



Employability characteristics and their impact on social impact: An exploratory study on women's small social enterprises

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to understand and explore how women social entrepreneurs select their employees and how this can affect their social impact. This study has two objectives. The first is to explore the most attractive employees' employability characteristics chosen by women entrepreneurs. The second objective was to explore the relationship between employability characteristics and the social impact of the social enterprises. This study used an exploratory quantitative paradigm to reach the study's findings. Multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) explores employability characteristics the women social entrepreneurs select and the relationship between the selected employability characteristics and the social impact of the women's social enterprises. The data were collected using a cross-sectional questionnaire. Data were collected from 382 employees working in 174 female social enterprises. Women social entrepreneurs were found to prefer employees with high interpersonal skills, high ethics, high physical abilities, high abilities to learn, high implicit knowledge, high reliability, and low soft skills. Linking these employability skills to social impact revealed that implicit knowledge and interpersonal skills are the most influential. A paucity of research discusses how women social entrepreneurs recruit their employees. This problem is getting worse when it comes to small social enterprises. This study led to a discussion about employability characteristics in women's social enterprises and their impact on social impact.

1. Introduction

Management of social enterprises is a significant problem women face in social enterprises [1]. Different aspects of social enterprises' management can determine the success or failure of social enterprises. It is important to understand the entrepreneurial activity of women in social enterprises and how they create new social businesses, yet how they manage it is another issue. Researchers usually focus on how women's social enterprises are created, yet little research has been done on how women's social enterprises are managed. One of the most critical issues for women's social enterprises is employee selection or recruitment [2]. The selection of improper

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employees is one of the most important factors in the failure of women's social enterprises, especially smaller enterprises [3]. Women social entrepreneurs need employees who can do their jobs properly, understand the goals of social enterprises, and generate new innovative ideas that would contribute to these enterprises' performance.

In contrast to commercial entrepreneurs, scholars gave less attention to social entrepreneurship [2]. Social entrepreneurs don't have the same opportunities and resources to run their enterprises [2]. Social entrepreneurs are more self-dependent in the way they run their social enterprises. This would raise a crucial question of how women social entrepreneurs select their employees so they can do their jobs properly. In other words, are women social enterprises' employees employable or not?

Women social entrepreneurs face tremendous challenges in managing their social enterprises, especially in a context such as Yemen [4,5]. These challenges could affect the way women social entrepreneurs manage their enterprises. Making incorrect managerial decisions can affect social enterprises' efficiency, effectiveness, and performance. One of the main objectives of social enterprises is to be supportive environments to create jobs [6]. Thus, one of the most important decisions is the recruitment process. Lack of human resource skills is an important barrier to social entrepreneurship [7]. Women social entrepreneurs should choose the right employees to support their social enterprise's goals. Selecting the right employees can significantly affect the social impact of these enterprises. Selecting employees according to their employability characteristics is one of their challenges, and it should be investigated.

Women are the largest contributors to social support; they act as the ultimate givers [8]. Women are the main agents who can lead social entrepreneurship activities [9]. Employability is critical for women's social enterprises, especially small-sized ones. Usually, these enterprises attract low-skilled workers. Women social entrepreneurs should know exactly what type of employability characteristics can help them expand their social impact.

To address the research problem of this study, two main research questions have developed.

The first question focuses on the initial step of the employee selection process in women social enterprises. It aims to investigate the recruitment process within these enterprises and how they choose their employees based on their employability characteristics.

- RQ1: What are women's small-sized social enterprises choosing as the most favorable employability characteristics?

The second question delves deeper into the recruitment process and examines the connection between employability characteristics and their impact on the social outcomes of women social enterprises. This question explores the relationship between the identified employability characteristics and their influence on the social impact of women social enterprises.

- RQ2: Which of these employability characteristics contribute more to the social impact of women's social small-sized enterprises?

To answer the research questions, we first looked for the solution in the literature. There is a lack of literature on employability skills in women's social enterprises. Employability skills were studied in the area of higher education. Most of the previous studies tried to understand how education systems can create better employability skills [10–12]. This theme was extended to models that can be adopted by universities to improve students' employability skills [13]. Moreover, it discusses the effect of training on low-skilled workers' employability skills [14] and the improvement of competitive relationships between employees [15]. Entrepreneurship literature also showed the same trend. The main themes discussed how education systems can improve entrepreneurship and employability skills [16], the design of entrepreneurship education programs [17], and the desire for employability and its effect on employability skills [18]. The third theme tried to connect employability to employee issues, such as performance [19], changes in employability skills in the digital era [20,21], linkage of employability skills and career transition [22], employability skills deficit in rural areas [23], and career adaptability [24]. The last practical theme discusses the relationship with employers, such as meeting the exactions of employers [25] and the employability skill from the perspective of employers [26,27]. The last theme was more on the theoretical side. The trend in literature is to develop employability measurement scales [28].

Therefore, this study has two main objectives. The first is to know and explore the most attractive employee employability characteristics chosen by women entrepreneurs. The second objective was to explore the relationship between employability characteristics and the social impact of social enterprises. This study advances the knowledge on social enterprises, human resource practices, employability characteristics, and social impact, both practically and theoretically. Practically, it explored human resource practices in women's social enterprises and how they choose and maintain their employees according to their employability characteristics. This study also shows evidence of the impact of employability characteristics and social impact. Some of these characteristics relate to employees' social capital. Theoretically, this advanced literature explores the relationship between employees' employability characteristics and the selection process of women's social enterprises. It has shifted attention from management to employees. This study extends the literature by exploring the most desirable employability characteristics of women social entrepreneurs. This study also establishes a new relationship between employability characteristics and social impact.

This paper is organized as follows. The first section is the introduction. The second section is devoted to the development of theory, calculations, and literature review. The third section explains the methods used in this manuscript. The fourth section shows the results and findings of this study, followed by the discussion and conclusion sections.

2. Literature review

2.1. Social entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship is an entrepreneurial activity that has social objectives and purposes. Successful social enterprises should

focus on how to improve their social impact. Social impact is the key factor in judging the success of social entrepreneurship. Previous literature focused on the owner's characteristics as a key factor of social entrepreneurship success: women's values [29], ethics [8,29], desire [8], and qualifications [30]. Others attributed social entrepreneurship failure to women's social entrepreneurship-specific problems, such as lack of social network, tech, limited space for women to make decisions, unsupported culture, unsupportive legislation environment, business, and operational difficulties, work-life balance, and gender discrimination [31].

Previous literature pointed to the importance of employees and workers in social entrepreneurship [32]. It also showed the importance of qualifying social employees to do their social work. Previous literature showed that social enterprises hire local employees and improve their social impact by increasing employment, giving fair salaries and wages, and improving employees' livelihoods [33]. The lack of skilled employees was discussed as a challenge for social entrepreneurship [34]. Others focused on the social competencies of managers instead of employees [35]. Previous literature also highlighted the importance of supporting employees' ethical voices in social entrepreneurship [36]. Employing special types of employees can help align social enterprises with sustainable development goals [37]. It shows that ethics of care is the core principle of human resource management in the social enterprises [38].

Knowing how women social entrepreneurs manage their enterprises is a crucial issue. Rosca et al. [9] argued that women social entrepreneurs started their businesses with a clear clue of what to do socially. However, even with a clear idea of what to do, do women social entrepreneurs know how to manage their enterprises to achieve their clear social targets? Social enterprises need differentiated human resource practices to reach their mission and goals [38]. One part of this managerial endeavor is selecting employees in women's social enterprises.

2.2. Employability skills

Employability is the skills, characteristics, and competencies an employee can acquire to become more attractive to employers [39]. Employers highly demand these competencies and give employees high potential in their jobs. However, these skills are not equally important from employers' perspectives [26]. The demand for employability characteristics differs between fields of employment. For example, technology, industry, and business require different characteristics [40]. Consequently, we expect women entrepreneurs to choose what is more suitable for their distinctive social objectives. Women's social entrepreneurs' leadership styles can affect their selection of employability characteristics. In addition, intrinsic work values can also affect the perceived employability [41]. Moreover, when employees perceive their jobs as protean careers, it affects their employability characteristics [42]. This could affect employees' decisions to stay with or leave social enterprises. Therefore, social entrepreneurship has a strong potential effect on employees' employability characteristics.

Employability characteristics were treated as the social output of social enterprises. Social entrepreneurship intervention has been shown to enhance the employability skills of people in need of these skills [43]. Employability skills were introduced as an output of the practical activities of social entrepreneurship [44]. They showed a significant improvement in social enterprise employees who had work-based learning [45]. These themes showed a clear gap in the literature. Creating or improving employability skills is not what social entrepreneurs do; they need to select the most suitable employability skills of their employees to achieve their social objectives.

2.3. Social impact

Different factors, such as psychological, educational, environmental, experience, leadership, and team composition, were reported to affect social entrepreneurship success [46]. Employability can improve the influence of human resource management on employee innovation [47]. Moreover, employability has a direct influence on employee innovation. The type of job crafting negatively affects employees' internal employability and thus affects their performance [48]. Women social entrepreneurs can create a unique employability culture in their enterprises to improve their employees' well-being [49]. Human resource lack of skills is an important barrier to social entrepreneurship [7]. Social entrepreneurship needs human intellect and endeavors to perform more efficiently [50].

The success of social enterprises can be observed from commercial or social perspectives [51]. The most important factor that can represent social enterprises' success is their social impact [52]. Social impact is an essential factor in investment alignment in the social enterprises [53]. Social impact is about the ability of the social enterprise to socially affect its surrounding environment and stakeholders [54]. Social impact, for example, concerns how social enterprises improve their employees' economic and working conditions. It is also about the ability of social enterprises to improve the social lives of surrounding communities. If the social aim of a social enterprise is to create jobs for those who are deprived of such opportunities, the social impact would represent the number of people who got these jobs. Social impact is about creating a positive impact on society [52].

Literature has discussed the different aspects and consequences of the social impacts of social enterprises. Research studies discussed the importance of knowing the pros and cons of social impact improvement [52]. The importance of social impact is another theme found in literature [53]. Social impact perception is another theme raised in studies [55]. This theme shows the importance of paying more attention to understanding the social impact. Others discussed the practical consequences of social impacts in special types of businesses or circumstances [56,57].

Good intention is acknowledged as a crucial factor in social impact [58]. This idea was developed to include social responsibility instead of only good intention [59]. This step is important to understand the creation process of social value, which inspired this study to take a step in the practical understanding of value creation. No previous study discussed the relationship between employability characteristics selection and social impact.

Based on the previous discussion, the second question of this study is formulated to discuss the relationship between employability characteristics and the social impact of women's social enterprises. This question is about how employees with a specific employability

characteristic can improve the social objectives and social impact of women's social enterprises. In other words, which of the selected employability characteristics by the women social enterprises have contributed the most to the social impact of the enterprise?

3. Materials and methods

This study followed an exploratory paradigm to answer the research questions. The exploratory paradigm uses the inductive approach to tackle the research problem, objectives, and questions. This approach is used when there is a new relationship or theme to be discovered [60]. However, exploratory studies don't aim at confirming previously discovered relationships, themes, or theories. For example, how women social entrepreneurs choose their employees based on their employability skills was not discussed or explored in the literature. In addition, how the employability skills of the employees can contribute to social impact was not discussed in the literature. Thus, the exploratory paradigm was selected as the only option for this study.

Conducting an exploratory study can utilize a quantitative or a qualitative design. Qualitative designs suit more research questions that deal with how and why. On the other hand, using a quantitative design is more suitable for establishing new relationships. Thus, this study followed the exploratory quantitative design.

The exploratory quantitative approach has several techniques. Some of these techniques, such as the mean and standard deviation, are very simple. Other techniques depend on visualizing the data, such as the histogram. More advanced techniques, such as cluster and discriminant analysis, are multivariate techniques that depend on visualization and classification. This study aims to discover relationships rather than classify the targeted data. Thus, multiple correspondence analysis was chosen to accomplish this task.

Multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) is an innovative technique that helps discover relationships. MCA is widely applied in different fields, such as management and economics [61]; as an exploratory technique, MCA is designed to discover and reveal potential relationships, not to test or confirm the relationship between variables. MCA is mainly used to discover the association or relationship between two or more categorical variables [62]. In a case having n variables, MCA describes the relationship between these n variables in the lower dimensional space that contains these variables instead of the default n -dimensional space [61]. Instead of using n dimensions space, MCA can measure the association between n variables in a unidimensional or a 2 dimensions space. MCA also has another advantage: the ability to visualize the relationships between n variables in the lower dimensional space. This is a useful characteristic of MCA because it helps discover associations between variables easily and effectively. MCA represents the categorical variables as points in the lower dimension space. MCA obtains the lower dimension space with a minimum level of data loss. The distance between the points in the lower dimension space determines the strength of the relationship. The shorter the distance between the points, the stronger the association between these variables. In the case of having more than one dimension space, the axis that accounted for a higher amount of variance would be the most important one. MCA uses chi-square distance to calculate the distance between the space's points.

There are several advantages of using MCA over other techniques. The MCA is an exploratory technique. It explores the relationships among variables, whereas other exploratory techniques, such as cluster analysis, attempt to classify data. MCA visualizes the data and relationships among the variables. This advantage cannot be achieved using other techniques, such as ANOVA, chi-square test, or linear regression. Other techniques, such as structural equation modeling analysis, are used to confirm well-established theories in different contexts. On the other hand, MCA tries to explore new relationships and contributes to the establishment of new theories.

Before conducting the main analysis, data reliability and credibility tests were conducted. First, the informant bias problem was tested using the interclass correlation coefficient ICC test [63]. A high correlation score on this test indicates the absence of the informant bias problem. Second, non-response bias was tested by comparing early and late responses [64]. We ran a correlation analysis between the early and late responses to assess their relationship. Again, a high correlation indicates no non-response bias problem. This study tests the first 50 responses and the last 50 responses. Third, common method bias was tested using Harman's single-factor test [65]. Harman's single-factor test should show a less than 50 % common variance that would be extracted from one common single factor. Finally, reliability was tested using the most common technique of Cronbach alpha. Cronbach alpha should show a score of more than 0.6 to secure the reliability of any construct [66].

3.1. Pilot study

A pilot study was necessary. The success of the data collection protocol depended significantly on the results of the pilot study. We had several important concerns about the data collection protocol we should follow. First, the population of this study contains employees in female-owned social enterprises. We expected most of these employees to be females. Dealing with females in a context such as Yemen is not easy. Therefore, we expected many difficulties during the data collection phase.

The pilot study was conducted before conducting the main study. It was devoted to measuring the understanding of the study's instrument, data collection protocol, and the best ways, techniques, and times to reach female-owned social enterprise employees.

We selected 20 females and 10 males employed in social enterprises, local non-governmental organizations, or charitable organizations. From their experience in social work, they told us the best time to reach them during their work is from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This time was the least intensive work time during the day. We collected the data from this group of people using four times. In the first attempt, questionnaires were distributed manually to 10 females and 5 males to be filled solely by the respondents. This approach was not successful because the response rate was only 20 %. The rest of the respondents didn't answer the questionnaire, or they responded with a significant amount of missing data. In the second attempt, hard copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the other respondents; in this attempt, a professional surveyor filled in the answers after asking the respondents the questions. Although this method resulted in a response rate of 100 %, this technique was uncomfortable for the surveyors. Surveyors said carrying many

hard copies would not be practical. The last two attempts were the same as the previous two, yet they were distributed to the opposite groups, this time using electronic devices. In the third attempt, electronic questionnaire links were distributed to the respondents, who were asked to answer the questionnaire via their computers or smartphones. This method resulted in a response rate of 0 %. The fourth and most successful attempt was conducted using the surveyors' cell phones, which they filled out after asking the respondents about their answers.

The questionnaire items were translated into Arabic by a professional English translator. The respondents didn't struggle to understand the meaning of these questions. On very few occasions, the respondents asked the surveyors to explain the meaning of the questionnaire's items. During the fourth data collection attempt, the surveyors told us that some respondents took longer to answer the questionnaire items. They didn't attribute the delay in these answers to understanding the questionnaire items. Instead, respondents needed more time to give the most appropriate answers to these items. As a result, we found no necessity to modify any of the questionnaire items.

The respondents needed, on average, 35 min to answer the questionnaire, with a range of [20–50]. This time was reasonable and expected to create no time problem when conducting the main study.

3.2. Ethical consideration

After constructing the questionnaire for this study based on literature, the Research Ethics Committee of the faculty of business at the Lebanese International University, Sana'a, Yemen approved the proposal of his study. The approval was registered under the number [LIU.Y.EC.2.01.22]. During the data collection phase, the authors and the surveyors strictly followed the American Psychological Association's ethical research principles. Before distributing the questionnaire to any women's social enterprise, consent was obtained from the owners and the employees of this enterprise. All participants were given the freedom to choose whether or not to participate. The authors and the surveyors didn't use any pressure or material temptations to encourage participation in this study. The participants were given a clear explanation of the study and its objectives. Moreover, the participants were guaranteed that this study won't harm them in any way, and their data would always be kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

3.3. Data collection and sampling techniques

The data collection process encountered several difficulties. The first difficulty was gathering information about the population of this study. There was a scarcity of official or published statistics about the population of female social entrepreneurs in Yemen. The first step was to get information from the Ministry of Social Affairs & Labor. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor in Sana'a gave us information about women social entrepreneurs in the northern region of Yemen. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor in Aden gave us information about the population in the southern region of Yemen. The total number of women's social enterprises gathered from these two official parties is 3852. In addition, we used a snowball technique by asking some of these women's enterprises about further contacts or addresses for other enterprises. This process was beneficial because it added another 429 enterprises to our sampling frame. From the 4281 enterprises, we randomly selected 500. A simple random sampling technique was used at this stage. Of the 500 selected enterprises, 106 were not found, 93 were out of business, 69 were relocated, and 58 refused to participate in this study. The final sample size of this study is 174 enterprises.

The total number of employees surveyed was 497 employees. Out of the 497 responses, 115 were excluded. These responses were excluded due to different reasons. Some chose the neutral answer, others were unsure what to answer, and others were not serious about answering the questionnaire's items. Thus, from these 174 enterprises, we collected data from 382 employees.

Although the sample size is not a critical factor for an exploratory study, this sample size is satisfactory and more than enough to explore the study's relationships [67]. The second obstacle was dealing with women in a community such as Yemen. People in Yemen don't like asking or interacting directly with women outside their family members. To solve this problem, the surveys were distributed by 17 female surveyors. This step created a more feasible solution for data collection. The surveyors were between 23 and 29 years old. All of them held bachelor's degrees. The surveyors had experience with data collection. The surveyors had participated in more than 10 data collection processes. These surveyors were previously trained in data collection processes, ethics, time management, real-time data collection, and data collection automation.

The sample of this study showed that 94 % of the respondents were females while only 6 % were males. In addition, 28 % of the respondents held a secondary school degree, whereas the other 72 % held a bachelor's degree. Of the respondents, 54 % were between 20 and 30 years old, 43 % were between 30 and 40 years old, and only 3 % were between 40 and 50 years old.

These social enterprises depend on different types of social activities, such as opening a small store to employ their family members, creating a small shop that sells essential products on flexible and extended credit plans, creating bakeries that employ housewives who have no jobs to provide their bakeries with different types of homemade bread, and buying motorcycles and selling them with reasonable installments to unemployed youths. The aim was to give these youths tools to generate income and, at the same time, generate profit that helps the social entrepreneurs to continue to create this social impact.

3.4. Measurement

3.4.1. Social impact

Measuring social impact is challenging due to the versatile women's social entrepreneurship activities. Literature proposed different measurements, such as a change in income, competencies improvement, number of new jobs, and effect on improving the

community's education [68]. For example, some women entrepreneurs have focused on social change among their family members. Other women entrepreneurs focused on helping people in need in their surrounding neighborhoods. Women entrepreneurs also focused on serving their community members regardless of their relationship with them. Thus, the social impact could be measured as the effect on family members, the effect on closed community members, or the impact on community members in general. Thus, in this study, we measured social impact by counting the number of individuals who were socially affected by women's social enterprise. This number was extracted from the official records of the women's social enterprises. This selection is in line with literature to solve the problems of measuring social impact. Literature argued that social enterprises use internal output to measure their desire for social impact [69]. Instead, this measurement depends on external outcomes. Literature also emphasizes the quantitative and qualitative nature of social impact measurements [70]. This study followed a quantitative approach by measuring social impact by the number of individuals who were socially affected by women's social enterprises.

3.4.2. Employability characteristics

There are different perspectives on measuring employability. Literature showed different approaches to measuring employability. These measurements vary from objective, subjective, and assorted items from both types [71]. The measurement of employability characteristics was adopted from the work of Abbas and Sagsan [39]. This scale divided employability characteristics into four categories: knowledge, skills, abilities, and professional attitude. They divided knowledge into two subcategories: explicit and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge was measured using 5 items, while tacit knowledge was measured using 4 items. Skills were also divided into two categories, hard and soft. Each one of these categories was measured using 5 items. The abilities category has two subcategories: intellectual, measured using 5 items, and physical, measured using 4 items. The last category of professional attitude was separated into five subcategories: reliability with 5 items, interpersonal behavior with 4 items, emotional stability with 4 items, and ethics and values with 5 items. This scale was found to suit well the employees of the social enterprises. The self-esteem construct was measured using 10 items [72], and ability and willingness to learn were measured using 7 items [73]. Please see appendix A for the full item list.

3.4.3. Control variables (supplementary variables)

Because this study focused on the employees' characteristics to measure their influence on social impact, the owners' characteristics would be the right choice for any supplementary variables. This selection is important because the social impact could be affected significantly due to factors related to the business or the owners of the business. The selected factors are social environment factors, institutional environment factors, human capital, desirability and feasibility, and social capital [74]. This set of factors was found to have impact that could distort the relationship between employability characteristics and the social impact of women's social enterprises. These factors are unrelated to the conceptual framework of this study. They were used only to confirm the robustness of the findings and control for confounding effects. Human capital is related to the experience and knowledge attained through the individual's life. The most important human capital factors are education and experience in the social entrepreneurship field [74]. The first variable was the education level. This variable is commonly used in the social sciences. This is about the level of education of female social entrepreneurs. The levels of education are illiterate, secondary school, bachelor's degree, master's degree, or doctoral degree. Education level was measured using an ordinal scale that shows different categories of education levels. The second variable was social entrepreneurs' experiences in the field of social entrepreneurship. The number of years that women social entrepreneurs have been working in this field. Social entrepreneurs' experience was measured using the number of years of social entrepreneurship. Social capital is a collection of competencies resulting from interactions between an individual and their surrounding networks. Social capital can be divided into two main parts, external and internal social capital. This study considered external social capital the most important part affecting social impact. Thus, external social capital was measured using 8 items representing the involvement of activities outside the organization and connections with people who have power [75].

All the previous scale items were measured using five levels. The scale varies from strongly disagree to agree strongly. The strongly agree and agree are combined and were described as high. The strongly disagree and disagree were combined to formulate the low level. The neutral answers were excluded from the analysis. For the constructs' measurement, the median scores were calculated. This scale was the best choice for the multiple corresponding analysis because, following this scale, all variables were treated as categorical data.

4. Results

4.1. Data quality analysis

The quality of the data was tested using different types of techniques. The main source of the informant bias in this study is the self-administered questionnaire each respondent answers. Respondents rated their characteristics, which could create an informant bias problem. This problem was solved by rating the characteristics of 58 respondents twice from two different sources. The 58 respondents filled in the questionnaires by themselves, and at the same time, we asked some of their coworkers to answer the same questionnaires and rate these respondents. The interclass correlation coefficient shows that $ICC = .703$, $p\text{-value} = .000$. The data collected doesn't suffer from the informant bias problem. The non-response bias correlation analysis showed a correlation coefficient of $r = .68$, $p\text{-value} = .021$. This indicates the no-nonresponse bias problem is not an issue in this study. Harman's single-factor test showed 38.2 % of the common variance when all items were loaded on a single factor. The data didn't show extreme outliers. The data screening also showed normal results, with a maximum score of 5 and a minimum score of 1. The data were then tested using confirmatory factors analysis for

each construct. The loading scores for all constructs showed a minimum loading of 0.78 and a maximum loading of 0.91. This shows that all items were loaded as expected on the construct. The reliability of the constructs showed satisfactory scores. Cronbach alpha showed scores ranged from 0.67 to 0.78.

4.2. Women social entrepreneurs selection of the employability characteristics analysis

The first step of the MCA is to choose the optimal number of dimensions. The number of dimensions is selected based on the contribution of the number of dimensions to the inertia. Contribution to inertia refers to how much variation is contributed to it by the dimension. The optimal level determines the optimal number of dimensions. Table 1 shows the contribution of each dimension to the inertia.

In simple words, Table 1 shows the contribution of each dimension to the variation. Dimension 1 explained 29 % of the variation. Dimension 2 added another 20 %. The best situation for the dimensions should explain 100 % of the variation; however, this is impossible. Adding more dimensions jeopardized the findings because of the curse of the dimensionality problem. Thus, we should choose the optimal number of dimensions, which in our case is two [76].

To continue the MCA analysis, we tested the quality of the representation. The quality of the representation shows very good scores for all variables on the selected two dimensions. The quality of the representation varies from a minimum value of 31 %–58 %. The quality of the representation is shown in Table 2 under the \cos^2 column, where \cos^2 is the squared cosine distance. It measures the contribution of a variable in two dimensions. In our case, we added the scores of \cos^2 to the two dimensions. There is no threshold value for \cos^2 , yet it should not be very small.

The main variable in this analysis was employee status. The status of the employee either stayed at the social enterprise or left it. As shown by Table 2 and Fig. 1, the employment variables show coordination scores of (0.73, 0.86) for the left category and (−0.25, −0.29) for the stayed category.

In this stage, we analyzed the employability characteristics of the employee status variable. We compared the coordination of each variable with the two categories of employee status. There are two categories of employee status: stayed and left. For the stayed category, the nearest categories are: interpersonal_high with coordination scores of (−0.34, −0.34), ethics_high with coordination scores of (−0.25, −0.13), physical_ability_high with coordination scores of (−0.01, −0.19), ability_to_learn_high with coordination scores of (−0.31571, −0.07896), implicit_knowledge_high with coordination scores of (−0.28554, −0.01054), reliability_high with coordination scores of (−0.04, −0.01), and soft_skills_low with coordination scores of (−0.4211, 0.45052).

For the left category, the nearest categories are interpersonal_Low with coordination scores of (−0.50, 0.51), ethics_Low with coordination scores of (0.31, 0.17), ability_to_learn_Low with coordination scores of (0.42, 0.11), reliability_Low with coordination scores of (0.05, 0.013), and soft_skills_high with coordination scores of (0.50, 0.00), implicit_knowledge_Low with coordination scores of (0.27, 0.01).

Table 2 illustrates these two aspects. The first part is about the coordination of each category. These coordinates show the location of the category on a two dimension-plane. The second part shows the contribution of the variables to the two dimensions [76].

Fig. 1 shows the location of each category on a two-dimensional plane. A short distance between any two categories indicates a strong relationship, while a long distance between any two categories indicates no relationship [76].

4.3. The effect of employability characteristics on social impact analysis

In this analysis, we chose the optimal number of dimensions. The number of dimensions is selected based on the contribution of the number of dimensions to the inertia. Contribution to inertia refers to how much variation is contributed to it by the dimension. The optimal level determines the optimal number of dimensions. Table 3 shows the contribution of each dimension to inertia.

Using only 2 dimensions can explain 47.5 % of the inertia. The quality of the representation shows very good scores for all variables on the selected two dimensions. This is because the two dimensions present variables well. The quality of the representation varies from a minimum value of 28.9 %–59 %. The quality of the representation is shown in Table 2 under the \cos^2 column, where \cos^2 is the squared cosine distance. It measures the contribution of a variable in two dimensions. In our case, we added the scores of \cos^2 to the two dimensions. There is no threshold value for \cos^2 , yet it should not be very small.

In this analysis, we focused on the social impact variable. The social impact variable was represented by two categories: high social impact and low social impact. As shown in Table 4 and Fig. 2, the social impact variable shows coordination scores of (−0.65, 0.07) for the high social impact category and (0.70, −0.08) for the low social impact category.

In this step, we analyzed the nearest variable to the social impact according to their MCA coordinates. This analysis was carried out for two social impact categories: high and low social impact. For the high social impact category, the nearest categories are interpersonal_high with coordination scores of (−0.61, −0.15) and Implicit_Knowledge_High with coordination scores of (−0.43, 0.17). For

Table 1

Dimensions contribution to the inertia of the first model (the relationship between social entrepreneurs' selection and employability characteristics).

	Dim1	Dim2	Dim3	Dim4	Dim5
Contribution	29.05 %	20.41 %	10.13 %	7.02 %	4.1 %

Using only 2 dimensions can explain 49.46 % of the inertia. The contributions of the two dimensions were added. This satisfactory result indicates we don't need more than two dimensions to perform the MCA procedure.

Table 2
Categories' coordinates of the first model (the relationship between social entrepreneurs selection and employability characteristics).

	Coordinates		quality on the factors map (CO2)	
	Dim 1	Dim 2	Dim 1	Dim 2
Left	0.73	0.86	0.28	0.22
Stayed	-0.25	-0.29	0.28	0.23
Explicit_knowledge_High	-0.22	0.58	0.16	0.28
Explicit_knowledge_Low	0.21	-0.54	0.16	0.28
Implicit_Knowledge_High	-0.29	-0.01	0.33	0.08
Implicit_Knowledge_Low	0.27	0.01	0.33	0.08
hard_skills_High	0.12	-0.41	0.55	0.02
hard_skills_Low	-0.13	0.45	0.55	0.02
soft_skills_High	0.49	0.00	0.21	0.11
soft_skills_Low	-0.42	0.00	0.21	0.11
physical_ability_High	-0.02	-0.19	0.32	0.11
physical_ability_Low	0.02	0.26	0.32	0.11
intellectual_ability_High	0.25	-0.43	0.26	0.09
intellectual_ability_Low	-0.23	0.38	0.26	0.09
reliability_High	-0.05	-0.01	0.14	0.21
reliability_Low	0.05	0.01	0.14	0.21
interpersonal_High	-0.34	-0.34	0.25	0.18
interpersonal_Low	0.51	0.51	0.25	0.18
emotional_stability_High	-0.22	0.21	0.25	0.18
emotional_stability_Low	0.24	-0.23	0.25	0.18
ethics_High	-0.25	-0.14	0.37	0.22
ethics_Low	0.31	0.17	0.37	0.22
values_High	0.52	-0.12	0.17	0.20
values_Low	-0.56	0.13	0.17	0.20
self.esteem_High	-0.28	0.27	0.19	0.18
self.esteem_Low	0.32	-0.31	0.19	0.18
ability_to_learn_High	-0.32	-0.08	0.13	0.35
ability_to_learn_Low	0.42	0.11	0.13	0.35

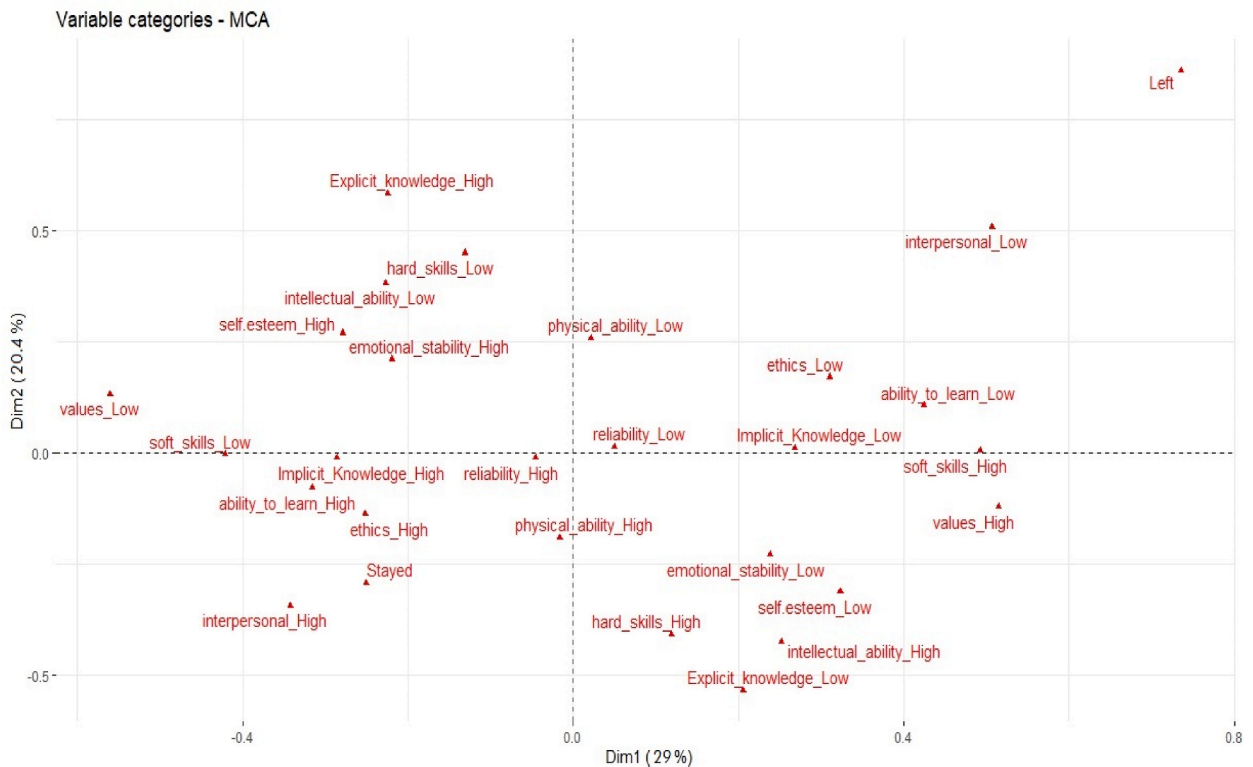


Fig. 1. Visual representation of the Multiple correspondence analysis of the relationship between social entrepreneurs' selection and employability characteristics.

Table 3

Dimensions contribution to the inertia of the second model (the relationship between employability characteristics and social impact).

	Dim1	Dim2	Dim3	Dim4	Dim5
Contribution	28.0 %	19.5 %	14.6 %	8.9 %	6.5 %

the low social impact category, the nearest categories are interpersonal_Low with coordination scores of $-0.50, 0.51$) and Implicit_Knowledge_Low with coordination scores of $(0.40, -0.16)$.

5. Discussion

Literature on women's social entrepreneurship suffered from a significant gap. Literature didn't provide enough investigation of the human resource management practices in women's social enterprises. This gap limited our understanding of these enterprises' working and impact mechanisms. This study contributes to the literature on women's social entrepreneurship by explaining human resource management aspects in small women's social enterprises. Furthermore, this study explained how women social entrepreneurs select their employees based on their employability characteristics. In addition, this study explored the relationship between the selected employability characteristics and the social impact of women's social enterprises.

This study showed that women social entrepreneurs preferred employees with high interpersonal skills, employees with a high level of ethics, high ability to learn, high level of physical ability, employees with soft skills, high-reliability employees, and a high level of implicit knowledge.

The most relevant employability characteristic is interpersonal skills. This shows the importance of human capital for social activities. Women social entrepreneurs prefer employees with solid capabilities in listening and interacting with others. They prefer employees who can deal with and work with others in efficient ways. This also raises the importance of teamwork for them and their social objectives. Politeness and humbleness are critical factors for employee selection.

This study also showed women social entrepreneurs look for high ethics employees. This selection could be attributed to the general culture in Yemen. Women social entrepreneurs expect their employees to be self-controlled. Women social entrepreneurs want their employees to work for the organization and to achieve social objectives. They don't want to impose restrictions on their employees and want them to work according to their ethical standards. One of the major problems facing social enterprises is taking the job's workload seriously. These characteristics help women social enterprises ensure their employees share the workload fairly and equally.

Most of the businesses in the field of social entrepreneurship are labor-intensive. Thus, women social entrepreneurs look for employees with high physical ability. The findings of this study show the importance of physical abilities from the perspective of female social entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurs look for employees with a body and stamina to help them do their job. From their perspective, these characteristics can help employees be more efficient and do more than one task at a time.

Women social entrepreneurs prefer employees with high ability and eagerness to learn. These employees can learn from their work experience. They also have a passion for learning new developments in their work field. They always look for how to improve their working skills and knowledge. They seize any opportunities for training to improve their work abilities.

Implicit knowledge is another preferred employability characteristic by women social entrepreneurs. Tacit knowledge is also related to the ability to learn. Employees with a tacit knowledge characteristic have self-learning motivation skills. They think differently and develop new and innovative ways to solve work problems. This gives them a clear advantage over other types of employees.

Linking employees' employability characteristics to the social impact of women's social enterprises shows important findings. These findings were explored when we controlled for other important potential confounders. For example, we controlled the owners' experience, the owners' education level, and the owners' ability to learn. The findings showed the most important employability

Table 4

Categories' coordinates of the second model (the relationship between employability characteristics and social impact).

	Coordinates		quality on the factors map (CO2)	
	Dim 1	Dim 2	Dim 1	Dim 2
Social_Impact_High	-0.66	0.08	0.46	0.01
Social_Impact_Low	0.70	-0.08	0.46	0.01
Implicit_Knowledge_High	-0.43	0.17	0.17	0.13
Implicit_Knowledge_Low	0.40	-0.16	0.17	0.13
hard_skills_High	0.07	0.18	0.14	0.14
hard_skills_Low	-0.07	-0.20	0.14	0.14
physical_ability_High	0.04	-0.31	0.16	0.13
physical_ability_Low	-0.06	0.41	0.16	0.13
interpersonal_High	-0.61	-0.16	0.55	0.04
interpersonal_Low	0.90	0.24	0.55	0.04
ethics_High	-0.20	0.47	0.05	0.28
ethics_Low	0.25	-0.59	0.05	0.28
ability_to_learn_High	-0.12	-0.65	0.02	0.57
ability_to_learn_Low	0.16	0.88	0.02	0.57

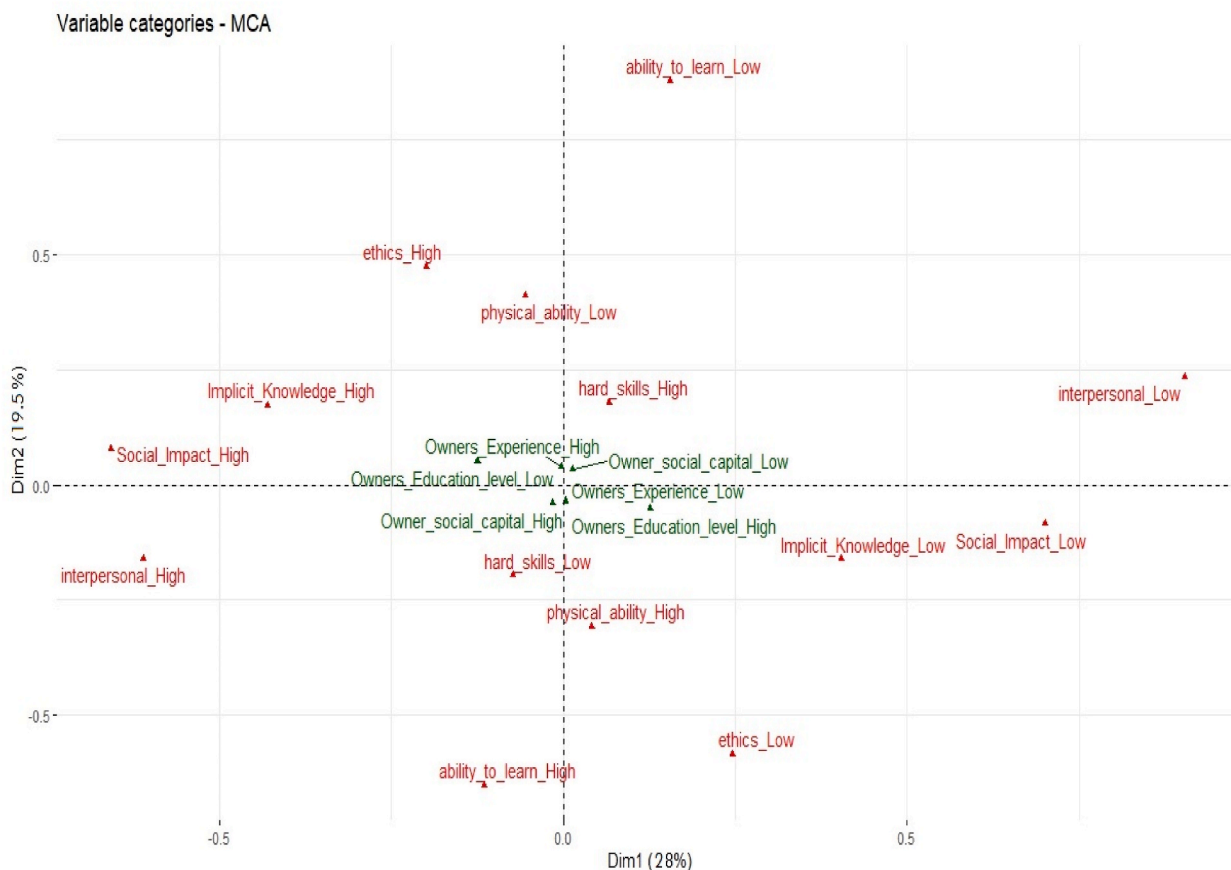


Fig. 2. Visual representation of the Multiple correspondence analysis of the relationship between employability characteristics and social impact.

characteristic is the interpersonal skills of the employees. This emphasized the social capital of the employees and its contribution to the social impact. The ability of employees to interact with other people, employees, customers, and beneficiaries was found to be the pillar of the social impact.

The social impact analysis showed interpersonal skills and implicit knowledge characteristics are the most important employability skills. This showed that women social entrepreneurs are correct when training and keeping employees with high interpersonal employability skills. Interpersonal skills showed a gain in the importance of social capital in social activities. Social capital is a vital pillar of social entrepreneurship.

Social impact also showed the importance of the tacit knowledge of the employees. It is the most influential factor in women's social enterprises' social impact. Employees with tacit knowledge can create innovative ways to improve social impact.

6. Conclusion

This study explored the most preferred employability characteristic chosen by women social entrepreneurs. It also explored the impact of these employability characteristics on the social impact of women's social enterprises. The study uses the exploratory quantitative methods of multiple correspondence analysis to explore these findings. The study applied the multiple correspondence analysis on data collected from small women's social enterprises in Yemen. We found that interpersonal skills, ethics, ability to learn, physical abilities, soft skills, reliable employees, and implicit knowledge are the preferable employability characteristics chosen by women social entrepreneurs. In addition, we found that, among these employability skills, interpersonal skills and tacit knowledge are the important characteristics that contribute to the social impact of women's social enterprises.

6.1. Theoretical implications

This study advances the literature by exploring the most attractive employability characteristics of women social entrepreneurs and how these characteristics are linked to social impact. Literature has provided evidence of the importance of employees in social work [32]. This study advances this theme by studying how to enhance social work. Literature has not paid attention to employees' employability characteristics. It focused on the type of employees, such as whether they are treated as local or not [33]. This study

extends this overview by categorizing employees according to their employability characteristics. In addition, previous literature has focused on managers' competencies instead of employees' [35]. This study shifted the focus from managers to employees. This study also confirmed the literature by showing the importance of hiring special types of employees to achieve higher social impact [37]. Furthermore, the literature emphasizes the ethical characteristics of employees in social enterprises [38]. This study advances this trend in the literature by exploring the most desirable employability characteristics of women social entrepreneurs.

This study also explores and establishes a new relationship between employability characteristics and social impact. Literature tackled employability characteristics and output social entrepreneurship activities and learning [43–45]. This study advances this thinking by showing the role of employability characteristics in improving the social impact of women's social enterprises. Previous themes focused on the consequences of social impact [52], the importance of social impact [53], social impact perception [55], and the practical consequences of social impact [56,57]. In contrast to these themes, this study discusses tools for enhancing social impact. This study also shifts the discussion in literature from intention [58] to practical actions that can improve social impact.

6.2. Managerial/practical implications

This study has explored the simple human resource practices in women's social enterprises. Women social entrepreneurs should focus more on the social capital of their employees. They should look for employees with skills of interaction with others. Women social entrepreneurs should look for employees who can smoothly and easily create social interactions with other employees, customers, beneficiaries, suppliers, and any other business-related network members. Spotting an employee with interactive skills is not difficult, but an employee with a high level of tacit knowledge is not easy. One indicator to spot tacit knowledge is the ability of the employee to create social interaction. In addition, women social entrepreneurs should choose employees who systematically create a knowledge-sharing environment with others. This is essential for employees with high tacit knowledge skills. Finally, women social entrepreneurs should look for employees who can understand the other employees' narratives and stories. This would indicate that this employee has tacit knowledge that others can't copy.

The findings of this study can be extended to other contexts. One of these contexts is that of medium and large social enterprises. In large social enterprises, women as CEO are not responsible for the recruitment process. The human resources department can use the findings of this study to recruit the most suitable employees for their social work. Social capital can be added to the recruitment criteria to boost the social impact of medium and large social enterprises. Although this study was conducted in a resource-constrained country, such as Yemen, it could be applied to other resource-abundant contexts. Social work and employability characteristics are similar in these different contexts.

6.3. Limitations

This study is an exploratory study with limitations. First, this study didn't investigate the interaction between women social entrepreneurs and their employees. Second, it investigates only one type of interaction: keeping and firing employees. Third, this study investigated what women entrepreneurs can offer their employees to create more attractive employability characteristics.

6.4. Future research

This study advances the knowledge of social enterprises, human resource practices, employability characteristics, and social impact, practically and theoretically. Practically, it explored human resource practices in women's social enterprises and how they choose and maintain their employees according to their employability characteristics. Future research could explore the orientation of women entrepreneurs, whether they offer promotion-focused jobs crafting or prevention-focused job crafting and the effect on their employee's employability characteristics. Another direction that could be taken is investigating the ability of social enterprise employees to learn new employability competencies because of their work-related learning. Future research can also investigate women entrepreneurs' role in this learning process. This study also shows evidence of the impact of employability characteristics and social impact. Some of these characteristics relate to employees' social capital. Social capital played a main role in this study; thus, it would be an important avenue for future research. The dynamic relationship between social capital and social impact could be studied, such as the interaction between the owner's and employees' social capital and its impact on social impact.

Theoretically, this advanced literature explores the relationship between employees' employability characteristics and the selection process of women's social enterprises. It has shifted attention from management to employees. This study extends the literature by exploring the most desirable employability characteristics of women social entrepreneurs. This study also establishes a new relationship between employability characteristics and social impact. However, further research is required to advance this knowledge. Exploring the mechanisms of employee selection requires further investigation. The question of why women social entrepreneurs choose these employability characteristics is another important issue that needs to be explored. The relationship between employability characteristics and social impact should be studied in the long run. The stability of social enterprises' employees over the long run requires further investigation. This study is exploratory in nature and opens several opportunities for future research.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Ali Al-Tahitah: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Validation, Supervision, Software, Methodology, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Mohammed Ali Al-Awlaqi:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft,

Visualization, Validation, Software, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Nasser Habtoor:** Writing – review & editing, Visualization, Software, Project administration, Investigation, Data curation. **Saib Sallam Thabet:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Software, Resources, Methodology, Data curation. **Mohammed Abdulrab:** Writing – review & editing, Resources, Project administration, Investigation, Formal analysis. **Ishaq Ibrahim:** Writing – review & editing, Validation, Resources, Investigation.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships which may be considered as potential competing interests: We would like to acknowledge the support provided by the Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM) in setting up the computational laboratory used for this research. USIM contributed approximately (RM7000).

Appendix A

Questionnaire's items.

Employability characteristics		
Explicit knowledge	5	Possess adequate knowledge to efficiently perform the work Has know-how to solve problems related to assigned tasks Shares knowledge with others in an easy and understandable way Supports his arguments and work with logic
Tacit knowledge	4	Has the ability to apply theoretical knowledge to real life Motivated enough to learn new things Thinks in the innovative and productive way Has up-to-date knowledge of issues related to his field Analyzes the situation from different perspectives
Skill		
Hard skills	5	Has satisfactory knowledge of things required to perform the job Has adequate command of technology usage Manages the tasks in a well-organized way Analyzes the things in a productive way Manages the tasks within time-frame
Soft skills	5	Has the ability to make effective decisions Demonstrates effective communication skills Possesses substantial leadership skills Demonstrates strong team-player characteristics Keeps good relations with all staff members
Abilities intellectual	5	Memorizes the things for future use Thinks in innovative and creative ways Makes effective and ethical decisions by considering the situation Tackles the problems in a professional way Produces high standard results
Physical	4	Has the strength to manage the things under pressure Can produce quality work with limited resources utilization Has the stamina to work for extra hours to fulfil the tasks Shows coordination between different performed tasks
Professional attitude		
Reliability	5	Shows interest in taking the responsibility of the job Use office hours and resources productively Performs high-quality work without supervision Completes the tasks at a given time Shows "can do" attitude for tasks
Interpersonal behavior	4	Shows interest in listening to others' ideas and suggestions Works with people in an efficient way Shares his experience with team members Expresses his opinion in a polite and humble way
Emotional stability	4	Deals with people with patience and persuasion Responds to conflict situation in a calm and polite manner Takes the change as an opportunity to improve Reacts amicably to high workload situation
Ethics and values	5	Works by considering the best interest of the organization Performs the tasks by considering the ethical values Openly admit the mistakes made by him/her Shares workload of and with others Keeps the organizational information confidential
Self-esteem	10	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself

(continued on next page)

(continued)

Employability characteristics	
	At times I thin I am no good at all (–)
	I feel that I have a number of good qualities
	I am able to do things as well as most other people
	I feel I do not have much to be proud of (–)
	I certainly feel useless at times (–)
	I feel that I'm a person of worth, or at least on a equal plane with others
	I wish I could have more respect for myself (–)
	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure (–)
	I take a positive attitude toward myself.
Ability and willingness to learn	7
	I follow up on goals, tasks and assignments to ensure successful completion
	I monitor my impact against deadlines and milestones
	I make sure that I keep myself up to date on technical knowledge and new developments in my field
	I am always on the lookout for ways to improve my knowledge and skills, and develop myself as a person
	I know how to ask the right questions to get needed information and to properly size up a situation
	I accept and tackle demanding goals with enthusiasm
	I make use of developmental or training opportunities to enhance my competencies

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