

# Soft Skills Competency among OUSL Graduates- Employers' Perspective

D.A.R. Dolage<sup>1</sup> and C.N. Hearth<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Civil Engineering, The Open University of Sri Lanka, Nawala, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka

<sup>2</sup>Department of Textile and Apparel Technology, The Open University of Sri Lanka, Nawala, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka

Corresponding Author: [dadol@ou.ac.lk](mailto:dadol@ou.ac.lk), Tele: +94112881289

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**Abstract** - This study investigates into the soft skill requirement of graduates seeking employment, according to the perspectives of four types of stakeholders namely, employers, academics, graduates and current students. Eighteen soft skill types were identified and ranked according to their importance based on the mean Relative Importance Indexes (RII) computed for each soft skill type. Based on this, five most important soft skills were identified namely, Interpersonal (0.869), Leadership (0.864), Oral Communication (0.862), Decision making (0.850), and Team work (0.850). Relative Competence Indexes (RCIs) were computed for OUSL, 'other local' and foreign graduates according to the perceptions of the stakeholders of the OUSL. It was found that OUSL graduates perform poorly in relation to all the core soft skill dimensions, compared to the other two types of graduates.

**Key words;** Employment competencies, Graduate employment, Soft skills, Technical skills

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The acquisition of soft skills by a graduate of any discipline has become indispensable in the highly competitive global market, where the workplace is increasingly becoming interpersonal. This relatively new requirement of soft skill competency for career progression is gathering momentum unprecedentedly. The companies are keen to assess the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) of the applicants in a bid to select the most fitting candidate for their company. The majority of companies judge the knowledge by measuring the Intelligent Quotient of the candidate. The companies are not keen to assess the technical knowledge which is to a greater extent fulfilled by the persuasive evidence of formal academic qualifications. Any specific technical skills required for a company can be easily provided through training since the candidate is equipped with the fundamental technical skills. Nonetheless, the employers would want their future managers/executives to possess adequate levels of soft skills.

Kramer (2011) provided robust definitions for hard skills and soft skills as follows: Hard skills are the skills needed to effectively complete job tasks such as computing or machinery. They are often acquired through technical training or job preparation courses. Soft skills are the skills useful to execute the hard skills. They are the professional aptitudes that correspond with one's personality and behaviour. They include creativity, communication, problem solving, critical thinking, leadership and teamwork. According to a study by Muir (2004), soft skills such as social intelligence, collaboration, communication, listening, and novel and adaptive thinking are the critical skills that employees will need to find success in the workplace (Ketter, 2011). The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify and rank the important soft skills needed by the graduates seeking employment in the industry.
2. To evaluate and compare the level of soft skills competence among graduates based on the type of degree awarded.

## **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Graduate Unemployment in Sri Lanka**

The current primary and secondary education enrolment rates of Sri Lanka are 98% and 97% respectively, which are quite high for a developing economy. Chandrasiri (2008) ascribed this to the strategic public policy decisions taken by Sri Lankan policy makers in the 1940s to make significant investments in education and other social sectors. There are 18 state universities in Sri Lanka with an annual intake of about 22,000 students per year and the annual graduate output is around 20,000 per annum.

Over the past three decades, unemployment of graduates, with demand side problems not being addressed, has escalated into a major social, political and economic problem in Sri Lanka. In 2005, there were 40,527 unemployed graduates who sought entry to Graduate Placement Scheme (Chandrasiri, 2008).

Karunaratne (2010) points out, although universities are not meant to train graduates as in the vocational schools, certain basic attributes were lacking in the graduates, some of them being (a) lack of commitment and earnestness (b) inability to establish good relations with superiors, peers and subordinate grades (c) inadequate or lack of knowledge of English required for the job (d) insufficient familiarity with modern day technology (e) lack of enthusiasm for retraining. On account of these shortcomings, current graduates are not attractive to the privates sector whose motive, naturally, is profit making and such graduates were considered a burden.

### **2.2 Changing needs of private sector Labour market**

It is time the students and teachers realize that they must demonstrate proper behaviour to the public and to the potential employers in order to change the present attitude of

the employers and public towards the university students and graduates. The graduates should be mindful that they are in a world of advancing technologies and processes. The knowledge gained is fast becoming obsolete and the necessity of acquiring new knowledge must be recognized. Regarding, graduate unemployment, Weerakkody (2010) provides three plausible hypothesis:

- i) the prevalence of a skills mismatch where the education system is not providing what the labour market needs.
- ii) public sector employment and wage policies operating in the country lead to a queuing behaviour among the population for the attractive jobs.
- iii) existence of stringent labour market regulation prevents employment creation in the private sector.

Weerakkody (2010) reports that many studies have revealed that in general, university graduates lack basic skills sought by employers like 'speak and write' with impact, adaptability, self confidence and basic commercial knowledge.

Karunaratne (2010) says in a highly competitive world, another method for success is the acquisition of multiple skills. This emanates from the private sector employers' preference to recruit graduates who have acquired professional qualifications outside the discipline in which they have majored for the degree, eg. some engineering graduates acquiring professional qualification in other disciplines such as accountancy, management, computing and marketing.

Indraratna (2010) says private sector enterprises keep on complaining that the graduates coming from the non professional faculties of our universities are not suitable for them. They have been very slow in revising and upgrading their curricula and courses to suit the competing demands of a knowledge-based global economy.

### **2.3 Recent initiatives by state and private sector to improve soft skills**

In 2011, the Ministry of Higher Education launched a programme for the first time to introduce soft skills along with English and ICT skills to those who had been selected to state universities. This is an ongoing programme conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Defense and will be conducted at Military camps.

The World Bank project 'Higher Education for the Twenty First Century (HETC)' has different components each committed to improve certain aspects of higher education. One component, the University Development Grant (UDG) is aiming to improve is the social and economic relevance of university education and thereby to make graduates more employable. This task is to be accomplished through the following four activities:

- i) Enhancing ICT skills of students
- ii) Improving English language skills of students
- iii) Strengthening Soft Skills of students
- iv) Promoting Ethnic Cohesion among students and staff

The 18 universities and institutes eligible for the grant have proposed to implement the activity of 'Strengthening Soft Skills of students' either as a stand alone subject or by incorporating soft skills components into the existing subjects. Three instances where state sector universities have attempted to market their students are described below:

The Faculty of Engineering of the University of Moratuwa annually organizes a 'Careers Day' in collaboration with the Career Guidance Unit and the Student Association. About thirty organizations from conglomerates, banks and large private sector companies participate on this day to inform the students who have just sat the final year examination, of their selection criteria, skill requirements etc.

The Faculty of Engineering of the University of Peradeniya annually organizes an 'Industry day' (Efi 2012) with the participation of both public and private sector organizations involved in engineering, utilities and other services. On this day, these organizations can interview and select the final year undergraduates who are ready to join the industry in June 2012.

The Faculty of Management of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura conducts lectures in the evening and expects students to work in the private sector at least for short stints to gain some training. The private sector commitment to provide such short term assignments with a monthly stipend to students shows that they welcome the idea of pre degree training.

The above examples show that the prevailing trend among state sector universities to market their graduates is a harbinger to the introduction of soft skills to the undergraduates. Such early exposure to working environment will enthuse students to acquire soft skills. Providing such training in soft skills and state universities becoming more market oriented can guarantee a good future for our graduates.

## **2.4 Importance and types of soft skills**

Wijesingha (2010) says the country has to recognize that education means not just academic learning, but also the development of professional and vocational skills, and the soft skills that will allow these too to be used productively. Ample evidence can be adduced from the industry to prove that those workers who progress swiftly in employment have both excellent technical skills and soft skills. According to Drucker (1994), the decline of manufacturing has created a 'knowledge worker' class, which he estimated to be a third of the American labour force at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Muir (2004) says the effective knowledge worker works in teams, multitasks, and is a critical and creative thinker. Such a worker must adapt well to social and operational contexts. Hence, competence in soft skills which are attitudes and behaviours displayed in interactions among individuals that affect the intended outcomes is a 'must-have' in the present day context.

Owing to the competence in hard skills graduates can directly enter the path to leadership. Hence, it is worthwhile to explore what skills can guarantee their path to leadership without faltering. It is difficult to coin a single definition for Leadership, akin

to most of the other management concepts. According to Cole (2011), leadership has been defined in terms of individual personalities, leader behaviour, role relationships, follower perceptions, influence over others, influence on tasks/goals etc. Nonetheless, according to most definitions, leadership entails a primary concern to motivate a collective group of individuals to work together to achieve a common objective while alleviating any conflicts that may arise during their trek towards that objective. Cole (2011) says the leader required to be adept at soft skills, commonly known as interpersonal or social skills. The author recommends five soft skills every leader should practice: sensitization to follower expectations, inspiring others, building positive effects, communicate and listen and individuation.

It is observed that different authors adopt different types of soft skills in their studies to measure the degree of soft skills competence. Weber *et al*, (2009) adopts 101 very basic level soft skills to measure soft skill competence among entry level managers in the hospitality sector. Nyman (2006) explained five types of skills in his study on soft skills of engineers, namely Ambiguity, Relationship building, Decision making, Executive presence and Humor. Kramer (2011) having said that soft skills are used to execute the hard skills, describes soft skills are the professional aptitudes that correspond with one's personality and behaviour. They include creativity, communication, problem solving, critical thinking, leadership, and team work.

Balaji and Somashekar (2009) in their study on 'comparative study of soft skills among engineers', Identified 14 soft skills necessary for being successful, which are Leadership, Team work, interpersonal, Problem solving, Creativity/innovation, Written Communication, Oral Communication, Flexibility, Presentation, Continuous Learning, Futuristic thinking, Decision making, Self management and Listening.

Ketter (2011) says soft skills are 'must-haves' in future workplace and identifies key soft skill types namely, social intelligence, collaboration, communication, listening, and novel and adaptive thinking, which employees will need to succeed in the workplace.

The selection of soft skills needed for a particular profession depends on the nature of the profession and the culture (Ketter, 2011). The types of important skills could be numerous and training in these could be tedious and time taking. Hence, when training of staff, it is important to identify a few most important types to simplify the task. The following is a description of the 18 soft skills selected for the study of which nine skills had been included in the study by Balaji and Somashekar (2009).

### **Leadership**

Leadership is the factor that influences, motivates and challenges the membership to achieve the predetermined goals. Leadership enhances adaptability to a variety of situations and circumstances.

### **Time management**

Time management is the act or process of planning and exercising conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase effectiveness, efficiency or productivity. Time management may be aided by a range of skills, tools,

and techniques used to manage time when accomplishing specific tasks, projects and goals complying with a due date.

### **Stress management**

Stress management skill helps to plan your work in the workplace well and not letting it overwhelm you. This also helps you to feel that you are in control of your life and you are capable of making things go smoothly. The productivity of workers, adept at this skill, is high and prolonged mismanaged stress can make you feel sick and leads to low productivity.

### **Team work**

Team work encourages members and facilitates cooperation, instills a sense of pride, trust and group identity. It fosters commitment, team spirit and helps the teams to achieve their goals.

### **Negotiation**

This skill effect a process by which the involved parties or groups resolve matters of dispute by holding discussions and coming to an agreement which can be mutually agreed by them. It also refers to coming to closing a business deal or bargaining on some product. This is one of the most important skills a graduate must posses because workplace tends to have disputes, arguments which if not resolved could end up in unpleasant situations.

### **Oral Communication**

This skill helps in expressing information to individuals or groups effectively, taking into account the audience and the nature of the information. A clear and convincing oral presentation evokes good response and has desirable effect on the audience which is a key to managerial effectiveness.

### **Interpersonal**

Interpersonal skills reflect good understanding, courtesy, tact, and concern for others. It helps in developing and maintaining relationships. It helps in dealing with people who are difficult, hostile and distressed. It helps in relating well with people from varied backgrounds and situations. It is also sensitive to individual differences.

### **Problem solving**

Problem solving skills deal with the ability to identify problems and gather relevant information to solve them. It uses sound judgment to generate alternatives and evaluate them to make recommendations, which help in solving the problems.

### **Decision making**

This is an ability to make sound, well informed and objective decisions. It also perceives the impact and implications of decisions, leads to commitment even during uncertain situations to accomplish organizational goals.

### **Self management**

It sets well-defined and realistic personal goals, displays high level of initiative, effort and commitment towards completing assignments in a timely manner. It helps to demonstrate responsible behaviour, ability to work under minimal supervision, and motivation to achieve.

### **Effective thinking**

Effective thinking is not creative thinking or lateral thinking. It is being aware of and improving ones own thinking. An effective thinker consciously works at making his/her thinking more rational, clear, accurate, and consistent. An effective thinker is one who utilizes a combination of critical and creative thinking within the reasoning process.

### **Continuous learning**

This skill assists in developing the ability to learn new methods and techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge, skills and working methods. This helps one to use different training methods, provide feedback and capitalize on other opportunities for self learning and development.

### **Mind mapping**

Mind mapping helps you break large projects or topics down into manageable chunks, so that you can plan effectively without getting overwhelmed and without forgetting something important. As such, they engage much more of your brain in the process of assimilating and connecting information than conventional notes do.

### **Written Communication**

It recognizes the use of language especially English in one's professional life to transfer ideas, express feelings, report and communicate effectively at the work place.

### **Presentation**

Presentation skills have become the hallmark of successful managers. Effective presentation skills help in influencing the perceiver and reduce problems or doubts that may arise due to lack of clarity about information.

### **Adaptation to working condition**

Once a worker begins to work for a particular organization he may have to work in a different environment due to the requirements of the job. If they are not adaptive to working in different environments they will become unhappy and non productive.

### **Coping with challenges**

A person's work life presents oneself with a number of challenges which are essential for the organizational effectiveness. A profound coping ability is necessary to overcome challenges without being frustrated. This skill is very important to a graduate in a competitive market, where target setting is commonplace.

### **Attitudinal flexibility**

An attitude can be defined as a predisposition or a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person, or situation. Attitude influences an

individual's choice of action, and responses to challenges, incentives, and rewards. Since a worker has to encounter all these on a huge range, having a high degree of flexibility of attitudes is necessary for organizational effectiveness.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

A questionnaire comprising 18 statements was prepared to assess the importance of 18 soft skills types deemed to be relevant for graduate employees working in private sector organizations. All framed statements were close end type. The questionnaire was administered among four categories of stakeholders namely, managers, academics, graduates and current students. The technique of Relative Importance Index (RII) was adopted to determine the relative importance of the selected soft skills. The recipients were expected to put down their responses, to the 18 statements, in terms of ratings ranging from 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (1 - strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree).

The respondents constituted 32 managers (8 top level and 16 middle level) from private sector, 24 graduates (8 OUSL graduates, 9 'the other local graduates' and 7 foreign graduates), 22 academics and 28 current students of OUSL (12 Engineering Technology, 8 Humanities and Social Sciences and 8 Natural Sciences). The RII of each soft skill was computed by adopting the following formulae:

$$RII = \frac{\sum W}{A * N} \dots(1)$$

where W is the weighting given to each soft skill by the respondents (ranging from 1 to 5), A is the highest weight (ie. 5 in this case) and N is the total number of respondents.

It was envisaged to select the five most significant soft skills types based on the RII assigned to each soft skill in this survey. Subsequently, a second questionnaire survey was conducted in order to assess the current level of competence of the five selected soft skills among the following categories; OUSL graduates (8), 'the other local graduates' (9) and foreign graduates (7). The perceptions of the respondents were measured in the same way as in the first survey. In keeping with the objectives of the study the respondents were requested to indicate their perception using their working experience with the graduates. This survey was conducted among the top and middle level managers of the renowned private sector establishments in both industrial and service sectors. A total of thirty two managers responded by rating the responses on a Likert type scale of 1-5. In a similar manner to RII, a Relative Competence Index (RCI) was computed by adopting the following formulae:

$$RCI = \frac{\sum W}{A * N} \dots(2)$$

A brain storming session was conducted with the participation of four middle level managers and three academics who are experts on training in soft skills. The questions

asked at the brain storming session were focused on identifying the soft skills significant for graduates and the following soft skill types were short listed:

- Leadership
- Time management
- Stress management
- Team work
- Negotiation
- Oral Communication
- Interpersonal
- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Self management
- Effective thinking
- Self learning
- Mind mapping
- Written Communication
- Presentation
- Adaptation to working condition
- Coping with challenges
- Attitudinal flexibility

## **4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The RII for each soft skill type was computed with respect to the four categories of stakeholders namely, employers, academics, graduates and current students. RIIs, mean RII and ranking for each soft skill type are depicted in Table 1. The mean RII of each skill type is graphically presented in Figure 1.

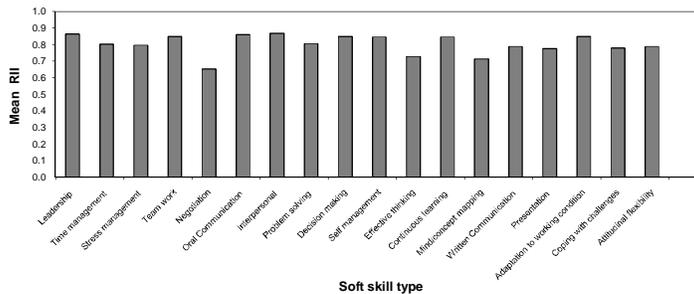
When mean RII was computed, no weighting was assigned to any particular category of stakeholders since no basis could be figured out for such a weighting. Five soft skills carried fairly high RIIs namely Interpersonal (0.869), Leadership (0.864), Oral Communication (0.862), Decision making (0.850) and Teamwork (0.850); the mean weightings are given in parentheses.

### **Interpersonal**

Lately, the working environment is increasingly becoming interactive, and the hierarchical structure is fading away. A good understanding among workers is expected of in discharging duties in order to keep a pleasant working environment. Workers at various levels have to be courteous and tactful in getting work done, which is mainly done by way of requesting rather than ordering, a practice being discouraged in the office environment. Although superior-subordinate work environment is still continuing to fulfill the requirement of inevitable formal functioning of the office (for various approvals) superiors are supposed to show respect, empathy and concern to subordinates.

**Table 1 - Relative Importance Index (RII) of soft skills**

Soft Skill Type	Relative Importance Index (RII)				Mean RII	Ranking
	Employers	Academics	Graduate	Current Students		
Leadership	0.916	0.890	0.890	0.758	0.864	2
Time management	0.800	0.850	0.850	0.714	0.804	10
Stress management	0.756	0.830	0.830	0.772	0.797	11
Team work	0.898	0.850	0.850	0.800	0.850	5
Negotiation	0.700	0.640	0.640	0.630	0.653	18
Oral Communication	0.850	0.900	0.900	0.796	0.862	3
Interpersonal	0.904	0.900	0.900	0.772	0.869	1
Problem solving	0.770	0.850	0.850	0.754	0.806	9
Decision making	0.800	0.900	0.900	0.800	0.850	4
Self management	0.800	0.910	0.910	0.766	0.847	8
Effective thinking	0.770	0.700	0.700	0.742	0.728	16
Continuous learning	0.800	0.900	0.900	0.788	0.847	7
Mind/concept mapping	0.746	0.700	0.700	0.708	0.714	17
Written Communication	0.762	0.832	0.832	0.734	0.790	12
Presentation	0.784	0.800	0.800	0.724	0.777	15
Adaptation to working condition	0.900	0.850	0.850	0.794	0.849	6
Coping with challenges	0.898	0.748	0.748	0.724	0.780	14
Attitudinal flexibility	0.900	0.750	0.750	0.758	0.790	13



**Figure 1- Relative Importance Index (RII) of soft skills**

These are the reasons why the stakeholders perceive interpersonal skills to be the most important type of soft skill that graduates seeking employment should possess.

Also the competence in this skill is required to deal with workers who are non cooperative, difficult, hostile and distressed. Since people from varying cultures, background, age group can join the workplace one has to be sensitive to individual differences.

### **Leadership**

The new trend is to get the work done by giving tasks or assignments to workers. One has to be adept at leadership which is the factor that influences, motivates and challenges the members to achieve the predetermined goals. In modern working environment imposition of rules and regulations is not encouraged and so skills in leadership are of very high importance to accomplish the given tasks. The stakeholders perceive this as an important skill because market is becoming competitive and success of ventures to a greater extent depends how much one can outperform the competitor. This can only be achieved through a potent team led by a good leader.

### **Oral Communication**

A worker is expected to express ideas and convey information to individuals, and groups effectively. Success of a business depends on how well you can convince the prospective customers. The stakeholders know the power of clear and persuasive oral presentations in evoking favourable response from the audience which is a key to outperform the competitors and to launch new product and services.

### **Decision making**

Irrespective of the position in the organization any worker has to make decisions in discharging duties. To ensure that the decisions made are profound, one must develop an ability to make informed, timely and objective decisions. Ideally, this skill enables the worker to make decisions that lead to commitment even during uncertain situations to accomplish organizational goals. Decision making is considered an important skill by stakeholders, lack of which makes them indecisive and seek decisions of the superior constantly.

### **Teamwork**

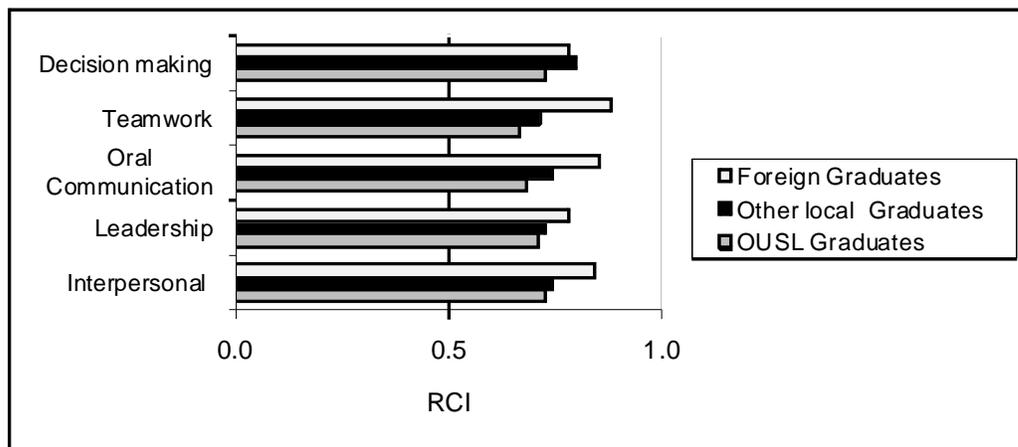
When job tasks are analysed in the present context, one will realize that they are mostly teamwork. Firms have begun to realize that team work encourages members and facilitates cooperation among members. It also instills a sense of pride, trust and group identity which will make them do more than their individual job tasks. This will help the work to progress smoothly with minimum interruptions. Since the stakeholders are conscious about the productivity, this is rated as an important skill.

In the second survey, the employers' perception on the competence of these five skills was assessed. Table 2 depicts the Relative Competence Index (RCI) of the five most important soft skills among the three categories of graduates namely, OUSL graduates, 'other local graduates' and foreign graduates. Figure 2 provides a graphical representation of RCI of the five soft skills among the three categories of graduates.

**Table 2 - Relative Competence Index (RCI) of soft skills**

Soft Skill Type	OUSL Graduates	Other local Graduates	Foreign Graduates
Interpersonal	0.724	0.742	0.842
Leadership	0.710	0.728	0.782
Oral Communication	0.684	0.742	0.854
Teamwork	0.666	0.714	0.882
Decision making	0.728	0.800	0.782

In comparison to both 'other local' graduates and foreign graduates, the OUSL graduates perform poorly in all important soft skills namely Interpersonal, Leadership, Oral communication, Teamwork and Decision making. However, Oral communication and teamwork skills of the OUSL graduates are far off from 'other local' and foreign graduates. The fact that OUSL graduates underperform significantly with respect to the above two skills can be attributed to the deficiency in the mode of imparting knowledge, i.e. Open Distance Learning (ODL). Since OUSL students do not attend lectures akin to conventional universities the number of face to face interactive sessions with the academics is fewer. These kinds of skills can only be acquired through participating in interactive sessions with academics, instructors and fellow students. This leaves OUSL students having less opportunity to master both these skills of Oral communication and Teamwork.



**Figure 2 - Relative Competence Index (RCI) of soft skills**

According to the analyses and the literature findings, the possible causes for the problems can be summarized as below:

- Failing to identify the emerging needs and expectations of stakeholders concerning soft skills
- Not having a systematic plan to incorporate useful soft skills components into academic programmes
- Greater attention is being paid to the development of hard skills but scant attention to developing soft skills of undergraduates.
- Neither a compulsory nor elective course is offered to train and impart knowledge in soft skills

The above analysis shows OUSL graduates are lacking in all the five most important soft skills. This indicates that OUSL programmes are not adequately geared to improve the essential soft skills which the potential employers are looking for. It is obvious that lack of proficiency in these important soft skills affects the employability of fresh graduates as well as the career progression of those who are already employed. The forming of the Career Guidance Unit (CGU) in year 2009 at the OUSL is an important step towards improving the employability of undergraduates. The CGU is currently engaged in conducting soft skill programmes for the students registered at the OUSL.

## **5 CONCLUSION**

The literature review identified 32 types of soft skills in which graduates should be competent with in order to enhance employability. Through a brain storming session, participated by four types of stakeholders namely, employers, academics, graduates and current students, this list was reduced to a manageable 18 soft skills, which are essentially needed by the graduates seeking employment in the industry.

According to the perceptions of the four types of stakeholders, the soft skills were ranked, based on RIIs, in the following manner (the rank is given in parentheses).

Interpersonal (1), Leadership (2), Oral Communication (3), Decision making (4), Team work (5), Adaptation to working condition (6), Continuous learning (7), Self management (8), Problem solving (9), Time management (10), Stress management (11), Written Communication (12), Attitudinal flexibility (13), Coping with challenges (14), Presentation (15), Effective thinking (16), Mind mapping (17), Negotiation (18).

In order to assess soft skills competence among graduates based on the type of degree awarded, the five most important skills were adopted, namely Interpersonal (1), Leadership (2), Oral Communication (3), Decision making (4), Team work (5). Using the Relative Competence Index (RCI) the soft skills competence of the OUSL, 'other local' and foreign graduates were computed.

In general, competence of soft skills of foreign graduates is far greater than that of OUSL graduates and 'other local' graduates. However, soft skills competence of 'other local'

graduates is only marginally better than OUSL graduates. According to RCI, with respect to all the five types of soft skills, the OUSL graduates perform poorly in relation to both 'other local' and foreign graduates. Further, Oral communication and Teamwork skills of the OUSL graduates are far lower than those of 'other local' and foreign graduates. The opportunities available for the OUSL graduates to improve these skills are limited due to the mode Open Distance Learning (ODL) in which they pursue their programmes. Hence, the courses should be conducted in such a way that they contain an optimum number of activities directly geared to improve Oral communication and Teamwork skills.

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