

# Employee's Soft Skills as A Successful Way to Achieve Personal Branding: Scientific Literature Review

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## KEYWORDS

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## ABSTRACT

21st century era has strong competition in the world industry. Competition can be overcome by having self-ability. Soft skills are the main key in the world of industry that can be developed from an early age in school. Soft skills will help someone in pursuing a career in the future. Thus, this paper aims to analyze the knowledge of employee soft skills needed in the 21st century era to achieve personal branding. The data were taken through a literature review using several journals. By applying a strictly reproducible process, the method used was library research with analyzing peer-reviewed journal articles on soft skills needed in 21st century. This paper utilized scientific journals that focused on soft skills employee in 21st century keyword and personal branding for career keyword. The finding showed the core of employee skills were communication skill, critical thinking skill, and problem-solving skill. These core soft skills would lead to another soft skill, like creativity skill, negotiation, and decision-making skill. They could be formed and practiced by schools' learning through group discussion, debate, writing report, and presentation. Thus, through the implementation of core soft skills, personal branding would follow automatically as self-characteristic. This research made a significant contribution by providing an updated and convincing summary that could be built and applied in individuals. Thus, it has potential for future research or practice.

## INTRODUCTION

There are two kinds of skills: hard skills and soft skills (Vasanthakumari, 2019). Soft skills are personal characteristics that improve an individual's interactions, job performance, and career opportunities (Vasanthakumari, 2019). The increased complexity of today's work environment has highlighted the importance of soft skills such as teamwork, communication, leadership, and problem solving (Ritter et al., 2018). But, Embark Saleh & Ambarak Salih, (2020) called communication, critical thinking and problem solving, teamwork, life-long learning and information management, ethics and professional morals, and leadership were soft skills that referred to non-academic generic skills. Nowadays, envisioning the evolution of the renewable energy sector is critical for identifying future skill requirements as the sector undergoes changes fuelled by the adoption of Industry 4.0. (Arcelay et al., 2021). Business graduates must be "work ready" upon graduation, according to the industry (Purnamasari et al., 2021). Thus, soft skills must be developed and prepared from an early age because, we know soft skills are not inborn, but they can be taught (Tan et al., 2021).

The evolution of the renewable energy sector was critical for identifying future skill requirements, as they accommodate the changes brought about by the sector's adoption

of Industry 4.0 (Arcelay et al., 2021). The ongoing process of major transformations necessitates preparing education to deal with the resulting changes for the twenty-first century and education 4.0 (T. Tran et al., 2021). It will cause the question about how the students can compete for jobs and develop into human beings who excel at their jobs. One of the answers is personal branding which is the practice of marketing oneself and one's career as a brand (Vinod Dani, 2018). Personal branding is the process by which a person actively attempts to manage other people's perceptions of their skills, abilities, and experiences (Johnson & Johnson, 2017). Here, we know that personal branding and skill have correlation each other. Personal branding can be built by skill that we have, to set themselves apart from our competitors (Vinod Dani, 2018). Creating a personal brand is an ongoing process that involves interactions with others both in person and online (Johnson & Johnson, 2017). It can be said that personal branding can be implementation through online and offline. Digital technology necessitates the incorporation of new types of skills (T. Tran et al., 2021). LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and blogs are just a few of the social media tools available to convey personal brand (Johnson & Johnson, 2017).

Thus, soft skills and personal brand are two things that people will remember you if you have a strong personal brand (Vinod Dani, 2018). Soft skills can help a person's ability to develop supportive characteristics in the workplace, where that ability will manifest itself through self-presentation, which can demonstrate personality excellence at work. Self-presentation is the mechanism by which an individual conveys information to the outside world in order to influence perception (Johnson & Johnson, 2017). This lead career success and personal branding are inextricably linked (Vinod Dani, 2018).

By identifying their unique value proposition and then leveraging it across platforms with a consistent message and image to achieve a specific goal, young professionals can use their personal brands to enhance their recognition as experts in their fields, establish reputation and credibility, advance their careers, and build self-confidence (Pathmanathan & Dodamgoda, 2018). Therefore, in this paper will analyze the soft skills that should be needed to achieve personal branding, in order to become individual with strong selling points and high work quality. Furthermore, these soft skills will help to shape personal branding which can later be used as self-characteristics to compete for job opportunities. Then, the research question are: 1) what are soft skills related to achieve personal branding for future job? 2) what are soft skills implemented in across country to achieve personal branding?

## **METHOD**

This study employs qualitative research. The purpose of qualitative research is to investigate a specific concept, theory, or practice from a new angle (Kyngäs et al., 2020). For specific, the methodology used in this study was library research. Library research is an essential component of any field of study, allowing researchers to determine what related work has already been done and how experts have evaluated it (George, 2021). Since this study took from peer-reviewed journals as the data source which utilized scientific journals that focus on soft skills employee in 21<sup>st</sup> century keyword and personal branding for career keyword.

This study is carried out in a variety of ways in order to achieve the objectives. First, the data will collect to find the soft skill integrated in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Second, the data will be analysed based on the highest soft skill in 21<sup>st</sup> century and found the three-high level to find the level of soft skill needed. Third, the training of soft skills at school will be analysed based on the most effectiveness training to find the level of effectiveness training at school. The last, analysing the soft skill in cross country.

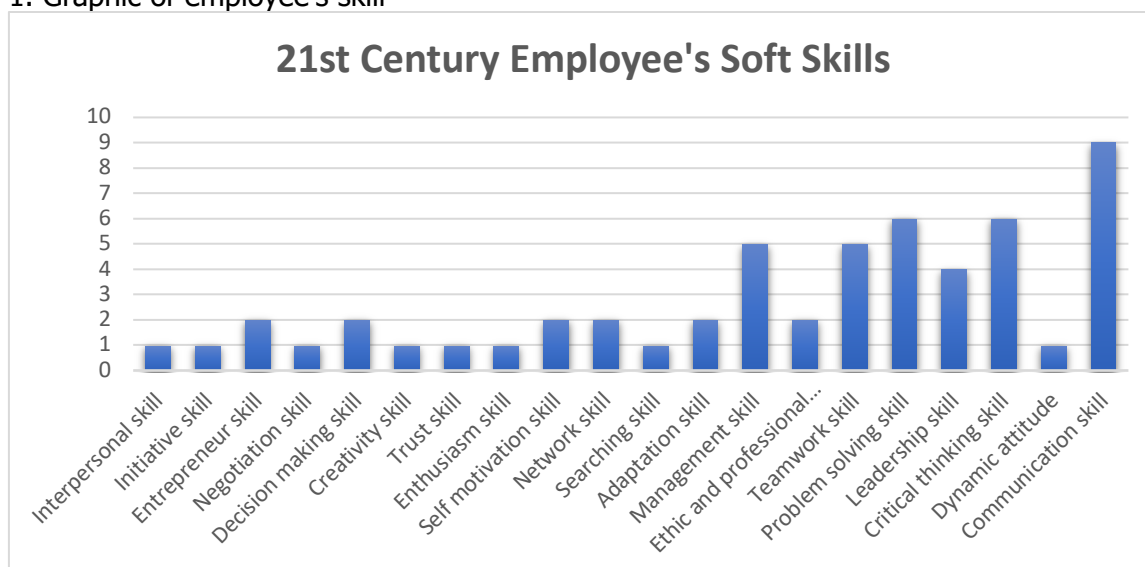
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The importance of 21st century soft skills has been emphasized by researchers and educators attempting to prepare students for the workforce (St. Louis et al., 2021). Soft skills are a collection of personal characteristics, habits, attitudes, and social graces that make someone a good employee and easy to work with (Vasanthakumari, 2019). Soft skills are also frequently called personality traits (T. Tran et al., 2021). Increase the chances of getting a job by learning some generic skills, particularly in the humanities or social sciences (Tan et al., 2021) because industry 4.0's incorporation of smart sensors, robots, and automation will necessitate a shift in workforce skills (Arcelay et al., 2021).

Employers seek soft skills because human resources are increasingly providing organizations with a competitive advantage (Ritter et al., 2018). But the popular problem today is about the specific business issue. Some logistics leaders are lack soft skills training strategies for their employees (Dean & East, 2019). This cause a lack of optimality in work should not be appeared in work place, it has high potential for company progress. In responding to problems at work, emotional stability and ways of thinking are also things that need to be applied in work, it can be said that soft skills, such as a proactive and dynamic attitude, advanced communication skills, adaptability to change, systematic thinking, leadership skills, and the ability to assume social and ethical responsibility will also be important for the successful development of the smart grid (Arcelay et al., 2021). These soft skills can be offered to companies through personal branding. Personal branding has the power to propel a person to new heights (Vinod Dani, 2018). While branding has long been associated with businesses, almost everyone today can say that he or she has a personal brand, even if only a few of us have consciously cultivated it (Petruca, 2016). Personal branding is more than just selling a graduate at a job interview or to a specific audience. By identifying their unique value proposition and then leveraging it across platforms with a consistent message and image to achieve a specific goal, young professionals can use their personal brands to enhance their recognition as experts in their fields, establish reputation and credibility, advance their careers, and build self-confidence (Pathmanathan & Dodamgoda, 2018). This personal branding can be built by showing the ability of soft skills that can affect the quality of someone at work.

In the review, employee's soft skills are to support personal branding:

### 1. Graphic of employee's skill



2. Table of Percentage Soft Skill

Type of soft skill	Count	Percentage
Interpersonal skill	1	5%
Initiative skill	1	5%
Entrepreneur skill	2	10%
Negotiation skill	1	5%
Decision making skill	2	10%
Creativity skill	1	5%
Trust skill	1	5%
Enthusiasm skill	1	5%
Self-motivation skill	2	10%
Network skill	1	5%
Searching skill	1	5%
Adaptation skill	2	10%
Management skill	5	25%
Ethic and professional moral	2	10%
Teamwork skill	5	25%
Problem solving skill	6	30%
Leadership skill	4	20%
Critical thinking skill	6	30%
Dynamic attitude	1	5%
Communication skill	9	45%

The table of percentage shows that there are 20 soft skills that can affect personal branding or in other words the soft skills that need to be possessed to be able to compete in the world of work. Out of 20 existing soft skills, communication skill is ability that is considered important and must be possessed in the 21st century era. Then, followed by problem solving skill and critical thinking skill are soft skills also considered important to have in the 21st century era.

**Communication Skill**

Soft skills are necessary for professional development, intellectual property protection, and effective communication (Vasanthakumari, 2019). From data, communication is the highest percentage, it reaches 45% from data. The ability to express thoughts and arguments clearly is referred to as communication skills (Embark Saleh & Ambarak Salih, 2020). Employees must be able to communicate effectively to reach company's target. The study found that key soft skills communication skills are the most important, and that most students needed to improve on them (Patacsil & Tablatin, 2017). It can be said that communication is the most needed skill to be had.

It should lead communication skill as the part of teaching program. Thus, this communication skills can be trained through education, it means that the ability to communicate does not appear by itself but requires ongoing practice. The training can be done by express themselves clearly and confidently in both written and oral form. Studies showed that a suitable practice for developing communication skills is learning by deliver oral presentations, the improvement of successful participation in discussions, and the development of the ability to identify and respect the attitudes, behaviors, and

beliefs of others (Embark Saleh & Ambarak Salih, 2020). Moreover, communication skill could be implemented into speaking and writing lesson.

### **Critical Thinking Skill**

From data, critical skill is the second highest percentage, it reaches 30% from data. The ability to analyze, evaluate, and apply knowledge is referred to as critical thinking (Salih, 2020). Critical thinking skill is valuable because they enable someone to deal effectively with social, scientific, and practical problems (Thi Van Pham & Thi Thu Dao, 2020). Hughes in Saleh & Saleh, (2018) outlined some interesting activities for encouraging critical thinking in the language classroom, including: developing a critical mind set, opinion and reason generator, critical questioning, recognizing context, making connections between topics, evaluating the reliability of sources, stance, identifying main arguments and supporting evidence, fact or opinion, vague or accurate, where is it from, reading between the lines, false conclusions, writing headlines, find the expression, predicting the content of the text, practicing the language for expressing critical thinking, a for-and-against essay, preparing a group discussion, assessing presentation. Thus, Critical thinking can be trained through education because basically critical thinking skills are critical in teaching. The way teacher to improve critical skill can be done through activities written essays, written websites, claims and arguments, debates, media analyses, problem solving tasks, self and peer assessment (Saleh & Saleh, 2019). Therefore, having critical thinking skills can improve self-quality which can improve personal brand. This ability looks easy but difficult to be implementation. Thus, schools need to provide appropriate practice to improve this skill through writing lesson.

### **Problem Solving Skill**

As same as the critical thinking, problem solving skill also gets the second highest percentage, 30%. Problem-solving begins with the identification of a problem state and the formation of an understanding of the nature of that condition. It is necessary for a person to identify the specific problems to be solved, design and implement a solution, and observe and assess progress throughout the activity (Md, 2019). It can be said that problem solving has the steps. Identification the condition, observe the problem, and deciding a solution are the component that will be passed. The occurrence of problems can be prevented by good emotional management through problem solving learning as well. This skill can be started or developed through learning at school, teachers can promote and train students by holding whole-class discussions, role-playing and modeling conversations (Embark Saleh & Ambarak Salih, 2020). This will teach students the importance of respecting others' opinions as well as the importance of working together to solve problems that cannot be solved alone. These include critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, both of which improve employability (Tan et al., 2021). Actually, critical thinking and problem-solving abilities are inextricably linked (Md, 2019). Therefore, how to think and make decisions to solve the problem are two things that can be held to solve problems. This can show a good self-quality in controlling emotions and solving problems, hence that a positive personal brand will be formed.

### **Soft Skill Training**

Cited from Succi & Canovi, (2020), they emphasized that more needs to be done by school to improve graduate employability and encourage school to implement work-based learning programs to provide them with initial work experience and improve students employability prospects. Thus, school has to define the school's activity to support soft skill. It should be considered because school and employer were both responsible for training in such skills and had an equal influence on their qualification (Goulart et al., 2021).

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Essentially, for the first time, soft skills can be introduced through schools and then developed by themselves. Activities that can help with soft skill development as Robles's said in Embark Saleh & Ambarak Salih, (2020) is whole class discussions, practicing role plays and model conversations or demonstrating soft skills. Another perspective said that activities of written essays, websites, claims and arguments, debates, media analyses, problem solving tasks and self, and peer assessment (Saleh & Saleh, 2019) can support soft skills in 21<sup>st</sup> century. These activities can help improving soft skills to prepare to be competent employees.

### **Soft Skill in Across Country**

ILO cited in (Ali et al., 2017) said that in recent years, the phenomenon of unemployment has become a source of concern. This problem occurs in many developing countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia, and India, as well as in developed countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States; they all experienced the same thing. Emphasizing soft skills among students is an important component in producing graduates who are competitive when faced with any situation in the workplace (Ali et al., 2017). Thus, soft skills are needed in every country. This is to make it easier for someone to deal with situations at work. In Vietnam, soft skills are grouped into several parts, namely: leadership skill, problem-solving and creative skill, and critical skill (Ha et al., 2021). But, soft skills in general, and teamwork skills in particular, are becoming increasingly important for students to learn (Anh & Hien, 2020). That means teamwork skill is the main of soft skill that must require needed. Teamwork is defined as the ability of one member of a group to possess information that sheds light on the strengths and weaknesses of other members. Successful teamwork is dependent on the synergies that exist among all team members in order to create a place where everyone is ready to contribute and promote a positive and effective teamwork environment (Anh & Hien, 2020). In teaching in schools, teachers use group learning a lot because working as a team is required to complete the difficult tasks assigned by the teachers (Anh & Hien, 2020).

In Malaysia, the soft skills of employee are learnability, responsibility, teamwork, communication skill, motivation, trust, honesty, innovation, integrity, attitude (Fadhil et al., 2021). In other hand, in Malaysia pushes digital skill because everything has become digitalized as the world has progressed, and being unable to communicate in a digitalized environment (Saari et al., 2021). The ability to use digital devices, communication applications, and networks to access and manage information to be handed over to newcomers is referred to as digital skills to deliver knowledge (Saari et al., 2021). Digital skill is the main concern that must be needed for students because the learning process is using digital technology, online learning. The ability to operate software has been ready for students and make sure no one left behind. Thus, the school study includes digital skill.

Move to developed country, America. In America, they call the main of soft skill as social skill. Social skill includes coaching, mentoring, implementing personal and group development techniques, resources can help improve students' employability (Fernández-Arias et al., 2021). In the implementation of this skill, teacher uses Internships in real projects and practical programs to help students develop their abilities in teamwork, collaboration, and group cooperation, as well as respect for others, tolerance, self-confidence, resilience, patience, responsibility, and critical and creative thinking (Fernández-Arias et al., 2021). Thus, America has one main skill that branch to another soft skills. In the study of robotics aids in the development of soft skills and can stimulate the ability to work collaboratively, develop communication, mediation, negotiation, and problem-solving abilities (Fernández-Arias et al., 2021).

Next to developed country, Mexico. In Mexico soft skill is called life skills. Life skills are abilities or skills that individuals require to achieve success in life within a sociocultural setting (Vergara-Torres et al., 2022). It is as same as Vietnam, Malaysia, and America that soft skill aims to achieve the self-ability in society but in Mexico they have different called as life skills. The life skills are communication, teamwork, goal setting, time management, emotional skill, problem solving skill, leadership skill, social skill (Vergara-Torres et al., 2022). The study shows that the mean life skill scores are relatively high, with almost all being above four, with teamwork being the highest and time management being the lowest (Vergara-Torres et al., 2022). Same as like Vietnam, teamwork is the main soft skill that must be needed of students. Teamwork can lead another soft skill to follow the ability automatically.

## **CONCLUSION**

Soft skills are skills that must be taught and must focus on skills that will distinguish a person characteristic. The characteristic will be defined in the twenty-first century by promoting soft skills such as responsibility, self-confidence, social and communication skills, flexibility, teamwork, a positive work attitude, self-motivation, and self-management. Furthermore, 21st century soft skills are found such as critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, ethics, and professional morals. Soft skills have evolved with the advancement of technology and the passage of time into motivational skills, enthusiasm skills self-motivation, decision-making, and time management, and trust skills. However, soft skills such as time management skills, adaptability, information searching skills, and networking skills will greatly affect companies that use rapid work as a guide work.

Integration of communication skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving is skills that are the main points in career development and self-branding and also the main foundation for influencing other soft skills. Communication skills are used as a way to understand each team member and as a way to express opinions or suggestions that help to represent own feeling and other feelings. Then, critical thinking and problem solving are two components that cannot be separated. Critical thinking is a way for someone to think creatively and critically in certain contexts and situations. Besides, critical thinking is also the way to identify and analyze the complex situation. Problem solving is a way to find a solution to a problem that is done through critical thinking to reach the right decision in a short time.

In another country, they have other soft skills that can improve students' personal branding. In Vietnam, team work as the main skill that should have. The school project is done by group. It helps students to decide the answer. In Malaysia, they concern with digital skill because the learning process is using online learning. They predict that future era all of situation will use software or device. In developed country America, social skill has branch for another soft skill. They have to master the social skill as the main skill in environment. In Mexico, soft skill is called life skill. They concern on teamwork skill that must be needed in environment.

Overall, communication skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving can form other skills. Basically, communication skills can develop into negotiation skills and leadership skills. Critical thinking can develop into creativity skills and teamwork skills. Problem solving can develop into decision making skills and teamwork skills. These are not the rule out of possibility to develop into other soft skills. By mastering these three main soft skills, personal branding will automatically stick with own self. This will give a label about self-own abilities. But in cross country, they have another concern soft skill based on the condition and situation they face to lead their personal branding. The difference between soft skills in developing country and developed country is in developed countries, soft skills are prioritized not only for career development but also for the environment, while for developing countries, soft skills are developed in the realm of career development.

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