

Soft Skills for Employability from Lecturers' Perspectives

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Abstract- The Hard and Soft skills that aid in situation assessment are Critical Thinking skills. Critical thinking (CT) skills especially Soft skills is reportedly a job barrier in Malaysia. Even though CT has been a part of the school curriculum since the 1990s and reached the university level in 2008, employers assert that Malaysian graduates lack soft skills. In addition, the Malaysian government has encouraged the use of CT skills in higher education institutions through the introduction of Soft skills, which include communication skills, problem solving and thinking skills, continuous learning skills and information management skills, work in group skills, leadership skills, entrepreneurship skills and professional ethics. This study focuses on the Soft skills for graduates' employability through three objectives: to investigate the Soft skills needed by graduates, to check whether graduates have the soft skills needed for employment, and whether these skills are being taught at university. The research methodology consists of a survey aimed at lecturers at the Language Centre, National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM), following a mixed model approach. The online survey has both close and open-ended questions and is analysed using SPSS v.25.0 and manual thematic analysis. Results indicate that the most wanted Soft skills are Communication Skills, Problem Solving and Thinking Skills, and Teamwork Skills. Lecturers agree that graduates or new employees need to be equipped with the Soft skills needed for employment and they perceive those skills are taught at the university. The lecturers agree on the importance of Soft skills, and this is supported by the overall findings. This research suggests that the higher educational institutions to teach the Soft skills either through a course specifically for Soft skills or integrated into courses to meet employers' needs.

Keywords: critical thinking, soft skills, affective domain, graduates' employability, higher education institution

Introduction

One of the main objectives of education in Malaysia has always been the growth of critical thinking. Through the introduction of Soft skills, the Malaysian government has promoted the application of these skills in institutions of higher learning. In order to realise Vision 2020, the administration has determined that developing human capital is the most important factor. The holistic acquisition of information, skills, and attitude is referred to as "human capital development," and it is complimented by "soft skills" talents. The group of personality qualities, social graces, language ability, personal routines, and teamwork are collectively referred to as soft or generic abilities.

Prior to the introduction of Soft skills, the New Curriculum for Primary School (KBSR) and the New Curriculum for Secondary School (KBSM) provided Malaysian students with problem-solving and creative and critical thinking instruction, however it was not in-depth. As a result, critical and creative thinking became the primary educational objectives in Malaysia. Through an educational programme that includes curriculum and co-curricular activities that encompasses all the knowledge, skills norms, values, cultural elements, and beliefs to help develop a student fully with respect to the physical, spiritual, mental and emotional (JERI) aspects as well as to inculcate and develop desirable moral values and to transmit knowledge; the Malaysian Education Act (1996) also placed a focus on thinking skills.

Critical Thinking (CT) was introduced into Malaysia's education system in the 90s. It started off in primary schools where CT was integrated into Maths and Science. As mandated by MOHE, the integration of CTS in the Malaysian higher education has been implemented since 2008. After more than 20 years of teaching CT, it is said to be one of the most quoted reasons for graduates' unemployment. Employers claimed that graduates do not have Soft skills even though CT has been embedded into the school curriculum since the 90s and reached tertiary level in 2008. This also raised the issue of skill gap where what is being taught in higher education institution does not match with what is wanted in the working world [1][2][3]. Despite decades of emphasis on soft skill development, soft skill integration in Malaysia is still not at an optimal level [4]. In addition, the Malaysian government has encouraged the use of CT skills in higher education institutions through the introduction of Soft skills, which include communications' skills, problem solving and thinking skills, continuous learning skills and information management skills, work in group skills, leadership skills, entrepreneurship skills and professional

ethics [5][6]. The seven Soft skills are also said to be embedded in the syllabus taught at Institutes of Higher Learning in Malaysia [5].

This study focuses on the Soft skills for graduates' employability through three objectives: to investigate the Soft Skills needed by new employees in an educational organisation, to check whether new employees have the soft skills needed for employment from employers' perspectives, and whether soft skills are being taught at university. In general, it plans to see whether lecturers understand what Soft skills are and whether they teach these important skills to students in their classrooms.

Literature Review

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is one of the most discussed higher order thinking skills [7][8] and is seen to play a vital role in logical reasoning, decision making, and problem solving. Critical thinking is best defined as the ability of thinkers to control their own thinking [9]. Instead of being spoon-fed and relying solely on textbooks and other people's internet resources, critical thinking skills allow students to come up with solutions on their own, even if they are basic, and to use reasoning skills to explain their solutions. However, due to our current education system is thought to be too exam-oriented and theory-based, potential employers frequently complain about graduates' ability to think critically, and their lack of English proficiency restricts their ability to develop unique and creative ideas [10].

Critical thinking is associated to commonly identified twenty-first century abilities such as metacognition, motivation, and creativity [11]. With the growth of technology, which has resulted in the globalisation of the world, critical thinking has become an essential and vital skill that one must possess both during their educational journey and at work. It is also a necessary talent for students since it allows them to connect with their cognitive abilities and spiritual questions, as well as analyse people, policies, and organisations, preventing societal problems [12][13].

The public is becoming more conscious of the importance of students developing higher order thinking skills to cope with the demands of modern society [14]. As a result, it is possible to conclude that even society's standards of critical thinking had improved. The need of developing critical thinking abilities has been widely publicised, even to the tiniest members of society, to the point that it has become a crucial criterion that should be ingrained in everyone. The ability to think clearly and critically has become a must and crucial trait even for future generations to be able to cope with current society.

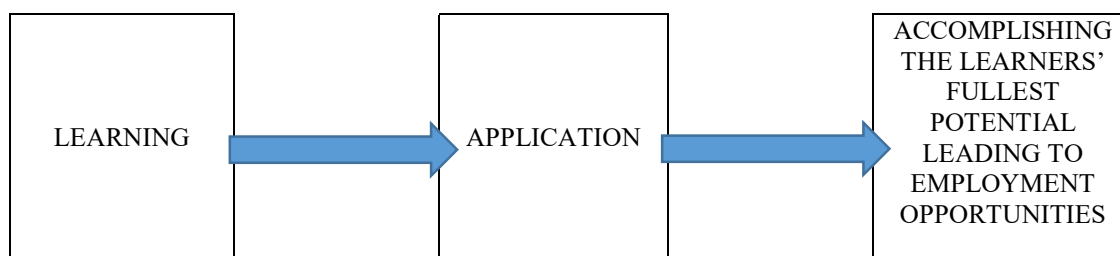


Figure 1. Theoretical framework: Pragmatic Learning (Dewey, 1916)
Adopted from Dewey (1916)

According to the Theory of Pragmatic Learning, students must first learn (about Soft skills), and then they must be educated to apply what they have learned in order to become exceptional performers with a variety of employment prospects (see Fig. 1). In other words, students must receive the instruction necessary to put what they have learned into practise in order to become outstanding performers with a variety of job options. Ideally, based on this framework, Soft skills have to be taught to students and they should get the chance to apply these skills before they leave for the working world.

The Malaysian Government identified seven (7) Soft skills which are important to the employability of new graduates and they are as listed in Figure 2. Soft skills are most related to the Affective domain of Critical Thinking since these skills involve feelings, emotions, and attitudes. This domain includes the manner in which we deal with things emotionally and is then categorised into five (5) subdomains: receiving, responding, valuing, organisation, and characterisation [15]. Even though most people think learning as an intellectual or mental function (only the cognitive domain can be taught), we actually can also learn attitudes and behaviours (affective), and physical skills (psychomotor), in other words Soft skills can be taught.

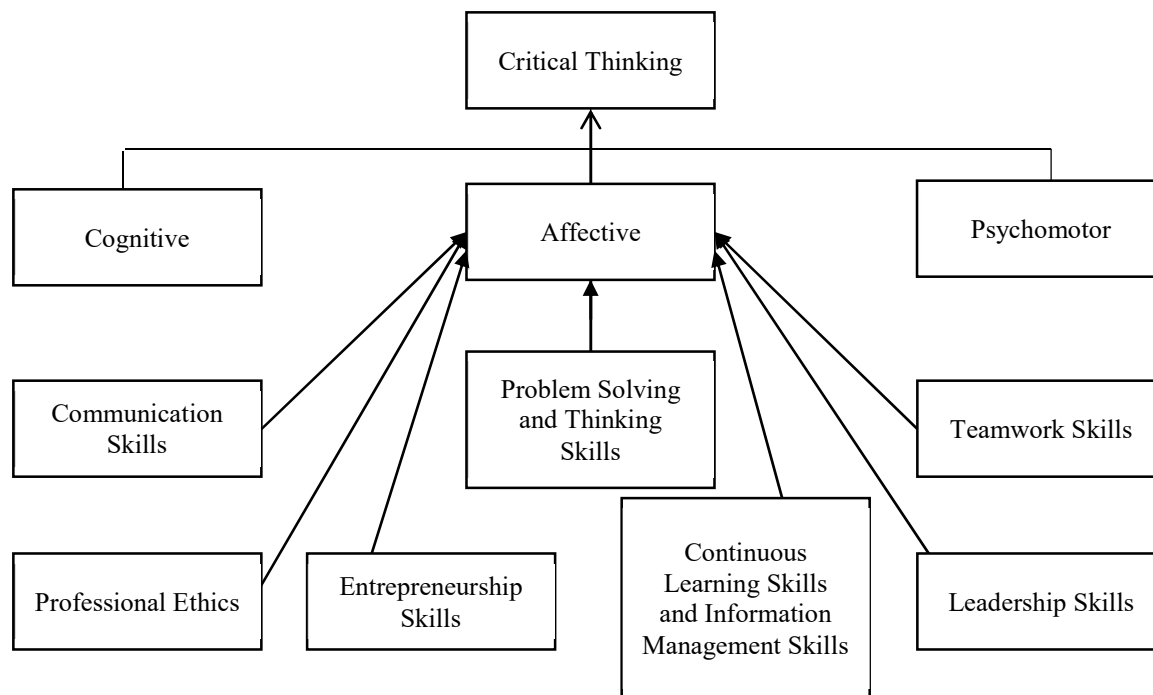


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

Affective Domain of Critical Thinking

By considering emotional elements, the affective domain influences an individual's capacity to make informed decisions. Our feelings play a significant part in determining the decisions we make. The affective domain is displayed using a comparable Bloom's Taxonomy, but it is discussed and explained in a different way. Receiving, responding, valuing, organising, and characterising are the five phases of Bloom's Taxonomy, which are used to represent the affective domain.

There is widespread concern that current undergraduate programmes are not generating graduates with the requisite life-long learning capabilities for their careers [16]. "Traditional evaluation approaches focus on knowledge acquisition rather than proficiency in employment qualities [17]. The relevance of the affective domain is validated by Archer and Davison, who demonstrated that most employers value social skills and personality type over a degree [18].

To a considerable extent, the economic pressure to prepare graduates with cognitive-oriented graduate traits has resulted in the marginalisation of affective abilities. Employer value these social and emotional abilities the most, although they differ from the talents students normally possess upon graduation [19]. Graduates' ability to "self-regulate learning and process new knowledge" when employed is limited by higher order thinking facilitated solely within the cognitive domain [20], which suggested that the affective domain of critical thinking has been overlooked.

Research Objectives

This study checks if lecturers are familiar with Soft skills at the university through three objectives:

- RO1: To investigate the Soft skills needed by new employees in an educational organisation.
- RO2: To check whether new employees or graduates have the Soft skills needed for employment from employers' perspectives, and
- RO3: To check whether Soft skills are being taught at university.

Methodology

Research Design

Mixed-method analysis consisting of both quantitative and qualitative research methods was used to collect the necessary data to perform this research. Therefore, quantitative method was used in this study in the form of online Microsoft forms, distributed to the targeted respondents by using as an approach of convenient sampling. The questionnaire has both close and open-ended questions where the subjective questions were analysed through qualitative method, which is thematic analysis.

Population and Sampling

Based on the research objectives, the population of this research covers all lecturers from the Language Centre of NDUM. The population of this study is 17 lecturers at the Language Centre. Questionnaires were distributed through convenient sampling technique. The analysis utilised all the information from the respondents as an example estimate to get progressively correct outcome.

Data Collection

Data and information of this research were collected by means of questionnaire surveys that were distributed to respondents. The questionnaire has been modified after it was verified by three experts to accommodate the research objectives. The questionnaire of this study was mainly focused on closed-ended questions which allows the respondents to choose from concrete options available.

Data Analysis

The statistical analysis was performed using Version 25.0 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) on the data obtained from this research. Thematic analysis and coding were used to analyse the data acquired for the qualitative research approach.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive data analysis restricts generalisation to a certain group of people evaluated. There are no findings that extend beyond this group, and there is no way to know if they are like individuals outside the group. The information pertains to only one group. Descriptive analysis is used in a lot of simple action research, and it provides useful information about the nature of a certain group of people.

The variables used five-point Likert scales as it is numerical and measurable. There are five levels of mean scores used to measure the mean obtained from the analysis. The levels of mean score can be depicted as below [21]:

Table 1: Mean Score and Level

MEAN SCORE	LEVEL (frequency/agreement)
1.00 – 1,80	Very Low (never/strongly disagree)
1.81 – 2.60	Low (rarely/disagree)
2.61 – 3.20	Medium (sometimes/neutral)
3.21 – 4.20	High (often/agree)
4.21 – 5.00	Very High (always/strongly agree)

Reliability Analysis

As a quantitative approach to determining the relationship between the variables, a five-point Likert scale is used in this study to evaluate the relationship between the variables. The association between the variables in this study is measured using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient is a method used to examine the instrument's dependability, which refers to the consistency or stability of a measure of behaviour [22]. The following table shows the rule of thumb of the Alpha Coefficient Range of Cronbach:

Table 2: The Range of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.90$	Excellent
$0.90 > \alpha \geq 0.80$	Good
$0.80 > \alpha \geq 0.70$	Acceptable
$0.70 > \alpha \geq 0.60$	Questionable
$0.60 > \alpha \geq 0.50$	Poor
$0.50 > \alpha$	Unacceptable

Inferential Analysis

The hypotheses are evaluated using inferential statistical methods, and the results are utilised to determine whether the hypotheses are accepted or rejected. Inferential analysis is a type of analysis that follows the data definition to get definitive results. Based on these findings, a study group's generalisation can be applied to the entire population, and this process is known as making conclusions based on inferential analysis. In order to explain how well the independent variables and dependent variable of the sample interact with each other, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, r , is used to evaluate the proposed hypotheses, and also to assess the intensity of the correlation between the two variables. According to Hair et al. [23], the rule of thumb for Pearson correlation analysis is shown in the table below:

Table 3: Description of Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Coefficient Range	Strength of Correlation
± 0.00 to ± 0.20	Slight
± 0.21 to ± 0.40	Low
± 0.41 to ± 0.60	Moderate

±0.61 to ±0.80	High
±0.81 to ±1.00	Perfect

Thematic Analysis

The open-minded questions that were posed to the participants from the questionnaire were analysed using thematic analysis in this study. Thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clarke [24], focuses on identifying, evaluating, and recording patterns or themes within data, with the themes serving as analysis categories for the research question.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Analysis

Demographic data

The demographic survey contained four (4) questions on the characteristics of the respondents which include gender, profession, qualification, and working experience. Question 1 asked for the respondents' gender which respectively consists of 58.8 percent (n=10) female and 41.2 percent (n=7) male. Demographic question 2 described the profession of the respondents. The respondents who had answered the questionnaire were 100 percent (n=17) lecturers. Question 3 is related to their academic qualification. The results showed that 64.7 percent (n = 11) of the respondents being evaluated were Master's holder and 35.3 percent (n=6) were PhD holder. Question 4 is about the amount of time (years) of employment of the respondents since graduation. 17.6 percent (n=3) had less than five years of work experience, 35.3 percent (n=6) had six to 10 years of experience, 11.8 percent (n =2) had 11 years to 15 years of experience, another 11.8 percent (n =2) had 16 years to 20 years of experience, and 23.5 percent (n=4) had more than 21 years of working experience.

Descriptive analysis was also used to answer the research questions. The result for questions 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, and 21 is presented in the table below.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
CS1	3.24	.903	17
CS2	4.24	.970	17
CS3	4.53	.514	17
CS4	4.53	.514	17
CS5	4.06	.556	17
CS6	3.88	.485	17
PSTS1	3.53	.800	17
PSTS2	4.35	.606	17
PSTS3	4.47	.514	17
PSTS4	4.47	.514	17
PSTS5	3.88	.781	17
PSTS6	4.00	.612	17
CLSIMS1	3.47	.800	17
CLSIMS2	4.18	.529	17
CLSIMS3	4.24	.562	17
CLSIMS4	4.29	.470	17
CLSIMS5	3.76	.831	17
CLSIMS6	3.94	.659	17
TS1	3.18	.636	17
TS2	4.18	.809	17
TS3	4.29	.588	17
TS4	4.35	.493	17
TS5	4.18	.636	17
TS6	4.00	.500	17
LS1	3.41	.795	17
LS2	4.35	.493	17
LS3	4.41	.618	17
LS4	4.35	.493	17
LS5	3.94	.827	17
LS6	3.94	.556	17
ES1	3.18	.809	17
ES2	3.71	.849	17

ES3	3.88	.857	17
ES4	3.82	.809	17
ES5	3.82	.728	17
ES6	3.65	.702	17
PE1	3.29	.920	17
PE2	4.29	.470	17
PE3	4.47	.514	17
PE4	4.47	.514	17
PE5	3.71	.920	17
PE6	3.94	.556	17

What are the Soft Skills needed by new employees?

Question (ii), (iii), and (iv)

Table 5. Mean Scores for Question (ii), (iii), and (iv)

Question	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ii	17	3.29	5.00	4.1849	.46775
iii	17	3.43	5.00	4.3277	.49426
iv	17	3.71	5.00	4.3277	.43672
Valid N (listwise)	17				

Questions (ii), (iii), and (iv) from each section refer to the Soft Skills needed by new employees. They explain the need of the skills in educational organisation; which explain whether employers seek these Soft Skills, whether these skills are needed for employment and whether they are important in their workplace. The lowest mean obtained from the table is 4.1849 which if we refer to Table 1, it indicates that respondents agree that these Soft Skills are needed by new employees.

Table 6. Mean Scores for Soft Skills

Soft skills	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Communication Skills (2)	17	3.33	4.67	4.0784	.38242
Problem Solving and Thinking Skills (1)	17	3.50	5.00	4.1176	.42803
Continuous Learning Skills and Information Management Skills (6)	17	3.33	5.00	3.9804	.42444
Teamwork Skills (3)	17	3.50	5.00	4.0686	.43724
Leadership Skills (4)	17	3.33	4.83	4.0294	.40498
Entrepreneurship Skills (7)	17	2.50	4.83	3.6765	.63866
Professional Ethics (5)	17	3.50	5.00	4.0294	.40925

Highest mean means perceived most important for employment by respondents. Lowest mean means perceived least important for employment by respondents.

Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics (mean scores) for all the Soft Skills mentioned in this research. Problem Solving and Thinking Skills have the highest mean of 4.1176 which indicates the most important Soft Skills for employment by respondents while Entrepreneurship Skills scored the lowest mean of 3.6765 and perceived as the least important Soft Skills for employment by respondents. However, it is considered as high in the Mean Score table which means respondents agree that Entrepreneurship Skills are important for employment.

Do new employees (future graduates) have the soft skills needed for employment?

Question (i)

Question (i) from each section investigates whether the respondents think new employees have poor Soft skills. In this question, if the respondents disagree to the statement, it shows that the lecturers think their students or future graduates have these Soft Skills. (which is the opposite of what employers think)

Table 7. Mean Scores for Question (i)

Question	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
i	17	2.00	4.71	3.3277	.65614
Valid N (listwise)	17				

Table 7 shows the mean score for this question is 3.3277, which is high. This shows that respondents agree that new employees have the Soft skills. This contradicts what is being said about them; they lack of Soft skills that are needed for employment.

Are Soft Skills being taught at the university?

Question (v) and (vi)

Table 8. Mean Scores for Question (v) and (vi)

Question	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
v	17	2.86	5.00	3.9076	.64274
vi	17	3.00	5.00	3.9076	.48954
Valid N (listwise)	17				

To investigate whether Soft Skills are being taught at the university, Question (v) and (vi) were asked in each section. Question (v) is to check whether respondents think Soft skills are being taught at the university whilst Question (vi) is to see whether they agree that graduates are exposed to these Soft skills through job training (internship). Table 8 shows mean scores for both questions is 3.9076, which is high. These indicates that respondents agree that these Soft skills are being taught at the university and students receive training on the job that exposes them to these soft skills.

Soft Skills Rank

In Section I of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to rank the Soft Skills suggested by the Malaysian government according to their importance from the respondents' perspectives. At the same time, all the Soft Skills had also been analysed by using SPSS v.25.0 to indicate the most important to least important Soft Skills based on the mean score of each Soft Skill. The results are as Table 2.

Table 9. Soft Skills Rank

No.	Section I	SPSS v.25.0
1.	Communication Skills	Problem Solving and Thinking Skills
2.	Problem Solving and Thinking Skills	Communication Skills
3.	Teamwork Skills	Teamwork Skills
4.	Leadership Skills	Leadership Skills
5.	Professional Ethics	Professional Ethics
6.	Continuous Learning Skills and Information Management Skills	Continuous Learning Skills and Information Management Skills
7.	Entrepreneurship Skills	Entrepreneurship Skills

The table above shows that Problem Solving and Thinking Skills tops the list; next is Communication Skills where both are highly rated as the most important Soft skills for employment by respondents. Leadership skills, Professional Ethics, and Teamwork Skills are also rated as the top 5 important Soft skills for employment.

Reliability Analysis

All the variables used in the questionnaire are reliable because their coefficient alpha is greater than 0.70, which is the sound level of internal reliability. The α for "Soft Skills for Employability from Employers' Perspectives" is 0.952. All the variables met the acceptable standard of reliability analysis and can be confirmed as reliable, standard, and relevant.

Inferential Analysis

The Pearson's correlation coefficient was used in this research to measure the strength of the correlation between the Soft Skills that are listed in this research.

Table 10. Correlations

Soft skills	CS	PSTS	CLSIMS	TS	LS	ES	PE
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CS	Pearson Correlation	1	.757**	.641**	.612**	.672**	.644**	.617**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.006	.009	.003	.005	.008
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
PSTS	Pearson Correlation	.757**	1	.711**	.740**	.743**	.472	.792**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.001	.001	.001	.056	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
CLSIMS	Pearson Correlation	.641**	.711**	1	.842**	.878**	.782**	.963**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.001		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
TS	Pearson Correlation	.612**	.740**	.842**	1	.939**	.616**	.874**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.001	.000		.000	.008	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
LS	Pearson Correlation	.672**	.743**	.878**	.939**	1	.688**	.919**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.001	.000	.000		.002	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
ES	Pearson Correlation	.644**	.472	.782**	.616**	.688**	1	.729**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.056	.000	.008	.002		.001
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
PE	Pearson Correlation	.617**	.792**	.963**	.874**	.919**	.729**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).								

Table 3 indicates all the skills have high positive r value which means all Soft skills are correlated to each other. This concludes that focus on any one of these skills will enhance other Soft skills in the list.

Thematic Analysis

In Section 1 of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to state the soft skills that are needed most in their profession and the three (3) highest rated skills are: Problem Solving and Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, and Teamwork Skills.

Problem Solving and Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, and Teamwork Skills

Problem solving and Thinking skills

In this section, respondents shared their view on the meaning of Problem Solving and Thinking Skills, which according to the ranking, ranked as the most important Soft skills for employability. Problem Solving and Thinking Skills indicate active listening, analysis, research, creativity, dependability, and decision making. In addition, the respondents shared their definition of this skill as:

Respondent 1: The **ability to find solutions** despite unforeseen circumstances and lack of resources. Knowing one's limit and achieving or utilising the best within that limit is also a part of the skills.

Respondent 2: The **ability to come up with ethical multiple solutions** to a given problem when conventional solution is inaccessible.

To sum up, Problem Solving and Thinking Skills are considered as the ability or ways of thinking to face unexpected situations. The respondents gave positive insights on these Soft skills, and this proves that they too, support the importance of this skill for employability.

Communication skills

The question for this section is to define communication skills in respondents' own words. To apply communication skills, one must first have the knowledge of what communication skills are and how does it contribute to the Soft skills for employability. When discussed about communication skills, most would respond with "the ability to communicate". It is true in a sense where communication can only happen when two or more people communicate with each other. The respondents also shared that:

Respondent 1: A communication skill is **the ability to communicate** with others regardless of language, racial, cultural, religion, and other barriers. It involves the ability to deliver and convey messages and engage in active

conversations with people. It is crucial because the need to have interaction and communication with your colleagues and other departments cannot be disputed at all. It is important for you to acquire communication and interpersonal skills for your career advancement.

Respondent 2: Communication Skills are the capabilities people employ to provide and receive various types of information. It is the idea of being able to share fresh ideas, sentiments, or even an update on the current project we are working on at work effectively. It also involves listening, speaking, observing, and empathising. It is understanding the variations in **how to communicate** through face-to-face contacts, phone talks, and digital communications such as email and social media.

Communication Skills are one (1) out of seven (7) Soft skills suggested by the Malaysian government. It is important because we frequently communicate with others to establish plans, form relationships, and complete daily activities, these skills are essential to our daily lives as they can make all the difference to both work and personal life. The different views from each respondent had given a positive outcome as they were able to explain Communication Skills in their own terms. As it was the most picked Soft skills, this confirms the importance of Communication Skills for employability.

Teamwork skills

Teamwork Skills is often use especially when there is work needed to be done in groups. It promotes active listening, honesty, awareness, and responsibility. Upon the analysis of the answer from Section I, on the most important Soft Skills for employability, Teamwork Skills ranked third place. Thus, these are the respondents' thoughts on this skill:

Respondent 1: **Working well with a group** of individuals to reach a common purpose or end. Attending to the needs of other team members. Considering everyone's thoughts, not just your own.

Respondent 2: The **ability to make things work and achieve goals** despite working with people of different ages, backgrounds, abilities and needs.

The Malaysian government had listed Teamwork Skills as one of the Soft Skills needed for employment. The need for this skill is essential as most industries work in a team. When employees collaborate to achieve a common goal, they use a combination of talents, attributes, methods, and processes. This is why Teamwork Skills or collaboration is so important. The responses from the respondents also support the means of this skill.

Situations where Soft skills (Problem Solving and Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, and Teamwork Skills) are used at workplace

Problem solving and Thinking skills

Being a lecturer is not only about teaching students, but it includes handling situations related to the students. As online based learning is being practised during the Covid-19 pandemic time, lecturers had to familiarise themselves with the use of online platform and to perform quick action when there is a problem to ensure their classes go on smoothly. Lecturers from the Language Centre claimed to use Problem solving and Thinking skills in these situations: (active listening, analysis, research, creativity, dependability, and decision making)

Respondent 1: Sudden change of plans which requires quick decision-making and amendments. I always stress on listening properly to lecturer's explanation and to analyse any problem carefully before making any decisions.

Respondent 2: Having two important tasks which need to be attended at the same time, you have to compare and evaluate which one needs to be solved first, and think of how to solve them.

Issues and problems are inevitable, and it is part of life. However, every problem has a solution. Problem Solving and Thinking Skills can be useful in times where it promotes critical thinking, especially when we deal with problematic situations.

Communication Skills

Communication happens on a daily basis whether in a form of verbal or non-verbal communication. As the respondents for this research are all lecturers, the situation where they are required to use communication skills are often in class or meeting. This is supported by the answers shared by the respondents:

Respondent 1: When I am teaching online and need to deliver an effective lecture to help students understand the lessons as best as possible. Having good communication skills will help in students' engagement. Engagement in a communication happens when there is meaningful communication.

Respondent 2: To disagree towards certain issues or ideas and to add-up something to your colleague's idea in any meeting without offending the related parties. Communication skills are needed in negotiations that is in agreeing or coming to a decision agreed by everyone in a group.

Since the respondents are lecturers from the Language Centre, they stressed on the importance of Soft Skills, especially Communication Skills at classrooms, office, or workplace. Lecturers communicate with students daily and it is needed by both parties; lecturers need good Communication Skills to be able to teach the students whilst students need good Communication Skills to communicate with the lecturers, and in doing their assignments especially in group work to avoid miscommunication.

Teamwork Skills

When working in an industry, Teamwork Skills are one of the Soft Skills often used in getting a work done. As it involves two or more people working together to work on a task, communicating and sharing ideas, it is vital that this skill is set as one of the Soft Skills for employability. The use of this skills at the Language Centre are as follows:

Respondent 1: We employ teamwork skills on a regular basis, particularly in our research and publications. We divide our tasks, discuss, and communicate well in order to reach our common goals, which contributes to our individual performance scores, PB productivity, and university's recognition nationwide.

Respondent 2: Working on a novel project that involves the efforts from people with different exposure to the concept. We also give group assignments to students to enhance their teamwork skill because they definitely need this skill when to go out in the job market.

The responds given indicate that respondents, who are lecturers from the Language Centre, apply Teamwork Skills in their workplace daily. Thus, confirming that Teamwork Skills are one of the most vital Soft skills out of all the seven skills recommended by the Malaysian government.

Conclusion

Critical thinking has been looked upon as an important criterion that every individual should have within themselves so that they can move around independently and make their own time and sound decisions. Employers make it essential for their employees to have higher critical thinking skills so that they can critically analyse a problem and proceed further in evaluating the problem and coming up with solutions. Employers in the working world opined that graduates or new employees do not have Soft skills (the affective domain of CT) needed but respondents (lecturers) claimed that those Soft skills are taught at the university. Not only that, but these Soft Skills are direly needed for employment. Communication Skills, Problem Solving and Thinking Skills, and Teamwork Skills are the most needed Soft Skills in an educational organisation or any other organisation; which makes it crucial for new employees or graduates to have these skills. This research suggests that the higher educational institutions to give more focus in developing these Soft skills for graduates' employability and consider creating a course specifically in teaching the Soft skills to meet employers' needs. Universities' instruction must incorporate and stress non-cognitive skills in order to fully and comprehensively prepare future workers with the information and abilities they need to succeed in the demands of the workplace.

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