Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Education

Volume 15, Issue 4 (2026), pp. 379-398
Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Education
ISSN: 2166-2681Print 2690-0408 Online |https://ojed.org/jise
https://doi.org/10.32674/0mx88210

From Employability Skills to Workplace Performance: The Mediating Role of Career Adaptability in Employer Evaluations of Student Trainees

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between college students' perceived employability skills and their employability and competencies as evaluated by their on-the-job training (OJT) hosts, with career adaptability behavior as a mediator. Using data from 317 students and structural equation modeling (SEM), the results showed that students generally demonstrated moderate to high levels of employability skills, career adaptability, and employability. Use of technology showed no significant relationship with employability, whereas multitasking influenced employability indirectly through career adaptability. Oral communication and disciplinary expertise were fully mediated by career adaptability, whereas ethics and responsibility and interpersonal skills were partially mediated. The findings highlight the crucial role of career adaptability in translating employability skills into positive employer evaluations.

Keywords: employability skills, career adaptability, employability and competencies, role of higher educational institutions, school-to-work transition

INTRODUCTION

Employability is one of the hurdles fresh graduates need to overcome to achieve their professional milestones. Graduate employability remains a critical milestone in the transition from higher education to professional life (Guan et al., 2014). For a college graduate to have a proper transition, educational institutions play a large role in equipping students with the proper knowledge, skills and competencies to stand above the rest and be desirable to potential employers. Higher education institutions are increasingly recognized for their pivotal role in equipping students with the necessary knowledge and industry-relevant competencies required to navigate modern labor markets (Jackson, 2010; Misni et al., 2019). Studies also emphasize the importance of performance-based assessments and institutional support systems in preparing students for professional practice. This is to demonstrate competencies in planning, implementation, assessment, and reflective practice, while curricular improvements and structured institutional support mechanisms contribute to better graduate preparedness and professional effectiveness (Baron, 2015). Fresh graduates are viewed as valuable talent pools capable of fostering innovation and growth within organizations (Gault et al., 2010). However, the concept of employability is multifaceted and influenced by evolving industry demands, rapid technological advancements, and changing educational approaches (Halim et al., 2022; Jackson, 2010). Studies further reveal that employers highly value competencies such as communication skills, teamwork, time management, independent work, readiness to learn, and self-management, emphasizing the growing importance of transferable and work-related skills that are developed during basic education and higher education (Abdi and Kenea, 2023).

Despite the efforts of HEIs, a persistent skills gap or discrepancy remains between the skills possessed by graduates and those demanded by employers (Jackson, 2010; Oraison et al., 2019). Industry leaders frequently highlight deficiencies in soft skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, and teamwork, suggesting that graduates often emerge with theoretical knowledge but lack the ability to apply it in practical settings (Misni et al., 2019; Oraison et al., 2019). This mismatch not only hinders graduates' ability to secure suitable employment but also limits their potential to contribute meaningfully to their chosen fields (Turkson et al., 2021). Research suggests that responsibility for

employability must be shared between institutions, employers, and the students themselves, who must take greater agency in their career preparation (Cheng et al., 2021).

Industries try to adjust to changing economies, and one way to adapt to this is by hiring competent people or finding someone with the right skills for the company. These changes in the job market have led to a growing discrepancy between the skills possessed by college graduates and the skills demanded by employers. Work-integrated learning, such as on-the-job training or practicum programs, serves as a vital bridge between classroom education and professional practice (Gault et al., 2010; Tangaro, 2019). These programs allow students to link theoretical training with real-world applications while providing a platform for employers to evaluate graduate readiness (Rothman, 2017; Tangaro, 2019). Employer evaluations of interns are considered a robust method for monitoring student learning and validating the effectiveness of university curricula in meeting industry standards (Bawica, 2021). This gap not only affects graduates' ability to secure suitable employment but also hinders their potential to make meaningful contributions to their chosen fields. Additionally, as students' behavior transitions into professional careers that can make or break the skills already developed in college, fresh graduates must secure their first employment.

The findings of this research aim to contribute to the institutions' aim of equipping students with proper skills for employability. Additionally, the study desires to offer practical recommendations for educational institutions to refine their programs and prepare graduates for the demands of the job market, which will give seamless integration of college fresh graduates into the workforce based on employers' view of employable graduates.

The study aims to determine the effect of students' perceived employability skills during their college on their actual employability and competencies as evaluated by their practicum host in the presence of the students' career adaptive behavior. Specifically, to evaluate students' acquired skills during their college years and to view their career adaptive behavior in transitioning from college to professional fields. Assessing students' employability and competencies will be evaluated by their host during their practicum (OJT) to see their current level. We also explore the students' perceived employability skills and their effect on employability and competencies during practicums as evaluated by OJT Host in the presence of their career adaptive behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW

College students often experience difficulty transitioning from school to a professional field. While it is defined that academic results play an important role in employers' prospects where individuals with advanced degrees or specialized qualifications were more likely to secure employment and had a higher probability of being retained in the workforce (Koen et al., 2012), academic qualifications alone were not sufficient for the assurance of employability (Yorke & Knight, 2004) and that employability skills are being emphasized in the market. Employability skills or graduate competencies include different attributes that are sought after across different industries or professional fields, such as technology use, multitasking, oral communication, ethics and responsibility, interpersonal skills and disciplinary expertise (Castro, 2015). Participation in internships is strongly correlated with higher career adaptability profiles, as students who engage in these programs are more concerned about their future careers and better prepared for workplace changes (Ameliah & Jatnika, 2024).

Employability is identified when employers have specific expectations regarding the employability skills and attributes they seek in their potential employees. These expectations involve different traits, such as technical skills, soft skills (e.g., communication, teamwork), adaptability, problem-solving abilities, and a positive work ethic. Research suggests that employers prioritize a mix of domain-specific knowledge and transferable skills that enable individuals to effectively contribute to the organization, where reports mention that employers view students to have a strong foundation in teamwork, problem-solving, and work ethics, all of which are refined during the OJT period (Rosario et al., 2025).

Students perceived the role of higher education credentials in work and employability after graduation, where it is identified that a degree alone was not enough to guarantee employability and that factors such as practical experience, networking, and the development of transferable skills are considered (Tomlinson, 2008). Recent findings indicate that employers generally report moderate satisfaction with graduates, while students often demonstrate strengths in professional behavior; however, they frequently struggle with conflict resolution and the transition into employment (Doan Thi & Vu Van, 2026). Studies also indicate that while AI is reconfiguring tasks as a technological advancement tool in the workplace, there is a sustained and critical need for interpersonal skills, teamwork, and ethical judgment (Singh, 2026). Research highlights that ethics can be the most influential variable in graduate employability, sometimes carrying more weight than leadership or interpersonal skills (Tajib & Yusoff, 2024). Oral communication, including both verbal and nonverbal skills, is a critical determinant of workplace effectiveness and is often used by OJT hosts as a primary measure of a candidate's suitability where

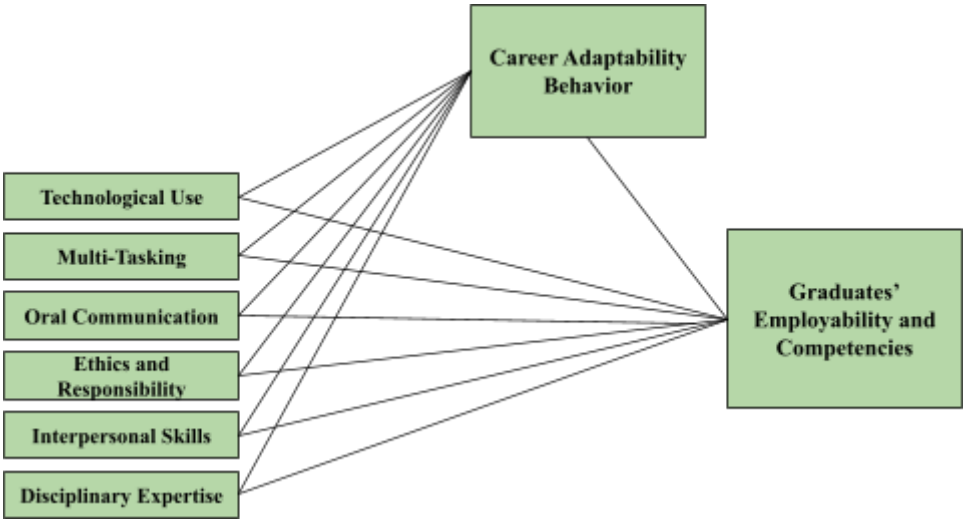
effective communication reduces perception bias and enhances efficiency in team-based environments (Hosain et al., 2021).

Career adaptive behavior on college students' employability refers to the student's ability to effectively adapt to changes from student to professional career. Career adaptability behavior contains various aspects, such as career planning, career decision-making, career exploration, and occupational self-efficacy (Hirschi et al., 2015). Studies have investigated the relationship between career adaptability behavior and various career-related outcomes. Rudolph et al. (2017) found that career adaptability positively predicts job search self-efficacy and career decision-making self-efficacy, both of which are integral components of employability. Additionally, Hirschi & Valero (2015) demonstrated that generally higher adaptability showed more adaptation and showed that students with higher adaptability showed significantly higher adaptivity, showing that adaptability is meaningfully relative. The mediating effect of career adaptability behavior on employability suggests that career adaptability behavior acts as an intermediary process that enhances the relationship between college education and employability outcomes. Career adaptability behavior involves the acquisition of skills such as problem solving, adaptability, and resilience. These skills are highly valued by employers and contribute to increased employability (Guichard, 2009). Recent research confirms that graduates with higher adaptability are significantly better prepared for workforce transitions (Jiang et al., 2024). Furthermore, career adaptability often acts as a mediator, while specific employability skills are necessary, they are frequently converted into successful placements through the student's ability to adapt to new and challenging industrial settings (Omar et al., 2023; Venugopal & Kumar, 2022). Compelling evidence has shown the mediating role of career adaptive behavior in graduate employability; however, further study should be conducted to verify its role in the relationship between acquired skills and employability.

RESEARCH METHOD

Employability theory, as introduced by Fugate, Kinicki, and Ashforth (2004), emphasizes different traits that hone one's employability. One of those traits pertains to individual attributes that pertain to personal characteristics, knowledge, skills, and abilities that individuals possess. The research employs a framework that draws from building causal pathway models to illustrate the connections between essential skills and graduates' employability and competencies as viewed by possible employers and OJT hosts through students' career adaptability behavior. This approach allows for the examination of whether the implementation strategies are effective as intended, the impact of contextual factors on the implementation process, and the extent to which the theorized mechanisms account as hypothesized in the model (Lewis et al., 2018).

Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework Showing the Mediation of Career Adaptive Behavior*



Participants

This study employed a quantitative, correlational research design to examine whether career adaptive behavior mediates the relationship between students' employability skills and their employability and competencies as evaluated by their on-the-job training (OJT) hosts. Data were gathered using a structured three-part questionnaire administered to student respondents and OJT supervisors during the conduct of the study.

The study used a three-part questionnaire. The first part measured the students' employability skills or graduate attributes: technology use with 3 questions and reliability of 0.75, multitasking that consisted of only 1 question, oral communication with 3 questions and reliability of 0.85, ethics and responsibility with 3 questions with reliability of 0.72, interpersonal skills with 2 questions with reliability of 0.80 and 3 questions for disciplinary expertise with reliability of 0.81 (Castro, 2015). The second part evaluated the students' career adaptive behavior career planning and consisted of 5 questions with a reliability of 0.86 (Jackson & Tomlinson, 2020); career decision-making with 3 questions with a reliability of 0.81 (Lounsbury et al., 2005; Sovet et al., 2015); career exploration with 5 questions with a reliability of 0.95 (Yuen et al., 2010); and occupational self-efficacy with 5 questions with a reliability of 0.92 (Rigotti et al., 2008). The third part identified the students' employability as evaluated by their OJT host with 6 questions with a reliability of 0.87 (Jackson & Tomlinson, 2020).

The items used to measure confidence in performing skills and competencies with a six-point Likert scale from: 1 Totally Sure I cannot/I am not; 2 I cannot/I am not; 3 Somewhat I cannot/I am not; 4 Somewhat I can/I am; 5 I can/I am; and 6 Totally Sure I can/I am. To analyze whether the career adaptability behavior of the students mediates the relationship of students' employability skills to their employability and competencies as seen by the OJT host, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used. This allows the researcher to analyze the estimation of multiple and interrelated dependence relationships with the ability to represent unobserved concepts in these relationships (Kline, 2015). Appropriate fit indexes were identified to determine how well the model fits the sample data to provide an indication of how well the proposed model fits the data. Modifications to the prior model were made to have an acceptable fit index.

The finalized model identified the influence of students' perceived employability skills on their employability and competencies during practicums, as evaluated by OJT hosts, with career adaptive behavior serving as a mediating variable. The model provides insights into how higher education institutions may strengthen employability preparation and contribute to quality education initiatives through the development of students' career readiness and workplace competencies.

Ethical considerations were addressed for the safety of the researcher, respondents and other bodies connected to the study. Prior to data gathering, permission to conduct the study was secured from the concerned institutional authorities and partner OJT establishments. The questionnaires were distributed to qualified student respondents and their respective OJT supervisors. Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, the estimated duration of participation, and their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, respondents were not asked to provide personally identifiable information such as names in the questionnaires. Student numbers were identified to ensure that the responses were aligned and that no duplications were made. Each questionnaire was assigned a numerical code solely for data organization and matching of student and OJT supervisor responses. All collected data were stored securely and were accessible only to the researchers. The data were used exclusively for research purposes and were reported in aggregate form to prevent the identification of individual participants. There were no conflicts of interest to declare in relation to this study. The respondents were notified in advance about the study, wherein all important details about the study were mentioned and about the place and time of the respondents' availability and comfort. The respondents were informed about the duration of the study, and he/she could decline and withdraw at any time he/she wishes and that participation is voluntary. The respondents' responses were kept confidential. The information in this study will

be used for research purposes only. It will not be used in any manner, which would allow the identification of my individual responses.

RESULTS

Three hundred seventeen (317) students present in Table 1 show the descriptive statistics of various variables. **Technological use** on average is 5.2229, with a standard deviation of 0.55125. This suggests that students reported moderate to high usage of technology, with relatively low variability among the responses. For **multitasking, it** was 4.9495, with a standard deviation of 0.88087. This indicates that, on average, students reported moderate levels of doing multiple related task behavior but with a relatively higher degree of variability in responses compared to others. Students reported a mean score of 5.0400 for oral communication skills, with a standard deviation of 0.61722. This suggests that, on average, students perceived themselves as having moderate to good oral communication skills, with relatively low variability in responses. **The ethics and responsibility** score was 5.5205, with a standard deviation of 0.52773. This indicates that, on average, students adhere closely to society's rules and ethical guidelines, with relatively low response inconsistency. Students rated their **interpersonal skills** at 5.3991, with a standard deviation of 0.56470. This suggests that, on average, students perceived themselves as having moderate to good interpersonal skills, with relatively low variability among responses. Students reported a mean score of 5.1062 for **disciplinary expertise**, with a standard deviation of 0.63001. This indicates that, on average, students perceived moderate expertise in their respective disciplines or work fields. The results align with research suggesting that these soft skills are increasingly prioritized by employers over technical knowledge alone (Jackson, 2010). However, higher variability in some variables may reflect a skills gap, in which graduates struggle with the high-pressure, multidimensional demands of modern workplace environments (Halim et al., 2022).

The average for **student employability** as perceived by the students' OJT host was 5.0620, with a standard deviation of 0.52488. This suggests that, on average, students are moderately employable, as seen by their possible employers, with relatively low variability in responses.

On average, students rated their **career adaptability behavior** at 5.0974, with a standard deviation of 0.53257. This suggests that, on average, students perceived themselves as moderately adaptable from undergraduate going to the professional field in terms of their career behavior, with relatively low variability among responses. Employer-based evaluations are often considered more objective than student self-perceptions (Tangaro, 2019). The consistency between the students' perceived skills and the OJT hosts' evaluations suggests a positive alignment between academic preparation and workplace expectations in your

sample (Bawica, 2021; Rothman, 2017). This alignment is vital, as research indicates that when graduates' attributes match industry criteria, the transition into the workforce is significantly more "seamless" (Misni et al., 2019; Oraison et al., 2019).

Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Employability Skills of Respondents (N =317)*

Descriptive	*M*	*SD*
Technological Use	5.2229	.55125
Multi-Tasking	4.9495	.88087
Oral Communication	5.0400	.61722
Ethics and Responsibility	5.5205	.52773
Interpersonal Skills	5.3991	.56470
Disciplinary Expertise	5.1062	.63001
Student Employability	5.0620	.52488
Career Adaptability Behavior	5.0974	.53257

Note. M = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation.

Table 2 explores the relationships between employability skills to both career adaptability behavior and student employability among a sample population. Technological use does not significantly predict career adaptability behavior and students' employability, with p values of 0.07 and 0.19, respectively. This suggests that students' use of technology and knowledge does not notably influence their adaptability in career contexts and their transition to working fields, nor does it notably influence possible employers' hiring decisions, as technology needs to be understood differently from field to field. This aligns with the findings that basic technological use often fails to predict employment success. Students possess general digital literacy, and employers are specifically seeking "AI-integrated workflow readiness," where the ability to collaborate with machine-led tasks is more critical than standard software use (Nguyen, 2026).

Multitasking significantly influences career adaptability behavior, with a standard estimate of 0.21 and a p value of 0.01, suggesting that students who engage in multitasking contribute to students' career pursuits. However, multitasking does not significantly influence students' employability, with a p value of 0.10, indicating that multitasking is not necessarily viewed by potential employers as a valuable skill or a sign of employability. Graduates must handle multiple shifting responsibilities simultaneously, a form of advanced multitasking. The ability to adapt to these shifting tasks is what defines "human–machine collaborative competency" (Yang & Jiang, 2026).

Oral communication significantly affects students' career adaptability behavior and employability with an estimate of 0.30 and p value of 0.00 and 0.22 with a p value of 0.04, respectively, implying that good communication skills contribute to the betterment of students' transition to the work environment and contribute to employers' views as a good manpower qualification. Findings say that advanced professional oral skills remain crucial for high-stakes negotiation, leadership, and persuasion (Rzayeva & Ashrafova, 2026), such as in fields such as engineering, oral communication is now identified as a critical determinant for workplace effectiveness, specifically for client interaction and teamwork leadership (Palaniappan, 2026).

Ethics and responsibility show a significant influence on both students' career adaptability behavior, with an estimated value of 0.18 and a p value of 0.05, and employability, with an estimated value of 0.53 and a p value <0.001. This indicates that students' values for ethical behavior in career and workplace contribute to their ease shift from student to working professional and how their employers are most likely to hire them. The findings are supported in the study identifying these traits as foundational graduate employability capacities (Ismail, 2017), where responsibility is identified as a key competency that employers consider. Studies have shown that ethical and responsible behavior is a strong predictor of career adaptability because it contributes to a graduate's sense of global and moral citizenship, which enhances their agency and motivation during the transition into the workforce (Coetzee et al., 2015).

Students' interpersonal skills significantly affect career adaptability behavior with an estimated value of -0.30 and a p value of 0.00, indicating that there is a negative contribution of strong interpersonal skills due to potential conflicts of social understanding with other people as they move to their working environment. The table also shows that students' interpersonal skills significantly affect employability with an estimate of -0.67 and a p value of <0.001, which suggests that possessing strong interpersonal skills might hinder one's ability to secure employment or advance in one's career, perhaps due to being perceived as overqualifying standard entry employment for fresh graduates. The negative contribution can be attributed to a mismatch between the skills taught in higher education and the specific entry-level expectations of employers, suggesting that high levels of a particular skill, such as interpersonal communication, may lead to perceptions of misalignment or overqualification for a standard role (Cramer, 2002; Sayed and Ozgit, 2023).

Disciplinary expertise shows significant positive associations with career adaptability behavior with an estimated value of 0.45 and a p value of <0.001, suggesting that students who have expertise in their field are more likely to exhibit adaptive behaviors in their career searches. However, disciplinary expertise does not significantly influence student employability, with a p value of 0.11, which suggests that disciplinary expertise does not play a role in

determining employability once students graduate. This suggests that while expertise in a specific field or discipline is important, it may not be the sole determining factor in securing employment once students graduate, such as mismatch demand for expertise. These results follow the finding that students who perceive their disciplinary training as highly relevant to real-world problems show significantly higher levels of career readiness and academic motivation (Madi et al., 2026).

Table 2: *Estimates students' acquired skills and career adaptive behavior to employability*

	Standardized Estimate	Estimate	SE	CR	p value	Interpretation
Technological Use → Career Adaptability Behavior	-.21	-.17	.10	-1.80	.07	Not Significant
Multi-Tasking → Career Adaptability Behavior	.21	.10	.04	2.63	.01	Significant
Oral Communication → Career Adaptability Behavior	.30	.22	.07	3.23	.00	Significant
Ethics and Responsibility → Career Adaptability Behavior	.18	.16	.08	2.00	.05	Significant
Interpersonal Skills → Career Adaptability Behavior	-.30	-.26	.09	-3.00	.00	Significant
Disciplinary Expertise → Career Adaptability Behavior	.45	.34	.07	4.90	***	Significant
Career Adaptability Behavior → Student Employability	.24	.25	.09	2.80	.01	Significant
Technological Use → Student Employability	-.16	-.14	.11	-1.31	.19	Not Significant
Multi-Tasking → Student Employability	.14	.07	.04	1.65	.10	Not Significant
Oral Communication → Student Employability	.22	.17	.08	2.09	.04	Significant
Ethics and Responsibility → Student Employability	.53	.52	.11	4.93	***	Significant
Interpersonal Skills → Student Employability	-.67	-.62	.12	-5.23	***	Significant
Disciplinary Expertise → Student Employability	.17	.13	.08	1.60	.11	Not Significant

Furthermore, career adaptability behavior itself, the intended mediator, significantly predicts student employability with estimate value of 0.24 with 0.01 p value, implying that students who demonstrate adaptability in their career behaviors are more likely to be employable, which follows the results that

graduates often need higher levels of adaptability skills even relative to technical employability skills to successfully secure employment in varied job settings (Venugopal & Kumar, 2022).

Figure 2: *Model of relationships between employability skills and student employability through career adaptability behavior*

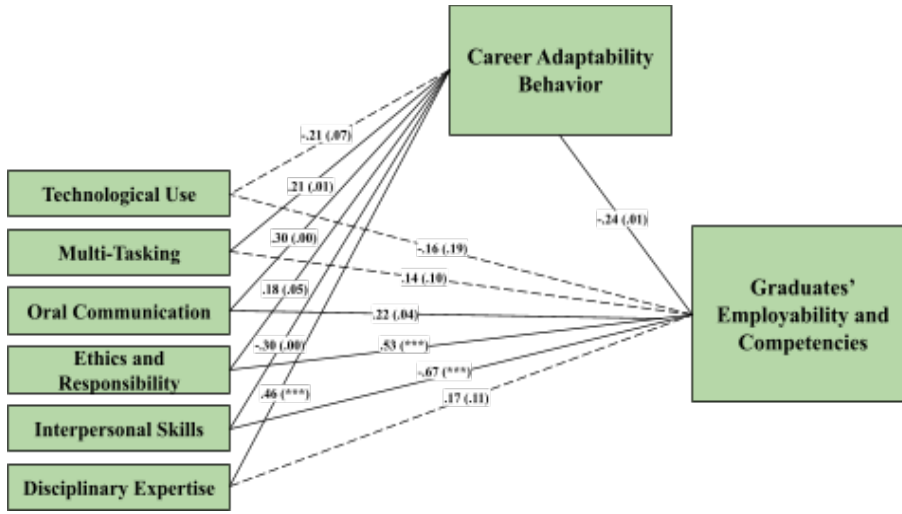


Table 3 shows the mediating role of students' career adaptability behavior in the relationship between students' acquired skills and employability. The results show that technological use is not related to students' employability, as shown in Table 3, where the total and indirect estimates are not significant, with p-values of 0.21 and 0.06, respectively. This indicates that proficiency in technology is not necessarily prioritized by employers in hiring newly graduate students, which may be due to the different technology needs the hired students are in and the skills are expected to be developed in the workplace to have the appropriate technological knowledge needed by the company or the field the students are in. New research identifies that although students are knowledgeable in basic digital skills, employers express deep concern regarding graduates' ability to handle complex, AI-integrated workflows and data-driven tasks (Nguyen, 2026).

While multitasking indicates only an indirect relationship to students' employability as perceived by host through students' career adaptive behavior, as the total estimate indicates no significant influence with a p value of 0.10, the indirect estimate is significant with a standardized estimate value of 0.05 and a p value of .02. This means that multiple tasks, although they can be performed by the students, would only be effective in the presence of their career adaptive

behavior on the transition to work for them to be employable in the eyes of employers.

Students' career adaptability behavior fully mediates the relationship of oral communication to students' employability in the eyes of their OJT host, as shown in the table, where the total standard estimate is 0.29 with a p value of 0.03 and the standard indirect estimate is 0.05 with a p value of 0.02, while the direct estimate is not significant with a p value of 0.17. This indicates that good communication skills developed by students indirectly contribute positively to the view of OJT hosts or employers hiring them after graduation through the necessary presence of students' adaptability behavior on their transition to work as a mediator.

The relationship of ethics and responsibility to students' employability is only partially mediated by career adaptability behavior, as shown, wherein there is a significant total estimate with a value of 0.57 and a p value of 0.01, an indirect estimate of 0.04 and a p value of 0.02, and a direct estimate of 0.53 with a p value of 0.01. This shows that ethics and responsibility both directly influence and indirectly influence employability as seen by employers through students' career adaptability behavior, emphasizing the importance of ethics and responsibility in shaping their readiness for the workforce as partially mediated by the students' career adaptability behavior.

The same is true for interpersonal skills, where it is partially mediated by career adaptability behavior to students' employability, wherein there is a significant total estimate with a value of -0.74 and a p value of 0.01, an indirect estimate of -0.07 and a p value of 0.01, and a direct estimate of -0.62 with a p value of 0.01. However, as seen, the estimates indicate an inverse relationship between interpersonal skills and the likelihood of being employable that shows complex interaction between individual competencies and employment.

Disciplinary expertise is fully mediated by career adaptive behavior to its relationship to employability in the eyes of the OJT host, with a significant total estimate with a value of 0.28 and a p value of 0.02, a significant indirect estimate of 0.11 and a p value of 0.01, and a nonsignificant direct estimate with a p value of 0.22. This implies that disciplinary expertise, which represents a culmination of knowledge, skills, experiences, and professional practices in specific fields that the students studied and its relationship to the employability of the students in the views of OJT host or employers, is fully explained and assessed by the students' career adaptability on their transition.

Studies confirm that skill development perception and learning engagement serve as critical mediators in the relationship between academic factors such as acquired skills and career readiness (Madi et al., 2026). The findings explicitly identify career adaptability as a crucial mediator between a student's acquired skills and their successful procurement of job placements (Venugopal & Kumar, 2022). This indicates that career adaptive behavior may

act as a full or partial mediator for skills to employability as perceived by their possible employers.

Table 3: *Mediating role of students' career adaptability behavior in the relationship between students' acquired skills and employability*

	TU	MT	OC	ER	IS	DE	CAB
Total Effect	-.18	.10	.23	.56	-.69	.22	.25
Standardized Total Effect	-.21	.19	.29	.57	-.74	.28	.24
Two-Tailed Significance	.21	.10	.03	.01	.01	.02	.02
Indirect Effect	-.04	.03	.06	.04	-.07	.09	***
Standardized Indirect Effect	-.05	.05	.07	.04	-.07	.11	***
Two-Tailed Significance	.06	.02	.01	.02	.01	.01	***
Direct Effect	-.14	.07	.17	.52	-.62	.13	.25
Standardized Direct Effect	-.16	.14	.22	.53	-.67	.17	.24
Two-Tailed Significance	.32	.17	.17	.01	.01	.22	.02
Decision	No Relationship	Indirect Relationship	Full Mediation	Partial Mediation	Partial Mediation	Full Mediation	Intended Mediating Variable

Note. CMIN = 378.175; DF = 248; p < .001; CMIN/DF = 1.525; SRMR = .023; RMSEA = .041; GFI = .917; CFI = .965; IFI = .965; AGFI = .891; TLI = .958; NFI = .906. CMIN = chi-square statistic; DF = degrees of freedom; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; GFI = goodness-of-fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; IFI = incremental fit index; AGFI = adjusted goodness-of-fit index; TLI = Tucker–Lewis index; NFI = normed fit index.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Students reported moderate to high usage of technology, and this factor did not significantly predict career adaptability behavior or employability. Employers may prioritize other skills and qualities over technological proficiency when considering job candidates, as specific technological requirements can vary depending on what field the students may enter. In multitasking, students who engage in multitasking behaviors are more likely to demonstrate career adaptability behavior. However, multitasking itself does not significantly

influence employability directly, indicating that employers may not view multitasking as a crucial skill in determining a candidate's suitability for employment but rather multitasking as an indirect skill through the career adaptability of students. Strong oral communication skills positively influence both career adaptability behavior and employability as viewed by OJT hosts. Effective communication is valued by employers as it contributes to successful transitions into the workforce as a full mediator, which then enhances perceived qualifications of potential hires. Ethics and responsibility directly and indirectly influence employability through career adaptability behavior. Students who demonstrate ethical behavior and a sense of responsibility in society and the workplace are perceived more favorably by employers, highlighting the importance of these values in shaping students' readiness for the workforce.

IMPLICATIONS

While students with strong interpersonal skills may face potential challenges in their career adaptability behavior due to social dynamics, these skills significantly impact employability. Employers may perceive overly strong interpersonal skills as potentially detrimental, suggesting a complex interaction between individual competencies and employment outcomes. In addition, disciplinary expertise positively influences career adaptability behavior but does not directly predict employability. Instead, the relationship between disciplinary expertise and employability is fully mediated by career adaptability behavior. With this, the results highlight the importance of students' career adaptability behavior as a mediator for skills such as oral communications, ethics and responsibility, and disciplinary expertise in translating their expertise into marketable skills valued by employers and/or OJT hosts.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) serve as crucial producers of the workforce by equipping students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to succeed in various professions and industries. Based on the results, to be more appealing to future employers, skills in oral communication, ethics and responsibility, and disciplinary expertise should be enhanced. While technological use may not be a factor because of mismatched technological knowledge from school and professional fields, it is advised to train students to technology more suited for the industry. Additionally, career adaptive behavior should focus on development, as it serves as a tool for guiding students in their first step from student to professional.

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