

Bridging Campus to Corporate Mock Interviews as a Strategic Placement Tool for Enhancing Employability of Commerce Graduates

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Abstract: *In today's competitive job market, enhancing the employability of commerce graduates requires more than academic proficiency—it demands confidence, communication skills, and professional preparedness. This study evaluates the role of mock interviews as a strategic placement tool designed to bridge the gap between campus learning and corporate expectations. Conducted with 40 final-year B.Com and M.Com students at Sir Parashurambhau College (Empowered Autonomous), Pune, during the first term of the academic year 2025–26, the activity provided experiential exposure to real interview environments through structured simulations and expert feedback. Data were collected through a structured Google Form comprising both quantitative and qualitative components. Analysis revealed that mock interviews significantly enhanced students' confidence, communication, and professional behavior, while also reducing interview-related anxiety and improving awareness of industry expectations. Students particularly valued the feedback mechanism and practical insights gained through the process. The findings affirm that mock interviews are an effective experiential learning practice that transforms theoretical preparation into applied employability competence. The study recommends institutionalizing mock interviews as a core component of placement training to strengthen the campus-to-corporate transition and improve graduate readiness for professional success.*

Keywords: *Mock Interviews, Employability, Commerce Students, Placement Readiness, Communication Skills, Professional Behavior, Industry Expectations, Feedback Mechanism, Experiential Learning, Higher Education*

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive job market, it is important for commerce students to be well-prepared for real job interviews. While classroom learning helps them gain subject knowledge, many students lack the

practical skills and confidence needed to perform well in interviews. To solve this problem, mock interviews are now being used by many colleges and placement cells as a useful way to train students.

A mock interview is a practice session that looks and feels like a real interview. It gives students a chance to experience interview situations, improve their speaking and presentation skills, and receive feedback on how they can do better. These sessions help reduce fear, build confidence, and increase awareness about what companies expect from fresh graduates.

This study is based on mock interviews conducted for final-year B.Com and M.Com students during the first term of the academic year 2025–26. The activity was organized by the Training and Placement Cell to help students prepare early and get enough time to improve before facing actual campus interviews.

Many researchers and experts support the use of mock interviews. Learning theories like Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory and Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory explain how students learn better by doing and practicing. Guidelines from NAAC and AICTE also suggest that colleges should include such activities to improve student employability.

This research aims to find out how helpful these mock interviews were for students. It looks at how the interviews improved their confidence, communication, professional behavior, and readiness for real job interviews. The study also checks how students felt about the feedback they received and what challenges they faced during the process.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The transition from campus to corporate is often hindered by the lack of real-world readiness among commerce graduates. Mock interviews have emerged as a critical pedagogical tool to bridge this gap. The following literature reviews offer theoretical backing, empirical evidence, and institutional insights supporting the role of mock interviews in employability enhancement.

a. Theoretical Foundation:

- [1] Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory explains how students learn through experience, reflection, and experimentation. Mock interviews embody this learning cycle, enabling commerce students to simulate, evaluate, and refine their performance.
- [2] Bandura's self-efficacy theory underpins the psychological benefit of mock interviews. Through simulated experience and positive reinforcement, students gain confidence in their ability to perform well in real interviews, reducing fear and anxiety.
- [3] Schon emphasizes reflective practice as a tool for professional development. In mock interviews, reflective feedback helps learners critically assess their strengths and gaps, improving their future performance in actual corporate interviews.

b. Role of Mock Interviews in Employability:

- [4] This study affirms the increasing relevance of soft skills and states that employability is greatly enhanced by practices like mock interviews that promote interpersonal skills, communication, and professionalism.
- [5] Participation in structured career-preparation activities, including mock interviews, directly improves job acquisition rates among commerce and business students.
- [6] The paper reports a positive correlation between mock interviews and improved student confidence, articulation, and non-verbal cues—essential for corporate readiness.
- [7] Mock interviews created tangible improvements in communication, dressing, and behavioral etiquette. Students who had

2+ mock sessions performed better in real placement rounds than those who didn't.

c. Student Perception and Feedback Mechanism:

- [8] This empirical study from Indian institutions shows that students benefit significantly from feedback-driven mock interviews. Students identified personal weaknesses and built confidence through repeated exposure.
- [9] The paper highlights a framework for core employability skills and advocates for interactive, feedback-rich training mechanisms like mock interviews for meaningful student development.
- [10] The study showed a significant rise in self-confidence and placement conversion after students participated in two or more mock interviews followed by structured feedback.
- [11] Analyzes student reflections on mock interviews and finds that interactive post-interview feedback sessions were the most transformative part of the exercise.

d. Institutional Guidelines and Policy Recommendations:

- [12] NAAC guidelines recommend conducting placement-focused activities such as mock interviews to improve student employability, performance metrics, and graduate progression scores in accreditation cycles.
- [13] AICTE stresses the need for structured interventions like interview simulations, resume building, and mock interview feedback as essential for transforming graduates into industry-ready professionals.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed-method research design to evaluate the effectiveness of mock interviews in enhancing the employability skills of commerce students. The approach integrates both quantitative and qualitative techniques to capture measurable outcomes and student perceptions, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the activity.

- a. Research Design and Purpose: The study was designed to assess how mock interviews contribute to the development of students'

confidence, communication skills, professional behavior, and interview readiness. The mock interviews were structured to simulate real corporate interactions, enabling students to experience the interview process in an authentic, feedback-oriented environment.

- b. **Participants:** The research was conducted among 40 final-year commerce students (B.Com and M.Com) from Sir Parashurambhau College (Empowered Autonomous), Pune. The participants were selected based on their voluntary involvement in the mock interview sessions organized by the Training and Placement Cell during the first term of the academic year 2025–26. The activity aimed to provide early exposure, allowing students sufficient time to reflect and improve before participating in actual campus placements.
- c. **Data Collection:** Primary data were collected immediately after the mock interviews through a structured Google Form questionnaire designed by the researchers. The instrument included both Likert-scale and open-ended questions, focusing on the following key dimensions:
 - Improvement in confidence before and after the mock interview
 - Development of communication and presentation skills
 - Understanding of professional behavior and industry expectations
 - Usefulness of structured feedback received
 - Reduction in interview-related anxiety and fear
 - Overall readiness for placement and corporate interviews

This structure allowed for both quantitative assessment of improvement levels and qualitative insights into student reflections and experiences.

- d. **Data Analysis:** The collected responses were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques to identify trends and patterns across student

perceptions. Percentage distributions were used to interpret Likert-scale data related to confidence, communication, and readiness. In addition, thematic analysis was applied to open-ended responses to identify recurring themes such as increased self-awareness, value of feedback, reduction in anxiety, and alignment with industry expectations. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provided a holistic evaluation of how mock interviews contribute to employability enhancement and readiness for real-world interviews.

- e. **Research Scope and Limitations:** The study focuses on commerce students from a single institution and within one academic term. While findings strongly indicate positive outcomes, broader generalization would require replication across disciplines and institutions. Nonetheless, the insights serve as a strong empirical foundation for institutional policy and curriculum design focused on experiential learning and employability development.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION BASED ON DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

- a. **Aspects of Mock Interviews Found Most Useful by Students:** To gain deeper insights into which components of the mock interview exercise contributed most to students' learning and preparation, participants were asked to identify the aspects they found most useful. The question allowed multiple selections to capture a comprehensive view of perceived benefits across different dimensions of the activity. The responses aimed to highlight specific areas—such as communication improvement, confidence building, and professional behavior — that students valued the most in strengthening their readiness for real corporate interviews. The consolidated results presented in Table 1 summarize students' feedback on the most useful aspects of the mock interview experience.

Table 1: Aspects of Mock Interviews Found Most Useful by Students (*n* - 40)

Particulars	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Answering common HR questions	6	15%
Answering technical/subject-related questions	6	15%
Building confidence for real interviews	10	25%
Experiencing a real interview-like environment	6	15%

Gaining awareness of mistakes to avoid in interviews	6	15%
Handling unexpected or difficult questions	7	17.5%
Identifying strengths and weaknesses	6	15%
Improving communication skills (clarity, fluency, articulation)	9	22.5%
Learning how to structure better answers (STAR method)	8	20%
Learning professional behavior and body language	7	17.5%
Practicing self-introduction and personal pitch	9	22.5%
Receiving expert/panel feedback	10	25%
Reducing interview anxiety and fear	8	20%
Time management while answering	2	5%
Understanding how to dress and present professionally	4	10%
Understanding industry expectations	4	10%

Table 1 presents students' feedback on the most useful aspects of the mock interview experience. The responses indicate that the most valued components were building confidence for real interviews (25%) and receiving expert or panel feedback (25%), followed by improving communication skills and practicing self-introduction and personal pitch (22.5% each). Other frequently identified aspects included reducing interview anxiety, learning to structure better answers, and developing professional behavior and body language. Key insights reveal that students considered the mock interview exercise highly beneficial in strengthening self-confidence, enhancing communication and presentation abilities, and translating theoretical knowledge into practical interview performance. The activity not only familiarized them with real interview dynamics

but also helped them identify personal strengths and weaknesses, refine their responses through expert feedback, and develop a more professional outlook aligned with corporate expectations.

b. Student Perceptions on Confidence, Communication Skills, and Placement Readiness: To assess the holistic impact of mock interviews on students' employability competencies, participants were asked to share their views on three core dimensions—confidence building, communication skill enhancement, and overall placement readiness. Their consolidated responses are presented in Table 3, reflecting how effectively the mock interviews contributed to these key developmental areas.

Table 2: Student Perceptions on Confidence, Communication Skills, and Placement Readiness (*n* -40)

Particulars	Response Options	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Q1. Improvement in confidence for facing real interviews	Huge improvement	6	15%
	Moderate improvement	9	22.5%
	Significant improvement	22	55%
	Slight improvement	3	7.5%
	No improvement	0	0%
Q2. Improvement in communication skills	Not at all	0	0%
	Slightly	0	0%
	Moderately	3	7.5%
	Considerably	22	55%
	Greatly	15	37.5%
Q3. Feeling of preparedness for placement interviews	Not prepared	0	0%
	Slightly prepared	6	15%
	Moderately prepared	9	22.5%
	Well prepared	19	47.5%
	Very well prepared	6	15%

Table 2 presents consolidated student feedback on the extent to which mock interviews improved their confidence, communication skills, and overall

readiness for placement interviews. The responses indicate a strong positive impact across all three dimensions. A majority of students reported

significant improvement in confidence (55%), considerable enhancement in communication skills (55%), and a sense of being well prepared for placement interviews (47.5%). Notably, none of the respondents indicated “no improvement” or “not prepared,” highlighting the universal benefit of the exercise. Key insights reveal that mock interviews played a transformative role in strengthening students’ confidence, sharpening their communication and presentation abilities, and enhancing their overall readiness to face real corporate interviews. The activity not only reduced anxiety but also equipped students with essential interpersonal and professional skills, making them more competent and self-assured candidates for future placement opportunities.

- c. **Student Awareness of Industry Expectations and Professional Behavior:** To understand how mock interviews influenced students’ understanding of workplace professionalism and industry standards, participants were asked two questions focusing on professional behavior and etiquette as well as industry-specific expectations. Their combined responses are summarized in Table 3, providing insights into how effectively the mock interviews bridged the gap between academic preparation and real-world corporate expectations.

Table 3: Student Awareness of Industry Expectations and Professional Behavior (*n* - 40)

Particulars	Response Options	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Q1. Understanding of professional behavior and etiquette	Not at all	0	0%
	Slightly	6	15%
	Moderately	6	15%
	Considerably	19	47.5%
	Very much	9	22.5%
Q2. Awareness of industry-specific expectations	Not at all	0	0%
	Slightly	6	15%
	Moderately	12	30%
	Considerably	13	32.5%
	Very much	9	22.5%

Table 3 presents students’ responses regarding their awareness of industry expectations and understanding of professional behavior developed through the mock interview exercise. The data indicates that 47.5% of students felt the mock interview considerably improved their understanding of professional behavior and etiquette, while 32.5% gained considerable awareness of industry-specific expectations. Around 22.5% in both cases reported a very high level of understanding, and none of the respondents selected “Not at all,” reflecting the positive influence of the exercise on professional readiness. Key insights reveal that mock interviews effectively familiarized students with real-world corporate norms and expectations. The activity helped them internalize appropriate behavior, body language, and communication etiquette expected in professional settings. Moreover, by simulating actual interview

scenarios, students gained valuable insights into industry standards and hiring expectations, thus enhancing their overall employability and workplace preparedness.

- d. **Student Feedback on Mock Interview Experience, Anxiety Reduction, and Confidence Level:** To evaluate the overall psychological and skill-based impact of the mock interview exercise, students were asked about the usefulness of feedback received, the extent to which the activity reduced their anxiety about real interviews, and how their confidence levels changed after participation. The consolidated responses, presented in Table 4, provide a comprehensive overview of how the mock interview process contributed to enhancing students’ self-assurance, reducing fear, and improving overall interview performance.

Table 4: Student Feedback on Usefulness of Feedback, Anxiety Reduction, and Confidence Level (*n* -40)

Particulars	Response Options	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Q1. Usefulness of feedback in improving performance	Not useful	0	0%
	Slightly useful	6	15%
	Moderately useful	6	15%
	Very useful	19	47.5%
	Extremely useful	9	22.5%
Q2. Reduction in anxiety about real interviews	Not at all	0	0%
	Slightly	0	0%
	Moderately	3	7.5%
	Considerably	19	47.5%
	Significantly	18	45%
Q3. Confidence level after the mock interview	Much less confident	0	0%
	Less confident	2	15%
	Same as before	0	0%
	More confident	9	70%
	Much more confident	2	15%

Table 5 presents consolidated feedback from students on the usefulness of the feedback received during mock interviews, the extent to which the activity helped reduce anxiety about real interviews, and the improvement in their confidence levels afterward. The data shows a strong positive response across all three dimensions. Nearly 70% of students rated the feedback as “Very Useful” or “Extremely Useful”, indicating that constructive evaluation played a crucial role in enhancing their interview performance. Similarly, 92.5% of respondents reported that the mock interviews either considerably or significantly reduced their anxiety, suggesting that repeated exposure to interview-like settings helped them overcome fear and nervousness. In terms of confidence, a combined 85% of students felt “More Confident” or “Much More Confident” after the exercise, highlighting the psychological benefits of experiential learning. Key insights reveal that the mock interview sessions were instrumental in strengthening students’ self-belief and emotional readiness for real corporate interviews. The structured feedback mechanism, along with practical exposure and supportive evaluation, enabled students to identify weaknesses, refine their approach, and face future interviews with greater poise, composure, and confidence.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study clearly demonstrates that mock interviews serve as an effective experiential learning and placement-training strategy for enhancing the employability of commerce students. By simulating real interview conditions, the exercise enabled

participants to strengthen their confidence, communication, and presentation skills, while also improving their understanding of professional behavior and corporate expectations.

Findings from the analysis reveal that students perceived mock interviews as highly beneficial in reducing interview-related anxiety, identifying personal strengths and weaknesses, and developing the self-assurance necessary to face real corporate interactions. The structured feedback mechanism played a pivotal role in this process, allowing students to reflect, refine, and improve their performance in a supportive environment.

The results affirm that mock interviews are not merely preparatory exercises but transformative learning experiences that foster personal and professional growth. They bridge the gap between academic instruction and employability outcomes by combining practical exposure with reflective learning.

From an institutional perspective, the study underscores the importance of institutionalizing mock interviews as a regular, feedback-driven component of placement training within higher education. Integrating such activities into the commerce curriculum can significantly enhance graduate employability, placement readiness, and industry alignment.

In conclusion, mock interviews emerge as a strategic pedagogical tool that empowers students to approach real corporate interviews with clarity, competence, and confidence. Their implementation represents a vital step toward realizing the larger goal of bridging the campus-to-corporate transition

and cultivating industry-ready graduates for the dynamic world of work.

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