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Examine the Impact of Curriculum Components on Students' Employability Potential: A Study on Undergraduate Tourism Students

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Abstract

The major goals of education are to educate students, equip them with the necessary skills to support themselves, and prepare them for success in their selected areas of work. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of curriculum components on students' employability potential. The target population of the study consists of institutions and universities in the North Indian region. A total of 360 students enrolled in bachelor's programs and taking tourism courses in the regular mode were approached for the study. To analyze the collected data, SPSS version 24 and AMOS version 21 were used. Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh were taken into consideration. Exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis, along with structural equation modeling (measurement model and structural model), were employed, revealing that the generic skills and functional area skills of curriculum structure design have a significant positive influence on students' employability potential.

Keywords: Curriculum; Generic skills, Functional area skills, Tourism courses, Employability potential

1. Introduction

Education is a means of experiencing continuous personal growth that is not limited by age and keeps pace with people's skills. The major goals of education are to educate students, equip them with the skills needed to support themselves, and prepare them for success in their selected areas of work. Education with a good curriculum and healthy policies can enhance the

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prospects for tourism industry manpower, hence making tourism education more relevant to all stakeholders associated with the tourism industry (Choy & Yeung, 2023). Tourism education should focus on the overall professional development of an individual, which ultimately benefits society, industry, and the individual themselves (Fernández-villarán et al., 2024).

The history of tourism education as we know it now dates back around 50 years. Before this period, universities in Rome (1925), Vienna (1936), St. Gallen and Berne (1941), and other locations investigated tourism (Medlik, 1965). However, "tourism began to appear more generally in the academic repertoire of higher education only about the middle of the 1960s."(Airey, 2015). Since then, from very humble beginnings, tourism has established itself as a topic of study and research at colleges and universities worldwide, with its unique literature, academic community, and areas of focus. Table 1 presents the stages of tourism education.

Education on tourism is not a recent development in India. Diploma programs in tourism were initially introduced in India in the 1970s and gradually gained importance as the sector accepted and embraced them. In the 1980s, the Indian government established the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM) in Gwalior under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism. The IITTM was officially founded on January 18, 1983, when it was registered in New Delhi. Following Kurukshetra University, HP University Shimla, Pondicherry University, HNB Garhwal University, Bundelkhand University Jhansi, Jiwaji University Gwalior, and Jammu University all introduced tourism courses in the early 1990s.

There is no necessary curriculum for degree or diploma programs in tourism. Each university and institution have its own unique course curriculum. As a result, Indian tourism education only creates trained workers, not competent managers or successful entrepreneurs (Yashroy, 2025). Some universities/institutions in India allow students to choose elective subjects up to the graduate level, whereas others do not. There should not be many deviations from the intended curriculum. Different curriculum elements must be created using a holistic design approach. Different knowledge, skills, and attitudes need to be taught in tourism education. To have a beneficial impact on the nation's tourism education, the tourism curriculum should allow for the involvement of stakeholders with a variety of interests (Zhang et al., 2024).

The study is limited to undergraduate tourism students in North India, where most of the tourism education and human resource development activities are concentrated. University undergraduates are the first channel of future tourism professionals, and therefore is important in designing their curriculum to enhance employability. Previous employability research

has focused on generic graduate attributes and employer perspectives, with little empirical research into how curriculum components influence employability in the context of tourism education, especially in developing nations. The analysis of generic and functional area skills in curriculum design through structural equation modeling relates the structure of curriculum to employability frameworks within tourism education, extending literature on employability.

The article contributes to the body of literature by presenting a detailed analysis of trends, current status, and imperatives in relation to tourism education in India, while establishing a connection with global developments. It brings new perspectives on how tourism education can be developed to become more relevant, holistic, and industry-based, enriching both academic debate and policy direction.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

Generic and functional area skills have a substantial positive impact on employability-specific abilities (Peng et al., 2021). As per the requirements of the tourism industry, generic skills have very strong implications on employability, specific abilities. Functional skills, in addition to an understanding of inbound, outbound, domestic, MICE, and VISA operations, are also important (Carlisle et al., 2023). A comprehensive curriculum that incorporates all of these components can enhance students' employment prospects in the tourism industry. Since the tourism business involves a greater human element, the characteristics of tourism products, such as perishability, intangibility, inseparability, and heterogeneity, set them apart from other products. According to Kim & Baker (2024) employees have to be familiar with their job requirements and gather more abstract information about it to integrate themselves into the work situation and culture. They must also be able to arrange and interpret a large amount of information. It is a complex, service-oriented industry, and product delivery requires the cooperation between various stakeholders. The tourism service sector requires highly specialized and qualified manpower.

The term "skills" is used to describe a variety of overlapping and interchangeable concepts, including behavioral skills, generic skills, core skills, transferable skills, and important skills (Hamzah et al., 2025). However, it's quite challenging to organize skills into a sealed container. However, to understand, abilities can be grouped into the following categories.

2.1. Generic Skills

The breadth of abilities and attributes required for higher education is referred to as generic skills. Clanchy & Ballard (1995) revealed that it must be made apparent what these generic talents are if institutions are to be

held publicly accountable for improving them. Teamwork, communication, analytical and logical problem-solving, logical reasoning, interpersonal skills, and interpretive abilities are examples of generic skills. These abilities are essential for enhancing employability potential in the tourism industry. The knowledge, talents, and skills required to perform as a skilled professional in a culture rich in information are referred to as generic skills (Pearce, 2002).

Zamiri & Esmaeili (2024) describe the idea of generic abilities as effective time management, audience communication, lifelong learning, persuasion, and resource management. Since the delivery of services involves more human connection, such as in the tourism business, generic skills are often referred to as soft skills, and the importance of these abilities is greater in this context. As a result, customer happiness depends on the type of interactional experience that visitors have. The qualities, morals, conduct, and gaining of knowledge that students in higher education must develop are known as generic skills.

2.2. Functional Area Skills

Examining functional area skills and increasing competencies in the functional areas of inbound, outbound, domestic, MICE, VISA, and marketing operations within the tourism industry must be the primary focus of tourism-related education. Focus on developing functional area abilities that fall under a certain tourism sector domain to meet employer needs. Dale & Robinson (2001) focus on three areas of tourism education: generic degrees, functional degrees, and market/product-based degrees; elaborate functional degrees as functional expertise in the specific field of tourism; as a service-oriented industry, the tourism sector frequently requires professional skills in areas such as marketing planning, IT, and other regions. Chan (2011) emphasized the importance of functional competencies across all specific disciplines. A skill of this kind is likely to be preserved, prompted, and reinforced in diverse situations. Functional skills are beneficial in producing reinforcing effects for the human being or others around them (Kumazawa & Yamada, 2024). The demand for human capital in the tourism sector is very significant.

Rationale for generic and functional area skills in the tourism curriculum. Tourism education requires a blend of generic skills and specialized skills in functional areas. Generic skills include communication, teamwork, ethics, and analytical capabilities, whereas functional area skills encompass domestic, inbound, and outbound operations, event management, marketing, and the ability to operate digitally. Collectively, however, these skills equip students for a wide range of tourism-related positions (Kumar & Bhinder, 2021).

Misni et al., (2020) study based on the conceptual framework to exemplify the perception of graduates towards the impact of the curriculum

vision, curriculum design, the operationalization of the curriculum vision, curriculum evaluation, and the curriculum delivery on the employability competency. The study's results showed that employability potential and competency were highly and favourably impacted by curriculum design.

This study contributes integral insights into the implementation of efficient curriculum design. Various researchers have conducted studies to evaluate the impact of curriculum structure design on students' employability potential, emphasizing the curriculum components as an integral tool to enhance students' learning.

2.3. Research Objectives

1) To examine the impact of generic skills on students' employability potential
2) To examine the impact of functional area skills on students' employability potential.

The curriculum structure in tourism education involves the deliberate combination of generic and functional area skills to enable students to perform specific industry tasks and meet workplace requirements (Kumar, Nayak, et al., 2021). On the other hand, generic skills are higher-order academic and professional competence that contribute to the overall adaptability of students in terms of their problem-solving capability in facing various challenges posed by society, as well as workforce particularity concerning performance and behavior, regarded as a core employability attribute (Kumar, Bhinder, et al., 2021). Also, functional area skills, including operations, marketing, and technological agility, share domain-specific capabilities that may be elementary for performing technical tasks in the tourism sector (Stangl et al., 2024). Thus, we can tentatively and rationally assume that all dimensions of curriculum structure design have a positive impact on students' employment potential, which formulates hypotheses from H1 to H7.

2.4. Hypotheses Formulation

H1: Interpersonal Skills significantly impact students' employability potential

H2: Communication Skills significantly impact students' employability potential

H3: Teamwork Skills significantly impact students' employability potential

H4: Analytical Skills significantly impact students' employability potential

H5: Operation Skills significantly impact students' employability potential

H6: Marketing Skills significantly impact students' employability potential

H7: Technology adaptation skills significantly impact students' employability potential

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Study Area and Sampling Design

The target population of this study comprised undergraduate tourism students enrolled in regular bachelor's programs in North India. Four states, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh, were selected due to their high concentration of tourism education institutions and student enrollment. Final-year undergraduate students were chosen because they possess sufficient curriculum exposure and are closer to entering the labor market, making them suitable respondents for assessing employability potential.

A probability-based systematic sampling technique was used. First, institutions offering undergraduate tourism programs were identified, and eligible final-year students were selected through a random lottery method. Institutions with more than 15 students were randomly sampled, while institutions with exactly 15 students were fully included. A preliminary study with 25 students helped refine the questionnaire for clarity and ease.

Using the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) formula, the minimum recommended sample size was 322; however, to enhance model robustness and statistical power, 360 responses were collected and analyzed using SPSS 24 and AMOS 21.

3.2. Measurement and Instrument Development

The survey instrument consisted of 37 items measuring seven constructs: interpersonal skills, communication skills, teamwork skills, analytical skills, operations skills, marketing skills, and technology adaptation skills. Generic skill items were adapted from established scales (Rahman, 2010; Verdadero et al., 2019), whereas several functional area skill items, particularly in operations, marketing, and technology adaptation, were self-structured to reflect context-specific competencies in tourism education curriculum.

The self-structured items were developed based on curriculum documents, industry competency requirements, and prior tourism education literature. To ensure content validity, the instrument was reviewed by three tourism education experts and two industry practitioners. Minor wording modifications were made based on their feedback and pilot testing, ensuring clarity, relevance, and representativeness of constructs.

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

The sample size is 360 Students of bachelor's programs enrolled in tourism courses in regular mode in colleges of the North Indian region (Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh). To know about the students, the demographic profile of respondents concerning gender, age, and educational course has been provided. The demographic profile of respondents has been analysed by providing group-wise frequencies and percentages as given below:

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Sr. No.	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Male	205	56.9
2.	Female	155	43.1
Total		360	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 shows that male students comprised more than half of the respondents in the sample, i.e., 56.9% and there are 43.1% of female students studying tourism. Therefore, it can be concluded from the above table that the majority of male students are studying tourism.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by Age Group

Sr. No.	Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Below 20	58	16.1
2.	20-22	165	45.8
3.	22-24	121	33.6
4.	Above 24	16	4.4
Total		360	100

Source: Primary Data

In the data analysis, the age of respondents was grouped into four categories, i.e., below 20 years, 20-22 years, 22-24 years, and above 24 years. The data in Table 2 depicts that a greater part of students are from the age group of 20-22 and 22-24 years, having 45.8% and 33.6% respectively. There are 16.1% of students from the age group below 20 years. Furthermore, only 4.4 % of the respondents are from the age group above 24 years.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by Courses

Sr. No.	Courses	Frequency	Percentage
1.	BA Tourism and Travel Management	90	25.0
2.	Bachelor of Tourism and Travel Management	122	33.8
3.	B.Sc. Travel and Tourism Management	32	8.8
4.	BBA Tourism	51	14.1
5.	BBA Tourism and Travel	47	13.0
6.	BA Tourism Administration	18	5.00
Total		360	100

Source: Primary Data

The respondents were grouped into six tourism courses, i.e., BA Tourism & Travel Management, Bachelor of Tourism and Travel Management, B.Sc. Travel and Tourism Management, BBA Tourism, BBA Tourism and Travel, and BA Tourism Administration. The results of Table 3 depict that the majority of the respondents are studying the Bachelor of Tourism and Travel Management, i.e., 33.8%, followed by BA Tourism & Travel Management, i.e., 25 % of respondents. However, only 5% of respondents are studying BA Tourism Administration.

4.2. Common Method Bias

Common method bias (CMB) was evaluated as all data in this research were collected from the same source (survey instrument) and a single respondent. To conduct a Harman's single-factor test, we entered all items into an exploratory factor analysis of unrotated factors. The first factor was responsible for 23.6 % of the variance (i.e., lower than the 50 % critical value), indicating that CMB is not a serious issue in this study (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Further, deviation in standardized regression weights was insignificant on confirmatory factor analysis with a cross-load and/or CFA with a shared latent, enabling us to establish that CMB did not influence the outcomes.

4.3. Normality Test

The normality of the variables and error terms was checked before structural equation modelling. The skewness (and kurtosis) of all the items ranged between −2 and +2 (Kline, 2010). Additionally, Mardia's coefficient was within accepted values, supporting the assumption of normality. These findings validate the suitability of the data for SEM analysis using maximum likelihood estimation.

4.4. Results of factor analysis

The EFA results confirmed seven factors with satisfactory factor loadings (>0.5) and explained 65.05% of the total variance, indicating strong construct structure. Descriptive statistics revealed that generic skills such as teamwork and communication recorded moderate mean scores, while technology adaptation skills exhibited comparatively lower mean values (ranging from 1.96 to 2.89). This indicates that students perceive themselves as less prepared in digital and technological competencies, highlighting a critical gap between tourism curriculum delivery and evolving digital industry requirements. Conversely, teamwork and interpersonal skills demonstrated relatively higher mean values, suggesting that curricula are more effective in developing collaborative and social competencies.

Table 4: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.809
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	7274.8
	df	861
	Sig.	0.000

Table 5: Results of Factor Analysis Along with Descriptive Statistics

Items	Cs	FL	Mean	SD
Generic skills				
Interpersonal skills (IS)				
IS1	.671	.814	3.36	1.14
IS2	.693	.826	3.48	1.18
IS3	.772	.870	3.31	1.16
IS4	.742	.859	3.51	1.13
Communication skills (CS)				
CS1	.614	.776	3.44	0.94
CS2	.724	.841	3.56	1.02
CS3	.757	.861	3.50	1.06
CS4	.723	.842	3.46	0.99
Teamwork skills (TS)				
TS1	.745	.839	3.59	1.03
TS2	.744	.713	3.33	1.08
TS3	.795	.879	3.46	1.06
Analytical skills (AS)				
AS1	.644	.795	3.34	0.91
AS2	.658	.718	3.30	0.90
AS3	.698	.738	3.22	0.99
AS4	.608	.770	3.26	0.89
Functional area skills				
Operations skills (OS)				
OS1	.693	.757	3.26	1.12
OS2	.827	.704	3.49	0.98
OS3	.743	.718	3.40	1.03
OS4	.639	.718	3.48	0.92
OS5	.730	.696	3.42	0.97
OS6	.753	.658	3.41	0.98
OS7	.546	.713	3.37	0.94
OS8	.716	.704	3.43	1.02
OS9	.678	.687	3.51	1.16
OS10	.640	.651	3.43	0.99
OS11	.620	.713	3.51	1.05
Marketing skills (MS)				
MS1	.706	.837	3.48	0.79
MS2	.752	.861	3.47	0.90
MS3	.774	.845	3.55	0.97
MS4	.683	.804	3.60	0.82
MS5	.672	.801	3.41	1.07
Technology adaptation Skills (TAS)				
TAS1	.822	.899	2.20	0.97
TAS2	.734	.838	1.96	1.03
TAS3	.600	.769	2.12	0.99
TAS4	.743	.856	2.89	1.11
TAS5	.668	.809	2.70	1.08
TAS6	.795	.878	2.09	1.06

Source: Primary Data

Note: Cs= Communalities, FL= Factor Loading, SD= Standard Deviation

Table 4 shows that the adequacy of the study sample size, with a KMO value of 0.809, and a significant p-value, i.e., .001 for Bartlett's test, depicts that the construct's comprising elements are significantly satisfactory. Thus, both the KMO and Bartlett's tests requirements were met. Table 5 depicts the EFA results of the Items of curriculum structure design in terms of the adoption of generic skills and functional area skills on students' employability potential with 37 statements. Thus, 37 items got clubbed into 4 items of Interpersonal Skills, 4 Items of Communication Skills, 3 Items of Teamwork Skills, 4 Items of Analytical Skills, 11 Items of Operations Skills, 5 Items of Marketing Skills, 6 Items of Technology Adaptation Skills, shown in tabular form in Table 5. All the items found to have factors loading more than 0.5 are therefore retained (Joseph F. Hair et al., 2017). Thereafter, the communality value is also tested. It is the total variance that an original variable shares with all other variables. Items having Communality values greater than 0.5 should be kept for the study, along with mean and standard deviation, and all of the 37 items met the acceptance criteria, so retained for further analysis.

4.5. Confirmatory factor analysis

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) approach was employed in the measurement model, which confirms that the actual data is acceptable for the stated factor arrangement (Hair et al., 2003). The factors are examined by the researcher in exploratory factor analysis (EFA) from the items/observed variables. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) validates the number of factors and matching items for each component as given in Figure 1. The sample statistics were used to quantify population parameters in the most extensively used CFA approach (maximum likelihood factor analysis) (Hair et al., 2017). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is often regarded as the ideal method for evaluating psychometric qualities. In general, CFA is used to achieve two goals: 1) evaluating the measurement model's fitness, and 2) evaluating the model's validity.

Figure 1: Curriculum structure design in terms of generic skills and functional area skills

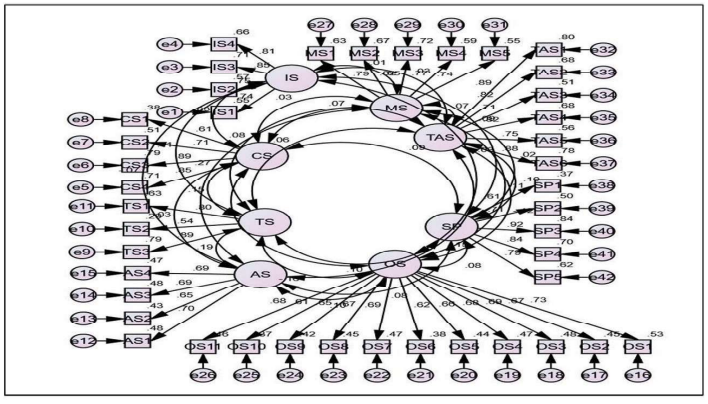

Table 6: Fit statistics of the model (Curriculum structure design in terms of generic skills and functional area skills, and students' employability potential)

Model Fit	Cut-off Criteria	Model Statistics	Remarks
CMIN		1306.28	
DF		791	
CMIN/DF	≤ 3 (Hair et al., 2010)	1.651	Excellent
GFI	≥.8 (Baumgartner & Homburg, 1996)	0.843	Excellent
PGFI	≥.5 (Wu et al., 2011)	0.738	Excellent
CFI	≥.9 (Hair et al., 2010)	0.924	Good
TLI	≥.9 (Byrne, 2010)	0.917	Good
RMESA	≤.08 (Steiger, 1990)	0.045	Excellent

Figure 1 shows path analysis. Table 6 outcome shows both the absolute and incremental fit indices. With CMIN score or chi-square ($\chi 2$)= 1306.280, CMIN/Df ($\chi 2/df$) = 1.65 ≤ 3, P < .01, GFI=0.843 > 0.8, PGFI= 0.738 ≥ 0.5, CFI=0.924 > 0.9, TLI = 0.917 > 0.90, and RMSEA=0.045 ≤ 0.08 it indicates strong fit to data. All thresholds were reached. As a result, the proposed study model is fit.

Table 7: Convergent and Discriminant Validity Statistic of Variables (Curriculum structure design in terms of generic skills and functional area skills, and students' employability potential.

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR (H)	IS	CS	TS	AS	OS	MS	TAS	SP
IS	0.869	0.623	0.013	0.875	**0.790**							
CS	0.854	0.598	0.021	0.888	0.030	**0.773**						
TS	0.878	0.706	0.035	0.885	0.114	0.146	**0.840**					
AS	0.848	0.570	0.075	0.862	0.066	0.031	0.187	**0.755**				
OS	0.956	0.665	0.024	0.962	0.028	0.004	0.156	0.103	**0.815**			
MS	0.895	0.631	0.075	0.899	0.008	0.026	0.084	0.274	0.113	**0.794**		
TAS	0.923	0.667	0.021	0.934	0.033	0.069	0.059	0.145	0.122	0.074	**0.816**	
SP	0.926	0.717	0.010	0.957	0.093	0.092	0.096	0.083	0.084	0.016	0.102	**0.847**

Source: Primary Data

All of the prerequisites of the validity analysis are met, as shown by the validity statistics in Table 7, indicating the validity of each concept. Interpersonal Skills (0.623), Communication Skills (0.598), Teamwork Skills (0.706), Analytical Skills (0.570), Operation Skills (0.665), Marketing Skills (0.631), Technology adaptation skills (0.667), and Students' Potential (0.717) all have Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values that are greater than the minimum threshold of 0.5. Additionally, the composite reliability of all the constructs i.e., Interpersonal Skills (0.869), Communication Skills (0.854), Teamwork Skills, (0.878) Analytical Skills (0.840), Operation Skills (0.956), Marketing Skills (0.895), Technology adaption skills (0.923), Students Potential (0.926) is also higher than the minimum prescribed limit of 0.70 (0.888). Additionally, all of the item's factor loading values were above the

minimum allowable level of 0.6, and all the statements were determined to be significant; as a result, it was determined that the constructs meet all three requirements for convergent validity.

As per the results of Table 7 condition of discriminant validity has been met, Interpersonal Skills ($0.623 > 0.790_2$), Communication Skills ($0.598 > 0.773_2$), Teamwork Skills, ($0.706 > 0.8402_)$ Analytical Skills ($0.570 > .755_2$), Operation Skills ($0.665 > 0.815_2$), Marketing Skills ($0.631 > 0.794_2$), Technology adaption skills ($0.667 > 0.816_2$), Students Potential ($0.717 > 0.847_2$).

Table 8: Inter-correlations among variables

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR (H)	IS	CS	TS	AS	OS	MS	TAS	SP
IS	0.869	0.623	0.013	0.875	**0.790**							
CS	0.854	0.598	0.021	0.888	0.030	**0.773**						
TS	0.878	0.706	0.035	0.885	0.114	0.146	**0.840**					
AS	0.848	0.570	0.075	0.862	0.066	0.031	0.187	**0.755**				
OS	0.956	0.665	0.024	0.962	0.028	0.004	0.156	0.103	**0.815**			
MS	0.895	0.631	0.075	0.899	0.008	0.026	0.084	0.274	0.113	**0.794**		
TAS	0.923	0.667	0.021	0.934	0.033	0.069	0.059	0.145	0.122	0.074	**0.816**	
SP	0.926	0.717	0.010	0.957	0.093	0.092	0.096	0.083	0.084	0.016	0.102	**0.847**

Source: Primary Data

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 8 describe the results of the correlational analysis that the student's potential is significantly associated with skills i.e., Interpersonal Skills ($r = 0.428^{**,}$ $P < .05$), Communication Skills ($r=0.276^{**,}$ $P < .05$), Teamwork Skills ($r = 0.626^{**,}$ $P < .05$ =), Analytical Skills ($0.518^{**,}$ $P < .05$), Operation Skills ($0.417^{**,}$ $P < .05$), Marketing Skills ($0.441^{**,}$ $P < .05$), Technology adaption skills ($0.569^{**,}$ $P < .05$). All correlation values fall below the upper limit of 0.9. As a result, it can be inferred from the data that multicollinearity between independent variables is not a problem. All of these factors have a strong correlation with one another, supporting the objectives fundamentally.

Table 9: Collinearity statistics (Dependent variable: Student's Potential

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	.379	.272		1.390	.166		
	IS	.157	.045	.156	3.472	.001	.795	1.258
	CS	.105	.048	.091	2.162	.031	.906	1.103
	TS	.560	.088	.569	6.366	.000	.210	1.009
	AS	.226	.043	.265	5.236	.000	.622	1.607
	OS	.179	.059	.195	3.028	.013	.734	1.363
	MS	.103	.045	.106	2.257	.025	.726	1.378
	TAS	.165	.088	.154	3.642	.002	.280	1.542

(Source: Primary Data)

While students' potential is the dependent variable, the tolerance values of Interpersonal Skills (0.795), Communication Skills (0.906), Teamwork Skills (0.210), Analytical Skills (0.622), Operation Skills (0.734), Marketing Skills (0.726), and Technology adaptation skills (0.280) are greater than the minimum prescribed limit of 0.2. The VIF values of Interpersonal Skills (1.258), Communication Skills (1.103), Teamwork Skills (1.009), Analytical Skills (1.607), Operation Skills (1.363), Marketing Skills (1.738), and Technology adaptation skills (1.542) are also less than the maximum cut-off point of 5.0. As a result, given in Table 9, it is determined that there is no risk of collinearity between all of the components.

SEM analysis was used to analyse the impact of curriculum structure design in terms of the adoption of generic skills and functional area skills on students' employability potential. To put this to the test, the impact of all skills is investigated on the average of five statements of students' employability potential. In this study, all of the skills acted as independent variables, with student employability potential serving as the dependent variable.

Table 10: Results of Structural Model (Direct Effect)

Hypotheses	Relationship			Estimate	S.E.	C.R	P
H1	SP	<---	IS	.157	.045	3.311	***
H2	SP	<---	CS	.105	.048	2.186	**
H3	SP	<---	TS	.560	.087	6.437	***
H4	SP	<---	AS	.226	.043	5.294	***
H5	SP	<---	OS	.179	.079	3.050	***
H6	SP	<---	MS	.103	.045	2.282	**
H7	SP	<---	TAS	.165	.087	3.660	***

Source: Primary Data

(IS- Interpersonal Skills, CS- Communication Skills, TS- Teamwork Skills, AS- Analytical Skills, OS- Operation Skills, MS- Marketing Skills, TAS- Technology adaptation skills, SP- Student's Potential)

Figure 2: Structural Model

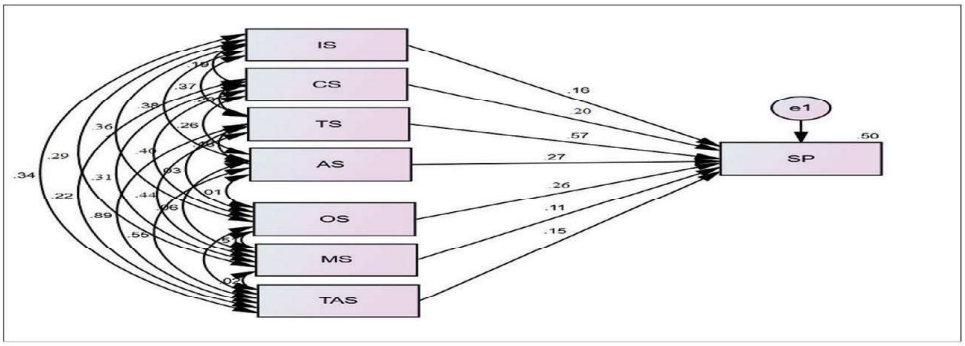

Figure 2 and Table 10 depict the model along with estimates of testing the

influence of curriculum structure design (skills) in terms of the adoption of generic skills and functional area skills on students' employability potential. Statistical results show a significant influence of all skills of curriculum structure design on student's employability potential such as Interpersonal Skills (H1) (CR = 3.51, $p < 0.05$), Communication Skills (H2) (CR = 2.18, $p < 0.05$), Teamwork Skills (H3) (CR = 6.43, $p < 0.05$), Analytical Skills (H4) (CR=5.29, $p < 0.05$), Operation Skills (H5) (CR = 3.05, $p < 0.05$), Marketing Skills (H6) (CR = 2.28, $p < 0.05$), and Technology adaptation skills (H7) (CR = 3.66, $p < 0.05$). Hence, it is interpreted that all skills of curriculum structure design have a significant positive influence on students' employability potential, leading to acceptance of all hypotheses. Moreover, among all the skills, Teamwork Skills (56%) and Analytical Skills (22%) of students influence the student's employability potential most, following Technology adaptation skills, Interpersonal Skills, Operation Skills, Marketing Skills, and Communication Skills, respectively.

4.6. Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

The structural model results confirm that all seven curriculum skill components significantly influence students' employability potential, supporting H1–H7. Teamwork skills ($\beta = 0.560$) and analytical skills ($\beta = 0.226$) emerged as the strongest predictors, highlighting the importance of collaborative competencies and problem-solving abilities in tourism employability. The strong effect of teamwork skills reflects the service-intensive nature of tourism, where coordination and interaction with colleagues and stakeholders are essential, while analytical skills enable graduates to interpret information and address operational challenges effectively.

Although technology adaptation skills were significant, their comparatively lower mean scores indicate that students perceive themselves as less prepared in digital competencies, suggesting a need for enhanced training in GDS, tourism analytics, and digital marketing. Interpersonal, operational, marketing, and communication skills also demonstrated significant positive effects, confirming that both generic and functional skills jointly contribute to improving graduate employability outcomes in the tourism sector.

5. Discussion and Implications of the Study

To examine the impact of curriculum structure design in terms of the adoption of generic skills and functional area skills on students' employability potential, SEM analysis was conducted. Employees must be conversant with and have a broader conceptual knowledge of the requirements of their occupations, according to Bailey (1997), to easily

incorporate themselves into the workplace and its culture. Statistical results show a significant influence of all skills of curriculum structure design on students' employability potential, such as generic skills like (Interpersonal skills, Communication skills, Teamwork skills and Analytical skills), and functional area skills (Operation Skills, Marketing Skills, and Technology adaptation skills), providing support to previous studies (Rahman, 2010; Chan, 2011). This describes that these abilities are necessary to increase employability potential in the tourism industry. Hence, it is interpreted that all skills of curriculum structure design have a significant positive influence on students' employability potential. Moreover, among all the skills, Teamwork skills and analytical skills of students influence the students' employability potential. Moreover, among all the employability potentials most followed, Technology adaptation skills, Interpersonal skills, Operation skills, Marketing skills, and Communication Skills are the most followed. According to de Dios Alija et al. (2024), generic competency has a great impact on employability, along with functional skills (Bisschoff & Massyn, 2024). The improvement of students' competency and preparation for future success as practitioners might come through the development of functional and generic area skills (Petrovič et al., 2025). The tourism industry has a substantial requirement for human resources.

5.1. Theoretical Implication

The study discussed the vast literature regarding the undergraduate tourism courses. The results of the study show a significant impact of course structure on students' employability potential. It implies that if institutions want to enhance students' employability potential, various updated/revised course components with extracurricular activities are required to make the students employable and committed towards the tourism industry. The research has also made a vital contribution to the field of undergraduate tourism course literature by studying various constructs such as curriculum, generic skills, and functional area skills. The study has also discussed the vast literature regarding the undergraduate tourism courses. The results of the study show a significant impact of course structure on students' employability potential. It implies that if institutions want to enhance students' employability potential, various updated/revised course components with extracurricular activities are required to make the students employable and committed towards the tourism industry.

5.2. Practical Implications

Considering the existence of human elements in services, it is crucial to provide students all the necessary skills and to educate them on aspects of the tourism industry. A study found that the employability potential of students is significantly influenced by both generic skills and functional area

skills. Since the tourism industry is a service-based industry hence study modules must be updated considering numerous internal and external changes. The research gaps identified in the current study should motivate more investigation into this field.

Skills in digital competency are also in high demand right now. Priority must be given to adding more components that will increase students' employability potential to help them successfully adapt to changing industry, digital-oriented demands. It is necessary to evaluate and reevaluate the feedback obtained through follow-up throughout training programmes to identify any shortcomings and faults. This will help in improving the commitment level of students to the tourism industry.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the impact of curriculum structure design, comprising generic and functional area skills, on undergraduate tourism students' employability potential in North India. The results confirm that all curriculum skill components significantly contribute to employability, with teamwork and analytical skills exerting the strongest influence. These findings suggest that tourism curricula should prioritize collaborative learning, problem-solving activities, and experiential learning approaches to enhance graduate readiness for the labour market.

The low level of preparation in technology adoption skills suggests that there is a need to enhance the curriculum with digital tourism applications, GDS, tourism analytics, and competencies for digital marketing. Ways to improve the programme relevance and alignment with industry and enhance interaction between industries and academia, modifying internship models and setting up technology-based platforms for learning. At the policy level, tourism education authorities and universities should establish national standardized competency frameworks, which can be updated regularly in line with changing industry requirements. In general, the implementation of generic and soft skill training into the curriculum can enhance students' employability and aid in developing a competent tourism workforce.

6. Limitations and future research

The current work was performed during a certain period, using a cross-sectional design and taking into consideration only full-time undergraduate students. This is why its results cannot be generalized to students who study through correspondence mode or who are in post-graduation. The study included only direct associations between the independent variable (IV) and the dependent variable (DV), lacking underlying mediating factors. It was also constrained in terms of time, place, and setting, limiting

the generalizability of findings to other places. Longitudinal studies could further examine whether and how students' perceptions change over time. To get the results more realistic, it has to include postgraduate students, other than regular and correspondence students. The geographic scope of the study was limited to four northern states (Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, including Chandigarh UT, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh), which limits the ability to generalize the findings to other regions of India. Furthermore, studying other areas with larger sample sizes could provide more general insights.

Declaration

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

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