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## SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT DURING EDUCATION PROCESS AT MODERN UNIVERSITIES

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Graduate employability has emerged as a significant concern for researchers, educators, employers, and various stakeholders who are invested in the preparedness of students by higher education institutions (HEIs) for the job market. Students typically engage in several years of higher education with the expectation that their studies will yield positive outcomes, enabling them to secure employment or become self-employed (Adolphs, S., Clark, L., Dörnyei, Z., Glover, T., Henry, A., Muir, C., & Valstar, M., 2021).

However, the reality is often different; graduates worldwide frequently enter the workforce lacking the relevant skills necessary for success. Higher education institutions have faced criticism regarding their methodologies in equipping students with essential skills. For a university graduate to thrive, it is imperative that they possess a robust combination of both soft and technical skills. While there is a general inadequacy of both skill types among graduates, empirical studies indicate a more pronounced deficiency in soft skills compared to technical skills. HEIs tend to emphasize hard skills in their curricula, often neglecting the integration of soft skills (Abelha, M., Fernandes, S., Mesquita, D., Seabra, F., & Ferreira-Oliveira, A., 2020).

This oversight may be a primary factor contributing to the significant soft skills gap observed among university graduates. This issue is particularly evident in Tanzania, where students often complete their higher education lacking adequate soft skills. Soft skills, which are essential for lifelong learning, are not exclusively cultivated in traditional classroom settings; rather, they are often more effectively developed in informal environments (Aleixo, A., Leal, S., & Azeiteiro, U., 2022).

Soft skills refer to the interpersonal abilities that facilitate effective interactions among individuals. Those who possess these skills are often regarded as pleasant collaborators and companions. According to Succi and Canovi, soft skills encompass a dynamic blend of cognitive and meta-cognitive abilities, as well as interpersonal, intellectual, and practical competencies. These skills enable individuals to adapt and respond positively, equipping them to navigate the challenges encountered in both professional and everyday contexts (Asefer, A., & Abidin, Z., 2021).

Soft skills are closely associated with personality traits, aspirations, and motivations. They represent a significant added value that enhances the potential for achieving broader and more esteemed accomplishments in today's labor market. To enhance student employability, universities around the globe are increasingly incorporating courses aimed at developing soft skills. While these skills are crucial for university students and graduates, their importance can vary significantly across different professions (Caggiano, V., Schleutker, K., Petrone, L., & González-Bernal, J., 2020).

Certain soft skills may be prioritized by employers in specific fields, while others may not hold the same level of significance elsewhere. Among the most sought-after skills by employers are communication skills, which have garnered considerable attention from researchers. These skills encompass the ability to convey, receive, and accurately interpret information, involving both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication. Key components of communication skills include speaking, listening, writing, reading, and presenting (Deep, S., Salleh, B. M., & Othman, H., 2019).

Leadership skills pertain to an individual's capacity to influence and motivate others to take actions that contribute to the collective objectives of a group or organization. Additionally, teamwork skills are essential, as they enable individuals to collaborate effectively within teams, focusing on the collective achievement of shared goals (Demissie, M., Herut, A., Yimer, B., Bareke, M., Agezew, B., Dedho, N., & Lebeta, M., 2021).

Work ethic encompasses the personal moral values that influence an individual's thought processes, decision-making, and actions. It serves as a framework for determining what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable within professional environments. Individuals possessing a strong work ethic exhibit self-discipline, particularly when it comes to adhering to established

rules and procedures in the workplace (Denney, V., Haley, G., Rivera, E., & Watkins, D., 2020).

Another crucial soft skill is adaptability to change. Those who excel in this area are receptive to change and demonstrate the flexibility necessary to accept and embrace new developments in their work environments.

Additionally, innovation and creativity represent another vital set of soft skills. These abilities enable individuals to generate ideas and devise methods or strategies that yield positive outcomes in the workplace. The capacity to tolerate stress is also an essential soft skill, reflecting an individual's ability to maintain composure in the face of challenges and adversity. Individuals with this skill can effectively manage their emotions during difficult times, allowing them to navigate both work-related and personal tasks successfully (Fadhil, S. S., Ismail, R., & Alnoor, A., 2021).

Lastly, customer orientation is a critical set of soft skills that empower individuals to comprehend and prioritize customer needs while delivering services. This orientation fosters a sense of value and importance among customers, enhancing their overall experience with both the individual and the organization. This neglect may be a key factor contributing to the notable soft skills gap seen among university graduates (Fakhretdinova, G. N., Osipov, P., & Dulalaeva, L., 2021).

This challenge is particularly pronounced in Tanzania, where students often finish their higher education without sufficient soft skills. Soft skills, crucial for lifelong learning, are not solely developed in conventional classroom environments; they are often more effectively nurtured in informal settings.

Soft skills are regarded as crucial competencies that contribute significantly to an individual's success in both their professional and personal life. Individuals who exhibit strong soft skills are often well-regarded by their peers due to their ability to foster positive interactions. Employers who prioritize soft skills during the hiring process tend to experience fewer interpersonal conflicts within their organizations.

Consequently, a workforce rich in soft skills promotes a more harmonious workplace environment. Given that organizations typically achieve better results when employees collaborate in teams rather than working in isolation, there is a heightened demand for individuals with soft skills, particularly in firms where overall performance hinges on both individual contributions and teamwork. Organizations view employees with soft skills as valuable assets that enhance their operational effectiveness (Nguyen, N., 2023).

Some employers place a higher value on soft skills compared to hard or technical skills, as the former often require a more extended period to develop. While hard skills can be acquired through short courses and in-house training, the cultivation of soft skills is a more complex process. Individuals with strong

soft skills facilitate positive relationships with various stakeholders, especially customers, who are vital for organizations seeking to achieve and maintain a competitive edge. Beyond their significance to organizations, soft skills are equally important for the individuals who possess them. Those with well-developed soft skills are more likely to advance in their careers compared to their counterparts who lack these abilities.

Furthermore, the automation of soft skills in the workplace is challenging, as these skills are inherently human. This reality implies that individuals with robust soft skills hold greater value and possess enhanced bargaining power relative to those with limited soft skills.

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## **РЕФОРМА ВИЩОЇ ЮРИДИЧНОЇ ОСВІТИ В УКРАЇНІ: ВПЛИВ НА РОЗВИТОК ЗАКОНОДАВСТВА**

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Юридична освіта є найпопулярнішою спеціальністю серед більшості вступників, які навіть попри війну, бажають стати юристами та отримати ґрунтовні знання у сфері законодавства. Втім питання підвищення якості юридичної освіти, зважаючи на значний попит спеціальності, тривалий час не було в центрі уваги як законодавця, так і органів виконавчої влади. При цьому, на думку деяких вчених, сьогочасний стан вищої юридичної освіти позначається суперечливими характеристиками зважаючи на велику кількість вищих навчальних закладів (надалі – ВНЗ), які надають вищу юридичну освіту [1, с. 48].