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Investing in soft skills as critical success factors

Introduction

Corporations today have increased their scrutiny in hiring new candidates based on hard skills alone. Hard skills in this context refer to the professionally trained skills acquired by candidates throughout their academic learning and professional growth environment interactions. Hard skills have traditionally been the benchmark against which the employee's employability has been measured by corporations. However, recent developments in the corporate environment lend awareness of soft skills as a decisive factor in determining the capabilities and resourcefulness of an employee. Soft skills are therefore a vital characteristic that must be evaluated when considering new members in a team, organisation or a similar context.

The relevance of this topic for this research is made more essential as the growth of soft skills in the contemporary business environment has been exponential. Businesses are making use of diverse recruitment and talent selection tools to sort for individuals with high soft skills. This includes the use of psychometric testing, questionnaires and mock group scenarios that are all designed to estimate the soft skills performance of the individual candidate (Jardim et al., 2020). This marks a key period in the corporate environment where soft skills are recognised for their capability in driving critical success across diverse interactions in the corporate environment. Instances are readily available to support this view of soft skills being important to the point of being indispensable. For instance, soft skills such as networking through communications are considered an essential avenue for securing professional growth, job promotion and other growth-oriented outcomes secured through soft skills interventions (Ellis et al., 2014). Other soft skills such as active listening make the individual capable of participating in a higher depth of engagement (Knippen & Green, 1994). Furthermore, the globalisation of today's business environment makes it essential to develop soft skills, as soft skills allow for a better engagement with multicultural co-workers in the workplace environment (Fletcher & Thornton, 2023). This research paper, therefore, develops upon the basis of these finds and aims to determine the validity of soft skills being an indispensable quality towards driving individual success performance and its outcomes, and ultimately determine the extent to which soft skills must be developed for a higher level of organisational performance.

Research question

“What are ² the most popular soft skills in demand in the contemporary business environment?”

"How to do soft skills influence team dynamics and organisational performance?"

Literature review

The findings (S., 2019) have determined that soft skills are a critical factor in individual behaviour that affects the individual's participation in the workplace environment. Soft skills such as listening skills make managers more connected to the workforce and bring about a better quality of interpersonal relationship management between the workers and the manager. Soft skills are also shown as being useful in allowing an individual to navigate cross-cultural or multicultural workplace environments. This is attributed to the influence of soft skill behaviours such as empathy, which allows an individual to relate to the circumstances of others across diverse personal characteristics (Lamiani et al., 2021). In a modern workplace environment, soft skills such as these are wholly essential in securing the development of an equitable workplace environment where employees can participate equitably due to their awareness of soft skill habits.

Within soft skills, the framework of emotional intelligence as defined by Dr Goleman has been attributed as a key approach to aligning an individual's internal training and development with that of soft skills growth and development. Soft skills are therefore shown as being useful for mediating interpersonal conflicts in the workplace environment (Molek-Winiarska & Kawka, 2022). A higher fluency in practising soft skills allows the individual to express an equitable solution that would be accepted by the conflicting parties in a conflicted-oriented situation. Soft skill development faces certain barriers that present limits on an individual's capability to practise soft skills. Soft skills taken broadly are detailed across diverse activities, ranging from being a better communicator to being a more attentive listener. The development of soft skills has been given a new priority across organisations, which aim to use this development to nurture soft skills expertise in the internal workforce.

Expected output

This research aims to present soft skills in a different context, one which ⁴underlines the value of ¹soft skills across different business area contexts. ¹The development of soft skills will improve the well-being ¹of the individual as well as increase the organisational performance of the team member (Dimitrov & Vazova, 2020). Continuity in the practice of soft skills will be essential to create a future-ready workforce and workplace environment that is capable of creating a higher

level of performance across the teams. The long-term necessity of soft skills development will therefore be summarily shown.

Methodologies

The research in this paper has utilised data available from secondary quantifiable sources, such as other peer-reviewed journals publishing relevant data on the subject matter. This methodology is appropriately selected for the discussion, as access to these sources of data allows the research to develop itself towards a positive direction of objectivity and reliance (Wickham, 2019).

Primary sources of data collection would require personal engagement with in-person interventions, such as focus groups and staff interviews. While this mode of research into data is useful, it is also best used in a selective manner that justifies the selection of one data-gathering methodology to meet the needs of the topic.

Therefore, the data is derived based on secondary learning into the original author's findings, discussions and descriptive research as a whole (Wickham, 2019). By considering the available literature on the topic, the research paper was able to consider various sources of legitimate information that benefit the outcome of creating an objective statement in the favour of soft skills growth. As the research paper uses secondary data, the data gathered ensures that accurate scientific journals are used in the paper.

Discussion

Soft skill development can be accelerated by integrating positive psychology development into the educational environment. This is evidenced by the development of positive education as a practice, and its success has been demonstrated in school systems across Australia (Duan et al., 2020). Positive education aims to teach pupils about their capabilities in securing personal well-being, which in turn presents them with an opportunity for real-world growth. Therefore, positive education through an emphasis on soft skills can be used in social environment institutions such as schools (Thi Van Pham & Thi Thu Dao, 2020). This will ensure that the educational learnings are kept respected for their value and cultural significance. This is achieved through incorporating educational institutions with soft skill growth and positive education development. The graduating students will likely be more capable of sustaining themselves in an employment capacity due to their soft skills usage.

Furthermore, soft skill usage will be essential for workers of the future, as soft skills such as resilience are useful for acquiring quality learning and growth. Soft skills such as the emotional

intelligence framework are useful for developing personal capabilities in interacting in a human environment in the workplace (De Meuse & Harvey, 2022). The added qualities of resilience and adaptation allow workers to become more capable of learning with agility. This in particular is a useful quality that will safeguard an employee from becoming redundant due to the advancements in the modern workplace environment (Li, 2022). As such, soft skill integration with hard skills development is an essential approach for the growth of employees and organisations as a critical success factor.

Conclusion

³ The development of soft skills becomes imperative in the contemporary workplace environment, as it will create a well-rounded workforce that is capable of acting following contemporary business values and beliefs. Through the integration of soft skills development, employees will be empowered to become more integrated with the company culture and internal environment of the organisation. This will ultimately secure the development of learning organisations that have a higher degree of organisational efficiency and performance.

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