



## Research Article

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Received: 28 April 2020 / Accepted: 23 December 2020 / Published: 17 January 2021

## Requirements of Organization for Soft Skills as an Influencing Factor of Their Success

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36941/ajis-2021-0025>

### Abstract

*Soft skills in the today organizations are considered to be one of the most evaluable components for success. Soft skills are traditionally considered complementary to hard skills, which are the ability to perform a particular type of task or activity. Given that businesses have different requirements and criteria for hiring workers, the reason for this research is to see how much organizations in Kosovo and Albania give importance to soft skills and how much they require these skills when hiring workers. We conducted this research with primary data, ie through questionnaires, to collect data questionnaires were distributed to various commercial, service and production organization in several cities of Kosovo and Albania. We based this study on Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence. And then to derive the most accurate statistics and results SPSS software package was used. The results of the analysis show that businesses in Kosovo and Albania mainly apply soft skills and consider them important for their development.*

**Keywords:** *Soft skills, communication, teamwork, recruitment, success*

### 1. Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to analyze the existing state of recognition, research and application of soft skills by businesses in Kosovo and Albania, whether production, service or commercial. The paper also aims to present research findings on the application of soft skills by businesses.

To begin with, we will distinguish between hard and soft skills and the importance they have for the development of organizations. Hard skills - are part of the skill set required for a job. Some of the hard skills are considered to be: computer programming, web design, accounting, finance, writing, math, and other measurable skills that are embedded in the requirements in the work place.

Soft skills — are considered non-technical skills and knowledge that help people find, retain and succeed at the work place. Soft skills are a new way to describe a set of skills or talents an individual can bring to the workplace, including various skills such as: group skills, communication skills,

leadership skills, service skills client and problem-solving skills.

While writing this research, the classic model of presenting this research paper has been followed, starting with the introduction, review of the literature, methodology, findings analysis and finally conclusions and recommendations.

Through multiple linear regression done with SPSS statistical program, we validated the hypothesis presented in this paper. The paper concludes with the references we have used to conduct this study.

## 2. Literature Review

Based on data collected from different authors and countries, we find that soft skills are important as criteria for employment, although they are sometimes difficult to identify. In some countries of the world these soft skills are more developed whereas in some other countries they are developing, while in Kosovo and Albania there is a lack of research of this kind which is to be understood as being in progress. Day-to-day soft skills are becoming one of the most important criteria for employment and to succeed in the marketplace and beyond.

According to an analysis done by GAP Institute in 2017, in the private services sector companies find it difficult to find workers equipped with soft skills. The findings of this research confirm the lack of professional skills in the private sector in Kosovo, where out of 92% of the surveyed companies that have hired new workers over the last three years, 82.1% have found it difficult to find qualified workers. The research also highlights the most required cross-cutting general skills in the service industry which are: foreign language proficiency, rapid information dissemination, critical thinking, genuine communication, logical thinking, problem solving, self-initiative, creativity, teamwork, use of information technology and versatility (GAP, 2017).

Kechagias in a 2011 project "Measuring and Evaluating Soft Skills" shows that many universities around the world have added soft skills teaching to their curriculum in order to better prepare students for Labor market. Man is seen as good in himself aiming at his / her self-development and self-expression. Learning levels included emotional and cognitive levels. The results obtained in this research are satisfactory because most of the countries studied have focused on soft skills. (K. Kechagias, 2011)

Cinque in 2016 conducted a research on soft skills development in European countries and finally some countries offer special training for these skills, others have dedicated employment departments, and universities were playing an important role to further develop these skills (M. Cinque, 2016)

Historically, technical skills, also known as difficult skills, were the only skills needed for employment careers (James & James, 2004)); but today's work is showing that technical skills are not enough to keep individuals employed (Robles, 2012). Because soft skills are critical to productive workplace performance, current and future business leaders are emphasizing soft skills development (Nealy, 2005).

Many researches have been done on the importance of soft skills in the workplace. A study by Klaus (2010), found that 75% of long-term job success depends on people with soft skills while only 25% depend on technical knowledge (Klaus, 2010). Another study conducted by Harvard University shows that strong skills contribute only 15% to success, while 85% of success is due to soft skills (Sethi, 2014).

In her research, Robles has found ten valuable skills from business executives: "Integrity, communication, curtesy, responsibility, social skills, positive attitude, professionalism, flexibility, teamwork and work ethic "(Robles, 2012).

Teamwork and trust are seen by employers as fundamental to success in the workplace. These skills need a strong foundation of speech, language and communication and are needed in a potential new employee's employment. They can be treated as the most important indicator of job performance. (K. Slavinska, K.S. Villani, 2014)

Gloria Meeks in a 2017 study entitled "Soft Critical Skills to Succeed in the Workplace" had

followed the theory of emotional intelligence, had a purposeful sample, and the results she had drawn from this research were that communication was the most sought-after skill in firms in the southeastern United States. From the perspective of principals and managers of human resources found gaps in soft skills among some graduates (Meeks, 2017).

Fernando Cortez in 2014 conducted a study on soft skills using qualitative and quantitative analysis. Responsibility was the skill that mattered most in the study, followed by integrity and work ethic while interpersonal skills mattered less (Cortez, 2014).

### 3. Research Methodology

During the paper we used the descriptive method, the literature of various international authors was reviewed, through which we described the soft skills and their importance.

The methodology used in this research is with primary data i.e. a questionnaire, which is divided into three sections; the first section includes interviewee data, the second one organization data, and the third soft skills.

The data collection is made possible by the questionnaire which is a structured segment of research questions that almost completely answers the corresponding topic on the role of soft skills in local organizations. Questionnaires were distributed to 101 different commercial, service and manufacturing firms in Kosovo and Albania for data collection.

To derive the most accurate statistics and results we used SPSS package, with linear regression and correlation analysis, where as dependent variable is the success of organizations and independent variables are: communication, interpersonal skills, flexibility, integrity, positive attitude, leadership, responsibility, problem solving, teamwork and work ethics.

The following are explanations for the variables of this paper.

**Communication** — is an important interpersonal skill in today's global business environment. It is generally assumed by many companies that communication is a fundamental skill that everyone knows and operates well (Cortez, 2014). Communication skills were defined verbally or in writing, with several lists including presentation skills and listening ability. Verbal skills, written and presented, are crucial for any workplace, both for interactions with clients and for interactions with colleagues.

A recent study published in the Journal of Business Communication (2013) investigated verbal communication behaviors used in the workplace. The 10 most common behaviors identified in the workplace for verbal communication were: listening, asking, discussing, sharing information, agreeing, suggesting, receiving information, seeking answers, answering questions and explaining (Cortez, 2014).

**Interpersonal skills** - these skills include being able to deal with people from different backgrounds, which means being able to develop relationships with different people when needed. Interpersonal skills also include persuasion, motivation and encouragement skills. Persuasion skills refer to persuading and influencing others to help you achieve your project goals. Motivational and motivational skills refer to performing specific strategies to motivate team members to work hard, identifying their feelings, needs, and expectations (Awan, M.H., Ahmed, K. & Zulqarnain, W., 2015).

**Flexibility** — it is this soft skill that requires the capacity and willingness to acquire new skills and face new tasks and challenges (Jena, A. & Satpathy, S.S., 2017).

"You have to always be able to predict what will happen in the future and have the flexibility to develop it (MarcBenioff).

**Integrity**- is also defined as: the quality or condition of being on moral principles such as; justice, honesty, and sincerity; the desire to do the right thing; and to state and experience some desired values and expectations for their results. The 2008 NACE study found that integrity was ranked as the most important employee attribute, followed by work ethic. Therefore, it is no wonder why HR professionals or companies looking for new employees look for individuals who possess integrity (Cortez, 2014).

**Positive Attitude** - Employers want employees who are positive, even in stressful and challenging circumstances. They want to hire applicants with a "can do" attitude who are flexible, dedicated and willing to contribute more, if necessary, to getting the job done. (Doyle, 2018).

**Lidershipi-** leadership is another skill required for managers. Some might argue that leadership is a strong skill, as there are some technical aspects to being a good leader. However, leadership qualities are generally based on one's personality, experience both in and out of work, and a personal philosophy, so this is also a soft skill. While different organizations need different types of leaders at different times (Hamlin, 2017), in general, leadership is important because companies need individuals who can not only motivate others but also provide guidance and implement strategic plans

**Liability** —as a characteristic that employers are looking for it is ultimately and synonymously linked to trust. Being responsible is not only a good quality to have while working in any organization, but it is also a determining factor that most companies look for in their employees when downsizing or restructuring. According to Cascio (2002), this soft skill is the key that employers look for in their employees that will ultimately determine whether or not to retain them during the company downsizing. In his book, Cascio suggested that companies should view their employees as assets, not as costs. If a company perceives employees as assets, it will invest in developing their skills; thus, improving their work effectiveness (Cortez, 2014)

**Problem Solving and Critical Thinking** refers to the ability to use knowledge, facts and data to solve problems effectively. This does not mean that you need to have an immediate answer, it does mean that you must be able to think, evaluate problems and find solutions. The ability to find a well thought out solution within a reasonable amount of time, however, is a skill that employers greatly value (ODEP, 2007)

**Teamwork** - Remedios (2012) pointed out that an individual who possesses good teamwork skills can build good relationships and interact with others, can be a leader or a follower, can recognize and respect differences and can communicate and listen well. Troth et al. (2012) asserted that good communication between team members is a fundamental requirement for successful team performance and a fundamental element of how teams work together. Successful team performance comes from good communication, the resources of a team, the processes in which members engage, and the skills possessed by each team member. The demand for teamwork is a skill that has grown because organizations require people to work together on committees, cross-teams, and joint ventures (Meeks, 2017)

**Work ethic** - The last soft skill that was explored is work ethic. Ezigbo (2012) addressed this topic through a study of workplace ethics. He said the importance of ethics helps employees decide how best to respond to the interests of different organizational actors. Employees, especially those in management, often experience an ethical dilemma when they are faced with a situation that affects the employer and the organization. The study also identified the long time the employee spends in the organization, loyalty to others, and professionalism were the variables that affected their decisions. "Sometimes making a decision is easy because a standard, value or norm of behavior is evident." (Cortez, 2014)

#### 4. Theoretical Approach - Theory of Emotional Intelligence

Goleman's theory of Emotional Intelligence was the theory we based this study on. The subject of soft skills has been analyzed by numerous scholars under the framework of emotional intelligence since a direct relationship must exist between them. People with high emotional intelligence are more likely to develop skills that are part of soft skills such as teamwork, effective communication, and successful social interactions. Emotional intelligence seems to be a critical attribute for personal and professional success (Goleman, 1998).

Goleman builds his theory from a variety of sources and identifies what he calls the greatest separation with human abilities that lies between the mind and the heart or what he calls more technically between cognition and emotion. Emotional intelligence as a concept has continued to evolve in the areas of business, management, marketing, psychology, psychotherapy, education, and with a slight increase in social work (Meeks, 2017)

Emotional Intelligence - is a person's ability to connect with others and to understand others and

themselves. Goleman divided the five components of emotional intelligence into two categories: personal competencies and social competences. Personal competencies include: awareness, self-regulation and motivation. Courses of social competence include: empathy that is the ability to identify other people's feelings, needs and concerns, and the social ability to build bridges between people through teamwork, conflict management, negotiation and leadership (Goleman, 1998).

*This is one of the most common patterns of human resource recruitment in organizations, despite the fact that insufficient empirical research has been conducted to support its validity.*

## 5. Empirical Analysis

In order to arrive at the most accurate conclusions and analysis of our study, the research question and the working hypothesis have been raised which will be the basis of the argumentation of the analysis. The research question and hypothesis are constructed as follows:

- Are soft skills required by businesses, namely human resource management?

### 5.1 Hypothesis

- Hypothesis zero: Soft skills have no impact on organizations success
- Alternative Hypothesis: Soft skills impact the organizations success

Through the multiple regression method, we will test the effects that soft skills have on the success of organizations.

Therefore, the specification of the multiple regression model is as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \dots + \beta_n X_n + u$$

Y- represents the dependent variable, in our case is the success of the organizations

X - represents the independent variable, where in our case are X<sub>1</sub> communication, X<sub>2</sub> interpersonal skills, X<sub>3</sub> flexibility, X<sub>4</sub> integrity, X<sub>5</sub> positive attitude, X<sub>6</sub> leadership, X<sub>7</sub> responsibility, X<sub>8</sub> problem solving, X<sub>9</sub> teamwork, X<sub>10</sub> work ethic.

Bo, B<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>2</sub> are the parameters or estimation coefficients; where Bo is the constant parameter, while B<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>2</sub> are the independent variable estimation parameters.

U- is the stochastic or error term variable, it contains all factors or variables not foreseen in the model and is a non-reserved random variable assuming positive and negative values.

### 5.2 Coefficient of determination analysis

R- The coefficient of determination in our case is about 99%, which indicates a strong positive relationship between the dependent variable (success of organizations) and independent ones (communication, interpersonal skills, flexibility, integrity, positive attitude, leadership, responsibility, problem solving, teamwork and work ethics).

Based on the result obtained by R-square we can say that the independent variables explain the dependent variance for 98% which is a good result for our work.

**Tab. 1:** Coefficient of determination

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.993 <sup>a</sup>	.986	.985	.35778	.986	641.801	10	90	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), ethic, integrity, leadership, teamwork, flexibility, problem solving, positive attitude, responsibility, communication, interpersonal skills

### 5.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

From the multiple regression formula, we can represent the function according to the performance data where the dependent variable is the success of the organizations and the independent variables are: communication, interpersonal skills, flexibility, integrity, positive attitude, leadership, responsibility, problem solving, teamwork and work ethic.

$$Y = 0.310 + 0.150X1 + 0.292X2 + 0.112X3 + 0.284X4 + 0.297X5 + 0.201X6 + 0.048X7 + 0.289X8 + 0.352X9 + 0.086u$$

Keeping all other factors constant if Communication increases by one unit then the success of organizations will increase by 0.150. Keeping all other factors constant, if Interpersonal Skills increase by one unit then the success of organizations will increase by 0.295.

Keeping all other factors constant if Flexibility increases by one unit then the success of organizations will increase by 0.112. Keeping all other factors constant if Integrity increases by one unit then the success of organizations will increase by 0.284.

Keeping all other factors constant if the Positive Attitude increases by one unit then the success of the organizations will increase by 0.297. Keeping all other factors constant if Leadership grows per unit then the success of organizations will increase by 0.201.

Keeping all other factors constant if the Responsibility increases for one unit then the success of the organizations will increase by 0.048. Keeping all other factors constant if Problem Solving increases by one unit then the success of organizations will increase by 0.289. Keeping all other factors constant if Teamwork increases by one unit then the success of organizations will increase by 0.352. Keeping all other factors constant if work ethic increases for one unit then the success of organizations will increase by 0.086.

So, the result of this analysis shows that the basic hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted because the value of sig. is less than 0.05, where in our case sig. is 0.00. i.e. Soft skills influence the success of organizations.

Tab. 2: Multiple linear regression

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>										
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
(Constant)	.310	.311		3.423	.000	.128	.392			
communication	.150	.515	.096	1.067	.010	.273	.474	.863	-.112	-.013
interpersonal skills	.290	.322	.469	2.004	.000	.230	.250	.963	-.389	-.050
flexibility	.112	.328	.638	1.435	.000	.160	.364	.923	.561	.080
integrity	.284	.126	.194	2.827	.000	.334	.234	.800	.636	.097
Positive attitude	.297	.153	.105	1.943	.055	.007	.201	.931	.201	.024
leadership	.201	.145	.166	2.138	.000	.113	.390	.846	.400	.051
Responsibility	.048	.161	.334	3.021	.000	.128	.368	.948	.390	.050
Problem solving	.289	.118	.105	2.445	.010	.054	.224	.945	.250	.030
teamwork	.352	.094	.184	3.731	.000	.164	.239	.738	.366	.046
ethics	.086	.394	.015	1.217	.010	.069	.198	.867	-.023	-.003

a. Dependent Variable: organization success

### 5.4 Correlation Analysis

Correlation measures the strength or degree of linear association between two variables. The correlation coefficient takes values from -1 to +1. The correlation or relationship between the dependent variable that is the success of organizations and the independent variables are:

communication, interpersonal skills, flexibility, integrity, positive attitude, leadership, responsibility, problem solving, teamwork, work ethic. It is seen that there is a strong correlation in all cases which is very close to 1, where as we know the degree of correlation determination ranges from 0-1. Whereas the correlation between the independent variables between them gives us the impression that this model is accepted, since the relation between them is less than 0.05 based on what the links below 0.05 consider the model acceptable.

Tab. 3: Correlation analysis

Correlations												
	Organisations success	communication	interpersonal skills	flexibility	integrity	Positive attitude	leadership	responsability	Problem solving	Team work	ethics	
Pearson Correlation	Organisations success	1.000	.863	.963	.923	.800	.931	.846	.948	.945	.738	.867
	communication	.863	1.000	.836	.868	.577	.781	.607	.816	.751	.904	.980
	interpersonal skills	.963	.836	1.000	.959	.777	.892	.820	.916	.914	.710	.839
	flexibility	.923	.868	.959	1.000	.671	.807	.679	.844	.860	.714	.869
	integrity	.800	.577	.777	.671	1.000	.695	.693	.695	.781	.571	.574
	Positive attitude	.931	.781	.892	.807	.695	1.000	.897	.967	.888	.636	.797
	leadership	.846	.607	.820	.679	.693	.897	1.000	.891	.838	.462	.619
	responsability	.948	.816	.916	.844	.695	.967	.891	1.000	.912	.635	.832
	Problem solving	.945	.751	.914	.860	.781	.888	.838	.912	1.000	.626	.754
	teamwork	.738	.904	.710	.714	.571	.636	.462	.635	.626	1.000	.871
Ethics	.867	.980	.839	.869	.574	.797	.619	.832	.754	.871	1.000	
Sig. (1-tailed)	Organisations success	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	communication	.000	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	interpersonal skills	.000	.000	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	flexibility	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	integrity	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Positive attitude	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	leadership	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000	.000	.000
	responsability	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000	.000
	Problem solving	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
	teamwork	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
Ethics	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	
N	Organisations success	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101
	communication	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101
	interpersonal skills	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101
	flexibility	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101
	integrity	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101
	Positive attitude	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101
	leadership	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101
	responsability	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101
	Problem solving	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101
	teamwork	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101
Ethics	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	



## 5.5 Limitation of the study

This paper is accompanied by a number of limitations and some of the most important are:

1. Limited working time compared to the study sample,
2. Reluctance of managers and owners to complete the questionnaire, in certain cases refusal to complete the questionnaire
3. Another limitation is that there is little or no research in Kosovo and Albania on this topic to base and make a difference at the same time.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Businesses in Kosovo and Albania look for and apply soft skills and give relative importance to them because soft skills are one of the keys to an organisation's success. This confirms the alternative H1 hypothesis. The organizations success is most influenced by teamwork 0.352, then positive 0.297, interpersonal skills 0.295, problem solving 0.289, integrity 0.284, leadership 0.284, leadership 0.201, communication 0.150, flexibility 0.112 and work ethic has least impact 0.086 and responsibility 0.048. We can conclude that the most important soft skills in Kosovo and Albania are: teamwork, positive attitude and interpersonal skills.

Some of our recommendations are:

- To do more research on soft skills in both countries;
- To provide more general training in soft skills,
- To give even more importance to skills like responsibility, work ethic and
- communication, because we think they are very important for further development and
- To develop more debates about soft skills because these kinds of debates are missing in both Kosovo and Albania.

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