
SKILLS SET OF FUTURE PROFESSIONALS MAJORING FOR SPECIALTY 292 “INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS” IN THE DIGITAL



Nataliia Vasylyshyna, Dr. Sc., Prof.
*Professor, Foreign Language and Translation
Department,
SNE “State University “Kyiv Aviation Institute”,
Kyiv, Ukraine
filologyN@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0003-9998>*

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Abstract. *It is emphasized that management innovation is crucial for attaining strategic advantages in a disruptive environment and will shed light on the management competencies necessary for success in the digital era. A diverse range of programs is available to enhance these capabilities, covering areas such as digital literacy, programming etc. At the heart of successful leadership is the capacity to cultivate sustainable organizations that can adapt to changing conditions. The proposed research aims to identify key business soft skills that are essential for future managers to gain a competitive edge in the labour market. The ongoing research encompasses several key tasks: to delineate a comprehensive set of skills deemed essential for future professionals pursuing the specialty 292 “International Business”; to provide a concise analysis that highlights the characteristics of these selected skills necessary for individuals aiming to work in the field of international business. The research methodology adopted is a literature review method that employs a qualitative approach. This approach entails the collection of data through the interpretation and analysis of theories present in various pertinent literature. The survey process involved stages such as data reduction, data presentation, conclusion formulation, and verification. The findings have identified a set of skills that are crucial for future professionals to enhance their employability in contemporary business environments. The conclusions have indicated a skill set that includes emotional and social intelligence; effective communication etc.*

Keywords: *digital age; criteria; cognitive; practical; information technology; skill set; international business; future professionals; competitive advantage, technology.*

INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM STATEMENT

Today, the use of digital technologies in education is one of the most important and sustainable trends in the development of the global educational process. Several factors contribute to this.

Firstly, the education sector, which is being modernised through digital technologies, is becoming much more efficient. Moreover, digital technologies allow not only to increase the praxeological effectiveness of education, but also to change the landscape and rules of its functioning (Mazurek, 2023, p. 12).

Secondly, digital technologies allow to intensify the educational process, make it mobile, differentiated and individual, adapted to the realities of modernity, increase the speed and quality of perception, understanding and assimilation of knowledge, which ensures the formation of competitive professionals. Thirdly, digital technologies can ensure the continuity of learning in the face of unpredictable influences (military conflicts, diseases or pandemics).

The rapidly advancing, interconnected, and intelligent digital landscape is evolving at an astonishing pace, necessitating that business leaders swiftly and significantly enhance their leadership capabilities to guide organizations and individuals through this intricate and unpredictable future. The impending digital transformation is poised to render the current work methodologies nearly unrecognizable to today's leaders and managers. Paradoxically, this transformation is less about technology itself and more about the human and organizational adjustments needed to leverage its potential. It involves shifts in organizational dynamics and the execution of work. Consequently, management and management competencies should be central to the process of digitalization.

Taking into account the actuality of the issue related to professional competencies of future managers, in particular business soft skills, the proposed research is aimed at revealing some of the most important business soft skills possession of which is vitally sufficient for the future managers in order to have a competitive advantage on labour market.

Additionally, the tasks of the ongoing research incorporate: firstly, to outline a set of skills sufficiently important for future professionals majoring for the specialty 292 "International Business", such as: emotional intelligence and social intelligence skills; effective communication and persuasion skills; diversity management and cultural intelligence skills; critical thinking and decision-making skills; integrity skills; analytical thinking skills; computational thinking skills; virtual collaboration skills; capacity for independent learning; importance of networking agility and active listening; cognitive flexibility; tech management skills; soft skill assessment; transparency skills; results-only work focus skills as well as managing the future skills; secondly, give them a brief analyses describing the features of the selected skills necessary for future professionals aimed for working in the area of international business.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The changes driven by technology in the business landscape will instigate profound alterations in organizational structures, systems, and leadership approaches (Weill & Woerner, 2015). In the context of the digital economy, it may no longer be adequate to simply modify existing management practices that were previously effective. The digital landscape is evolving at an unprecedented pace, making the acquisition of new skills increasingly vital for employability. Regardless of the industry, digital transformation is facilitating more efficient processes, optimized systems, and enhanced productivity on a global scale. Online education serves as an effective means to address any digital skills deficiencies within your organization, thereby unlocking new opportunities for growth.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) projects that by 2025, 85 % of job vacancies will necessitate digital proficiency, underscoring the rapid expansion of the digital realm. While this represents a significant shift in how we approach change in the workplace, it also presents challenges for individuals who may struggle to adapt. Factors such as limited time, insufficient focus, or constrained learning and development budgets must be addressed to ensure that all employees have the chance to achieve digital literacy.

Essential workplace skills are those that enable individuals and teams to excel in demanding situations, meet their key performance indicators, and foster a positive work environment. The integration of traditional employment skills with an increasingly digital perspective makes the development of new skills imperative for both organizational advancement and individual professional growth. Adapting to new technologies is merely one aspect that employers must consider when formulating a learning and development strategy aligned with their growth objectives (Poláková et al., 2023).

As an employer, fostering these critical skills is essential for helping your team adapt and succeed in the digital era. Continuous access to learning opportunities is a potent resource. It not only equips employees with new skills that benefit both the organization and the individual but also enhances employee well-being. Many individuals find fulfilment in acquiring new knowledge, enhancing their personal and professional capabilities, and achieving their objectives.

Furthermore, it is evident that government and local authorities are placing a high priority on digital skills and the necessary changes that accompany this shift.

Managers must ensure that their employees possess current and relevant skills that enable them to adapt to emerging technologies.

Cherusheva (2023) emphasizes the necessity of cultivating “soft skills” during the professional training of future enterprise managers to facilitate effective management practices. The researcher identified the essential structural components of soft skills and justified their socio-economic significance. While the development of soft skills is crucial for aspiring business leaders, it is equally important for future education managers, albeit with distinct characteristics.

Yampol, Polishchuk & Namestiuk (2023) highlighted that enhancing the quality of training for future education managers requires the cultivation of soft skills such as leadership, communication, motivation, creativity and innovation, adaptability, and conflict resolution.

Nosovets, Piskun & Rekun (2021) introduced a novel category of skills termed “self skills”, which, according to the researchers, can strengthen the foundational competencies upon which all other skills are built, particularly in the context of teacher training.

The study titled “Identifying leadership skills required in the digital age” by German authors Klus & Müller (2020) presents significant insights. The researchers employed a three-stage study design to compare leadership skills outlined in existing literature with the perspectives of managers and data from job postings for leadership roles. They identified that the primary challenges faced by managers include a high degree of information diversity, a broad spectrum of business issues, rapid changes, and substantial workloads. The study aimed to elucidate the nature and composition of soft skills, hard skills, and digital skills, as well as their influence on various related specialties within the management profession, such as sales management, human resources management, logistics management, and project management.

A contemporary library and information specialist will recognize, implement, and effectively integrate the benefits of soft skills in both personal and professional domains, thereby impacting societal dynamics. Klus & Müller (2020) examined the leadership strategies necessary for guiding organizations and their personnel within an increasingly digital business landscape, identifying the essential skills for success. Their findings indicate that while the advancement of digital technologies profoundly alters the organizational work environment and presents new challenges for managers, there remain ongoing challenges and technological shifts that necessitate an evolving skill set for effective management.

The review of existing literature reveals that both Ukrainian and international scholars have adequately addressed the concepts and elements of “soft skills”, whereas “hard” and

“digital skills” have received comparatively less attention. The necessity of employing various skill sets across different roles has been acknowledged. However, as time progresses and circumstances evolve, there will be a continual need for further investigation (Burniske, 2007).

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in the current research is a literature study method utilizing a qualitative approach. This method involves gathering data through the comprehension and examination of theories found in various relevant literature. The objective of qualitative research is to achieve a profound understanding of human and social issues, rather than merely describing superficial aspects of reality, as is the case with positivist qualitative research. The data analysis technique applied is triangulation, which serves to verify the validity of data or information from multiple perspectives. The survey process included data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification.

MAIN RESULTS

Educational institutions, like any other organisation in the digital age, must look for all possible mechanisms to improve the quality of service delivery, increase efficiency and save resources. Digital transformation is the integration of technology into all areas of education to fundamentally change teaching, learning and school operations. It is not just about small improvements to old processes. It is a large-scale change across the organisation that promotes systemic change, rethinking them to achieve the desired outcome.

At State University “Kyiv Aviation Institute” the discipline is being taught according to the program for the specialty 292 “International Business” where the following sets of knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies must be acquired by future professionals (NAU, 2021).

Knowledge: students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge related to international business practices and international regulation of business activities. A distinctive feature of this specialty is the focus on the activities of international corporations, international business management, international trade, investments and finance. Students will be able to obtain the knowledge necessary to manage multinational and foreign companies and organizations, understand the differences in international business.

Skills and Abilities: using the advantages and opportunities of the international business environment, business strategies for management and organization, understanding complex economic processes of the world economy in the areas of: research of globalization processes, international relations and the global market. Doing business in accordance with the cultural context and characteristics of different regions of the world. Ability to perform professional oral and written translation from/to a foreign language, in particular, on specialized topics.

Competencies and Employment: work in private or public companies in the fields of international trade, international marketing, international banking, international human resources management (HR), international tourism — domestic companies, subsidiaries and representative offices of foreign corporations, joint ventures, banks, stock markets, government agencies and non-governmental organizations. Continuing education abroad (Irawati, 2015).

A Bachelor of International Business can continue his/her education at the master’s level. Creativity and an innovative mindset are essential management competencies. The famous adage, “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again while expecting different results” — often attributed to Albert Einstein — holds true in the realm of management as well. To effect change, it is necessary to adopt new approaches. While creativity pertains to

the generation of novel ideas, innovation involves the effective implementation of these ideas within a particular context (Cherusheva, 2023).

Considering the mentioned above academic demands stated in the program in the research framework we are presenting the list of skills that will improve students' future competitive advantage in their workplaces within digital age. Based on the above, we consider it appropriate to highlight the following criteria for the level of formation of soft skills of future managers in the conditions of the information society: *cognitive, practical and information technology*.

Cognitive criterion is a set of characteristics that take into account the volume and quality of knowledge necessary and sufficient for successful business activity using traditional and innovative technologies.

Practical criterion is a set of characteristics that take into account the degree of implementation of future business managers' professional skills in the process of their future business activity.

Information and technological criterion is a set of characteristics that indicate the degree of mastery of information technology tools in business activities, the volume and quality of knowledge about the essence of information and communication technologies, various information technology tools and their practical capabilities (Learner Bubble, 2024).

Emotional Intelligence and Social Intelligence Skills are paramount for managers tasked with leading teams. The capacity to reach pragmatic compromises, informed by the social environment and the various facets of emotional intelligence, fosters stronger and more trusting teams. A systems thinker recognizes that a team's collective strength surpasses the mere sum of its individual members, provided that the interactions among team members are optimized. This ability is crucial for cultivating resilient and trustworthy teams (Maksymenko, 2021).

Effective Communication and Persuasion Skills are vital skills for articulating ideas and convincing colleagues and stakeholders that pursuing a particular course of action serves their collective interests. Employees appreciate leaders who can clarify not only what actions are necessary but also the rationale behind those actions. The ability to communicate and persuade across all organizational levels and functional areas is of utmost importance (Nikolska, 2022).

Diversity Management and Cultural Intelligence Skills serve as significant partners, with cultural intelligence frequently characterized as the capability to effectively manage diversity. This encompasses the ability to address both overt and implicit biases, a comprehension of cultural nuances, and the capacity to modify both verbal and non-verbal communication styles. Mastery of this skill mitigates the likelihood of misunderstandings and facilitates the leadership of diverse team members in a manner that fosters respect and cultivates trust (Jantarachot & Lalaeng, 2023).

Critical Thinking and Decision-Making Skills are essential competencies for navigating complex situations, employing the necessary tools and techniques to anticipate potential outcomes, and arriving at well-informed decisions. The capacity for critical thought empowers individuals to pursue innovative ideas, similar to how Tapscott felt empowered to challenge Michael Porter due to his well-founded arguments rooted in critical analysis. Effective leaders are decisive, whereas ineffective leaders may defer responses (Shah et al., 2023).

Integrity Skills encompasses a range of attributes, including authenticity and sincerity. Managers who embody integrity demonstrate consistency in their actions, recognize their limitations, uphold honesty, and take responsibility for their errors. When one is both creative and courageous enough to make bold choices, mistakes are inevitable. Acknowledging

one's errors and demonstrating authenticity in corrective actions is indicative of true leadership (Andrews & Higson, 2021).

Analytical Thinking Skills are essential in today's business environment, where every process has been digitized and decision-making relies heavily on data. It is imperative to base business decisions on accurately contextualized data rather than making choices in a vacuum. Foundational elements such as validity and reliability must transition from theoretical discussions in academic literature to practical applications in the boardroom, ensuring that the extensive data sets genuinely reflect the realities they represent and are utilized to inform optimal decision-making.

Computational Thinking Skills encompass a range of skills, but fundamentally, contemporary managers must grasp the core principles of the technologies that permeate our workplaces. This includes understanding digital literacy, managing data in a digital format, and recognizing the synergistic relationship between the rapidity and precision of technology and the ingenuity and adaptability of human beings. It also involves collaborating effectively with various forms of artificial intelligence that are increasingly integrated into our work environments (Lyu & Liu, 2021).

Virtual Collaboration Skills has become the standard, and it is widely acknowledged that cohesive teams can achieve far more than individuals working alone. Leaders have the opportunity to reduce the costs associated with internal and external collaboration and must cultivate the necessary skills to foster high-quality engagement. While the term flexible adaptability may seem redundant, it reflects the complex layers of change that characterize both society and business, which are in a state of constant flux. Leaders must accept the inevitability of ongoing change and maintain a positive, open-minded professional demeanour when engaging with new clients, navigating new processes, and adapting to new systems amid evolving competition and regulatory and societal challenges driven by rapid digital transformation (Sysoieva, 2021).

The Capacity for Independent Learning may be one of the most undervalued competencies in today's digital workplace. In job interviews, I often pose the question: "What was the most recent skill related to [insert role-specific word] that you acquired, and what was your method for achieving this?" I am not interested in hearing about training programs sponsored by the company; such responses would disqualify a candidate (Akiri, 2024).

It is essential for managers to take initiative in identifying the knowledge they require and determining how to acquire it. This is a continuous endeavour in knowledge-driven roles, as the landscape of knowledge is perpetually evolving (UNLV, 2022).

The Importance of Networking Agility and Active Listening is paramount in contemporary organizations. As companies adopt flatter and more virtual structures, the emphasis of work will shift towards a horizontal approach rather than being confined to traditional business functions. Managers will be required to establish temporary frameworks to capitalize on emerging opportunities and mitigate rapidly evolving threats. Active listening will emerge as an essential competency, as valuable insights into challenges may originate from outside conventional work teams and expert circles. Effective decision-making will necessitate a broad network to access the appropriate resources at critical moments (Marnewick & Marnewick, 2021).

Cognitive Flexibility is another vital attribute skills. While it is distinct from multi-tasking, there exists a significant connection between the two. The advent of digital technologies compels leaders to navigate the multitude of opportunities and challenges they present. Rather than concentrating solely on optimized processes, managers must focus on the behavioural dynamics that influence organizational performance. This includes understanding the motivations and constraints of individuals, their resource needs, and, crucially, how to inte-

grate individual behaviours to foster the collective behaviour that defines new performance standards (Zuhri & Sukarnianti, 2015).

Tech Management Skills. No sector will remain untouched by the influence of technology. While we may not witness an immediate upheaval caused by AI and machine learning in our workplaces, the integration of technology will progressively increase. It is essential for managers to possess a comprehensive understanding of technology to navigate its challenges and opportunities, particularly in areas such as data management, career and skill development, workplace roles, and privacy concerns. Presently, managers allocate 54% of their time to administrative duties; however, as AI systems become capable of generating reports and scheduling appointments, managers will have the opportunity to focus on more complex business initiatives.

As technology evolves, it is imperative for managers to engage in ongoing education regarding new operating systems to stay abreast of emerging challenges. Even if they do not occupy purely technical positions, they must be adept at collaborating with AI technologies as non-technical professionals, enabling them to assist their employees in acquiring these skills. In a rapidly changing environment, managers must serve as a consistent and stable presence, embracing new technologies and adapting to the evolving dynamics of the workplace.

Soft Skill Assessment. In addition to the necessity for technical skills among all employees, soft skills will be a crucial attribute for managers to cultivate in themselves to effectively evaluate future candidates. This encompasses abilities such as active listening, effective communication, maintaining a positive demeanour, receptiveness to feedback, and proficient time management. Managers will need to assess applicants for a blend of critical thinking and innovative problem-solving capabilities as the pace of technological advancement accelerates. While emerging technological tools will assist future managers in evaluating soft skills, it is equally important for managers to possess these skills to comprehend their employees and their learning processes in an increasingly digital world. Conferencing and automation tools will aid managers in fostering long-term success with trained professionals and establishing their influence as trusted consultants (Nosovets et al., 2021).

Transparency Skills. The digital world will bring about clearer, more immersive ways of communicating. As a result, managers are going to need higher levels of transparency and communication. Today, managers are constantly worried about protecting their company's privacy and keeping information confidential. However, in a world where digital leaks are more likely to happen, managers will have to help mold transparency strategies that allow employees to know more about salary and work practices. In fact, a 2016 Pew Research Survey found that employment is higher when there is more average or over-average interpersonal management and communication skills. Diverse teams need managers they can trust. Open, face-to-face communication is the way to go (Bailey, 2021).

Results-Only Work Focus Skills. Managers will need to know how to gain the most productivity out of their workforce. Results-only work practices (ROWE) will be a mindset that managers need to enforce as part of the work culture. ROWE focuses on principles such as accountability and freedom. As a result, the specifics of where and how employees work won't carry such importance. High-functioning managers will concentrate more on results and output. In many industries, freelance and contract workers will be on the rise. In fact, 40 % of U.S. workers are expected to become freelancers by 2020.

In addition to automated tools changing our workforce, managers will need to gather the talent needed to complete tasks. Because processes and completing tasks will become smoother with automated gadgets and other innovations, it will be more about optimizing certain skills rather than the work process. It will be less about hours put in and more about

results. With more flexibility in the workplace, managers will need to focus on communication strategy and relationship and conflict management will take a higher precedence (Rainie & Anderson, 2017).

Managing the Future Skills. Technological advancements can facilitate the adoption of healthier work practices that benefit both individuals and the economy. As managers become proficient with emerging tools such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, they will also discover more effective methods that incorporate empathy, critical thinking, and creativity, leading to enhanced business operations and improved workplace environments.

Both blue-collar and white-collar sectors will need to embrace a more mobile, collaborative, and transparent approach in an increasingly interconnected and rapid-paced environment. Contrary to the cold, artificial settings often depicted in science fiction, this high-tech landscape actually enables us to manage and appreciate the compassionate, human aspects of business while transforming our work practices for the better.

CONCLUSIONS

As the global landscape increasingly transitions to online platforms, a multitude of employment opportunities has emerged across diverse sectors of the economy. The swiftly advancing, interconnected, and intelligent digital landscape is evolving at an unprecedented pace, necessitating that business leaders urgently and substantially refine their leadership capabilities to guide both organizations and individuals through this intricate and uncertain future. The impending digital transformation is anticipated to render current work methodologies almost unrecognizable to today's leaders and managers (Osvitnii Khab mista Kyieva, n.d.).

Notably, this transformation emphasizes the importance of human and organizational adjustments rather than the technology itself, aiming to leverage its potential effectively. It involves significant shifts in organizational dynamics and the execution of work. Consequently, management and managerial competencies must take precedence in the digitalization journey.

The advancements in technology within the business sector are poised to bring about substantial changes in organizational frameworks, operational systems, and leadership approaches. In the context of the digital economy, it is increasingly evident that simply modifying previously successful management techniques may no longer be adequate.

In summary, it is important to highlight that the primary outcome of the educational journey is the acquisition of a profession, which entails the knowledge, skills, and competencies gained. Therefore, graduates from educational institutions must possess a well-rounded skill set that encompasses cognitive, practical, and technological dimensions. Research findings have pinpointed essential skills that are vital for aspiring professionals in the field of 292 "International Business" to improve their employability in modern business settings.

Additionally, the research underscores the significance of competencies such as emotional and social intelligence; effective communication and persuasion; diversity management and cultural awareness; critical thinking and decision-making; integrity; analytical and computational thinking; virtual collaboration; self-directed learning; networking adaptability; active listening; cognitive flexibility; technology management; soft skill evaluation; transparency; a results-oriented mindset; and the capacity to manage emerging skills.

The skills outlined in this research are significant as they can be supplemented with additional competencies in response to the evolving employment landscape. Future studies may focus on the business sector, for instance.

Furthermore, to enhance objectivity and deepen the comprehension of strategies and initiatives associated with digitalization, it would be advantageous to expand the analysis through interviews with a range of individuals within the organization.

In particular, interacting with personnel from various hierarchical levels, functional areas, or those with distinct responsibilities could yield valuable insights.

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