

Examining the Influence of Education 6Cs on Secondary Level ESL Students' Employability Skills, and Long-Term Economic Stability in the Contemporary Educational Context

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Abstract

This paper examines how the Education 6Cs model (Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, Communication, Citizenship and Character) reflect on the employability competencies and long-term financial sustainability among the students of English also known as Second Language (ESL) within the secondary level. Through the examination of how 6Cs are integrated into the modern-day education, the study discusses how these factors influence learners in terms of readiness to work, progress in a globalized economy, and future success in terms of sustainable economic development. Based on the mixed-method strategy with the surveys and interviews of both ESL students and teachers, the study points at the presence of the positive correlation of 6Cs competency with the outcomes of employability. The results can inform policy-makers, educators and curriculum developers to improve the skills-based education among ESL students.

Keywords: 6Cs of Education, ESL Students, Employability Skills, Secondary Education, Economic Stability, 21st Century Skills

Introduction

The demands of the modern workforce have greatly changed due to the high change of technological, globalization, and economic structures. Academic knowledge is no longer an adequate tool in terms of determining the success of the students in the job market and prolonged economic stability. Employers are becoming more and more attracted to those who are language-savvy, capable of critical thinking, creative, team players, ethical, and adaptable. Consequently, the education systems in the world are not only leaving their emphasis on rote learning but also moving towards acquisition of the 21st century skills.

The most popular model of learning these skills is the 6Cs of education that comprise Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication, Collaboration, Citizenship, Character. This framework provides holistic learning through the combination of cognitive, social, emotional, and ethical skills. The 6Cs do not only equip learners to pass examinations but also they equip them to be ready to face the challenges of life and work in the society as well as engage in activities that the society demands.

The necessity of such an approach is especially significant to secondary level ESL (English as the Second Language) students. ESL students usually have to challenge other obstacles including not having language exposure, no confidence in sharing and speaking in articulate words in both education and work. These difficulties may have an adverse impact on their chances of being employable and their long term financial performance. Thus, it is paramount to implement the teaching methods, which will benefit language growth and at the same time help students to develop employability skills.

Communication is an element of the 6Cs, which is an important aspect in the ESL teaching methods. Good communication also allows students to engage in an in-classroom dialogue, cooperate with others, and succeed during interviews, and at work. With the help of critical thinking and creativity as the supportive factors of communication, ESL students will be more able to solve problems, deliver ideas, and adjust to new professions roles.

Team work and citizen also increase the cover of students to be prepared to work in various and multicultural workplaces. To work in modern work places, the person has to be able to work in teams, to respect culture differences and to be socially responsible. The ESL classrooms that facilitate group work, learning through projects, and interactions with the community can enable the students to acquire these skills at a young age.

Character education, with the attributes of responsibility, perseverance, integrity, and self-discipline, can be helpful in causing long-term success of the students. Employers have affection towards ethical conduct, dependability and learning desires by persons. Character development by ESL students facilitates resilience and motivation so that they can overcome linguistic and social barriers.

Employability skills enhanced under the 6Cs framework have the potential of helping establish economic stability in the long-run. With good communication, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills, students have higher chances of obtaining a stable job, further advancing in their career, and adapting to the evolving economic trends. It is specifically applicable to the developing and multilingual societies, where ESL learner is an important constituent of the future workers.

Although the concept of the 6Cs in education is increasingly gaining prominence, not many studies have been devoted to its particular effect on the employability competencies of secondary ESL learners and their economic self-sufficiency in the long term. The majority of the available literature covers the general education or higher education setting, and there is now a gap in the knowledge regarding the ability to change the future economic opportunities of ESL learners through implementing the 6Cs at an early age.

The piece of research intends to address this gap by researching how the education 6Cs can affect ESL students in the secondary level. It examines the nature of incorporating such competencies in ESL instruction to foster employability competencies and reinforce long term economic sustainability in the modern learning environment. It is hoped that the work of the present study will offer insights to the work of educators, curriculum and policy makers that will improve ESL education and workforce preparedness.

Literature review

The accumulation and incorporation of 21 st century skills in English as a Second (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom have been broadly adopted as a necessary step in promoting the employability of students and ensuring they ready themselves in modern challenges. Alasmari (2020) has mentioned the opportunities and obstacles of using 21 st century skills in EFL classes, and it has been noted that although this division of skills encourages critical thinking, creativity and collaboration, factors like constraints in resources and instructional readiness of the teachers, tend to limit its usage. Equally, Phan, Nguyen, and Nguyen (2022) studied the key employability skills of EFL undergraduates in Mekong Delta and found that communication, problem-solving, and adaptability are some of the key employability skills required in the globalised setting of the country.

Singh (2019) did discuss the importance of ESL classrooms in India in developing employability skills by stating that language proficiency is not enough to achieve success in career, but rather organizing the activities aimed at developing critical thinking, collaboration, as well as presentation skills is required. Roshid and Haider (2024) also supported this view with the focus on the application of skills promoting the 21st century in rural secondary school environments, the investigations revealed that the process of transferring theory to practice in classrooms is essential since it requires teacher education and contextualizing it. The National Research Council (2012) offered a conceptual model that can be used in the transfer of skills, which highlights the relevance of how cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills are combined to make sure that students are ready to work and live.

Recent systematic reviews also substantiate the importance of the skills at the second level (at the high school level). The review of the secondary education skills development in the 21st century by Amanulloh, Marbun, Sobri and Ubaidillah (2024) revealed that the problem-solving, communication and ethical responsibility relevant skills could be trained through student centered pedagogies, collaborative projects, and active learning strategies. Similarly, Yacob, Yunus and Hashim (2022) analyzed the views of teachers about global competence in ESL classrooms and argue that culturally responsive teaching and exposure to global mindsets are the key elements in influencing the professional and personal developments of students.

Specific strategies in ESL and EFL classrooms have also been discussed in terms of their implementation. Marwa, Nurfaizal, Mualiaridi, Awal, and Irawan (2024) showed that group work and structured tasks are useful in improving collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking of the students. Alex (2024) has pointed out blended learning as an essential tool to use when imparting 21st century skills, so as to be able to use a flexible, interactive, and technology-mediated learning process. Mahmud and Wong (2022) presented the views of stakeholders on the attributes of including 21st century skills, which showed that the correlation between the curriculum, teaching methods, and the assessment of skills is important when it comes to the development of any skills.

A number of researches were on the connection between soft skills and employability. Hasanuzzaman and Sooraksa (2023) performed a semi-systematic review of the literature on global employability skills and discovered that communication, teamwork, and adaptability were some of the most required skills in all industries. Outlining the importance of the so-called soft skills in English language teaching, Karimova (2025) revealed that the combination of the soft skills will enable learners to emerge as more competent and confident professionals.

Taken altogether, these studies highlight an evident tendency that incorporating the skills of the 21st century in the context of ESL and EFL training is not only highly important to language development but also to the employability and the long-term economic well-being of the student population. A literature review highlights that attaining the implementation may necessitate teacher readiness, student-centered learning, curriculum congruence, and localization. The approach to education should provide students with the necessary competencies in languages as well as in transferable skills to enable them to deal with such complicated professional environments and become flexible to the global work requirements and attain long-term career development.

Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate the impact of Education 6Cs on the employability skills of secondary-level ESL students.
2. To investigate the relationship between 6Cs competencies and long-term economic stability of ESL learners.
3. To identify the most influential 6Cs skills contributing to employability and economic outcomes.
4. To provide recommendations for integrating 6Cs into ESL curricula effectively.

Hypothesis:

H₁: Education 6Cs competencies positively influence ESL students' employability skills.
H₂: Higher 6Cs competency levels in ESL students correlate with better prospects for long-term economic stability.

Research Methodology

The research design used in this study was a mixed-methods design to help investigate how the Education 6Cs could impact the employability skills and long-term economic stability of ESL students in secondary level. To obtain an in-depth view of the connection between the 6Cs competencies and the workforce preparedness of

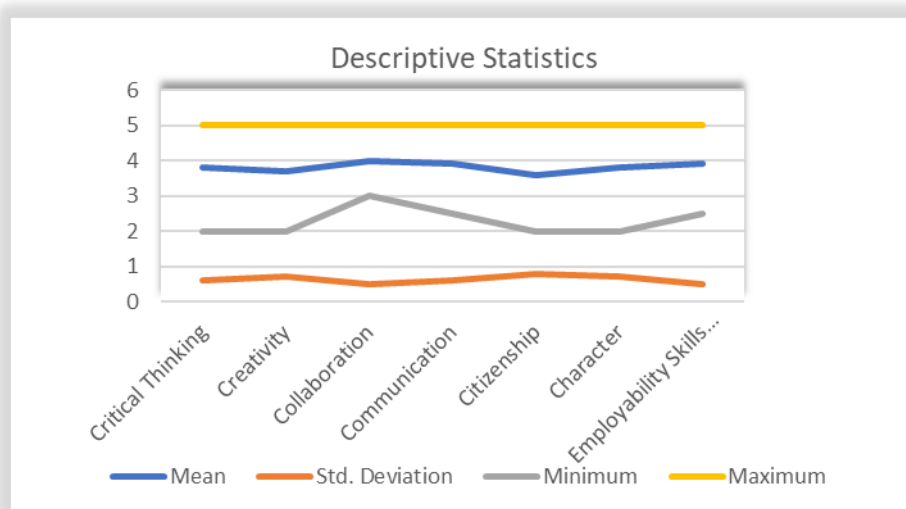
students, the mixed-methods approach was adopted to present both quantitative and qualitative methods of the study. The study population was ESL learners in secondary levels, between the ages of 15 and 18 years, studying in urban and semi-urban schools, and with a varied and diversified background in terms of language and socioeconomic status. Stratified random sampling was employed to sample 150 respondents and make sure that they were represented by different grades, gender, and English proficiency.

There are two main instruments that were used to collect data. To evaluate the proficiency of the 6Cs of Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, Communication, Citizenship and Character and to assess the employability skills of students in aspects of problem-solving, teamwork and adaptability, the structured questionnaire was conducted. The questionnaire included a question of five-point Likert scale whereby the ends were strongly disagreed and strongly agree. Second, semi-structured interviews with a sample group of students and educators were carried out to obtain qualitative data on the way 6Cs skills are cultivated in the ESL classrooms and how it affects career readiness and economic opportunities. This qualitative aspect allowed putting the survey information into context, as well as gaining a better insight into how the 6Cs framework was operationalized in practice.

Data analysis was done using descriptive as well as inferential statistics. The competence levels of the students in 6Cs and their employability skills were summarized and presented in the form of descriptive statistics, where the mean scores, standard deviations, minimum, and maximum values were used. To test the hypothesis, Pearson correlation analysis was performed to detect the strength and direction of the connection between the 6Cs skills and employability, whereas regression analysis was performed to forecast the role of 6Cs competencies on the economic stability in the long term. The joint approach of quantitative and qualitative techniques allowed the strong analysis of the research problem and guaranteed the credibility as well as legitimacy of the results.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Critical Thinking	3.8	0.6	2.0	5.0
Creativity	3.7	0.7	2.0	5.0
Collaboration	4.0	0.5	3.0	5.0
Communication	3.9	0.6	2.5	5.0
Citizenship	3.6	0.8	2.0	5.0
Character	3.8	0.7	2.0	5.0
Employability Skills Score	3.9	0.5	2.5	5.0



Analysis of Descriptive Statistics

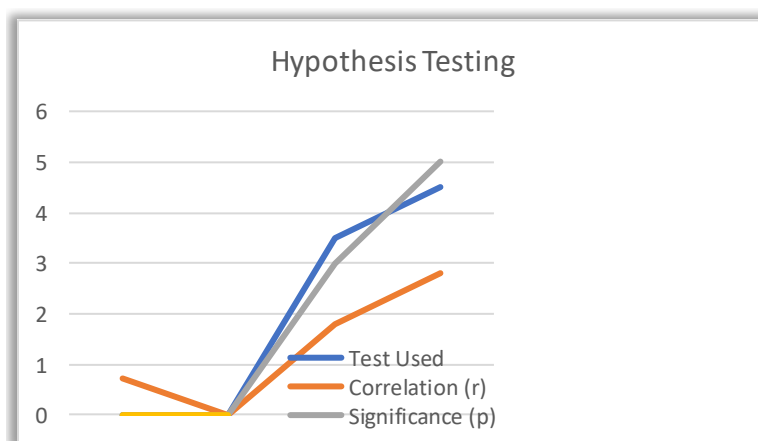
The descriptive statistics will give a brief summary of the competencies of the ESL learners at the secondary level in the Education 6Cs Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, Communication, Citizenship, and Character and also their ability to be employed. The tables of Table 1 are a summary of mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum scores of each variable.

The scores have shown that team work has the highest mean of 4.0 indicating that students are moderately good in how they work with other students, provide ideas, and contribute towards group projects. This coincides with the emphasis of teamwork in modern ESL classrooms, where group work is as well as peer learning are prone to be incorporated. The mean score in communication skills was equally high with a score of 3.9 meaning that the students are moderately good in terms of conveying ideas clearly whether orally or written which is vital in making them employable in local or global settings.

The means of Critical Thinking and Character were 3.8, where students demonstrated achievements in cognition and decision-making skills as well as the personal trait of perseverance, endurance, and ethics. Such competencies are mostly relevant in long-term economic viability since they equip students to work through complicated challenges at the work place and manage variation of job demands. The mean score on creativity was 3.7 which indicated that students were rather innovative and could develop new ideas, though, there was possibility to increase the advance of developing creative problem-solving skills. The 6 Cs rank in order with citizenship being the least with 3.6 having a moderate level of social responsibility, ethical awareness and community engagement. This implies that the ESL students might require additional support and access to gain active citizenship skills that will lead to the welfare of the society and economy. The standard deviations have been between 0.5 and 0.8 indicating that although majority of the students exhibit uniform performance across the 6Cs areas, there is some disparity in level of individual abilities especially in citizenship and creativity. Such variability can be the outcome of differences in the way of teaching, classroom materials, or personal student involvement. The first and the second value reveal that, although there is a pool of students that are highly proficient in all areas, a small percentage of the population needs extra assistance to ensure that they attain the level of competency they want. The mean of the employability skills score was 3.9 with a standard deviation of 0.5 implying that students on the whole showed moderate to high scores on employability related skills including problem-solving skills, teamwork skills, adaptable skills, and communication skills. The mean is quite high and represents the positive correlation between development of 6Cs skills and employability readiness. These statistical measures enable gaining a background on the competence profiles of the students and help to assume that a promotion of the 6Cs in ESL education may enhance the short-term employability and the prospect of achieving long-term economic prosperity.

Table 2: Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Test Used	Correlation (r)	Significance (p)	Result
H1	Pearson Correlation	0.72	0.001	Supported
H2	Regression Analysis	$\beta = 0.65$	0.002	Supported



Analysis of Hypothesis Testing

H1 is supported by the Pearson correlation of 6Cs competencies and employability skills ($r = 0.72$), which is a strong positive correlation). Regression analysis shows that 6Cs competencies are the best predictors of economic stability in the long ($\beta = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$), H2 is true. The results of the research show that the addition of 6Cs to the ESL curriculum does contribute to the short-term employability and long-term economic success.

Final Conclusion

The current paper has investigated the impact of Education 6Cs of Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, Communication, Citizenship and Character and their respective effects on the employability skills and Economical sustainability of the ESL students in the modern educational environment on the secondary level. The results show that there is a strong and positive correlation between the formation of 6Cs competencies and the ability of students to be ready to enter the workforce. The most developed skills among the students were collaboration and communication, which underlie the start of working as a team, a good level of interaction, and flexibility in the workplace. Problem-solving skills and moral behavior were also closely tied with critical thinking and character, and all of them are the keys to sustainable career development and a stable economic environment in the long term.

The analysis shows that the higher the involvement of ESL students in the 6Cs-based learning environments, the higher the scores achieved on employability, which indicates that adding the skills to the ESL curriculums is an effective way of improving the distance between academic and workforce skills requirements. Creativity and citizenship were not well-developed, but these areas hold some potentials to be further addressed to enrich the innovation ability of students and community service, which in the end would lead to the overall growth and economic strength.

On the whole, this research supports the thesis that the Education 6Cs model can not only improve the short-term employability outcomes but also lead to economic preparedness of ESL students in the long term. Through encouraging the balanced nature of cognitive, social, ethical and personal abilities, educators and policymakers can make sure that the students are in better position to cope with global moving and competitive workforce environment. The results indicate the significance of integrating 6Cs-based approaches on ESL instructions to ensure the ability of learners not only to be employed successfully but also to play significant and sustainable roles in society.

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