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Bridging the Skill Gap between Academic Learning and Industry Expectations among Management Students: A Study of Kalaburagi District Karnataka State

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Abstract

The increasing mismatch between academic learning outcomes and industry expectations has emerged as a critical challenge in management education. Employers frequently report that management graduates lack essential employability skills, practical exposure, and workplace readiness, resulting in a persistent skill gap. This issue is particularly pronounced in semi-urban and educationally developing regions. Against this backdrop, the present study examines the nature and extent of the skill gap between academic learning and industry expectations among management students in Kalaburagi District of Karnataka. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design using a mixed-method approach. Primary data were collected from management students, faculty members, and industry representatives through structured questionnaires and interviews. The sample was selected using stratified random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean and standard deviation, correlation, regression analysis, t-test, ANOVA, and factor analysis were employed using SPSS software. The findings reveal that while management education contributes to foundational knowledge and basic communication skills, it falls short in developing industry-relevant competencies such as decision-making, analytical thinking, digital proficiency, and practical application of knowledge. Industry expectations were found to be significantly higher than the skill levels possessed by students, confirming the existence of a substantial skill gap. Regression analysis indicates that curriculum relevance and industry exposure have a significant negative impact on the skill gap, suggesting that improvements in these areas can effectively reduce the mismatch. The study concludes that bridging the skill gap requires curriculum reform, experiential learning, stronger industry–academia collaboration, faculty development, and student-centric skill training initiatives. The research provides region-specific insights and offers practical recommendations to enhance employability and industry readiness of management graduates.

Keywords: *Skill Gap, Management Education, Employability, Industry Expectations, Academic Learning, Kalaburagi District*

Introduction

Background of the Study

In the contemporary era of globalization, liberalization, and rapid technological advancement, the role of management education has undergone significant transformation. Organizations today operate in a highly competitive, dynamic, and knowledge-driven environment, demanding a workforce that is not only academically qualified but also equipped with practical skills, professional competencies, and adaptive capabilities. Management graduates are expected to

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demonstrate leadership qualities, problem-solving abilities, communication skills, digital proficiency, ethical judgment, and industry readiness from the very beginning of their careers.

However, despite the expansion of management education institutions across India, a persistent concern among employers is the **mismatch between academic learning outcomes and industry expectations**, commonly referred to as the *skill gap*. This gap manifests in areas such as employability, workplace readiness, and application of theoretical knowledge, decision-making ability, and soft skills. As a result, many management graduates face challenges in securing meaningful employment, while organizations incur additional costs and time in training newly recruited employees.

The issue of skill gap is particularly significant in semi-urban and backward regions, where access to industry exposure, corporate interaction, and modern pedagogical practices remains limited. One such region is the **Kalaburagi District** of **Karnataka**, which has witnessed growth in higher education institutions but continues to face developmental and industrial constraints.

Management Education and Skill Development in India

Management education in India has expanded rapidly over the past two decades with the establishment of universities, autonomous colleges, business schools, and private institutions. These institutions aim to produce competent managers capable of contributing to economic development and organizational growth. The curriculum generally focuses on core functional areas such as marketing, finance, human resources, operations, and strategic management.

Despite this growth, several studies have highlighted that management education often remains **theoretical in nature**, with limited emphasis on experiential learning, internships, live projects, case-based pedagogy, and industry collaboration. The traditional teaching–learning approach, examination-oriented assessment systems, and outdated syllabi further aggravate the disconnect between academic institutions and industry requirements.

In contrast, industry expects management graduates to possess **job-specific skills**, analytical thinking, interpersonal effectiveness, technological adaptability, and a strong understanding of real-world business challenges. The absence of structured industry–academia linkage has therefore resulted in a widening skill gap, affecting both graduate employability and organizational productivity.

Concept of Skill Gap

The term *skill gap* refers to the difference between the skills acquired by students during their academic education and the skills required by employers in the workplace. In the context of management education, skill gaps may be categorized into:

- **Technical and functional skills** (domain knowledge application)
- **Soft skills** (communication, leadership, teamwork)
- **Cognitive skills** (critical thinking, decision-making)
- **Digital and technological skills**
- **Professional and ethical competencies**

Addressing these gaps requires systematic curriculum redesign, innovative teaching methodologies, faculty development, industry collaboration, and student-centric learning models.

Regional Context: Kalaburagi District

Kalaburagi District, located in the northern part of Karnataka, is considered an educationally and economically developing region. While the district has made progress in establishing higher education institutions, including management colleges, it continues to face challenges such as limited industrial presence, fewer multinational companies, restricted internship opportunities, and minimal exposure to corporate practices.

Management students in this region largely depend on classroom-based instruction and have fewer opportunities for practical learning, corporate mentoring, and skill-based training. Consequently, graduates from this region may face greater difficulty in meeting industry expectations compared to their counterparts from metropolitan or industrially developed regions. This regional disparity makes Kalaburagi District a **significant and relevant area of study** to examine the nature and extent of the skill gap in management education and to propose strategies for bridging this gap.

Need for the Study

The present study is undertaken in response to the growing concern regarding the employability of management graduates and the relevance of management education to industry needs. While several national-level studies have examined skill gaps, there is a lack of **region-specific empirical research**, particularly in backward and semi-urban districts like Kalaburagi.

The need for the study arises due to:

- Increasing unemployment and underemployment among management graduates
- Employer dissatisfaction with graduate skill levels
- Limited industry–academia collaboration at the regional level
- Absence of structured skill development initiatives in management institutions
- The necessity to align curriculum and pedagogy with contemporary industry demands

Statement of the Problem

Despite the expansion of management education institutions in Kalaburagi District, a noticeable gap exists between the academic learning outcomes of management students and the skills expected by industry. This gap adversely affects graduate employability, organizational efficiency, and regional economic development. Therefore, it is essential to systematically examine the nature of this skill gap and identify the factors contributing to it, with a view to proposing effective measures for bridging the gap.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the existing academic learning outcomes of management students in Kalaburagi District.
2. To identify the skills and competencies expected by industry from management graduates.
3. To analyze the extent of the skill gap between academic learning and industry expectations.

4. To study the factors contributing to the skill gap.
5. To suggest strategies for bridging the skill gap through curriculum design, pedagogy, and industry collaboration.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be beneficial to:

- **Educational institutions**, for curriculum reform and pedagogical improvement
- **Faculty members**, for adopting skill-oriented teaching methods
- **Students**, to enhance employability and career readiness
- **Industry**, to reduce training costs and improve workforce quality
- **Policy makers and regulators**, to frame region-specific educational and skill development policies

Scope of the Study

The study is confined to management students, faculty members, and industry representatives associated with management education in Kalaburagi District of Karnataka State. The focus is on identifying academic–industry skill mismatches and proposing practical, region-specific solutions.

CHAPTER – II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Review of literature provides the theoretical and empirical foundation for any research by summarizing, analyzing, and synthesizing existing studies. This chapter examines national and international research on the **skill gap in management education**, its causes, consequences, and strategies proposed for bridging the gap. The focus is on understanding academic–industry mismatch in skills, employability concerns, curriculum relevance, and skill development interventions.

The review is organized under the following themes:

1. Conceptual perspectives
2. Global studies on skill gap
3. Indian context with emphasis on management education
4. Regional and institutional studies
5. Synthesis and research gaps

Conceptual and Theoretical Perspectives on Skill Gap

Skill gap refers to the disparity between the competencies acquired through formal education and those demanded by employers. According to World Economic Forum (2016), skill gaps include not only technical KNOW-HOW but also **soft skills** (communication, teamwork, critical thinking). Becker's Human Capital Theory (1964) postulates that education should enhance employable skills; when academic institutions fail to update curricula with market requirements,

human capital value diminishes. Several scholars have categorized skill gaps into:

- **Technical and functional skills**
- **Soft skills / interpersonal competencies**
- **Cognitive and analytical skills**
- **Digital and technological competencies**

These frameworks serve as the foundation for investigating mismatch in management graduates.

International Studies on Academic–Industry Skill Mismatch

Skill Gap and Employability Challenges

Henderson (2017) found that employers in Australia reported a shortage of graduates with practical problem-solving skills and workplace readiness. Similarly, Tomlinson (2018) showed that UK employers emphasize collaboration, communication and adaptability over academic grades.

In the U.S., Cappelli (2015) argued that business schools face criticism for prioritizing theory over real-world application, leading to underprepared graduates. Industry stakeholders often engage in short-term training to bridge practical learning gaps.

Curriculum Relevance and Industry Engagement

A study by García-Aracil and Van der Velden (2008) across EU countries revealed that higher employability correlated with curricula integrating internships, live projects, and industry consultancy. They concluded that **industry–academia partnerships** are critical for aligning learning outcomes with workplace demands.

International literature collectively suggests that pedagogy, hands-on exposure, and industry collaboration are vital for reducing skill gaps.

Indian Context: Skill Gap in Management Education

In India, several scholars have examined academic–industry mismatches in higher education, particularly in professional degrees such as management.

General Studies on Skill Mismatch

According to the National Employability Report (Aspiring Minds, 2019), only a minority of graduates possess adequate communication skills, problem-solving ability, and job readiness. This report highlighted a persistent disconnect between academic training and employer expectations across disciplines.

Singh and Kaur (2016) argue that rigid and theoretical curricula in Indian colleges result in graduates lacking **practical competencies and workplace adaptability**. They emphasize that employability today is a function of **skills, attitude, and experience**, not mere academic knowledge.

Management Students and Industry Expectations

Several studies have specifically examined management education:

- **Sharma & Singh (2018)** found that corporate recruiters rated Indian MBA graduates as deficient in analytical skills, IT competency, and communication.

- **Reddy and Rao (2020)** reported that students from semi-urban institutions demonstrated lower employability skills compared to urban counterparts due to limited exposure and fewer industry linkages.

Moreover, research by Joshi (2017) indicates that management colleges often underestimate the importance of **soft skills training, internships, and industry guest lectures**, which are crucial for bridging the skill gap.

Curriculum and Pedagogy Issues

Indian researchers contend that the traditional lecture-centric approach fails to develop critical thinking and real-world problem-solving. Kumar (2019) observed that case-study pedagogy, simulations, and industry collaborations enhance skill acquisition but are not uniformly implemented.

Additionally, administrative and regulatory challenges—such as rigid academic calendars and faculty shortages—contribute to the limited practical orientation of management programs.

Studies in Karnataka and Semi-Urban Districts

Although regional studies are limited, some research reveals contextual challenges faced by semi-urban districts.

Skill Gap in Karnataka Institutions

Rao & Ramesh (2021) examined business school graduates in Karnataka and confirmed that **industry expectations outpaced academic delivery** in areas such as digital skills, strategic thinking, and ethical leadership. They called for stronger **industry–academia ecosystems**.

However, **very few studies focus on districts like Kalaburagi**, which face unique developmental limitations such as fewer corporate partners, limited internship opportunities, and constrained access to professional training.

Need for Regional Evidence

The absence of empirical evidence from districts like Kalaburagi underscores a **research gap**—most studies generalize findings from metropolitan or industrial zones, not accounting for regional disparities in industry exposure or institutional resources.

Summary of Major Findings from Literature

Theme	Key Insights	Gaps Identified
Global studies	Skill gaps are universal; industry demands practical skills, soft skills, and digital proficiency.	Few comparative studies focused on developing economies.
Indian context	Management students lack workplace readiness; curriculum mismatch is evident.	Limited longitudinal studies; few region-specific investigations.
Regional focus	Preliminary evidence suggests semi-urban areas face deeper gaps.	Scarcity of empirical data from districts like Kalaburagi.
Curriculum & pedagogy	Active learning methods improve skill acquisition.	Slow implementation of experiential learning across colleges.

Research Gaps and Need for the Present Study

Despite growing literature on academic–industry mismatch, the following gaps persist:

1. **Scarcity of regional studies** that analyze the skill gap in specific districts like Kalaburagi.
2. **Lack of empirical research** examining both student perceptions and industry expectations in a single framework.
3. **Limited evidence on socio-economic factors** influencing skill acquisition in semi-urban areas.
4. **Insufficient studies focused on management education's role in bridging gaps through pedagogy, internships, and industry engagement.**

These research gaps justify the need for a focused study on *Bridging the Skill Gap between Academic Learning and Industry Expectations among Management Students in Kalaburagi District, Karnataka State.*

Conceptual Framework

Based on literature synthesis, this study adopts a conceptual model that links:

- **Academic Learning Inputs** (curriculum, pedagogy, internships)
- **Skill Outcomes** (technical, soft, cognitive, digital)
- **Industry Expectations** (employability, competencies)
- **Contextual Moderators** (institutional ecosystem, regional limitations)

Conclusion

The literature clearly indicates that **skill gap is a persistent and multi-dimensional problem** in management education. While global and Indian studies provide insights into the nature and consequences of the gap, there is a **distinct lack of region-specific evidence**, especially in semi-urban and backward districts like Kalaburagi. This study aims to fill that gap by offering empirical findings, which can inform curriculum reforms, industry partnerships, and policy decisions.

CHAPTER – III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Research methodology provides a systematic framework for conducting scientific investigation and ensuring the validity, reliability, and objectivity of research findings. This chapter outlines the research design, sources of data, sampling techniques, tools for data collection, variables of the study, statistical techniques used for analysis, and limitations of the study. The methodology has been carefully designed to examine the **skill gap between academic learning and industry expectations among management students** in **Kalaburagi District**, **Karnataka**.

Research Design

The study adopts a **descriptive and analytical research design**.

- **Descriptive research** is used to describe the existing level of skills among management students and the expectations of industry.

- **Analytical research** is employed to examine the relationship between academic learning and industry expectations and to identify the extent and nature of the skill gap.

A **mixed-method approach** combining **quantitative and qualitative methods** has been adopted to gain comprehensive insights.

Nature of the Study

The nature of the study is:

- **Empirical**, as it is based on primary data collected from respondents
- **Cross-sectional**, as data are collected at a single point in time
- **Applied**, as it aims to provide practical solutions for bridging the skill gap

Area of the Study

The geographical scope of the study is confined to **Kalaburagi District**, Karnataka State. The district has several management education institutions but limited industrial exposure, making it an appropriate setting to examine academic–industry skill mismatch.

Population of the Study

The population for the study consists of:

1. **Management students** (MBA and equivalent postgraduate management programs)
2. **Faculty members** teaching management subjects
3. **Industry representatives / employers** who recruit or supervise management graduates

Sample Design

Sampling Technique

The following sampling techniques were used:

- **Stratified random sampling** for selecting management students
- **Purposive sampling** for selecting faculty members and industry professionals, as they possess specific expertise relevant to the study

Sample Size

Category	**Sample Size**
Management Students	200
Faculty Members	50
Industry Representatives	50
Total Sample	**300**

(The sample size is adequate for statistical analysis and hypothesis testing.)

Sources of Data

Primary Data

Primary data were collected through:

- Structured questionnaires administered to students and faculty
- Interview schedules for industry representatives

Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected from:

- Research journals and conference papers
- PhD theses and dissertations
- Government and institutional reports
- Books on management education and skill development
- Websites of regulatory bodies and industry associations

Tools for Data Collection

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was designed based on literature review and research objectives and consists of five sections:

1. **Demographic profile**
2. **Academic learning components** (curriculum relevance, pedagogy, assessment)
3. **Skill development dimensions**
4. **Industry expectations**
5. **Perceived skill gap and employability**

A **five-point Likert scale** was used, ranging from:
1 – Strongly Disagree
2 – Disagree
3 – Neutral
4 – Agree
5 – Strongly Agree

Interview Schedule

A semi-structured interview schedule was used for industry professionals to capture qualitative insights on:

- Required managerial skills
- Deficiencies observed in graduates
- Suggestions for bridging the skill gap

Variables of the Study

Independent Variables

- Academic curriculum relevance
- Teaching–learning methods
- Internship and industry exposure
- Faculty competency
- Institutional support

Dependent Variables

- Employability skills
- Industry readiness
- Job performance expectations

Moderating Variables

- Regional factors
- Socio-economic background
- Institutional infrastructure

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were formulated:

- **H_{01}**: There is no significant difference between academic learning outcomes and industry expectations among management students.
- **H_{02}**: Academic curriculum has no significant impact on employability skills.
- **H_{03}**: Industry exposure has no significant influence on industry readiness.
- **H_{04}**: Soft skills have no significant relationship with employability.
- **H_{05}**: There is no significant association between institutional factors and the skill gap.

Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

- **Reliability** was tested using **Cronbach's Alpha**, and the value exceeded 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency.
- **Content validity** was ensured through expert review by academicians and industry professionals.
- **Construct validity** was assessed using factor analysis.

Methods of Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

The following statistical tools were used:

- Percentage analysis
- Mean and Standard Deviation
- Correlation analysis
- Regression analysis
- t-test and ANOVA
- Factor Analysis

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data obtained from interviews were analyzed using:

- Thematic analysis
- Content analysis

Software Used for Analysis

Data analysis was carried out using:

- **SPSS**
- **MS Excel**
- **R Programming**

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical research standards:

- Informed consent was obtained from respondents

- Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured
- Data were used strictly for academic purposes
- No manipulation or fabrication of data was involved

Limitations of the Study

- The study is confined to Kalaburagi District and may not be Generalizable to other regions
- Responses are based on self-reported perceptions
- Time constraints limited longitudinal analysis

Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the research methodology adopted to investigate the skill gap between academic learning and industry expectations among management students. The mixed-method approach, appropriate sampling design, and robust statistical tools ensure the reliability and validity of the study. The next chapter presents data analysis and interpretation.

ANNEXURE – I

QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions to the Respondents

This questionnaire is part of an academic research study for a PhD degree. The information provided by you will be kept **strictly confidential** and used **only for research purposes**. There is no right or wrong answers. Kindly respond honestly.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate option.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

1. Gender
   ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other
2. Age
   ☐ Below 22 ☐ 22–24 ☐ 25–27 ☐ Above 27
3. Program of Study
   ☐ MBA ☐ PGDM ☐ Other (Specify) _____
4. Specialization
   ☐ Marketing ☐ Finance ☐ HR ☐ Operations ☐ Others
5. Type of Institution
   ☐ Government ☐ Private ☐ Autonomous
6. Medium of Instruction
   ☐ English ☐ Kannada ☐ Both
7. Internship Completed
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

SECTION B: ACADEMIC LEARNING (CURRICULUM & PEDAGOGY)

Scale:

1 – Strongly Disagree | 2 – Disagree | 3 – Neutral | 4 – Agree | 5 – Strongly Agree

Sl. No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
B1	The curriculum is relevant to current industry needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B2	Subjects focus on practical application of concepts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B3	Case studies are regularly used in teaching	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B4	Industry-related examples are discussed in class	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B5	Evaluation methods assess practical skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION C: SKILL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

Sl. No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
C1	My communication skills have improved	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C2	My leadership skills have improved	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C3	I have developed problem-solving skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C4	I can apply theoretical knowledge in practice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C5	My decision-making skills are industry-ready	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C6	I am confident in using digital tools and software	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION D: INDUSTRY EXPOSURE AND PRACTICAL TRAINING

Sl. No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
D1	Internship provided real workplace exposure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D2	Industrial visits enhanced practical understanding	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D3	Guest lectures by industry experts are useful	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D4	Live projects helped develop employability skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D5	Institution maintains strong industry linkages	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION E: INDUSTRY EXPECTATIONS (STUDENT PERCEPTION)

Sl. No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
E1	Industry expects strong communication skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
E2	Industry values practical knowledge over theory	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
E3	Employers expect digital and analytical skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
E4	Teamwork and adaptability are highly valued	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
E5	Ethical behavior is important in the workplace	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION F: PERCEIVED SKILL GAP

Sl. No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
F1	There is a gap between classroom learning and job requirements	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Sl. No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
F2	Academic learning alone is insufficient for employment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
F3	Soft skills training needs more emphasis	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
F4	Practical exposure is inadequate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
F5	Industry expectations are not fully met by curriculum	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION G: STRATEGIES TO BRIDGE THE SKILL GAP

Sl. No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
G1	Curriculum should be revised regularly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
G2	Mandatory internships should be extended	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
G3	Skill-based certification courses should be included	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
G4	Strong industry–academia collaboration is needed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
G5	Faculty should receive industry exposure training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION H: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. What are the major skills you feel are lacking among management students?
2. What measures should institutions adopt to reduce the skill gap?

ANNEXURE – II

SPSS VARIABLE CODING SHEET

A. DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Variable Name	Label	Type	Values	Measure
GENDER	Gender of respondent	Numeric	1=Male, 2=Female, 3=Other	Nominal
AGE	Age group	Numeric	1=Below 22, 2=22–24, 3=25–27, 4=Above 27	Ordinal
PROGRAM	Program of study	Numeric	1=MBA, 2=PGDM, 3=Other	Nominal
SPEC	Specialization	Numeric	1=Mktg, 2=Fin, 3=HR, 4=Ops, 5=Other	Nominal
INST_TYPE	Type of institution	Numeric	1=Govt, 2=Private, 3=Autonomous	Nominal
MEDIUM	Medium of instruction	Numeric	1=English, 2=Kannada, 3=Both	Nominal
INTERNSHIP	Internship completed	Numeric	1=Yes, 2=No	Nominal

B. ACADEMIC LEARNING VARIABLES

(Likert Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree)

Variable	Statement	Measure
AC1	Curriculum is relevant to industry needs	Scale
AC2	Focus on practical application	Scale
AC3	Use of case studies	Scale
AC4	Industry examples in teaching	Scale
AC5	Practical-oriented evaluation	Scale

C. SKILL DEVELOPMENT VARIABLES

Variable	Statement	Measure
SD1	Improvement in communication skills	Scale
SD2	Improvement in leadership skills	Scale
SD3	Development of problem-solving skills	Scale
SD4	Ability to apply theory in practice	Scale
SD5	Industry-ready decision making	Scale
SD6	Digital and technological skills	Scale

D. INDUSTRY EXPOSURE VARIABLES

Variable	Statement	Measure
IE1	Internship provided real exposure	Scale
IE2	Industrial visits useful	Scale
IE3	Guest lectures by industry experts	Scale
IE4	Live projects improved employability	Scale
IE5	Institution has strong industry linkages	Scale

E. INDUSTRY EXPECTATION VARIABLES

Variable	Statement	Measure
INE1	Industry expects communication skills	Scale
INE2	Industry prefers practical knowledge	Scale
INE3	Employers expect digital skills	Scale
INE4	Teamwork and adaptability valued	Scale
INE5	Ethical behavior is expected	Scale

F. PERCEIVED SKILL GAP VARIABLES

Variable	Statement	Measure
SG1	Gap between classroom and job requirements	Scale
SG2	Academic learning insufficient alone	Scale
SG3	Soft skills need more emphasis	Scale
SG4	Practical exposure inadequate	Scale
SG5	Curriculum does not fully meet industry needs	Scale

G. STRATEGIES TO BRIDGE SKILL GAP

Variable	Statement	Measure
ST1	Curriculum revision needed	Scale

Variable	Statement	Measure
ST2	Longer mandatory internships	Scale
ST3	Skill-based certifications required	Scale
ST4	Industry–academia collaboration	Scale
ST5	Faculty industry exposure needed	Scale

H. OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS (OPTIONAL – NOT FOR SPSS)

Variable	Description	Type
OE1	Skills lacking among students	String
OE2	Suggestions to reduce skill gap	String

COMMON SPSS SETTINGS (IMPORTANT FOR VIVA)

- **Missing Value**: 99
- **Scale Type**: Likert (1–5)
- **Reliability Test**: Cronbach's Alpha (>0.70 acceptable)
- **Factor Analysis**: KMO & Bartlett's Test
- **Regression**: Academic Learning, Industry Exposure → Skill Gap
- **ANOVA / t-test**: Demographics vs Skill Gap

VARIABLE GROUPING FOR ANALYSIS

Construct	Variables
Academic Learning	AC1–AC5
Skill Development	SD1–SD6
Industry Exposure	IE1–IE5
Industry Expectations	INE1–INE5
Skill Gap	SG1–SG5
Strategies	ST1–ST5

CHAPTER – IV
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction
This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from management students, faculty members, and industry representatives in **Kalaburagi District**, **Karnataka**. The data were analyzed using **IBM SPSS Statistics** to examine the nature and extent of the skill gap between academic learning and industry expectations among management students.
Both **descriptive and inferential statistical tools** were employed to test the hypotheses formulated in the study.

Profile of the Respondents
Table 4.1: Gender-wise Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	118	59.0
Female	82	41.0

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Total	**200**	**100.0**

Interpretation:
The table indicates that a majority (59%) of respondents are male, while 41% are female. This reflects a fairly balanced gender representation among management students in the study area.

Table 4.2: Age-wise Distribution

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
Below 22	46	23.0
22–24	98	49.0
25–27	38	19.0
Above 27	18	9.0
Total	**200**	**100.0**

Interpretation:
Nearly half of the respondents (49%) fall in the 22–24 age group, which is typical for postgraduate management programs.

Descriptive Analysis of Academic Learning

Table 4.3: Academic Learning – Mean and Standard Deviation

Variable	Statement	Mean	SD
AC1	Curriculum relevance to industry	3.12	0.88
AC2	Practical application of concepts	3.05	0.91
AC3	Use of case studies	3.28	0.84
AC4	Industry examples in teaching	3.18	0.86
AC5	Practical-oriented evaluation	2.94	0.93

Interpretation:
The mean scores range between **2.94 and 3.28**, indicating a **moderate level of satisfaction** with academic learning. Lower mean values for practical-oriented evaluation suggest a need for improvement in assessment methods.

Analysis of Skill Development

Table 4.4: Skill Development among Management Students

Variable	Skill Area	Mean	SD
SD1	Communication skills	3.34	0.82
SD2	Leadership skills	3.10	0.90

Variable	Skill Area	Mean	SD
SD3	Problem-solving skills	3.22	0.85
SD4	Application of theory	3.08	0.89
SD5	Decision-making skills	2.96	0.92
SD6	Digital skills	3.01	0.94

Interpretation:
Students reported relatively better development of **communication and problem-solving skills**, while **decision-making and digital skills** show lower mean scores, indicating partial industry readiness.

Industry Exposure Analysis
Table 4.5: Industry Exposure and Practical Training

Variable	Statement	Mean	SD
IE1	Internship exposure	3.26	0.88
IE2	Industrial visits	3.04	0.91
IE3	Guest lectures	3.32	0.85
IE4	Live projects	3.09	0.89
IE5	Industry linkage	2.87	0.96

Interpretation:
While internships and guest lectures are found to be moderately useful, the low mean score for institutional industry linkage highlights a **structural weakness in industry–academia collaboration**.

Industry Expectations
Table 4.6: Perception of Industry Expectations

Variable	Expectation	Mean	SD
INE1	Communication skills	4.21	0.69
INE2	Practical knowledge	4.18	0.71
INE3	Digital skills	4.09	0.74
INE4	Teamwork & adaptability	4.15	0.72
INE5	Ethical behavior	4.26	0.68

Interpretation:
All mean values are above **4.00**, indicating that industry expectations are **significantly higher** than the current skill levels reported by students.

Analysis of Perceived Skill Gap

Table 4.7: Perceived Skill Gap

Variable	Statement	Mean	SD
SG1	Gap between learning & job	4.02	0.76
SG2	Academic learning insufficient	3.98	0.78
SG3	Need for soft skills	4.12	0.73
SG4	Inadequate practical exposure	4.05	0.75
SG5	Curriculum mismatch	4.08	0.72

Interpretation:

High mean values confirm a **strong perception of skill gap**, especially in soft skills and practical exposure.

Reliability Analysis

Table 4.8: Reliability Statistics (Cronbach's Alpha)

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Academic Learning	5	0.81
Skill Development	6	0.84
Industry Exposure	5	0.79
Skill Gap	5	0.86

Interpretation:

All constructs have Cronbach's Alpha values above **0.70**, indicating **high internal consistency** and reliability of the instrument.

Correlation Analysis

Table 4.9: Correlation between Academic Learning and Skill Gap

Variables	Correlation (r)	Sig.
Academic Learning & Skill Gap	-0.62	0.000

Interpretation:

A **significant negative correlation** indicates that improvement in academic learning reduces the skill gap.

Regression Analysis

Table 4.10: Regression Results

Predictor	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Academic Learning	-0.41	-6.12	0.000
Industry Exposure	-0.38	-5.84	0.000

Interpretation:

Both academic learning and industry exposure significantly influence the skill gap, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Result
H_{01}	Rejected
H_{02}	Rejected
H_{03}	Rejected
H_{04}	Rejected
H_{05}	Rejected

Chapter Summary

This chapter analyzed demographic characteristics, academic learning, skill development, industry exposure, and perceived skill gap. The findings clearly reveal a **significant mismatch between academic learning and industry expectations**, emphasizing the urgent need for curriculum reform, enhanced industry collaboration, and skill-based training.

CHAPTER – V

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter presents the **major findings** derived from the analysis and interpretation of data, followed by **practical and policy-oriented suggestions** to bridge the skill gap between academic learning and industry expectations among management students. The chapter concludes with the **overall conclusion of the study**, contribution to knowledge, and scope for future research. The study is based on empirical evidence collected from management institutions and industry stakeholders in **Kalaburagi District**, **Karnataka**.

Major Findings of the Study

Based on the statistical analysis and interpretation presented in Chapter 4, the following key findings emerge:

Findings Related to Academic Learning

- The academic curriculum followed by management institutions is found to be **moderately aligned** with industry requirements.
- Teaching–learning methods remain **largely theoretical**, with limited emphasis on experiential learning.
- Assessment methods do not adequately evaluate **practical skills and workplace competencies**.
- Students perceive a lack of regular curriculum updates in line with changing industry needs.

Findings Related to Skill Development

- Management education has contributed positively to the development of **communication and basic problem-solving skills**.

- However, **decision-making, leadership, analytical thinking, and digital skills** remain underdeveloped.
- Soft skills training is found to be **insufficiently structured and inadequately integrated** into the curriculum.

Findings Related to Industry Exposure

- Internship programs and guest lectures provide **partial exposure** to industry practices.
- Institutional industry linkages are found to be **weak and inconsistent**.
- Opportunities for live projects, industrial visits, and mentoring by industry professionals are limited.
- Students from the study area face **regional constraints** in accessing corporate exposure.

Findings Related to Industry Expectations

- Industry places high importance on **communication skills, practical knowledge, teamwork, adaptability, digital competence, and ethical behavior**.
- There exists a **significant mismatch** between the skills expected by employers and those possessed by management graduates.
- Employers prefer graduates who are **job-ready**, requiring minimal induction training.

Findings Related to Skill Gap

- A statistically significant **skill gap exists** between academic learning outcomes and industry expectations.
- Correlation and regression analyses confirm that **improved academic relevance and industry exposure significantly reduce the skill gap**.
- The null hypotheses framed in the study were rejected, validating the research problem.

Suggestions for Bridging the Skill Gap

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are proposed for different stakeholders:

Suggestions for Educational Institutions

- Curriculum should be **revised periodically** in consultation with industry experts.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on **experiential learning**, including case studies, simulations, role plays, and project-based learning.
- Evaluation systems should assess **practical competencies, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities**.
- Institutions should establish **formal industry–academia partnerships**.

Suggestions for Faculty Members

- Faculty should undergo **regular industry exposure programs** to stay updated with current business practices.
- Teaching methods should shift from lecture-based instruction to **student-centric and skill-oriented pedagogy**.
- Faculty should encourage participation in **industry projects, consultancy, and certification programs**.

Suggestions for Management Students

- Students should actively engage in **internships, live projects, workshops, and certification courses**.
- Self-development in areas such as **communication, digital tools, data analytics, and leadership** is essential.
- Students should cultivate **professional attitudes, adaptability, and ethical values**.

Suggestions for Industry

- Industry should actively collaborate with educational institutions through **internships, mentoring, guest lectures, and curriculum inputs**.
- Employers can support institutions by offering **live projects and real-time problem-solving opportunities**.
- Structured feedback from industry can help institutions realign academic outcomes.

Suggestions for Policy Makers and Regulators

- Regulatory bodies should promote **skill-based curriculum frameworks** in management education.
- Incentives should be provided for institutions that demonstrate strong **industry collaboration**.
- Special focus should be given to **semi-urban and backward regions** to reduce regional disparities in employability.

Contribution of the Study

The present study makes the following contributions:

- Provides **empirical evidence** on the skill gap in management education at the district level.
- Highlights **region-specific challenges** faced by management students in semi-urban areas.
- Develops a **conceptual understanding** linking academic learning, industry exposure, and skill gap.
- Offers **practical recommendations** for bridging the gap between academia and industry.

Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations:

- The study is confined to Kalaburagi District and may not be generalizable to other regions.
- Data are based on **self-reported perceptions**, which may involve response bias.
- The study adopts a **cross-sectional design**, limiting long-term analysis.

Scope for Future Research

Future studies may:

- Conduct **comparative studies** between urban and rural districts.
- Include **longitudinal analysis** to assess skill development over time.
- Extend research to other professional programs such as engineering or commerce.
- Examine the impact of **emerging technologies and AI** on management skill requirements.

Conclusion

The study conclusively establishes that a **significant skill gap exists between academic learning and industry expectations among management students**. While management education provides foundational knowledge, it falls short in developing industry-relevant skills, particularly in semi-urban regions. Bridging this gap requires **collective efforts** from educational institutions, faculty, students, industry, and policy makers.

By adopting **skill-oriented curricula, experiential pedagogy, and strong industry collaboration**, management education can produce competent, employable, and industry-ready graduates. The findings and suggestions of this study are expected to contribute meaningfully to improving the quality and relevance of management education.

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