

RESEARCH PROJECT

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Title:

An explanatory study of the perception of the importance of Soft skills development in Higher Education by hospitality students.

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Student perception of the importance of Soft skills development in Higher Education.

1. Abstract

The development of Soft skills (generic skills) and Hard skills (academic skills) of students in hospitality through Higher Education (HE) is acknowledged to be both important in HE through research. Identifying specific soft skills of importance for a specific course can greatly help with curriculum development for the course. Research shows that Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) acknowledge the importance of soft skills development in students through the curriculum. In this paper students are asked about their knowledge of the importance of soft skills development in HE and to identify soft skills that they perceive as important for their future employment in hospitality.

2. Introduction

Higher Educational institutions emphasize the importance of hard skills as well as soft skills development for their students. Do students in hospitality understand the importance of soft skills development through their HE and do students experience soft skill development through HE.

Description of research topic

Purpose of research: To establish the student's perception about the importance of soft skill development through their years in HE and to establish which soft skills students understand to be important for the hospitality industry as developed through their HE experiences.

Background of research

Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) acknowledge the importance of soft skills development to prepare their students for successful employment. Moore and Morton (2017) note the acknowledgment by Australian HEI to develop the student's soft skills through their years in HE. Although the importance of soft skills development in students through HE is acknowledged by HEI, evidence of developing soft skills in HE is seldom evident and reported as unsatisfactory by employers of graduated students. Gruzdev, et al. (2018) concluded in their research that employers found soft skills lacking in master's and doctor's degree students when they first enter the employment market.

3. Literature review

Igl (n.d.) explains that the hospitality industry is made out of various fields including culinary arts, restaurant management, sports and gaming, hotel management, tourism and event planning. Various employment opportunities will arise from the various fields of hospitality like chef and waitering staff, accountants, marketeers, managers, executives, hoteliers, etc. Through a hospitality course in HE the various positions can be upskilled to create skilled workers in the hospitality industry. In 1994 Okeiyi, et. al. (Weber, 2016) concluded that soft skills are essential traits in the hospitality industry. Sisson and Adams (2013) (Weber, 2016) recently surveyed hospitality course graduates and identified 33 competencies as important to hospitality workers. The competencies were subdivided in 3 categories: hard soft skills, soft skills, and mixed skills. Fourteen competencies were viewed as essential to hospitality workers and of the fourteen, twelve was soft skills. They identified the four most important soft skills as: ability to develop positive customer relationships, working effectively with peers, professional demeanor and leadership. Do Hospitality students understand the importance of

developing soft skills to be successful employees? Do hospitality students experience the HEI developing soft skills?

According to Robles (2012) soft skills are the desired qualities for specific employment that do not depend on acquired knowledge and is based on common sense, people skills, and attitude. Parsons (2008) (Robles, 2012) highlighted that soft skills are character traits that enhance a person's job performance which in turn enhances a person's career prospects.

Soft skills in hospitality

Wilks and Hemsworth (2001) agreed with Weber (2016) about the importance of soft skills in employers in the hospitality industry and indicated through a study that a sample of hoteliers voted soft skills as the most important skills to effectively perform in the hospitality field. They further concluded that current hospitality programs in HE shows deficits in developing the important soft skills for hospitality in HE through their curriculum. Are students aware that they are not trained to develop the necessary soft skills to be successful in the hospitality industry? Spowart (2011) reiterates the importance for students to have learning opportunities to get them "work ready". She reports that employers indicate the lack of competencies (soft skills) when they enter the workforce in hospitality. Spowart (2011) researched the competencies (soft skills) in final year hospitality students that the students thought they need to be successful in hospitality before work integrated learning and after the work integrated learning. The objective of the research was to recommend curriculum adjustments to the faculty to incorporate the needed soft skills training in curriculum. Part of Spowart's conclusion was that the student's perception of the importance of soft skills development through education was poor.

Importance of soft skills in all employment

Moore and Morton (2017) highlight the importance of Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) in Australia to get their students "job ready". They noted the function change of (HEI) from being autonomous from outside influence on how to equip their students to institutions that need to consider the needs of the employers of their students after their studies. The internal process of determining curriculum content needs to consider more than the traditional academic content to prepare their students for future employment. Bowen, et. al. (Moore & Morton, 2017) noted that there are more skills than academic knowledge that students need to be fully equipped to be successful employees. They refer to these skills as soft skills or generic skills. Subramanian (2017) calls these soft skills, employable skills and highlights that these skills are teachable and can contribute to the employability of students. Wats (2009) states that new knowledge is driven by the economy as much as by academic inspiration. She noted that skills needed to advance the knowledge of economy stretched much wider than academic skills and estimates that academic skills only translate to 15% of successful employment. She describes the importance of soft skills to be successful in employment and the essence to develop these skills throughout the educational training process. Kenton and Abbott (2019) define soft skills as interpersonal skills and character traits of people that characterize their relationship towards other people. They state that soft skills often are concerned with who people are during interaction with other people. They reiterate that these skills can be taught through curriculum in HE.

Many soft skills are identified through various research papers. Some skills are universally applicable and relevant in most employment environments whereas some can be job specific. Knight (2011), Belcar, et.al. (2018), Robles (2012) agree on the following soft skills as to be important to most employment: Communication, teamwork, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and

organizing, self-management, learning, technology, cooperation, leadership, independence, creativity, learning through life, computer literacy, courtesy, flexibility, integrity, positive attitude, professionalism and responsible.

Belcar, et.al. (2018) also noted that employers with better soft skills are more productive in the workplace.

Gap between skills expected by employers and skills of graduates:

Knight (2011) reported a growing gap between soft skills expected by employers and actual soft skills in newly graduated employees. More hard skilled orientated HE was found to be one of the reasons for a lack of soft skills development in HE. A detailed study by Gruzdev, et al. (2018) agreed with Knight and found a growing gap between the expectations of soft skills of bachelor's and master's degree students by employees and the actual level of soft skills recorded in the graduated students. In all the identified skills the employers reported lower skill levels than expected from the doctoral and master's degree students. This comprehensive paper found that employers were not satisfied with the soft skills of graduated students and question why these skills were not developed in HE. Knight (2011) acknowledge that most HE institutions in Australia are aware of the importance of soft skills in employment and adopted in principle that soft skills need to be trained in HE, but the implementation seems to be lacking. Questions will have to be asked about why HE institutions are found lacking in the implementation of soft skill training. Different ways to train soft skills in the HE setup also needs to be investigated according to Knight (2011). Tevdovska (2015) questioned the HE ability to measure improvement in soft skills through curriculum to address the lack of soft skills teaching in HE.

Although adjustments in curricula was reported to be incorporated in hospitality industry HE institutions to promote soft skills (Stenden South Africa, n.d.) not a lot of research proof is available to show improvement in soft skills in students throughout their HE years or students understanding of the importance of soft skills for future employment.

4. Problem statement

Through the literature review it was found that although soft skills development is reported as important by most HE institutions, very few institutions measure the effectiveness of their soft skill development in students through their years in HE or reiterate the importance of soft skills development to their students.

Research questions to consider:

- How important is soft skills development for successful employment through the employer's perspective?
- What are soft skills? Which soft skills are most important for the hospitality industry?
- What is the role, regarding soft skills, of HE institutions? How important do HE institutions see the development of soft skills?
- What is the role regarding soft skills development for the student?
- How does HE institutions address soft skills development?
- How do students think these soft skills can be developed in HE?

5. Research methodology

The study was arranged following the qualitative methodology. Research will be conducted into the understanding of students of their knowledge about soft skills, the importance of soft skills in employment, the focus of soft skills in their studies by the HEI, and the perceived gap of soft skills that exists between graduated students and the skills expected by employers in hospitality.

Data analysis method: A questionnaire was prepared through google forms. This method was chosen because of the easy accessibility of all students to the necessary technology and the ease to complete the questionnaire at a suitable time for the students. The google forms format also allows easy interpretation of the results through graphs and pie charts.

Third year hospitality B.com students from Stenden South Africa (Stenden South Africa, n.d.) was chosen for the survey. 30 students participated in the study. Third year students were chosen due to their years of experience of HE.

6. Analysis of data and findings

Thirty students in hospitality responded to the research Questionnaire from Stenden University (Appendix A).

83.3% of the students reported that they were aware of the importance of soft skills development for successful employment. No students were unaware of the importance of soft skills and 16.7 % reported that they are “maybe” aware of the importance of soft skills. Nearly all students acknowledge the importance of soft skills in hospitality employment. Some students commented that soft skills were promoted through their practical training where they were subjected to real working environments.

The most important soft skills identified by the students were communication, teamwork and problem solving. Courtesy, flexibility, integrity, creativity and leadership was reported to be the least important soft skills by the students. Weber (2016) found that hospitality employers’ rate that customer relationships, teamwork, and leadership as the most important in hospitality. This show that student perception is different than employer perception about important soft skills like leadership but both regard teamwork as important.

The students reported that communication, leadership, teamwork and problem solving to be the soft skills best developed in their course. This will align well with employer needs as described by Weber (2016).

One third of the students experienced that soft skills are developed by all the lecturers whereas 56.7% of the students reported that not all lecturers develop soft skills through their lecturing. This was highlighted by Moore and Morton (2017) that bemoaned the lack of soft skills training by lectures.

Half of the students thought that 70-90% of class time is spent on hard skills where only 10 % of the students reported that only 20-30% of class time is spend on hard skills.

The students were divided on how much time is spent on soft skills where 20% (the biggest portion) reported that 20-30% of class time is spend on soft skills.

The student’s opinions were divided on the percentage of time spent in practical sessions on hard skills and soft skills. This might be to good curriculum integration of soft and hard skills in real live practical sessions.

Seventy-five-point nine percent of students thought that more time could be spent on soft skills and 89.7% of the students acknowledged that they also have a responsibility to develop their soft skills.

When the students were asked if their soft skills were up to standard for successful education most reported that they still need some more development. Most reported positive soft skills development through the practical sessions. Work experience was mentioned by many students as a positive developer of soft skills before HE and in HE practical training sessions.

The students reported communication, flexibility, and creativity as the soft skills they would like to develop more. These soft skills were also described by Weber (2016) as especially important skills for successful employment.

Students awareness of the importance of soft skills for employment was high, but perceived soft skills training by the HEI was limited.

7. Ethical considerations

The Research was done in a professional way guided by the ethical considerations prescribed by the IIE. Handling of the data gained from the students with regards to their HEI will be handled and interpreted with full consideration of the ethical considerations.

Students answers will be handled with confidentiality (no names of students will be required on the questionnaire).

Sensitivity towards the Higher Institution was considered when compiling the research results.

8. Limitations of studies

A small research group was used to gain data from only one HEI. Results indicated the perception of third years hospitality students at Stenden South Africa and will not necessary be the perception of other third year hospitality students at other HEI.

Soft skill development can be seen as skills that individuals need to develop themselves and not as a function of HE.

Some teaching pedagogies automatically incorporate the development of soft skills, but assessment thereof is limited. Soft skills can be differently perceived by employers, employees, students and HEI.

9. Anticipated contribution of the research

Through the research I hope to establish whether students realize the importance of soft skills in employment. The research might highlight the importance of students realizing the impact of soft skills development through their HEI and the role students can play to encourage HEI to develop soft skills. Student experience of soft skills learned through their years in HE can encourage HEI to adjust their pedagogies to maximize the development of soft skills in their students.

10. Conclusions and recommendations

Through the literate review the importance of soft skills for successful employment through the view of the employers was clearly highlighted. The lack of soft skills in newly graduate students was also reported by employers. HEI institutions also acknowledge the importance of soft skills and the need to advance these skills in their students. Measuring of the advancement of soft skills in students through their years in HE was hard to find. Through the research students did acknowledge realization

of the importance of soft skills for their further employment. There was mixed feedback of the effectiveness of the HEI to advance the students soft skills although most students acknowledged that it was part of the function of the HEI. Students like employers did rate teamwork, communication and problem solving of high importance for employment, but skills like courtesy, creativity and leadership were rated higher by hospitality employers than hospitality students in the importance of successful employment . Students did feel that more time can be spent on soft skills in HE, but also acknowledge that it is also the student's own responsibility to advance soft skills.

I would encourage HEI to do more research in the importance of soft skills to align curriculum, classes and practical sessions to advance the especially important soft skills. Orientating students to the importance of soft skills for employment and highlighting all the soft skills can create a student awareness of the importance of the skills. Although there is some reference of soft skills measuring tools in HEI evaluating the improvement of soft skills in HE can be of great help to encourage students and lectures to advance these skills.

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12. Appendices

Appendix A

Good day students. My name is Johan van der Merwe and I am currently busy with a Postgraduate course in Higher Education (PGDHE). As part of the course, I am researching soft skills and the importance thereof in employment.

Definition of soft skills or generic skills: According to the Oxford dictionary (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, n.d.) soft skills are personal qualities that allow you to interact and communicate with other people.

According to Robles (2012) soft skills include communication, courtesy, flexibility, integrity, teamwork, problem-solving, conflict management, creativity, work ethic, leadership, ext.

Bowen, et. al. (Moore & Morton, 2017) noted that there are more skills than academic knowledge that students need to be fully equipped to be successful employees.

Wilks and Hemsworth (2011) concluded in their study that a sample of hoteliers indicated that soft skills are consistently rated as being the most important skills to effectively perform as an employer in the hospitality field.

Stenden South Africa is an institution where we take pride in a student-centered approach of higher education through unique educational methods such as Problem Based Learning, Case Based Learning, and Real-World Learning in our learning companies. (Stenden South Africa, n.d.)

The questionnaire is to establish a student's awareness and perspective on the importance of soft skills development through their student years to get them job ready.

Please note that all information provided will be handled with complete confidentiality and no personal information is required from participating students. The research will adhere to the ethics code of research as required by the Independent Institute of Education South Africa (IIE).

Are you as a student aware of the importance of soft skills for your future?
employment?

10/15/2020 Soft skills

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/12rLKAJUzrwpM6hvkAkkjSweKzmfN-OFL2N3uvGGDIM/edit> 2/7

2.

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Maybe

3.

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Maybe

4.

Check all that apply.

Communication

Courtesy

Flexibility

Integrity

Teamwork

Problem-Solving

Conflict management

Creativity

Work Ethic

Leadership

2. DO you consider soft skills as important for successful employment?

3. Do you think it is the responsibility of the Higher Educational institutions to promote soft skills in their students?

4. Out of the list provided below, which 4 soft skills do you see as most important for your employment:

10/15/2020 Soft skills

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/12rLKAJUZrwpM6hvkAkkjSweKzmfN-OFL2N3uvGGDIM/edit> 3/7

5.

Check all that apply.

Communication

Courtesy

Flexibility

Integrity

Teamwork

Problem-Solving

Conflict management

Creativity

Work Ethic

Leadership

6.

Check all that apply.

Communication

Courtesy

Flexibility

Integrity

Teamwork

Problem-Solving

Conflict management

Creativity

Work Ethic

Leadership

5. Which soft skills do you see as the least important for your employment?

6. Which soft skills do you experience to be developed most in your course?

10/15/2020 Soft skills

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/12rLKAJUzrwpM6hvkAkkjSweKzmfN-OFL2N3uvGGDIM/edit> 4/7

7.

8.

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Maybe

9.

Mark only one oval.

100-90

90-80

80-70

70-60

60-50

50-40

40-30

30-20

20-10

10-0

How would you suggest soft skills can be trained in your course? (Please be specific and practical)

Do you feel that all lectures develop soft skills?

8. Hard skills are also known as academic skills. Which percentage of class time is spent on hard skills compared to soft skills by lectures?

10/15/2020 Soft skills

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/12rLKAJUzrwpM6hvkAlkkjSweKzmfN-OFL2N3uvGGDIM/edit> 5/7

10.

Mark only one oval.

100-90

90-80

80-70

70-60

60-50

50-40

40-30

30-20

20-10

10-0

11.

Mark only one oval.

100-90

90-80

80-70

70-60

60-50

50-40

40-30

30-20

20-10

10-0

9. What percentage of academic material would you say concentrates on soft skills development?

10. In practical training, which percentage of time is sent on hard skills compared to soft skills?

10/15/2020 Soft skills

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/12rLKAJUZrwpM6hvkAlkkjSweKzmfN-OFL2N3uvGGDIM/edit> 6/7

12.

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Maybe

13.

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Maybe

14.

11. Do you think more time must be spent to develop soft skills through your studies?

12. Do you think students have a responsibility to develop soft skills to prepare them for employment?

13. Do you think your soft skills (communication, courtesy, flexibility, integrity,

teamwork, problem-solving, conflict management, creativity, work ethic, leadership) are at a standard where your employer (s) will be satisfied in? Please support your answer.

10/15/2020 Soft skills

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/12rLKAJUzrwpM6hvkAkkjSweKzmfN-OFL2N3uvGGDIM/edit> 7/7

15.

Check all that apply.

Communication

Courtesy

Flexibility

Integrity

Teamwork

Problem-Solving

Conflict management

Creativity

Work Ethic

Leadership

Appendix B – Questionnaire answers

Soft skills

30 responses

Are you as a student aware of the importance of soft skills for your future employment?30 responses

YesNoMaybe16.7%83.3%

Yes 25

No 0

Maybe 5

2. DO you consider soft skills as important for successful employment?30 responses

YesNoMaybe96.7%

Yes 29

No 0

Maybe 1

3. Do you think it is the responsibility of the Higher Educational institutions to promote soft skills in their students?30 responses

YesNoMaybe10%83.3%

Yes 25

No 3

Maybe 2

4. Out of the list provided below, which 4 soft skills do you see as most important for your employment:30 responses

0102030CommunicationCourtesyFlexibilityIntegrityTeamworkProblem-SolvingConflict managementCreativityWork EthicLeadership26 (86.7%)26 (86.7%)2 (6.7%)2 (6.7%)6 (20%)6 (20%)6 (20%)6 (20%)18 (60%)18 (60%)18 (60%)18 (60%)13 (43.3%)13 (43.3%)7 (23.3%)7 (23.3%)15 (50%)15 (50%)8 (26.7%)8 (26.7%)

Value **Count**

Communication 26

Value	Count
Courtesy	2
Flexibility	6
Integrity	6
Teamwork	18
Problem-Solving	18
Conflict management	13
Creativity	7
Work Ethic	15
Leadership	8

5. Which soft skills do you see as the least important for your employment?28 responses

051015CommunicationCourtesyFlexibilityIntegrityTeamworkProblem-SolvingConflict managementCreativityWork EthicLeadership3 (10.7%)3 (10.7%)14 (50%)14 (50%)8 (28.6%)8 (28.6%)4 (14.3%)4 (14.3%)8 (28.6%)8 (28.6%)5 (17.9%)5 (17.9%)3 (10.7%)3 (10.7%)14 (50%)14 (50%)6 (21.4%)6 (21.4%)4 (14.3%)4 (14.3%)

Value	Count
Communication	3
Courtesy	14
Flexibility	8
Integrity	4
Teamwork	8
Problem-Solving	5
Conflict management	3
Creativity	14
Work Ethic	6
Leadership	4

6. Which soft skills do you experience to be developed most in your course?30 responses

0102030CommunicationCourtesyFlexibilityIntegrityTeamworkProblem-SolvingConflict managementCreativityWork EthicLeadership21 (70%)21 (70%)5 (16.7%)5 (16.7%)15 (50%)15 (50%)4

(13.3%)4 (13.3%)22 (73.3%)22 (73.3%)18 (60%)18 (60%)9 (30%)9 (30%)13 (43.3%)13 (43.3%)4
(13.3%)4 (13.3%)17 (56.7%)17 (56.7%)

Value	Count
Communication	21
Courtesy	5
Flexibility	15
Integrity	4
Teamwork	22
Problem-Solving	18
Conflict management	9
Creativity	13
Work Ethic	4
Leadership	17

How would you suggest soft skills can be trained in your course? (Please be specific and practical)22 responses

By teaching students' strategies to handle real life situations.

Guest speakers who can speak from real life experiences

Training courses or lectures can be done on each soft skill and why it is important

By adding more conflict management related cases to study

by giving task to the students when they are in the real-world learning. This gives the students a chance to build their self-confident to communicate and to be more creative.

I believe soft skills can be learnt just by studying at NHL Stenden, I think the course is built in a way where you need to utilize certain soft skills in order to complete your tasks.

Role play

More classes on the various skills or skills be more incorporated in the course by giving tasks that require these skills

more external courses like toastmasters.

Through real world learning which is provided by working at the My Pond hotel

I personally feel just more open discussions about soft skills and the importance of them in a practical sense (like how they can positively affect your day to day life)

Real world learning

none

Group activities

Real world learning. Putting students in real life situations and giving them a chance to practice their skills. As well as giving positive feedback and improvement points

Soft skills workshops

More teamwork projects besides assignments maybe seminars etc

Include in a section in one module

As a basis, promoting the importance of soft skills within hospitality would be a great start. Further, provide examples or bring in industry professionals to further promote soft skills within the industry to instil it into the student's mindset.

team building courses

Do you feel that all lectures develop soft skills?30 responses

YesNoMaybe10%56.7%33.3%

Yes 10

No 17

Maybe 3

8. Hard skills are also known as academic skills. Which percentage of class time is spent on hard skills compared to soft skills by lectures?28 responses

100-9090-8080-7070-6060-5050-4040-3030-201/217.9%10.7%25%25%

100-90 0

90-80 7

80-70 7

70-60 3

60-50 5

50-40 2

40-30 1

30-20 0

20-10 2

10-0 1

9. What percentage of academic material would you say concentrates on soft skills development?30 responses

100-9090-8080-7070-6060-5050-4040-3030-201/213.3%20%13.3%20%13.3%

100-90 2

90-80 1

80-70 4

70-60 2

60-50 4

50-40 6

40-30 4

30-20 6

20-10 0

10-0 1

10. In practical training, which percentage of time is sent on hard skills compared to soft skills?29 responses

100-9090-8080-7070-6060-5050-4040-3030-201/220.7%20.7%10.3%13.8%13.8%

100-90 0

90-80 1

80-70 6

70-60 4

60-50 4

50-40 3

40-30 6

30-20 3

20-10 2

10-0 0

11. Do you think more time must be spent to develop soft skills through your studies?29 responses

YesNoMaybe24.1%75.9%

Yes 22

No 0

Maybe 7

12. Do you think students have a responsibility to develop soft skills to prepare them for employment?29 responses

YesNoMaybe89.7%

Yes 26

No 1

Maybe 2

13. Do you think your soft skills (communication, courtesy, flexibility, integrity, teamwork, problem-solving, conflict management, creativity, work ethic, leadership) are at a standard where your employer (s) will be satisfied in? Please support your answer.28 responses

Yes

To some extent

Not at the moment. I could be more educated.

Yes, I often research human behaviour and psychology in my spare time, and it has helped me in my previous work in hospitality as well as working with classmates

No as I am still in the beginning of my studies and need to learn more

Yes, as I have previously been in a working environment before

I am not there but I believe myself, that I can do better.

Yes, I think through practical trading at My Pond over the past three years, my soft skills have developed from very little to good.

To a larger extent, Yes

Yes, but I could still learn more skills

some of them are, but we could spend more time on work ethic and creativity.

Yes. I have had numerous jobs prior to studying and have proven to have had most of the above skills.

Yes, I believe they have been trained not just during my time at Stenden but rather during my entire life by various influencers

Yes. I have previous work experience in my field before coming to study further.

Could be improved

Needs work

No, I believe I have strong soft skills however I have not had enough experience or practice to further develop them. I hope to have this opportunity on my internship

yes

Yes, because over my years at Stenden South Africa I have been exposed to an environment that helped my polish my soft skills especially experience from my grand tour minor which helped me apply these soft skills in a di

Yes, but this depends on the field within the industry you would like to enter. For example, if I were to go into F and B (Food and Beverage) or Front office, conflict management, communication, leadership and teamwork would be essential as those are vital within those two operational departments. You deal with guests on a daily basis and it's up to your team to work together to provide the best service standards possible. It is also vital that you're able to deal with conflict with guests as not everything constantly goes to plan in the industry. These are just examples of how important soft skills are, especially within operational departments. Hard skills are important, but they don't mean anything if you have k soft skills at all and that is what your employer will be leaning more towards.

No because we have not been nurtured enough

Which soft skills would you like to improve more in order to be prepared for employment?30 responses

051015CommunicationCourtesyFlexibilityIntegrityTeamworkProblem-SolvingConflict managementCreativityWork EthicLeadership15 (50%)15 (50%)4 (13.3%)4 (13.3%)13 (43.3%)13 (43.3%)4 (13.3%)4 (13.3%)7 (23.3%)7 (23.3%)7 (23.3%)7 (23.3%)9 (30%)9 (30%)12 (40%)12 (40%)7 (23.3%)7 (23.3%)8 (26.7%)8 (26.7%)

Value	Count
Communication	15
Courtesy	4
Flexibility	13
Integrity	4
Teamwork	7
Problem-Solving	7
Conflict management	9
Creativity	12
Work Ethic	7
Leadership	8

Are there any comments or recommendations you would like to add regarding soft skills?12 responses

No

no

no

I think they are extremely important

None

none

It's important that students need to understand that soft skills are vital. Your academics or hard skills also play a vital role but if you cannot apply soft skills then the industry will prove to be extremely challenging.