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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this report is to critically evaluate personal academic and employability skills. Based on the aim, the objectives of this report are given below:

- Identify the various skills published in existing literature
- Analyse the main employability and academic skills
- Personal SWOT analysis to identify the skill gaps
- Personal Development Plan to develop or acquire skill gaps

2.0 DEFINITION OF SKILLS

Jackson (2013) defined skills as knowledge in application and individual's ability to perform consistently in order to carry out tasks effectively. Several authors tried to classified skills. In this report the skills have been classified as

- **Adaptive skills**

According to Conarroe (2016) adaptive skills are applied and daily skills required to conduct and fulfill the demand of individual. Adaptive skills are helpful for individuals to take care efficiently and independently and assist to manage individuals and interact with others. Examples of adaptive skills are: self-care, communication, social skill, self-direction and so on. (Chang, 2018)

- **Academic skills**

These are the skills assists to be more effective learner by developing various study skills and research skills. Sound academic skills assist to gain success not only academically but also in personal and professional life. Examples of academic skills are: recognize own learning style, effective use of time, team work, research skills, presentation skills, critical evaluation, critical thinking, study skills, and plan, organise and manage study. (Conarroe, 2016)

- **Employability skills**

Employability skills basically indicates to the definition where it means the skills graduates need to excel in their intended work life and also get sought out with their capabilities. David and Stuart (2017) provide the definition of employability skills as “ *a set of achievements-skills, understandings and personal attributes-that makes graduates*

more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy”

Employers in modern world tend to have criteria when recruiting employees and also graduates need specific skill to get themselves into their desired places. The common forms of employability skills identified in various literatures are: communication, teamwork, time management, leadership, decision-making, problem solving, digital, management and so on. (Griffin and Annulis, 2013).

3.0 ANALYSE OF THE MAIN ACADEMIC SKILLS

Murdoch-Eaton (2002) states in order to success at university it is vital to develop academic skills. The key academic skills have been listed in previous section in this section these skills will be analysed and based on the analysis a personal development plan will be devised.

i. Study skills

During their period in university student need to develop a sound study skills which are reading, writing, note taking, independent learning, obtaining feedback. Students need to develop their study skills in order to become more effective and successful. Good academic skills enable students to write the course work or assignment and improve their knowledge on their chosen field of study. (Frisse, 1994)

ii. Research skills

To improve knowledge for future career students need to improve their research skills which includes finding information, analyse information, critical evaluation and report writing (Conarroe, 2016). During the course work the author has immensely developed this skills such as finding information from books, journals, reports, and various other reliable source, how to carry out critical evaluation and paraphrase various information in order to avoid plagiarism and writing assignments. A sample copy of paraphrasing exercise is included in Appendix A.

iii. Presentation skills

During their time at University students need to attend presentation (Rimmer, 2018). Therefore it is important to develop this skill. In order to develop this skill students need to practice, be positive, speak clearly, be confident and engage the audience. The group

presentation that has been delivered during the Managing Enterprise of 21st Century module immensely assisted author to develop this skill.

iv. Time management skills

It is important for students to manage time effectively to succeed at university (Cottrell, 2008). Student should manage and plan time effectively to meet the study deadline and to manage professional and family life. This can be done by keeping an effective time schedule and following the PPO method which is planning, prioritising and organising tasks. (Conarroe, 2016)

v. IT skills

IT skill or digital skill is also important to be successful at university life. It is important because students need to frequently use computer and internet to conduct their coursework, to find information, send and receive mail from tutors or university, to provide presentation and so on (Joubert, 2015).

3.1 SWOT analysis on academic skills

SWOT stands for S-Strength, W-Weakness, O-Opportunity, and T-Threat (Manktelow et al, 2018). It is personal analysis tool.

Strengths Note-taking in lectures Punctuality Classroom discussions Researching Reading IT skills	Weaknesses Making time to study Spelling Time management Presenting projects Memory Impatience
Opportunities Extra help from tutors Proof reading by graduated colleagues Use of technology Opportunities for personal development Job shadowing Engage tutors in providing feedback	Threats Working late in my part time job can negatively impact on my studies Long commute to college can affect my time management Time pressure

Table 1: Academic Skills - Personal SWOT analysis

3.2 Personal Development plan for the academic skills

Based on the SWOT analysis carried out on previous section a Personal Development Plan has been devised in this section.

<i>Long-term development plan</i>			
Skills	Action	Deadline	Reflection
Time Management skill	Set individual tasks or goals and break them down into an action plan. This can be done by following a structured approach, such as planning, prioritising and organising tasks.	At the beginning of Term 2.	End of Term 2
Presentation skills	Firstly have to recognise what audience requires and then I need to develop the content and deliver it in a confident manor to create an overall engaging presentation.	Term 2 presentation	Confidently delivering presentation in Term 2
Digital skill	Conducting research work such is searching for information online, writing assignments on computer and so on	Term 1 and Term 2	Continuous monitor
Short-term goals might include taking			
Study skills	Regular notes in the class, attending lectures regularly, attend in the classroom discussion, perusing extra help from tutors, taking feedback from tutors, and making time for study.	Term 1 and Term 2	Feedback from tutors

Table 2: Personal Development plan for the academic skills

4.0 ANALYSE THE MAIN EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Employability skills have been defined in various ways, which show the aspects of it. According to Miler and Newton (2013), “*Employability skills refer to a set of transferable skills and key personal attributes which are highly valued by employers and essential for effective performance in the workplace. Unlike professional or technical skills, employability skills are generic in nature, rather than job-specific, and are common to all work roles and workplaces across all industry types - for instance, communication and teamwork*”. Wickramasinghe and Perera (2010) specified five

important employability skills that organization continuously look when hiring their employees. The skills specified by the authors are described below:

4.1 Teamwork skill

According to Morgan (2016), *“teamwork is absolutely fundamental for teams to work effectively. Only when the skills and strengths of individual team members are joined with shared goals, and a focus on collective efforts as well as performances, then the whole performance of the team becomes more enriched and enhanced as a result of collective effort”*.

Importance of teamwork skills in organisational context

Any organization or workplace having the practice of teamwork results in more success and more proficiency. It has been proven that the members of team within an organisational setting will be able to work towards the common objective only if interact with each other. The ability to interact with a team and work with them collectively is a highly required skill, which is very much important in today's era where almost every field requires it. The case study carried out in class (attached in Appendix B) titled “Who Kill Nokia” suggests the importance of teamwork. One of the major factors of failure of the Nokia can be noted as lack of teamwork or team coordination. Lack of flow in the information between top management, middle management and employees contributed to the organisational failure in Nokia. Having benefits like -creating the bonding and unity in the workplace, offering different perspectives and feedback, providing great learning opportunities, promoting workplace synergy (Fay, *et al.*, 2014).

How teamwork skills can be improved

Teamwork can be created by building up social communication and the practice of the cultivation of open communication. The goals should be set and well defined with clearly outlined roles and responsibilities of each team member. The team has to mediate the conflict very quickly and efficiently. There are some certain theories by which the performance of the team can be escalated very quickly along with some points which shows why teams fail and their reasons to fail, which can be a key factor of analysis while improving the work conditions in a team. Also being a team member asks for to look into the whole teamwork and along with how the team is built, what are the

strengths and weaknesses of the team. The DISC model identified by Marston (1928) cited by Peter (1917) is a significant instrument for team building and also provides a significant insight into how team members operate in a group. The DISC model, D-dominance: the way approaching any difficulties, I-influence: the way people communicate their feeling and ideas, S-stability: the way people provide response, and C-conformity: the way people replies.

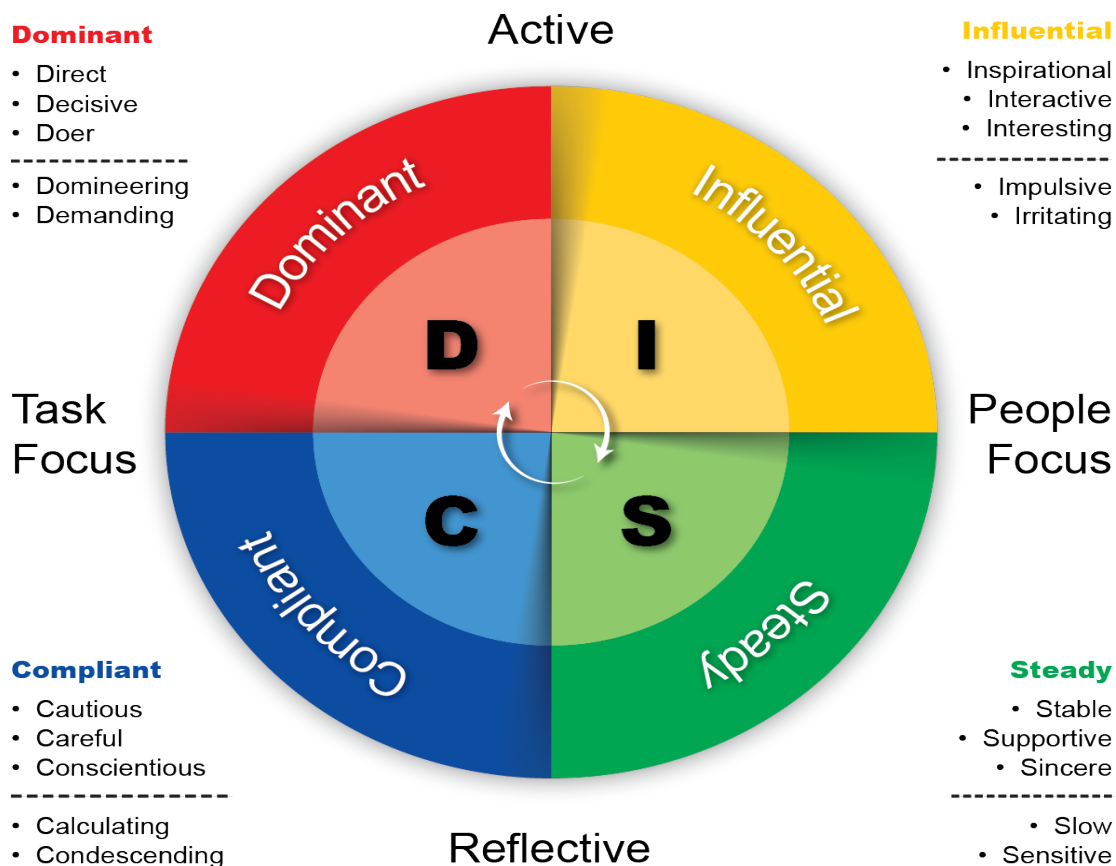


Figure 1: DISC Model (Sugerman, et al. , 2011)

4.2 Communication skill

As indicated by Maund, Schriek and Tinkler (2011. p.47), communication is a process of sharing information between sender and receiver and communication skill is the ability to interchanges information effectively.

Significance of communication skills in an organisation

A powerful and proficient correspondence is a significant expertise to accomplish effectiveness, profitability and improve solid work environment relationship inside a whole organization. Companies that contribute time and are decide to improve correspondence inside their staffs will quickly make confidence and faith among its

employees that will drive them to an expanded proactivity and accomplish great hierarchical culture. Again referring to the case study in Appendix B, it was evident employees within Nokia fear to communicate with top management and lack of communication leads to the failure as an organisation. Therefore, great correspondence among supervisors, workers, suppliers and clients is a significant resource for an organization.

Way to improve communication skills

In this part the ways of improving the communication skill will be discussed that have been identified in present literatures.

Steps	Process
<i>Clearly delivery of message</i>	During delivery of it is important to articulate the message obviously. During the deliver of message it is viable to believe in the idea or message that will be delivered, show respect and appreciation to listeners.
<i>Choose your medium carefully</i>	Once the message is ready it is important the medium of delivering the message carefully. The medium can be verbal, non verbal and written. It is important to select which way will be suitable to communicate with the employees.
<i>Keep everyone involved</i>	It is important to ensure the communication channels are always open. As stated Maund, Schriek and Tinkler (2011) and Brownell (1996, p.96) it is important to use HUNTER model to keep every involved. The model consists of six elements: Hearing, Understanding, Remembering, Interpreting, Evaluating, and Responding. Clearly the sender of the message sometimes they want to know that they are been hear, so adopting good posture that make the speaker field you are interested in his message. Do not interrupt the listeners. Asking question and paraphrasing is another way to keep the audience engaged and interested in the conversation
<i>Listen and show empathy</i>	According to Page (2018), "Communication is a two-way process and no company or individual will survive long if it doesn't listen and encourage dialogue with the other party. Listening shows respect and allows you to learn about any outstanding issues you may need to address as an employer"]

Table 3: Steps of improving Communication skills

4.3 Time management

Time management simply means proper utilisation of time. In an organisational setting time management is an important attribute because poor time management can lead to missed in deadline, customer will be dissatisfied, and will increase company overhead. On the other hand proper utilisation of time will certainly improve organisational productivity. (Aminshayan, 2010).

Ways to improve time management skills

According to Houserebate (2019), recommend three steps to manage time effectively and these are listed below:

- Plan and set achievable objectives: Management should plan and set goals with feasible time line and review it accordingly.
- Prioritise task: organisation should assist employees to evaluate their work based on importance and urgency.
- Organised: employees and management team need to be organised in order to finish tasks on time.

The Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto has develop a model named '*Pareto 80/20 principal*' has proven to be one of the important principle for managing time effectively. According to principle suggested by Parto, "*put your efforts where they will make the most difference, before you begin work, always ask yourself, is this task in the top 20% of my activities or in the bottom 80%?*"

For example according to (Koch, 2013), "*if you have a list of ten items to do, two of those items will turn out to be worth as much or more than the other eight items put together*".

Eisenhower developed a Matrix, which is known as Eisenhower Matrix in order to define the Urgent and Important task. Eisenhower Matrix consists of four squares is helpful to prioritise tasks. According to Covey (2017), "*The four quads of the matrix is: urgent/important, Important/not Urgent, Urgent/not Important, Urgent/not important. According to Eisenwover if you really want to manage and controlling time and make it more efficiency and productive the best stage is quad one, when task is urgent and important*".

4.4 Problem solving skill

In an organisational setting problem-solving skill can be defined as the employees' ability to handle difficult or unanticipated situations.

Significance of problem-solving skill

No organisation is problem free. Various problem arises every day. Therefore, it is vital from organisation's point of view to handle the problem effectively. Therefore, during selection of employees, organizations often prioritise people with good problem solving skill.

Ways to improve problem solving skill

Present literatures show various strategies to solve problem effectively. A four steps problem solving process has been described by Griffin and Annulis (2013) and the steps are as follow:

Problem Solving Skill – 4 Stage methods

Define the Problem: Identify the issue and observe the problem area closely to form a detailed image of what's wrong. Analyse employee behaviour, workplace policies, and operating procedures.

Brainstorm Alternatives: This is one of the most important stages of problem solving. It requires a careful balance of creativity and logical thinking. Compare all possible alternatives. Analyse the money, time, staff, and resources necessary for each approach as well as the return that you can expect from various strategies.

Choose the Best Strategy: Strong decision-making is essential at this stage. After carefully considering all options, it is important to select the best strategy for the problem and stick with the selection.

Implement Solution: Implementation is the critical peak of the problem-solving process. This is where you draw up an action plan, share it with the appropriate personnel, and follow through with your chosen approach.

4.5 SWOT Analysis Of Employability Skills

Considering the result coming out of analysis of main employability skill, the author presented his personal SWOT analysis like how it is presented below:

Strengths • From present employment and working in groups at university it can be said that the author has good teamwork and organizing skills. • Author is also good at managing time and self management, can plan tasks, prioritise tasks according to importance, meet deadline and so on. • Willingness to learn new skills to improve and meet career objectives. • Long timework experience in the UK.	Weaknesses • Have limited technological skill and need to develop the use of software packages, information process, advance use of information that will be required in the targeted career • Poor problem solving skill. • For being introvert in nature I am shy to speak in front of large audience and need to improve communication skill
Opportunities • Using the job experience and successful completion of the current degree will provide the opportunity to gain the expected career objectives. • Self-management and time management skill will assist to fill up the skill gaps.	Threats • Extreme competition in the intended career • Frequent change in the job roles within an organisation

Table 5: SWOT analysis on employability skills

4.6 Personal Development Plan on Employability Skills

Deciding individual qualities, shortcomings, openings, and dangers, this area dissect the self-awareness intend to develop employability aptitudes dependent on SMART goal (Manktelow et al, 2018).

Skill to be developed	Specific actions	Measure	Target date
Communication skills	Learn the basics of verbal and nonverbal communication. Ask for honest feedback from colleagues Do not feel nervous when talking to strangers Improve presentation skill Engage the audience in discussion Presenting and participating in class discussions	Confidently communicate with others Make presentation in front of class	By the end of Semester 2
Problem solving skills	Apply for the volunteer opportunities provide by the “future” Helping people solve problem while improving my problem solving skills. Become a volunteer	Analysis the requirements of school assignments Meet the assignment requirements of teachers	Deadline of the assignments
Time management skill	Prioritise you task, Plan task accordingly, Meet the dead line or due date, start the next task	Meet the deadline of the tasks at present workplace Meet the deadline of the assignments	Continuous

Table 6: Personal development plan

5. CONCLUSION

After conducting this report the author has identified the skill gaps required for academic and professional field. Based on the identified skills requirement a personal development plan has been constructed for both academic and employability skill development. In order to develop academic skill it is important for the author to improve time management, digital skill, and presentation skill and study skill. For employability skill it is important skills such as communication skill, problem solving and time management skill.

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Appendix A:

Appendix B



Academic and Employability Skills (ACE) – term 1 BMSW4001

In-class exercise 2: Summarising - RESIT

Student Name: SYED MUSIAPUR RAHMAN Student ID: 1818489

Time allocated: 1 hour. Please return your paper to the lecturer upon completion. It will be returned to you at the next session. You will need to include a scanned copy of this exercise in the form of an appendix together with your Task 1 (part of the Assignment for this module).

Ex.1

Read the following text and make notes on the main ideas. You can do this on a separate piece of paper which you do not have to hand in.

Who killed Nokia?

In October 1998, Nokia became the best-selling mobile phone brand in the world; by 2013 Nokia had lost it all. What led to the company's decline? In order to understand its rapid downfall from its position as a world-dominant and innovative technology organisation, a qualitative study was conducted. It consisted of interviewing 76 Nokia top and middle managers, engineers and external experts and conducting in-depth investigations.

According to the findings, published in the 2015, Nokia had suffered from organisational fear; it was grounded in a culture of temperamental leaders and frightened middle managers. There are descriptions of some members of Nokia's board as "extremely temperamental" who regularly shouted at people "at the top of their lungs". Threats of firings or demotions were commonplace. Fearing the reactions of top managers, middle managers remained silent or provided optimistic, filtered information. One middle manager told us "the information did not flow upwards. Top management was directly lied to..."

Moreover, top managers realised that Nokia needed a better operating system for its phones to match Apple's iOS; they knew it would take several years to develop, but were afraid to publicly acknowledge the inferiority of Symbian, their operating system at the time, for fear of appearing defeatist to external investors, suppliers, and customers and thus losing them quickly. Nobody wanted to be the bearer of bad news. Top managers also lacked technical competence which influenced how they could assess technological limitations during goal setting; by comparison, the top engineers at Apple were all engineers. Instead of allocating resources to the achievement of long-term goals such as developing a new operating system, Nokia management decided to develop new phone devices for short-term market demands.

Nokia's ultimate fall can be put down to internal politics. In short, Nokia people weakened Nokia people and thus made the company increasingly vulnerable to competitive forces. When fear permeated all levels, the lower rungs of the organisation turned inward to protect resources, themselves and their units, giving little away, fearing harm to their personal careers. Top managers failed to motivate the middle managers with their heavy-handed approaches and they were in the dark with what was really going on.

Lecturer's signature: _____

Date: 18.08.2019

Ex.2

This task is designed to see if you can summarise ideas from course materials in your own words. Re-read the text 'Who killed Nokia?' on previous page. Now answer the following question in your own words: What factors contribute to ALDI's success? Write about 175 words.

Downfall of Nokia

- * Less Innovative with technology
- * Problem Inside the Organisation
- * Develop new phone Device for short term market Demand.

Nokia was best selling mobile in October 1998, but Nokia lost it by 2013, when the Apple came in the market with better technology using iOS system. For Nokia the top managerial people who were saying "Top of the range" to blame for killing Nokia.

There was a miscommunication and threats from the top managerial people to the middle manager about their job threat, so company lost its motive to survive in a market, although the middle managers provided filtered information. But the top management said it didn't come from them. So the disfunctional of management cause the Nokia to fall apart. Also they failed to lead and vulnerable to the market force. Top management failed to notice the middle manager with the heavy handed approach and which led Nokia to get in the dark.

Lecturer's comments:

A fair attempt, main points picked up

Lecturer's signature:

Date:

2019.08.18