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A STUDY ON AWARENESS OF MODERN HR PRACTICES AMONG STUDENTS AND FRESHERS

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ABSTRACT
This study investigates the level of awareness of modern Human Resource (HR) practices among students and freshers and its impact on employability and job readiness. With the rapid digital transformation of the workplace, awareness of contemporary HR tools and practices has become a critical competency for fresh graduates entering the professional world. A structured questionnaire was administered to 201 respondents comprising final year students, fresh graduates, and freshers seeking employment. The study focuses on key modern HR practices including AI-based recruitment, HR analytics, performance management systems, employee engagement strategies, and hybrid work policies. With 70% of respondents affirming awareness of modern HR practices and ANOVA confirming a statistically significant gap between academic curricula and industry HR expectations (F = 6.47, p = 0.0004), the findings reveal that while awareness is broadly positive, practical understanding remains insufficient. The study recommends strengthening industry-academia collaboration through internships, workshops, and curriculum modernisation to bridge this gap and enhance career readiness among students and freshers.
KEY WORDS: *Modern HR Practices, HR Analytics, AI-based Recruitment, Employee Engagement, Hybrid Work Policy, Awareness, Employability, Students, Freshers, Performance Management.*

INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management (HRM) has undergone a significant transformation over the past few decades. Traditionally, HR was considered a support function primarily responsible for recruitment, payroll administration, attendance management, and maintaining employee records. However, in the modern business environment, HR has evolved into a strategic partner that contributes directly to organizational growth, innovation, and sustainability. The shift from traditional personnel management to strategic HRM has introduced a wide range of modern HR practices that focus on employee development, digital transformation, performance optimization, and data-driven decision-making.

In today's competitive and globalized economy, organizations recognize that human capital is one of their most valuable assets. The success of any organization largely depends on its ability to attract, develop, engage, and retain talented employees. Modern HR practices are heavily influenced by technological advancements, globalization, workforce diversity, and changing employee expectations. The integration of technology into HR functions has led to the development of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS), Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based recruitment tools, performance analytics dashboards, digital learning platforms, and automated payroll systems.

The manufacturing and service sectors across India have increasingly adopted these digital HR practices. However, awareness of these tools and practices among students and fresh graduates who are the future workforce remains a critical area of concern. This study examines the awareness level of modern HR practices among students and freshers at Sakthi Institute of Information and Management Studies, Pollachi, and assesses its impact on their employability and career readiness.

OBJECTIVES

- To examine the level of awareness of modern HR practices among students and freshers and assess its impact on their employability and job readiness.
- To identify the key modern HR practices known to students and freshers.
- To analyse the gap between academic curriculum and industry HR practices.
- To gather suggestions for improving awareness of modern HR practices and enhancing overall career readiness.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- **Gupta & Kumar (2019)**, HR Analytics has become an essential aspect of modern Human Resource Management, focusing on collecting, analyzing, and interpreting workforce data to support evidence-based decision-making. Gupta & Kumar (2019) emphasized that awareness of HR analytics among students and freshers is still limited despite its growing importance in organizations. HR analytics helps organizations identify patterns related to recruitment, performance, retention, and employee engagement, enabling more effective workforce planning.
- **Kavanagh & Johnson (2018)**, HR technology and automation have become central to modern HRM. Kavanagh & Johnson

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(2018) emphasized that digital tools streamline HR processes, improve decision-making, and enhance overall workforce efficiency. Technologies such as HRIS, Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS), cloud-based payroll systems, and performance management software have transformed traditional HR operations.

- **Singh (2018)**, Digital recruitment has become a cornerstone of modern HRM. Singh (2018) highlighted that organizations increasingly rely on online platforms, AI-driven ATS, and social media to attract and hire talent efficiently. Jain (2019) emphasized that despite the prevalence of digital recruitment, awareness of these practices among students and freshers remains limited, with many using job portals merely as applicants rather than understanding the underlying recruitment technologies.
- **Rao (2017)**, Performance management has evolved from traditional annual appraisals to comprehensive, continuous systems that align individual performance with organizational goals. Rao (2017) emphasized that modern performance management practices include 360-degree feedback, real-time monitoring, and goal- setting frameworks such as OKRs. Becker and Huselid (2006) highlighted that organizations implementing continuous feedback and performance analytics experience higher productivity and better retention rates.
- **Saks (2006)**, Employee engagement has emerged as a central focus of modern HRM. Saks (2006) defines engagement as the degree to which employees are involved in, committed to, and enthusiastic about their work and organization. Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002) found that organizations with higher employee engagement experienced 20% higher profitability and significantly lower absenteeism.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Based on the survey method, the current study is descriptive in nature. This section provides a brief overview of the techniques used in the sample selection, respondent selection, data collection, and analysis tools.

HYPOTHESIS

- Awareness of modern HR practices significantly impacts the employability and job readiness of students and freshers.
- There is no significant difference in the awareness of modern HR practices based on the field of study.
- There is a significant difference in the awareness of modern HR practices based on the field of study.
- Students who have completed HR-related internships demonstrate significantly higher awareness of modern HR practices.
- The effectiveness of academic curriculum in preparing students for HR-related roles is not significantly correlated with the frequency of exposure to modern HR practices.
- The effectiveness of academic curriculum in preparing students for HR-related roles is significantly correlated with the frequency of exposure to modern HR practices.

SOURCES OF DATA

- **Primary Data** – Questionnaire was administered to 201 respondents.
- **Secondary Data** – Websites and online journals, published reports, and review of literature from published articles.

Sample Size: 201 Students and Freshers (Final year UG/PG students, Fresh graduates, and Freshers seeking employment).

TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS

A descriptive statistic typically comprising percentage analysis, chi-square test, and ANOVA is used to address research questions. Percentage analysis is used when it is crucial to know how many participants provided a specific response.

Method of Analysis

Tools for Data Analysis: Quantitative analysis of the survey data, including descriptive statistics, was carried out using statistical software like SPSS and Excel.

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

- **Age and Awareness of Modern HR Practices & Field of Study and Knowledge of HR Practices**

There is no significant association between the age group of respondents and their awareness of modern HR practices.
There is a significant association between the age group of respondents and their awareness of modern HR practices.

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.302	9	.006
Likelihood Ratio	20.660	9	.014
N of Valid Cases	201		

INTERPRETATION

The result is statistically significant since the p-value = 0.006 is less than 0.05. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that the two categorical variables under analysis age group and HR awareness have a strong correlation with one another, making it unlikely that the variations in observed frequencies are the result of chance.

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HR Internship Experience and Awareness of Modern HR Practices & HR Workshop Participation and Awareness of HR Practices

HR internship experience is not significantly associated with the level of awareness of modern HR practices among students and freshers.

HR internship experience is significantly associated with the level of awareness of modern HR practices among students and freshers.

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	29.425	9	.001
Likelihood Ratio	25.058	9	.003
N of Valid Cases	201		

INTERPRETATION

Since the p-value (.001) is less than the standard alpha level (0.05), we reject the null hypothesis. This suggests there is a statistically significant association between HR internship experience and awareness of modern HR practices. The chi-square value of 59.837 for workshop participation and awareness further confirms the strongest association found in the study, indicating that structured learning events have a powerful positive impact on HR knowledge acquisition.

ANOVA ANALYSIS

Awareness of modern HR practices and employability/job readiness:

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	28.64	3	9.55	5.82	0.0018	2.68
Within Groups	154.32	94	1.64			
Total	182.96	97				

INTERPRETATION

- **F-Value (5.82):** The calculated F-value (5.82) is greater than the table value (F crit = 2.68), indicating significant group differences.
- **Significance (p = 0.0018):** The p-value of 0.0018 is well below the 0.05 threshold. This indicates that the observed relationship is statistically significant. The null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that awareness of modern HR practices significantly impacts employability and job readiness.
- **Sample Size (N = 201):** The 201 respondents provide an adequate sample size for drawing reliable conclusions. Academic curriculum gap and industry HR practices:

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	34.18	4	8.55	6.47	0.0004	2.45
Within Groups	123.56	93	1.33			
Total	157.74	97				

INTERPRETATION

- **F-Value (6.47):** The calculated F-value (6.47) is higher than the critical value (F crit = 2.45).
- **Significance (p = 0.0004):** The p-value (0.0004) is also lower than 0.05, which means the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant gap between the academic curriculum and current industry HR practices. Respondents reported that practical implementation, real-time case studies, HR software training, and exposure to current recruitment technologies are limited in the existing curriculum.
- **Sample Size (N = 201):** With 201 respondents, the sample size is sufficient to identify moderate or strong relationships, affirming the reliability of findings.

SUGGESTIONS

- Strengthen Practical Training: Conduct more interactive HR training sessions, live industry demonstrations, and hands-on exposure to HR technology tools such as HRIS, ATS, and HR analytics dashboards.
- Frequent Refresher Courses: Plan recurring workshops and seminars on modern HR practices to maintain students' knowledge of evolving trends such as AI-based recruitment and hybrid work policies.
- Enhance Curriculum Alignment: Update academic syllabi regularly to incorporate contemporary HR topics, including digital recruitment, HR analytics, performance management frameworks (OKRs), and remote work policies.
- Boost Industry Interaction: Facilitate regular guest lectures, corporate visits, and live case study sessions with HR professionals to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and industry expectations.
- Encourage Internship Participation: Make HR-specific internships a mandatory component of management degree

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programmes to provide students with real organizational HR exposure.

- Encourage Safety and Transparency Culture: Encourage a robust learning culture by recognizing student initiatives in HR, integrating HR project work into performance evaluations, and promoting peer learning through HR clubs and competitions.

CONCLUSION

The study unequivocally demonstrates that awareness of modern HR practices among students and freshers plays a significant role in shaping their employability, job readiness, and professional confidence. The majority of the 201 respondents surveyed affirmed a positive awareness of modern HR practices, and many acknowledged that such knowledge greatly enhanced their career preparation and adaptability to corporate expectations.

According to the data, structured industry interaction, HR internships, effective workshop programmes, and exposure to digital HR tools are the most powerful enablers of HR awareness. Even though overall awareness levels received relatively positive ratings, the presence of a statistically significant gap between academic curricula and industry HR practices confirmed by ANOVA indicates that more work is required to modernise academic preparation.

Furthermore, the limited awareness of AI-based recruitment tools (only 18% aware) and the moderate academic preparation reported by 46% of respondents highlight how crucial experiential and technology-integrated learning is to building genuine HR competency. In the end, the results demonstrate that a well-structured academic programme enriched with practical HR exposure is a strategic investment that enhances student performance, reduces the industry-academia gap, and promotes operational excellence in human resource management. Institutions should constantly evaluate and update their curricula in accordance with evolving HR industry standards to achieve sustainable graduate employability and organizational readiness.

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