
Targeting Soft Skills Development: Understanding the Canadian Context

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Abstract

Given Canada growing immigration trend, each year sizable number of immigrants arrive to the country and bring unique sets of skills and abilities. These skills may not always match the expectation and requirements of Canadian employers, which in its turn leads to the skills gap, higher underemployment, and unemployment among immigrants. To reduce the time, it takes the immigrant population to adapt to a new culture and to improve the economic performance of the country, it is crucial to understand the gap and develop tools that can help newcomers adapt to a new labor market faster.

This research focuses on the identification and description of the most sought-after soft skills in the Canadian labor market by analyzing literature written on the topic over the past decade as well as considering skills requirements during the Covid-19 pandemic. Soft skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, leadership, emotional intelligence, and work ethics are found to be the most desired by Canadian employers. Hofstede cultural dimensions theory is used for further interpretation of each skill in the Canadian context.

Since Canada growing immigration trend is not unique, this research can be used as a foundation for further investigation into soft skills preferences, interpretations, measurement, and development methods in other countries with growing immigrant population.

Keywords: soft skills, employment skills, Canada, immigrant employment

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