



Graduate Employability: Perception of Graduate Students on Soft Skills Towards Employability in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Career opportunity for newly graduated candidates in Bangladesh is challenging at present due to high job demand, skill gap and lack of practical experiences. Thus, this study emphasises on student's perception regarding the importance of soft skills acquisition towards their employability. This study has collected survey responses from 326 final year students from ten different private and public universities in Bangladesh. Structural Equational Modelling (SEM) technique has been used to investigate the relationship between different soft skills and employability through analysis of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Significant relationships among communication, critical thinking, teamwork and employability have been found in this study. This study is limited to the soft skills acquisition and graduates' employability. Further study can be conducted between the relationship of different soft skills and Human Resource Management (HRM) practices. This study provides a significant contribution to the literature by exploring the key soft skills that have relationship with employability. It also promotes the acquisition and practice of soft skills in finding jobs for newly graduated job candidates.

Keywords: Career, Employability, Skill Gap, Soft Skills, Students, Bangladesh

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Introduction

Employers assume that employability for newly graduated candidates is their readiness to work with certain set of skills, awareness, attributes and commercial knowledge which assist them to be more productive in the organization immediately after getting a job (Majid et al., 2012; Mason et al., 2006). A maximum number of employers are demanding an assortment of different skills like technical competencies, interpersonal, critical thinking, leadership and managerial capabilities reinforced by the educational system from their employees (Patacsil & Tablatin, 2017). Currently, employers are giving more emphasize on higher level skills of employability and adjustability with industrial prompt changes along with technical expertise to locate right employees in right place (Sattar et al., 2012; Khata et al., 2013; Fong

et al., 2014). In this regard, the soft skills acquisition among students has become essential at present time. Soft skills have been a subject of life-long learning that have application in every aspects of life. Personal development of individual gets enabled and enhanced through the development of soft skills (Gibb, 2014). Soft skills include personal accountability, strong work ethics, positive attitudes, self-motivation, the degree of collaboration, interpersonal skill, conflict resolution, negotiation skill, people's adaptability and flexibility, the clarity of communication, creative thinking, and the ability of coaching and mentoring etc. (Taylor, 2016; Zaman et al., 2018). Learning success of soft skills influences individual behaviour both in social and professional life (Gibb, 2014; Zaman et al., 2018). Soft skills practice has impact in developing social skills as well as professional competency. Employers now a days demand their employees practicing soft skills, which have positive impact on serving customers with service quality and satisfaction (Patacsil et al., 2017). Some researches reveal that in many situations at work, soft skills are even more importance than technical skills. Pritchard (2013) has mentioned that 75% of employers are looking for employees with soft skills. Patacsil & Tablatin (2017) have studied on IT professional and found out that soft skills practice is needed for business growth and sustainability. Interpersonal communication, critical thinking and problem solving ability are crucial to develop for an employee to become skilled professional (Naim, 2017). Beyond the technical knowledge on occupation, employers also look for the workforce to be ethical, agreeable, leader and team spirited (Johnson, 2016; Majid et al., 2012). Therefore, the assessment of soft skills is widely practiced while hiring new employees.

Job market for fresh graduates is getting competitive in Bangladesh at present. Developing employability through higher education can improve employment prospect and also achieve personal learning goals. However, there is a skill gap among newly graduated students who have academic knowledge only, but have lack of practical experience which can be overcome through acquisition of soft skills (Roos et al., 2016). It is essential to acquire soft skills through training, especially self-training, attending language classes, presentation skills development session and socializing with others (Kechagias, 2011). It is also found that the practice of soft skills at work is comparatively low in Bangladesh and very few initiatives have been taken by the employers to develop these skills (Hossan et al., 2012; Zaman et al., 2018). Therefore, this study is primarily focusing on the perception of students about the importance of soft skills acquisition and its relationship towards getting job at the beginning of their career. This study identifies the most commonly perceived soft skills needed for employability of students in Bangladesh analysed through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Then, the relationships among soft skills (extracted through EFA) practices and graduates' employability have been tested by using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) where Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) has been done at the beginning.

This study provides a significant contribution to the literature by exploring the key soft skills that have relationship with employability. It also promotes the acquisition and practice of soft skills in finding jobs for newly graduated candidates. Since very few studies have been conducted on soft skills practice in Bangladesh, this study will draw the attention of academic institutes to emphasise more on soft skills development of their students and include these into curriculums.

Literature Review

Students from different academic background are striving to get a job in their relevant areas. Many of students may not get a job instantly after completing their studies for their lacking in some set of skills. In a study of World Bank in India, the findings indicated that graduates

have the prevalent skill gap between complex intellectual skills (rational, mathematical and problem solving capability) and simple intellectual skills such as communication and critical thinking (Andreas & Hiroshi, 2011). Due to global competition in the labor market, graduates are facing difficulties to get a job and falling in aggressive competition. To be competent and forceful in the job market, students should attain a set of soft skills for increasing the employability skill (Azami et al., 2009). Employers always seek a certain set of employment qualities like problem solving, strong work ethic and decision making skills while taking candidates' job interview (Kechagias, 2011). However, employers face a challenge to recognize the potential employee who has the competency in both technical and soft skills (Shafie & Nayan, 2010). Graduates must understand the recruiters' demanding issues to prepare themselves as proficient candidates for getting employment in the desired working place. This study is focusing on important soft skills needed for getting job.

Soft skills refer both personal qualities and interpersonal skills that make individual emotionally intelligent and engaged with other in order to bring desired state of affairs (Zaman et al., 2018). Soft skills are the human skills such as assertiveness, behavioural competency, creativity, engagement, leadership, work ethics, self-control and openness (Alam et al., 2010; Rao, 2017; Szilárd et al., 2018). It is also known as personal skills that include communication, team work, creativity and problem solving. According to Yearley (2017), soft skills mean delegation, networking, time management, team building capacity and awareness of individual. Therefore, soft skills include personal accountability, strong work ethics, positive attitudes, self-motivation, the degree of collaboration, interpersonal skill, conflict resolution, negotiation skill, people's adaptability and flexibility, the clarity of communication, creative thinking, and the ability of coaching and mentoring. Tang (2018) stated that soft skills are personal traits that enhance interaction, job performance and career growth. Rao (2015) mentioned that soft skills are essential for both career growth and social competence. Someone possess soft skill has more social skills for interaction and networking that enables the person to be accomplished more. Unlike hard skills (technical skills) which are learned by training, soft skills are more related with emotions and insights that are very difficult to measure and evaluate (Wesley et al., 2017). Soft skills have become significant both in personal and profession life. Possessing soft skills help individual to connect psychologically with others. Therefore, practice of soft skill helps individual and the organization to understand the needs of others, and directs them to act accordingly for mutual benefits.

This study is considering Social Exchange Theory (SET) for understanding students' perception on soft skills, which is developed for obtaining job at the beginning of the career. SET refers human behaviour based on the notion of mutual relationship between two parties (Emerson (1976). Social interaction as well as communication in organization are needed for working in a team (Nazir et al., 2018; Waskito et al., 2020). This is basically explained in SET. Cross & Dundon (2019) have mentioned the importance of SET for employment relations and Human Resource Management (HRM). It is assumed that critical thinking skills, communication ability and adaptability in teamwork can make employee more compatible for getting a job. Thus, these skills are emphasized more by the graduates for their employability, which is their ultimate goal as return.

Hypothesis Development

Soft skills development among students are essential for finding job. Employers mostly look for few specific soft skills during hiring new employees which include creativity, integrity, leadership, critical thinking, strong work ethics, positive attitude, communication, time management, teamwork, problem solving, self-confidence etc. (Patacsil & Tablatin, 2017). Before hiring new employees, recruiters in general like to see a fine blend of soft skills and competencies among the job candidates in addition to discipline-based knowledge and skills. However, employers often find soft skills deficiency among the job applicants (Johnson, 2016; Kechagias, 2011; Roos et al., 2016). Therefore, soft skills have become one of the needed criteria while hiring employees. Since soft skills help one to get and keep a job as well as successfully influence and lead others at work (Rao, 2017), these have become crucial to find out the most commonly perceived soft skills needed for student's employability in Bangladesh. For this study, only three most common soft skills are considered to investigate the perceptions of students. These are communication, critical thinking and teamwork.

Communication is the daily activity that everyone does at work. Employees communicate with managers and clients on a regular basis, and effective communication is essential at every level. Employers believe that communication is mostly needed soft skills to develop since employees often need to involve with jobs that require different level of leadership and decision making activities (Majid et al., 2012; Patacsil & Tablatin, 2017). Through communication employees can exchange their ideas and knowledge with the management, and it also helps them to deal with customers. It is perceived that communication skills help employee to negotiate and network professionally (Rao, 2017). Good communication develops the relationship between employee and employer. It reduces misunderstanding and opens the floor of cooperation and coordination for mutual benefits. Therefore, communication is one of the most demanding skills that employers always seek while hiring employees. Based on this discussion the following hypothesis is developed to examine the relationship between communication skills and employability.

H₁: There is a positive relationship between communication and students' employability.

Critical thinking is another soft skills that helps employee for career success. Critical thinking enables employee to work under stress, set priority and solve problem holistically (Tang, 2018). Critical thinking seems a very important soft skill for various types of organization. Though critical thinking is more associated with education, it is now also considered a major element of success at workplace (Zuo et al., 2018). When employees can think critically, then they can act more professionally. Professionalism helps in establishing boundaries at work, and showing respect to others (Hamilton & Brabbit, 2007). Critical thinking also ensures work ethics, equity and fairness (Beeri et al., 2013). Critical thinking can accumulate information correctly that help people to take decision. Exercising critical thinking also helps one to conceptualize outcomes, solve complex problems and encourage on self-reflection. That is why employers prefer candidate with critical thinking skills. The following hypothesis is developed based on the above mentioned arguments.

H₂: There is a positive relationship between critical thinking and students' employability.

Teamwork is an important ingredient of soft skills. Many studies have shown the effectiveness of teamwork in improving job performance (Kalleberg, 2009; Criss, 2010; Weinstein et al., 2013). Capacity in effective team building and working as team make people more empowered and connected. Rao (2017) has mentioned about teamwork for the

employees that can achieve organizational goal more smoothly. Work ethics and morale are enhanced when people work in a team. It is also important to give joint effort for strategic business success. Teamwork generates higher productivity with positive work motivation (Tang, 2018). That is why employees need to have the ability to work in a team. During the employee selection process, teamwork skill is also investigated. Thus the next hypothesis of the study is

H3: *There is a positive relationship between teamwork and students' employability.*

Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review, this study is proposing that communication, critical thinking and teamwork have the relationship with employability of graduates.

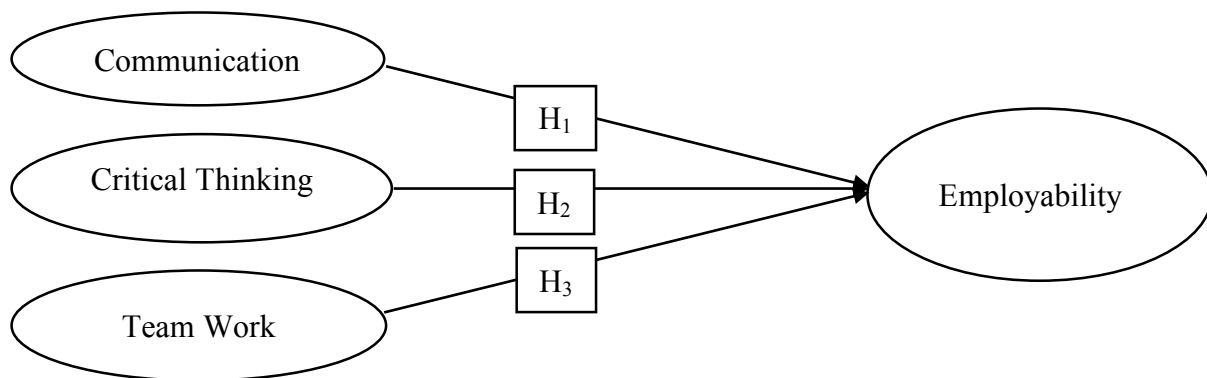


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Research Design and Methodology

A quantitative study has been done to find out the perceptions of students regarding the need of soft skills for getting job in Bangladesh. Specifically, this study has used Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Data of this study has been collected between January and February 2021 through structured questionnaire survey from 326 final year students from both public and private universities in Bangladesh. Total 10 (5 public and 5 private) universities across Bangladesh are selected purposively based on the convenience of the researcher. This study has adopted convenience sampling which is non-probability sampling subject to the convenient accessibility and proximity (Hair et al., 2010; Kothari, 2015). Questions are asked from different dimensions of soft skills that are required for graduate recruitments. The questionnaire of this study followed the dimensions used by Pritchard (2013) in his study on soft skills. Questionnaire has been designed in Google form and the link has been sent to the respondents through email and various social medias (Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, IMO & Viber). Data are then imported into SPSS file from MS Excel file.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

SL	Content		Percentage	Frequency
1	Gender	Male	63.2	206
		Female	36.8	120
2	Age	Less than 20 years	3.4	11
		20-25 years	72.7	237
		25-35 years	23	75
		35-45 years	.6	2
		45 years or more	.1	1
3	Education	Undergraduate	60.7	198
		Graduate	29.1	95
		Post Graduate	10.1	33

The respondents consisted of 63.2% male students and 36.8% are female. 60.7% respondents are undergraduate students whereas post-graduate students are only 10.1% and the remaining respondents have recently finished their bachelor degree but have not started job yet. Most of the respondents are young and their age is between 20 to 25 years. Meanwhile, to running the collected data from the respondent, twenty-one items are composed based on the theoretical framework. The twenty-one items stated are representing the most commonly perceived soft skills needed for getting a job, which are communication, critical thinking, teamwork and leadership.

Responses of twenty-one items have been analysed using Explanatory Factor Analysis (EFA) in SPSS 25 software. EFA is a useful tool for investigating the variable relationships for complex concepts (Hair et al., 2010). Before the final data analysis, normality test of collected data has been conducted through skewness and standard error (where, skewness/std.error < 1.96). Only two items were not approved in normality test. Since the number is not significant, the data analysis can be carried out. However, homogeneity of the variance has been tested and box plot are drawn for data screening that are supported to do further data analysis.

First, a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with rotation has been conducted to examine the factor structure of the 21 items, with multiple methods used to determine the number of factors underlying the data (e.g. eigenvalue-greater-than-one, screen plot, parallel analysis). Second, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) has been conducted in order to see whether there were significant differences in the factors extracted from the PCA. SEM is a multivariate statistical analysis technique that is used to analyse structural relationships (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2012). SEM technique is the combination of factor analysis (EFA & CFA) and multiple regression (Hair et al., 2010), and it is used to analyse the structural relationship between measured variables and latent constructs. SEM method is preferred by the researcher since it estimates the multiple and interrelated dependence in a single analysis (Johnson & Wichern, 2007).

In this analysis, two types of variables are used endogenous variables and exogenous variables. Endogenous variables are equivalent to dependent variables and are equal to the independent variable (Hair et al., 2010). SEM consists of measurement model and structural model (Hair et al., 2010). Measurement model is also known as path analysis which represents how measured variables come together to represent constructs (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2012), and it is a set of relationships between exogenous and endogens variables. This is shown by the use of an arrow. The measurement model follows the assumption of unidimensionality. The structural model shows how constructs are related to each other as

test of proposed casual relationships (Johnson & Wichern, 2007). Therefore, this study has done an extensive study and analysis to confirm the factors and relationship between soft skills practice and employability as perceived by students.

Reliability

Reliability is defined as the extent to which a questionnaire, test, observation or any measurement procedure produces the same results on repeated trials (Kothari, 2015). It is evident that the reliability coefficient or alphas for the different constructs have been computed using the reliability procedure in SPSS. The reliabilities of all the constructs used in this study found to be above the standard set by Nunnally (1978), which is 0.89.

Data Analysis and Findings through EFA

The principal component analysis with varimax rotation has been applied. Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) score and Bartlett's test have been verified to know the adequacy of the data before factor analysis. Kaiser (1974) had suggested that for KMO in the 0.90s adequacy is marvellous, in the 0.80s is meritorious, in the 0.70s is middling, in the 0.60s is mediocre, in the 0.50s is miserable and below 0.5 – unacceptable. The Bartlett's test of sphericity should be significant ($p < 0.05$). Following phase of factor analysis is the choice of number of factors. The most popular criteria are: Kaiser rule – retain only those factors with an eigenvalue larger than 1; and Cattell criterion – a scree-plot. The extraction of factors is usually conducted by Principal Components Analysis (PCA). Principal component analysis is usually used in “typical” EFA – it is one of the techniques used for calculation of factor loadings. PCA is used as the adaptation of classical Hotelling's principle components analysis for factor analysis, and in practically is the most popular. The next step of factor analysis is the choice of rotation method. The goal of rotation is to simplify and clarify the data structure (Malina, 2004). On the basis of loadings values, it could indicate the variables with practically importance – it should be above ± 0.5 . The analysis could be finished by interpretation of factors (using loading for all variables). Examination method of KMO that used to measure sampling adequacy suggested that the sample was factorable where about 0.919, and Bartlett's test of sphericity scored 2720.716 with significant level of 0.000 less than 0.05, which means there are correlations between variables.

The communality, which means the amount of variance in each variable that can be explained by the factor model (Hair et al., 2010). This communality represents initial commonalities before rotation. It is the norm that the communality value for each variable must be above 0.5 to be accepted (Hair et al., 2010). Table 2 below illustrates each variable extraction value. For example, extraction value of variable X1 is 0.769 which mean that about 76.9% of variance can be explained by the form of X1 variable factors. Meanwhile, 0.732 is the amount of X2 variable extraction, which indicates that 73.2% of variance can be explained by the form of X2 variable factors.

Next stage for analysis, is the result of criteria analysis in the extraction factors which explained with Eigen value, cumulative percentage, scree plot, component matrix, and rotate component matrix. Eigen value explains the amount of variance in all the variables considered (Hair et al., 2010). There are four components with more than 1 eigenvalue, meaning that the number of factors formed are four. The cumulative percentage of total variance explained in this study is 66.15%. Since this study is in social science where minimum value of cumulative percentage is 60%, the formation of four factors have been considered as valid and acceptable. Scree plot shows that the line connected from the first

four components have >1 eigenvalues. While the rest components, which are 5 to 21, the eigenvalue is <1. This means that the factors that can be formed from 21 variables.

Table 2. Rotated Component Matrix^a				
	Components			
	Communication (Factor-I)	Critical Thinking (Factor-II)	Team Work (Factor-III)	Employability (Factor-IV)
X1	0.624			
X2	0.714			
X4	0.643			
X5	0.754			
X7	0.71			
X9	0.676			
X18		0.578		
X19		0.71		
X20		0.813		
X21		0.709		
X10			0.746	
X12			0.727	
X13			0.601	
X3				0.625
X14				0.654
X15				0.606
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.				
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				
a. Rotation converged in 9 iterations.				

Table 2 shows rotated component matrix that helps to determine the components represent (Hair et al., 2010). This table shows that there is no cross loading of variables for the factors. Factor-I (Communication) consists of items X1, X2, X4, X5, X7 and X9. These five items represent communication as soft skill needed for getting job. Factor-II covers four items (X18, X19, X20 & X21) and these refer critical thinking as another needed soft skills perceived by students for employability. Factor-III includes X10, X12 and X13 which represents team work. Factor-IV consists of X3, X14 & X15 that refer employability.

Finding of the exploratory factor analysis in this study states that the students perceive three main soft skills as most important for getting job. These are communication, critical thinking, and team work. Communication skill help one individual to find out employment opportunity (Rao, 2015). Students with good communication skills can easily manage job since they are capable enough to convince the recruiter. One having communication skill can also understand the expected behaviour and requirement of employers. Critical thinking is another skill that recruiters look on job applicants. Critical thinking is tested in hiring the new employee since it comes up with innovative ideas, promote options and uncover the spinoffs (Zuo et al., 2018). Critical thinking ability also helps individual to be selected in the recruitment process. Teamwork increases work spirit and develops sense of belongingness (Johnson, 2016). Team work capacity of students are

also essential as employee need to work in a team and this skill must be developed from the student life. To sum up as reflected in this study, communication, critical thinking and team work are mostly needed soft skills for student’s employability in Bangladesh. To verify the findings of EFA, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) have been conducted in the next phase of the data analysis.

Data Analysis and Findings

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the construct validity of the model. Convergent validity is confirmation of the existence of a construct determined by the correlations exhibited by independent measures of the construct. To assess convergent validity, the loading estimates and construct reliability were investigated. In AMOS 21, convergent validity can be assessed and tested using the measurement model by determining the significant t-value of each item’s estimated pattern coefficient on its posited underlying construct factor (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). CFA was performed using AMOS 21. A good rule of thumb is that standardized loading estimates should be > 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010). Based on the Figure 2, it can be seen that communication (COM); critical thinking (CT) and teamwork (TW) have factor loading more than 0.5. The CFA results provide overall fit indices ($X^2 = 254.644$), chi-square degree of freedom (Normed chi-square) = 2.274, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)= 0.063. Figure 2 shows the model fit results.

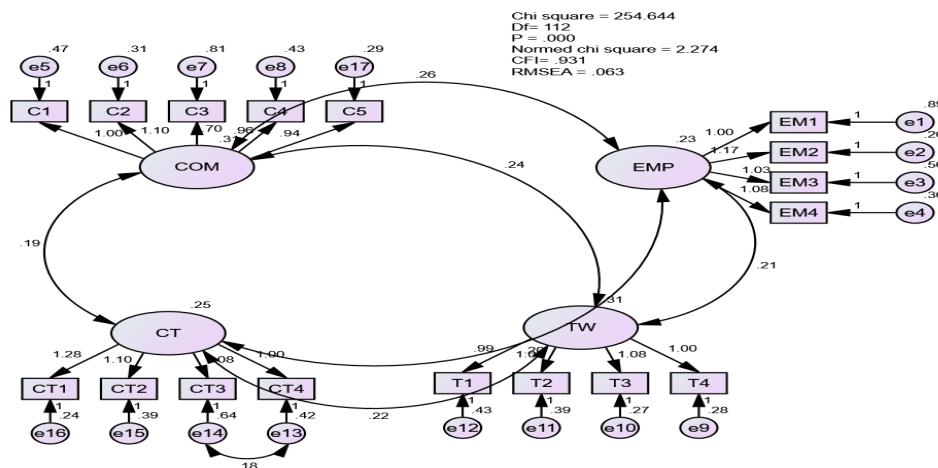


Figure 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

As it can be seen from Figure 2, Normed chi-square = 2.274 is a good fit, because it should be range from as high as 5.0 (Wheaton et al., 1977) to as low as 2.0 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). CFI = 0.931 is a good fit. A rule of thumb for the CFI and the incremental indexes is that values above 0.90 may indicate reasonably good fit (Hair et al., 2010) of the researcher’s model. Next, RMSEA = 0.063 is good fit. Hair et al., (2010) suggested $0.03 < RMSEA < 0.08$ is for “good fit”. Therefore, confirmatory factor analysis for the final measurement model reasonably supported the model’s fit.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

SEM has been used to test the hypothesized proposed. SEM technique enables the simultaneous estimation of multiple regression equations in a single framework (Hair et al., 2010). The model was estimated using maximum likelihood method. A structural model is

fit to communication, critical thinking, teamwork and employability presented in figure 3. The goodness of fit indices for the final structural model suggested a good fit to the data: small ratio of normed chi-square ($2 < \text{normed chi-square} < 5$) (Wheaton et al., 1977; Tabachnik & Fidell, 2012), great values of CFI (> 0.9) and RMSEA values ($0.03 < \text{RMSEA} < 0.08$) (Hair et al., 2010).

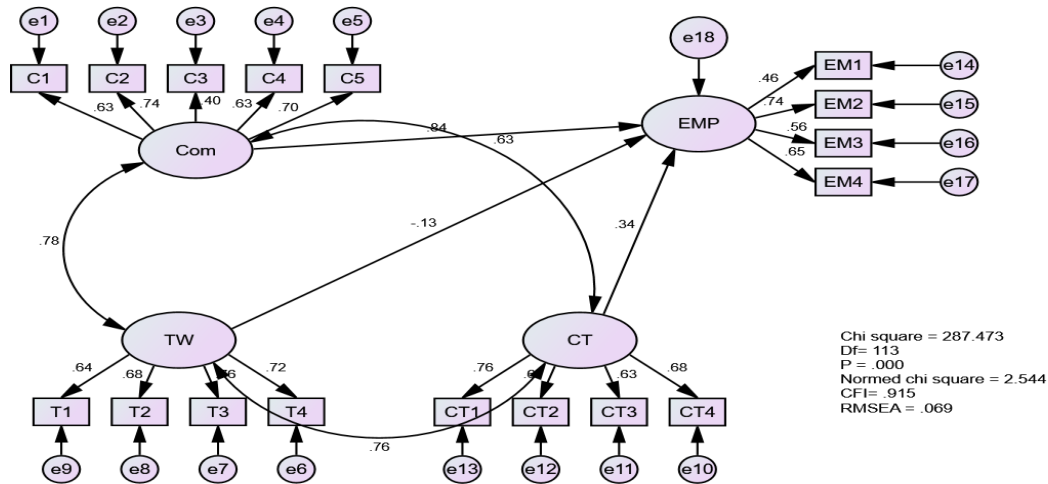


Figure 3. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

Hypotheses Test

The hypotheses testing results are displayed in Table 3. As shown in Table 3, the *p-value* of communication to employability is 0.008, which is less than 0.05. It can be concluded that H1 is supported, meaning that communication has a significant effect on employability. Next, *p-value* of critical thinking to employability is 0.006, which is less than 0.05. It can be concluded that H2 is accepted, meaning that critical thinking has significant effect on employability. Finally, *p-value* of team work to employability is 0.001, which is less than 0.05. It can be concluded that H3 is supported, meaning that team work has a significant effect on employability.

Table 3. Hypotheses Testing Result

Path	Beta	<i>p-value</i>	Result
Com → EMP	0.63	0.008	Supported
CT → EMP	0.34	0.006	Supported
TW → EMP	0.13	0.001	Supported

Discussion

Finding of the EFA states that the students perceive three soft skills as most important for getting job. These are communication, critical thinking and teamwork. These three soft skills have also supported the model's fit in CFA for the measurement model. Through SEM, the significant relationships among communication, critical thinking, teamwork and employability are found. First of all, communication skill helps one individual to find out employment opportunity (Rao, 2015). Students with good communication skills can easily manage job since they are capable enough to convince the recruiter. One having communication skill can also understand the expected behaviour and requirement of

employers. Thus, it is rational that H1 is accepted. Secondly, critical thinking is a soft skill that recruiters look for in job applicants. Critical thinking is tested in hiring the new employee since it comes up with innovative ideas, promotes options and uncovers the spinoffs (Zuo et al., 2018). Critical thinking ability also helps individuals to be selected in the recruitment process. That is why students perceive critical thinking as required soft skills for employability based on which H2 is tested as accepted. Finally, teamwork increases work spirit and develops a sense of belongingness (Johnson, 2016). Teamwork capacity of students is also essential as employees need to work in a team and this skill must be developed from the student life. Therefore, H3 is accepted. To sum up as reflected in this study, communication, critical thinking and teamwork are mostly needed soft skills for students' employability in Bangladesh.

Conclusion and Implications

Soft skills are positive attributes that help one to stay focused, connected and self-driven. Soft skills are equally essential both in personal and work life. Employees can perform better when their communication skills are appropriate. Critical thinking ability makes individuals strategic and target-oriented. Teamwork brings the best output from the group effort. That is why these three are perceived by the students to develop as employers look for these skills while hiring new employees. This study has mentioned the significance of developing communication, critical thinking and teamwork for getting a job at an early career. It also identifies the positive relationships among these three with employability.

This study has several implications. Findings of the study will be useful for the stakeholders to be more concerned on employment crisis. As the main cause of unemployment for graduates is the absence of industry-academia collaboration, this study will draw the attention of educational institutes, policy makers and students to emphasize more specifically on developing soft skills for career opportunity and professional development. Besides, this study has used Social Exchange Theory (SET) to understand the counterpart result of acquiring soft skills and getting employment benefits in return, which is a new contribution into the field of management.

Limitation and Recommendations for Future Research

This study is limited to the soft skills acquisition by students and employability. Further study can be done to know the relationship between soft skills practice and other Human Resource Management (HRM) areas such as job performance, job satisfaction, employee commitment etc. EFA, CFA and SEM have been done in this study to test the direct relationships among the variables. But further extension of the study can be done through mediation and moderation effects in SEM. Since the students' perception is only considered in this study, there is a scope for future research to conduct a study by integrating the responses from employers, experts and graduates to know the role of soft skills for employability.

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