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Soft Skills Model for Employability in Mexico

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Abstract: Nowadays, soft skills are known as skills of the XXI century; in Mexico, it is necessary to promote or promote soft skills to encourage productivity, employability, and improve the quality of life of people or young professionals, so it is essential to know those skills that, in addition to the basic knowledge, employers require since skills necessary to contribute to the same objectives of the companies can be determined [1]. In any organization, certain competencies acquired by employers are required, and that is where soft skills play an important and fundamental role in companies, soft skills are considered a holistic concept of competence that involves the mobilization of knowledge, attitudes, and values to meet complex demands [2]. The objective of this research was to design a model for the employability of companies in Mexico. The methodology used for this research was a quantitative approach, causal correlational scope, and non-experimental, translational, and causal correlational research design [3]. Factor analysis was used to prevent two variables from measuring the same and multiple regression to determine the influence of soft skills on employability [3] in large companies in transformation in the State of Hidalgo, Mexico. The research instrument contains 22 items with a Likert scale from totally agree to strongly disagree, with a Cronbach's alpha of .830. The results were that the soft skills that influence employability are recognition, control of emotions, creative thinking, understanding of feelings, analytical reflections, own feelings and empathy, and relating and understanding with others; it could be concluded that hard work is needed with the integration of previous soft skills with employers.

Keywords: soft skills, employability, conceptual model.

墨西哥就业能力的软技能模型

摘要：如今，软技能被称为二十一世纪的技能；在墨西哥，有必要促进或促进软技能，以鼓励生产力、就业能力和提高人们或年轻专业人员的生活质量，因此了解这些技能是必不可少的，除了基本知识外，雇主还需要这些技能，因为可以确定为公司的同一目标做出贡献所必需的技能[1]。在任何组织中，都需要雇主获得某些能力，这就是软技能在公司中发挥重要和基础作用的地方，软技能被认为是能力的整体概念，涉及调动知识、态度和价值观以满足复杂的需求要求[2]。本研究的目的是为墨西哥公司的就业能力设计一个模型。本研究使用的方法是定量方法、因果相关范围以及非实验、转化和因果相关研究设计[3]。在墨西哥伊达尔戈州的转型中，使用因子分析来防止两个变量测量相同，并使用多元回归来确定软技能对

就业能力[3]的影响。该研究工具包含 22 个项目，采用李克特量表，从完全同意到非常不同意，克隆巴赫的 α 值为 0.830。结果表明，影响就业能力的软技能是识别、情绪控制、创造性思维、感受理解、分析性反思、自己的感受和同理心，以及与他人的联系和理解；可以得出结论，需要努力工作，将以前的软技能与雇主相结合。

关键词：软技能、就业能力、概念模型。

1. Introduction

Generating new competencies, such as human skills through education, learning and meaningful work are key drivers of the success economy, individual well-being and social cohesion. In this scenario, companies seek to provide opportunities to update and develop skills, and the global change toward a future of work is defined by a constant expansion of new technologies by 2025, 44% of the skills that employees will need to perform functions with effectiveness will change [4].

In the 21st century, competencies, skills, and abilities have become the key factor in achieving individual well-being and the economic success of a society. Technological progress does not translate into growth, and countries are unable to compete in a world economy that is increasingly based on knowledge. Competences and abilities are essential to allow people and countries to progress in an increasingly complex, interconnected, and changing world. In countries where people develop strong skills, learn throughout their lives, and use skills fully and effectively at work and in society, they are more productive and innovative and enjoy a higher level of confidence, better health outcomes, and better quality of life [2].

Traditionally, managers have placed greater emphasis on the evaluation of technical skills when evaluating and selecting training for their employees, little has been investigated about both defined and soft skills, such as patience, persuasion, and flexibility; they influence people's ability to find and keep a job, i.e., their employability [11, 16].

This research aims to develop a soft skills model for the employability in companies in the State of Hidalgo, Mexico. To achieve the above, an instrument was built that allowed data collection and identification of the relationship between the variables, considering employability as a dependent variable. Employability is understood as the set of transferable skills and qualifications that reinforce the ability of people to take advantage of the education and training opportunities that are presented to them with a view to finding and keeping decent work [5]. Thus, the independent variables were soft skills. Skills are part of a holistic concept of competence, which implies the mobilization of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to satisfy complex demands [6]. Therefore, all the soft skills that influence employability were determined and with that

the soft skills model for employability was designed.

2. Literature Review

In the study of the development of soft skills in the business field, there are authors who mention the importance and relevance of their development in early stages, such as in the stage of vocational training.

In some studies referring to the importance of this topic, soft skills are identified as a holistic concept of competence, which implies the mobilization of knowledge, attitudes, and values to meet complex demands [2].

In this way, the University of Murcia, Spain, refers in its research that employers determined ten competencies or skills that are considered of greater importance for employability; among the most substantial the following stand out: the ability to work in a team and relate to other people from the same or different professional fields, leadership capacity, adaptation to changes, and considering ethics and intellectual integrity. [7] mentions the importance of interaction with customers and the resolution of group and individual problems.

Contributing to this range of competencies, [8] determine that for the development of the individual in the subject of decisions, it is important to develop skills such as confidence, self-esteem, self-control, and perseverance. For this purpose, they promote the design of policies so that young people acquire them.

Soft skills can be considered as of utmost importance in the labor market, so creativity, decision-making, social interaction, and knowing the motivations of others are determined as necessary to develop the tasks assigned in their work area [9].

It is shown in [10] that to perform in academic, personal, and professional fields, a greater development in the field of non-cognitive skills such as soft skills is required as opposed to cognitive ones.

3. Methodology

This research designs a soft skills model for employability in Mexico. A quantitative approach of causal correlational scope, non-experimental design, and factor analysis was applied.

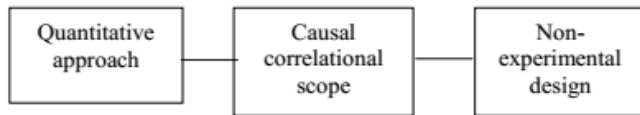


Fig. 1 Methodology (The authors' elaboration)

A questionnaire was used to collect data from 117 company executives in Mexico. Management responded electronically. The questionnaire consisted of 22 questions with Likert-type scale answers (strongly agree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree). Once the reliability of the instrument in the statistical program (SPSS) had been determined, a Cronbach's alpha of .830 was achieved, consisting of the internal consistency index of the 22 elements, subsequently and according to the characteristics of the research, the factor analysis was carried out to estimate parameters and test hypotheses, that is; Identify which soft skills influence or relate to employability. Similarly, a conceptual model of factor analysis was designed.

4. Hypothesis

The soft skills, critical sense, self-awareness, stress management, empathy, management of emotions, assertive communication, decision-making, critical thinking, solving problems and conflicts, and interpersonal relationships that employers demand influence employability in transformation companies in Mexico.

A way of measuring and as a theoretical perspective, the variables were determined so that the independent variable refers to soft skills as a holistic concept of competence, which implies the mobilization of knowledge, attitudes, and values to meet complex demands [6].

The employability variable refers to transferable competences and qualifications [5]. Therefore, the conceptualization of the variables can be observed, which allows us to know the importance of each one as theoretical support.

Table 1 Conceptualization of the variables (The authors' elaboration)

Variable	Conceptual Definition	Indicator
Critical thinking	Key skill for today's world, understanding that society at this time requires personnel capable of processing information to make the best decisions [12]	Logic reasoning
Self-awareness	Recognition of emotions and their consequences [13]	Self-awareness
Stress management	Physical, emotional and harmful response that occurs when the demands of the job do not match the capacities, resources, or needs of the worker [14]	Pressure control
Empathy	Understanding the emotions of the other cited by [15]	Understanding ability
Management of emotions	Consciously processing emotions, accepting, facing, and mastering them in specific situations cited by [12]	Degree of consciousness
Assertive communication	Optimizing the quality of personal relationships, using assertiveness is knowing how to ask, knowing how to refuse, to get what you want; respecting the other and communicating our feelings clearly [17]	Interpersonal relations
Decision-making	Intuition, experience based on rules, and procedures that allow organizations to achieve their objectives according to the subject, situation, or problem posed by the decision-making, as cited by [18]	Own criterion
Creative thinking	Analysis, making inferences, creating innovative and original ideas to build more thinking and reasoning society capable of choosing the best answers to the most difficult questions [19]	Development of new ideas
Troubleshooting and conflicts	Skill that the person must understand and solve tasks [12]	Comprehension and solution of tasks
Relationships	Skill that the person must understand and solve tasks [12] Social aptitude that allows establishing effective interactions, considering the needs of others and acting accordingly [13]	Social aptitude
Employability	The ability of people to take advantage of the educational and training opportunities that are presented to them with a view to finding and keeping a decent job [5]	Skills

Therefore, it was necessary to define the operationalization of the same variables to categorize the items of the research instrument (questionnaire) (Table 2).

Table 2 Operationalization of the variables (The authors' elaboration)

Variable	Items
Critical Thinking	6
Self-awareness	8 and 11
Stress management	10
Empathy	3
Management of emotions	4
Communications	9
Decision-making	12
Creative thinking	5 and 7
Troubleshooting and conflicts	2
Relationships	1
Employability	13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22

The variables in Table 2 are defined and used for the formulation of the constructs that serve as a basis for the identification of the variables that measure employability.

5. Results

Managers consider the relationship between the same soft skills to be of greater significance; it is important that workers know their own emotions, understand the feelings of others, have innovative thinking and reasonable reflection, establish effective relationships, control emotions for employability, are analytical in performance, have their own criteria, are intuitive, have dexterity in specific tasks, know how to relate, consider alternative solutions, and have experience in procedures and own solutions (Table 3).

Table 3 Relationships of soft skills and employability of greater significance (The authors' elaboration)

Soft skills	Correlation matrix value	Employability	Value
Knowing one's own emotions and understanding the feelings of others	.610	Controlling emotions and being analytical in performance	.520
Innovative thinking and reasonable reflection	.491	Own judgment and intuition	.449
Building effective relationships and innovative thinking	.481	Task and analytical skills	.443
Knowing one's own emotions and establishing effective relationships	.443	Interacting with others and choosing better solution alternatives	.424
Understanding other people's feelings and establishing effective relationships	.430	Experience in own procedures and solutions	.405

When performing the principal components factor analysis, it was carried out with respect to the

measurement of soft skills (Items 1-12) and another with respect to their influence on employability (Items 13-22). With respect to soft skills, when examining the matrix of partial correlations, 77% of significant correlations were obtained, the sample sufficiency measure obtained was 0.740, and on the diagonal of the anti-image correlation matrix, the sampling adequacy measures were all greater than 0.5. For this first set of questions, it was found that with 4 factors there was an eigenvalue of 1.022 and 61.41% of the variance was explained, so this solution was chosen as the optimal one. To effectively analyze which variables were considered of greater significance in which factor, it was decided to perform a varimax rotation to the initial solution with four factors.

The four factors were interpreted as follows:

Factor 1: Recognition, control, and consequences of one's own emotions and creative thinking;

Factor 2: Understanding others and their feelings and reasonable, innovative thinking;

Factor 3: Knowing one's own emotions and feelings of others;

Factor 4: Creating assertive relationships and understanding the needs of others.

The same procedure was performed for the second set of variables (Questions 13 to 22). Here, 84% of significant correlations were obtained with sample sufficiency of 0.835, and the sampling adequacy measures were all greater than 0.5 in the anti-image matrix, showing the feasibility of factor analysis. In this case, it was found that with two factors, there were an eigenvalue of 1.226 and a total explained variance of 48.28%. When performing the varimax rotation, the two factors were interpreted as follows:

Factor 1: Analytical, reasoning, and socialization capacities for employability;

Factor 2: Intuition and experience for employability.

With the above, it is possible to appreciate the skills that managers consider of greater importance and that there is a significant relationship for the employability of large companies in Mexico.

6. Conceptual Model

Through the principal component analysis and regression, the Soft Skills Conceptual Model for Employability was generated. SPSS AMOS V23 software was used using the Factor Analysis and Structural Equations (SEM) technique.

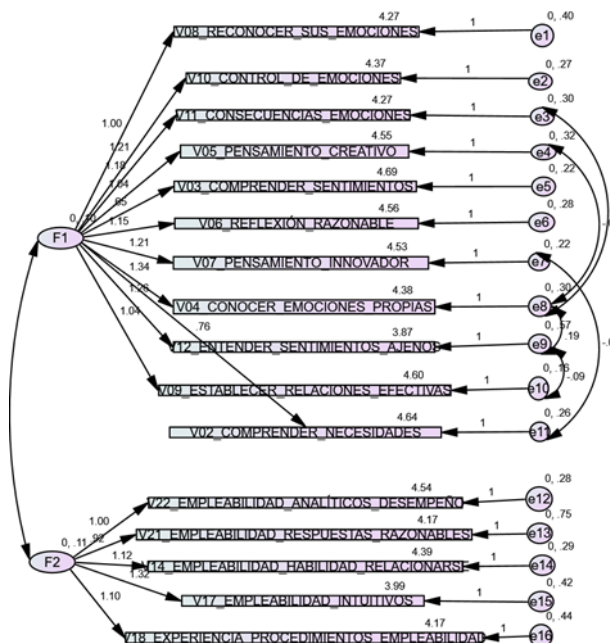


Fig. 2 The soft skills model for employability (The authors' elaboration)

The conceptual model presents the observable or latent variables and their definition, factor one (F1), soft skills, factor two (F2), employability, and the variables that have not been contemplated in the model and may affect the measurement of an observed variable, which represents the prediction error.

Additionally, it is a reflective model because a variable is erased the construct remains and can be followed with confirmatory factor analysis, that is; oriented to causal relationships. The confirmatory factor analysis was determined because a solid theoretical basis is requested to determine the factors and relationship between the variables.

Therefore, in the conceptual model of soft skills for employability shows a significant relationship between soft skills and employability.

7. Conclusions

In such a way that the soft skills are known as skills of the XXI century, in Mexico, it is necessary to promote or promote soft skills to encourage productivity, employability, and improve the quality of life of people or young professionals, so it is essential to know those skills that, in addition to basic knowledge, are required by employers as they can determine the skills needed to contribute to the same objectives of companies [19]. In this context, soft skills are an integral part of the human being that must be developed in any field.

Therefore, skill is identified as practical or technical knowledge and the ability to apply theoretical knowledge in a practical context.

According to the results obtained in this research, soft skills influence employability, and we observe that analytical capacity, reasoning, and socialization of workers, understanding the feelings of others, having a

reasonable thought and innovative, analytical skills, reasoning and understanding the feelings of others are skills of greater significance for the directors of companies in Mexico.

Likewise, it is concluded that for the managers of companies in Mexico, the recognition, control, and consequences of their own emotions and creative thinking have a positive impact on intuition and experience for employability. It is necessary and important that human capital is aware of the importance of soft skills for employability and therefore should be given interest.

The comparison with other studies has other ramifications. Many times, it is emphasized that managers must be employees with high technical capabilities and it is not recognized how much they know about soft skills and their impact on employability. It is essential to know that leaders are also trained in how to occupy soft skills and how they perceive them.

Finally, the hypothesis is accepted because soft skills, recognition and control of one's own emotions, creative thinking, understanding others and their feelings, reasonable and innovative thinking, knowing one's own emotions and feelings of others, creating assertive relationships, understanding the needs of others, critical sense, knowing oneself better, and knowing the feelings of others have a positive impact on employability.

Therefore, managers need not only to ensure that subordinates learn and improve their technical skills, but also train their employees in soft skills such as empathic ability and knowledge and recognition of feelings, as a way to encourage and retain job improvement.

As recommendations and future research, the applicability of the soft skills model for employability is recommended, as well as analyzing hard skills and how they impact in relation to soft skills. As a line of research, see the correlation of soft skills with the gender of employees.

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