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World Job Demand for Soft Skills Education for Young Labor Force Majoring in Agricultural Engineering Pedagogy

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Abstract: In the survey of 103 agencies, enterprises and 77 alumni who graduated from Vietnam National University of Agriculture, majoring in Agricultural Engineering Pedagogy, 2.6% of alumni assessed themselves as skilled, 14.3% had good presentation skills, 18.2% had good teamwork skills and 19.5% had good communication skills. These agencies, enterprises and employers said those alumni have skills, but their skills are relatively weak, accounting for 48% of the foreign language skills, 54.8% of presentation skill, 60.6% of team-work skills and 57.7% of communication skills. This reflects the fact that soft skills training for students in universities is currently not paid sufficient attention in addition to the training of professional skills and capacity. In order for graduates to respond immediately to the job, universities need to train soft skills that employers are interested in.

Key words: soft skills, alumni, employers

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the world has been undergoing a revolution in science - technology. The transition from the industrial era to the development of information technology and knowledge economy has affected all sectors, making a fast and profound change to the material and spiritual life of our society. This transformation is the result of the emergence of high technology, globalization and the knowledge economy. In Vietnam, advances in science and technology are greatly affecting the nature and content of labor in our country: many new careers appear, with old jobs lost. Therefore, workers need to be regularly fostered in order to update their knowledge and skills so that they can continue to work in the fast-changing and sustained development of science and technology. The training process must also innovate towards the development of learner capacity to create the creativity of the workers and at the same time ensure that the majority of graduates have jobs that are in line with the digging expertise and meet the demands of world employment in the shortest possible time.

Profession-Oriented Higher Education (POHE) has been implemented since 2005 at eight universities in Vietnam with the support of Dutch Applied Sciences Schools and is continuing to expand in other universities across the country. One of the highlights of profession-oriented training is the increase in the practice time of the subject at enterprises and agencies; the training program is built according to the module-designed approach. This enables students to be able to perform their job right after each module. In addition to professional qualifications, employers in the agricultural sector are interested in soft skills, including systems of skills such as communication, teamwork, presentation, planning, decision making, problem solving, analysis of information processing, foreign languages, informatics ...

2. THE LEVEL OF RESPONSE OF SOFT SKILLS TO THE JOB AND REQUIREMENTS OF EMPLOYERS

The world job survey in 103 enterprises, agencies, educational establishments and 77 alumni graduating from Agricultural Engineering Pedagogy, who have been working in there in 2014, showed following results:

Table 1
Alumni assessment of the level of responsiveness of soft skills with current job

unit: %

No	Type of soft skills	Mean	Rank	Uneducated	Educated			
					Weak	Fair	Good	Excellent
1	Communication skills	2.27	10	16.9	5.2	31.2	27.3	19.5
2	Team work skills	2.49	4	10.4	5.2	27.3	39.0	18.2
3	Presentation skills	2.51	3	10.4	3.9	24.7	46.8	14.3
4	Time management skill	2.23	11	14.3	11.7	27.3	29.9	16.9
5	Planning and managing skills	2.42	6	13.0	7.8	26.0	31.2	22.1
6	Decision-making skills	2.29	9	11.7	14.3	26.0	29.9	18.2
7	Problem-solving skills	2.42	6	14.3	7.8	23.4	31.2	23.4
8	Adapting skills	2.35	7	14.3	6.5	32.5	23.4	23.4
9	Foreign language skills	1.97	12	9.1	11.7	54.5	22.1	2.6
10	Computer skills	2.48	5	6.5	5.2	36.4	37.7	14.3
11	Information analysis and processing skills	2.32	8	11.7	2.6	42.9	27.3	15.6
12	Leadership capacity	2.23	11	16.9	10.4	23.4	31.2	18.2
13	Passion and responsibility	2.81	1	15.6	5.2	10.4	20.8	48.1
14	Loyalty to the profession	2.73	2	15.6	2.6	19.5	18.2	44.2

The results of Table 1 show that the percentage of students trained in soft skills and their ability to respond to current work is low. Important skills such as communication, time management, decision making, foreign language use, information analysis and processing are underestimated in this set of soft skills.

In the process of working at the workplace, the students themselves must always improve themselves in all respects especially their ability to adapt quickly to the requirements of work and avoid being eliminated in many different ways. Many alumni suggest that universities offer soft skills training as follows:

Table 2
Alumni proposal for soft skills training in university

No	Type of soft skills	Mean	Rank	Unnecessary	Little necessary	Necessary	Very necessary
1	Communication skills	3.71	1	0	1.3	26.0	72.7
2	Team work skills	3.61	3	1.3	0	35.1	63.6
3	Presentation skills	3.61	3	0	1.3	36.4	62.3
4	Time management skill	3.60	4	1.3	1.3	33.8	63.6
5	Planning and managing skills	3.71	1	0	1.3	26.0	72.7
6	Decision-making skills	3.57	6	2.6	2.6	29.9	64.9
7	Problem-solving skills	3.58	5	0	2.6	36.4	61.0
8	Adapting skills	3.48	9	2.6	3.9	36.4	57.1
9	Foreign language skills	3.48	9	0	11.7	28.6	59.7
10	Computer skills	3.70	2	0	2.6	24.7	72.7
11	Information analysis and processing skills	3.50	8	0	3.9	41.6	52.3
12	Leadership capacity	3.21	10	1.3	18.2	39.0	41.6
13	Passion and responsibility	3.61	3	0	5.6	28.6	66.2
14	Loyalty to the profession	3.52	7	1.3	10.4	23.4	64.9

It can be drawn from the figure in Table 2 that communication skills, planning skills, work management, informatics skills, teamwork skills, presentation skills, passion and sense of responsibility, which are needed at a high level by young people, must be trained in university so that when they go to work they are not surprised and can adapt quickly to work in the workplace.

According to the opinions of the employers using graduates of the Agricultural Engineering Pedagogy, we get various comments which reflect the situation of current training.

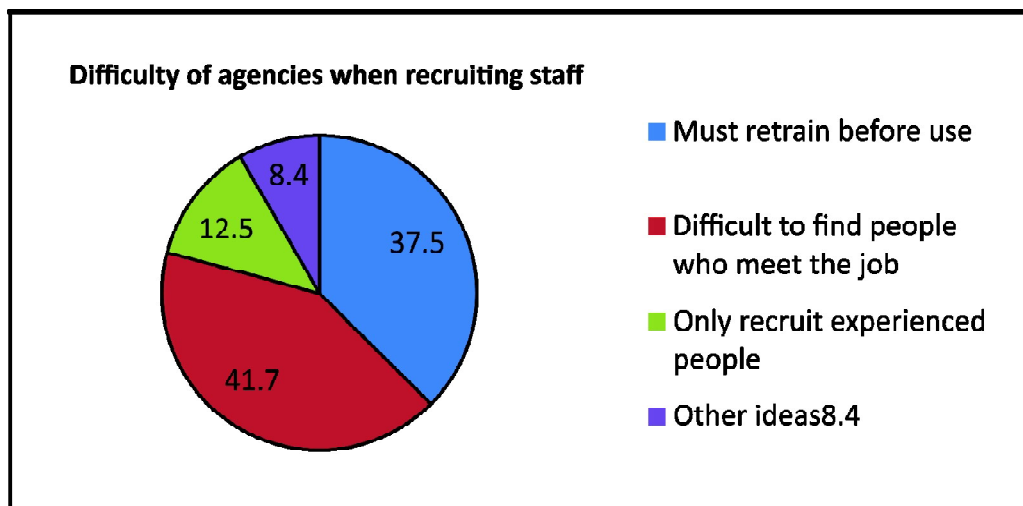


Chart 1: Difficulty of agencies when recruiting staff

Most employers find it hard to find people who are responsive to the job (41.7%); 37.5% agreed that they must retrain labor before use. This shows that agencies and enterprises when recruiting laborers of agricultural engineering pedagogy have encountered many difficulties. They are not satisfied with the training product but still have to spend some time and resources to re-train their labor. The time spent by agencies and businesses to recruit students under three months accounted for 48.1%, from 3 to 6 months was 28.8%, over one year was 3.8%, the rest was retraining from 6 months to 1 year.

Table 3
Agency / Enterprise soft skills assessment of newly recruited staff

No	Type of soft skills	Insufficient		Sufficient in No but weak in quality		Mean
		No	Rate (%)	No	Rate (%)	
1	Communication skills	41	39.4	60	57.7	1.41
2	Team work skills	40	38.5	63	60.6	1.39
3	Presentation skills	45	43.3	57	54.8	1.44
4	Time management skill	49	47.1	52	50	1.49
5	Planning and managing skills	52	50	50	48.1	1.52
6	Decision-making skills	57	54.8	43	41.3	1.57
7	Problem-solving skills	39	37.5	62	59.6	1.39
8	Adapting skills	43	41.3	59	56.7	1.42
9	Foreign language skills	51	49.0	50	48.0	1.50
10	Computer skills	28	26.9	73	70.2	1.28
11	Information analysis and processing skills	53	51.0	48	46.2	1.52
12	Leadership capacity	70	67.3	31	29.8	1.69
13	Passion and responsibility	36	34.6	65	62.6	1.36
14	Loyalty to the profession	42	40.4	59	56.7	1.42

Most of the interviewed labor recruited agencies identified the lack of soft skills on newly or under-graduated students or the need of more training for them to meet their job requirements. In particular, skills in using information technology, love for work and sense of responsibility, teamwork skills have lower scores than other soft skills.

In the coming years, different agencies have different recruitment plans. In general, the criteria they expect in the hiring process are:

- Good command of foreign languages.
- Good communication skills and soft skills.
- Good technical skills and practical ability.
- Love the profession and dedication to work
- University degree or above.
- Ability to handle many different positions.
- Desire for promotion and further study

3. CONCLUSION

In addition to hard skills training, professional skills for students of Agricultural Engineering Pedagogy, additional training in soft skills is essential for graduates to undertake the work they are trained in, which can help to reduce retraining time of recruiter and save money not only for agencies but also for socio-economic savings. It is important to design and deliver modules that teach soft skills in the current training program, especially the profession-based training program.

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