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FRAMEWORKS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOFT SKILLS IN THE PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT – A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

In today's professional landscape, soft skills like communication, teamwork, and adaptability are essential for success, yet frameworks for their development often lack consistency. This work project conducts a systematic literature review using PRISMA 2020 and SPIDER to analyze recent research, identifying five "master keys" for effective frameworks: (1) *Core Soft Skills*, such as teamwork and communication; (2) *Experiential Learning*, like work-based training; (3) *Feedback & Evaluation*, including peer and self-assessments; (4) *Adaptability*, across industries and cultures; and (5) *Challenges & Gaps*, such as scalability. This work project offers actionable insights for scalable, inclusive, and digitally adaptive soft skill development strategies.

Keywords

Soft Skills, Soft Skill Development, Soft Skill Frameworks, HRM Practices, Competency Frameworks, Professional Development

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1. Introduction

In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, the value of soft skills has risen dramatically as they are no longer a complement to technical expertise but a core driver of organizational success and employee adaptability (Marin-Zapata et al. 2022). Studies emphasize that soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and emotional intelligence are critical for bridging the gaps in modern workplaces, where technical competencies alone fail to meet the demands of dynamic environments (Cimatti 2016). Employers increasingly prioritize these skills, recognizing that the capacity for collaboration, problem-solving, and ethical decision-making directly impacts organizational performance and resilience (Chin 2021). However, perspectives on the importance and development of soft skills vary across industries; for instance, while the education sector emphasizes communication and adaptability, manufacturing industries focus on teamwork and problem-solving to address operational complexities (Sydorenko et al. 2022; Lok, Cheng, and Choong 2021).

The development of soft skills within professional frameworks has gained more attention in recent years. This reflects a shift in the understanding of workplace competencies. Studies have highlighted the necessity of structured approaches to developing soft skills as the importance of soft skills for both individual performance as well as organizational outcomes becomes more known. Soft skills are increasingly recognized as a basis for effective collaboration, leadership, and innovation in many professional industries (Cimatti 2016; Lok, Cheng, and Choong 2021). Frameworks often integrate soft skills into training by using experiential and cooperative learning models, emphasizing real-world application and iterative improvement (Herwina et al. 2019). Across technical, healthcare, and educational fields, these approaches blend cognitive, emotional, and practical dimensions to prepare professionals for dynamic and diverse demands (Lamri and Lubart 2023; Ghafili et al. 2023; Pinos Ullauri et al. 2024). Despite the growing recognition of the importance of soft skills, significant gaps persist in both theoretical and

practical dimensions of soft skills training and development. Firstly, while various frameworks exist to classify and understand soft skills, there remains a lack of consensus on their definitions, categorizations, and terminologies. For example, over 119 different terms have been identified in the literature to describe soft skills which shows the diversity and inconsistency that hinder the development of standardized frameworks (Cinque 2016). Furthermore, much of the research on soft skills has been concentrated in specific sectors such as education and human resources, often neglecting interdisciplinary applications and industry-specific requirements (Cinque 2016). Additionally, the methodologies used for developing and evaluating soft skills are fragmented and lack exploration. For instance, Lamri and Lubart (2023) highlight the absence of systematic approaches to integrate hard and soft skills, emphasizing the need for holistic frameworks that accommodate both dimensions of workforce training. Employers frequently report that graduates lack essential skills such as teamwork, communication, and adaptability, which are critical for workplace success (Cinque 2016; Espina-Romero et al. 2023). Finally, there is a lack of scalable and context-sensitive models for soft skills development, particularly for underrepresented regions as research tends to focus on high-resource environments (Espina-Romero et al. 2023). This work project seeks to address these gaps in literature by exploring existing frameworks on the development of soft skills in professional contexts: Based on this gap, the following research question has been formulated:

What are the existing frameworks for developing soft skills in a professional context?

The objectives of this work project are to identify and evaluate existing models and frameworks designed to develop soft skills across various professional environments. Furthermore, it seeks to explore the differences and commonalities across these frameworks. Lastly, the project aims to identify master skills based on the found features that apply across different industries.

To answer the research question, a systematic literature review was conducted following the PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses)

checklist (Page et al. 2021). The SPIDER framework was employed during the full-text analysis phase to systematically categorize and evaluate studies based on their relevance and methodological accuracy (Methley et al. 2014). Together, these approaches ensured a targeted exploration of soft skills development framework to provide insights into existing frameworks. The data for this review was collected from two key academic databases, Web of Science and Scopus, to ensure a robust and diverse selection of peer-reviewed publications. This work project focuses broadly on soft skills development frameworks applied in professional contexts, without limiting the analysis to specific industries or geographical regions. The timeline was restricted to the last decade to ensure the relevance of findings to capture recent trends and developments in the field of soft skill development.

This project enhances the understanding of soft skills development by analyzing existing frameworks in differing professional contexts. This addresses the lack of consensus in the literature. Soft skills are essential for workplace productivity, yet their definitions and development methods vary, underscoring the need for a systematic review to guide future efforts (Lamri and Lubart, 2023). The findings aim to consolidates fragmented knowledge to offer a foundation for further research into training methods. Furthermore, this can provide practitioners (e.g. HR professionals and educators) with actionable strategies to improve soft skills frameworks (Cimatti 2016). Moreover, it underscores the societal value of soft skills as they are linked to employability and professional development (Espina-Romero et al. 2023).

2. Theoretical Background

Soft skills comprise a wide range of interpersonal, social, and cognitive abilities that enhance an individual's capacity to effectively interact and adapt to diverse environments (Shaffie, Md-Ali, and Yusof 2018). Examples of soft skills include communication, emotional intelligence, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability (Cimatti 2016; Korolyova, Voyakina, and Zherebayeva 2021). They are harder to measure and evolve through experience and reflection

(Marin-Zapata et al., 2022; Weber et al. 2020). The terminology used to describe soft skills varies across regions; they are sometimes referred to as "key competencies" or "generic skills" in Europe, "employability skills" in the United States, and "workplace know-how" in Australia. This diversity of terms reflects an ongoing challenge of conceptual clarity in soft skills research (Marin-Zapata et al. 2022). These skills are often contrasted with hard skills, which are technical or domain-specific and easier to quantify (Shaffie, Md-Ali, and Yusof 2018). In contrast, hard skills are technical, job-specific competencies that are task-oriented and quantifiable, typically acquired through formal training or education (Weber et al. 2020; Sethi 2018). Both skill sets are complementary. For instance, while technical expertise (hard skills) ensures competence in a specific field, communication and collaboration (soft skills) are crucial for successful implementation in team settings (Dogara et al. 2020a; Marin-Zapata et al. 2022). Soft skill development is a lifelong process shaped by education, workplace experiences, and personal interactions (Sydorenko et al. 2022). Experiential learning methods, such as role-playing and project-based learning, provide foundational opportunities to acquire essential skills like communication, teamwork, and leadership, especially through simulated real-world environments (Kearney, Bond-Barnard, and Chugh 2024). Reflective learning further supports this continuous growth by encouraging individuals to analyze past experiences This enables many to adapt their skills to future challenges. On-the-job training and mentorship programs also play a crucial role because they integrate theoretical knowledge with practical application to foster professional development (Shaffie, Md-Ali, and Yusof 2018). These competencies, including adaptability, emotional intelligence, and stress management, are critical for long-term career resilience in dynamic and high-pressure environments, such as healthcare and engineering (Rodrigues and Dias 2024; Al-Azmi et al. 2024; Korolyova, Voyakina, and Zherebayeva 2021). Additionally, the increasing complexity and volatility of modern workplaces underscore the enduring importance of soft skills as adaptable competencies

(Kearney, Bond-Barnard, and Chugh 2024). By embedding these skills in early education and reinforcing them through lifelong learning, individuals are better equipped to navigate transitions and seize opportunities in evolving professional landscapes (Cook et al. 2020; Espina Romero et al. 2023; Chin 2021).

Soft skills are significantly influenced by cultural diversity (Cook et al. 2020). This applies to understanding, prioritization, and application of these skills. This makes their development and relevance very context-dependent. In collectivist cultures, such as many Asian societies, relational skills like group harmony and respect for hierarchy tend to be very important, whereas in Western and more individualistic cultures assertiveness and self-expression are more found more often (Cimatti 2016). This divergence presents challenges in multicultural teams, where communication norms and problem-solving approaches may differ. This could lead to misunderstandings without proper cultural awareness. Training programs tailored to address cultural dimensions can bridge these gaps and foster effective intercultural collaboration (Espina Romero et al. 2023; Chin 2021). Also, the growing number of global teams underscores the need for soft skills training that covers cultural sensitivity (Lok, Cheng, and Choong 2021).

Over the last decade, the focus on soft skills has surged, driven by rapid technological advancements, globalization, and shifting workplace dynamics. Automation and digital transformation have highlighted the importance of human-centered skills, such as creativity, empathy, and complex problem-solving. These attributes cannot be easily replaced by technology (Lok, Cheng, and Choong 2021; Touloumakos 2024). This trend is further amplified by the integration of soft skills into performance management systems, which highlight their critical role in career progression and organizational success (Rodrigues & Dias 2024). The growing attention to soft skills also reflects their ability to bridge technical competencies with holistic professional effectiveness. This makes them vital in managing modern workplace challenges (Cimatti, 2016; Espina Romero et al. 2023).

The conceptualization of soft skills is grounded in interdisciplinary theories, such as emotional intelligence, competency-based models, and situated learning frameworks. Emotional intelligence theory, particularly Goleman's model, underscores the significance of self-awareness, empathy, and interpersonal effectiveness as foundational components (Touloumakos 2024). Also, competency-based frameworks emphasize measurable and transferable attributes and align soft skills with organizational goals (Cimatti 2016). Situated learning theory further suggests that soft skills are dynamic and context-specific, shaped through real-world social interactions and workplace practices (Touloumakos 2024; Korolyova, Voyakina, and Zherebayeva 2021). Together, these perspectives highlight the complex, multifaceted nature of soft skills. In addition, this shows the importance of detailed approaches to their development and integration.

Evaluating soft skills remains challenging due to their subjective, context-dependent nature and the lack of standardized metrics. Common approaches include self-assessments, 360-degree feedback, and simulation-based evaluations. All of them aim to capture competencies like teamwork, communication, and leadership (Al-Azmi et al. 2024; Lok, Cheng, and Choong 2021). However, these methods often have biases, inconsistent criteria, and limited scalability. Those limitations also show the need for improved evaluation tools (Espina Romero et al. 2023). Emerging technologies, such as gamification and AI-driven analytics, offer promising options for creating reliable, real-time assessment frameworks. The goal there is to enhance the accuracy and utility of soft skills evaluations (Korolyova, Voyakina, and Zherebayeva 2021).

The application of soft skills varies significantly across industries, reflecting distinct operational needs and goals. In healthcare, teamwork, empathy, and communication are critical for patient care and inter-professional collaboration (Al-Azmi et al. 2024). Conversely, sectors like engineering and technology prioritize problem-solving, adaptability, and creativity to foster innovation and address complex challenges (Espina Romero et al. 2023; Lok, Cheng, and

Choong 2021). These sector-specific demands underscore the importance of tailored training programs that align with industry priorities while fostering transferable skills applicable in diverse professional contexts (Cimatti 2016; Touloumakos 2024).

3. Methodology

This chapter presents the thesis' methodology and the used research design. As stated, this paper aims to identify and compare existing frameworks on the development of soft skills in a professional context. To thoroughly analyze and answer the research question, a systematic literature review (SLR) was conducted. A SLR is a bibliographic research method and aims to collect all existing evidence needed to answer previously defined research questions (Page et al. 2021). In addition, they encourage the development of a deeper understanding of the respective research topic. Thereby research gaps can be identified to inspire and guide future research projects (vom Brocke et al. 2015; Webster & Watson 2002). Due to this, SLRs play a vital role in information science research (Webster & Watson 2002). Evidently, this approach appears most suitable for this work project as the main objective of the thesis is to obtain an overview of existing frameworks on the development of soft skills in a professional context. The SLR needs to be thorough and well-documented to grant fellow researchers a deeper understanding and positively affect the research project's impact (vom Brocke et al. 2015).

3.1 Data Collection and Extraction

The literature research used two data bases: Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus by Elsevier. Both encompass peer-reviewed papers for a broad range of research subjects. This corresponds to the wide research focus as the goal is to identify soft skill frameworks for any professional context supported by a robust and balanced literature review. Together, these data bases provide comprehensive coverage because each contains unique content that broadens the scope of relevant literature. Using both data bases also minimized selection bias and allowed for cross-validation. This reduced the likelihood of overlooked publications. WoS's selective focus on

natural science research complemented Scopus's broader disciplinary coverage to enhance the search's quality. Combining citation data from both sources provides a fuller picture of the impact and reach of the reviewed studies. The publication results for both data bases are displayed in Appendix 2 with the exact number of hits per data base for the used search query. The keywords mentioned in chapter 3.1 were used to build the final search queries used in the data bases. These queries were designed to ensure a broader search scope that allows to capture all relevant publications across the two data bases (Alf 2022). To ensure consistent results across the two data bases, the search queries were constructed using the same keywords combinations, with variations adapted to align with the specific guidelines of each database regarding the usage of Boolean and Proximity operators.

3.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

In this SLR, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to ensure relevance, quality, and accessibility of selected studies. In addition, a focus was laid upon primary sources as the original research findings provide a direct and in-depth understanding of the studies' methodologies, results, and implications to strengthen accuracy and credibility of the analysis (vom Brocke et al. 2015).

The *inclusion criteria* required that publications are available in full text to allow for a thorough analysis. In addition, only articles published in English or German were considered. Peer-reviewed publications were prioritized to maintain academic rigor. Also, only publications were included that were found through the previously described literature search within the selected data bases or the subsequent forward- or backward-search. Publications were limited to those from the last ten years (2014–2024) to capture recent findings on the development of soft skill framework. Furthermore, included studies needed to focus on the development of soft skills or the application of frameworks within a professional working context across various industries worldwide. To encompass the broadest possible range of professional contexts, no further

restrictions were imposed on specific workplace settings. Lastly, as the goal of this work project is to display all the frameworks that fall beneath the stated research questions, all kinds of papers ranging from mixed methods, to qualitative and quantitative papers, were included.

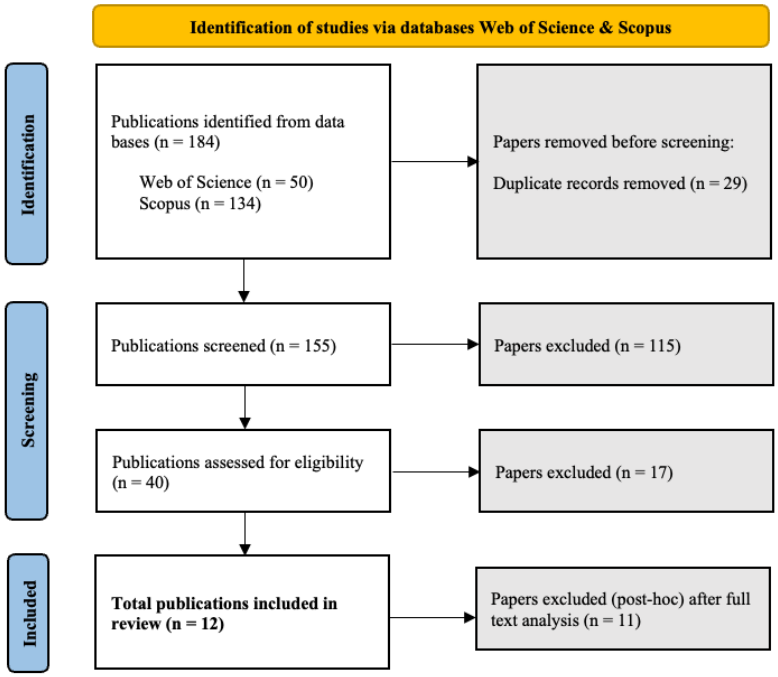
The *exclusion criteria* encompassed studies that did not pertain to professional or workplace settings, as well as those focused on unrelated sectors that do not contribute to understanding soft skills in a general professional context. Non-peer-reviewed sources, such as blog posts, opinion pieces, and low-quality reports, were excluded to ensure the credibility of findings. Furthermore, conference papers were excluded due to their often limited peer review and preliminary nature. Moreover, purely theoretical papers without foundational frameworks or empirical evidence were also omitted, as the focus was on evidence-based studies that provide practical insights into soft skill development. Frameworks and publications were excluded if their primary focus was on hard skills or other competencies, or if soft skills only played a supporting role. Additionally, frameworks were excluded if they focused solely on a single soft skill or a narrow subset of skills (e.g., only time management), rather than addressing a broader range of soft skills. Lastly, the final search string queries included a filter to exclude papers related to soft skill frameworks influenced by COVID-19. This exclusion aligns with the objective of this research project, which is to analyze overarching frameworks without the bias of specific events, as such an analysis would constitute a distinct research focus.

3.3 Paper Selection Proceeding (PRISMA Protocol)

Throughout the screening process, a guiding principle derived from the PRISMA 2020 item checklist by Page et al. (2021) was systematically applied to assess each study's title, abstract, and full text against the inclusion and exclusion criteria. For this work project, the stated checklist was adapted to fit the specific scope and limitations of the project. Certain items were streamlined or omitted to align with the project's focused objectives and manageable length. Key checklist items retained included those essential for transparent reporting, such as

documentation of search strategy, recognition of inclusion and exclusion criteria, as well as the screening process. The selection process is depicted as a flow chart, derived from the PRISMA 2020 flow chart diagram, in Figure 1 (Page et al. 2021).

Figure 1 *Paper selection proceeding derived from PRISMA 2020 Item Checklist*



3.4 Full Text Data Extraction

After the initial selection, the identified publications were analyzed in full using the SPIDER framework to ensure a structured, in-depth review. The SPIDER approach is a structured framework designed to clarify and develop effective search strategies, particularly for qualitative and mixed-methods research, ensuring alignment with specific research objectives (Methley et al. 2014). Here, it allowed for systematic categorization and grouping studies which aided thematic and subgroup analyses. It also supports consistent data extraction, quality assessment, and methodological appraisal. Additionally, it facilitates structured reporting and highlights literature gaps while ensuring the relevance of each study to the research question. For this work project, the SPIDER approach guided the selection and refinement of relevant studies by establishing clear inclusion criteria. This structured method allowed for a

comprehensive and targeted literature search, precisely tailored to the research focus on soft skills development frameworks in a professional context.

Using the SPIDER framework, a full-text analysis was conducted to further assess the relevance and depth of each publication. This analysis helped identify which studies offered substantial contributions to the topic. Each study was evaluated based on specific SPIDER items: the "Sample" (S), indicating the participant group targeted by the study; the "Phenomenon of Interest" (PI), detailing the core focus and type of training or framework examined; "Design" (D), outlining the study's structure; "Evaluation" (E), summarizing the study's conclusions; and the "Research Type" (R), describing the methodological approach (Methley et al. 2014).

The SPIDER analysis led to a post-hoc exclusion of 11 papers to further ensure the inclusion of only those publications that directly contribute valuable insights to the purpose of this research (see Appendix 3). Reasons for the post-hoc exclusion of 11 publications were made due to their focus on soft skills as a secondary topic rather than the primary focus, or because they lacked a defined framework (e.g., critiques of training models or conceptual overviews). Some studies were also excluded for their narrow focus on a single context or skill (e.g., transformational leadership models) or because they targeted specific educational paradigms without a broader professional framework.

4. Results

This chapter presents the results of the work project, structured according to the SPIDER framework, to provide a systematic and descriptive analysis of the 12 selected papers. Overall, most studies, published between 2017 and 2024, show a growing interest in soft skills frameworks. The health sector dominates, focusing on stress management, leadership, and collaboration for nurses and health discipline students. Besides that, also education-related professions (e.g. teachers and technical college students) and business and management roles are also key areas for the application of soft skill frameworks. Although not all studies specify

their countries of origin, the journals and research contexts show a broad global reach. Examples include studies from Asia, Africa, and Europe. Furthermore, publications in international journals demonstrate the widespread and cross-sectoral interest in developing effective soft skills frameworks globally (see Appendix 3).

4.1 Results based on SPIDER Framework

The **Samples (S)** across the 12 selected studies represented diverse educational and professional groups, emphasizing the importance of soft skills in various contexts. Most studies focused on students, including those in vocational education (Dogara et al., 2020a), marketing programs (Hain & Ritz 2021), and ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) courses (Stal & Paliwoda-Pękosz 2019), as well as professionals in specific sectors like healthcare (Destri et al. 2017; Gockel Blessing, Wood, and Grahovec 2022). Others examined organizational trainees and early-career workers, such as hospitality managers (Weber, Lee, and Crawford 2020) and construction students (Mahasneh & Thabet, 2017). A recurring theme across the samples is the emphasis on populations at the early stages of their careers or education, highlighting the critical role of soft skills in preparing individuals for professional success.

The **Phenomenon of Interest (PI)** across the 12 selected studies revolves around developing soft skills to enhance employability, professional effectiveness, and interpersonal competencies. Several studies emphasized frameworks for integrating soft skills into educational programs, such as project-based learning in technical education (Dogara et al. 2020a) and experiential learning in marketing (Hain & Ritz 2021). In professional settings, the focus shifted to improving workplace application, including frameworks for transferring soft skills effectively (Hamzah et al. 2024) and enhancing leadership and teamwork among hospitality managers (Weber, Lee, and Crawford 2020). Health-focused studies explored soft skills for patient care, such as stress management for nurses (Destri et al. 2017) and collaborative learning in health disciplines (Gockel Blessing, Wood, and Grahovec 2022). Across the studies, the PI

consistently highlighted the centrality of soft skills in fostering interpersonal effectiveness and meeting sector-specific demands, whether through targeted training, self-facilitation (Sethi 2018), or blended frameworks for curriculum design (Stal & Paliwoda-Pękosz 2019).

The selected studies utilized diverse **Designs (D)** to ensure robust evaluation and applicability of soft skills frameworks. Many relied on conceptual and theoretical models, such as Hamzah et al.'s (2024) behavioral science-grounded framework and Dogara et al.'s (2020a/b) project- and work-based learning models, both validated through structural equation modeling. Mixed-method approaches were prominent, combining quantitative analysis with qualitative insights to capture the multidimensional nature of soft skills. For example, Destri et al.'s (2017) model assessed nursing competencies through pre- and post-intervention tests, while Weber Lee, and Crawford (2020) employed Importance-Performance Analysis to identify gaps in hospitality training. These approaches emphasized validation through practical application, ensuring that the frameworks were both empirically sound and tailored to real-world demands.

The **Evaluation** (E) methods in the reviewed studies highlight a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches to measure the effectiveness of soft skill development frameworks. Quantitative methods focus on structured metrics, such as employability outcomes (Dogara et al. 2020b), project success rates (Dogara et al. 2020a), and validated performance improvements through tools like the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) (Dogara 2020 WBL). In contrast, qualitative approaches capture more subjective constructs, including participant attitudes toward training (Sethi 2018), self-reported behavioral changes (Hamzah 2024), and feedback on interpersonal growth (Weber, Lee, and Crawford 2020). Studies like Destri et al. (2017) and Hartiti, Poddar, and Bhaumik (2020) evaluate outcomes such as emotional resilience and leadership confidence, reflecting the importance of unobservable constructs in healthcare and leadership contexts. Regardless of methodology, all frameworks

aim to assess improvements in soft skill proficiency, often combining subjective self-assessments with objective metrics to align with their research questions.

The **Research (R)** approaches across the studies show diverse methodologies and highlight the complexity of soft skills development. They are predominantly qualitative and, therefore highlight thematic analysis, case studies, and interviews to explore more interpersonal aspects. Mixed-method designs, especially applied in healthcare and education, combined qualitative insights with quantitative validation for comprehensive outcomes (e.g., Destri et al. 2017; Mahasneh & Thabet 2017). Systematic and scoping reviews emphasized evidence-based frameworks that are rooted in theory (e.g Hamzah et al. 2024). Quantitative designs were used that include pre- and post-intervention tests and feedback mechanisms like self-assessments. Studies such as Bischoff and Massyn's (2024) employability model and Gockel Blessing et al.'s (2022) case-based model, highlighted adaptability to real-world contexts.

4.2 Master Keys on Frameworks for Soft Skill Development

The SLR of soft skills development frameworks found diverse methodologies in the 12 papers that are tailored to various professional contexts with differing focuses and approaches. However, there were recurring themes and shared principles found. To systematically display the found results, the goal of this chapter was to identify so called “master keys”. A master key is a central concept that "unlocks” understanding or provides access to a complex system, set of ideas or, in this context, frameworks (Cambridge Dictionary n.d.). In this work project, a master key represents a primary takeaway that summarizes patterns into a cohesive and actionable conclusion. Due to the complexity of the frameworks found within 12 papers, there were 5 “master keys” identified by creating a comparative table to analyze papers by key categories, extracting similarities, differences, and unique insights.

The *first master key* identified across the 12 frameworks represents the shared focus on **Core Soft Skills**, which are particularly interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies. The found soft

skill frameworks consistently emphasize interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, which are universally recognized as critical for professional success. Teamwork and communication are the most common skills found across industries. In healthcare contexts, for example, frameworks like Destri et al. (2017) and Hartiti, Poddar, and Bhaumik (2020) prioritize teamwork for improving collaboration in high-stress environments. Similarly, in ICT education, Stal and Paliwoda-Pękosz (2019) incorporates teamwork into technical curricula, using peer reviews and group projects to teach collaborative skills in tech-driven professions. Communication also features prominently in hospitality frameworks like Weber, Lee, and Crawford (2020), where it is integral to customer-centric roles, and in marketing contexts, as shown in Hain and Ritz (2021), where it is tied to problem-solving during in-vivo campaigns.

Intrapersonal skills such as emotional intelligence, self-management, and time management are also widely emphasized. Bischoff and Massyn (2024) incorporate emotional intelligence as part of a broader employability capital model that equippes graduates with adaptability and empathy for AI-driven industries. Similarly, Weber, Lee, and Crawford (2020) highlight emotional intelligence as a core skill for hospitality workers as it is linked to improved customer service outcomes. Time management and self-motivation are emphasized in frameworks like Sethi (2018), which focuses on lifelong learning and self-facilitatio, and Hartiti, Poddar, and Bhaumik (2020), which integrates self-discipline into nursing leadership training. However, some frameworks stand out by targeting unique skills tailored to specific contexts. For example, Destri et al. (2017) focus on stress management which oughts to provide nurses with the tools to handle high-pressure situations effectively. Similarly, Dogara et al. (2020b) address cultural intelligence and resource management in vocational education to meet the demands of Nigerian technical colleges. These variations reflect the adaptability of core soft skill priorities to the unique challenges of different industries and regions.

The *second master key* identified across the 12 frameworks emphasises on **Experiential Learning** as a foundational approach to soft skill development. Active learning methods such as work-based learning (WBL) and project-based (PBL) learning dominate many frameworks. For example, Dogara et al. (2020b) employ a structured WBL process, dividing training into preparation, supervision, and evaluation phases to simulate workplace scenarios. Similarly, Dogara et al. (2020a) emphasize iterative group projects to enhance teamwork and problem-solving. In construction education, Mahasneh and Thabet (2017) adapt their model to refine both technical precision and collaborative skills through hands-on projects. Healthcare frameworks also rely on experiential learning, tailoring their methods to high-pressure environments. Destri et al. (2017) incorporate role-playing to prepare nurses for stress management, while Hartiti, Poddar, and Bhaumik (2020) use simulations to foster empathy and self-assurance through transformational leadership workshops. These approaches mirror the practical demands of healthcare professions, where real-world readiness is critical. In addition to traditional methods, blended and digital learning models feature prominently. Stal and Paliwoda-Pękosz (2019) integrate e-learning tools with peer reviews in ICT curricula, while Gockel Blessing, Wood, and Grahovec (2022) emphasize collaboration through online teamwork in interdisciplinary healthcare projects. These frameworks demonstrate how experiential learning adapts to different industries and contexts, reaching from vocational training to technical and professional sectors.

The *third master key* identified is the essential role of **Feedback and Evaluation** mechanisms in ensuring the effectiveness of soft skill development frameworks. Peer, employer, and self-assessments are among the most commonly used methods. For example, Dogara et al. (2020b) integrates feedback loops from supervisors and employers to align students' performance with workplace expectations. Similarly, Stal and Paliwoda-Pękosz (2019) incorporate peer reviews in ICT education, promoting collaborative learning while assessing individual contributions. In

hospitality, Weber, Lee, and Crawford (2020) combine manager-employee feedback to identify and address skill gaps through tailored training plans. Self-assessment tools also feature prominently. Sethi (2018) uses reflective surveys to evaluate participants' progress in communication and time management, fostering self-awareness and accountability. Hamzah et al. (2024) expand this approach by tracking behavioral changes over time, using self-assessments to ensure that soft skills are applied consistently in professional contexts. These tools empower participants to monitor their development independently, complementing external feedback mechanisms. However, innovative evaluation methods set some frameworks apart. Weber, Lee, and Crawford (2020) introduce a tool with radial feedback graphs that provides a visual representation of skill gaps to guide personalized improvements. Also, Dogara et al. (2020b) employ a specific model to establish causal links between WBL phases and skill acquisition. This offers a quantitative measure of framework effectiveness. The stated approaches highlight the role of advanced evaluation tools as well as the existing variety in validating and refining soft skill training.

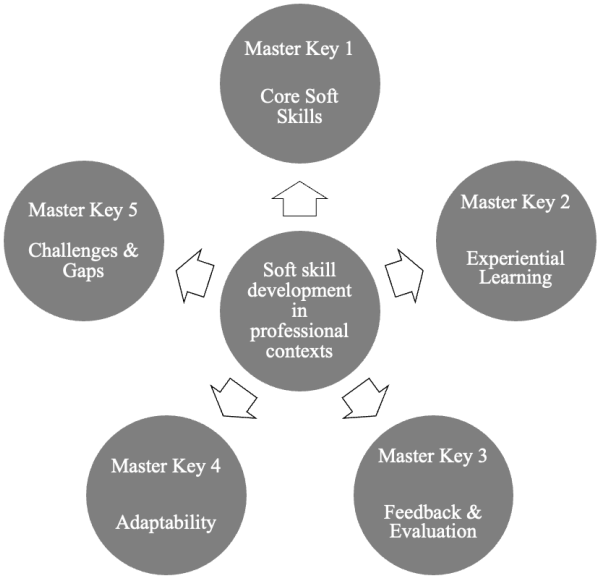
The *fourth master key* identified features the **Adaptability** of soft skill frameworks to adapt to diverse global, regional, and industry-specific needs. While some frameworks are designed for more general application, others are tailored to address unique cultural or professional contexts. Global frameworks, such as Bischoff and Massyn (2024) or Hamzah et al. (2024), emphasize broad applicability by focusing on emotional intelligence, behavioral reinforcement, and employability skills that align with global workforce trends. These approaches cater to diverse industries by targeting foundational soft skills that are transferable across roles and sectors. In contrast, several frameworks address more regional and cultural needs. Dogara et al. (2020b) adapts to Nigeria's vocational education challenges, incorporating resource management and student independence to address gaps in technical training. Similarly, Hartiti, Poddar, and Bhaumik tailor transformational leadership workshops to the Indonesian healthcare context,

emphasizing empathy and self-assurance for nurses. Destri et al. (2017) also focus on Indonesian healthcare and use stress-specific training modules to address cultural and professional pressures faced by hospital staff. Frameworks also align with industry-specific requirements. For example, Stal and Paliwoda-Pękosz (2019) integrate teamwork and self-learning into ICT curricula to balance the technical demands of the field with interpersonal skill development. Weber, Lee, and Crawford (2020) adapt soft skill training to the hospitality industry to focus on emotional intelligence and communication for improving customer service outcomes. Also, Mahasneh and Thabet (2017) uniquely addresses construction education. Overall, these specialized frameworks show how soft skills can be integrated into diverse technical and service-oriented professions.

The *fifth master key* identified is the set of **Challenges and Gaps** that might hinder the effective implementation and scalability of soft skill frameworks. Many frameworks highlight barriers to the transfer of learned skills into workplace behaviors. For example, Hamzah et al. (2024) address this issue by focusing on habit formation through behavioral reinforcement, ensuring that soft skills are retained and consistently applied. Also, Sethi (2018) notes that sustaining self-motivation for lifelong learning can be difficult, particularly for participants lacking intrinsic engagement. Resource constraints and scalability challenges are common, particularly in regional and resource-limited contexts. This is shown, for example, by Dogara et al. (2020b) where they highlight the difficulties of implementing work-based learning in underfunded vocational education systems in Nigeria. There, resource limitations hinderd the scalability of effective training. Similarly, Hartiti, Poddar, and Bhaumik (2020) emphasize the resource-intensive nature of transformational leadership workshops in Indonesia, which rely heavily on trained facilitators to guide participants. Destri et al. (2017) also identify resource constraints as a barrier to expanding stress-specific soft skill training in healthcare settings, where role-playing modules require significant institutional support. Another gap is the varying focus on

short-term versus long-term outcomes. Healthcare-focused frameworks like the ones from Destri et al. (2017) and Hartiti, Poddar, and Bhaumik (2020) prioritize immediate benefits, such as stress reduction and teamwork improvement. At the same time, they lack mechanisms for long-term. In contrast, Hamzah et al. (2024) focuses on sustainability by tracking the long-term application of soft skills through behavioral change models to fill a critical gaps in most other frameworks. Some frameworks address these challenges with innovative solutions. Weber, Lee, and Crawford (2020) use their model to pinpoint specific skill gaps to offer a targeted approach to address deficits efficiently. Similarly, Dogara et al. (2020b) employ their model to validate causal relationships between training phases and skill acquisition to provide robust empirical evidence for the framework's effectiveness. Despite these advancements, challenges like scalability, resource availability, and skill retention remain significant obstacles across most frameworks.

Figure 2 *5 Master Keys Influencing Soft Skill Development in the Professional Contexts*



Overall, the five stated master keys summarize the findings of the conducted systematic literature review. Although the frameworks analyzed vary significantly in their specific focus, methodologies, and target industries, they share overarching themes that provide a cohesive structure for understanding soft skill development. These master keys capture both

commonalities and differences across the frameworks. This reflects their adaptability to diverse professional and cultural contexts. Figure 2 illustrates how the stated master keys organize the insights derived from the review.

5. Discussion

The discussion interprets the findings of this work project considering the research question: *What are the existing frameworks for developing soft skills in a professional context?* These findings provide an understanding of existing frameworks and offer insights into their practical applications and limitations.

The review identified a shared emphasis on interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, such as communication, teamwork, and emotional intelligence, which are foundational across industries. While universal in importance, some frameworks tailor soft skills to specific industry needs, such as stress management in healthcare or cultural intelligence in vocational education. Experiential learning emerged as a cornerstone, with active methods like work-based or project-based learning bridging theory and practice. Frameworks often included mechanisms for feedback and evaluation, such as peer assessments and self-reflection, to ensure that training aligns with workplace requirements. Lastly, adaptability across cultural, regional, and industry-specific contexts was a recurring feature, demonstrating the flexibility of frameworks in diverse settings. However, challenges like scalability, resource limitations, and the lack of long-term effectiveness were notable gaps, especially in underfunded or resource-constrained environments.

These results underscore the complexity of developing soft skills in professional settings, where frameworks must balance universal competencies with industry-specific demands. The emphasis on experiential learning aligns with theories of situated learning, which suggest that skills are best developed in real-world contexts. Feedback mechanisms highlight the importance of iterative improvement and self-awareness and reinforce the dynamic nature of soft skill

acquisition. However, the gaps identified (e.g. such as scalability and resource constraints) reflect broader systemic issues in professional training. Addressing these limitations may require collaboration between academia and industry to create scalable, context-sensitive models. Additionally, the findings emphasize the need for frameworks that are adaptable to rapidly changing workforce dynamics. This could include globalization and technological advancements.

5.1 Limitations

The findings are comprehensive but have inherent limitations. They emphasize recurring themes, such as the importance of experiential learning and feedback mechanisms, but lack granularity regarding industry-specific implementations. The reliance on qualitative insights means the findings provide depth but not breadth, limiting generalizability to broader populations or underrepresented regions and industries. Furthermore, the absence of longitudinal data in the reviewed studies prevents a clear understanding of the long-term effectiveness and retention of developed soft skills.

A significant challenge lies in the heterogeneity of the reviewed frameworks because the 12 included studies contain diverse methodologies, industries, and contexts. On the one hand, this reflects the versatility of soft skills frameworks, on the other hand it complicates the synthesis of universally applicable conclusions. This might lead to an underrepresentation of other industries, such as manufacturing, technology, and creative fields. This imbalance of featured industries can limit the transferability of insights to domains where soft skills may manifest differently or are being prioritized less explicitly.

While the frameworks address common professional needs, such as adaptability and teamwork, they do not fully explore their intersection with technical skills in integrated settings. Additionally, challenges like scalability and resource constraints were identified but not deeply analyzed, leaving gaps in understanding their practical resolution. These limitations suggest a

need for more diverse methodologies and perspectives to strengthen future research and practice.

The methodology used in this work project also had some limitations. The reliance on WoS and Scopus data bases ensured rigor but may have excluded relevant studies from other repositories. This might have limited the review's real-world applicability. Additionally, the SPIDER framework's qualitative focus captured nuanced findings but underrepresented quantitative studies, which could have offered more robust data on scalability and long-term impacts. Further, the exclusion of studies focused on single soft skills or narrow contexts streamlined the analysis but potentially omitted valuable contributions. Similarly, limiting the review to English and German publications excluded culturally diverse perspectives, and the ten-year timeframe excluded foundational research that could provide historical context. Adaptations to the PRISMA protocol for feasibility introduced subjectivity, potentially impacting the thoroughness of the review.

The SPIDER framework provided a structured approach to systematically analyze the 12 selected papers, emphasizing key aspects such as Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, and Research Type. This method effectively captured the context-specific elements of soft skill development frameworks. However, its qualitative emphasis limited the inclusion of quantitative studies, such as those assessing long-term outcomes or scalability. While being instrumental for identifying diverse approaches and commonalities, its focus on qualitative methods may have excluded critical data-driven insights. This highlights the need for a more balanced methodology in future analyses.

5.2 Implications and Future Research

The findings of this work project underscore the importance of developing adaptable, evidence-based frameworks for soft skill development across diverse professional contexts. Current frameworks demonstrate effective elements, such as experiential learning and feedback

mechanisms, but their scalability, cultural adaptability, and integration with technical skills require further exploration. Future research should prioritize more longitudinal studies to assess the long-term retention and impact of soft skill training. Investigating frameworks tailored for resource-constrained or non-Western areas could provide insights into scalability and cultural relevance and impact for soft skill development frameworks.

Additionally, interdisciplinary approaches that integrate soft skills within industry-specific contexts, like combining leadership training with technological competencies, are essential to meet evolving workforce demands. Research should also explore the role of digital tools, gamification, and artificial intelligence in enhancing the accessibility and customization of soft skill development frameworks. Lastly, fostering collaboration between research, industry, and policymakers could bridge gaps between theoretical models and practical applications, ensuring that future frameworks effectively address real-world needs. These recommendations aim to advance the design and implementation of inclusive, scalable, and impactful soft skill development frameworks, and therefore future training programs. By integrating these insights, this work project contributes to a deeper understanding of existing frameworks and provides a foundation for future research. The findings stress the importance of building more inclusive and sustainable approaches to soft skill development. This would bridge the gap between theoretical models and practical applications in diverse professional contexts.

The identified master keys provide a foundation for developing soft skills across diverse professional contexts. Also, they reflect essential elements of effective training and development programs and could serve as a starting point for further exploration. However, the evolving nature of workplaces and industries suggests the possibility of discovering additional master keys through future research. For instance, emerging trends such as digital collaboration, AI integration, or remote work dynamics could introduce new priorities in soft skills development.

While the methodology effectively addressed the research question and provided valuable insights, it could benefit from refinements. Expanding database selection, incorporating more quantitative studies, and broadening language and timeframe restrictions would enhance comprehensiveness. These adjustments would better capture the complexity of soft skill development frameworks and their broader applicability in professional contexts in future research.

6 Conclusion

This work project explored the research question, *What are the existing frameworks for developing soft skills in a professional context?* Through a systematic literature review, five master keys were identified as core components of effective soft skill development frameworks: These master keys provide a structured understanding of how soft skills are cultivated. The results show commonalities such as teamwork and communication, alongside contextual nuances tailored to specific industries and regions.They further illustrate that existing frameworks integrate theory and practice through experiential learning and feedback mechanisms, ensuring alignment with workplace demands. However, they also reveal critical gaps, including scalability, resource limitations, and a lack of long-term evaluation. These limitations underline the need for more standardized, inclusive, and adaptable models to address diverse professional contexts. Answering the research question, the study confirms that while robust frameworks exist, their application and effectiveness are constrained by systemic challenges. By addressing these issues through interdisciplinary approaches, advanced technologies, and enhanced collaboration between academia and industry could pave the way for more impactful soft skill development strategies. This work project not only consolidates fragmented knowledge but also provides a foundation for future research and actionable insights for people working in this area, like educators, HR professionals, and policymakers.

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II. Appendix

Appendix 1 *Keywords Table per Tier (pre-search selection)*

Topics	Identified Keywords
Tier 1 **Professional context**	Professional context, working context, working environment, employees, workforce, staff, personnel, team members, work professionals, industry professionals, business managers, leaders, executives, service providers, occupational groups, working context
Tier 2 **Soft skills**	Soft skills, non-technical skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills, social skills, personal qualities, human skills, people management, universal skills, cross-functional skills, personnel competence, employability skills, socioemotional skills, management competencies
Tier 3 **Soft skill development**	Soft skill development model, soft skill development, competency building, skill improvement, skill advancement, skill cultivation, growth, professional growth, soft skill, staff development, professional development, leadership development
Tier 4 **Frameworks**	framework, competency framework, competency model, best practices, guiding principles, theoretical model, systematic approach, procedural framework, development system, common practices

Appendix 2 *Final Search Strategy and derived Queries for both Data Bases*

Database	Search Query	Date	Results
WoS	TI=(("soft skill*" OR "soft skill development*") NEAR/10 "framework*" OR "model*") AND AB=(("soft skill*" OR "soft skill development*" OR "soft skill framework*" OR "interpersonal skill*" OR "non-technical skill*" OR "cross-functional skill*" OR "professional competences*" OR "workplace education*" OR "employee development*" OR "soft skill development model*")) AND AB=(("soft skill*" NEAR/5 "model" OR "framework*")) AND PY=(2014-2024) AND LA=(English OR German) NOT AK=(covid AND "covid-19" OR "highschool*" OR "*kindergarten")	November 8, 2024	50
Scopus	ALL ("*soft skill" W/15 model OR framework AND NOT covid "covid-19" OR "*highschool" OR "*kindergarten") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("*soft skill" OR "*soft skill development" OR "*interpersonal skills" OR "*non-technical skill" OR "*social skills" OR "*cross-functional skills" OR "*skill growth" OR "*interpersonal skills" OR "*professional competences" OR "*workplace education" OR "employee development" OR "*soft skill development" W/5 framework OR model OR "*competency model" OR "*competency framework" OR "*skills model" OR "*development framework") AND PUBYEAR > 2014 AND PUBYEAR < 2024 AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English") OR LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "German"))	November 8, 2024	134

Appendix 3 *SPIDER framework with 23 identified Papers (based on Methley et al. 2014)*

Author	Title	Year	Journal	Sample (S)	Phenomenon of Interest (PI)	Design (D)	Evaluation (E)	Research Type (R)	Reason for post-hoc exclusion
Bischoff & Massen 2024	A conceptual soft skills competency framework for enhancing graduate intern employability	2024	Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning	Graduate Interns	Competency framework for enhancing graduate intern employability through soft skill and employability capital	Theoretical inquiry and content analysis	Expert validation via Delphi technique; examining employability capital on the impact on employability	Qualitative research	
Bottomley & Burgess 2018	Millennials in Leadership: An Examination of the Practice-Immediacy Model	2018	Engaged Leadership, Management for Professionals	Millennials in leadership roles	Practice-Immediacy Model for transformational leadership and skill development	Conceptual framework and case study illustration	Evaluated through case applications and feedback from leadership participants	Qualitative research	Excluded → transformational leadership with ss only as supporting aspect
Destri et al. 2017	Model of Training Soft Skills for Nurses in Managing Stress in Patients at the Hospital	2017	Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research	Nurses	Training model to enhance soft skills for stress management in patient care	Developmental research with R&D model	Model validation through expert feedback and trials with nurses; effectiveness assessed through pre- and post-tests	Mixed methods	
Dogara et al. 2020a	Project-Based Learning Conceptual Framework for Integrating Soft Skills Among Students of Technical Colleges	2020	IEEE Access	Technical college students	Project-based learning model to integrate soft skills in technical education	Structural equation modeling (SEM)	Validation through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and SEM	Quantitative research	
Dogara et al. 2020b	Work-Based Learning Conceptual Framework for Effective Incorporation of Soft Skills Among Students of Vocational and Technical Institutions	2020	IEEE Access	Vocational and technical students	Work-based learning model for soft skills integration in vocational education	Structural equation modeling (SEM)	Validation through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and SEM	Quantitative research	
Ghafili et al. 2023	Mobilizing the World Café Method for Adequate Development of Non-Technical Skills of Midwives in Morocco: A Pilot Experiment	2023	Healthcare	Midwives in Morocco	World Café method for developing non-technical skills in midwifery	Pilot experiment with World Café cycles	Self-assessment and qualitative feedback from participants	Qualitative research	Excluded → no proposed framework
Gockel Blessing, Wood, and Grahovec 2022	Case-by-Collaboration: An Adaptable Soft Skills-Based Educational Model for Health Disciplines	2022	Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practice	Health discipline students	Soft skills-based collaborative learning model in health education	Qualitative case study with observations and interviews	Coded qualitative data and feedback from participants	Qualitative research	
Hain & Ritz 2021	Skills Development Through Experiential Learning: A Case for the Application of the Enterprise Marketing Variation Model	2021	Marketing Education Review	Marketing students	Experiential learning model for developing soft skills in marketing education	Experiential learning model for developing soft skills in marketing education	Experiential project-based learning	Qualitative research	

Hamzah et al. 2024	Making Soft Skills 'Stick': A Systematic Scoping Review and Integrated Training Transfer Framework Grounded in Behavioral Science	2024	European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology	Organizational trainees	Integrated framework for effective soft skills transfer in the workplace	Systematic scoping review and model development	Evaluation through behavioral science metrics and transfer factors analysis	Systematic review and framework development	
Hartiti, Poddar, and Bhaumik 2020	Development of Transformational Leadership Model to Improve Nurses' Soft Skills	2020	Malaysian Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences	Nurses	Transformational leadership model to enhance soft skills in nursing	Action research with R&D model	Evaluation through pre- and post-intervention assessment	Mixed methods	
Herwina et al. 2019	Cooperative Experiential Learning Model Based on Soft Skill and Hard Skill in Improving Trainee Competence	2019	International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering	Beauty course trainees	Experiential learning model integrating soft and hard skills in vocational training	Cooperative experiential learning model development	Evaluation through skill assessment and performance metrics	Mixed methods	Excluded → incorporates ss in larger learning model, but no ss framework
Lamri & Lubart 2023	Reconciling Hard Skills and Soft Skills in a Common Framework: The Generic Skills Component Approach	2023	Journal of Intelligence	General workforce	Framework for integrating hard and soft skills through generic skill components	Conceptual framework development	Reviewed through literature and theoretical discussion	Conceptual research	Excluded → integration of hard & ss within generic framework
Mahasneh & Thabet 2017	Utilizing Design for Six Sigma to Implement Soft Skills in Construction Education	2017	International Journal of Six Sigma and Competitive Advantage	Construction students	Framework to integrate soft skills into construction education	Design for Six Sigma-based curriculum development	Pilot study and theoretical framework testing	Mixed methods	
Md-Ali, Yusof, and Fuziah (2016)	Public University Educators' Understanding and Conception of Soft Skills for Educators	2016	International Review of Management and Marketing	University educators	Understanding and conceptualization of soft skills among educators	Qualitative interviews with educators	Thematic analysis of interview data	Qualitative research	Excluded → educators understanding of ss without development framework
Rebrina, Khakimova, and Ishkinyaeva 2019	Networking Cooperation in Forming Soft Skills of a New Type of Teacher	2019	Space and Culture, India	New teachers in training	Networking model for developing soft skills in teacher training	Network model development and pilot implementation	Evaluation through participant feedback and qualitative data	Qualitative research	Excluded → more conceptual partnership approach than detailed ss framework
Sethi 2018	Self-Facilitation Framework for Developing Soft Skills – FSIAR	2018	Development and Learning in Organizations	Business school students and professionals	Framework for self-facilitation of soft skills development	Framework design with qualitative data	Feedback through pilot and participant surveys	Framework development	

Shaffie, Md-Ali, and Yusof 2018	Towards Soft Skills Framework for Social Work Educators	2018	Journal of Social Sciences Research	Social work educators	Soft skills framework specifically for social work educators	Conceptual framework and exploratory study	Feedback from expert social work educators	Conceptual framework development	Excluded → educators understanding of ss without development framework
Stal & Paliwoda-Pękosz 2019	Fostering Development of Soft Skills in ICT Curricula: A Case of a Transition Economy	2019	Information Technology for Development	ICT students	Framework for soft skills integration in ICT education for transition economies	Design-based research with case studies	Evaluated through blended learning application and feedback	Mixed methods	
Sydorenko et al. 2022	Developing Teachers' Soft Skills within the New Educational Paradigm	2022	Acta Paedagogica Vilnensia	Teachers in training	Soft skills model in teacher education aligning with new educational standards	Theoretical model with empirical validation	Feedback from educational stakeholders and competency assessment	Mixed methods	Excluded → rather educational alignment based on paradigm for teachers
Valente et al. 2019	Seeking Co-production of Knowledge in Alternating Training: Insights from DESCI World Cafés	2019	Journal of Physics: Conference Series	Secondary school students	World Café approach to foster soft skills and transversal competences in education	Participatory design with living labs	Continuous evaluation through World Café sessions and participant feedback	Qualitative research	Ecxcluded → ss in secondary education + no professional framework
Weber, Lee, and Crawford 2020	A Suggested Best Practices for Enhancing Performance of Soft Skills with Entry-Level Hospitality Managers	2020	Anatolia	Entry-level hospitality managers	Best practices framework for developing soft skills in hospitality management	Importance-Performance Analysis framework	Evaluated using IPA with feedback on soft skills performance	Mixed methods	
Yeardley, T. 2017	Training of New Managers: Why Are We Kidding Ourselves?	2017	Industrial and Commercial Training	First-line managers	Critical review of soft skills training models for new managers	Longitudinal study with thematic analysis	Comparison with best practices and core competency standards	Qualitative research	Excluded → critiques training models for new managers, no framework
Yurii et al. 2022	On the Formation of "Soft Skills" as the Equivalent of Professional Competencies: A Forecast of Educational Trends	2022	Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice	General workforce and students	Framework forecasting the integration of soft skills with professional competencies	Theoretical analysis and comparative method	Conceptual insights and future education recommendations	Conceptual research	Excluded → conceptual analysis on soft skills as professional competencies, no framework