Skill …Skill… Which Skill do I Acquire? ---Skills Requirement for the BANI Environment---

P. Gowri Kusuma
Assistant Professor
Siva Sivani Institute of Management, Hyderabad, Telangana, India
 https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8298-2260

K.S.R. Sarma
Assistant Professor
Siva Sivani Institute of Management, Hyderabad, Telangana, India

Abstract
We are moving from the information era to innovation era. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA) are the core for every employee to accomplish the organizational goals during this era. This paper is an exploratory study aimed at identifying the 'SKILLS' requirement to meet new-age challenges, and to assess the role of Higher Educational Institutions in imparting those SKILLS. Secondary data is collected through various reports and research works to list out the skills required by the millennials. According to World Skill Council, problem solving, self-management, working with people, technology use and development are some of the Skills among the top Skills of 2025. The emphasis is on the emerging Skills requirement, as the very basic nature of work and meaning of workplace is in transition stage. The rules of the game have changed. The below three questions will provide an insight on the changing workplace scenario. (i) Who does the work? Work could be done by full time or part time employees, gig workers or crowd sourcing. (ii) How the work is done? – Work can be accomplished by using AI, robotics and automation. (iii) When and where work is done? – Work places are no longer traditional brick and mortar settings. They could be fluid work schedules, remote workers or collocated workspace. To embrace this change in the workplace, it is vital for the workforce to equip themselves with a new set of skills. Therefore, this study will explore the skills requirement for the future workplace to thrive in BANI environment. And also make an effort to direct the Higher Educational Institutions in imparting those Skills.

Keywords: Skills, Up-skill, Re-Skill, KSA, Information Era, Innovation Era, BANI, Future Workplaces, Gig Workers.

Introduction

Future of work will be a combination of 'Force, Space and Culture'. 'Force' comprises of collaboration between humans and technology. Automation, augmentation (Example – Holo Lens 2 by Microsoft) of work and information will be the key players in deciding the velocity of 'Force'. 'Space' is referred as connectivity, digital assistance, content and collaboration and smart facilities. It relates to connected, secure work environment independent of place of time. 'Culture' can be understood as engaged and empowered workers aligned to new digital skills. Focus in on talent acquisition, development and retention.

This paradigm shift in the future of work is an indicator emphasizing the need for new skill set among the employees.

According to a report by Price water house Coopers (PwC), there are four worlds of work. They are Red, Blue, Green and Yellow.

Table 1 Future of Work

Present	Future
Employee Engagement	Employee Experience
Hard skills	Soft skills
Set hours and location	Flexibility
Manage	Coach and mentor
Human act like robots	Human work with robots and AI
Process centric tasks	Strategic and creative tasks
Hierarchy	Flat structures
Static workforce	Dynamic workforce
Company acts like a factory	Company acts like a laboratory
Move for job	Move for job and life.

Source: www.workskillcouncil.org

Table 2 Four Worlds

World	Key element	Description
Red	Innovation rules	Organizations use technology and intellectual property rather than human efforts
		University degree is seen as less valuable than relevant skills and experience
		Specialism is highly prized
		Most sought after skills means biggest reward
		Employees move frequently based on the projects
		Contract negotiations are key
		Ownership of intellectual property of freedom to work are as important as financial incentives
		Small number of pivotal people with outstanding management skills command high rewards
		Employees hold responsibility for increasing their skills using open source learning
Blue	Corporate is King	Talent is bought in where and when it's needed
		Employers begin their search for exceptional talent. They form links with schools and engaging promising youngsters.
		Employees take active role in their career development, honing their skills
		Human efforts, automation, analytics and innovation are key for performance.
		Success depends on productive workforce as companies compete for the best talent.
		Employees performance and wellbeing are measured.
		It's an era of super workers
Green	Companies Care	Employees enjoy family-friendly flexible hours
		Take part in socially useful projects
		Trust and ethics play the central role
		Employee feel that doing a job that makes a difference is more important to their career
		Employees are attracted to Green World companies by the opportunity to work for an organization they admire, whose values match their own
		Wellbeing support like sleep-clinics, digital-dieting etc., will be adopted.
		Travel will be minimised. Virtual social networks will be developed among the organization and client base.
Yellow	Humans come first	Employees and organizations seek out greater meaning relevance in what they do
		Employees feel the strongest loyalty not to their employer, but to people with same skills or cause.
		Like-minded workers gravitate towards each other
		Digital platforms create mobility and help match worker with employer and skills and attributes with demand Compiled by researcher

Source: pwc report 'Workforce of the future – The competing forces shaping 2030

The requirements of the Human Capital are clearly depicted in Table no: 2, the nature of skills required in each world is discussed.

Need for the Study

India is one of the youngest nations in the world with more than54% of the total population coming below 25 years of age. India will continue to enjoy this advantage till 2040. Skilling the youth is the need of the hour, as we are moving from VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous) to BANI (Brittle, Anxious, Non-Linear, Incomprehensible), year 2020 has showed us that the uncertainties are the only certainties we have.

Jamais Casico, American anthropologist, author and futurist, is the creator of the term 'BANI' model for working with chaotic futures.

Brittle – The Illusion of Strength

Catastrophes can occur at any time. Be prepared to encounter them. Constant efforts to maximise profits and efficiency may result in brittleness. Crisis in one sector will definitely cause disruptions in other sectors. Businesses that are built on fragile foundations can fall overnight. A virus can appear suddenly;competitor may change their strategy. As the world is interconnected, one business performance will have an impact on others business. Brittleness is illusionary strength. The belief that 'everything will be alright' and the assumption that 'what we all know is true'. Brittle refers to the myths that people tell themselves and each other to feel better and more secure. Resiliency is the key to tackle with brittle environment.

Anxious – The Illusion of Control

Information is the new mantra. But too much of it results in anxiety. It may result in immense anxiety and constant feeling of helplessness. Decision making will be difficult issue in times of pressure and tension. Businesses are dependent on other's choice. It is a world of too much information, threats and fake news. It's crucial knowing how to deal with situations in a positive way. Identify the opportunities and develop creative problem solving solutions. Anxiety is a subjective feeling caused by gap between what one expects and what one experiences. It comes with stress and worrying and a fear of not being able to cope with what the world asks. Emotional intelligence will help in better tackling and anxious environment.

Nonlinear–The Illusion of predictability

In a nonlinear world, we don't see a clear and obvious connection between cause and effect. In some cases, the result of an action might come with a high delay or not visible at all. Small decisions can have devastating consequences. The fact that people increasingly talk about nonlinearity again doesn't say anything about the world in which they live. The system of cause and effect will become disconnected or disproportional. The effect can reinforce the cause that generated it in a circular way. The connections inside this process might not be clear and it may be impossible to identify a clear start and a clear end.

In a non-linear world, things go back and forth successively, and at the end doesn't seem to be where it should be. The efforts of decisions on the economy, climate issues and public health may not have a date to emerge or end. The beauty of successful businesses lies in their preparedness of moving forward and back a few places in the game at any time.

Incomprehensible – The Illusion of Knowledge

Obsessive analysis of the data could overwhelm any person's ability to understand it as well as make it hard to distinguish signal from noise. The noise increases along with the difficulty to find a universal truth. It is often difficult to try to translate or understand the situation. Living in an anxious, fragile and nonlinear world makes most of the events, causes and decisions incomprehensible. Everything happens so fast that it seems more and more that we understand less. Individuals experience an incomprehensible situation when we struggle to find answers and the answers are not convincing. We try to overcome this problem by increasing the volume of data available, but this can be counterproductive. The more we try to understand an incomprehensible situation, the more we feel overwhelmed. Incomprehensible refers to people's experience that they don't understand what is going on. They can't oversee it, can't grasp it, can't interpret what happens and why. This means

they can't find answers they are looking for and, as far as they don't get answers, they can't make sense of the answers either.

When we describe a world, it says something about ourselves. We describe our difficulties with grasping and controlling the world. But BANI takes this to next level. Rather than saying something about the world, it first and foremost says something about how we perceive it. We are living in a world that's delicate, uncontrollable, unpredictable, and impossible to comprehend. Organizations should develop the Skills of their employees in order to thrive in the BANI environment. Below figure no 1, depicts the Skills required by 2030.
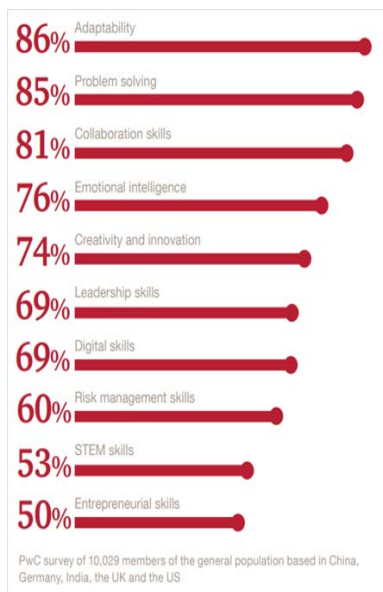

Figure 1 Skills required by 2030

Objectives
The objectives of the study are:
- To study the characteristics of BANI environment
- To explore the Skills required for survival in BANI environment
- To propose recommendations to Higher Educational Institutions to impart the required Skills among their students.

Research Methodology
The researcher adopted a non-experimental study. It is descriptive in nature and aimed at meeting the research objectives. The proposed research is descriptive and qualitative in nature. Data is collected from secondary sources. Inferences are drawn based on the available literature. BANI concept is still emerging and research articles are rarely available on the proposed framework of the study. Websites, blogs, LinkedIn, conference notes are part of data collection.

Discussion
BANI environment demands for a unique set of Skills to survive in a dynamically changing environment.

Table 3 List of Skills Required

Creativity	Individuals need to be creative in solving problems with unique solutions.
Emotional Intelligence	Understanding the emotions of self and others is a pre-requisite for survival in BANI environment.
Resilience	Organizations will encounter setbacks in BANI environment. How gracefully they keep moving forward will determine the success of any organization.
Adaptability	Organizations need to align their goals, plans and strategies to stay in the competition. Adaptability is the key to thrive in BANI environment.
Collaboration	The concept of 'I' will not exist in BANI environment. It is 'We' which will be recognised. Shared goals and shared results will flourish in BANI environment.
Continuous learning	Learning is always recommended whether in BANI or VUCA. But, what to learn, how to learn and unlearn is also a required skill.
Agility	Swiftness is needed in BANI environment. Moving quickly and adapting to changing circumstances will give a competitive advantage to the organizations.
Systems thinking	Complex interactions between different stakeholders take place in BANI environment. Individuals should be geared up to systems thinking.

Critical thinking	Individuals need to analyse complex and ambigious situations to make informed decisions.
Risk management	Anticipation and management of risk should be a Skill of high order importance in BANI environment.
Communication	Not just creative, but communicating those ideas, messages and values are equally important which calls for communication skills among employees.
Transparency	Transparency should be maintained in communicating fear of challenges and problems.
Cooperation	Synergy is the energy in BANI environment. Esprit de corps should be the voice of every team member.
Empathy	Being empathetic is always recommended especially in BANI environment. Listening and communicating emotionally will bind the organizations.

Source - Compiled by researcher

Role of Higher Educational Institutions (HEI's) in Imparting Skills Required for BANI Environment
- Curriculum redesign – Courses on critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and adaptability need to be included in the curriculum.
- Interdisciplinary courses – Interdisciplinary courses expose students to different fields of study that help them to develop systems thinking.
- Culture of innovation –HEI's should promote a culture of creativity and innovation. Hands on experience on Entrepreneurial activities, research and development will promote creativity and innovation.
- Internships – Transfer of learning takes place at internships. Students apply their theoretical knowledge and give solutions to real time problems.
- Industry partnerships –HEI's can partner with organizations that are already part of BANI environment. This will provide a platform for the students to gain insights into the skills and knowledge required for success.
- Workshops and Training – HEI's can organized workshops and training sessions to cover specific Skills required to thrive in BANI environment.
- Experiential learning – Experiential learning can help students to develop the Skills like resiliency, agility, and risk management.
- Access to technology – HEI's should design platforms where students can get access to technology and try exploring it before entering the BANI world.

Conclusion

Accepting and adapting will keep us moving. It is the responsibility of HEI's, corporates, and students to define their goals and the approached to reach their goals. Corporates require talent, this talent in nurtured in HEI's. Both industry and HEI's should go hand in hand to nurture the talent. Human resources are the only resource which appreciate in value over a period of time because of their inherent ability to acquire new skills and serve the organizations to achieve their vision. It is only the Human Capital which act as competitive advantage. In highly unpredictable environment, only one prediction is the Skills set of the Human Capital. As long as the Human Resources and equipped with the requisite Skill set, organization will flourish and cherish adding value to the lives of individuals, society and nation.

References

Abell, A. "Skills for Knowledge Environments." *Information Management Journal*, vol. 34, no. 3, 2000.

"Building Tomorrow's Workforce: Six No-Regrets Plays to make Today." PWC, https://www. pwc.com/gx/en/issues/workforce/future-of-work-and-skills.html

Collings, David G., and Kamel Mellahi. "Strategic Talent Management: A Review and Research Agenda." *Human Resource Management Review*, vol. 19, no. 4, 2009, pp. 304-13.

Davies, Beth, et al. "Competitive Advantage with a Human Dimension: From Lifelong Learning to Lifelong Employability." *Mckinsey Quarterly*, 2019.

"Future of Work." *OECD*, https://www.oecd.org/future-of-work

Hatfield, Steve, et al. "Activating the future of workplace: The Workplace Evolves to be an Input to the Work Itself." *Deloitte*, 2023.

Lippitt, G. "Developing Professional Skills and Expertise." *Training and Development Journal*, vol. 33, no. 5, 1979, pp. 66-70.

Mehra, Amit, et al. "Reskilling the Workforce, One Person at a Lifetime." *World Economic Forum*, 2021.

Mugabe, Farai. "Six Fearless Talent Choices that HR has to make in Times of BANI." *HR Congress*, 2022.

Rainie, Lee, and Janna Anderson. "The Future of Jobs and Jobs Training." *Pew Research Center*, 2017.

"VUCA is Past? What is BANI?" *Synergy Strategies*, https://www.synergystrategies.com/vuca-is-past-what-is-bani/

Ward, Paul, et al. "Adaptive Skill as the Condition Sine Qua Non of Expertise." *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2018, pp. 35-50.

Author Details

P. Gowri Kusuma, *Assistant Professor, Siva Sivani Institute of Management, Hyderabad, Telangana, India,* **Email ID**: *kusumajana@yahoo.co.in*

K.S.R. Sarma, *Assistant Professor, Siva Sivani Institute of Management, Hyderabad, Telangana, India,* **Email ID**: *sarmaramam@gmail.com*