

Identifying Critical Leadership Soft skills for Career Success:

A content analysis of Project Management Job Advertisements in New Zealand

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Overview

1. **Aim:** Identifying critical soft skills needed for Project Management career success
2. **Method:** Content analysis of 421 Project Management job advertisements in New Zealand (July 2019-June 2020).
3. **Results:** Communication skills (89%), collaboration (81%), problem solving (79%), ethics (work ethic) (76%), teamwork (74%) People skills (74%), Time Management (73%), Critical thinking (71%), Professionalism (71%), cultural sensitivity (70%).
 1. Identification of the most critical soft skills needed for Project Management career success;
 2. Educational guidelines around soft skills training and development.
4. **Keywords:** Soft skills, Content Analysis, New Zealand, Project Management

Introduction & Rationale

1. Soft skills highly demanded (Duckworth & Yeager, 2015; Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012).
2. Graduates lack Soft Skills (Goodman et al., 2015; Hart Research Associates, 2015).
3. **The question** on what are the vital soft skills for Career Success?

Literature Review

- Soft skills are in high demand (Duckworth & Yeager, 2015; Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012, World Economic Forum-WEF, 2019).
- Graduates lack Soft Skills (Goodman et al., 2015; Hart Research Associates, 2015).
- Duckworth & Yeager, 2015 have also stressed on the importance of soft skills for successful management skills in managing a project.
- Identification of soft skills: Communication, collaboration, problem solving, ethics (work ethic), teamwork, People skills, Time Management, Critical thinking, Professionalism, cultural sensitivity (Burning Glass Technologies, 2015; Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006; Hart Research Associates, 2015; Neubert et al., 2015)



Methodology

- Adopted the Five Steps Content Analysis (Krippendorff, 2018).
- Step 1: Identified and Collect Data – Based on Research question & Lit. Review.
- Step 2: Determined Coding Categories- Using Yoshikoder Software
- Step 3: Coded the Content- Based on Key themes
- Step 4: Check Validity and Reliability- Used the 80% coding consistency rule.
- Step 5: Analysed data from the Project Management Job advertisements from www.seek.co.nz and www.indeed.co.nz (between Jun 2019 and July 2020) using Yoshikoder Software.

Analysis & Results

421 Jobs
advertisements
analysed

91% requested at
least one soft skill

89%
Communication
was the most
requested
common skill

81%
Collaboration

70% - 71% -73%
Cultural sensitivity
– Critical thinking
& professionalism
– time
management

74%- 76% -79%
People skills –
Work ethic &
team work –
Problem solving

Discussion & Implications

1. There is a clear-cut demand for a few skills communication, collaboration, and problem solving
2. Communication skills ranked first.
3. These New Zealand findings support prior research findings in different countries.
4. Although prior research indicated that graduates must possess as many as 17 skills for Career Success (McCloy et al., 2017), our study found 10 skills.
5. To close this skills gap, it is vital that New Zealand education system adopt learning outcomes that emphasize soft skills to improve graduates' career success

Limitations

- Only two online job boards in New Zealand, hence the sampled advertisements may not represent all online job posts in New Zealand.
- These sites charges for placing adverts, hence organisations that were not able to pay were not included in the sample.
- Study did not include offline advertisements, which may have exhibited different features than that was analysed in this study.

Conclusion

Student development of soft skills is greatly needed for graduates career success in New Zealand.

Areas for Further Research

Research on strategies to close graduates soft skills gaps in New Zealand and world wide.

THE END

THANK YOU