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## Soft Skills of New Teachers in the Secondary Schools of Khon Kaen Secondary Educational Service Area 25, Thailand

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### Abstract

Excellent soft skills are necessary requisites for success (Gillard, 2009). Soft skills fulfill an important role in shaping and individual's personality (Schulz, 2008). A perfect blend of personal qualities, soft skills and hard skills will definitely contribute to enhancing graduate employability (Wye&Lim, 2009). Hard skills tend to be specific to a certain type of task or activity, soft skills are broadly applicable. It often said that hard skills will enable individuals to obtain an interview but soft skills enable individuals to secure a job. Vast research and expert opinions have been sought in the effort to determine the specific soft skills to be implemented and used in higher institutions of learning. Based on the research findings obtained, seven soft skills have been identified and chosen to be implemented in all institutions of higher learning. What soft skills and levels do new teachers in the secondary school have currently? This research objective was to study soft skills of new teachers in the secondary schools of Khon Kaen Secondary Educational Service Area 25, Thailand. The data were collected from 60 purposive samples of new teachers by interviewing and questionnaires. The results of this study were informed that new teachers have all of soft skills at high level totally. Communicative skills were highest among seven of soft skills and next Life-long learning and information management skills, Critical and problem solving skills, Team work skills, Ethics, moral and professional skills, Leadership skills and Innovation invention and development skills were lowest in all skills. Based on the research findings obtained, the sub-skills of seven soft skills will be considered and utilized in the package of teacher development program of next research.

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## *Introduction*

Working in the period of collaboration, involving in law and progress from external factors significantly affect working nowadays (Shinta Dewi Herawati, 2012). Currently, the capabilities in work places are not only utilized hard skills but also soft skills, because soft skills will be supported for successful works. Soft skills were early studied and developed in business. Moreover, many countries around Thailand have focused on soft skills critically because they will be the important and effective instruments or tools for collaboration and cooperation in ASEAN Community (Shinta Dewi Herawati, 2012).

Soft skills are hard to definite the meaning but the Wikipedia (2013) soft skills are EQ in social of person which concern with traits or personalities in social of individuals, language and communication, friendship habits an positive thinking for different levels of people. Nussbaum (2009), cited in Listya (2011), defines the practice as team working, attending to details, being careful, and initiating. The expert also places an importance on soft skills of communicative ability on the occupations that involve administration. Widhiarso (2009) refers the practice to skills that affect the ways we interact with other people, effective communication, creativity, forming teamwork, and other abilities involving specific person's personality. The soft skills are considerably useful for, such as, career development and occupation ethics. The soft skills consist of 1) being initiating, 2) having integrity, 3) rationally thinking, 4) willing to learn, 5) having intention, 6) having motivation to success, 7) being enthusiastic, 8) having communicative abilities, 9) being believable, and 10) being creative.

To be successful, having good soft skills is required (Gillard, 2009). It plays a significant role to build specific person's personality (Schulz, 2008). Personal qualifications of soft and hard skills certainly facilitate the graduates to hunt any jobs (Wye & Lim, 2009). The hard skills are practical for some kinds of jobs, while soft skills support workers to work smoothly. There are many experts' suggestions and studies trying to specify particular skills to utilize in highly educational administration. The result of Tang's (2013) study suggested that the soft skills are divided into seven skills as follows: Innovation invention and development skills, Communicative skills, Critical and problem solving skills, Teamwork skills, Leadership skills, Life-long learning and information management skills, and Ethics, moral and professional skills.

Teachers' working relates to many people such as in teaching, collaborating with other personnel in schools, and getting in touch with parents and external communities. Apart from teaching skill, teachers need other skills to facilitate their working. There are some skills taking time to build up. Teacher assistants are new teachers with only primary experience of working in schools. They might be in trouble if lacking those skills. However, work places can improve teacher assistants' skills (Marshall & Mill, 1993). There are very impressive and interesting to know what soft skills of new teachers in the secondary schools are and what levels are.

## *Research Questions*

1. What levels do the new teachers of secondary school have?
2. What soft skills should the new teachers of secondary school is developed?

## *Concept of Research*

There are seven soft skills which the new teachers should have as 1) Innovation invention and development skills 2) Communicative skills 3) Critical and problem solving skills 4) Team work skills 5) Leadership skills 6) Life-long learning and information management skills 7) Ethics, moral and professional skills

## *Research Process*

The samples of this survey research were 103 new teachers (N=129) in Khon Kaen Secondary Educational Service Area 25, Thailand by using Krejcie and Morgan's table. The questionnaires were collected data on January-February, 2013. The data was analyzed by SPSS program for means and standard deviation.

## Results

The findings of this research were showed that 103 new teachers (male=43, female=60) in Khon Kaen Secondary Educational Service Area 25, Thailand, most of new teachers were 25-30 years old (65.54%), bachelor degree (94.12), a few higher than bachelor (15.87) and teaching science. The new teachers were high in all of soft skills which are displayed in Table1.

Table 1, Soft skills of New Teachers in Khon Kaen Secondary Educational Service Area 25, Thailand

Skill	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S.D.
Ethics, moral and professional	103	2.00	5.00	3.9223	.81276
Communicative	103	2.00	5.00	4.1165	.85521
Critical and problem solving	103	2.00	5.00	3.9903	.85744
Innovation invention and development	103	2.00	5.00	3.7961	.91136
Leadership	103	2.00	5.00	3.8932	.88465
Life-long learning and information management	103	2.00	5.00	4.0388	.77867
Team work skills	103	2.00	5.00	3.9806	.86297
Valid N	103				

The findings were showed that new teachers had communicative skills in highest level, next Life-long learning and information management skills, Team work skills, Ethics, moral and professional skills, Leadership skills and Innovation invention and development skills were in the lowest level.

## Discussion

The results of study were informed and clarified that almost of new teachers in Khon Kaen Secondary Educational Service Area 25 had soft skills in high level. It's possible that these teachers will be growth and success in their works. In conclusion, new teachers have Communicative skills and Team work skills which they will interact and engage with colleagues and others positively. In addition, they can utilize completed information by Innovation invention and development skills to search and present the data effectively. James J. Heckman, Tim Kautz (2012) considered that good personalities will be supported the success of individual life. However, new teachers should improve and enhance their Innovation invention and development skills.

## Recommendations

This study was restricted the respondents by the choices in questionnaires. It will be better if the researcher extend the questions for studying the soft skills which are important for teachers in the future. Then, the results of this research should be developed to a development program, using some principle of action research for enhancing soft skills of new teachers and compared with the new teachers in another area.

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