

# Impact of Employee Soft Skills on Organizational Development in the Post-Covid-19 Era: A Case Study of Watercom Company Limited

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**Abstract:** The study was conducted at Watercom Company Limited to assess impacts of employees' soft skills on the organisational development after the COVID-19 Pandemic, specifically the study intended to assess the soft skills most crucial for organizational development in the post-COVID-19 era. The study involved 200 respondents from different occupations at WCL to enrich findings of the study. The study used case study design to provide answers to the questions linked to the research problem. The study employed interview and questionnaire as tools for data collection. findings revealed that WCL provides no training to develop employees' soft skills, the researcher observed that due to the nature of the organization and the industry it operates from it hard to conduct those training to develop soft skills of the employees despite the important of soft skills in influencing the development of the organization yet the organization neglect training that aimed at developing employees soft skills after COVID – 19 era, the era which pushed employees into working at home and social distancing, depression and anxious. Additionally, the study highlighted the significant relationship between employees' soft skills and key organizational outcomes such as productivity, innovation, and resilience.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Soft skills play a critical role in driving organisational development and success. In today's dynamic and competitive business landscape, organisations need employees who possess strong soft skills, such as effective communication, teamwork, leadership, problem-solving, and adaptability. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly reshaped the landscape of work, necessitating remote work arrangements, digital transformations, and changes in Organizational structures. Amidst these changes, the role of soft skills in employee performance and organizational development has garnered increased attention. This study aims to assess the impact of employees' soft skills on organisational development in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Tanzania, several studies have also been carried out on how employees' soft skills can contribute to organisational performance. The study of Nasoro (2015) investigated the role

of leadership soft skills in enhancing organizational performance in Tanzania. Was it specifically focused on the perceptions of managers regarding the importance of soft skills such as emotional intelligence, adaptability, and decision-making in achieving organizational goals? (Mkumba, 2019). This study also investigated the influence of soft skills on employee performance in Tanzania, emphasizing the importance of soft skills assessment for organizational success in the Tanzanian context. By recognizing and addressing the importance of soft skills, organizations in East Africa can enhance their employees' performance, boost productivity, and gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Therefore, this study aims to uncover the impact of employees' soft skills on organizational performance in a case study of Watercom company limited (WCL). Organizations have increasingly realized the significance of soft skills and their influence on various aspects of organizational performance.

While the importance of soft skills in organizational success has been acknowledged for years, the unique challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted a significant gap in understanding their impact on organizational development in the post-pandemic era. The gap is based on Limited Research on the Specific Impact of Soft Skills on Organizational Development Post-COVID-19 Pandemic in Remote and Hybrid Work Environments. This means that while there is a growing body of research recognizing the importance of soft skills for organizational success, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these skills specifically contribute to organizational development in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in remote and hybrid work settings. Existing studies tend to focus on the general importance of soft skills without addressing their specific impact on organizational outcomes post-pandemic. This gap hinders organizations' ability to effectively leverage employees' soft skills to drive sustainable growth and resilience in the evolving work landscape. Addressing this gap is crucial for providing evidence-based insights and actionable recommendations for organizations navigating the complexities of the post-pandemic era. This gap in the literature presents several key challenges including limited research, Dynamic Work Environments which means that the rapid shift to remote work and virtual collaboration has fundamentally altered the dynamics of the workplace Traditional measures of soft skills may not fully capture their relevance or effectiveness in these new work environments. The gap in the literature is essential for advancing our understanding of the role of soft skills in organisational development post-COVID-19 pandemic. By bridging this gap, researchers can provide valuable insights and action recommendations for organizations seeking to leverage soft skills effectively to drive sustainable growth and resilience in the evolving workplace landscape.

#### ➤ *Objective of the Study*

The main objective was employees' soft skills impact on organisational development after the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on this objective the study centered in this research questions

- RQ1 What are the most critical soft skills for organisational development in remote and hybrid work environments in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- RQ2 How do employees' soft skills influence key organisational outcomes, such as productivity, innovation, and resilience, in the post-pandemic workplace?
- RQ3 What strategies and best practices can organisations implement to effectively cultivate, assess, and leverage employees' soft skills to drive sustainable growth and resilience in the evolving work landscape following the COVID-19 pandemic?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### ➤ *Soft Skills*

Soft skills and the hard sell: A study of the demand for soft skills among Irish graduates. This study investigates the demand for soft skills among Irish graduates and its impact on their employability and organisational performance. It highlights the importance of soft skills assessment in recruitment and talent management (White, 2019).

### ➤ *Organizational Development*

Smith and Johnson (2023) in their Relative literature work titled Organisational Development Impacts after COVID-19 this empirical literature review synthesizes existing research to examine the impacts of organizational development initiatives implemented after the COVID-19 pandemic. The review explores various strategies organizations have adopted to adapt, innovate, and foster resilience in response to the pandemic's challenges. By analyzing empirical evidence, the review identifies key organizational development practices and their effects on organizational performance, employee well-being, and stakeholder engagement in the post-pandemic era.

### ➤ *Covid-19 Pandemic*

Wu and Chen (2023) show the relevance in their research titled Employee Well-being and Organisational Development. A Review of COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts. This empirical review focuses on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on employee well-being and its implications for organisational development. By synthesizing empirical research, the authors explore how organisations have prioritized employee health, safety, and work-life balance to support well-being during the crisis. The review examines the relationship between employee well-being, engagement, and organizational performance, offering insights into the importance of holistic approaches to organizational development in fostering a supportive and resilient workplace culture.

### ➤ *Organizational Performance*

Oxford Handbook of Human Resource Management, (2019), brings out the concept of organizational performance. Organisational performance encompasses not only financial indicators but also non-financial metrics that provide a holistic view of an organization's health and overall achievement. These non-financial indicators may include employee satisfaction, customer loyalty, brand reputation, environmental sustainability, social impact, and ethical practices.

### ➤ *Relationship Between Soft Skills and Organization Performance*

Impact on Employee Satisfaction and Engagement: Research has consistently shown that employees with strong soft skills tend to be more satisfied with their jobs and exhibit higher levels of engagement. Soft skills enable employees to build positive relationships with colleagues, superiors, and customers, resulting in a more supportive and harmonious work environment (Doğan et al., 2016). This, in turn, enhances job

satisfaction and encourages higher levels of motivation, commitment, and productivity (Dewett, 2007).

➤ *Impact of Employees' Soft Skills on Organization Development in Post COVID-19 Era*

Ferreira et al. (2023) noted the changes that occurred in human resource management due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic were changes that were fast, fundamental, and permanent, thus revolutionizing required employee skills. New labels identified for needed skills included digital upskilling, reskilling, future-gazing, future proofing, and next-normal as businesses rushed to adjust and align worker skills with job success skills. Accompanying these developments of new skills were increased complex tasks associated with successful business accomplishment.

These developments were proven to be a direct connection with the changes brought about after the COVID-19 pandemic and were important contributions to this research dissertation because it examined the before and after effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the business world. As Ferreira et al. (2023) emphasized, for workers who may be working remotely, that responsibility has become so much more than using a laptop for job performance.

Brennan et al. (2023) studied influence of Covid-19 pandemic on soft skills development in engineering students and defined these skills as leadership, innovative thinking, teamwork, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, resilience, organization skills, and self-motivation. The results of the study revealed an increase in female students' resilience as well as increases in both male and female time-management skills, and organizational skills. There were also increases in isolation and other mental health issues during the pandemic, but these developed into an increase of self-motivation and accountability for work completed after the pandemic (Brennan et al., 2023). Because changes in the job market evolved directly due to the pandemic, students were in need of rapidly and somewhat automatically developing soft skills as an essential entity for employability, whereas these skills before the pandemic were just a possible additional benefit to employability (Brennan et al., 2023).

### III. METHODOLOGY

The mixed approach is the empirical research approach that involves the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. For completeness, the study used both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.

Yin (2011), defines the case study research method "as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Kumar (2011), explains that case study research design is the method in which the researcher

merges both qualitative and quantitative data to form a broad analysis of the research problem.

The sample is a set of individuals or objects collected or selected from a statistical population by a defined procedure (Payne, 2004). Sample size is the targeted population in which the researcher wants to generalize the results of a study, (Mugenda, 2003). The mechanism of obtaining a sample for the study can vary from one individual to another.

According to McLeod (2019), the sample of the study can be calculated using the following formula:  $(N > 50 + 8m)$

Explanation: N = Sample Size

m = number of questions available in the questionnaire.

A Researcher expects to have 12 questions, so  $N > 50 + 8(12)$ . The result is  $N > 178$ , which means the authors have to find more than 178 respondents. Therefore, a researcher prepared a minimum number of 200 questionnaires.

According to McLeod (2019), defined sampling as a process of selecting a few items (samples) from the target population to become the basis of the study. This study used Convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is the most common type of non-probability sampling, which focuses on gaining information from participants (the sample) who are 'convenient' for the researcher to access (Kothari 2019). This sample method doesn't require a random selection of participants based on any set of criteria (like demographic factors) instead, researchers can subjectively select people at random, who are happy to be approached and become part of the research (Kumar 2011).

The quantitative data of this study analyzed statistically through descriptive analysis and using SPSS and Microsoft Excel software. Qualitative data were analyzed contently through thematic analysis using Microsoft Word software.

### IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

➤ *The Soft Skills Most for Organizational Development in the Post-COVID-19 Era*

Thus, to meet the above objective, the study has explored a wide range of soft skills, which the researcher considers crucial to organizational development during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The next sections will show the responses of the respondents with regards to the seventeen mentioned soft skills categorized into five major competencies, namely, communication skills, flexibility, teamwork, leadership, and emotional skills. The relevance and significance of each of the skills in the developmental process of an organization are then ascertained.

➤ *Effective Communication*

Effective communication is fundamental for maintaining good relationships with colleagues and clients. Table 1 shows the respondents' views on their ability to communicate effectively.

Table 1 Effective Communication can Help to Maintain Good Relationships with Colleagues and Clients.

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	Neutral	8	4.0
	Agree	86	43.0
	Strongly Agree	106	53.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: (Analyzed Data, 2026)

Most respondents, 106 (53.0%), strongly agreed that they can maintain good relationships with colleagues and clients through effective communication. An additional 86 (43.0%) agreed with this statement, indicating a strong consensus on the importance of effective communication. Only 8 (4.0%) were neutral, showing that there is a high level of confidence in communication skills among the respondents. This finding highlights that effective communication is a crucial soft skill for fostering positive interpersonal relationships and facilitating smooth operations within the organization, which is essential for development in the post-COVID-19 era.

➤ *Adaptability*

Adaptability in the workplace is key to handling new challenges effectively. Table 2 presents the respondents' opinions on their ability to adapt to changes.

Table 2 Employee can Easily Adapt to Changes in the Workplace and Handle New Challenges Effectively

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	Neutral	13	6.5
	Agree	71	35.5
	Strongly Agree	116	58.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: (Analyzed Data, 2026)

A substantial majority of 116 (58.0%) strongly agreed that they can easily adapt to changes in the workplace and handle new challenges effectively. Another 71 (35.5%) agreed, while 13 (6.5%) were neutral. The high proportion of respondents who strongly agree underscores the significance of adaptability as a soft skill. This ability is particularly valuable in the post-pandemic environment, where organizations must remain agile and responsive to evolving circumstances and market demands.

➤ *Teamwork*

Effective teamwork is crucial for achieving common goals through collaboration. Table 3 shows the distribution of responses regarding teamwork skills.

Table 3 Employee Works Well Within a Team and Contribute to Achieving Common Goals Through Collaboration.

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	Neutral	14	7.0
	Agree	69	34.5
	Strongly Agree	117	58.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: (Analyzed Data, 2026)

Most respondents, 117 (58.5%), strongly agreed that they work well within a team and contribute to achieving common goals through collaboration. Additionally, 69 (34.5%) agreed with this statement. Only 14 (7.0%) were neutral. The high level of agreement indicates that teamwork is a well-regarded skill among employees, which is crucial for collective problem-solving and achieving organizational objectives, especially in a collaborative and dynamic post-pandemic work environment.

➤ *Leadership*

Leadership involves guiding and supporting others during challenging situations. Table 4 presents respondents' views on their leadership capabilities.

Table 4 Employees can Demonstrate Leadership by Guiding and Supporting Others During Difficult Situations.

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	Neutral	10	5.0
	Agree	76	38.0
	Strongly Agree	114	57.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: (Analyzed Data, 2026)

A significant majority, 114 (57.0%), strongly agreed that they can demonstrate leadership by guiding and supporting others during difficult situations. An additional 76 (38.0%) agreed with this statement, while 10 (5.0%) were neutral. This high level of agreement on leadership skills suggests that employees feel confident in their ability to take charge and support their colleagues, which is critical for navigating the complexities of the post-pandemic workplace.

➤ *Emotional Intelligence*

Emotional intelligence involves being aware of and managing one’s emotions effectively. Table 5 outlines the respondents’ perceptions of their emotional intelligence.

Table 5 I am Aware of my Emotions and can Manage them Effectively in Various Circumstances

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	Disagree	7	3.5
	Neutral	13	6.5
	Agree	83	41.5
	Strongly Agree	97	48.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: (Analyzed Data, 2026)

Most respondents, 97 (48.5%), strongly agreed that they are aware of their emotions and can manage them effectively in various circumstances. Additionally, 83 respondents (41.5%) agreed with this statement, while 13 (6.5%) were neutral, and 7 (3.5%) disagreed. The predominance of agreement highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in managing stress and maintaining professional relationships, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, when employees are faced with numerous challenges and changes.

➤ *The Relationship Between Employees’ Soft Skills and Key Organizational Outcomes*

In this section, presents the findings of the research on the connection between employees’ soft skills and various organizational outcome indicators. The findings are found from Watercom Limited and investigate the impact of various soft skills –communication, adaptability, teamwork, leadership and emotional intelligence on organizational performance. The test of significance which are depicted by the logistic regression analysis enables one to grasp the importance and effectiveness of these soft skills on organizational returns.

➤ *Case Processing Summary*

The case processing summary outlines the distribution of soft skills ratings among respondents, offering a snapshot of how employees perceive their soft skills.

Table 6 Case Processing Summary

		<b>N</b>	<b>Marginal Percentage</b>
ORGANISATION OUTCOME	3.00	9	4.5%
	3.40	4	2.0%
	3.60	7	3.5%
	3.80	10	5.0%
	4.00	27	13.5%
	4.20	16	8.0%
	4.40	22	11.0%
	4.60	29	14.5%
	4.80	15	7.5%
	5.00	61	30.5%
Valid		200	100.0%
Missing		0	

Total	200
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**Source:** (Analyzed Data, 2026)

The case processing summary indicates that the dataset is complete with no missing values. The distribution of organizational outcomes is spread across a range of values, with a notable concentration at higher values (4.00 and above). The highest frequency of responses, 61 (30.5%), is at the top end of the scale (5.00), suggesting a favorable view of organizational outcomes among respondents.

➤ *Parameter Estimates*

Parameter estimates provide detailed insights into how varying levels of soft skills impact organizational outcomes.

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[ORGOUT = 3.00]	16.539	1.781	86.205	1	.000	13.047	20.030
	[ORGOUT = 3.40]	17.607	1.779	98.002	1	.000	14.121	21.093
	[ORGOUT = 3.60]	18.583	1.794	107.245	1	.000	15.066	22.100
	[ORGOUT = 3.80]	19.509	1.821	114.773	1	.000	15.940	23.078
	[ORGOUT = 4.00]	21.144	1.901	123.703	1	.000	17.418	24.871
	[ORGOUT = 4.20]	21.904	1.953	125.821	1	.000	18.076	25.731
	[ORGOUT = 4.40]	22.908	2.025	128.013	1	.000	18.939	26.876
	[ORGOUT = 4.60]	24.269	2.104	133.047	1	.000	20.145	28.393
	[ORGOUT = 4.80]	24.915	2.130	136.866	1	.000	20.741	29.089
Location	COMGR	.620	.345	3.235	1	.072	-.056	1.296
	ADAP	.773	.376	4.239	1	.040	.037	1.509
	COLABTEAM	.308	.326	.891	1	.345	-.332	.948
	LEADRSHP	1.453	.419	12.052	1	.001	.633	2.274
	EMOTIN	1.981	.298	44.314	1	.000	1.398	2.565

**Source:** (Analyzed Data, 2026)

The parameter estimates provide insights into the impact of each soft skill on organizational outcomes:

**V. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

➤ *Soft Skills Most Crucial for Organizational Development in the Post-COVID-19 Era.*

Some of the identified soft skills were deemed to be highly essential by 53. 0% of the participants with communication being identified as an essential soft skill for relation and interaction with colleagues and customers. This is in line with Lee et al. (2017) who pointed out that understanding promotes sharing of information, conflict resolution and improves unity which is vital in stability of an organization. A greater degree of agreement was observed among the participants which indicates the need for effective communication in enhancing efficiency of working relations especially in the changed world where working extended from home and virtual communications are more the norm among organizations. Essential communication helps people interact and collaborate within an organization and contribute to enhancing working connections with the clients hence increasing organizational development and customer satisfaction (Schneider & Bowen, 2019).

➤ *The Relationship Between Employees' Soft Skills and key Organizational Outcomes*

This section delves into the findings from the analysis of the relationship between employees' soft skills and key

organizational outcomes at Watercom Limited. The findings are derived from logistic regression analysis, which provides a comprehensive view of how communication, adaptability, teamwork, leadership, and emotional intelligence affect organizational performance.

The analysis shows that communication skills (COMGR) have a positive estimate of 0.620 with a Wald statistic of 3.235, but this result is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level (p = 0.072). While communication skills are vital for effective information exchange and relationship-building within organizations (Lee et al., 2017), their direct impact on organizational outcomes in this study appears less pronounced compared to other soft skills. This could imply that the benefits of communication skills may be more indirect or context-dependent, potentially influencing other areas like teamwork or leadership more significantly.

Adaptability (ADAP) demonstrates a significant positive effect with an estimate of 0.773 and a Wald statistic of 4.239 (p = 0.040). This finding underscores the importance of adaptability in enhancing organizational outcomes. Adaptability is crucial in rapidly changing environments, as it enables employees to adjust to new challenges and opportunities, thus improving overall performance (Johnson & Brown, 2021). The significant impact of adaptability reflects its

critical role in maintaining organizational resilience and agility, particularly in the face of dynamic business conditions.

The parameter estimate for collaboration and teamwork (COLABTEAM) is 0.308 with a Wald statistic of 0.891, which is not statistically significant ( $p = 0.345$ ). This suggests that while collaboration and teamwork are essential for fostering a productive work environment (Baker, 2018), their direct effect on organizational outcomes in this study is not as evident. The role of teamwork might be more nuanced, potentially mediated by other factors such as leadership or communication, which are not fully captured in this analysis.

Leadership (LEADRSH) shows a significant positive effect with an estimate of 1.453 and a Wald statistic of 12.052 ( $p = 0.001$ ). This result highlights the critical role of effective leadership in driving organizational success. Strong leadership influences team performance and organizational direction significantly, aligning with findings from empirical studies that emphasize the importance of leadership in achieving superior outcomes (Eisenbeiss et al., 2015). The substantial impact of leadership in this study underscores its importance as a key determinant of organizational performance.

Emotional intelligence (EMOTIN) exhibits the most significant effect with an estimate of 1.981 and a Wald statistic of 44.314 ( $p < 0.001$ ). This finding indicates that employees with high emotional intelligence are likely to contribute significantly to better organizational performance. Emotional intelligence facilitates effective stress management, conflict resolution, and interpersonal relationships, all of which are essential for achieving high performance (Goleman, 2010). The strong effect of emotional intelligence underscores its critical role in enhancing organizational outcomes and overall employee well-being.

➤ *Actionable Recommendations and Best Practices for Organizations to Effectively Cultivate, Assess, and Leverage Employees' Soft-Skills to Drive Sustainable Growth and Resilience in the Post-Pandemic Era*

The post-pandemic era has underscored the critical role of soft skills in fostering sustainable growth and resilience within organizations. As businesses navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing environment, it is imperative to adopt best practices for cultivating, assessing, and leveraging employees' soft skills. The following discussion integrates empirical findings with theoretical insights to provide actionable recommendations for organizations.

Cultivating soft skills is fundamental for enhancing organizational performance and resilience. Organizations should prioritize comprehensive training programs that focus on key soft skills such as adaptability, communication, leadership, teamwork, and emotional intelligence. According to Chen et al. (2021), proactive adaptation is essential for employees to navigate uncertainty effectively. Therefore, training programs should emphasize adaptability and

flexibility, preparing employees to handle changing circumstances and evolving business priorities. Implementing regular workshops, mentoring programs, and interactive training sessions can foster these skills. For instance, Dewey et al. (2019) demonstrated that structured soft skills training positively impacts employee attitudes and service quality. By integrating these training initiatives into the organizational culture, companies can build a workforce that is better equipped to manage challenges and contribute to long-term success.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Organizations which tend to invest in these so called 'soft skills' are likely to see an overall rise in performance, cohesiveness, and efficiency of employees and teams. Interpersonal communication brings cohesiveness in working, and its flexibility allows employees to deal with volatility. Team cohesion is conducive to idea generation and the resolution of issues while the exercise of supervision increases participation as well as the promotion of the right organizational culture. Emotional intelligence also preserves the health of workforce and their satisfaction in the workplace to help enhance the organizational stability. Therefore, the inclusion of soft skills within organizational frameworks is not only advantage but a necessary element to thrive after covid-19 pandemic. The paper presents the development, evaluation and management of these skills as the critical area that organizations need to pay attention to enhance sustainable business. As such, the pro-active investment in soft-skills development could enable an organization to be more responsive to future conditions ad changes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ *Develop Comprehensive Training Programs*

The study results revealed that there is a clear relationship with organizational performance and soft skills in the employees. Therefore, organizations are advised to enhance elaborate training techniques that entail key soft skills like two manner communication, flexibility, cooperation, managerial prowess and emotional intelligence. Such programs should be needs assessment based and be appropriate to the needs and issues highlighted within the organization.

➤ *Incorporate Soft Skills Assessment into Performance Reviews*

The research further showed that soft skills' evaluation is important in determining where learners excel and where they require to be trained. From the findings, it is suggested that soft skills should be included in the performance appraisal system dim. This will assist in being able to view progress as well as lack of skills and edit developmental plans and interventions that fit individual and organizational needs.

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