

SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

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ABSTRAK

Perguruan tinggi dewasa ini semakin dituntut peranannya dalam meningkatkan mutu serta kualitas mahasiswa. Perguruan tinggi dihadapkan pada tantangan untuk menghasilkan lulusan yang tidak hanya mempunyai kemampuan keilmuan (*hard skills*) yang memadai, tetapi juga diharuskan mempunyai kemampuan kepribadian (*soft skills*). Konsep soft skills sebenarnya merupakan pengembangan dari konsep kecerdasan emosional. Soft skill sendiri diartikan sebagai kemampuan diluar kemampuan tekhnis dan akademis, kemampuan yang lebih mengutamakan keterampilan intra dan interpersonal, yaitu keterampilan seseorang dalam berhubungan dengan orang lain dan keterampilan dalam mengatur dirinya sendiri sehingga mampu mengembangkan produktifitas pribadi secara optimal. Selama ini pengembangan soft skill di perguruan tinggi sering terabaikan.

Kata kunci : hard skills, soft skills, perguruan tinggi

ABSTRACT

Higher education today increasingly demanded a role in improving quality and student quality. Higher education are faced with the challenge to produce graduates who not only has the scientific ability (hard skills) is adequate, but also required to have the personality skills (soft skills). The concept of soft skills is actually a development of the concept of emotional intelligence. Soft skill itself is defined as the ability of outside technical and academic skills, ability to prioritize the more intra-and interpersonal skills, that is a person skill in dealing with others and skills in organizing themselves so as to develop personal productivity to the optimal. During this development of soft skills in higher education are often overlooked.

Keywords: hard skills, soft skills, higher education

1. Background on Soft Skills Development

Higher education as a vehicle and means for improving the quality of human resources should play a role in increasing the competitiveness of nations. One of the responsibilities of universities is to seek fulfillment, needs required of all prospective graduates of the maximum for graduates can be absorbed in the world of work. Currently, the quality of Indonesian human resources are in a low level even decreased (Consolidated World Competitiveness Yearbook, 2004. About the level of competitiveness). At the regional

environment, the competitiveness of Indonesia's human resources was ranked lowest as compared to Singapore (ranked 2), Malaysia (ranked 16), Thailand (ranked 29) and Philippines (ranked 52). (Satryo Soemantri Brodjonegoro, March 2007).

Faced with competition in an increasingly tight world of work, the current absorption higher education graduates is still low in the world of work. This is due in addition to the limited job opportunities, also due to the demands of the user are becoming increasingly high.

Facing this, higher education must be prepared to meet the demands of the

workplace by continuously trying to develop a learning system to produce graduates who have competitive behavior in the global market, capable of entering a professional environment entrepreneurs and private enterprise as a distinctive color to differentiate with other universities.

Development-oriented learning systems not only in the form hard skill cognitive abilities, but has developed further in other qualities that are not visible (intangible) are the working world needs a soft skill.

2. Urgency Soft Skills Development Program

Generally the service users (stakeholders) want their workers in addition to cognitive ability (high GPA) also has the capability required soft skills, such as interpersonal competence, creativity, innovation & change, personal organization and time management, problem solving & analytic and another competency proficiency effective performance score (high achievement).

Achievements are presented by the graduates in addition to cognitive ability (hard skills) are adequate to meet the needs of service users (stakeholders) as well as developing entrepreneurship, it is balanced high for soft skills can form an integrated skills and have the competence to suit the needs service users (stakeholders).

The results of research the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2002) in the United States concluded that the grade point (GPA) is not the only thing that is considered important in world of work, even just ranked 17 out of 20 qualities that are considered important from a graduate Higher Education. Generally, users of graduates require skills in the form of soft skills employment by 82%, the hard skills only 18% (results NACE, 2005).

To the above, shows how important soft skills for prospective higher education graduates to be developed by the academic community to produce high quality graduates, adaptive and competitive

competency to enter the professional environment entrepreneurs and private enterprise, so it can absorbed in the world of work. Such behavior can only be established through the development environment or learning management system and the system competitive with soft skill development system in a planned, programmed and measured, is expected to give the competitiveness of graduates and the relevance of higher education as well as foster trust and respect of stakeholders

3. Soft Skills Development Goals.

Soft skills development goal nationally is to provide opportunity, space and time for students to develop her potential, not just be productive force but a human capital that has the capability to act competitiveness in the era of creative economy. The shift of economic pedestal and comparative prosperity of the nation of factors to the area of creative economy, have occurred in recent decades this. Creative economy is not much dependent on the factors of production (natural resources, capital, human resources) but more will be created by the creativity of human capital.

In general, soft skills development goals are to provide opportunities, space and time for students to develop her potential to become a pious man, critically, polite, moral, democratic, responsible, and competitive.

In particular the development of soft skills in universities, has a goal to change the thought patterns (cognitive), the pattern of attitude (affective), and follow patterns (psychomotor) prospective graduates to be competitive, creative and innovative with the specific skills needed in various sectors, and has high adaptability.

Thus the general purpose of the system is appropriate soft skills development aimed at the creation of capabilities and skills of creative & innovative, so it can contribute to the economic development of the country.

Thus, it will provide an opportunity for prospective graduates to acquire the learning process (learning process) other cognitive-

looking (hard skills), as well as the development of attitudes and behavior (soft skills) which shows the results (outcomes) that can answer the needs of service users (stakeholders) and has the ability to create entrepreneurship (entrepreneurship).

Directorate General of Higher Education has clearly set a general purpose soft skills development program towards the establishment of college graduates who have a balance of academic ability, the ability to act and behavior in the work. In the long term are expected to materialize educated qualified human resources, with the goal of the program:

1. Building a system of self-development potential students who are possible to be adopted and developed by universities and in accordance with the characteristics and needs of each college
2. The growth models of soft skills development in college who planned, programmed and structured.
3. Provide the opportunity, time and space to students to develop self-potential to become a pious man, critically, polite, moral, democratic, responsible and competitive.

The first and second target above (building systems and foster models) explicitly provides a description of the lack of a standardized model system and in the development of soft skills as integral to the higher education system, which can be universally accepted both in the academic and practical.

Weakness methodologis, divergence concept and universe of content that still color the concept of overlapping among these fields as well as a constraint in business soft skills development in higher education.

Not to the implementation of the change from content based to competence-based curriculum, provides an overview of the obstacles mentioned above as a result of various levels of understanding and assessment of the importance of competency-

based curriculum that actually contains expectations educational excellence that is the output results (outcomes) in accordance with the societal needs, industrial/business needs and professional needs with the understanding that the outcomes is the ability of combining intellectual skills, knowledge and affective behavior in a whole.

4. Definition of Soft Skill

Soft skill is the ability of social interaction, including personal and interpersonal skills and as a complement to the hard skills to achieve success (Ichsan S. Putra and Ariyanti Pratiwi, 2005)

Soft skills refer to the cluster of personality traits, social grace, facility with language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that mark people to varying degrees. Soft skills complement hard skills, which are the technical requirement of a job (Wikipedia).

There are various attributes of soft skills include:

Learning is the ability to gain knowledge from everyday experiences and to keep-to-date on development in the field. That is able to obtain knowledge from the experiences of everyday and deviations, maintaining, and developing it.

Problem Solving and Analytic. Defined as the ability of knowledge and skills in identifying, on solving business problems. As revealed by Evers., Et., Al., (1998): Identifying, prioritizing, and solving problems, individually or in groups; the ability to ask the right question, sort out the many Facets of a problem, and Contribute ideas as well as answers Regarding the problem. Analyzing the means to think analytically. Analytical thinking includes organizing the parts of a problem or situation in a systematic way; making systematic comparisons of different, features or aspects; Setting Priorities on a rational basis, identifying time sequences, causal relationships (Spencer & Spencer, 1993).

Personal Strength: develop personal traits for dealing with day-to-day work

situations e.g. maintaining high energy levels, motivating one self, maintaining a positive attitude, able to work independently, responding appropriately to constructive criticism. That includes a variety of personal characteristic that assist individuals in dealing with day-to-day work. Example: high energy, motivated to excel, be able to cope with stress, maintain a positive attitude, able to work with the independent, and able to answer the criticism constructive.

Risk Taking is taking job-related risks by recognizing alternative of different way of meeting objectives while recognizing potential negative outcomes and monitoring progress toward the set objectives. Able to take a risk on the job / work charged to him. Ability to identify alternative solutions to problems in a different way of targets. At the same time able to recognize the potential, negative outcomes and monitoring progress towards objectives that have been determined.

Visioning is ability to conceptualized the future of the company and provide innovative paths for the company to follow. Ability to determine / future position of the group, and provide innovative grooves to be followed by the group.

Communication defined as the ability to present and transfer information effectively both written and oral. As revealed by Evers.et.al., (1998).

Interacting effectively with a variety of individuals and groups to facilitate the gathering, integrating, and conveying of information in many form (for example, verbal, written). Interpersonal: Working well with others (superiors, subordinates, and peers), understanding their needs, and being sympathetic to them. Listening: Being attentive when other are speaking and responding effectively to other' comments during a conversation. Oral communication: The ability to present information verbally to other, either one-on-one or in group. Written communication: The effective transfer of written information, either formally (for example, trough reports and business

correspondence) or informally (through memos, notes, and the like).

Personal Organization and Management involves managing tasks at once, being able to set priorities and allocate time efficiently in order to meet deadlines. Namely the ability to organize and plan the work yourself through maximizing the use of time: avoid delays, facing gulp time (deadlines) are unnecessary and wasted productivity. These include the ability to manage multiple priorities and assignments and determine which ones require the involvement of others in order to meet the requirements requested.

Creativity, Innovation, Change is ability to adapt to situations of change. At times it involves the ability to initiate change and provide novel solutions to problems. It involves the ability to reconceptualize roles in response to changing demands related to success. Namely the ability to develop new problem-solving, seeking new opportunities to do the job for more effective and efficient.

The ability to improve performance by doing new things. This includes innovative procedures that have not been identified in a lesson, unit, faculty, university. This includes the ability to create an open environment and position themselves for change, including identifying and overcoming resistance to change. Able to adjust to changing situations. Able to initiate changes and provide solutions to problems faced. Able to play a role delivering solutions in response to demand changes associated with the success of the group.

5. Soft Skills Development in Higher Education System

Based on survey results of the National Association of Colleges and Employers, USA, 2002 (survey of 457 leaders), as set out in table 1.1, in the world of work turned out to GPA is not the only thing that is important. Another thing that is far more important is the ability of Communication, Honesty and Cooperation as well as other qualities that are attributes of "soft skills" is.

Tabel 1

No	Quality	Score
1	Communication Skills	4.69
2	Honesty / Integrity	4.59
3	Capability Working Together	4.54
4	Interpersonal Ability	4.5
5	Ethica	4.46
6	Motivation / Initiative	4.42
7	Adaptability	4.41
8	Power Analytical	4.36
9	Ability Computers	4.21
10	Ability to Organize	4.05
11	Detail Oriented	4
12	Leadership	3.97
13	Confidence	3.95
14	Friendly	3.85
15	Polite	3.82
16	Wise	3.75
17	GPA (≥ 3.0)	3.68
18	Creative	3.59
19	Humorous	3.25
20	Ability of entrepreneurship	3.23

Source : Sukses dengan Softskill (Ichsan S Putra:2005 :5)

Basically, soft skills have been applied in higher education through a variety of student activities (extra-curricular) as an excellent student, seminars, industrial visits, business gathering, program successes skills, and entrepreneurship development

Hopefully, with the growing development of soft skills in universities are

planned, programmed and structure, will bring increased national resources towards improving the nation's competitiveness.

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