

SOFT SKILLS AS IMPORTANT PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT STUDENTS

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In order to succeed in profession every specialist has to possess a balanced set of cognitive, social and emotional skills, the former including such skills as to achieve goals, to work effectively with others, and to manage emotions. All mentioned are essential in the field of high education, especially in preparation of police officers, taking into account their ability to communicate in conflict situations and to establish contacts with different categories of citizens [1] which is considered *topical* for preparation of future police officers. Graduates of higher legal educational institutions prepare for life in a context of the dialogue between cultures and peoples, as well as interethnic communication. Adaptation to these conditions requires to have a working knowledge of foreign languages, communication skills, knowledge of customs and the ability of integration into the system of world and national cultures. Hence, the *object* of this paper is the set of skills, soft, in particular, which help policemen communicate with all participants of the situation.

Professional strategic competence implies the development of the ability to choose effective strategies for solving professional communicative tasks; the ability of future specialists to self-study and self-improvement, the desire to communicate in everyday and professional spheres and to listen to and understand others, to plan the educational and working process, the ability of adequate assessment and self-assessment, the development of personal communicative culture [2]. Communication is a complex process of establishing and developing the contacts necessary for effective police work. A police officer must have good communication skills, must know how to make psychological contact and determine right actions. Police officer communication is usually official in nature and quite clearly regulated. When performing operational duties, a police officer does not have the ability to choose to communicate or not to communicate, depending on whether the communication is pleasant or unpleasant /.../. Since business communication governs official human relations, police officers need to learn to control their emotions and intonation, which give rise to facial expressions and gestures [3].

In the professional competence model, skills are divided into *soft* and *hard* ones. And while hard skills are narrow professional that are needed to solve specific tasks in everyday work, soft skills are super-professional ones that help to solve life's problems and work with other people. They're not specific to a particular profession, but they help do the job well and are important to career [1].

Unlike hard skills which are treated as academic knowledge and professional skills, and can be gained and measured, soft skills are difficult to quantify. As the workplace has modernized around the world, the demand for such skills has increased over the past decades.

In contrast to hard ones, soft skills are defined as the set of interpersonal skills that an individual possesses. Here, there is a move away from technical skills to skills with more of a human aspect to them. Soft skills are centred on social ones. They include empathy, autonomy, the ability to manage stress or take the initiative, discipline, flexibility and problem-solving abilities. These types of skills are innate. Soft skills partly condition how individuals conduct themselves in the workplace [4].

Soft skills are related to social and emotional intelligence, areas that are viewed by recruiters as increasingly important. In a professional world that is in constant flux and is becoming increasingly digitalized and decentralized, employees need to be able to demonstrate their adaptability [5].

The nature of law enforcement demands that a policeman interacts appropriately with a variety of people at any given time in a variety of situations. The best way to resolve potentially dangerous use-of-force situations is to rely on one's cognitive and emotional intelligence. These are not necessarily the hard skills you acquired in professional training. These are those soft skills needed to develop to be truly effective in a day-to-day job as a police officer, namely, empathy, compassion, nonverbal communication, active listening, adaptability, building trust, critical thinking and observation, conflict resolution, work-life balance [6].

Researches L. H. Lippman, R. Ryberg, R. Carney and K. A. Moore have distinguished the key soft skills for workforce success. There are following critical skills most likely to increase success across all outcomes and which employees are expected to have: social skills; communication; higher-order thinking skills (including problem solving, critical thinking, and decision-making); supported by the intrapersonal skills of self-control and positive self-concept [7]. Social skills help people get along well with others. This ability includes respecting others, using context appropriate behavior, and resolving conflict; they are universally important. Communication skills refer to the specific types of communication used in the workplace, and include oral, written, non-verbal, and listening skills. Strong general communication skills contribute to the development of other soft skills, like social skills. There is evidence that communication skills are related to three of the workforce outcomes studied for youth, they are the most frequently sought skill among employers, and they were strongly endorsed by stakeholders /.../ [ibid.].

According to law enforcement experts, foreign-language skills play a role in a broad variety of situations, including: assisting crime victims, interviewing witnesses, fielding emergency calls, listening to wiretaps, conducting community programs. Police officers and others with foreign-language skills may be called upon, even when off duty, to assist with investigations or other matters. Fluency often is the level of knowledge required, especially when it comes to interviewing witnesses or handling other matters likely headed for court [8].

Obviously, the given above list of soft skills is incomplete. Social relationships develop so quickly that knowledge needs to be updated very quickly. Thus, a worker who is able to learn quickly, to adapt effectively to new circumstances, and to find unconventional solutions is valuable for an employer. It is soft skills that help to solve life problems and work with other people, that ensure the achievement of the set goals, in particular in the activities of the operational units of the National Police of Ukraine.

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