SOFT SKILLS ABILITY OF EDUCATED YOUTH OF
THE FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS, UNIVERSITAS BRAWIJAYA
ACADEMIC YEAR 2016

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to capture the soft skills ability of educated young generation of the Faculty of Economics and Business Universitas Brawijaya academic year 2016 by using seven indicators variables namely communication skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, teamwork, lifetime learning, and information management skills, entrepreneurship, ethics, morals, and professionalism, and leadership. The subjects of the research were students of the Faculty of Economics and Business Universitas Brawijaya academic year 2016 who are taking minor thesis course. The questionnaire used as the research instrument. Using the purposive sampling method, this research focused on 290 respondents. The research data were analyzed using quantitative descriptive analysis with a percentage. In conclusion, the student’s soft skills ability of the Faculty of Economics and Business Universitas Brawijaya academic year 2016 are included in the moderate category.

Keywords: soft skills, student, educated youth

INTRODUCTION

The increasing level of unemployed graduates is one of the issues that trigger the world’s concern lately. It happens due to the imbalance situation between labor supply and demand. This macroeconomy problem may affect one’s income and standard of living.

Table 1 describes the level of open unemployment based on the education level starting from 2016 until 2018. Based on the table, it shows that diploma graduates got the smallest number among all levels of education, it shows that diploma graduates are well absorbed in the working world. On the other hand, educated unemployment including university graduates has experienced a deterioration with an increase of 2.19 percent. The absorption of labor force graduates from high school and above tends to be slow that it fosters the level of educated unemployment. The research from Todaro and Smith (2010) argued that unemployment in developing countries is generally dominated by young and educated unemployed people.

There are several factors that lead to educated unemployment. Sutomo, AM Susilo (1999), said that educated unemployed labor is due to three important reasons, namely: (1) Structural inequality between supply and
employment opportunities. (2) The strong influence of the human capital theory on the way of thinking of society, which causes an attitude that seems to cultivate school education as an institution that directly prepares workers who are capable and skilled at work. (3) Vocational education programs are too regulated by the large role of middle and professional education in higher education, while the role of private education institutions and the business world is still too small.

The increasing number of job seekers which is not comparable to the number of job vacancies leads to smaller opportunities to get a job. The low quality of human resources is a barrier to the country's development due to the low level of education and employment opportunities with the development of the economy, especially industry, clearly, more and more skilled and literate workers are needed (Suparmoko, 1990). Human resources, who are loaded of potential and competitive, are required in this globalization era.

To be successful in today's job market, candidates for jobs have to bring a competitive edge that will distinguish them from other job seekers with similar qualifications and comparable evaluation results. College graduates who master soft skills have a higher chance of securing the job, easier to compete in the work field, have a great adapting skill, and bigger opportunities to success in careers.

Figure 1 Component of Success

A research conducted by Harvard University, United States, written by Muqowim (2012) revealed that “a person’s success is only determined by 20% of hard skills, while the remaining 80% comes with soft skills”. This idea is supported by a study conducted by the National Association of College and Employers (NACE) in 2002 which showed that the quality of college graduates expected by the workforce (sorted by importance) was having a great communication skill, honesty and integrity, capable to work in team, able to do interpersonal skills, have a good work ethic, mastering technology, able to organize, data-oriented, leadership, confidence, friendly, polite, wise, have a GPA ≥ 3, creative, humorous and entrepreneurship. On the other hand, Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia (MOHE, 2006) mentioned seven of the most important soft skills for someone to have, those are: 1) communication skills, 2) critical thinking or problem-solving skills, 3) teamwork, 4) lifetime learning and information management, 5) entrepreneurship skills, 6) ethics and professional management skill, and 7) leadership skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Soft Skills

Soft Skill is a popular term used to indicate personal transversal competencies such as social talents, language and communication ability, friendliness, and capability to work together with other personality characteristics that characterize relationships between people. Traditionally, soft skills are considered complementary to hard skills, which are the ability to perform a particular type of task or activity.

Bryce Kingsley (2015) classified the definition of soft skills into two categories:
1. InTRA-Personal Competences

Intrapersonal intelligence is the ability to understand oneself and act adaptively based on knowledge about the self, ability to reflect, self-balance, high self-awareness, initiative, and
courage. Further, he subsumes this into two classifications; self-awareness which includes self-confident, self-assessment, trait & preference, emotional awareness) and self-management which are part of the action of improvement, self-control, trust, worthiness, time and source management, proactivity, conscience.

2. InTER-Personal Competences

Interpersonal skills include social awareness like political awareness, developing others, leveraging diversity, service orientation, empathy. In addition, relationship management is also a part of the action, including leadership, influence, communication, conflict management, cooperation, teamwork, synergy.

Soft skills have several interrelated components between one and the other. These components have certain functions and tasks, which are interrelated and support each other. Sharma (2009) stated that soft skills are all aspects of generic skills, which also include cognitive elements related to non-academic skills. He further shows the grouping of soft skills elements based on must-have elements and good-to-have elements. Given the emphasis on the must-have elements of soft skills that must be present, the good-to-have soft skills are also expected to be inculcated. The seven soft skills were identified and important to be developed for students in higher education institutions, including communication skills, problem-solving, teamwork, lifetime learning, and information management, entrepreneurship, ethics, morals and professionalism, and leadership.

**Communication Skills**

Communication skill is the ability to convey and receive any information to other people effectively, including speaking capability, writing, listening, and non-verbal communication. Must-have Elements:

- The ability to convey ideas clearly, effectively and convincingly both oral and written
- Ability to practice listening skills and respond
- Ability to present clearly and convincingly to the audience

Good-to-have Elements:

- Ability to use technology during presentations
- Ability to discuss and arrive with consensus
- The ability to communicate with individuals with different cultural backgrounds
- Ability to use non-verbal skills

**Critical Thinking and Problem Solving**

Critical thinking and problem solving refers to the ability to identify and analyze problems in a difficult situation by using knowledge, facts, and data. It includes the ability to develop and expand the way of thinking through discussion and improvisation to assess problems and find alternative solutions.

Must-have Elements:

- The ability to identify and analyze problems in difficult situations and justify
- The ability to expand and improve thinking skills such as explaining, analyzing and evaluating discussions
- The ability to get ideas and find alternative solutions

Good-to-have Elements:

- Ability to think more broadly
- The ability to make conclusions based on valid proof
- The ability to accept and give full responsibility
- The ability to understand someone and accommodate into a diverse work atmosphere

**Teamwork**

Teamwork is the collaborative effort of a team by combining their skills to achieve a common goal or to complete a task most effectively and efficiently and provide constructive feedback despite any personal conflict between individuals.

Must-have Elements:

- The ability to build relationships, interact and work effectively with others
- The ability to understand and act as a leader and follower
• The ability to understand, respect and respect the behavior, understanding, and beliefs of others

Good-to-have Elements:
• Ability to contribute to planning and coordinate group work
• Responsible for group decisions

Lifetime Learning and Information Management

Lifetime learning indicates a person willing to pursue ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated learning processes throughout life by accepting and managing new ideas, information, and pieces of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons.

Must-have Elements:
• The ability to manage relevant information from various sources
• The ability to accept new ideas

Good-to-have Elements:
• The ability to develop a desire to investigate and seek knowledge

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is an individual’s ability to identify job opportunities and turn ideas into action. Most of all, entrepreneurship includes creativity, innovation, and risk-taking to build, explore, and look for business opportunities.

Must-have Elements:
• Ability to identify job opportunities
• Ability to submit business opportunity proposal
• The ability to build, explore, look for business and work opportunities
• The ability to own entrepreneurship

Good-to-have Elements:
• Ability to understand the economic crisis, environment and social-cultural aspects professionally
• Ability to analyze, to make problem-solving decisions related to ethics

Good-to-have Elements:
• Ability to practice behavioral ethics in addition to having responsibility for society

Leadership

Leadership is the art of an individual or a group of individuals to influence, motivate, and guide other people to make a move in order to achieve a common goal. Leading a project, including job delegation, supervising, and motivating become basic skills for leadership.

Must-have Elements:
• Having knowledge of the basic theories of leadership
• The ability to lead a project

Good-to-have Elements:
• Ability to understand and be the alternative leader and follower
• Ability to supervise the members of a group

The Role of Soft Skills

Soft skills are not a substitute for technical skills. Soft skills are needed for everyday life, the most important is needed for work. Soft skills act as harmonizing skills that come up to unlock the potential for highly effectual performance in people even with good hard skills.

Illah Sailah (2009) explained that since the beginning, students were provided with sufficient knowledge of soft skills and were even accustomed to practicing it in their daily lives, their chances of becoming successful people in the community would be even greater.

Wellington (2005) added that while technical skills are a part of many excellent educational curricula, soft skills still need further emphasis in the university curricula so that students learn the importance of soft skills early in their academic programs before they embark on a business career.
Soft Skills Measurement

Soft skills are dominated by individual personality components so that the measurement procedure is slightly different from the measurement of individual ability components. Therefore, the measurement of soft skills will lead to characteristics that are internal and manifest in the individual, such as the dimensions of affective, motivational, interpersonal, or attitude.

This research used the self-report technique as the measurement. Self-report is a set of stimuli in the form of statements, questions or a list of self-descriptions that are responded by individuals (Widhiarso, 2009). Respondents were given a questionnaire consisted of 59 questions using a modified Likert scale with eight alternative answers from never (0%) to always (100%) that must be filled based on self-descriptions on their personal soft skills ability.

DATA METHOD ANALYSIS

The data analysis method used in this research was descriptive analysis method. Using the purposive sampling technique, the sample data of 290 respondents calculated by the Slovin formula obtained through a questionnaire. The instrument validity test and reliability test were conducted by comparing r-count and r-table.

In order to categorize the soft skills of students, this research uses three categories, namely high, moderate, and low. The categorization of students’ soft skills abilities is based on the formula B. Syarifudin (2010) as follows

Table 2 Soft Skills Categorizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>( X \geq M + SD )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>( M = SD \leq X &lt; M + SD )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>( X \leq M - SD )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: B. Syarifudin (2010)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soft Skills</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>379.70</td>
<td>49.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>80.39</td>
<td>13.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking and Problem Solving</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>67.36</td>
<td>11.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>47.92</td>
<td>6.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifetime Learning and Information Management</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>52.47</td>
<td>7.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18.18</td>
<td>4.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics, Morals, and Professionalism</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>54.23</td>
<td>6.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>59.15</td>
<td>8.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Soft Skills

Based on the descriptive analysis results on student soft skills data, obtained the maximum value of 472 and minimum value of 169. The score of soft skills data of Faculty of Economics and Business students shows the mean value of 379.70 and the standard deviation of 49.71.

Figure 2 Student Soft Skills Categorization

The soft skills ability of students of the Faculty of Economics and Business are categorized in moderate category. 66 students were ‘high’ skilled (22.66%), 186 students were ‘medium’ skilled (64.14%), and 38 students were ‘low’ skilled (13.20%)

Communication Skills

Based on the descriptive analysis results on student soft skills data in communication skills with a total of 13 questions, obtained maximum value of 104 and a minimum value of 31. The
The score of communication skills data of Faculty of Economics and Business students shows the mean value of 80.39 and the standard deviation of 13.22. Figure 3 Soft Skills Categorization in Communication Skills

The soft skills ability of students of the Faculty of Economics and Business are categorized in moderate category. 79 students were ‘high’ skilled (27.24%), 171 students were ‘medium’ skilled (58.97%), and 40 students were ‘low’ skilled (13.79%).

Based on the analysis of question items, some students of the FEB UB still experience obstacles in expressing opinions and ideas verbally, especially during presentations. While written ideas explanations are considered better.

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Based on the descriptive analysis results on student soft skills data in critical thinking and problem solving with a total of 11 questions, obtained a maximum value of 88 and a minimum value of 29. The score of critical thinking and problem-solving skills data of Faculty of Economics and Business students shows the mean value of 67.36 and the standard deviation of 11.33.

Figure 4 Soft Skills Categorization in Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

The soft skills ability of students of the Faculty of Economics and Business are categorized in moderate category. 72 students were ‘high’ skilled (24.83%), 169 students were ‘medium’ skilled (58.28%), and 49 students were ‘low’ skilled (16.90%).

Based on the analysis of question items, some students of the FEB UB still experience obstacles in identifying existing problems, also in providing ideas to solve problems.

Teamwork

Based on the descriptive analysis results on student soft skills data in teamwork with a total of seven questions, obtained a maximum value of 56 and a minimum value of 21. The score of teamwork data of Faculty of Economics and Business students shows the mean value of 47.92 and the standard deviation of 6.44.

Figure 5 Soft Skills Categorization in Teamwork

The soft skills ability of students of the Faculty of Economics and Business are categorized in moderate category. 72 students
were ‘high’ skilled (24.8%), 180 students were ‘medium’ skilled (62.07%), and 38 students were ‘low’ skilled (13.10%).

Based on the analysis of question items, some students of the FEB UB still experience obstacles with a new socio-sphere with new people, and still find hard to mingle with group members. Leads to more time for students to accept and being accepted in a group.

**Lifetime Learning and Information Management**

Based on the descriptive analysis results on student soft skills data in lifetime learning and information management with a total of eight questions, the obtained maximum value of 64 and a minimum value of 33. The score of lifetimes learning and information management data of the Faculty of Economics and Business students shows the mean value of 52.47 and the standard deviation of 7.05.

![Soft Skills Categorization in Lifetime Learning and Information Management](image)

The soft skills ability of students of the Faculty of Economics and Business are categorized in moderate category. 72 students were ‘high’ skilled (24.83%), 175 students were ‘medium’ skilled (60.34%), and 43 students were ‘low’ skilled (14.83%).

Based on the analysis of question items, some students of the FEB UB still experience obstacles in building self-desire to individually learn knowledges.

**Entrepreneurship**

Based on the descriptive analysis results on student soft skills data in entrepreneurship with a total of 3 questions, obtained maximum value of 24 and a minimum value of 3. The score of entrepreneurship data of the Faculty of Economics and Business students shows the mean value of 18.18 and the standard deviation of 4.07.

![Student Soft Skills Categorization in Entrepreneur](image)

The soft skills ability of students of the Faculty of Economics and Business are categorized in moderate category. 44 students were ‘high’ skilled (15.17%), 217 students were ‘medium’ skilled (74.83%), and 29 students were ‘low’ skilled (10.00%).

Based on the analysis of question items, some students of the FEB UB still experience difficulty in identifying job opportunities.

**Ethics, Morals, and Professionalism**

Based on the descriptive analysis results on student soft skills data in ethics, morals, and professionalism with a total of eight questions, obtained the maximum value of 64 and a minimum value of 31. The score of ethics, moral, and professionalism data of Faculty of Economics and Business students shows the mean value of 54.23 and the standard deviation of 6.95.
The soft skills ability of students of the Faculty of Economics and Business are categorized in moderate category. 64 students were ‘high’ skilled (22.07%), 191 students were ‘medium’ skilled (65.86%), and 35 students were ‘low’ skilled (12.07%).

Based on the analysis of question items, some students of the FEB UB do not really understand the culture and habits of the surrounding community and have difficulty in making decisions related with ethics.

Leadership

Based on the descriptive analysis results on student soft skills data in leadership with a total of nine questions, the obtained maximum value of 72 and a minimum value of 17. The score of leadership data of Faculty of Economics and Business students shows the mean value of 59.15 and the standard deviation of 8.97.

The soft skills ability of students of the Faculty of Economics and Business are categorized in moderate category. 59 students were ‘high’ skilled (20.34%), 200 students were ‘medium’ skilled (68.97%), and 31 students were ‘low’ skilled (10.69%).

Based on the analysis of question items, lack of experience in leading projects makes some students have difficulty in decision making, maintain group harmony and prevent conflicts.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

Based on the research regarding the soft skills of educated young students that have been conducted, it can be concluded that:

1. The overall soft skills ability of the students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Brawijaya, academic year 2016 are included in the “moderate” category.
2. The communication skills ability of the students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Brawijaya, academic year 2016 are included in the “moderate” category.
3. The critical thinking and problem-solving ability of the students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Brawijaya, academic year 2016 are included in the “moderate” category.
4. The teamwork ability of the students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Brawijaya, academic year 2016 are included in the “moderate” category.
5. The lifetime learning and information management ability of the students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Brawijaya, academic year 2016 are included in the “moderate” category.
6. The entrepreneurship ability of the students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Brawijaya, academic year 2016 are included in the “moderate” category.

Further, entrepreneurship becomes the factor that most students mastered with the highest score in the “moderate” category.
7. The ethics, morals, and professionalism ability of the students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Brawijaya, academic year 2016 are included in the “moderate” category.
8. The leadership ability of the students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Brawijaya, academic year 2016 are included in the “moderate” category.

Research Limitation

The research limitations of the research are as follows:
1. This research was a self-perception research in which the research subjects answer the questions listed on the questionnaire.
2. This research was only conducted on students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Brawijaya, academic year 2016 who were taking minor thesis courses with a total sample of 290 respondents.
3. The subjectivity of filling out the questionnaire that might occur due to the absence of any sanctions that were imposed on the respondent in filling out the questionnaire, so that the respondent may not be serious in filling out the questions on the questionnaire.

Suggestions

Based on the research conclusion above, the suggestions that could be given are as follows
1. For students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Brawijaya, it is suggested to always improve their soft skills, given the importance of soft skills for self-development and as complementary skills to hard skills in order to survive in the working world.
2. In 2018 the Faculty of Economics and Business Universitas Brawijaya held a curriculum revision by adding several compulsory subjects including Pancasila and Civic Education subjects as general compulsory subjects, Character Building as compulsory subjects for Economics, Finance, and Banking Department, as well as Digital Business for Management and Accounting Department. This research can be developed by examining the impact of the addition of these subjects to the soft skills of students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Brawijaya.
3. For the next researchers, this research can be developed by conducting research by involving accountable third parties as observers in assessing the ability and character of the subject.

REFERENCES


