

## The Role of Soft Skills at Workplace in Multinational Companies in India

Dr. Rajendra Subhash Jarad<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Dnyaneshwar Tukaram Pisal<sup>2</sup> and Dr. Savita Jarad<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Professor, MBA Dept., Dr. D. Y. Patil Institute of Technology, Pune, India

<sup>2</sup>Professor, SVPMs Institute of Management, Malegaon (BK), Pune, India

<sup>3</sup>Asst. Professor, Anantrao Kanase Homeopathy Medical College, Ale Phata, Pune, India

### Abstract

*It is said that an organization is made by the people, for the people, of the people. The various stakeholders come together and contribute in their own way for better growth prospects days and nights. The human beings are the most dynamic assets for the organization. They get easily influenced due to various factors. It is important for the organization to maintain the level of motivation, performance, and healthy competition all the time. However, it is challenging at the same time since all of them differ in perceptions, acceptance, preferences and needs. Consequently, it becomes imperative to train the employees on soft skills such as assertive thinking, problem-solving, analytical thinking, team-building, stress management, communication skills etc. The multi-national companies (MNCs) have diverse workforce from different backgrounds. The present study aims to identify the most crucial soft skills required at workplace and their influence on organizational efficiency, performance, branding. The intrapersonal, interpersonal and communication skills are covered in the present article. Their contribution is taken into account from sustainable development point of view. The study is significant since it deals with skill and will domains creating win-win situations in the long-term with optimum resource utilization. The study is qualitative in nature.*

**Keywords:** Soft Skills, Business Communication, Training and Development, Team-Building, Organizational Development

## **1. Introduction:**

It is said that an organization is made by the people, for the people, of the people. The various stakeholders come together and contribute in their own way for better growth prospects days and nights. The human beings are the most dynamic assets for the organization. They get easily influenced due to various factors. It is important for the organization to maintain the level of motivation, performance, and healthy competition all the time. However, it is challenging at the same time since all of them differ in perceptions, acceptance, preferences and needs. Consequently, it becomes imperative to train the employees on soft skills such as assertive thinking, problem-solving, analytical thinking, team-building, stress management, communication skills etc. (Sekhar, 2019). The multinational companies (MNCs) have diverse workforce from different backgrounds. The present study aims to identify the most crucial soft skills required at workplace and their influence on organizational efficiency, performance, branding. The intrapersonal, interpersonal and communication skills are covered in the present article. Their contribution is taken into account from sustainable development point of view. The study is significant since it deals with skill and will domains creating win-win situations in the long-term with optimum resource utilization. The study is qualitative in nature.

## **2. Background of Study**

Soft skills are essential in every domain of work, according to Ms. PallaviJha, MD, Dale Carnegie Training, India. Soft skills are required in every sector of work, including sales, negotiations, and customer service. Companies today are seeking for individuals that can communicate effectively, handle difficult situations calmly, bargain well, have cultural awareness, and give a decent presentation. Companies are no longer willing to spend time and money training their staff in these abilities. These crucial skills are being honed by recent graduates making their first venture into the job market. As a result, there is now a business dedicated to soft skill training for individuals, groups, and even corporations. India has a large talent pool, and businesses are ready to hire it; the only stumbling block is a shortage of soft skills (Das &Kodwani, 2018).

Soft skills are characteristics that individuals should have in their careers, such as teamwork, communication, ethics, time management, and a sense of variety. Soft skills are vital in every business area in the twenty-first century workforce Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019). Employers, on the other hand, frequently claim that new employees lack these soft skills. Every day at work and at home, in politics, trade, education, sport, entertainment, and the financial sector, communication has a role in all we do. Every aspect of our lives is influenced by communication. It is a basic prerequisite for anyone in any job or position in any public or private firm to be able to communicate with employees, deal with the media, and talk in public. But the most important thing is to strike a balance: it's vital to have information, but you also need to be able to successfully transmit that knowledge (Schislyaeva, Elena & Olg, Saychenko, 2022).

### **3. Scope and Significance of Study**

To adapt to problems in local and global competition, firms must strengthen their flexibility, responsiveness, efficiency, and innovation. This is owing to the organization's fast rising requirement for creative product and service capabilities, as well as internal processes and behaviour of all members. In tackling this challenge, past studies that investigated moving from efficiency to an innovation perspective arose. More information about how individuals can be coordinated is required to promote organizational creativity and performance (Park, 2020). Furthermore, experts advise developing innovations that help to improved performance. While some other experts demonstrate that employee innovation indirectly influences organizational value through its effect on market and financial position.

Soft skills are critical for employees in the corporate sector to perform a variety of activities and managerial duties. Numerous research studies demonstrate that it is possible to acquire soft skills. The effectiveness of soft skills training on employees is evaluated using Kirk Patrick's model of training evaluation in order to determine whether soft skills training

imparted to service sector employees may change employee behaviour and impact dimensions of employee work performance (Balcar, 2016).

#### **4. Objectives of Study:**

The present study has the following predefined objectives:

- To examine the present scenario of skill development in India
- To identify the most crucial soft skills required at workplace in multinational companies in India
- To analyze the role of soft skills in organizational development in the long-term

#### **5. Problem Statement**

Skilling the workforce is the need of an hour for any organization in order to survive and sustain in the market. The soft skills are difficult to train and apply at the workplace. This is because they are closely associated with the personality traits, innate persona, behavioural patterns, socio-economic, psychological conditions at home and office, habits etc. Again, company, sector, region, language, gender, and other demographics influence on the success ratio of soft skills. Therefore, the weightage, importance varies from one company to another, one sector to another, one vertical to other vertical. The present study explores which soft skills are most important and how do they contribute in organizational development.

#### **6. Review of Literature**

An international leading recruitment platform, Linked-In (2020) conducted an exclusive survey of 2000 business leaders to identify the most important soft skills. It was revealed that the leaders strongly believed that leadership, communication, collaboration and time management were found to be the top four highly in-demand soft skills in the corporate world. It was also known that these skills have significant relationship with the performance,

profitability and sustainability of the firms. These skills make the difference to the employees as well as to the organization to the great extent.

According to Ajit&Deshmukh (2013), soft skills have a significant impact on job performance, and as a result, soft skills are critical for organizational success and well-being. Several studies have been conducted to investigate the effects of soft skills on job performance in various disciplines, such as education, medicine, engineering, and commerce. The authors described five fundamental soft skills that stimulate employees' outcomes. Soft skills are thought to improve people's chances of success in a variety of areas, including self-control, social skills, communication, positive self-concept, and higher-order thinking capabilities.

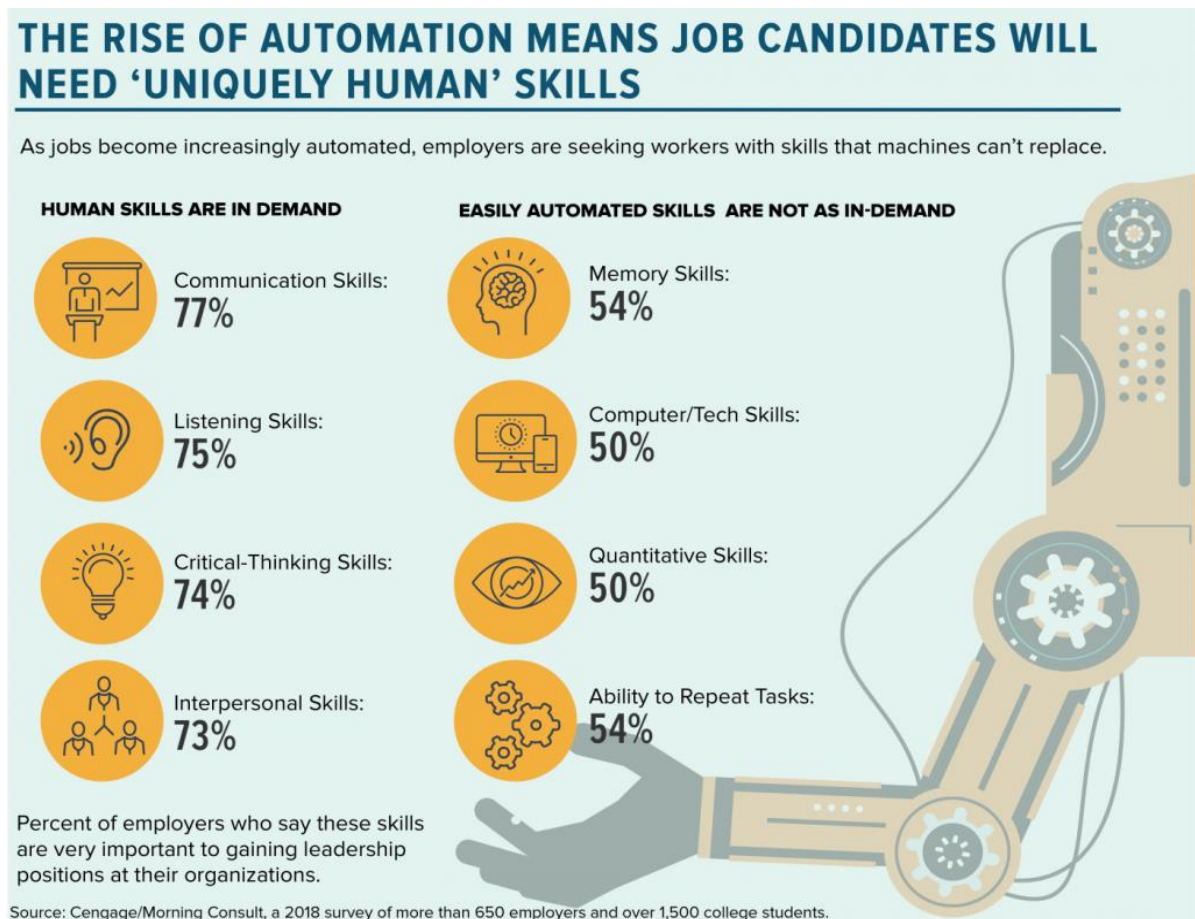
The soft skills that employees possess have a significant impact on industrial growth, product and service quality, and individual behaviour in the workplace (Mehrotra, 2019). Any industry's financial success and success is heavily reliant on its employees' soft skills. This is why many industries are now emphasizing on their employees' soft skills. Furthermore, technological advancements and virtual workplaces (which include some conditions such as work from home) are causing more companies to focus on enhancing their employees' soft skills.

There are several studies indicating soft skills play a major role in developing employability amongst the graduates. They help in minimizing the existing demand-supply skill gap. The communication skills, team-work, leadership, motivation, problem-solving are required for marketing, sales, human resource, performance etc. They contribute in terms of communication, coordination, managerial effectiveness, relationship management. The skills create strong value chain system for business which makes the difference for the customers and organization as well (Gaikwad, 2016).

Employees' emotional intelligence helps them raise their emotional self-awareness, emotional expression, creativity, tolerance, trust, and integrity, strengthen relationships within and beyond the organization, and so improve their individual and organizational performance. "One of the few important attributes that distinguishes strategic leaders in organizations is emotional intelligence." Emotional intelligence plays a vital role in the business, and it has become an important criterion for judging a productive employee. It boosts productivity and builds trust within and across the firm. It contributes in managing self, managing others, social awareness and relationship management (Johar, 2018).

## 7. Discussion and Analysis

**Figure 1: Soft Skills Vs Other Skills**



The above figure clearly indicates that human skills are more dominant even in the digital era. This is because it is the human beings who operate the systems, technologies creatively to identify and solve the complex problems. There is a big list of soft skills required while performing jobs in the multinational companies. However, the above insights received through Cengage Morning Consultancy survey indicate that communication skills are the highest important (77%) followed by listening skills (75%), critical thinking (74%) and interpersonal skills (73%) respectively. It is noteworthy to mention that these four skills have a great deal of contribution for leadership development and excellence in the multinational companies.

It has revealed that regular vocational, college or university coursework does not instill soft skills nor does on-the-job experience. The array of soft skills that are in demand, with the implementation of AI and automation in the workplace, must be specifically taught to be developed. Education has also evolved into building specialized technical capabilities for most of the workforce, again, tied to the highest paying occupations. It is only at the C-suite/executive education level that soft skills were viewed as valuable. How to lead, inspire, motivate, evaluate data, handle complex situations, manage change, make wise decisions, plan strategically and innovate has been the domain, until now, of upper management.

## **8. Findings of Study:**

- It is found that the business leaders and multinational companies prefer employees with soft skills.
- The communication skills are the highest important (77%) followed by listening skills (75%), critical thinking (74%) and interpersonal skills (73%) respectively.
- The various surveys indicate emotional intelligence, leadership and team-work support in improvement in performance, profitability of the corporate firms.
- Indian marketplace is diversified and heterogeneous in nature. The Indian customers have different languages, religions, regions, family backgrounds. The emotionally

literate employees can understand their needs and deal with them skillfully with high ratio of customer acquisition, retention and delight.

- The soft skills play a significant role in developing healthy relations with each other. The employee-employer, company-customers, stakeholders can create long-lasting associations through soft skills.
- In short, sustainable development is possible through soft skills.

## **9. Conclusion:**

The organizational learning has gained the momentum in the competitive and digital world. Though technology has dominated the businesses, it is equally important to create healthy human relationships with the customers and other stakeholders to keep the consistency in production, quality, and customer satisfaction. The employees need to be trained on how to develop soft skills and apply them at workplace. It will create second home for them, give feel of family minimizing conflicts and maximizing potential and resource optimization.

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