

## **FACTORS AFFECTING TOWARDS LACK OF SOFT SKILLS AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AMONG UNDERGRADUATES**

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The need for undergraduates with sound English proficiency and soft skills has increased in state universities of Sri Lanka. This contemporary issue has caused many problems in undergraduates' academic careers in the job market causing many professions to reject undergraduates who graduate from state universities. The research problem of this research was "What are the factors affecting the lack of soft skills and English proficiency among undergraduates?" The main objective of this research was to find the reasons for the lack of soft skills and English proficiency among university undergraduates and to acknowledge the awareness of undergraduates about the modern demand for soft skills and English proficiency. The research was mixed research through both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies used with a descriptive analysis. Data was collected through a self-administered online questionnaire for the undergraduates and key-informant interviews with lecturers from the faculty of social sciences, faculty of humanities and the Department of English Language Teaching (DELT). "Social Learning Theories" by Albert Bandura (1977) was the theory which was studied for the theoretical framework of the research. Results found that even though many undergraduates lack both soft skills and English proficiency even before commencing tertiary education in state universities, many undergraduates do not have sufficient knowledge about the demands of the job market due to which they do not realize the importance of polishing their English knowledge or upgrade their soft skills. Another result was the poor guidance by schools since primary education and lack of support from family, school and peers affect the acquisition of soft skills and English skills. In conclusion, even though there is a huge demand for undergraduates with sound soft skill abilities and English proficiency, many undergraduates are behind the required level of a professional university student. As a recommendation, if the undergraduates receive the proper guidance from the beginning of their tertiary education, they will be able to complete their tertiary education with sound soft skills and English skills and face the job market as a sound competitor and the courses and subjects should be upgraded according to the present needs of the society.

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