

INTEGRATING SOFT SKILLS ASSESSMENT THROUGH SOFT SKILLS WORKSHOP PROGRAM FOR ENGINEERING STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF PAHANG: AN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is to address the need for implementing Soft Skills Workshop that could be an instrumental in developing and improving Soft Skills Program in UMP. The UMP Soft Skills components consist of Positive Values, Leadership, Team Working, Oral Communication, Written Communication, and Learning Capabilities. Hence, the Soft Skills Expert Group at the Centre for Modern Languages & Human Sciences, UMP took the initiative in organizing the Soft Skills 2 Workshop for final year students before they set out for their industrial training. This program was organized to unveil the awareness of employability skills and industrial requirements that should be attained by students in their industrial training as well as for their future career development. Throughout the talk sessions, which based on the modules, group activities and assessments, this workshop aims to instil and nurture the Soft Skills components within the students. A total of 226 final year Engineering students out of 549 were selected as respondents. The study was conducted using survey methods. The descriptive methods of statistical data analysis were utilized. Based on the analysis of the findings, generally it was found that the majority of the respondents were agreed to the implementation process of the Soft Skills workshop. Most of them (more than 50%) stated that the “strongly agree” and “agree” results to all question asked. Thus, this paper addresses a comprehensive and integrated model in fulfilling the needs of final year students as well as stakeholders and governing agencies/bodies in order to produce proficient, expert and well-competent graduates in academic, technical skills and non-technical skills.

Keywords

Technical skills and non-technical skills, Soft Skills (Kemahiran Insaniah), Employability, Industrial Training

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to Soft Skills

Studies by Stanford Research Institute and the Carnegie Mellon Foundation among Fortune 500 CEOs found that 75% of long term job success depended on people skills and only 25% on technical skills. This is true at other levels as well. For effective performance in the workplace, companies need their employees to have not only domain knowledge, technical and analytical skills, but also the skills to deal with the external world of clients, customers, vendors, the government and public and work in a collaborative manner with their colleagues. Even for MBA graduates the annual rankings of MBA colleges often place communication and interpersonal skills as the most critical skills needed for success in the corporate world. Noted academic Prof. Henry Mintzberg while speaking on the importance of soft skills for MBAs, refers to the crucial soft skills- leadership, teamwork, communication, and the ability to think outside the box of a discipline-that separate the best from the rest in the management world. Accountant also need soft skills-

Mayurkumar Dadewar an ERP consultant with Price water house Coopers says Soft Skills are very important in business. It is essential to be technically sound, but one should also have ability to convey the idea to the masses in the simplest possible manner. In the UK and India financial services firms are facing a skills crisis, according to a report from KPMG. The report, global skills for Graduates in Financial Services”. Found that a soft skills gap is increasingly apparent because of the development of graduates with excellent technical knowledge, but who lack soft business skills (Maya Khemlani David, 2007). What it is important to emphasize is that soft skills are required not only for established CEOs but even for first time entrants to the job market. In fact, soft skills are of the essence for new employees. A recent survey from Office team has revealed that soft skills rather than technical skills are often valued more by new employers. The survey involved more than 3000 administrative professionals and 400 human resource manager (www.officeteam.com). Soft skills encompass a number of attributes. The following skills are those most valued by the employers in the survey.