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RESEARCH ON A MODEL OF KEY SUCCESS FACTORS STRATEGY FOR EMPLOYMENT COMPETENCY FOR BUSINESS MANAGEMENT FIELDS IN BEIJING

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ABSTRACT

In the context of accelerating digital transformation and increasingly competitive labor markets, enhancing the employability of professional postgraduates has become a pressing concern for higher education institutions and employers. This study focuses on Master of Business Administration (MBA) graduates in Beijing to investigate the key factors that shape their employability outcomes. The purpose of this research is to construct and empirically validate a comprehensive model of employability that integrates traditional competency constructs with emerging digital and psychological capabilities. Data were collected from 440 valid responses through a structured questionnaire distributed over a three-month period. The study employed structural equation modeling (SEM) to test both direct and mediating relationships among five key dimensions: competency type, potential ability, self-efficacy, digital and technological subversive ability, and employability. The findings reveal that all five dimensions significantly influence employability, with competency type serving as a central mediator for the effects of potential ability, self-efficacy, and digital capacity. In particular, digital and technological subversive ability demonstrates both direct and indirect impacts, highlighting its strategic importance in the current job market. The study contributes theoretically by expanding the employability framework through the integration of digital disruption and psychological constructs, and offers practical implications for universities, employers, and graduates aiming to foster job readiness in the digital era. Future research may further explore longitudinal dynamics, industry-specific variations, and cross-regional applicability of the proposed model.

KEYWORDS: Employability, MBA Graduates, Competency Type, Self-Efficacy, Digital Capability.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, China's graduate education landscape has undergone significant structural transformation, marked by the rapid expansion of professional master's programs. According to data released by the Beijing Municipal Education Commission, the number of full-time graduates from universities in Beijing is expected to reach approximately 296,000 in 2023, including 160,800 graduate students (masters and doctoral), surpassing undergraduate graduates by over 25,000 for the first time (Tang, 2025). This demographic shift is driven in part by the prolonged impact of the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in 2020, which suppressed outbound study opportunities and motivated more students to pursue domestic postgraduate education (Cheng & Agyeiwaah, 2022). Concurrently, labor market demand for high-level, practice-oriented professionals has surged, particularly in the fields of technology, finance, and business management (Rimma et al., 2020). In this context, Master of Business Administration (MBA) graduates have become a focal point in the discourse on graduate employability and workforce alignment in China's urban innovation hubs such as Beijing.

To meet these structural challenges, the Ministry of Education has introduced several national-level policy frameworks, including the *Graduate Education Quality Improvement Plan* and the *Guidelines for Enhancing Professional Degree Graduate Competence* (Tang, 2022). These policies emphasize the integration of enterprise collaboration, digital capability training, and competency-based education models in professional degree programs. Beijing's municipal employment promotion initiatives, such as the *Beijing Employment Service Action Plan for University Graduates (2023)*, further encourage universities to offer targeted career support and skill development programs for professional master's students (Zhang & Zhou, 2025). As a result, MBA programs across Beijing's 16 major universities—including comprehensive, technical, finance, and media-oriented institutions—have increasingly aligned their curricula with market-oriented training in project execution, communication, and strategic management.

However, despite policy support and rising enrollment numbers, MBA graduates continue to face several critical obstacles in achieving successful employment transitions. Empirical investigations reveal that while these students often possess solid disciplinary knowledge and applied project experience, they experience difficulties in translating academic training into workplace performance, particularly in digital innovation tasks, adaptive learning, and self-regulated problem-solving (Hero & Lindfors, 2019; Sharma et al., 2024). These challenges are compounded by mismatches between traditional knowledge delivery models and the complex competency demands of employers in high-velocity sectors. For example, some graduates struggle to integrate cross-disciplinary knowledge or demonstrate sufficient resilience in high-pressure professional environments (Godwin et al., 2025). These structural and individual-level challenges point to an urgent need for a systematic framework to evaluate and enhance the employability of professional master's degree holders.

Although the topic of graduate employability has garnered growing academic interest, most existing studies have focused on undergraduates or academic master's students, with limited empirical attention given to professional master's cohorts such as MBA students (Blackburn, 2011; Thaller et al., 2024). Prior research tends to conceptualize employability through general constructs such as core skills or labor market fit (Lange et al., 2021; Suleman, 2018), but lacks analytical depth regarding the role of psychological traits (e.g., self-efficacy), latent capacities (e.g., potential ability), or digital transformation readiness (e.g., digital subversive ability). Moreover, the application of validated modeling techniques, such as structural equation modeling (SEM), to explore the internal structure and causal relationships among these dimensions

remains rare in the Chinese context. Therefore, a competency-oriented analytical approach is needed to enrich the theoretical understanding of employability and offer practical solutions for capacity development.

This study aims to address the above gaps by constructing and validating a competency-based model of employability for MBA graduates in Beijing. Specifically, it integrates four dimensions—competency type, potential ability, self-efficacy, and digital and technological subversive ability—into a conceptual framework for analyzing graduate employability. The research objectives are:

1）To Study the Current Situation for Employment Ability Criteria for Business Management Fields in Beijing.

2）To Study the Key Success factors Strategy for Employment Ability for Business Management Fields in Beijing.

3）To Present a Model of Key Success factors Strategy for Employment Ability for Business Management Fields in Beijing.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 provides a comprehensive review of the relevant literature on graduate employability and competency-based frameworks. Section 3 outlines the research methodology, including the research design, data collection procedures, measurement instruments, and analytical approach. Section 4 presents the empirical results derived from the structural equation modeling analysis. Section 5 discusses the key findings in light of existing theories and practical implications. Finally, Section 6 concludes the paper by summarizing the main contributions, addressing research limitations, and proposing directions for future investigation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical foundation of this study is constructed upon four complementary frameworks: Competency Theory (Boyatzis, 1991), Employability Theory (Yorke, 2006), Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1977), and the Digital Disruption Competency Framework (Wirtz et al., 2022). These theories collectively enable a multidimensional understanding of graduate employability by incorporating observable capabilities, psychological dispositions, and digital adaptation skills. Competency Theory emphasizes that job performance depends not only on knowledge and skills but also on deeper motivational and behavioral attributes, such as adaptability, execution capacity, and stress tolerance—all of which are captured under the construct of ability type in this study (Boyatzis, 1991; Kurz & Bartram, 2002). Employability Theory conceptualizes employability as a dynamic, developable set of achievements that includes core knowledge, transferable skills, and personal attributes (Williams et al., 2016; Yorke, 2006). It provides the overarching framework for evaluating how these internal capabilities affect labor market outcomes in the context of higher education.

Self-Efficacy Theory contributes by highlighting the role of cognitive self-beliefs in shaping professional behavior. As defined by Bandura (1977), self-efficacy influences task engagement, persistence, and coping with workplace challenges—making it a key factor in professional adaptation and performance. In parallel, the Digital Disruption Competency Framework addresses the growing demand for technological agility and digital innovation capacity in modern workplaces, especially in high-velocity environments like urban China (Lee & Meng, 2021). This framework supports the inclusion of digital and technological subversive ability as a core employability driver. These four theoretical strands, though developed in varied disciplinary contexts such as psychology, education, and organizational studies, converge meaningfully to support a competency-based model of employability for MBA graduates. Their integration reflects the complex reality that employability is no longer a static trait but a composite of skills, mindsets, and adaptation capabilities required for sustained career success in digitally disrupted and highly competitive labor markets (Berniak-Woźny et

al., 2023).

The concept of ability type stems from Competency Theory (Boyatzis, 1991), which classifies individual capabilities into distinct but complementary dimensions such as basic ability, vocational skill, potential ability, and psychological resources like self-regulation and resilience. These multi-dimensional abilities are viewed as core predictors of individual performance and adaptability in the labor market. Prior studies have confirmed that the composition of ability types significantly contributes to employability in fields such as engineering, health sciences, and education, especially when integrated into outcome-based education and employer-aligned training models (Malekshahian et al., 2025; Winberg et al., 2020). In China, policy initiatives such as the National Education Development Plan (2021–2035) have emphasized competency-driven professional education, yet there remains limited empirical evidence on how diverse ability types influence employability outcomes among MBA graduates—particularly in high-density labor markets such as Beijing. Given this gap, the present study proposes that the integrated ability type of MBA graduates directly influences their employability, as these competencies determine their readiness for complex tasks, organizational fit, and career advancement.
Therefore, this paper proposes the hypothesis:

H1: The ability type directly affects the employability of Beijing master of business administration graduates.

The ability to navigate and leverage digital and technological disruption has become a core dimension of modern employability, particularly for business graduates facing rapidly evolving organizational demands. Grounded in dynamic capabilities theory (Teece, 2007) and the digital competence framework (Wirtz et al., 2022), the concept of digital and technological subversion ability captures an individual's capacity to adapt to emerging technologies, integrate digital tools into problem-solving, and lead innovation-driven change. Prior studies have shown that digital agility significantly enhances job readiness and career progression, especially in digitally intensive sectors such as finance, e-commerce, and strategic consulting (Salmela et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). In China, national initiatives such as "Digital China" and the "Smart+ MBA" policy framework have emphasized the cultivation of tech-savvy managerial talent (Brown et al., 2021). However, empirical evidence on the direct relationship between digital subversion ability and employability remains scarce in the context of Beijing's MBA programs. Addressing this gap, the present study posits the following hypothesis:

H2: The ability of digital and technological subversion directly affects the employability of Beijing master of business administration graduates.

Potential ability refers to an individual's latent capacity for growth, adaptability, and long-term value creation, often reflected in traits such as creativity, problem-solving initiative, learning agility, and leadership potential. The concept originates from competency-based education theory (Boyatzis, 1991) and is further supported by career adaptability theory (Savickas, 1997), which highlights how forward-looking traits enable individuals to anticipate change and proactively construct career pathways. Numerous empirical studies have shown that potential ability—especially when linked to innovation mindset and continuous learning orientation—significantly enhances employability in knowledge-intensive and volatile labor markets (Bodolica & Spraggon, 2021; Koporcic et al., 2025). In the context of postgraduate business education, potential ability is increasingly seen as a differentiator in talent recruitment, with employers seeking candidates who demonstrate strategic vision and the ability to grow into leadership roles (Nurmala & Utin Nina Hermina, 2024; Tomlinson & Anderson, 2021).In China, policy initiatives such as the National Innovation-Driven Development Strategy and MBA curriculum reforms emphasize

the nurturing of future-oriented, high-potential talent. Yet, despite its recognized importance, there is limited empirical research examining how potential ability directly contributes to employability among MBA graduates in competitive regions like Beijing. To address this gap, the current study proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: The potential ability directly affects the employability of Beijing master of business administration graduates, which has a significant impact.

Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their capacity to execute tasks and achieve goals, is a foundational construct in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2014). It plays a pivotal role in shaping motivation, career decision-making, and performance in dynamic work environments. In the employability literature, self-efficacy is consistently recognized as a psychological resource that enhances confidence in job search behavior, adaptability to changing work demands, and resilience under pressure (Gerçek, 2024; Li et al., 2022; Souto et al., 2022). Empirical studies across various educational and cultural contexts have confirmed that higher levels of self-efficacy are positively associated with perceived and actual employability outcomes, particularly among university graduates and early-career professionals (Gerçek, 2024; Kim et al., 2024; Petruzziello et al., 2024). In the business education domain, MBA students with strong self-efficacy tend to exhibit more proactive learning behavior, stronger leadership orientation, and higher career mobility (Arghode et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2022).Despite these insights, limited research has examined the role of self-efficacy as a direct predictor of employability among MBA graduates in metropolitan Chinese labor markets, where high performance expectations and psychological pressures coexist. Given the increasing emphasis on psychological capital in professional development and recruitment practices, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H4: Self-efficacy has a direct impact on the employability of Beijing master of business administration graduates.

While digital and technological subversion ability is often considered a standalone predictor of employability, recent theoretical developments suggest its influence may be mediated by how individuals internalize and express such capabilities through different ability types. According to the competency-based framework (Benayoune, 2017) and dynamic skill acquisition theory (DeKeyser, 2020), the transformation of raw technological awareness into employable competencies depends on the learner's dominant ability type—such as cognitive, interpersonal, or functional skills. For example, a graduate with high digital subversion capacity may only become employable when this is converted into applicable vocational skills (e.g., data analytics, digital project management) or soft skills (e.g., virtual collaboration), depending on the individual's ability profile. Empirical studies have echoed this view by demonstrating that the employability impact of digital competence is contingent on how it is channeled through context-specific skills and behavioral competencies (Marra, 2022; Tomlinson, 2021). In the context of MBA education in China, where students possess diverse backgrounds and learning orientations, this mediating mechanism has not been sufficiently tested.

To explore this indirect relationship, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: The ability of digital and technological subversion indirectly affects the employability of Beijing master of business administration graduates through their ability types.

Potential ability, often conceptualized as an individual's latent capacity for growth, adaptability, and innovation, plays a pivotal role in long-term career development and strategic talent management (Marlapudi & Lenka, 2024; Yildiz et al., 2024). Unlike immediately observable vocational skills, potential ability encompasses traits such as learning agility, creativity, and openness to feedback, which may not directly translate into employability unless mediated

by functional or interpersonal competencies (Berniak-Woźny et al., 2023). Drawing from the competency-based human resource theory and career construction theory (Savickas, 1997), the process of converting potential into actual employment outcomes typically depends on how such latent traits are expressed through concrete ability types—be it through enhanced communication, analytical reasoning, or leadership behaviors.Recent research suggests that while potential ability forms a critical foundation for employability, its impact is often indirect, requiring development into recognized and applicable skill sets that employers can readily assess (Suleman, 2021). Within the specific context of MBA graduates in Beijing, this transformation may vary according to educational background, exposure to professional training, and personal development pathways. Yet, few empirical studies have investigated this mediating mechanism, leaving a notable gap in the understanding of how potential ability operates through ability typologies to shape employability.

To address this, the present study proposes the following hypothesis:

H6: Potential ability indirectly affects the employability of Beijing master of business administration graduates through ability types.

Self-efficacy, defined by Bandura (2014) as an individual's belief in their capacity to organize and execute actions required to manage prospective situations, has long been recognized as a critical psychological resource in career development and performance outcomes. High self-efficacy is positively correlated with proactive job-seeking behaviors, persistence in the face of setbacks, and adaptive performance in complex work environments (Fan et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2025). However, the influence of self-efficacy on employability is often indirect, operating through the development and expression of specific competencies aligned with one's dominant ability type—such as analytical reasoning, communication skills, or task execution. The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) emphasizes that efficacy beliefs shape individuals' learning experiences and skill development trajectories, which in turn affect career outcomes (Akinlolu et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2022). In the context of MBA graduates in Beijing, self-efficacy may motivate individuals to acquire or strengthen particular types of abilities—such as leadership (interpersonal), digital literacy (cognitive), or task-specific skills (functional)—which subsequently enhance their employability. Yet, existing literature has not sufficiently explored the mediating role of ability types in this psychological-behavioral-employment linkage.

Therefore, this study posits the following hypothesis:

H7: Self-efficacy indirectly affects the employability of Beijing master of business administration graduates through their ability types.

In summary, the reviewed literature underscores the multifaceted nature of employability in contemporary labor markets, particularly in the context of digitally disrupted, high-performance environments such as Beijing. By synthesizing four theoretical perspectives—Competency Theory, Employability Theory, Self-Efficacy Theory, and the Digital Disruption Competency Framework—this study constructs a comprehensive framework that links observable ability types, psychological attributes, and digital capacities to graduate employability. Despite the increasing scholarly and policy attention to competency-based education and digital transformation in China, empirical research remains limited regarding how these internal factors interact—both directly and indirectly—to influence employment outcomes among MBA graduates. This theoretical synthesis not only informs the formulation of seven interrelated hypotheses but also provides a robust foundation for the methodological design that follows. The next section introduces the research model, variable measurements, data collection procedures, and analytical strategies

employed to empirically test the proposed relationships.

Based on the theoretical foundations and the hypothesized relationships discussed above, this study proposes a conceptual framework titled "The Employability Impact Model of Competency Structure in MBA Graduates", as illustrated in Figure 1.

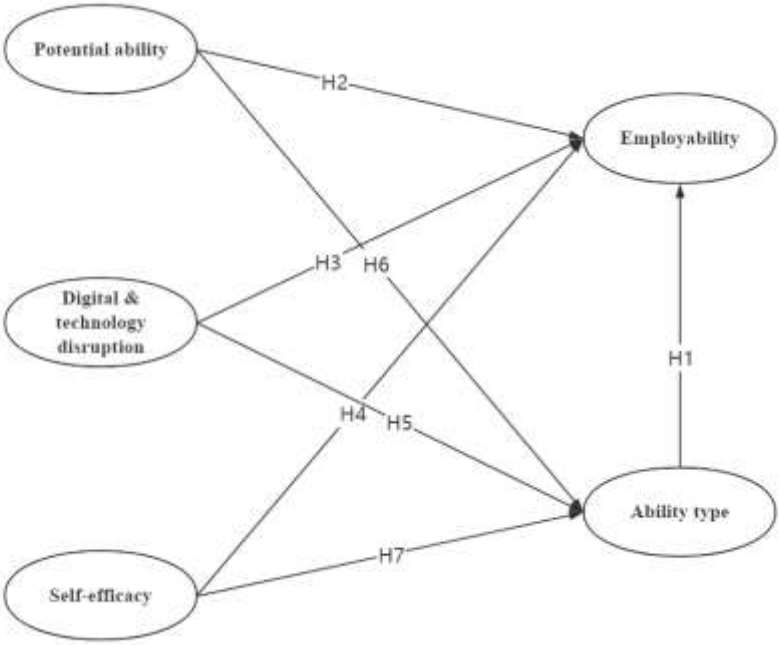

Figure 1: The Employability Impact Model of Competency Structure in MBA Graduates.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative research methodology, using a structured questionnaire survey to empirically examine the factors influencing the employability of MBA graduates in Beijing. The research model integrates four core constructs—ability type, potential ability, digital and technological subversion ability, and self-efficacy—to explore their direct and indirect effects on employability. The target population for this study comprises MBA graduates from business schools in Beijing, a group characterized by high academic training, management-oriented career orientation, and direct exposure to both traditional and emerging competency demands.

A stratified purposive sampling method was used to select participants who had obtained MBA degrees from 2020 to 2022 in Beijing, ensuring diverse representation across institutions, industries, and career stages. The questionnaire was distributed via professional alumni networks, MBA forums, and institutional mailing lists. A total of 512 responses were collected, of which 440 were valid, yielding an effective response rate of 85.9%. The final sample adequately reflects the heterogeneity of Beijing's MBA graduate pool in terms of gender, industry sectors, and years of work experience.

The survey instrument consisted of six sections. The first section gathered demographic information. The subsequent five sections measured the core variables using well-established and validated scales. The measurement of ability type followed the framework developed by Boyatzis (1991), encompassing cognitive ability, emotional competence, and behavioral skill sets, with 12 items. The potential ability scale was adapted from Benayoune (2017) competency iceberg model, comprising 9 items that reflect values, traits, and self-motivation. The digital and technological subversion ability construct, based on Malchenko et al. (2020)'s

digital capability framework, included 8 items capturing respondents' adaptability to digital disruption and innovative tools. Self-efficacy was measured using the General Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995), with 10 items. Finally, employability was measured through a 9-item scale derived from the work of Fugate et al. (2004), covering career identity, personal adaptability, and human/social capital.

A pilot test was conducted prior to the formal survey to ensure the clarity, reliability, and validity of the instrument. A group of 30 MBA graduates were invited to complete the questionnaire and provide feedback. Based on their input, minor adjustments were made to the wording of certain items to enhance comprehensibility and contextual relevance. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all subscales exceeded 0.80 in the pilot test, confirming the internal consistency of the measures.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Statistical Results of Sample Basic Information

The demographic and institutional profiles of the 440 valid respondents provide a comprehensive view of the MBA graduate population in Beijing, allowing for a robust examination of employability-related factors across gender, age, educational background, and employment context.

In terms of gender distribution, the sample is relatively balanced, with 232 male respondents (52.7%) and 208 female respondents (47.3%). This parity ensures the gender representativeness of the results and facilitates further gender-based analysis of employability attributes.

With regard to age, the largest group of respondents falls within the 30–40 age bracket (38.0%), followed by those under 30 years old (26.1%) and those aged 40–50 (23.2%). A smaller segment of respondents (12.7%) are over 50 years old. This age structure aligns with the typical career development trajectory of MBA graduates, capturing both early-career and mid-career professionals, which enhances the generalizability of the study's findings across career stages.

Regarding educational institutions, the sample reflects a diverse academic background. Graduates from universities of science and engineering constitute the largest share (31.1%), followed by those from universities of finance and economics (25.7%) and comprehensive universities (25.0%). Graduates from agriculture and forestry universities (10.7%) and media universities (7.5%) are less represented. This disciplinary diversity allows for the exploration of how institutional types may influence the development of different competency structures and perceived employability.

In terms of employment sectors, private enterprises dominate the sample (40.0%), indicating that many MBA graduates are engaging with market-driven organizational contexts. This is followed by foreign-owned enterprises (19.8%) and joint ventures (16.8%), both of which reflect internationalized employment environments that likely place high demands on cross-cultural adaptability and digital competence. State-owned enterprises (14.8%) and government agencies (8.6%) are also represented, enabling comparative analysis across sectors with differing organizational structures and competency expectations.

Overall, the sample distribution suggests a high level of heterogeneity, which strengthens the empirical analysis by enabling multidimensional comparisons of employability perceptions and influencing factors across gender, age, institutional, and organizational dimensions.

Table 1: Basic Information of The Sample of Master of Business Administration Graduates' Employability Survey.

project	quantity	Percentage (%)
gender		
male	232	52.7

woman	208	47.3
age		
< 30 years old	115	26.1
30-40 years old	167	38.0
40-50 years old	102	23.2
Over 50 years old	56	12.7
graduated institutions		
Comprehensive universities	110	25.0
University of science and engineering	137	31.1
Agriculture and forestry universities	47	10.7
University of finance and economics	113	25.7
Media universities	33	7.5
Work unit type		
state-owned enterprise	65	14.8
government agency	38	8.6
private enterprise	176	40.0
full foreign-owned enterprises	87	19.8
joint venture	74	16.8

4.2. Questionnaire Discrimination and Reliability

4.2.1. Correlation Analysis of Variables

To preliminarily examine the relationships among the main constructs of this study, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted between employability and five core independent variables: ability type, employability cognition, potential ability, self-efficacy, and digital and technological subversive ability. The results are presented in Table 2 and reveal statistically significant and positive correlations across all variable pairs at the 0.01 significance level (two-tailed), indicating strong inter-variable associations.

Most notably, ability type demonstrates an extremely strong positive correlation with employability ($r = .914$, $p < .01$), suggesting that the classification and structure of one's abilities play a foundational role in shaping MBA graduates' employment readiness. Similarly, employability cognition—as a specific subdimension—exhibits the highest correlation coefficient with employability ($r = .932$, $p < .01$), underscoring its conceptual closeness and potential mediating role in the relationship between upstream traits and actual employability outcomes.

Both potential ability ($r = .862$, $p < .01$) and self-efficacy ($r = .862$, $p < .01$) show strong positive correlations with employability, supporting the hypothesis that internal cognitive and latent psychological resources are important antecedents to perceived and realized employability. The equivalence of correlation coefficients between potential ability and self-efficacy also suggests their parallel contributions in shaping graduates' self-assessed market readiness.

Meanwhile, digital and technological subversive ability also exhibits a strong positive correlation with employability ($r = .846$, $p < .01$), implying that in the context of digital transformation and disruptive innovation, technical adaptability and innovation capability have become vital components of contemporary employability.

It is further observed that all independent variables are significantly correlated with each other, with the strongest inter-variable correlation appearing between ability type and employability cognition ($r = .780$), and between ability type and digital and technological subversive ability ($r = .782$), indicating potential multicollinearity and reinforcing the need for a structural equation model (SEM) to verify direct and indirect paths among them.

Overall, these correlation results validate the theoretical model's proposed relationships and provide empirical justification for the subsequent path analysis.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis of Employment Ability and Five Dimensions of Master of Business Administration Graduates.

correlation						
	Employability	Ability type	Employability	potential ability	Self-efficacy	Digital and technical subversive ability
Employability	1					
Ability type	.914**	1				
Employability	.932**	.780**	1			
potential ability	.862**	.714**	.762**	1		
Self-efficacy	.862**	.716**	.758**	.662**	1	
Digital and technical subversive ability	.846**	.782**	.678**	.732**	.615**	1
*** * At The Level Of 0.01 (Two-Tailed), The Correlation Is Significant.**						

4.2.2. Competency Types: Discrimination And Reliability Analysis

In order to ensure the internal consistency and measurement validity of the "ability type" construct in this study, a reliability and discrimination analysis was conducted on its six observed variables. As shown in Table 3, all items demonstrate strong item-total correlations and satisfactory Cronbach's Alpha values, supporting their suitability for inclusion in the structural model.

The corrected item-total correlation coefficients range from 0.658 to 0.763, all exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.6, indicating a good degree of internal coherence among the items. This suggests that each observed variable contributes meaningfully to the overall construct of ability type, and that none of the items exhibit redundancy or conceptual misalignment.

The overall Cronbach's Alpha for the ability type dimension reaches 0.845, well above the 0.7 threshold, indicating high internal reliability. This supports the internal consistency of the composite variable and confirms that the six components jointly reflect a cohesive underlying construct.

Specifically:

Adaptability (AC1) exhibits the highest item-total correlation (0.763), underscoring its centrality in characterizing MBA graduates' ability to navigate changing employment contexts.

Executive ability (EC1) and compressive capacity (CRC) also show strong correlations (0.702 and 0.701, respectively), aligning with the growing demand for operational leadership and resilience under pressure in managerial roles.

Information comprehension (ICC) and learning ability (SC) demonstrate strong coherence with the overall dimension (0.692 and 0.689), reflecting the knowledge agility and continuous learning essential in fast-paced business environments.

Knowledge understanding (KCC), while slightly lower (0.658), still exceeds the acceptable cutoff, reaffirming the foundational role of conceptual mastery in employability.

Collectively, these findings validate the ability type as a robust multidimensional construct, providing empirical support for its use in subsequent structural equation modeling to examine its direct and mediating effects on employability.

Table 3: Discrimination And Reliability of Ability Types.

Observed variable	Basic variable	Correct Item Total correlation	Cronbach's Alpha
Competency type (TC)	Knowledge understanding (KCC)	0.658	0.845
	Information comprehension (ICC)	0.692	
	Executive ability (EC1)	0.702	
	Adaptability (AC1)	0.763	
	Learning ability (SC)	0.689	

	Compressive capacity (CRC)	0.701	

4.2.3. Employability: Discrimination And Reliability Analysis

To assess the internal consistency and construct validity of the employability dimension in the present study, a discrimination and reliability analysis was conducted on the three observed indicators: core competence (CC), professional ability (PC1), and management ability (MC). As shown in Table 4.4, all three items demonstrate strong item-total correlation values, with Cronbach's Alpha exceeding standard benchmarks, supporting the robustness of the construct.

The corrected item-total correlation coefficients range from 0.678 to 0.701, which are well above the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.6. This indicates that each observed variable is strongly and uniquely associated with the overall construct of employability, with no redundancy or misfit among the items.

The overall Cronbach's Alpha for the employability scale is 0.827, signifying high internal reliability and confirming that the three observed indicators jointly capture a coherent and unified dimension of MBA graduates' employment capacity.

Management ability (MC) exhibits the highest item-total correlation (0.701), underscoring its critical importance in defining employability within business management contexts, where strategic coordination and leadership are essential.

Professional ability (PC1) (0.682) reflects the specialized skills and applied knowledge needed to perform job-specific functions effectively, particularly in competitive corporate environments.

Core competence (CC) (0.678) captures fundamental and transferable skills, such as problem-solving, communication, and teamwork, which serve as the backbone of long-term employability across diverse job settings.

Together, these three indicators form a well-structured and reliable measure of employability, enabling subsequent structural modeling to evaluate how employability interacts with other key dimensions such as ability type, self-efficacy, and digital competence.

Table 4: Discrimination And Reliability of Employability.

Observed variable	Basic variable	Correct ItemTotal correlation	Cronbach's Alpha
Employability (EC)	Core competence (CC)	0.678	0.827
	Professional ability (PC1)	0.682	
	Management ability (MC)	0.701	

4.2.4. Potential Ability

The construct of potential ability in this study refers to those intrinsic qualities and soft skills that underpin an individual's future development and adaptability in complex business environments. It is measured using three key indicators: personality (PC2), innovation ability (IC), and communication skills (CS). As shown in Table 5, the discrimination and reliability analysis yields favorable results that support the structural soundness of this construct.

The corrected item-total correlation coefficients range from 0.658 to 0.692, indicating that all three observed variables contribute meaningfully and consistently to the overall latent construct of potential ability.

Personality (PC2) shows the highest item-total correlation at 0.692, reinforcing its foundational role in shaping one's behavioral tendencies, work attitudes, and long-term career adaptability.

Innovation ability (IC) (0.673) captures the graduate's capacity to generate novel ideas and adapt to change, which is especially vital in fast-paced, technology-driven business environments.

Communication skills (CS) (0.658) highlight the interpersonal and collaborative capabilities necessary for teamwork, negotiation, and leadership—skills increasingly emphasized in MBA graduate profiles.

The Cronbach's Alpha for the overall potential ability construct is 0.765, surpassing the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating a good level of internal consistency across the indicators. This suggests that the scale is both reliable and conceptually coherent for measuring the latent trait of potential ability in the target population.

Overall, this measurement structure provides a strong empirical foundation for exploring the direct and indirect effects of potential ability on employability, as hypothesized in the study.

Table 5: Discrimination And Reliability of Potential Ability.

Observed variable	Basic variable	Correct ItemTotal correlation	Cronbach's Alpha
Potential ability (PC)	Personality (PC2)	0.692	0.765
	Innovation ability (IC)	0.673	
	Communication skills (CS)	0.658	

4.2.5. Self-Efficacy

In the context of this study, self-efficacy is conceptualized as an individual's belief in their ability to effectively plan, execute, and manage tasks related to professional growth and employability. This construct is operationalized through three dimensions: self-reflection (SR1), self-management (SM), and self-regulation (SR2). As detailed in Table 6, all three indicators demonstrate acceptable psychometric properties in terms of discrimination and reliability.

The corrected item-total correlation coefficients for the three basic variables range from 0.647 to 0.681, indicating satisfactory levels of internal consistency and construct cohesion.

Self-reflection (SR1) (0.647) captures the graduate's capacity to critically evaluate their experiences, recognize strengths and weaknesses, and generate insights for personal and professional development.

Self-management (SM) (0.669) reflects the ability to set goals, prioritize tasks, and maintain motivation and discipline—traits especially critical for MBA graduates transitioning into leadership roles.

Self-regulation (SR2) (0.681) emphasizes emotional and behavioral control in the face of challenges, contributing to resilience and adaptability in dynamic work environments.

The overall Cronbach's Alpha value for the self-efficacy construct is 0.752, exceeding the standard 0.70 threshold and confirming the internal reliability of the scale. This reliability level supports the theoretical assumption that the three indicators coherently represent the latent trait of self-efficacy.

Collectively, these results validate the inclusion of self-efficacy as a predictive psychological resource in the research model and support its hypothesized direct and mediating effects on employability outcomes.

Table 6: Discrimination And Reliability of Self-Efficacy.

Observed variable	Basic variable	Correct ItemTotal correlation	Cronbach's Alpha
Self-efficacy (SE)	Self-reflection (SR1)	0.647	0.752
	Self-management (SM)	0.669	
	Self-regulation (SR2)	0.681	

4.2.6. Self-Digital and Technical Subversive Ability

The construct of Digital and Technological Subversive Ability reflects the capacity of MBA graduates to adapt to and leverage digital transformations, a critical competence in the face of rapid technological change and evolving workplace demands. This dimension embodies not only technical proficiency but also the innovative mindset necessary to navigate and reshape digitally mediated business environments.

As shown in Table 7, the construct is measured

through eight observed variables, each representing a vital facet of digital competency:

Data Processing (DP) (0.672) and Data Analysis (AC2) (0.701) reflect the graduate's ability to extract, manipulate, and interpret data for decision-making, highlighting foundational skills for digital operations.

Digital Technology Application (ADT) (0.646) and Integration (IDT) (0.702) assess the capacity to implement and coordinate digital tools within various organizational functions, indicating systemic digital adaptability.

Digital Innovative Thinking (DIT) (0.693) and Digital Innovation Capability (DIC) (0.681) capture cognitive traits related to ideation, experimentation, and technological creativity—qualities essential for disruptive innovation.

Knowledge (KDT) (0.647) and Understanding (UDT) (0.651) of digital technologies encompass both declarative and procedural knowledge, enabling informed engagement with technological systems and platforms.

All corrected item-total correlation coefficients fall within the range of 0.646–0.702, suggesting strong individual discrimination across items. The construct's Cronbach's Alpha is 0.812, demonstrating high internal consistency and confirming the reliability of the scale.

Overall, these results affirm that Digital and Technological Subversive Ability constitutes a multi-dimensional and psychometrically sound construct, supporting its role as both a predictor and mediating factor within the proposed research model on MBA graduates' employability. Its inclusion reflects the increasing importance of digital fluency and disruptive potential as drivers of sustained professional competitiveness in contemporary business environments.

Table 7: Discrimination And Reliability of Digital and Technological Subversion Ability.

Observed variable	Basic variable	Correct ItemTotal correlation	Cronbach's Alpha
Digital and technical subversive ability (DTD)	Data processing (DP)	0.672	0.812
	Data analysis (AC2)	0.701	
	Digital technology application (ADT)	0.646	
	Digital technology integration (IDT)	0.702	
	Digital innovative thinking (DIT)	0.693	
	Digital innovation capability (DIC)	0.681	
	Knowledge of digital technology (KDT)	0.647	
	Understanding of digital technology (UDT)	0.651	

4.3. Analysis of Validation Factors

4.3.1. Competency Types

In this study, the construct of competency type (TC) is conceptualized as a foundational dimension of employability among Master of Business Administration (MBA) graduates, encompassing key cognitive, behavioral, and adaptive capabilities. These competencies enable individuals to effectively perform in complex, dynamic work environments and demonstrate sustained learning, problem-solving, and task execution skills. As shown in Table 8, the latent construct of competency type is measured by six observed variables: knowledge understanding (KCC), information comprehension (ICC), executive ability (EC1), adaptability (AC1), learning ability (SC), and compressive capacity (CRC). Each item demonstrates a standardized factor loading (λ) above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong item reliability and satisfactory indicator validity. Notably, compressive capacity exhibits the highest loading (λ = 0.832), underscoring its critical role in the competency structure of MBA graduates.

The convergent validity of the measurement model is supported by an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of 0.683, which exceeds the minimum acceptable value of 0.50, suggesting that the latent construct explains a substantial portion of variance in its indicators. Additionally, the construct

reliability (CR) reaches 0.892, well above the benchmark of 0.70, indicating excellent internal consistency and measurement stability. Collectively, these results confirm that the competency type construct possesses robust psychometric properties, including high reliability and convergent validity. This provides a solid foundation for its inclusion in the subsequent structural equation modeling analysis and reinforces its theoretical relevance in assessing the employability capabilities of MBA graduates.

Table 8: Structural Reliability of Capability Types.

Observed variable	Basic variable	Standard regression weight (λ)	the Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Construction Reliability (CR)
Competency type (TC)	Knowledge understanding (KCC)	0.732	0.683	0.892
	Information comprehension (ICC)	0.741		
	Executive ability (EC1)	0.804		
	Adaptability (AC1)	0.812		
	Learning ability (SC)	0.784		
	Compressive capacity (CRC)	0.832		

4.3.2. Employability

The construct of employability (EC) in this study is operationalized as a multidimensional capability reflecting MBA graduates' readiness to perform effectively in professional environments, marked by a combination of core competencies, specialized expertise, and managerial acumen. As illustrated in Table 9, employability is measured by three key observed variables: core competence (CC), professional ability (PC1), and management ability (MC). Each indicator demonstrates a strong standardized regression weight (λ), with values of 0.813, 0.808, and 0.825 respectively, all surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.70. This indicates high item reliability and suggests that each dimension meaningfully contributes to the latent employability construct.

The measurement model exhibits excellent convergent validity, as reflected by an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of 0.683. This value indicates that over two-thirds of the variance in the observed indicators is explained by the latent factor, meeting the benchmark for adequate convergent validity. Moreover, the construct demonstrates a high level of internal consistency, with a Construct Reliability (CR) of 0.897, exceeding the conventional threshold of 0.70. These psychometric properties validate the robustness of the employability construct and confirm its theoretical coherence in the context of business administration education. This reinforces its relevance as a central outcome variable in evaluating the strategic success factors influencing MBA graduates' career competence.

Table 9: Structural Reliability of Employability.

Observed variable	Basic variable	Standard regression weight (λ)	the Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Construction reliability (CR)
Employability (EC)	Core competence (CC)	0.813	0.683	0.897
	Professional ability (PC1)	0.808		
	Management ability (MC)	0.825		

4.3.3. Potential Ability

The construct of potential ability (PC) is conceptualized as the latent personal resource reservoir that enables MBA graduates to adapt, innovate, and communicate effectively in evolving professional environments. It reflects the intrinsic attributes that support long-term career development beyond immediate task performance. As shown in Table 10, potential ability is measured

through three observed variables: personality (PC2), innovation ability (IC), and communication skills (CS). These indicators exhibit high standardized regression weights (λ), with values of 0.798, 0.831, and 0.816 respectively, all above the acceptable threshold of 0.70, demonstrating strong individual contributions to the underlying construct.

The measurement model also demonstrates satisfactory convergent validity, as indicated by an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of 0.675. This implies that a substantial proportion of the variance in the observed variables is captured by the latent factor. Furthermore, the Construct Reliability (CR) of 0.883 confirms excellent internal consistency, exceeding the recommended criterion of 0.70. Collectively, these psychometric properties confirm that potential ability is a valid and reliable dimension in the assessment of employability capabilities, capturing the foundational soft skills and dispositional strengths that are increasingly recognized as essential for success in dynamic, knowledge-based workplaces.

Table 10: Structural Reliability of Potential Capacity.

Observed variable	Basic variable	Standard regression weight (λ)	the Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Construction reliability (CR)
Potential ability (PC)	Personality (PC2)	0.798	0.675	0.883
	Innovation ability (IC)	0.831		
	Communication skills (CS)	0.816		

4.3.4. Self-Efficacy

The latent construct of self-efficacy (SE) represents the individual's belief in their own ability to plan, execute, and regulate actions to achieve personal and professional goals, which plays a critical role in career adaptability and employability outcomes. As illustrated in Table 11, self-efficacy is operationalized through three key dimensions: self-reflection (SR1), self-management (SM), and self-regulation (SR2). These observed variables exhibit strong standardized regression weights (λ = 0.834, 0.826, and 0.831 respectively), all surpassing the 0.80 threshold, indicating that each component makes a substantial contribution to the measurement of the self-efficacy construct. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for self-efficacy is 0.618, meeting the recommended criterion of 0.50 and confirming good convergent validity. Moreover, the Construct Reliability (CR) is 0.879, suggesting a high level of internal consistency among the indicators. These psychometric results validate self-efficacy as a reliable and theoretically coherent construct within the broader employability framework. By capturing individuals' self-regulatory competencies and internal motivational mechanisms, this dimension contributes significantly to understanding how graduates effectively navigate complex workplace challenges and persist in the face of uncertainty.

Table 11: Structural Reliability of Self-Efficacy.

Observed variable	Basic variable	Standard regression weight (λ)	the Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Construction reliability (CR)
Self-efficacy (SE)	Self-reflection (SR1)	0.834	0.618	0.879
	Self-management (SM)	0.826		
	Self-regulation (SR2)	0.831		

4.3.5. Digital And Technical Subversive Ability

The construct of Digital and Technical Subversive Ability (DTD) encapsulates a comprehensive set of digital competencies essential for navigating and transforming modern organizational environments. This dimension reflects not only the practical skills associated with digital tool usage but also the cognitive and innovative capacities required to leverage digital technologies disruptively and strategically. As shown in Table 12, this latent variable is measured through eight key observed

indicators: data processing (DP), data analysis (AC2), digital technology application (ADT), digital technology integration (IDT), digital innovative thinking (DIT), digital innovation capability (DIC), knowledge of digital technology (KDT), and understanding of digital technology (UDT).

All standardized regression weights (λ) exceed 0.79, with the highest loading for digital innovative thinking (DIT) at 0.854, demonstrating robust indicator reliability and strong convergent contributions across all facets. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is 0.683, indicating that the latent construct explains more than two-thirds of the variance in its indicators, which confirms satisfactory convergent validity. Furthermore, the Construct Reliability (CR) of 0.892 demonstrates high internal consistency and measurement stability.

These results affirm the construct validity of DTD as a multidimensional capability, encompassing technical knowledge, data proficiency, digital creativity, and innovation orientation. In the context of business management graduates, this capability serves as a foundational enabler of employability and competitive advantage in digitally dynamic workplaces.

Table 12: Structural Reliability of Digital and Technological Subversion Ability.

Observed variable	Basic variable	Standard regression weight (λ)	the Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Construction reliability (CR)
Digital and technical subversive ability (DTD)	Data processing (DP)	0.812	0.683	0.892
	Data analysis (AC2)	0.825		
	Digital technology application (ADT)	0.793		
	Digital technology integration (IDT)	0.804		
	Digital innovative thinking (DIT)	0.854		
	Digital innovation capability (DIC)	0.832		
	Knowledge of digital technology (KDT)	0.838		
	Understanding of digital technology (UDT)	0.840		

4.4. Test Of Structural Equation Model

Prior to conducting factor analysis, it is essential to assess the appropriateness of the dataset for such statistical procedures. Table 13 presents the results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The KMO value reached 0.951, which exceeds the commonly accepted threshold of 0.90, indicating excellent sampling adequacy for factor analysis (Kaiser, 1974). This suggests that the partial correlations among variables are sufficiently low, and that the dataset is well-suited for uncovering underlying latent constructs. In addition, Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant (χ^2 = 2153.737, df = 120, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the correlation matrix significantly differs from an identity matrix. This result further validates the hypothesis that the variables exhibit sufficient inter-correlations to warrant dimension reduction techniques such as principal component analysis (PCA). Taken together, these preliminary tests provide strong empirical support for proceeding with factor extraction.

Table 13: Test Of KMO And Bartlett for Employment Ability of Master of Business Administration Graduates.

KMO sampling suitability quantity		0.951
Bartlett sphericity test	Barthes Sphere Value (approximate chi-square)	2153.737
	Degree of freedom (df)	120
	Significance (p value)	0

Table 14 presents the results of the principal component analysis with varimax rotation, conducted to identify the factorial structure of MBA graduates' employability. Five factors were extracted based on theoretical expectations and eigenvalue criteria, and the rotated component matrix clearly delineates the factor loadings of each observed variable on its respective latent dimension.

The first component represents Competency Type (TC), encompassing six observed variables with strong loadings, including knowledge understanding (KCC = 0.745), information comprehension (ICC = 0.653), and compressive capacity (CRC = 0.631). These results confirm the internal consistency of the competency-related indicators.

The second component corresponds to Employability (EC), with robust loadings for core competence (CC = 0.709), professional ability (PC1 = 0.704), and management ability (MC = 0.664), demonstrating conceptual cohesion in this dimension.

The third factor reflects Potential Ability (PC), where personality (PC2 = 0.726), innovation capability (IC = 0.644), and communication skills (CS = 0.533) coalesce to form a unified construct related to latent employability traits.

The fourth component represents Self-efficacy (SE), showing significant factor loadings for self-reflection (SR1 = 0.787), self-management (SM = 0.586), and self-regulation (SR2 = 0.542), indicating a coherent psychological self-regulatory dimension.

The fifth and final factor captures Digital and Technical Subversive Ability (DTD), with eight items loading consistently above 0.58, including data processing (DP = 0.702), digital innovative thinking (DIT = 0.652), and understanding of digital technology (UDT = 0.581), thus supporting the multidimensional conceptualization of digital competence in the current labor context.

The rotation converged in 13 iterations, suggesting a stable and interpretable factorial structure. These results substantiate the construct validity of the measurement model and confirm the multidimensional nature of employability attributes among MBA graduates.

Table 14: Factor Analysis of Employment Ability of Master of Business Administration Graduates Rotation Component Matrix.

Validity analysis results						
		Factor load factor				
		1	2	3	4	5
TC	KCC	0.745				
	ICC	0.653				
	EC1	0.583				
	AC1	0.549				
	SC	0.603				
	CRC	0.631				
EC	CC		0.709			
	PC1		0.704			
	MC		0.664			
PC	PC2			0.726		
	IC			0.644		
	CS			0.533		
SE	SR1				0.787	
	SM				0.586	
	SR2				0.542	
DTD	DP					0.702
	AC2					0.653
	ADT					0.589
	IDT					0.624
	DIT					0.652
	DIC					0.619
	KDT					0.642
	UDT					0.581

Extraction method: principal component analysis.	
Rotation method: Caesar normalization maximum variance method.	
A rotation has converged after 13 iterations.	

4.5. Data Collection and Test of Hypothetical Results

This study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods to examine the factors influencing the employability of Master of Business Administration (MBA) graduates and to test the proposed research hypotheses. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed, and 440 valid responses were collected, yielding an effective response rate of 88%. Among the respondents, 52.7% were male and 47.3% were female. In terms of age distribution, the majority were between 30 and 40 years old (38.0%). The graduates came from a variety of academic institutions, including comprehensive universities, science and engineering universities, and finance and economics universities. Regarding employment sectors, private enterprises constituted the largest proportion (40.0%), followed by wholly foreign-owned enterprises and joint ventures.

To assess the relationships among the core variables, correlation and exploratory factor analyses were conducted. The results indicated that employability was significantly positively correlated (at the 0.01 level, two-tailed) with all five dimensions: ability type, employability core skills, potential ability, self-efficacy, and digital and technological subversion ability. These findings provided empirical support for hypotheses H1 through H5, confirming that each dimension has a significant positive effect on MBA graduates' employability.

The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, all of which exceeded the 0.6 threshold: 0.845 for ability type, 0.827 for employability, 0.765 for potential ability, 0.752 for self-efficacy, and 0.812 for digital and technological subversion ability. These results indicate strong internal consistency and overall instrument reliability. In addition, confirmatory factor analysis confirmed satisfactory structural validity across all constructs. Each latent variable showed adequate standardized regression weights, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR), suggesting that the measurement model was both robust and appropriate for further analysis.

The hypothesis testing results are summarized in Table 4.16. All seven hypotheses (H1–H7) were supported. In addition to the direct effects (H1–H4), the study also confirmed several indirect paths. Specifically, digital and technological subversion ability, potential ability, and self-efficacy were all found to influence employability indirectly via their effects on ability type (H5–H7). These findings highlight the mediating role of core ability structures in transforming internal traits into external employability outcomes. Moreover, industry-specific expectations and capability gaps among MBA graduates suggest that targeted skill development strategies are essential for enhancing their competitiveness in a dynamic labor market.

Table 15: Hypothetical Test Results.

No.	Hypothetical content	Accepted or Rejected
1	H1: The ability type directly affects the employability of Beijing master of business administration graduates.	Accepted
2	H2: The ability of digital and technological subversion directly affects the employability of Beijing master of business administration graduates.	Accepted
3	H3: The potential ability directly affects the employability of Beijing master of business administration graduates, which has a significant impact.	Accepted
4	H4: Self-efficacy has a direct impact on the employability of Beijing master of business administration graduates.	Accepted
5	H5: The ability of digital and technological subversion indirectly affects the employability of Beijing master of business administration graduates through their ability types.	Accepted

6	H6: Potential ability indirectly affects the employability of Beijing master of business administration graduates through ability types.	Accepted
7	H7: Self-efficacy indirectly affects the employability of Beijing master of business administration graduates through their ability types.	Accepted

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Theoretical Implications

This study constructed and empirically tested a structural model to explore the factors influencing the employability of Master of Business Administration (MBA) graduates in Beijing. Based on a sample of 440 valid responses, five key latent constructs were identified and validated: competency type, employability, potential ability, self-efficacy, and digital and technological subversive ability. Using structural equation modeling, the results revealed that each of these factors had significant direct or indirect effects on employability, with competency type playing a central mediating role. These findings provide a comprehensive and integrated understanding of how internal traits and external competencies jointly shape graduates' employment capabilities.

In comparison with previous studies, this research differs significantly in both conceptual framework and methodological emphasis. Earlier works on graduate employability have predominantly focused on general cognitive abilities or labor market adaptability (Monteiro et al., 2019; Tomlinson, 2012), often neglecting the interplay between digital capability and psychological traits. While some studies acknowledged the growing importance of digital literacy, they treated it as a peripheral skill rather than a subversive force affecting core competencies (Allatt & Tett, 2019). Moreover, most existing models tend to adopt either human capital theory or competency-based frameworks in isolation (Benayoune, 2024; Shet et al., 2022), without considering how motivational factors such as self-efficacy and latent potential translate into practical employability outcomes.

By contrast, this study uniquely integrates cognitive-behavioral dimensions (e.g., knowledge comprehension, adaptability), psychological variables (e.g., self-efficacy), and emerging digital capabilities into a unified analytical model. It reveals that not only do digital and technological subversive abilities exert direct influence on employability, but they also significantly affect employability indirectly through their impact on competency types. This finding highlights the mediating mechanism by which disruptive digital capacity enhances core skills and, ultimately, employment outcomes—a dynamic rarely addressed in prior literature.

Theoretically, this study makes three primary contributions. First, it extends existing employability frameworks by incorporating digital subversion ability as a multi-dimensional construct, including data analysis, digital integration, and innovation thinking. This redefinition reflects the complex competencies demanded in a digitized economy and fills a conceptual gap in the current literature. Second, the study deepens the understanding of self-efficacy in the employability context by validating its indirect influence through competency mediation, offering empirical support for Bandura (2014)'s social cognitive theory in a professional graduate education setting. Third, it provides empirical evidence that potential ability—often treated as an implicit trait—is a measurable and impactful factor that can be cultivated through targeted training. These theoretical insights can inform future models of professional graduate development by demonstrating how different layers of ability interact structurally to shape employability.

5.2. Practical Implications

The findings of this study provide substantial practical implications for multiple stakeholders involved in graduate education, talent cultivation, and labor market integration. Specifically, the results reveal actionable insights for higher education institutions, employers, policymakers, and MBA graduates, highlighting the interactive roles of digital

capability, competency structure, self-efficacy, and potential ability in enhancing employability outcomes.

(1) Higher education institutions.

For higher education institutions, particularly those offering MBA programs, the findings indicate an urgent need to redesign curricula that balance foundational management knowledge with digital and soft-skill training. The strong direct and indirect effects of digital and technological subversive ability on employability suggest that digital literacy has become a fundamental competency rather than an auxiliary skill. Universities should therefore:

1) Integrate interdisciplinary modules covering data analysis, digital communication, innovation thinking, and technology application into traditional business courses;
2) Adopt teaching methods that cultivate problem-solving, adaptability, and learning agility as essential learning outcomes; and
3) Apply simulation-based learning, case-based teaching, and industry-linked projects to develop applied competencies aligned with labor market demands.
   These initiatives can strengthen graduates' digital adaptability and competency profiles, thereby improving their long-term employability.

(2) Employers

For employers, especially those operating in dynamic industries such as finance, technology, and consulting, the results underscore the need for more comprehensive recruitment and employee development strategies. Rather than relying solely on educational qualifications or work experience, employers should:

1) Implement competency-based recruitment systems that assess potential ability, self-efficacy, and digital innovation capacity;
2) Design in-house training programs focused on continuous upskilling in areas such as digital integration, self-management, and creative problem-solving; and
3) Collaborate with universities to co-develop internships and practice-based consulting projects that prepare graduates for real-world professional environments.
   Such initiatives can foster sustainable human capital capable of adapting to rapid technological and organizational change.

(3) Policymakers

For policymakers concerned with higher education and employment reform, this research provides evidence-based guidance for designing targeted interventions. Policy measures should:

1) Prioritize funding for competency-based training programs and digital learning infrastructure;
2) Encourage closer university–industry partnerships to ensure that academic curricula remain aligned with evolving labor market needs; and
3) Support the establishment of psychological coaching, mentorship, and career counseling mechanisms that strengthen graduates' confidence, resilience, and readiness for employment.
   By integrating these policy supports, governments can help bridge the skill mismatch and promote equitable access to employability-enhancing opportunities.

(4) MBA Graduate

For MBA graduates themselves, the study provides a clear roadmap for self-directed career development. Graduates should:

1) Continuously improve their digital competencies and maintain a lifelong learning orientation to remain competitive in fast-changing work environments;
2) Enhance self-efficacy through reflective learning, experiential projects, and applied problem-solving; and
3) Strengthen adaptive and collaborative capacities to achieve sustained career growth.

This perspective highlights that employability is not determined solely by technical expertise but rather by an integrated set of cognitive, behavioral, and psychological resources that support long-term professional success.

In summary, this study bridges theoretical modeling with actionable practice, presenting a comprehensive framework through which universities, employers, policymakers, and individuals can collaboratively enhance employability in the digital era. The integrated implications offered here not only clarify stakeholder responsibilities but also provide a coherent pathway for improving graduate readiness and organizational competitiveness in the evolving global economy.

6. CONCLUSION

This study systematically investigated the key factors influencing the employability of Master of Business Administration (MBA) graduates in Beijing, with a particular focus on the interplay between ability types, potential ability, self-efficacy, and digital and technological subversive ability. Drawing on a mixed-method approach, the research employed quantitative survey data from 440 valid respondents and used structural equation modeling (SEM) to test seven hypothesized relationships. The results demonstrate that all five core dimensions—ability type, employability, potential ability, self-efficacy, and digital and technological subversive ability—exert significant direct or indirect effects on employability. Notably, digital and technological subversive ability not only influences employability directly but also through mediating pathways involving other ability constructs, underscoring its pivotal role in the digital transformation of professional competence.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the expanding literature on graduate employability by proposing and validating a multidimensional model that integrates traditional managerial capabilities with contemporary digital competencies. Unlike previous studies that emphasize static or discipline-specific predictors, this study foregrounds the dynamic interaction among cognitive, emotional, and technological attributes. It further extends the theoretical discourse by introducing the notion of "digital and technological subversive ability" as a measurable and impactful construct in employability research. Practically, the findings inform curriculum reform, talent development strategies, and policy design. Universities can revise training modules to emphasize digital literacy, self-efficacy, and adaptive problem-solving, while employers and policymakers can design support systems that bridge the gap between education and labor market demands. For MBA graduates, the study offers a roadmap to enhance career readiness through proactive skill development and digital innovation awareness.

Despite its contributions, the study is not without limitations. First, the research sample was geographically limited to MBA graduates in Beijing, which may constrain the generalizability of the findings to other regions or disciplines. Future studies could expand the scope by including graduates from other academic fields or different urban and rural contexts. Second, while the quantitative design provided robust statistical insights, the qualitative component could be further enriched through in-depth interviews or longitudinal tracking to capture evolving competency development. Third, the construct of digital and technological subversive ability, although empirically validated, remains relatively novel and requires further theoretical refinement and cross-cultural validation. Future research could explore how this construct interacts with organizational culture, digital infrastructure, or industry-specific transformations. Additionally, longitudinal studies are encouraged to examine how employability evolves over time in response to technological disruptions and socio-economic shifts.

In conclusion, this study offers a timely and empirically grounded framework for understanding the determinants of MBA graduates' employability in the digital era. By integrating multiple dimensions

of ability and highlighting the centrality of digital competence, the research not only advances theoretical inquiry but also provides actionable implications for education, policy, and individual career development.

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APPENDIX 1

variable	Observed variable	definition	horizontal survey
Ability type	Comprehension of knowledge and information	The knowledge and information comprehension of professional postgraduates refers to the knowledge content (including theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge, cutting-edge knowledge, etc.) and related information (such as academic trends, industry information, etc.) the ability to effectively receive, accurately interpret, deeply analyze, reasonably integrate and properly use (Pinto et al., 2021).	Interval scale variable Subjective data
	executive capability	The executive ability of professional postgraduates refers to the ability of professional postgraduates to effectively translate goals, plans and tasks into practical actions in academic research, practical operation and self-development and other fields, ensure the quality and efficiency of actions, and finally achieve the expected results (Bays & Wettergren, 2017).	
	adaptive capacity	The adaptability of professional postgraduates refers to a comprehensive ability that professional postgraduates can actively adjust their psychological state, behavior mode, knowledge structure and skill system in the face of new learning environment, academic requirements, social communication situation and career development orientation, so as to live in harmony with the new environment and effectively use resources in the new environment to achieve personal learning goals, career goals and all-round development (Mmako & Letsoalo, 2020).	
	learning ability	The learning ability of professional postgraduates refers to the comprehensive ability of professional postgraduates to effectively acquire, process, apply and innovate knowledge and skills in order to achieve academic improvement, career development and personal growth goals in their specific learning stages (Cheng & Chau, 2013).	
	stress tolerance	The anti-stress ability of professional postgraduates is a combination of psychological quality and behavioral ability. From a psychological point of view, it means that professional postgraduates can maintain a relatively stable psychological state in the face of various stress situations and will not be easily influenced by negative emotions caused by stress, such as anxiety, depression and irritability. From the behavioral level, it means that graduate students can actively take effective coping strategies to deal with stress (Pan et al., 2017).	
Employability	core competence	The core competence of professional postgraduates refers to a series of abilities that play a key and leading role in the study, research and future career development of professional postgraduates (Hu & Xu, 2023). It is a collection of abilities that are different from other types of graduate students and can highlight the characteristics and value of professional graduate students. Together, these abilities enable professional postgraduate students to effectively complete their academic tasks, adapt to professional requirements, and show their competitiveness in their professional fields (Warren & Stifter, 2008).	Interval scale variable Subjective data
	Professional competence	The professional ability of professional postgraduates refers to a series of ability combinations possessed by professional postgraduates in their specific professional fields, which can effectively carry out professional practice activities and solve practical professional problems, and reflect their professional knowledge and skill level (Mena et al., 2017). It is the key to distinguish professional postgraduates from other levels and types of talents, and it is also the core element for them to play their value in professional jobs (Sporer & Monjau, 2002).	

	supervisory capability	The management ability of professional postgraduates refers to the ability of professional postgraduates to effectively organize, coordinate, control and make decisions on various resources (including time, knowledge, interpersonal relationships, etc.) during their study, research and future career development (Akıntunde & Olujıde, 2018). This ability helps them to complete their academic tasks more efficiently, participate in team projects, and lay a foundation for future management-related occupations or play management functions at work (Muntaner-Mas et al., 2017).	
potential ability	Personal character	The personality of professional postgraduates refers to the relatively stable psychological characteristics and behavioral tendencies of professional postgraduates in their psychological activities (Tychmanowicz, 2017). These characteristics and tendencies will affect their attitudes and behaviors in learning, scientific research, interpersonal communication and future career development (Rampino et al., 2019).	Interval scale variable Subjective data
	Innovation capacity	The innovation ability of professional postgraduates refers to a comprehensive ability that professional postgraduates can produce novel, unique and valuable ideas, viewpoints or methods in the process of study, scientific research and professional practice, and effectively transform them into practical results (Nurcahyono et al., 2019). This ability involves many aspects, such as knowledge base, mode of thinking, practical skills, etc., and is the key factor for graduate students to achieve breakthrough and development in professional fields (Takeuchi et al., 2020).	
	interpersonal skills	Communication skills of professional postgraduates refer to the ability of professional postgraduates to accurately, clearly and effectively convey information, express opinions, exchange emotions and correctly understand other people's intentions in academic, social and professional situations. This is a comprehensive ability, including language expression, the use of nonverbal signals, listening skills and feedback ability, which helps graduate students to establish good interpersonal relationships in different occasions and achieve the goal of information sharing and cooperation (Itzchakov et al., 2024).	
Self-efficacy	search one's heart	Self-reflection of professional postgraduates refers to the process of reviewing, examining, analyzing and evaluating their thoughts, behaviors, emotions and results in many aspects such as study, research, social interaction and career development (Tecedor & Vasseur, 2020). This is a self-directed cognitive activity, the purpose of which is to better understand oneself, discover one's strengths and weaknesses, adjust one's behavior and thinking mode, and promote one's growth and development.	Interval scale variable Subjective data
	self-management	Self-management of professional postgraduates refers to a series of activities of self-planning, self-organization, self-supervision, self-adjustment and self-control of their own study, life, psychology and career development. This is an active, conscious and purposeful way of self-behavior management, aiming at making full use of personal time, energy and resources to achieve academic progress, personal growth and career development (Lorig & Holman, 2003).	
	self-control	Self-regulation of professional graduate students refers to the process that individual professional graduate students can actively use cognitive, emotional and behavioral strategies to consciously adjust and control their thoughts, emotions and behaviors when facing changes, challenges and pressures in study, life, social interaction and career planning, so as to adapt to the environment, achieve goals and maintain physical and mental health (Roderick, 2019).	

Digital and technical subversive ability	Data processing and analysis	The data processing and analysis ability of professional postgraduates refers to their comprehensive ability to effectively collect, sort out and store relevant data, use appropriate statistical methods, tools and technologies to clean and transform the data, and then dig deep into the information and laws behind the data, and explain and present the analysis results in a reasonable way (Kumari et al., 2019).	Interval scale variable Subjective data
	Application and Integration of Digital Technology	The application and integration ability of digital technology for professional postgraduates refers to the ability to understand the principles and functions of digital technology, apply a variety of digital technology tools, platforms and methods to solve professional problems, and organically integrate different digital technologies to make them cooperate with each other and play a more efficient role, so as to realize the comprehensive ability of professional tasks and innovation (Gebresenbet et al., 2023).	
	Digital innovative thinking and ability	Digital innovative thinking and ability of professional postgraduates refers to the comprehensive thinking and ability of professional postgraduates to combine digital technology and tools in their study, research and practice in their professional fields, take innovation as the guide, produce novel, unique and potentially valuable ideas, and turn these ideas into practical results (Motukeeva et al., 2024).	
	Knowledge and understanding of digital technology	The knowledge and understanding ability of digital technology for professional postgraduates refers to the ability of professional postgraduates to acquire, store, integrate and deeply understand digital technology-related knowledge in the process of their professional study and research, and to use this knowledge to analyze, explain and evaluate digital technology application scenarios (Deng et al., 2023). This concept includes two important parts, namely, the mastery of knowledge and the application of understanding ability.	