SOFT SKILLS: MAKING USE OF THE HUMAN NATURE TO HAVE A JOB IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGY

SOSYAL BECERİLER: TEKNOLOJİ ÇAĞINDA İŞ SAHİBİ OLMAK İÇİN İNSAN DOĞASINI KULLANMAK

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ABSTRACT

In today's business world, having a good job and maintaining it is a risky business. It will even be a privilege in the future. People work hard to be hired, and the innovative ones and quick learners can achieve their all goals about professional life and their career. A modern employee should be open minded and adorned with extra skills in order to face problems, understand and be understood correctly, be a valued one, and earn a good salary or promotion. But in this knowledge and technology era to access the professional knowledge is easy and free of charge. There are even some Artificial Intelligence (AI) robots are hardwired with the technical knowledge and designed as replacements of the human workforce. Hence employees should discover and use the natural talents that differentiate themselves from the new understanding of the workforce. This study is designed to feature the benefits of soft skills by presenting a review and instruction for people want to be in the business life in the future.

Key words: Soft skill, Business-life, Employee, Future

ÖZ

Günümüzün iş dünyasında iyi bir işe sahip olmak ve bunu sürdürmek riskli bir iştir. Hatta bu, gelecekte br ayrıcalık haline gelecektir. İnsanlar bir işe girebilmek için çok çalışmakta, yenilikçi olan ve çabuk öğrenenler profesyonel yaşamlarında ve kariyerlerinde bütün hedeflerine ulaşabilmektedir. Modern çağın çalışanı açık fikirli ve sorunlarla yüzleşmek, doğru anlamak ve doğru anlaşılmak, değer verilen bir çalışan olmak ve iyi maaş ya da ikramiyeler almak için fazladan beceriler ile kendini donatmalıdır. Ancak bu teknoloji ve bilgi çağında profesyonel bilgiye ulaşmak oldukça kolay ve bedelsizdir. Hatta yapay zekâya sahip ve teknik bilgilerle donatılmış bazı robotlar, insan iş gücünün yerini alacak şekilde tasarlanmaktadır. Bu nedenle çalışanlar kendilerini bu yeni iş gücü anlayışından sıyıracak doğal yeteneklerini kendi içlerinde keşfetmek ve kullanmak durumundadır. Bu çalışma gelecekte iş yaşamının bir parçası olmayı tasarlayan insanlar için, yumuşak/ince becerilerin faydalarını ortaya koymayı amaçlayan özet bir değerlendirme olarak tasarlanmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Sosyal beceri, İş yaşamı, Çalışan, Gelecek

1. INTRODUCTION

An employee must have technical skills (hard skills) to have a desired job and social skills (soft skills) to sustain it. In the beginning, a job candidate has to add some plus qualities to her/his abilities to apply a job position in a good business because in every corner of the world there are a lot of people graduated from universities, and have o lot of technical skills. To be able to be different and one step ahead, a candidate must adorn himself with personally-specific skills that help him to show himself as qualified and a good option for the position. So these kind of human based skills are named soft skills, and it is very easy to adapt oneself to them thanks to the human nature's structure.

In order to have soft skills, an employee must value these qualities at first. With this awareness, one can dig these natural skills from her/his deep and apply them to her/himself with eager and acceptance. With a learner culture of a business, all people can see and experience the value of soft skills and try to develop and use them in their profession. It is an important part of the business success that is to have the ability to learn and to practise what is learned. So the ability to learn and to apply is another soft skill that must be adopted in all the business' organizational culture not just related to the employees.

2016 Global Challenge Insight Report on The Future of Jobs released by the World Economic Forum indicates that it is possible to be technically automatable that more than %30 of activities of in six out of ten jobs. The report points out that around 5 million jobs will dissapear till 2020. In this accelerated change of business-life, individuals, governments and business environments need to have the ability to prepare themselves for future skills requirements. They must anticipate them in order to mitigate unwanted results (Global Challenge Insight Report, 2016). In another survey conducted by CareerBuilder, there are ten soft skills emerged as the most important. These are in order; having a strong work ethic, being dependable, having a positive attitude, being self-motivated, being team-oriented, being organized and able to manage multiple priorities, working well under pressure, being an effective communicator, being flexible, and being confident. According to this survey employers predominantly (%77) believe that soft skills are as important as hard skills and the rest believe that soft skills are more important than hard skills (Grasz, 2014).

In another survey of Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends, survey respondents predict the most important future skills for the workforce as %63 complex problem-solving, %55 cognitive abilities and %52 social skills. In order to cope with technology and its effects on the workplace, employers should put the human nature in the loop and must train the employees and rearrange the organization's structure up to this understanding (Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends, 2018, pp.8-9).

Table 1. Demand for skills in overall industry sectors, 2015 and 2020

Skills Family	Current	2020
Complex Problem SolvingSkills	36	36
Social Skills	20	19
Process Skills	18	18
Systems Skills	16	17
Resource Management Skills	14	13
Technical Skills	14	12
Cognitive Abilities	11	15
Content Skills	10	10

According to Future of Jobs survey (Table 1), complex problem-solving skill remains the core skill in 2020, social skills such as persuasion, EQ and teaching ability will be in higher demand in overall industries than technical skills like programming or equipment operation, etc. Cognitive abilities like creativity or mathemathical reasoning will be the most growing part of the soft skills that any industry requires   (Future of Jobs Survey, World Economic Forum 2016).

In 1918, Charles Riborg Mann had authored and published *A Study of Engineering Education,* and a group of researchers from Harvard University extrapolated this study's statistics in 2016. There were 1,500 engineers were asked by a questionnaire about the most important factors they consider that bring the success to engineers. According to the numbers emerged from the study about %85 of job success sourced from well-developed soft skills, and only %15 of it comes from hard skills (National Soft Skills Association, 2017; Madsen, 2018). In all these studies, there will be explained the importance of soft skills for employees and also for organizations. So the importance of training the employees and the students are indicated in order to point out the urgency of achieving soft skills and of to be prepared for near future.

2. ABOUT SOFT SKILLS

Soft skills are essential skills that belong to human nature but to identify it clearly is not easy because of the nature of the business areas. The perception of the definition of soft skills can differ from context to context. In a business area a subject can be defined as a soft skill but in another, the same subject can be defined as hard skill. For example; knowledge about cultures is a plus for a chemist but is an obligation for a public relations employee who serves for a multicultural customer portfolio (Schulz, 2008, p.147).

There are different definitions of soft skills, but almost all of them define at one point the common understanding of human nature. According to Alex: '*Social skills is a term which refers to personality*

traits, social graces, facility with language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that mark people to varying degrees.' (Alex, 2009, p.3). Another definition on Oxford dictionary, soft skills are '*Personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people.*' (Oxford Dictionary). And according to Andre Iland, 'This is a 'package' of skills related to personality development that including social skills, communication and language skills, interpersonal habits, assertiveness, friendliness and optimism that demonstrate the relationship with the other.' (Nitonde, 2014, p.7).

Soft skills are known as people skills, and they contribute to hard skills. They can be easily defined as the interaction ability with the others and are related to emotions, feelings, gut instinct namely inner knowing. One can enhance job performance, career prospects and individual relationships by these skills. These kinds of corporate skills bring employability to the attendees. Soft skills cannot be taught like hard skills but by enough practice and training soft skills can be awaked and developed (Subramanian, Das Mohapatra, Ratha & Das, 2017, p. 3). '*Hard skills vary based on the job, but soft skills are required for every job.*' (Berger, 2016).

In 2003, after a dramatic job losses period corresponding with major market-related downturns the survivor industries in Smyth County needed workforce but they didn't find matches. So a study was undertaken with the help of business leaders by the National Association of Manufacturers named: *The Skills Gap: Manufacturers Confront Persistent Skills Shortages in an Uncertain Economy*, and they tried to determine the common problems (Morgan, 2005, pp. 29-30). They found these 60 skills and called them '*The Workforce Profile*' (Table 2), that needed by the employers. These skills are considered a must-have in any business fields and the most important skills that are expected to have of all job applicants (Alex, 2009, p.8; Rham Phani, 2007).

Table 2. Top 60 Soft Skills

1.Math.	2.Being drug free.	3.Basic spelling and grammar.
4.Safety.	5.Good attendance.	6.Reading and comprehension.
7.Courtesy.	8.Personal energy.	9.Ability to follow regulations.
10.Honesty.	11.Work experience.	12.Willingness to be accountable.
13.Grammar.	14.Ability to measure.	15.Ability to fill out a job application.
16.Reliability.	17.Personal integrity.	18.Ability to make production quotas.
19.Flexibility.	20.Good work history.	21.Basic manufacturing skills training.
22.Team skills.	23.Positive work ethic.	24.Awareness of how business works.
25.Eye contact.	26.Interpersonal skills.	27.Staying on the job until it is finished.
28.Cooperation.	29.Motivational skills.	30.Ability to read and follow instructions.
31.Adaptability.	32.Valuing education.	33.Willingness to work second and third shifts.
34.Follow rules.	35.Personal chemistry.	36.Caring about seeing the company succeed.
37.Self directed	38.Willingness to learn.	39.Understanding what the world is all about.
40.Good attitude.	41.Common sense.	42.Ability to listen and document what you have heard.
43.Writing skills.	44.Critical thinking skills.	45.Commitment to continued training and learning.
46.Driver's license.	47.Knowledge of fractions.	48.Willingness to take instruction and responsibility.
49.Dependability.	50.Reporting to work on time.	51.Ability to relate to coworkers in a close environment.
52.Advanced math.	53.Use of rulers and calculators.	54.Not expecting to become a supervisor in the first six months.
55.Self supervising	56.Good personal appearance.	57.Willingness to be a good worker and go beyond the traditional eight hour day
58.Good references.	59.Wanting to do a good job.	60.Communication skills with public, fellow employees, supervisors, and customers.

To survive in the competition world employees need such requirements as these, and they are about to control himself and also to manage emotions in social relationships. These skills are actually included in emotional intelligence concept. Having these kinds of abilities also means having emotional intelligence and it brings to people professionalism and skill-based managerial ability (Sitompul, Kustono & Suhartadi, 2016, p.030055-3).

There are 3 main discriminations about hard skills and soft skills:

1. Hard skills need IQ and are required to use left brain for more intelligence. But soft skills need EQ and are required to use right brain for more intelligence.

2. In hard skills, all the rules are the same for all employees and all situations. All hard skills rules are defined by the business. But soft skills are focused on each employee's character or personality, and the rules can change depending on co-workers or corporate culture.

3. While hard skills can be learned as an absolute beginner in schools, from books or by the help of experts; soft skills can be achieved through surrounding environment and families or friends, and require many persistent practices by self or by help (Ali, Djamaluddin & Hadibrata, 2017, p.367).

3. THE RELATIONSHIP OF SOFT SKILLS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

According to Serrat; 'Emotional intelligence describes the ability, capacity, skill, or self-perceived ability to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of one's self, of others, and of groups. People who possess a high degree of emotional intelligence know themselves very well and are also able to sense the emotions of others. They are affable, resilient, and optimistic.' (2010, p.2). Emotional intelligence (EQ) can be distinguished into two parts according to superior or ordinary performance of both individual and teams:

Intrapersonal intelligence: Being self-aware and intelligent on identifying thoughts and emotions; also having self-management at coping with these thoughts and feelings.

Interpersonal intelligence: Being intelligent to be aware of others and to identify their thoughts and feelings; also having relationship management skills that effective in arranging the actions in the cooperations properly (Palethorpe, 2006, p.12).

The human beings' nature is not only rational but also emotional; they use both of these features to cope with their life's challenges, to survive and to stand. EQ is the most important essential to work and to socialize. EQ includes perceiving emotions accurately, generating feelings, understanding emotionally charged information, making use of knowledge with emotion, and managing emotions for both own and others' comfort by feeding intellectual and emotional point of view (Salovey, Detweiler-Bedell, Detweiler-Bedell & Mayer, 2008, p.535).

Can be referred five EQ that the business world needs:

1. Emotional awareness that involves emotional maturity in a decision-making process that concludes a win-win situation,

2. Managing emotions namely; self-controlling that involves sensitivity, patience, and stableness in fulfilling a task,

3. Sticking with on the positive thinking ability and the tenacious attitude by self-motivation,

4. Ability to understand, be intimate, warm, and caring for others by approaching with empathy,

5. Ability to consider public interests, deliberation and cooperation that are involved in social skills (Sitompul et al., 2016, p.030055-3).

EQ has increasingly seemed like an important qualification in human resource needs, profession descriptions, job interviews, employee selection processes, promotions, customer relationships, and so on.

According to Goleman, there is a critical development age of EQ that is in around from early to late adolescence period. The people are born with different levels of EQ, and they can improve it by practice, persistence, and motivation. The person, notably male, tries to interact with or to attract people, and in these situations, she/he may be rejected or feel anxiety. So, because of this kind of situations that person begins to spend time on the computer that requires to high skills, and to low contact with people. This kind of person becomes technically well-equipped but undeveloped in social skills. Then this low EQ person feels comfortable only on the computer and expects entertainment or socialization from it; because she/he does not be aware of the emotions enough. These people choose professions according to this logic, and might be 'phobic' about the emotions and training on this subject. But it should be shown to these people the relevance between EQ and success, and be provided that the information about feeling and understanding the emotions can be improved and even learned through practice (Furnham, 2012, pp.7-8).

4. TWO ASPECTS OF SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Learning soft skills is not a realistic thought because soft skills are not the skills that one can paste himself or learn by heart. They have already existed in almost all people's nature, and the only way to use them is to identify and develop them through some efforts. So there are two ways to develop these skills that self-training by some tools or getting training by teachers or trainers.

4.1. Self-training

When a person realizes the need for soft skills in business-life and decides to improve them; at first, should examine personal traits and evaluate the existence of own soft skills. According to Alex, there are some ways to acquire innate individual traits. First, a person should be a part of a group, then observe own behaviors in these groups and the relationships with the members. Second, the person can ask family members to write down his own traits as the best and the worst; and can try to learn common ones and these traits' weaknesses or strengths through the answers. Third, the person should observe own use of time as the use of time is very important in business-life. Fourth, the person should not ignore the feedback from people around him; because responding to the feedback enhances the soft skills positively. Fifth, giving feedback is as important as getting, so the person should be careful and competent in giving feedback. And the fifth, the person must live with mindfulness and appriciate the moment she/he lives, so this help to achieve to own personal traits (Alex, 2009, p.8).

From what Shulz says; the other way of self-training is reading books on acquiring the soft skills. Making a difference in personal traits requires a long period; the importance of self-training shows up from this feature (Schulz, 2008, p.152). But active learning is said more effective at achieving soft skills. There is a difference between knowing and practicing. For short, a person may know everything about a subject; however, the skill is to realize how to use it relevantly, and this is only possible by practicing (Sonmez, 2015, p.160).

There is no such thing like self-awareness as Socrates said, 'Know thyself.' If a person aware of own habits or patterns, can manage them. With the successful management, a person can react to personal traits properly, adjusts them, and then behaves differently. But to gain desired change, the person must know what makes him tick. Self-comfort is also very important to be able to handle the differences. If someone accepts himself as she/he is, other people are not afraid to be judged being themselves by him. So they can feel self-comfort, too. The person must know that she/he is not a robot; she/he has feelings, life, experiences, values, etc., and they triggered by some situations. If someone is aware of own bias or red lines, this brings the ability to self-governance (Gardenswartz, Cherbosque & Rowe, pp.34-35).

According to Nitonde, the soft skills are being learned mostly during social interactions and actually called as *life skills*. Communication skills are the most important skills that one should achieve, and self-training of soft skills must be conscious and continuous. He presents some advice to develop them. The first thing one must do is identify his soft skills and never stop practicing. It is always better to find and choose a business area according to one's soft skills, and there should be innovations and creativity in these practices. And above all; should not be ignored that families, friends, and education play a vital role in one's development of soft skills (Nitonde, 2014, pp.8-9).

4.2. Formal Training

Soft skills, can also be achieved by training and education, help people to have positive relationships. Influencing others and understanding self can be possible by some training techniques. Some people have a natural talent for soft skills, but for some need to work hard and practise more. Formal soft skills training can be divided into two categories as work-based and school-based. If the employee could not have a chance to have soft skills courses when he was a student, it is not late for him because the business may supply some workshops or training programmes while he is working. So this division is sourced by these circumstances.

In Smyth County case that mentioned before, free training for workers and unemployed people is provided by two community colleges. First, 69 workshops were supplied over a four-month period through the programme that involves leadership, communication, business ethics, critical thinking, basic computer skills, and job search. After these workshops' huge success, the colleges tried to find some innovative ways to attract other workers' and unemployed people's interest in this programme. After that The Smyth County School Board implemented a *Career Pathways* programme in the K-12 curriculum. Because of the emerging need, the Smyth County School System has renewed its career education programme and proposed a multi-targeted approach as the workforce needs of the 21st century. The local employment rate has been about ninety-five percent in recent years, and job proportion is rising day by day (Morgan, 2005, pp.30-31).

Soft skills involve survival skills like communication, emotional intelligence, negotiation, team, stress management, time management, leadership, and other interpersonal skills. The business world has

understood the importance of soft skills in recent years, and soft skills training has begun to be part of education and curriculum. Soft skills provide an advantage in business life by softening edges and supplying a competitive edge to employees (Deepa & Seth, 2013, p.7). There must be professional education channels to train the future employees. The students need to be prepared by these channels as having both hard and soft skills to survive in modern business-life.

The first thing to do is to attract the students' attention to the importance of soft skills in business-world and also consequences of their lack. The students should be encouraged to attend all opportunities that served by the school such as courses, workshops, clubs, etc. In order to carry the students to the desired level of soft skills, there should be prepared a detailed programme about soft skills and add them to the curriculum. Those have been proven very effective at lower levels of the soft skills training that to make the students do research and present the results in the classroom. But on graduate levels, there must be communication, time management, conflict management, cultural issues, etc. courses to prepare the students to their very soon professional life. But the most effective way to make the students achieve their soft skills is to embed the soft skills course to the hard skills courses. With this approach, the hard skills courses can be modified to make the students graduated as desired workforce profile. By this kind of courses, the lecturers can determine the teaching methods according to teach both hard and soft skills. For example in a math course, there can be discussion sessions or a lot of presentations, and students' participation (Remedios, 2012, p.1288).

According to The Automation Readiness Index, education and training must be taken seriously and should be developed long-term strategies in order to handle the challenges that automation will bring in the future. The students, namely the future workforce must be educated and trained as to the skills that computers never have. There must be taken governmental precautions to be fit for the future needs. For example, in regard to the report, it is seen that South Korea stands out as the leader that adds soft skills to the curriculum. Germany, Singapore, and Japan take the next three rankings after South Korea (The Automation Readiness Index, 2018, p.15).

After 100 years from Charles Riborg Mann's study that mentioned above, LinkedIn has conducted a survey with 2000 business leaders and asked them the most important soft skills that they want to see their employees learn. And the most demanded skills are emerged as leadership, collaboration, communication, time management skills (Madsen, 2018).

5. CONCLUSION

Future business life is full of opportunities for today's youth with soft skills. The basic soft skills have been official musthave features for an employee for 100 years. Before and after that, they have seemed to remain in the same importance maybe they will even mean more. Training the employees is a very effective way to be able to cope with the automation of businesses, but it can be late in the day. Only if training the students and adding the soft skills courses to the curriculum is the most effective way to be prepared for the future business world. Hence the governments, the business, and the academic world need to be conscious of the value of soft skills in all systems and should encourage the youth to have these skills to survive in automated work life. There are plenty of studies about the importance of soft skills now it is time to globally action. The first step is that needed to take is to add a range of soft skills courses to curriculum and train teachers to be able to give these courses. AI and the humanbeing need to work together and fuel one another for the sake of the world. Soft skills are that sourced from the human nature in different levels as a qualification named EQ, and people should discover their skills on their own, and these skills that must be achieved by resistant and guided training that are provided by the governments and proffessionals.

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