

Soft Skills Educations For Pedagogical Students Role, Current Situation And Solutions

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ABSTRACT: Soft skills are not only necessary for working people but also play an important role for students, especially pedagogical students and future educators. We have heard many terms about soft skills, but do we really understand soft skills correctly? What do soft skills include? This article focuses on understanding the role, current situation and solutions for soft skills education for pedagogical students in Vietnam today.

Keywords: Soft skills educations; pedagogical students; role; curent situation; solutions

I. INTRODUCTION

In the modern society, a period of global integration with many unpredictable changes, the more independent each person is, the more closely connected they are to others and to the society. Faced with these fluctuations and interwoven relationships, being equipped with soft skills will enable students to handle situations in life. Besides professional skills, candidates possessing soft skills always have an advantage in the recruitment process of administrators...

Soft skills; What are soft skills?

According to author D.M. Kaplan, soft skills are skills that people possess in addition to expertise and professionalism in the field of work. It is also considered a manifestation of human emotional intelligence, demonstrating the mental ability of the individual. In other words, soft skills demonstrate the existence and effective application of personal characteristics, such as friendliness, altruism, and acceptance of others.²

Soft skills are a set of skills related to activities in life. Some "necessary skills" include: The ability to use language, communication, behavior, attitudes between people, thinking, communication, teamwork, presentation, conflict resolution, etc. That is the ability of the individual to successfully establish and develop interactive relationships between yourself and those around you, leading to positive results in professional activities based on the relevant knowledge system that has been formed through the experiencing process. Thanks to that, employers can evaluate the candidate's ability to interact and work in a team, thereby considering compatibility with the environment of the business or administrative and public service units.

The role of soft skills: In fact, most successful people only possess about 25% technical skills, the remaining 75% are life skills³. At present, many training establishments open soft skills training classes for students to help each person gradually improve themselves: The ability to share and handle situations well helps us create many practical values in life, and is a leading complement to hard skills. According to a recent study, more than 90% of the list of the world's richest people possess certain soft skills. From there, they create breakthroughs in work and life.

Popular soft skills today: Negotiation skills; Communication skills; Teamwork skill; Time management skills; Planning skills; Listening Skills; Leadership skills; Problem-solving skills; Soft skills and hard skills always exist side by side, becoming two indispensable factors if you want to be successful in any job position.

Understanding what soft skills are, you will have a plan to quickly develop and achieve great success. It's never too late, right now, continuously practice to possess the best soft skills.

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².Results of ministerial-level scientific research project: "Developing soft skills for pedagogical students", code B.2012.19.75

³ <https://chefjob.vn/ky-nang-mem-la-gi>

II. ROLE OF SOFT SKILLS EDUCATION ACTIVITIES FOR PEDAGOGICAL STUDENTS

Soft skills are considered an important and necessary element of human capacity, especially in modern society with the rapid explosion of science and technology, skills become even more important. Soft skills education is not a subject, it is an educational activity that aims to form in learners, especially pedagogical students, specific soft skills such as: self-awareness, communication, creativity, teamwork skills, etc. help them have methods to handle situations anytime, anywhere, in any situation, at work and in daily communication, etc.

In life and study: Soft skills help pedagogical students be aware of their actions and know how to control themselves, be more confident in life, and especially in study and work after graduation. Soft skills help them have a stronger stance, faster and sharper thinking, and more effective ways of responding and handling situations encountered in life. Soft skills are also the art of dealing with students, colleagues, and associates; with superiors and with everyone. Practicing soft skills helps perfecting human personality. For students, especially pedagogical students, studying and cultivating soft skills is even more important, greatly affecting their learning outcomes and adaptation to life, stemming from the following reasons:

- Changing living environment: Most students have to leave far from home and start an independent life. New living environments require students to have skills to adapt to those changes.

- Changing the learning environment: Students must get used to the new learning environment, with new learning methods that require self-discipline, self-study and self-research. To achieve high results in studying at university, in addition to studying hard in class, students also need to carefully research materials related to studying with appropriate and creative learning methods. A university study requires students to express themselves and express their own opinions. To do this well, students are required to be confident in communication.

For pedagogical students - with specific requirements on output standards, students in the training process are required to be trained and educated in soft skills to both serve learning activities, meet output standards and serve their practical work after graduation.

Thus, educating students about life skills helps them easily integrate into the learning environment as well as social life, which is always moving and changing.

In the working environment after graduation

Soft skills meet the requirements when performing professional tasks in the education sector in the current socio-economic context: With the strong development of science and technology, the globalization trends and the current knowledge economy, workers' skills are increasingly appreciated. Many employers value soft skills and consider this one of the important recruitment requirements. Education and qualifications are only necessary conditions, but not sufficient conditions for a person to live and work effectively. Soft skills help pedagogical students think and interact in study and work in the best way. In today's conditions with an increasingly dynamic, pressured and competitive working environment, soft skills are proven to have a great influence on the success or failure of each person's career in the pedagogical field.

- Soft skills directly contribute to improving efficiency in learning, research, and labor productivity through the ability to work in groups. In addition to knowledge and expertise, soft skills are also the most important factor influencing the hiring decisions of administrators. Soft skills represent the way of life, accumulated experiences from life and in today's society. This is considered the golden key to success. In particular, soft skills are important factor for pedagogical students to best apply their professional capacity in practical work and life. Soft skills also give pedagogical students the opportunity to connect with many individuals and organizations, helping them expand and develop relationships.

- Soft skills directly contribute to improving efficiency in learning, research, and labor productivity through the ability to work in groups. Soft skills act as a bridge for students to acquire knowledge and professional competencies that have been trained into effective actions and jobs in practical work. Soft skills not only help pedagogical students improve their own abilities, but are also a necessary factor for those students to be able to cooperate well with each other in the process of performing work.

In general, soft skills play a very important role for university students in general, and pedagogical students in particular, helping them quickly adapt to the labor market upon graduation, creating opportunities for advancement for themselves in the work and meet the requirements of the modern society.

III. CURRENT STATUS OF SOFT SKILLS EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AT SOME PEDAGOGICAL UNIVERSITIES

The soft skills of students at pedagogical universities are not direct professional skills, but skills that create teachers' adaptation in the working environment in high schools. These are particularly effective contribution skills that create special interactions between teachers and other subjects in professional relationships; and are also the conditions to support teachers to reach the highest effectiveness.

1. *The current status of education and training of soft skills* through a test subject of 60 students participating in the class “Developing soft skills for students at pedagogic universities” held at Ho Chi Minh City University of Pedagogy (HCMC) and Thu Dau Mot University organized by the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Educational Psychology in collaboration with the Youth Union, is free for students who register freely (with application review to select truly interested students). This is also a pilot class that serves as a premise for future classes of research institutions or implementation of soft skill education programs for pedagogical university students. The results obtained were significant improvements in all skills in pedagogical students participating in the study.

Firstly: *Comparison results of students' problem-solving skills before and after the experiment (see table 1)*

Table 1 shows that there was a large and very positive change in the problem-solving skills of pedagogical students after the experiment with an average score ($4.13 - 2.96 = 1.17$) of more than 1.0 point; In all 6 criteria, there are significant changes and this difference is statistically significant. The most significant differences are in the following order: “understanding the concept of problem solving” ($4.14 - 2.72 = 1.42$), “difficulties in solving problems” ($4.35 - 3.03 = 1.32$), “the requirements when solving problems” ($3.91 - 2.79 = 1.12$), “specific actions in each stage when solving problems” ($3.89 - 2.78 = 1.11$), “understanding the concept of problem-solving skills and its characteristics” ($4.03 - 3.42 = 0.61$). In general, this difference is quite large, showing that the problem-solving skills of students in the experimental group have been improved.

N	Content	Average score		T-Test	difference statistically significant
		Before TNg	After TNg		
1	Concept of teamwork skills	2,72	4,14	0,00	+
2	Requirements of teamwork	3,42	4,03	0,00	+
3	Level of performance of operations and skills related to teamwork	3,07	4,45	0,003	+
4	operations and skills related to teamwork	2,79	3,91	0,005	+
5	Requirements when managing emotions	2,78	3,89	0,002	+
6	Difficulties of students in teamwork	3,03	4,35	0,000	+
Average score		2,96	4,13	0,000	+

Table 1. Comparison of problem solving skills in students of Ho Chi Minh City University of Education before and after the experiment

Secondly, *the comparison results on teamwork skills in students of Ho Chi Minh City University of Education before and after the experiment*

N	Content	Average score		T-Test	difference statistically significant
		Before TNg	After TNg		
1	Concept of emotional management skills	2,78	3,89	0,003	+
2	Requirements when managing emotions	2,88	3,99	0,002	+
3	Level of performance of operations and skills related to emotional management skills	3,50	4,42	0,000	+
4	Difficulties of students when performing emotional management skills	3,06	4,00	0,000	+
Average score		3,05	4,07	0,00	+

Table 2. Comparison of group work skills in students between before and after the experiment

From the above survey, it can be concluded that there is a difference in students' teamwork skills before and after the experiment. Thanks to the impact measure, students' teamwork skills improved significantly, from average level (average score = 3.05) to high level (average score = 4.07).

Thirdly: Comparison results of emotional management skills in Pedagogical University students before and after the experiment.

The score achieved in emotional management skills of students at Pedagogical University only corresponds to the average level when the average score is 3.00. However, after the experiment, the emotional management skills of students at Pedagogical University reached a high level with an average score of 4.04; at the same time, the t value found when comparing the average score on emotional management of pedagogical university students before and after the experiment showed a statistically significant difference.

N	Content	Average score		T - Test	difference statistically significant
		Before TNg	After TNg		
1	Concept of emotional management skills	2,38	3,49	0,002	+
2	Requirements when managing emotions	2,68	3,59	0,001	+
3	Level of performance of operations and skills related to emotional management skills	3,50	4,54	0,000	+
4	Difficulties of students when performing emotional management skills	3,43	4,53	0,000	+
Total		3,00	4,04	0,00	+

Table 3. Comparison of emotional management skills in students of Ho Chi Minh City University of Education before and after the experiment

2. At Hanoi National University of Education

Respondents: Administrators, teachers and 3rd year students of Hanoi National University of Education. The study selects 7 skills to survey about soft skills of students at Hanoi National University of Education currently being taught in the official soft skills education program within the classroom: Skills: 1- communication skills; 2- teamwork skill; 3- problem-solving skills; 4- planning and work organization skills; 5- self-management skills; 6- lifelong learning skills; 7- technology skills.

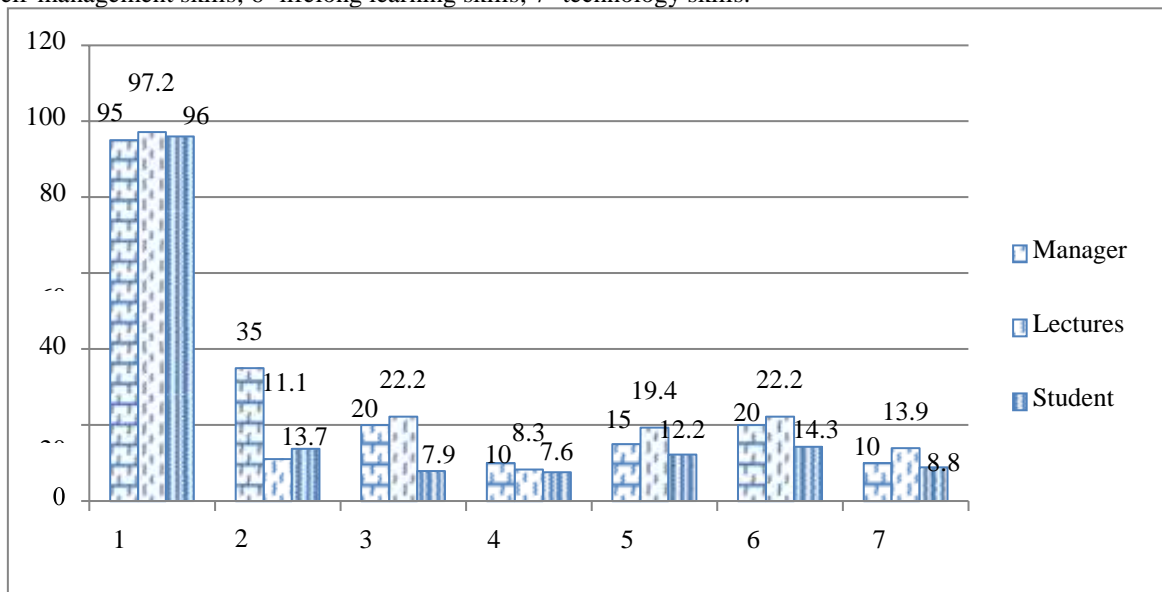


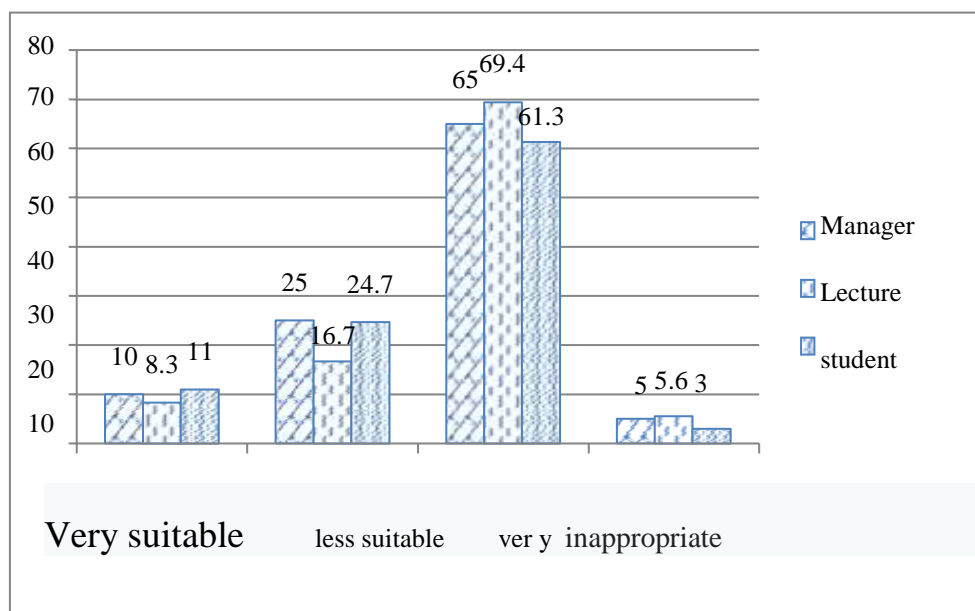
Figure 2.1 Evaluation of administrators, lecturers, and students on soft skills for students in the current soft skills education program.

From Figure 2.1, we see that the survey results are completely consistent with the reality. Over 95% of

administrators, teachers and students agree that only communication skills are officially taught in the training program. Skills are only integrated and integrated into other modules, also known as hidden soft skills education programs, so the rate of agreement between administrators, teachers, and students is low.

Regarding the suitability of the current soft skills education program, administrators, teachers and students have the

Following assessments



From Figure 2.2, we can see that about 70 - 75% of administrators, teachers and students think that the soft skills education program of Hanoi National University of Education is not really suitable for students' future job requirements. The cause of this problem is that the official soft skills education program has not been focused on, only accounting for a negligible proportion of the entire training program, mainly focusing on communication skills.

IV. SOME SOLUTIONS FOR INNOVATING THE MANAGEMENT OF SOFT SKILL TRAINING FOR STUDENTS OF PEDAGOGICAL SCHOOLS

On the basis of analyzing the influencing factors (charts) on the management of soft skill training for students, the author makes some basic suggestions as follows:

Firstly, integrate the soft skills output standard into the training program for students

On the basis of the defined output standards, it is necessary to develop appropriate and practical programs and contents to organize training and fostering of soft skills for students right in each module; consider adding the soft skills module to the training program so that students have the conditions to develop skills in a specific and clear way; enhance practical activities and experiences in the training process. The way to take action is as follows:

+ Schools need to organize for the faculties to complete the output standards of training programs, including integrating the output standards on soft skills.

+ Compare the current training program with the newly defined output standards; thereby adding the necessary courses or adjusting and supplementing the content of the existing courses to meet the new output standards.

+ Compile training programs, detailed outlines of modules, including soft skills module.

Secondly, raise awareness of staff, lecturers and students about the importance of soft skills for students.

This measure helps staff and lecturers to be properly aware of the importance of developing soft skills, giving lecturers a positive spirit of support and serious implementation when developing soft skills for students.. In order for the development of soft skills for students to be highly effective, schools need to raise the awareness of staff, lecturers and students about the importance of soft skills because awareness is always the first stage of a process of social activities and has great significance. Only when having the right perception can they take the right action, so raising awareness and sense of responsibility for officials, lecturers and students about the role of soft skills for students is an important factor that has a great influence on the quality of education in general and the effectiveness of developing skills for students in schools in particular. Raising awareness of students will help students have the motivation to study and develop skills. The way to take action is as follows[22]:

+ Organize seminars and exchanges for representatives of recruitment agencies, lecturers to talk about the importance of soft skills for students, from which students have a sense of self-study, self-improvement of knowledge and skills.

+ Organize propaganda and training for lecturers about the importance, goals and contents of soft skills.

+ Regularly organize for staff, lecturers and students to study, research and thoroughly grasp the Directives, Resolutions and guidelines of the Party on the development of education and training; guiding documents of the State on the construction and development of high human resources.

Thirdly, renovate the organization to implement soft skill training for students

+ Establish clubs, organize seminars, forums, contests as part of the plan to organize educational activities outside of class time. Through these activities, students have the opportunity to express and assert themselves, practice skills such as communication and behavior skills, teamwork skills, problem solving skills, creativity, etc.

+ Innovate the integration of knowledge development in the subjects: organizing professional activities to select appropriate lessons that can integrate the development of new skills, agreeing specifically on activities that need to be integrated in the lesson, teaching and selecting information, knowledge and skills needed for students to perform practical activities in learning situations and daily life; focusing on applying active teaching methods to enhance students' initiative in the process of studying lessons, and at the same time, maximally developing the skills associated with the lesson content.

+ Innovate activities of testing and monitoring the implementation of developing skills for students: assessing the results should focus on such contents as sticking to the output standards of developing knowledge skills for each topic, each grade level, closely following the goals of each specific activity, evaluating the results of each specific activity content, the students' proficiency in applying the skills to the appropriate conditions, circumstances, behavior change, progress compared to the individual student himself[22].

Fourthly, supplement resources for soft skills development activities for students

Facilities and teaching equipment belonging to the media system of the teaching process are necessary conditions, the basis for realizing the goal of renovating the curriculum, and are also an important and necessary condition for innovating the teaching methods. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of material foundations and teaching equipment to develop new skills for students: building a list of the minimum facilities necessary for effective development of new skills; developing annual financial plans; well implementing the socialization of education, mobilizing forces and sponsors to support funding and means for the operation; developing internal rules and regulations on the use and maintenance of equipment; and organizing training for staff and lecturers on how to use and maintain existing modern machinery and equipment [22].

V. CONCLUSION

From the above data it can be seen that: The number of students graduating each year is relatively large, but the employment rate right after graduation is not high. The main reason given by employers is that candidates have basic knowledge but lack relevant soft skills, making it difficult to integrate into the working environment. According to experts, right from the time they are in school, pedagogical students should learn and gradually practice *soft skills*, such as communication, presentation skills, and interviewing. CV writing, listening, etc. can help with future work. At the same time, from the perspective of administrators, it is necessary to synchronously implement the above solutions.

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