

## **Challenges faced by humanities undergraduates in developing employability skills in the university system of Sri Lanka: A study based on literature**

F. N. Wickremasinghe, E. S. Neranjani

*Faculty of Education, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

The employability challenges Sri Lankan Humanities Undergraduates (HU) face are multifaceted, primarily arising from a misalignment between educational outcomes and market expectations. In this context, the study investigates current initiatives for developing employability skills (ES) in Sri Lanka, identifies the challenges HU encounters in developing ES within the university system, and offers recommendations for policymakers, educators, and industry stakeholders to address these obstacles. Additionally, it examines relevant theories such as human and social capital, graduate identity and experiential learning theories that relate to the challenges faced by HU in higher education and in cultivating ES to facilitate a seamless transition of graduates into the workforce. The research adopts an interpretivist paradigm, employs a qualitative approach and is grounded in literature analysis. Purposive sampling was used to select existing documents, including university policies, academic literature, and government reports. Thematic analysis yielded three principal themes: first, the curriculum is outdated and not aligned with industry needs; second, career guidance services are under-resourced, with limited student access and insufficient emphasis placed upon them; and third, a lack of practical experience stemming from traditional teaching methods, teacher-directed learning environments, limited engagement with industry, and scarce internship opportunities. These challenges contribute to graduate unemployment and preparedness deficits concerning labour market demands. The findings carry substantial implications for policymakers, educators, and industry stakeholders, emphasizing the necessity of collaborative efforts, informed policy-making, and strategic interventions to enhance the employability prospects of HU in Sri Lanka. Further research is recommended to develop and evaluate interventions aimed at improving the ES of HU.

**Keywords:** *Challenges, Employability skills, Humanities undergraduates, Sri Lanka*