



Creation of an Employability Skills of Students Enhancement Model for Music School Students in Shanxi Province

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study examines the development of employability skills among music school students in Shanxi Province, China, with the objective of elucidating the multifaceted dimensions essential for success within regional music education. Anchored in adult learning and experiential education theories, the research investigates the interplay between technical proficiency, creativity, communication, adaptability, and business acumen. Utilizing a qualitative methodology, this study engages with music students, educators, and industry professionals to unravel the nuances of skills development. **Method:** The study employs a qualitative design, utilizing semi-structured

interviews to capture the lived experiences and perspectives of key stakeholders within Shanxi's music education ecosystem. The sample consists of music school students, educators, and industry professionals, selected through purposive sampling. Data collection involves conducting in-depth interviews, with thematic analysis applied to distil key patterns and insights. **Findings:** Preliminary findings underscore the significance of technical proficiency, creativity, communication, and business acumen as essential components of employability skills among students. The study reveals distinct nuances within the Shanxi music industry, highlighting the necessity for a tailored model that integrates technical training with business education and real-world experiences. **Originality/Significance:** This research advances the existing literature by addressing the gap in tailored models for music school students in Shanxi Province. Its originality stems from its focus on the contextualized development of employability skills, providing insights into the specific demands of the regional music industry. The findings are expected to inform curriculum design, industry collaborations, and policy initiatives, promoting a paradigm shift in music education towards a holistic and region-specific approach.

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Introduction

Music school graduates are facing heightened expectations due to the rapid expansion of the industry. This study investigates how music school students in Shanxi Province enhance their employability skills. Building on the notion that a comprehensive skill set extends beyond technical knowledge, the research highlights the intricate connections between commercial acumen, creative mastery, interpersonal competence, and adaptability. By analysing the demands of the regional music industry, the study aims to guide the development of teaching strategies that equip musicians with the broad skill set required for sustained employment (Barata & Coelho, 2021). Utilizing established principles of experiential education and adult learning, this qualitative study explores the perspectives and experiences of music school students, educators, and industry professionals. The study is situated within a global shift in employability skills, emphasizing the growing need for artists to possess both technological expertise and commercial savvy (Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023). Through qualitative data analysis, the research seeks to transform music education. Shanxi, known for its diverse musical traditions and numerous music education institutions, presents both industry norms and contemporary challenges for students embarking on musical careers. This study aims to identify the specific professional opportunities and challenges faced by Shanxi music school graduates (Zhang, 2021). While traditional music education in Shanxi has long emphasized technical proficiency and classical creativity, the current music industry demands a broader skill set that includes business acumen and adaptability alongside musical talent (Sun et al., 2021). By examining the perspectives, attitudes, and aspirations of key stakeholders in the regional music education ecosystem, this study seeks to elucidate the complex dynamics influencing the careers of aspiring musicians.

Modern musicians encounter a myriad of challenges, prompting scholars to examine the employability skills cultivated in music education. Numerous studies have demonstrated the critical importance of technical proficiency in music education. Wang (2022) emphasized the significance of instrumental and vocal skills in the careers of music school graduates. Research indicates that musical theory establishes a robust cognitive framework, enabling artists to adapt to various genres and styles (Nestorova et al., 2023; Suriya et al., 2023). Recent investigations have explored the role of artistic expression and creativity in music education alongside technical skills. Elpus and Abril (2019) examined changes in the education of composition, arrangement, and interpretation/performance skills. Their findings suggest that a creative mindset not only facilitates artistic production but also enhances an artist's ability to contribute creatively within an organization and adapt to evolving customer expectations. Beyond creativity, research has highlighted the significance of communication and teamwork skills in the music industry. Tahirbegi (2023) investigated the necessity of interpersonal communication in ensemble cooperation, underscoring the importance of managing group dynamics and contributing to collaborative music efforts. Despite extensive research on various employability skills, there is a notable gap in the academic study of commercial and entrepreneurial skills within music education (Ellefsen & Karlsen, 2020). This research aims to elucidate the complexities of these overlooked components, providing a comprehensive understanding of the skills required for success in the contemporary music industry. There is a dearth of studies addressing the industry's needs in marketing, financial management, and genre adaptation.

The literature on employability skills for music school students across diverse regional contexts is notably deficient in specialist strategies. While He et al. (2022) offer more comprehensive frameworks, these still fall short in addressing the specific challenges and opportunities within Shanxi Province's music industry. This gap is exacerbated by previous research that has focused more broadly on general employability skills rather than those tailored to the music industry. This study examines these gaps by evaluating the shortcomings of existing research. The absence of detailed models specifically designed for Shanxi's music sector underscores the necessity of this analysis. The study emphasizes technical training, real-world experience, and business education, aligning with the ongoing discourse on the professionalization of the music industry (Yin, 2023). The lack of information on employability skills tailored to the Shanxi music industry further justifies the need to explore various dimensions of skill development, leading to a more nuanced and context-specific perspective. In essence, this research addresses the deficiencies in prior academic work by developing a tailored and contextually relevant model for enhancing the employability skills of music school students in Shanxi Province. The study's regional focus and its integration of technical, artistic, and business skills aim to advance music career education paradigms in Shanxi.

This study seeks to address existing research gaps by integrating technical skills, creativity, communication, teamwork, adaptability, and commercial acumen into the local music context. It examines the challenges associated with developing employability skills among students and proposes a comprehensive framework tailored to the music industry in Shanxi Province. Current paradigms in music education may fall short in meeting the evolving demands of the field. The study aims to identify and prioritize the employability skills of students, instructors, and music education professionals. It explores the significance of these skills within the local music ecosystem through an analysis of their lived experiences and perspectives. Additionally, the research will assess the impact of formal music education and industry requirements on the employment decisions of music school graduates. The findings are expected to influence music education practices in Shanxi Province, China, by highlighting how students can cultivate marketable skills for success in the regional music industry. The results will assist educators in developing curricula that extend beyond traditional frameworks, incorporating technical expertise with creative, persuasive, and entrepreneurial attributes. Collaboration between industry stakeholders and music institutions is encouraged to bridge the gap between academic training and industry needs. This study contributes to the broader discussion on employability skills in music education, shedding light on geographical variations that affect educational policies and practices globally. Its significance lies in equipping emerging artists in Shanxi with a diverse skill set that aligns with contemporary demands in the music industry.

Literature Review

Employability Skills

Employability skills, often referred to as soft or transferable skills, encompass competencies that extend beyond technical expertise. These skills are crucial for individuals to excel in their professional roles and address contemporary workplace challenges. Key among these skills are interpersonal, communication, and collaboration abilities, which are fundamental to fostering robust professional relationships and effective teamwork (Li &

Zhang, 2023). Critical thinking and problem-solving are also essential employability skills, as they enable individuals to analyse situations, make informed decisions, and navigate obstacles. Additionally, flexibility and adaptability are valued traits that enhance one's ability to adjust to varying work environments (Elmosnino, 2021). In today's dynamic workplace, proficiency in adaptability, technological skills, and the ability to receive and act on feedback are increasingly important. Leadership skills, encompassing the capacity to inspire, manage, and assume responsibility, are integral to employability. Effective organization and time management are also necessary for optimizing productivity, requiring individuals to plan, prioritize, and adhere to deadlines (Rajathi & ISSN, 2022). Traits such as resilience, positivity, and the ability to manage pressure further contribute to job effectiveness. While academic and technical skills remain significant, the broader employability skills—including technical proficiency, interpersonal communication, adaptability, and effective communication—are pivotal for career advancement and organizational success (Poláková et al., 2023). Developing and recognizing these employability skills is essential for preparing students to thrive and progress within the competitive labour market (Hidalgo & Abril, 2020). In light of evolving job dynamics and expanding skill requirements, cultivating these competencies is crucial for creating resilient and successful professionals.

Employability Skills in the Context of Music Education

Music education necessitates a combination of employability skills that integrate creative talent with adaptability to thrive in a rapidly evolving and diverse industry. Music, as an expressive medium, conveys ideas, narratives, and artistic visions beyond mere words (Dodds, 2019). To excel, musicians must demonstrate strong employability skills that enable them to perform effectively within ensembles, showcasing both technical proficiency and an understanding of how individual contributions enhance the overall musical experience. The music industry requires constant adaptation due to shifting genres, techniques, and performance environments (Mooney & Pinch, 2021). Musicians must be able to navigate transitions between different styles and audiences, from classical to contemporary, and remain versatile across various settings. The ability to learn quickly and respond constructively to feedback enhances a musician's marketability (Brásio et al., 2019). Critical thinking and problem-solving are essential for both the appreciation and performance of music. Musicians need to employ creativity, interpret musical notation, and engage in rigorous practice and performance to manage the complexities of the music industry effectively (Dissez & Bertaud, 2024). Collaboration, a vital professional skill, is central to music. Musicians must work harmoniously with conductors, fellow musicians, composers, and producers, requiring open communication, compromise, and a shared artistic vision. This collaborative process not only enhances musical performances but also fosters adaptability and teamwork among musicians (Clements-Cortés et al., 2024). Effective leadership in music education involves mentoring and supporting others while fostering a positive environment for practice and performance. Strong leadership skills can significantly contribute to the success of musical projects. In addition to creativity, musicians need robust organizational skills to coordinate sessions, performances, and schedules (Campo et al., 2023). Given the multifaceted nature of their roles, musicians must possess excellent time-management abilities to handle multiple responsibilities and meet deadlines efficiently. Such organizational skills enhance their reliability and competence in the eyes of directors, employers, and colleagues. Employability skills for students in music education encompass

not only creativity but also a range of transferable skills (Elmosnino, 2021). Through their training, musicians develop essential skills such as communication, flexibility, critical thinking, teamwork, leadership, and organizational abilities. These competencies enable them to navigate the complexities of the music industry, improve their employability, and adapt to the evolving music landscape.

Employability Skills Demanded by the Job

The labour market in Shanxi Province places significant value on unique skill sets that align with industry requirements and economic advancements. Effective communication is crucial for students to convey ideas clearly to clients and colleagues (Khodeir & Nessim, 2020). Proficiency in Mandarin, the official language, is often essential for successful interactions. In Shanxi, which has prominent manufacturing, agricultural, and energy sectors, professionals must adapt to evolving business practices, technological advancements, and regulatory changes (Islam, 2022). Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are vital for addressing challenges within these industries, particularly in complex situations where informed decision-making and effective solutions are required. Given the economic difficulties faced by the province, innovative and critical thinking is especially important. Interpersonal skills are crucial for successful business and external interactions, with strong leadership being particularly valued by business managers in Shanxi (He et al., 2023). The province requires team leaders, strategists, and motivators, especially in the manufacturing and energy sectors. Expertise in green technology and sustainability is also in demand, reflecting Shanxi's focus on energy generation and environmental concerns (Li et al., 2023). Proficiency in green energy, sustainability practices, and environmental awareness is increasingly important for employability. Furthermore, IT expertise is essential for maintaining productivity and competitiveness in a dynamic workplace. Cultural understanding and corporate ethics are also critical, as knowledge of local business etiquette and cultural norms can enhance relationships with clients and colleagues, thereby improving job satisfaction (Hidalgo et al., 2020). In summary, Shanxi Province's job market values a blend of teamwork, leadership, technological proficiency, sustainability, critical thinking, and cultural sensitivity. This combination of skills is highly regarded across the province's diverse economic landscape.

Existing Models and Initiatives for Enhancing Employability Skills of Students

Numerous global programs and policies are designed to address evolving labour force demands and enhance employability by fostering skills beyond technical expertise. The "Skills Framework for the Information Age" (SFIA) is instrumental in assessing and developing IT skills, categorizing competencies across various levels of responsibility and proficiency (Brown, 2020). This framework supports the rigorous evaluation and advancement of technological skills. The "Employability Skills Framework" developed by the Department of Education outlines the essential skills required across diverse occupations, emphasizing the importance of critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and communication in a rapidly changing career landscape (Suarta & Suwintana, 2021). The World Economic Forum's "Future of Jobs Report" focuses on skills pertinent to the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), highlighting the need for critical thinking, creativity, emotional intelligence, and advanced problem-solving abilities in the future job market. This report also underscores the significance of

communication, ethics, and cultural awareness (Im & Kim, 2022). In the European Union, the "European Skills Agenda" fosters collaboration in vocational education and training to ensure individuals acquire the skills required by the labour market. This agenda emphasizes ecological skills, digital literacy, and resilience to meet evolving European labour market needs (Flisi et al., 2019). Singapore's "Skills Future" initiative advocates for continuous education and skill specialization, providing courses and resources to enhance employability and empower individuals to advance their skills. Additionally, partnerships between corporations and academia have led to the development of apprenticeship programs and instructional initiatives that integrate academic knowledge with practical workplace skills. Local and regional efforts are also significant, with industry-specific programs being implemented in industrial hubs and technological centres to address skill shortages in particular sectors. These targeted initiatives help bridge the gap between educational training and industry requirements, ensuring that individuals are well-prepared for the demands of the job market.

The gap in Previous Studies

The employability skills of students, particularly in specialized fields such as music education, have been the subject of extensive research. However, there is a notable gap in scholarly literature concerning tailored frameworks specifically for music education students, as most studies focus on broader educational contexts or specialized institutions (Twiner et al., 2022). Music education presents unique challenges and opportunities that necessitate customized approaches to developing employability skills. Standard models may inadequately address the specific needs of the music industry and the unique career paths of music school students. In Shanxi Province, for instance, music school graduates may encounter cultural, industry-specific, and geographical obstacles that demand a targeted strategy for skill development (Zhang & Xiao, 2023). The lack of attention to these tailored frameworks results in an undervaluation of Shanxi music school students, complicating efforts to meet their employment needs effectively. Without specialized models, educators and policymakers are limited in their ability to implement solutions that address the unique characteristics of the local music scene and employment market. This deficit in academic material further hampers the provision of comprehensive and context-specific career guidance and support for music school students. Consequently, the absence of tailored models means that music education programs may not adequately focus on the skills demanded by employers, thereby impeding students' transition into professional roles (Madheswari & Mageswari, 2020). Addressing this gap is crucial for ensuring that music education effectively prepares students for the specific demands of the music industry. Therefore, it is essential to conduct a study focusing on the employability skills of music students in Shanxi Province. Such research would illuminate the specific skills required by the local music industry, identify the challenges faced by recent graduates, and develop problem-solving frameworks tailored to the province's unique context. Addressing this gap could significantly enhance the professional prospects of Shanxi music school alumni and provide a model for improving employability in other specialized educational settings.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach to investigate the employability skills of music school students in Shanxi Province. Qualitative research was selected due to its ability to explore individuals' experiences, attitudes, and perspectives within the context of music

education and the local employment market. This approach facilitated a nuanced understanding of students' employability skills and their preparation for the workforce. The study involved music school students, educators, and industry professionals in Shanxi Province. By engaging multiple stakeholders, the research aimed to provide a comprehensive evaluation of employability skills from various perspectives within the music education ecosystem. Music school students represented those currently enrolled in music programs, educators offered insights as facilitators of learning, and industry experts contributed viewpoints grounded in real-world career expectations. Data were collected from 15 purposively sampled subjects, as detailed in Table 1. This sampling strategy, which included individuals with diverse experiences and opinions, enriched the qualitative data and provided a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Participant ID	Category	Age	Gender	Occupation / Role	Years of Experience in Current Role	Years of Involvement in the Music Industry
1	Music School Student	22	Female	Bachelor's in Music, Year 3	-	-
2	Music Educator	35	Male	Music Theory Instructor	8	-
3	Industry Professional	40	Female	Concert Pianist and Composer	-	15
4	Music School Student	20	Male	Diploma in Music, Year 2	-	-
5	Music Educator	28	Female	Vocal Instructor	5	-
6	Industry Professional	45	Male	Music Producer and Sound Engineer	-	20
7	Music School Student	21	Female	Master's in Music Performance	-	-
8	Music Educator	40	Male	Orchestra Conductor	15	-
9	Industry Professional	38	Female	Music Festival Organizer	-	12
10	Music School Student	23	Male	Bachelor's in Music Composition	-	-
11	Music Educator	32	Female	Guitar Instructor	6	-
12	Industry Professional	50	Male	Music Director in a Recording Studio	-	25
13	Music School Student	19	Female	Diploma in Music, Year 1	-	-
14	Music Educator	45	Male	Jazz Ensemble Director	10	-
15	Industry Professional	36	Female	Music Journalist	-	8

An equitable distribution of responses was ensured across the three designated categories: students, educators, and industry experts, as shown in Table 2. Participants were selected based on their current engagement in music education—whether as enrolled students, active educators, or seasoned professionals in the Shanxi Province music industry. This selection criterion aimed to capture a broad range of experiences and perspectives, thereby providing a comprehensive view on improving employability skills.

Table 2

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Music School Students	Enrolled in music schools in Shanxi Province	Non-music education background
Educators	Actively teaching in music schools in Shanxi Province	Non-music education background, limited experience
Industry Professionals	Substantial experience in the music industry in Shanxi Province	Non-music education background, limited experience, non-Shanxi residents

To ensure a targeted and representative participant selection, the study utilized purposive sampling. This approach was designed to gather diverse perspectives from Shanxi Province's music school students, educators, and industry professionals. Participants were selected based on their current roles, backgrounds, and experiences to provide a comprehensive understanding of employability skills within the region's music education context. The study employed a semi-structured interviewing method to address all key topics, including perspectives on the local music industry, employability skills, and experiences within music education (Table 3). Open-ended questions were used to elicit detailed responses. Feedback from pilot interviews was incorporated to enhance the clarity and applicability of the interview technique. Purposive sampling specifically influenced the selection of interviewees: industry professionals were chosen for their in-depth knowledge of the Shanxi music sector, while educators were selected based on their diverse teaching experiences. This rigorous methodology facilitates a thorough exploration of the various facets of music education and employability skills. Students from the Music School were selected to represent a range of academic disciplines and levels, ensuring comprehensive coverage of musical education skills across various areas. This diverse selection aimed to capture a broad spectrum of experiences and insights. In-person interviews were conducted to facilitate open and honest dialogue. Prior to participation, all individuals provided informed consent, confirming their voluntary involvement. Interviews were timed according to participant groups: industry experts were interviewed for 60-90 minutes, students for 45-60 minutes, and educators for 60-75 minutes. This variation in interview duration allowed for an exploration of complexity and depth specific to each group. Data saturation was monitored throughout the study, with interviews continuing until no new information or perspectives emerged. This iterative approach enabled the study to adjust its sample size dynamically, enhancing both validity and reliability. The methodical examination of relevant employability skills through recurrent data collection ensured a thorough and robust analysis.

This study employed thematic analysis to identify trends in qualitative data. The process involved a meticulous, step-by-step examination of the data. Initially, the investigator engaged in multiple readings of interview transcripts and related materials to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. This immersion established a foundational framework for further analysis. Draft codes were then developed by annotating relevant segments of the data. Each segment was assigned a unique label to accurately represent its core meaning. This process segmented the data into manageable units, facilitating the identification of themes, concepts, and expressions pertinent to

employability skills in music education. Following the creation of draft codes, the study proceeded to identify themes by combining codes with similar ideas or characteristics. The goal was to uncover themes that captured the diverse perspectives and experiences of music students, educators, and industry professionals. The selected themes were rigorously examined for relevance and consistency. The coded data were reviewed multiple times to assess thematic coherence both within and across interviews. This iterative process allowed for the refinement of themes, ensuring they effectively reflected the richness and diversity of the data.

Table 3

Interview Guidelines

Interview Questions	
Music School Students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you share your experiences in your music education journey in Shanxi Province? 2. What specific skills do you believe are crucial for your future career in the music industry? 3. How do you perceive the alignment between the skills taught in your music education and the demands of the music industry in Shanxi? 4. In your opinion, what challenges do music school graduates face when entering the workforce in Shanxi? 5. Can you provide insights into any specific initiatives or support services within your music school aimed at enhancing employability skills?
Educators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do you incorporate employability skills of students into the music curriculum? 2. From your perspective, what employability skills of students are most critical for music school students in Shanxi? 3. What challenges do you encounter in teaching and fostering employability skills of students among students? 4. In your opinion, how can music schools in Shanxi better prepare students for the job market in the region? 5. Are there any collaborative efforts between music schools and the industry to enhance students' employability skills?
Industry Professionals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From your experience, what specific employability skills of students are highly valued in the Shanxi music industry? 2. How well-prepared do you find music school graduates in Shanxi when it comes to employability skills? 3. Can you share insights into any industry-specific challenges faced by professionals in Shanxi and the required skill sets? 4. Are there any collaborative initiatives between the music industry in Shanxi and educational institutions to bridge the gap in employability skills? 5. What recommendations do you have for improving the alignment between music education and the needs of the Shanxi music industry?

The study identified and explored key topics, distilling their essence into concise and precise summaries. This approach facilitated effective data processing and interpretation within well-defined areas. The findings were consolidated into a comprehensive report,

where extensive synthesis was supported by relevant quotes and excerpts. The objective was to construct a compelling narrative that highlighted both the breadth and depth of the data, focusing on the employability of music school students in Shanxi Province. Collaboration with colleagues, utilization of qualitative analysis software, and adherence to qualitative research standards contributed to the credibility and reliability of the analysis. This approach ensured that the study results accurately reflected the perspectives and experiences of the participants. Ethical considerations were paramount, with the study emphasizing participant welfare and rights. Informed consent, along with complete details about the study, was obtained before participation. To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms were used in reporting. Emotional questions were designed to capture the diverse viewpoints and personalities of participants. The study received approval from an ethical review board in accordance with established requirements. Clear communication, debriefing, and adherence to data security protocols were implemented to ensure participant understanding and data protection. The study aimed to achieve its objectives while safeguarding participant privacy and dignity and fostering an enhanced understanding of ethical practices.

Results

The Employability Skills Enhancement Model for students at Shanxi Province Music School offers a nuanced understanding of the interplay between academic programs, industry demands, and personal aspirations. This study delves into the intricate process of developing marketable skills, emphasizing technical expertise, creativity, flexibility, communication, and commercial acumen. The investigation explores market dynamics, human motivation, and the role of music education institutions in identifying what artists require to thrive in Shanxi's expanding music industry. This section synthesizes the findings, highlighting the importance of experiential education and the adult learning paradigm. Additionally, it discusses potential strategies for curriculum reform and corporate partnerships as implementation options. The chapter addresses the challenges and methodologies related to model implementation, focusing on ensuring its long-term sustainability and effectiveness. It provides an in-depth analysis of Shanxi's multifaceted music education system and proposes a framework designed to enhance the employability skills of future musicians.

Specific Employability Skills of Students Identified

Theme 1: Technical Proficiency

Participants indicated that technical expertise is paramount in Shanxi Province's music education job market, with this key theme encompassing two interconnected subthemes. There was a consensus that both instrumental and vocal skills are essential for technical success. Mastery of these skills not only determines musical competency but also enhances visibility and potential within the local music industry. Many musicians in Shanxi believe that possessing strong instrumental or vocal abilities is crucial for success, as it showcases their music and attracts attention. The importance of technical skills was emphasized by several participants, with one noting the role of instrumental competence in facilitating teamwork. They also highlighted that proficiency in any instrument—whether Western or

Chinese—improves collaborative performance. Music theory was also identified as critical for technical, instrumental, and vocal skills. Participants stressed that music theory is fundamental to understanding and expressing music. One participant described music theory as the "language of musicians," essential for conveying and interpreting nuanced emotions during performances. Participant narratives reinforced the view that music theory is a valuable employability skill. It is considered beneficial for both exams and professional work, enabling smooth engagement, adaptation to various musical styles, and significant contributions in diverse musical contexts. In summary, participants in Shanxi's music education sector perceive their roles through the lens of technical proficiency, which demands both instrumental/vocal talents and music theory knowledge. The music industry in Shanxi values creativity alongside technical skills, with a strong background in both instrumental performance and music theory being advantageous for career advancement.

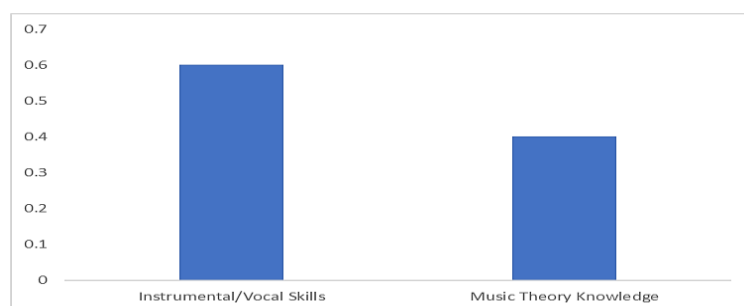


Figure 1: Weightage Analysis for Technical Proficiency.

Theme 2: Creativity and Artistic Expression

The analysis of employability skills for music students in Shanxi Province also emphasized the critical role of originality and creativity. Participants highlighted that uniqueness and artistic expression are crucial for distinguishing musicians and enhancing their marketability within the local music industry. This component of employability was explored through two interrelated subthemes. Participants emphasized that skills in composition and arranging are vital for securing roles in the music industry. These skills are perceived as essential for standing out in a competitive field, with one participant noting, "The Shanxi music industry values creativity." Proficiency in composition and arrangement can create new opportunities and open doors in the industry. Quotes from participants underscored the significance of these skills, with one remarking, "Having your own signature in the industry is akin to being able to compose. Performing the music of others alone is insufficient; you must also create work that reflects your artistic identity." The second subtheme focused on performance and interpretation, with participants recognizing the importance of persuasive performances and interpretive skills in their professional roles. The ability to convey emotions and tell stories through music was highlighted as essential for making a performance memorable. One participant stated, "It is not merely about technical proficiency; it is also about your interpretation and execution of the music. Your emotional connection sets you apart within the industry." Another participant emphasized, "In Shanxi, audiences value not only technical skill but also the ability to connect with them through your performance." Overall, participants stressed that creativity and artistic expression are highly valued in Shanxi's music education system. The themes of composition,

arrangement, and performance/interpretation reflect the complexity of these skills. A participant noted, "Passionate and distinctive musicians are respected. Creative expression through composition or live performance is both valued and necessary in Shanxi's music scene."

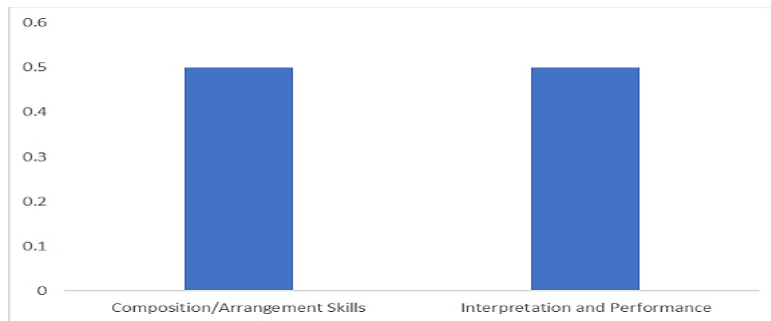


Figure 2: Weightage Analysis for Creativity and Artistic Expression.

Theme 3: Communication and Collaboration

Participants discussed the employability skills of students in Shanxi Province's music education, highlighting the crucial roles of collaboration and communication. The necessity of these skills was emphasized as essential for navigating the complexities of the local music market. Two subthemes elaborated on these skills. The primary subtheme focused on effective interpersonal communication. Participants agreed that while technical proficiency is important, the ability to convey musical ideas, emotions, and observations is equally critical. One participant stated, "Communication is not just about talking; it's about expressing musical ideas, understanding others, and working seamlessly as a team." This perspective underscores the importance of interpersonal interaction in the job search and professional success. Additionally, the analysis highlighted the significance of originality and creativity. Participants noted that uniqueness and artistic expression are key factors in enhancing a musician's marketability within the local music industry. This aspect was explored through two related subthemes. Participants emphasized that skills in composition and arrangement are vital for career advancement. In a competitive industry, having the ability to compose and arrange music distinguishes individuals from their peers. One participant remarked, "The Shanxi music industry emphasizes creativity. Your writing and arranging skills can open doors to new opportunities."

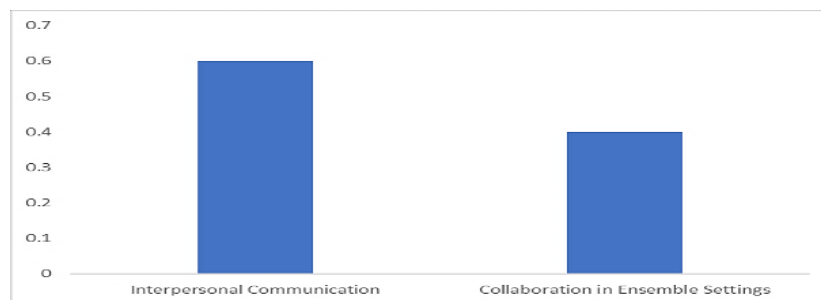


Figure 3: Weightage Analysis for Communication and Collaboration.

Theme 4: Adaptability and Flexibility

The research on employability skills for music students in Shanxi Province highlighted the critical importance of adaptation and flexibility within the region's dynamic music industry. Participants emphasized the necessity of these skills to thrive in a sector marked by rapid changes and diverse musical influences. Adaptability to various musical styles emerged as a major theme, reflecting the region's musical diversity and the need for musicians to be versatile across different genres and traditions. Participants valued the ability to switch between styles and adapt to evolving trends, noting that "singing in various genres enhances an artist's potential and market value." This flexibility is crucial for job opportunities, given the complex nature of the local music scene. Additionally, creativity and innovation were highlighted as key employability skills. Participants underscored that the Shanxi music industry values musicians who explore and incorporate new ideas, with one participant stating, "Shanxi's music scene values individuals who can navigate various genres and embrace new approaches." This openness to experimentation and the introduction of unique elements into performances are vital for standing out in a competitive market. The local industry's preference for the unconventional was also noted, reinforcing that "being open to new musical ideas is a distinctive employability skill." Overall, success in Shanxi's music education sector relies on a blend of adaptability to diverse musical styles and a proactive approach to creativity and innovation.

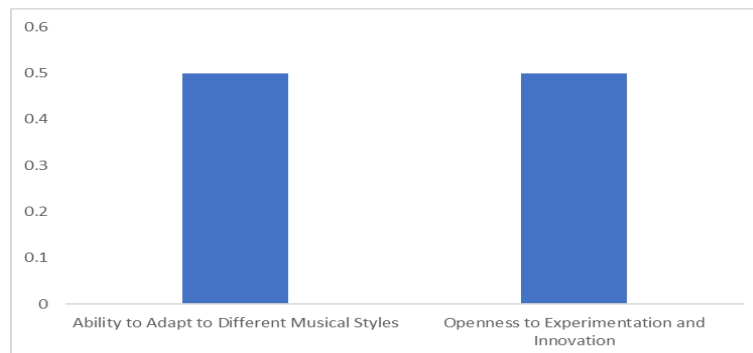


Figure 4: Weightage Analysis for Adaptability and Flexibility.

Theme 5: Business and Entrepreneurial Skills

In Shanxi Province's music education sector, discussions have underscored the critical role of business and entrepreneurial skills in achieving success. Panellists highlighted that excelling in the local music scene demands not only musical talent but also robust commercial and entrepreneurial capabilities. Two key subthemes emerged from this discourse: marketing and promotion, and financial management. Marketing and promotion were identified as essential strategies for enhancing employability in Shanxi's competitive music industry. Participants stressed the importance of self-promotion and brand visibility, noting that "it's not just about performing music; it's also about promoting oneself." Effective marketing enhances an artist's credibility and raises industry awareness through collaborations, events, and social media. One participant remarked, "Knowing how to market your music is critical" for success in this thriving sector. Financial management also emerged as a crucial component of employability.

Participants emphasized the need for musicians to grasp budgeting, contract negotiation, and financial planning. "Despite its importance, financial literacy is often ignored," one participant observed. Effective money management, including understanding performance compensation, royalties, and partnerships, is vital for thriving in Shanxi's music business. Another participant pointed out, "Being a musician is not merely an occupation of producing music; it is a business." The discussion clearly highlighted that survival and success in Shanxi's music industry require a blend of musical talent and entrepreneurial acumen. Business and entrepreneurial skills, including marketing, promotion, and financial management, are pivotal for navigating the local music market. A participant encapsulated this view, stating, "Surviving as a musician in Shanxi requires more than skill. You must understand business, from self-promotion to finance." This perspective underscores the necessity of integrating commercial and entrepreneurial skills into music education to enhance employability and success in the regional music industry.

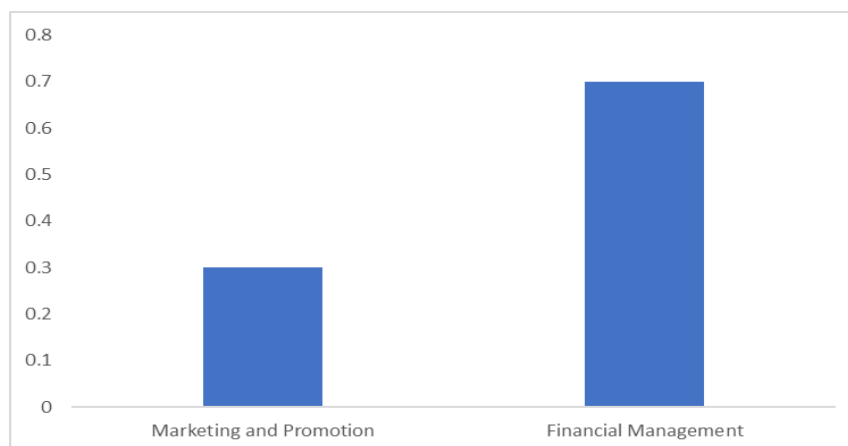


Figure 5: Weightage Analysis for Business and Entrepreneurial Skills.

Factors Influencing Employability skills of students Development

Theme 1: Role of Music Education Institutions

Research on employability skills within Shanxi Province's music education emphasizes the crucial role of music education institutions in cultivating marketable abilities. Participants highlighted that colleges play a significant role in shaping skills that align with the local music industry's needs. Two interconnected subthemes emerged: curriculum implementation and organization, and opportunities through extracurricular activities. The first subtheme, curriculum implementation and organization, focuses on how music education programs influence skill development. Participants stressed the importance of well-structured curricula that not only teach technical skills but also foster creativity, collaboration, and adaptability. As one participant noted, "The curriculum establishes the foundation." A comprehensive curriculum that integrates technical training with creative and collaborative elements is seen as essential for meeting the demands of Shanxi's music industry. Another participant emphasized that workshops go beyond mere instrument instruction, incorporating real-world scenarios to test and develop both musical and interpersonal skills, saying, "Our workshops encompass much more than mere instrument playing."

The second subtheme, opportunities and extracurricular activities, highlights the role of activities beyond formal education in developing employability skills. Participants pointed out that concerts, seminars, and networking events are crucial for gaining practical experience and understanding industry dynamics. One participant remarked, "We learn industry dynamics through extracurriculars," emphasizing that such activities provide insights into the potential and challenges of the Shanxi music industry. Extracurricular engagements, including collaborations and business connections, are vital for exposing students to real-world scenarios and industry practices. In summary, Shanxi Province's music education research underscores the importance of both well-designed curricula and extracurricular activities in preparing students for successful careers. By integrating technical training with opportunities for creativity, collaboration, and industry engagement, music education institutions can effectively enhance employability skills and align with the demands of the local music market.

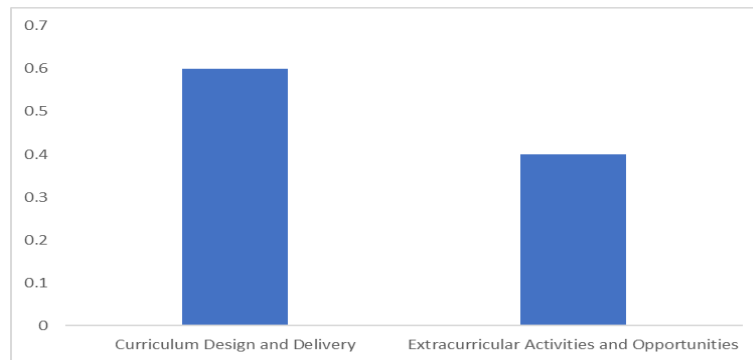


Figure 6: Weightage Analysis for Role of Music Education Institutions.

Theme 2: Industry Expectations and Trends

Industry expectations and trends have significantly influenced the development of marketable skills within Shanxi Province's music education system. Participants underscored the impact of evolving industrial dynamics on the cultivation of employable talents, highlighting two main subthemes: adapting to industry changes and integrating technological advancements. The first subtheme, adapting to industry changes, focuses on the need for music education to align with the shifting requirements of Shanxi's music industry. Participants emphasized the importance of staying abreast of market trends, understanding audience preferences, and tailoring skills to meet industry needs. As one participant stated, "The industry determines the setting. We must adapt to producers and audiences. Relevance matters." This perspective underscores the necessity for educational programs to equip students with skills that align with current industry demands and trends. The emphasis is on ensuring that students are not only skilled musicians but also adaptable professionals who can meet evolving market expectations. The second subtheme, technical progress, explores the impact of technological advancements on employability in the music industry. Participants discussed how technology influences various aspects of music production, collaboration, and distribution. One participant noted, "Technology changes the game. Our abilities must go beyond traditional instruments."

Marketing and music composition require more skill." This reflects the growing importance of integrating technological literacy into music education. In Shanxi, where digital skills and software proficiency are increasingly crucial, the ability to navigate technological tools is seen as an essential component of a musician's skill set. Participants highlighted that a strong grasp of technology enhances traditional musical skills, making students more competitive in the digital landscape of the music industry. Overall, the findings indicate that Shanxi's music education system must address both industry trends and technological advancements to effectively prepare students for successful careers. Adapting to market demands and embracing technological innovations are pivotal for aligning with the dynamic nature of Shanxi's music scene. As one participant summarized, "Adapt. The ever-changing Shanxi music business demands market adaptability and technical growth," underscoring the need for continuous evolution in music education practices to meet the industry's challenges and opportunities.

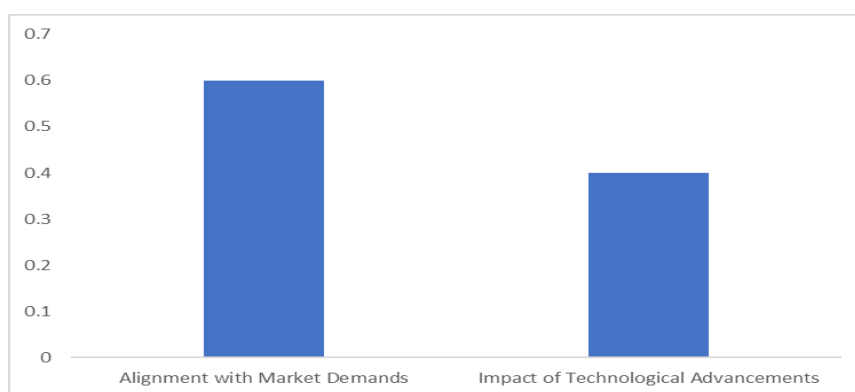


Figure 7: Weightage Analysis for Industry Expectations and Trends.

Theme 3: Individual Motivation and Initiative

The study on employability skills in Shanxi Province's music education highlighted the critical role of initiative and intrinsic motivation in developing marketable talents. Participants emphasized the importance of proactive effort and personal drive in enhancing employability. Two key subthemes emerged from the data, reflecting the complex nature of initiative and motivation. The first subtheme, personal development, underscores the necessity of ongoing effort beyond formal education. Participants stressed that marketable skills are cultivated through continued education, individual practice, and skill development outside the classroom. One participant remarked, "Your education does not conclude in the classroom. You must improve, acknowledge your shortcomings, and try new genres to flourish in Shanxi's music market." This perspective highlights the importance of self-directed learning and personal growth. Participants noted that while educational institutions provide foundational knowledge, individual pursuits such as learning new instruments or engaging in music production are vital for advancing employability. As another participant put it, "While our institution provides the foundation, individual pursuits hold significance." This underscores the value of proactive personal development in achieving career success in Shanxi's competitive music industry.

The second subtheme, networking and mentorship, reveals how external support and professional connections contribute to career advancement. Participants recognized the role of mentors and networking in acquiring industry knowledge, building connections, and navigating career challenges. One participant described mentorship as "having a road map," illustrating its importance in providing guidance and opportunities. Networking was also highlighted as a key factor in establishing professional relationships, gaining new clients, and receiving valuable industry insights. "Networking transcends mere social interaction," noted one participant, emphasizing its role in career development. Mentors and networking opportunities offer practical advice, career connections, and assessments of necessary employable skills in Shanxi's music scene. In conclusion, the study highlights that initiative and motivation significantly impact the development of marketable skills among Shanxi's music students. Personal development activities, coupled with effective networking and mentorship, are essential for success in the music industry. Participants expressed that "Your desire and initiative are equally as important as your skills in Shanxi's music scene," reflecting the belief that self-motivation and proactive effort are crucial for achieving career goals. Thus, fostering a culture of personal drive, continuous learning, and professional networking is vital for enhancing employability in Shanxi's music education landscape.

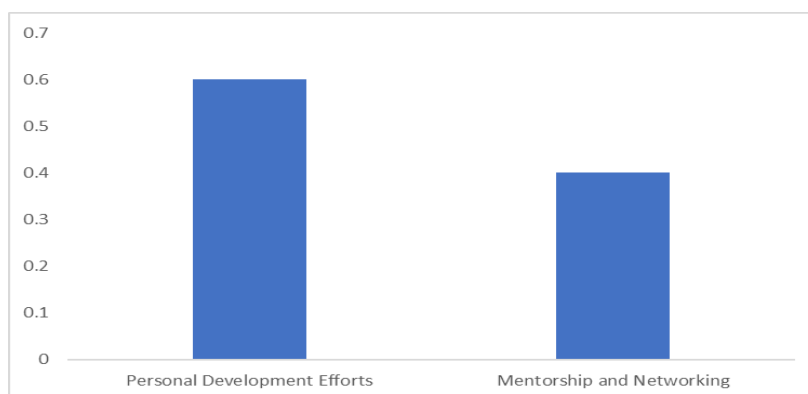


Figure 8: Weightage Analysis for Individual Motivation and Initiative.

Development of Employability skills of Students Enhancement Model

The study on building an Employability Skills Enhancement Model for Shanxi Province music school students provides a comprehensive framework for advancing musician employability. The model integrates key components essential for success in the music industry, including technical proficiency, creativity and artistic expression, communication and collaboration, adaptability and flexibility, business and entrepreneurial skills, music education institutions, industry expectations and trends, and individual motivation and initiative. Shanxi's music education system is designed to meet the demands of a competitive music industry by emphasizing both technical and soft skills. Students' employability is viewed through various dimensions: technical expertise, creativity, communication, adaptability, and entrepreneurial acumen. The curriculum and delivery methods, including extracurricular activities, are tailored to prepare students for the

multifaceted demands of the job market. The model highlights the importance of aligning with industry expectations and trends. Understanding market requirements and keeping pace with technological advancements are crucial for developing relevant skills. The integration of technical training with business education underscores the need for musicians to be adept not only in their craft but also in managing their careers. This includes financial management, marketing, and understanding industry dynamics, which are essential for negotiating contracts, managing finances, and strategically positioning oneself in the market. Motivation, initiative, and personal growth, alongside mentorship and networking, are identified as critical factors influencing employability. The model promotes a holistic approach to education that bridges the gap between artistic talent and the practical realities of the music industry. By fostering these attributes, the model aims to create well-rounded individuals capable of contributing creatively and succeeding in Shanxi's competitive music scene. In summary, the Employability Skills Enhancement Model integrates technical and business skills to address the comprehensive needs of musicians. It prepares students not only to excel in their artistic endeavours but also to navigate the complexities of the music industry effectively. The emphasis on soft skills and entrepreneurial knowledge ensures that graduates are equipped to thrive in the dynamic and competitive landscape of Shanxi's music industry.

The principal theme of Communication and Collaboration encompasses both interpersonal and group communication, extending beyond mere musical interpretation. The curriculum modules are designed to enhance communication skills, cooperation, and artistic expression, integrating soft skills to underscore their critical role in a musician's employability. By developing these skills, artists are better equipped to refine their technical abilities and engage effectively with peers, industry professionals, and audiences, thus fostering a well-rounded and adaptable career. The model advocates for incorporating real-world experiences into the curriculum, reinforcing the significance of extracurricular activities, opportunities, and industry exposure in music education. It suggests that internships, collaborative projects, and joint ventures be utilized to provide students with insights into the Shanxi music industry. This experiential approach bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, preparing students for the dynamic demands of the Shanxi music sector.

The Employability Skills Enhancement Model employs Adult Learning Theory, recognizing Shanxi Province music students as active, self-directed learners (Table 4). This framework integrates self-directed learning, practical applicability, and the incorporation of prior experiences. It emphasizes the importance of respecting adult learners' autonomy, allowing for educational customization, and acknowledging diverse backgrounds and motivations. The model fosters self-directed learning and aligns with Adult Learning Theory by accommodating the specific needs and preferences of adult learners, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and engagement of the educational experience. Furthermore, the model emphasizes experiential learning and reflection. It advocates for hands-on experiences such as industry engagements, internships, and collaborative projects to facilitate the application of theoretical knowledge and practical skills. This approach enhances skill acquisition and the integration of theory and practice, ensuring that students are deeply immersed in the music industry, making their learning process both meaningful and enduring.

Table 4

Theoretical Underpinnings of the Model

Theoretical Underpinnings	Description
Adult Learning Theory	Recognizes the unique characteristics and motivations of adult learners, emphasizing self-directed learning and relevance to real-life experiences. Tailors instructional methods to accommodate diverse learning styles and prior knowledge.
Principles of Experiential Education	Emphasizes learning through direct experience, reflection, and application. Integrates hands-on activities, problem-solving tasks, and real-world projects into the curriculum.

Implementing this approach necessitates modifications to the curriculum. The proposal advocates for the integration of technical, business, and soft skills training, which requires the development of interdisciplinary courses, revisions of existing modules, and the introduction of new, topic-specific modules. Faculty development programs should be established to prepare instructors for this integrated approach (Table 5). Regular evaluation and feedback are essential to maintain the curriculum's relevance and effectiveness. This calls for a flexible curriculum that undergoes periodic reviews and updates based on market trends and student feedback. Industry engagement plays a pivotal role, thus it is vital to adopt effective collaboration strategies with the music industry. Forming partnerships with local music groups, specialists, and enterprises is recommended. Such collaborations could include guest lectures, mentorship opportunities, internships, and practical projects. To ensure that the curriculum remains aligned with the evolving expectations of the Shanxi music industry, input from an industry advisory council should be incorporated. Industry forums, workshops, and networking events are valuable for connecting students with professionals, thereby enhancing the educational experience and bridging the gap between academic learning and industry practice.

Table 5

Practical Implementation Strategies

Practical Implementation Strategies	Description
Recommendations for Curriculum Reform	Update curriculum to integrate technical training with business education, soft skills development, and real-world experiences. Incorporate project-based learning, case studies, and industry-relevant projects.
Strategies for Industry Engagement	Foster partnerships with local music industry stakeholders, including venues, record labels, and production studios. Establish internship programs, guest speaker series, and industry mentorship initiatives.

Resistance to change is a common challenge in educational reform. To address this, it is

essential to implement a comprehensive communication strategy. Transparent communication regarding the nature of the changes, their benefits, and the collaborative aspects of the reform can mitigate opposition (Table 6). Engaging teachers, students, and other stakeholders in the decision-making process and incorporating their feedback fosters a sense of ownership and cooperation. Faculty professional development programs that emphasize the advantages of the new approach and provide training on its implementation can facilitate a smoother transition. Successful reform requires a supportive environment that collaboratively identifies and addresses challenges. To ensure the model's sustainability and long-term impact, continuous monitoring and assessment should be conducted. Regular evaluations of student outcomes, industry relevance, and stakeholder feedback will guide necessary adjustments. Embracing innovation, adaptability, and ongoing development within the institution will help maintain the model's effectiveness. Additionally, sustained partnerships with the music industry will ensure that the program remains up-to-date and relevant.

Table 6

Potential Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Potential Challenges	Mitigation Strategies
Addressing Resistance to Change	Provide faculty development workshops to foster understanding and buy-in for curriculum reform. Solicit input from stakeholders to ensure their concerns are heard and addressed.
Ensuring Sustainability and Long-Term Impact	Establish ongoing assessment and evaluation mechanisms to monitor the effectiveness of the model. Secure long-term funding and support from institutional leadership and industry partners.

Discussion

The qualitative analysis identified a diverse array of employability skills required for music school students in Shanxi Province. Technical proficiency, including music theory and instrumental and vocal abilities, was deemed essential. Originality and skills in composition and arrangement were highly valued, along with creative expression and performance capabilities. Collaboration and communication skills were highlighted as critical, particularly for group tasks and interpersonal interactions. Flexibility and adaptability were recognized in students' ability to switch musical genres and explore new approaches. Additionally, commercial and entrepreneurial skills, such as financial management and marketing/promotion, were identified as crucial for success in the music business (Ellefsen et al., 2020). The survey revealed a broad spectrum of marketable skills and skill gaps among Shanxi music school students. Traditional music education programs were found to lack sufficient focus on commercial and business skills, which contributed to these discrepancies. Participants expressed a need for more integrated training to better prepare students for the challenges of the music industry (Sungurtekin, 2022). The qualitative analysis indicated a need for more real-world experiences, such as group projects and industry apprenticeships, to effectively bridge the gap between education and industry. Shanxi music school students develop marketable skills influenced by various

factors, including the curriculum, delivery methods, and extracurricular activities offered by music education institutions. Employability is also shaped by industry expectations and the necessity to adapt to technological advancements (Elmosnino, 2021). Personal initiative, desire for growth, mentorship, and networking were identified as key contributors to enhancing employability skills. However, many existing programs and methods for developing employability skills in Shanxi Province lack tailored education for the music sector. While basic employability frameworks exist in business studies and vocational education, the music industry requires sector-specific models to address its unique opportunities and constraints. Current curricula tend to prioritize technical training over business education and practical experience, highlighting the need for more detailed and specialized approaches.

The qualitative study corroborates prior research on music education and employability skills. Technical proficiency remains a fundamental emphasis, aligning with music education frameworks that highlight the necessity of mastering instrumental or vocal skills alongside music theory. Similarly, the importance of collaboration, communication, and creativity aligns with these frameworks, as well as discussions on the evolution of musicians, which underscore the significance of creative expression and interpersonal skills alongside technical expertise (Davies, 2020). The identified gaps in employability skills reflect a broader trend in higher education towards integrating academic learning with business acumen (Thompson, 2020). The inclusion of entrepreneurial and commercial skills in music education supports the academic consensus that diverse approaches are required to prepare students for professional challenges (Chalmers et al., 2021). The study's findings on the affective components of employability align with adult learning theory and experiential education research. Practical application, self-directed learning, and hands-on experiences resonate with adult learning theory, which emphasizes autonomy and relevance (Carlson & McGowan, 2022). Additionally, experiential learning programs such as industry collaborations and apprenticeships have been shown to enhance employability (Sokhanvar et al., 2021). While evaluating existing approaches and programs, the study highlights the need for tailored strategies to address the unique challenges faced by music school students in Shanxi Province. Although current frameworks offer valuable insights, they often do not adequately capture the specific skills and market aspects relevant to the music industry (Dunphy et al., 2021). The Employability Skills Enhancement Model offers a comprehensive and contextually relevant framework designed to enhance the employability skills of Shanxi Province music school students, integrating qualitative study findings with existing literature.

The proposed employability skills for students align with established frameworks and current research in music education. Literature in the field consistently underscores the importance of technical proficiency, including instrumental, vocal, and theoretical skills (Martínez-Castilla et al., 2023). The emphasis on artists' roles as creators and innovators beyond mere performance is in harmony with the focus on creative expression and innovation. Effective interpersonal and ensemble communication and collaboration are recognized as crucial in many professional contexts (Gilstrap et al., 2021). The current emphasis on preparing workers to adapt to evolving work environments highlights the importance of adaptability and flexibility. Employability courses increasingly integrate aspects such as financial management and marketing, reflecting the growing need for

technical and commercial expertise within the profession. This shift addresses the historical focus of music education on technical mastery and creative development, which has often led to perceived gaps in business and entrepreneurial skills (Huang, 2022). Traditional music instruction, with its emphasis on classical training and artistic growth, has frequently overlooked the practical aspects of a competitive profession. Additionally, the lack of integration between music education institutions and the local music industry may contribute to deficiencies in business skills (Canavan & McCamley, 2020). This disconnect underscores the need for a more comprehensive approach that bridges the gap between music education and industry demands, ensuring that students are equipped with both artistic and commercial competencies.

The deficiencies in real-world experience and industry connections exacerbate the challenges faced by music school students. To address these issues, it is essential to reform music, business, and technical education. Music education institutions should collaborate with local music companies to provide industry-relevant courses and practical experiences. Internships and other real-world opportunities are crucial for developing transferable skills that facilitate the transition into the music business (Gunawardena & Wilson, 2021). Collaboration between business leaders and educators is necessary to drive educational reforms and enhance the employability of music school graduates (Guedes et al., 2023). Music school students acquire marketable skills through a nuanced interplay of personal, institutional, and industry factors. Music education institutions play a pivotal role in shaping talent through curriculum design, instructional methods, and extracurricular activities. The study found that while these institutions effectively enhance students' technical skills, creativity, and collaborative abilities, there is a notable deficiency in business and entrepreneurial training. This gap highlights the need for educational institutions to realign their curricula with industry demands. As the music industry evolves, incorporating new musical genres and technological advancements is crucial for aligning educational outcomes with industry conventions and expectations.

The study underscores the necessity for music school graduates to stay abreast of industry developments and align their skills with market expectations. The acquisition of new skills necessitates both motivation and initiative. Participants highlighted the importance of networking, self-directed learning, and personal growth in fostering a proactive mindset among students. It is crucial for music students to take responsibility for their skill development beyond traditional education frameworks. The study emphasized that while formal music education equips students with foundational knowledge and technical expertise, there is a significant gap in meeting industry-specific requirements, particularly in business and entrepreneurial skills. This alignment between formal education and industry needs is essential for comprehensive skill development. The findings suggest that music education institutions and the music industry should foster closer collaboration. Integrating practical experiences, industry-relevant projects, and real-world scenarios into the curriculum is vital for addressing industry demands. A concerted effort among educators, industry professionals, and policymakers is necessary to bridge the gap between formal education and industry expectations. This collaboration aims to ensure that graduates acquire both the creative skills expected from formal education and the practical competencies required by the evolving music industry.

Conclusion

Using qualitative research methods, this study aimed to thoroughly explore the complexities involved in developing employability skills among students in music schools in Shanxi Province. The study identified a broad range of marketable skills, from technical proficiency to business acumen, reflecting the diverse demands of the regional music sector. While the study's findings align with existing literature and provide valuable insights, it is crucial to recognize its limitations, including methodological constraints and potential sample biases. The implications of these findings extend to legislative advocacy, industry collaboration, and the formulation of practical recommendations for music education. These recommendations aim to promote a comprehensive approach to music education, equipping students to meet the evolving challenges of the contemporary music industry. Proposed initiatives include regulatory changes, curriculum updates, and enhanced industry partnerships. The study, while specific to Shanxi Province, suggests several directions for future research. These include longitudinal studies, investigations into various cultural and geographical contexts, and evaluations of the long-term benefits of employability skills development initiatives. This research paves the way for a deeper understanding of how music education can adapt to the dynamic demands of the music industry, ultimately producing versatile and employable musicians well-prepared to succeed in their careers.

Implications

Practical Implications

The study's findings have significant implications for music education institutions and the music industry in Shanxi Province. The research highlights the need for enhancements in the formulation and implementation of music education curricula. Integrating technology and business education into music programs is crucial to address existing skill gaps. To thrive in the competitive music industry, students require training in marketing, financial management, and industry dynamics. Incorporating experiential learning into the curriculum is essential for developing employability skills. This includes apprenticeships, collaborative projects, and networking with industry professionals to help students grasp the complexities of the music business. Experiential learning bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, equipping students with industry-relevant skills. Music institutions and stakeholders should establish strong industry partnerships through mentorship, internships, and guest speaker programs. These collaborations provide valuable opportunities for students and enable industry experts to support future career prospects. Additionally, providing students with opportunities to showcase their work in professional settings can further enhance their practical experience and readiness for the music industry.

Theoretical Implications

This study significantly advances the theoretical understanding of employability skills development in Shanxi's music education sector. It provides a detailed analysis of essential skills required for young artists, including technical proficiency, entrepreneurial skills,

adaptability, creativity, and communication. This comprehensive perspective challenges existing music education theories and advocates for an integrated approach to meet the diverse demands of the local music industry. The study underscores the relevance of adult learning theory and experiential education in developing these skills. Adult learning theory highlights the importance of recognizing adults' self-directed learning styles, ensuring practical and effective teaching approaches. Experiential education emphasizes the need for hands-on, reflective learning experiences, which are crucial for skill development. The findings suggest that technical competence, creativity, and practical problem-solving should be central to music education, guided by adult learning principles and experiential learning practices. The proposed Employability Skills Enhancement Model combines these elements, integrating business education with technical training to address gaps and meet the needs of adult learners in the Shanxi music industry. This model supports the development of a well-rounded skill set that aligns with real-world demands, ensuring that students are well-prepared for the competitive music business.

Limitations and Future Direction

The study provides valuable insights into the employability skills of music students in Shanxi Province but is subject to certain limitations. Qualitative methods, while suitable for exploring in-depth experiences, have inherent constraints such as potential biases from social desirability or personal beliefs. The sample size may not fully represent the broader population of Shanxi music students, and the findings may not be directly applicable to other music education systems due to regional differences in educational and industry contexts. To address these limitations, future research should replicate the study in diverse regions and cultural settings, considering variations in education systems and the music industry. Longitudinal studies could offer insights into how employability skills evolve over time, providing a clearer understanding of their long-term impact. Additionally, combining quantitative and qualitative data could enhance the robustness of findings. Future research should aim for larger, more diverse samples and employ rigorous methodologies to improve the reliability and generalizability of results. Examining skills across various musical disciplines and institutions, as well as assessing the success determinants and career trajectories of music school alumni, would further elucidate the effectiveness of employability skills training and its long-term benefits.

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