International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences
EISSN: 2600-8777
IJMTSS
Volume 6 Issue 25 (December 2023) PP. 25-38
DOI 10.35631/IJMTSS.625003

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MODERN TRENDS IN SOCIAL SCIENCES (IJMTSS)
www.ijmtss.com

INSUFFICIENCY OF SOFT SKILLS AMONG GRADUATES WITHIN THE SERVICES AND MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

Nur Syafiqah Ab Aziz[1*], Norshima Zainal Shah[2], Afifah Quraishah Abdul Nasir[3]

[1] Language Centre, Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia, Malaysia
Email: nur.syafiqah2421@gmail.com
[2] Language Centre, Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia, Malaysia
Email: shima@upnm.edu.my
[3] Language Centre, Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia, Malaysia
Email: afifah@upnm.edu.my
[*] Corresponding Author

Article Info:

Article history:
Received date: 19.10.2023
Revised date: 31.10.2023
Accepted date: 22.11.2023
Published date: 17.12.2023

To cite this document:

Ab Aziz, N. S., Zainal Shah, N., & Abdul Nasir, A. Q. (2023). Insufficiency Of Soft Skills Among Graduates Within The Services And Manufacturing Industries. *International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences*, *6* (25), 25-38.

DOI: 10.35631/IJMTSS.625003

Abstract:

The unemployment rate in Malaysia is at 3.5% as of February 2023. The competition for employment is tougher due to the rising number of graduates. Employers today consider graduates' Hard and Soft Skills in addition to their academic accomplishments. It was reported that the graduates are not able to secure jobs because they lack of critical thinking and Soft Skills yet we do not exactly what skills are they lacking. The goals of this study are to identify the Soft Skills that the workforce requires, investigate the Soft Skills that companies provide, and identify the graduates' Soft Skills by employers. The samples are employers from the services and manufacturing sectors that were obtained from the Federation of Manufacturing Malaysia. A questionnaire is used and made available online for one month in the form of a Google Form. Using SPPS version 25.0, both descriptive and inferential analyses are performed on the data. Employers stated that teamwork skills are the most important Soft Skills for their organisations and are among the Soft Skills that employers may impart to graduates. The organisations recognise that the graduates who joined their companies have the capacity to learn. According to the results of the inferential analysis, there is a substantial positive correlation between the importance of Soft Skills in organisations and the Soft Skills that can be acquired at the organisations (ρ: .553). There is no connection between graduates' Soft Skills and the importance of Soft Skills in organisations (ρ: .139), and the graduates' Soft Skills and the Soft Skills learned at the organisations show a moderately good association (ρ: .262). According to the findings, organisations provide learning opportunities for employees that are relevant to their organisations. The findings also support the claim made by the employers that graduates lack Soft Skills. This study focuses on the Soft Skills needed for employment in the services and manufacturing sectors and is

International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences
EISSN: 2600-8777
IJMTSS
Volume 6 Issue 25 (December 2023) PP. 25-38
DOI 10.35631/IJMTSS.625003

significant because it encourages additional collaborations between educational institutions and industries to provide students with the practical experiences they need for future employment.

Keywords:

Critical Thinking, Employability, Graduates, Soft Skills

Introduction

The unemployment rate in Malaysia is at 3.5% as of February 2023 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2023). The competition for employment is tougher due to the rising number of graduates. Employers today consider graduates' Hard and Soft Skills in addition to their academic accomplishments. Soft Skills are important to assist employees to thrive by fostering a good and productive work environment, whereas Hard skills are concentrated on carrying out technical-related tasks in a profession.

The issue of many unemployed graduates in Malaysia is not new (Abdul Wahab, 2022); (D'Silva, 2020); (Abd Rahman, Ismail, Ridzuan, & Abd Samad, 2020). It is said that most graduates have strong educational backgrounds, but when it comes to expressing themselves on the job, they lack the necessary Soft Skills (Nazron, Lim, & Nga, 2017). Fifty percent of employers who have been surveyed globally stated that employees that are often with a skills gap or lack Soft Skills (Hurrell, 2016). This is rather concerning as the number of graduates increases every year, resulting in an increasing unemployment rate when graduates struggle to find employment after they graduate (Md Razak, Mohd Yusof, Syazana, Jaafar, & Talib, 2014). While it is common for employers to state those graduates lack Soft Skills, what do the organisations themselves provide to fill these Soft Skills voids after they have accepted the graduates for employment? There are numerous important soft skills that can be used in the workplace (Vasanthakumari, 2019). Hence, it is important to acknowledge the Soft Skills prioritised in the organisations and whether they implement those skills in new employees. Lack of Soft Skills is a very general statement to graduates' unemployment, thus, in a way, there are some Soft Skills that graduates possessed but either they do not suit the organisations' needs or other graduates have the upper hand on their Soft Skills. It is imperative that this study is conducted, plainly to know what Soft Skills are lacking in graduates in the services and manufacturing industries. Below are the research objectives and research questions for this study.

Research Objectives

This study focuses on Soft Skills for employability through these three (3) objectives:

RO1: To identify the Soft Skills that are required by organisations.
RO2: To investigate the Soft Skills that are provided by organisations.
RO3: To identify graduates' Soft Skills from employers' perspectives.

Research Question

RQ1: What are the Soft Skills required by the organisations?
RQ2: What are the Soft Skills provided by the organisations to their employees?
RQ3: What are the Soft Skills possessed by graduates from employers' perspectives?

International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences
EISSN: 2600-8777
IJMTSS
Volume 6 Issue 25 (December 2023) PP. 25-38
DOI 10.35631/IJMTSS.625003

Literature Review

Soft Skills for Employability

The employability of graduates is a major problem as institutions prepare students for the workforce by equipping them with specific critical skills that facilitate employment (Bogd´any, Cserh´ati, & Raffay-Danyi, 2023). Employers argue that soft skill development is not given enough attention by institutions (Tumpa, Skaik, Ham, & Chaudhry, 2023). Previous studies have demonstrated that the likelihood of an individual having prestigious employment possibilities and being able to participate in the fiercely competitive global market increases with one's level of education (Noah & Abdul Aziz, 2020). Therefore, the goal of the government's implementation of soft skills in higher education institutions (HEIs) is to create graduates who are well-rounded and will be able to serve the country in the future.

Soft Skills and Critical Thinking

Soft skills are considered a subset of Critical Thinking (Norshima, Nur Syafiqah, & Belinda, 2022). Soft skills are most closely tied to Critical Thinking (CT) Affective domain because they entail feelings, emotions, and attitudes. This domain includes how we emotionally connect with things and is further separated into five (5) subdomains: receiving, responding, valuing organisation, and characterization (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964). Although most people think of learning as an intellectual or mental function (only the cognitive domain can be taught), we may also learn attitudes and actions (affective), or Soft Skills. The Malaysian Government has identified seven (7) Soft Skills that are vital to the employability of new graduates as shown in Figure 2. CT is seen as an umbrella which encompasses of all the learning domains in a human being. Additionally, if all three domains were given equal attention, this produces balanced individuals which is the ultimate aim of Malaysia's National Education Philosophy (NEP).

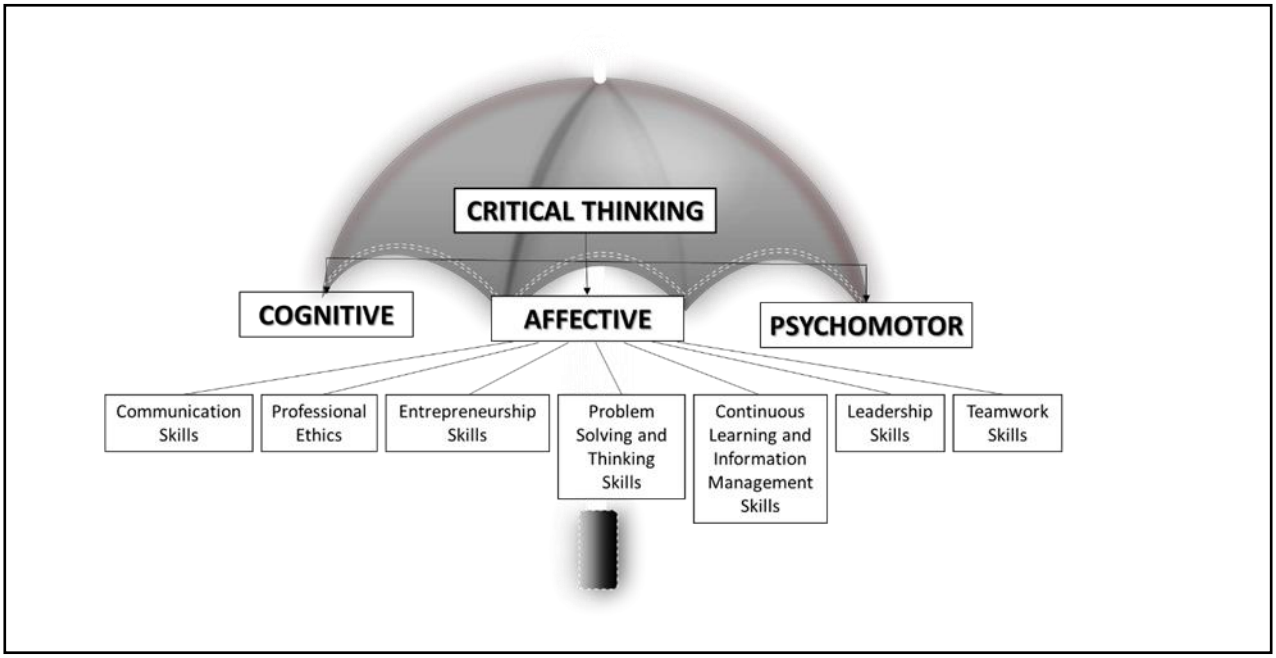

Figure 1: Soft Skills (Affective Domain) in Critical Thinking

International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences
EISSN: 2600-8777
IJMTSS
Volume 6 Issue 25 (December 2023) PP. 25-38
DOI 10.35631/IJMTSS.625003

The seven (7) Soft Skills as outlined by the Malaysian Government through the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), are being used in the research instrument to assess graduates' skills.

Theoretical Framework

According to Dewey's Philosophy of Progressive Education, educational strategies employed by institutions of higher learning cannot be detached from reality or be abstract. Instead, it serves as a little town that educates students for careers in broader society. According to Dewey's Philosophy, which was developed in the early 1930s, schools or universities are not just places where students received a traditional education, but also organisations that worked to create a social framework before students encountered the outside world. Dewey viewed the aesthetic experience as it pertains to the creation of art and culture, and he contended that this experience can enhance our quality of life while assisting us in discovering our purpose and realising our potential (Lee & Oh, 2019); (Dewey, 1956). As seen in Figure 2, Dewey posited that an individual's interactions with their environment shape both their instrumental intelligence and the values that guide those interactions. This then generates education through real-world encounters.

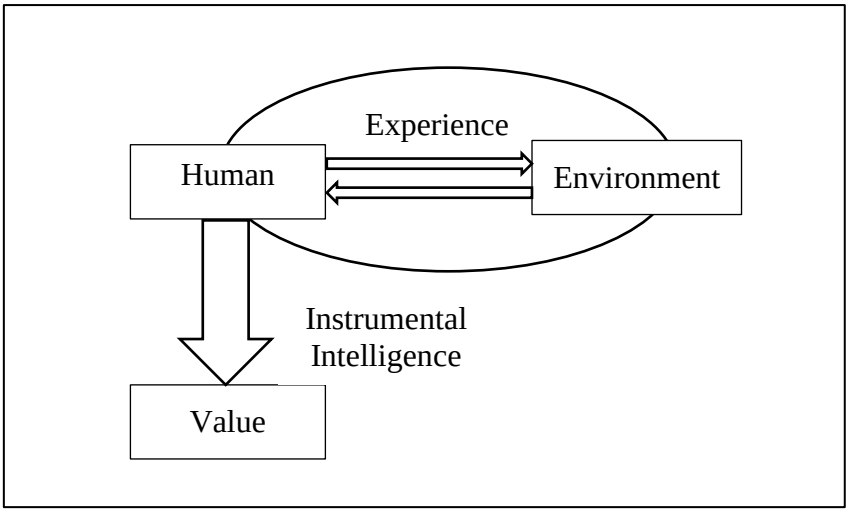

Figure 2: Theoretical Framework, Theory of Progressive Education

In other words, students must be taught how to use what they have learned in order to become excellent performers with a variety of job alternatives. Ideally, based on this paradigm, students should be taught Soft Skills and given opportunities to practice them before entering the workforce. In connection to the issue of graduate unemployment, this theory proposes that colleges have close ties with the sectors in which they operate to establish a "social framework" to familiarise and prepare graduates for the working world. Below is a Conceptual Framework for this study where the research objectives and research questions are constructed based on the framework.

International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences
EISSN: 2600-8777
IJMTSS
Volume 6 Issue 25 (December 2023) PP. 25-38
DOI 10.35631/IJMTSS.625003

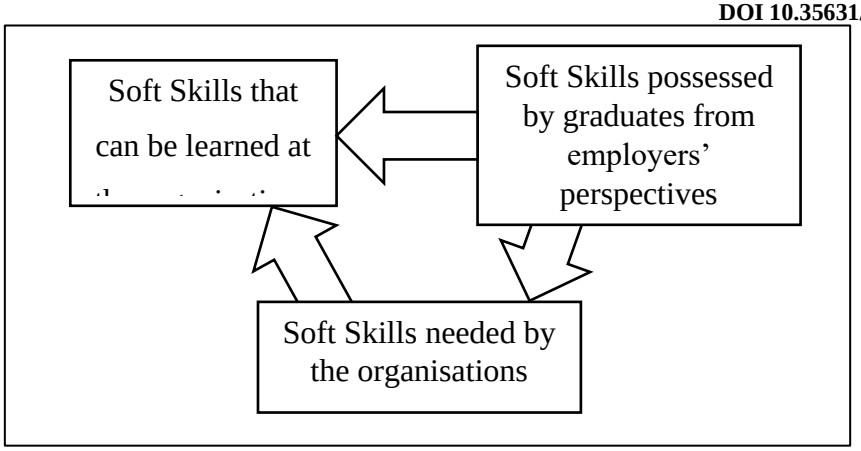

Figure 3: Conceptual Framework for this study

Hypotheses

There are three (3) null hypotheses that were generated based on the Conceptual Framework:

H01: There is no significant relationship between the Soft Skills needed by the organisations and the Soft Skills that can be learned by the graduates at the organisations.

H02: There is no significant relationship between the Soft Skills owned by the graduates from employers' perspective and the Soft Skills that can be learned by the graduates at the organisations.

H03: There is no significant relationship between the Soft Skills possessed by the graduates from employers' perspective and Soft Skills deemed important by employers for their organisations.

Methodology

Research Design

Quantitative analysis was applied to acquire data for this study. The method used was the form of an online survey through Google Forms. The questionnaire is a closed-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire used in this study is an adaptation of one titled "The Role of Personal Core Skills in the Working Life Competency of Graduates" from the Trans-European Framework for Core Personal Skills. The seven Soft Skills promoted by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) in place of the original questionnaire's skillset included communication skills, teamwork skills, leadership skills, problem-solving and critical thinking skills, continuous learning and information management skills, professional ethics, and entrepreneurship skills.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study is employers in Malaysia. The samples are employers from the services and manufacturing sectors as it was recorded in the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) as the two highest employed sectors. Their contact information was obtained from the Federation of Manufacturing Malaysia (FMM). The questionnaire was distributed through a convenient random sampling technique. As it was made available for a month, a total of 87 employers completed the questionnaires.

International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences
IJMTSS
EISSN: 2600-8777
Volume 6 Issue 25 (December 2023) PP. 25-38
DOI 10.35631/IJMTSS.625003

Data Collection

Data and information from this study were collected based on the questionnaires that were distributed to respondents. The questionnaire has also been altered as it was verified by three (3) experts to better accommodate the research objectives.

Data Analysis

Using SPPS version 25.0, both descriptive and inferential analyses were performed on the data. Frequency, percentage, mean score, and normality test are all included in the descriptive analysis, while Spearman correlation was used for the inferential analysis.

Descriptive Analysis

In the absence of experimental manipulation, the descriptive analysis entails the direct observation of the target behaviour in natural (or naturalistic) circumstances to obtain information on subsequent and potentially significant environmental occurrences (Sloman, 2010). The information focused only on the target group.

The five-point Likert scale was used as it is numerical and measurable thus following five levels of the mean score used to measure the mean acquired from the analysis. The levels of the mean score are presented below:

Table 1: Mean Score and Level

Mean Score	Level (Frequency/Agreement)
1.00 – 1.80	Very Low (Never/Strongly Disagree)
1.81 – 2.60	Low (Rarely/Disagree)
2.61 – 3.20	Medium (Sometimes/Neutral)
3.21 – 4.20	High (Often/Agree)
4.21 – 5.00	Very High (Always/Strongly Agree)

Source: (Moidunny, 2009)

Reliability Analysis

In this study, a five-point Likert scale was utilised to evaluate the association between the variables using a quantitative approach to assess the link between the variables. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is used in this study to examine the relationship between the variables. Under some very severe conditions, Cronbach's alpha can be a valuable indicator of reliability when conceptualised as item consistency (Komperda, Pentecost, & Barbera, 2018). The following table shows the rule of thumb of the Alpha coefficient range of Cronbach:

Table 2: The Range of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.90$	Excellent
$0.90 > \alpha \geq 0.80$	Good
$0.80 > \alpha \geq 0.70$	Acceptable
$0.70 > \alpha \geq 0.60$	Questionable
$0.60 > \alpha \geq 0.50$	Poor
$0.50 > \alpha$	Unacceptable

Source: (Cronbach, 1951)

International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences
IJMTSS
EISSN: 2600-8777
Volume 6 Issue 25 (December 2023) PP. 25-38
DOI 10.35631/IJMTSS.625003

Inferential Analysis

Inferential analysis is a sort of analysis that uses the data definition to produce conclusive findings. Inferential statistical techniques were used to analyse the hypotheses, and the results were used to decide whether they should be accepted or rejected. Making conclusions based on inferential analysis is the process of generalising a study group's findings to the overall population. As the data was not regularly distributed, Spearman rho, ρ, is used to analyse the provided hypotheses and to determine the strength of the correlation between the two variables in order to explain how well the independent variables and dependent variable of the sample interact with each other. The interpretation for the Spearman correlation analysis is shown in the table below:

Table 3: Interpretation Table of Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficients

Spearman, ρ	Correlation
≥ 0.70	Very Strong Relationship
0.40 – 0.69	Strong Relationship
0.30 – 0.39	Moderate Relationship
0.20 – 0.29	Weak Relationship
0.01 – 0.19	No or Negligible Relationship

Source: (Dancey & Reidy, 2004)

Findings

Demographic Data

The demographic profile survey consists of six (6) questions on the characteristics of the respondents which include gender, age, years of service, education level, industry they worked in, and the region they are from. Question 1 asked for the respondents' gender which respectively consists of 66.7% (n = 58) female and 33.3% (n = 29) male. Question 2 focuses on the age range of respondents where 32.2% (n = 28) of respondents are from the age 21 to 30 years old, another 32.2% (n = 28) are from the age 31 to 40 years old, 25.3% (n = 22) from the respondents aged 41 to 50 years old, and the last 10.3% (n = 9) respondents are from the age 51 to 60 years old. Question 3 looks into respondents' years of service in the industry. There are 10.3% (n = 9) of respondents who work for less than a year, 32.2% (n = 28) of respondents work between one to five years, 26.4% (n = 23) work for six to ten years, another 5.7% (n = 5) of respondents work for 10 to 15 years, and the rest 25.3% (n = 22) respondents work for more than 15 years in their respective industries.

Question 4 of the questionnaire asked the respondents to choose their educational level. The results showed that 2.3% (n = 2) of the respondents hold *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) as its highest educational level, 10.3% (n = 9) of the respondents hold a diploma, 69.0% (n = 60) of them acquired a bachelor's degree, 17.2% (n = 15) has a master's degree, and only 1.1% (n = 1) of the respondents is a Ph.D. holder. For Question 5, the respondents were asked to choose the industry they worked in. As the study only focuses on manufacturing and services industries, 60.9% (n = 53) of the respondents chose manufacturing, while the rest 39.1% (n = 34) chose services. To ensure that this study covers these two industries in Malaysia, Question 6 was added to acknowledge whether all regions took part in this study. From the northern region; Perlis, Kedah, Penang, and Perak, only 9.2% (n = 8) of people took part. The respondents from the central region; Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, and Melaka, took the most part in this study with the percentage of 51.7% (n = 45). 8.0% (n = 7) of the respondents from this study were contributed by the eastern region; Kelantan, Terengganu, and Pahang. The

International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences
EISSN: 2600-8777
IJMTSS
Volume 6 Issue 25 (December 2023) PP. 25-38
DOI 10.35631/IJMTSS.625003

respondents from the southern region; Johor contribute 24.1% (n = 21), while there is only 3.4% (n = 3) respondent from Sabah and Sarawak each.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is mainly used to answer the research questions. As the first research question focuses on the Soft Skills required by organisations, Question 7 was generated to figure out the most significant Soft Skills for organisations. The results for Question 7, where the mean scores are concerned, are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Question 7

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
b7cs	87	2	5	4.18	0.724
b7ts	87	1	5	4.29	0.791
b7ls	87	2	5	4.13	0.818
b7psct	87	2	5	4.24	0.835
b7clim	87	3	5	4.20	0.775
b7pe	87	1	5	4.10	0.807
b7es	87	1	5	3.49	0.999

Legend
b7: Section B, Question 7
cs: Communication Skills
ts: Teamwork Skills
ls: Leadership Skills
psct: Problem Solving and Thinking Skills
clim: Continuous Learning and Information Management Skills
pe: Professional Ethics
es: Entrepreneurship Skills
: Highest Mean Score
: Lowest Mean Score

Based on Table 4, employers stated that "teamwork" skills are their organisations' most important Soft Skills ($\bar{x}$ = 4.29). These Soft Skills acknowledged as the most significant by employers indicate that these are required in organisations. "Entrepreneurship skills" is the least important Soft Skill ($\bar{x}$ = 3.49). The top employability skills that employers look for when hiring graduates are teamwork skills (Mainga, Daniel, & Alamil, 2022). The term "teamwork skills" refers to a variety of abilities necessary for working in groups and on projects, including those for team building, accepting responsibility for tasks given to the group, respecting the thoughts and opinions of others, and resolving and managing conflicts.

The second research questions aim to answer whether organisations provide Soft Skills training to their employees. To provide the answer to this question, refer to Table 5 as Question 8 focuses on the Soft Skills that can be learned in organisations. As the question was answered by employers, these are the Soft Skills that are offered in most organisations involved:

International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences
EISSN: 2600-8777
IJMTSS
Volume 6 Issue 25 (December 2023) PP. 25-38
DOI 10.35631/IJMTSS.625003

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Question 8

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
b8cs	87	2	5	4.16	0.761
b8ts	87	2	5	4.21	0.734
b8ls	87	2	5	4.07	0.744
b8psct	87	2	5	4.11	0.769
b8clim	87	2	5	4.07	0.846
b8pe	87	2	5	4.02	0.821
b8es	87	1	5	3.51	1.010

Legend
b8: Section B, Question 8
cs: Communication Skills
ts: Teamwork Skills
ls: Leadership Skills
psct: Problem Solving and Thinking Skills
clim: Continuous Learning and Information Management Skills
pe: Professional Ethics
es: Entrepreneurship Skills
: Highest Mean Score
: Lowest Mean Score

"Teamwork skills" is among the Soft Skills that employers may impart to graduates ($\bar{x}$ = 4.21), but they give the least for "entrepreneurship skills" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.51). The ability to work together as a team in order to accomplish a job or reach a shared objective is known as Teamwork Skills (Vasanthakumari, 2019). People of either gender, from various age groups, qualifications, and skill sets collaborate to complete the assignment as a team. The necessity for improved employee skills in the fiercely competitive workplace is acknowledged by organisational employers (Batalla-Busquets & Pacheco-Bernal, 2013). For competitiveness and to solve the skills gap, more training opportunities are needed. Therefore, teamwork avoids singling out a person for training whenever possible as this could create the impression to other workers that the worker is in need (Dean & East, 2019).

The final research question was to identify the Soft Skills possessed by graduates from employers' perspectives. Among the seven (7) Soft Skills listed by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) back in 2006, employers had chosen a Soft Skill that they deemed graduates to have. Table 6 shows the list of mean scores for Question 9, which indicates the most and the least have Soft Skills graduates.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for Question 9

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
b8cs	87	2	5	3.30	0.916
b8ts	87	1	5	3.56	0.872
b8ls	87	1	5	3.24	0.964
b8psct	87	1	5	3.32	1.029
b8clim	87	1	5	3.60	0.946
b8pe	87	1	5	3.30	0.941
b8es	87	1	5	2.93	0.986

Legend
b9: Section B, Question 9
cs: Communication Skills
ts: Teamwork Skills
ls: Leadership Skills
psct: Problem Solving and Thinking Skills
clim: Continuous Learning and Information Management Skills
pe: Professional Ethics
es: Entrepreneurship Skills
: Highest Mean Score
: Lowest Mean Score

International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences
EISSN: 2600-8777
IJMTSS
Volume 6 Issue 25 (December 2023) PP. 25-38
DOI 10.35631/IJMTSS.625003

The organisations recognise that the graduates who join their companies have the capacity to learn continuously ($\bar{x}$ = 3.60) but lack the opportunity to pursue "entrepreneurship skills" ($\bar{x}$ = 2.93) from their organisations. For an organisation to be sustainable, there is a critical need for ongoing learning and knowledge management (Chiabrishvili & Zaim, 2018); (Menon & Menon, 1997). According to this perspective, knowledge management and organisational sustainability are closely intertwined (Demir, Budur, Omer, & Heshmati, 2021).

Reliability Analysis

Table 7: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	N of Items
0.900	0.904	21

The α for the questionnaire is 0.904. Since the coefficient alpha for all the variables used in the questionnaire is higher than 0.90, which is an excellent level of internal reliability, all the variables are reliable. All the variables could be verified as reliable, standard, and relevant because they all met the requirements of the reliability analysis.

Inferential Analysis

Normality tests consisting of Skewness, Kurtosis, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, and Shapiro-Wilk, were done on all the items in the questionnaire. In SPSS, the skewness and kurtosis statistic values should be less than ±1.0 to be considered normal (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005). As for Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk, the data is considered not normal if the significance is less than 0.05 (Chua, 2008). Table 8 and Table 9 show the result of the normality tests done on the questionnaire.

Table 8: Skewness and Kurtosis

	Std. Dev		
	sumb7	**sumb8**	**sumb9**
Skewness	-0.642	-0.910	-0.072
Kurtosis	0.601	1.436	-0.025

Table 9: Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk

	Sig.		
	sumb7	**sumb8**	**sumb9**
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	0.014	0.000	0.022
Shapiro-Wilk	0.002	0.000	0.145

Results showed that the data were not normally distributed, hence Spearman, ρ, was calculated to test correlation. The Spearman rank correlation coefficient is a nonparametric measurement correlation where it is used to establish the relationship that exists between two pieces of data (Dodge, 2008).

International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences
EISSN: 2600-8777
IJMTSS
Volume 6 Issue 25 (December 2023) PP. 25-38
DOI 10.35631/IJMTSS.625003

Table 10: Spearman's Correlation

			b7sum	b8sum	b9sum
Spearman's rho	b7sum	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.553**	0.139
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.200
		N	87	87	87
	b8sum	Correlation Coefficient	0.553**	1.000	0.262*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.014
		N	87	87	87
	b9sum	Correlation Coefficient	0.139	0.262*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.200	0.014	
		N	87	87	87
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)					

The results of Spearman's correlation analysis revealed that there was a strong relationship between the significance of Soft Skills needed by the organisations and the Soft Skills that can be acquired at the organisations (ρ: 0.553). According to the results of the inferential analysis, there is a substantial positive correlation between the importance of Soft Skills in organisations and the Soft Skills that can be acquired at the organisations. This indicates that organisations offer to implement workplace skills that are relevant to their organisations. The success of an organisation depends on its individual training and development programmes (Khattak, Rehman, & Rehman, 2014). Thought to be person-specific, emotional intelligence training may potentially have effects on groups (Schutte, Malouff, & Thorsteinsson, 2013). Hence, the importance of internship is to impart more Soft Skills to students as they trained under the organisations for a certain period.

Next, there was a weak relationship between graduates' Soft Skills and the Soft Skills that can be learned at the organisations (ρ: 0.262). The graduates' Soft Skills and the Soft Skills learned at the organisations show a low association. The Soft Skills graduates bring to the workforce are relevant to the organisation where they are employed even if it is not much. This is supported by Tang (2019) who suggested that within six months of graduation, graduates are capable of securing entry-level positions at the graduate level. Cramer, Van Der Heijden, and Jonker (2006) asserted that these effects would rapidly diminish over time as graduates are able to find other employment requiring occupationally specialised knowledge and abilities in line with their areas of specialisation through on-the-job training and practical experience. Due to the lack of employability, the extended time of ongoing supply and demand imbalances in the job market will result in more than one transfer into other work.

Lastly, there was no or negligible relationship between the significance of Soft Skills at organisations and graduates' Soft Skills (ρ: 0.139). There is no connection between graduates' Soft Skills and the importance of Soft Skills in organisations. Although many university graduates in Malaysia are well-trained in their fields of study (Rahmah, Ishak, & Wei-Sieng, 2011), Hairi, Toee, and Razzaly (2011) pointed out that they actually lack soft skills competencies. Graduates do not have the Soft Skills needed by the manufacturing and services employers as per suggested by the results.

International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences
IJMTSS
EISSN: 2600-8777
Volume 6 Issue 25 (December 2023) PP. 25-38
DOI 10.35631/IJMTSS.625003

Conclusion

According to the findings of this questionnaire, organisations provide learning opportunities for employees that are relevant to their organisations. It also supports the claim made by employers that graduates lack Soft Skills. On the other hand, the skills that graduates bring to the workplace are applicable to the companies where they work, and this shows that universities do nurture Soft Skills in students. This study is significant because it encourages the creation of additional collaborations between educational institutions and industries in order to provide students with the practical experience they need for future employment.

Collaboration helps bridge the gap between academia and industry, ensuring that the academia is relevant where what is being taught is applicable to real-world problems. Collaboration provides opportunities for students and future employers to gain hands-on experience and develop practical skills. Graduates can apply their theoretical knowledge in real-world scenarios and develop a better understanding of industry needs. This enhances their employability and makes them better prepared for the workforce.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to express gratitude to the Global Academic Excellence (M) Sdn Bhd, for the opportunity to publish this article journal. The authors would also like to thank the anonymous referees for their useful comments.

References

Abd Rahman, N. H., Ismail, S., Ridzuan, A. R., & Abd Samad, K. (2020). The Issue of Graduate Unemployment in Malaysia: Post Covid-19. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 10 (10), 834-841.

Abdul Wahab, D. (2022). *Who's to Blame for Graduate Unemployment?* Retrieved from Malaysia Now: https://www.malaysianow.com/opinion/2022/09/27/whos-to-blame-for-graduate-unemployment

Batalla-Busquets, J., & Pacheco-Bernal, C. (2013). On-the-Job e-Learning: Worker's Attitudes and Perceptions. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 14, 41-63.

Bogd´any, E., Cserh´ati, G., & Raffay-Danyi, A. (2023). A Proposed Methodology for Maping and Ranking Competencies that HRM Graduates Need. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 21 (2), 100789. DOI:10.1016/j.ijme.2023.100789.

Chiabrishvili, M., & Zaim, H. (2018). The Role of Knowledge Management for Long-Term Sustainability in Kuwait Companies. *Middle East Journal of Management*, 5 (4), 340-335. https://doi.org/10.1504/MEJM.2018.095586 .

Chua, Y. P. (2008). *Asas Statistik Penyelidikan: Analisis Data Skala Ordinal dan Skala Nominal (Buku 3).* Kuala Lumpur: McGraw Hill.

Cramer, J., Van Der Heijden, A., & Jonker, J. (2006). Corporate Social Responsibility. *Business Ethics, the Environment Responsibility*, 15 (4), 380-389.

Cronbach, L. (1951). Coefficient Alpha and the Internal Structure of Tests. *Psychometrika*, 16 (3), 297-334.

Dancey, C., & Reidy, J. (2004). *Statistics Without Maths for Psychology: Using SPSS for Windows.* London, England: Prentice Hall.

Dean, S. A., & East, J. I. (2019). Soft Skills Needed for the 21st-Century Workforce. *International Journal of Applied Management and Technology*, 18 (1), 17-32.

Demir, A., Budur, T., Omer, H. M., & Heshmati, A. (2021). Links between Knowledge Management and Organisational Sustainability: Does the ISO 9001 Certification have

International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences
EISSN: 2600-8777
IJMTSS
Volume 6 Issue 25 (December 2023) PP. 25-38
DOI 10.35631/IJMTSS.625003

an Effect? *Knowledge Management Research and Practice*, 21 (1), 183-196. https://doi.org/10.1080/14778238.2020.1860663.

Department of Statistics Malaysia. (2023, April 10). *Monthly Principal Statistics of Labour Force*. Retrieved from Ministry of Economy Department of Statistics Malaysia Official Portal: https://www.dosm.gov.my/portal-main/release-content/monthly-principal-statistics-of-labour-force-apr

Dewey, J. (1956). The Child and the Curriculum. *University of Chicago Press*, p. 12.

Dodge, Y. (2008). Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient. In *The Concise Encyclopedia of Statistics* (pp. 502-505). New York, NY: Springer. Retrieved from Springer, New York, NY: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-32833-1_379

D'Silva, V. (2020). More and More Graduates are Facing Unemployment in Malaysia. *The New Straits Times*, pp. https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2020/02/562309/more-and-more-graduates-are-facing-unemployment-malaysia.

Hairi, F., Toee, M. N., & Razzaly, W. (2011). Employers' Perception on Soft Skills of Graduates: A Study of Intel Elite Soft Skills Training. *International Conference on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 1-8.

Hurrell, S. (2016). Rethinking the Soft Skills Deficit Blame Game: Employers, Skills Withdrawal and the Reporting of Soft Skills Gap. *Human Relations*, 69, 605-628.

Khattak, A., Rehman, S., & Rehman, C. (2014). Organizational Success Through Corporate Trainings: A Case Study of Hotel Industry of Pakistan. *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, 6, 167-183.

Komperda, R., Pentecost, T. C., & Barbera, J. (2018). Moving beyond Alpha: A Primer on Alternative Sources of Single-Administration Reliability Evidence for Quantitative Chemistry Education Research. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 95 (9), 1477-1491.

Krathwohl, D. R., Bloom, B. S., & Masia, B. B. (1964). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook II: Affective Domain.* New York: McKay.

Lee, S. J., & Oh, J.-E. (2019). Modeling Cultural Content for Outreach Programs in Marginalized Communities in Asia: A Case Study of South Korea. *Higher Education Studies*, 9 (2), 96-107.

Leech, N. L., Barrett, K. C., & Morgan, G. A. (2005). *SPSS for Intermediate Statistics: Use and Interpretation (2nd Ed.).* Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Mainga, W., Daniel, R. M., & Alamil, L. (2022). Perceptions of Employability Skills of Undergraduate Business Students in a Developing Country: An Exploratory Study. *Higher Learning Research Communications*.

Md Razak, M. I., Mohd Yusof, A., Syazana, W. N., Jaafar, W. E., & Talib, A. H. (2014). Factors Influencing Unemployment among Graduates in Malaysia - An Overview. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 5 (11), 1700-2222.

Menon, A., & Menon, A. (1997). Enviropreneurial Marketing Strategy: The Emergence of Corporate Environmentalism as Market Strategy. *Journal of Marketing*, 61 (1), 51-67. https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299706100105 .

Moidunny, K. (2009). The Effectiveness of the National Professional Qualification for Educational Leaders (NPQEL). *Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Bangi: The National University of Malaysia*.

Nazron, M. A., Lim, B., & Nga, J. L. (2017). Soft Skills Attributes and Graduates Employability: A Case in University Malaysia Sabah. *Malaysian Journal of Business and Economics*, 4 (2), 65-76.

Noah, J. B., & Abdul Aziz, A. (2020). A Case Study on the Development of Soft Skills among TESL Graduates in a University. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8 (10), 4610-4617. DOI: 10.13189/ujer.2020.081029.

International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences
EISSN: 2600-8777
IJMTSS
Volume 6 Issue 25 (December 2023) PP. 25-38
DOI 10.35631/IJMTSS.625003

Norshima, Z. S., Nur Syafiqah, A. A., & Belinda, M. B. (2022). Soft Skills for Employability from Academics Perspectives. *Journal of Advances in Humanities Research*, 1 (3), 16-36. https://doi.org/10.56868/jadhur.v1i3.36www.jadhur.com. Retrieved from Journal of Advances in Humanities Research: https://doi.org/10.56868/jadhur.v1i3.36www.jadhur.com

Rahmah, I., Ishak, Y., & Wei-Sieng, L. (2011). Employers' Perception on Graduates in Malaysia Service Sector . *International Business Management*, 5 (3), 184-193.

Rasul, M. S., Abd. Rauf, R. A., & Mansor, A. N. (2013). Employability Skills Indicator as Perceived by Manufacturing Employers. *Asian Social Science*, 9 (8), 42-46.

Schutte, N., Malouff, J., & Thorsteinsson, E. (2013). Increasing Emotional Intelligence Through Training: Current Status and Future Directions. *The International Journal of Emotional Education*, 5, 56-72.

Sloman, K. N. (2010). Research Trends in Descriptive Analysis. *The Behavior Analyst Today*, 11 (1), 20-35.

Tang, K. N. (2019). Beyond Employability: Embedding Soft Skills in Higher Education. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 18 (2), 1-9.

Tumpa, R. J., Skaik, S., Ham, M., & Chaudhry, G. (2023). Enhancing Project Management Graduates' Employability through Group Assessment Innovations: An Empirical Study. *Project Leadership and Society*, 4, 100084. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.plas.2023.100084.

Vasanthakumari, S. (2019). Soft Skills and Its Application in Work Place. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, 3 (2), 66-72.