



Need For Pre-Employability Training Among Individuals With Intellectual Disabilities: A Parental Perspective

* V. Indirani

Research Scholar, RKMVERI-FDMSE,

Coimbatore Campus -20

** Co-author

Dr. S. Logeshkumar,

Research Supervisor

Assistant Professor in Special Education

RKMVERI-FDMSE, Coimbatore Campus -20

Abstract

Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (IwID) face significant barriers to employment, including limited access to education and training, social stigma, and lack of support. Pre-employability training programs aim to address these challenges by providing skills and knowledge necessary for successful employment. This study investigates the need for pre-employability training among IwID from the perspective of their parents. A survey research design was employed, using a questionnaire to collect data from 30 parents of IwID. The results show that 63.33% of parents perceived a high need for pre-employability training, 26.67% perceived a medium need, while only 6.67% and 3.33% reported low and no need respectively. These findings suggest that most parents recognize the importance of structured pre-employment training programs. The study recommends further research involving multiple stakeholders, including educators and employers, to design more inclusive and targeted training programs for IwID.

Keywords:

Pre-Employability Training, Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Parental Perspective

Introduction

Employment is a critical milestone in the lives of individuals, fostering independence, self-worth, and social inclusion. However, for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (IwID), achieving meaningful employment remains challenging due to barriers such as limited education, inadequate training, social stigma, and insufficient support systems. Pre-employability training programs aim to address these issues by equipping individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to secure and retain jobs. This study explores the need for pre-employability training from the perspective of parents, who often play a pivotal role in shaping the employment outcomes of their IwID.

Review of Related Literature

In recent years, increasing attention has been directed toward the need for effective pre-employability training for IwID. Researchers have emphasized the multi-dimensional barriers faced by this population in gaining and sustaining meaningful employment, such as skill gaps, lack of employer readiness, and social exclusion. Employability skills and training outcomes

Wehman et al. (2022) emphasized that family involvement and inter-agency collaboration significantly improve transition outcomes, leading to more sustainable employment. This aligns with findings by **Grigal et al. (2020)**, who argued that inclusive postsecondary education programs contribute to better employment outcomes by integrating academic learning with vocational experiences.

Chiu et al. (2021) reported that digital and virtual pre-employment training models have become increasingly effective post-pandemic, especially when they integrate real-world simulations and role-play. Their study highlighted increased self-confidence, communication, and job task competence in young adults with intellectual disabilities who underwent targeted training.

Similarly, **Alnahdi (2020)** explored the impact of job readiness training focused on soft skills, such as time management, problem-solving, and workplace behavior. The results indicated that training focusing

on these non-technical aspects significantly improved employability among individuals with mild to moderate ID, reinforcing the need for comprehensive, individualized curricula.

Parental Involvement and Perceptions

Chen et al. (2021) found that parental attitudes significantly affected the types of vocational opportunities pursued by youth with ID. Optimistic and engaged parents were more likely to support skill-building activities and transition planning early on.

Rauf et al. (2020) emphasized that many parents still lack adequate awareness of the scope and importance of structured pre-employability training programs. Their qualitative study in an Asian context revealed that parents often believed their children did not need formal training, underestimating the evolving demands of the modern job market.

A more recent comparative study by **Ditchman and Easton (2021)** showed that parents generally hold more favorable views about their child's readiness for employment compared to educators or employers. This finding parallels the results of the current study, where most parents reported no or low need for training, despite empirical data showing the necessity of workplace readiness programs.

Multi-Stakeholder Approaches to Training

An emerging consensus in the literature supports multi-stakeholder collaboration. **Jones et al. (2021)** argued that pre-employability programs are most effective when designed in partnership with families, schools, and employers. Their findings showed that such models, which include job shadowing, internships, and mentorship, produce higher employment success rates than isolated school-based training.

Grigal, Hart, and Weir (2020) extended this argument by linking inclusive higher education models with long-term employment success, emphasizing the role of integrated academic and vocational preparation. Such models provide a framework for designing pre-employability programs that are inclusive and future-focused.

Policy and Systemic Considerations

Carter and Brock (2016) stressed the need for systemic change in the delivery of transition services. Their work emphasized that individualized support must be backed by policy reforms that encourage inclusive employment practices, accessible training, and consistent funding streams. This systemic lens is crucial in interpreting the implications of parental perceptions and in guiding future research and practice.

Objective

To identify the need for pre-employment skills training for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities as perceived by their parents

Research Questions

1. To what extent is need for pre-employability training felt among parents of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities?
2. What percentage of parents felt Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities need pre-employment training at no need, low need, medium need and high need?

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a survey research design to collect quantitative data regarding parental perceptions of the need for pre-employability training.

Sample

The study included 30 parents of individuals with mild intellectual disabilities. The sample comprised (5 Male and 25 Female).

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was used to select participants who were knowledgeable about the employment challenges faced by their children.

Research Tool

Data were collected using a researcher-developed structured need analysis questionnaire, which assessed parental perceptions of the employment challenges encountered by their children.

Data Collection Procedure

Participants were oriented about the research study. The questionnaire was distributed and explained about details to be furnished and scoring against each item. The collected responses were recorded and entered in master sheet for analysis.

Data Analysis and Results

The demographic information of the sample group for objective, as presented in table 1 This table provides relevant details about the characteristics of the participants involved in the analysis. In this particular study, the sample size for objective consisted of 30 individuals.

Table 1: Demographic data of sample for analysis of difficulty in employment (n = 30)

S. No	Male	Female	Total
1	5	25	30

The research question 1 seeks to understand the need for pre-employment training program from the perspective of the parents. This was addressed by finding the mean and standard deviation of the total score on the 'need analysis questionnaire'. The total scores on obtained on the questionnaire were divided into four levels of need for pre-employment training as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Needs for pre-employment training program score range and levels

Score range	Need of difficulty
181-240	High need (H)
121-180	Medium need (M)
61-120	Low need (L)
0-60	No need (N)

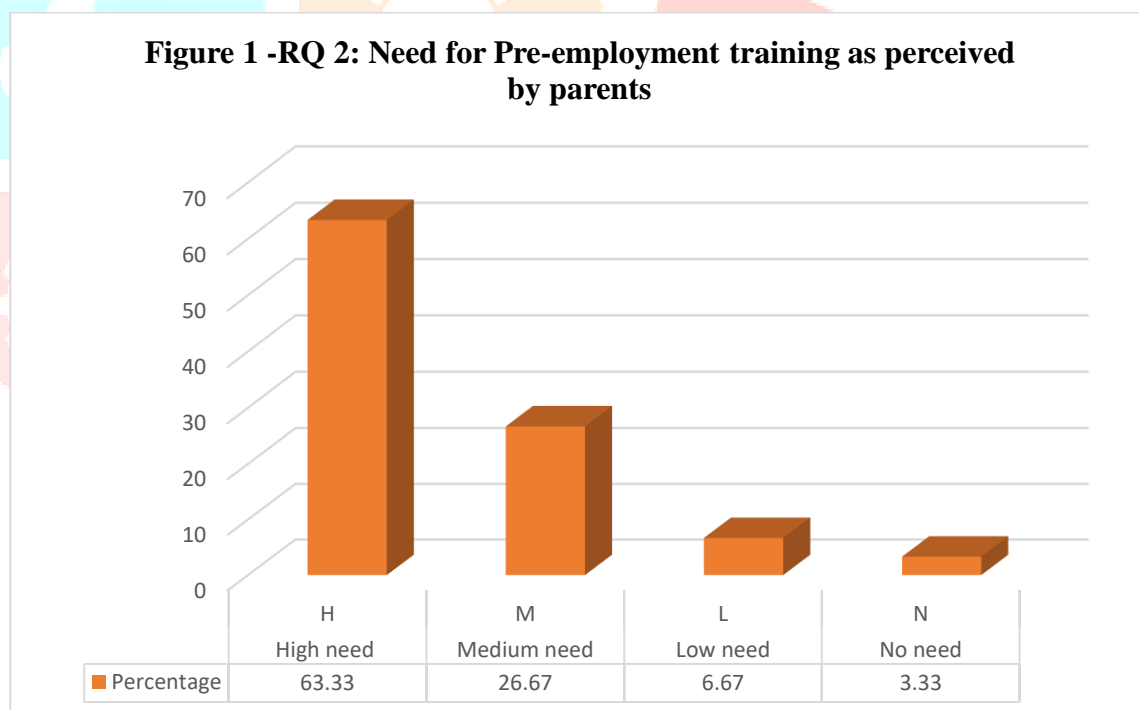
The need for pre-employability training felt among parents of IwID. For this, the average of the total scores obtained by each parent in the sample group on the 'need analysis questionnaire' was calculated along with the standard deviation. The mean and standard deviation of the total scores of parents regarding need by their wards with mild intellectual disability was 195.70+/-21.30. Referring to table 2 need of difficulty levels, it can be seen that the mean score lies in the high need difficulty (181-240).

Research question 2 asks the percentage of parents who felt their ward had a particular need of difficulty level (table 3). Here, the parents were given a difficulty level code based on the total score on the ‘need analysis questionnaire’. Further the number of responses in each level of need of difficulty was counted and the corresponding percentages were calculated. The results are shown in table 3 and shown graphically in figure 1.

Table 3: Percentages of parents according to the need of difficulty level in employment by their ward with mild ID

Levels	Code	Percentage
High need	H	63.33
Medium need	M	26.67
Low need	L	6.67
No need	N	3.33

Figure 1: Graphical representation of the percentages of parents by need of difficulty level



It can be seen from Table 3 and Figure 1 that the percentages of parents' responses for each need level were as follows: High need – 63.33% of parents reported a high level of need for pre-employment training. Medium need – 26.67% reported a medium level of need. Low need – 6.67% of parents expressed a low level of need. 3.33% of parents felt there was no need for training. These findings strongly suggest that parents are aware of the training gaps and overwhelmingly support structured programs to develop their children's employment readiness skills.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that a majority of parents (63.33%) perceive a high need for pre-employability training for their children with mild intellectual disabilities, while 26.67% recognize a moderate need. Only a small proportion (6.67%) report a low need, and an even smaller percentage (3.33%) believe there is no need for such training. These results indicate a growing awareness among parents of the skills gap their children face when transitioning from school to work. This aligns with recent literature that emphasizes the necessity of structured employment preparation for youth with disabilities (Wehman et al., 2022; Carter & Brock, 2016).

The increased parental recognition observed in this study may reflect broader societal changes, including improved awareness campaigns, parent advocacy groups, and exposure to transition planning through schools. Earlier studies, such as Rauf et al. (2020), found that many parents underestimated the importance of pre-employment training, often assuming that family support or basic education would be sufficient. Hernandez et al. (2019) also noted that some parents held overly optimistic views about their child's readiness for employment without recognizing the need for structured vocational support. However, the present study suggests a shift toward a more realistic and informed parental perspective.

Despite this encouraging trend, the findings also reveal ongoing gaps in knowledge or access. A small percentage of parents still perceive minimal or no need for training, which could be due to lack of awareness, cultural beliefs, or limited exposure to vocational rehabilitation services. Addressing these gaps is critical, as research shows that IwID who undergo structured employability programs demonstrate better workplace behavior, self-confidence, and long-term job retention (Chiu et al., 2021; Alnahdi, 2020).

A key limitation of this study is its small sample size ($n = 30$), which may limit generalizability. Additionally, the study focused solely on the perspectives of parents, excluding input from teachers, vocational trainers, employers, and the IwID themselves. As highlighted by Jones et al. (2021), multi-stakeholder approaches provide a more comprehensive understanding of training needs and result in better program design. Future studies should adopt a mixed-methods or multi-perspective framework to capture diverse viewpoints and develop inclusive and responsive pre-employment training programs.

Conclusion

This study explored the perceived need for pre-employability training for IwID from the viewpoint of their parents. The findings clearly indicate that the majority of parents recognize a high or moderate need for such training, reflecting increased awareness of the skill gaps and employment challenges faced by their children. This acknowledgment marks a positive shift from earlier assumptions that informal support alone would be sufficient.

These results carry important implications for educators, policymakers, and vocational rehabilitation professionals. Parent involvement should be considered a critical factor when designing and implementing transition programs. Furthermore, awareness-building efforts are still needed for the minority of parents who remain unaware of the benefits of structured training.

Future research should broaden the scope by including perspectives from educators, job coaches, and the IwID themselves. Adopting participatory and inclusive research methods will ensure that training programs are better tailored to the real-world needs of this population and will enhance their long-term employment outcomes.

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