



## CORE SOFT AND HARD SKILLS FOR THE EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

This paper was on core soft and hard skills for the effective administration of higher education in Nigeria. The quality of leadership provided by any higher education leadership does not only base on the materials chosen and on the technology used, neither only on the expertise of staff who contribute to their fabrication, but also on the quality of the enterprise in its whole. This quality strongly depends on the human resources involved and their capability of positively interact to achieve the pre-set goal of the institution. The paper proposes skill set that utilizes a combination of core soft and hard skills for the effective administration of higher education. The paper revealed that teamwork and communication skills are very important soft skills to be possessed by higher education leadership. It is recognized that soft and hard skills are very important tools and promotes smooth running of the university by both leadership and followership to provide desired results in Higher education. These skills will further provide essential relationship skills and enhance the communication skills of higher education leadership and that of followership for the attainment of higher leadership roles. The paper therefore, suggests that the higher education leadership should target improvements of soft skills and hard skills and specific personality development component in the training and retraining of higher education leadership.

**Keywords:** Core, Soft, Hard, Skills, Effective, Administration, Education, Nigeria.

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### INTRODUCTION

The role of adequate skills for the effective administration of higher education in has lingered much over the past years in Nigeria. The exercise of financial acumen, educational collaboration, building new leadership, effective horizontal and vertical communication, strategic planning, educational change and management, commitment to diversity and intellectual curiosity, higher

education leadership in Nigeria will fail where it falls short of effective soft and hard skills. In short, it is widely applicable in all organizations of the economy (OEC, 2015).

Higher education leadership is dynamic in the sense that it is evolving in high-skills. It also needs qualified staff to keep pace with its on-going change. Accordingly, more than 15 million organizations rate the aggregate skill levels of their staff as less than optimal, and 93 percent of employers indicate that there is an overall skills gap among employees (American Society for Training & Development, 2012).

In an era where leadership, knowledge and skills are critical elements for nations to prosper and compete, priority is placed on the quality and relevance of leadership and how to ensure that higher education leaders have sufficient knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to meet the demands of the industries. The changing nature of work environments, the emergence of technology-driven processes, and the diversified needs of clientele are the emerging challenges of effective administration of higher education in order to meet the demand for employable graduates Gratz and Roemer (2004) thus, becoming a critical concern for effective higher education leadership in Nigeria. This is an indication that effective administration of higher education is challenged to equip their leadership with more than just leadership skills (Pritchard, 2013). Nevertheless, higher education leadership are expected to develop personal skills, qualities, and experiences that will enable them to achieve preset leadership goals (Ghillyer, 2009).

Skills refer to the level of performance of an individual on a particular task or the capability to perform a job well which can be divided into technical elements and behavioural elements (Adnan et al., 2014). Hard skills are related to specific technical knowledge and training while soft skills are personality traits such as leadership, communication or time management. Both types of skills are necessary to successfully perform and advance in most jobs. Technical elements refer to “hard” skills while communication elements measure “soft” skills which include the attitudes and approaches applicants take to their work, such as the ability to collaborate on team projects (Engelberg, 2016). In this context, higher education leadership should be aware of the needs and relate them to their abilities to be able to meet the requirement of their future by employers (Yorke & Harvey, 2002). If higher education leadership do not see the need and the importance of these skills, the likelihood of higher institutions to convince students to cultivate the desired competencies will be difficult (Coll et al., 2002).

## **BACKGROUND**

With the pressing demands of institutional leadership comes a new perspective to shape the direction of higher education leaders. Higher institutions are transitioning their hiring and training practices around emotional intelligence and leadership competencies as they realize that these are now key skills. By definition, hard skills are skills that members of an organization develop to perform specific jobs. They can be measured and are pertinent to effectiveness in the workplace. They are essential. In contrast, soft skills have traditionally been considered “people skills” that are nice to have, yet have not been evaluated or considered as strongly. Now, however, companies are finding that those said soft skills are essential to specific jobs, and that they are measurable and correlate with success and innovation (McMurtrey et al., 2008).

Hard and Soft Skills are fundamental leadership values that must be developed at very early stage of leadership, and then it is not an issue only regarding Universities and Enterprises. Furthermore the development of Soft Skills starts within the family, then even earlier than the

time when the child goes to School. It is very difficult to predict what the labour world will be in future, only short-term prediction can make sense. Educational programmes should try to consider possible future scenarios in order to educate young leaders to find a job, but this is not easy to do, as the future is often unpredictable. But Soft Skills are not only necessary to work, they are essential for everyday life, then educational institutions must focus on methodologies and techniques to help students develop transversal competences that will be useful for them in any circumstance.

Both hard and soft competences have a large impact on our work efficiency and its quality. One can state that we are useful as long as the qualities we possess belong to both of these groups. Key competences identified for each work post will be different. For instance, a candidate who applies for the post of a driver does not have to be fluent in foreign languages, but the basic requirement to be fulfilled in such a situation is having the right qualification, a driver's license is indispensable to perform this type of job. Unfortunately, the situation on the contemporary institutional leadership does not reflect the one which used to be dominant in the past. Nowadays, higher education leadership have to be much more flexible with reference to their job requirements and understand that during the whole period of their professional activeness one can be subject to frequent changes in order to meet the demands of unpredictable work environment (Daud et al., 2012).

Contemporary leadership have to use the time and possibilities of development in order to build a competitive advantage. Hard and Soft competences of key institutional leadership constitute a key element which conditions development of organizations. Also, the implementation of sustainable development principles in management is crucial from the point of view of soft competences (Alao, 2005). Development of discussed competences is important element in contemporary organizations management. Thanks to it, employees feel that they constitute a part of the organization and understand and approve their roles regardless of the fact how important their organizational roles are. The goal of the contemporary leadership is not only to strive at achieving a financial success; nowadays, it is equally important for organizations to apply sustainable development principles in their actual operational activity.

## CONJECTURAL CONTEXT

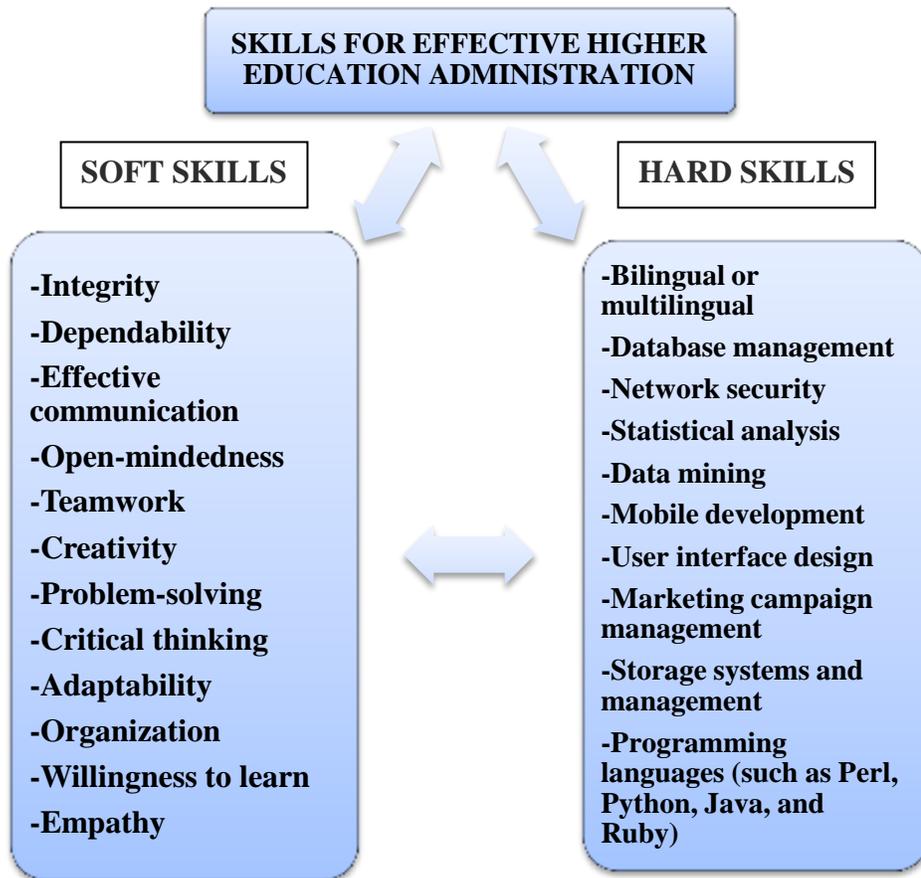


Figure 1: Skills for effective higher education administration

The key differences between hard skills and soft skills are how they are gained and put to use in the workplace. Hard skills are often gained through education or specific training. They include competencies like how to use a certain machine, software or another tool. Soft skills are more often seen as personality traits you may have spent your whole life developing (Robles, 2012). They are called upon when you manage your time, communicate with other people or confront a difficult situation for the first time. Put another way, hard skills could be defined as your technical knowledge whereas soft skills are your overall habits in the workplace.

Soft Skills is the ability of a person to deal with various scenarios in random conditions. Training for soft skills is not the same as training for language skills or technical skills. Soft skills are often confused with these skills. In reality, soft skills are the skills organization look for in order to hire a person. The reason this skill is so important because an individual who has a learning attitude is easier to train as compared to someone who has a negative attitude for learning new things. The way you talk, dress up, walk, your approach towards working all are the things that speak a lot about you (Barnawi & Arifin, 2012).

Soft skills are personal habits and traits that shape how you work, on your own and with others. Effective communication, for example, is a key soft skill many employers seek. Some others include dependability, effective teamwork and active listening. Soft skills are essential to your career and as you

search for jobs. While hard skills are necessary to successfully perform technical tasks in a job, soft skills are necessary to create a positive and functional work environment. For this reason, employers often seek individuals who possess proven soft and hard skills. Some employers may prefer to select candidates who have a stronger set of soft skills over hard skills, as soft skills are at times more difficult to develop (Creswell, 2013). For example, you may be seeking a job in Human Resources but lack prior knowledge of data analysis tools. If you have references that can attest to the effectiveness of your soft skills, such as empathy, open-mindedness and communication, an employer may choose you over another candidate whose hard skills are stronger but who lacks the same level of soft skills.

The development of an individual’s knowledge, skills, and attitudes is not just the sole responsibility of the academic community; however, it is a joint responsibility of institution and the individual. Soft skills communication abilities were the most relevant, and the skills most students needed to improve. Below is the differences between hard skills and soft skills (see figure 2).

SOFT SKILLS	HARD SKILLS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience based</li> <li>• People related</li> <li>• Attitudinal</li> <li>• Behavioral</li> <li>• Non-domain specific</li> <li>• General</li> <li>• Trans-situational</li> <li>• Non-technical</li> <li>• Intangible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rule based</li> <li>• Technological/scientific</li> <li>• Industrial/mechanical</li> <li>• Relates to tools and techniques</li> <li>• Specialized</li> <li>• Procedural and methodical</li> <li>• Replicable</li> <li>• Predictable</li> <li>• Tangible</li> </ul>

Figure 2: Differences between hard skills and soft skills

### The Need for Synergy of Hard and Soft Skills

The demand for the collaborative synergy between hard and soft subjects arises by the marked increase in the changes of higher education and achieving pre-set goals. This is motivated by the increasing demand of the higher institutions for knowledgeable, highly skilled and specialized leadership. Due to this, the possibility that more collaboration could be engaged between hard and soft skills of higher education leadership have been realized with the gaining of popularity (Smidt, 2015). The hard-skills and soft-skills integration is also implemented via the use of information gained from industrial trainee’ supervisory and corporate training experience. This serves as an avenue where higher education leadership has become more meaningful and intensified as more soft-skills input could be directly imparted to the higher education system. This creative synergy serves as a useful platform for people entering newly into higher education leadership (Cunha & Heckman, 2007).

The synergy of hard and soft skills presented higher education leadership the leverage of planning, materials usage, teaching approaches, and assessment tasks which are made to revolve around relevant and important leadership routine. Generally, integration of soft and hard skills follow common implementation approaches, namely, identifying learning objectives, meeting organizational needs, integrating relevant skills into the leadership and specifying lessons

delivery and assessment methods (Noll & Wilkins, 2002). This is intensified in the following ways:

- Online usage via e-learning portal with links
- Language task-writing report via process approach -planning, gathering and organizing data.
- Mini projects-folio, checklist, collect information from fieldwork, interviews of trainees, industry personnel and specialist.
- Leadership centered cooperatives learning, group discussion, peer evaluation presentation, question-answer session and project management approach.

Leadership roles such as inter personal skills and technical skill present good opportunity for exposure, enhancement of understanding and applying language and communication skills in the achievement of leadership roles. The soft skills identified and incorporated are language and communication skills, planning and organization skills, group dynamic skills like cooperation, teamwork, problem solving and time management. In preparing for higher education leadership roles, higher education system should have authentic human and materials resources in the form of real technical manuals, organizational reports and technical task sheets which will be used as sources for higher education leadership improvement (Onyekwere et al., 2019). It could be observed that successful leadership roles were drawn to actively respond by giving opinions, asking questions, arguing, discussing and forwarding suggestions in a less apprehensive and more active atmosphere as compared to situations where leadership roles were not specified.

There has been a huge rise in the number of organizations from different sectors like IT, Travel, Hospitality, Financial Services, Transport, Communication, and Healthcare. Although, there has been a significant increase in the number of job opportunities, companies struggle a lot to find a suitable candidate. This is an indication that the number of people who are employable is very less (Heckman & Kautz, 2012). There is a wide gap between the numbers of people who aspire to be employed compared to those who could be employed. The need for incorporating soft skills into students has been realized by educational institutions. It is important to be able to interact with the customers and work with the team members in a collaborative manner. It is crucial to maintain the quality of work and productivity (Kostons et al., 2012). Soft skills have less to do with knowledge and more to do with who we are. The foundation for a successful career may be laid by hard skills, but they are only strengthened by soft skills. There are two types of soft skills, interpersonal and intrapersonal. Interpersonal skills are about how a person could manage his or her feelings or behaviors in a social context and how they are reflected in others. Intrapersonal skills are about dealing with the thoughts and emotions that persist within an individual. Life skills are a mix of both these types of skills that enable an individual to develop a better understanding, effective communication and the ability to deal with difficult situations by making better choices (Schwartz & Bohner, 2001).

The leadership demand for the collaborative synergy between hard skills and soft skills is on the high demand. This is motivated by the increasing demand by higher education leadership for knowledgeable and highly skilled administration. The manpower and logistical challenges of assigning responsibilities to administrators to be supervised by a limited number of incompetent leaders will prompt the management to create an enabling environment which will promote acquisition and development of hard and soft skills of administration (Maxwell, 2013). Among

the possible options was to rope the synergy to provide effective and efficient leadership in higher education. This is proposed in recognition of the reality that the soft-skills subjects of higher education leadership such as language, communication, entrepreneurship and management, do relate to the hard skills like database management, network security and statistical analysis.

### **Rational for Hard-Skills and Soft-Skills Synergy**

In this globalization and competitive age of science and technology where artificial intelligence is over-taking emotional intelligence, the government has emphasized measures to ensure that hard and soft skills elements are adequately incorporated in the university curriculum and leadership. These measures are embodied and specially formulated by the privately owned higher institutions. Furthermore in the context of leadership improvement, Chen (2016) noted that higher education administrators must be equipped with project management skills, cognitive strategies and abilities, technical abilities and communication skills. However, as noted by Junrat et al. (2014), higher education leadership are primarily focused on receiving orders and executing them without the incorporation of hard and soft skills needed by the leadership. This has led to the constricting the scope and space to impact and improve effectively on leadership and administrative roles using hard and soft skills. This is due to the lack of awareness on the means to incorporate soft-skills in delivery of the hard-skills in higher education leadership, as being explored by this paper. Unfortunately, these essential hard and soft skills are usually marginalized which prioritizes technical knowledge or hard-skills (Hendarman & Tjakraatmadja, 2012). As such, the collaboration synergy between hard skills and soft skill is timely.

Noe et al. (2015) noted that via such collaboration in universities are able to capitalize on the effectiveness of results for authentic real-world input where industrial technology training and workforce development can be intensified as the higher education can provide direct feedback on their employment needs and qualities required. Furthermore, for a graduate to be employable, they must possess a portfolio of language and communication skills that enable them to be flexible in adapting to various job positions or environment (Achan et al., 2006).

Presently, learners in higher education leadership and older higher education administrators will have to master the specific language and relevant communicative skills. Higher education institutions in developed countries for instance, are constantly adopting and integrating intentional use of soft and hard skills to achieve higher rates of performance index, while institutions of developing countries are seeing the need to emphasize on the learning and mastery of the crucial hard such as bilingual or multilingual, database management, network security, statistical analysis, data mining, mobile development alongside with soft skills such as integrity, dependability, effective communication, open-mindedness, teamwork, and creativity (Creswell, 2013). The mastery of the hard skills and soft skills for specific fields and departments of administration could be enhanced via incorporation of hard-skills and soft-skills learning platforms. Studies have revealed that it is more practical to make promotion of soft and hard skills appealing and meaningful to institutional leaders through the use of essential aspects like content schemata, hands-on experience and simulating future application of leadership roles (Schwartz & Bohner, 2001).

Focusing on institutional leaders multiple soft and hard skills competencies such as communication literacy and technical content area literacy is a critical step in motivating the achievement of leadership roles. This is achieved via the bridging of leadership practices with

hands-on workplace tasks and training which will enhance their roles as effective leaders in general and specific departments (Robles, 2012). The synergy of hard and soft skills content presents opportunities for higher education administrators to learn in context, by exploring their knowledge and experience on leadership content and further discourse that which has been previously exposed to them. Exposure to specific leadership patterns that relate to leaders needs and interests such as their teamwork, creativity, data mining and storage systems and management will enhance their motivation and engagement in higher education leadership (Engelberg, 2016). The hard-skills and soft-skills approach could also revolve around authentic leadership and relevant to problem solving in educational management. Many studies (e.g., Creswell, 2013; Oloolube, 2019) have found that using situational problems, authentic context, and real workplace information as evidenced in leadership are able to attract and motivate leadership effectiveness.

Most higher education administrators generally have positive responses towards their roles as active participants of higher institution. They view their task as important and beneficial despite not being directly being at the top-most hierarchy of leadership. Furthermore, useful information in terms of language, communication, planning, management, problem solving and other workplace aspects were obtained and could be directly and indirectly as a result of the incorporation of soft and hard skills (Pritchard, 2013). Despite not coming from academic leadership field, higher education leaders are to ensure that all necessary preparations to have better understanding of the institutions goals and tasks via discussion with distinguished administrators, by attending the industrial placement briefings sessions and by referring to educational policies. The main challenge faced by higher education leaders is the none familiarization of and none-synergy of soft and hard administrative skills. Thus, the importance of the technical and behavioural aspects of the job to bring about effective and high results (Ghillyer, 2009).

### **Awareness of Hard and Soft Skills for Administrative Effectiveness**

The level of knowledge on administrative effectiveness in higher education is growing and the concept has become very popular. However, it is still doubtful whether the level of social awareness of people is satisfactory to start to implement the concept in organizations. In the contemporary world, the scope and rate of sustainable development principles implementation do not keep up with unfavourable phenomena, examples of which are exceeding the tolerance limits of the people and accumulation of social problems. It is necessary to transform higher education into sustainable ones, based on responsible production and consumption of effective administration (Alao, 2005). One can observe that profit-driven attitude for higher institution owners and operators are still dominant among the higher education, although, the number of sustainable development proponents is still growing. Also, the growing disparities between profit maximization with respect to sustainable administrative principles implementation cause that tolerance limits of each other are still being extended and the number of effective administration of higher education problems is still increasing (Cunha & Heckman, 2007). Thus, it seems reasonable that in order to prevent the further accumulation of problems, the present *status quo* needs to be altered, as it is based on the growing consumption of materials and promoting consumer's lifestyle. The priorities to follow for higher education administration are definitely a high level of integration with the hard and soft skills awareness of institutions as well as the managerial staff that is competent and consistent in the way it manages the administration of

higher education. Enterprises of the future have to consider limitations of the individuals and their social needs (OEC, 2015). As a consequence they should take into consideration priorities of sustainable leadership and administration in the following areas of production management, marketing, management, reporting and communication with stakeholders, relationships with clients and social responsibility, inter and intra relationships, strategic management and sustainable planning (Heckman & Kautz, 2012). It should be also emphasized that considering the awareness of hard and soft skills for administrative effectiveness, sustainable administration of higher education principles is to set new challenges for the administration. Only well-qualified staff possessing effective combination of core soft and hard skills for effective administration of higher education will be able to face the challenge of trying to combine the current developments of higher education administration and preserving its sustainability (Engelberg, 2016).

### **Implementation of Hard and Soft Skills**

With so much reliance on technology and communication happening through digital channels, it should come as no surprise that the interpersonal skills of entire workforces are deteriorating. Implementing hard and soft skills training for higher education leadership will result in career success for them and success for the institution at large. According to Creswell (2013), when making an attempt to identify the qualities that constitute an efficient leader, one would probably mention the following personality traits—Starting with fundamentals can provide strong building blocks for a successful soft skills training program. Body language is an area that is often studied by science. However, training for these hard and soft skill areas is best accomplished by role playing and creating various scenarios to see how staff reacts. Many draw a line between face-to-face communication and digital correspondences when addressing soft skills, but that is a grave mistake. It is important to implement soft and hard skills’ training that does not ignore the digital realm. When it comes to digital communication, there is a wealth of records to refer to. When possible, higher education administrators produce a selection of sent emails they feel were perfectly professional and others where they recognize room for improvement. Analyzing these correspondences, provides practical, real-world examples that are the most effective tools to train with. The digital workplace has an etiquette that is all its own, and training must address it appropriately (Junrat et al., 2014).

Building confidence plays a key role in improving soft and hard skills. Most of the time, lack of confidence stems from a lack of knowledge on a certain topic. Being put on the spot is difficult, but when staff takes ownership of their roles and interactions, these are the most confident ones. That has a positive effect on every other soft and hard skill, and ultimately produces better organizational results. Instilling a sense of ownership takes time and it is a process that begins with every new project or task and requires the understanding of the unique factors that surround it. Higher education staff should think about the “why” or “why not” behind each task and practice explaining the reasons behind each action (Cunha & Heckman, 2007). This will also place the higher education staff in a confident position to assure that they will quickly find them a resolution to anything left unanswered.

It is majority of an institutional leadership’s roles to require a large amount of interaction thus teamwork is still an essential part of soft skills training. The focus should not just be on training a specific team to work together on one project, but to teach transferrable skills that can make one a productive co-worker regardless of what team they are on. This entails the understanding one’s role and responsibilities within team dynamics, realizing which specific

tasks are reliant on multiple teammates, and keeping the overall project objectives in mind (Kostons et al., 2012). When possible, taking the time to administer effective administrative roles before, during, and after team projects can provide a tremendous amount of insight and direction. After all, building a great team environment translates to the better achievement of business goals.

While practice makes perfect, practicing bad habits will only reduce the effectiveness and professionalism of an employee and adversely impact the goal attainment negatively (Onyekwere et al., 2019). Recognizing negative patterns, knowing the necessary corrective action, and implementing a productive soft skills training program takes time and expertise. For those unable to dedicate the resources to such a project, partnering with experts in acquisition of hard and soft skills is the most effective solution.

### **A Panoramic Perception of Hard and Soft Skill**

From an educational perspective that recognizes the importance of soft skills, university education is conceived as something more than simple training for the labour field, where professional development is directly related to personal development. Thus, to develop life skills, individuals must be significantly committed to personal development, making active learning pedagogy necessary; that is, teaching skills require participatory methods such as role-playing, discussion, and situation analysis (Hendarman & Tjakraatmadja, 2012).

Similarly, training in soft skills requires fieldwork with experienced people that are close to the educational environment that can benefit from the technical or disciplinary skills that the students develop. This allows them to generate a solid sense of identity, evidencing the need for teamwork in order to obtain better results in their daily work and personal activities (Coll, Zegward & Hodges, 2002). In this respect, it must be recognized that the proposal to involve other actors in the educational process for training in hard and soft skills requires a transformation in the pedagogical paradigm. That is, what is required is a methodology different from the one implemented for the development of cognitive or professional competencies. When considering training in hard and soft skills, this means thinking about the transformation of the classical model of higher education, bringing its actions closer to the education of humanity to serve humanity.

In this respect, professional leadership practices are a scenario to which higher education must pay special attention as higher education administrators are expected to interact with colleagues, superiors and clients. Furthermore, it is through this educational process, that staff assumes their professional and personal roles to tackle new challenges. All these characteristic of educational space are expected to enable the development of transversal skills. This is why higher education institutions should be interested in evaluating the development of hard and soft skills during pre-practical and post-practical vocational training, as this will make it possible to identify whether it is indeed education with "simulated" training that allows for the development of skills or whether, on the contrary, efforts should be focused on the professional internship period (McMurtrey et al., 2008).

Another basic pillar of training in hard and soft skills is interdisciplinary, as it is believed that it is not the task of educators alone but the responsibility of psychologists, counsellors, and other actors involved in the teaching and learning process. This leads us to consider that it is not only necessary to promote articulated work, but also within the framework of Virtual Education, the development of soft hard and skills in teachers and other actors involved in students' teaching

and learning processes is fundamental, emphasizing that contents are only tools and that they are not the most important thing in this new digital era. Now, what we most require are the skills to question, create knowledge networks, and observe.

To conclude, the panoramic review of soft skills allowed us to establish three key aspects. The first, that a clear conceptualization of the term and of each of the skills that are part of the whole is necessary. The second is the need to recognize and appropriate theories that consider feasible the training of soft skills in university contexts and the adoption of conceptually solid theoretical models such as the theory of social learning that methodologically guide and direct the training process. The third is that although, there is recognition of the impact of experiential activities in training, there is still a need for research in the practical area that allows more specific and concrete orientations on the pedagogical activities and strategies that allow their development.

It is also important to recognize that through research it is evident that training in hard and soft skills is highly relevant socially, because it recognizes the considerable demands made by the globalized and rapidly changing world that professionals have to tackle and where it has been clearly identified that professional competencies are no guarantee of success if they are not accompanied by personal and critical skills that allow them to make a more comprehensive reading of the world that is attuned to reality (Pritchard, 2013). Thus, in response to social demands, today's higher education institutions should stop considering universities as places where students go to theorize about the net knowledge of a discipline, but rather, they should look to turning the educational scenario into a space to learn to live with others, that implies learning to socialize, interact, understand and accept differences, argue critically and recognize and interpret emotions.

In short, the need for training in soft skills in the university context requires the necessary pedagogical adjustments in both curricular components and professional practices in order to train people with the skills for "doing" as well as with the skills necessary for "being". So the challenge here is to focus interest on what is really important about what we call "University". That is, the human beings who are educated within an educational community that models, molds, and creates not only professionals, but also leaders, empowered women, discerning individuals, and responsible citizens (Yorke & Harvey, 2002).

This pedagogical shift, besides being a response to real comprehensive training, dynamizes a positive impact on the community and society training highly productive professionals, who are propositive, innovative, emotionally intelligent, resilient to adversity and managers of new projects. Training in soft skills makes for social agents with the capacity to quickly adapt to changes, which are able to self-evaluate, lead, and generate real social transformations.

Promoting soft skills in university students is a win-win situation. The student benefits from personal training; the educational institution benefits from providing real comprehensive training, thus, complying with basic institutional principles; the community benefits because it is served by professionals in training while, at the same time, students increase their transversal skills. In sum, investing in students' integral training is an investment that can be perceived and where there is no loss (American Society for Training and Development, 2012). This is why the text emphasizes the promotion of a higher education scenario interested in the development of soft skills and comprehensive training, leading to the parallel development of students' being and doing skills, which in turn, leads to happier and more complete human beings.

## **CONCLUSION**

Our institutions need to help institutional leaders to polish the relevant hard and soft skills as the success of higher institutions place significant importance on soft and hard skills. Soft and hard skills training strategies should be tailored to meet the needs of the present and future ever changing and complex higher institution of learning. Higher education stakeholders should be encouraged to participate in training and development to facilitate a greater collaboration between the industries and institutions. This could help to narrow down the gap between the future skills needed by the higher educational leadership and what is being taught and developed in the institutions.

Higher education administration progress and the changes undergoing in the turbulent environment have influenced relaxation of basic management rules and implementation of psychological aspects stressed by hard and soft skills such as data mining, mobile development, user interface design, marketing campaign and communicativeness, making friends easily respectively, which surely conditions the probability of higher education administrative success regardless of the form of its operations. Trainings and conferences have vital influence on the process of shaping employees in the scope of their proper attitudes and meeting sustained employment requirements depending on the place occupied in the given organization's hierarchy. When hard and soft competences can be developed, the vital element in this respect is the awareness of the need to make such an investment. Key core hard and soft skills are the key for securing correct development of higher education. Types of trainings can be adjusted to the needs of a particular enterprise or the ability to integrate a group or team of employees in order to increase their motivation to perform their duties and preset higher educational goals.

## **Recommendations**

This paper therefore suggests that:

- Higher education leadership should target enhancement or inclusions of soft and hard skills on the specific development component on its planning and revisions of the training and retraining.
- It should undertake to improve hard skills capability of data analysis, programming and entry level technical skills such as computer operations and maintenance.
- Make sure that stakeholders and industry partners participate in the deliberations related to the framing of policies and soft and hard skill development.
- The cooperative effort involving stakeholders of higher institutions should be strengthen to provide opportunities for higher institution leadership exposure in the development of their skills.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION**

Another study should be conducted, particularly in relation to the various departments of higher institutions that focus on specific hard and soft skills that will be peculiar to the individual department to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

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