

Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine
Dnipro State Agrarian and Economic University
Philology Department

Collective Monograph



Specialists' Identity in Language Activity
and Professional Communication



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Dnipro State Agrarian and Economic University
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MASTERING SOFT SKILLS AS THE KEY TO PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS FOR FUTURE SPECIALISTS IN AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS

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Abstract. *In the ever-evolving landscape of agricultural business, the role of soft skills in the success of future specialists is becoming increasingly vital. This article explores the significance of soft skills in the context of agricultural business and emphasizes their importance alongside technical competencies. Through a review of existing literature and case studies, it is evident that soft skills such as communication, leadership, teamwork, and adaptability are crucial for navigating the complex challenges faced by professionals in this field.*

The article highlights the need for educational institutions and training programs to integrate soft skills development into their curricula to better prepare students for the demands of the agricultural business sector. Furthermore, it discusses the role of industry stakeholders in providing opportunities for practical skill development through internships, workshops, and mentoring programs.

The purpose of the research is to offer a thorough examination of how soft skills function in the realm of learning foreign languages, to compare and contrast soft skills with hard skills, and to explore the benefits of incorporating these skills into the teaching practices of educators.

The research is methodologically grounded on principles of scientific rigor, systematic approach, and objectivity. Various scientific methods such as analysis, synthesis, comparison, systematization, and generalization were employed in the paper's development. The material is organized thematically, and a comprehensive exploration of the topic was achieved through the use of comparative, typological, and functional methods.

Comparative analysis of the concepts "hard skills" and "soft skills" has been given in the article, emphasizing that hard skills are specific, teachable abilities or knowledge sets that are easily quantifiable and measurable. These skills are typically acquired through formal education, training programs, or on-the-job experience. Hard skills are often job-specific and can be defined and evaluated against specific criteria. Examples of hard skills include technical skills such as programming, data analysis, accounting, and proficiency in using specific tools or software. Unlike soft skills, which are more about how a person interacts with others and their environment, hard skills are more about what a person can do in a specific role or job. It has also been mentioned that soft skills refer to a cluster of personal qualities, habits, attitudes, and social graces that define one's relationships, communication, and interactions with others. These skills are typically difficult to measure and quantify, as they are not specific to any particular job or task, but are crucial for effective functioning in the workplace. Examples of soft skills include communication skills, teamwork, problem-solving abilities, adaptability, creativity, and emotional intelligence. Unlike hard skills, which are technical and job-specific, soft skills are transferable across different jobs and industries.

Overall, the findings suggest that mastering soft skills is essential for future specialists in agricultural business to thrive in their careers, foster innovation, and contribute effectively to the sustainable development of the agricultural sector.

Key words: *hard skills, soft skills, agricultural sector, foreign language, interaction, cultural competence.*

Introduction

The acquisition of a foreign language is considered to be a multilayered process that can extend beyond the simple memorization of vocabulary and various grammar constructions. Recognizing the role of soft skills is vital for both teachers and learners. Educators can improve their teaching by incorporating these skills into their programs. Similarly, learners who develop their soft skills can enhance their language proficiency and cultural understanding, leading to more authentic interactions in the target language. It is necessary to highlight that linguistic competence create the foundation of language learning, while soft skills play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness and success of the learning process. Soft skills, encompassing a range of social, cognitive, and emotional abilities, may contribute considerably to an individual's ability to acquire and use a foreign language meaningfully and proficiently.

Recognizing the importance of soft skills in language learning is essential for both educators and learners. Incorporating these skills into language programs can improve teaching effectiveness. Likewise, learners who nurture and cultivate their soft skills can enhance their language proficiency and cultural understanding, resulting in more meaningful interactions in the target language.

Through a comprehensive examination of existing literature and research, this article aims to shed light on the significance of soft skills in foreign language learning and provide insights into how educators and learners can harness these skills to achieve greater success in language acquisition.

The aim of the research is to provide a comprehensive overview of the role of soft skills in the context of learning foreign languages, to analyze the difference

between soft skills and hard skills and to get acquainted with the advantages of their usage by teachers in educational process.

According to the goal, the following **tasks** were set: to identify the key soft skills that are relevant to foreign language learning, such as communication, empathy, motivation, and cultural sensitivity, to examine how these soft skills influence the acquisition, development, and mastery of a foreign language, to explore the impact of technology and digital tools on the development of soft skills in language learning, to investigate the challenges associated with developing soft skills in the context of foreign language learning, including individual differences, cultural factors, and the influence of technology, to discuss strategies and approaches for integrating soft skills into language teaching curricula to enhance the effectiveness of language learning, to provide recommendations for language educators and learners on how to cultivate and develop soft skills to improve language proficiency and cultural competence.

By addressing these aims, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the importance of soft skills in foreign language learning and provide practical insights for educators and learners seeking to enhance their language learning experience.

The research methodology. The general scientific methods (analysis, synthesis, comparative, systematization) have been used while writing the paper. The material has been presented according to the thematic principle. Comparative, typological and functional methods have been used for a comprehensive research of the topic. The theoretical and practical results of implementing information and interactive technologies have been studied using the methods of analysis and synthesis. The method of analysis has been used for a detailed study of information technologies, which made it possible, in particular, to study scientific viewpoints on the need for implementation. The method of synthesis made it possible to distinguish the types of interactive technologies in the system of higher education.

Analysis of publications. At different times, a rather large number of scientists was engaged in the study of the problems of “soft” and “hard” skills”: Abashkina O., Aingorn E., Hayduchenko O., Marushev A., Davydova V., Dlugunovych N., Drozdova Yu., Dubinina O., Zhadko N., Churkina M., Ivanov D., Kanardov I., Klyukovska I., Koval K., Miroshnychenko O., Novikov A., Oleksiv N., K. Perez Meya., Choshanov M., Chulanova O., Pavlova E., Portland Yu., Sosnytska O., Tataurschykova D., Yasna I. and others. There are several researchers and scholars who have studied the topic of soft skills in learning foreign languages. Some notable figures in this area include: **Rebecca Oxford** who is known for her work on language learning strategies and affective factors in language learning, which encompass soft skills, **Zoltán Dörnyei** - a prominent figure in the field of second language acquisition and motivation in language learning, whose work often touches upon the importance of soft skills in language acquisition, **Jean-Marc Dewaele** whose research includes the study of emotions and personality in language learning, aspects closely related to soft skills, **Sarah Mercer** - known for her work on language learner psychology, including the development of soft skills, **Joan Rubin** whose research has focused on second language acquisition, including the role of affective factors and social context in language learning, which are relevant to soft skills. These researchers, among others, have contributed significantly to our understanding of how soft skills impact foreign language learning and have provided valuable insights for educators and learners alike.

However, there is a lack of thorough research on identifying and implementing soft skills technologies in the process of Business English learning.

Part 1 Basics of soft skills formation for future specialists

1.1 Clarification of the concepts “hard skills” and “soft skills”

The difference between soft and hard skills remains ambiguously delineated, necessitating a nuanced exploration of the term “skill” within the context of this work. In line with the 2023 Merriam-Webster lexicon, skill is articulated as “the capacity to apply one’s intellect efficaciously and with agility in the execution or performance of a task” [1]. This elucidation highlights the acquisition of capability

through practice, structured training, and accumulated experience for the adept execution of a specific task to a specific level of quality. The subject of competence has been rigorously scrutinized by academicians from diverse fields, including psychology, pedagogy, and kinesiology [2; 3].

A skill can be likened to a unique tool in your toolbox, utilized for specific tasks. It comprises your knowledge, thought processes, and physical abilities, such as strength, speed, or coordination. [4]. This perspective helps us understand why specific skills and knowledge are essential for performing tasks effectively, whether they involve thinking, communicating, or manual work. Additionally, your proficiency in these skills can be influenced by the specific requirements of the job, your natural talents, your values, preferences, and your environment.

Moreover, a skill involves the ability to manage and interpret information, understand its significance, and apply it to achieve an initial goal. This encompasses both cognitive and physical abilities, which are pivotal for mastering a particular task. Through repetitive practice, you improve your speed and proficiency in these skills, eventually performing them almost instinctively [5].

The definitions of Hard and Soft Skills

Hard skills are known to be the precise, measurable technical abilities required for particular jobs [6]. Typically acquired through education or training, they are necessary for effectively fulfilling job responsibilities. These skills are crucial for tasks demanding specialized knowledge or expertise, such as soil science, operating agricultural machinery, crop management, and comprehension of agricultural laws and regulations.

For instance, individuals in the IT field may view hard skills as the technical expertise needed for software development, whereas those with design experience might perceive hard skills as the creative abilities necessary for graphic design.

In addition, hard skills are highly valuable in the workplace due to their tangible outcomes [7]. This is why companies prioritize these skills during the hiring process. According to Bishop (2017), hard skills play a significant role in determining job candidates' suitability [8].

The term "soft skills" was initially coined by Paul G. Whitmore during a training event in Texas for the US Army Continental Army Command (CONARC). He described soft skills as essential job skills that do not really involve working with machines [9]. Unlike hard skills, which pertain to technical knowledge that can be readily assessed, soft skills relate to personal and social abilities that are less quantifiable [10]. These encompass your interpersonal skills, emotional management, and abilities such as communication, creativity, problem-solving, teamwork, and stress management [11].

Soft skills differ from hard skills in that they are typically not acquired through formal education or training. Instead, mastering soft skills requires personal effort, self-reflection, and continuous self-improvement [12; 13]. While both hard and soft skills require effort and self-improvement, mastering soft skills often presents greater challenges and is more closely linked to individual characteristics. Additionally, soft skills are usually honed through social interaction that is why they are often known as "people skills" [14].

Talking about soft skills, a bunch of different names such as social competencies, interpersonal skills, or even emotional intelligence are being used [15].

Social competencies encompass a broad range of skills that aid in interpersonal interactions, fostering friendships, and collaborating effectively within a team. This entails proficiency in communication, teamwork, adaptability, and cultural awareness. Interpersonal skills revolve around your ability to connect, communicate, and collaborate with others. This involves active listening, empathy, conflict resolution, and negotiation. Furthermore, emotional intelligence encompasses recognizing and managing your own emotions while understanding others' emotions. It is associated with adept interpersonal skills and includes self-awareness, emotional control, motivation, empathy, and social adeptness [16].

Durlak and colleagues (2011) conducted a study to evaluate the effectiveness of school programs aimed at teaching children about emotional management and interpersonal skills. The study analyzed 213 research papers involving over 270,000 students across various grades. They discovered that students who participated in

these programs showed improved abilities in understanding and managing their emotions, developed more positive attitudes, exhibited better behavior, and even performed better academically compared to those who did not participate in such programs [17].

Comparative Analysis of hard and soft skills

Aspect	Hard Skills	Soft Skills
Definition	Technical abilities and knowledge required for specific tasks or jobs.	Interpersonal skills that affect your ability to work and interact with others.
How Acquired	Through formal education, training, certifications, and specific job experience.	Developed over time through experiences and interactions with others.
Measurement	Easily quantifiable through tests,	Subjectively assessed through observations,
	Certifications and practical demonstrations.	Feedback and self-reflection.
Examples in Agricultural Business	Soil analysis, crop rotation planning, knowledge of agricultural equipment, pest Management techniques.	Leadership, communication, teamwork, problem-solving, Adaptability.

Achieving success in the workplace necessitates proficiency in both hard and soft skills. Research suggests that a blend of these skills results in enhanced success [6; 18]. Hard skills, typically obtained through formal education, are vital for tasks

requiring technical knowledge and problem-solving, such as software development or design. Conversely, soft skills are paramount for personal and interpersonal effectiveness and often serve as better indicators of success in the workplace. These skills encompass creativity, communication, leadership, and teamwork, which are crucial for roles involving customer service and collaborative projects [19].

While hard skills can become outdated, soft skills retain their relevance. This underscores the importance for employers to recognize the value of both skill sets during the hiring process and to offer training and mentorship to sustain a proficient workforce [20]. Hard and soft skills frequently overlap, complementing each other in diverse professional settings. Their combined application can greatly improve job performance and organizational achievements.

Soft skills are seen as “Person-Centred”, concentrating on interpersonal relationships, whereas hard skills are “Task-Centred”, underscoring the completion of definite tasks. Nevertheless, there is an overlap between the two, as certain skills like communication can involve both soft and hard skill elements, such as data analysis and presentation creation. This interdependency underscores the importance of a synergistic approach to skill development, where enhancing both soft and hard skills can lead to more effective job performance and successful outcomes in the workplace [4; 8; 6].

Importance in Agricultural Business

In the modern agricultural sector, both hard and soft skills are fundamental elements. It is known that hard skills are necessary for specialists in order to understand the technical farming and agriculture aspects, for instance crop management, animal husbandry, and the use of agricultural technology.

These skills make sure that the operating aspects of an agricultural business can be managed in effective way.

However, soft skills may play a critical role in the management and business side of agriculture. Scientists emphasize that leadership and communication skills are essential for managing farm operations, dealing with suppliers, and negotiating sales. Problem-solving and adaptability are important in responding to the changeability of

weather, crop diseases, and market fluctuations. Moreover, teamwork skills are compulsory for coordinating the efforts of farm workers, agronomists, and business managers to achieve mutual goals.

The agricultural production is generally associated with hard skills such as operating machinery, realizing the way crop cycles work, and livestock management. Nonetheless, there is an increasing recognition of the significance of soft skills in agricultural sector. These particular skills which include communication, problem-solving, leadership, and teamwork, are credited with being essential for modern farmers. This article explores the significance of these soft skills in agriculture and how they can be utilized for increased productivity and success.

Unfortunately soft skills are frequently underestimated in agricultural sector, thus far they are central for a farm's successful operations. What is more, communication skills are essential for negotiating with merchants, discussing contracts with consumers, and interacting with organizations. Similarly, problem-solving skills are vital, as farmers frequently encounter unexpected challenges such as machinery breakdowns, pest infestations, or hasty weather changes.

Leadership skills also play critical role in agricultural field. Every manager of the farm has to effectively lead a team, make strategic resolutions, and encourage other workers to go towards collective goals. Additionally, teamwork is said to be fundamental for ensuring that all farm issues are completed in efficient and effective way.

According to a researcher Sfiso S., the first step in leveraging soft skills in agricultural business is identifying their significance. Agronomists and agricultural professionals need to invest in developing these types of skills, comparable to learning how to operate equipment or studying agribusiness techniques.

It will not be an exaggeration to say that training programs and workshops can be valuable for evolving soft skills. These particular programs may often comprise practical exercises and real-life situations in order to improve communication, problem-solving, leadership, and teamwork skills.

Mentorship is an additional effective method for mastering soft skills. Experienced farmers and agricultural professionals can share their knowledge and expertise, providing valuable comprehensions and supervision to novices in the industry.

The influence of soft skills on the agricultural sector cannot be overstated. With strong soft skills, agronomists will be able to negotiate better deals with suppliers and consumers, manage their teams more successfully, and solve problems in an efficient way. As a result, it can lead to increased output, reduced expenditures, and higher revenues.

Furthermore, soft skills are said to contribute to the sustainability of the agricultural business. By enhancing communication and teamwork, agronomists can cope with common challenges such as climate change, water shortage, and soil degradation.

All things considered, while hard skills are crucial in agriculture, the significance of soft skills should not be underestimated. By recognizing their importance and investing in their development, farmers and agricultural professionals can ensure the success and sustainability of their farms and the agricultural sector as a whole.

The future of agriculture depends not only on those who can operate machinery or understand crop cycles but also on those who can communicate effectively, solve problems creatively, lead confidently, and collaborate efficiently. Soft skills are indeed a formidable force in agriculture.

1.2 The state of the problem of the formation of soft skills among future specialists

The formation of soft skills among future specialists is a complex issue exacerbated by the rapid transformations within the postmodern society, influenced by globalization, migration, and informatization. These global changes have a profound impact on the labor market, introducing new behavioral patterns among employers and employees, the emergence of novel professions, and the obsolescence of traditional roles. This dynamic landscape places unprecedented demands on the knowledge, skills, and expertise of potential employees, rendering them particularly

susceptible to the challenges posed by these transformations.

Novice employees, including recent university graduates, find themselves at a significant disadvantage as they navigate the transition into the workforce. Not only must they acclimate to new working environments, but they are also expected to demonstrate a comprehensive range of technical knowledge and skills acquired during their higher education. A critical hurdle many encounter is the difficulty in manifesting interpersonal or soft skills, which often results in employment challenges.

The inability to effectively display soft skills such as communication, teamwork, adaptability, and emotional intelligence has emerged as one of the paramount challenges for future specialists. These skills are increasingly recognized as critical components of employability, augmenting an individual's competitiveness in both global and national labor markets. The emphasis on softskills underscores a paradigm shift in employment criteria, where personal attributes and the ability to navigate complex social dynamics are as valued as technical proficiency.

The persistent gap in soft skills among potential employees highlights a pressing issue within the educational system. Despite long-standing interest from scholars and practitioners in enhancing soft skills development, the rapid evolution of labor market demands outpaces the current educational approaches. Traditional education often prioritizes subject-matter knowledge and technical skills, overlooking the critical importance of integrating soft skills training into the curriculum [32].

In the contemporary labor market, the personal and professional development of potential employees depends not solely on their qualifications for a specific job but increasingly on their soft skills. These skills not only enhance employability but also enable individuals to navigate the complexities of modern work environments more effectively. The deficiency in soft skills not only limits immediate employment opportunities but also affects long-term career progression and adaptability to future changes in the labor market.

Emphasizing soft skills in educational programs and professional training is essential for bridging the gap between academic preparation and the real-world

requirements of the labor market, ultimately ensuring that potential employees are not only technically proficient but also adept at the interpersonal dynamics critical for success in the postmodern workplace.

1.3 Different ways of soft skills testing

In today's dynamic job market, the importance of soft skills alongside hard, technical skills cannot be overstated. For industries as diverse as technology, education, healthcare, and especially agricultural business, the ability to effectively test for soft skills is critical process.

It is necessary to consider methodologies and practices for assessing candidates' soft skills that ensure that future professionals are not only good at technical skills, but also excel in interpersonal communication, problem solving, and adaptability.

1. Ask candidates on your vacancy to list the soft skills that would be required for success.

In the interview, ask the applicant to rank the crucial soft skills, starting with the most critical, they believe are necessary to thrive in the role. By asking candidates to prioritize soft skills, it forces them to consider not only what general abilities are important but how those abilities specifically apply to the demands of the position. This task reveals their insight into the role's nuances and their preparedness to fulfill its requirements. A candidate's ability to accurately identify and rank these skills is indicative of their understanding of interpersonal dynamics, problem-solving, and adaptability within a professional setting. If a candidate cannot identify the necessary soft skills, it is a red flag suggesting they may lack the critical thinking or self-assessment capabilities essential for success in the role, indicating a potentially poor fit for the position [21].

2. Have them quickly rank their soft skills

This method of assessing a candidate's soft skills through force-ranking offers a deeper, more nuanced insight into their self-perception and prioritization of these skills. By requiring candidates to quickly organize their soft skills from the strongest to the weakest, it bypasses the superficiality of merely affirming possession of a skill.

This approach encourages candidates to critically evaluate their own skill sets,

providing a clearer picture of what they genuinely consider their strengths and weaknesses. It reveals not just the skills they possess but also how they value and perceive the importance of each skill in relation to their professional capabilities [21].

This ranking can quickly highlight discrepancies between a candidate's self-assessment and the job requirements. If a candidate places a skill deemed crucial for the job low on their list, it suggests a potential gap between their capabilities and the job's demands. This insight is invaluable for identifying candidates, whose self-assessed strengths align with the essential skills for the role, ensuring a better fit for the position

3. Give them test situations/tasks that require soft skills

This approach to testing candidates on their soft skills by presenting them with a real situation from your firm and asking them to navigate through it offers a practical and direct assessment of their capabilities. This method does more than just evaluate if a candidate can claim to have certain soft skills; it puts those claims to the test in a context directly relevant to your organization's unique challenges and environment. By requiring candidates to articulate how they would apply their soft skills to solve a specific problem, you gain insight into their problem-solving approach, critical thinking, and the ability to apply soft skills to concrete situations.

This strategy also allows for a deeper exploration of a candidate's thought process and decision-making. As they outline the steps they would take, you can assess their ability to identify which soft skills are necessary at each juncture, demonstrating not just self-awareness but also the practical application of their skills in real-world scenarios. Moreover, when targeting a particular skill, presenting a problem that necessitates its use provides clear evidence of the candidate's proficiency (or lack thereof) in that area. Delving into the specifics of their approach offers a detailed understanding of their skill level, how they prioritize actions, and how effectively they can integrate soft skills with technical knowledge to address complex issues. This method is highly effective in distinguishing candidates who genuinely possess the required soft skills from those who may only have a superficial or theoretical understanding of them [21].

4. Give them online tests covering soft skills

Using online tests for assessing candidates' soft skills offers a standardized, objective method to evaluate these crucial abilities across applicants. The significance of this approach lies in its ability to provide quantifiable data on skills that are traditionally considered subjective and difficult to measure directly through interviews or resumes alone. When a reputable company like Footlocker reports a tangible improvement in performance metrics, such as a double-digit increase in sales, following the implementation of a soft skills test, it underscores the direct impact these skills have on business outcomes.

However, the effectiveness of these online tests hinges on their relevance and accuracy for the specific job family. Validation is essential to ensure that the tests are predictive of success within your organization's unique context. By administering these tests to employees who are already known to possess varying degrees of soft skills proficiency, companies can gauge whether the tests accurately reflect the employees' on-the-job performance and soft skill levels. This process of validation helps in fine-tuning the selection process, ensuring that the tests not only measure the right attributes but are also calibrated to identify candidates whose soft skills align with those that have proven to contribute to success in the specific roles within the company.

This methodical approach to selecting and validating online soft skills tests ensures that they are a reliable tool for identifying candidates who are not just technically competent but also excel in the interpersonal and cognitive skills crucial for thriving in today's dynamic work environments.

5. Make them do the test task and observe

This method of assessing candidates' soft skills through practical tests, specifically by placing them in leadership roles during group exercises, offers a direct and dynamic way to evaluate their actual abilities in real-time scenarios. When candidates claim to possess certain soft skills, such as leadership, during interviews, it is often challenging to gauge the authenticity and depth of those claims solely through verbal affirmation. By observing candidates in action, leading a team

comprised of existing employees, their genuine leadership qualities or lack thereof come to the forefront.

This approach goes beyond theoretical knowledge or rehearsed answers, providing a platform for candidates to demonstrate their soft skills in situations that mimic real workplace challenges. It allows evaluators to see firsthand how a candidate communicates, motivates team members, navigates conflicts, and manages the task at hand. Such exercises reveal not only a candidate's ability to lead but also how they collaborate, listen, and adapt to feedback, which are critical components of effective leadership.

Conducting these exercises with groups of candidates can also illuminate other essential soft skills, such as teamwork, empathy, and problem-solving.

This hands-on evaluation method is particularly effective because it places candidates in simulated yet realistic scenarios that require them to apply their soft skills in practice. It moves beyond hypotheticals to provide a clear, observable demonstration of a candidate's capabilities, offering a robust assessment of their potential fit within the team and the organization [21].

6. Continue to assess post-hire

Continuing to assess soft skills post-hire during the onboarding and training phases is a strategic approach to ensuring that new hires not only fit the technical requirements of their roles but also align with the interpersonal and cultural dynamics of the organization. This method acknowledges that the evaluation of a candidate's soft skills cannot be fully completed through pre-hire assessments alone. The transition into the actual work environment presents a more authentic context in which to observe and evaluate these skills in action.

This ongoing assessment allows organizations to identify any gaps or areas for improvement in a new hire's soft skills that may not have been evident during the initial hiring process. It offers a safety net, ensuring that individuals who may excel in technical skills but lack in areas such as communication, teamwork, adaptability, or leadership can be provided with targeted training to develop these crucial competencies.

Moreover, this approach provides a pragmatic pathway for addressing mismatches early on. If a new hire significantly falls short of the required soft skill standards, the organization can make informed decisions about their continued employment. This could mean offering additional support and training to help them improve, or in cases where the gap is too wide, considering their release to maintain team performance and morale.

Assessing soft skills post-hire supports a culture of continuous improvement and learning, reinforcing the importance of these skills in the workplace and ensuring that all employees, not just new hires, understand and strive to meet the organization's expectations in this area.

7. Use neuroscience assessments

Neuroscience assessments represent a cutting-edge approach to evaluating candidates' soft skills, leveraging advanced technologies like artificial intelligence, deep machine learning, and facial and voice recognition software. These tools, offered by companies such as HireVue, transcend traditional assessment methods by analyzing not just the content of candidates' responses in taped interviews but also the nuances of how those responses are delivered.

The utilization of neuroscience assessments allows for a comprehensive analysis that includes phrases, facial expressions, voice inflections, and even subtle physical movements that might be imperceptible to human evaluators. This depth of analysis can uncover insights into a candidate's emotional intelligence, sincerity, stress response, and other critical soft skills that are often challenging to gauge through conventional interview techniques alone.

One of the key advantages of this method is its ability to detect inconsistencies or deceptions in a candidate's presentation, offering a more objective and scientifically grounded evaluation of their true capabilities and fit for a role. By analyzing the myriad subtle cues that accompany verbal responses, neuroscience assessments can provide a more accurate picture of a candidate's interpersonal skills, resilience, and adaptability.

This approach underscores a broader trend in recruitment toward leveraging

technology to enhance the accuracy and fairness of candidate evaluations, ensuring that hiring decisions are based on a holistic understanding of an individual's potential to contribute to an organization. Neuroscience assessments offer a glimpse into the future of recruitment, where technology and psychology converge to identify the best fit between candidates and roles based on a wide array of soft and hard skills [21].

Part 2

2.1 Development of soft skills as an important component of professional communication

Importance of Soft Skills Communication

The significance of soft skills communication lies in its role as a foundational element for effective interpersonal interactions and professional success. This set of skills enables individuals to convey ideas clearly, understand others' viewpoints with empathy, and navigate social dynamics smoothly, irrespective of the workplace or industry context. Soft skills like active listening, articulate speaking, and interpreting non-verbal cues are universal competencies that enhance an individual's ability to connect with others, making them indispensable in any professional environment.

In the realm of professional and personal relationships, the ability to communicate effectively is paramount. It serves as the linchpin for establishing trust, mitigating conflicts, and encouraging teamwork. Soft skills communication is multifaceted, involving the ability to tailor one's message to the audience, express thoughts with clarity and brevity, and appreciate diverse perspectives. These skills facilitate not just the exchange of information but also the building of rapport and the development of strong, collaborative relationships.

Active listening exemplifies a critical component of soft skills communication, emphasizing the importance of fully engaging with others during conversations. This entails not only processing the spoken words but also being attuned to the subtleties of tone and body language. Mastery of active listening fosters a deeper understanding of the communicator's intent and emotions, paving the way for responses that are thoughtful and constructive. Ultimately, the cultivation of these communication soft skills ensures interactions that are both effective and enriching, highlighting their

vital role in personal effectiveness and career advancement.

The importance of soft skills communication extends significantly into the realm of effective speaking and non-verbal communication, underscoring the comprehensive nature of interpersonal exchanges. Effective speaking is not merely about the clarity and precision of conveying messages; it embodies the speaker's capacity to captivate and maintain the audience's engagement, making the delivery of information not just heard but felt and understood. The ability to modulate communication styles to fit various contexts and audience needs is essential for ensuring that the intended message is not only delivered but resonates with the listeners, fostering an environment of clear understanding and mutual respect [22].

Non-verbal communication, encompassing elements like facial expressions, body language, and eye contact, plays an equally critical role in the tapestry of soft skills communication. These silent signals can often speak louder than words, offering profound insights into a person's true feelings, attitudes, and intentions.

Mastery of non-verbal cues enhances the depth and authenticity of interactions, enabling individuals to connect on a more significant level. It serves as a powerful tool in building rapport, reinforcing spoken messages, and establishing a foundation of trust and sincerity in relationships.

Together, effective speaking and non-verbal communication highlight the multifaceted nature of soft skills communication. They demonstrate that successful communication is a blend of what we say, how we say it, and the unspoken messages we convey through our actions and reactions. Recognizing and honing these skills can significantly impact one's ability to navigate and thrive in social and professional environments, emphasizing the indispensable role of soft skills communication in achieving personal and collective goals.

Active Listening

Active listening skills are paramount in the workplace, especially for those in supervisory roles or who regularly engage with colleagues. This skill involves more than just hearing words; it is about fully comprehending the message being communicated, demonstrating empathy, and engaging with the speaker in a way that

validates their concerns or ideas. Active listening facilitates a deeper understanding of issues, enabling collaborative problem-solving and decision-making. It also displays patience, signaling respect and value for the input of others, which can significantly enhance team dynamics and productivity [23].

For example, active listening in agronomy, a field where collaboration and precision are key, can have profound benefits. Agronomists frequently work with farmers, researchers, and agricultural technicians, discussing complex subjects like crop rotation, soil health, and pest management. An agronomist who actively listens might catch subtleties in a farmer's description of crop behavior, leading to a more accurate diagnosis of soil deficiencies or pest infestations. By fully engaging with the conversation, asking clarifying questions, and reflecting on the information shared, an agronomist can develop more effective, tailored strategies for improving crop yield and sustainability.

Moreover, active listening can significantly impact workplace safety in agronomy. For instance, during discussions on the safe application of pesticides, actively listening to a technician's experiences and concerns can lead to the identification of potential safety gaps in current practices. This might prompt the implementation of improved safety protocols or training sessions, thereby reducing the risk of accidents or health issues.

In essence, active listening is not just a communication tool but a strategic asset in fields like agronomy, where the integration of technical knowledge, interpersonal skills, and safety considerations are crucial for success.

Here are seven techniques and recommendations to help improve active listening skills:

1. Be Fully Present
2. Pay Attention to Non-Verbal Cues
3. Keep Good Eye Contact
4. Ask Open-Ended Questions
5. Reflect What You Hear
6. Be Patient

7. Withhold Judgment

Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication skills are critical in conveying messages and emotions without the use of words. Skills such as interpreting and utilizing facial expressions, gestures, posture, and even silence, play a significant role in reinforcing or contradicting spoken messages. Mastery of non-verbal cues enables individuals to complement and emphasize their verbal communication, fostering a deeper connection and understanding between parties [22].

Agronomists often find themselves in diverse settings, from field visits and laboratory meetings to community workshops. For example, a reassuring nod or a confident posture can significantly impact a farmer's trust in an agronomist's recommendations. Similarly, being attentive to a farmer's body language might provide clues about their concerns or hesitations regarding a proposed agricultural practice, even if they do not verbally express it. This insight allows the agronomist to address issues more effectively.

Types of nonverbal communication or body language include:

1. Facial expressions

The human face can express a vast array of emotions, from joy and satisfaction to concern and skepticism. This form of communication is particularly notable for its universality; expressions of fundamental emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger, surprise, fear, and disgust are the same across different cultures, making facial expressions a globally understood language [24].

For example, an agronomist's facial expressions can convey their enthusiasm and confidence in a recommended course of action, such as the adoption of a new pest management strategy. A genuine smile and an expression of confidence can help instill trust and reassurance in farmers or agricultural workers, making them more likely to adopt the recommendations.

Moreover, in educational settings or workshops, an agronomist's ability to read the facial expressions of attendees can help identify when participants are engaged or when they might be confused or losing interest. This awareness allows for real-time

adjustments to the presentation style or content, ensuring that the information is effectively communicated and well received.

2. Body movement and posture

The manner in which individuals sit, walk, stand, or position their heads can profoundly influence others' perceptions of them, conveying attitudes, emotions, and intentions. This facet of nonverbal communication encompasses not only the static posture someone maintains but also their dynamic movements and overall demeanor.

For example, an open stance with arms relaxed at one's sides and a straight back can signal confidence and openness to communication, inviting interaction. In contrast, crossed arms, a slouched posture, or avoidance of eye contact might suggest discomfort, disinterest, or even defensiveness. These cues can be especially telling in professional settings, where the ability to read and respond to such nonverbal signals can significantly affect the outcomes of interactions.

3. Gestures

Gestures can emphasize a point, signal a direction, or convey a wide range of emotions, from enthusiasm to disapproval.

However, the significance of gestures extends beyond their ability to enhance communication; they also possess the potential for misinterpretation. What is considered a benign gesture in one culture may carry a completely different, sometimes negative, meaning in another. For instance, the "OK" sign, formed by connecting the thumb and index finger into a circle while extending the other fingers, is recognized as a gesture of agreement in many English-speaking countries. Yet, this same gesture may be perceived as vulgar or offensive in countries like Germany and Brazil.

In professional fields such as international business, education, or diplomacy, understanding the cultural nuances of gestures can be crucial in building relationships, negotiating deals, or simply avoiding misunderstandings. This mindfulness not only prevents potential faux pas but also demonstrates respect for and openness to diverse cultural norms, fostering a more inclusive and effective communication environment.

4. Eye contact

Given that the visual sense is dominant for most individuals, the manner in which one person looks at another can convey a multitude of messages, spanning from interest and affection to hostility and attraction. This silent exchange can set the tone for the interaction, influencing perceptions and responses in profound ways [24].

The role of eye contact extends beyond mere expression; it is instrumental in regulating the flow of conversation. By making or breaking eye contact, individuals signal their engagement in the dialogue, indicating when it is appropriate for others to speak or listen. This unspoken coordination is crucial for the smooth exchange of ideas and information, ensuring that communication is not only effective but also feels natural and respectful.

5. Space

The physical distance we maintain during conversations can convey a wide array of nonverbal messages, influencing the perceived nature of our relationships and interactions. This spatial arrangement can signify intimacy, affection, aggression, dominance, or even submission, depending on how closely we position ourselves to others.

The concept of personal space varies significantly across different cultures and contexts, reflecting a complex interplay of social norms, individual preferences, and situational factors. In some cultures, close physical proximity is seen as a sign of trust and camaraderie, whereas, in others, it might be interpreted as intrusive or disrespectful.

6. Voice

The way one speaks incorporating aspects such as timing, pace, volume, tone, inflection, and various non-lexical utterances like “ahh” and “uh-huh” plays a crucial role in how messages are interpreted by listeners. These vocal characteristics allow speakers to add nuance and subtlety to their communication, enabling them to convey complex emotional states and attitudes that might not be explicitly stated through words alone.

Timing and pace, for instance, can significantly affect the reception of a

message. Rapid speech may be interpreted as enthusiasm or anxiety, whereas a slower pace might suggest deliberation, sadness, or calm. Similarly, volume can communicate confidence, aggression, or excitement when raised and whispering can indicate secrecy, intimacy, or fear.

Tone and inflection further color communication, imbuing it with emotional resonance. A change in pitch or stress on particular words can alter the perceived meaning of a sentence, as when inflection turns a simple statement into a question or indicates irony. These vocal variations can subtly signal the speaker's attitude toward the subject matter or the listener, such as warmth, skepticism, or hostility.

7. Touch

We communicate a great deal through touch. A weak handshake, for instance, may be interpreted as a lack of confidence or enthusiasm, possibly setting a tone of hesitancy or indifference at the onset of a relationship or interaction. Conversely, a firm handshake is commonly associated with confidence and respect, establishing a foundation of equality and assurance between parties from the beginning.

A warm bear hug typically conveys affection, comfort, and solidarity, embodying a sense of closeness and trust. This form of touch is powerful in reinforcing bonds and offering support, signaling a safe space and mutual care within personal relationships.

A patronizing pat on the head, however, can communicate a very different message, often one of condescension or superiority. This gesture may diminish the recipient's sense of autonomy or respect, reflecting an imbalance in the perceived status or age between individuals involved.

Lastly, a controlling grip on the arm might signify an attempt to dominate or assert power over another, evoking feelings of constraint and discomfort. Such a touch can be intrusive and threatening, undermining the sense of safety and respect in an interaction.

Effective Speaking

Successful speakers are able to organize their thoughts coherently, speak with conviction, and tailor their language and delivery style to suit their audience, thereby

maximizing engagement and comprehension.

Effective speaking is not confined to public speaking or formal presentations. It plays a vital role in everyday interactions, such as negotiating with a client, providing feedback to a colleague, or persuading a friend. In each case, the ability to articulate thoughts clearly, demonstrate empathy through tone, and reinforce messages with appropriate body language can significantly impact the outcome of the interaction [22]. Effective speaking skills also facilitate leadership, enabling individuals to inspire confidence, articulate vision, and guide teams towards achieving goals. For example, a leader addressing their organization during times of change must choose their words carefully, project assurance, and convey empathy, thereby fostering trust and alignment among stakeholders.

Effective speaking is a multifaceted skill that enhances personal and professional communication. It involves the integration of verbal and non-verbal cues to deliver messages in a way that is engaging, persuasive, and clear.

Strategies for Developing Soft Skills Communication

1. Developing Emotional Intelligence.

Developing Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a fundamental strategy for enhancing soft skills communication, as it directly influences one's ability to interact harmoniously and effectively with others.

EI comprises several key components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Each of these components plays a crucial role in understanding and managing personal emotions, as well as in recognizing and responding to the emotions of others.

Self-awareness is the foundation of EI, enabling individuals to understand their own emotions, strengths, weaknesses, and the impact of their actions on others. For example, a self-aware individual might recognize their tendency to become defensive in response to criticism. This awareness allows them to prepare mentally and emotionally before entering potentially challenging discussions, thereby improving their position, response and communication.

Self-regulation involves controlling or redirecting disruptive emotions and

impulses and adapting to changing circumstances. Consider a manager who feels frustrated with a project's progress. Instead of expressing their frustration in a counterproductive manner, they use self-regulation to approach the situation calmly, discussing the issues constructively with their team to find solutions.

Motivation in the context of EI refers to being driven to achieve for the sake of achievement. A highly motivated individual will communicate positively, encouraging and inspiring others even in the face of setbacks. This positive energy can be contagious, uplifting the entire team's morale and fostering a collaborative effort toward common goals.

Empathy is critical for effective interpersonal interactions. It allows individuals to understand and share the feelings of others. An empathetic leader, for example, can discern when a team member is overwhelmed and might need support or a lighter workload, even if the team member has not voiced it explicitly. This understanding can guide the leader's approach to conversations, ensuring they are conducted with sensitivity and supportiveness.

Social skills, the final component of EI, are what enable individuals to navigate social complexities and build strong, positive relationships. This involves effective communication, active listening, and the ability to manage relationships and build networks. An example of strong social skills in action could be a team leader facilitating a meeting where conflict arises. They would mediate the discussion, ensuring all parties are heard and understood, and guide the group toward a consensus.

In practice, developing EI transforms the way individuals communicate and interact within professional settings. It enhances one's ability to convey messages in a manner that is respectful, clear, and empathetic, thereby improving team dynamics, productivity, and overall workplace atmosphere. By focusing on developing emotional intelligence, individuals not only become better communicators but also more effective and respected leaders and team members.

2. Improving Problem-Solving Abilities.

This strategy involves a multifaceted enhancement of critical thinking, analytical

skills, and a proactive stance towards identifying and resolving issues.

The essence of this strategy lies in not just reacting to communication barriers as they arise but in actively seeking and implementing solutions that prevent such issues from recurring.

Critical Thinking. This skill is vital for problem-solving as it involves questioning assumptions, evaluating evidence, and synthesizing information to make reasoned decisions. For instance, when a team faces repeated misunderstandings over email communications, a critical thinker would analyze the root causes such as ambiguous language or lack of context and propose clear guidelines for future communications, thereby mitigating confusion.

Analytical Abilities. These abilities enable individuals to break down complex communication issues into manageable parts and understand the underlying factors contributing to the problem. Consider a scenario where there's a conflict between departments due to misaligned goals. An individual with strong analytical skills might dissect the issue to understand each department's priorities and facilitate a discussion to realign goals and expectations, fostering a more cooperative environment.

Proactive Mindset. Being proactive involves anticipating potential communication pitfalls and addressing them before they escalate. This could mean establishing regular check-ins or feedback sessions to gauge team morale and uncover any unspoken issues, allowing for timely interventions that maintain open and positive channels of communication [22].

3. Building Stronger Relationships with Empathy.

Empathy, at its core, involves a deep understanding and understanding of others' feelings and perspectives. It is about genuinely connecting with others on an emotional level, which can significantly influence the dynamics of communication and interaction within any context, particularly in professional environments.

Understanding Perspectives. Empathy allows individuals to see situations from others' viewpoints, which is crucial for resolving conflicts, negotiating, and collaborating effectively. For example, in a workplace disagreement, an empathetic

approach would involve each party taking the time to listen and understand the other's concerns and motivations before responding. This understanding can lead to more constructive conversations and solutions that accommodate all parties' needs.

Enhancing Communication. Empathetic communication goes beyond just listening; it involves responding in a way that demonstrates understanding and care for the other person's experience. For instance, when a colleague is feeling overwhelmed with workload, rather than simply acknowledging their stress, an empathetic response would include offering specific support, whether it is helping to prioritize tasks, taking on some of their work, or finding resources to assist them. This kind of response not only alleviates their decrease stress but also strengthens the relationship by showing genuine concern and willingness to help.

Fostering a Collaborative Environment. Empathy contributes to a culture of openness and trust, where team members feel valued and understood. This is particularly evident in leadership, where empathetic leaders can create an environment that encourages sharing ideas and feedback without fear of judgment. An example of this could be a manager who regularly holds one-on-one meetings with team members to discuss not just work-related issues but also any personal challenges that might be affecting their performance. These meetings signal to employees that their well-being is important and that they are part of a supportive team.

2.2 Effective ways of soft skills formation by means of information and communication technologies

As the global workforce becomes increasingly digitized and interconnected, the integration of ICT in soft skills education has become not just beneficial but essential. This section highlights how ICT facilitates the acquisition and refinement of soft skills in several key ways [27; 29; 30].

Accessibility and Flexibility.

ICT opens up unprecedented access to soft skills training, breaking down geographical and temporal barriers. Through online platforms, learners can access a wealth of resources and training programs from anywhere, at any time, allowing for a

more flexible learning schedule that can be tailored to individual needs and lifestyles. This democratization of education ensures that more individuals can develop vital soft skills, regardless of their location or circumstances.

Interactive and Engaging Learning Experiences.

Traditional lecture-based training methods can be less effective in teaching soft skills, which often require interaction and practice. ICT offers interactive e-learning environments, simulation tools, and gamification elements that make learning more engaging and effective. By simulating real-world scenarios, learners can practice and hone their communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills in a controlled, risk-free setting. Gamification adds a layer of motivation and fun to the learning process, encouraging continued engagement and practice [25].

Real-time Feedback and Personalization.

One of the significant advantages of using ICT in soft skills training is the capability for real-time feedback and personalized learning paths. Advanced analytics and AI-driven tools can assess a learner's performance, provide immediate feedback, and tailor the learning experience to address specific weaknesses or build on strengths. This personalized approach ensures that learners receive targeted support and guidance, accelerating their progress and enhancing the effectiveness of the training [26].

Collaboration and Networking. ICT facilitates virtual collaboration and networking, allowing learners to interact with peers and mentors from diverse backgrounds. Platforms such as educational projects, social media, forums, and collaborative project tools mimic the collaborative environments found in many modern workplaces, providing a practical context for developing communication and teamwork skills. These interactions also offer opportunities for networking, mentorship, and exposure to different perspectives and cultures, further enriching the learning experience [25].

Scalability and Cost-effectiveness. ICT solutions offer scalable and cost-effective options for soft skills training. Unlike traditional in-person workshops or seminars, which can be resource-intensive and limited in reach,

ICT-based training can be easily scaled to accommodate an increasing number of learners without a proportional increase in costs. This scalability ensures that organizations and educational institutions can provide comprehensive soft skills training to a wider audience, maximizing impact and return on investment [25].

The role of Information and Communication Technologies in enhancing soft skills training is transformative and multifaceted. By leveraging ICT, educators and trainers can provide more accessible, engaging, personalized, and effective soft skills development opportunities, preparing individuals for the complexities and demands of the modern workplace.

Effective ICT tools and methods for soft skills training

1. E-Learning platforms.

These platforms offer a versatile and accessible means for individuals to enhance skills such as communication, time management, project management, leadership, teamwork, and emotional intelligence. Why?

Online courses can include interactive videos, quizzes, and simulations that engage learners actively. These elements can mimic real-life scenarios, challenging learners to apply their soft skills in context. For instance, interactive role-play scenarios can simulate workplace conflicts or negotiation settings, allowing learners to practice communication strategies and problem-solving skills.

One example is the Adidas training platform for their employees. Employees study information about the company's products and technologies, and courses are implemented for them to learn and practice communicating with customers, handling their objections, and finding solutions to meet a person's needs.

All this takes place in the format of studying video and textual material, and then practicing by visualizing situations in applications and tests.

Also, many e-learning platforms facilitate peer-to-peer interaction through discussion forums, group projects, and peer review sessions. This not only enhances communication and teamwork skills but also provides valuable feedback from diverse perspectives, mirroring the collaborative nature of modern workplaces [25; 29].

As for accessibility. Access to expert-led webinars, live Q&A sessions, and

mentorship opportunities allows learners to gain insights and advice on applying soft skills in professional settings. These interactions can deepen understanding and inspire confidence in learners as they navigate the complexities of interpersonal dynamics.

A lot of online courses incorporate assessments and feedback mechanisms that help learners gauge their progress and identify areas needing further development. These can range from automated quizzes to detailed feedback from instructors, providing constructive insights that guide learners in refining their softskills [25; 29].

2. Simulation and gamification.

Increasingly adopted for soft skills training, offering dynamic and engaging ways to enhance decision-making, problem-solving, and teamwork skills. These approaches leverage technology to create realistic, immersive environments and scenarios where people can practice and develop their soft skills in a safe, controlled setting.

Virtual simulations on gamification platforms use realistic scenarios that mimic real-world challenges, allowing learners to immerse themselves in environments where they can apply soft skills such as leadership, communication, and emotional intelligence. These simulations are designed to replicate the complexity and unpredictability of workplace situations, requiring learners to navigate through tasks, make decisions under pressure, and interact with virtual team members or clients. For example, a simulation might place a person in the role of a project manager leading a virtual team through a tight deadline, challenging them to use their communication and leadership skills to motivate the team and delegate tasks effectively.

Benefits of Virtual Simulations and Gamification:

- Learners gain hands-on experience in applying soft skills in contexts closely resembling real-life situations, enhancing their ability to transfer these skills to the workplace.
- Safe Learning Environment. Mistakes are part of the learning process, and simulations provide a risk-free environment where learners can experiment with different approaches and learn from their errors without real-world repercussions.

- Gamification incorporates game-design elements and principles into non-game contexts, making learning more interactive and enjoyable. By integrating elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, and challenges, gamification motivates learners to engage with the training material actively. For example, a gamified course on teamwork might include a series of challenges that require students to collaborate with colleagues to solve problems, negotiate outcomes, and manage conflicts, all within a competitive yet cooperative framework.

- The use of game elements increases motivation and engagement, making people more likely to complete the training and retain the information [28; 29; 30].

This method of development soft skills not only make learning more engaging and effective but also prepare individuals for the complexities of modern work environments by developing critical soft skills in decision-making, problem-solving, and teamwork.

3. Social Media

Platforms as LinkedIn, Slack, and Microsoft Teams facilitate a range of interactions of networking and professional development.

LinkedIn. Primarily a professional networking site, LinkedIn enables individuals to connect with peers, mentors, and industry leaders, fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional growth. Through engaging in discussions, sharing articles, and participating in industry groups, users can develop and demonstrate effective communication skills, including articulating ideas clearly, engaging in professional discourse, and networking effectively. LinkedIn Learning further provides access to courses focused on various soft skills, allowing users to enhance their competencies in areas such as leadership, emotional intelligence, and teamwork.

About Slack. Designed as a communication hub for teams, Slack supports real-time messaging, file sharing, and collaboration across projects and departments. Its channel-based structure encourages the creation of dedicated spaces for specific topics or projects, facilitating focused discussions and teamwork.

Microsoft Teams integrates chat, video meetings, file storage, and application integration within a single interface. It supports both synchronous and asynchronous

communication, making it an ideal tool for fostering collaboration and communication within distributed teams. Microsoft Teams allow users to conduct virtual meetings, collaborate on documents in real time, and maintain project continuity through integrated apps and services. This environment encourages the development of soft skills such as active listening, persuasive communication, and effective teamwork, as users navigate through coordinating tasks, sharing responsibilities, and resolving conflicts virtually.

In essence, social media provide environments where communication and other soft skills can be continuously improved. By integrating these tools into soft skills training, companies and educational platforms can leverage the full spectrum of interactive and collaborative features to foster a culture of open communication, mutual respect, and effective teamwork.

2.3 Soft skills as the main criteria for employment

Soft skills are increasingly recognized as the main criteria for employment, marking a pivotal shift in how employers evaluate potential hires. The emphasis on these skills underscores a holistic approach to assessing a candidate's full range of capabilities, beyond just technical proficiency. This is rooted in the understanding that while technical skills may get someone in the door, soft skills are what enable them to navigate the complexities of workplace dynamics, contribute to a positive work environment, and ultimately excel in their career [29; 30].

Technical excellence alone does not guarantee professional success. Soft skills like time management, dependability, and the ability to receive and act on feedback play a crucial role in fulfilling job responsibilities effectively. These skills ensure that an employee not only produces quality work but also meets deadlines, collaborates with the team, and maintains client satisfaction. The absence of such skills can lead to project delays, financial losses, and damaged client relationships, potentially stalling an otherwise promising career.

The significant role of soft skills in job performance and career longevity is

reflected in recruitment trends. The LinkedIn's Global Talent Trends report [30] illuminates a widespread acknowledgment among recruiters that the failure of hires often stems from a deficiency in soft skills rather than technical skills. This realization has prompted employers to prioritize soft skills in their hiring criteria.

The Monster's The Future of Work 2021: Global Hiring Outlook further corroborates this trend, with employers emphasizing the need for skills such as dependability, teamwork, flexibility, and problem-solving. These skills are not only valued for their immediate impact on work efficiency and team dynamics but also for their contribution to adapting to future workplace changes and challenges.

What about career durability?

Alexandra Levit's concept of "career durability" encapsulates the essence of why soft skills are indispensable. Soft skills equip individuals with the adaptability, resilience, and mindset necessary to thrive in an ever-evolving work landscape [31].

They are foundational to lifelong learning, enabling individuals to seamlessly transition through various roles, industries, and learning environments. This adaptability is crucial for long-term engagement and productivity, as the future workforce will require individuals to continuously acquire new skills and adapt to technological advancements and changing job demands.

Employers recognize the value of these skills in fostering efficient, adaptable, and collaborative employees who can contribute to a positive workplace culture and navigate the challenges of the future work environment. As such, the development of soft skills is not just beneficial but essential for individuals seeking to secure their place in the workforce of tomorrow.

Conclusion

In this research, we have delved into the crucial role of soft skills in the agricultural business sector, underscoring their significance for future specialists. The evolution of the global labor market, characterized by rapid changes and increasing complexity, demands a workforce adept in skills beyond technical expertise. Soft skills such as communication, leadership, adaptability, and teamwork are identified as pivotal for navigating the challenges and opportunities in agriculture, enhancing

professional interactions, and driving success in this dynamic field.

The investigation highlights the challenges in soft skills development, including educational system limitations and the underestimation of these skills' value. The need for a structured, comprehensive approach to soft skills training is evident, suggesting that current educational frameworks may fall short in preparing future specialists for the realities of the agricultural business.

The discourse around soft skills is enriched by contributions from leading scientists and researchers, who advocate for the integration of emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills into professional development. Their insights underscore the multifaceted nature of soft skills, which encompass not only the ability to communicate and collaborate effectively but also the resilience and creativity needed to adapt to an ever-changing industry.

About ICT in soft skills development. Through e-learning, virtual simulations, and gamification, ICT provides dynamic environments where future agricultural business specialists can practice and hone their interpersonal skills in realistic scenarios. This digital approach not only makes soft skills training more accessible and engaging but also mirrors the technological advancements shaping the agricultural sector, preparing specialists for more effective work.

Case studies and practical examples within the research illustrate the tangible benefits of soft skills mastery, showing how individuals and organizations in the agricultural sector have leveraged these competencies for improved performance, competitiveness, and innovation. These success stories highlight the tangible impact of soft skills on professional growth and organizational success.

Prospect of further research.

Mastering soft skills is fundamental to the professional success of future specialists in the agricultural business. As the sector continues to evolve, driven by technological innovation and global market shifts, the demand for well-rounded professionals equipped with both technical knowledge and advanced soft skills will only grow. This research underscores the need for a holistic approach to education and training, one that fully integrates soft skills development to prepare future

specialists for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

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CONTENTS

SECTION 1. "FUNDAMENTAL DIRECTIONS OF LINGUISTIC RESEARCH"

Liudmyla Semak

STYLES AND SEMANTICS OF LEXICAL SYNONYMS (BASED ON THE MATERIAL OF MODERN UKRAINIAN WOMEN'S PROSE)

.....4

SECTION 2. "METHODS AND TECHNOLOGIES OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES"

Vira Chornobai

PROFESSIONAL - ORIENTED FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING USING INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGIES, THE INTERNET AND SOCIAL NETWORKS.....

34

Olga Piddubtseva

FREMDSPRACHENAUSBILDUNG DER KÜNFTIGEN FACHKRÄFTE IM AGRARSEKTOR DER UKRAINE.....

66

Svitlana Samoilenko

MOTIVATIONAL TOOLS FOR INTENSIFYING THE STUDY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.....

101

Kateryna Sheypak

PEDAGOGICAL CONDITIONS FOR THE FORMATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS OF NON-LINGUISTIC UNIVERSITIES.....

138

Maryna Volkova

IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHING ACTIVITIES IN REMOTE CREATIVE WRITING CLASSROOMS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS.....

175

SECTION 3. "PROFESSIONAL, INTERPERSONAL AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION"

Olena Kazakevych

PERSONALITY-BASED LEARNING AS REFLECTION OF HUMANIZATION OF EDUCATION.....206

Tetiana Kramarenko

MASTERING SOFT SKILLS AS THE KEY TO PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS FOR FUTURE SPECIALISTS IN AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS.....244

Olena Nazarenko

LANGUAGE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF STUDENTS: THEORETICAL APPROACHES, PRACTICAL DIMENSIONS AND INNOVATIVE PROCESSES.....280

Kateryna Pantileienko

THE CAREER HISTORIES OF THE WOMEN IN ADMINISTRATORS SPHERE.....304

Olena Rezunova

THE EDUCATIONAL TRAINING AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR PHD STUDENTS SELF-EFFICIENCY DEVELOPMENT.....333

Tetyana Stasiuk

SPECIALISTS' IDENTITY IN COMMUNICATION AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES.....368

Olena Stukalo

PREPARATION OF FUTURE SPECIALISTS IN AGRICULTURE FOR PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION IN THE PROCESS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING.....407

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