

IDENTIFICATION OF SOFT SKILLS FOR TRAINING REQUIREMENTS OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PERSONNEL

Dr. Varsha Goyal, Assistant Professor, Amity University, Noida

Abstract : *The contemporary business scenario has become more dynamic and is changing radically, due to the effect of globalization, Information and Technological development, increasing workplace diversity and competition in the market, the importance and training of soft skills become an essential part of particularly Information technology Industry as these mold the personality of Information technology professionals and also help them to sustain in the competitive edge to achieve survival of fittest. In this perspective Soft Skills should be identified for personnel of information technology industry and training should be given accordingly. The purpose of this research paper is to identify the soft skills of the personnel of Indian, MNC and Small IT industry. Responses were gathered from 120 respondents which include personnel of Information Technology Industry established in India. Analysis of the responses has been done using the basic statistics. The results revealed the soft skills as interpersonal skills, Team building competence, stress management, and Negotiation skills, Presentation, Problem Solving ability for training requirement. These skills are important for personnel of all types of Information Technology Industry and developed however using strategies in planned way.*

Key words: Soft Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Stress management, Negotiation Skill, Survival of Fittest

Introduction:

The contemporary global economic scenario is described in terms of global economy, technology, and customer influence, and workplace diversity, mobility, cross cultural sensitization, complexity and uncertainty gripping the industrial world. To compete successfully in the global business environment and to get edge over competitors' professionals have to add value to hard skills with soft skills so as to exhibit once true potential. Soft Skills are nontechnical traits and behaviors needed for successful career navigation which allows a person to more effectively use his technical abilities & knowledge (Klaus 2007).

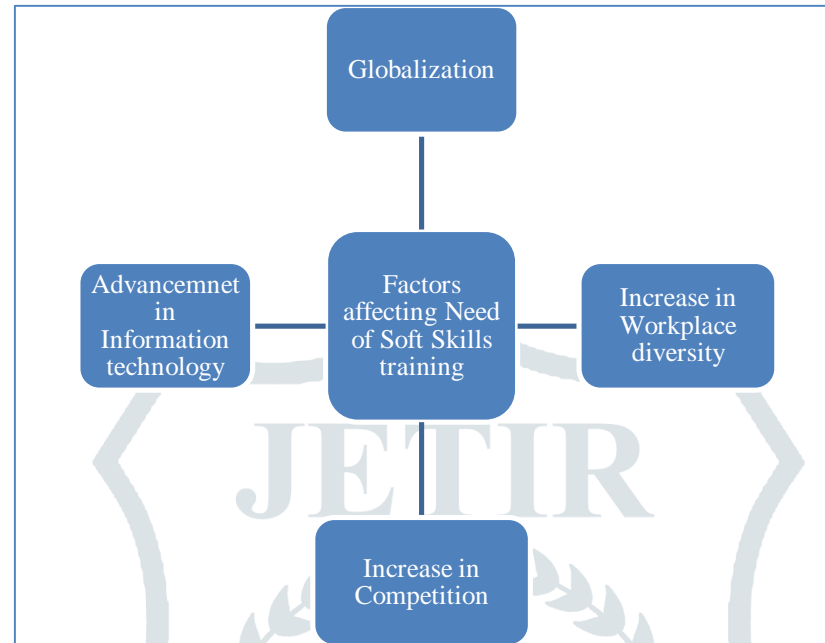


Figure 1:- Factors affecting need of soft skills training

Upadhyaya and Vasavi (2006) in their study focused on the creation of the IT workforce; the new forms of work, employment, organization and management and new cultures of work emerged in IT industries due to transformation in lifestyles, sociality and identity that are taking place within this global workforce. Joseph, D. et.al (2010) described development of soft skills for IT professional's level of practical intelligence in which a broader set of soft skills were identified in which some are very much needed for personnel of Information Technology Industry, researcher wanted to identify those necessary soft skills for information technology industry as Indian IT, MNC and small IT so that these can be developed using different training interventions. As these training interventions will help the IT personnel to adapt to different cultures, customs, social practices & management approaches who can work with other employees from different backgrounds. Technical and job-related skills are must, but they are not sufficient when it comes to progressing up the ladder. One should have the ability to convey the idea to the masses and to get the best out of them in the simplest possible manner to survive and grow in a job.

Review of Literature:

Goswami, R. (2013) emphasized more on the grooming of soft skills of Information technology students. It has been observed that during their course of studies emphasis is given on developing the hard skills as their curriculum is specifically designed to make them technically very sound but they lack in soft skills. This gap is clearly visible during the occasions of interviews, presentations and public speaking. Prospective IT personnel find it difficult to coordinate when they are more likely to work on series of projects with the diverse teams in which they have to use variety of soft skills to convince the team members and implement the task.

Mathur. A. (2017) highlighted the importance of soft skills requirements initiated due to employers' complaint about the lack of soft skills among technical graduates. Bancino and Zevalkink (2007) in their recent survey of more than 250 technical leaders cited the

biggest reason for project failure as a lack of soft skills. When nontechnical skills are developed to complement technical skills, personal productivity, collaboration and synergy are increased. This translates into improved project success rates, sustainable competitive advantage and increased profitability. Chikumba, S. (2011) highlighted in his research that training tasks should ensure that there is a high level of soft skills imparted to compliment hard skills they gain during Work Integrated Learning.

Half, (2007) reported in his recent study that 53 % of all IT companies surveyed, 62% of companies with more than 1000 employees, 70% of business services firms are improving the productivity of individual technical staff, increasing the project success rates for the technical team, and improving the bottom line of their companies by paying attention to the soft skills of their technical teams. IT staff (Technical professionals) should improve soft skills as **Communication, Emotional Intelligence, Teamwork and Leadership** concluded by the recent study showing percentage of following skills to be improved. **Team work-Interpersonal skills 31%, Communication- Written & Verbal skills 20%, Leadership- Organizational Skills 14%, Emotional Intelligence- Ability to work under pressure 17%**, only 25% of technical abilities are needed but above soft skills for IT professionals should be upgraded for productivity of individual & success of the company. Kakabadse & Korac-Kakabadse, (2000), identified the skills and competencies required for development in the early twenty-first century for IT professionals. Verma and Bedi, (2008) listed the critical soft skills required in an industry especially in an IT industry and their components. Agrawal and Thite, (2003), in their study identified the various soft skills required by software professionals in Leadership position through role diagnostic workshop of Indian software professionals and in-depth interviews of various stakeholders. They need to have self-related soft skills, leadership and managerial skills etc. Kendall, (2010) in his study focused on IT professionals to develop their business and service oriented skills to get closer to the business they work in. Tewari, (2010). In her study the ultimate significance of soft skills for technical professionals in the LPG (liberalization, privatization and globalization) era had been elicited. Remedial approaches to training as well as polishing soft skills had been the focal point of the study. Zhang, (2012.) said that IT education must prepare future IT professionals with hard and soft skills to communicate with end users to resolve conflicts and to bring different functions together toward a common goal. Radhika, CH. (2013). in her study focused on the skills required by the Industry and training of identified soft skills. Above research studies focusses on the importance of necessary soft skills and their training requirement in IT education.

The present study, emphasizes more on the identification of soft skills in which training is required for Information technology personnel which helps them in the “survival of fittest” to have the competitive edge.

***Objectives of the Study:* - To study the Soft Skills for training requirement of the Personnel of Indian IT, MNC IT and Small IT Industry**

Methodology: Information was gathered from 120 respondents which include personnel of Indian, MNC and Small Information Technology Industry. The survey method was used and responses were randomly collected through WhatsApp, email and face to face interaction and subsequently analyzed. The analysis was presented in the following tables and subsequently interpreted.

Analysis:

Table No. 1 - Training requirement on Soft Skills of the Personnel of Indian IT, MNC IT and Small IT Industry

S.No	Soft Skills	Indian IT %	MNC IT %	Small IT %
1	Analytical Thinking Ability	30	23.3	42.5
2	Assertiveness	42	36.6	52.5
3	Communication	42	46.6	42.5
4	Conflict Management	44	36.6	45
5	Creative Thinking	32	30	45
6	Cross Cultural Sensitivity	40	36.6	45
7	Customer Relationship Management	36	43.3	47.5
8	Decision Making Skills	34	36.6	45
9	Emotional Intelligence	24	30	40
10	Impression Management	34	33.3	40
11	Interpersonal Communication Skills	52	53.3	42.5
12	Leadership Skills	46	50	42.5
13	Listening with empathy	26	30	40
14	Managing Hazardous emotions	48	53.3	40
15	Moral and ethical responsiveness	30	23.3	35
16	Motivational Skills	48	43.3	45
17	Negotiation Skills	48	43.3	45
18	Persuasive Skills	32	36.6	47.7
19	Positive Thinking	24	23.3	42.5
20	Presentation Skills	40	36.6	47.7
21	Problem Solving Skills	36	33.3	47.7
22	Public Speaking Skills	32	30	42.5
23	Social Networking Skills	26	30	42.5
24	Stress Management	46	46.6	52.5
25	Team Building Competence	46	46.6	47.7
26	Time Management	48	40	50

Results: The skills which have high percentage for **training requirement in Indian IT** are as follows: Interpersonal Communication Skills, Managing hazardous emotions, Motivation Skills, Time Management Skills and Negotiation skills, Stress Management and Team building competence (52%, 48%, 48%, 48%, 48%, 46%,46%)These skills are presented in the Figure no. 1

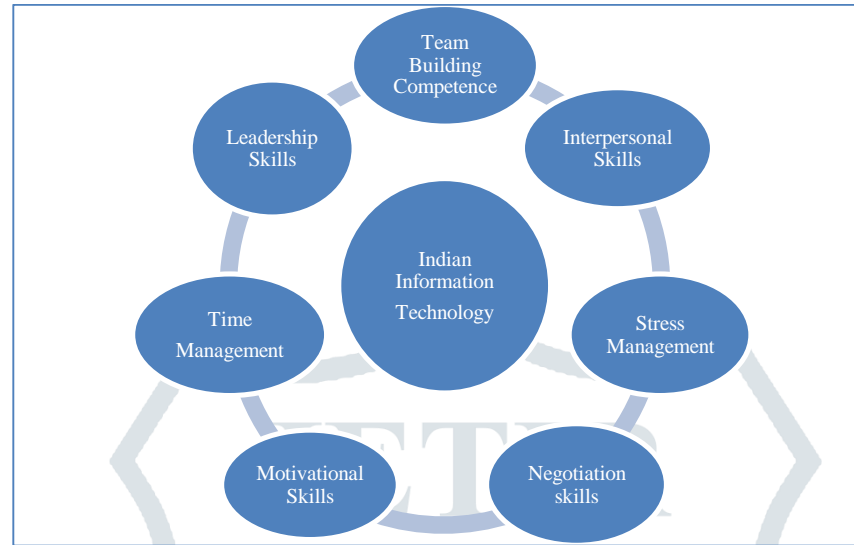


Figure 2: - Training requirement of Soft Skills on the Personnel of Indian Information Technology Industry

Results: The skills which have high percentage for **training requirement in MNC IT** are as follows, Interpersonal Communication Skills, Managing Hazardous emotions, Stress Management Skills and Team Building Competence, Motivational, Negotiation Skills (53.3%, 53.3%, 46% , 46%,43.3%, 43.3%). These Skills are presented in the figure 2.

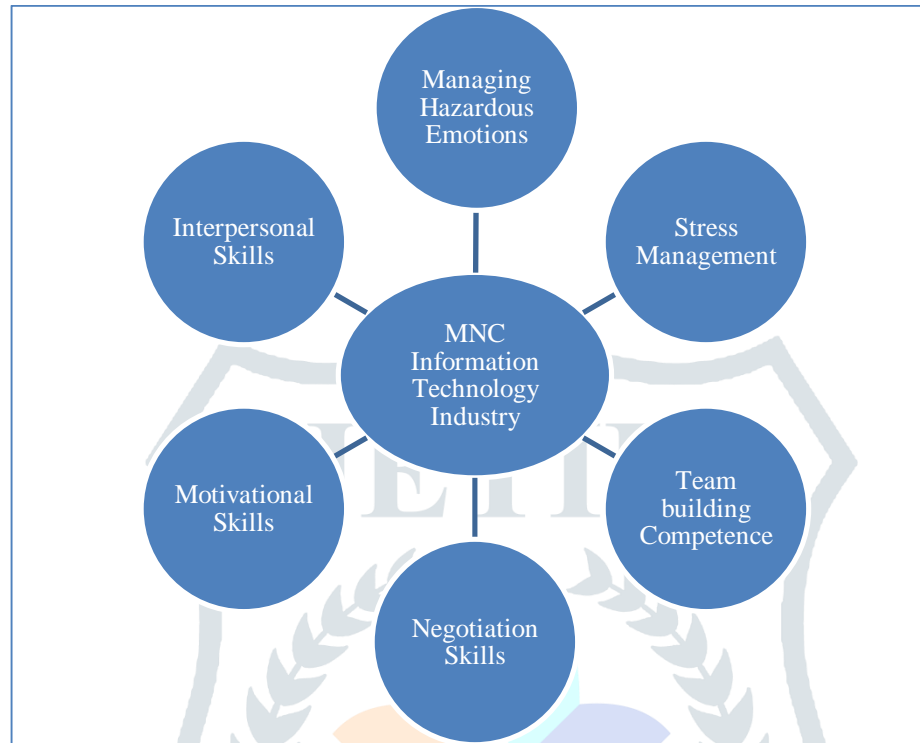


Figure 3: - Training Requirement on the Soft Skills of the Personnel of MNC Information Technology Industry

Results- The skills which have high percentage for **training requirement in MNC IT** are as follows Assertiveness, Stress Management Skills, Time Management, and Persuasion. Presentation and Problem-solving skills (52.5%, 52.5%, 50%, 47.5%, 47.5%, 47.5%) These skills are presented in the figure 3.

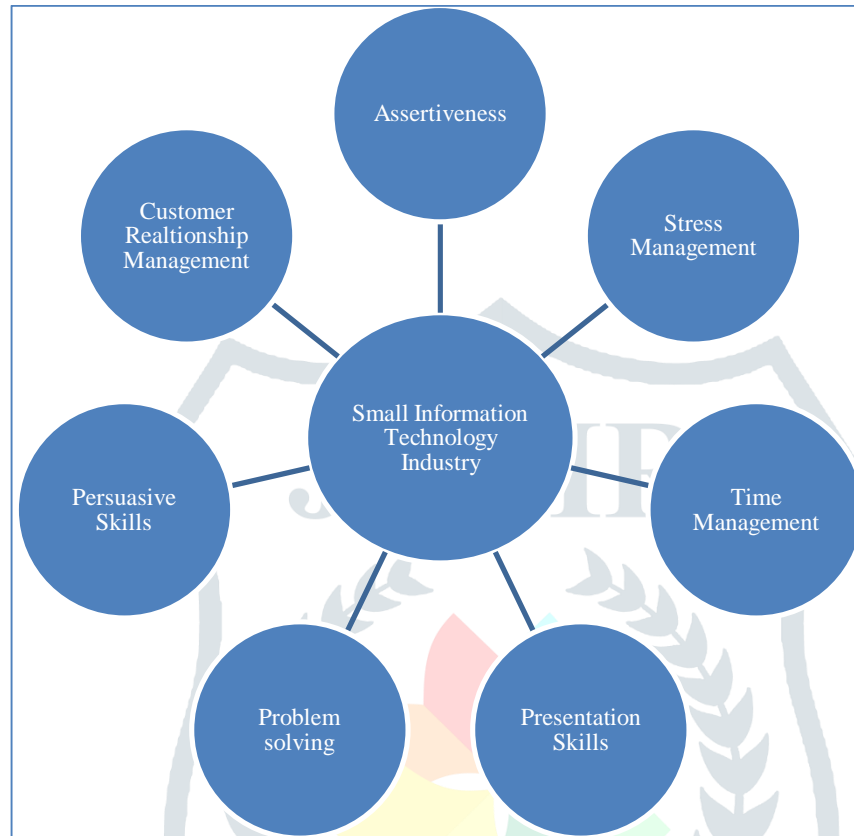


Figure 4: - Training Requirement on the Soft Skills of the Personnel of Small Information Technology Industry

Conclusion: In this research paper, training requirement of soft skills on personnel of information technology has been analyzed and the results are interpreted and concluded that the training requirement is to a great extent on the interpersonal skills, stress management, time management as it helps the IT personnel to sustain in the competitive edge. As the use of social media is increasing day by day in various aspects so new fronts in management education may also open where the influence of Social media will appear in the near future. The influence of social media on the soft skills may be studied of the personnel working in different sectors such as , medical education taking new aspects for different hierarchies.

Bibliography:

1. Kakabadse, Nada Korac-Kakabadse, (2000) "Leading the pack : future role of IS/IT professionals", *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 19 Issue: 2, pp.97-155, <https://doi.org/10.1108/02621710010312815>
2. Agarwal, N.M. and Thite, M. (2003). "Nature and Importance of Soft Skills in Software Project Leaders". *IIM Bangalore Research Paper No. 214*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2159692>
3. Upadhya Carol, Vasavi, A.R. (2006). "Work Culture and Sociality in Indian IT Industry". *A Sociological Study*

4. Bancino, R., Zevalkink, Claire. (2007). “Soft Skills: The New Curriculum for Hard-Core Technical Professionals”. *Techniques: Connecting Education and Careers (J1)*, Vol.82, n5, pp.20-22
5. Klaus Peggy, (2008). “The Hard truth about Soft skills – Workplace lessons Smart People Wish They would learned sooner”. *Collins, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers*, pp.208
6. Kendall, H. (2008). “IT service industry needs better business & soft skills”. www.ft.com
7. Verma, A., Bedi, M.(2008). “The ICAI University of Soft Skills”. Vol 2. No. 4 http://www.iupindia.in/1208/Soft_Skills.asp?mag
8. John, J. (2009). Study on the Nature of Impact of Soft Skills Training Program on the Soft Skills Development of Management Students, *Pacific Business review* pp.19-27. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1591331>
9. Joseph, D.et.al. (2010). “Practical Intelligence in IT: Assessing Soft Skills for IT Professionals”. *Communication of the ACM*, Vol.53, No.2, pp.149-154.
10. Tewari, R. (2010). “Training Students in Soft Skills for Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization”. www.eltweekely.com
11. Radhika, Ch. (2013), “Soft Skills – A Buzz Word In The New Millennium”. *Indian Streams Research Journal* Vol-3, Issue-7 (Aug 2013): Online & Print
12. Zhang, A. (2012). “Peer Assessment of Soft Skills and Hard skills”. *Journal of Information technology Education Research*. Vol.1, pp .157-164
13. Radhika, Ch. (2013), “Soft Skills – A Buzz Word In The New Millennium”. *Indian Streams Research Journal* Vol-3, Issue-7 (Aug 2013): Online & Print
14. Goswami, R. (2013). Importance of Soft Skills in the employability of IT students, *Bharti Vidyapeeth’s Institute of Management & Information Technology (BVIMSR’S) Journal of Management Research*.
15. www.bvimsr.com/documents/publication/NCIT2013/13.pdf
16. Mathur, A. (2017). The role of soft skills in enhancing employability of technical graduates, *International Journal on Emerging Technologies*, Vol.8, pp.65-66 www.researchtrend.net