

UNIVERSITY OF WALES

TRINITY SAINT DAVID

ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

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Introduction

Prior to starting the job-hunt procedure, it is important for fresh applicant and job aspirants to critically analyse their habits, employability skills, behaviours, personal needs and demands, and accurately identify the threats, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities available to them. The entire self-analysis protocol has to be impartial and unbiased where the aspirants will have to come to conclusions with valid proofs and not hearsay (renovo.uk, 2021). This study will cover my self-analysis, job-role analysis, and discuss the steps that can be taken by me to meet the requisite criterion for becoming an HR Manager in future.

This report will cover 4 crucial skills and topics that I have learned in the module, ***'Academic and Employability Skills'***. The 4 key skills that I feel are most crucial for attaining my goal of becoming an HR Manager are Time Management, Summarising, Reflection and Public Speaking. I will apply Kolb's Cycle of Learning in the above-mentioned skills and topics to explain how I benefited from the module, how reflective thinking of the module enabled me to conceptualise the skills and their importance in different scenarios and sectors and then how I acted on acquiring the skills for personal and career development.

Swot-Analysis

I will have to impartially identify the strengths and weaknesses while analysing threats and opportunities that are presented to me. This can be done by performing a **SWOT Analysis** of mine. I can also utilise various Psychometric Tests to ease out the confusions and dilemma by applications of various well-established theories and models. Analysing my skills will enable me to identify what I want to be and then help me to plan out what I need to do in order to achieve my career aspirations.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Academic Prowess. The job aspirants must be well versed in their subject literature, including and not limited to different models, theories and frameworks of implementation, monitoring and strategic planning. I have a bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management which enables me to have a good grasp on different motivational theories that would help me to identify different motivational tools and use them efficiently to motivate the workforce and improve its productivity. • Job Experience. I have worked in an SME on a part-time basis as HR personnel who provided me opportunities to first-hand learn about different HRM practices. Consequently, I have a good idea of the expectations that the company has from HR Managers and I can act accordingly.	• Organisation Skills. I have no previous experience of organising events, as a result of which I have poor organisations skills. HR personnel regularly organises different events with the aim of improving the motivation and skill supply of the workforce, therefore I need to work on my organising skill. • Tech Savvy. I am not from a technical background and consequently, I am not proficient in designing software such as Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator. Designing and Poster-making is one of the regular tasks of HR

• Communication Skills. Communication skills are required in all business functions. I have good communications skills as I was a part of school as well as college debate teams and have done a good share of public speaking. Having good communication skills have enabled me to speak clearly with all and consequently, chances of miscommunication are low.	personnel and therefore I need to take a professional course on Online Designing. • Time-management. Sometimes I find it hard to multitask and consequently fall behind the deadlines. Not sticking to deadlines has cost me my grades in several instances. Although I have improved my time management skills, I still have scopes of improvement.
Opportunities • Internship. I can make proper utilisation of the free time I have while studying in college and take up an internship at one of the companies near my college campus. This would help me improve my time-management skills and at the same time, I will be able to gather more work experience. I will be able to hone up my practical skills in managing employees which will give me a competitive advantage over other fresh candidates. • Networking Skills. I can take advantage of my communication skills and socialise with people of similar interests such as HR aspirants, HR personnel and HR managers to improve my knowledge about HR Practices. I can also improve my networking skills by communicating and	Threats • Failure to follow deadlines. If I am unable to handle multiple tasks simultaneously then I will miss out on different responsibilities that would disastrous for me and bad for the company. • Not able to operate complex software. If I do not learn to operate HRIS software and do graphic designing then my productivity and efficiency would not be on par with the changing times. The entire company would be facing problems due to slow, inefficient HRM practices.

socialising with people from different sectors and different backgrounds. Networking is crucial for cultural awareness and cultivating multi-perceptive opinions. • Leadership Skills. By attending different leadership workshops and applying different leadership theories, I can improve my leadership skills by finding the most suitable leadership approach that goes along with my personality. I will have to lead by example and first implement whatever change I want to see in others firstly on myself. Convincing Power is also something I will need to work on to support my leadership skills and become an efficient leader.	
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Job-analysis

Skills can be categories into 4 types; they are Adaptive Skills, Academic Skills, Transferable Skills and job-related skills. Skills that help in developing interpersonal interactions such as communication skills are called Adaptive skills. Skills that improve theoretical knowledge and can be acquired by educational programmes, reading books and attaining degrees are called Academic skills. Skills that are not job-specific and are applicable in all sectors such as Time Management are called transferable skills. Skills that are job-specific and only valuable in specific sectors are called Job-related skills. For example, recruitment and selection skills to hire the most suitable candidate require a lot of practice and it can be acquired only by experience (from the lecturer's slides).

Requisite Employability Skills in a Human Resource Manager are:

- **Excellent Communication Skills.** Communication skills build up interpersonal relationships.
- **HRIS Knowledge.** Human Resource Information System helps to efficiently collect and store Human Resource data and information which can be later analysed to take efficient HRM decisions (Masum *et al.*, 2018).
- **Recruitment and Selection Skill.** HR Managers have to have reliable and impartial intuitions about hiring the most suitable candidates.
- **Proactivity.** Proactive measures protect the company from any potential disputes and lawsuits. Proactive HR Management Practices can also train the workforce to take proactive decisions (Lee *et al.*, 2019).
- **Administrative Experts.** HR Managers administrate the workforce and ensure law compliance in them.
- **Coaching.** HR Managers must impart coaching and training to employees so that they can increase productivity. One-to-one coaching employees who are facing problems can help the HR Managers to emphasise with the employees and then come up with ideas to mitigate the problem and restore productivity (Jones *et al.*, 2016).
- **Intercultural Sensitivity.** Cultural Awareness Skill ensures that employees from diverse background are not discriminated against and avoid any misunderstanding in the workforce.

- ***Excellent Analytical Driven.*** Analytical thinking enables HR Managers to partake in workforce planning.
- ***Time Management.*** Time Management Skill is crucial in HR Managers so that they can efficiently focus on many different aspects of the organisation such as staffing need, law compliance, workplace environment and safety standards in the company (Aeon and Aguinis, 2017).
- ***Organising Skill.*** Organisation skills enable HR Managers to focus on multi-task and organise different workplace events without ignoring any aspect of the job responsibilities.

Skill Development

After conducting self-analysis and job analysis job aspirants must work on the identified shortcomings and work accordingly to improve their skill supply and meet the skill requirements. This can be done by charting out different short-term goals and long-term goals and formulating a personal development plan to achieve them (medium.com, 2019).

Short-term Goals and Long-term Goals

Short-term goals are targets that can be attained within six months. It takes less time to achieve them, and the implications are observed immediately, mid-term goals take 6-12 months to attain. On the other hand, ***long-term goals*** take over 2-3 years to attain and requires regular contributions to meet them. In most cases, attainment of long-term goals requires chronologically establishing several short-term goals.

Personal Development Plan

Personal Development Plan helps individuals to take charge of their development progress by making the learning process proactive and reactive. Starting a PDP would enable me to curate and prioritise different goals as per the immediate needs as well as the long-term ambitions (Rimmer, 2018). PDP will enable me to identify key aspects of learning, acquire new skills and develop existing skills that would help me become an efficient HR Manager. Creating a PDP involves defining what I need to do, defining when and how I will do it, mention and how I will check my progress at regular intervals (from the lecturer's PDF).

	Short-Term Time Frame	Mid-Term Time Frame	Long-Term Time Frame
Section 1 My Goals	My short term goals are to become knowledgeable in the fields of online designing and HRIS software operating. These would help me to achieve my final goal of becoming an HR manager as these skills are required to become efficient in the HRM field.	My mid-term goal is to improve my organisation skills which will help me conduct different learning and development sessions for the workforce. I will also be able to take initiatives in hosting cultural events and other educational sessions for the employees as HR Manager in future.	My long-term goal is to master the art of time management. Time management will enable me to multi-task several important tasks and maintain flexible prioritising ability when I become an HR manager in future.
Section 2 Skills and Knowledge to be Learned	For the above-mentioned skills, I will also have to develop my computer basics and arrange sufficient funds to take up online courses that generally last for 6 months. I will freelance with different companies that deal with graphic designing in order to enhance my skills with actual practice.	In order to improve my organisational skill, I want to intern as an HR personnel in one of the local businesses near my college campus and learn from experience.	I plan to keep a detailed journal and maintain a to-do list every day for 3 years. I also will have to leave sufficient space for improvisation as per the needs while ensuring that I do not miss out on any deadline in doing so.

Section 3 Next Steps	I'll take one of the many online courses that are available on the internet for learning basics and advanced techniques and skills of graphic designing. I will also look up and invest online in a software proficiency course. I will join 6 months-long courses and simultaneously freelance with different companies associated with graphic designing for practice whatever I learn from the courses.	I am going to intern at one of the local businesses near my college campus on a part-time basis while pursuing my degree. This would help me get exposure to the practical application of different HRM practices I learnt in college. I will learn to organise different programmes and events on behalf of the company which would improve my organisation skills.	I am going to improve my time management skills by regularly maintaining a to-do list and allocating time for each task assigned. I plan to make the to-do list flexible and be accommodating to unforeseen developments in the day and consequently improve my prioritising ability as well. I plan to adhere to the to-do list and keep a detailed journal to understand my shortcomings and improve them the next day.

Section 4 – Resources	I will require sufficient funds to join and free time to regularly attend the above-mentioned online classes. Freelancing will also require free time and professionalism.	I will need free time to be able to balance my college life and my professional life. I will have to plan the working hours in such a way that they don't interfere with my classes.	Implementation of this long-term plan will not require any such resources except a notebook, a pen and dedication to follow through with the plan.
Section 5 – Time Schedule	My time schedule would be attending the regular classes for 1 hour preferably from 7 to 8 in the morning. I will dedicate 2 hours to studying whatever I learn and continue with the rest of my day. At night I will freelance with different companies to apply whatever I learn and dedicate 2 hours for freelancing purposes every alternative day.	I will be working on weekends for 6 hours and in peak seasons I will be working on alternative days in night shifts. I plan to work for 1 year to improve my organisational skills by learning and practising.	My time schedule would be to prepare the to-do list for the next day at night and update it as per the recent developments. This is going to be a long-term goal spanning 3 years with a self-analysing period to a week to check my progress every 3 months and identify new ways to become more efficient.

When will I start?	I will start from the next day of finishing my current semester.	I will start from the month of August 2021	I will start from the month of August 2021.
When do I expect to finish?	6 months from the day of starting, I hope to accomplish my short term goal by the time I finish my next semester.	I plan to achieve my mid-term goal by August 2022.	I plan to realise my goal by August 2024.

Kolb's Learning Cycle

As per David Kolb, learning is a process where the transformation of experience into knowledge takes place. Kolb's learning model functions on two separate levels, a four-step cycle of learning and four different learning styles (Kolb and Kolb, 2017). The 4-step cycle is named the **Experiential learning cycle** and the steps mentioned are Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualisation and Active Experimentation (from the lecturer's notes). A suitable explanation in a contextual situation would be:

- **Concrete Experience.** When I attended the module, 'Academic and Employability Skills', I attended lectures about various key factors of employability skills, such as time management, CV writing, paraphrasing, academic writing, public speaking and presentation making. Such new concrete experiences enabled me to progress through the next step of the Experiential Learning Cycle.
- **Reflective Observation.** Reflecting Observation is the act of reflecting on the experience and drawing meaningful knowledge from the experience. By paying attention to the concrete experience, I was able to understand the importance of each employability skill that was discussed in this module. Reflective observation of the concrete experience enabled me to proceed to the third step of the learning cycle, Abstract Conceptualisation.
- **Abstract Conceptualisation.** Reflective observation and proper understanding of the covered topic helped me to align the gained knowledge and information in different scenarios and therefore think of new ideas that would work well with my career development path. I realised that I need to improve my Time Management Skill and how that would benefit me when I become an HR Manager. Accordingly, I was able to continue with the next step of the learning cycle, Active Experimentation.
- **Active Experimentation.** In the final step of learning, where the conceptualised idea is implemented and experimented upon. I took steps to formulate different short-term, mid-term and long-term goals with the aim of incorporating key employability skills and practices to improve my prospects of becoming an efficient HR Manager. Successful implementation of these goals will again provide me with concrete experience which would open new doors of learning and the learning cycle continues.

Kolb also stated that it is not possible to feel and think about any topic at the same time and it is impossible to do and watch how it is done together as well. Accordingly, he used 4 different terminologies to explain the learning styles, Accommodating, Diverging, Assimilating and Converging (Sudria *et al.*, 2018).

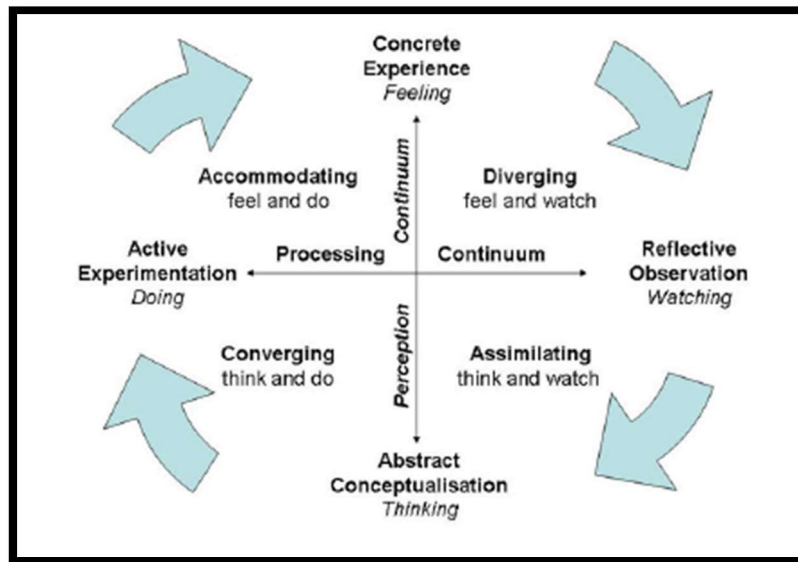


Figure1. Kolb's Learning Styles

(Source: From the learner's notes)

HR Managers are crucial for the development, maintenance and even sustenance of businesses. It is widely accepted that Human Resource is the most valuable resource that any company can ever possess. HR Managers have several responsibilities such as managing the workforce, onboarding new employees, developing suitable pay structures, organising learning and development for the workforce and motivating the workforce through various benefit and compensations schemes. They are also responsible for designing organisation policies that comply with employment laws set by the local and national governments (Ahammad, 2017). Citing the different job roles and responsibilities, the requisite skills for being an efficient HR Manager are many.

Of the different employability skill taught in this module, we will discuss the key requirements to become efficient HR Managers by applying Kolb's Learning Cycle concept in the following skills and concepts:

Application of Kolb's learning cycle with respect to Reflective Writing.

Reflective writing is the process of analysing experiences and expressing them in their own words to make them easy to comprehend and remember (from the lecturer's slides). It is a personal version of the way we analyse the event and what we think is crucial from the collected information.

Reflective Learning can help the learners to understand the concepts better and utilise them for gaining professional success (Gibson *et al.*, 2017). It is proof of reflective thinking and in terms of academic contexts; reflective thinking includes looking back at concrete experiences (lectures, events, documentaries etc.) and analysing the experience from different perspectives to cultivate a better understanding of the concerned topic. Reflective thinking also includes aligning the daily activities of the learner.

I used abstract conceptualisation to think of the ways in which HR Managers can use this skill to comprehend the strategic goals and objectives set by the management and explain them to the employees so that employees know their specific roles in realising the organisational goals and objectives.

After this, I acted to incorporate the skill of reflective thinking in my daily routine to help me become an efficient and successful HR Manager.

Application of Kolb's learning cycle with respect to Summarising.

Summarising is the act of analysing the information and short listing the key components of it for easier recovery and faster conveyance to others. It is a highly valuable practice that can help to process the large volume of data quickly and highlight only the important information from it. Efficient summarising practices means that the condensed data is not short of any key information and any reader can easily follow the chain of thought of the original text by reading the summary.

Summary making skill is crucial for analysing large data in a short time. I learnt this in this module and have applied it in my academic studies and at the same time have identified that summary making is exceptionally useful for HM Managers to condense the company reports and agendas and then use it to explain to the entire workforce.

Therefore, Kolb's learning cycle was used to reflectively observe the concrete experience and abstractly conceptualise it in two scenarios, academically and professionally. Finally, I actively experimented with summary writing and decided to incorporate it by setting it as a short term goal.

Application of Kolb's learning cycle with respect to Time Management.

I learnt about Time Management and its importance in this model through the lectures which served as a concrete experience. Time management is an important skill in all sectors. It is absolutely essential for students as well as employees to properly utilise their time and formulate effective schedules to ensure that all the assigned tasks and responsibilities are completed within deadlines (Helms, 2021).

Reflective observation revealed that Time Management practices enable individuals to efficiently prioritise different activities as per their importance and urgencies and make sure all of them are finished in time. Allocating the right time as per their requirements is the most important part of Time Management. Time Management also makes it possible for students and employees alike to multi-task without disrupting the quality or quantity of work performed by them. The module taught me that the key steps of time management are effective planning, setting goals, setting deadlines, delegating responsibilities, prioritising activities and correctly allocate time for completion.

Next, I applied it to different aspects of my life and conceptualised its different uses. Academically, Time Management can help me in balancing my study sessions among all subjects according to my exam deadlines and the bulk of the syllabus. Professionally, Time Management would enable an HR Manager to allocate time to successfully complete all its job roles like compliance with laws and policies, organising motivational events for employees and conducting learning and development programmes for improving the skills of the workforce.

Understanding the importance of Time Management in professional as well as personal life, I took steps to cultivate time management skill and have set it as a long-term goal. Since long-term goals take a lot of time and the chances of getting distracted is high,

establishing a well organised and regulated monitoring practice is mandatory (zippia.com, 2020). This is how I actively experimented with Time Management.

Application of Kolb's learning cycle with respect to Public Speaking.

Public Speaking, as mentioned in this module is a requisite employability skill and is important in all business sectors. Public Speaking improve inter-personal communicational nod is a sought after skill when it comes to managerial candidates as they have to handle a number of employees under them. Public speaking is highly important for students as well since it trains them to handle future leadership roles (Marinho *et al.*, 2017).

Therefore, the lectures served as a concrete experience for me that made me diverge about the topic to reflectively watch for the importance of public speaking in different aspects of my life. Next, I assimilated all the information that I could gather and implemented it to think of ways in which public speaking can benefit me in achieving my aspirations.

By abstract conceptualisation, I figured out that public speaking also very crucial in HR roles as HR managers have to communicate with the entire workforce about different policies and agendas of the company and inspire them to engage more in the organisation. Motivating employees requires frequent delivery of prep-talks and the HR Manager's role in mitigating inter-organisational conflicts also requires exceptional public speaking ability. Finally, I planned and started acting on improving my public speaking skills.

Conclusion

Self-analysis has been found to be crucial for the proper identification of the strengths and weakness of an individual. Accurate analysis of strength can benefit the individual to sort the different advantages and scopes that the person has to import performance and predictability of the person. Moreover, weakness analysis enables the individual to proactively identify the different threats that he person can face if the weaknesses are not mitigated soon.

Job analysis has helped to identify the requisite skills that are required to excel in that job position and job aspirants can prepare themselves accordingly. This helps the job aspirants to identify the gap in expectations and supply of employability skills and then the candidates can chart up personalised personal development plans (PDP). Personal Development Plans have helped me to closely monitor my progress in achieving personal and professional goals as per my career aspiration of becoming an HR Manager.

It can thus be concluded that this module has helped me identify different employment skills that are required to become successful in performing job roles and functions. After reflection on the lectures, I attended this semester, I found out that the four main employment skills that I require to attain my career aspiration of becoming an HR Manager are time management, summarising, public speaking and reflective writing. Kolb's learning cycle has helped me diverge the experience, assimilate the different benefits, converge the concept and apply to different sectors and accommodate the change in personal and professional life.

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