

# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

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## Abstract

Covid 19 outbreak worldwide has forced the countries to impose numerous restrictive measures, including social distancing complete and partial lockdowns. The economy of many countries came to a halt, including India. Schools and colleges were closed, and online teaching and learning gave limited practical exposure to students. Companies stopped hiring; instead, the offer letters which were rolled out were taken back. Salaries were deducted, and layoffs were announced. Several people lost their jobs. Students got anxious about their future during this environment of chaos and anxiety. Covid 19 significantly impacted the employability skills and employment opportunities. Thus, this study aims to measure the impact of COVID-19 on the employment and employability skills of university students. Data is collected from 163 university students across different disciplines and courses.

**Keywords:** Covid 19, Employment, Employability Skills

## Introduction

The pandemic has turned the entire globe upside down. No one ever believed the world could be turned upside down in this way. COVID19 is a severe acute respiratory illness that has wreaked havoc on the economy and society. In January 2020, the World Health Organization labeled the coronavirus outbreak an international public health emergency, followed by a pandemic in March. The first documented case in India occurred in Kerala in January 2020, prompting the Indian government to declare a state of emergency on March 20. Schools and colleges were ordered to close by the government. Admissions and exams in schools and universities have been rescheduled or cancelled.

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During the COVID-19 crisis, India and other countries enacted social distancing measures and stay-at-home orders, resulting in a substantial increase in unemployment and other workers being granted reduced hours or temporarily suspended. School closures and the elimination of entry-level jobs, internships, and apprenticeships have had a significant impact on youth. High and ongoing youth unemployment and underemployment in the effects of the global financial crisis demonstrated that reconnecting youth people with excellent jobs may be difficult, with potentially long-term consequences.

The lockdown has caused the regular academic session to be disrupted. Because most primary and secondary school children are cut off from academic exchanges with their teachers, they are the most affected. Through the efforts made by teachers, school administrations, local and national governments to cope with the unusual circumstances of e-learning, the disruption in education and learning could have medium and long-term implications on the quality of education. In reaction to school closures, UNESCO advised that schools and teachers employ distance learning programs and available educational tools and platforms to reach learners remotely and minimize disruptions in education.

### Concept of employment and employability:

Employment is a formal connection between two parties in which one party is the employer, and the other is the employee. The employer might be a company, a for-profit organization, a not-for-profit organization, a co-operative, or another entity. Employability skills are, however, different from employment. *Employability skills* are the essential skills and characteristics required for practically any employment. These are the skills that a business looks for in a candidate. Employees with these skills are virtually always sought-after hiring managers. Figure 1 shows the various essential employability skills measured in this study.



Figure 1: Employability Skills

During the COVID-19 crisis, India and other countries imposed social distancing measures and stay-at-home orders, resulting in a significant increase in unemployment and the reduction or suspension of other workers.

The economic costs of the COVID-19 epidemic have not been evenly distributed. Employees in informal employment or in a variety of work arrangements, for example, have been susceptible to the crisis's impacts because they have fewer resources and protection. Women have lost a disproportionate amount of jobs and money. Many working women have been on the front lines of providing essential services while also being in danger of contracting the coronavirus. Furthermore, women have been disproportionately affected by the crisis's increased burden of unpaid care.

The removal of entry-level jobs, internships, and apprenticeships, as well as school closures, has had a tremendous impact on youth. In the aftermath of the global financial crisis, high and persistent youth unemployment and underemployment proved that linking young people with outstanding jobs could be challenging, with long-term ramifications. Because the epidemic is causing havoc on the informal economy, young and female employees in this vulnerable sector are particularly worrying.

**Literature Review:**

**BUHEJI & Buheji (2020)**

Throughout history, widespread diseases or pandemics have presented us with numerous obstacles and numerous chances for development, one of which is Covid-19. In this paper, we look ahead to chances to improve and develop our planet. We examine the various opportunities these pandemics and other everyday occurrences bring to our lives. This report proposes a methodology for examining the potential hazards of such a terrible crisis. More research is needed to identify answers that will protect us from future crises. This analysis was carried out in order to uncover both hidden and evident opportunities that the crisis has brought into our lives.

**Hite and Mcdonald (2021)**

It is reasonable to conclude that Covid 19 has had various effects; however, Linda M Hite and Kimberly S Mc Donald in 2020 attempted to examine the fundamental aspect of careers after Covid 19 and its problems and modifications. Human resource development, career resilience, and career shocks were also discussed. They focused on work-life balance and double-checked with the Mckinsey Institute, which studies worldwide economic trends and combines the concepts of employability and employment.

**Ivanov and Terziev (2021)**

The employment guidance study is part of a detailed study that analyzes and examines the process on the global market that ensures emergency scenarios from COVID-19 pandemics. The main effect is on the labor before the pandemic crisis and the changes in current global employment. It proposes measures and actions to reconstruct the monetary resources to prepare for the new challenges faced by the global market. This methodology initiates long-term goals.

**YUCEL AND WHO (2021)**

Hospital employees were not allowed to take vacations, resign, or retire during the pandemic. Consciousness is required for discipline. Work should be done in conformity with the stated goals. Because this illness is claiming lives on a regular basis, the government has advised voters to maintain physical and social isolation and has even enacted regional quarantining to prevent the sickness from spreading further. During the pandemic, authorities advised that anyone who was infected or had contact with infected people go into quarantine; also, states with high infection rates were confined to prevent further infection.

**AHMAD AL-FADLY (2020)**

The purpose of this review is to show how covid 19 created massive failures in society, particularly in the hospitality and tourism sectors, which employ a large number of people. The personnel, supply chain, and cash flow of SMEs were noted as areas of particular importance in the evaluation. The findings established a general perception of SME business owners and identified themes relating to the business individual, the business, and the firm's survival. The study found that government intervention is essential to help surviving enterprises, particularly in stimulus funding, moratoriums, extended loans, and interest exemptions.

**Adecco Group (2020)**

COVID 19 has a strong impact globally, as every country's government tried to make a strong plan that will support the health and economy of the country out of this pandemic. Similarly, employers must also find solutions to ensure the organization stays active, with required productivity and a healthy and skilled workforce. This paper concludes that the CEO of Adecco Group (Alain Dehaze) recently said now is the time to 'invest in people, not only jobs. It means the focus should be on investing in people and their skills as it is of utmost importance. Also, Vocational education training (VET) and apprenticeship have proven the perfect medium for investing in people and their skills. They benefit both students and employers, but most importantly, they can bridge the skills gap due to COVID-19.

### **Kay and Russell (2020)**

The world reacts to the impact of COVID-19, work-integrated learning programs worldwide. Across countries like Australia and Canada, several students shifted to working remotely or were dismissed from their WIL experience. This COVID-19 pandemic affected students learning, risk management, staff capability, program delivery, and industry engagement. This research paper shows the responses of COVID-19 by the University of Waterloo, Canada, and RMIT University. These are guided by the quality of WIL principles and different types of WIL organized structure. This paper infers with discussion on challenges and opportunities that events such as COVID-19 had upon the WIL program, the implication for other institutions, and student outcomes.

### **ODEY and ABUTU**

“This paper concluded extensive literature review exposes the post-COVID-19 skills for the Nigerian economy and employment for youths in nations development. This type of crisis outbreak has brought severe social consequences like loss in income, lockdown, closure of educational institutions, loss of jobs, decrease in wealth, and increase in poverty. This COVID-19 pandemic affects the youth of Nigeria faster and harder than other age groups youth of Nigeria face multiple shocks like training and on-job-learning, employment, and income losses due to lay-off and reduced working hours. Have difficulties in finding new jobs or increase in unemployment. This makes a skill gap which makes several youths remain unemployed. Youth of Nigeria must strive to obtain the needed for post-COVID-19 skills was also established recommendation are made to enhance recovery for the post-COVID-19 skills by youths to boost their employment and relevant contribution for nations development”.

### **Maree J G (2021)**

Specially in South countries, employees' situations and work-seekers has deteriorated markedly. In Global North contexts, structures of hierarchical activities were disappearing apace... Erstwhile “safe work” contexts were not there to supply safety and secure a “holding environment” for employees.

### **Syabova and Tesarova (2021)**

The covid-19 pandemic has occupied virtually every space of people's lives. Many countries have introduced several degrees to measures to forestall it unfold. Most of those measures were, or still area units endowed toward reducing or stopping the operation of retailers and services, in some cases adding to the massive producing corporations. However, as several corporations did not address these restrictions, cases have increased in most EU countries. An analogous state of affairs was additionally ascertained in Shovakia.

**Objectives:** Objectives are specific or measurable steps taken to achieve a goal. It describes what the research or report is trying to achieve. It shows the focus of the study. The purpose of this research is to find out what life is like before and after Covid-19, especially in terms of employment and employability. Reports show how employment has taken a turn after covid 19. So, the objectives of this research are-

- To know the impact of Covid-19 on employment
- To know the impact of Covid-19 on employability

### **Research Methodology**

- The research design used is Descriptive Research Design. This design's goal is to depict a general population, situation or phenomenon unequivocally and productively. This design can answer *what, where, when* and *how* questions, and not *why* questions. There are three methods to conduct Descriptive Research: Surveys, Observations and Case Study. Out of these we used the survey method.
- Primary and Secondary Data have been used in this. Primary data refers to the data collected first hand by the researcher. Secondary data is the data that has already been collected by someone else and is now being used by the researchers. In our research, the questionnaire is the primary data whereas the literature review is the secondary data.

- The primary data (questionnaire) collected in our research was collected through Google Forms. A questionnaire containing some demographic information and 9 statements on employability skills and 5 statements on employment concerns were asked from the respondents on a scale of 1-5.
- Sampling Technique used in this research is Convenience Sampling Technique. In this, the sample is taken from a group of people easy to contact or to reach.
- Sample Size: the number of respondents who filled the questionnaire are 163.

**Data Analysis**

Table 1: Demographic Details

Age	
Below 20	45.4%
20-25	47.2%
25-30	5.5%
Above 30	1.8%
Gender	
Male	58.3%
Female	41.7%
Education Level	
Undergraduate	80%
Postgraduate	20%

**Impact of COVID 19 on Employability Skills**

I feel my learning and knowledge is negatively affected because of Covid 19.

163 responses

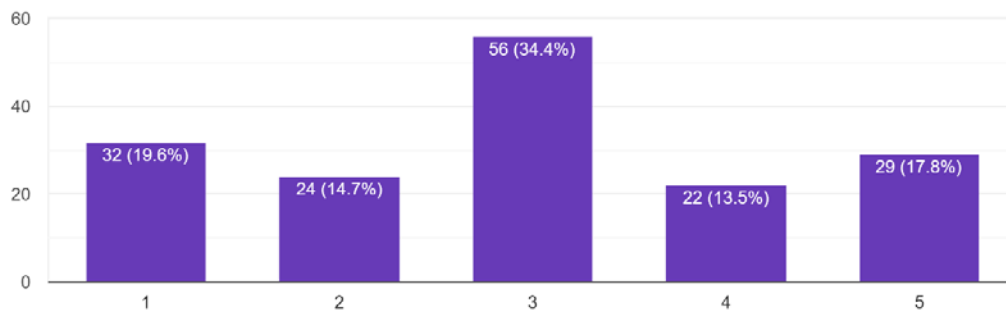
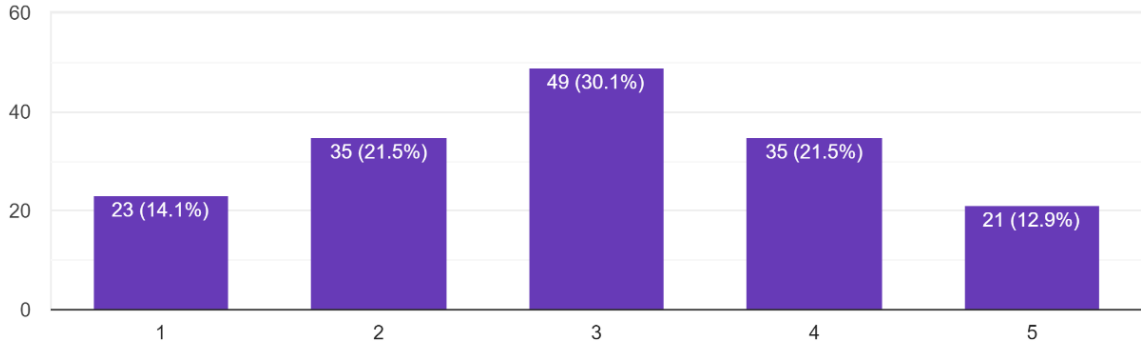


Figure 1: EMPLOYABILITY SKILL Q1

I got enough time and opportunities to develop myself during Covid 19.

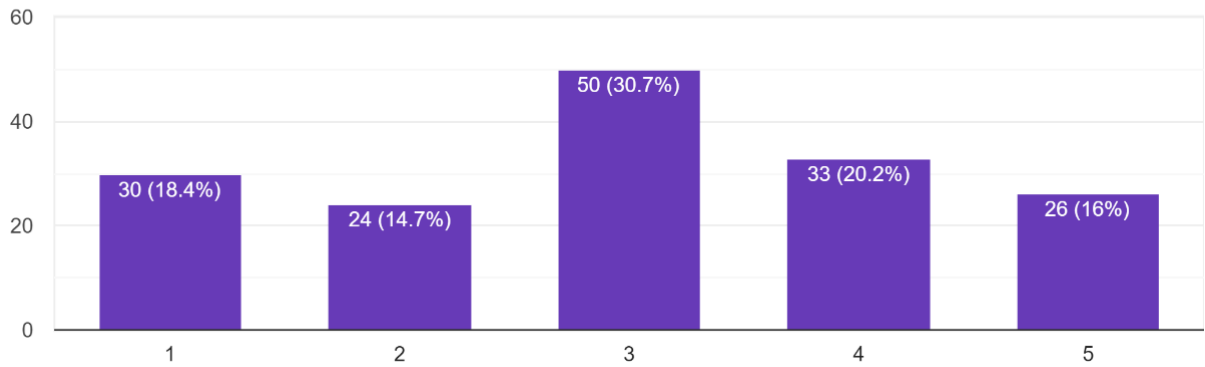
163 responses



*Figure 2: EMPLOYABILITY SKILL Q2*

I did not get enough exposure to improve my presentation skills during Covid 19.

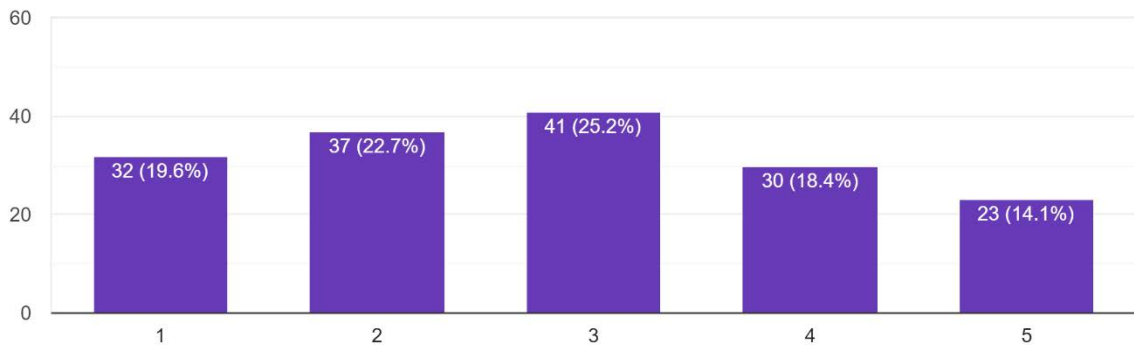
163 responses



*Figure 3: EMPLOYABILITY SKILL Q3*

My stress level has increased after Covid 19.

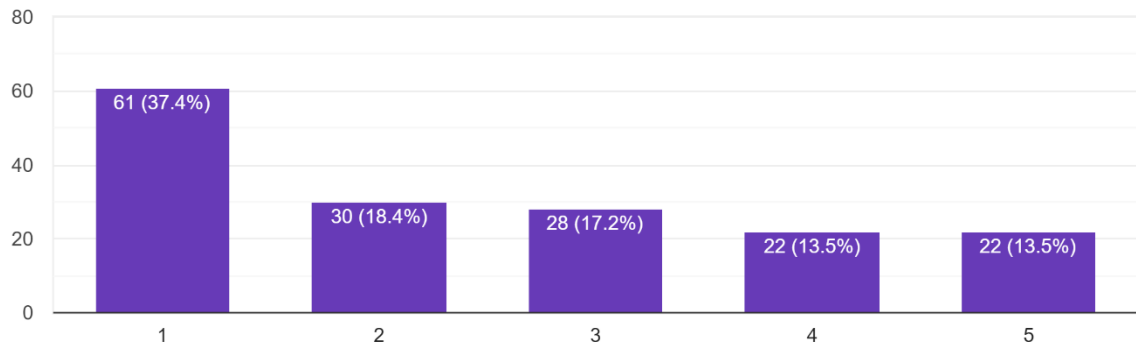
163 responses



*Figure 4: EMPLOYABILITY SKILL Q4*

I did not get practical exposure due to online classes during Covid 19.

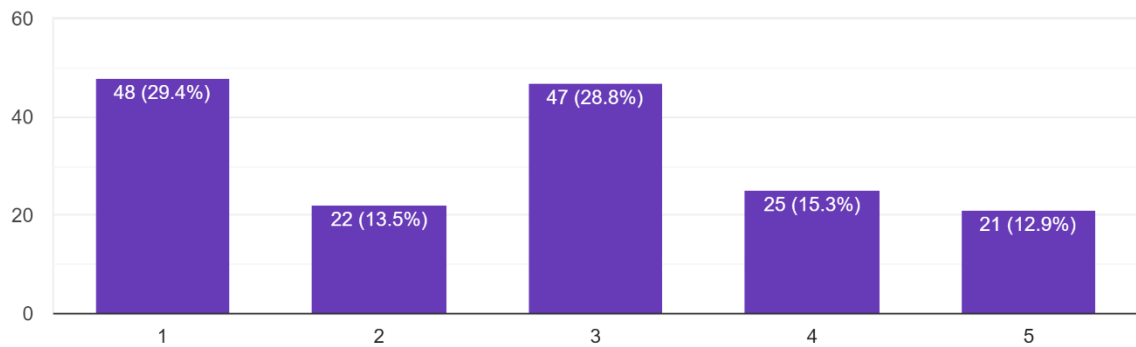
163 responses



*Figure 5: EMPLOYABILITY SKILL Q5*

My labs, practical assignments, internships etc. were missed due to Covid 19.

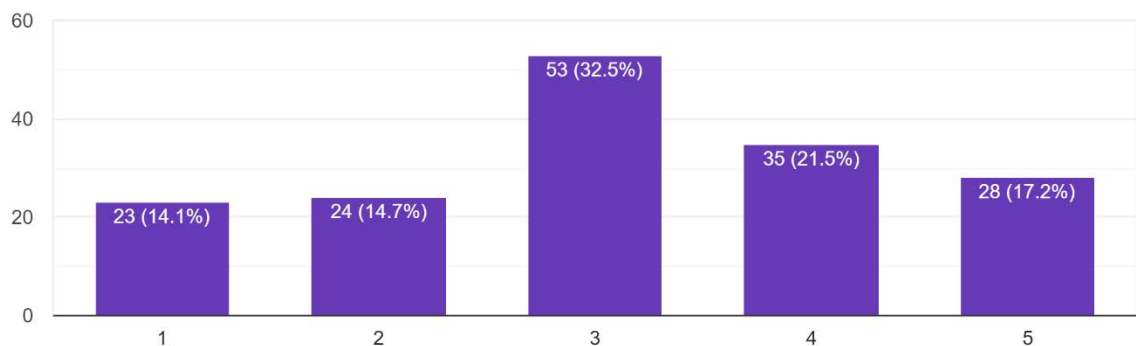
163 responses



*Figure 6: EMPLOYABILITY SKILL Q6*

I feel comfortable working in team after Covid 19

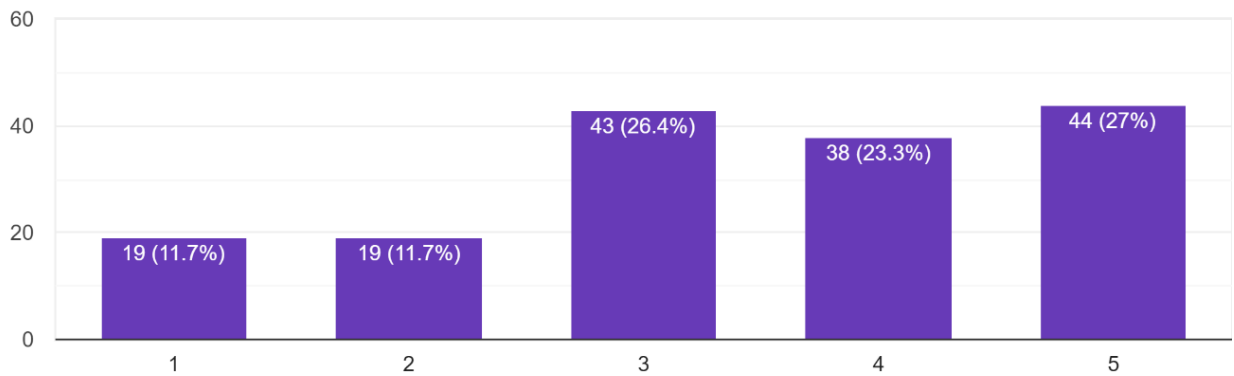
163 responses



*Figure 7: EMPLOYABILITY SKILL Q7*

My time management skills have improved after Covid 19

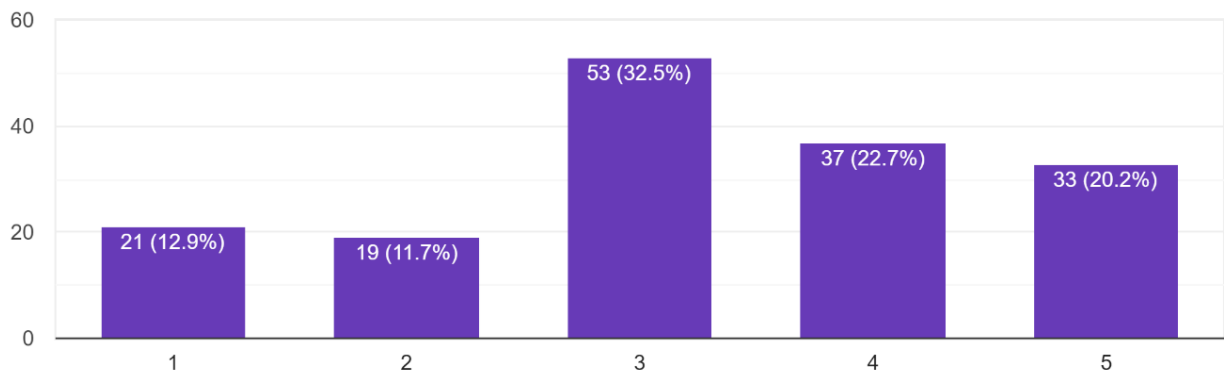
163 responses



*Figure 8: EMPLOYABILITY SKILL Q8*

My attitude has become more negative after Covid 19.

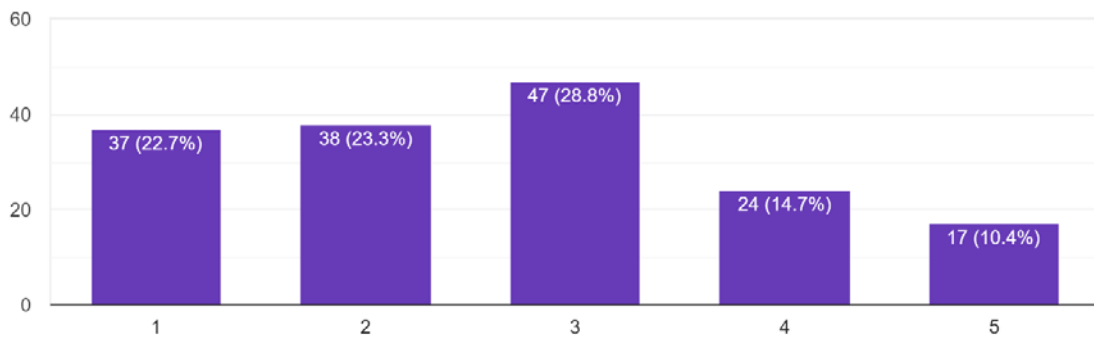
163 responses



*Figure 9: EMPLOYABILITY SKILL Q9*

I think Covid 19 has adversely impacted students' overall Employability Skills?

163 responses



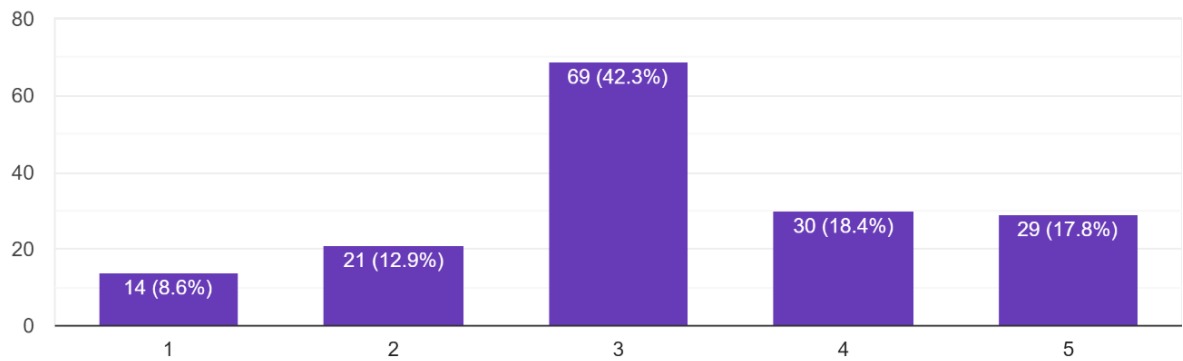
*Figure 10: EMPLOYABILITY SKILL Q10*



**Impact of Covid 19 on employment**

I feel more confident in facing employment related concerns after Covid 19

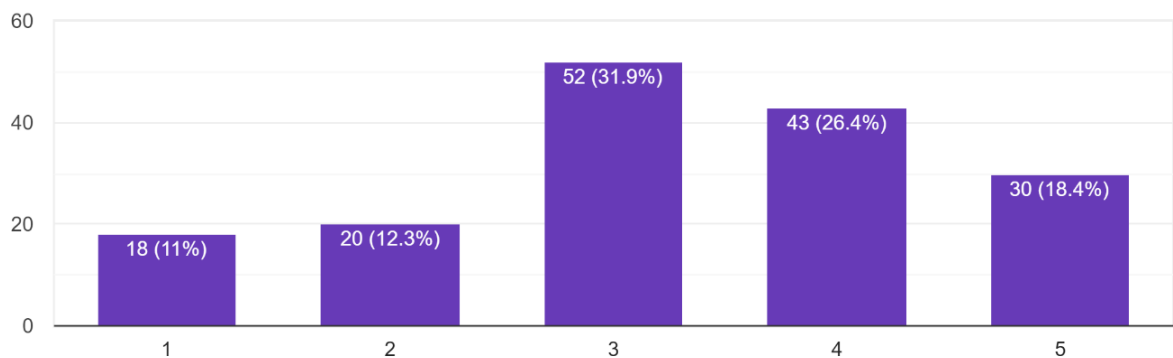
163 responses



*Figure 11: EMPLOYMENT CONCERN Q1*

Same placement opportunities are available in my college as it was before Covid 19.

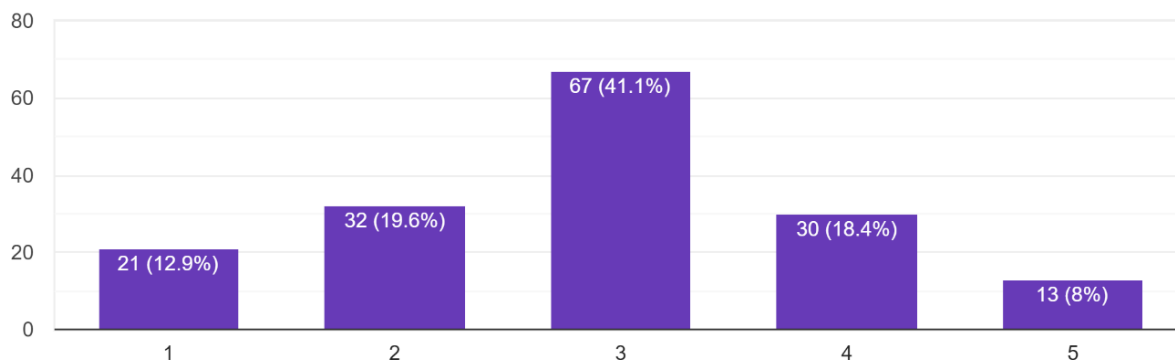
163 responses



*Figure 12: EMPLOYMENT CONCERN Q2*

There is a change in the compensation packages offered by companies after Covid 19.

163 responses



*Figure 13: EMPLOYMENT CONCERN Q3*

I think Covid 19 has adversely impacted Employment opportunities for students?

163 responses

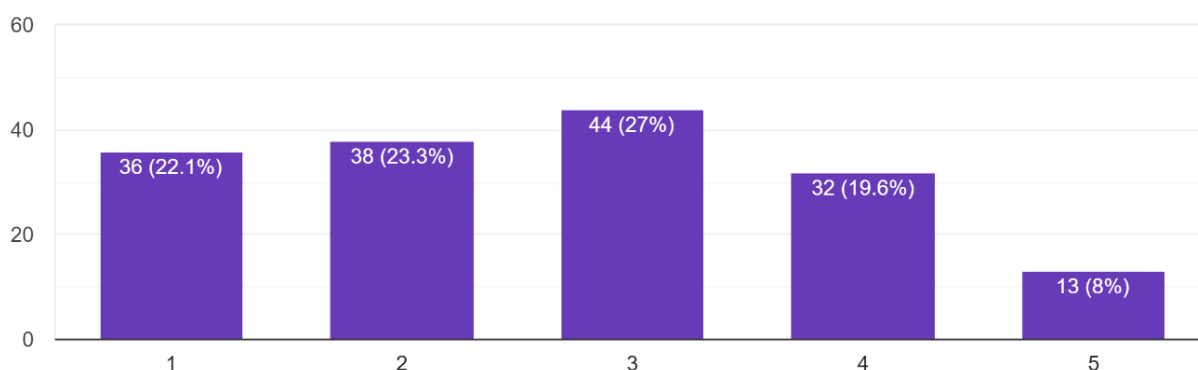


Figure 14: EMPLOYMENT CONCERN Q4

### Findings

- 34.4 % students gave an average rating to that their learning and knowledge is negatively affected because of Covid 19
- 30.1 % students gave an average rating to that they got enough time and opportunities to develop themselves during Covid 19.
- 30.7 % students gave an average rating to that they did not get enough exposure to improve their presentation skills during Covid 19.
- 25.2 % students gave an average rating to that their stress level has increased after Covid 19.
- 37.4 % students **strongly agree** that they did not get practical exposure due to online classes during Covid 19.
- 29.4% students **strongly agree** that their labs, practical assignments, internships etc. were missed due to Covid 19.
- 32.5 % students gave an average rating to that they feel comfortable working in a team after Covid 19
- 27% students **strongly disagree** that their time management skills have improved after Covid 19
- 32.5% students gave an average rating to that their attitude has become more negative after Covid 19.
- 42.3 % students gave an average rating to that they feel more confident in facing employment-related concerns after Covid 19
- 32.9 % students gave an average rating to that they feel the same placement opportunities are available in their college as it was before Covid 19.
- 41.1% students gave an average rating to that there is a change in the compensation packages offered by companies after Covid 19.
- 28.8 % students gave an average rating to that Covid 19 has adversely impacted students' overall employability skills?
- 27 % students gave an average rating to that Covid 19 has adversely impacted employment opportunities for students?

### Conclusion And Recommendations

Students' perspectives on how Covid 19 has impacted their employment skills and concerns are highlighted in the study. The majority of students agreed that Covid 19 had harmed their practical exposure in terms of the lab, practical exposure,

internships, and so on. In addition, it was discovered in this study that students have time management challenges following Covid 19. Universities and institutions are encouraged to think of new ways to provide students with greater practical experience. Since schools and universities are now offering physical lessons, more efforts are needed to prepare students for the workforce and to compensate for the losses caused by Covid 19. Students also need to put extra efforts to learn time management and prepare themselves to changing business environments.

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