IDENTIFYING KEY SOFT SKILLS IN UNIVERSITY OF LIBERAL ARTS BANGLADESH

Elevate Youth By USAID

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Business Administration

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UNIVERSITY OF LIBERAL ARTS BANGLADESH

Internship/Project Report Approval Form

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INTERNSHIP/PROJECT INFORMATION

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Organization: Elevate Youth by USAID

Internship /Project Report Topic: IDENTIFYING KEY SOFT SKILLS IN UNIVERSITY OF LIBERAL ARTS BANGLADESH

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☑ Approved □ Not Approved □ Partial Re-write □ Full Re-write

Remarks (For Not Approved): _____

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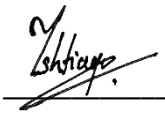
Signature _____  Date: 15TH SEPTEMBER 2024

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PART A

Chapter One: Internship Preparation

i. Motivation for the Internship

My decision to undertake the internship with the Elevate Youth initiative, implemented by the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) and funded by USAID, stemmed from my deep interest in humanitarian work and leadership development. The project's focus on empowering youth by enhancing their urban humanitarian response capacity aligned with both my academic background and long-term career goals. Working in a project that directly addresses urban humanitarian challenges, especially in a city like Dhaka, presented a unique opportunity to develop skills that are increasingly relevant in today's complex world.

The initiative's aim to train over 150 students in leadership, self-awareness, design thinking, and humanitarian response was particularly attractive. These modules promised hands-on learning experiences and the opportunity to collaborate with international organizations like the Swiss Red Cross. This exposure to global humanitarian standards and practices motivated me to join the project, as it provided a platform to not only learn but also actively contribute to meaningful social impact.

Moreover, being able to work under the guidance of seasoned professionals such as Asif Uddin Ahmed, Director of the Graduate Business Program, and Rashid Saleh, the Project Officer, added immense value to the internship. Their leadership in driving the project's objectives inspired me to take on a more active role in organizing events and coordinating the training modules. This internship offered a holistic blend of leadership, practical experience, and the chance to be part of a transformative initiative, which perfectly aligned with my aspiration to build a career in humanitarian leadership.

ii. Internship Search Process

The process of securing my internship with the Elevate Youth initiative was both strategic and fulfilling. My primary goal was to find an internship that resonated with my academic interests in management and my passion for humanitarian work. After extensive discussions with faculty members and career counselors at ULAB, I learned about the Elevate Youth initiative, which was being implemented under the AI4Resilience Innovation Challenge Fund and funded by USAID. This initiative, designed to enhance the humanitarian response capacity of urban youth, immediately caught my attention due to its alignment with my personal and professional aspirations.

Once I understood the scope of the project and its impact on empowering youth through leadership and humanitarian training, I knew this was the perfect opportunity. I proactively reached out to the project supervisor, Rashid Saleh, and expressed my interest in contributing to the project's goals. This initiative's aim to develop a network of youth humanitarian responders across Bangladesh and its collaboration with international agencies like the Swiss Red Cross made it an ideal learning ground for someone with my aspirations.

After submitting my application and going through the interview process, I was selected for the position of Event Manager. This role was particularly exciting as it involved organizing events that blended leadership training with practical humanitarian solutions, offering me the chance to develop skills in both areas. The search process ultimately led me to an internship that not only matched my academic interests but also offered invaluable real-world experience.

iii. Internship Interview Experience

The interview for my role as Event Manager at the Elevate Youth initiative was a professional and insightful process. The interview was conducted by the project supervisor, Rashid Saleh, who focused on understanding my leadership abilities, organizational skills, and passion for humanitarian work. I was asked to elaborate on my previous experiences in event management, particularly how I had coordinated university events in the past, and how those skills would apply to organizing leadership and training workshops for Elevate Youth participants.

A key aspect of the interview involved discussing how I would manage the logistical challenges of coordinating events for over 100 students across multiple universities. I highlighted my ability to collaborate with diverse teams, prioritize tasks, and ensure that events run smoothly. The interview also touched on my interest in humanitarian work and how I envisioned contributing to the project's broader goals of empowering urban youth in Bangladesh to lead humanitarian responses.

I felt that the interview provided a platform for me to articulate my vision for the role and how my skill set aligned with the project's objectives. It reinforced my enthusiasm for the position and gave me a clear understanding of the responsibilities I would undertake during the internship.

iv. Organization Overview

The Elevate Youth initiative, currently being implemented by the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), is a pioneering project aimed at strengthening the humanitarian leadership capacity of youth in urban settings. Funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance through the AI4Resilience Innovation Challenge Fund, this yearlong pilot program is designed to train over 150 university students in Dhaka to respond to urban humanitarian challenges effectively.

As part of the larger Accelerating Innovation for Resilience (AI4Resilience) program, Elevate Youth is coordinated by the Global Knowledge Initiative (GKI) in partnership with Spring Activator. The project's primary focus is to develop a network of youth humanitarian leaders capable of addressing the unique challenges posed by urban disasters in cities like Dhaka. The initiative is structured into five phases: design, youth capacity development, innovation challenges, network building, and assessment. These phases are geared towards developing a replicable and scalable program that can be expanded across multiple regions.

The youth capacity development component is a key aspect of the initiative, featuring five comprehensive modules that cover leadership, design thinking, humanitarian response basics, and self-awareness. Students receive intensive training through collaborations with international humanitarian organizations like the Swiss Red Cross, gaining both theoretical and practical knowledge. A notable highlight of the project was a field visit to Gazipur, where students met with Bangladesh Red Crescent Society volunteers and gained firsthand experience in managing pandemic-related humanitarian efforts.

Under the leadership of Asif Uddin Ahmed and project coordinator Rashid Saleh, the initiative has successfully completed its design phase and is now moving towards implementing the youth capacity development modules. These efforts are not just limited to training but are also aimed at building a sustainable network of youth humanitarian responders who can collaborate with both government and international organizations to drive innovation in disaster response.

ULAB's partnership with humanitarian organizations and the government is a critical component of the project's success. The involvement of international partners like the Swiss Red Cross provides valuable insights into global best practices, while ULAB's academic framework ensures that students receive a well-rounded education that prepares them for real-world challenges.

Chapter Two: About the Internship

i. Internship Roles and Responsibilities

As the Event Manager for the Elevate Youth initiative, I was responsible for organizing and managing a variety of training workshops and events aimed at developing leadership and humanitarian response skills in university students. My role required coordinating with multiple stakeholders, including students from different universities, ULAB faculty, and international partners like the Swiss Red Cross. I was tasked with ensuring that all logistical arrangements for these events, such as venue setup, participant coordination, and communication, were executed smoothly.

One of the most significant events I managed was the leadership development workshop, which introduced students to essential leadership and design thinking concepts as part of their humanitarian training. Additionally, I helped organize a field visit to Gazipur, where students learned about the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This experience provided participants with a practical understanding of disaster management, a key focus of the Elevate Youth initiative.

I also worked closely with the project coordinator, Rashid Saleh, to ensure that each event aligned with the project's goals of fostering youth leadership and creating a sustainable humanitarian response network. Overall, my role gave me valuable experience in project management, event coordination, and leadership training.

ii. Learning and Skill Development

My internship with the Elevate Youth initiative provided an unparalleled opportunity for both personal and professional growth. The role of Event Manager allowed me to develop critical skills in project management, particularly in the areas of event planning, coordination, and logistics. I learned how to manage large-scale events involving multiple stakeholders, including international organizations like the Swiss Red Cross, and gained valuable insights into how to effectively execute complex projects under tight deadlines.

Working closely with both ULAB faculty and humanitarian experts, I also enhanced my communication and teamwork skills. The collaborative nature of the project required constant coordination with various teams, which helped me become more adept at managing communication between different groups. This experience not only improved my ability to work in a diverse environment but also deepened my understanding of how to lead teams effectively.

The leadership modules I helped organize allowed me to apply my academic knowledge of leadership theories to real-world situations. By working with students from multiple universities, I developed my interpersonal skills, particularly in areas like conflict resolution and emotional intelligence. The field visit to Gazipur provided a hands-on experience in disaster management, further enhancing my problem-solving abilities and practical understanding of humanitarian response efforts.

This internship has undoubtedly strengthened my leadership, organizational, and communication skills, all of which are essential for my future career in humanitarian work. The diverse range of experiences

I gained through the Elevate Youth initiative has equipped me with the skills and confidence needed to excel in future leadership roles.

iii. Educational Learning and Internship Integration

My academic background in business administration, particularly in leadership and organizational management, played a crucial role in shaping my internship experience at the Elevate Youth initiative. Throughout my studies, I learned the importance of strategic planning, effective communication, and leadership, all of which were directly applicable to my role as Event Manager for this project.

The internship allowed me to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world situations, particularly in managing events and coordinating humanitarian leadership workshops. The skills I developed in project management during my coursework were directly transferable to organizing training sessions and ensuring that all logistical aspects of the events were handled efficiently. Additionally, the communication strategies I studied helped me engage with a diverse group of participants and stakeholders, enhancing my ability to manage teams and collaborate effectively.

Furthermore, the leadership modules I helped coordinate provided a practical platform to apply the leadership theories I had studied. Working under the guidance of experienced professionals like Asif Uddin Ahmed and Rashid Saleh, I gained firsthand experience in leading teams and managing complex projects. The field visits and hands-on learning experiences also allowed me to integrate classroom learning with practical applications in disaster management.

In summary, my internship at Elevate Youth served as an excellent bridge between academic learning and practical experience, offering me valuable insights and skills that will be instrumental in my future career.

Chapter Three: Self Reflection

i. Likes and Dislikes

During my internship with the Elevate Youth initiative at ULAB, I had many positive experiences and also identified areas that I found challenging. One of the aspects I liked the most was the opportunity to work closely with humanitarian organizations like the Swiss Red Cross and the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society. These interactions provided real-world exposure to how humanitarian response strategies are implemented and gave me a deeper understanding of leadership in crisis situations. I also enjoyed the collaborative nature of the project, where students from different universities came together to work on disaster response training and leadership development.

Another highlight of my experience was the mentorship I received from my supervisors, particularly Asif Uddin Ahmed and Rashid Saleh. Their guidance was invaluable in helping me navigate the complexities of project management and event coordination.

However, one of the challenges I encountered was balancing multiple responsibilities within tight deadlines. As the Event Manager, I was often tasked with coordinating events while simultaneously managing communications with various stakeholders. This required exceptional time management and organizational skills, which I found challenging but also rewarding.

Overall, the experience was highly enriching, but it also highlighted the need for better tools and processes to manage tasks efficiently.

ii. Areas for Improvement

While my internship at Elevate Youth was a valuable learning experience, there were several areas where improvements could enhance both the project and my personal experience. One area for improvement was the lack of advanced project management tools. As the Event Manager, much of my work involved coordinating multiple tasks across various teams. Having access to project management software such as Trello or Slack would have made it easier to manage communication and track the progress of each task.

Another area for improvement was the need for more structured feedback sessions. Although I received general guidance from my supervisors, there were limited opportunities for formal feedback. Structured feedback sessions at key milestones would have provided more clarity on my performance and areas where I could improve. This would also ensure that the project remained aligned with its goals.

Additionally, while the leadership and humanitarian training modules were well-organized, there was scope to involve students more actively in the planning and decision-making process. Greater involvement in these stages could enhance leadership development by providing hands-on experience in decision-making and critical thinking.

iii. Insights for Future Positions

My internship at Elevate Youth provided several key insights that will inform my approach to future positions. First and foremost, I realized the importance of adaptability in fast-paced environments. Managing events and coordinating with multiple stakeholders under tight deadlines taught me how to remain flexible and make quick decisions without compromising on quality. This ability to adapt will be essential in future leadership roles, particularly in the humanitarian sector.

Another important insight was the value of teamwork and collaboration. Working with a diverse group of students from different universities taught me how to manage group dynamics and lead teams with varying perspectives. This experience strengthened my interpersonal skills and my ability to foster effective collaboration.

Moreover, I gained a deeper understanding of how to balance technical tasks with leadership responsibilities. As Event Manager, I had to not only manage logistical details but also ensure that the project's objectives were met. This balance between operational tasks and leadership roles will be critical in future professional settings where both hard and soft skills are needed.

Chapter Four: Personal Development Plan

i. Next Course of Action and Career Plan

As I move forward from my internship experience at Elevate Youth, my next step is to deepen my expertise in humanitarian leadership and project management. Given my interest in disaster response and leadership development, I plan to pursue further education in humanitarian studies or supply chain management, which is crucial in the logistics of emergency response. I am already enrolled in a Post Graduate Diploma (PGD) in Supply Chain Management and Logistics, which will equip me with the technical knowledge needed to handle logistical challenges in humanitarian contexts.

In the short term, I intend to seek roles that allow me to apply the skills I developed during my internship, particularly in event management, leadership training, and humanitarian response coordination. I aim to work with organizations like the United Nations or international NGOs, where I can contribute to capacity-building initiatives and disaster management programs.

In the long term, my career goal is to become a project manager or coordinator for large-scale humanitarian efforts, focusing on leadership development and disaster response strategies. I am particularly interested in how technology can be integrated into humanitarian work to create more efficient and effective solutions for communities in crisis.

By continuing my education and gaining practical experience in the field, I plan to develop a well-rounded skill set that will allow me to take on leadership roles in humanitarian organizations and contribute to meaningful social change.

ii. Technical and Interpersonal Skills Development

Throughout my internship at Elevate Youth, I identified several areas for growth in both technical and interpersonal skills that are crucial for my future career. The role provided me with a comprehensive understanding of where I currently excel and what areas I need to improve to meet the demands of a professional setting, particularly in humanitarian leadership and project management.

Technical Skills Development: One of the key areas I need to focus on is the improvement of my project management skills, particularly in terms of using digital tools to manage tasks and teams efficiently. While I was able to manage event coordination successfully, the use of advanced project management software such as Trello, Asana, or Slack would have significantly improved my ability to track progress, delegate tasks, and streamline communication across multiple stakeholders. To address this, I plan to undertake short courses in project management tools and methodologies such as Agile or Lean Six Sigma, which will give me the technical expertise required to manage complex projects more effectively.

Additionally, I aim to strengthen my proficiency in data analysis. As I pursue my PGD in Supply Chain Management, I will be focusing on learning how to interpret and use data to optimize logistics and resource allocation. This is particularly important in humanitarian work, where data-driven decisions can greatly improve the effectiveness of disaster response. I will also explore courses in Excel, Power BI, and SQL to develop my ability to analyze and visualize data.

Interpersonal Skills Development: In terms of interpersonal skills, I recognized the importance of communication and teamwork during my internship. Although I was able to lead events and manage collaborations effectively, I aim to improve my ability to communicate complex ideas more clearly, particularly in high-pressure situations. To enhance my communication skills, I plan to attend public speaking workshops and actively seek feedback from peers and mentors to refine my ability to articulate ideas clearly and persuasively.

Leadership is another key interpersonal skill I aim to develop further. While I was able to take on leadership roles during my internship, leading teams in the context of humanitarian work requires a nuanced understanding of group dynamics and the ability to motivate others in challenging circumstances. I plan to engage in leadership development programs that focus on conflict resolution, team motivation, and emotional intelligence, which will be critical in managing diverse teams effectively in future roles.

Lastly, I aim to work on my adaptability and problem-solving skills. The fast-paced nature of humanitarian projects requires the ability to think on one's feet and adapt to rapidly changing situations. While I demonstrated some adaptability during my internship, I believe that further developing these skills through real-world experiences and exposure to different types of projects will be crucial for my future success. Volunteering in crisis situations and participating in simulation exercises related to disaster management will help sharpen my ability to make quick decisions under pressure.

PART B

Executive Summary

This report highlights my internship experience with the Elevate Youth initiative, funded by USAID and implemented by the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB). The initiative aims to empower urban youth by enhancing their leadership and humanitarian response capabilities, aligning perfectly with my academic background in business administration and my passion for humanitarian work.

As the Event Manager for the initiative, I was responsible for coordinating leadership workshops and managing logistical aspects of the project. Through my role, I developed a range of skills, including project management, communication, and leadership. I also had the opportunity to collaborate with international organizations like the Swiss Red Cross and the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, gaining valuable insights into humanitarian response strategies and leadership development.

This internship allowed me to integrate my academic knowledge with real-world applications, particularly in managing events and leading teams in humanitarian contexts. I identified areas for improvement, including the need to enhance my proficiency in project management tools and strengthen my leadership skills further.

Looking ahead, I plan to continue my education with a focus on supply chain management, which will provide the technical expertise needed for logistics in humanitarian efforts. My long-term goal is to work with international organizations to lead large-scale humanitarian initiatives, contributing to meaningful social change. This internship has equipped me with the foundational skills and insights needed to pursue that path.

Chapter One: Introduction

i. Research Title

"IDENTIFYING KEY SOFT SKILLS IN UNIVERSITY OF LIBERAL ARTS BANGLADESH"

ii. Research Objective/Purpose

The objective of this research is to assess the development of key soft skills among University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) students, focusing on differences between first and final semester students. The study aims to identify areas for improvement and suggest interventions for enhancing soft skill development throughout the academic journey.

iii. Background of the Study

In today's rapidly evolving job market, soft skills have become increasingly important for both personal and professional success. While technical knowledge and expertise remain essential, employers are placing greater emphasis on candidates who demonstrate strong soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, adaptability, leadership, and emotional intelligence. These competencies are critical for navigating complex work environments, collaborating with diverse teams, and adapting to changing circumstances. As a result, universities are under pressure to equip students with these essential skills in addition to their academic knowledge.

The University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) is committed to providing a holistic education that prepares students for the challenges of the modern workplace. In line with this mission, ULAB

emphasizes the development of soft skills through its academic programs and extracurricular activities. The university offers a variety of opportunities for students to engage in group projects, leadership roles, and community service, all of which foster the growth of key competencies like teamwork, communication, and problem-solving. However, while ULAB's focus on soft skills is evident, there has been limited research on how effectively these skills are developed throughout a student's academic journey.

This research aims to bridge that gap by evaluating the soft skills of ULAB students and examining the progression of these skills from the first semester to the final semester. By using structured questionnaires to assess competencies such as communication, leadership, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of how students' soft skills evolve during their time at university. The study also aims to identify any gaps in soft skill development and recommend targeted interventions that can help enhance these competencies across different academic stages.

As the demand for soft skills continues to grow in the global job market, educational institutions like ULAB play a crucial role in preparing students for success beyond the classroom. This research not only highlights the importance of integrating soft skill development into university curricula but also provides valuable insights for educators and policymakers looking to strengthen these programs and better prepare students for the professional world.

iv. Research Question

Primary Research Question: Does the Universities of Bangladesh effectively contribute to the development of soft skills among its students, and is there a noticeable difference in soft skill acquisition between students in their first and final semesters?

Sub-questions Derived:

1. How proficient are first-semester students in key soft skills compared to their final-semester counterparts?
2. What specific soft skills show significant improvement as students' progress through their academic stages?
3. What factors within the university environment contribute to the development of these soft skills?

Conceptual Framework:

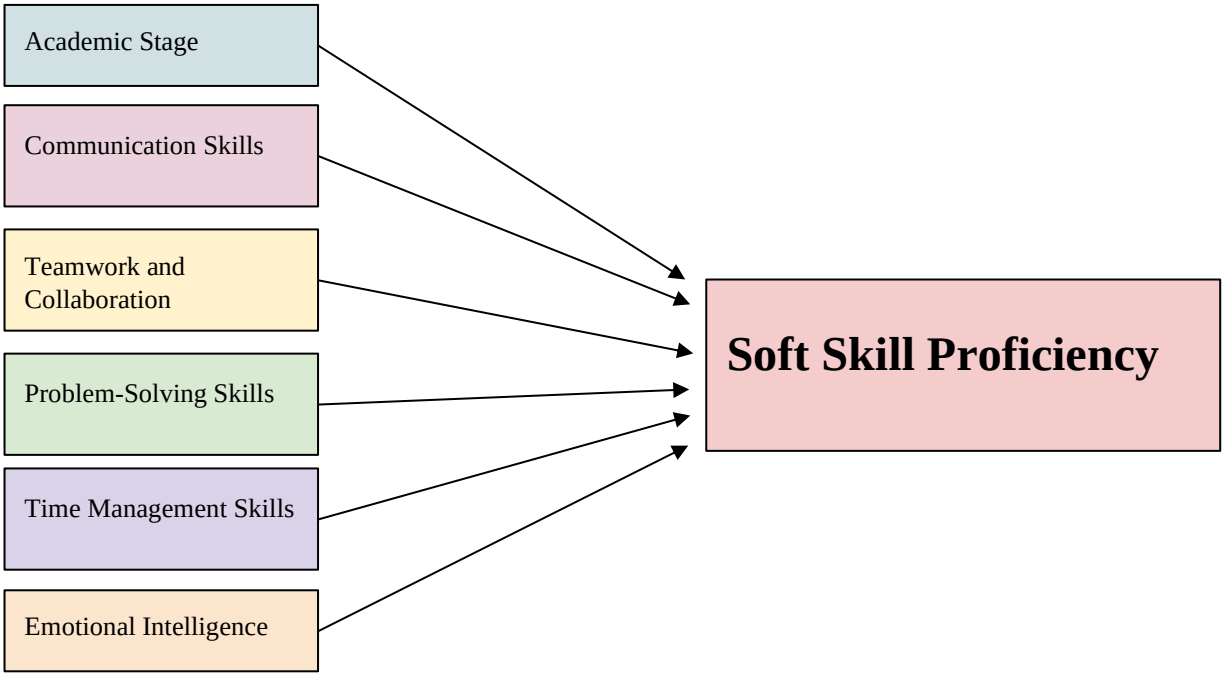

Fig.1: Conceptual Framework: Soft Skill Proficiency

Upon reviewing literature (along with contextual gap) and taking the research objectives into consideration, the following alternate hypotheses has been constructed:

Hypotheses:

1. Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between a student's academic stage and their overall soft skill proficiency, where final-semester students demonstrate significantly higher levels of soft skill proficiency than first-semester students due to their increased exposure to academic and real-world challenges.
2. Hypothesis 2: Communication skills have a positive impact on overall soft skill proficiency, meaning that students who exhibit strong verbal and written communication abilities tend to have higher overall soft skill proficiency.
3. Hypothesis 3: Teamwork and collaboration skills positively influence soft skill proficiency, with students who engage in team projects or group activities demonstrating higher levels of proficiency in other soft skills, such as leadership and adaptability.
4. Hypothesis 4: Problem-solving skills are positively related to soft skill proficiency, suggesting that students with strong critical thinking and problem-solving abilities exhibit better overall soft skill proficiency.
5. Hypothesis 5: Effective time management skills lead to higher soft skill proficiency, as students who can manage their time efficiently are more likely to perform well both academically and professionally, thereby enhancing their overall soft skill set.
6. Hypothesis 6: Emotional intelligence is positively associated with soft skill proficiency, where students who demonstrate higher levels of emotional intelligence, such as empathy and self-awareness, are better equipped to collaborate, communicate, and lead, thus improving their overall proficiency in soft skills.

A broader research design with probability sampling techniques and an exploratory foundation (focused group discussions) could aid in the reliability of the findings. The purpose of developing these

hypotheses is to develop a questionnaire that correctly corresponds to the 5 key soft skills. The hypotheses serve no quantitative purpose in the findings since the research design is descriptive.

Chapter Two: Methodology

Type of Research	Primary Research, Cross-Sectional Study
Type of Approach	Quantitative
Population	University Students in ULAB
Sampling Method	Non-Probability Sampling: Convenience Sampling
Sample Size	50
Sampling Frame	University Students in ULAB those of which are likely to be in their final semesters and those of which are likely to be in their first semesters.

i. Type of Research

Quantitative Research:
This study adopts a quantitative research approach, focusing on the objective measurement and statistical analysis of soft skills among university students in Bangladesh. The research emphasizes structured data collection and analysis, employing numerical data to explore the proficiency of various soft skills among students at different academic stages, ranging from first-year to final-year university students.

Nature of the Quantitative Research: The study utilizes basic data analysis techniques, including data grouping and aggregation, to analyze responses from students across various universities in Bangladesh. These techniques are applied to summarize and organize the data to identify patterns related to key soft skills like communication, teamwork, problem-solving, time management, and emotional intelligence. Although advanced statistical methods are not utilized in this study, these techniques provide a foundational understanding of how soft skills are developed and progress throughout the university experience. For more comprehensive results, future research may incorporate complex statistical tests.

Generalizability of this Method: One strength of this quantitative approach is the potential for generalizing the findings to a broader student population in Bangladesh. If the sample is representative of the entire university population, the results could help educational institutions and policymakers develop targeted soft skill enhancement programs for students across the country.

Structured Methodology**:** Standardized Data Collection: Data is collected using structured questionnaires distributed to students across multiple universities in Bangladesh. The uniformity of the questionnaire ensures consistency in data collection and comparison. The questions are designed to indirectly assess five key soft skills: communication, teamwork, problem-solving, time management, and emotional intelligence. Rather than asking students to directly rate their skills, the survey focuses on their reactions to specific situations and their interaction with others, which serve as indicators of their proficiency in these areas.

Replicability: The structured methodology of the study allows for replicability, enhancing the reliability of the findings. The use of clear and defined methods makes it possible to replicate the research in different academic institutions or at different times to verify results.

ii. Research Design

Descriptive Research Design: The research design is primarily descriptive, focusing on describing the characteristics of key soft skills among students in Bangladesh. The goal is to answer "what" soft skills are prevalent and to what extent students at different academic stages demonstrate these skills.

Comparative Study: A comparative aspect is integrated into the design, comparing the proficiency of soft skills between first-year and final-year students. The objective is to identify potential development and progress of soft skills as students advance through their academic programs.

Case Study Approach: While the study includes students from multiple universities in Bangladesh, each institution is treated as a unique case. The findings can provide insights into how specific universities influence soft skill development, making the case study approach particularly useful for exploring institutional differences.

iii. Methods for Sampling, Data Collection, and Analysis

Sampling Techniques

Convenience Sampling: Due to constraints in time and resources, convenience sampling is used to collect data. This method involves selecting participants who are readily accessible, primarily through the researcher's network and online platforms. University students across Bangladesh are invited to participate in the survey, with an emphasis on reaching both first-year and final-year students to ensure a diverse sample.

Rationale: The decision to use convenience sampling stems from its practicality. Although probability sampling would be ideal for a quantitative study, the time-sensitive nature of the project, coupled with limited budget and human resources, necessitates the use of non-probability sampling.

Sample Size and Selection: A sample of 50 students is targeted, with responses collected through an online survey distributed via social media and academic networks. The sample is designed to include an even distribution of first-year and final-year students from various public and private universities across Bangladesh.

iv. Limitations

Time and Cost: Time-sensitive factors and resource limitations influenced the choice of convenience sampling and an online survey format. These constraints may have affected the ability to gather a fully representative sample of students from all universities across Bangladesh.

Sampling Bias: The convenience sampling method introduces potential sampling bias, as the sample may over-represent certain groups of students, such as those who are more connected to the researcher's network or more active online. This limitation may affect the generalizability of the findings.

Self-Reporting Bias: Self-reporting bias is another limitation, as students may overestimate or underestimate their soft skill proficiency. Since soft skills are often subjective, participants may respond based on what they believe is socially desirable rather than providing an objective assessment of their skills.

Response Collection and Ethical Considerations: To ensure ethical conduct, participants are informed of the study's purpose and assured of anonymity and confidentiality. No personal identifiers are collected, and data is used solely for research purposes. The study employs an ethical review process, with questionnaires and research protocols submitted to the appropriate authorities for approval.

Chapter Three: Findings & Discussions

3.1 Overview of Survey Responses

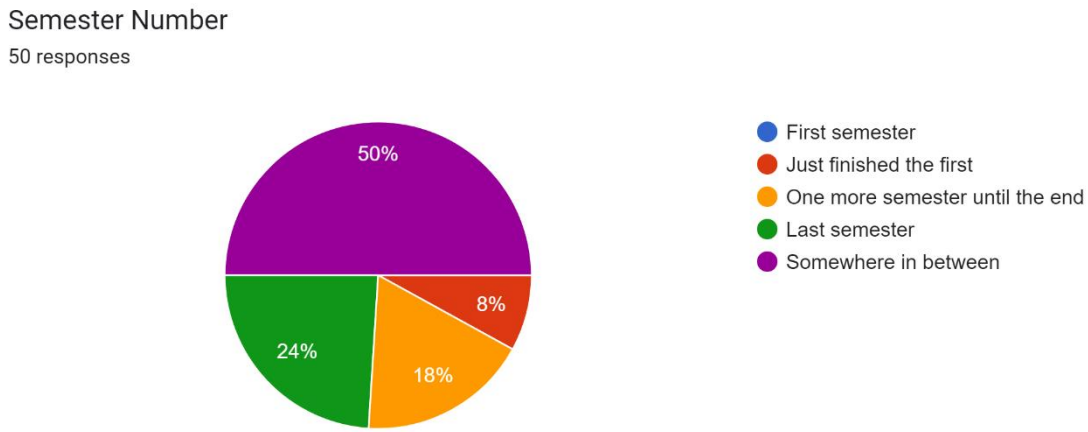

Fig.1

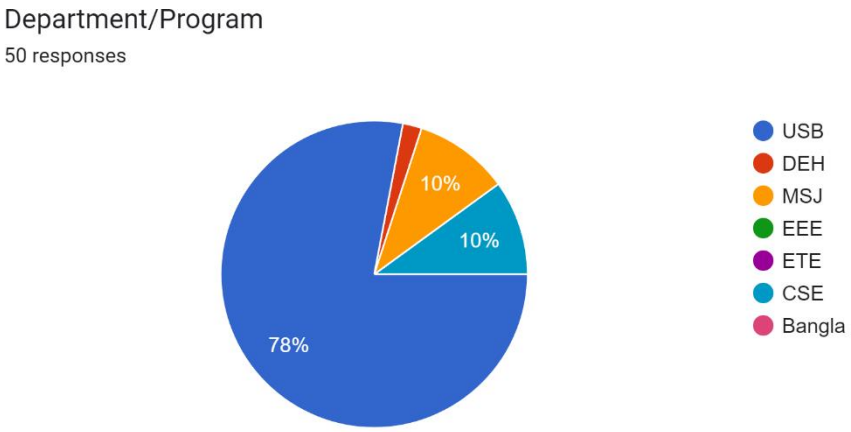

Fig.2

The primary aim of this chapter is to present the results of a survey conducted to identify key soft skills among students at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB). The questionnaire, distributed via Google Forms, was completed by 50 respondents across various academic stages. We can see in fig.1 that almost 50% students are in their first semester and fig.2 shows the department/program they're enrolled in. Most of them are enrolled in USB department. It was designed in five sections, focusing on Demographics, Communication Skills, Teamwork & Collaboration, Problem-Solving Skills (Critical Thinking), Time Management, and Emotional Intelligence. These key areas were selected based on their relevance in both academic and professional settings.

3.2 Communication Skills

Communication is a critical soft skill assessed in the survey. Part II of the questionnaire asked ULAB students how well they convey ideas, provide advice, and are recognized for communication skills in group settings.

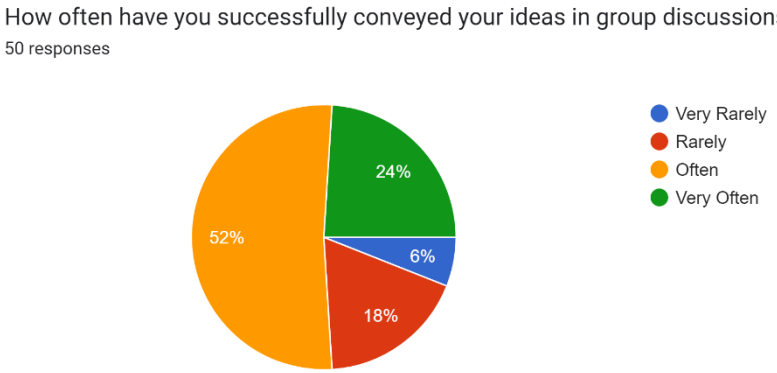

Fig.3

i. Conveying Ideas in Group Discussions

- **52%** of respondents "often" conveyed their ideas successfully, while **24%** said "very often."
- A smaller portion, **18%** reported "rarely," and **6%** said "very rarely."

Fig.4

ii. Providing Advice for Assignments

- **50%** were "often" sought for advice by peers, with **28%** "very often."

- **18%** were "rarely" asked, and **6%** "very rarely."

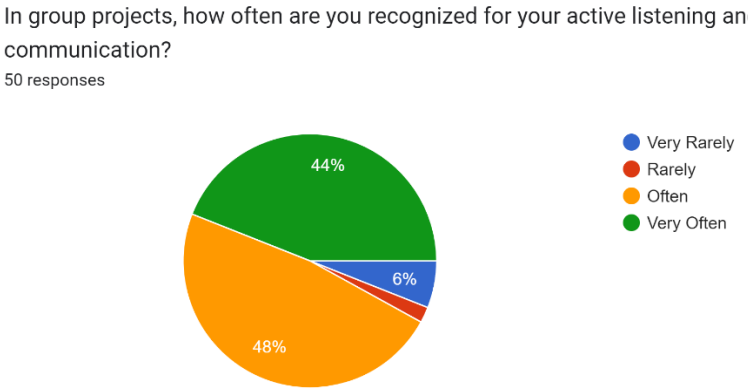

Fig.5

iii. Recognition for Effective Communication

- **48%** said they are "often" recognized for communication, **44%** said "very often."
- Only **6%** were "rarely" recognized.

❖ **Summary**

Overall, most ULAB students feel confident in their communication skills, though a small portion struggles, especially in conveying ideas. Communication improves as students advance, with seniors showing the highest proficiency.

3.3 Teamwork and Collaboration

Teamwork and collaboration are key skills measured in Part III of the survey. Students were asked about their contributions to group projects and their ability to collaborate with peers.

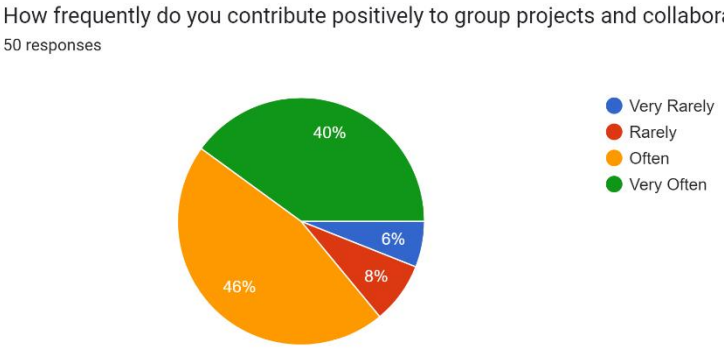

Fig.6

i. Positive Contribution to Group Projects

- **46%** of students "often" contribute positively to group projects, while **40%** contribute "very often."

- A minority, **8%** said "rarely," and **6%** "very rarely" contribute."

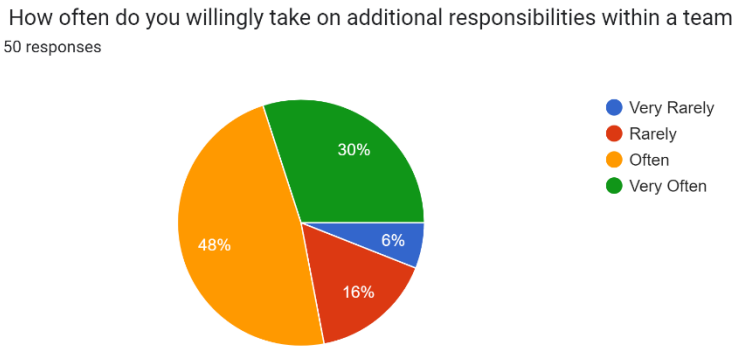

Fig.7

ii. Willingness to Take on Additional Responsibilities

- **48%** of respondents "often" take on additional responsibilities, with **30%** saying "very often."
- **16%** reported "rarely," and **6%** "very rarely" took on extra tasks"

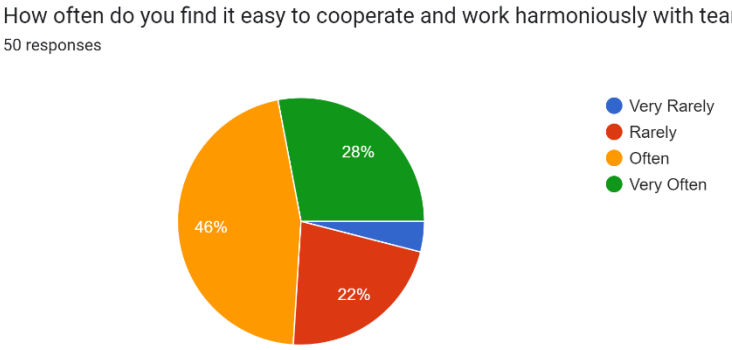

Fig.8

iii. Working Harmoniously with Team Members

- **46%** found it "often" easy to work harmoniously with team members, while **28%** said "very often."
- **22%** reported they "rarely" cooperate easily, and **4%** said "very rarely."

❖ Summary

Most ULAB students actively contribute to group projects and willingly take on extra responsibilities. Cooperation is generally high, although some students face challenges working harmoniously with teammates.

3.4 Problem-Solving Skills/Critical Thinking

Critical thinking and problem-solving are highly valued soft skills, especially in academic environments. Part IV of the survey aimed to evaluate how often students at ULAB excel in analyzing information, taking initiative in problem-solving, and making well-informed decisions.

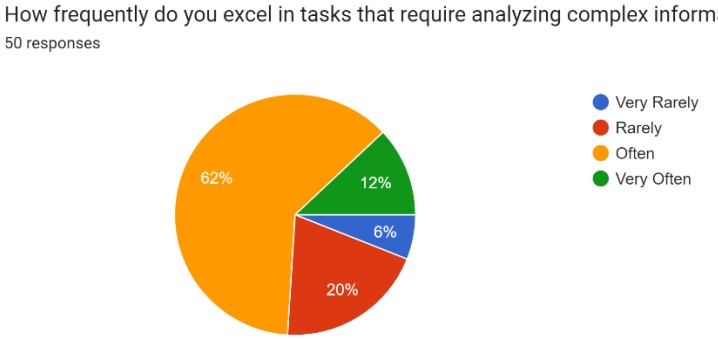

Fig.9

i. Analyzing Complex Information or Data

- **62%** of respondents "often" excel in tasks requiring complex data analysis, while **12%** said "very often."
- **20%** stated "rarely," and **6%** said "very rarely" excel in such tasks.

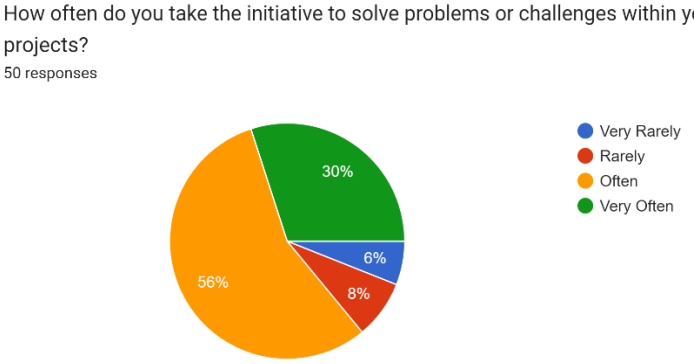

Fig.10

ii. Initiative in Problem-Solving

- **56%** of students "often" take initiative to solve problems, and **30%** said they do so "very often."

- **8%** rarely take initiative, while **6%** stated they "very rarely" solve problems.

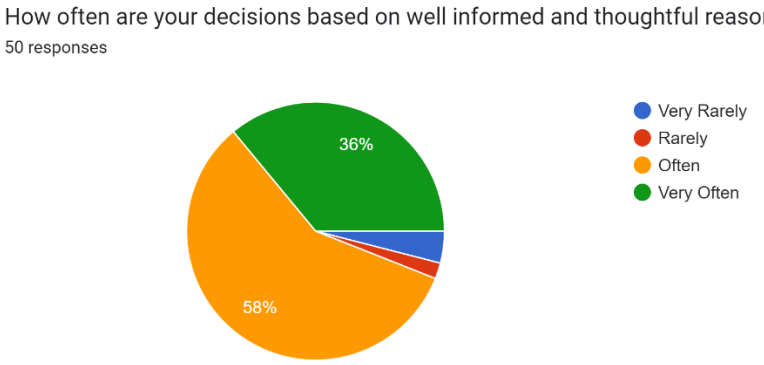

Fig.11

iii. Informed and Thoughtful Decision-Making

- **58%** make well-informed decisions "often," and **36%** do so "very often."
- Only **4%** said "very rarely," and **2%** said "rarely."

❖ **Summary**

Most ULAB students frequently excel at analyzing complex information and taking the initiative to solve problems, with a majority making decisions based on well-informed reasoning.

3.5 Adaptability

Adaptability, the ability to adjust to unexpected changes and manage commitments effectively, is another critical soft skill. Part V of the survey explored how well ULAB students adapt to new situations and how frequently they are recognized for organizing their academic and extracurricular activities.

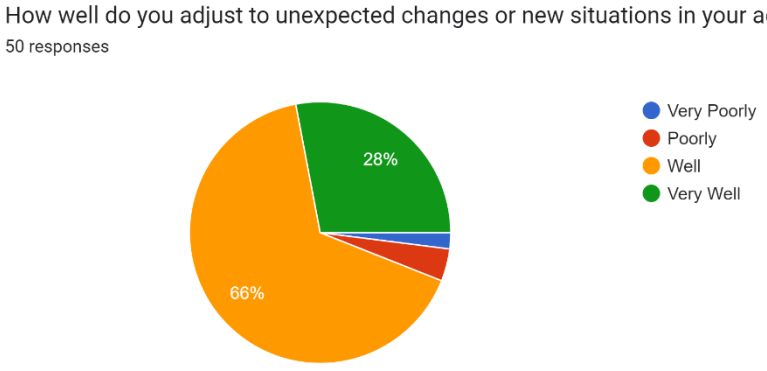

Fig.12

i. Adjusting to Unexpected Changes

- **66%** of respondents said they adapt "well" to unexpected changes, while **28%** stated "very well."
- A small percentage, **4%**, said they adapt "poorly," and **2%** reported "very poorly."

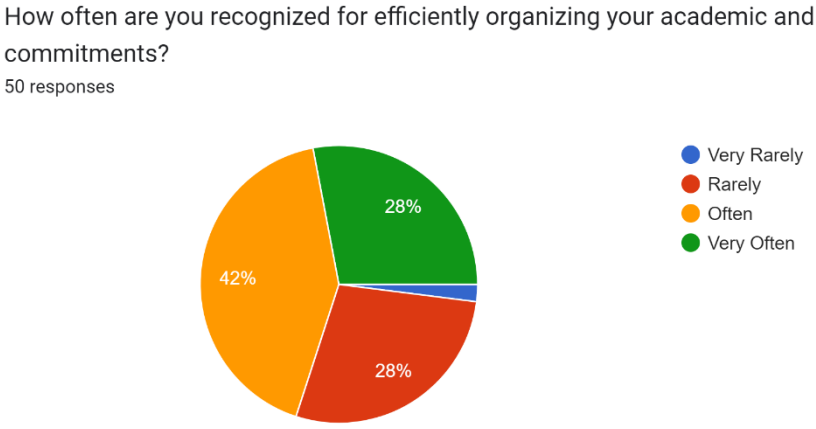

Fig.13

ii. Organizing Academic and Extracurricular Commitments

- **42%** of students are "often" recognized for efficiently organizing their commitments, and **28%** said they are recognized "very often."
- **28%** indicated they are "rarely" recognized, and **2%** said "very rarely."

❖ Summary

Most ULAB students feel confident in adapting to unexpected changes, with the majority also receiving recognition for effectively managing their academic and extracurricular responsibilities. However, some students could benefit from support in organizing their commitments more efficiently.

3.6 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence, the ability to recognize and manage one's emotions as well as understand and respond to the emotions of others, is an increasingly valued soft skill. Part VI of the survey measured ULAB students' emotional intelligence by assessing their self-awareness and empathy.

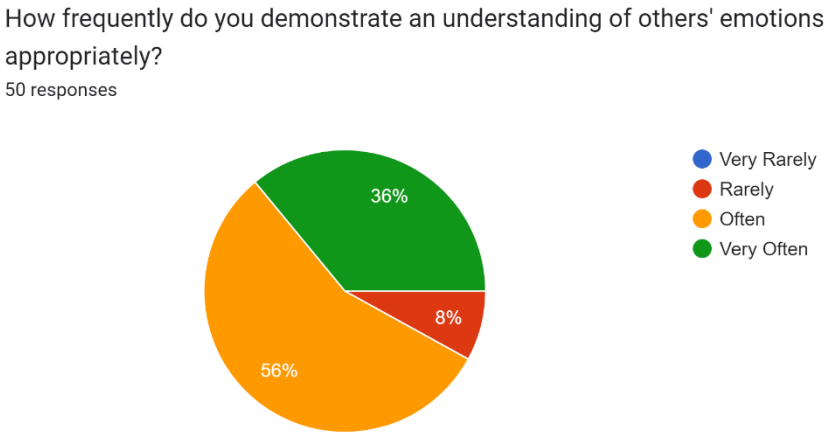

Fig.14

i. Awareness and Management of Own Emotions

- **46%** of respondents indicated they "often" manage their emotions effectively in challenging situations, while **26%** said they do so "very often."
- **20%** of students said they "rarely" manage their emotions well, and **8%** indicated "very rarely."

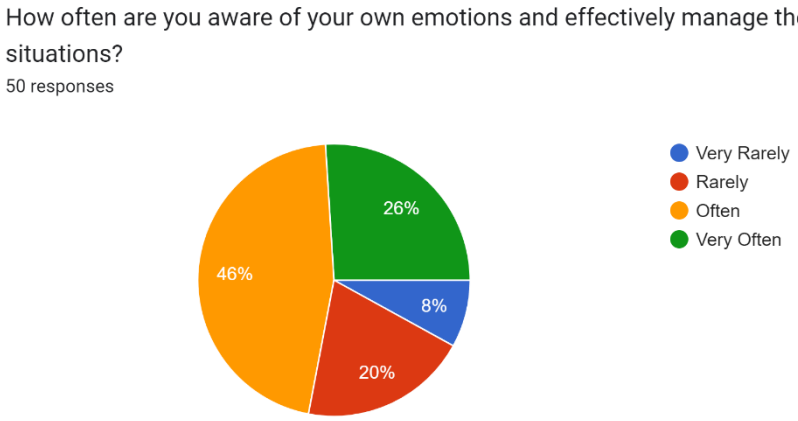

Fig.15

ii. Understanding and Responding to Others' Emotions

- **56%** of respondents said they "often" demonstrate understanding of others' emotions and respond appropriately, while **36%** reported doing so "very often."
- Only **8%** stated they "rarely" respond appropriately, and no one indicated "very rarely."

❖ Summary

The majority of ULAB students show a strong ability to manage their own emotions and empathize with others. While most students demonstrate high levels of emotional intelligence, some respondents may benefit from further development in self-management and empathy skills.

Chapter Four: Conclusion

The survey conducted on "Identifying Key Soft Skills in University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh" has provided valuable insights into the proficiency levels of ULAB students across various soft skills. These skills—communication, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, and emotional intelligence—are vital not only for academic achievement but also for professional success. The responses from students across different academic stages reveal how these skills develop and strengthen throughout their time at university.

One of the standout findings is the strong communication skills demonstrated by ULAB students, particularly in group settings. From the early stages of their education, students reported successfully conveying ideas during discussions and presentations. As they progressed through their academic journey, there was a notable improvement in their ability to communicate effectively, especially among students in their final semesters. This steady growth reflects ULAB's curriculum, which emphasizes the importance of clear and effective communication from the outset and continuously builds on it.

The survey also highlights the development of teamwork and collaboration skills, another key area for students at ULAB. Early in their academic experience, students are exposed to group work, and by the time they reach the later stages of their studies, many report being frequently recognized for their active listening and contributions to team efforts. This progression indicates a learning environment that fosters collaboration, a crucial skill for success in professional settings where teamwork is often a fundamental aspect of organizational culture.

Problem-solving skills and critical thinking were shown to be well-developed among the students, with the majority excelling in tasks that require analyzing complex information. Students consistently reported taking initiative to solve problems, indicating a strong sense of responsibility and independent thinking. This is particularly important in preparing students to handle real-world challenges, where problem-solving is a daily necessity.

Adaptability was another key area in which ULAB students demonstrated proficiency. Throughout their academic journey, students reported adjusting well to new situations and efficiently managing their academic and extracurricular commitments. This ability to adapt to changes is essential in today's fast-paced professional environment, where flexibility and time management are critical.

The survey also revealed that ULAB students possess a high level of emotional intelligence. Many reported being aware of and managing their emotions effectively, as well as understanding and responding appropriately to others' emotions. These qualities are increasingly recognized as critical in both personal and professional settings, where the ability to navigate complex social interactions is highly valued.

In conclusion, the findings from the survey highlight the strength of ULAB's academic framework in nurturing essential soft skills. From communication to emotional intelligence, ULAB students are well-prepared to face the challenges of both academic and professional life. The university's emphasis on soft skills development ensures that graduates are equipped not only with technical knowledge but also with the interpersonal abilities needed to thrive in today's competitive world. By continuing to prioritize these competencies, ULAB can further enhance its role in shaping well-rounded, capable graduates ready for the demands of the modern workplace.

Chapter Five: Recommendations

Based on the findings from the survey on soft skills among ULAB students, this section presents targeted recommendations for students at various stages of their academic journey: First semester, Mid-way through, and Final semester. These recommendations aim to address the specific needs and opportunities for soft skills development at each stage, ensuring that students can build, refine, and apply their skills effectively throughout their university life.

5.1 For Students in the First Semester

- **Introductory Workshops:** Organize foundational workshops focused on key soft skills like communication, teamwork, and adaptability. These sessions should introduce students to the importance of soft skills in both academic and professional settings and engage them in practical exercises to foster early development.
- **Peer Support Systems:** Establish peer mentoring programs where senior students assist first-semester students in adjusting to university life. Through these mentoring relationships, newcomers can gain insights into effective teamwork and communication, while also building relationships that foster collaborative learning.

5.2 For Students in the Midway Point of Their Studies

- **Skill Development Sessions:** As students' progress, introduce workshops that dive deeper into skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence. These sessions should encourage students to reflect on the skills they've acquired and challenge them with more complex scenarios that simulate real-world applications.
- **Cross-Departmental Collaboration:** Encourage students to engage in collaborative projects with peers from different departments. This will allow them to broaden their teamwork experience, adapt to different working styles, and enhance their ability to communicate across diverse fields.

5.3 For Students in Their Final Semester

- **Advanced Application Projects:** Implement capstone or advanced group projects that require students to apply all the soft skills they have developed during their time at ULAB. These projects should mimic real-world challenges, encouraging students to demonstrate their skills in problem-solving, leadership, and communication under pressure.
- **Industry Readiness Programs:** Organize career development workshops that focus on translating soft skills into professional settings. These workshops could include mock interviews, resume-building sessions, and networking strategies to help students effectively present their soft skills to potential employers.

5.4 General Recommendations for All Students

- **Reflection and Assessment:** Incorporate reflective assignments throughout the academic journey, where students assess their own soft skill development. This could take the form of journals, self-assessments, or group discussions that encourage students to consciously track and improve their communication, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities.
- **Leadership and Extracurricular Opportunities:** Provide students with opportunities to take on leadership roles within clubs, events, or community service projects. These experiences will allow them to further hone their organizational, leadership, and emotional intelligence skills in real-world contexts.

- **Continuous Peer Engagement:** Foster peer-to-peer learning through discussion groups or collaborative study sessions. This allows students to share insights, discuss challenges, and develop their soft skills together in a supportive environment.

By tailoring these recommendations to students at different stages of their academic journey, ULAB can ensure that its graduates are well-prepared to succeed in both academic and professional environments. This comprehensive approach to soft skills development will empower students to be adaptable, collaborative, and emotionally intelligent leaders in their future careers.

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Appendix

A. Survey Questionnaire

Part I: Demographics

1. Name:
2. Semester:
    - First Semester
    - Just finished the first
    - One more semester until the end
    - Last semester
    - Somewhere in Between
3. Department:
    - USB
    - DEH
    - MSJ
    - EEE
    - CSE
    - BANGLA
4. Your Email Address:

Part II: Communication Skills

1. How often have you successfully conveyed your ideas in group discussions or presentations?
    - Very Rarely
    - Rarely
    - Often
    - Very Often
2. How frequently do your peers seek your advice for written assignments or reports?
    - Very Rarely
    - Rarely
    - Often
    - Very Often
3. In group projects, how often are you recognized for your active listening and effective communication?
    - Very Rarely
    - Rarely
    - Often
    - Very Often

Part III: Teamwork & Collaboration

1. How frequently do you contribute positively to group projects and collaborations?
    - Very Rarely
    - Rarely
    - Often
    - Very Often
2. How often do you willingly take on additional responsibilities within a team?
    - Very Rarely
    - Rarely
    - Often
    - Very Often

3. How often do you find it easy to cooperate and work harmoniously with team members?
    - Very Rarely
    - Rarely
    - Often
    - Very Often

Part IV: Critical Thinking

1. How frequently do you excel in tasks that require analyzing complex information or data?
    - Very Rarely
    - Rarely
    - Often
    - Very Often
2. How often do you take the initiative to solve problems or challenges within your academic or group projects?
    - Very Rarely
    - Rarely
    - Often
    - Very Often
3. How often are your decisions based on well informed and thoughtful reasoning?
    - Very Rarely
    - Rarely
    - Often
    - Very Often

Part V: Adaptability

1. How well do you adjust to unexpected changes or new situations in your academic journey?
    - Very Poorly
    - Poorly
    - Well
    - Very Well
2. How often are you recognized for efficiently organizing your academic and extracurricular commitments?
    - Very Rarely
    - Rarely
    - Often
    - Very Often

Part VI: Emotional Intelligence

1. How often are you aware of your own emotions and effectively manage them in challenging situations?
    - Very Rarely
    - Rarely
    - Often
    - Very Often
2. How frequently do you demonstrate an understanding of others' emotions and respond appropriately?
    - Very Rarely
    - Rarely
    - Often
    - Very Often

B. Internship Proposal Form

Internship Approval Form

Name:	Ishtiaque Anowar
ID:	191011009
Semester (Spring/Summer/Fall)	Summer 2024
Department:	BBA
Supervisor's Name (Faculty):	Dr. Umana Anjalin
Organization Name:	University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh
Internship Title:	IDENTIFYING KEY SOFT SKILLS IN UNIVERSITY OF LIBERAL ARTS BANGLADESH

15th September, 2024

Student's signature & date

Supervisor's signature & date

C. Acceptance Letter

ULAB
UNIVERSITY OF LIBERAL ARTS BANGLADESH

ULAB/FHR/6469/2024

March 11, 2024

Mr. Ishtiaque Anowar
2/2/3 Tolarbag, Mirpur- 1
Dhaka- 1216

APPOINTMENT AS INTERN

Dear Mr. Anowar:

The management of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) is pleased to appoint you as **Elevate Youth Project Intern** for a period of six months from February 1, 2024 to May 31, 2024 with the following terms and conditions:

1. Report to Mr. Asif U Ahmed, Assistant Professor and Director of Graduate Business Programme for your overall and day to day work;
2. Assist in the planning, coordination, and execution of project activities and events.
3. Conduct research on youth development and humanitarian response best practices.
4. Support in the development and implementation of training programs and workshops for youth participants.
5. Assist in outreach and recruitment efforts to engage urban youth in project activities.
6. Participate in monitoring and evaluation activities, including data collection and analysis.
7. Prepare reports and documentation related to project activities and outcomes.
8. Collaborate with the project team and partners to ensure the successful execution of project objectives.
9. Perform other duties and tasks as assigned by project supervisors.
10. Work at least **30 (Thirty) Hours** per week;
11. You will be entitled to a consolidated monthly pay of **Tk. 6,000 (Six Thousand)** only;
12. No other benefits will be applicable to you;
13. Either party can terminate the employment at any time by giving 15 (Fifteen) days prior notice or Fifteen days' pay in lieu of the notice period;
14. Other office rules and regulations of ULAB will be applicable to you.

Please note that all employees of the University operate under individual contracts and are expected to maintain confidentiality about the terms of employment at all times.

If these terms are acceptable to you, please sign and return the duplicate copy (enclosed) of this letter to HR Office.

The University greatly appreciates your cooperation in every respect.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Imran Rahman
Vice Chancellor

Accepted

Signature

14.03.24
Date

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