



JAGSoM
JAGDISH SHETH SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT



Manager 2030

The Skill Shift Report

JAGSoM – NHRDN Study on NextGen Competencies for 2030

NHRDN - JAGSoM Study on Skill Disruption for India: A Managerial Perspective

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The JAGSoM–NHRDN (National Human Resource Development Network) study on “Skill Disruption for India: A Managerial Perspective” provides a comprehensive analysis of the future skills landscape in India, examining how rapid changes in technology, demographics, globalization, and workplace dynamics are reshaping the competencies required for success. Conducted in the backdrop of a world increasingly defined by VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous) conditions, the study explores how skills will evolve between 2025 and 2030 and identifies where the most significant disruptions are likely to occur. The World Economic Forum’s Future of Jobs Report 2025 underscored the rising importance of agility, analytical thinking, and AI-driven capabilities worldwide, and it paved the way for this study by contextualizing those global insights within India’s unique economic, demographic, and organizational realities. Its findings have critical implications for educational institutions, businesses, and policymakers seeking to prepare India’s workforce for the jobs of the future.

This report builds on the 2019 JAGSoM–NHRDN study on Industry 4.0 skill requirements, which emphasized the importance of people-oriented competencies such as creativity, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving. The present research takes that foundation further by empirically identifying the scale and direction of disruption caused, especially by the breath taking advances in the world of data science and generative AI, across 15 competencies drawn from the World Economic Forum’s Report of 2025.

The study employs a three-pronged design:

1. Quantitative survey – More than 400 respondents from multiple industries and job levels evaluated the current relevance & importance of 15 skills for 2025 and projected their significance for 2030.
2. Focus group discussions –CXO Roundtables in Bengaluru, Delhi, and Mumbai provided deeper insights, validating or challenging survey findings and highlighting sector-specific nuances.
3. AI-based prediction modelling – Used to project how industries differ in their readiness for future skills, offering a forward-looking picture of sectoral priorities.

Together, these methods ensure a robust and multidimensional understanding of the future of skills in our workplace.

Key Findings

1. Human and Adaptive Skills Remain Essential: At present, employers place strong emphasis on adaptive and interpersonal abilities such as listening, agility, and service orientation. These skills facilitate collaboration, responsiveness, and customer-centricity in increasingly complex environments. Despite advances in automation, these human-centric competencies continue to form the bedrock of employability.
2. Technology-Driven Skills Gain Ground: By 2030, however, technology-related competencies—particularly artificial intelligence, big data, and analytical thinking—are expected to rise

steeply in importance. These will need to be combined with creativity, resilience, and critical thinking to create a balanced skill set. Rather than replacing human skills, technology will amplify their value by requiring employees to blend digital fluency with emotional intelligence and innovative problem-solving.

3. **Career Stage Differences:** Skill requirements will evolve differently across career levels. Freshers will experience the steepest increase in expectations, with the need to balance technical proficiency in AI and data with adaptability and interpersonal influence. Middle managers will need to integrate analytical and technical expertise with leadership, resilience, and strategic judgment. Senior leaders, already relying on a wide range of capabilities, will increasingly need to incorporate digital awareness, innovation, and organizational resilience into their decision-making.
4. **Insights from Industry Leaders:** CXO Roundtable discussions reinforced these findings, consistently highlighting:
 - Emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and leadership as vital for collaboration and influence
 - Analytical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving as indispensable.
 - .
 - Digital and AI fluency as mandatory across roles and industries.
 - Customer-centric orientation and innovation as key to organizational competitiveness.
 - Continuous learning and adaptability as central to professional resilience and lifelong employability.
5. **Sectoral Variations in Future Skills:** The AI-based prediction model highlights that, while digital, cognitive, and adaptive skills will gain importance across all industries, sectoral contexts shape specific priorities. For example, infrastructure and energy emphasize creativity and efficiency to meet sustainability and innovation demands, while healthcare highlights resilience and innovation to address complex patient-care challenges. Retail and e-commerce focus more on motivation and adaptability to manage consumer-driven pressures and rapid market shifts. Overall, the findings show that AI, analytical thinking, and adaptability will be universally critical, but each sector will balance these with human-centric skills appropriate to its unique challenges.

Implications for Education and Business

For educational institutions, especially business schools, the findings highlight the need to move away from static, content-heavy curricula toward dynamic approaches that integrate AI applications, problem-solving, and continuous learning. Pedagogy must emphasize interdisciplinarity, creativity, adaptability, and emotional intelligence, ensuring graduates are ready for the fluid demands of tomorrow's workforce. For businesses, the challenge is to foster skills-based organizations that can adapt quickly by redeploying capabilities as needs evolve. This requires embedding continuous learning into work processes, supporting inclusivity in access to reskilling, and combining technical advancements with the human skills that sustain resilience and innovation.

The study suggests the following actions to prepare India's workforce for future disruption:

1. **Integrate AI and Digital Competencies into Education and Workplaces:** Institutions and organizations should focus on embedding AI and digital applications into daily practice, emphasizing problem-solving and real-world applications rather than technical coding alone. AI must be taught and used as “assisted intelligence,” complemented by human judgment and domain expertise, instead of artificial intelligence.
2. **Strengthen Human-Centric Skills:** Equal weight must be given to adaptability, creativity, resilience, and emotional intelligence, which remain critical in a VUCA environment and ensure technology enhances rather than displaces human contribution.
3. **Promote Lifelong Learning through stronger and more consistent Academia–Industry Collaboration:** Continuous reskilling and upskilling must be embedded into the flow of work, with academia and industry working together to create relevant opportunities. This includes interdisciplinary exposure, experiential learning, and co-designed initiatives such as centers of excellence, applied research projects, and industry-driven training programs.

Educational institutions must reimagine curricula, businesses must foster adaptable and inclusive organizations, and policymakers must ensure equitable access to skill development. Together, these efforts will enable India to thrive in a VUCA world by equipping its workforce with the AI knowledge, agility, resilience, adaptability, and creativity needed to navigate uncertainty while seizing new opportunities.

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INTRODUCTION

As we navigate the VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous) complexities of the 21st century, the transformation of the workplace demands continuous re-valuation. We are all familiar with the term ‘continuous learning’ and ‘continuous employability’ which are generic ways to understand that change is occurring and change is occurring continuously. We also know that people have to be ready for change to remain relevant in a market economy. From the perspective of an educational institution, the crucial issue is what are the skills that are required for future. Globalization and advances in digital technology, combined with the challenges posed by a pandemic and climate change, have escalated the urgency for businesses and educators to understand the future of skills. Merit lies in a re-evaluation of skills and competencies necessary for success. The rapid proliferation of technology, evolving economic landscapes, and shifting societal norms are collectively redefining how work is performed, who performs it, and the skills required to thrive in the new work environment.

The NHRDN -JAGSoM study on the future of skills aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the competencies that will be crucial in the evolving job market. It considers both hard and soft skills that are becoming increasingly important as industries adapt to technological disruptions, consumer preferences shift, and workforce demographics change. Understanding these evolving demands is critical for stakeholders across various sectors, including policymakers, educators, businesses, and individuals seeking to navigate the complexities of the future workforce.

The 2019 JAGSoM–NHRDN Study of Industry 4.0 Needs, sought to identify India-specific unmet needs that business schools must address and to assess the response of India Inc. and academia to the new skill demands highlighted by the WEF. It underscored the significance of people-oriented skills, problem-solving, rational thinking behaviour, creativity, emotional intelligence, and service orientation as essential for the next industrial revolution shaped by emerging business themes and systems. While this provided an important baseline, the exponential acceleration of technological disruptions, evolving consumer preferences, and shifting workforce demographics necessitated a follow-up investigation. The 2025 NHRDN–JAGSoM study on the future of skills extends the earlier work by providing a comprehensive analysis of 15 competencies drawn from the WEF Future of Jobs Report 2025, examining both their current relevance and anticipated transformation by 2030. Using a combination of quantitative surveys, qualitative focus groups, and AI-based prediction models, the study not only measures the present frequency of skill usage but also projects patterns of disruption and future demand. By considering both hard and soft skills that are becoming increasingly critical as industries adapt to technological change, shifting consumer preferences, and evolving workforce demographics, the study offers insights essential for policymakers, educators, businesses, and individuals navigating the complexities of the future job market. Consolidating the above discussion, the following themes emerge.

- *The Transformative Impact of Technology.* The advent of technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, automation, and data analytics is fundamentally altering the landscape of work. Routine and repetitive tasks that were once performed by humans are increasingly being automated, leading to a significant transformation of job roles across sectors. As McKinsey Global Institute reports, up to 25% of jobs in the U.S. may be automated by 2030, underscoring the critical need for an agile workforce adept in digital skill sets.¹

¹ The Future of Work in America (<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/the-future-of-work-in-america>, accessed 16/08/2025)

Deloitte's reports emphasize the shift towards more agile work environments requiring new skills in technology integration, data analysis, and a stronger focus on employee wellbeing. The importance of soft skills, such as adaptability, communication, and empathy, is noted as well.² OECD study on the Skills of Tomorrow found that the skills necessary for adapting to changing labor market demands, including critical thinking, digital literacy, and the ability to learn continuously. It suggests that education systems need to evolve to prepare students for these new realities.³ Accenture's future workforce study highlighted the automation of job roles and the need for workers to develop skills related to new technologies. The study points out the importance of human elements such as creativity and emotional resonance, which automation cannot replicate.⁴

- *Globalization.* Globalization has further complicated the landscape of skills required for future employment. The interconnectivity of markets means that businesses are not only competing locally but on a global scale. This competition is driving demand for skills that enhance cross-cultural communication, adaptability, and multilingualism. In an increasingly interconnected world, professionals who can navigate different cultural contexts and work with diverse teams are invaluable assets to organizations.
- *Remote work.* Rise of remote work has blurred geographical boundaries, enabling talent from various regions to collaborate in real-time. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated this trend, forcing businesses worldwide to adopt remote working models. As a consequence, skills such as self-management, digital communication, and collaboration tools have come to the forefront of essential competencies. Understanding the importance of these emerging requirements will help organizations structure training and development programs that prepare their workforce for success in a geographically dispersed work environment.
- *Lifelong Learning and continuous employability.* Further, the concept of lifelong learning is gaining prominence as the skills landscape continues to change. With the half-life of skills precariously decreasing due to rapid technological advancements, individuals must be committed to ongoing education and skill development throughout their careers. This shift requires not only a change in educational policy but also a cultural transformation where continuous learning is embraced as a central tenet of professional development.
- *Addressing Inequities in Skill Development.* Amid the exciting potential for the future of skills, it is crucial to address underlying inequities that may exacerbate disparities in the workforce. Access to quality education and skill development opportunities is not uniformly distributed, raising concerns about inclusivity and equity. Underprivileged communities, women, and marginalized groups often face structural barriers that limit their access to education and training resources. This inequity may result in a widening skills gap, where vulnerable populations are left behind in an increasingly competitive job market.

² The Future of Work: A New Era (<https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/technology/future-of-work.html>, accessed 16/08/2025)

³ Skills for a Digital World](<https://www.oecd.org/employment/skills-for-a-digital-world.html>, accessed 16/08/2025)

⁴ Reworking the Revolution (<https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insights/future-workforce-index>, accessed 16/08/2025)

Several studies have focused on the Indian context also. For example, the study under the aegis of Indian embassy in Vienna highlighted the technological transformation in India.⁵ NASSCOM - Future of Work: Trends & Opportunities in India's IT/BPM Sector highlighted the digital transformation within India's IT and BPM (Business Process Management) sectors. The study emphasizes the need for upskilling in areas like artificial intelligence, data analytics, and cybersecurity. A greater focus on soft skills and emotional intelligence is also underscored, as organizations adapt to new methodologies and hybrid work environments.⁶ PwC - Workforce of the Future: The Competing Forces Shaping 2030 discusses how Indian firms will need to prepare for the workforce of the future by focusing on flexibility, skills development, and employee experience. The study highlights the potential shifts in workforce demographics, including multigenerational workforces, and the increasing demand for remote working options.⁷ FICCI - Future of Work in India: An Agenda for Policy Action suggests that labour policy reforms, strengthening the education system, and fostering an entrepreneurial environment are critical to aligning skills with the demands of the future economy.⁸ Deloitte - The Future of Work in India study found the need for organizations to embrace agile work principles and invest in workforce capability-building. The emphasis is on leadership in nurturing digital mindsets and fostering a culture of learning to adapt to the rapidly changing work environment.⁹ IMF and Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - Economic Outlook Reports indicate the insights into economic trends that affect employment and labour market conditions in India. Recent outlooks emphasize the importance of transitioning to a knowledge economy, the digital economy's growth potential, and how it can lead to new job creation opportunities. The World Economic Forum (WEF) 2020 study emphasizes the importance of technology in reshaping job roles and skill requirements. Their research indicates that by 2025, automation may displace many jobs but also create new ones, particularly in sectors such as technology, healthcare, and renewable energy. Upskilling in digital literacy and soft skills is vital.¹⁰

In this context, the critical question arises: what skills will be necessary in a world where many traditional roles are fading, while new ones emerge? To mitigate these challenges, targeted interventions are necessary to ensure equitable access to skill development opportunities. Initiatives that enhance digital literacy, provide mentorship, and foster inclusive environments will be vital in bridging the skills gap across diverse demographics. Encouraging partnerships between education providers, businesses, and governments can foster policies and programs that empower those traditionally excluded from economic opportunities.

The confluence of these trends raises critical questions for all stakeholders involved in the labour market. How can we ensure that workers are equipped with the skills that align with future job opportunities? In what ways can organizations develop resilient cultures that embrace change and

⁵ EY Budget Connect Report

[https://www.eoivienna.gov.in/public_files/assets/pdf/Budget_Connect_\(by_Ernst_and_Young\)_240125.pdf](https://www.eoivienna.gov.in/public_files/assets/pdf/Budget_Connect_(by_Ernst_and_Young)_240125.pdf), accessed 16/08/2025)

⁶ NASSCOM- Future of Work (https://nasscom.in/sites/default/files/media_pdf/NASSCOM-Statement-Job-creation-and-Hiring-in-Indian-IT-BPM-industry.pdf, accessed 16/08/2025)

⁷ PwC Workforce Future Study (<https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/services/people-organisation/workforce-of-the-future/workforce-of-the-future-the-competing-forces-shaping-2030-pwc.pdf>, accessed 16/08/2025)

⁸ <https://ficci.in/public/storage/SPDocument/24020/RveAsujTz7b7Urk3QOkdKAjhOUUnL6jQ4CN81yAqz.pdf>, accessed 16/08/2025

⁹ Deloitte Insights (<https://www2.deloitte.com/in/en/insights/focus/future-of-work.html>, accessed 16/08/2025)

¹⁰ Future of Jobs Report by WEF (<https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-future-of-jobs-report-2020>, accessed 16/08/2025)

foster adaptability? What role should governments play in creating policies that support skill development initiatives?

The Role of Education. As the demand for new skills grows, the traditional educational system faces scrutiny regarding its ability to evolve quickly enough to keep pace with market needs. Educational institutions are under pressure to integrate skills training and experiential learning into their curricula, preparing students for real-world applications rather than rote memorization. A study conducted by the Institute for the Future emphasizes the necessity for education systems to foster not just specific knowledge but also critical thinking, collaboration, and emotional intelligence.

While there is little dispute of the changing nature of work and the overwhelming role of technology, the issue remains on what are the actions that educational institutions in general and business schools in particular can take. The WEF study on the Future of Work 2025 highlights some interesting trends¹¹. The WEF study projects that India will experience a 38% skill disruption between 2025 and 2030; higher than developed countries and slightly lower than less developed ones. However, it does not specify which particular skills will drive this disruption.

JAGSoM in collaboration with NHRDN undertook the following research questions in this study:

- 1. Which skills are most frequently used currently?**
- 2. Which specific skills are most vulnerable to disruption across different sectors and job levels in India between 2025 and 2030?**
- 3. What skills do industry leaders find crucial in 2025 and 2030?**

This study, namely NHRDN-JAGSoM study on ‘Skill Disruption for India: A Managerial Perspective’ addresses this gap. The incremental contributions over the WEF study on the Future of Work 202 in the context of India are: 1) It determines the frequency (how often) of use of key 15 skills in 2025 at various job levels and sectors; 2) predicts frequency of use of these skills by 2030; 3) develops a skill disruption index. In doing so, this is the first study of its kind that determines empirically the skill disruption and gives clues to what educational institutions and business organizations should focus on in the next four to five years. The study extends the competency theory, the nature of competencies, and how they change constantly.

EVOLVING WORKFORCE CAPABILITIES: CONTEMPORARY WORK

The rapid pace of technological, economic, and demographic change is reshaping the global skills landscape, requiring individuals, organizations, and policymakers to adapt continuously. The *World Economic Forum’s* recent global framework underscores the urgency of equipping workers with future-relevant skills to enable smooth transitions to the “jobs of tomorrow,” highlighting the need for both immediate upskilling and longer-term workforce resilience¹². This emphasis aligns with the

¹¹ The Future of Jobs Report 2025 by World Economic Forum

(https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_Report_2025.pdf, accessed 06/08/2025)

¹² World Economic Forum. (2024). *Unlocking opportunity: A global framework for enabling transitions to the jobs of tomorrow*. (<https://www.weforum.org/publications/unlocking-opportunity-a-global-framework-for-enabling-transitions-to-the-jobs-of-tomorrow/>, accessed 16/08/2025)

global shift towards skills-based hiring, where demonstrated competencies increasingly outweigh traditional qualifications such as formal degrees¹³.

The concept of competency has long been rooted in performance theory, which posits that optimal work outcomes occur when an individual's capabilities align with job demands and organizational context¹⁴. Competencies are understood as underlying characteristics of individuals that lead to superior performance¹⁵, encompassing a range of related behaviours organized around an intent and expressed in contextually appropriate ways¹⁶. These attributes are not static; research into managerial and professional development has shown that individuals can develop complex competencies, including emotional and social intelligence, through structured learning and practice¹⁷.

Historically, competency frameworks emerged from extensive longitudinal and organizational studies on managerial performance¹⁸, providing the foundation for contemporary human capital strategies¹⁹. In the current era, these frameworks must respond to unprecedented changes driven by artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and digitalization. Competencies are expected to evolve rapidly in response to technological disruption²⁰, with leaders in the digital transformation era needing to excel in digital communication, high-speed decision-making, managing disruptive change, fostering connectivity, and revitalizing technical expertise²¹. Furthermore, digital competencies have emerged as a cornerstone of organizational strategy, enabling firms to generate value from widely accessible technologies²².

Technological acceleration has also shortened competency life cycles, will render some skills obsolete within a few years while generating demand for entirely new capabilities²³. This phenomenon underscores the importance of anticipating future skills needs, particularly in the context of AI integration into business processes. Emotional, social, and cognitive intelligence competencies remain critical predictors of leadership effectiveness²⁴, but they now coexist with emerging digital and analytical skills in defining employability and organizational value creation.

¹³ World Economic Forum, 2024, Putting Skills First

(https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Putting_Skills_First_2024.pdf, accessed 16/08/2025)

¹⁴ Boyatzis, R. E. (1982). The competent manager: A model for effective performance. John Wiley & Sons.

¹⁵ McClelland, D. C. (1973). Testing for competence rather than intelligence. *American Psychologist*, 28(1), 1–40.

¹⁶ Boyatzis, R. E. (2008). Competencies in the 21st century. *Journal of Management Development*, 27(1), 5–12.

¹⁷ Bray, D. W., Campbell, R. J., & Grant, D. L. (1974). *Formative years in business: A long term AT&T study of managerial lives*. John Wiley & Sons.

¹⁸ Campbell, J. P., Dunnette, M. D., Lawler, E. E., & Weick, K. E. (1970). *Managerial behavior, performance, and effectiveness*. McGraw-Hill.

¹⁹ Boyatzis, R. E., Stubbs, L., & Taylor, S. (2002). Learning cognitive and emotional intelligence competencies through graduate management education. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 1(2), 150–162.

²⁰ Harkins, A. M. (2008). Leapfrog principles and practices: Core components of education 3.0 and 4.0. *Futures Research Quarterly*, 24(1), 19–31.

²¹ Santana, M., & Díaz-Fernández, M. (2023). Competencies for the artificial intelligence age: Visualisation of the state of the art and future perspectives. *Review of Managerial Science*, 17(6), 1971–2004.

²² Kindermann, B., Beutel, S., Garcia de Lomana, G., Strese, S., Bendig, D., & Brettel, M. (2020). Digital orientation: Conceptualization and operationalization of a new strategic orientation. *European Management Journal*, 38(2), 235–248.

²³ Gallardo-Gallardo, E., & Collings, D. G. (2021). Talent management for the future of work. In M. Santana & R. Valle-Cabrera (Eds.), *New directions in the future of work* (pp. 35–54). Emerald Publishing.

²⁴ Boyatzis, R. E. (2008). Competencies in the 21st century. *Journal of Management Development*, 27(1), 5–12.

The Indian labour market exemplifies the scale of the skills challenge in emerging economies. Severe skill gaps are projected to intensify, with forecasts indicating a 38% disruption in skill sets between 2025 and 2030²⁵. This aligns with findings from employer surveys, which reveal that problem-solving, communication, and strategic thinking currently dominate hiring priorities, while technological skills such as cloud computing, statistical analysis, and data visualization are becoming increasingly important²⁶. Notably, in South East Asia, AI competencies are projected to rise from a relatively low ranking in current skill importance to near the top within the next five years.

Crucially, the relative importance of competencies is not uniform across the workforce. Variations exist across job levels, industries, and functional domains²⁷. For example, entry-level roles may place greater emphasis on technical or operational competencies, while senior positions demand higher-order strategic, interpersonal, and leadership skills. Industry context further mediates these requirements, with sectors undergoing rapid digitalization demanding higher proficiency in technology-oriented competencies, whereas others may prioritize regulatory knowledge, customer engagement, or domain-specific expertise.

These differentiated needs have significant implications for skill assessment and development strategies. A survey-based methodology, such as that employed in the present study, can provide granular insights into both the current and anticipated future relevance of specific competencies across multiple job levels and industry segments. This approach reflects a broader research tradition emphasizing that competency modelling must be contextually grounded, incorporating the strategic objectives and operational realities of the target organization or sector²⁸.

Moreover, the transformation of work in the digital age requires an integrated perspective on skills, one that blends enduring human capabilities with evolving technical expertise. While foundational competencies—such as communication, adaptability, and ethical judgment—are likely to retain their value across most contexts, their interaction with emerging skills, such as AI literacy and advanced data interpretation, will define future employability. Strategic foresight, therefore, becomes as important as skills acquisition itself, ensuring that investments in workforce development are aligned with projected industry and technological trajectories.

In summary, existing literature converges on several key points relevant to this study's objectives. First, competencies remain the central currency of employability and organizational performance, with both foundational and specialized skills playing vital roles. Second, the skills landscape is

²⁵ Cabral, C., & Dhar, R. L. (2019). Skill development research in India: A systematic literature review and future research agenda. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, 26(7), 2242–2266.

²⁶ Graduate Management Admission Council. (2024). Corporate recruiters survey: South Asia report. GMAC. (https://www.gmac.com/-/media/files/gmac/research/employment-outlook/2024-corporate-recruiters-survey/2024_gmac_crs_regional_profile-central_south-asia.pdf?rev=96b05f2d065c45d08a0954a7f3e5268c, accessed 16/08/2025)

²⁷ Graduate Management Admission Council. (2024). Corporate recruiters survey: South Asia report. GMAC. (https://www.gmac.com/-/media/files/gmac/research/employment-outlook/2024-corporate-recruiters-survey/2024_gmac_crs_regional_profile-central_south-asia.pdf?rev=96b05f2d065c45d08a0954a7f3e5268c, accessed 16/08/2025)

²⁸ Graduate Management Admission Council. (2024). Corporate recruiters survey: South Asia report. GMAC. (https://www.gmac.com/-/media/files/gmac/research/employment-outlook/2024-corporate-recruiters-survey/2024_gmac_crs_regional_profile-central_south-asia.pdf?rev=96b05f2d065c45d08a0954a7f3e5268c, accessed 16/08/2025)

undergoing accelerated transformation, driven largely by AI and digital technologies, resulting in shortened competency lifecycles and increased volatility in demand patterns. Third, the importance and type of competencies vary systematically across job levels, industries, and geographies, making granular, context-specific assessment essential. Finally, skills development must be forward-looking, integrating immediate operational needs with strategic anticipation of future trends.

By situating the survey findings within these established insights, the study aims to illuminate not only the current distribution of skills importance across job levels and industries in 2025, but also the expected shifts that will shape workforce readiness in the years to come.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

1. Skill is defined as the knowledge skill and ability required to do a job as perceived by the respondent, largely but not necessarily confined to the organization and job role they are now performing and is expressed in terms of frequency of use in the workplace.
2. Disruption is defined as the degree of change in the frequency of use in each of the skills by 2030 for performance in the same role and context.
3. Operations definition of each skill was also given in the survey instrument.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This study uses 15 out of 26 skills reported in *Future of Jobs Report 2025* by the WEF to study the importance of these skills in 2025 and capture the expected changes in skills requirements in 2030. It uses three techniques to study the skills disruption: quantitative, qualitative and AI prediction model approach. Both the quantitative survey and the Focus Groups were conducted in collaboration with NHRDN.

First, the quantitative design is based on survey consisting of the selected 15 skills and measures their use in terms of frequency of use at work through a 5-point Likert scale (0: Not Used, 1: Used Rarely, 2: Used, 3: Used Often, 4: Used Almost Always). Details of the survey instrument are in Appendix A. This is the base line measure, depicting the current skill usage for the year 2025. The survey also measures how these skills might undergo increase or decrease in their deployment by 2030, thus helping us to measure the disruption by developing a disruption index score. Frequency of use of these skills in 2030 is measured in relations to the base line by asking questions whether its use will be 1) About Same, 2) Higher or 3) Significantly Higher. In order to bring homogeneity in answers, the questionnaire defined the skill, for example, the question “Proficiency level required at present for Resilience in the job”, defines resilience as the ability to cope with adversity, adapt to change, and bounce back from challenge. The sample survey elicited 414 responses from different job levels, junior, middle, senior, directors and C suite level and across different levels of work experience, which is more than the threshold of 383 responses for 95% confidence intervals and 5% error.

Second, the qualitative study was conducted using three Focus Groups (FGs) in Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Delhi, where CXO’s & Senior Leadership from across the industry were invited as participants, as listed in Table 1. The details are provided in Appendix 3. The intent of these Focus Group discussions was to confirm or negate the findings of the quantitative study and find out the concurring or differing viewpoints of the disruption. These were coordinated by 3 senior faculty from JAGSoM.

Lastly, the AI prediction model was generated by the Analytics and AI area of JAGSoM, based on the quantitative and the qualitative data.

Table 1: Companies which were a part of the focus group discussion across three locations

JSW Infra	Deutsche bank	NET ZERO THINK
L & T Technology Services Limited	HSBC	IBM
Raymond	Novo Nordisk	Accenture
LYNX -Lawrence & Mayo	Union Bank of India	Standard Chartered Bank
Canoon Indikos	Suprajit	Schneider Electric
OnePointOne Solutions	CBRE	S&P Global
Capgemini	Zolo Stay	PMI
Saraswat Infotech Pvt Ltd	Withum	Orient Electric
Banswara Syntex Ltd	Razorpay	Rassense Private Limited
Reliance Industries Limited	Dell Technologies	Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail
Yes Bank	Google	KPMG GLOBAL
DHL Global Forwarding	AIQRATE & 3AI	National HRD Network
NCR Atleos	Lendingkart	The Press Trust of India (PTI)
Pfizer	Tesco	KAJARIA CERAMICS
JP Morgan Chase & Co	HGC	HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW
Cradlewise	e6data	UNSTOP
NHRDN	Wells Fargo	Royal Enfield
Yes Bank	Vijaybhoomi University	JK Tyre & Industries
Nippon Life India Asset Management Limited	Airbus	Reliance Industries & Tata (previous CXOs)
Open Spaces Consulting	ArisUniter RE Solutions	Deakin University
UBI	Baxter International Inc	Vijaybhoomi University
Futureense Technologies	NHRDN	

SAMPLING

The survey was sent online under the aegis of NHRDN and this was followed up with a request to fill the survey and 417 responses were received.

The figures in Appendix 1 present the demographic distribution of the respondents, who completed the survey. Respondents were from diverse sectors education & consulting, manufacturing & engineering, technology, platform companies, financial services, and IT & ITES. More than 50% of the respondents were from the human resources area, but there was representations from the AI, banking & insurance, marketing, and analytics area. Further, 55% of the respondents were senior management professionals C-suite executives, Director or VP. Approximately 25% of the respondents were from the mid-management level and the remaining 20% were either junior professionals or entrepreneurs.

The Focus group was by invitation only. The invitations were sent to 68 leaders and CXOs, who attended the Focus Groups across the three locations.

	Bangalore	Delhi	Mumbai
Invitations Accepted	25	21	22

INSIGHTS AND INFERENCES

1. Insights from the Quantitative Analysis

The findings of the study focus on the relative importance of the 15 skills for the present scenario (i.e. 2025) and 2030. For each skill, respondents provided ratings across the three job levels—Fresher, Middle Management, and Senior Management. To capture a consolidated perception across the career trajectory, we computed the overall skill score as the arithmetic mean of these three ratings:

$$\text{Overall Skill Level} = \frac{S_{\text{Fresher}} + S_{\text{Middle Management}} + S_{\text{Senior Management}}}{3}$$

For example, if a respondent rated Resilience as 4 for Freshers, 3 for Middle Management, and 2 for Senior Management, the overall score would be:

$$\frac{4 + 3 + 2}{3} = 3$$

Figure 1: Frequency of use of skills in 2025



The rank ordering of workplace skills for 2025 indicates that Active Listening (M = 3.99), Agility (M = 3.91), and Service Orientation (M = 3.90) are considered the most critical competencies, whereas AI and Big Data (M = 3.53), Resource Management (M = 3.56), and Talent Management (M = 3.56) are positioned at the lower end of the scale, as presented in Figure 1. This distribution suggests that organizations continue to prioritize human-centered and adaptive skills over purely technical or managerial ones. The prominence of listening, agility, and service orientation reflects the increasing complexity of workplace interactions, the demand for responsiveness in volatile environments, and the growing centrality of customer-oriented roles. Conversely, the responses suggest that the effective use of AI and Big Data will depend on their integration with human intelligence and adaptive skills, reinforcing the broader future-of-work literature which highlights that soft skills, resilience, and critical thinking are less susceptible to automation and therefore retain enduring value in the workplace of 2025 and beyond. These findings are consistent with broader future-of-work literature, which highlights that soft skills, resilience, and critical thinking are less susceptible to automation and

therefore retain enduring value in the workplace of 2025 and beyond. These findings highlights that in the short term, soft skills and cognitive flexibility will be especially central to workplace success.

Similarly, we calculated the percentage of respondents who reported a present need for each skill at the levels “4 = Used Often” or “5 = Used Almost Always” in 2025, and those who expected the need to be “High” or “Significantly Higher” in 2030. For the overall skill level, this percentage was computed as the arithmetic mean of the three job-level responses. Formally:

$$\text{Percentage for Overall Skill level} = \frac{\%_{\text{Fresher}} + \%_{\text{Middle Management}} + \%_{\text{Senior Management}}}{3}$$

For example, if 80% of respondents reported *High/Significantly High* for Freshers, 30% for Middle Management, and 40% for Senior Management, the overall percentage would be an average of all three, i.e. 50%.

Figure 2: Comparison of the frequency of use of skills in 2025 and 2030 - All job levels

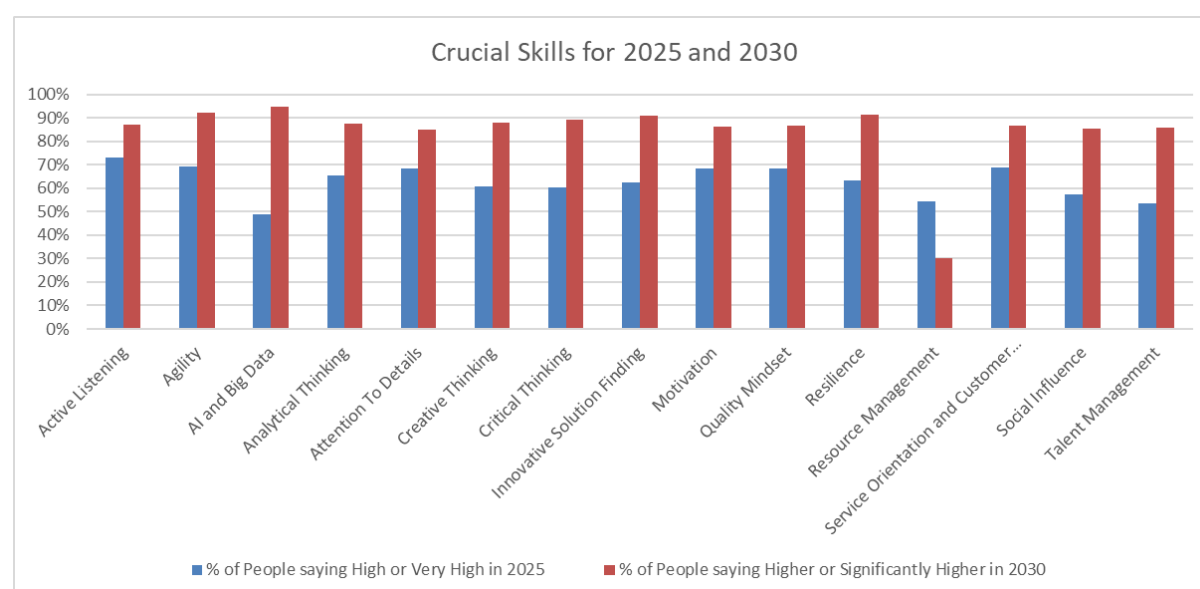
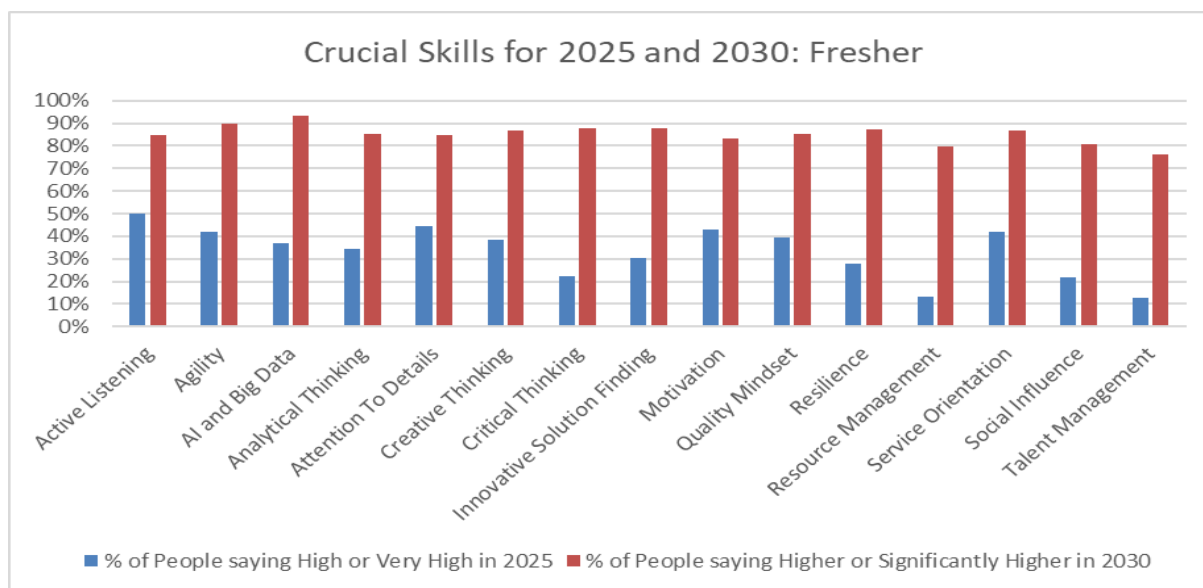


Figure 2 shows a clear rise in the importance of almost all 15 workplace skills between 2025 and 2030, with AI and Big Data, agility, analytical thinking, resilience, innovative solution finding, critical thinking, talent management and creativity showing the steepest increases, each rated highly by over 90 percent of respondents by 2030. Core adaptive skills such as agility, motivation, and critical thinking also strengthen in demand, underscoring the need for innovation and flexibility. In contrast, resource management declines sharply, suggesting that routine managerial tasks may be absorbed by automation. Overall, the data signals a shift from operational competencies to digital, cognitive, and adaptive skills as the foundation of the 2030 workplace.

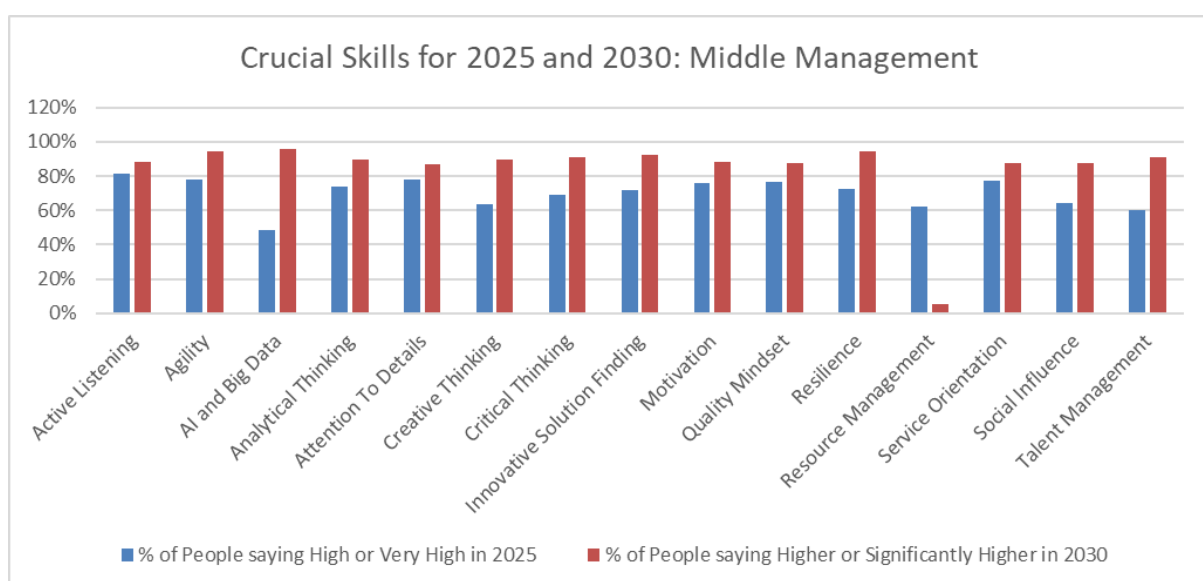
AI and Big data will face the largest skill disruption from 2025 to 2030.

Figure 3: Comparison of the frequency of use of skills in 2025 and 2030 - Freshers



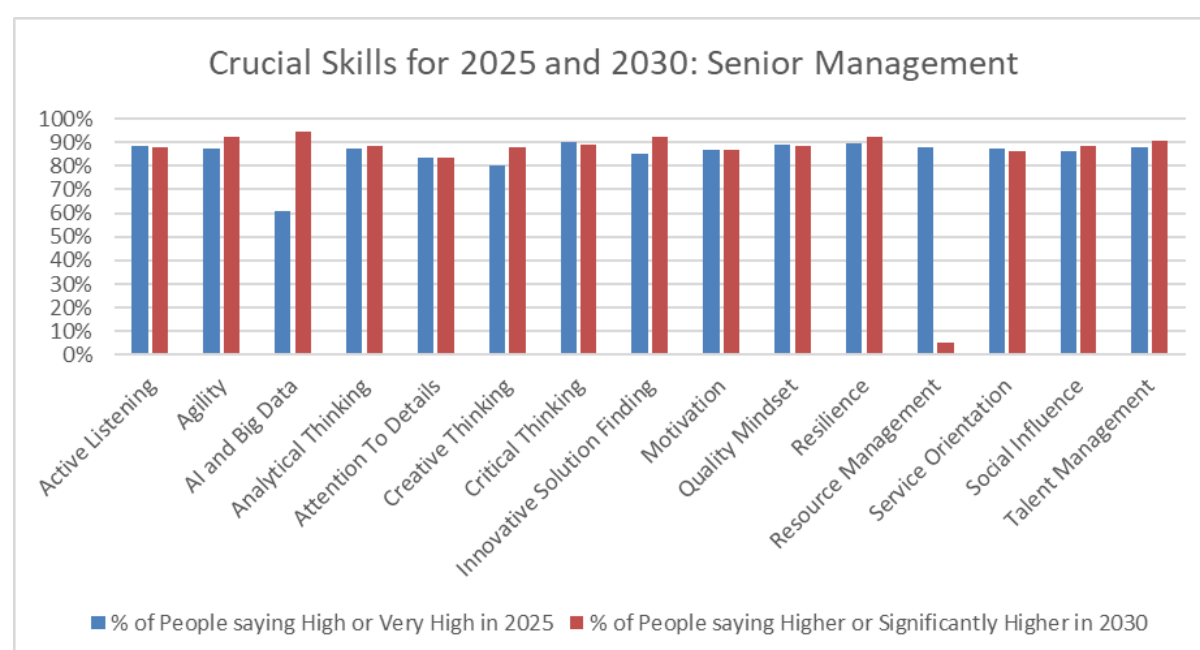
The survey findings reveal a pronounced shift in the frequency and importance of skill usage for freshers between 2025 and 2030, with all fifteen assessed competencies projected to experience significant growth in demand. Figure 3 shows that skills such as active listening, agility, quality mindset, and social influence register the highest ratings in 2025, technical capabilities like AI and Big Data and analytical thinking are already positioned as core competencies. By 2030, however, respondents anticipate a substantial escalation in the relevance of almost all skills, with AI and Big Data, analytical thinking, agility, innovative solution development, and social influence emerging as the most critical, each exceeding 85% in projected importance. Notably, skills currently rated relatively low—such as critical thinking, service orientation, and talent management—are expected to witness the largest proportional increases, indicating a strategic reorientation towards advanced problem-solving, adaptability, and people management in future workplace contexts. The data underscores the necessity for freshers to develop a balanced portfolio of technical expertise, cognitive agility, and interpersonal effectiveness to remain competitive in evolving labour markets.

Figure 4: Comparison of the frequency of use of skills in 2025 and 2030 - Middle Management



The survey data for middle management is presented in Figure 4, which indicates a consistent rise in the expected importance of all fifteen evaluated skills between 2025 and 2030, although the relative growth is more moderate compared to freshers. In 2025, middle managers already exhibit a high baseline proficiency requirement across most competencies, with skills such as active listening, agility, AI and Big Data, analytical thinking, and quality mindset rated particularly highly. By 2030, the projected importance of these skills increases further, with notable growth in critical thinking, innovative solution development, resilience, and talent management—suggesting a stronger emphasis on strategic decision-making, adaptability, and people leadership in the evolving business environment. While technical and analytical competencies remain essential, the findings highlight the growing significance of interpersonal, motivational, and resource management skills, reflecting the multidimensional demands placed on middle managers to integrate technical expertise with leadership effectiveness.

Figure 5: Comparison of the frequency of use of skills in 2025 and 2030 - Senior Management



The survey findings for senior management presented in Figure 5 reveal that the frequency of using all fifteen assessed skills at work is projected to increase between 2025 and 2030, though the rise is relatively moderate compared to fresher or middle-management levels due to an already high

Across all three career stages—freshers, middle management, and senior management—the survey indicates a clear rise in the frequency of using key skills at work between 2025 and 2030. For freshers, the increase is steepest, with emerging priorities in AI and Big Data, analytical and critical thinking, and interpersonal influence, reflecting the need for a balanced blend of technical, cognitive, and social abilities. Middle managers show moderate growth, with an emphasis on combining analytical and technical expertise with leadership, motivation, and resource management to meet expanding role demands. Senior managers already report high usage across most skills, but are expected to further increase their application of AI and Big Data, resilience, innovation, and service orientation, signalling a shift towards integrating technological awareness and adaptability into strategic leadership.

baseline of usage. In 2025, senior leaders report frequent use of active listening, agility, analytical thinking, critical thinking, and quality mindset, alongside leadership-oriented competencies such as talent management, social influence, and resource management. By 2030, the frequency of usage is expected to rise further across all skills, with the largest increases observed in AI and Big Data, resilience, innovative solution development, and service orientation. This suggests that senior leaders will not only continue to rely on their established leadership and strategic capabilities but will also need to integrate emerging technological awareness, adaptability, and organisational resilience more deeply into their day-to-day decision-making and management practices.

These findings are in line with the WEF report of 2025. Both studies conclude that agility is one of the most important skills in 2025. Similar to the WEF report, this study also captures the employer expectations for the evolution of skills in the next five years, from 2025 to 2030. Both studies find that AI and Big Data skills will be the fastest-growing skills, in addition to socio-emotional skills like agility and resilience. While, managers globally consider analytical thinking, social influence, and creative thinking to be some of the most important skills, this study finds that Indian managers consider active listening, agility, AI and analytical thinking to be the most important skills.

2. Insights from the Focus Group discussions

Based on the skills identified in the focus groups across Bengaluru, Delhi, and Mumbai, several common themes can be discerned. These themes reflect the evolving demands of the workforce and highlight critical competencies for future success. The following are the common themes:

1. Analytical Thinking and Problem Solving
 - Bengaluru: Emphasis on analytical thinking and creativity to solve complex problems.
 - Delhi: Highlight of decision-making and intellectual curiosity, paired with adaptability and resilience to navigate challenges.
 - Mumbai: Inclusion of complex problem-solving, critical thinking, and analytical skills, reiterating the importance of sound reasoning in navigating future uncertainties.
2. Emotional Intelligence and Human Skills
 - Bengaluru: Focus on emotional intelligence, collaboration, active listening, and coaching.
 - Delhi: Emotional intelligence is again emphasized, along with customer-centric thinking, highlighting the need for understanding others' emotions and meeting needs effectively.
 - Mumbai: Leadership, social influence, and interpersonal skills are stressed, underscoring the need for effective communication and relationship-building.
3. Continuous Learning and Adaptability
 - Bengaluru: Continuous learning and reskilling as an essential trait for professional agility.
 - Delhi: Agility and adaptability, with a focus on resilience and the ability to adjust to new situations.
 - Mumbai: Active learning, innovation, and cognitive flexibility, indicating the requirement for ongoing education and adaptability in response to evolving work conditions.
4. Digital and Technological Fluency
 - Bengaluru: Proficiency with digital tools and AI technologies highlighted as critical.
 - Delhi: Partnering with AI technologies for enhanced work outcomes.
 - Mumbai: A robust emphasis on technology use, digital marketing, and content creation indicates the necessity for digital literacy across roles and industries.

5. Innovation and Creativity

- Bengaluru: Innovation in combination with analytical skills.
- Delhi: A notable mention of creativity alongside adaptability.
- Mumbai: A strong focus on creativity, originality, and initiative, crucial for driving change and maintaining competitive advantage.

6. Customer-Centric Orientation

- Bengaluru: A service orientation focusing on delivering continuous value and quality.
- Delhi: Customer-centric thinking emphasizing the need to meet customer needs.
- Mumbai: Service orientation highlighted again, reinforcing the importance of understanding customer expectations and building relationships.

7. Leadership and Self-Management

- Bengaluru: Self-leadership and discipline as critical for early-career professionals.
- Delhi: No direct mention, but implicit in the skills calling for emotional intelligence, resilience, and collaboration.
- Mumbai: Leadership and social influence point to the need for guiding teams and influencing others positively.

8. Interdisciplinary and Holistic Skill Sets.

- This skill did not emerge in Bengaluru.
- Delhi: Interdisciplinary skills that encompass knowledge across multiple fields.
- Mumbai: A clear call for cognitive flexibility, systems analysis, and evaluation, emphasizing the blending of various competencies for holistic problem solving.

Table 2: Tabulation of the skills discussed across the focus groups

S No	Important Skills for the Future	Bengaluru	Delhi	Mumbai
1	Active Listening	✓	✓	✓
2	Agility	✓	✓	✓
3	AI and Big Data	✓	✓	✓
4	Analytical Thinking	✓		✓
5	Attention	✓		
6	Creative Thinking	✓		✓

7	Critical Thinking			✓
8	Innovative Solutions	✓		✓
9	Motivation	✓		
10	Quality Mindset	✓		
11	Resilience		✓	
12	Resource Management		✓	✓
13	Service Orientation	✓	✓	✓
14	Social Influence			✓
15	Talent Management	✓		✓

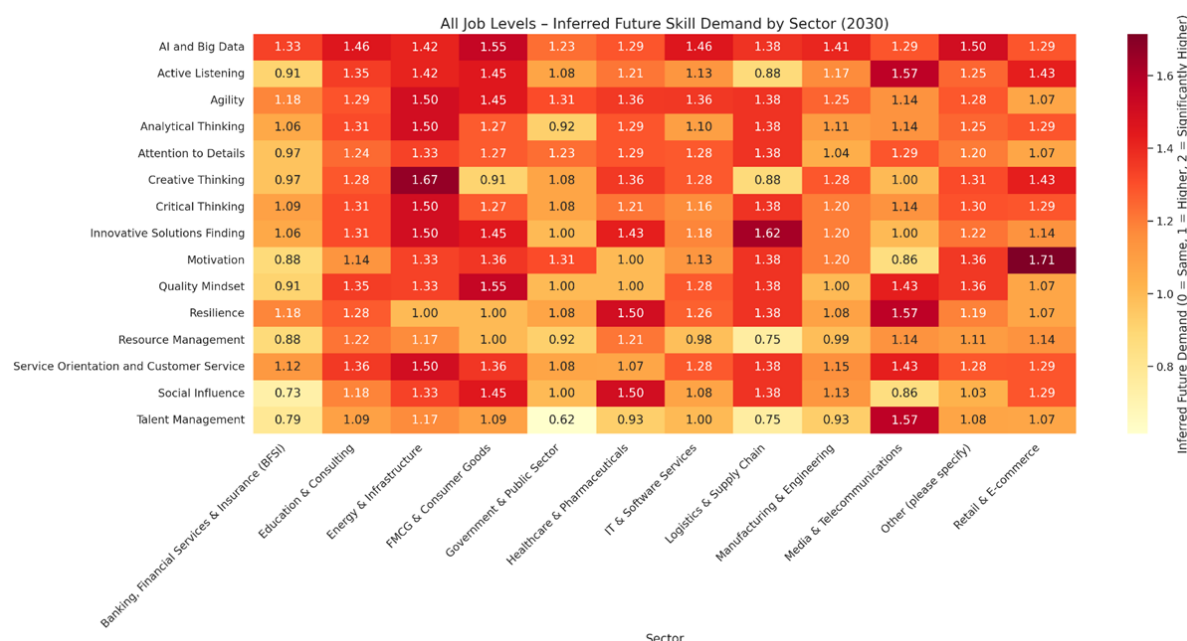
The focus group discussions across Bengaluru, Delhi, and Mumbai underscored a common set of future-relevant skills, with each city bringing unique emphasis. Analytical thinking, complex problem-solving, and creativity consistently emerged as core capabilities for navigating uncertainty and making sound decisions. Emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and leadership qualities were highlighted as equally important, enabling professionals to collaborate effectively, influence others, and build strong relationships. Adaptability, resilience, and continuous learning were viewed as essential traits for thriving in dynamic environments and responding to evolving workplace demands.

Digital and AI fluency surfaced as a critical enabler across industries, encompassing proficiency in emerging technologies, data literacy, and digital communication tools. A strong customer-centric orientation — reflected in service orientation and the ability to align solutions with client needs — was also identified as vital for sustaining value creation. In addition, interdisciplinary thinking and cognitive flexibility were noted as important for integrating knowledge across domains to solve complex problems. Together, these insights point to a future workforce that blends technical expertise with human-centric and adaptive capabilities, enabling professionals to excel in diverse and rapidly changing business contexts.

3. Findings from the AI Prediction Model

The following analysis based on the AI model offers a data-driven foundation for understanding skill gaps and future workforce development needs.

Figure 6: Heat Map of the change in skill importance by sectors in 2030



The heatmap of inferred future skill demand by sector in 2030 (Figure 6) reveals a broad shift in the workplace skill landscape toward digital, cognitive, and adaptive capabilities. Across industries, AI and Big Data, analytical thinking, critical thinking, and innovative solution-finding stand out as consistently high-demand areas, reflecting the increasing centrality of digital fluency and higher-order problem-solving. Creative thinking and resilience also emerge as critical, highlighting the growing importance of adaptability and innovation in uncertain environments. By contrast, traditional managerial competencies such as resource management and talent management generally display lower or uneven demand, suggesting that these functions may be increasingly absorbed by automation and technology platforms. Overall, the pattern indicates that the future workplace will be shaped by the dual imperatives of technological competence and human adaptability, with digital expertise complemented by creativity, motivation, and resilience.

Sector-specific variations further refine this picture by illustrating how industries prioritize particular skill sets in line with their structural dynamics. Energy and Infrastructure places unusually high emphasis on creative thinking (1.67) and quality mindset (1.55), pointing to the sector's dual need for innovation and efficiency. Media and Telecommunications highlights resilience (1.57) and talent management (1.57), reflecting volatility and human-centered challenges in this rapidly evolving domain. Retail and E-commerce stands out for its exceptional emphasis on motivation (1.71), indicative of strong performance pressures in consumer-driven markets. IT and Software Services emphasizes resilience (1.50) alongside creativity and analytical capabilities, underlining adaptability in fast-changing technological contexts. In contrast, skills like motivation, agility and attention to details are important for Government and Public Sector jobs, which are critical for policy making and implementation. In the Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals sector, social influence is vital for building trust and shaping public perception, resilience enables professionals and organizations to withstand crises and setbacks, and innovative solutioning drives breakthroughs in research, technology, and patient care to address complex health challenges. These differentiated patterns suggest that while certain skills—particularly digital and analytical ones—are universally indispensable, sectoral dynamics strongly shape the relative importance of creativity, resilience, and motivation in the skill ecosystem of 2030.

As AI and Big Data, Agility, and Innovative solution finding emerge as the crucial skills for employee performance in 2030, it becomes crucial to understand the sector-wise readiness of these skills for 2030.

Figure 7: Box plots depicting the AI readiness by sectors in 2030

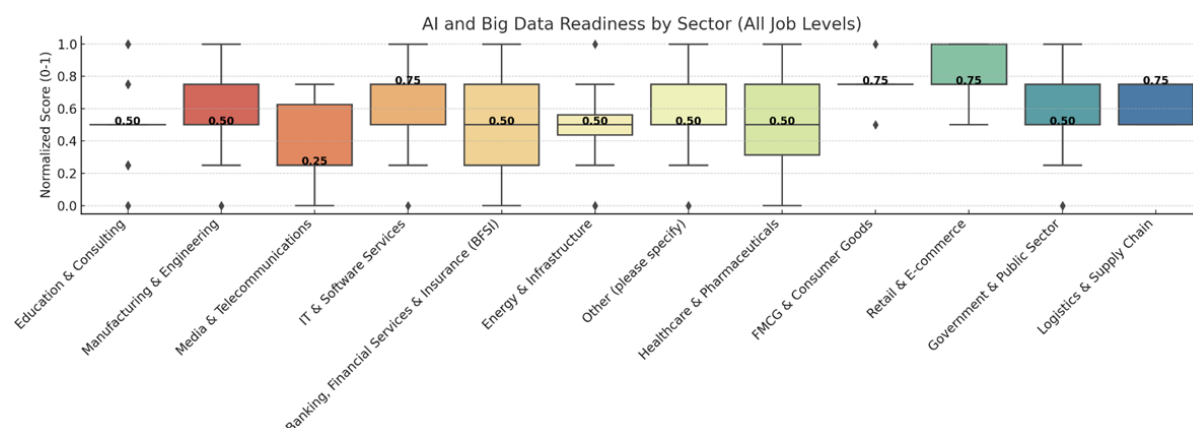


Figure 7 shows sectoral variations in AI and Big Data readiness across job levels, highlighting uneven preparedness for this critical 2030 workplace skill. Sectors such as IT & Software Services, Retail & E-commerce, and Logistics & Supply Chain demonstrate relatively higher readiness (median score 0.75), indicating stronger integration of digital and data-driven capabilities. In contrast, sectors like Media & Telecommunications have lower readiness (median score 0.25), suggesting slower adoption or structural challenges in leveraging AI. Overall, the findings emphasize that while AI and Big Data will be a universal priority, sector-specific differences in adoption speed and capacity will shape workforce demands and reskilling needs.

Figure 8: Box plots depicting the Agility readiness by sectors in 2030

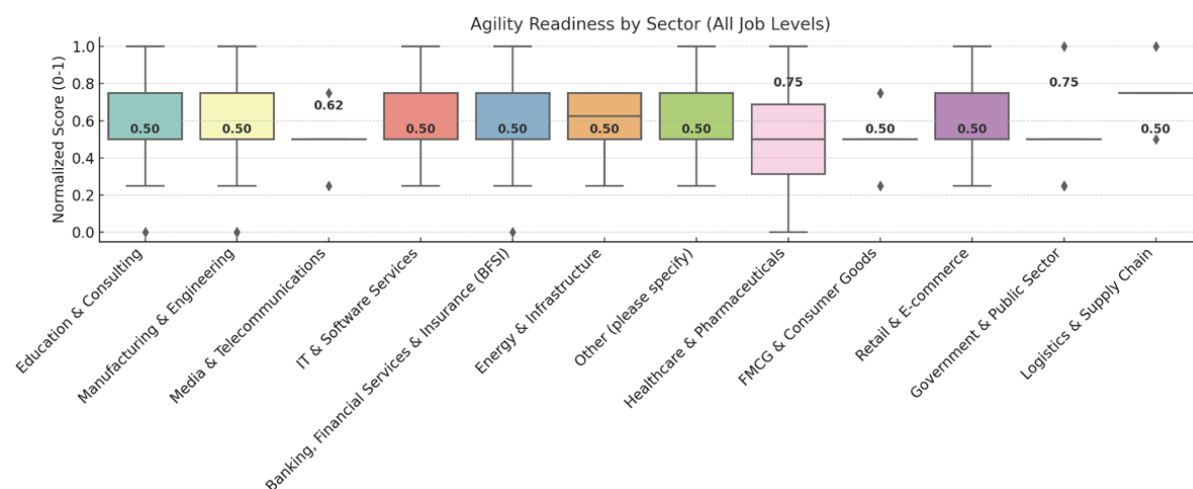


Figure 8 illustrates agility readiness across sectors, an increasingly vital skill for the workplace in 2030. Most sectors cluster around a median readiness score of 0.50, indicating moderate change in demand in 2023, though FMCG & Consumer Goods and Government & Public Sector stand out with higher median scores of 0.75, suggesting stronger adaptability. Media & Telecommunications shows slightly above-average readiness (0.62), while other industries such as Education, Manufacturing, BFSI, and

Logistics remain at moderate levels (0.50). Overall, the results suggest that while agility is recognized as a critical future competency, with a few industries demonstrating advanced adaptability in anticipation of evolving workplace demands.

Figure 9: Box plots depicting the Innovative solutions readiness by sectors in 2030

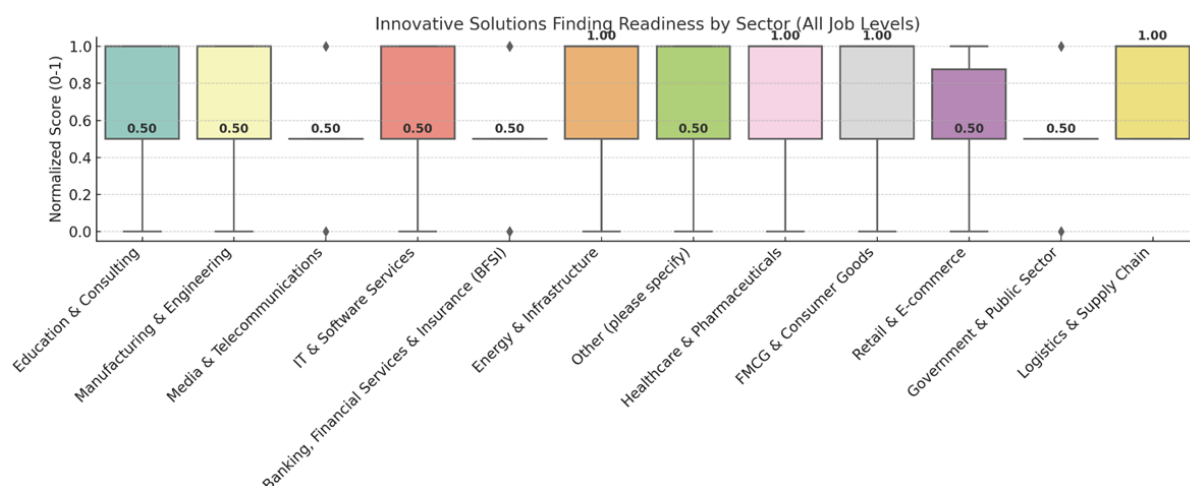


Figure 9 presents sectoral readiness for innovative solutions finding a key workplace skill for 2025 and 2030. Most sectors report a median readiness score of 0.50, suggesting moderate capability, while sectors like Energy & Infrastructure, Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals, FMCG & Consumer Goods, and Logistics & Supply Chain show maximum readiness levels (1.00), highlighting strong innovation potential. Education, Manufacturing, IT & Software, and Retail display wider variability, indicating uneven preparedness within these industries. Overall, while baseline innovation readiness is consistent across sectors, certain industries are significantly more advanced, underscoring their strategic emphasis on innovation as a driver of future competitiveness.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study highlights several important findings. Artificial Intelligence (AI) emerges as the leading disruptor, shifting from being among the least frequently used skills in 2025 to becoming the most frequently applied by 2030. This is expected and is in line with the studies by WEF (2025) and McKinsey²⁹ (2019). As shown in Figure 10, AI and automation are expected to significantly reshape demand for skills, with rising importance attached to creativity, entrepreneurial initiatives, leadership, and IT/programming skills. Globally, the demand for AI-related skills is expanding rapidly, led by India and the United States. However, the drivers differ: in the U.S., growth is primarily fuelled by individual learners pursuing AI training independently, whereas in India, corporate sponsorship plays a pivotal role, with organizations actively supporting and promoting generative AI training for employees (WEF, 2025). Deloitte's 2025 Global Human Capital Trends report reaffirms the evolving and critical role of managers in the age of AI and rapid workplace transformation. Managers now need three key capabilities to thrive: (1) developing, coaching, and motivating people, (2) redesigning work to optimize human-AI collaboration, and (3) enabling agility, innovation, and strategic problem-solving.

²⁹ The future of work in America: People and places, today and tomorrow, July 2019. <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/future%20of%20organizations/the%20future%20of%20work%20in%20america%20people%20and%20places%20today%20and%20tomorrow/the-future-of-work-in-america-full-report.pdf>, accessed on 6 August 2025.

The traditional directive role of managers is being replaced with one that empowers employees, builds psychological safety, and connects people across networks³⁰.

Agility emerges as the second major disruptor, a finding consistent with the demands of AI-driven transformation, which requires agile implementation and adaptation. In a climate of constant disruption, agility has become essential for organizational resilience, encompassing not only flexible structures but also dynamic workforce capabilities that can adapt swiftly to technological advancements, shifting industry boundaries, and market uncertainties. Traditional job-based models often constrain this responsiveness, whereas a Skills-Based Organization (SBO) model emphasizes dynamic deployment of skills to meet evolving work demands.

While AI was not explicitly foregrounded in the focus group discussions (FGs), participants across all three locations accepted its importance emphasized broader concepts such as digital, technological fluency, including the need for AI in the B-School curriculum and the ability to use AI tools. The FGs also highlighted the disruption of four cognitive skills—critical thinking, innovativeness, analytical thinking, and creative thinking—with analytical and innovative thinking receiving particular attention. Resilience was emphasized in Delhi’s discussions, where it was closely linked to emotional intelligence, reinforcing findings from prior studies³¹. Other disrupted skills such as resource management and talent management were mentioned only in Delhi, while customer centricity/service orientation was emphasized consistently across both the survey and FGs.

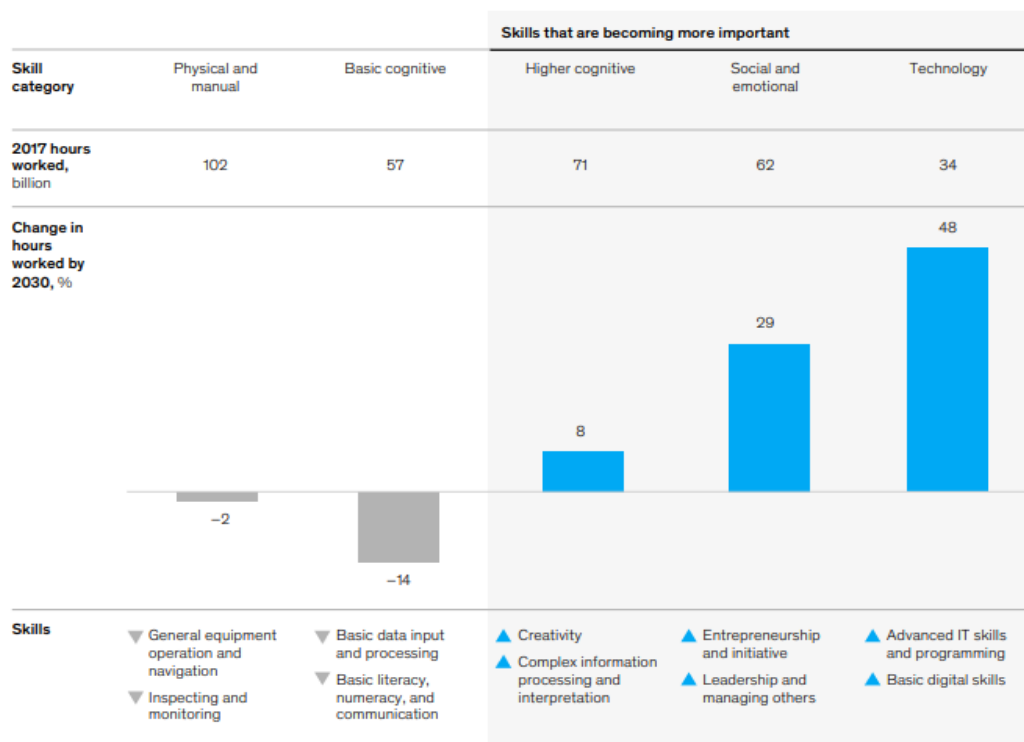
³⁰ 2025 Global Human Capital trends, 2025.

https://www.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/articles/2025/glob187692_global-human-capital-trends/DI_2025-Global-Human-Capital-Trends.pdf, accessed on 6 Aug, 2025

³¹ Schneider, T. R., Lyons, J. B., & Khazon, S. (2013). Emotional intelligence and resilience. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 55(8), 909-914.

Figure 10: Changes in demand for workforce skills due to Automation and AI

Change across all sectors, 2017–30



Source: The future of work in America: People and places, today and tomorrow, McKinsey, July 2019.

Additional survey findings revealed disruptions in quality mindset, active listening, motivation, and social influence. These themes were reflected in the FGs as well, with quality receiving in-depth discussion in Bengaluru, motivation emerging as important in Mumbai, and social influence also featuring prominently. Attention to detail, though highlighted as disrupted in the survey, did not receive explicit mention in the FGs. Instead, participants emphasized the importance of continuous learning and adaptability, leadership and self-management, and interdisciplinary/holistic skill sets—areas not included in the survey but considered highly relevant to future workplaces.

Taken together, the findings suggest that technical skills such as AI, cognitive skills, and soft skills are deeply interdependent, creating a synergistic skill ecosystem. This indicates limited scope for prioritizing one category of skills over another; instead, future workforce readiness depends on the balanced integration of technical expertise, cognitive agility, and interpersonal capabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the following actions in the business school curriculum.

- Along with focusing on AI, the schools should also focus on agility, innovation, cognitive capability and other soft skills.
- Institutions should include AI as part of their learning and pedagogical goals.
- AI should be integrated in all aspects of the student journey, for example, it can be used in the admission process, training students to prepare for specific job roles, and aligning CVs.
- Institutions should focus on AI applications more rather than the software coding aspect of AI, through AI-based seminars, discussion forums, and panel discussions.
- Schools could develop centre of excellence in AI and include use of AI based problem solving in all courses, where it is very important to teach students the limitations of AI and validate AI generated results with domain knowledge. Use AI should be used as “Assisted Intelligence” rather than “Artificial Intelligence”.
- Institutions should set guardrails on the use of AI and the ethical risks.
- AI-based Companies should assess their AI maturity model and create appropriate interventions.
- Companies and business schools could collaborate for promoting the use of AI business problem solving along with supporting soft skills.
- Both AACSB and EFMD could promote the ideas above as recommended competencies in their outcome-based education philosophy.

LIMITATIONS

This study does not investigate the link between the soft skills and adoption of AI. Since all the soft skills are also found disrupted along with AI, a study along this line can be revealing.

APPENDIX 1: DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Figure A1.1: Distribution of Respondents across Sectors

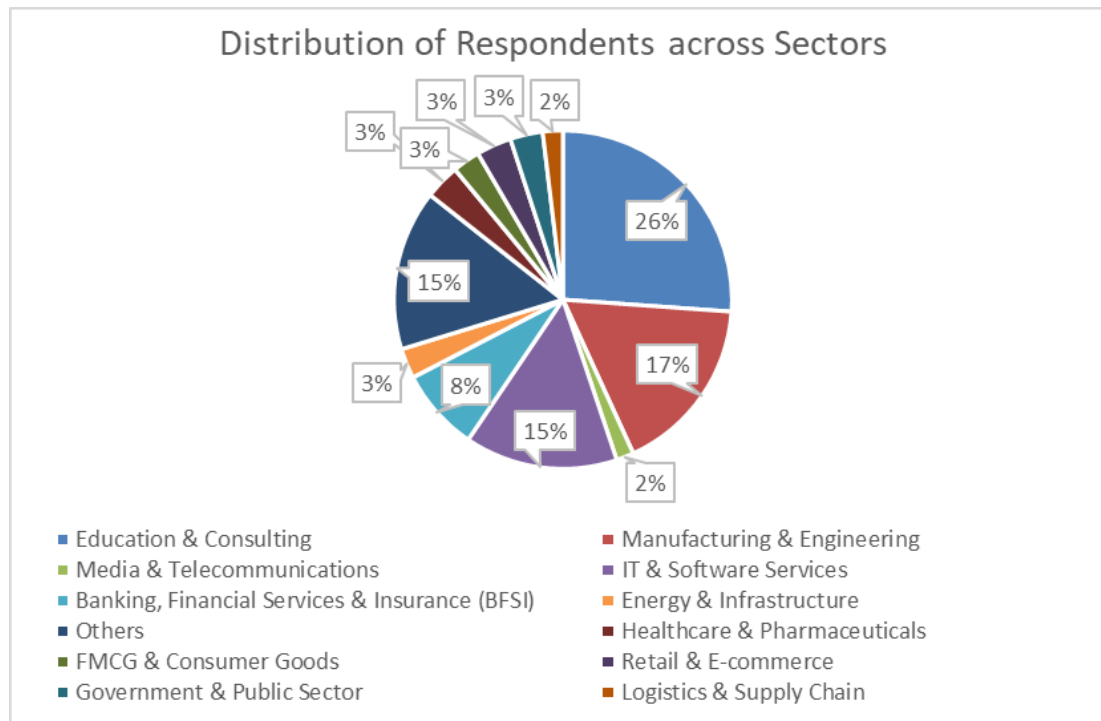


Figure A1.2: Distribution of Respondents across Functional areas

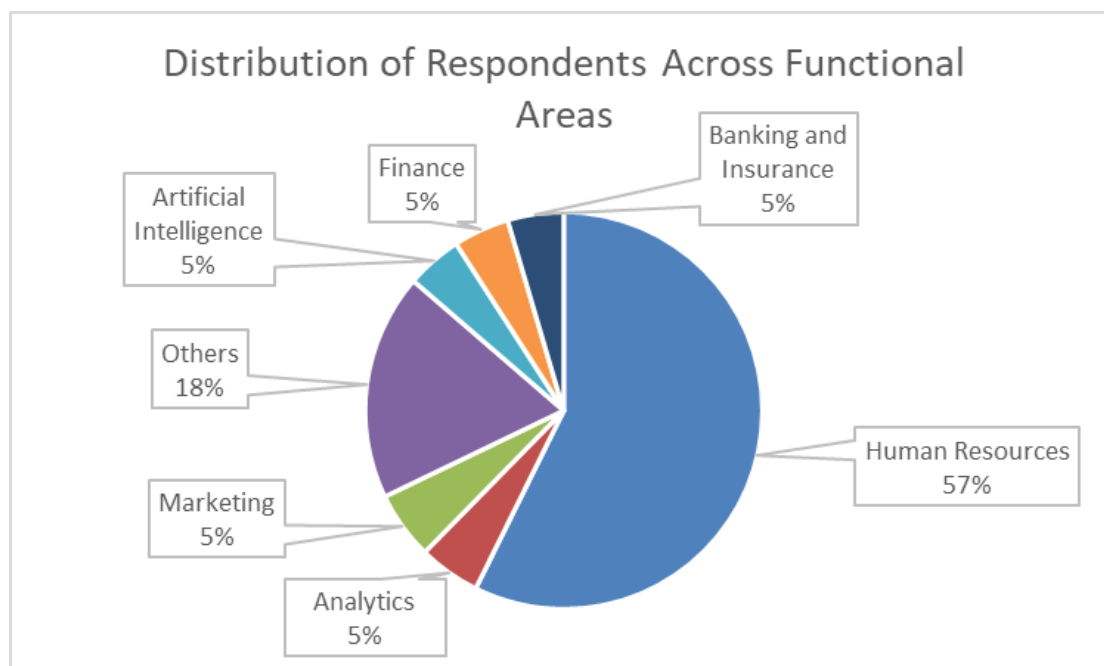
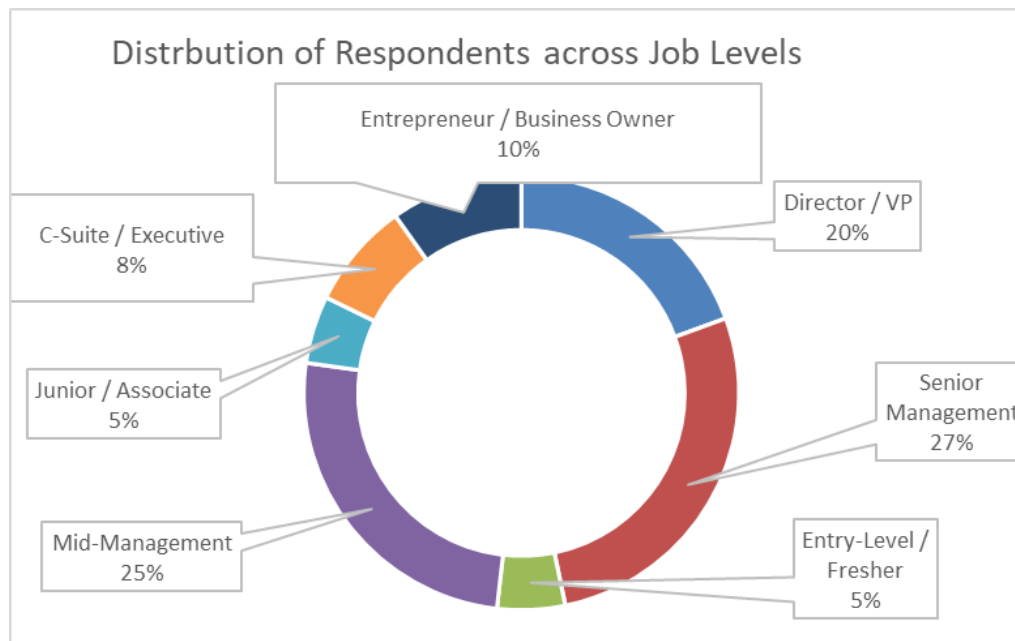


Figure A1.3: Distribution of Respondents across Job Levels



APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE PROTOCOL

Appendix 2.1 Questionnaire Design

Cover Letter
Dear Fellow Manager, Most of us are busy rationalizing the competencies of our organizations by adding or laying off manpower. The Future of Work Report 2025 by the World Economic Forum (WEF) indicates several job skills required in the workplace by 2030 based on a global survey. The report also indicates that India is likely to face 38% disruption for the skills by 2030. But the study is silent on what competencies will undergo a churn in India. I am sure that this question will interest all of us so that we can retrain, adapt and change. What is more, with appropriate development of our people, India will be able to lead the world in terms of product and services and manpower the world needs today and would need even more by 2030. Yes! India is on the anvil to lead. A study on the competencies for Industry 4.0 was launched 5 years ago by National HRD Network (NHRDN) in collaboration with Jagdish Sheth School of Management (JAGSoM), Bangalore. In that study we explored how India can match the world by training our manpower appropriately. In this study, NHRDN has teamed up with JAGSoM once again, but now to explore how India can lead the world through skill/competency development. This study will be presented to the world through the aegis of AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business), and EFMD (European Foundation for Management Development), the American and European think tanks in management education respectively just like the earlier study was. It will also be mailed to you and made public. The intent of this study is to help the world see the compelling Indian emergence with new eyes and to enable Indian organizations to gear up to win the War for Talent. The survey has two major parts: 1) input intended to help organizations to plan changes in their skills; 2) input intended for management institutes to prepare their students for organizations. The survey data will be combined with focus group discussion nationally and AI generated prediction model to arrive at the conclusion. The survey is seeking your personal input and not necessarily the organizational view and will be kept confidential. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Every response is valuable and every response will contribute to the compelling vision - 'Indian skills leads'. Please take a few minutes to provide your response.
Consent
I have read the instructions carefully and I am willing to participate in the survey.
Yes/No
Demographic Variables
Name (Optional)
Sector you are currently employed in
1. Banking, Financial Services & Insurance (BFSI) 2. Education & Consulting, Energy & Infrastructure 3. FMCG & Consumer Goods
4. Government & Public Sector 5. Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals 6. Hospitality & Travel 7. IT & Software Services
8. Logistics & Supply Chain 9. Manufacturing & Engineering 10. Media & Telecommunications 11. Retail & E-commerce 12. Other (please specify)
Functional Area
1. Human Resources ; 2. Analytics ; 3. Artificial Intelligence ; 4. Banking ;

5. Finance ; 6. Marketing ; 7. Other (please specify)
Job Level
1. Entry-Level / Fresher; 2. Junior / Associate; 3. Mid-Management; 4. Senior Management;
5. C-Suite / Executive; 6. Director / VP; 7. Entrepreneur / Business Owner
Total Years of Experience
1. Less than 1 year; 2. 1–3 years; 3. 4–7 years; 4. 8–12 years; 5. 13–20 years; 6. 20+ years
<u>Anchor Statement</u>
Please rate how frequently each skill is used in your job at different levels — Fresher, Middle Management (5+ years of Work Experience), and Senior Management (holding an important decision making role). Two time periods are used to capture the level of proficiency required for a skill: 1) At present or as on date. 2) In 2030 compared to the present. (Scale: Very Low, Low, Medium, High, Very High) Note: Please rate how often each skill is used in your job at three levels: Fresher (0 -5), Middle Management (5+ years), and Senior Management (decision-making role). Rate for the present skill level on a scale of 1 (Very Low) to 5 (Very High) and About Same, Higher or Significantly Higher for 2030 skill level.
Instructions
I have read and understood the instructions.
Yes
<u>2025</u>
Proficiency level required at present for Skill X in the job
Scale: 1 (Very Low); 2 (Low); 3 (Medium); 4 (High); 5 (Very High)
Fresher
Middle Management
Senior Management
<u>2030</u>
Proficiency level required in 2030 for Skill X in the same job compared to present
Scale: About Same, Higher, Significantly Higher
Fresher
Middle Management
Senior Management
Any other thoughts on the skills required for the present? (<i>Optional</i>) Feel free to share any insights on emerging trends, challenges, or skills that are important in the present scenario
Any other thoughts on the skills required for 2030? (<i>Optional</i>) Feel free to share any insights on emerging trends, challenges, or skills that will be important in 2030.
Any other thoughts or comments about the present work environment (<i>Optional</i>)

Appendix 2.2 List of Fifteen Skills Included in the Questionnaire

Name	Skill
1	Active Listening
2	Agility
3	AI and Big Data
4	Analytical Thinking
5	Attention To Details
6	Creative Thinking
7	Critical Thinking
8	Innovative Solution Finding
9	Motivation
10	Quality Mindset
11	Resilience
12	Resource Management
13	Service Orientation and Customer Service
14	Social Influence
15	Talent Management

Appendix 2.3 Sample of the Questionnaire

* 10. Proficiency level required **at present** for **Resilience** in the job

Resilience: the ability to cope with adversity, adapt to change, and bounce back from challenge.

	1 (Very Low)	2 (Low)	3 (Medium)	4 (High)	5 (Very High)
FRESHER	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
MIDDLE MANAGEMENT	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
SENIOR MANAGEMENT	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* 11. Proficiency level required **in 2030** for **Resilience** in the same job compared to present

	About Same	Higher	Significantly Higher
Fresher	☐	☐	☐
Middle Management	☐	☐	☐
Senior Management	☐	☐	☐

Figure A2.1 Sample of the Questionnaire Design for the Skill: Resilience

* 10. Proficiency level required **at present** for **Resilience** in the job

Resilience: the ability to cope with adversity, adapt to change, and bounce back from challenge.

	1 (Very Low)	2 (Low)	3 (Medium)	4 (High)	5 (Very High)
FRESHER	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
MIDDLE MANAGEMENT	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
SENIOR MANAGEMENT	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* 11. Proficiency level required **in 2030** for **Resilience** in the same job compared to present

	About Same	Higher	Significantly Higher
Fresher	☐	☐	☐
Middle Management	☐	☐	☐
Senior Management	☐	☐	☐

Figure A2.2 Sample of the Questionnaire Design for the Skill: Resilience

APPENDIX 3: DETAILS OF THE FOCUS GROUP RESPONDENTS

Mumbai Focus Group Details

Moderator: Prof. Edwin Moses, Dean, Career Winning & Continuing Education (JAGSoM)

Support: Prof. Rajesh Kumar, Associate Professor, Marketing & Digital Business (JAGSoM)

Suraj Srivastava, Vice President - Industry Relations & Career Services (JAGSoM)

SNO	NAME	ORGANIZATION	DESIGNATION
1	Dr. Suresh N Kumar	JSW Infra	CHRO
2	M. Lakshmanan	L & T Technology Services Limited	Chief HR Officer
3	K Narayan	Raymond	President HR
4	Dr. Vivek Mendonsa	LYNX -Lawrence & Mayo	Director Marketing
5	Vinod Purohit	Canoon Indikos	Chief Operating Officer
6	Rao Ashwini Kumar	Onepointone Solutions	Chief Human Resources Officer
7	Mukesh Jain	Capgemini	CTO/Executive Vice President
8	Devadatta Chandgadkar	Saraswat Infotech Pvt Ltd	CEO
9	Marazban Velati	Banswara Syntex Ltd	CHRO
10	Sony Thayil	Reliance Industries Limited	Chief Business Officer
11	Anjali Shrivastava	Yes Bank	AVP
12	Sunil Naik	DHL Global Forwarding	Vice President- HR, India and South Asia
13	Harish Sharma	NCR Atleos	Sr. Services Sales Leader - India, SEA & GCA
14	Roma Nair	Pfizer	Director - Corporate Affairs & Global Media Relations
15	Aniket Joshi	JP Morgan Chase & Co	AVP – Process Intelligence
16	Ashish Banka	Cradlewise	Head - People Success
17	Nalin Ranjan Srivastava	NHRDN	Assistant Director
18	Hiren Kathrani	Yes Bank	Zonal Head
19	Rajesh Derhgawen	Nippon Life India Asset Management Limited	Chief Human Resources Officer
20	Aneeta Madhok	Open Spaces Consulting	Managing Director
21	Dr. Chetna Pandey	UBI	General Manager
22	Sonal Singh	Deutsche Bank	Head- Talent Sourcing India

Bengaluru Focus Group Details

Moderator: Dr. Venkatesh Sunkad, Director (JAGSoM)

Support: Pritiraj Brahma, Chief of Staff (JAGSoM)

Suraj Srivastava, Vice President - Industry Relations & Career Services (JAGSoM)

SNO	NAME	ORGANIZATION	DESIGNATION
1	Arabind Dash	HSBC	Head, Global Debt Capital Markets
2	Aditya Pal Singh	Novo Nordisk	Head Of Talent Acquisition Partnering & Delivery
3	Akshat Telang	UBI	Principal Staff College
4	Hr Badarinarayana	Suprajit	VP HR
5	Praveen Mn	CBRE	Director -Advisory
6	Aparna Ghatwal	Zolo Stay	Head Of India Sales
7	Nigel John	Withum	Head Of Talent Acquisition and Organisation Development
8	Sumit Premi	Razorpay	Sr. Director Talent Acquisition
9	Sachin Sabyasachi	Dell Technologies	India Leader - Talent Acquisition - Early Careers & University Relations
10	Satyendra Khare	Google	Growth Leader - Emerging/Strategic Partnerships (India & SAARC) For Google Cloud @ Google
11	Sameer Dhanrajani	Aiqrate & 3ai	CEO
12	Maninder Singh	Lendingkart	HR Director - COE
13	Vishal Naidu	TESCO	People Partner
14	Pankaj Sharma	HGC	Head (HR) Learning & Organisational Development
15	Dr. S. Naga (Siddhu) Siddharth	E6DATA	CHRO Hon. Vice President NHRD BLR
16	Ruchi Chaturvedi	Wells Fargo	Executive Director
17	Dr Gautam Sinha	Vijaybhoomi University	Founding Director IIM Kashipur & Member, Board of Governors
18	Preveen Voona	Airbus	Heading HR For Airbus Digital & Information Management India.
19	Rekha Mallan	Arisunitern Re Solutions	Vice President - Growth & Strategy
20	Major Deepak Sadotra	Baxter International Inc	Head - HR
21	Nalin Ranjan Srivastava	NHRDN	Assistant Director
22	Manoj Kumar Singh	Net Zero Think	Founder & CEO
23	Nitya Ramkumar	IBM	Director And Chief Platform Architect – GBS
24	Shiva Tanuku	Accenture	Managing Director (Partner)
25	Amit Tripathi	Standard Chartered Bank	Director-Product Management

Delhi Focus Group Details

Moderator: Dr. (Col) PS James, Dean – Academic Research (JAGSoM)

Support: Prof. Sarthak Daing, Assistant Professor (JAGSoM)

Suraj Srivastava, Vice President - Industry Relations & Career Services (JAGSoM)

SNO	Name	Organization	Designation
1	Vaibhav Bist	Schneider Electric	GM Marketing
2	Ashutosh Kumar	S&P Global	APAC Head of Managed Services & EMEA Head of Agency Operations
3	Anirudh Sharma	PMI	Head Of Market - South Asia
4	Sanatan Kaul	Orient Electric	Head - National Operations -SCM
5	Gautam Babbar	Rassense Private Limited	General Manager Human Resources
6	Nidhi Luthra	Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail	Gm- Retail HR Lead (Ethnic Brands)
7	Rajat Mehrotra	KPMG Global	Director
8	Dhananjay Singh	National HRD Network	Director General
9	Sachin Srivastava	The Press Trust of India (PTI)	Head - Human Resources
10	Atul Gupta	Kajaria Ceramics	AVP- Marketing
11	Sumit Harjani	Harvard Business Review	Md India And South Asia
12	Alekhya Chakrabarty	Unstop	Head Of Marketing & Growth
13	Sangeet Kishore	Royal Enfield	Global Business Head
14	Tarun Chhabra	JK Tyre & Industries	Chief Product Manager - Truck & Bus Tyres
15	Nishi Srivastava	Ex- Reliance Industries & Ex-Tata	Ex - Senior General Manager - People Development Coe
16	Basab Pratim Choudhury	Deakin University	Head – Business Development & Recruitment (South Asia)
17	Dr. Ravikesh Srivastava	Vijaybhoomi University	Vice Chancellor
18	Sandeep Kumar	Sodexo	Head HR Operations -India
19	Vikas Gupta	Futureense Technologies	Chairman And Managing Director
20	Aanchal Tandon	HCL	India Ead B School Campus
21	Hasmeet Gujral	HCL	India Lead B School Campus

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