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# The Power of Soft Skills: Boosting IT Professionals' Performance in Kerala

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In today's fast-paced IT industry, technical expertise is no longer the only criterion for success. Soft skills have become increasingly important for IT professionals to excel in their roles and drive business growth. Kerala, known for its thriving IT sector, is no exception. This article explores the effectiveness of soft skills on IT professionals' performance in Kerala, highlighting the essential skills required and benefits of developing them. The IT industry in Kerala is thriving, with numerous companies and startups emerging. However, technical skills alone are not enough for IT professionals to succeed. Soft skills play a vital role in boosting their performance and career growth.

## 1. Introduction

In today's fast-paced IT industry, technical expertise is no longer the only criterion for success. Soft skills have become increasingly important for IT professionals to excel in their roles and drive business growth. Kerala, known for its thriving IT sector, is no exception. This article explores the effectiveness of soft skills on IT professionals' performance in Kerala, highlighting the essential skills required and benefits of developing them. The IT industry in Kerala is thriving, with numerous companies and startups emerging. However, technical skills alone are not enough for IT professionals to succeed. Soft skills play a vital role in boosting their performance and career growth.

Effective communication is a crucial soft skill for IT professionals. It enables them to articulate complex technical ideas, collaborate with team members, and interact with clients. IT professionals in Kerala who possess strong communication skills can deliver projects efficiently and build strong relationships with stakeholders. Teamwork and collaboration are essential soft skills in the IT industry. IT professionals in Kerala who can work harmoniously with cross-functional teams, share knowledge, and support colleagues achieve better outcomes and enhance organizational productivity.

Problem-solving and adaptability are critical soft skills for IT professionals. The ability to

analyze complex problems, think critically, and adapt to new technologies and trends enables IT professionals in Kerala to stay ahead in the industry. Time management and organization are vital soft skills for IT professionals. Prioritizing tasks, meeting deadlines, and maintaining a high level of productivity contribute significantly to their performance and career advancement.

Leadership and initiative are valuable soft skills for IT professionals. Taking charge, motivating team members, and driving projects forward demonstrate leadership potential and accelerate career growth. Emotional intelligence and empathy enable IT professionals to navigate conflicts, manage stress, and build strong relationships with colleagues and clients. IT professionals in Kerala who possess high emotional intelligence excel in team environments. Continuous learning and professional development are essential soft skills for IT professionals. Staying updated on industry trends, attending workshops, and pursuing certifications enhance their expertise and career prospects.

In Kerala's IT industry, companies like Infosys, UST Global, Cyber Park, Info Park and Techopark recognize the importance of soft skills. They invest in training programs that focus on developing soft skills, leading to improved employee performance and job satisfaction. By emphasizing soft skills development, IT professionals in Kerala can enhance their performance, career prospects, and overall well-being. Incorporating soft skills training into educational curricula and corporate culture will foster a more effective and successful IT workforce in Kerala because of certain Benefits such as it improved communication, Enhanced collaboration, Increased productivity, Better problem-solving, Stronger relationships, Leadership opportunities, Career advancement and finally it Improves job satisfaction. By focusing on soft skills development, IT professionals in Kerala can thrive in the industry and drive growth and innovation.

## 2. Review of literature

The term "soft skills" is widely used but often lacks a precise definition. While its origins can be traced back to military training documents from the 1970s (Conrad, 1999), there is ongoing debate about its exact meaning.

Various definitions have been proposed:

- Interpersonal Skills: Soft skills are often described as interpersonal, human, people, or behavioral skills that complement technical knowledge (Crosbie, 2005; Kantrowitz, 2005; Weber et al., 2011).
- Personality Traits and Behaviors: Soft skills encompass personality traits, attitudes, and behaviors (Moss and Tilly, 1996).
- Socio-Emotional Skills: These skills are essential for personal development, social interactions, and workplace success, including communication, teamwork, and adaptability (Kechagias, 2011).
- Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Skills: Soft skills include both self-management skills and interpersonal skills, such as communication and relationship-building (Laker and Powell, 2011; Howe, 2010).

Despite the lack of a universally agreed-upon definition, it is clear that soft skills are crucial for success in both personal and professional life.

Soft skills are crucial for effective project management. Marando (2010) highlights interpersonal skills like leadership, communication, negotiation, expectation management, influence, problem-solving, and decision-making as essential. Similarly, Martino et al. (2011) emphasize entrepreneurial orientation, strategic influencing, communication, relationship building, adaptability, tolerance for uncertainty, and passion as crucial soft skills for innovation. Innovation leadership, a specific soft skill, involves encouraging, guiding, and fostering trust within teams. Workers possessing innovation leadership skills can influence and direct innovative activities in their workplace (Carmeli et al., 2010). Unlike technical skills, soft skills are intangible and often involve interpersonal interactions. They are not directly tied to specific tools or templates but are essential for effective collaboration, problem-solving, and decision-making.

The distinction between hard and soft skills can be somewhat blurred. While hard skills are often associated with cognitive abilities, influenced by IQ (Rainsbury et al., 2002), some skills like problem-solving, decision-making, and conceptual thinking can be classified as both hard and soft skills. Poisson-de Haro and Turgut (2010) categorize conceptual thinking as a hard skill, while others, like Spencer and Spencer (1993), consider it a soft skill. Similarly, quick study skills, mentioned by Martino et al. (2011), are often classified as soft skills. Therefore, it is evident that the boundaries between hard and soft skills are not always rigid, and certain skills may be categorized differently depending on the context and specific definition.

Polanyi (1966) categorized knowledge into two types: hard skills and soft skills. Soft skills, often considered tacit knowledge, are deeply rooted in individual experiences, values, and emotions (Boske & Osanloo, 2015; Kawamura, 2016; Hartley, 2018). They are difficult to articulate and codify, often requiring personal interaction and knowledge sharing (Deranek, McLeod & Schmidt, 2017; Wang & Liu, 2019; Asher & Popper, 2019; Lee, 2019). Numerous studies have explored the nature of soft skills. Chen et al. (2018), Holford (2018), Khoshorour & Gilaninia (2018), Zebal, Ferdous & Chambers (2019), Agyemang & Boateng (2019), PerezFuillerat et al. (2018), Nonaka & Toyama (2015), Munoz et al. (2015), Stewart et al. (2017), Razmerita et al. (2016), Jaleel & Verghis (2015), Wang et al. (2016), Serna et al. (2017), Jou et al. (2016), Rothberg & Erickson (2017) have all contributed to our understanding of soft skills as personal knowledge gained through individual experiences. While soft skills may be challenging to articulate and formalize, they play a crucial role in knowledge creation and sharing. The SECI Model, proposed by Nonaka and Hirose (2018), highlights the importance of tacit knowledge, including soft skills, in the knowledge creation process. By fostering social interaction and knowledge sharing, organizations can leverage the power of soft skills to drive innovation and organizational success.

Today's business environment is increasingly complex, uncertain, and competitive. As a result, organizations recognize human resources as a critical asset for their success. Employers often prioritize hiring, retaining, and promoting individuals who possess a blend of hard and soft skills. While technical skills are essential, soft skills, such as dependability, resourcefulness, effective communication, self-direction, a positive attitude, and a willingness to learn and grow, are equally important for career advancement (Wats, M., & Wats, R.K., 2009).

Employers recognize that technical skills alone are insufficient to achieve organizational goals. Soft skills are crucial for leadership, decision-making, and effective collaboration within teams. By cultivating a workforce with strong soft skills, organizations can enhance their overall performance and adaptability to change (Mitchell, G. W., Skinner, L. B., & White, B. J., 2010).

Soft skills, which encompass personality traits, qualities, and personal behaviors, are crucial for effective communication, problem-solving, self-motivation, decision-making, and time management (Gupta, Y., 2009).

A study by Hodges and Burchell (2003) revealed that employers prioritize soft skills, ranking them among the top ten most important skills. These skills include the ability and willingness to learn, teamwork, interpersonal communication, energy, passion, and problem-solving.

Similarly, a study in the United States identified soft skills as a major competency across various professions, including technical fields (Rubin, R.S., 2009).

Despite the increasing emphasis on soft skills by employers, many business students still undervalue their importance (Porter, 2007). This lack of appreciation often results in negative attitudes towards courses focused on soft skills development (Rynes et al., 2003). Consequently, a significant gap exists between the soft skills sought by employers and those possessed by business graduates. To address this issue, academic institutions must prioritize the development of soft skills in their curricula.

While employers increasingly prioritize soft skills, many business students underestimate their importance (Porter, 2007). This lack of appreciation often results in negative attitudes towards courses focused on soft skills development (Rynes et al., 2003). Consequently, a significant gap exists between the desired soft skills of employers and the actual skills possessed by business graduates. To address this issue, academic institutions must prioritize the development of soft skills in their curriculum. To enhance soft skills among students, various approaches can be adopted. Kumara and Sahasranam (2008) demonstrated the effectiveness of well-planned training programs in developing creativity and soft skills among engineering students. Additionally, real-world assignments can be used to improve communication skills, as suggested by Addams et al. (2010).

Several studies have highlighted the importance of integrating soft skills into the curriculum. McEnrue, Groves, and Shen (2009) and Howe (2010) emphasize the need to embed these skills in academic programs. Alshare, Lane, and Miller (2011) conducted a study to assess the perceptions of students and faculty regarding the adequacy of soft skills training in IT parks in the world . While students generally expressed satisfaction, faculty members identified areas for improvement.

While a significant body of research has examined the importance of soft skills from an employer's perspective, fewer studies have focused on the perceptions of IT professionals themselves. Moreover, most research has been conducted in North America and Europe, which may have different learning environments and work cultures compared to many Asian countries. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the perceptions of IT employees regarding the importance of soft skills in their employment.

## 3. Research methodology

Research methodology provides a systematic framework for conducting research. It ensures that the research process is logical and efficient, leading to valid and reliable findings. The quality and relevance of a study are directly influenced by the choice of research methodology.

Research Design.

This study employed a descriptive-analytical approach, utilizing both primary and secondary data sources.

Primary Data:

Collected directly from IT professionals in Kerala's major IT parks through structured interviews.

Secondary Data:

Gathered from libraries, research centers, government departments, voluntary organizations, and online sources. A comprehensive literature review was conducted using e-journals, textbooks, research reports, and other relevant publications.

Research Participants

The study focused on IT professionals working in major IT parks in Kerala. A sample size of 420 IT professionals was selected using simple random sampling.

Data Collection:

A well-structured interview schedule, developed based on previous studies and theoretical frameworks, was used to collect primary data.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 22.

Objectives:

1. To find out soft skills needed for the IT professionals Performance
2. The effect of soft skills on the performance of IT Professionals.

Testing of hypothesis (H1)

H01: The effect of the Soft skillson the performance of IT Professionals is not high.

Ha1: The effect of the Soft skillson the performance of IT Professionals is significantly not low.

## 4. Analysis and Interpretation of data

Analysis of the power soft skills on IT professionals' performance in Kerala

This part of the study is intended to present the perceptions of IT Professionals related to the IT Professionals in the State of Kerala for evaluating variables of effectiveness of skills. The

main variables related to the various skills on the organizational performance of IT Professionals are soft skills, hard skills, social skills and IT skills. These variables are assessed on the basis of the perception of IT Professionals through the use of questionnaires as well as interview schedule. .

Factors Influencing Soft skills

The first main variable considered for the analysis is 'Soft skills'. The sub-variables identified for the study are Time management, Decision making, Dependability, Problem solving, Listening, Critical thinking, Adaptability and Emotional intelligence. The Items of influence under each sub-variable have been Identified to provide more substance and meaning to the analysis which are given below.

Time management

Decision making

Dependability

Problem solving

Listening

Critical thinking

Adaptability

Emotional intelligence

The above main variable 'soft skills' is analyzed with the perceptions of the IT Professionals who are directly related to the issue. The Professionals are the stakeholders who have direct involvement in the organizational performance in IT Professionals due to the fact that they come in the picture only in the implementation or execution stage of different activities as well as Projects.

Assessment of the effect of soft skills on the IT professionals' Performance

There are eight sub-variables which constitute the soft skills. They are Time management, Decision making, Dependability, Problem solving, Listening, Critical thinking, Adaptability, Emotional intelligence. These sub-variables are analyzed using the tools of descriptive statistics and the result is given below.

Time Management

Time management is in important aspect in performance of professionals in Kerala. Planning to divide time, Priorities for specific activities, Improve work life balance, Reduce stress and risks, Capture bigger opportunities. The perceptions on these items gathered from the IT Professionals of IT Projects have been analyzed and the result is shown in table 4.14.

Table 1. Time Management

| Sl. No | Items | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Neutral | | Disagree | | Strongly Dis Agree | | Total | | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | | |
| 1 | Planning to divide time | 147 | 35 | 167 | 39.7 | 36 | 8.6 | 26 | 6.2 | 44 | 10.5 | 420 | 100 | 3.83 | 1.253 |
| 2 | Priorities for specific activities | 150 | 35.7 | 169 | 40.2 | 39 | 9.3 | 31 | 7.4 | 31 | 7.4 | 420 | 100 | 3.91 | 1.175 |
| 3 | Improve work life balance | 153 | 36.4 | 143 | 34 | 61 | 14.5 | 29 | 6.9 | 34 | 8.2 | 420 | 100 | 3.84 | 1.185 |
| 4 | Reduce stress and risks | 133 | 31.7 | 153 | 36.4 | 58 | 13.8 | 43 | 10.2 | 33 | 7.9 | 420 | 100 | 3.73 | 1.236 |
| 5 | Capture bigger opportunities | 154 | 36.7 | 135 | 32.1 | 76 | 18.1 | 25 | 6.0 | 30 | 7.1 | 420 | 100 | 3.85 | 1.178 |
| | Time Management | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3.832 | 1.205 |

Source: Primary Data

The result reveals that all the five items mentioned above have got mean value in between 3.91 to Priorities for specific activities and 3.73 to reduce stress and risks. About 75 per cent of the respondent Users have rated the 'Time Management' favoured with score of strongly agree or agree. Again the overall mean score ratings of the sub-variables Time Management have been obtained with the mean score of 3.83 which is considered as above average level rating of the Time Management . Thus it can be come to a conclusion that the Time Management is rated by the IT Professionals at an above average level.

Decision making

Decision making are perceived mostly needed soft skill by the IT Professionals of major Projects. Decision making includes Making choices, Identifying a decision, Assessing alternatives, Thoughtful decision and Most satisfying alternatives choose among the alternatives . The perception of the IT Professionals of Kerala gathered from the sample respondents have been analyzed on the items mentioned above and their result is shown in table below.

Table 2. Decision making

| Sl. No | Items | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Neutral | | Disagree | | Strongly Dis Agree | | Total | | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | | |
| 1 | Making choices | 145 | 35 | 139 | 32.6 | 71 | 17.4 | 24 | 5.5 | 39 | 9.5 | 420 | 100 | 3.90 | 2.664 |
| 2 | Identifying a decision | 144 | 34.7 | 137 | 32.1 | 70 | 16.9 | 35 | 8.5 | 34 | 7.6 | 420 | 100 | 3.79 | 1.203 |
| 3 | Assessing alternatives | 144 | 34.7 | 133 | 31.2 | 71 | 16.9 | 25 | 6 | 47 | 11.2 | 420 | 100 | 3.74 | 1.275 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Thoughtful decision | 143 | 33.6 | 134 | 31.7 | 72 | 17.1 | 26 | 6.2 | 48 | 11.4 | 420 | 100 | 3.72 | 1.278 |
| 5 | Most satisfying alternatives choose among the alternatives | 137 | 32.2 | 136 | 32.2 | 71 | 16.9 | 38 | 9 | 41 | 9.7 | 420 | 100 | 3.70 | 1.254 |
| | Decision making | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3.77 | 1.169 |

Source: Primary Data

About 65 per cent of the respondents have positively responded to all the items in the form of strong agreement or agreement. As far as the ratings obtained on the items 'Candidate orientation program was conducted at the time of selection' with a highest mean score of 3.90 whereas 'Planning for orientation programme ' with a mean value of 3.70 which are far above the threshold statistical mean of 3. The overall mean score rating for the sub-variable Decision making is 3.77. Thus it can be concluded that the perception of IT Professionals on Decision making in Professionals Performance of IT Projects are at an above average level.

Dependability

The third sub-variable put for analysis is the Dependability it includes Be Responsive, Be Organised,meet the deadline, Be accountable, Be consistant. The result shows in the table

Table 3: Dependability

| Sl. No | Items | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Neutral | | Disagree | | Strongly Dis Agree | | Total | | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | | |
| 1 | Be Responsive | 116 | 28.0 | 135 | 32.2 | 115 | 27.8 | 33 | 7.3 | 21 | 4.7 | 420 | 100 | 3.15 | .975 |
| 2 | Be Organized | 128 | 30.7 | 117 | 28.2 | 118 | 28.4 | 31 | 6.9 | 26 | 5.8 | 420 | 100 | 3.15 | .946 |
| 3 | Meet the deadline | 97 | 23.8 | 174 | 40.9 | 97 | 23.8 | 39 | 8.7 | 13 | 2.9 | 420 | 100 | 3.13 | .936 |
| 4 | Be accountable | 152 | 36.0 | 119 | 28.7 | 97 | 23.8 | 39 | 8.7 | 13 | 2.9 | 420 | 100 | 3.12 | .936 |
| 5 | Be consistant | 124 | 29.8 | 148 | 35.1 | 96 | 23.6 | 39 | 8.7 | 13 | 2.9 | 420 | 100 | 3.12 | .901 |
| | Dependability | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3.14 | .9140 |

Source: Primary Data

Around 50 per cent of the respondent Users have agreed or strongly agreed in favour of the items as well as the mean score rating. As regards the mean score ratings the items 'Be Responsive ' and 'Be Organised' have got mean value of 3.15 each whereas the least score of 3.12 have been shared by the item 'Give importance in staffing' and 'Be consistant' . The overall mean score of the sub-variable Dependability is 3.14 which are above the threshold mean value of 3. It can be concluded that the perception of IT Professionals on Dependability related to IT Projects in Kerala is at a moderate level.

Problem Solving

The next sub-variable of Factors influencing recruitment and selection is Problem Solving in Professionals' Performance of IT sector. Like the above sub-variable mentioned, five items

are identified for analysing the factor Transfer and Hard communications. Problem Solving are the integral part of an organisations. The items identified for gathering the perception of stakeholders in this respect . The result of the analysis is shown in table 4

Table 4. Problem solving

| Sl. No | Items | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Neutral | | Disagree | | Strongly Dis Agree | | Total | | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | | |
| 1 | Addressing one issue with Multiple interrelated obstacles | 118 | 28.4 | 129 | 30.9 | 114 | 27.6 | 46 | 10.2 | 13 | 2.9 | 420 | 100 | 3.04 | .895 |
| 2 | Troublesome situation | 125 | 30.0 | 129 | 30.9 | 102 | 24.9 | 48 | 10.7 | 16 | 3.6 | 420 | 100 | 3.12 | .865 |
| 3 | Sufficient resources | 116 | 28.0 | 131 | 31.3 | 114 | 27.6 | 46 | 10.2 | 13 | 2.9 | 420 | 100 | 3.12 | .866 |
| 4 | Knowledge beyond general competence | 124 | 29.8 | 131 | 31.3 | 109 | 26.4 | 43 | 9.6 | 13 | 2.9 | 420 | 100 | 3.06 | .878 |
| 5 | Identifying goals | 118 | 28.4 | 131 | 31.3 | 108 | 26.2 | 43 | 9.6 | 20 | 4.4 | 420 | 100 | 3.14 | 1.005 |
| | Problem solving | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3.10 | .8708 |

Source: Primary Data

The result reveals that about 60 per cent of the User stakeholders have agreed or strongly agreed positively with the statement related to the items. The highest mean score of 3.14 is assigned to the item 'Identifying goals' and the least mean score of 3.04 has been assigned to the item 'Our selection process for a job is very extensive' . The overall mean score obtained for the sub-variable Problem Solving is 3.10 which is just above the threshold mean value of 3. Thus it can be seen that the perception of IT Professionals of the sub-variable steps for Problem Solving on Government projects is at an average level.

Listening

Listening is very necessary in recruitment and selection procedure. It is the most important method for materialising the demand of the organisation to materialise. The Listening is defined for the purpose of data gathering in the five items. They are We place a lot of importance on Follow directions, Prevent misunderstanding, Ability and accurately, Greater productivity with fewer mistakes, Customer satisfaction. The result of the analysis is shown in the table below

Table 5 Listening

| Sl. No | Items | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Neutral | | Disagree | | Strongly Dis Agree | | Total | | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | | |
| 1 | Follow directions | 137 | 32.7 | 135 | 32.2 | 90 | 22.2 | 38 | 8.4 | 20 | 4.4 | 420 | 100 | 3.97 | 1.079 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Prevent misunderstanding | 132 | 31.6 | 131 | 31.3 | 98 | 24.0 | 41 | 9.1 | 18 | 4.0 | 420 | 100 | 4.00 | 1.095 |
| 3 | Ability and accurately | 142 | 33.8 | 127 | 30.4 | 93 | 22.9 | 40 | 8.9 | 18 | 4.0 | 420 | 100 | 4.03 | 1.024 |
| 4 | Greater productivity with fewer mistakes, | 156 | 36.9 | 133 | 31.8 | 71 | 18.0 | 38 | 8.4 | 22 | 4.9 | 420 | 100 | 3.89 | 1.006 |
| 5 | Customer satisfaction | 108 | 26.2 | 177 | 41.6 | 86 | 21.3 | 38 | 8.4 | 11 | 2.4 | 420 | 100 | 3.74 | .926 |
| | Listening | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3.93 | .9663 |

Source: Primary Data

The result reveals that about 65 per cent of the respondent Users of Government Projects have strongly agreed or agreed positively on sharing their perception related to all items of the sub-variable 'Ability and accurately . Again the result of the descriptive statistical analysis shows that the highest mean score of 4.03 has been assigned to the 'Ability and accurately' and the least mean score of 3.74 has been obtained by the item ' Customer satisfaction. The overall mean score for the sub-variable is 3.93 which is far above the statistical mean of 3. It is seen that the perception of IT Professionals on the Listening on Professionals' Performance of IT Projects for getting it initiated is at an above average level.

Critical thinking

Policy and reservation are very much important is recruitment and selection process. The sub variables are Generally, we spend a great deal of money on selecting people for a job, Emotional intelligence , Logical connection with ideas , Innovative ideas and Discerning truth from fiction . The information collected from the respondent IT Professionals in respect of the sub-variable 'Critical thinking ' have been analysed and the result is shown in the table below

Table 6: Critical thinking

| Sl. No | Items | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Neutral | | Disagree | | Strongly Dis Agree | | Total | | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | | |
| 1 | Analyse the facts | 103 | 24.5 | 302 | 71.9 | 4 | 1.0 | 7 | 1.7 | 4 | 1.0 | 420 | 100 | 4.17 | .615 |
| 2 | Emotional intelligence | 99 | 23.6 | 292 | 69.5 | 12 | 2.9 | 11 | 2.6 | 6 | 1.4 | 420 | 100 | 4.11 | .697 |
| 3 | Logical connection with ideas | 197 | 46.9 | 198 | 47.1 | 4 | 1.0 | 12 | 2.9 | 9 | 2.1 | 420 | 100 | 4.34 | .820 |
| 4 | Innovative ideas | 279 | 66.4 | 95 | 22.6 | 15 | 3.6 | 16 | 3.8 | 15 | 3.6 | 420 | 100 | 4.45 | .989 |
| 5 | Discerning truth from fiction | 194 | 46.2 | 193 | 46.0 | 17 | 4.0 | 8 | 1.9 | 8 | 1.9 | 420 | 100 | 4.33 | .803 |
| | Critical thinking | | | | | | | | | | | | | 4.28 | 0.7848 |

Source: Primary Data

The result of the analysis shows that about 90 per cent of the respondent IT Professionals have

rated the sub-variable 'Critical thinking ' with positive perception of strongly agree or agree. The result of mean score analysis exhibits that the item 'Innovative ideas' has got the highest mean value of 4.45 and the least mean score obtained by the item 'Emotional intelligence' with mean value of 4.11. The overall mean score obtained by the sub-variable 'Critical thinking' is 4.28 which is considered as a high level of ratings given by the Official respondents. Hence it can be said that as per the ratings of IT Professionals a high level of policies are provided through organizational performance through IT projects.

Adaptability

The data collected from the sample group of IT Professionals on the sub-variable 'Adaptability ' has been analysed. The major sub variables are, Interacts with others in work place ,Adjust to changing circumstances, Collaboration & Growth mind set, Responsive Negotiation, Self development .The result is presented in the below table.

Table 7.Adaptability

| Sl. No | Items | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Neutral | | Disagree | | Strongly Dis Agree | | Total | | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | | |
| 1 | Interacts with others in work place | 156 | 37.1 | 181 | 43.1 | 67 | 16.0 | 10 | 2.4 | 6 | 1.4 | 420 | 100 | 4.13 | .861 |
| 2 | Adjust to changing circumstances | 102 | 24.3 | 303 | 72.1 | 4 | 1.0 | 6 | 1.4 | 5 | 1.2 | 420 | 100 | 4.12 | .781 |
| 3 | Collaboration & Growth mind set | 101 | 24.0 | 303 | 72.1 | 3 | .7 | 7 | 1.7 | 6 | 1.4 | 420 | 100 | 4.17 | .624 |
| 4 | Responsive Negotiation | 202 | 48.1 | 203 | 48.3 | 6 | 1.4 | 5 | 1.2 | 4 | 1.0 | 420 | 100 | 4.16 | .647 |
| 5 | Self development | 283 | 67.4 | 87 | 20.7 | 20 | 4.8 | 14 | 3.3 | 16 | 3.8 | 420 | 100 | 4.41 | .677 |
| | Adaptability | | | | | | | | | | | | | 4.20 | 0.718 |

Source: Primary Data

It is seen that about 90 per cent of the respondent IT Professionals have positively responded to all the items in the form of strong agreement or agreement. As far as the ratings obtained on the item 'Self development' with a highest mean score of 4.41 whereas 'Adjust to changing circumstances' with a mean value of 4.12. The overall mean score rating for the sub-variable adaptability is 4.20 which are considered as a high level of ratings given by the Official respondents. Thus it can be concluded that the perception of IT Professionals on adaptability of Professionals' Performance of IT Sector are at a high level.

Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligenceis very necessary in recruitment and selection procedure. It is the most important method for materialising the demand of the organisation to materialise. The Emotional intelligence is defined for the purpose of data gathering in the five items. They are We place a lot of importance on Ability to understand, Relieve stress, Overcome challenge, Manage own emotions, Self awareness and self regulation. The result of the analysis is shown in the below table

Table 8. Emotional intelligence

| Sl. No | Items | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Neutral | | Disagree | | Strongly Dis Agree | | Total | | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | | |
| 1 | Ability to understand | 137 | 32.7 | 135 | 32.2 | 90 | 22.2 | 38 | 8.4 | 20 | 4.4 | 420 | 100 | 3.97 | 1.079 |
| 2 | Relieve stress | 132 | 31.6 | 131 | 31.3 | 98 | 24.0 | 41 | 9.1 | 18 | 4.0 | 420 | 100 | 4.00 | 1.095 |
| 3 | Overcome challenges | 142 | 33.8 | 127 | 30.4 | 93 | 22.9 | 40 | 8.9 | 18 | 4.0 | 420 | 100 | 4.03 | 1.024 |
| 4 | Manage own emotions | 156 | 36.9 | 133 | 31.8 | 71 | 18.0 | 38 | 8.4 | 22 | 4.9 | 420 | 100 | 3.89 | 1.006 |
| 5 | Self awareness and self regulation | 108 | 26.2 | 177 | 41.6 | 86 | 21.3 | 38 | 8.4 | 11 | 2.4 | 420 | 100 | 3.74 | .926 |
| | Emotional intelligence | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3.74 | .9663 |

Source: Primary Data

The result reveals that about 65 per cent of the respondent Users of Government Projects have strongly agreed or agreed positively on sharing their perception related to all items of the sub-variable ‘Ability and accurately . Again the result of the descriptive statistical analysis shows that the highest mean score of 4.03 has been assigned to the ‘Ability and accurately’ and the least mean score of 3.74 has been obtained by the item ‘Customer satisfaction. The overall mean score for the sub-variable is 3.93 which is far above the statistical mean of 3. It is seen that the perception of IT Professionals on the Emotional intelligence on Professionals’ Performance of IT Projects for getting it initiated is at an above average level.

It is necessary to examine the consolidated score of the perception of the IT Professionals on the main variable ‘soft skills on Professionals’ Performance of Employees in IT Sector. The result of the analysis is depicted in table below.

Table 9: Mean Score Analysis of soft skills on Professionals’ Performance of Employees in IT Sector

| Sl.No. | Sub-variable | Mean Score | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Time management | 3.83 | .9250 |
| 2 | Decision making | 3.77 | 1.169 |
| 3 | Dependability | 3.14 | .9140 |
| 4 | Problem solving | 3.10 | .8708 |
| 5 | Listening | 3.93 | .9663 |
| 6 | Critical thinking | 4.28 | .7848 |
| 7 | Adaptability | 4.20 | .7180 |
| 8 | Emotional intelligence | 3.74 | .9071 |
| | Soft skills | 3.75 | .9068 |

Source: Primary Data

The consolidated result of the sub-variables relating to the main variable Factors Influencing soft skills on Professionals’ Performance of IT Projects is reiterated in table 4.21. The table shows that the sub-variable ‘ Critical thinking ’ has got the highest mean score with 4.28

whereas the sub-variable Problem Solving with the least mean score of 3.10. The sub-variable Preference for Right person and Decision making are rated with 3.83 and 3.77 respectively while the sub-variable Dependability has got the mean score at just an average level of 3.14. The overall mean score for the main variable soft skills on Professionals' Performance of IT Projects is 3.75 which is fairly above the threshold mean value of 3. Thus it can be seen that the soft skills on Professionals' Performance of IT Projects are relevant and at an above average level.

Table 10: One Sample t test for analysing the effect of soft skills on Professionals' Performance of IT Projects in Kerala

| Variable | Mean Value | SD | t Value | P Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| soft skills on Professionals' Performance of IT Professionals | 3.75 | 0.9068 | 17.28 | 0.000* |

*Significant at 1% level

Table 4.20shows the One Sample t test for analysing the effect of soft skills on Professionals' Performance of IT Professionals. It is seen from the table that the mean value obtained is 3.75 which is above the threshold mean value of 3 which states that effect of soft skills on Professionals' Performance of IT Projects is at an average level. Since the P value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1 per cent level of significance. Hence the Null Hypothesis H0 1 that "The effect of the Soft skillson the organizational performance of IT Projects is not high" stands rejected. Therefore it can be concluded that the effect of soft skills on Professionals' Performance of IT projects are relevant and at a moderate level.

## 5. Conclusion:

Soft skills are essential for IT professionals to excel in Kerala's thriving IT industry. By developing and enhancing soft skills, IT professionals can improve communication, collaboration, and productivity, ultimately driving business growth. As the IT industry continues to evolve, the importance of soft skills will only continue to grow. The major benefits includes enhanced collaboration and teamwork, Improved communication with clients and stakeholders, Increased productivity and efficiency, Better conflict resolution and customer service and Leadership development and career advancement. And the study recommends Enhanced collaboration and teamwork, Improved communication with clients and stakeholders, Increased productivity and efficiency, Better conflict resolution and customer service and Leadership development and career advancement.

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