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SOFT SKILLS: A RESEARCH STUDY ON OUTDOING ACADEMICS AND CONQUER THE WORLD

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ABSTRACT

“Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.” Nelson Mandela.

The statement ‘Education is important’ exemplifies an understatement, as it is the most powerful weapon to improve, expand, and develop the life of the human race. Education acts as a tool to bring in a complete transformation within the society. It believed in general that training begins at home. It is a life-long process that starts with birth and ends with death. Education enhances the quality of an individual by refining their knowledge, skills, abilities, personality, and attitude. Also, education creates higher opportunities for the unemployed. Individuals with higher education are likely to get a job as it adds value to life and society. Primary learning begins with the ability to deal with the necessary skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Teachers play a significant role in the education system. They head the responsibility of grooming and enlightening the students or learners in all facets. Today's generation is deficient in managing multiple problems can come up with appropriate solutions. There is a high demand to teach soft skills in this highly technologically advanced country. The teachers, apart from the regular curriculum, are subjected to train the students/ adults to adjust to the world, improve communication skills, methodological skills, and soft skills. For Survival in the modern era, the teachers should change the teaching focus to soft skills, because in this twenty-first century, those skills are essential to be successful. Indeed, soft skills are a phrase closely related to life skills, deals with interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, and social skills. Soft skills are the mishmash of life skills, social skills, interpersonal skills, personal characteristics, attributes, and personality to commendably adapt according to the needs and desires of others. It is the ability to communicate and interact with others in an approachable, pleasant, and cordial manner. Various parameters of soft skills include negotiation, resolving conflicts, networking, communicating effectively with others, offer the best customer services, effective teamwork, problem-solving skills, managing pressure at work, and others. Several researchers have found out that there are 87 plus soft skills that are mandatory for the learners to acquire in today's world. These 87 skills are in general under seven necessary soft skills, namely communication skills, leadership skills, influencing skills, interpersonal skills, personal skills, creative skills, and professional skills. Thus, teachers need to emphasize soft skills so that the next generation easily cope up with the personality development issues and achieve success in their carrier. The present research study stresses the need for soft skills in the modern era concerning personality and professionalism. The paper also explains the importance

and purpose of teaching and learning soft skills in the contemporary period. It also describes the critical need to acquire soft skills in the workplace. In short, the paper tries to state that soft skills are the learned behaviors through a rigorous training process. Also, the article highlights the importance of soft skills in the modern era for all learners to be it, students, or professionals. For this, the paper presents a few relevant statements substantiated in other research papers. That is, the corresponding data presented, along with the findings and results in support of the current research topic. In the end, a few suggestions concerning the research topic are introduced.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the term soft skill is used as an umbrella term that covers essential competencies such as life skills, social skills, aptitude skills, and attitude. It also includes personality traits such as maintain a friendly relationship with others, capable of working in a team, establish and maintaining professionalism at the workplace. By soft tradition, skills are treated complementary to hard skills, which are implemented to perform a task. To achieve success both in life and in the profession, learning soft skills is obligatory. Only through education, one can build these skills. We can find a lot of difference between an educated, skilled, talented individual and uneducated, unskilled and untalented individual. Without proper planning and application of skills, execution of the work turns failure.

These days, only skilled individuals can accomplish tasks and grab opportunities.

Skills generally refer to the ability of an individual to complete the assigned task or any particular task. It is also defined as the potential to execute a task with perfection. These skills will enable individuals to accomplish the tasks, thereby improving one's competencies at their swift and pace. It is the ability to produce the determined results in the stipulated timeframe work. Broadly skills are divided into technical skills, personal skills, social skills, and life skills. Technical skills are those skills required to finish a job.

On the other hand, personal skills include motivating others, planning and organizational skills, problem-solving skills, and others. Social skills will consist of leading a group of members, negotiation skills, inspiring skills, and others. And life skills include time management, training, work-life balance skills, and others.

There are two types of skill set: soft skills and hard skills. Soft skills are subjective as it involves other people's opinion. All the competencies are not directly connected to a task. On the other hand, hard skills refer to a specific set of capabilities to complete a task. Hard skills are a set of technical expertise to perform a job, and soft skills are the essential interpersonal skills necessary to fulfill the duties. Soft skills are often described as prerequisite personality traits such as leadership quality, integrity, optimism, communication skills, and social skills. All of the above-listed skills can be picked up through arduous practice. There are several differences between soft skills and hard skills. Hard skills are those skills that are learned at school through training. They can be measured in terms of quantity. And these skills can be taught at regular intervals. Examples of hard skills are learning welding and plumbing techniques, mastering computer programming skills, accountancy, and other technical skills. Hard skills, once acquired, stay life-long. For example, they are learning to drive a car by attending the training sessions. However, soft skills are idiosyncratic and emotion-based, which measures itself in quality.

A few of the soft skills can be learned through training, but most of them come innately. Another significant difference is hard skills are mandatory for specific jobs. Soft skills are equally necessary for both life and career, although few job roles demand more of hard skills. Hard skills can be easily measured, and tangible and soft skills are demonstrated according to the arisen situations. Generally,

schools, colleges, and universities variedly identify and understand the importance of soft skills. It is one of the widely debated topics of the twenty-first century, thereby concluded that to lead a happy life, soft skill are imperative. Soft skills are well-thought-out as a strategic, pre-emptive, and tactical element at any workplace. These skills act as the key to the whole professional career. Growth and profit of any industry or organization are based on the employees' strong, soft skills. Also named as life skills, soft skills are widely, appropriately, and suitably used to manage proficient affairs. Either these skills are voluntarily learned or taught so that individuals learn to handle all problems in day-to-day life. Often soft skills assist in encountering issues and try to come up with adequate solutions. The practice of life skills or soft skills helps to absorb, gulp, and imbibe other leading qualities such as sociability, self-esteem, self-confidence, tolerance, broad-mindedness, and other crucial competencies.

In this twenty-first century, most of the organizations and industries seek employees who are excellent at skills. Employees with reliable, robust, and outstanding soft skills are hired in an organization for their benefit. The early twentieth century found the rise of adapting soft skills in all the educational institutions, training centers diagonally around the world. Today's competitive world urges to have youngsters with exceptional, first-class, and remarkable soft skills as hard skills are not alone enough to meet the dreams of that individual. To leave a scar, the learner or worker needs to upgrade and upskill himself/ herself to go in line with the market knowledge and talent. A famous line 'Survival of the Fittest' acts as the base of the soft skill training programs in countries such as China, America, Japan, Europe, and other developed areas. But in India, though the literacy rate is high, the focus has not reached soft skills. Therefore, this paper proposes to provide a detailed explanation of the need for developing soft skills in the life of an individual. Although this era is technologically advanced, the need and demand for soft skills are increasing all the way. Both the students and the employees lack soft skills abilities from all walks of life. People began considering soft skills as a commodity than a necessity. They think that soft skills are only essential to crack at interviews and excel in the workplace.

In educational institutions, teachers train the students to excel in hard skills such as writing, reporting, and other skills. It is estimated that hard skills exert an immediate impact at the workplace, while soft skills have become challenging. Becoming proficient at these skills will help the students or employees progress at swift and pace to be more independent. Today's English classroom's altered to soft skilling training centers as English is extensively used across the world in business, technology, education, and others. Reputed organizations seek for those candidates who not only completes the assigned tasks effectively and efficiently but also stay dedicated, focused, and organized with tremendous and admirable leadership skills. Therefore, all the youngsters should have training in both soft skills and hard skills as well at respective training centers and educational institutions. This paper tries to attempt, analyze, and differentiate the vital soft skills which necessitate the urge to live in this twenty-first century. For this, sufficient and adequate literature is presented to substantiate the observations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Review Stage

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There are full definitions of soft skills in literature. Engelberg, 2015 defines soft skills or social skills to understand and interpret the relationship in connection with other people. The study identifies different types of personal and social skills, such as thinking skills, listening skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills, decision-making skills, negotiating skills, and others. Examples of personal skills

such as a passion for learning, achieving goals, and planning are also critically discussed.

Grisi, 2014 defines soft skills as the prerequisite hard skills to keep oneself updated and developed in fluctuating circumstances. These skills are related to man's logic and rational. While this may be true, hard skills permit him/ her to bear out to chase his dreams of becoming an engineer, teacher, philologist, psychologist, and anthropologist. Soft skills drive an individual independently to go beyond the limits of an individual. Daniel Goleman, with the help of a diagram, elucidates the meaning of intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies. The picture clearly states that every individual is accountable for his actions. In particular, the awareness and effects of the individual are connected. Figure 1 shows the representation of soft skills.

Ciappei, 2015 explains that most of the personal traits of an individual persuade his competencies. Soft skills like justice, bravery, courage, and tolerance are indefinitely carried from the moral aspect of life. All these significant traits eventually nurture the competencies. Moreover, the research study distinguishes soft skills as entrepreneurship skills and technological skills. Entrepreneurship skills also termed leadership skills, encircle the skills like taking risks, inspire and motivate co-workers, creativity, innovativeness, and management skills. Likewise, the technological skills permit one to accomplish the specific tasks within the timeframe.

The Nobel Prize winner James Heckman came up with a simple definition for soft skills, which goes like this: "Soft skills predict the success in life." He found out that there is an undying cause-effect relationship between soft skills and an individual's achievements. For this reason, several educational and training institutions demand to conduct multiple training sessions on soft skills. In countries like Europe, several projects have been initiated to study the skills and found out that interpersonal skills are divided into individual and social groups. Of all the projects, the 'Tuning' project divides soft skills into three groupings, namely, Interpersonal, Instrumental, and Systematic. Other projects have also tried to understand the prerequisite skill set in the coming future. Most of the current jobs demand both technological/ technical skills and soft skills to perform assigned tasks.

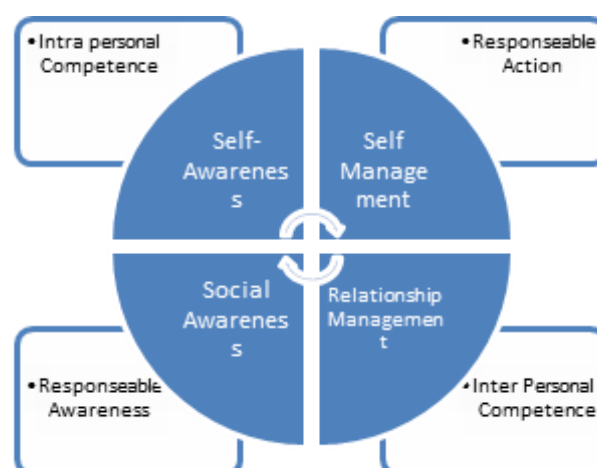


Figure 1. Representation of soft skills

It is essential to list the necessary soft skills in priority. At the same time, it is incredibly challenging to judge which soft skills are obligatory for the individuals in this modern era.

One of the research studies tried to list out the vital soft skills such as communication skills, making decisions, motivating the self, leadership skills, team-working skills, creativity skills, problem-solving skills, time management skills, and stress management skills. Moreover, the essential soft skills required for a teacher in the modern era are also discussed widely. Using soft skills, teachers can make the class interesting, informative, and thought-provoking. To attract the students with innovative techniques, teachers should utilize all the soft skills like modulating the tone or pitch wherever needed, make charts spontaneously, and so on. By doing this teacher set the best example of genius. Many students can change their lives if a teacher can nurture the students to be successful in their life. It would also be easy for the teachers to interact with their students in an understanding level. Besides, the expertise of soft skills enables them to be good motivating and inspiring leaders.

Even among the student's soft skills will nurture their value within their friend's circle family and relatives. By nature, man is a social animal, and hence we cannot resist ourselves from communication. Be it at school, tuition centers, or home; these skills will help them to establish and maintain a meaningful and sensible relationship with others. The students can even have a better and deep understanding of the lessons taught in the classrooms. Their presentation skills also will be improved, and they set examples for self-expression. Therefore, the importance and necessity of soft skills are commonly discussed and debated topics in the field of education. Soft skill development has become the need of the hour both at employment and training so that it can lead to having a prosperous livelihood. Most of the research studies focused on the employer's perspective, while only a limited number of studies tried to explore the need for soft skill training from the students, teachers, and employees' perspective. Some other studies justified the reasons for getting soft skill training done. Thus, the current research tries to explore the value of soft skill training from a different angle. The study attempts to incorporate the necessity of soft skills in the modern era, especially in the education system, employment, and corporate world.

In the literature review, areas such as the definition of soft skills, the attitude of the students, the importance of soft skills for students and teachers, types of soft skills are so far covered. Now let us discuss the process of teaching and developing soft skills, the advantages and importance of soft skills at the workplace, for students, teachers, and others.

III. TEACHING AND DEVELOPING SOFT SKILLS

Soft skill training is the most central educational activity. Without any doubt, soft teaching skills should begin at an early stage, that is, at the primary level of schooling. The soft skill development process starts at home, even before a child is admitted to a school. The twenty-first century is not sure about the labor world. Thus, it is essential to educate, inform, and instruct the younger or coming generation the importance of these skills while searching for a job, an interview, and finally, in the working environment. To lead a peaceful, happy life, soft learning skills would be of great help and support. Therefore, the educational institutions and training centers should start concentrating on different methodologies and techniques to develop soft skills within the students. And in fact, these skills will be of use for them at any circumstances. To substantiate the views pinpointed, a recent study declared that a child is wholly developed with a balanced and composed set of social, cognitive, and emotional skills so that the child can face an infinite number of challenges in the contemporary era. It is also stated that the composed set of skills upsurges the skills, thereby reducing all kinds of disparities. Most importantly, the educational system should develop soft skills not only to nail a job but also to embellish oneself as a better social animal. In

other words, soft skills act as a source of happiness to all lives. Almost all the countries demand soft skill training as it increases the annual revenue of the nations. At the same time, individuals feel free to cope up with others in peace. To expertise in soft skills, every human being mandatory climbs the ladder of emotional intelligence. Fig.2 shows the tree diagram of emotional intelligence.



Figure 2

The ladder is comprised of five essential parameters, such as self-awareness, self-control, directed motivation, social awareness, and social influence. Implementing these five steps in a classroom helps teachers to guide students in the right direction. Also, the ladder method allows students to find out their gaps and learn accordingly at their own pace and convenience. Apart from this, there are other tools to teach soft skills within the classroom or at the workplace. The mechanisms suggested are:

- Project works
- Case studies
- Teamwork /Assignments
- Seminar
- Practical Lab
- Brain Storming
- PowerPoint Presentations

Other innovative methods that can be employed to develop soft skills include:

- Academic Writing
- Professional Development Programs
- Soft Skill seminar programs
- Collaborative learning
- Cooperative learning
- Problem-solving programs

IV. ADVANTAGE OF SOFT SKILLS

When it comes to discussing the benefits of soft skills, undoubtedly, there comes a list. Some of the benefits already identified are as follows:

- It defines the person and what he/she desires to achieve. In short, it is a kind of self-awareness.
- It creates an opportunity for the young ones.
- It allows for dreaming, aspiring, and achieving success.

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- It creates an opportunity for the young ones.
- It allows for dreaming, aspiring, and achieving success.
- It allows us to review, analyze and evaluate the possible outcomes and aftermaths.
- It brings in a discipline-based knowledge in academics and profession.
- It is life-long learning.
- It focuses more on people than on the revenue earned.
- Improves presentation skills.

A. **Figures and Tables Importance and need of Soft Skills in the Modern Era**

Here are the main reasons justifying and explaining the importance of Soft Skills in the modern era.

1. Without soft skills, hard skills are treated as useless. Because technical skills alone will not suffice, we should have interpersonal skills along with job-specific skills. For instance, a teacher needs to listen to his/her students, speaking skills, reading skills, managing skills, decision-making skills, and problem-solving skills. All these personal skills and attributes permit one to interact with other human beings. Most of the job roles demand soft skills along with the technical skills to be successful.
2. Soft Skill learning is difficult as it is not all innate. At the same time, it is not arduous to acquire. These skills can be learned at ease over time. It is one of the most challenging tasks as a conscious effort to develop the skills that are placed. In simple words, it is a voluntary commitment to upgrade and upskill oneself.
3. Recently, all the workplaces began to concentrate more on soft skills such as listening, interacting with others, cooperating with co-workers, and others. Such an environment at a workplace can lead to a peaceful, calm, and composed lifestyle.
4. Even the contemporary market has a high demand for soft skills. For instance, customers these days have unlimited access to smartphones, the internet, for that matter, any materialistic products. So, to convince the customers in this typical modern period is not easy. Therefore, the concerned person selling products, goods, and services should be able to communicate effectively with customers, convince them to buy it. Only then the business will be successful in earning tons of profits.
5. Last, of all, near-future employment entirely relies on soft skills. Hard skills are comparatively being blue-penciled off daily.

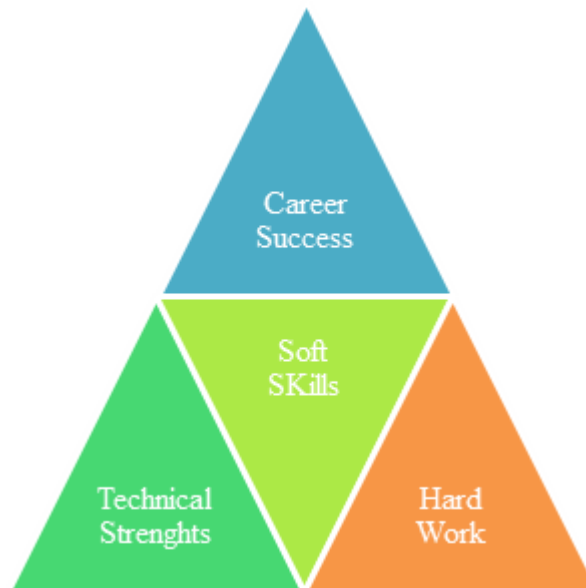


Figure 3

Figure 3 shows the soft skills model. It can, therefore, be concluded that soft skills concentrate more on individuals and no process. Even the organizations conduct interviews and select the employees based on their skills, hard work, and hard skills.

V. SOFT SKILLS VS. PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Supreme organizations of the contemporary era are anticipating the employees to be faultless in terms of performing their tasks. The employees entail having great potential and capabilities to accomplish the assigned tasks. For this reason, they should possess soft skills as well as hard skills. As soft skills and personality development go hand in hand, professional behavior and etiquette of the employees are no were far away from skilling it. Even while having some meaningful conversations with customers at the workplace, professional ethics takes a role in maintaining a consistent relationship with them. It also aids an individual to sustain their relationships with co-workers, friends, relatives, friends, clients, suppliers, and so on. Here comes the importance of acquiring soft skills or social skills or life skills, which plays a prime role in the success of the organization.

Eighty-Seven Soft skills are organized into seven categories, such as communication, creativity, leadership skills, teamwork, professional ethics, problem-solving skills, decision-making skills, and entrepreneurship skills. Often life skills or interpersonal skills are considered as the replacement of technical skills. But in reality, technical skills and life skills are harmonizing soft skills. Both soft skills and hard skills together expose the inner potential of employees. Generally, public focus on learning a few soft skills among which a few will be discussed here:

A. Communication Skills

- Ability to use clear, appropriate, and accurate oral communication styles.
- Acquire presentation skills
- Possess active listening skills
- Ability to provide and receive appropriate and clear feedback
- Ability to manage criticisms

- Skill to manage technology during discussions
- Be clear at expressing one' opinion without any hesitation

B. Problem Solving Skills

- Skill to think, analyze and evaluate problems in a situation
- Ability to come up with practical solutions to the identified problem
- Develop essential examining and assessing skills
- Ability to understand the issues far ahead which may pop up

5.3 Creative Skills

- Capacity to come up with novel ideas
- Capability to go beyond the comfort level and think
- Suggest advanced ideas whenever demanded
- Ability to come up with a variety of solutions

C. Leadership Skills

- Ability to lead other members of a group at the workplace
- To be able to make a meaningful contribution to the team
- Have respect towards other members of the team
- Possess extremely positive behavior and attitude towards work and others as well
- To be able to lead and direct a project
- Carry excellent coordinating skills
- Have in-depth knowledge of different types of leadership
- To be able to encourage, support, motivate and inspire other members of the team
- To be able to take turnovers and turnovers at the appropriate time

D. Entrepreneurship skills

- To be able to use advanced technology
- To be able to initiate and develop business at one's own risk
- To be able to recognize employment openings
- Possess high convincing skills
- To be able to interact with others smoothly

E. Professional skills

- Understand the importance of workplace ethics
- To be able to practice appropriate ethical attitude towards life and society
- Maintain organizational standards throughout
- Maintain social and moral ethics at workplace

Studies in the US, UK, and other countries marked that soft skills should be taught at an early stage. That is, learning should start at home. And soft skills and hard skills co-exist and cannot be seen as an individual entity.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

From the research study, the following outcomes can be driven effortlessly:

- Soft skills play an essential role in the life of every individual. These skills define the person concerning the surroundings.
- Soft skills are integrated and incorporated with hard skills.
- Soft skills are difficult to teach, while hard skills can be learned without any difficulty.
- Soft skills can be developed only with the aid and support of teachers or training sessions.
- Soft skills can be developed within an individual only when he lays the foundation for himself. That is, individuals should be committed to the learning aspect.
- Soft skill is life-long learning. The process is never-ending and tiring. It can also be considered as a source of life.
- While it comes to teaching soft skills, teachers can use different techniques like projects, seminars, academic writing, conducting case studies, and games.
- Even the corporate world is in high demand of employees who can undoubtedly cope up well with others. That is the ability to interact with others humbly and straightforwardly.

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