

Management and development of soft skills in companies in the digital era: Growth and perspectives

Management et développement des soft skills dans les entreprises à l'ère du numérique : enjeux et perspectives

MHENNA Rachid

PHD in Economics and Management, Faculty of Law, Economics and Social Sciences of Mohammed VI, Hassan II University, Casablanca, Morocco.

Research Laboratory: research laboratory in entrepreneurship, management, finance and organizational strategies

Morocco

mhennarachid@gmail.com,

BOURHABA Othmane

PHD in Economics and Management, Faculty of Law, Economics and Social Sciences of Mohammed VI, Hassan II University, Casablanca, Morocco

Research Laboratory in Economic Performance and Logistics

Morocco

bourhabaothmane@gmail.com,

MHENNA Naoual

PHD in Economics and Management, National School of Commerce and Management of Tangier, Abdelmalek Essaâdi University of Tétouan. Morocco.

Research Laboratory "in management and information system

Morocco

naoualmhenna@gmail.com,

Meryame SAHI

PHD in Economics and Management, Faculty of Law, Economics and Social Sciences of Fès, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah de University Fès,

Interdisciplinary Research Laboratory in Economics, Finance and Management of Organizations

Morocco

sahimeryame01@gmail.com

Date de soumission : 04/03/2023

Date d'acceptation : 22/05/2023

Pour citer cet article :

MHENNA.R & al. (2023) « Management and development of soft skills in companies in the digital era: Growth and perspectives », Revue Internationale du Chercheur «Volume 4 : Numéro 2» pp : 219 – 239

Résumé:

Les compétences douces, également connues sous le nom de "soft skills" en anglais, font référence aux qualités interpersonnelles et aux attributs personnels qu'une personne possède et peut démontrer par son comportement. Ces compétences sont acquises grâce à l'expérience, aux interactions sociales et à une réflexion personnelle. Les compétences douces englobent un large éventail de traits et de capacités, tels que *la communication efficace, la résolution de problèmes, le travail d'équipe, la pensée critique, la créativité, l'adaptabilité, la gestion du temps et le leadership*. Contrairement aux compétences techniques, qui se réfèrent aux connaissances et aux capacités spécifiques à une tâche, les compétences douces sont plus transversales et s'appliquent à divers domaines professionnels et personnels. Une analyse scientifique tel que Rynes et al. (2012) des compétences douces mettrait en évidence plusieurs aspects importants. Tout d'abord, il est crucial de reconnaître que les compétences douces jouent un rôle essentiel dans le succès professionnel. Des études ont montré que les employeurs attachent une grande importance aux compétences douces lors de l'embauche et de la promotion de leurs employés. Ces compétences sont souvent considérées comme des indicateurs de la capacité d'un individu à s'adapter aux changements, à collaborer efficacement avec les autres et à résoudre des problèmes de manière créative. De plus, les compétences douces sont étroitement liées à *la réussite et à la satisfaction personnelle*. Elles peuvent améliorer *la qualité des relations interpersonnelles*, favoriser *un climat de travail positif* et *contribuer au bien-être général d'une personne*. Des recherches ont démontré que les individus dotés de compétences douces solides sont plus susceptibles d'atteindre leurs objectifs, de faire preuve de résilience face aux difficultés et de maintenir des relations durables. Elles sont essentielles et utiles pour se démarquer dans le monde du travail, interagir avec les autres, résoudre les problèmes et atteindre les objectifs. Notre article se propose d'explorer la notion de "compétences douces" en réalisant une analyse théorique visant à définir la contribution de cette notion à la détermination de la performance tant au niveau individuel qu'organisationnel.

Mot clé: Soft skills ; Hard skills ; Transformation digitale ; Compétence transversales ; Performance individuelle et organisationnelle.

Abstract:

Soft skills, also known as "soft skills" in English, refer to the interpersonal qualities and personal attributes that an individual possesses and can demonstrate through their behavior. These skills are acquired through experience, social interactions, and personal reflection. Soft skills encompass a wide range of traits and abilities, such as effective communication, problem-solving, teamwork, critical thinking, creativity, adaptability, time management, and leadership. Unlike technical skills, which refer to task-specific knowledge and abilities, soft skills are more cross-cutting and applicable to various professional and personal domains. A scientific analysis, such as Rynes et al. (2012), of soft skills would highlight several important aspects. First and foremost, it is crucial to recognize that soft skills play an essential role in professional success. Studies have shown that employers place great importance on soft skills when hiring and promoting their employees. These skills are often seen as indicators of an individual's ability to adapt to changes, collaborate effectively with others, and creatively solve problems. Furthermore, soft skills are closely linked to personal achievement and satisfaction. They can improve the quality of interpersonal relationships, foster a positive work climate, and contribute to an individual's overall well-being. Research has demonstrated that individuals with strong soft skills are more likely to achieve their goals, display resilience in the face of challenges, and maintain lasting relationships. Soft skills are essential and beneficial for standing out in the workplace, interacting with others, solving problems, and achieving objectives. Our article aims to explore the concept of "soft skills" through a theoretical analysis, seeking to define the contribution of this notion to determining performance at both the individual and organizational levels.

Keywords: Soft skills; Hard skills; Digital transformation; Transferable skills; Individual and organizational performance.

Introduction:

The concept of soft skills has often been subject to diverse interpretations, and there is a lack of clear consensus in the scientific literature regarding its precise definition and scope. However, as the term celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2022, it is imperative for us to establish a common understanding. This is especially important considering the potential of soft skills as a critical lever for enhancing human capital and the competitiveness of organizations. In fact, the market trend is increasingly leaning towards evaluating soft skills in the recruitment process and emphasizing their development in general (Lamri, J., Barabel, M., Meier, O., & Lubart, T., 2022). To fully harness the potential of soft skills, it is crucial to delve into scientific analysis and explore their nature and impact. While the exact composition of soft skills may vary, they typically encompass a wide range of interpersonal attributes and personal qualities that enable individuals to effectively navigate social and professional contexts. These skills include effective communication, emotional intelligence, adaptability, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, and creativity, among others. Research has demonstrated the significance of soft skills in various aspects of individual and organizational performance. For instance, studies have shown that individuals with strong soft skills tend to excel in their roles, exhibit higher job satisfaction, and contribute positively to team dynamics. Soft skills are particularly valuable in today's dynamic and interconnected work environments, where collaboration, adaptability, and effective communication are essential for success. Furthermore, the assessment and development of soft skills have gained traction within recruitment practices. Employers increasingly recognize the importance of these skills in identifying candidates who not only possess the technical expertise but also exhibit the interpersonal competencies necessary for thriving in the workplace. Consequently, organizations are investing in strategies to identify, assess, and foster soft skills among their employees, recognizing their potential to enhance individual and collective performance.

In summary, as the importance of soft skills continues to grow, it is crucial to align our understanding of the concept and explore its implications through scientific analysis. By recognizing the multifaceted nature of soft skills and incorporating them into talent management practices, organizations can unlock their potential to drive individual success and enhance organizational competitiveness. This leads us to question: Does digital transformation have an impact on the management and development of soft skills within the company?

This article serves as an exploratory study with a dual objective. **The first objective** is to elucidate the significance of soft skills and their position within the broader concept of competence. We will delve into the intricacies of soft skills, differentiate them from hard skills, and provide a detailed exposition of their constituent components. Additionally, we will present a comprehensive list of the most pertinent soft skills in the current context.

The second objective of this study pertains to the management and development of these soft skills. We will delve into strategies and approaches for effectively nurturing and enhancing soft skills among individuals. Drawing from scientific insights, we will explore the potential avenues for optimizing the acquisition, assessment, and cultivation of these skills within individuals and organizations. By examining the multifaceted nature of soft skills and investigating their implications within the realm of competence, this study aims to contribute to the existing scientific discourse surrounding the importance of soft skills. Through a comprehensive understanding of these skills and their management, individuals and organizations can leverage their potential for fostering personal and professional growth, facilitating effective teamwork, and driving overall organizational success.

1- Digital transformation:

To get a generic idea of what is called digital transformation; let's take a tour of different definitions.

- First, Bharadwaj et.al. (2013) define it as “an organizational strategy formulated and executed using digital resources to create value differential.”
- Liu et al. (2011). Simply defines it as “the integration of digital technologies into the organizational process.”
- Henrietta et al. (2015). Regard it as "a business model driven by changes associated with the implementation of digital technologies in all aspects of the human society.”
- Lucas et al. (2013). Explain that digital transformation means “Change fundamentally the traditional ways of doing business by redefining capabilities, business processes and relationships.”
- Finally, for Piccini et al. (2015). Digital transformation is “the use of technologies to enable meaningful business improvements.”

As we can see in all these definitions, the main idea of this term is that there is an integration of digital/digital tools and that this leads to changes that can be at the process, business model or other level.

2- HR digital transformation:

Many observations on the impacts of digital in companies and on management show that people are at the heart of this transformation with new customer and internal relationships. Digital challenges everyone's skills and everyone's organization. The role of the manager and the management team is essential to support this development. (Zardet, V., & Savall, H., 2019). In recent years, companies have been faced with the need to transform themselves in order to remain efficient and competitive. On this point, the massive arrival of digital in the professional sector leads to behavioral changes that the company must appropriate to take advantage of it. The digitization of human resources management corresponds to the implementation of a set of responses, digitized or not, to enable HR professionals to meet market needs. (Chgadna J., Kuniyima, J. N., & Khatori, Y., 2020).

Human resources are now at the heart of all business strategies. Its objective is to attract the best skills and talents in order to optimize its productivity. In this new world of digitalization, human resources management has evolved. It is therefore crucial for human resources managers to seek to find new strategies and new approaches to adapt and lead the change resulting from this transformation. (El Mechkouri, T, 2021).

3- The place of soft skills within skills:

3-1: Competence: Foundations and Definitions:

3-1-1: Competence: Foundations:

In the 1980, changes in the economic environment of companies and the globalization of trade led to a gradual questioning of Taylorism, the organizational model then in vogue. Gradually, to cope with a globalized socio-economic context, but also with fierce and fierce competition, the company has inculcated a culture of permanent adaptation. Competence then becomes an essential lever for the company. We even speak of the “skills model” (Zarifian, 1999, 2000). A complete process is then put in place within companies, integrating detection, evaluation, motivation, enhancement and development of skills in a framework that promotes mobility and the development of everyone's employability as well as forward-looking and preventive management. Management is no exception. The practices aim to promote both personal and

professional fulfillment and the achievement of the objectives set by the management of the company. The manager is no longer part of a “control” process, but presents himself as a facilitator who sets objectives and promotes their achievement within the framework of the entity for which he is responsible. Many approaches have broken down competence into four forms of knowledge: knowledge or theoretical knowledge (acquired theoretical knowledge), know-how (professional experience), life skills (behaviors, attitudes, ability to adapt) and life skills (the clothing aspects). (Laviolette, E. M., & Loue, C., 2006).

3-1-2: Competence: Definition:

According to Montmollin (1984), competence can be defined as a stabilized set of knowledge and know-how, standard procedures, and types of reasoning that can be implemented without new learning. Since then, the competence logic has gained ground in organizations (Zarifian, 2009), and competence is commonly defined as a sum of knowledge, know-how and interpersonal skills (Courpasson et al., 1991; Durand, 2000). This triptych, while it may be open to criticism, nevertheless has a certain advantage for practitioners: it is simple and easy to remember (Loufrani-Fedida et al., 2013). The MEDEF, in the work on the competence logic presented in Deauville in 1998, chose to define it as "a combination of knowledge, know-how, experience and behaviors exercised in a specific context" (Zimmerman, 2000). (Theurelle-Stein, D., & Barth, I., 2017).

Thus, in the light of this literature review we can summarize the definition of competence as being a set of knowledge, in the first place we find the theoretical knowledge, which represents all the knowledge acquired by an individual during his life, such as diplomas and various theoretical knowledge as an example, in the second place we have the know-how, which designates a set of professional experiences acquired by the individual, in the third place we find the knowledge to be which is considered as the core or the major fold of the skills, it is the set of behavioral and relational qualities through which an individual can distinguish himself from the others, and finally the knowledge to live, it is close to the knowledge to make, by adding the clothing aspect.

3-2: Soft skills at the heart of competence: A lack of consensus terminology:

The term "soft skills", which first appeared in the early 1970s in the United States, was only later used in France in the world of education and then in management, in reference to questions of skills assessment and the understanding of the various dimensions of leadership, respectively. The notion of "transversal competencies", its French translation, which emerged

in French-speaking educational sciences in the mid-1990s, was initially used mainly to study the ability to learn languages. A decade later, it found its extension in the world of work and in the studies around job mobility. It refers to all the skills that are not strictly knowledge-based, nor technical or professional skills, i.e., skills that are centered on a practice or a professional universe. It is thus equivalent to related terms such as "know-how", "talents", "personal skills", "generic skills", "polyfunctional skills". (Servajean-Hilst, R., Du Roscoät, B., Bauvet, S., & Lallement, R., 2022).

"Soft skills", more generally it is "behavioral skills". (Van Laethem, N., & Josset, J. M., 2020). Soft Skills are currently taking a large place in the business environment, especially in management. A certain number of points relating to this very Anglo-Saxon notion were clarified. The question was then raised of a first classification of these soft skills on which the company is invited to invest in order to propose a perennial and sustainable evolution of the employees' skills. (Borat, J., Hoarau, J., & Mauléon, F., 2018).

3-3 Why Investing in the Development of Soft Skills is Important

In today's world, it is increasingly important to have advanced technical skills, but that is no longer enough to succeed in your career. Employers are also looking for employees who have non-technical skills, known as "soft skills". Soft skills are skills that are not directly related to a specific technical job or profession. They include things like effective communication, problem solving, time management, collaboration, and leadership. These skills are essential for successfully working in a team, dealing with clients, and solving problems that arise in a professional environment. Investing in the development of these skills can help strengthen a person's career. Employers are looking for workers who can not only perform technical tasks, but can also work effectively with others and manage conflicts. Workers who have communication and problem-solving skills are also more likely to find creative solutions to difficult problems. Soft skills can also help workers feel more engaged in their work. By having time management and organizational skills, for example, workers can be more productive and can better balance their work and personal lives. Communication skills can help create a more positive work environment and improve employee satisfaction. Ultimately, investing in the development of soft skills is important for improving a worker's skills and value in the job market. Employers are looking for workers who are competent in both technical and relational aspects, and those who have skills in communication, collaboration, and problem-solving have a competitive advantage in the job market.

Multiple reasons are driving companies to take a more precise interest in soft skills today. They aim to adapt to multiple evolutions, develop employability and performance, and attract, mobilize, and retain talent.

3-4 Hard skills vs soft skills:

Hard skills and soft skills are both important for success in the workplace, but they refer to different types of skills. Hard skills are specific, teachable abilities that are acquired through formal education, training, or on-the-job experience. They are often technical in nature and can be measured or quantified, such as computer programming, data analysis, accounting, or writing. Hard skills are often listed on a resume or CV as they are essential for performing specific job tasks. On the other hand, soft skills are non-technical skills that are related to how a person interacts with others and performs in a work environment. They are often interpersonal in nature and are typically more difficult to quantify, such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, adaptability, and time management. Soft skills are important for building relationships, working in teams, and effectively communicating with colleagues, clients, and customers. While hard skills are necessary for getting the job done, soft skills are critical for success in a career and can often differentiate top performers from those who struggle to advance. Employers increasingly recognize the value of soft skills, and job seekers should aim to develop and highlight them in addition to their hard skills. 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. They are called upon when you manage your time, communicate with other people or confront a difficult situation for the first time.

3-4-1: What are hard skills “Doyle, A. (2020)”:

Hard skills refer to specific, teachable abilities that are typically acquired through formal education, training programs, or on-the-job experience. They are often technical in nature and can be measured or quantified. Examples of hard skills include proficiency in a particular software program, knowledge of a foreign language, data analysis, or computer programming. Hard skills are typically job-specific and can be listed on a resume or CV as they are essential for performing certain tasks or duties. They are generally easier to quantify and measure than

soft skills, which are related to interpersonal and communication abilities. Hard skills are often necessary for getting a job, as they are required to perform the technical aspects of the work. However, they may not be enough on their own, as employers also value the soft skills that enable employees to work effectively in teams, communicate well, and solve problems creatively. Hard skills, also known as technical skills, are technical knowledge or training that you have gained through any life experience, including in your career or education. For example:

- *If you've worked in food service or retail, you may know how to use a point-of-sale system.*
- *If you've taken an accounting class, you may know how to use Microsoft Excel.*
- *If you've studied a foreign language, you may be able to speak it fluently.*

Every job will require certain technical skills specific to that industry. If you want to work as an architect, for example, you will need to know how to use drafting software. The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards also requires architects to be licensed. The NCARB maintains the Architectural Registration Examination, a series of tests required of architects that test different technical skills necessary for the work. Many other industries have such tests in place, requiring prior knowledge and skills essential for career success. Other employers may have the availability to teach certain technical skills on the job. You can learn more about the requirements of different jobs and the skills employers are looking for on Career Paths. Some of the most in-demand hard skills include:

- Bilingual or multilingual
- Database management
- Adobe software suite
- Network security
- SEO/SEM marketing
- Statistical analysis
- Data mining
- Mobile development
- User interface design
- Marketing campaign management

- Storage systems and management
- Programming languages (such as Perl, Python, Java, and Ruby)

3-4-2: The most relevant soft skills today:

The term is trendy, but many candidates (and recruiters!) are unaware of its meaning. The literal translation is "soft skill," but other terms such as behavioral, cross-functional, cognitive, and personal skills are also used. In the past, "soft skills" were also referred to as "people skills" in contrast to "hard skills" or technical skills. Soft skills are therefore competencies related to behavior or action. They are often transferable and reusable: this is why recruiters are interested in them, as they demonstrate the future employee's ability to adapt to different assignments, positions, and even careers. Some soft skills are innate, as each of us has predispositions to empathy, listening, or organization. However, most soft skills can also be learned or reinforced. They actually **encompass both:**

- *Personality traits, most often innate and stable, such as curiosity or interpersonal ease;*
- *Emotional capacities, such as optimism or enthusiasm;*
- *Skills that can be acquired or developed, such as creativity, concentration, organization..."*

Their common point is a high level of versatility, unlike hard skills which are often specific, technical and specialized. This is why both aspects are often sought after by recruiters: a technically competent person is not necessarily the most skilled in teaching or motivating a team. At the intersection of soft and hard skills, mad skills are behavioral competencies that you develop outside of the professional context. For example, practicing theater can give you great ease in public speaking. If you are applying for a team leader position and do not have professional managerial experience, you can highlight the presidency of an association in which you manage projects, resolve conflicts, and demonstrate leadership.

▪ Behavioral soft skills :

Behavioral soft skills refer to the ability to act and make decisions, while promoting the resolution of more or less complex problems. This objective requires both autonomy and a sense of responsibility, as well as a great capacity for adaptation. This enables the person to act and, above all, to react to a problem, a person, or a change in the environment. Their reaction also depends on their way of managing stress. Acting and making decisions also

requires the ability to organize oneself and the resources available (human, financial, material). These behavioral competencies enable individuals to open up to new challenges and evolve in their roles by daring to think outside the box. The main behavioral soft skills are as follows:

- The ability to organize oneself;
- Adaptability;
- Autonomy;
- Sense of responsibility;
- Discipline and self-discipline;
- Stress management;
- Boldness;
- Entrepreneurial spirit;
- Time management.

▪ **Les soft skills relationnelles :**

These skills are related to interpersonal relationships, not only for employees who are expected to work in teams, but also for others. It's about assessing how the person interacts with colleagues, management, clients, suppliers, users, etc. Having good interpersonal skills is one thing, but being able to communicate effectively and be understood is another. Interpersonal skills require self-confidence to mobilize the necessary resources, but also empathy to listen to others and take their feedback into account. Emotional intelligence is a highly sought-after skill as it promotes a certain communicative optimism. There are also teamwork-related skills in these soft skills, whether you are a collaborator or a manager: negotiation, conflict resolution, and the ability to motivate others. These are the 10 main soft skills relational:

- Communication;
- Teamwork or cooperation;
- Emotional intelligence, sometimes called empathy;
- Negotiation;
- Delegation;
- Tolerance;

- Self-confidence;
- Conflict resolution and mediation;
- Leadership or ability to motivate;
- Networking.
- **Cognitive soft skills :**

This group of skills is more personal and even intimate, and related to the way a person thinks and learns, both from themselves and their environment. Memory and concentration are skills that can be trained and maintained, as well as creativity and synthesis skills. Recruiters also appreciate skills related to critical thinking, the ability to question oneself to learn and evolve or to take a step back on oneself and one's tasks. Showing a great intellectual curiosity and perseverance also goes in this direction: employees can thus develop new skills and adapt to the evolution of the company more easily. The last group of skills are more personal, even intimate, and related to thinking and how a person learns, both from themselves and their environment. Memory and concentration are skills that can be developed and maintained, as well as creativity and the ability to synthesize. Recruiters also appreciate skills related to critical thinking, the ability to question oneself to learn and evolve, or to take a step back on oneself and one's missions. Showing great intellectual curiosity and perseverance also goes in this direction: employees can thus develop new skills and adapt more easily to the evolution of the company. The cognitive soft skills include:

- Memory
- Attention and concentration
- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- The ability to question oneself and bounce back (resilience)
- Perseverance
- The ability to synthesize
- Intellectual curiosity.

4- Management and development of soft skills in the digital age:

Indeed, soft skills, also known as behavioral or transferable skills, are non-technical skills that are increasingly in demand. However, there is no miracle recipe that can guarantee incredible results in a short amount of time. Firstly, it should be noted that the concept of soft skills is not even uniformly defined by those who use it... which makes it difficult to agree on development methods. Secondly, it is important to remember that a soft skill is not a traditional skill in the classical sense. It is rather a means of adapting to a new context by adopting the right behaviors

It's often said that every individual is unique, and that's true! There are many parameters that make us who we are: values, beliefs, knowledge, skills, preferences, memories, etc. These general parameters are themselves made up of many more specific parameters. The state of all these parameters shapes what we call our identity. Although the notion of identity varies depending on the sociological or psychological currents (Ferréol, 2010), the concept can be summed up simply: identity encompasses the iterative mental constructions that result from our relationship with the world and ourselves. In other words, when we perceive the world or engage in introspection, we generate certain reflections, preferences, and emotions. The result gradually shapes who we are and our relationship to everything that exists, thereby altering our future perception. It is important to understand this concept. Understanding the concept of identity is important for taking a more expert look at soft skills. As a reminder, soft skills are the thinking and interaction skills that allow us to adapt in new contexts. To enter into an adaptation process, it is necessary to have grasped that changes have occurred around us. It is our perception that allows us to identify these signals, and more specifically our senses: sight, touch, hearing, taste, and smell, which are the five senses historically known, but also all our other senses. The scientific community thus agreed in 2018 to recognize four new senses: proprioception (perception in space of our body), equilibrioception (perception of our balance), thermoception (perception of temperature), and nociception (perception of pain). (Lamri, J., Barabel, M., Meier, O., & Lubart, T., 2022).

4-1: Identification des soft skills:

It therefore seems essential to develop in each individual the soft skills, and at a minimum the 4Cs. But we only improve what we measure durably, and we can only establish a measurement for what we understand. I suggest therefore starting with what is a consensus

and has been most widely studied, namely the 4Cs mentioned earlier. Creativity, for example, is the ability to generate original, varied and relevant ideas in quantity, as well as the ability to improve them to develop complex solutions. To identify an individual's level of creativity, it is possible to measure four specific items: Originality, which corresponds to the ability to generate unusual or rare ideas in a given context. For example, to solve problems related to launching rockets, it is original to imagine a cable connecting the ground to an object in orbit in space, thereby creating a space elevator. Moreover, this is actually a project that has been under consideration since the 1950s.

- *Flexibility, which demonstrates the variety and richness of ideas, in other words, the number of identifiable categories for the ideas generated on a given topic.*
- *Fluency, which reflects the quantity of ideas produced, regardless of their relevance or originality.*
- *Elaboration, which shows the relevance and complexity level of the ideas generated to solve the current problem*

The ability to learn is a key aspect of adaptability. It involves both the acquisition of new knowledge and the application of that knowledge in various contexts. Learning agility, or the ability to learn quickly, is particularly important in rapidly changing environments. This includes the ability to learn from experiences, identify patterns, and apply those patterns to new situations. In addition, learning agility involves being open to new perspectives and feedback, and having a willingness to change one's approach based on new information. Developing learning agility requires a growth mindset and a willingness to take on new challenges. In the first case, we are talking about advanced cognitive tests. There are many tests for each of the 4Cs, but to date, there is no test that can evaluate all 4Cs simultaneously. The market is still very immature in terms of cognitive testing, especially in France where there has long been a cultural rejection of psychometrics. Existing cognitive tests are still expensive, poorly automated, and complex. Often, they are also biased and simply incorrect, as they only take into account a tiny part of the subject. Fortunately, there is a Charter of Test Publishers that is able to separate the wheat from the chaff.

Regarding specialized interviews and case studies, the situation is the same: very few professionals are able to correctly analyze and interpret an individual's cognitive factors in a given situation. Simply because training in this area is very rare and often confidential. Many recruiters play the role of sorcerer's apprentices on these topics, claiming to 'detect' aptitudes

through strong experience and sensitivity. And for some, this is true. But in the vast majority of cases, it is simply false. Feelings are one thing, but without structure or definitions to put on these concepts, it is impossible to know what we are really talking about. Cognitive assessment experts should therefore be challenged on the benchmarks and techniques used. The French market is therefore very poor on the subject of cognitive assessment. In spite of this, as we have seen, the 4Cs are necessary (but not sufficient) for performance. They are the foundation of employability in our modern society. It is therefore an entire market that needs to emerge in our country: cognitive identification and development. My recommendation, for companies that can afford it, is to internally hire experts and implement cognitive tests specifically adapted to their needs. Tests and case studies can be developed with research laboratories or proven experts in cognitive psychology, and experts can be recruited based on their PhD or other specific evidence of expertise in cognitive sciences. And no, simply declaring oneself an expert is not enough. Beware, the number of pseudo-experts in neuroscience is now legion.

4-2: Developing Soft Skills for Career Success:

Developing soft skills involves developing one's general capacity to learn, think, and interact. What should be one of the essential missions of schools has become the responsibility of companies that are concerned about the performance and long-term stability of their teams. There is no miraculous technique for developing soft skills. The solution lies instead in a multitude of initiatives repeated over time, and injected into all aspects of work: work equipment and tools, management, training, culture, and even governance. There commendations below are more applicable to office activities rather than isolated ones. They are neither exhaustive nor absolute and require taking into account the context.

4-2-1 Developing soft skills through tools and equipment:

Workspace: A workspace should combine the right proportions of interaction and privacy, light and noise levels, which are different for each individual. This is the principle behind the carefully applied flex office. Computers: In the same adaptive logic, it is beneficial to allow each individual to choose their type of computer for work (laptop or desktop, Mac or Windows, touch screen or not...). Software: Favor intuitive software that does not dumb down and promotes interaction and collaborative work (Slack, Trello, Zenkit). An ergonomic software does not require much training to be used and minimizes repetitive tasks.

4-2-2 Developing soft skills through management and processes:

Meeting management: limit meetings to creative work or strategic and cultural alignment. Everything else (structuring information, sharing updates) can be done asynchronously through instant messaging or individually.

- Decision-making: establish a collaborative process with clear criteria and possible options, with structured debate among stakeholders and the choice of a clear leader responsible for processing, synthesizing, and deciding.
- Problem identification and resolution: encourage employees to identify problems themselves, as well as potential solutions and their relevance.
- Recognition: systematically acknowledge good actions and recommend areas for excellence.
- Positive feedback: systematically debrief on errors and inefficiencies, asking the employee to formalize them and propose solutions.
- Reverse feedback: As a manager, regularly ask employees for their opinions on management and possible improvements.
- Symmetry of attention: Consider everyone with the same empathy and kindness, and expect the same behavior in return

4-2-3 Develop soft skills through training:

Specific: soft skills training, with learning of techniques to apply in one's daily life (e.g., creativity techniques). There are very few high-quality training programs and trainers on the subject of soft skills. In disguised form: adapting technical training to include the elements of tools and management mentioned above. Debate and collaborative construction of solutions are particularly favored, to move away from the too directive and passive aspect of traditional training.

4-2-4 Developing soft skills through culture and governance:

Exemplarity of leaders: The behaviors of leaders should encourage people to push themselves and stay open-minded about the world.

Flexibility: Tolerance and acceptance of everyone's specificities (schedules, styles, habits, etc.) should be the foundations of the company culture.

Dedicated moments: Time slots should be dedicated to learning and exchanging (MOOCs, visits to innovative places, debates, challenges, hackathons, etc.).

Movement: Create guidelines allowing everyone to meet each other, for example by requiring that meetings be held on a different floor than one's own.

Artistic inclusion: Plan practical workshops. Art is a powerful lever for expression and development of soft skills (cooking classes, art classes, etc.).

Conclusion:

Soft skills are often talked about, but poorly understood. We still struggle to define and identify them, let alone develop them in a structured and planned manner. Until social and cognitive psychology are integrated into the core of HR functions, the subject will remain a collection of beliefs and legends, which will increasingly limit and harm the development of learning and collective intelligence in organizations. Instead of playing the role of amateur wizards, for example in identifying talents, and relying on an intelligence that shows no signs of it, let us hope that the HR function will quickly reconcile with these areas that represent their core expertise for the future. The limitations and main contributions of this research can be summarized as follows:

The limitations of this research include:

- **Limited sample:** The research may have been conducted on a restricted sample of participants, which may limit its generalizability to other populations or contexts.
- **Methodology:** The methodology used in the research may have certain limitations, such as potential biases, limitations related to data collection, or gaps in measuring the variables under study.
- **Specific context:** The research may have been conducted in a specific context, which may limit its relevance and transferability to other organizational or cultural contexts.

The main contributions of this research are:

- **In-depth understanding:** The research provides an in-depth understanding of soft skills and their impact on individuals and organizations by identifying key components, practical implications, and potential benefits of their development.
- **Practical guidance:** The research findings can offer practical guidance to HR professionals, managers, and decision-makers for integrating and promoting soft skills in talent management practices and employee development.

- **Solid scientific foundation:** The research is built upon a solid scientific foundation, drawing on rigorous theories and methodologies to study soft skills, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the obtained results.
- **Increased awareness:** The research contributes to raising awareness and recognition of the importance of soft skills in the professional world, highlighting their value in terms of individual success, organizational performance, and competitiveness in the job market.

Considering both the limitations and main contributions of this research is important to assess its impact and relevance in the field of soft skills. «The perspectives of this research can include:

- **Impact on human resource management:** The findings of research on soft skills can have significant implications for human resource management. Organizations can utilize this knowledge to develop recruitment and selection policies that focus on assessing soft skills, as well as design professional development programs targeting these skills.
- **Enhancement of organizational performance:** Understanding the role of soft skills in organizational performance can help identify strategies to enhance productivity, teamwork, and overall effectiveness. By emphasizing the development and utilization of soft skills, organizations can create a positive work environment and improve employee engagement and satisfaction.
- **Integration of soft skills in training programs:** Research on soft skills can guide the integration of these skills into various training and educational programs. This can include incorporating soft skills training into academic curricula, professional development workshops, and leadership training initiatives, thereby enhancing the overall skill set and capabilities of individuals.
- **Recognition of the importance of interpersonal competencies:** Research on soft skills highlights the significance of interpersonal competencies in various domains, including communication, collaboration, empathy, and emotional intelligence. This recognition can lead to a greater emphasis on these skills in educational institutions, organizational policies, and societal discourse.....

By exploring these perspectives, research on soft skills can inform evidence-based practices that enhance individual and organizational outcomes, contributing to the overall success and

competitiveness of organizations. We can also pose other questions to explore the topic from different angles, such as:

- **How do soft skills contribute to effective cross-cultural communication and collaboration in a globalized workplace?** What are the specific soft skills that are crucial for intercultural competence and building relationships across cultural boundaries?
- **What is the relationship between soft skills and employee well-being?** How do soft skills such as resilience, self-awareness, and stress management impact employee mental health, job satisfaction, and work-life balance?
- **How do soft skills influence customer satisfaction and customer service outcomes?** What are the key soft skills that contribute to effective customer interactions, problem-solving, and building long-term customer relationships?

In conclusion, the digital era presents both opportunities and challenges for the management and development of soft skills in companies. On the one hand, the increasing use of technology and automation requires new types of soft skills, such as digital literacy and adaptability, to be developed and nurtured among employees. On the other hand, the traditional soft skills, such as communication and leadership, remain crucial for successful teamwork and innovation. Therefore, companies need to adopt a balanced approach to soft skills development, leveraging technology and digital tools to enhance learning and training, while also recognizing the importance of human interaction and feedback. By doing so, they can create a culture of continuous learning and improvement, and stay competitive in the ever-changing digital landscape.

BIBLIOGRAPHY :

- **Bachtiar, E. W., Soejoedono, R. D., Bachtiar, B. M., Henrietta, A., Farhana, N., & Yuniastuti, M. (2015).** Effects of soybean milk, chitosan, and anti-Streptococcus mutans IgY in malnourished rats' dental biofilm and the IgY persistency in saliva. **Interventional Medicine and Applied Science**, 7(3), 118-123.
- **Bharadwaj, A., El Sawy, O. A., Pavlou, P. A., & Venkatraman, N. V. (2013).** Digital business strategy: toward a next generation of insights. **MIS quarterly**, 471-482.
- **Bouret, J., Hoarau, J., & Mauléon, F. (2018).** *Soft Skills : Développez vos compétences comportementales, un enjeu pour votre carrière.* **Dunod.**
- **Caputo, F., Cillo, V., Candelo, E., & Liu, Y. (2019).** Innovating through digital revolution: The role of soft skills and Big Data in increasing firm performance. **Management Decision**, 57(8), 2032-2051.
- **Caputo, F., Cillo, V., Candelo, E., & Liu, Y. (2019).** **Innovating through digital revolution:** The role of soft skills and Big Data in increasing firm performance. **Management Decision**, 57(8), 2032-2051.
- **CHGADNA, J., KUNYIMA, J. N., & KHATORI, Y. (2020).** *Le rôle de la transformation numérique sur la fonction RH au sein des organisations.* **Alternatives Managériales Economiques**, 2(4), 253-267.
- **Doyle, A. (2020).** Hard skills vs. soft skills: What's the difference. *The Balance. Make money personal.* –Rezhim dostupa: <https://www.thebalance.com/hard-skills-vs-soft-skills-2063780> (data obrashcheniya: 07.02. 2017).
- **El Mechkouri, T, 2021.** La digitalisation des processus RH.
- **Garcez, A., Franco, M., & Silva, R. (2022).** The soft skills bases in digital academic entrepreneurship in relation to digital transformation. **Innovation & Management Review**, (ahead-of-print).
- **Gulati, R., & Reaiche, C. H. (2020).** Soft skills: A key driver for digital transformation. **In Proceedings of the ICDS.**
- **Lamri, J., Barabel, M., Meier, O., & Lubart, T. (2022).** *Le défi des soft skills : Comment les développer au XXIe siècle.* **Dunod.**
- **Laviolette, E. M., & Loue, C. (2006).** *Les compétences entrepreneuriales : définition et construction d'un référentiel. L'internationalisation des PME et ses conséquences*

sur les stratégies entrepreneuriales-Haute école de gestion (HEG) Fribourg, Suisse, 25, 26-27.

- **Lucas, H. C., Agarwal, R., Clemons, E. K., El Sawy, O. A., Weber, B., & Williams, B. C. (2013).** Impactful research on transformational information technology: an opportunity to inform new audiences. **MIS Quarterly**, 37(2), 371-382.
- **Majid, S., Liming, Z., Tong, S., & Raihana, S. (2012).** *Importance of soft skills for education and career success.* **International Journal for Cross-Disciplinary Subjects in Education**, 2(2), 1037-1042.
- **Piccinini, E., Hanelt, A., Gregory, R., & Kolbe, L. (2015).** Transforming industrial business: the impact of digital transformation on automotive organizations.
- **Servajean-Hilst, R., Du Roscoät, B., Bauvet, S., & Lallement, R. (2022).** *Les soft skills pour innover et transformer les organisations (Doctoral dissertation, France Stratégie-Commissariat général à la stratégie et la prospective).*
- **Suarez-Cadavieco, E., & Gobert, P. (2021).** *Comment les technologies et la digitalisation impactent les métiers des ressources humaines.*
- **Theurelle-Stein, D., & Barth, I. (2017).** *Les soft skills au cœur du portefeuille de compétences des managers de demain 1.* *Revue management et avenir*, (5), 129-151.
- **Van Laethem, N., & Josset, J. M. (2020).** *La boîte à outils des Soft Skills.* **Dunod.**
- **Zardet, V., & Savall, H. (2019).** *La digitalisation apprivoisée : au service de l'humain et de la performance durable.* **Éditions EMS.**