“Exploring cross-cultural variations in perceived soft skills among business students: A comparative analysis between Jordan and Hungary”

AUTHORS	Mohamedbashir Baniismail Tímea Juhász

ARTICLE INFO	Mohamedbashir Baniismail and Tímea Juhász (2024). Exploring cross-cultural variations in perceived soft skills among business students: A comparative analysis between Jordan and Hungary. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, *22*(3), 582-592. doi:10.21511/ppm.22(3).2024.44
DOI	http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/ppm.22(3).2024.44
RELEASED ON	Friday, 20 September 2024
RECEIVED ON	Thursday, 25 April 2024
ACCEPTED ON	Thursday, 15 August 2024

JOURNAL	"Problems and Perspectives in Management"
ISSN PRINT	1727-7051
ISSN ONLINE	1810-5467
PUBLISHER	LLC “Consulting Publishing Company “Business Perspectives”
FOUNDER	LLC “Consulting Publishing Company “Business Perspectives”

NUMBER OF REFERENCES	NUMBER OF FIGURES	NUMBER OF TABLES
33	0	5

BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES

LLC "CPC "Business Perspectives"
Hryhorii Skovoroda lane, 10,
Sumy, 40022, Ukraine

www.businessperspectives.org

Mohamedbashir Baniismail (Hungary), **Timea Juhasz** (Hungary)

EXPLORING CROSS-CULTURAL VARIATIONS IN PERCEIVED SOFT SKILLS AMONG BUSINESS STUDENTS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN JORDAN AND HUNGARY

Abstract

The study aims to examine similarities and differences in the way business students from different cultural backgrounds perceive soft skills based on Geert Hofstede's cultural model. Four business universities in Jordan and one in Hungary were included in the study. Both samples included 313 respondents. The main reason for selecting business students was that soft skills are essential for finding a job in the professional labor market. The quantitative analysis was carried out using a questionnaire, and statistical analysis was performed using SPSS software. The results confirmed a difference between Jordanian and Hungarian cultures in the perception of the importance of soft skills, which can be attributed to cultural differences. The Jordanian respondents gave the highest mean scores for their own skills in communication (M: 4.28), teamwork (M: 4.22), ethical skills (M: 4.17), and self-awareness (M: 4.17), while the Hungarian sample gave the highest mean score for teamwork (M: 4.29), ethical skills (M: 4.23), and empathy (M: 4.19). Furthermore, students also differed in terms of which skills they thought employers valued as necessary for a career starter. Jordanian young people gave the highest average score to responsibility (M: 4.12) and admitting when wrong (M: 4.41), while Hungarians gave the highest average score to communication (M: 4.13) and problem-solving (M: 4.10).

Keywords soft skills, cultural model, Jordan, Hungary, business, Hofstede's dimensions, intercultural competence, comparative analysis

JEL Classification J20, I23

Received on: 25th of April, 2024
Accepted on: 15th of August, 2024
Published on: 20th of September, 2024

Mohamedbashir Baniismail, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Doctoral School of Entrepreneurship and Business, Faculty of Finance and Accounting, Budapest Business School, Hungary. (Corresponding author)

Timea Juhasz, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Methodology for Social Studies, Faculty of International Management and Business, Budapest Business School, Hungary.

Conflict of interest statement:
Author(s) reported no conflict of interest

INTRODUCTION

Soft skills are becoming increasingly valuable in today's globally connected society across various professions (Janani & Vijayalakshmi, 2023; Nowacka & Rzemieniak, 2021). Leadership, interpersonal, and communication skills are among the soft skills that are now necessary for success in the modern workplace (Shet, 2024). These skills are often seen as complementary to technical qualifications but are vital to create effective work dynamics within the organization. For example, the LinkedIn's (2023) Global Talent Trends report has shown that 92% of employers consider soft skills to be either an "essential" or "very important" factor in hiring decisions. However, their importance for corporate culture is actually much greater. This makes acquiring these skills essential for business students to adapt to the changing and complex working environment in the corporate world.

The importance attached to a particular soft skill and whether it is valued and recognized can vary from culture to culture, as different

http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/ppm.22(3).2024.44

cultures have different values and priorities and different ways of thinking. For example, Eastern cultures might assign a higher importance to hierarchy and seniority, while Western cultures might value individuality.

Hofstede's cultural dimension theory suggests that nations with high Power Distance Index (PDI) scores, such as Malaysia (PDI of 100) and the Philippines (PDI of 94), emphasize hierarchy and respect for authority. In these countries, soft skills like politeness and deference are highly valued at work. On the other hand, societies that have low PDIs – for instance, the Netherlands (PDI 38) or Denmark (PDI 18) – emphasize equality and directness in communication, thus making assertiveness more prized as a soft skill. This statistical evidence proves how different cultural norms can assign different levels of importance to certain soft abilities.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Chattoraj and Shabnam (2015) found that employers and educational institutions complain that workers do not have enough soft skills. Workers are scientifically qualified to do a job, but lack basic soft skills such as communication and verbal or numerical reasoning. This highlights the importance of soft skills, as technical knowledge is not sufficient by itself.

Albandea and Giret (2018) defined soft skills as the ability of a person to relate to other people (interpersonal skills) and the ability of a person to regulate oneself (intrapersonal skills). Such skills also include the person's additional ability to trust/care for both the creator and other people (extra personal skills). On the other hand, Magyar (2023) conceptualized that while hard skills are, in fact, professional competencies, soft skills are those qualities or skills that cannot be learned (meaning academically). Soft skills help an employee to fit into the work environment. In other words, personal skills help the individual make use of technical skills within the work environment. However, it is possible to develop soft skills through specialized training. To learn and develop soft skills, companies involve experts, trainers, and coaches who are aware of current global trends and practices (McLaren, 2019).

Furthermore, Lamri and Lubart (2023) stressed that firms are paying increasing attention to skills development and assessment. However, there is no consensus on what constitutes a soft skill and how much hard skills contribute to employee and employer success. This means that it is not easy to understand which soft skills are more important, as various factors can play a role, such as cultural factors, which are the topic of this study.

Ranstadt (2024) investigated other factors affecting the importance of soft skills. The study found that the skills most often categorized as soft skills are organizational, teamwork, communication, flexibility-adaptability, and problem-solving skills. These skills can be useful in various types of jobs, but the job's nature and the position's level may influence the order of their importance.

According to Danao (2024), several soft skills were considered to be the most important in the workplace in 2024, based on the opinion of companies. They include communication, leadership, teamwork, creativity, time management, adaptability, problem-solving, work ethic, critical thinking, conflict management, and emotional intelligence.

Tóthné Téglás and Kelemen-Erdős (2020) compared non-graduate and higher vocational programs in the field of business within Hungarian higher educational institutes. They found differences between what the students considered important and what was expected by employers in the context of competencies (soft skills). These differences were most significant for the following skills: problem-solving skills, practical application of skills, communication skills, foreign language skills, organizational skills, stress tolerance, analytical skills, analytical approach, flexibility, and the ability to motivate others. Companies expect business students to perceive reliability, accuracy, practical application of skills, autonomy, problem-solving, workload management, and work ethic.

On the other hand, Holik et al. (2020) conducted a survey of engineering students in Hungary to assess their soft skills. Their results indicated that the students surveyed needed to improve their soft skills.

Horvath-Csikós and Juhász (2021) analyzed how students perceive their own soft skills and how well they meet employers' expectations. According to the results, gender, age, and educational attainment influenced soft and hard skills in the sample studied. They found evidence for the importance of integrated soft skills courses in university education, which can contribute to the development of soft skills for students entering the labor market. Furthermore, it is important to integrate soft skills courses into normal basic education (Pelesz, 2021; Juhász & Radics, 2019).

The concept of soft skills development started very early in Hungary. This task appears as a goal in the National Curriculum (2012), as teachers are expected to pay attention to the development of soft skills at the primary level. However, the actual realization of these concepts has been questionable, as the lack of soft skills can be observed later on in the secondary and higher education levels, not to mention in employment (Csapó, 2007). In the future, one of the tasks of education will be to develop these skills in line with labor market expectations and challenges at all levels of education, taking into account the age-related needs of the learner.

On the other hand, the topic of soft skills is not widely investigated in the Arabic world in general and in Jordan specifically. However, few studies can be referred to in this context. Adely et al. (2021) challenged the main idea of "skills mismatch" in Arab countries, particularly Jordan. They argued that youth unemployment is only due to a lack of appropriate skills, ignoring the larger social and economic problems. Although this might be considered an oversimplification of the problem, it can certainly hold some truth to it.

Lubowiecki-Vikuk et al. (2023) focused primarily on the tourism and hospitality sector. Businesses operating in VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) situations need specific soft skills. These skills include the ability to solve the problems, adapt, and prioritize customer needs.

R. O. Silva and G. D. Silva (2022) focused on exploring how curiosity in the workplace can influence workers' creative abilities, particularly through their ability to connect ideas. The study provides valuable insights into the relationship between curiosity and creativity.

Amer (2018) highlighted the importance of ensuring that business students acquire basic soft skills to increase their employability and enable a smoother transition from education to the labor market. The results stress that ensuring the development of soft skills can address the problem of youth employability.

It is evident that in the Hungarian context, studies usually focus on employers' expectations regarding soft skills and whether graduates meet them, which seems to be a significant issue in Hungary. On the other hand, the Jordanian studies focus more on job creation and how soft skills can help with that; this shows that unemployment is the biggest issue in Jordan (Assaad & Salemi, 2010; Fallah et al., 2019).

Dartey-Baah (2013) showed that Hofstede's cultural model can explain why research on soft skills between countries can vary. From that, this study can investigate the differences and similarities between graduates in Hungary and Jordan. The model identifies important cultural characteristics that shape social goals. Hungary prefers organized surroundings with defined expectations, as evidenced by its high Uncertainty Avoidance Index score. This cultural characteristic, which reflects a desire for stability and predictability in the labor market, is consistent with the Hungarian emphasis on whether graduates match employers' expectations for soft skills. Jordan, on the other hand, emphasizes hierarchical relationships and a less organized attitude to uncertainty, as seen by its greater Power Distance Index and lower Uncertainty Avoidance Index.

This cultural setting encourages an emphasis on job development and the contribution of soft skills to the fight against unemployment, demonstrating a practical solution to financial difficulties. These cultural variations show how societal values and financial circumstances influence the goals of schooling and approaches to the job market (Aycan et al., 2000).

http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/ppm.22(3).2024.44

The aim of this study is to investigate the soft skills that students at business universities in Jordan and Hungary have learned. It also tried to determine how students perceive themselves in terms of these skills. The goal was to check whether Jordanian students, in contrast to Hungarian students, perceive the value of soft skills in the labor market differently and whether they also value their own soft skills differently. Only Hungarian and Jordanian students from the respective universities participated in the research, excluding students of other nationalities, not to alter the results.

The study elaborated on the following hypotheses:

H1: Business students in Jordan have different perceptions of soft skills compared to Hungarian students.

H2: Business students in Jordan rate their own soft skills differently from Hungarian students.

2. METHODS

This paper used G. Hofstede and G. J. Hofstede's (2008) theory of cultural dimensions as a basic framework to examine how business students in Jordan and Hungary perceive soft skills. The cultural dimensions are power distance, individualism, achievement and success motivation, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and permissiveness. A user-friendly online tool was used to collect data using the Hofstede Cultural Dimensions Framework.

This paper uses some of the 36 soft skills identified by the SkillsMatch (2022) project. The SkillsMatch's project aimed to develop and demonstrate a European-wide assessment and learning guidance technology to help users tailor their skills to the needs of the labor market. In this project, 36 key soft skills were grouped into four categories. These were self-image and worldview, context and performance-related, peer interaction, and methodological, intuitive, and lateral thinking (Juhász et al., 2023).

Based on Hofstede's model, Jordan scored higher on the cultural dimensions of power distance and permissiveness. In comparison, Hungary scored higher on the cultural dimensions of individualism, motivation, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation. These differences play a crucial role in the perception of business students' soft skills.

The main research method was a comprehensive cross-sectional survey using a structured questionnaire distributed electronically. A similar questionnaire was used by Horváth-Csikós and Juhász (2023), carefully designed to capture complex perspectives. Participants from different Jordanian universities (Hashmite University, The University of Jordan, Israa University, and Petra University) and from Budapest Business University via the university's social media platform were selected. When selecting the sample, the focus was on business students, as they are in a critical position for future professional environments where soft skills are critical. The business students were studying economics and management at their respective universities.

The 5-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire, which allowed participants to express their level of agreement on certain statements. This scale was chosen for its widespread familiarity and ease of interpretation to increase the consistency and reliability of the responses. Jordanian and Hungarian students were asked to answer the same questions. In both countries, the questionnaire was translated into the mother tongue, so the questions and possible answers were given to the respondents in Hungarian and Arabic.

The data were analyzed using various statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation, were used to summarize the soft skills scores. Inferential statistical methods, such as *t*-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA), helped clarify significant differences and provided insights into possible cultural aspects of soft skills perceptions. The software SPSS version 28 was used for analysis.

The study was conducted in 2021–2023. The first set of questions dealt with the sample demographics (gender, age, education, and work experience). The second set of questions focused on the characteristics of respondents' soft skills and employers' expectations of soft skills. The third set of questions focused on the opportunities for soft skills develop-

Table 1. Sample demographics

Demographics	Country	
	Hungary	Jordan
Gender	Male (143): 45.7%	Male (195): 62.3%
	Female (170): 54.3%	Female (118): 37.7%
Age	Under 20 years old (225): 71.9%	Under 20 years old (152): 48.6%
	21 to 30 years old (85): 27.2%	21 to 30 years old (143): 45.7%
	31 to 40 years old (3): 0.9%	31 to 40 years old (18): 5.7%
Work experience	No experience (0): 0%	No experience (0): 0%
	Employed (313): 100%	Employed (313): 100%

ment. A validity analysis was conducted. To assess the internal consistency of the data, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used, with 0.882 for the Hungarian sample, and 0.861 for the Jordanian sample. This suggests that the responses have a high level of reliability. It is also worth noting that the reliability of all 49 items in the study was excellent. The sample characteristics are presented in Table 1.

The results show that 54.3% of Hungarian respondents were female and 45.7% male, so the Hungarian sample is dominated by females. In comparison, the gender distribution in the Jordanian sample showed that males accounted for 62.3% and females for 37.7%. Notably, only 0.9% of participants were between 31 and 40 years old, and none was between 41 and 50 years old. In Jordan, the age distribution of respondents was as follows: 48.6% under 20 years, 45.7% between 21 and 30 years, 5.7% between 31 and 40 years, and no respondents between 41 and 50 years. The breakdown of respondents' work experience in Hungary and Jordan showed that all respondents have work experience.

3. RESULTS

A descriptive study of soft skills assessments by participants in Jordan and Hungary offers new perspectives on the relative value of different workplace talents (Table 2).

In Hungary, respondents, on average, stress the importance of good communication skills (average 4.13) and consider this to be a key attribute in the workplace.

A preference for admitting mistakes when wrong (mean 3.86) is consistent with a recognition of accountability and transparency in the workplace. This result may be influenced by cultural norms that emphasize clear and open communication and accountability.

In contrast, Jordanian participants place a higher value on certain soft skills. In the Jordanian workplace, leadership skills (mean 3.98) and the willingness to accept mistakes (mean 4.41) are particularly valued. The emphasis on leadership skills may reflect the cultural value of effective management and leadership in the workplace. Furthermore, the value of admitting mistakes is consistent with a work culture that values openness and humility. Looking at the two countries, the *t*-test was used to detect significant differences.

Table 3 shows that Jordanian participants perceive leadership skills as significantly more important than Hungarian participants. A non-significant *p*-value (greater than 0.05) indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceived importance of problem-solving skills be-

Table 2. Importance of soft skills in the workplace

Soft skills	Hungary		Jordan		Mean Diff
	Mean	Std. deviation	Mean	Std. deviation	
Good communication skills	4.13	0.727	3.87	0.711	0.26
Sense of responsibility	3.77	0.829	4.12	0.750	–0.35
Leadership skills	3.30	0.787	3.98	0.708	–0.68
Problem-solving skills	4.10	0.721	4.04	0.818	0.06
Desire for leadership	3.91	0.792	3.97	0.818	–0.06
Compassion	3.87	0.793	4.12	0.774	–0.25
Not avoiding tasks	3.91	0.819	3.58	0.775	0.33
Admitting when wrong	3.86	0.840	4.41	0.803	–0.55

http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/ppm.22(3).2024.44

Table 3. *t*-test for *H1*

Soft skills	t-value	p-value	Significant at p < .05?
Good communication skills (F1)	4.71131	< .00001	YES
Sense of responsibility (F2)	–6.21707	< .00001	YES
Leadership skills (F3)	–11.68262	< .00001	YES
Problem-solving skills (F4)	1.08764	0.138538	NO
Desire for leadership (F5)	–1.11089	0.133473	NO
Compassion (F6)	–3.75635	0.000092	YES
Not avoiding tasks (F7)	5.7125	< .00001	YES
Admitting when wrong (F8)	13.09669	< .00001	YES

tween the Hungarian and Jordanian samples. There is no statistically significant difference in the perceived importance of the desire to drive between the Hungarian and Jordanian samples. Jordanian participants perceived compassion as significantly more important than Hungarian participants. Hungarian participants attach significantly more importance to not avoiding tasks soft skill than their Jordanian counterparts. Jordanian participants attach significantly higher importance to leadership skill, sympathy, admitting when wrong soft skill than Hungarian participants.

Following these results, it can be concluded that *H1* is accepted for the following soft skills, namely good communication skills, sense of responsibility, leadership skills, compassion, not avoiding tasks, and admitting when you are wrong. In contrast, *H1* is rejected for two soft skills, namely problem-solving skills and desire for leadership.

The second hypothesis was tested by analyzing 16 items of the questionnaire, which corresponds to a question asking respondents to rate 16 soft skills they perceive as their own.

In the area of driving, with Jordanians performing much better (mean: 3.98) than Hungarians (mean: 3.33), a difference of 0.65. In areas such as empathy, resourcefulness, and flexibility, Jordanians continued to perceive themselves as more skilled (Table 4).

In contrast to their Jordanian counterparts, Hungarian participants rated themselves higher on talents related to effective communication, moral and ethical reasoning, and strategic thinking. The observed differences in these abilities may be a consequence of different social norms and cultural values in terms of communication preferences, moral concerns, and methodological approaches to problem-solving.

Table 4. Ratings of soft skills

Soft skills	Hungary		Jordan		Mean Diff
	Mean	Std. deviation	Mean	Std. deviation	
Good communication skills	4.13	0.803	4.28	0.905	–0.15
Critical thinking	3.82	0.853	4.11	0.887	–0.29
Leadership skills	3.33	0.978	3.98	0.951	–0.65
Entrepreneurship	3.27	1.032	3.69	1.012	–0.42
Ability to work in a team	4.29	0.786	4.22	0.877	0.07
Ethical and moral skills	4.23	0.792	4.17	0.878	0.06
Strategic thinking	3.79	0.806	3.39	0.852	0.4
Time management skills	3.65	0.975	3.27	1.001	0.38
Planning and organizational skills	3.89	0.832	3.55	0.958	0.34
Presentation skills	3.48	0.943	3.92	0.894	–0.44
Self-awareness	3.93	0.803	4.17	0.946	–0.24
Problem-solving skills	4.13	0.693	3.82	0.913	0.31
Empathy	4.19	0.909	4.15	0.897	0.04
Creativity	3.92	0.893	3.78	1.032	0.14
Flexibility	4.13	0.863	4.44	0.937	–0.31
Stress and conflict management skills	3.76	0.959	4.16	0.897	–0.4

Table 5. *t*-test for *H2*

Soft skills	t-value	p-value	Significant at p < .05?
Good communication skills	2.1934	0.014338	YES
Critical thinking	4.1692	0.000017	YES
Leadership skills	8.43	< 0.00001	YES
Entrepreneurship	5.1408	< 0.00001	YES
Ability to work in a team	1.0516	.146695	NO
Ethical and moral skills	0.8977	.184846	NO
Strategic thinking	6.0339	< 0.00001	YES
Time management skills	4.8111	< 0.00001	YES
Planning and organizational skills	4.7407	< 0.00001	YES
Presentation skills	5.0376	< 0.00001	YES
Self-awareness	3.4219	0.000332	YES
Problem-solving skills	4.7848	< 0.00001	YES
Empathy	0.5541	0.28985	NO
Creativity	1.8149	0.03501	YES
Flexibility	4.3054	< 0.00001	YES
Stress and conflict management skills	5.3892	< 0.00001	YES

For example, there are differences in empathy, creativity, adaptability, and leadership. These differences suggest that Jordanian and Hungarian business students may perceive different skills from each other. These results suggest that cultural and contextual variables may indeed influence how students perceive their own soft skills.

When analyzing communication and critical thinking, subtle differences in the self-concept of Hungarian and Jordanian business students were found.

There was a significant difference in the self-assessment of leadership qualities between Hungarian and Jordanian business students (Table 5). Hungarian students rated themselves significantly higher than Jordanian students in terms of entrepreneurship. This could be the result of differences in exposure to entrepreneurial role models, entrepreneurial education, or cultural perceptions of innovation and risk-taking. There were no noticeable differences in the ability to work in a team, suggesting that cultural attitudes are similar. This shows how important collaboration is in today's workplace.

Although the difference is not statistically significant, Hungarian students are perceived to have slightly better moral and ethical qualities than Jordanian students. Hungarians scored much higher in strategic thinking than in leadership. This could be the result of cultural or educational influences on their self-evaluation. Hungarian students significantly outperform Jordanian students in time management skills. Planning/organizing skills again showed a significant difference in favor of Hungarians. Educational and cultural influences may play a role.

Hungarian students perceive themselves as better performers than Jordanian students, which may be due to differences in schooling or cultural expectations regarding public speaking. Self-concept ratings did not show significant differences between Jordanians and Hungarians, suggesting that self-concept ratings are similar between cultures.

Hungarian students rate their problem-solving skills much higher than Jordanian students. This implies that Hungarian students are perceived to have a better understanding of complex problems than Jordanian students, perhaps due to teaching strategies that strongly emphasize analytical reasoning and critical thinking. There was no discernible difference between empathy scores in Jordan and Hungary, suggesting similar perspectives and emphasizing the value of empathy in interpersonal interactions and group projects.

On the other hand, there is a notable difference in creativity, with Hungarians rating themselves higher. This raises the possibility of social implications for how creative and risk-taking people are perceived. Significant differences were found in both stress management and resilience, where Hungarians gave themselves higher self-ratings. This suggests that perceived resilience and conflict resolution ability may be influenced by cul-

http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/ppm.22(3).2024.44

tural factors. There was a significant difference in stress and conflict coping, with Hungarians having higher self-ratings, indicating the influence of culture on perceived coping ability.

There are also parallels and differences between business students in Jordan and Hungary in terms of their self-assessed skills. Some soft skills, such as teamwork and professional skills, do not differ significantly in the self-assessment of the two groups, while others show clear differences. Students' self-assessments of a number of talents, including critical thinking, leadership, and entrepreneurship, show statistically significant differences between Hungarian and Jordanian students. Following these results, it can be concluded that H2 is accepted for the 13 soft skills.

4. DISCUSSION

Universities have a prominent role to play in the development of these skills (Csapó, 1999, 2007). Brown and Neve (2024) found that social aspects influence the perception and importance of soft skills. The results of this study confirmed this finding.

Several observations can be made when analyzing the results of the first hypothesis testing. In terms of power distance, higher power distance in Jordan indicates greater acceptance of hierarchical order. This may influence the perception of the value of leadership in Jordan, where people may place a higher value on good management and leadership than in Hungary. On the other hand, as far as individuality is concerned, Hungarians who score higher on individuality are more likely to support a loose social structure. This may be related to the emphasis in Hungary on leadership and communication skills, where courage and individual self-expression are valued.

Looking at the motivation for achievement and success, the higher motivation score in Hungary indicates a culture that values success, achievement, and competitiveness. This may be consistent with Hungarian scores for language skills and taking responsibility for mistakes. Similarly, the higher ambiguity avoidance score in Hungary indicates a lower level of ambiguity tolerance for ambiguity avoidance. This may contribute to the importance of problem-solving skills and willingness to avoid procrastination in Hungary, where a systematic and organized approach may be beneficial.

As for long-term orientation, Hungary's higher long-term orientation score indicates a more pragmatic, normatively oriented society. This may be related to Hungary's high emphasis on language skills and the value of completing tasks without procrastination. Finally, looking at the indulgence scores, Hungary's lower indulgence score indicates a more reserved society that values self-control over pleasure. This may be consistent with Hungary's emphasis on compassion, which may encourage moderation and empathy.

Krafft (2018) showed that family background has a significant impact on labor market performance, highlighting the diversity of factors that influence employability. Family background is directly influenced by the cultural context, which creates a different climate in which people grow up with different values. This present study shows that the availability and perception of soft skills can vary widely.

The second hypothesis testing revealed significant differences in the perception of Hungarian business students' own soft skills compared to Jordanian students. One possible explanation for the differences in the self-assessment of business students in Jordan and Hungary is Hofstede's model, which considers cultural elements.

In terms of power distance, reduced power distance in Hungary may encourage autonomous self-evaluation, while high power distance in Jordan may encourage students to conform to social norms in their self-evaluation. Individualism scores show that Hungary has a much higher individualism score than Jordan, indicating a society that encourages autonomy and achievement. The observed differences in self-esteem can be explained in part by the fact that Hungarian students tend to value themselves more highly and are more confident in their abilities.

Achievement motivation and success motivation scores indicate that Hungary's strong achievement motivation suggests a success-oriented culture,

which may have encouraged students to value their business-related skills more highly than those in Jordan. This confirms the link between perceptions of one's own abilities and cultural ideals. In terms of uncertainty avoidance, both in Hungary and Jordan, the level of uncertainty avoidance is medium to high, suggesting that students desire a well-organized environment with defined rules (Horstmeyer, 2020).

Hungary scores higher on long-term orientation. Hungarian students tend to prefer skills compatible with stability and long-term success, which may explain some of the observed differences in self-assessed competences. Finally, in terms of indulgence, compared to Hungarians, who place more emphasis on success, Jordanians prioritize enjoyment and leisure, which may explain their higher indulgence scores.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated how business students in Jordan and Hungary perceive soft skills in relation to cultural issues. Firstly, it was found that the focus of the available literature differs between Jordan and Hungary, with the Jordanian literature focusing more on job creation through soft skills. In contrast, the Hungarian sample focuses more on meeting employers' expectations. The study provided a strong foundation for the research by using Hofstede's framework of cultural dimensions to explore the significant cultural differences between the two nations. The results show that business students in Hungary and Jordan have different perceptions of the value of different soft skills in the labor market. For example, significant differences could be demonstrated in their perceptions of their own soft skills, such as empathy, leadership, managerial skills, and accountability. Students' self-assessments of a number of talents, including critical thinking, show statistically significant differences between Hungarian and Jordanian students.

Cultural differences, as identified by Hofstede's model, may be the reason for these differences in perception and self-evaluation. In conclusion, the study demonstrated that cultural variations have a major impact on how business students from Jordan and Hungary perceive and evaluate their soft skills. This result emphasizes how crucial it is to consider cultural context while developing and evaluating soft skills. The primary constraint of this study was its concentration on students studying economics. Students from different fields and nations should participate in future studies to better grasp this subject.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Mohamedbashir Baniismail, Timea Juhasz.
Data curation: Timea Juhasz.
Formal analysis: Mohamedbashir Baniismail, Timea Juhasz.
Investigation: Mohamedbashir Baniismail, Timea Juhasz.
Methodology: Mohamedbashir Baniismail, Timea Juhasz.
Resources: Mohamedbashir Baniismail, Timea Juhasz.
Software: Mohamedbashir Baniismail, Timea Juhasz.
Supervision: Mohamedbashir Baniismail, Timea Juhasz.
Visualization: Mohamedbashir Baniismail, Timea Juhasz.
Writing – original draft: Mohamedbashir Baniismail, Timea Juhasz.
Writing – review & editing: Mohamedbashir Baniismail, Timea Juhasz.

http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/ppm.22(3).2024.44

REFERENCES

1. Adely, F. I. J., Mitra, A., Mohamed, M., & Shaham, A. (2021). Poor education, unemployment and the promise of skills: The hegemony of the "skills mismatch" discourse. *International Journal of Educational Development, 82,* Article 102381. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2021.102381
2. Albandea, I., & Giret, J. F. (2018). The effect of soft skills on French post-secondary graduates' earnings. *International Journal of Manpower, 39*(6), 782-799. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJM-01-2017-0014
3. Amer, M. (2018). School-to-work transition in 2010–2016. In C. Krafft & R. Assaad (Eds.), *The Jordanian labor market: Between fragility and resilience* (pp. 225-258). Oxford Academic. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198846079.003.0009
4. Assaad, R., & Salemi, C. (2010). *The structure of employment and job creation in Jordan: 2010–2016* (Working Paper No. 1259). Dokki, Giza, Egypt: Economic Research Forum (ERF). Retrieved from https://erf.org.eg/app/uploads/2018/11/1259.pdf
5. Aycan, Z., Kanungo, R., Mendonca, M., Yu, K., Deller, J., Stahl, G., & Kurshid, A. (2000). Impact of culture on human resource management practices: A 10-country comparison. *Applied Psychology, 49*(1), 192-221. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1464-0597.00010
6. Brown, T., & De Neve, G. (2024). Skills, training and development: An introduction to the social life of skills in the global South. *Third World Quarterly, 45*(4), 607-623. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2023.2219615
7. Chattoraj, A. K., & Shabnam, S. (2015). Importance of soft skill in business. *Anusandhanika*, *7*(2), 105-110. Retrieved from https://www.anusandhanika.co.in/archives
8. Csapó, B. (1999). A tudás minősége [Quality of knowledge]. *Educatio, 3*, 473-487. (In Hungarian). Retrieved from https://publicatio.bibl.u-szeged.hu/11663/1/1999_Csapo_A_tudas_minosege.pdf
9. Csapó, B. (2007). *Képességfejlesztés az iskolában – Problémák és lehetőségek [Skills development in schools – Problems and opportunities].* Új Pedagógiai Szemle. (In Hungarian). Retrieved from https://ofi.oh.gov.hu/tudastar/kepessegfejlesztes
10. Danao, M. (2024, April 28). *11 essential soft skills in 2024 (With examples).* Forbes Advisor. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/soft-skills-examples/
11. Dartey-Baah, K. (2013). The cultural approach to the management of the international human resource: An analysis of Hofstede's cultural dimensions. *International Journal of Business Administration, 4*(2). http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/ijba.v4n2p39
12. Fallah, B., Krafft, C., & Wahba, J. (2019). The impact of refugees on employment and wages in Jordan. *Journal of Development Economics, 139,* 203-216. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2019.03.009
13. Hofstede, G., & Hofstede, G. J. (2008). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind.* Oláhné Szentessy Éva; VHE Kft., Pécs. Retrieved from https://books.google.hu/books/about/Cultures_and_Organizations_Software_of_t.html?id=o4OqTgV3V00C&redir_esc=y
14. Holik, I., Sanda, I., & Kersánszki, T. (2020). New research in educational science. Skills' significance and development opportunities in engineering education. *Opus et Educatio, 8*(3), 238-245. https://doi.org/10.3311/ope.462
15. Horstmeyer, A. (2020). The generative role of curiosity in soft skills development for contemporary VUCA environments. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 33*(5), 737-751. https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-08-2019-0250
16. Horváth-Csikós, G., Juhász, T., & Gáspár, T. (2023). Employers' perception of young workers' soft skills. *Prosperitas, 10*(1), 2-13. https://doi.org/10.31570/prosp_2022_0021
17. Janani, M., & Vijayalakshmi, V. (2023). An arts-based process to build workforce agility. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 36*(6), 917-931. https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-03-2023-0092
18. Juhász, T., Horváth-Csikós, G., & Gáspár, T. (2023). Gap analysis of future employee and employer on soft skills. *Human Systems Management, 42*(5), 527-542. https://doi.org/10.3233/HSM-220161
19. Juhász, V., & Radics, M. (2019). A kooperatív és kompetitív (társas) játékok a nem kogni-tív készségek fejlődésének szolgálatában [Cooperative and competitive (social) games for the development of non-cognitive skills]. In A. Döbör & V. Juhász (Eds.), *A nem kognitív készségek fejlesztése a munkaerőpiaci igények tükrében [Developing non-cognitive skills in the light of labour market needs]* (pp. 63-70). Szegedi Egyetemi Kiadó Juhász Gyula Felsőoktatási Kiadó. (In Hungarian). Retrieved from https://acta.bibl.u-szeged.hu/84606/1/nem_kognitiv_keszsegek_fejlesztese_tanulmanykotet_2019_063-076.pdf
20. Kárpátiné, D. J. (2014). *What is higher education in economics worth if it does not lead to a degree?* (Ph.D. Thesis). University of Pannon. Retrieved from https://real-phd.mtak.hu/624/1/Karpatine_Daroczi_Judit_dissertation.pdf
21. Krafft, C. (2018). Is school the best route to skills? Returns to vocational school and vocational skills in Egypt. *The Journal of Development Studies, 54*(7), 1100-1120. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2017.1329524
22. Lamri, J., & Lubart, T. (2023). Reconciling hard skills and soft skills in a common framework: The generic skills component approach. *Journal of Intelligence, 11*(6), Article 107. https://doi.org/10.3390/jintelligence11060107

23. LinkedIn. (2023, October). *Global Talent Trends: Data-driven insights into the changing world of work*. Retrieved from https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/global-talent-trends

24. Lubowiecki-Vikuk, A., Budzanowska-Drzewiecka, M., Borzyszkowski, J., & Taheri, B. (2023). Critical reflection on VUCA in tourism and hospitality marketing activities. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 35*(8), 2983-3005. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-04-2022-0479

25. Magyar, K. (2023, January 26). *Mégis, mik azok a soft skillek, hogy ennyire fontosak? [What are the soft skills that are so important?* UniSide. Retrieved from https://uniside.hu/soft-skill-karrier-allaskeszsegek/

26. McLaren, S. (2019). *Candidates' soft skills are notoriously hard to assess but following these 6 steps will help*. LinkedIn. Retrieved from https://www.linkedin.com/business/talent/blog/talent-acquisition/soft-skills-are-hard-to-assess-but-these-steps-can-help

27. Nowacka, A., & Rzemieniak, M. (2021). The impact of the VUCA environment on the digital competences of managers in the power industry. *Energies, 15*(1), Article 185. https://doi.org/10.3390/en15010185

28. Pelesz, N. (2021). Képzésfejlesztés és innovatív módszerek a pedagógusképzésben [Training development and innovative methods in teacher education]. *Módszertani Közlemények, 61*(1), 49-56. (In Hungarian). Retrieved from https://ojs.bibl.u-szeged.hu/index.php/modszertani-kozlemenyek/article/view/34751/33798

29. Ranstadt. (2024). *Az öt legyakoribb interjúkérdés. [The five most common interview questions]*. Retrieved from https://www.randstad.hu/allaskeresoknek/karrier-tippek/allasinterju/az-5-leggyakoribb-soft-skill-interjukerdes-es-ahogy/

30. Shet, S. V. (2024). A VUCA-ready workforce: Exploring employee competencies and learning and development implications. *Personnel Review, 53*(3), 674-703. https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-10-2023-0873

31. Silva, R. D. O., & Silva, G. D. (2022). Curiosity unlocked the cat: The relationship between curiosity at work and worker creativity. *Brazilian Administration Review, 19*(4). https://doi.org/10.1590/1807-7692bar2022220065

32. SkillsMatch. (2020, February 18). *Soft skills definitions*. Retrieved from https://intenseminimalism.com/2020/skillsmatch-catalog-of-36-soft-skills/

33. Tóthné Téglás, T., & Kelemen-Erdős, A. (2020). Pályakezdőkkel szembeni kompetenciaelvárások és mérésük [Competency expectations for new students and their measurement]. *Marketing & Management, 54*(1), 43-54. (In Hungarian). Retrieved from https://journals.lib.pte.hu/index.php/mm/article/view/3238

http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/ppm.22(3).2024.44