

**Evaluating The General Perception of Soft skills On Employment  
Among Business Management Students: A Study of Shanker Dev  
Campus**

**Unnati Shiwakoti<sup>1</sup>, Susmita Thakuri<sup>1</sup>, Srikant Upadhyay<sup>1</sup>, Sujita Shrestha<sup>1</sup>, Vikas Agri<sup>1</sup>**

BBM 4<sup>th</sup> Shanker Dev Campus, Nepal

**Dr. Rajan Bilas Bajracharya<sup>2</sup>,**

Faculty of Management, People's Campus, Nepal

[rajan\\_vj@hotmail.com](mailto:rajan_vj@hotmail.com)

**Corresponding Author**

**Rajan Bilas Bajracharya**

[rajan\\_vj@hotmail.com](mailto:rajan_vj@hotmail.com)

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**Abstract**

Soft skills are increasingly recognized as essential for success in today's competitive job market, particularly within the field of business management. This research explores the general perception of soft skills on employment success among business management students, focusing on a Shanker Dev Campus. Using a simple random sampling approach, data was collected through questionnaire from a sample of students enrolled in business management programs at the campus. Using descriptive analytical tools, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation are calculated and quantitative analytical tools i.e. Correlation between perceived soft skills proficiency and employment success, prospects among students. Analysis of the data revealed insights into the perceived importance of soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and leadership, as well as their impact on students' preparedness for the workforce and career advancement opportunities. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to enhance the development of soft skills within business management education and better align

curriculum with industry demands. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of soft skills in shaping the career trajectories of business management students and provides valuable insights for educators, employers, and policymakers.

**Keywords:** soft skills, employment success, career development, business management education,

## **1. Introduction**

In an era where the global workforce is continually evolving, employers are seeking individuals who not only possess a robust academic foundation but also exhibit a versatile set of interpersonal and communication skills. Soft skills encompass a range of attributes, including effective communication, problem-solving, self-motivation, decision-making, critical thinking, adaptability, teamwork, emotional intelligence, and time management skills, which collectively contribute to an individual's ability to navigate the complexities of the professional landscape. Soft skills are often known as personal skills, non-academic skills, interpersonal skills, employability skills, behavioral skills, non-technical skills, social skills and emotional intelligence (Siddiqui & Lokhande, 2019). A study by Hodges and Burchell (2003) investigated the perceptions of business employers of the importance of different skills. It was reported that eight out of top ten skills were soft skills which included the ability and willingness to learn, teamwork and cooperation, interpersonal communication, energy and passion, and problem-solving skills. A study covering over 52 different professions with more than 8,000 managers in the United States identified

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soft skills of employees as the major competency in nearly all the professions, even in the technical environments.

While it is now a well-established fact that employers are increasingly putting more emphasis on soft skills, it is equally important that students should also adequately appreciate the value of such skills and make deliberate efforts to acquire them. Porter, J. (2007) reported that many business students do not put much value on developing soft skills. Probably that is why, as suggested by Rynes et. al., (2003), the business students' attitude towards behavioral courses, with substantial coverage given to soft skills development, is usually negative together with their reluctance to register for such courses. As a result, there is an awareness gap resulting in deficiency of soft skills among business graduates entering the work force.

In the context of Nepal, where the educational landscape is undergoing rapid transformations, there exists a pressing need to investigate the student perspective regarding soft skills and their influence on career development. Despite a growing recognition of the importance of soft skills in global employment trends, there is a noticeable gap in our understanding of how Nepalese students perceive and prioritize these skills within their educational journey and subsequent career aspirations. The informal sector is a dominant economic sector of Nepal where more than 80 percent of the total workforce is involved (Ministry of Labour and Employment [MoLE], 2014; World Bank, 2019). Workers working in this sector generally acquire occupational skills during their work.

Through a comprehensive analysis of the student perspective, this study focuses on undergraduate student perception towards soft skills essential for knowledge and employment. Many studies have been carried out for highlighting needs of soft skills in a global context. Focusing on the need of soft skills among students the purpose of the

study is to analyze student perception regarding soft skills for Career development among students of Shanker Dev Campus. Being a top management college, it is a key factor that the college emphasizes for the growth of student's soft skills. It helps for employment soon. Hence the main aim for conducting this research is to examine whether Sanker Dev Campus has soft skills development through a student perspective

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study's general objective is to examine the significance of soft skills in career development. The specific objectives of this study are:

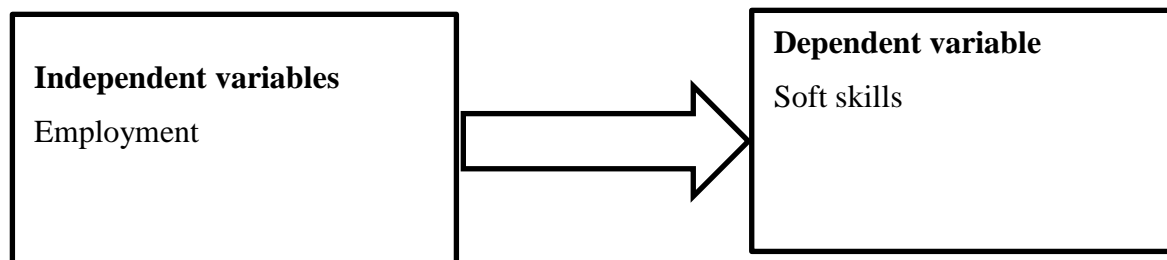
- To explore the student's general perceptions of soft skills
- To identify relationship between soft skills and employment

### **Hypothesis**

- There is a significant relationship between soft skills and employment.

### **Conceptual framework**

The study presents the following conceptual framework based on the literature review.



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework**

## **2. Literature Review**

In today's global market economy, the development and mastery of soft skills have become important for individuals to ensure career success and competitiveness. According to Majid et al (colombo-palacios et Al., 2009) engineers and scientists should understand the value of soft skills in order to progress in their careers. Soft skills refer to a set of non-technical, interpersonal skills essential for effective communication,

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collaboration, problem solving, and adaptability in the workplace. Majid et al. identified that soft skills like communication and interpersonal skills are highly valued in personal and professional life. This study explores student's perception of the importance of soft skills for education and employment. The sample survey among 188 undergraduate business management students from four Singapore universities participated. Most of the results were in favor of the importance of soft skills for social interaction and career development but not significantly for academic performance. This result states that along with academic performance soft skills are crucially important to compete in this 21st century. The study also suggests measures to improve student's soft skills improving from their employment perspective.

Abdullah-Al-Mamun (2012) explores that soft skills are essential for students to improve their employability and career prospects in the competitive world. These abilities, such as positive attitude, effective communication, and problem-solving skills, help students develop confidence in a performance-oriented work environment. Educators must prepare graduates to be competitive in the economic world. In a high demanding work culture employers increasingly seek soft skills in the workplace. Mismatches in soft skills can lead to students struggling in the critical corporate world. According to the World Health Organization, soft skills are necessary for people to succeed in their employment. These abilities help people to solve issues, think critically, and effectively manage teams. Because they help graduates in vocational fields think quickly on their feet, solve problems, and lead by example, they are very advantageous to them. For example, social skills enable people to think critically, speak clearly, develop wholesome relationships,

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and make well-informed judgments. These soft skills increase competitiveness at the individual, societal, and national levels. Study of Baral (2020) has shown that most workers in Nepal come from the informal sector, where people pick up skills on the job. More than 80% of employees learn their job-related skills on the job. In Nepal, traditional occupational practices are being transferred from generation to generation (Kafle, 2007).

The study of Gautam and Suresh (2016) highlights the importance of soft skills for undergraduate students in Nepal, particularly those preparing to enter the workforce in Kathmandu. The research uses ethnographic methods to explore everyday life activities of urban youth, focusing on four participants from a private college in Kathmandu. The result shows that two of the participants have started working in companies, while the other two are searching for jobs. The study highlights that teaching soft skills in the classroom is not enough; it is crucial to practice these skills in the working environment for the future of Nepali youth. The ethnographic approach was used to explore views of different participants regarding the issue of their readiness in a job market after their graduation. Thus, the main source of this paper was the information of the field from the data that resulted that most of the undergraduates are struggling to get jobs in the job market. It is difficult to prove them competent because they lack soft skills such as communication, courtesy, social skills, flexibility, professionalism, teamwork and a positive attitude. Coping in the work diversity without knowledge of soft skills is a major challenge that cannot overvalue academic expertism. Most of the students think that soft skills are important to enter into the labour market despite their academic qualifications.

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The job market in Kathmandu, Nepal, has experienced rapid changes over the past decade due to improved communication access. However, youth have largely used these changes for entertainment, neglecting the labor market and lacking soft skills. Academic institutions in Nepal should prioritize soft skills to prepare students for the globalized job market, as this could increase urban unemployment and poverty. By offering relevant soft skills during their undergraduate courses, academic institutions can better prepare their students for the job market.

The empirical research by Kalauz Hudec & Kirinic (2015) included demographic characteristics together with student's perception of soft skills importance for their future professional careers and performance. Semi structured questionnaire with 21 variables (soft skills) on engineering student's population at Faculty of textile Technology of University of Zagreb (N=112) presented. The result from the sample survey has shown the finding that on a 5-point Likert scale with a total score of 80.02% for skills that are scored highest at 4 and 5, students commonly perceive the relevance of soft skills for their future job engagements. The European Commission (EC) lists a variety of soft skills, that include taking initiative and being socially and skilled; problem-solving; learning to learn; creativity and innovation; critical thinking; decision-making; communication; collaboration; research and study; flexibility and adaptability; initiative and self-direction; productivity; leadership and responsibility; integrity; empathy; and sociability. Strong ethical behavior at work, optimism, time management skills, productive abilities, self-confidence, the ability to take criticism and grow from it, and the capacity to perform well under pressure are further examples of soft skills in the workplace, managerial ability,

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customer service and communication skills, collaboration abilities etc.

Peitz (2017) examines the importance of soft skills for bachelor students to adapt to the labor market. It reveals sensitivity towards these skills, but there are differences among courses and genders. The research, conducted through a questionnaire survey, highlights the need for autonomy, social and emotional skills in global university education and the sensitivity of students to these transversal competences. Data collected through a questionnaire survey, applied to bachelor students between October 2013 and January 2014, has been analyzed through the ANOVA model. Smith and Roche's research highlights the significance of soft skills in employment, with 92% of hiring managers prioritizing these skills over technical ones, and their effective communication and collaboration are crucial for career progression. Smith highlights the importance of soft skills in career advancement and professional success, highlighting their positive correlation with job performance and leadership roles, while deficiencies can hinder progression and professional development.

### **Research Gap**

After reviewed literature provides the knowledge that the bridge between importance of soft skills and their association with career success needs more in -depth investigations into specific soft skills that are most valued by employers for the job placement. Exploring the effectiveness of different training methods and interventions in enhancing soft skills and their impact on career development. One key aspect of the problem lies in the potential misalignment between the current educational curricula in Nepal and the evolving needs of the job market. Understanding how students perceive the relevance of



soft skills in the context of their career aspirations will shed light on the effectiveness of existing educational structures and the necessity for adjustments to better prepare students for the demands of the contemporary workforce. Furthermore, socio-cultural factors in Nepal may play a crucial role in shaping the attitudes and perceptions of students towards soft skills. Exploring how cultural norms and societal expectations influence the emphasis placed on these skills in educational settings can provide valuable insights into the challenges students face and the support systems needed to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical, employable skills.

### **3. Research Methodology**

The chapter serves as a blueprint for data collection, measurement, and analysis. This section describes the research design, population and sample, data collection methods and the analysis procedure.

This study adopts a descriptive and causal research design to describe the characteristics of the variables used in this study with a clearly phrased structured questionnaire to communicate with participants and avoid misunderstandings (Mahat, Neupane, & Shrestha, 2024). This research is quantitative research which is achieved through primary data collected from Shanker Dev Campus, Kathmandu (Parajuli, Mahat, & Kandel, 2023). The study attempts to examine the general perceptions on soft skills and their impact on employment success. The study used descriptive, correlation, and other statistical approaches to achieve the objectives. The study targets the students of 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> semester of BBM program of Shanker Dev Campus. Out of 115 respondents, 105 were recorded. Thus, considering the time limit and reliability of data

submitted by the respondents, the researcher concluded the survey by analyzing the responses of 105 respondents. The primary data for this study were collected through the distribution of structured questionnaires to the BBM students of SDC. The researcher opted for the questionnaire because the responses are acquired systematically, making questionnaires more objective than other tools of data collection. It solely comprises closed-ended questions to reduce the amount of time spent filling in the answers. A Likert scale is the most widely used scale in survey research, where respondents specify their level of agreement with a statement when responding to a Likert questionnaire item.

#### **4. Result and Discussion**

In order to learn about the general perception on soft skills and their importance on employment, the study provides questionnaires to 105 students of different semesters of BBM faculty. There were 20 questioners consisting of 6 questions relating to the general perception on soft skills and 14 other questions highlighting the importance of soft skills for employability. Mean and percentage has been used under descriptive analysis to examine the quantitatively data. Similarly, correlation coefficient, regression has been employed to examine the impact over demographic factors on soft skills.

##### **Respondent's profile**

The study involved participants from Shanker Dev Campus, initially comprising 115 individuals. However, due to incomplete responses, the analysis was narrowed down to 105 fully completed questionnaires. The gender distribution among respondents was predominantly female, accounting for 59% (n=62), while males constituted 41% (n=43) of the sample. This demographic skew towards females provides a unique lens for

examining the perceptions and attitudes toward the study's subject matter, offering insights into potential gender dynamics affecting the outcomes.

Table 1

*Gender and Soft Skill*

	Frequency	Percent
Female	62	59
Male	43	41
Total	105	100

Field survey, 2024

**Perceived importance of soft skills**

Analysis of the survey responses using a 5-point semantic differential scale shows that there is a positive relation between soft skills in career and employment success. A significant portion of the participants (51 strongly agree, 37 agree) acknowledged soft skills as essential for career advancement, highlighting their indispensable value. Furthermore, the survey underscored a prevalent belief among students those employers highly value soft skills (55 agree, 20 strongly agree), reinforcing their significance in enhancing job prospects.

In contrast, views on the learnability of soft skills compared to professional knowledge varied, with some participants indicating these skills are more challenging to acquire (12 strongly agree, 17 agree). However, a considerable majority contested the notion that soft skills are immutable, advocating their potential for improvement through practice (37

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strongly disagree, 42 disagree). This suggests recognition of soft skills not only as crucial but also as adaptable competencies within the professional sphere.

Table 2

## *General perception on importance on soft skills development*

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
Soft skills are critical for career advancement	5	1	11	37	<b>51</b>
Soft skills are highly sought after by employers	2	3	25	<b>55</b>	20
Soft skills are important for getting a better job	1	1	11	36	<b>56</b>
Soft skills are difficult to learn compared to professional knowledge	12	<b>38</b>	26	17	12
Soft skills cannot be enhanced through practice	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>	7	9	10
Soft skills are not as important as professional knowledge	<b>55</b>	33	8	5	4

Field survey, 2024

## Importance of Soft Skills for Employment

Table 3

*Importance of Soft Skills for Employment*

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
Leadership	1	2	7	40	<b>55</b>
Teamwork and collaboration	1	6	38	<b>38</b>	60
Decision Making	1	2	8	37	<b>57</b>
Problem Solving	2	4	11	41	47
Time Management	3	5	12	37	48
Passion and Optimism	3	2	25	33	42
Critical thinking skill	4	3	19	36	43
Willing to learn	2	5	17	38	43
Self-motivation and self-direction	2	5	11	40	47
Making Presentation	2	3	22	35	43
Small Group Discussion	2	8	8	48	39
Writing business communications	0	6	19	41	39
Writing proposals	0	8	24	33	40
Inter-personal Skills	1	3	9	33	59

Field survey, 2024

Table 3 represents the descriptive statistics of the study. The table presents data on the perceived significance of various soft skills in the context of employment. Notably, leadership emerged as highly valued, with 55% of respondents strongly agreeing (SA) on its importance, followed closely by teamwork and collaboration at 60%. Decision making,

problem-solving, and time management also garnered considerable agreement, with significant proportions indicating strong agreement (SA). Skills related to personal attributes such as passion, optimism, willingness to learn, and self-motivation showed substantial support among respondents, with notable percentages indicating agreement. Communication skills, including making presentations, writing business communications, and proposals, were also perceived as important, though to varying degrees. Interpersonal skills received the highest level of agreement, with 59% strongly agreeing (SA) on their significance. Overall, the table underscores the widespread recognition of soft skills as essential for employability, emphasizing the importance of both personal attributes and interpersonal competencies in the workplace.

### **Correlations**

A correlation analysis between soft skills and employment outcomes among 105 participants indicated a positive Pearson correlation coefficient of .267. This significant correlation underscores a meaningful relationship between soft skills proficiency and improved employment prospects, highlighting the critical component of soft skills in achieving career success. The findings support the hypothesis that individuals with well-developed soft skills are more likely to experience favorable employment outcomes.

Table 5

*Correlation between soft skills and employment*

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	Soft Skills	Employment
Soft Skills	1	0.267**
Employment		1

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\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Field survey, 2024

#### **4. Conclusion**

The study at Shanker Dev Campus has demonstrated the significant role of soft skills in career development and employment success among students, addressing the primary objectives of exploring students' perceptions and the importance of these skills for employment. Analysis of responses from 105 participants revealed that the value of soft skills has substantial majority recognizing their critical importance for career advancement and high valuation by employers. The statistical evidence, highlighted by a significant correlation between soft skills and employment outcomes (Pearson correlation coefficient of .267,  $p = .006$ ), directly supports the hypotheses posited at the study's outset.

In light of these findings, the study emphasizes the urgent need for educational curricula at Shanker Dev Campus and similar institutions to integrate soft skills development into their programs. This integration is essential not only for enhancing student employability but also for ensuring that graduates are well-equipped to meet the dynamic demands of the global job market. By aligning educational strategies with the identified significance of soft skills, the gap between academic preparation and professional requirements can be

effectively bridged, improving a workforce for success in diverse professional environments.

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