

## MANAGERIAL & SOFT SKILLS: THE PERCEPTION OF STIE PERBANAS SURABAYA STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

The study aims to observe STIE Perbanas Surabaya undergraduate students' perception about managerial and soft skills. Another objective is to examine the differences of the interest between management and accounting students. The research design is exploratory research, using the questionnaires with 14 items as instrument for collecting the data. The sampling technique is judgment sampling and it consists of 55 accounting students and 42 management students. The analysis technique is conducted by descriptive and independent sample t-test analysis.

The result finds that both the management and accounting students state that managerial and soft skills are important for their future wealth fare. The managerial skills consist of making decision and eliminating risk skill, making report skill, analysis skill, communication skill, the skill of strategic and critique making a economic decision, risk identifying skill, and skill of identifying reliable and relevant measurement to make economic decision. The soft skills consist of self confidence, skill of team work, the ability to make relationship with the other person, innovation ability, oral and writing communication skill, honesty, and ability to work in time and target pressure. The other research finding is that there isn't difference of the perception of interest level of managerial and soft skills between the management and accounting students. Based on such findings, it is advisable that STIE Perbanas Surabaya should place the managerial and soft skills in organizing the curriculum, especially before the students graduate from the institution.

**Keywords:** *Managerial Skill; Soft Skill; Management Students; Accounting Students*

### 1. BACKGROUND

The entrepreneurs, including general managers, sales managers, production managers, financial managers, accounting managers and so on have to play multiple roles in a business and developed a wide range of managerial skills. Because of that, managerial and soft skills are very important abilities for the alumni of undergraduate program in their jobs where they work. Now the process of teaching at STIE Perbanas Surabaya undergraduate program has not yet been paid attention in considering the managerial and soft skill aspects.

The users' opinion said that the alumnus of STIE Perbanas Surabaya accounting undergraduate who had managerial and soft skills should be noticed by the institution to provide them, especially for improving their self confidence, team work, interpersonal skills, innovation in the job, and effective communication both oral and written, making decision and taking risk, ethical attitude and behavior, and objective, clear, and verified

professional financial reporting (Wilopo, 2007). Although it's the users' opinion of accounting undergraduate, in fact, the users' opinion is not only for accounting undergraduate alumnus, but for all institution alumni. If that is so, managerial and soft skills are needed for STIE Perbanas Surabaya students. Before being applied, it's better to know the students' perception about the learning process of managerial and soft skills.

This study aims to observe and understand STIE Perbanas Surabaya students' perception about managerial and soft skills. In addition, the other purpose of the study is to observe the differences of the perception between management and accounting students. Furthermore, this research result will help the institution to improve the learning process, especially in accounting department.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The business school students will need to understand business and society as a complex, dynamic, and interdependent system and carefully explore theory, use frameworks, and build skills to match each other (Samuelson, 2006). It's needed to seek a new rigor that replaces *homo economicus* with a professional stance devoted to a larger purpose—where morals, ethical reasoning, and careful judgment truly matter. The undergraduate students not only have to understand about the managerial skill, but must to know about soft skill.

In this study managerial skill consists of making decision and eliminating risk skill, making report skill, analysis skill, communication skill, the skill of strategic and critique making an economic decision, risk identifying skill, and skill of identifying reliable and relevant measurement to make economic decision. While the soft skill consists of self confidence, skill of team work, the ability to make relationship with the other person, innovation ability, oral and writing communication skill, honesty, and ability to work in time and target pressure.

### 2.1. Managerial Skill

The managerial skill consists of:

1. Making decision and eliminating risk skill.  
Every time, a manager must make decision. In decision making, a manager selects many alternatives in which each alternative contains risk. Therefore, he or she has to attempt to select the alternative with lowest risk.
2. Making report skill.  
Data alone were of little value. The objective of gathering empirical data was to communicate and to inform decision making. Once data were collected, they were compiled in reports to higher management and the public. The reports served managerial purposes and contributed to informed decision making and better management (William, 2003). Therefore, if an undergraduate alumnus wants to work in an office, he or she has to possess a making report skill.
3. Analytical skill.  
In hiring MBA graduate, Zabid A.R., 2003 explained that the key factor considered by employers was e.g. analytical skill of the graduate. The analytical skill is required not only in hiring MBA graduate, but if someone will be a best staff in an office, he or she has to have an analytical skill. Therefore an undergraduate alumnus required an analytical skill too if he or she work in an office.
4. Communication skill

Douglas, C. et al, 2006, quoted Norton, 1993, said that communicator style, or the way one communicates, signals to help the receiver process, interpret, filter, or understand literal meaning and posited that receivers perceive meaning through style. It means that

5. Skill of strategic and critique making an economic decision.  
Parente, D et al, 2006, quoted McManus, 1995, explained that one of the assumptions of management development programs and management education programs, is that all managers will benefit from acquiring some *strategic* knowledge, skills, and abilities. With a strategic skill, a manager can make an economic decision
6. Risk identifying skill  
Return and risk are two major dimensions of business decisions. While return is a well-identified factor, risk is less understood (Johnson, K., 2007). In other words, a manager have to understand and can identify a risk, especially in his or her company. Enterprise risk management is a process, effected by an entity's board of directors, management and other personnel, applied in strategy setting and across the enterprise, designed to identify potential events that may affect the entity, and manage risk to be within its risk appetite, to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of entities objectives.
7. Skill of identifying reliable and relevant measurement to make economic decision  
The objective of financial reporting is to provide information useful to financial information users in making economic decisions (Barth, M.E., 2006). A manager has to understand which the reliable and relevant measurement that uses to make decision, especially economic decisions.

## 2.2. Soft Skill

The ability to utilize interpersonal skills is essential in workplace. Interpersonal skills often referred soft skills (Nealy, 2005). In this research, soft skills consist of:

1. Self confidence  
Moreno, 2007, quoted Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998, explained that self confidence positively effected on individual motivation and performance. Self confidence is defined as a person's conviction about his or her abilities to successfully execute a given task within an identified context. In addition, Moreno, 2007 said that self confidence has characteristics as hope, confidence, resilience, and optimism. If an undergraduate alumnus will be success in the workplace, he or she has to learn how to confidentially behave.
2. Skill of team work  
Teamwork has enhanced the ability of firms to successfully compete in the global market by productivity (Chansler, Phil., 2003). The use of teams has become popular in organizations attempting to remain competitive in today's increasingly global marketplace. Therefore a manager has to know well about how to work in a team. Not only a manager, in the global competition like this decade, every person in the company must understand to work as a team.
3. The ability to make relationship with the other person  
Teams basically left to run themselves can be highly efficient and productive. Success in this area requires three behaviors: being socially and politically aware, building team trust, and caring for team members (Druskat, 2004). Substantially, a manager must have a good relationship with other person, if he or she wants to be a success manager.

4. Innovation ability  
Yuan Duen Lee et al, 2006, quoted Kunkee, 1997, explained that the term 'innovation ability' refers to an organization's capacity to discover previously unrecognized areas of enterprise. In the global decade, if a company wants to survive, the management must be creative and innovative. Therefore, the undergraduate alumnus wants to work in a company, must be a creative and innovative person.
5. Oral and writing communication skill  
Oral communication skills include the ability to listen, converse, follow instructions, communicate with others, and participate in meetings (Ulinski, 2002). There is no doubt writing is an essential public relations skill (Wise, 2005). A good manager must have oral and writing communication skill, because every time he or she needs to present his or her idea and opinion to the colleague or the superior. Therefore, an undergraduate alumnus need to understand oral and writing communication skill if he or she wants to be a good manager.
6. Honesty  
Marques, J., 2007 explained that honesty enhances ownership, brings forth shared responsibility, elicits sense of respect, creates and enhances team spirit, engenders a healthier atmosphere, acknowledges a sense of wholesomeness among colleagues, radiates the message of fairness, and provides peace of mind and a sense of dignity. Then, the honesty is very important for a manager who wants to achieve a highest position in the firm.
7. Ability to work in time and target pressure.  
Effective managers know that not all stress is bad, hard work doesn't kill (Patsula Media, 2001). Effective managers understand and can manage time and achieve a target that be tasked to them. Therefore, a good manager is a person who can work in time and target pressure.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

The study uses a survey method in which the data were collected by questionnaire. The population is STIE Perbanas Surabaya students with a judgment sampling. In addition, the variables observed are managerial and soft skills. The research tries to explore the students' perception about the importance of managerial and soft skills. The indicators of variables are taken from STIE Perbanas Surabaya tracer study (Wilopo, 2007). Variable measurement is by means of Likert Scale, explaining that score "1" indicates disagreeing and score "5" the most agreeing.

In terms of Validity and Reliability, a Validity test is performed to test the capability of a measurement tool in measuring an object. The test is performed by correlating the variable score with the total score. The validity test shows that the correlation level is  $> 0.3$  and significant at alpha 5%. It means that the variables are valid. The reliability is a measure of the internal consistency of variables indicators. A questionnaire is reliable if the answer of a questionnaire is consistent and stable. In the study *Cronbach's* alpha is used to measure the reliability of the questionnaire. A measure is reliable if an alpha value of the coefficient  $> 0.6$  (Hair et al, 2006). The reliability test result shows that the value of *Cronbach's* alpha is 0.8520 for managerial skill and 0.6242 for soft skill. It means that the instrument of the study is reliable.

In regards of Analysis Technique, the research uses descriptive analysis and independent sample t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The descriptive analysis is

used to explain the respondents character. Independent sample t-test is used to test the difference of the management student' and accounting student' perception toward managerial and soft skills. The analysis of variance is used to test the difference of the student perception toward the need of managerial and soft skills among the intake period of the student and the student CGPA.

#### 4. RESEARCH RESULTS

##### Respondent Description

The questionnaire is sent to 150 students and backed questionnaire is 115. From the questionnaire only 97 responses can be analyzed. Table 1 shows the respondent character.

**Table 1**  
**Respondent Character**

Intake Period	Respondent	%
< 2003	7	7.3
2004	44	45.4
2005	45	46.4
Not Identified	1	1
	97	100
Program	Respondent	%
Accounting	55	56.7
Management	42	43.3
	97	100
CGPA	Respondent	%
2.50-2.74	8	8.2
2.75-3.00	31	32
3.01-3.49	30	30.9
3.50-4.00	25	25.8
Not Identified	3	3.1
	97	100

Table 1 shows that 45.4% respondent intake in 2004 and 46.4% respondent in 2005. The accounting student respondent is 56.7% and the management student respondent is 43.3%. The respondent having CGPA at 3.50 – 4.00 is 25.8%, CGPA at 3.01 – 3.49 is 30.9%, CGPA at 2.75 – 3.00 is 32%, and CGPA at 2.50 – 2.74 is 8.2%.

##### Results

The result of normality test using K – S Test shows that the data is normal. The significance value of the perception of the need toward managerial skills is 0.129 and toward soft skills is 0.1123 and more than 0.05. It means that the data has a normal distribution.

##### The perception toward the need of managerial skills

The analysis of the student perception about managerial skills shows that the highest score of managerial skills is communication skill score. The score is 4.48. It means that the effective communication skill is a most important requirement for the student if they

will work in the future. According to the study program, the average score of accounting student is 4.31 and the average score of management student is 4.26.

The independent sample t-test result shows that the significant value is  $0.636 > 0.05$ . It means that there is not a different perception of the management student and accounting student about the need of managerial skills if they will look for a job in the future. According the intake period, the average score of the 2003 student is 4.00, the 2004 student average score is 4.27, and the 2005 student average score is 4.33.

The analysis of variance result shows that the significant value is  $0.284 > 0.05$ . It means that there is not a different perception among students that managerial skills are a most important requirement for them if they will work in the future. According to the students CGPA, for the students having CGPA 2.50 – 2.74, the managerial skill score is 4.21, for the students having CGPA 2.75 – 3.00, the managerial skill score is 4.15, for the students having CGPA 3.01 – 3.49, the managerial skill score is 4.46, and for the students having CGPA 3.50 – 4.00, the managerial skill score is 4.28. By ANOVA test, the result of significant value is  $0.112 > 0.05$ . It means that there is not the different perception among the students about the need of managerial skills if they will work in the future. The result of the analysis is showed in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**The student perception about managerial skills**

Managerial skill	Score	Program	Score	Intake Period	Score	CGPA	Score
Making decision and eliminating risk skill	4.25	Accounting	4.31	< 2003	4.00	2.50-2.74	4.21
Making report skill	4.26	Management	4.26	2004	4.27	2.75-3.00	4.15
Analytical skill	4.25	Sign. t-test	0.636	2005	4.33	3.01-3.49	4.46
Communication skill	4.48			Sig. ANOVA	0.284	3.50-4.00	4.28
Skill of strategic and critique making an economic decision	4.29					Sig. ANOVA	0.112
Risk identifying skill	4.29						
Skill of identifying reliable and relevant measurement to make economic decision	4.21						

#### **The perception toward the need of soft skills**

The highest score of the respondent answer toward the questionnaire is an indicator of the need for self confidence. The score is 4.75. The lowest score of the respondent answer is an indicator of the need for ability to work in time and target pressure. The score is 3.88. It means that the self confidence is a most important soft skill, on other hand the ability to work in time and target pressure is unimportant soft skill for the respondent.

The result of independent sample t-test shows that significant value is  $0.605 > 0.05$ . It means that there is not a different perception among the management student and the accounting student toward the need of soft skills if they work in the future. The average score of soft skill is 4.27 for students in taking before 2003, and 4.47 for students in taking in 2004 and 2005.

The result of ANOVA shows that the significant value is  $0.406 > 0.05$ . It means that there is not the different perception from the 2003, 2004, and 2005 students about the need of

soft skills. The soft skill is important for the students if they will work in the future. For the students having CGPA 2.50 – 2.74, the soft skill score is 4.36, for the students having CGPA 2.75 – 3.00, the soft skill score is 4.39, for the students having CGPA 3.01 – 3.49, the soft skill score is 4.39, and for the students having CGPA 3.50 – 4.00, the soft skill score is 4.46. By ANOVA test, the result of significant value is  $0.517 > 0.05$ . It means that there is not the different perception among the students about the need of soft skills if they will work in the future. The result of the analysis is pictured in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**The students' perception about soft skills**

Soft skill	Score	Program	Score	Intake Period	Score	CGPA	Score
Self confidence	4.75	Accounting	4.47	< 2003	4.27	2.50-2.74	4.36
Skill of team work	4.34	Management	4.43	2004	4.47	2.75-3.00	4.39
Ability to make relationship with the other person	4.59	Sign. t-test	.605	2005	4.47	3.01-3.49	4.52
Innovation ability	4.33			Sig. ANOVA	0.406	3.50-4.00	4.46
Oral and writing communication skill	4.62					Sig. ANOVA	0.517
Honesty	4.68						
Ability to work in time and target pressure	3.88						

### Discussion

The study result finds that the all student of STIE Perbanas Surabaya, that there are the accounting student and the management student, students from all intake periods, and having a good or bad CGPA, have the same perception about the managerial and soft skills. They view that managerial and soft skills are most important for them if they will work in the future. The study result supports the literature review and the early researches about managerial and soft skills. The most important managerial and soft skills needed by the STIE Perbanas Surabaya students are the effective communication skill and the self confidence. Those skills can be provided by giving "a task for the student group with a certain role" having to be presented in a class. The providing a certain role for the student group in the learning process will practice and train the students for having a self confidence and a responsibility to the role provided to them.

### 5. CONCLUSION

According to the analysis of the study, the conclusion of the result research can be explained as:

1. The most important indicator of managerial skills is the effective communication skill and the most important of soft skills is a self confidence.
2. The accounting student and the management student have a same perception about the need of managerial skills and soft skills in providing them before working.
3. The requirement of managerial and soft skills is really needed for the all student in STIE Perbanas Surabaya that they are junior or senior students and they have good or bad CGPA.

The research result provides suggestions:

1. The research result hopes that STIE Perbanas Surabaya provides the content of managerial and soft skills in all process of education learning, especially before the students graduate and work.
2. The most important contents of managerial and soft skills are the effective communication skill and the self confidence. Those skills can be provided by giving "a task for the student group with a certain role" having to be presented in a class. The providing a certain role for the student group in the learning process will practice and train the students for having a self confidence and a responsibility to the role provided to them.

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