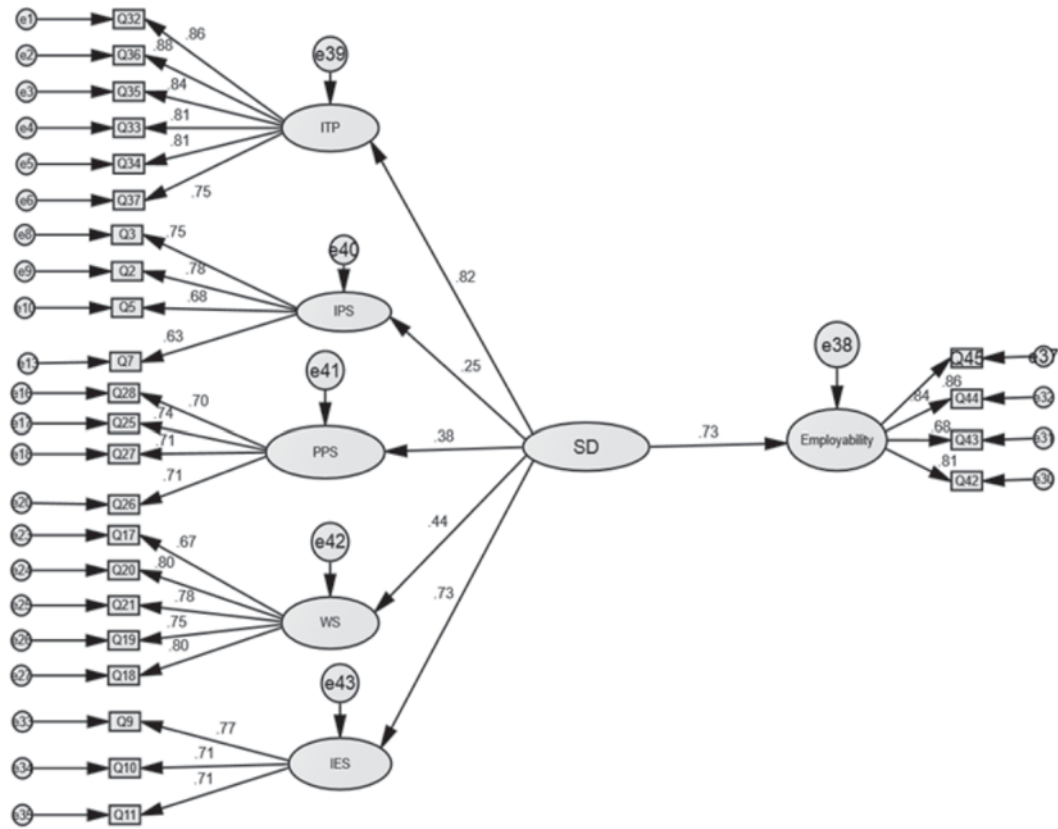|	Path	Components	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Results
Skill Development	→	ITP		1.000 Reference Point			
Skill Development	→	IPS	0.196	0.048	4.066	***	Significant
Skill Development	→	PPS	0.364	0.060	6.080	***	Significant
Skill Development	→	WS	0.306	0.044	6.994	***	Significant
Skill Development	→	IES	0.830	0.81	10.237	***	Significant

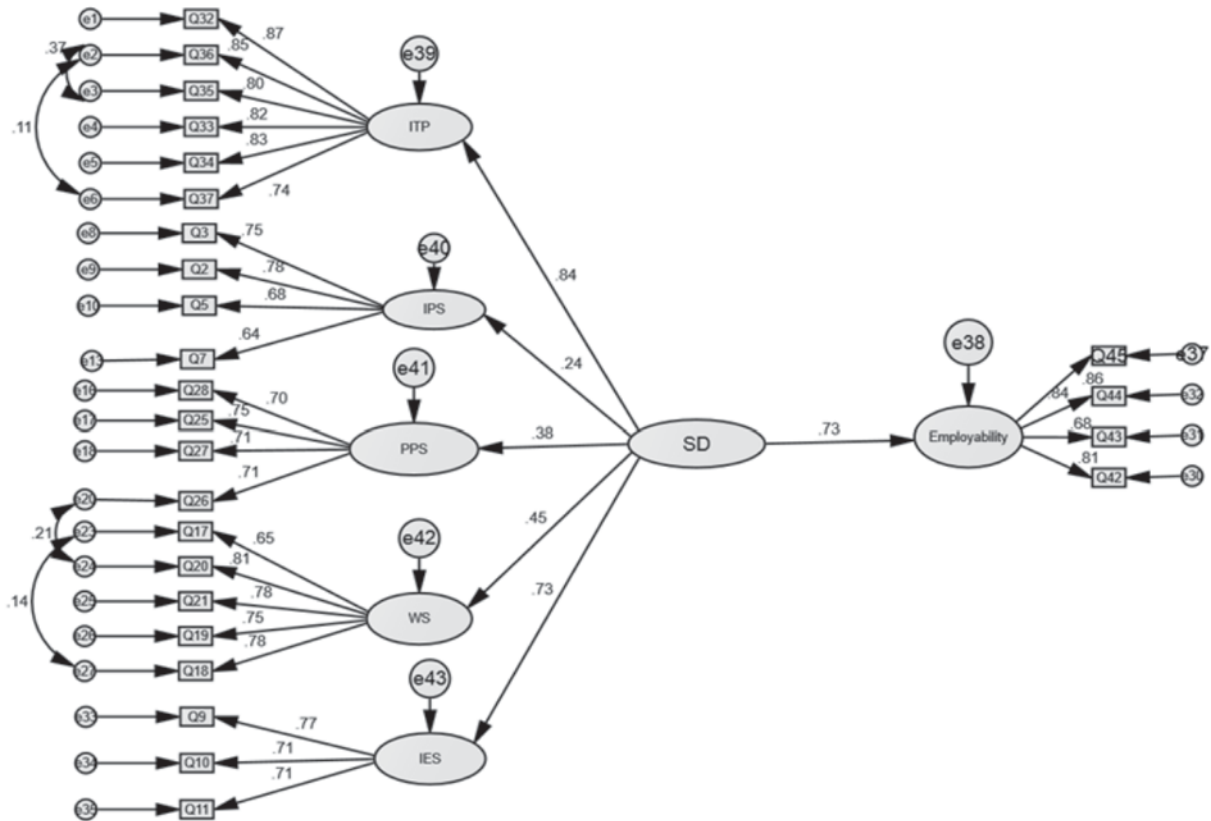*Figure 3: Output of Initial SEM Model*

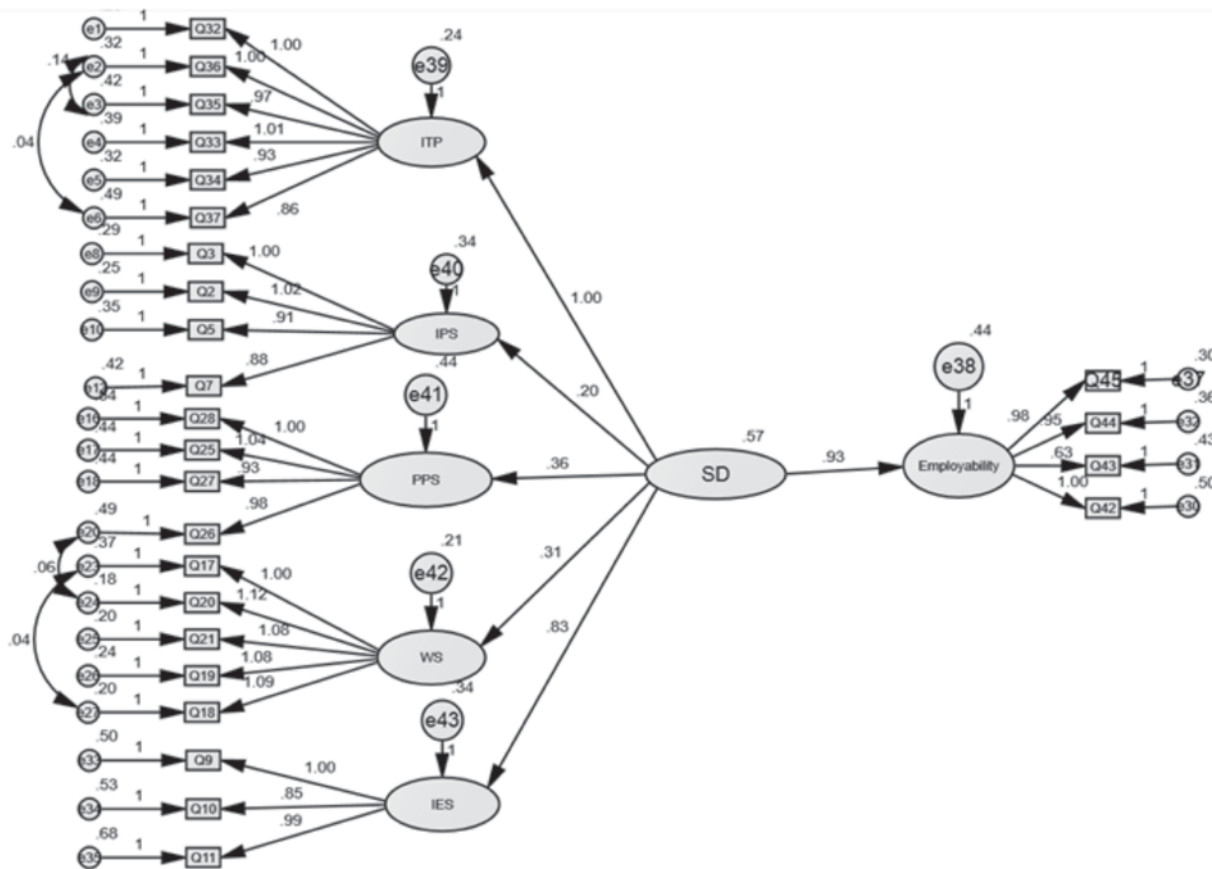*Figure 4: Revised (Standardized Regression Coefficients) Structural Model*

Figure 5: Unstandardized Structural Equation Model

Test of Direct Relationships

T – Statistics and path coefficients to test the impact of skill development on employability (figure 5) are significant in nature. Standardized regression coefficient is β = .726 with T statistics and significance value is t = 10.736, p < .001 for the same. Thus, skill development of workforce positively impacts employability skills which indicates that when skill development goes up by 1 standard deviation, employability goes up by 0.726 standard deviations. Thus, there exists a positive relationship between skill development and employability skills for employed workforce.

Discussion and Conclusion

Studies have shown that the benefits of VET programmes are manifold some of them being enhancing employment opportunities, aiding self-employment, imparting skills for required occupation to partake in the employment markets for school drops outs and to combat child labour and equip kids with marketable skills (Aggarwal & Aggarwal 2017). It is considered pertinent for increasing productivity and employability of the workforce in unorganized sector. (King 2012). The studies undertaken by Kumar et.al (2019) identified that having formal VET in India increase the salaries by 4.7% in the overall economy in comparison with a person without any formal VET. Studies conducted in India by Aggarwal& Aggarwal (2017) suggest higher returns to VET in comparison to general education. Further, Banerjee (2016) opined that VET increases overall wages and manufacturing

sector participation across all social groups. Similar studies conducted by Kahyarara& Teal (2008) in Tanzania, by El-Hamidi (2006) in Egpyt, and by Moenjak and Worswick (2003) in Thailand also revealed higher returns of VET when compared to general education.

National Youth Policy was introduced by Government of India in 2014 aimed at providing holistic vision for the country's youth to empower and achieve their potential. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) in 2019 also emphasized on Convergence, Increased Scale, Meeting Aspirations, and Improved Quality. The MSDE has launched 'Aatamanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM)' portal to help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities. The other governmental initiatives of "Make in India", Vocal for local, promotion of Micro of Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and Self-Help Groups (SHG) also aim at providing employment opportunities. Hence, the objective for enhancing the employability through skill delivery is being successfully achieved through these initiatives.

As per Bloomberg News Analysis 2017 it was predicted that India would have a billion people in the 15-64 years category which would be largest workforce in world by 2027. The current pandemic has also contributed to increase in unemployment rates. In the future too possession of appropriate skills would always enhance the chances of

getting employed and receive wages accordingly. Hence skill development through VET would be a panacea for all job-related problems. Studies have also identified that VET training is also quite helpful from the earnings point of view as it is observed that average daily wages of the formal trainees was found to be higher in comparison to non-formal trainees. This paper confirms that all constructs - Interpersonal Skills (IPS), Professional Practice and Standards (PPS), Initiative and Enterprise Skills (IES), Integration Theory and Practice (ITP), Workplace Skills (WS) are significant for Skill Development. It also identified a positive relationship between skill development and employability skills for employed workforce. The study reiterates that skill development through VET will generate higher employability. Arriagada and Ziderman (1992) also derived that students completing their vocational training receive higher earnings as compared to regular academic streams in Brazil emphasizing that the relation between skill development and employability is significant. According to Eichhorst et al. (2015) in the industrialized economies the government expands the job prospects of youth who lack in skills required by the labour markets and do not possess the ability, funding, or motivation to pursue higher education through VET to enhance the job

opportunities. Further studies by Arum and Shavit (1995) also reiterate that in US, VET increased the probability of employment for secondary graduates and helped them in becoming skilled workers. Kumar et.al (2019) observed that several research work both in developing and developed countries depicted that VET enhanced participation, chance of employment, employability, and salaries of the employees.

Hence in the current context it is further reiterated that possession of right skills through VET enhances the chances of employability for all. The requirements of trained manpower can be fulfilled when the VET is provided in the right earnest. Accurate skill development will lead to a win-win situation for all the stake holders-employee, employer, and the government. The National Education Policy 2020 also focusses on imparting skill-based learning right from the school levels.

The current study aims to provide an insight to the policy makers about the role of skill development and employability for employed workforce. Study enables them to understand the role of specific hard & soft skills and the other interventions required for employment. This will also help them in meeting the labour market demands effectively.

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