

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter discusses several points related to literature reviews to support this research. This chapter explains the definition of soft skills, assessing students' soft skills and strategies in assessing students' soft skills.

Soft Skills

Definition of soft skills. In this part, the researcher provides several definitions of soft skills taken from various resources. According to Onabamiro, et al. (2014, p.109), “soft skill is a sociological term relating to a person’s emotional intelligence quotient (EIQ), the cluster of personality traits, social graces, communication, language, personal habit, friendliness and optimism that characterize relationship with other people.” Moreover, Majid, Liming, Tong, and Raihana (2012) contended “soft skills refer to personalities, attributes, qualities, and people personal behavior of individuals” (p. 1036). Rani (2010) also claimed:

Soft skills are the skill of learning, how to practice, how to play together, when and where to use our manner, the development of social grace, how to resolve conflict, how to express appreciation by learning, soft skills can lead students to grow up better. (p. 4)

In addition, Dalaya, Ishaquddin, Ghadage, and Hatte (2015) described “soft skills are people used to communicate, solve problems, and think creatively in contrast to hard skills” (p. 1).

Categories of soft skills. There were some categories of soft skills.

According to Nealy (2005), soft skills include communication, listening, team of problem solving, cross cultural relationship, and customer service. Furthermore, soft skills are also dealing with communication skill, interpersonal skill, group dynamics, team work, body language, etiquettes, selling skill, presentation skill, confidence building (Rani, 2010).

Besides, Majid, et al. (2012) argued that soft skills include communication, problem solving, self-motivation, decision making, and time management skill. Sanyal (2013) added that soft skills comprise leadership, decision-making, conflict resolution, negotiation, communication, creativity, and presentation skill. Schulz (2008) also mentioned some categories of soft skills which are communication skill, critical thinking, problem solving skill, creativity skill, teamwork capability, negotiation skill, responsibility, time management, and self-management. In this research, the researcher examined five categories of soft skills proposed by Schulz (2008) which are communication skill, critical thinking skill, creativity skill, teamwork capability, and responsibility skill as soft skills. The five categories are soft

skills written on a lesson plan of lecturers of the EED of UMY, and the researcher wanted to grasp how the lecturers assess those soft skills.

Communication skill. Communication skill is the way to interact with others. Janasz, Dowd, and Schneider (2002) defined that “communication is a process in which information flow from a source to receiver and back. We communicate because we want something to happen or we want to satisfy a need” (p. 86). Dharmajan, Pachigalla, Lanka (2012) added that “communication skill is a skill where the message is transmitted in such a way that the receiver receives it in a way the sender intended it to be” (p. 4).

Critical thinking skill. As suggested by Paul and Elder as cited in Scot (2009) “critical thinking is solve a complex problem by rising vital question, gathering relevant information, determining finding, and communicating effectively”(p. 40). Meanwhile, Bernstein, Stewart, Penner, Roy, and Wickens (2000) stated that “critical thinking is the process of evaluating propositions or hypotheses and making judgments about them on the basis of well supported evidence” (p. 20).

Creativity. Creativity is about how one develops idea. According to Barbot, Besancon, and Lubart (2011) stated that “creativity is the ability to produce something which is both new or original and task or domain appropriate”. (p.125). In addition, Janasz et al. (2002) suggested that is creativity is an new idea that produced by someone. Another definition about creativity, it supported by Bernstein et al. (2000) who claimed that “creativity is the ability to generate novel but viable or

workable solution to problem” (p. 201). Furthermore, Prucha, Walterava, and Mares (1998) as cited Trnova (2014) said that “creativity is defined as mental ability based on cognitive and motivational process where, however, an important role is played by inspiration, imagination, and institution” (p. 55).

Teamwork capability. Teamwork is doing something together in a team. According to Janasz, et al. (2002) teamwork is a “team of a formal group consisting of people who work together intensively to achieve a common group goal. The essence of teamwork is to create a product through collective effort of several individuals” (p. 310). Another definition of teamwork was stated by Dolage and Hearth (2013) that “teamwork encourage a member and facilitates cooperative, instills a sense of pride, trust and group identify. It fosters commitment, team spirit and helps the teams to achieve their goals (p. 25).

Responsibility. There are two definitions of responsibility provided in this research. Firstly, based on Oxford dictionary (2010, p. 376) “responsibility is duty to deal with or take care of” (p. 376). Secondly, according to Duangjan (2014, p. 80) “responsibility is a basic important value of ethics and is a behavioral trait that should be encourage in other to develop personal quality.”

Assessing Students’ Soft skills. Assessing students’ soft skills. Assessing students’ soft skills is important to help the lecturers to develop the students’ skills

and find out the appropriate strategies in teaching and assessing the soft skills in the classroom. Dorowoju and Onuka (2014) stated:

“assessment of soft skills is as important as hard skills and one of the challenges of soft skills assessment in school has to do with determining with appropriate method for assessing soft skills. It becomes imperative to examine the appropriate methods for assessing soft skills” (p. 608).

The Roles of a Teacher or Lecturer

A teacher is not only someone who teaches students in front of class, but also the one who has some roles in teaching Harmer (2002) mentioned that a teacher can possess several roles, namely as a controller, organizer, assessor, prompter, participant, resource, tutor, and observer.

Teachers as controllers. When acting as controllers, teachers are responsible for the class and the class or group activities. They have to “take the role, tell students things, organize drills, read aloud, and various other ways exemplify the quality teacher-fronted classroom” (Harmer, 2002, p. 58).

Teachers as organizers. As organizers, teachers manage students to undertake various activities. “This often involves giving the students’ information, telling them how they are going to do the activity, putting them in to pair or group, and finally closing things down when it is time to stop” (Harmer, 2002, p. 58)

Teachers as assessors. Students may expect that their teacher will tell them whether or not they do the things well so that teachers should have a role as assessors. Assessing the students' performance can be carried out through "offering feedback and correction, and grading students in various ways" (Harmer, 2002, p. 59)

Teachers as prompters. Another role of teachers is as prompters. For instance, "in a role-play activity, students lose the thread of what is going on or they lost of word. They may not be quite sure how to proceed. Teachers should adopt some kind of a prompting role" (Harmer, 2002, p. 60)

Teachers as participants. During a class activity, teachers may do not get engaged in the activity and let students do it by themselves. The teachers' involvements is only intervening later to offer feedback and/or correct mistakes" (Harmer, 2002, p. 60). Teachers may get involved in the activity as participants instead of teachers.

Teachers as resources. Teachers act as resources when students "ask how to say or write something or word or phrase means. Students might want to know information in the middle to ask information about where to look for something – a book or a web site for example" (Harmer, 2002, p. 61).

Teachers as tutors. When acting as tutors, teachers provide guidance for students to do an activity. Teachers can be tutors "when students are working on

longer project, such as pieces of writing or preparations for a talk or debate” (Harmer, 2002, p. 62). However, the teachers should be aware that they may not intervene too much and too little. They can also “combine the roles of prompters and resources when acting as tutors” (Harmer, 2002, p. 62).

Teacher as observer. “Teacher observes what students do (especially in oral communication activities) so that the teacher can be useful for group and individual feedback” (Harmer, 2002, p. 62).

Strategy

Strategy is the methods of approaching a problem or task modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling, and manipulating certain information (Brown, 2007, p. 260). In this research, the researcher used the definition of strategies based on oxford dictionary (2010) that a “strategy is a plan intended to achieve a particular purpose” (p. 439). Besides, Herrell and Jordan (2004:5) as cited in Thomson (2012) “strategies was define as the approaches that can be used across curricular areas to support the learning of students”(p. 4).

Lecturers’ Strategies in Assessing Students’ Soft skills.

Strategies in Assessing Students’ Soft skills. Lecturers might have various had strategies to assess their students’ soft skills. As suggested by Dorowuju et al. (2014) there are methods that could be used to assess soft skills, as stated below.

“direct method, indirect method, and combination of direct and indirect method assessment. Direct method in assessing soft skills included oral

questions, projects, standardized test, oral quizzes or examination, teacher made tests, and practical test. Indirect method included classroom observation, interview, questionnaires, and checklist. For combination direct and indirect method involve the method into two groups direct and indirect” (p. 608).

Another definition of direct and indirect methods of assessment that can be used to assess students’ soft skills is based on project LEARN SLO assessment handbook (2006) that:

“direct assessment methods require students to demonstrated knowledge and skills and provided data that measure achievement of expected outcomes.

Students have to actively do something observable and measurable using the knowledge and skills. Direct method assessment involved standardized test, embedded questions on assignment, student presentation, and scoring rubric.

Indirect assessment method require that faculty actual student skills and values from sources other than observable, direct evidence. Example of indirect method; survey “(p.1-3).

Strategies in assessing students’ communication skill. Lecturers have some strategies to assess communication skill of students through a speaking activity in long life teaching process. According to Issaias and Isa (2013, p. 1) “various assessment methods were used to promote communication skill; discussion forum and presentation.” Moreover, surveys also can be used to assess communication skill as suggested by Johnston, Fidelie, Robinson, Killion, and Behren (2012) that survey

also can be used to assess communication skill. As suggested by Johnston, Fidelie, Robinson, Killion, Behren (2012) checklist, survey, interview and essay exam are all commonly method to assess communication skill.

Strategies in assessing students' critical thinking skill. There are some strategies that can be used by the lecturer to assess students' critical thinking. As suggested by Thomas (2011) method to assess critical thinking can be done through evaluation and analysis. Next is analysis of synthesis of an arguments. For example, by putting students into small groups discussion. Another proposed by Bailin et al (1999) as cited in Lai (2011) explained that "critical thinking involves the ability to respond constructively to others during group discussion, which implies interacting in pro-social ways by encouraging and respecting the contributions of others"(p. 34).

Strategies in assessing students' creativity. The lecturers had strategy to assess creativity skill of students during process learning. Assessing creativity is measure of students' creativity. As suggested by Sternberg & Grigorenko 2007, Sternberg, Jarvin & Grikorenko 2009, 2011, Sternberg & Lubart 1995b; Sternberg & William, 1996 as cited in Sternberg (2012) explained that "assessing creativity means evaluating students as they create, invent, discover, imagine if...., and predict" (p. 8). From those activities creativity could be assessed by the lecturers.

Strategies in assessing students' teamwork skill. A strategy that lecturers can use to in assess students' teamwork is team learning. Hughes and Jones (2011) stated:

one possible approach to assess team work is through written teamwork test and comprehensive assessment of team member effectiveness (CATME) that includes contributing to the team work, interacting to the team, expecting quality (expected the team to success), having relevant knowledge skill (p.57& 59).

Lecturers' strategy in assessing students' responsibility. The method that the lecturers used to assess students' responsibility skill is conscientious in task because when students have high responsibility they always punctuality. Lewis (2001) stated that "in particular, the role classroom discipline in promoting students responsibility is examined. Duangjan (2014) stated that "the students lack their responsibility toward their studies, as is seen by their poor class attendance, lack responsibility towards their institution, as made clear by their participants and teamwork skill" (p. 80).

Theoretical Framework

In this section, the researcher presents some theories related to this research. According to Onabamiro, et al. (2014, p. 109) "soft skill is a sociological term relating to a person's emotional intelligence quotient (EIQ), the cluster of personality traits, social graces, communication, language, personal habit, friendliness and optimism that characterize relationship with other people." Meanwhile, Majid (2012) said "soft skills refer to personalities, attributes, qualities, and people personal behavior of individuals" (p. 1036).

There are many categories of soft skills. However, this research only focuses on five soft skills suggested by Schulz (2008), namely communication skill, critical thinking skill, creativity skill, teamwork skill, and responsibility skill.

The lecturers have to know everything related to the class including their students' soft skills. In this research, the researcher analyzed lecturers' strategies in assessing students' soft skills in terms of communication skill, critical thinking skill, creativity skill, teamwork skill, and responsibility skill. The lecturers have to know every soft skill that the students have. Therefore, the lecturers use some strategies to assess those soft skills to help the lecturers understand well the ability of students.

In assessing five soft skills that discussed in this research, the strategy that could be used by the lecturers to assess communication skill was discussion forum and presentation. In addition, strategies in assessing students' critical thinking was analyzing the arguments by putting students into small groups. Another strategy that could be used by the lecturer to assess creativity is evaluating students as they create, invent, discover, imagine if..., and predict. Then for strategies to assess team work written is teamwork test and comprehensive assessment of team member effectiveness (CATME) that includes contributing to the team work, interacting to the team, expecting quality (expected the team to success). The last was the strategy to assess responsibility, through self -discipline and punctuality in submitting the task.

Review of Related Studies

The researcher noticed that study of Onabamiro, et al. (2014) entitled “Teachers’ Perception of Teaching and Assessing Soft Skills in Secondary School” has the same characteristics as this research. . The objective of this study was to grasp the ability of teachers in assessing of soft skills. The study used survey to collect the data because the researchers attempted to get the data of teachers’ perception on teaching and assessing soft skills in secondary school setting in Nigeria. The population of this study was the teachers, and the samples of this study were 120 teachers from four schools. This study used random sampling.

This study reported that soft skills are teachable in secondary school. 65.4% to 89.2% were valid to make soft skills teachable in secondary school while 10.8% to 34.6% of them perceived these skills are not teachable. The findings implied that majority of teachers believed that soft skills are teachable in Nigeria secondary school, and can be taught in several ways.