



## Exploring Employability Skills and Career Success through the Lived Experiences of Geology Graduates across Diverse Career Pathways

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**ABSTRACT:** Graduate employability has become an important indicator of higher education quality as graduates are increasingly expected to demonstrate transferable competencies that support career development across diverse employment contexts. This study aims to explore how employability skills contribute to career success among geology graduates working in both geology-related and non-geology sectors through the lens of Career Construction Theory. A qualitative phenomenological approach was employed to examine the lived experiences of seven geology graduates from Abbottabad University of Science and Technology, Pakistan. Participants were purposively selected based on their graduation year, professional experience, and employment background. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis. The findings revealed that communication, teamwork, adaptability and continuous learning, problem-solving, and professional responsibility were the key employability skills supporting career success across different occupational contexts. Graduates employed in geology-related sectors combined technical expertise with transferable employability skills to achieve career progression, whereas graduates working in non-geology sectors relied primarily on transferable competencies to facilitate career transition and establish sustainable careers. Career success was perceived as a multidimensional construct encompassing both objective outcomes, such as career advancement and employment stability, and subjective outcomes, including professional satisfaction, personal growth, and meaningful work. This study extends Career Construction Theory by demonstrating that employability skills function as adaptive career resources whose contribution to career success varies according to occupational context. The findings provide practical insights for higher education institutions, employers, and policymakers seeking to strengthen graduate employability through the integration of transferable competencies with discipline-specific education.

**KEYWORDS:** career success, career construction theory, employability skills, geology graduates, graduate employability, phenomenological study.

### INTRODUCTION

Graduate employability has become a major concern in higher education as universities are increasingly expected to produce graduates who possess not only disciplinary knowledge but also transferable competencies required by an evolving labour market. Rapid technological advancement, organizational transformation, and increasingly boundaryless careers have shifted employer expectations toward graduates who demonstrate communication, teamwork, adaptability, problem-solving, and lifelong learning skills in addition to technical expertise (Clarke, 2018; Yorke, 2006). From the perspective of Career Construction Theory (CCT), career success is no longer determined solely by academic qualifications but by graduates' ability to continuously adapt, construct meaningful career paths, and mobilize psychosocial resources in response to changing workplace demands (Wang & Li, 2024). Consequently, employability skills have become critical resources that enable graduates to achieve both objective career outcomes, such as employment stability and promotion, and subjective outcomes, including career satisfaction and professional fulfilment.

The importance of employability skills is particularly evident among graduates of specialized disciplines such as geology. Although geology programmes prepare students for careers in mining, petroleum, environmental consulting, and geotechnical industries, labour market dynamics have increasingly encouraged graduates to pursue careers beyond their disciplinary background. As a result, geology graduates frequently transition into sectors such as banking, education, and health and safety, where success depends not only on technical knowledge but also on the ability to transfer employability skills across different professional contexts. Previous studies have demonstrated that communication, adaptability, teamwork, emotional intelligence, and digital competencies significantly improve graduates' employability and career development (Hidayat & Amran, 2025; Ilyas & Ali, 2023; Iqbal et al.,



2023). Nevertheless, most existing studies have focused on general graduate populations, with limited attention given to geology graduates whose careers frequently extend beyond geology-related occupations.

Despite extensive research examining the relationship between employability skills and career success, two important gaps remain. First, previous studies have predominantly employed quantitative approaches that explain statistical relationships but provide limited understanding of how graduates experience, interpret, and apply employability skills throughout their career journeys. Second, relatively little research has explored employability and career success among geology graduates by comparing those employed in geology-related and non-geology sectors. This limitation restricts understanding of how similar employability skills are mobilized differently across diverse occupational contexts. Career Construction Theory offers an appropriate theoretical lens for addressing this gap because it conceptualizes career development as an adaptive process through which individuals actively construct meaningful careers by integrating employability skills, career adaptability, and professional experiences (Wang & Li, 2024).

This study explores how geology graduates of Abbottabad University of Science and Technology experience and perceive the role of employability skills in constructing career success across diverse career pathways, working in both geology-related and non-geology sectors. This study seeks to understand graduates' lived experiences using a phenomenological approach in developing and applying communication, teamwork, adaptability, problem-solving, and professional responsibility throughout their career development. By examining career success through the perspective of Career Construction Theory, this study contributes to the graduate employability literature by providing a deeper understanding of how employability skills are utilized across different employment contexts while offering practical implications for curriculum development, career services, and university–industry collaboration.

Although previous studies have examined employability skills and career success, most have relied on quantitative approaches and have focused on students or graduates in general. Limited research has explored how geology graduates experience employability skills across diverse career pathways through a phenomenological lens. Consequently, little is known about how geology graduates themselves perceive and make meaning of employability skills in shaping their career success across different occupational contexts.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Career Construction Theory

Career Construction Theory (CCT) developed by Mark L. Savickas, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals actively construct their careers through the interaction of personal experiences, psychosocial resources, and career adaptability rather than relying solely on accumulated knowledge or technical competence. Unlike traditional career theories that emphasize person-job fit, CCT views career development as a continuous process in which individuals assign meaning to their experiences and adapt to changing labour market conditions. The theory proposes four dimensions of career adaptability concern, control, curiosity, and confidence which enable individuals to anticipate future career opportunities, make career decisions, explore alternative pathways, and overcome career-related challenges (Chen et al., 2020; Kwon, 2019).

From the perspective of graduate employability, CCT explains that employability skills become valuable only when graduates actively mobilize these competencies to respond to workplace demands and career transitions. Through reflective learning and continuous adaptation, graduates develop professional identities that support sustainable career development across diverse employment contexts (Wang & Li, 2024; Yılmaz, 2026). Consequently, Career Construction Theory provides an appropriate theoretical foundation for understanding how geology graduates utilize employability skills to achieve career success in both geology-related and non-geology sectors.

### Employability Skills

Employability skills refer to a combination of technical, cognitive, interpersonal, and professional competencies that enable graduates to obtain employment, perform effectively in the workplace, and adapt to evolving organizational environments. Contemporary employability extends beyond disciplinary knowledge by emphasizing transferable skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, leadership, and lifelong learning (Clarke, 2018). Employers increasingly expect graduates to demonstrate these competencies as they navigate rapidly changing labour markets characterized by technological advancement, interdisciplinary collaboration, and organizational complexity.



Recent empirical studies have reinforced the multidimensional nature of employability skills. Research conducted in Pakistan identified communication, critical thinking, professionalism, flexibility, emotional intelligence, digital literacy, and commercial awareness as competencies most valued by employers (Iqbal et al., 2023). Similarly, experiential learning, internships, and university–industry collaboration have been shown to strengthen graduates' workplace readiness by integrating theoretical knowledge with practical application (Alvarez et al., 2022; Ilyas & Ali, 2023). These findings indicate that employability skills should be viewed as dynamic capabilities continuously developed through professional experience rather than static competencies acquired during university education.

## Career Success

Career success is widely recognized as a multidimensional construct consisting of both objective and subjective dimensions. Objective career success refers to externally observable achievements such as salary progression, promotions, employment stability, and professional recognition, whereas subjective career success reflects individuals' perceptions of career satisfaction, personal fulfilment, professional growth, and work-life balance (Seibert et al., 2026). Contemporary career research suggests that sustainable career success requires balancing these objective achievements with meaningful personal career experiences.

Recent studies suggest that employability skills are associated with both dimensions of career success. Graduates possessing strong communication, adaptability, and problem-solving skills are better able to manage career transitions, respond to organizational change, and achieve long-term professional development (Yinan et al., 2025). Furthermore, Career Construction Theory argues that career success emerges not merely from possessing competencies but from individuals' capacity to apply those competencies adaptively across changing professional contexts. This perspective is particularly relevant for geology graduates whose career trajectories frequently extend beyond traditional geology occupations.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of geology graduates concerning employability skills and career success. A phenomenological approach was considered appropriate because it enables an in-depth understanding of how individuals interpret and construct meaning from their career experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2024; Moustakas, 2011). The study was conducted among graduates of the Geology Study Program at Abbottabad University of Science and Technology (AUST), Abbottabad, Pakistan. Purposive sampling was used to recruit seven graduates who met the inclusion criteria, namely graduating in 2021, having at least two years of professional experience, and possessing relevant experience related to employability skills and career success. The participants represented both geology-related sectors (mining, petroleum, and oil and gas) and non-geology sectors (banking, education, and health and safety), enabling comparison across different employment contexts. Data saturation was achieved after the seventh interview, as no substantially new themes emerged.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted either face-to-face or via video conferencing, depending on participants' availability. Each interview lasted approximately 45-75 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' informed consent. The interview protocol explored participants' career backgrounds, employability skills, perceptions of career success, and professional experiences. The collected data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis, including familiarisation with the data, coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition, and report writing. Throughout the analytical process, participants' narratives were interpreted through the lens of Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2013) to understand how employability skills contributed to career success across different employment sectors.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied data, theoretical, and methodological triangulation. Credibility was strengthened by involving participants from diverse occupational backgrounds, while theoretical triangulation was achieved by interpreting the findings using Career Construction Theory alongside previous employability and career success literature. Methodological triangulation was supported through the integration of interview data and participants' professional backgrounds. Ethical principles were maintained by obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring voluntary participation, and protecting participant confidentiality through anonymised reporting.



## RESULTS

### Employability Skills Developed by Geology Graduates

The findings revealed that employability skills served as fundamental resources supporting graduates' professional development regardless of their employment sector. Across all participants, five employability skills consistently emerged as essential for workplace performance and long-term career development: communication, teamwork, adaptability and continuous learning, problem-solving, and professional responsibility. Although these competencies were shared by all participants, their application differed depending on whether graduates worked in geology-related industries or non-geology occupations.

**Communication** was identified as the most influential employability skill across both groups. Participants employed in geology-related industries explained that communication was indispensable for presenting geological findings, coordinating exploration activities, preparing technical reports, and collaborating with engineers, drilling teams, and operational managers. Technical knowledge alone was considered insufficient without the ability to communicate geological information effectively within multidisciplinary teams. Conversely, graduates working in banking, education, and occupational health and safety emphasized communication as a key competency for interacting with customers, students, supervisors, and colleagues, while simultaneously strengthening professional credibility within unfamiliar work environments. These findings suggest that communication functions not merely as an interpersonal skill but as a mechanism enabling graduates to transfer knowledge across different professional contexts. As one participant reflected:

*"Communication and confidence helped the most. In my current role as an HSE Coordinator, officers, foremen, HSE leads, and management visit our site regularly. We must explain safety systems, answer questions, and satisfy them with proper responses..." (P3)*

This finding is consistent with Clarke (2018), who argues that communication is a core transferable employability skill that enables graduates to function effectively across diverse professional contexts. Similarly, Iqbal et al. (2023) identified communication as one of the competencies most valued by employers for enhancing graduates' workplace performance and career development.

**Teamwork** also emerged as an important contributor to professional effectiveness. Graduates employed in mining, petroleum, and oil and gas industries described teamwork as essential for coordinating multidisciplinary operations involving engineers, geologists, safety officers, and technical personnel. Through collaborative work, participants developed practical knowledge, leadership abilities, and confidence that enhanced project performance. Similarly, graduates in non-geology sectors viewed teamwork as facilitating knowledge sharing, organizational learning, and problem-solving while supporting their adjustment to new professional environments. These findings demonstrate that collaborative competence remained equally important despite differences in occupational settings.

*One participant described the importance of teamwork as follows: "Teamwork is very important. Petroleum exploration is not a one-person job. Mud loggers, geologists, mud engineers, drillers, and other team members depend on each other. We are incomplete without one another." (P1)*

This finding is consistent with previous studies emphasizing teamwork as a fundamental employability skill that enhances collaboration, knowledge sharing, and workplace effectiveness across diverse professional contexts (Alvarez et al., 2022; Clarke, 2018).

**Adaptability and continuous learning** represented another dominant theme. Participants working within geology-related industries reported continuously updating their competencies in geological software, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), remote sensing, safety management systems, and emerging digital technologies to remain professionally competitive. In contrast, graduates who had transitioned into banking and education described adaptability as the primary factor enabling successful career transition. They emphasized learning entirely new organizational procedures, banking regulations, teaching methods, and workplace cultures after leaving geology-related professions. Rather than perceiving career transition as an obstacle, participants viewed adaptability as an opportunity for professional growth and sustainable career development.

*One participant described the importance of adaptability and continuous learning as follows: "I had already gained around three to three and a half years of experience in operations. I wanted to learn safety as well. Learning safety gave me a new perspective and opened opportunities for greater responsibility." (P3)*



This finding is consistent with Career Construction Theory, which conceptualizes adaptability as a psychosocial resource that enables individuals to respond effectively to changing career demands (Savickas, 2013). It also aligns with the findings of Haenggli and Hirschi (2020) and Wang and Li (2024), who emphasize that continuous learning and career adaptability are essential for sustaining employability and long-term career development in dynamic labour markets.

**Problem-solving and professional responsibility** further strengthened participants' career development across both sectors. Graduates working in geology-related industries frequently encountered operational challenges requiring analytical thinking, rapid decision-making, and professional judgment under demanding field conditions. Likewise, participants employed outside geology emphasized that reliability, accountability, ethical behaviour, punctuality, and commitment strengthened supervisors' trust and created opportunities for promotion and professional recognition. Although occupational contexts differed considerably, both groups consistently perceived responsibility and problem-solving as essential competencies supporting long-term employability.

One participant highlighted the importance of problem-solving and professional responsibility as follows:

*“Every day brings different challenges. We have to identify the problem, analyze the situation, and decide on the best solution while taking responsibility for our decisions because even a small mistake can have serious consequences.”* (P3)

This finding is consistent with previous studies identifying problem-solving and professional responsibility as essential employability skills that enable graduates to make effective decisions, perform reliably, and adapt to complex workplace environments (Clarke, 2018; Iqbal et al., 2023).

One participant described career success as follows: *“Career success means working in a field you wanted to pursue, earning well, and being satisfied with what you do. If you are earning money but you are not satisfied with your work, then something is still missing.”* (P5)

This finding is consistent with previous studies recognizing career success as a multidimensional construct encompassing both objective achievements and subjective career fulfilment (Ng et al., 2005; Shockley et al., 2016).

Proposition 1: Employability skills function as adaptive competencies that enable geology graduates to perform effectively and sustain professional development across both geology-related and non-geology employment sectors.

## Career Success among Geology Graduates

Participants conceptualized career success as extending beyond traditional objective indicators such as salary, promotion, and employment stability. While these objective outcomes remained important, graduates consistently associated career success with subjective dimensions, including professional satisfaction, confidence, personal growth, meaningful work, and work-life balance. This finding indicates that career success is a multidimensional construct shaped by both measurable achievements and individual perceptions of career fulfilment.

Differences nevertheless emerged according to occupational sector. Participants employed within geology-related industries generally experienced structured career progression characterized by increasing technical responsibilities, specialization, and organizational recognition. Career advancement was closely associated with technical competence combined with effective communication, teamwork, and professional responsibility. In contrast, graduates employed outside geology viewed successful career transition, adaptability, and continuous learning as indicators of career success. For these participants, entering a new profession, establishing professional credibility, and maintaining long-term employability represented equally meaningful achievements despite working beyond their academic discipline.

Regardless of occupational pathway, participants consistently described career success as an ongoing developmental process rather than a final destination. Their narratives demonstrated that successful careers were constructed through continuous learning, adaptation, and active engagement with changing workplace demands, highlighting the dynamic nature of career development across increasingly diverse labour market contexts.

Proposition 2: Career success among geology graduates is reflected through the integration of objective career progression and subjective career fulfilment achieved through continuous professional adaptation.

## Contribution of Employability Skills to Career Success

The findings demonstrate that employability skills contributed significantly to career success across all participants; however, their contribution varied according to occupational context. Graduates employed within geology-related industries relied



on the integration of technical competence and transferable employability skills to perform discipline-specific responsibilities effectively. Communication, teamwork, analytical problem-solving, and professional responsibility strengthened workplace performance, increased supervisors' trust, and created opportunities for specialization, promotion, and leadership. Technical expertise therefore complemented transferable employability skills in facilitating structured career advancement within geology-related professions.

Conversely, graduates working in banking, education, and occupational health and safety depended primarily on transferable employability skills to establish successful careers outside their original academic discipline. Communication, adaptability, teamwork, continuous learning, and professional responsibility enabled participants to acquire new knowledge, adjust to unfamiliar organizational cultures, and build professional credibility within new occupations. These competencies facilitated successful career transition while simultaneously supporting long-term career development despite the absence of geology-specific technical practice.

A cross-sector comparison further revealed that although graduates followed different occupational pathways, both groups consistently agreed that employability skills constituted the primary foundation of sustainable career success. Graduates remaining in geology-related industries integrated technical competence with transferable skills, whereas graduates pursuing careers outside geology relied predominantly on transferable employability skills to navigate career transitions. Despite these differences, participants unanimously emphasized that career success depended less on academic qualifications alone and more on their ability to apply employability skills effectively across changing workplace contexts.

Proposition 3: The contribution of employability skills to career success is shaped by occupational context, where technical competence complements transferable employability skills in geology-related careers, while transferable employability skills primarily facilitate successful career transition and long-term career sustainability in non-geology sectors.

## DISCUSSION

### Employability Skills through the Lens of Career Construction Theory

The findings indicate that participants experienced employability skills as extending beyond technical competencies, functioning as adaptive resources that enabled them to construct meaningful and sustainable careers across diverse occupational contexts. Across both geology-related and non-geology sectors, participants consistently described communication, teamwork, adaptability, problem-solving, and professional responsibility as core competencies supporting their professional development. These findings reinforce Career Construction Theory (CCT), which conceptualizes career development as an active process in which individuals continuously construct their careers by mobilizing psychosocial resources and adapting to changing occupational environments rather than relying solely on disciplinary knowledge (Savickas, 2013). Participants' narratives further suggest that career success was shaped not merely by possessing employability skills, but by their ability to apply these competencies effectively within diverse workplace contexts.

The findings also reflect the four dimensions of career adaptability proposed by Career Construction Theory: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. Participants demonstrated concern by preparing themselves for future careers through internships, professional certifications, and digital skill development. Control was reflected in their willingness to take responsibility for career decisions and continuously improve their competencies. Graduates who successfully transitioned into banking, education, and occupational health and safety illustrated curiosity by exploring alternative career opportunities beyond geology, while confidence emerged through their ability to perform effectively despite entering unfamiliar professional environments. These findings support previous studies indicating that career adaptability functions as a key psychosocial resource for sustaining employability in dynamic labour markets (Haenggli & Hirschi, 2020; Wang & Li, 2024).

Furthermore, the findings are consistent with Yorke (2006) and (Clarke 2018), who argue that employability extends beyond technical expertise by incorporating transferable competencies that facilitate lifelong career development. However, this study extends previous literature by demonstrating that the same employability skills are mobilized differently according to occupational context. Graduates employed within geology-related industries integrated technical competence with transferable skills to enhance workplace performance, whereas graduates employed outside geology relied predominantly on transferable employability skills to construct new professional identities. This finding broadens the application of Career Construction Theory by illustrating that employability skills function as adaptive career resources whose utilization varies according to professional context rather than remaining fixed across occupations.



## Career Success as a Process of Career Construction

The findings indicate that participants experienced career success as a multidimensional and dynamic process encompassing both objective achievements and subjective career fulfilment. Although participants acknowledged the importance of salary, promotion, and employment stability, they consistently described personal growth, confidence, meaningful work, and career satisfaction as equally significant indicators of success. This interpretation supports the multidimensional career success framework proposed by Ng et al. (2005) and further developed by Shockley et al. (2016), which distinguishes objective career success from subjective career success while recognizing the interdependence between these two dimensions.

From the perspective of Career Construction Theory, career success should be understood not as a fixed destination but as an ongoing process of career adaptation. Participants continuously reconstructed their professional identities through learning, workplace experience, and adaptation to organizational change. Graduates employed in geology-related industries experienced relatively structured career progression through increasing technical responsibilities and specialization. In contrast, participants working in non-geology sectors regarded successful career transition itself as evidence of career success because it required learning new knowledge, adapting to different organizational cultures, and establishing professional credibility. Participants' narratives suggest that career success was shaped by their capacity to respond adaptively to evolving labour market demands rather than by disciplinary background alone.

This interpretation also aligns with Kwon (2019) and Yinan et al (2025), who argue that employability skills and career self-efficacy contribute significantly to sustainable career development by strengthening individuals' adaptive capacity. The present study further suggests that career success among geology graduates is context-dependent, as graduates construct different pathways toward success while pursuing common goals of professional fulfilment, career progression, and long-term employability.

## Employability Skills across Geology and Non-Geology Sectors

One of the principal contributions of this study lies in its comparison of geology graduates employed within geology-related industries and those pursuing careers in non-geology sectors. Participants across both groups consistently identified communication, teamwork, adaptability, problem-solving, and professional responsibility as essential employability skills. However, their lived experiences revealed that these competencies were applied differently according to occupational context. Graduates who remained within geology-related professions integrated transferable employability skills with technical expertise to perform discipline-specific responsibilities and progress within structured career pathways. In contrast, graduates employed outside geology relied primarily on transferable employability skills to facilitate career transition, adapt to unfamiliar organizational environments, and establish professional credibility in new professional fields.

These findings extend previous employability research, which has generally treated employability skills as universally applicable competencies without considering sector-specific differences in their application. Rather than exerting a uniform influence on career success, employability skills appear to function differently depending on occupational context. Technical competence remains indispensable within geology-related professions, whereas transferable employability skills become the principal mechanism enabling graduates to adapt successfully beyond their disciplinary boundaries. This distinction provides new empirical evidence regarding how employability skills contribute to sustainable career development across increasingly boundaryless careers.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that employability skills are not merely workplace competencies but adaptive career resources that enable geology graduates to construct successful careers across diverse professional contexts.

## Theoretical and Practical Implications

The findings provide several theoretical and practical implications for graduate employability and career development research. From a theoretical perspective, this study extends Career Construction Theory by demonstrating that employability skills operate as adaptive career resources whose contribution to career success varies according to occupational context. While previous studies have primarily examined employability skills within single occupational settings or through quantitative approaches, this study reveals that geology graduates mobilize these competencies differently depending on whether they pursue careers within or beyond their disciplinary field. Consequently, the study broadens the applicability of Career Construction Theory by highlighting that career construction is influenced not only by individual adaptability but also by the interaction between transferable employability skills and occupational environments.



From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that universities should integrate transferable employability skills more systematically into geology curricula alongside discipline-specific technical competencies. Curriculum enhancement should include experiential learning opportunities, internships, interdisciplinary projects, communication training, leadership development, and problem-based learning to prepare graduates for increasingly dynamic labour markets. Career development centres should also strengthen career guidance programmes by helping students recognize that successful careers may extend beyond traditional geology professions while remaining aligned with graduates' competencies and career aspirations. Furthermore, employers may utilize these findings to design graduate development programmes that emphasise adaptability, continuous learning, and transferable professional competencies in addition to technical expertise.

### Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research

This study possesses several notable strengths. First, it provides an in-depth qualitative understanding of how employability skills contribute to career success by adopting a phenomenological approach that captures graduates' lived experiences rather than relying solely on statistical relationships. Second, the inclusion of graduates employed in both geology-related and non-geology sectors offers a comparative perspective that has received limited attention in previous employability research. Third, the integration of Career Construction Theory provides a robust theoretical framework for explaining how graduates actively construct successful careers through adaptability and continuous professional development.

Despite these strengths, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study was conducted with graduates from a single institution, Abbottabad University of Science and Technology, which may limit the transferability of the findings to other universities or national contexts. In addition, the relatively small sample size, although appropriate for phenomenological inquiry, does not permit statistical generalisation. The findings are also based on participants' self-reported experiences, which may be influenced by personal perceptions and retrospective interpretation. Moreover, the study focused exclusively on graduates from the geology discipline, and therefore the findings may not fully represent graduates from other academic programmes or professional fields.

The findings nevertheless provide valuable directions for future research. Future studies may adopt comparative multi-university or cross-country designs to examine whether employability skills contribute similarly to career success across different educational and labour market contexts. Mixed-methods or longitudinal research designs would also enable researchers to investigate how employability skills evolve throughout graduates' careers and influence long-term career development. Additionally, future research could explore the perspectives of employers, university administrators, and industry partners to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of graduate employability. Further investigation involving graduates from other STEM and non-STEM disciplines would also contribute to refining the application of Career Construction Theory across diverse occupational settings.

### CONCLUSION

This study explored how employability skills contribute to career success among geology graduates working in both geology-related and non-geology sectors through the lens of Career Construction Theory. The findings demonstrate that communication, teamwork, adaptability, problem-solving, and professional responsibility are essential employability skills that support graduates' career development across diverse employment contexts. Although the application of these competencies differed between occupational sectors, all participants consistently emphasized that career success was achieved through the effective utilization of employability skills rather than relying solely on disciplinary knowledge or technical expertise. The findings further indicate that career success encompasses both objective outcomes, such as career progression and employment stability, and subjective outcomes, including professional satisfaction, personal growth, and meaningful work.

This study contributes to the graduate employability literature by extending the application of Career Construction Theory to geology graduates and demonstrating that employability skills function as adaptive career resources that are applied differently across occupational contexts. Graduates employed in geology-related sectors combined technical competence with transferable employability skills, whereas those working in non-geology sectors relied primarily on transferable competencies to navigate career transitions and establish sustainable careers. These findings provide valuable insights for higher education institutions, employers, and policymakers seeking to strengthen graduate employability by integrating transferable skills with discipline-specific education to better prepare graduates for increasingly dynamic labour markets.



Overall, the findings highlight the importance of integrating transferable employability skills with discipline-specific education to support graduates in constructing sustainable and successful careers across diverse professional pathways.

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