Journal of Theoretical Accounting Research
ISSN: 1556-5106
Volume 22 Issue 1 Year 2026 Page 184-193

Accounting Graduate Employability Transitions under NEP 2020: A Theory-Driven Optimisation Model

[1*]Rachna Vats, [2]Muskaan Arora, [3]Dr. Anjani Srivastava,[4]Dr. Arvind Dalal,[5]Dr Rina, [6]Riya Kathuria

[1*]Research Scholar, School of Leadership and Management, Manav Rachna International Institute of Research & Studies, India *rachna.vats1983@gmail.com*
[2]Assistant Professor, Department of Management, JB Knowledge Park, Faridabad, India *muskaanarora713@gmail.com*
[3]Assistant Professor, School of Commerce, Manav Rachna International Institute of Research & Studies, India **anjani.soc@mriu.edu.in**
[4]Associate Professor, School of Leadership and Management, Manav Rachna International Institute of Research &Studies, India **arvind.slm@mriu.edu.in**
[5]Associate Professor, Goswami Ganesh Dutta Saharan Dharma College, Chandigarh **rina@ggdsd.ac.in**
[6]Assistant Professor, School of Commerce, Manav Rachna International Institute of Research & Studies, India **riyakathuria.soc@mriu.edu.in**

Abstract
This study examines the impact of India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 on the employability transitions of accounting graduates, with a specific focus on how educational reforms shape their readiness for the profession. Through a quantitative research design, the study gathered data from 400 higher education students and recent graduates in the National Capital Region (NCR), Delhi. It identifies key educational elements-multidisciplinary learning, vocational exposure, and industry alignment-that influence employability outcomes for accounting graduates. The findings highlight the central role of multidisciplinary education in developing core accounting skills such as professional judgment, analytical thinking, and adaptability to evolving industry demands. While vocational training and industry-oriented learning contribute to employability, their impact is secondary to the effect of multidisciplinary learning. This research advances accounting education theory by proposing a framework that integrates these key educational factors into accounting curricula. It emphasizes the theoretical implications of NEP 2020 reforms and their potential to enhance employability outcomes. The study offers valuable insights for policymakers and educational institutions aiming to optimize curriculum design and improve accounting graduate preparedness, aligning education with professional and industry needs.

Keywords: Accounting education theory; Accounting competencies; Professional employability; Curriculum development; NEP 2020; Multidisciplinary accounting education

1. Introduction

In developing economies, and especially in India, demographic advantage exists alongside continuing skill gaps, which has led to new focus in the higher education policy system on employability, particularly in the context of accounting education. Though India has one of the largest youth populations in the world, the country is still struggling with the problem of unemployment in graduates, underemployment, and poor school-to-work transitions. Such issues have been created by discrepancies between the academic curricula, labour market demands and the fast-shifting skill requirements due to the growth in technology and economic restructuring and reorganisation.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 will eliminate these inequalities by offering multidisciplinary approaches to learning, vocational inclusion, academic flexibility, and competency-based education. NEP 2020 will help modernize accounting professional training by encouraging changes in the curriculum that are relevant to the industry and enhance the quality of professional judgment and accounting skills.

Although these reforms have already been extensively discussed, empirical evidence in the accounting literature regarding the relationship between educational gains under NEP 2020 and the empirical employability transitions of accounting graduates remains substantially underrepresented. The current literature is inclined to focus on the enhancement of educational policies, yet it has not paid much mind to the issue of how these changes impact the employability of the accounting graduates in the rapidly changing labor market.

The effectiveness of these reforms is however determined by ease of passage and experience of the employability transition on and after higher education among the students. The aim of the study will be to conduct empirical research on employability transitions during NEP 2020 by investigating the role of policy-based education reforms in relation to perceived employability, the acquisition of skills by students, and their

preparedness to embark on a job. This study aims at filling the policy intentions gap with the actual employability outcomes by evaluating the quantitative primary data gathered on higher education students and recent graduates in NCR Delhi.

This study uses three major theoretical approaches to interpret the relationship between accounting education and employability of the accounting graduates: institutional theory, human capital theory, and professionalization theory. The institutional theory (Scott, 2008) focuses on how educational institutions contribute to the development of professional identities and competences. In this theory, institutional norms, structures and values influence accounting education and have a direct effect on shaping such accounting competencies as professional judgment and ethical reasoning. The research is based on the human capital theory (Becker, 1964) and the researchers consider accounting education as a type of human capital investment, as when graduates receive specific accounting skills, e.g. financial analysis, taxation and auditing, their employability grows because they develop more skills and knowledge base. According to professionalization theory (Larson, 1977), one of the key factors in the process of professionalization is the education in accounting that equips graduates with ethical, technical and analytical requirements of the accounting occupation. Education enables the acquisition of competencies that students require when they become professionals.

Based on these frameworks, the study has the following theoretical propositions. (1) The implementation of multidisciplinary learning and vocational exposure will make graduates more employable because they will gain key competencies such as professional judgment and ethical reasoning, (2) the flexibility in the curriculum under NEP 2020 will make graduates more adaptable to industry changes, and (3) vocational training with industry orientation will help them acquire more practical skills and transition readiness to the labor market.

The situation with the concept of employability in the context of accounting education is that it is an accounting education design phenomenon and is not a labor-market phenomenon. This paper presents an argument that the design of the accounting curriculum is directly related to employability of accounting graduates that incorporates elements of multidisciplinary learning, vocational exposure, and industry alignment. These learning factors foster the acquisition of fundamental competencies such as ethical reasoning, analytical, problem-solving, and professional judgment, which make it impossible to succeed in the accounting practice. Therefore, employability is not only the final outcome of the demands of the labor markets but a result of the accounting education structure and content.

Shaheen and Waris (2020) examine the importance of competency-based education of NEP 2020 on accounting education. They stress the acquisition of accounting-specific skills, including professional judgment and ethical reasoning, that is needed by the accounting professionals in the modern dynamic business environment. Dhiman and Solkhe (2025) consider the necessity of the combination of industry connections with accounting education to overcome the skills gaps. They emphasize that hands-on experience in accounting work such as auditing and financial analysis is important in improving the employability of accounting graduates.

Ngai et al. (2025) study the determinant roles of educational pathways on employability. In accounting education, such structured interventions as internships in accounting companies or taxation case studies can be of great help in reducing labor market disengagement and enhancing realistic accounting abilities. Tian and He (2024) show how creative models of teaching are more employable, thanks to their combination of experiential learning and systematic competencies. They consider research that supports scope of NEP 2020 but point out a need to have outcome assessment measured. NEP 2020 is examined as a rejuvenation of Indian higher education (Bhutia and Chhetri 2025). According to them, the success of the policy is premised on institutional preparedness and meeting of interests among the stakeholders, specifically in terms of conveying the flexibility in curricula to the achievement of employability. Kaur (2024) discusses about the ways, in which the vocational education as part of NEP 2020 can be used to curb the skills mismatch in the accounting practice. She proposes that taxation and financial reporting courses are needed to equip graduates with the necessary skills to address the needs of the industry. According to Akkermans et al. (2024), employability is a process that is dynamic, and it is especially applicable to the accounting education. In this regard, employability will be based on the competency of such skills as ethical decision-making, financial analysis, and adaptation to new technologies in accounting. Scandurra et al. (2024) discuss the effectiveness of employability programs in higher education. In accounting education, employability of accounting graduates is boosted by combining real-world accounting situations like financial auditing and tax consulting that imparts the accounting graduates with real life accounting skills. According to Tight (2023), employability should become part of a higher education curriculum. In the case of accounting education, this would entail the introduction of both the accounting skills and ethics decision making in the curriculum to make sure that those that graduate are up to the task of the accounting profession.

This study has limitations although it is a comprehensive study. It is based on quantitative data self-reported, and this data can be affected by the bias of perception of respondents. NCR Delhi used as a geographical focus, although a great source of information about an urban labour market, cannot be generalized to a rural or semi-urban setting. Also, the results of employability in the long perspective are impossible to measure because NEP 2020 is only at the initial level of implementation. The current literature focuses in great part on NEP 2020 as a policy, conceptual, or even qualitative effect, and has little validation of empirical level of the results of employability.

Although the literature speaks of skill-building, vocational training, and curriculum changes, there is a vacuum of quantitative studies that directly connect NEP-induced education experiences and shifts in employability among student sample populations.

Moreover, in India, employability studies tend to assume that the employment results are a fixed position instead of a change. The areas in which students consider themselves to be ready, to whom their skills match and where they are on the path to transition in the new policy framework are not given enough attention. The paper fills such gaps by applying systematic quantitative techniques of empirical research to the study of employability change in a high-competitiveness urban labour market. The main aim of the research is to discuss how NEP 2020 affects employability transitions among higher education students in NCR Delhi. To be more precise, the research is going to: (1) Determine the perceived employability of students that were taught in NEP-consistent educational frameworks, (2) Test a correlation between the skill development programs and employability readiness, and (3) check the transition rates between the education sector to the employment sector with the help of the quantitative analysis tools.

The present research is a planned study that is structured to empirically investigate employability transitions through a national education policy in India (National Education Policy 2020) via a quantitative research approach. This will be followed by the research design, which will cover the means of primary data collection using the questionnaire-based design, which includes questionnaire administration of a survey consisting of structured questions to the population of higher education students and fresh graduates of the National Capital Region (NCR), Delhi, and sample size analysis, sampling plan and statistical software to be used in the research. The results and the analysis section give a thorough analysis of the gathered datasets in application of SPSS based methods which involve the descriptive statistics as well as Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the findings are represented by tables and figures with detailed explanations to describe the trends in employability transitions. These two empirical findings are contextualized in the discussion section to the existing literature on employability and NEP to provide the novelty and academic contribution of the study. Lastly, the conclusion section will provide a synthesis of the main results, outlining the implications of NEP 2020 to the improvement of employability and its applicability to higher education institutions and policy makers.

2. Research Methodology

The research design used in this study is quantitative research, which aims at empirically analyzing the employment transitions associated with the use of the National Education Policy 2020 in India. The quantitative methodology suits this study because the relevant variables of employability can be measured in a systematic way and it is possible to prove the correlation between educational reforms and the outcomes of employability statistically (Akkermans et al., 2024; Scandurra et al., 2024). The study follows a cross-sectional research design and relies on primary information gathered by the use of a structured questionnaire.

The study area is the National Capital Region (NCR), Delhi, which is one of the most competitive and diverse labour markets in India. NCR Delhi has been chosen because it has a significant concentration of institutions of higher learning, a diverse variety of employment prospects, and an early implementation of academic reforms in line with NEP 2020. The study of this area would facilitate a significant analysis of employability transitions in a context of an urban policy-reactive environment. The primary data was gathered through the distribution of a structured research questionnaire, which was developed in compliance with NEP 2020 goals and current employability frames (Donald et al., 2019; Römgens et al., 2020). The questionnaire elicited quantitative data concerning competency building, vocational exposure, curriculum relevance, employability perception, and transition readiness. The kind of data is quantitative and the design is quantitative research, which permits objective measurement and statistical comparison of observed employability outcomes among respondents.

The sample size in this study was calculated through Cochran formula on sample size which is commonly applied with big populations in order to make sure that that sample is representative and has the statistical reliability. Upon this formula, an approximate of 400 respondents was achieved. The target population comprised of students undergraduate and postgraduate, and those who have graduated recently out of higher education institutions in NCR Delhi, and they are directly affected by NEP 2020 reforms.

Data gathered were subjected to SPSS statistical software that allowed analysis and the analysis of the data to be inferred. The characteristics of respondents and employability-related variables were summarized using descriptive statistics. The difference between the observed employability outcomes and the expected outcomes was scientifically supported by Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), as per the theoretical propositions of the effects of educational reforms on employability. In addition, the Taguchi method, an optimization-based reasoning approach, is an instrument to test critical theoretical hypotheses regarding employability, which can assist in comprehending the nature of different educational determinants in enhancing transition outcomes, as opposed to just assessing the impacts of different policies. This statistical and optimization-based analysis enhances the validity and reliability of the results (Tight, 2023; Cheng et al., 2022). The SPSS, Taguchi, and ANOVA are not only used to assess policy impact but mostly meant to validate accounting-theory-based propositions regarding employability outcomes, especially propositions related to multidisciplinary learning, exposure to vocation, and industry fit.

3. Results and Discussion

The reliability of the measurement instrument is vital in the strength of the empirical analysis. According to *Table 1,* the employability scale had the Cronbach's Alpha of 0.872, which is higher than the normal acceptable limit of 0.70.

Table 1 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
0.872	18

This shows that there is high internal consistency between 18 items of multidisciplinary learning, vocational exposure, industry alignment, and employability readiness. High reliability determines that subsequent differences in the Score of employability indicate actual differences in the educational exposure under NEP 2020 and not measurement error. This means that the dataset is statistically appropriate to be optimized in accordance with the Taguchi method and be validated in accordance with ANOVA, which reinforces the validity of further results

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics (SPSS Output, N = 400)

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Multidisciplinary Learning	3.92	0.71	0.50
Vocational Exposure	3.68	0.83	0.69
Industry Curriculum Alignment	3.85	0.76	0.58
Internship Effectiveness	3.74	0.81	0.66
Overall Employability Readiness	3.84	0.72	0.52

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics that give preliminary insights into how NEP 2020-related reforms are perceived by students and other recent graduates in NCR Delhi. Mean values of all the variables will be above the neutral midpoint, which reflects a more positive evaluation of the employability-oriented reforms. The highest mean (3.92) is kept by multidisciplinary learning, which indicates that one of the most noticeable institutional level reforms is in terms of curricular flexibility and cross-disciplinary exposure. Conversely, vocational exposure has the highest standard deviation (0.83) which indicates a skewed application of the elements of skills in the institutions. This difference reflects the point of departure; even though the policy general purpose is equal, the capabilities available in institutions when providing vocational training are unequal. These descriptive trends explain the necessity of optimization and factor prioritization, which is performed with the help of the Taguchi analysis.

Table 3 Factors and Levels for Taguchi-Based Employability Optimization

Factor	Description (Measured Variable)	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
A: Multidisciplinary Learning Score	Composite SPSS mean of multidisciplinary and flexible curriculum items	Mean ≤ 3.50	Mean 3.51–3.90	Mean ≥ 3.91
B: Vocational & Skill Exposure Score	Composite SPSS mean of vocational courses, skill labs, and hands-on training items	Mean ≤ 3.60	Mean 3.61–3.90	Mean ≥ 3.91
C: Industry-Oriented Learning Score	Composite SPSS mean of internship effectiveness and industry curriculum alignment items	Mean ≤ 3.65	Mean 3.66–3.90	Mean ≥ 3.91

The Taguchi method was used with an L9 orthogonal array to get out of descriptive trends and to be able to locate the most significant factors driving transitions in employability. The constructs and levels used in *Table 3* are based on SPSS generated composite mean scores so that the optimization will be based on actually measured constructs, and not on subjective classifications. This is one of the strengths of the study due to this methodological integration.

Table 4 Taguchi L9 Orthogonal Array for Employability Optimization

Experiment	A: Multidisciplinary Learning Level	B: Vocational & Skill Exposure Level	C: Industry-Oriented Learning Level	Employability Score (Mean)	S/N Ratio (Larger-is-Better)
1	1	1	1	3.42	10.69
2	1	2	2	3.61	11.15
3	1	3	3	3.78	11.55
4	2	1	2	3.74	11.46
5	2	2	3	3.89	11.80
6	2	3	1	3.67	11.29
7	3	1	3	3.96	11.95

8	3	2	1	3.88	11.78
9	3	3	2	4.02	12.08

Table 4, which summarizes the results of Taguchi experiments, shows that systematic differences result in the employability scores and signal-to-noise (S/N) ratios across combinations of factors. Experiment 9 provides the best overall employability (4.02) and S/N ratio (12.08), and, therefore, its configuration provides the optimal model of education, which involves high multidisciplinary learning, high vocational exposure, and moderate industry-oriented learning. The gradual rise in S/N ratios at the higher level of factors verify that the outcomes of employability rise in a systematic fashion when NEP-compatible educational inputs become more intensive. This trend proves that employability changes cannot be arbitrary but are motivated by quantifiable educational design decisions.

3.4 Factor-Level Influence and Relative Importance

Table 5 Response Table for Mean Employability Scores

Level	B: Vocational & Skill Exposure	C: Industry-Oriented Learning	A: Multidisciplinary Learning
1	3.707	3.657	3.603
2	3.793	3.790	3.767
3	3.823	3.877	3.953
Delta	**0.117**	**0.220**	**0.350**
Rank	**3**	**2**	**1**

The Response table (User means) (*Table 5*) further explains dominance of factors. The delta values indicate that the largest impact on the results of employability has multidisciplinary learning (Δ = 0.350) and then industry-oriented learning (Δ = 0.220) and vocational and skill exposure (Δ = 0.117). The ranking in the result of this analysis goes hand in hand with the policy focus of NEP 2020, according to which the curricular integration and flexibility are the key starting points of the reform.

This result indicates a significant mechanism; multidisciplinary learning can lead to better employability through improved cognitive adaptability learning, problem-solving capacity, and transferability, which are essential in dynamic labour markets. Vocational exposure is necessary, but also seems to have a downward-sloping curve unless it is part of an integrated curriculum that is flexible. Learning that is industry based also serves as a bridging process that contributes to applicability without shadowing of basic academic restructuring.

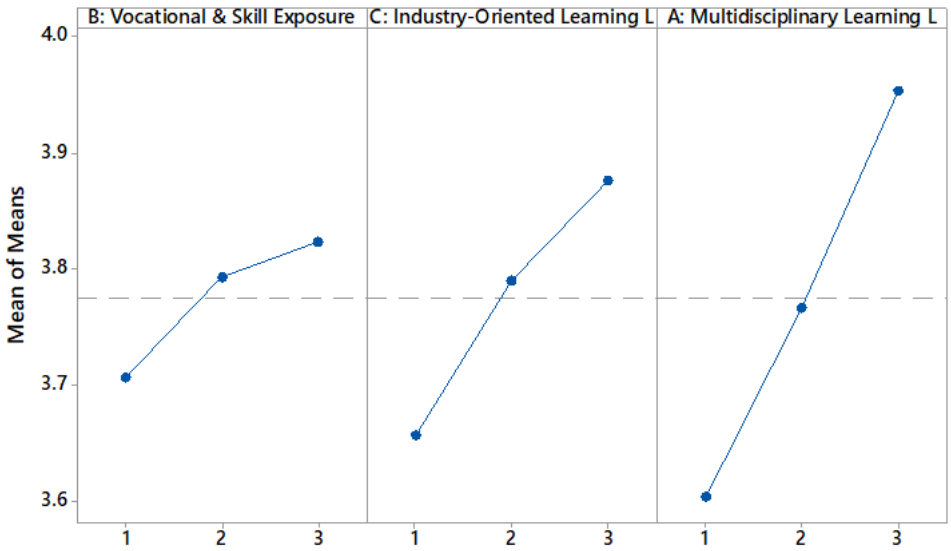

Figure 1 Main Effects Plot for Employability

The statistical tendencies observed in the tables are also supported with the help of SPSS- and Taguchi-generated visualizations. Through the plot of the main effects (*Figure 1*), it can be easily observed (Main Effects Plot) that multidisciplinary learning has the steepest positive slope in all levels and is therefore dominant in influencing employability transitions. Conversely, vocational exposure and industry-based learning present less abrupt gains, which supports their secondary but important contributions.

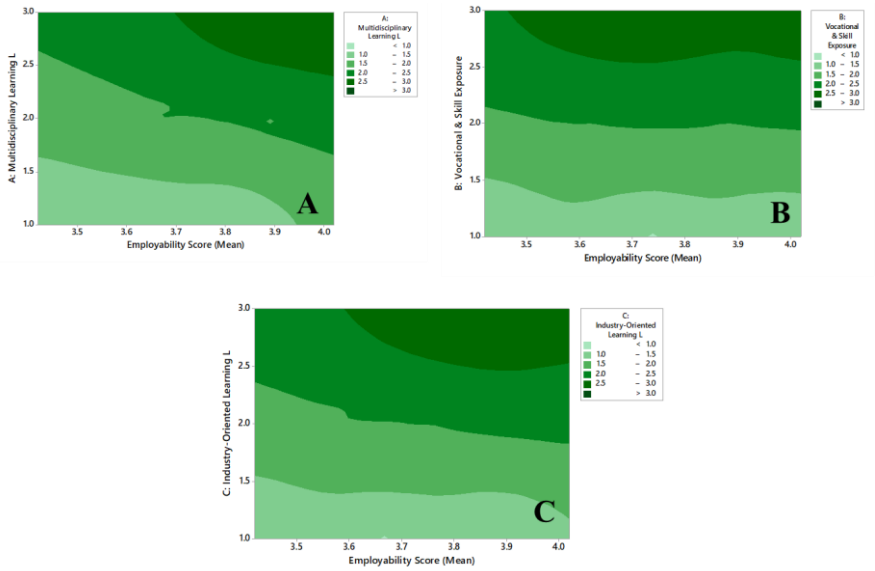

Figure 2 Contour plot of factors vs employability score, (a) A: Multidisciplinary Learning vs employability score, (b) B: Vocational & Skill Exposure vs employability score and (c) C: Industry-Oriented Learning vs employability score

Figure 2 (Contour Plots) represents employability scores in a two-dimensional fashion, with each factor interacting with it. The thicker outline portions at greater degrees of multidisciplinary learning show that it has significant and solid improvement of employability results. Gradients of vocational and industry-oriented learning are less intense, which points to supportive and less decisive influences. These contour patterns are a visual support of optimization results with illustration of non-linear but systematic relationships between educational inputs and performance in employability.

3.6 ANOVA-Based Model Validation

Table 6 ANOVA for Employability Factors (SPSS Output)

Factor	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-value	p-value
Multidisciplinary Learning Score (Factor A)	2	1.86	0.93	6.42	0.002
Vocational & Skill Exposure Score (Factor B)	2	1.12	0.56	3.87	0.022
Industry-Oriented Learning Score (Factor C)	2	0.98	0.49	3.41	0.034
Error	393	56.94	0.14		
Total	399	60.90			

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to statistically verify the optimization results of Taguchi and results are summarized in *Table 6*. The three have been found significantly significant on the 5 percent level, proving that they contribute to employability transitions independently. Multidisciplinary learning achieves the best F-value (6.42, p = 0.002) that supports its dominance in determining its impact based on Taguchi analysis. Important effects are also evident in vocational and skill exposure (F = 3.87) and industry-oriented learning (F = 3.41), which underlines the multidimensionality of the phenomenon of employability.

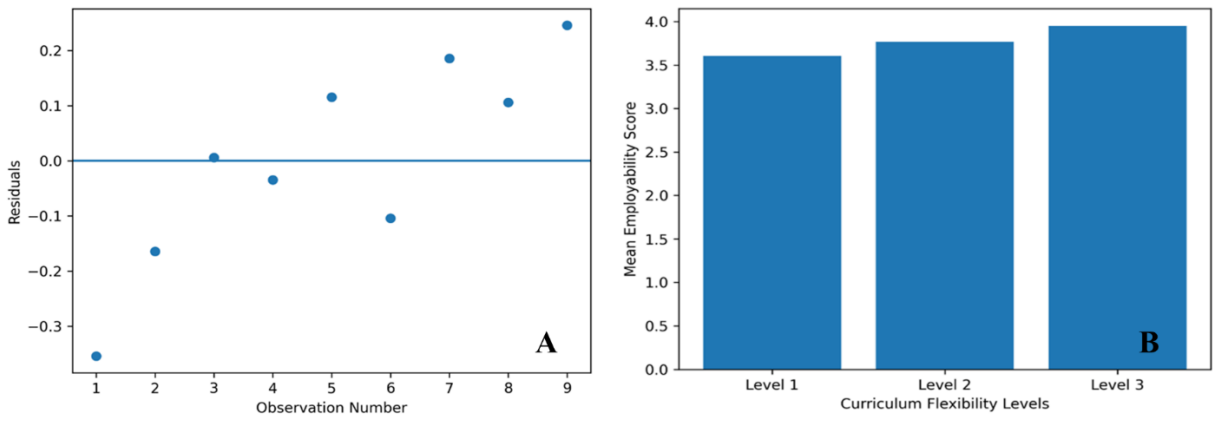

Figure 3 Comparative analysis of ANOVA Residual Plot and SPSS Outputs, (a) ANOVA Residual Plot for Model Validation, and (b) Mean Employability Scores by Factor Levels

The observed and expected difference of means of 0.38 also provides a firm foundation of the model since this difference is way below the predetermined mark of 0.5. As *Figure 3(a)* indicates, the distribution of the residual values around zero is random, therefore meeting the assumption of both normality and homoscedasticity, and *Figure 3(b)* visually confirms a monotonic rise in the level of employability by factors. A combination of these diagnostics justifies the statistical quasi-sufficiency and predictive validity of the analytical formulation.

4. Discussion and literature validation

This research offers empirical data that the objectives of NEP 2020 that are goal-focused on employability, specifically in the field of accounting education, are supported. It adds to the body of research on the reforms in the accounting education by emphasizing the multidisciplinary learning as a way to help develop the core accounting skills such as professional judgment, ethical reasoning and adapting to new standards. The previous studies in accounting education have been based on relevancy of its curriculum, however, this research builds on this concept by showing how multidisciplinary learning directly improves accounting judgment, ethical reasoning and adaptation to emerging accounting standards (Tight, 2023; Akkermans et al., 2024; Scandurra et al., 2024). Nevertheless, a great deal of the current literature is descriptive or qualitative in character (Shaheen and Waris, 2020; Sharma and Trivedi, 2023). Unlike previous research, the current study quantitatively assesses and prioritizes NEP-consistent elements of education, thus filling an essential methodological gap. In line with previous studies that emphasized the importance of curriculum flexibility (Aithal and Aithal, 2020; Bhutia and Chhetri, 2025), the results indicate that multidisciplinary learning is the most effective factor contributing to accounting graduate employability transitions by improving critical accounting skills, including professional judgment and responsiveness to accounting standards. This observation is consistent with the literature on accounting education, which underscores the role of interdisciplinary exposure to instill fundamental accounting skills and enable sustainability of the accounting profession to make ethical choices and adapt professionally (Abelha et al., 2020; Römgens et al., 2020). Although vocational exposure is significant, it is less influential than multidisciplinary learning which reinforces the accounting-specific skills of financial analysis, tax compliance, and auditing. It is emphasized herewith as to the importance of the incorporation of vocational training into a flexible, inter-disciplinary accounting curriculum which helps to develop professional competency (Pilz & Regel, 2021). Industry-focused learning is a mechanism of reinforcement and like Cheng et al. (2022) or Arranz et al. (2022), it reinforces transition readiness, which does not take independent control of employability outcomes.

The originality of this research is the combination of quantitative optimization models (including Taguchi and ANOVA) to confirm the accounting education theories under NEP 2020. The results are not only to evaluate the policy reforms but also to test empirically the multidisciplinary learning, vocational exposure and alignment to industry to enhance the accounting competencies and employability. This study is not based on the previous research where the key results are based on qualitative or descriptive statistics but on quantitative analysis of the policy-based educational elements and their optimal combinations to achieve the employability advantage. The empirical evidence presented in the study, through the adoption of the suggestion to show that multidisciplinary learning is the driving force of empowers out of employability transitions, supports curriculum-based reforms within NEP 2020. This evidence-based prioritization provides practical information to institutions of higher learning and policymakers who want to match educational design with labor market performance.

Contribution to Accounting Theory

The study will make a contribution to the accounting education theory by simply showing the importance of multidisciplinary learning in creating the core competencies needed by accounting professionals, including professional judgment, ethical rationale, and flexibility to changing standards. It confirms empirically that the emphasis of NEP 2020 on flexible and interdisciplinary curricula is strengthening these competencies and offers accounting graduates the skills that may be needed to respond to industry needs.

Moreover, the results highlight the necessity of the accounting curriculum developers to incorporate both, ethical decisions and problem-solving as a baseline of accounting education. In this way, they will be in a better position to equip graduates with the dynamic and regulatory demands of the accounting profession to make them relevant and viable in the workforce. The study preconditions future changes in curriculum and provides meaningful information to the regulators and policy makers who pay attention to better the correspondence between education and industry expectations.

5. Conclusion

The study is the systematic analysis of the effects of multidisciplinary learning on accounting competencies of graduates according to the National Education Policy 2020 in India. The study is based on a quantitative and optimization-related analytical framework that evaluates the effects that educational reforms have on the professional readiness of accounting graduates. The research utilized SPSS, Taguchi optimization, and ANOVA to establish statistically valid, policy-relevant determinants of employability and demonstrate that an effect of employability outcomes is determined by the systematic education design decisions and not a random one. The most important new findings of this study include the following summary:

1. Multidisciplinary learning was the most significant predictor of employability, acting as the core mechanism for enhancing graduate preparedness.
2. Vocational and skills exposure, while important, was secondary to multidisciplinary learning in providing the cognitive and ethical foundation critical for success in accounting.
3. Industry-oriented learning plays a supportive role, enhancing transition readiness and aligning with labor market expectations.
4. Taguchi optimization identified that the best configuration for employability outcomes combines high multidisciplinary education with strong vocational exposure.

Conceptually, the research highlights how multidisciplinary learning can help to build the necessary accounting skills, including the competencies of professional judgment, ethical reasoning, and flexibility to the accounting standards. This highlights the importance of curriculum changes to incorporate these competencies in the process of accounting education. The policy position of the study suggests reform of the curriculum to match industry demands with the appropriate education in accounting, exposing the student to vocational training in a flexible, interdisciplinary context.

The study contributes to a better theory of accounting education through a connection between the curriculum design and accounting competencies and empirical data supporting the impact of educational reforms on the success of a professional. It provides a basis of future investigations and curriculum development to make graduates more equipped in accounting profession and its changes and demands. At the societal level, the study offers practical implications of policymakers and educational institutions, therefore, aiding the evidence-based reforms of the curriculum and a better transition to the workforce, which results in a more skilled workforce and a more inclusive economic development.

Funding
This research received no funding.

Conflict of Interest
The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethics Approval
Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement
The data supporting this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

References

1. Dhiman, D., & Solkhe, A. (2025). Shaping skills: A qualitative dive into India's evolving skill development policies. *Development Policy Review, 43*(3), e70006. https://doi.org/10.1111/dpr.70006
2. Sarkar, S., Sahoo, S., & Klasen, S. (2019). Employment transitions of women in India: A panel analysis. *World Development, 115*, 291–309. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.12.003
3. Ngai, S. S. Y., Cheung, C.-K., Ng, Y.-H., Lee, B. J., Dupere, V., Wang, M., Zhou, Q., Chen, C., Li, Y., Wong, L.-M., & Yu, E. N.-H. (2025). Unraveling the school-to-work transition of non-engaged youth: A continuous-time Markov chain analysis. *Children and Youth Services Review, 172*, 108253. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2025.108253
4. Tian, J., & He, G. (2024). Research on innovative teaching to enhance the employability of college students based on the "five links and six steps" method. *Ain Shams Engineering Journal, 15*, 102677. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asej.2024.102677
5. Shaheen, S. S., & Waris, N. (2020). *Employability and education in National Education Policy 2020*. Department of Education, Aligarh Muslim University.
6. Bhutia, Y., & Chhetri, P. (2025). Revitalizing higher education in India through NEP 2020. *National Journal of Education, 23*(1), 1–10.
7. Paliwal, A. C., & Singh, A. K. (2023). Analysis of National Education Policy 2020's impact on legal education in India. *Karnavati Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies, 1*(1). https://journal.karnavatiuniversity.edu.in
8. Kaur, H. (2024). National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: Skill enhancement through vocational education. *International Council for Education Research and Training, 2*(1), 23–32. https://doi.org/10.59231/edumania/9015
9. Pang, N. S.-K., & Niemczyk, E. K. (2026). *Transformations of higher education in BRICS policy, procedures, and practice: China's education modernization 2035*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003669487
10. Akkermans, J., Donald, W. E., Jackson, D., & Forrier, A. (2024). Are we talking about the same thing? The case for stronger connections between graduate and worker employability research. *Career Development International, 29*(1), 80–92. https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-08-2023-0278
11. Scandurra, R., Kelly, D., Fusaro, S., Cefalo, R., & Hermannsson, K. (2024). Do employability programmes in higher education improve skills and labour market outcomes? A systematic review of academic literature. *Studies in Higher Education, 49*(8), 1381–1396. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2023.2265425
12. Tight, M. (2023). Employability: A core role of higher education? *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 28*(4), 551–571. https://doi.org/10.1080/13596748.2023.2253649
13. Hartini, P. Q. A., Wiyanto, W., Sudarmin, S., & Sumarni, W. (2025). Factors that influence the employability skills of vocational school students: A systematic review. *F1000Research, 14*, 586. https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.164629.1

14. Pandya, B., Ruhi, U., & Patterson, L. (2023). Preparing the future workforce for 2030: The role of higher education institutions. *Frontiers in Education, 8*, 1295249. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2023.1295249
15. Sharma, S., & Trivedi, N. (2023). Employability and youth: A perspective in harmony with NEP 2020. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research, 5*(6).
16. Abelha, M., Fernandes, S., Mesquita, D., Seabra, F., & Ferreira-Oliveira, A. T. (2020). Graduate employability and competence development in higher education: A systematic literature review using PRISMA. *Sustainability, 12*(15), 5900. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12155900
17. Dhiman, D., & Solkhe, A. (2025). Shaping skills: A qualitative dive into India's evolving skill development policies. *Development Policy Review, 43*, e70006. https://doi.org/10.1111/dpr.70006
18. Aithal, P. S., & Aithal, S. (2020). Analysis of the Indian National Education Policy 2020 towards achieving its objectives. *International Journal of Management, Technology, and Social Sciences*, 19–41. https://doi.org/10.47992/ijmts.2581.6012.0102
19. Mahajan, S. (2021). Implementation of National Education Policy 2020 to transform higher education in India: Some viewpoints. *University News, 59*(3), 18–24.
20. Pilz, M., & Regel, J. (2021). Vocational education and training in India: Prospects and challenges from an outside perspective. *The Journal of Applied Economic Research, 15*(1), 101–121. https://doi.org/10.1177/0973801020976606
21. Shukla, B., Joshi, M., Sujatha, R., Beena, T., & Kumar, H. (2022). Demystifying approaches of holistic and multidisciplinary education for diverse career opportunities: NEP 2020. *Indian Journal of Science and Technology, 15*(14), 603–607. https://doi.org/10.17485/IJST/v15i14.2296
22. Akkermans, J., Rodrigues, R., Mol, S. T., Seibert, S. E., & Khapova, S. N. (2021). The role of career shocks in contemporary career development: Key challenges and ways forward. *Career Development International, 26*(4), 453–466. https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-07-2021-0172
23. Akkermans, J., Tomlinson, M., & Anderson, V. (2023). Initial employability development: Introducing a conceptual model integrating signalling and social exchange mechanisms. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2023.2186783
24. Blokker, R., Akkermans, J., Marciniak, J., Jansen, P. G. W., & Khapova, S. N. (2023). Organizing school-to-work transition research from a sustainable career perspective: A review and research agenda. *Work, Aging and Retirement, 9*(3), 239–261. https://doi.org/10.1093/workar/waad012
25. Cheng, M., Adekola, O., Albia, J., & Cai, S. (2022). Employability in higher education: A review of key stakeholders' perspectives. *Higher Education Evaluation and Development, 16*(1), 16–31. https://doi.org/10.1108/HEED-03-2021-0025
26. De Vos, A., Jacobs, S., & Verbruggen, M. (2021). Career transitions and employability. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 126*, 103475. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103475
27. Delva, J., Forrier, A., & De Cuyper, N. (2021). Integrating agency and structure in employability: Bourdieu's theory of practice. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 127*, 103579. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2021.103579
28. Donald, W. E., & Ford, N. (2023). Fostering social mobility and employability: The case for peer learning. *Teaching in Higher Education, 28*(3), 672–678. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2022.2145467
29. Donald, W. E., & Jackson, D. (2022). Subjective wellbeing among university students and recent graduates: Evidence from the United Kingdom. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19*(11), 6911. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19116911
30. Donald, W. E., Baruch, Y., & Ashleigh, M. J. (2019). Undergraduate self-perceptions of employability: Human capital, careers advice and career ownership. *Studies in Higher Education, 44*(4), 599–614. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1387107
31. Cheng, M., Adekola, O., Albia, J., & Cai, S. (2022). Employability in higher education: A review of key stakeholders' perspectives. *Higher Education Evaluation and Development, 16*(1). https://doi.org/10.1108/HEED-03-2021-0025
32. Healy, M., Hammer, S., & McIlveen, P. (2022). Mapping graduate employability and career development in higher education research: A citation network analysis. *Studies in Higher Education, 47*(4), 799–811. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2020.1804851
33. Peeters, E., Nelissen, J., De Cuyper, N., Forrier, A., Verbruggen, M., & De Witte, H. (2019). Employability capital: A conceptual framework tested through expert analysis. *Journal of Career Development, 46*(2), 79–93. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845317731865
34. Römgens, I., Scoupe, R., & Beausaert, S. (2020). Unraveling the concept of employability: Bringing together research on employability in higher education and the workplace. *Studies in Higher Education, 45*(12), 2588–2603. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1623770
35. Scandurra, R., Cefalo, R., & Kazepov, Y. (2021). Drivers of youth labour market integration across European regions. *Social Indicators Research, 154*(3), 835–856.
36. Alvarez-Hevia, D., & Naylor, S. (2019). Conceptualising routes to employability in higher

education: The case of education studies. *Journal of Education and Work, 32*(4), 407–419. https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080.2019.1649376

37. Arranz, N., Arroyabe, M. F., Sena, V., Arranz, C., & Fernández de Arroyabe, J. C. (2022). University–enterprise collaboration for the employability of higher education graduates. *Studies in Higher Education, 47*(5), 990–999. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2022.2055
38. Barkas, L., & Armstrong, P.-A. (2022). The price of knowledge and the wisdom of innocence. *Industry and Higher Education, 36*(1), 51–62. https://doi.org/10.1177/09504222211016293
39. Dutta, J. (2016). Learning deficit to teaching deficit: What teachers know about teaching in higher education. *Economic and Political Weekly, 51*(48), 66–67.
40. Paschal, S., & Srivastav, N. (2022). NEP 2020: Narrowing the skills gap and equipping new skills through job satisfaction. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Communication and Technology, 2*(1).
41. Rathod, F. D., & Shrivastava, P. (2021). Prospects and implementation of NEP 2020: Competency-based education for employability. *International Journal of Social Impact, 6*(4). https://doi.org/10.25215/2455/0604008
42. Scott, W. R. (2008). Institutions and Organizations: Ideas and Interests. 3rd ed. Sage Publications.
43. Becker, G. S. (1964). Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education. University of Chicago Press.
44. Larson, M. S. (1977). The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis. University of California Press.