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SOFT SKILLS OF STUDENTS AS IMPORTANT PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

Today every field professionals need a balanced set of cognitive, social and emotional skills in order to succeed in modern life. Their capacity to achieve goals, work effectively with others and manage emotions will be essential to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Thus, forming this set of skills may be considered as one of the most essential missions within high education study.

While everyone acknowledges the importance of socio-emotional skills such as perseverance, sociability and self-esteem, there is often insufficient awareness of «what works» to enhance these skills. Some of the most important professional skills for workers and employers alike simply can't be taught in a classroom or measured on paper. These traits are called soft skills and they're more crucial to job search and overall career growth. Unlike hard skills (i.e. academic knowledge and professional skills), which can be proven and measured, soft skills are intangible and difficult to quantify. As the workplace has modernized around the world, the demand for such skills has increased over the past 20 years.

As for research history, since 1959, the U.S. Army has been investing a considerable amount of resources into technology-based development of training procedures. At the 1972 Soft Skills Conference there was presented a report aimed at figuring out how the term «soft skills» (in the areas of command, supervision, counseling and leadership) is understood: «Soft skills are important job-related skills that involve little or no interaction with machines and whose application on the job is quite generalized» [3].

Studies by Stanford Research Institute and the Carnegie Mellon Foundation among Fortune 500 CEOs established that 75 % of long term job success resulted from soft skills and only 25 % from technical skills. Hence, soft skills are as important as cognitive/technical skills. So, many policies and programs are designed to measure and enhance socio-emotional and soft skills, their effects on career success and vary considerably within and across countries [2].

Soft skills refer to a broad set of skills, competencies, behaviors, attitudes, and personal qualities that enable people to effectively navigate their environment, work well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals with complementing hard skills. Soft skills are regarded as a combination of people social skills, communication skills, character of personality traits, career attribute, social intelligence and emotional intelligence quotients among others. The Collins English Dictionary defines the term «soft skills» as «desirable qualities for certain forms of employment that do not depend on acquired knowledge: they include common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive flexible attitude» [4].

Researches L. H. Lippman, R. Ryberg, R. Carney and K. A. Moore have distinguished the key soft skills for workforce success. There are five critical skills most likely to increase odds of success across all outcomes and which employers expect employees to have: social skills; communication; and higher-order thinking skills (including problem solving, critical thinking, and decision-making); supported by the intrapersonal skills of self-control and positive self-concept [1, p. 56].

Social skills help people get along well with others. This ability includes respecting others, using context appropriate behavior, and resolving conflict; they are universally important. *Communication skills* refer to the specific types of communication used in the workplace, and include oral, written, non-verbal, and listening skills. Strong general communication skills contribute to the development of other soft skills, like social skills. There is evidence that communication skills are related to three of the workforce outcomes studied for youth, they are the most frequently sought skill among employers, and they were strongly endorsed by stakeholders in this project. *Higher-order thinking* consists of problem solving, critical thinking, and decision making. At a basic level, this includes an ability to identify an issue and take in information from multiple sources to evaluate options in order to reach a reasonable conclusion. *Self-control* refers to one's ability to delay gratification, control impulses, direct and focus attention, manage emotions, and regulate behaviors. Self-control is an intrapersonal skill, foundational to many others: it enables successful decision-making, resolution of conflict, and coherent communication. *A positive self-concept* includes self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-awareness and beliefs, as well as self-esteem and a sense of well-being and pride. *Hard work and dependability, responsibility, and self-motivation* are also highly valued by employers and supported by a strong base of research

evidence, placing them in the top supported skills. The field is building more evidence that these can be improved through interventions among youth and young adults, and it is expected that, in time, they may emerge with as much support as those above enjoy.

Those who are competent in these soft skills are effective in their job searches and interviews and thus are more likely to be hired. They are more likely to be productive, retained on the job, and promoted, and thus they tend to earn more than those less competent in soft skills [1].

Education systems need to prepare students for their future. Social and emotional skills develop and change with age, and are affected by a combined influence of biological and environmental factors, life events, and changes in self-perception. On average, levels of conscientiousness, emotional stability, social dominance and agreeableness generally increase with age. But the most comprehensive studies prove that systematic interventions can change the social skills of a person in desired directions. Those intervention programmes which used a coherent and co-ordinated set of activities, with a focus on the development of particular soft skills rather than a general skillset, are shown to have strong effects. The evidence indicates that continuing to learn after finishing formal education, e.g. learning in the workplace, can have a significant influence on people's soft skills.

Thus, in an increasingly fast-changing and diverse world, the role of soft skills is becoming more important. Soft skills refer to the abilities to regulate one's thoughts, emotions and behaviour. They are dependent on situational factors and responsive to change and development through formal and informal learning experiences. Soft skills determine how well people adjust to their environment and how much they achieve in their lives. The ability of citizens to adapt, be resourceful, respect and work well with others, and to take personal and collective responsibility is increasingly becoming the hallmark of a well-functioning society.

References

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FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING OF POLICE OFFICERS

Police officers being in the front line of public order situations, directing traffic, providing guidance or advice to citizens, tourists or simply visitors to their country need to be well prepared to react not only in their mother tongue, but in a foreign language as well. To be able to master a foreign language, continual possibilities to develop it are necessary. According to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU “Everyone has the right to education and to have access to vocational and continuing training” [6]. Constant language training of officers in the field of their profession makes them more professional, raises the credit of the police force and the trust of the public.

At present, foreign language teaching is based on the Communicative Approach (CA) or Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The approach emerged in the early 1980’s after Dell Hymes published his work «On Communicative Competence». It was a period known as the age of methods due to the fact that new methods would come out and disappear very quickly [1, p. 241].

Interactive technologies can help bring variety and a learner-centered material which can prompt learners’ interest and motivation to develop their language competence. When effectively applied in accordance with a needs analysis it can be a very useful tool in the language development as well as in the independence development of the learner. Above all, the analysis of the application of the e-module and the evaluation of foreign language learning efficiency led to the