



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Management

SOFT SKILLS & ITS ROLE FOR DEVELOPING EMPLOYABILITY FOR STUDENTS

KEY WORDS: soft skills, employment, communication skills, students

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ABSTRACT

The mushrooming of engineering and management institutions in India today has led to a paradoxical situation where there is no scarcity of students or companies to recruit them; rather, there is a severe dearth of employable youth. These graduates with their professional degrees are found to be unfit for the corporate world and their scope to acquire a job is greatly constrained due to a lack of various soft skills. Presently organizations assess candidates' suitability and employability not only by their academic record but also by a set of personal and interpersonal skills which help them to be industry-ready and sustain in the corporate world for long. This paper highlights the types & importance of Soft Skills & proposes its early incorporation for employment success.

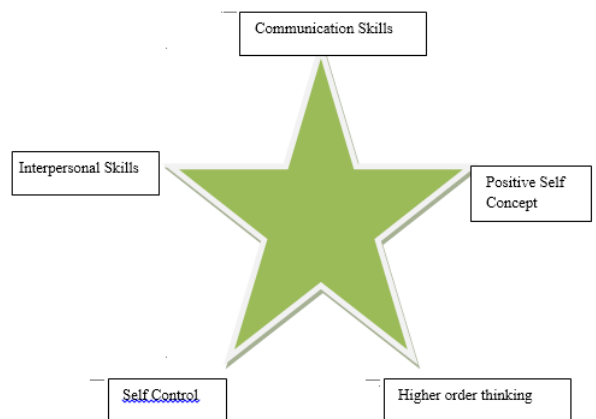
INTRODUCTION

Soft Skills - A word which appears to be very simple but has a huge impact on one's success or failure. People misinterpret soft skills for communication skills. It is anticipated that if one's communication skills are good, he is fit for the job. Soft Skills are more than that. These are people skills. Soft skills are personal attributes that enhance a person's job performance, interactions and career prospects. How well one networks with others influences the success of his career. "If you want a job, have technical skills. If you want a career, have people skills." Beginning in the early 1980s, management consultants and scholars began challenging the notion that people with high IQs are most likely to have business and career success. Instead, they found that individuals who use what the management journal *The McKinsey Quarterly* called "the soft S's of style, skills, staff, and shared goals" (Watson, 1983) generally outperform. According to the American Society of Training and Development's (ASTD) State of the Industry 2011 report (Green & McGill, 2011), U.S. employers spent \$171.5 billion on employee learning and development in 2010. More than 27.6% of the learning content they provided went to teaching soft skills, including interpersonal (7.49%), customer service (7.35%), and management and supervisory skills (12.83%). [2] Analyst firms, such as Bersin & Associates, that follow corporate training and development trends have found similar results showing that organizations tend to spend at least 20-25% of their training budgets on soft skills initiatives. The figures clearly indicate the necessity of soft skills in career development.

Importance of Soft Skills

In the present scenario, the industry demands have changed. Most of the companies prefer to hire people with a combination of soft skills and hard skills. Communication skills are the first and foremost of the soft skills because until and unless a person is able to put forth his ideas and explain his thoughts to others in a confident manner, he will not be heard. With communication comes listening. Active listening is also an essential trait of a successful manager. One can reciprocate to others' thoughts or ideas only when he/she listens effectively. One can become an excellent manager without becoming a good leader, but one cannot be an excellent leader without becoming a good manager. Be it any job, one needs to manage his work properly. Soft skills combine many management skills in it. The most crucial resource that one employs in any job or work is the human resource. Soft skills teach many management skills also which a person needs to incorporate while working to step up the corporate ladder. One of these is the critical thinking and problem solving skill. This is the ability to identify and analyze problems

KEY SOFT SKILLS FOR STUDENTS TO ENHANCE WORKFORCE SUCCESS



There are five critical skills most likely to increase odds of success across all outcomes and which employers expect employees to have: social skills; communication; and higher-order thinking skills (including problem solving, critical thinking, and decision-making); supported by the intrapersonal skills of self-control and positive self-concept. **Social skills** assist people get along well with others. This ability includes respecting others, using context proper behavior, and resolving conflict. Social skills are universally important. They predict all four types of workforce outcomes (employment, performance, income/wages, and entrepreneurial success), are sought by employers, and are seen as critically important by experts in the field. Social skills were supported across types of evidence, in all regions of the world, and within both formal and informal employment. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a position in which social skills would not be an asset. **Communication skills** refer to the precise types of communication used in the workplace, and include oral, written, non-verbal, and listening skills. There is evidence that communication skills are related to three of the workforce outcomes studied for youth, they are the most frequently sought skill among employers, and they were strongly endorsed by stakeholders in this project. The strong support for communication holds true across regions of the world, for both formal and informal positions, and for entry-level employees. Higher-order thinking consists of problem solving, critical thinking, and decision-making. At a fundamental level, this includes an ability to identify an issue and take in information from multiple sources to evaluate options in order to reach a reasonable conclusion. Higher-order thinking is very much sought by employers and is critical for all four workforce outcomes in all regions of the world. Because these skills are complex to measure in a survey, less empirical research has been conducted on how these skills relate directly to successful employment. Self-control relates to one's ability to

delay gratification, control anger, direct and focus attention, manage emotions, and regulate behaviors. Self-control is an intrapersonal skill, foundational to many others: it enables successful decision-making and resolution of conflict. A positive self-concept includes self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-awareness and beliefs, as well as self-esteem and a sense of well-being and pride. Positive self-concept is an additional intrapersonal skill that is important for workforce success. It is related to success across all four workforce outcomes and is especially supported in youth-specific literature. Hard work and dependability, responsibility, and self-motivation are also highly valued by employers and supported by a strong base of research evidence, placing them in the top ten supported skills. The field is building more evidence that these can be improved through interventions among youth and young adults, and it is expected that, in time, they may emerge with as much support as those above enjoy. Teamwork involves proficiency in these as well as other skills, so while it appears among the top ten supported skills, the recommendations focus on some of the components of teamwork, rather than on the overarching set of skills that it represents.

CONCLUSIONS

Students need to work on their Soft skills since these skills will continue to be in great demand in the years to come. Students therefore, must take time to introspect, read materials on enhancing self awareness, emulate how others handle difficult interpersonal situations, and ask family and friends to provide constructive feedback for further improvement. Mastering soft skills takes persistence. Students need to equip themselves with an array of self management skills for an inspired and purpose driven life. As Tom Hopkins says, "You are your greatest asset. Put your time, effort and money into training, grooming, and encouraging your greatest asset."

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