

GRADUATES' EMPLOYABILITY: DO EMPLOYERS SEEK FOR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OR SOFT SKILLS IN COVID-19 SITUATION? A REVIEW OF ACADEMIC LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

In our daily lives, critical and stressful events can take many various shapes. Stressful conditions, such as natural disasters and epidemics, may sometimes be more serious on a national or global scale, as it affects our life, jobs and life events in general (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2020). With the advent of the Covid-19 virus, we were in such a terrible and stressful situation. After all the time, effort, and money incurred in obtaining a degree, it is normal for graduates to focus on the technical abilities learned throughout their studies in order to be employed. Surprisingly, to a disappointment of job seeking fresh graduates, there are skills and attributes that potential employers value even more apart from skills directly relevant to the job. More importantly, soft skills which are related to a candidate's emotional intelligence should be given more weightage than hard skills which are knowledge specific. Emotional intelligence is making a significant contribution to combating the pandemic. soft skills aid in obtaining and maintaining employment, and help people to adapt and behave positively so that they can deal with the challenges of their everyday life. Basic components of emotional intelligence which include awareness, management, and empathy, are extremely crucial for individuals to manage the challenging Covid-19 situations. Finding in this research presents the need for courses and programs to foster, develop and increase emotional intelligence and soft skills to be considered at all levels of education. This research highlights the importance of emotional intelligence and soft skills to positively shape graduates' employability from the employers' perspective.

Keywords: Employability, Emotional Intelligence, Soft skills, Covid-19, Employers, Graduates

INTRODUCTION

A crisis is a situation in which daily life is disrupted and danger, uncertainty, instability, and forced action exist (Samman, 2015), critical events of varying degrees of severity and complexity cause the restructuring of current behavioural strategies (Mamzer, 2020). The pandemic has brought unprecedented disruption that – absent concerted policy efforts – will scar the social and employment landscape for years to come” (International Labour Organisation, 2021). The problem of the “COVID-19” pandemic has been linked to significant increases in unemployment in numerous nations (Blustein, Duffy, Ferreira, Cohen, Cinamon & Allan, 2020). This loss of employment has a substantial impact on people's ability to access financial resources and being employed (Casale & Posel, 2020; Wills, Patel, Berg & Mpetta, 2020).

Employers and many companies use a personality test in the recruiting process, according to a survey by the American Management Association (Kyllonen, 2013). The importance of noncognitive talents, also known as soft skills and emotional intelligence, cannot be overstated, according to Goleman (1995) and Urquijo, Extremera, & Azanza (2019) because they contribute to an individual's success or failure in the job.

Soft skills and emotional intelligence are widely acknowledged as vital for efficiently performing professional responsibilities; soft skills distinguish between average and excellent performance in the integration of each company and society (Majid et al., 2020). Managers in the workplace require a specific approach for determining an individual's degree of soft skills and emotional intelligence (noncognitive skills) in order to make informed employment decisions that lead to higher productivity (Oberpeul, 2020). Improvements in these skills related to behavior and academic motivation have been used to establish the importance of soft skills and emotional intelligence, which are crucial to long-term job outcomes (Jones et al., 2016).

Many graduate students, according to Oberpeul (2020), are more focused on acquiring academic abilities in their field of study, therefore they overlook the relevance of noncognitive skills (soft skills and emotional intelligence). However, it was only during the crisis of Covid-10 pandemic, that the need of emotional intelligence became obvious (Fuchs, 2020). Employees that are emotionally intelligent have a more positive outlook, appear more happy, devoted, and loyal to their profession and organisation, which leads to a more congenial work atmosphere and improved job performance (Miao et al., 2017).

Soft skills and emotional intelligence are vital not only for a person's work, but also for success in life (Oberpeul, 2017). Furthermore, due to external environmental, political, and economic factors such as recession, war, and, most recently, the breakout of COVID-19, the idea of graduate employability is fast shifting (Hosain, Mustafi & Parvin, 2021). As a result, the authors suggest that more research into this specific and important field of business and economics is required. The objective of this paper is to examine the importance of emotional intelligence and soft skills in determining the employability of graduates, and what employers look for when hiring a graduate during the pandemic is highlighted in this study.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives in this study are:

- i. To investigate emotional intelligence, soft skills, and employability from employers' perspectives.
- ii. To determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and employability.
- iii. To determine the relationship between soft skills and employability.
- iv. To explore how emotional intelligence and soft skills can be a major predictor of employability during the Covid-19 crisis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This review article looks at earlier studies on "employability" and its links to emotional intelligence (EI) and soft skills, as well as what employers are looking for when employing a graduate.

EMPLOYABILITY

An early definition of employability was the ability of graduates to obtain a job, which used the simple measure of testing whether a graduate had obtained a job within six months of leaving university (Asiri et al., 2017). The Canadian Labor Force Development Board (CLFDB) viewed employability as "the ability of individuals to gain valuable employment in the interaction with the labour market". Paying more attention to employability at work, the International Labour Organization (ILO) highlighted employability as "the ability to make progress at work and to react to changes in work. The phrase "employability" captured a wide range of talents, including transferable, generic, intellectual, interpersonal, industry-specific, and cognitive abilities. Despite the lack of a widely accepted definition, employability includes a collection of abilities and personal characteristics that can help an individual find work, keep it, and advance in their career (Romgens, 2019).

Employability consists of skills and talents that graduates must possess in order to increase their job prospects and the country's economic and social development (Jeswani, 2016; Phago & Thwala, 2015). While Behle (2020) termed it as the ability to find, retain, and advance in graduate employment. Advocates such as Koenelakis & Petrakaki (2020) focused on employability as a set of accomplishments, talents, understandings, and personal traits that makes graduates more likely to find work and thrive in their chosen fields, benefitting themselves, the economy, and society. However, York (2006) asserted that employability as "the capacity to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to achieve potential through sustained work," as cited by Roslan, Ping, Sulaiman, Jalil & Yan-Li (2020). Additionally, it entails not only the ability to obtain and keep a rewarding job, but also the ability to move autonomously within the labour market in order to realise one's potential through long-term employment (Balangen et al., 2021). While Sutil & Otamendi (2021) opined that employability is the capability to move self-sufficiently to realise the potential in the labour market through long-term employment.

According to Perera et al., (2017), graduate rising unemployment has been connected to lack of graduates' competency and not meeting employers' standards. Although academic knowledge is crucial, it is not the only aspect that determines a graduate's employment (Jayasingha and Suraweera, 2020), so what do employers want?

It is widely acknowledged that emotional intelligence is a skill that companies value in fresh graduates who are likely to be recruited. A total of 79.3 percent of human resource managers want fresh graduates to have emotional intelligence (Matsouka & Maihail, 2016). Similarly, Li & Pu (2021) found that interns who score high on emotional intelligence have a higher chance of being considered for employment by the internship host organisation than those who score low. However, soft skills have been shown to be more important in studies, as they have received greater focus in organisations and are in higher demand by employers (Low et al., 2016). Soft skills will not only help an employee stand out in today's more competitive market, but they will also boost relationships, work performance, and employability growth as emphasized by Kahirol et al., (2016) & Stewart et al., (2016). Additionally, soft skills are just as productive as professional skills (Balcar et al., 2018) and in recent studies, soft skills are becoming more important because they have been receiving greater attention in business and are in higher demand by employers (Bao, 2021). The extent to which emotional intelligence and soft skills are critical to employability from the business standpoint in hiring graduates require further exploration.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

In terms of the workplace, emotional intelligence (EI) plays an important role that involves understanding how someone deals with engagements with respect to their own emotions and having a good association with the people around them (Praditsang, 2018). EI is a feasible variable in the explanation of success in life and work place, as well as its importance to help people have interaction with their environment, involving the work environment and its relation to performance (Shahhosseini, Silong, Ismail & Uli, 2018).

Today, managers in the workplace understand the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) as a plan of capability management and abilities that authorizes a person to thrive in the workplace (Vasudevan & Mahadi, 2017). In contrast, the absence of emotional intelligence weakens both the growth and development of a person and an organization (Pathak, Shankar, & Tewari, 2018). Past research has found that emotional intelligence (EI) plays an important role in the ability to understand oneself and others (Stamatopoulou, Galanis, & Prezerakos, 2016). EI is not only essential for creating good collaboration with other people, but also by having good self-knowledge and good ability to read and understand the emotions and social essence of other people, it can

become easier to understand them. In fact, EI has been applied in several domains, such as clinical, educational, and organizational psychology (Petrides et al., 2016; Siegling et al., 2015).

Ceschi, Sartori, Dickert & Constantini (2016) found that high emotional intelligence (EI) is an important interpersonal resource which employees bring to organizations by developing good social relations at the workplace, for example, people with higher EI are more successful at problem solving and experience less anxiety, which are highly demanded by employers.

Salovey and Mayer in 1990 were early adopters discovered that emotional intelligence (EI) is a form of intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's feeling and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions (Poonamallee et al., 2018); while advocates such as Goleman found that EI involved an understanding how someone deals with conflicts with respect to their own emotions and having a good association with the people around them (Praditsang, 2018). Hence, EI includes the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour (Srivastava, 2013). Meanwhile, Fox (2013) discovered that EI has been a substantial magnification of interest in the past two decades, especially since Daniel Coleman released his 1995 book where he suggested that EI revealed abilities such as self-control, self-motivation and persistence. On the other hand, Gupta and Bajaj (2018) suggested that the roots of EI can be found in the concept of social intelligence put forward by Thorndike (1920) who revealed it as the ability to understand men, women, boys and girls; to act wisely in human relations.

Earlier findings by Goleman (1995) showed that emotional intelligence (EI) is any underlying personal characteristic that is not represented by cognitive intelligence. The initial model comprising five dimensions with 25 emotional intelligence competencies proposed by Goleman (1998). The first dimension is self-awareness whereby an individual is able to recognise his/her emotions, strengths, weaknesses, goals, motivations, and impact of their emotion on others. The second dimension is self-regulation, which includes recognising, controlling, and redirecting their negative emotions to more productive or positive purpose. The third dimension is social skills, which include managing relationships with others and directing others. The fourth dimension is empathy: considers others' feelings when making decisions. The last dimension is the motivation, the urge or drive for achievement (Bangun & Iswari, 2015). Later in 2001, Goleman refined his model into four dimensions with twenty emotional intelligence competencies. The dimensions in the refined model are self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, and relationship management (Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019). The Mixed model of emotional intelligence assimilates the goodness of both competency (ability) and general disposition (trait). The idea of mixed model is broad-based and good as it is redundant with personality traits Kanesan & Fauzan (2019).

The use of EI as in self-awareness includes the ability to understand and feel emotions at the workplace. Mohamad & Jais (2015) identified that reorganization of the feelings and individuals' emotions at the working place may create harmony and sense of well-being in the management of any procedure particularly in the educational process. Hafeez (2018) further emphasized that the first and foremost step in understanding positive emotional intelligence (EI) among people is to become self-aware of their responsibilities, which is also called reading the mind of others with the help of self-approach.

Okpara & Edwin (2015) strongly affirmed that self-awareness consists of emotional abilities that enable us to be more effective and form outstanding relationships in the work place and that self-awareness is the ability for one to recognize his/her emotions and their effects. They revealed that people who are aware of their emotions are more effective as they recognize and understand their moods, emotions, and needs and can perceive and anticipate how their actions affect others. Furthermore, people with great certainty about their feelings manage their lives well and are able to direct their positive feelings toward the achievement of tasks (Okpara & Edwin, 2015).

In relation to the emotional intelligence of a graduate, someone who is aware of his emotion is more effective in a task or job Self-management (SM) is one of the critical aspects of the domains of emotional intelligence (EI) that determines how an individual's internal mechanism facilitates understanding and effective management of an interpersonal relationship. SM revolves around managing emotions and drives to achieve goals (Ikpesu, 2017). While social awareness, Serrat (2017) involves sensing others' feelings and perspectives, recognizing and meeting others' needs, and acknowledging people's achievements. Another more important dimension of EI is relationship management, which, as Krishnan et al., (2018) further affirmed, is crucial to have a social relationship with society members and to improve teamwork skills is necessary for employment and achievement of organizational goals.

SOFT SKILLS

Soft skills are personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance and hard skills that tend to be specific to a certain type of task or activity. Soft skills include social gracefulness, and fluency in language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism that mark to varying degrees. Soft skills complement hard skills, which are the technical requirements of a profession. It can also be an important part of the organization, especially if the organization is dealing with people face-to-face (Pachauri & Yadav, 2014). Similarly, soft skills help people to adapt and behave positively so that they can deal with the challenges of their everyday life. In this case, soft skills relate to a considerable range of interpersonal and social qualities and competencies, transferable between economic sectors and industries (Hurrell, 2016; Deloitte Access Economics, 2017). Soft skills compete with hard skills in their capacity to predict employability (Majid, Eapen, and Aung, 2019). Additionally, Charlton (2019) stated that

improving soft skills is one of the best investments a graduate can make in their future profession. He added that the importance of soft skills relies on considering them an important part of the employability process.

Many organizations recognize the fact that the technical skills of their employees are not enough to achieve the organization's goals, which is why employers in many industries consider soft skills critical for business success (Stewart et al., 2016). Soft skills are difficult to measure and evaluate compared to hard skills (Abujbara & Worley, 2018) but employers generally prefer to recruit an individual who has soft skills in addition to hard skills (Maclachlan, 2019). Tracing from several institutions, notably the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have proposed several titles for soft skills through history as shown in Table 1 below. Specific Competences refers to hard skills, whereas Generic Competences refers to soft skills.

Table 1: Different names proposed to define soft skills.

Names proposed to define soft skills	Proposed by
Life skills	World Health Organization WHO (1993)
Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning	European Union EU (2006)
21 st Century Skills	Ananiadou & Claro (2009)
Future work skills	Institute for the Future IFTF (2010)
Soft Skills for talent	Manpower Group (2014)
Skills for social progress	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD (2015)

Source: Cinque (2015)

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMPLOYABILITY

The COVID-19 virus is responsible for a wide range of issues. While the difficulties that result affect health, economic, social, and psychological issues, they also trigger one another; unemployment, for example, is an issue (Koçak, 2021). Almost everyone experiences unfathomable stress, fear, and concern as a result of life challenges, but emotional intelligence is highly related to employability, as well as uncertainty and stress tolerance (Nyamai, 2022).

Earlier findings by Carson & Carson (1988) revealed that emotional intelligence of employees is positively associated with importance of employment experience and their emotional attachment to their current career and jobs. The Goleman emotional intelligence model in 1998 provided a strong justification for integrating emotional intelligence into any model of employability as he said that in a time with no assurances of job stability, when the entire notion of a job is fast being replaced by transferable skills, these are essential traits that make and keep us employable; he says a more descriptive and newer name can be assigned to them: emotional intelligence, from "personality" and "character" to "competence" to "soft skills".

According to Fabio & Kenny (2015) given the significance of awareness of one's own and others' emotions, as well as the requirement for proper expression and management of one's own emotions during an emotionally taxing job search, EI may be linked to employability and that although job searching is always stressful, it may become even more so if desirable employment prospects are rare, the authors also mentioned that employers indicate that cooperation skills and the capacity to operate well in a context of uncertainty and changing responsibilities are essential for the 21st-century workplace, therefore strong EI may be related with confidence in getting employment among young people.

Later on Matsouka & Mihail (2016) mentioned that it is widely acknowledged that emotional intelligence (EI) is a skill that companies value in fresh graduates who are likely to be recruited. A total of 79.3% of human resource managers want fresh graduates to have emotional intelligence. Jameson et al., (2016) found that employers prefer graduates with strong emotional intelligence for employability. The researchers surveyed 500 employers in Ireland's IT/computing, professional services (including accountancy, business, finance, HR, legal, and retail), science (including pharmaceutical and life sciences), and social science sectors to learn about their perspectives and opinions of employers on social and emotional competencies requirements among graduates in these sectors for employability. The findings reveal a gap between employers' expectations of emotional intelligence and the emotional intelligence held by graduate employees.

Researchers advise graduates to enhance their emotional intelligence in order to fulfil corporate criteria for employability skills, as people's emotional intelligence is also positively linked with significant employment experiences and emotional attachment to current careers and jobs. Li & Pu (2021) assert that interns who score high on emotional intelligence have a higher chance of being considered for employment by the internship host organisation than those who score low. Advocates such as Kaur, Shri & Mital (2019) also agreed that educators want students to graduate with solid foundation in knowledge and skills which will help them to be productive managers and effective leaders, and this can happen by implementing emotional intelligence (EI) theory and exercise.

EI is a significant aspect that improves the capacity to achieve organizational goals and job objectives, as well as improve collaboration through cooperation and trust (Arfara & Samanta 2016). People with high EI are more capable of protecting themselves from stressful situations, displaying less aggression, more self-discipline, and more self-esteem, and they do not have

the tendency to harm their mental health, as low emotionally intelligent people do (Drigas & Papoutsi, 2020). Furthermore, emotionally intelligent employees have a more positive outlook, appear more happy, devoted, and loyal to their profession and organization, leading to a more congenial work atmosphere and improved job performance (Miao et al. 2017). Such emotionally intelligent individuals contribute to a more productive work environment by being optimistic even in the face of overwhelming odds, resulting in better levels of job satisfaction, loyalty, and dedication (Miao et al. 2017). This was confirmed by the Global Talent Trend report, which listed emotional intelligence as one of the top skills employers want in 2021 naming it as a key skill for 2021 (LinkedIn, 2021).

SOFT SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY

Nowadays, soft skills are some of the most in-demand skills in any workplace. Recently, employers have placed increasing attention on the importance of soft skills as evidence suggests that soft skills are an important predictor in employability (Nazron et al., 2017). Vanitha & Jaganathan (2019) found that graduates with skills like effective communication, problem solving, time management, team spirit, self-confidence, positive attitude, handling criticism, and flexibility which are known as soft skills as a whole have much better chances of survival in the tough corporate world compared to those who are lacking in soft skills. Soft skills will not only help an employee stand out in today's more competitive market, but they will also boost relationships, work performance, and employability growth. Soft skills, according to new research, are just as productive as professional ones (Balcar et al., 2018)

Monster (2019) revealed that 85% of the recruiters in the survey took into account the value of soft skills. Recruiters like to see a good mix of soft skills and competencies among job prospects, as well as discipline-based knowledge and experience, before hiring new workers. Employers need employees with great soft skills who can establish a nice work atmosphere and successfully engage while retaining control (Matteson et al., 2016).

Oussi & Klibi (2017) in Tunisia with a sample of 180 students, and the study found a significant relationship between communication skills and employment. Similarly, Vyas (2019) assert that soft skills are vital requirements and in demand by hiring organizations . The latter stated within business management students for a better career and that some of the soft skills required by employers are communication skills, leadership skills, analytical thinking skills, teamwork skills and problem solving skills. In addition, employment opportunities increase when students have soft skills, and it increases opportunities to develop a career in a new direction, as well as giving the confidence to crack interviews and present themselves in a better way. Nusrat and Sultana (2019) identified the soft skills that recruiters frequently ask for graduates to sustain employment and found that there is a positive correlation between soft skills and employment in Bangladesh.

In Tanzania, Gerhardt (2019) found that proficiency of soft skills is important towards employability, final year students of bachelor's degree and postgraduate students showed a positive relationship between teamwork skills and employment. However, employers often find a soft-skills deficiency among job applicants (Johnson, 2016; Roos et al., 2016). Therefore, soft skills have become one of the needed criteria when hiring employees, since soft skills help one to get and keep employment as well as successfully influence and lead others at work (Rao, 2018). The World Economic Forum reported that by 2022, at least 54% of all employees would require reskilling and upskilling to keep up with changing job demands. This is especially crucial in light of the changes brought about by Covid-19, which have resulted in significant adjustments in the available job prospects. Apparently, communication skill, problem solving, analytical thinking skill, and leadership are among the most important skills employers demand (LinkedIn, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

This article is based on data gathered from various published articles, internet sources, and newspapers, and it is a review of the literature aimed at determining the relationship between emotional intelligence and employability, as well as the relationship between soft skills and employability from the perspective of employers, which will assist graduates in determining which factors are critical for employability, particularly during the Covid 19 situation.

The proposed conceptual framework was based on a review of the literature and previous studies. Specifically:

- Several nations throughout the world have expanded their focus on soft skills development in universities, as they prepare graduates for the world of employability (Abelha, Fernandes, Mesquita, Seabra & Oliveira, 2020).
- Having a higher level of emotional intelligence and better soft skills will lead to better employability chances (Hasnah et al., 2018).
- To be an excellent performer, emotional intelligence must work together with the skills to achieve employability (Riopel, 2020).

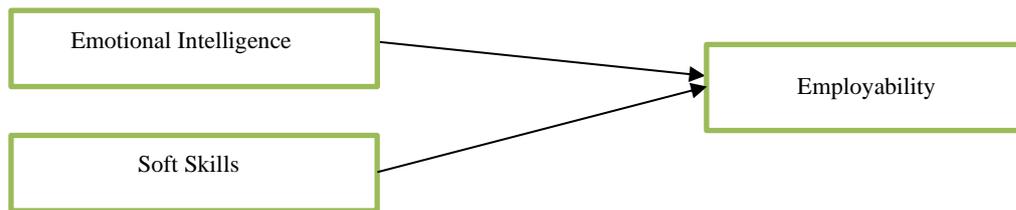


Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework of Emotional Intelligence, Soft Skills, and Graduates' Employability: Employers' perspectives

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Employability was termed a person's beliefs, philosophy, emotions, sense of calling or purpose, unconscious reasons, and characteristics, according to a researcher in the field of human resource management (Livesey, 2017). It has been argued that emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of life and professional success because an individual's ability to distinguish between stimuli and conduct is superior (Karimi, Leggar, fshari, Sarkeshik, & Verulava, 2021). Furthermore, employability is linked to variations in coping mechanisms to include emotional intelligence in behaviour, especially in a rapidly changing environment. It is fair to state that emotional intelligence (EI) has a direct impact on the entire coping process (O'Connor et al., 2019). Thus, employability is the key term for this coping strategy.

Although emotional intelligence has been observed as a moderator in a variety of settings, Fteiha & Awwad (2020) suggested that emotional intelligence plays a significant and positive role in stress and mental health. Kundi and Badar (2021) advocate that EI has an influence on emotional and behavioural responses to job security. Karimi, Leggat, Bertram and Verulava (2021) discovered a similar impact of EI on well-being and perceived work stress. The comparative performance of the individual countries in a global perspective is largely affected by their global economic standing. Individuals with greater emotional intelligence (EI) exhibit prosocial behaviors, which implies that they have acquired the skills to act correctly in interpersonally challenging situations (Martin-Raught et al., 2016). Furthermore, when hiring new workers, employers often seek for a particular few soft skills, such as creativity, leadership, critical thinking, communication, time management, teamwork, and problem solving, (Patacsil & Tablatin, 2017).

Apparently, recruiters like to see a good mix of soft skills and competencies among job seekers, as well as discipline-based knowledge and talents, before recruiting new workers. Employers, on the other hand, frequently discover a lack of soft skills among job seekers (Johnson, 2016; Roos et al., 2016). Therefore, soft skills have become one of the most important factors to consider when hiring new staff. Obviously, soft skills help to obtain and maintain employment, as well as successfully influence and lead people at work (Rao, 2017). Therefore, it is critical to identify the most widely recognised soft skills required for student employability. For example, at work, everyone engages in communication on a regular basis. Employees interact with supervisors and clients on a daily, and good communication is critical at all levels.

Employers feel that communication is one of the most important soft skills to learn since workers are frequently involved in occupations that demand varying levels of leadership and decision-making (Patacsil & Tablatin, 2017). Employees may share their thoughts and knowledge with management through communication, which also helps them interact with consumers. Communication abilities are said to aid employees in negotiating and networking professionally (Rao, 2017). Employee-employer relationships are strengthened through effective communication. It minimises misunderstandings and opens the door to mutually beneficial collaboration and coordination. As a result, one of the most important qualities that companies look for when hiring new staff is communication, which was reported lacking in graduates. The most common and trending topic on the employment/unemployment ratio of people is based on the soft skills deficiency: the skills that are required to handle the latest industry development (Clarke, 2018).

Another soft skill that helps employees succeed in their careers is critical thinking. Employees with critical thinking skills can operate under pressure, prioritise tasks, and solve problems holistically (Tang, 2018). Critical thinking appears to be a crucial soft skill for a variety of organisations. Though critical thinking is more closely linked with schooling, it is now recognised as a crucial component of job success (Zuo et al., 2018).

The significant contribution of this paper lies in determining importance of having emotional intelligence competencies as well as soft skills for the purpose of employment during the CoVid-19 pandemic and the years ahead, emotional intelligence helps people to be more successful at minimising anxiety and stress, as well as boosting resilience and recovery as despite the stressful work environment generated by the Covid-19 pandemic (Sadovyy et al., 2021). Workers with high EI have shown the best levels of job performance and the fewest unproductive work behaviors, compared to those with low EI who have shown higher levels of stress at work (Sadovyy et al., 2021). This paper clearly shows that the pandemic has brought to light the need for structural adjustments,

most notably in the area of education. This article presents the need for courses and programs to foster, develop, and increase emotional intelligence to be considered at all levels of education. Emotional intelligence and soft skills, in addition to cognitive and social skills, must be developed.

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