

MODULE CODE: BMSW40021

Academic and Employability Skills

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Introduction

Bailey (2011), described academic skills as the basic requirements for a student that might need to be developed for academic success. Academic writing, presentation skills, effective communication skills, referencing, critical thinking, problem-solving, etc. are the major academic skills. On the other hand employability skills are the basic requirements for getting a job and for being successful in a job career. Effective communication skills, time management skills, creative thinking, problem-solving, leadership skills, teamwork, organizational skills, negotiation skills, perseverance, stress taking, etc. are described as the major employability skills. Cottrell (2008), said that a learner or a student should develop academic and employability skills in both of his/her academic and employment life. Considering the essentials of academic and employability skills, the module on academic and employability skills have focused on the development and improvement of some of these basic skills. Currently, I am working in a Gym (Snap fitness) as a general manager. Considering my job responsibilities, I look after my staff, the right financial and academic reports every month and send it to my boss. Besides I need to arrange team meetings and offer customer services. This report is going to explore and analyze my academic and employability skills referring to in-class activities and published literature.

Literature review

Academic and employability skills are considered as the basic knowledge to survive the competitive modern economic and workplace environment. Effective academic skills enable students to pursue a higher level of learning without remediation. On the other hand, effective and required employability skills help students to get the desired jobs and ensure smooth career development.

According to Bailey (2011), major academic skills are academic writing (including report writing, essay writing, paraphrasing, note-taking, summarizing, researching, referencing), critical thinking, stress management, time management, problem-solving, etc.

According to Cottrell (2008), the major employability skills are effective communication skills, time management skills, management skills, leadership skills, problem-solving skills, self-awareness, motivation, organizing skills, empathy, negotiation, stress taking, persistence, and perseverance. Firth (2019), added team working, critical & innovative thinking, stress taking,

passion, commitment, confidence, and public speaking to the list of employability skills. However, technology skills and presentation skills are also considered crucial employability skills nowadays. According to Shapiro (2018), in the intensive competitive labor market, employers often ask for flexible and efficient employees who can perform a variety of tasks in different environments. Gasst (2019), added that effective employability skills provide a higher level of on the job confidence that helps to move to a higher level of working life. Effective employability skills help to impress the employers as well. So, the student must need to focus on the development and improvement of academic and employability skills in their academic life. So, the necessity of academic and employability skills is inevitable in this competitive world and students must need to focus on continual improvement of these skills.

Analysis

Currently, I am working in a Gym as a general manager. However, I have some career ambitions. Academic life I want to be the class topper. And in my professional carrier, I want to the area manager at Snap Fitness. For this, I further need to develop and improve some other skills. To design and effective personal development plan, I need to focus on my skill gaps. Personal SWOT analysis is widely used to explore personal strengths and weaknesses. In this section, I am going to evaluate myself using a personal SWOT analysis then I am going to focus on time management framework and finally I'm going to develop an integrated personal development plan based on my career ambitions.

Personal SWOT analysis

According to Zemach (2015), a Personal SWOT analysis is a systematic analysis tool that is used to illustrate personal strengths and weaknesses to explore opportunities and meet the threats. I am a student and currently working in the Gym. As a result, I have developed and improved some essential skills and experience. However, I am a learner and there is no limit for learning. So, I also have some weaknesses. Besides, the external environment is offering some opportunities and threats to me. Thus my personal SWOT is as follows:

Strengths:

- effective report writing skills are developed through practicing academic writing considering sentence structure, clause structure, paragraph structure, grammatical issues, the inherent flaw of ideas, etc. Along with my academic practices, I have practiced Report writing in the workplace. As a result effective academic writing is one of my crucial strengths.
- According to Firth, M., (2019) effective communication skills have four dimensions including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. I'm continually practicing this for different areas of effective communication skills in the classroom as well as in my current workplace. As a result, I have strong participation in ineffective communication skills.
- I have my leadership skills as I'm currently working as a general manager. As a leader, I have to focus on the vision to lead my subordinates.
- I have also improved my negotiation skills with the help of the module and my workplace activities.

Weaknesses

- I need to improve my confidence level.
- I can further focus on grammatical issues to improve academic writing skills.
- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are needed to be improved.
- I have weaknesses while speaking in front of a mass audience. So, my public speaking skills need to be improved.
- I was just introduced to research skills in this module however I need to know the critical issues regarding effective research skills to conduct academic and workplace research.

Opportunities

- I can promote my position as the area manager at Snap Fitness.
- With a higher level of academic and employability skills, I can't get jobs in the larger multinational companies as well.
- I can develop my job skills.

Threats

- The rising competition can be further intensive and I may not be able to get the desired job.
- Financial limitations can hinder my ambition to be the area manager.
- I may not get the required time to improve my skills.

- Resource scarcity and other barriers can also hinder my learning.

Time management schedule

Eisenhower developed a framework based on the importance and urgency of tasks. This framework is widely known as a time management framework. It enables us to manage our limited time and ensures successful completion of urgent and important tasks. The application of this model in personal life might enable me to improve my time management skills. Application of the Eisenhower method to improve time management skills is given below:

	Important	Not important
Urgent	Do now I should do the urgent and important tasks immediately. This task should include preparing reports for my boss, preparing class assignments, participate in meetings, and participate in the class in scheduled time,	Delegate I should delegate urgent tasks that are not important to me or not necessarily my physical appearance is important. These tasks might include the tasks regarding consulting the customers, sending reports, emails, other general messages to the boss or clients, etc. besides, I can also delegate the tasks that other could do better, tasks for which I am not responsible, tasks others might enjoy, and the time-consuming tasks.
Not Urgent	Schedule I should schedule important but not urgent activities. These activities might include some official meetings, family hangouts, friends hangout, classroom allocated tasks, submission of reports in different time schedules, etc.	Delete I should delete not urgent and not important tasks from my daily routine. These tasks might include the unusual use of mobile phones, irreverent taking in mobile phones, excess use of social media, sleeping more than eight hours, excess time passing with friends, and unusual waste of time.

Figure: Time management framework (self-creation)

Personal development plan

Shapiro, E., (2018) described personal learning as a continual process. There is no limit to learning. Gasst, (2019) added that personal development plan needs to focus on some key areas such as skill gaps, and resource requirements. Thus the personal development plan is as follows:

Description	Short-term actions (3 months)	Mid-term actions (next 6 months)	Long-term actions (Next 2 years)
Career goal I want to be the area manager within two years.	I will focus on learning and improving my leadership, communication, management skills using different books and online resources)	I would like to complete my admission in the intended course required for the promotion.	I would like to complete my degree and get the promotion in the desired position.
Required skills and knowledge: (To be the area manager at Snap Fitness I need an academic degree, need to improve leadership and communication skills)	Focus on improving the basic skills and knowledge require for area manager.	Will start improving the required skills through academic learning.	Expect to make me competent in the required areas of skills and knowledge for area manager.
Next steps (Next step to get admission into a one year leadership and management program)	Prepare for the admission and arrange the required resources.	Get admission	Prepare to be the area manager as the required criteria fulfilled.

Required resources (I must require financial supports to get admission with sufficient time to study)	I need to arrange the fund for getting the admission.	I will arrange the funds and required resource supports.	I will ensure the best uses of the resources.
Time schedule (I would like to complete my admission within 6 months and complete the degree within the next one year)	Will prepare myself for the long-term career objectives.	Complete the admission	Explore the career goals, mission, and vision.
Completion	Completion date: 30/07/2020	Completion date: 30/01/2021	Completion date: 30/01/2023

Figure: personal development plan (self-creation)

Conclusion

This report has explored the analyses of my academic and employability skills referring to in-class activities and published literature. As a part of the analysis tool, this report used a personal SWOT analysis to explore the skill gaps and identify the opportunities and threats. The report also used the time management framework of Eisenhower to improve time management skills. It classifies daily tasks into four major categories based on urgency and importance. Finally, an integrated personal development plan is used to improve and develop the required skills and competencies to the area manager at Snap Fitness. The learning and improvement of academic and employability skills are defined as a continual process and I just need to focus on continual development to make me efficient in each area of skill for career success.

Reflection

The module on academic and employability skills is specially designed to let the students learn about academic and employability skills and improve as well. The module has a special focus on improving different areas of academic writing, time management skills, presentation skills, team working, and developing integrated personal development plans based on the skills gaps that are required to improve for academic and professional success. As a part of academic writing we have learned about paragraph structure, sentence structure, academic essay, clause structure, grammatical issues, paraphrasing, summarizing, report writing, referencing, etc. Besides we have also learned how to gather relevant information from different primary and secondary sources for academic research. We were also introduced to the basic issues of academic research during this module. We have learned these skills by using resources provided in the module, workshops, seminars, classroom discussions, watching videos, etc. Indirectly, we have also improved our communication skills, team working skills, presentation skills, and time management skills.

Before starting this module I have little knowledge about the key areas of academic and employability skills. I used to write reports to my boss in my workplace but the quality of the writing was not so good. My knowledge regarding the basic issues of academic writing was below the standard. Besides, I was often suffered from poor time management skills.

With the help of this module, I have significantly improved my writing quality considering different aspects of academic writing such as grammatical issues, paraphrasing, summarising, sentence structure, paragraph structure, etc. Nowadays, my boss often praises my writing as the

quality of my writing is significantly improved. Besides, I also apply the time management framework of Eisenhower in my daily life. It enables me to efficiently manage my time. Besides, I have also improved my communication skills, leadership skills, and negotiation skills. The improvement of skills throughout the module is very significant.

The secret behind the development of skills and competencies was the continual support of my teacher. Besides, the resources provided in this module were amazingly effective for skills improvement. So, I'm very satisfied with this module

Though the time frame of this module is over the opportunity to improve competencies is not over yet. I need to focus on the continual skill improvement process to make me efficient in different areas of academic and employability skills.

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