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TRANSFER OF LEADERSHIP SOFT SKILLS ON THE EXAMPLE OF
BACHELOR'S BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
TARTU

Bachelor's Thesis

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Tartu 2021

This paper conforms to the requirements for the Analysis paper

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(signature of the supervisor)

Admitted for defense “ “.....(date)

I have written this Research paper/Bachelor Thesis independently. Any ideas or data taken from other authors or other sources have been fully referenced.

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Introduction

“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other”. (John F. Kennedy, 35th President of the United States)

Employers are seeking the best fit, and employees are looking for the best jobs. Currently, the data from the most popular employment-oriented social networking app LinkedIn shows that employers are checking both soft and hard skills while recruiting as both of them play an important role during the job performance ("The Top Skills In Demand For 2020—And How to Learn Them", 2020). Moreover, even after recruiting, companies are making trainings for their new employees, for example, according to Forbes, Bersin (2020) the US spending on the trainings increased by 15% in 2019 to 70 billion dollars in the US, and 130 billion dollars worldwide, which is the peak of the growth rate in the last 7-years period.

The demand for the soft skills for employees is growing day by day, the soft skills trainings according to Research Markets (2020), grew by 12% in compound annual growth rate during the 5-year time period from 2014 to 2019 globally. The soft skills can be defined as a “combination of interpersonal and social skills” (Dixon, Belnap, Albrecht, & Lee, 2010, 35-38). But in theoretical part author will discuss this term more in details by providing different definitions. Soft skills include in itself various skills like presentation skills, negotiation, communication, time management skills, leadership skills and etc (Soft Skills, 2020). Leadership soft skills is one of the categories of the soft skills and this paper is going to focus on the leadership soft skills.

Recruiters meet concerns when they face graduate students in the working places. On the one hand, soft skills are needed when adapting a new employee, on the other hand, modern realities require new skills from leaders, so universities that try to provide the most advanced knowledge on hard skills should also be aware of what soft skills the future leaders need and on an equal footing with hard skills also require purposeful development. Moreover, future success at work is largely dependent on soft skills ("Soft Skills Training in the Workplace: Upskill Employees", 2021). The future skills will be discussed more in details in the theoretical part.

Bersin (2020) states that companies spend a lot of money and time for their new employees to adapt to the working conditions and be productive in their companies, because

those new employees didn't have a lot of experience and knowledge in their universities on leadership soft skills. Author thinks that if companies spend a lot of money on training their employees for soft skills, it would be better both for employees and employers to be already skilled or at least having some background from the universities. Despite the fact that companies spend a lot of money on the trainings, still even big companies are failing on the transfer of the skills (Grossman & Salas, 2011). Transfer process has 3 main components: characteristics, learning design and work environment, according to Baldwin and Ford (1988). These characteristics will be analyzed in more details in theoretical part.

The aim of this paper is to investigate which of the main leadership soft skills are being touched in university and how, with which transfer process components they are being transferred on example of the Bachelor's Business Administration Program.

For achieving the aim of the research paper, the future tasks would be as mentioned below:

- To introduce the term "leadership soft skills", its benefits and importance;
- To introduce the term "transfer process" and its components;
- To introduce the variations of "teaching methods", which is a part of transfer process components;
- To present comparison and the variety of empirical studies on the topic of training transfer;
- To retrieve information from Study Information System (SIS) regarding courses taught on BBA program in the University of Tartu;
- To conduct empirical study with lecturers of Bachelor's Business Administration of the UT in order to see what kind of leadership soft skills are taught in the university and what are the main methods used to facilitate to transfer process;
- To make a questionnaire and a focus group interview with students in order to know what kind of studying objectives are students expected to obtain.
- To bring all research methods and make a summary from all findings

Despite the increased relevance and popularity of this topic, there are still very few studies among students and the author of the work was unable to find more than one on the example of students from Estonian universities and even universities from the Baltic countries.

Moreover, there are studies about soft skills transfer, but there are not so many studies regarding the leadership soft skills transfer.

Bachelor's Business Administration students of Tartu University is a good example of transfer of leadership soft skills because according to the QS World Rankings (2020), University of Tartu is the best in the Baltic States, and it has the biggest number of students in Estonia. The importance of soft skills is not only in managerial fields of workplaces, but also in very different spheres, because in this paper soft skills are in contact of leadership itself, not management. For example, not only in managerial fields, but also in finance, to be productive and successful for the organization, soft skills, mostly communication, decision making, problem solving, and teamwork are key skills to achieve the better working environment and successful path to the improvement of the career. (Dixon, Belnap, Albrecht, & Lee, 2010). Moreover, academic articles and online sources will be used as references. There is a big variety of academic sources on leadership soft skills and transfer process separately, even on soft skills in online education conditions. (Tseng, Yi, & Yeh, 2019).

This paper consists of two parts, theoretical and empirical. The theoretical part of this paper covers the relevance of leadership soft skills and the training transfer process in general in working places based on scholars and articles, training transfer process components and its examples, while the empirical part focuses on interviews with the University of Tartu students – who are partaking in BBA program, and the lecturers who are teaching those students. Interviews with lecturers, questionnaire and a focus group interview are held in the empirical part to make a deeper analysis to reach aim of the paper. Furtherly, more information about this will be elaborated in next chapters.

Keywords: Soft skills, leadership, University of Tartu, transfer process, leadership skills

1. Theoretical Background of Leadership soft skills and the Transfer Process

1.1 Leadership Soft Skills

As Leadership soft skills are intangible, AbuJbara & Worley (2018) state that leadership soft skills should be a part of the curriculum from the early stages of education so that students will be prepared to face job market's demands in future having more knowledge about the leadership soft skills. Moreover, both soft and hard skills are in demand in workplaces and managers are looking for candidates which have both skills ("Upskill Your Employees with the

Skills Companies Need Most in 2020", 2020). Hard skills and soft skills differ from each other with the fact that hard skills is the performance of the specific task list in the certain field of work, but soft skills is applicable to any other field as well, and soft skills are broader and assigned to more interpersonal skills (Hendarman & Tjakraatmadja, 2012). While hard skills are more technical and tangible practice oriented, soft skills require qualitative kind of methods of transfer, thus soft skills are harder to teach in comparison with hard skills, because hard skills could be taught through practice and repetition ("Why Hard Skills Matter", 2020). Soft skills are getting more and more in demand in today's job market and it means that it is also becoming more competitive, for instance, even in the job interview itself some of the skills are important to introduce a candidate's abilities (Schulz, 2008). Moreover, according to Schulz (2008), hard and soft skills are both significant, but it is not very professional to use those skills to mask or hide the specific area of specialty.

Leadership soft skills is one of the categories of the soft skills ("What are soft skills? Top 15 Soft Skills examples, Workable", 2020). According to Ngang, Prachak & Saowanee, (2013), the productive leadership is linked to the successful achievement of the organization or the company, and in order to run successful business, organizations are seeking for leaders who can make greater innovation henceforward.

For successful organizations, both managers and leaders are vital, and business played an important role for creation of the new breed of leadership, management (Zaleznik, 1977). Even though management and leadership have common intersections, leadership comes from the personal power, while management comes from the positional power (Toor, 2011). In this research paper, the context for leadership soft skills is not exactly for managerial positions, but for leadership skills, because leadership is obsolete definition and it is possible that leaders are not only in working places as managers, but also in any other spheres, as leadership soft skills are important and universal to any other employees as well. (Kotterman, 2006). The reason why suggested skills are leadership specific even though they can be applied to regular employees as well, is that these skills are not necessarily supposed to be for managerial positions. For example, in the organization, there are different teams and situations where workers would need leadership soft skills in that environment. According to Bertocci (2009), managers are of course expected to have leadership skills in the organizations, but the difference is that managers are having more formal requirements for their positions, while leaders are

giving more vision for their followers in the teams. For this reason author uses the term of 'leader' throughout this paper.

In order to have a better understanding of collected definitions, Table 1 has been designed. The list of leadership soft skills from different authors has been introduced to categorize all provided skills and make a list of them.

The term "leadership soft skills" embodies a multitude of concepts which are as in Table 1. Mostly authors agree with the fact that leadership soft skills are social or interpersonal skills, however, some authors agree with social and interpersonal skills, but also add individual or intrapersonal skills. But all definitions are gathering in one idea that working with other individuals and being able to communicate and socialize with them is a leadership soft skills' character, according to Table 1.

Table 1.

Definitions and list of leadership soft skills

Definitions and list of leadership soft skills	Author/s and year
"combination of interpersonal and social skills"	(Dixon, Belnap, Albrecht, & Lee, 2010, p. 35)
"skills that related to human skills focusing on the competency in working with other individuals"	(Ariratana, Sirisookslip & Ngang, 2015, 332)
"..The ability to work under pressure, The ability to plan and think strategically, The capability to communicate and interact with others, either in teams or through networking, Good written and verbal communication skills, Creativity and self-confidence..."	(Andrews & Higson, 2008, p. 413)
"...a person's skills, abilities and degree of influence to get people moving in a direction, making decisions and doing things that they would typically not have embarked on."	(Aldulaimi, 2018, p.1)
"collaboration/teamwork; communication skills; initiative; leadership ability; people development/coaching; personal effectiveness/personal mastery; planning and organizing; and presentation skills."	"Crosbie, 2005, p. 47"
Inspiring teammates by giving feedback, taking initiatives and successful change management	"Ginting, Mahiranissa, Bekt & Febriansyah, 2020, p. 2"

Source: *compiled by the author with reference to given sources*

As discussed before, both definitions and list of skills are mostly focused on social or interpersonal skills, however, some authors also add individual or intrapersonal skills. For example, Crosbie (2005) introduced skills which are on individual level like effectiveness and development, while Ginting, Mahiranissa, Bektı & Febriansyah (2020) selected leadership soft skills on their research like something impacting and inspiring on others.

As it is shown from the table, there are many different definitions yet some of them are common as well, mostly authors agree about non-cognitive and social skills which are considered as a leadership and communication skills (Table 1).

Based on the Table 1, authors' definitions could be grouped:

- Authors who associate leadership soft skills with social skills;
- Authors who associate leadership soft skills as an influence on different individuals and interpersonal skills;
- Authors who associate leadership soft skills with individual skills.

Firstly, Dixon, Belnap, Albrecht, & Lee, (2010), Andrews & Higson (2008) and Crosbie, (2005) stated that leadership soft skills are social and interpersonal skills. Andrews & Higson (2008) and Crosbie, (2005) both highlighted planning and organizing as interpersonal skills.

Secondly, Ariratana, Sirisookslip & Ngang (2015) mostly focus on the social skills like communication and interaction with different people.

Thirdly, Aldulaimi (2018) states about the leadership soft skills as an influence on different individuals and their directions but also add interpersonal skill like decision-making.

According to World Economic Annual Forum (2020), there are 4 skills which future leadership should be trained in universities so students can benefit from their future work, which are: using more technology in communication, having more co-operation involved activities, maintaining the life of learning of the students, making students being aware of the position, vision and mission of the organization in order to know the importance of it in the society (How universities must adapt to train future leaders, 2020). This is a good example to ask teaching staff interviewees if that kind of environment is used in the classroom. These future skills are also part of the training process.

Moreover, the list of skills is varying, yet in some small details authors agree with each other. Crosbie (2005) and Andrews & Higson (2008) have used more personal and

communication skills, while Ginting, Mahiranissa, Beki & Febriansyah (2020) is focusing on the impact for the others by the leaders. To categorize given skills from Table 1, the study about the soft skills was found, which divides those skills into two subcategories: Intrapersonal and Interpersonal skills Sunarto, (2015). The difference between intrapersonal and interpersonal skills is that intrapersonal is more personal and individual, while interpersonal is focusing more on working with others Sunarto, (2015).

According to that selection, skills introduced on Table 1 will be divided as well to subcategories.

The table 2 is compiled to categorize the leadership soft skills based on the previous definitions. This table will be base of the questions for interviews.

Table 2.

Types of leadership soft skills

Intrapersonal skills	Interpersonal skills
Personal effectiveness/mastery	Collaboration/teamwork
Planning and organizing	Communication skills
Presentation skills	People development/coaching
The ability to work under pressure	Inspire teammates by giving feedback
The ability to plan and think strategically	
Good written and verbal communication skills	
Taking initiative	
Change-management	

Source: *compiled by the author with reference to given sources from Table 1*

Leadership soft skills interview questions will be based on Table 2.

Throughout this chapter the term “leadership soft skill” was introduced from different authors and analyzed, and next chapter is going to cover the term transfer process to introduce its characteristic and importance for achieving the transfer of skill.

1.2 Training Transfer Process

The definition of “training transfer process” and its factors in details are discussed in this chapter.

The training transfer is the process of using applied training in the workplace (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). The transfer problem is the failure of the trainee to apply learned skills in the

job (Ford & Weissbein, 1997). The most popular and one of the old studies about “transfer process” was introduced by Baldwin and Ford (1988) stating that there are 3 factors during the transfer process which are trainee characteristics, training design, and the work environment. The meanings of those transfer process indicators are described below in Table 3.

Table 3.

Training transfer process components

Name of the factor	Meaning
Trainee characteristics	“ability, personality, motivation”(p.65)
Training design	“principles of learning, sequencing, training content”(p.65)
Work environment	“support, opportunity to use”(p.65)

Source: *compiled by the author with the reference to Baldwin and Ford (1988, p.65)*

The theory provided by Baldwin and Ford (1988) is one of the main ones and, and the main idea of factors in many other studies is taken from there. Even though Baldwin and Ford’s training transfer process (1988) is one of the main studies, author searched for leadership skills transfer process separately as well, to compare and see if there is a difference and proceed in empirical part based on these studies as one is the main one but broader, and the following one is more leadership specific. According to Vandergoot, Sarris, Kirby (2019), based on the 147 sample respondents from the organization to investigate what affects the transfer of leadership-management skills, where 52% of the variance accounted for individual characteristics and work environment for training development, and 41% of the variance accounted for the training maintenance with work environment and trainee characteristics. It is possible to say that Vandergoot, Sarris, Kirby’s study (2019) did not focus on the training design and, because the research was provided in an organization which had the same training for all participants, however in this bachelor thesis, it is obvious that each course has different training design or teaching method. Author found more studies about the training transfer process, which provides more information about the teaching or coaching role in training transfer process. One of the main studies about teaching role is made by Ford, Quiñones, Sego, & Sorra (1992), which states that supervisory attitude strongly impacted to the transfer of skills. It is important to note that author have noticed the lack of theoretical studies regarding supervisors’ roles during the training.

Therefore, author notices that Baldwin and Ford’s training transfer process study is one of the main and oldest theories, and newer studies are also focusing on this theory. Based on the

Table 3, it is possible to say that the training transfer is dependent on 3 factors like trainee characteristics, training design and the work environment and in this chapter, all three components will be discussed and provided with theoretical background.

Trainee characteristics or “individual characteristics” are “locus of control, conscientiousness, anxiety, age, cognitive ability, self-efficacy, valence, job involvement” and situational characteristics (e.g. climate)” (Colquitt, et al, 2000, p. 285). In case of the University of Tartu, this is checked during the admission competition like school grades, tests, and exams. For example, even if there is a group of class, their grades, background, test, and exam results are obviously different. Ability, personality, and motivation are mostly linked to the trainee himself or herself, not extra factors. Even if to look at the Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (1943) from the theory of human motivation, we can see that an individual needs physiological, safety, belongingness and love, esteem and the self-actualization. According to Maslow (1943), some people never even reach the self-actualization part which is the peak of his triangle. It includes reaching the full potential which could be interacting activities as well. Everyone appreciates these skills to varying degrees and develops them to the needed or desired extent; people are different and can have different stages, needs, or wishes. In author’s opinion, as many authors believe that motivation could positively impact on the training transfer, even though people have different wishes or aims, without the motivation it is hard to reach them. According to theory in Table 3, it is important to consider trainee; In this research, it would be students, motivation, and the interest in the subject.

Even if the trainee is highly motivated, it is not enough to transfer the skill if the trainee is not aware of how to do so (Holton III, 1996). Now in andragogy and in pedagogy in general, much attention is paid to the teaching methods. As shown on the table 3, **training design** is about the content and the principles of the learning. New century has come with a new solutions and methods in the education, and the main focus according to Yakovleva, & Yakovlev (2014) should be in interactivity of the studies giving students opportunities to have a choice of expression, practice, and real time scenarios for boosting motivation, knowledge, and efficient teamwork.

Various authors use different explanation and different list of the teaching methods for their research, but most of them have common ideas or have similarities. Table 4 is showing how researchers have used this terminology.

Table 4

Teaching methods

Author, year	List of the methods used in the research
Arasti, Falavarjani, & Imanipour, 2012, p.9	“Case study, guest speakers, group discussion, formal lectures, role play, simulations, individual project, group project, seminars”
Farashahi, 2018, p.133	“...lectures, case studies, business games, simulation, online lectures, role-play cases and internship”
Bourner, 1997, p. 347	“guest lectures, open learning materials, use of the Internet, problem-solving, essay-writing, discussion and debate, presentations, feedback, problem-solving, brainstorming, critical assessment and analyses”

Source: compiled by author from given sources

Interviews with lecturers in the empirical part of Bachelor’s Thesis will cover these questions to investigate what kind of teaching methods were used in the Bachelor’s Business Administration Program.

In next chapter, based on the theory provided in this research paper, interviews from both students and lecturers will be asked to see affecting factors from both sides. In the end, the results of the research will be provided. This will be applied on the empirical part, getting to know what kind of objectives were provided from the teaching stuff to the students, for example in this bachelor thesis these are: lectures, seminars, group-works, presentations, and various student clubs, startup labs, where students can really apply their leadership skills. In the empirical part, the interviews from lecturers will show what kind of methods were used during the classes, and students answer how these methods helped to develop the skills.

Training design is one of the important characters of the training transfer, which is affecting on the transfer, but at the same time when design can affect negatively on the transfer if it is not that vital (Nijman, Nijhof, Wognum & Veldkamp, 2006).

For example, Lim (2000) also agrees with the importance of the training design and identifies both discouraging and encouraging factors of training design like

- Discouraging: “.... mismatch between the practice session and the learning content; inappropriate grouping of trainees for workshop activities; lack of clarification of technical terminology; insufficient lab hours for computer use” (Lim, 2000, p.253),

- Encouraging: "...step-by-step instruction moving from basic to advanced learning content; skill practice session, teaming up of work group with mixed specialties; pre-distribution of reading materials; participatory learning method; use of audio and visual material during instruction" (Lim, 2000, p.253).

It is important to analyze and know what kind of training design was there during the BBA classes to describe the training transfer.

According to Holton III (1996), one of the failure reasons might be that a trainee is not provided with practical side of the work and is not aware of how to apply those skills. **Work environment** based on Table 3 is external factors influencing the trainee such as support and the opportunity to use the acquired knowledge. This will be applied to both students and lecturers in order to see what support is provided and how students are facing those opportunities or environment to transfer the skills. However, Noorizan, et al (2016) describe work environment with 3 factors: "Resistance or openness to change, support, and personal outcome". Both Noorizan, et al (2016) and Baldwin and Ford (1988) agree on support as the work environment factor, but Baldwin and Ford (1988) use term "work environment" as more extra factor, while Noorizan, et al (2016) adds interpersonal skills. Author highlights that the work environment in this Bachelor's Thesis context is all the opportunities provided from the University of Tartu, for example, ability to choose from optional and elective courses, startup lab, marketing club, economics club, traineeship, and study abroad courses, and to avoid confusion for reader, instead of term "work environment", "training environment" is used in this paper. This means that in case of this paper, author does not investigate how graduates apply the acquired skills at their workplaces, but rather focus on the possibilities of practicing the skills at the University.

For visualizing the theory and its connection with the empirical analysis in next chapter, Table 5 was created. Table 5 sums up this sub-chapter and shows training design, training environment and trainee characteristics in theory and the way it is used in this paper.

Table 5.

Application of the elements of transfer process to the Thesis

Transfer process elements according to <i>Baldwin and Ford, 1988</i>	Definitions	Author and year	Application in Thesis
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Training design	Different sorts of study materials and programs needed for training, role of trainer	Nur, Ruhizan & Bekri, 2015	Teaching methods, materials and instructions provided in the classes
Training environment	“..transfer climate, support, opportunity and follow-up”	Grossman, Salas, 2011, p. 112	Start-up Hubs, Delta building, Career Days, Practicality, Internships, Workshops
Trainee characteristics	Motivation, ability to perform, personality traits, and interests	Bell, Tannenbaum, S. Ford, Noe, Kraiger, 2017	The selection of students during the enrollment to the University

Source: compiled by author with given sources

Even though the exact study which focused on the transfer of leadership soft skills with the training transfer process details was not found and there is a research gap in this topic, author made a search of leadership soft skills transfer and found several empirical studies and findings. The closest one is a study by Gilpin-Jackson & Bushe (2007) which made a semi-structured interview and a survey among trainees and observers to investigate what affects for the transfer of leadership soft skills in the workplace. This study also used Baldwin and Ford's training transfer process (1988) as its one of main pillars, however leadership skills were not defined and questioned separately. Authors used various methods for the investigation, to measure from all sides as possible to be more precise, moreover, they have converted some qualitative findings to quantitative, meaning that added more tables which show means, or standard deviations of the given findings (Gilpin-Jackson & Bushe, 2007). 21 managers and 20 observers and trainees were interviewed and questioned from the survey and a 1-5 Likert scale and semi-structured interviews were used, where study findings show that there was a transfer, 19 out of 21 strongly agreed on that fact backing up this observation with the more detailed answers from observers and trainees (Gilpin-Jackson & Bushe, 2007). The employed methods are useful to interpret in this bachelor thesis, however, to investigate the topic deeper, and to reach the aim of this paper, in the empirical part, lecturers were interviewed about their teaching methods, detailed information is in next chapter.

More studies were found which are close to this research topic, however they focus either only on soft skills, or give examples of only training transfer processes. These studies will be listed to have a better understanding of what was done before and with what kind of methodology by another authors, nonetheless they are not very similar in this topic. One of these studies is Duygulu, & Kublay's transformational leadership training program, (2011) where 151 participants were provided with 14 hours of individual and 14 hours of theoretical special training of leadership and observed that leadership trainings increased the transfer compared to those observers who were not provided with the trainings. Based on this, it is possible to say from author's side that trainings and training designs are significant parts of the transfer process.

As this Bachelor's Thesis is written during lockdown times, author made a research about online education as well and found another empirical study which made a research among online business students and put emphasis on those trainees who had at least background or education, and those who haven't had any knowledge or training ever before. According to this research, those students who had managerial backgrounds were better at transfer of their soft skills. It was explained with the motivation of managerial experienced students to improve, as managers meet with the circumstances in the workplaces and this motivates them to work better and improve themselves in a good way in order to avoid problems (Tseng, Yi & Yeh, 2019). Moreover, the study shows that if there are more soft skills transfer, it can improve the trainees' learning contents. This study conducted MANCOVA and hierarchical multiple regression analysis based on 162 students in fully online business courses. In empirical part of this paper, students were also questioned about the difference of online and offline education, and whether they have experienced leadership soft skills before the university to give better understanding of the factor, more information about this will be in next chapter.

Furthermore, the research from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (Botke, Jansen, Khapova & Tims, 2018) talk about work factors which are impacting the transfer step of the soft skills. The research results showed that to have a better transfer of soft skills, not only the pre-period is important, but also the fact to understand the impact of those transfer stages. They selected "job-related factors, social support variables, and the organizational facilitation of learning" (Botke, Jansen, Khapova & Tims, 2018). The results also conducted that the motivation and transfer of skills are positively correlated. Moreover, the trainees' feelings themselves (trainee characteristics) are important; their belief about the training is important and will work in real

life as well. Besides, it is important to note that all results are differing in each stages of the training transfer, and the behavior of the supervisor himself or herself is important as well which is the factor of work environment (Botke, Jansen, Khapova & Tims, 2018). To show all the gathered empirical studies results, Table 6 has been compiled.

Table 6

Main findings of empirical studies

Author and year	Research title	Methodology and sample size	Main findings
Gilpin-Jackson & Bushe, 2007	“What contributes to transfer of soft skills?”	21 semi-structured interviews and 20 questionnaires	Training is positively connected with support and mutual understanding
Tseng, Yi & Yeh, 2019	“Learning-related among online business students”	Statistical analysis approach, 162 students	Those who had managerial background, had higher level of soft skills
Botke, Jansen, Khapova & Tims, 2018	“Work factors influencing the transfer stages of soft skills training”	Systematic review methodology	Motivation and transfer of soft skills are positively correlated
Duygulu & Kublay, 2011	“Transformational leadership training programme for charge nurses”	Observation, 151 participants	Leadership trainings increase the transfer of skills

Source: complied by the author based on given sources

As can be seen from the Table 6, the research aims and findings vary, and a study which focuses on both leadership soft skills and training transfer process was not found. From all findings these researches it is possible to say that trainings are important during studies, and there are different factors impacting on this fact. However, these studies have alternatives and in empirical part of this paper, several methods of research were implemented. Author included most common studies which are close to the current bachelor's thesis. As was mentioned before, the study by Gilpin-Jackson & Bushe (2007), which is the closest one to this paper, used interviews and questionnaires as research methods. For this reason, the same methodology is used in this paper. Author now proceeds to the empirical part of the paper to investigate the connection with the theoretical research analysis.

2. Empirical analysis: students and lecturers of University of Tartu

2.1 Research methodology and sample description

The aim of this paper is to investigate which of the main leadership soft skills are being touched in university and how, with which transfer process components they are being transferred on example of the Bachelor's Business Administration Program. The Research Plan looks like in the Table 7 below.

Table 7.

Research plan and its description

Research Plan	Description
Information about courses structure from SIS	Exclusion of technical and narrow-oriented courses
Interviews with the lecturers	Elimination of courses which have technical and hard skills, interviewing lecturers from managerial field
Questionnaire with students	Contribution of courses to the development of leadership soft skills
Focus group interview	Interviewing students from the BBA program
Analysis of answers with the theory	Summary of all 3 findings

Source: Compiled by the author

Task in this chapter is to ask lecturers about the teaching methods and compare results with questionnaires from students and the focus group interview answers. In theoretical part of this paper, several empirical studies were listed, and the closest one by Gilpin-Jackson & Bushe (2007) used various methods like semi-structured interviews and a survey to reach the aim of their paper, so author also decided to make empirical analysis on different methods as it is seen from the Table 7. However, author discovered that only interview and survey is not enough, and made a focus group interview as well, to make a deeper research on the topic and have back-up qualitative data.

According to Baldwin and Ford (1998) training characteristics, training design and the environment are 3 main components to receive the skills. It is important to take into consideration in what kind of conditions were courses held. To achieve this goal, the idea of interviewing lecturers was proposed, to know the training environment and training design. In order to investigate the more in details trainee characteristics and the transfer of skills themselves, the questionnaire and the focus group interview was held with students. As this

Bachelor's Thesis is focusing on the transfer of leadership soft skills, which is qualitative research, it was decided to conduct semi-structured interviews and online survey method in order to have more accurate and detailed answers from the respondents. Semi-structured method interview with lecturers will help to understand deeper what kind of soft skills were expected to be obtained, what kind of methods of teaching were used and overall about the course, what in the end will students gain from it, while online survey method will be asked in 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1 (extremely unlikely) to 5 (extremely likely) in order to see how students agree or disagree with a given statement about the leadership soft skills. Information taken and analysed is represented in Appendix A. Questions used in questionnaire and focus group interview are based on Table 2 and are presented in Appendix B and C. Questions from interviews with lecturers are based on Table 5 and are represented in Appendix D. Currently there are 69 students in University of Tartu Bachelor's Business Administration program according to University statistics, and 27 students out of 69 contributed to the online questionnaire. More than that, there is a focus group interview of 5 students to have more detailed results about the trainee characteristics and the opinion on the training transfer process. Focus group interview of the BBA students of University of Tartu will be about the skills and opinion of skills, to what extent they think courses have contributed to the development of leadership soft skills, while for lecturers the interview will be about the objectives of the course, and what kind of methods they were using in their lectures. In Bachelor's Business Administration there should be 180 ECTS collected to graduate from the University. Courses which have technical and hard skills were eliminated in Appendix A in order to see how many and what kind of courses are providing the leadership soft skills.

Information from Appendix A was collected from Study Information System as author had an access to it, but for researching the methods used in the courses deeper author contacted some of the lecturers of Bachelors' Business Administration Program. Author conducted interviews from Human Resources Management and Organizational Behavior, Teams in Organizations, Basics of Business Ethics, Business Communication, Principles of Management Total Quality Management, Introduction to Studies courses' lecturers, because these courses have more focus on the transfer of soft skills in general.

In total 3 semi-structured interviews with lecturers was conducted, but interviewed lecturers had more than one course taught in the Business Administration program at the

University of Tartu. Table 8 below demonstrates the interview details with course names and numbers to make further reading more convenient.

Table 8. Interview details

Interview №	Courses	Date of the interviews	Length, in minutes
3	Basics of Business Ethics	09.04.2021	22 minutes 24 seconds
3	Business Communication	09.04.2021	22 minutes 24 seconds
Covers all 3 interviews	Human Resources Management and Organization Behavior	09.04.2021	22 minute 24 seconds
2	Principles of Management	12.04.2021	29 minutes 30 seconds
2	Introduction to Studies	12.04.2021	29 minutes 30 seconds
1	Total Quality Management(elective)	06.04.2021	14 minutes 30 seconds
1	Teams in Organizations	06.04.2021	14 minutes 30 seconds

Source: compiled by the author

Not all lecturers were interviewed from BBA program, but during the 2nd interview already author has noticed that the answers are going repetitive, also focus was on courses which especially touch leadership soft skills. Total number of minutes is 66 and average time is 22 for interviews. All interviews were held in online environment, in Zoom and were recorded. It is important to note that in the beginning there was a trial version of interview, and feedback was received regarding the interview questions to improve the structure in order to obtain more detailed answers. After that, interviews were conducted with given advices to introduce the topic and explain the difference between leadership soft skills and soft skills in general. Lecturers were asked about the teaching methods they have used during the studies; methods are given in theoretical part of this paper in Table 5. After interviewing Lecturers, author interviewed students.

The process of interviewing and collecting results from questionnaires was quite long, because questions were tested several times, and from feedback to feedback it was changing, first of all there was no option like not applicable, but it was found out that not all students took all courses yet, so author created that option in poll as well.

Students from 1st, 2nd and 3rd courses were asked to fill in the questionnaire, but author had a chance to send to 4 already graduated students from Bachelor's Business Administration Program as well. There are currently 69 students studying in this program, and 27 students have filled the questionnaire, 4 of which is already graduated., being 13 males and 14 females. Author was sending the questionnaire with the snowball method, to have students from all courses – 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.

There are 2 sub-chapters which focus on the interview results and its analysis, one is the lecturers interview results, and another is students'. This is going to help to analyze the information from both sides, and in the end a summary from all 3 methods will be demonstrated to have a clear view of results.

2.2 Interview results from lecturers and its analysis

Before interviewing each of the lecturer, for making interviewees comfortable answering the given questions, the main research topic was introduced and the question types were explained, furthermore, each interviewee was informed and gave a permission to record the session. First, the general opinion was asked about the teaching methods impact on students' transfer of leadership soft skills, and later during the interview, questions and answers started to go deeper. The interview questions with lecturers is attached in Appendix D To have a clear image of respondents' opinion on methods used during the lectures, Table 9 was conducted based on the interviewees' answers.

Table 9

Teaching methods in BBA

Interview numbers	General opinion of teaching methods
Interview 1	Deadlines, Lectures, Seminars, Teamwork, presentation skills, group work,
Interview 2	Individual assignments, group works, presentations, oral exam, case studies, analyzing company, online environment

Interview 3	Case studies, Seminars, lectures, group works, presentations, practical assignments, guest speakers, video presentations, recorded lectures
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Source: compiled by the author based on the interview answers

As it is seen from the Table 9 there are very different methods used in the lectures, Table 4 also agrees with most of the methods, but moreover adds methods like business games a role play cases (Farashahi, 2018). It is also important to note that internships are also depicted as a teaching method according to Farashahi (2018), but in BBA program, there is a separate course for practicing traineeship (Study Information System, 2021).

Even though interviewees had similar backgrounds being part of a managerial courses like Human Resources Management, they still have different approaches and opinions on some topics. For example, Interviewee 1 responded that:

“When we're talking about as a subject, for example, in a total quality management, I think it's possibility for students also to develop some presentation skills. Now, but of course, I'm not analyzing the presentation skills, and for example, team working skills in my other courses, only in a Teams in Organizations.”

According to Interviewee 1, presentation and team working skills are practiced, but not analyzed; it is possible to connect it with Baldwin and Ford's training transfer process (1988), which indicates that it is hard to have a transfer with one of the components of working environment, trainee characteristics, or transfer design. Even though analysis of the team work and presentation skills is not done in all courses, it is still practiced and analyzed in Teams in Organizations course. Interviewee 3 also agrees that not in all courses analysis occurs, but curriculum in general has a place to provide students with this process.

“I have used some really brief questionnaires where you can analyze your skills, and what must be improved, for example, the first course in business communication have tried to do that. So that person would think that actually, I have some space for improvement,”

According to theory provided in Tables 1 and 2, leadership soft skills are divided into intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, which author also collected information regarding both

types of skills from the lecturers. As separate Themes 3 and 4, author asked respondents to talk about interpersonal and intrapersonal skills consequently.

Respondent 2 highlights that even during the individual assignments students are coping managing with their time as they have several tasks to do at the same time.

“Leaders have their environment and the laws and stuff they have to follow and know, also, I think, very important, is managing difficulties and some obstacles, because always something happens, and this is the same for leaders because they also have some sudden changes or problems”.

Interviewee 3 however also reflects the writing, that this is a problem of current students, as students are not practicing a lot of writing because of social media impact. Not only writing, but also presentation and communicating was mentioned as a skill which have a room to improve. All interviewees agree on that the methods like presentation, group works, writings themselves are practiced, but not all students have a motivation or understanding the opportunity to learn these skills. However, it is also highlighted that in different courses students have different motivation. Interviewee 1 and 2 gave an opinion that the lecturers of course giving an effort, but it is much harder when there is not a cooperation between students and lecturers.

Interviewee 2 also compares and brings as an example of non-international student group in School of Economics and Business Administration, that international students are more eager to develop and communicate.

“Maybe those students who come from abroad are alone here, they don't have family and friends, and they start to communicate more than Estonian students do, actually, I think, probably, that's a reason”.

This could be linked with the trainee characteristics, as all students have different backgrounds and own motivation, personality and ability (Baldwin and Ford, 1988). Moreover, respondent 3 added one more comparison with another study group, which has a bigger number of attendants.

“It’s somewhat easier for them to manage a smaller group. For example, in Estonian courses, we have sometimes 100 or 120 students, so who is brave enough to talk there? It’s so much harder”.

Author links this argument with the training environment during the transfer process (Baldwin and Ford, 1988).

Students were asked in focus groups and questionnaire with results was collected, in further subchapter the students’ opinion about their motivation, transfer of skills will also be analyzed to compare the results. Moreover, it is interesting to mention that according to respondent 2, some students are more motivated during some of courses, and not so much motivated during another courses. Respondent mentions about the importance of being a role leader for students to motivate them enough:

“So, it depends on the lecturer who can motivate students to participate and be engaging and be giving interesting assignments and so on. I think students are more willing to work in some courses than others if the lecturer is also a good leader or something like that. I think it's very important to be a good example”.

Other than that, Respondent 3, gave an example of the oral exam which was held in Human Resources and Organizational Behavior course, where it was observed that students remember some topics more than other, as they had a link within the theory. Respondent 3 adds that it would be better if there were more simulations or computer-based simulations or games, but at the same time there is a risk.

“There is too much risk. It's a big game, and perhaps we spend like maybe two or three seminars on that. And if it fails, then it's not feeling very good. So yes, today, I believe those practical examples, cases, they are useful. But again, it depends on students. And I see that students also must contribute; they need to read before the theory because otherwise we just come together and share some opinions. And that's not fair again”.

Later the discussion focused on the technology's impact in order to have more information about current situation and current teaching methods in online environment. Here Respondents' answers are varying, some believe that online methodology is more beneficial in context of participation and checking who is listening or not, but at the same time others say that regular offline classes were much more beneficial as it was physical.

Interviewee 2 discusses in it this way:

"In online education, there are some tricks to make people work more even than in the class, but of course, all the communication is much harder, and there are technical difficulties".

Even though the current semester's classes were held online, interviewees have come up with the oral exam, which also helped students to develop communication skills and coping with stressful situations (interviewee 2).

In author's opinion, there are some courses or methods where students coping those skills without the special training, meaning that lecturers do not purposefully develop those skills, but rather having that kind of environment helps to develop the skills. To have a better result of transfer, it does not mean to have more stressful situations, but to teach student how to cope with them, practice and analyze how they managed to cope, then the transfer will take place. Author thinks that if students are obliged to be in a stressful situation without any preparation, probably there will be a transfer of skills, but not to the very positive extend.

During the discussion external issues like technology were listed as well, to have a comparison of education periods. As it was mentioned before, some respondents depicted more disadvantages of online education than the offline one. Interviewee 3 mentioned how technology can fail even in the modern environment

"We discovered how the technology doesn't work. Even here in delta, everything seems to be settled, but then you go to the classroom and it doesn't work and there's a lot of stress actually."

In author's opinion training environment is of course necessary during the transfer process, but when these kind of issues occurs, it is harder to have a transfer of the skills,

especially when there is no mutual communication. For example, Interviewee 3 mentions the usage of cameras, when students don't use it, feels much less comfortable.

"It was like allowing people to your home or to your office"

Moreover, it is important to mention how technology have improved since the march 2020, according to respondent 3:

"Big Blue Button, and zoom and everything, they didn't have all those functionalities in spring. So these platforms have developed a lot during the last year. So you can now make breakout rooms in zoom, it wasn't before and so on. So yes, we learned a lot. But actually, now I feel that technology has a lot of benefits. And especially I like those recorded lectures."

Author agrees with the given opinion, and it was observed during the classes that teaching methods level increased compared to the beginning of last year's march, when the pandemic has started (Interviewee 3).

Other than that, Interviewee 3 states that time is passing by much faster in classroom than in the online environment, and this leads to the motivation as well:

"So, I feel that I am tired. And also, students are more tired. It's very hard to engage students during the whole class, let's say."

From this statement, it is again leading to the theory of transfer process, where all 3 factors are important, and in this case especially, working environment affects the trainee characteristics.

2.3 Interview and questionnaire results with students and its analysis

As discussed in previous chapters, to achieve the research goal, author has sent a questionnaire to students regarding to what extend the courses contributed to the development of leadership soft skills. There are 69 currently studying students in Bachelor Business Administration Program, but 27 of them have answered the questionnaire, and according to the

results, students have different opinions on this topic, some think that in some courses they could learn or practice more to acquire leadership soft skills, while in other courses it is vice versa.

Results from students' questionnaires are varying, but not so dramatically as Table 10 depicts the average of the answers from all students response, but generally it is possible to say that there is no course in which the average is less than 2,5 out of 5 which is a good result. Author calculated standard deviation, median, and average with the help of tools like Stata and MS. Excel. The questionnaire results are backing up the focus group interview's results, to show that more students agree or disagree about with the given statement.

Table 10
Questionnaire results

Courses	Standard Deviation	Median	Average
Personal effectiveness/mastery	0,7824	2,69	2,70
Planning and organizing	0,8601	2,63	2,69
presentation	0,8387	2,69	2,66
resilience skills	0,7968	2,81	2,86
ability to plan and think strategically	0,8065	3,07	2,91
good written and verbal communication skills	0,8101	3,00	2,90
demonstrate the propensity to take initiative	0,7577	2,94	2,85
demonstrate an ability to manage change	0,8221	3,00	2,72
collaboration and teamwork	0,7200	3,44	3,03
communication skills	0,8845	3,13	3,00
people development coaching	0,8612	2,56	2,56
Inspire and empower others by evaluating, analyzing, and providing critics	0,8112	2,94	2,73

Source: compiled by the author

Table 11 shows the all respondents' average, which is less or more than 2,5. The reason why author have divided this table into 2 parts, is to see the ratio, how big is the difference of respondents' answers.

Table 11.

Respondent's average

Skills	more than 2,5	less than 2,5
Personal effectiveness/mastery average	15	12
Planning and organizing average	16	11
presentation average	14	10
resilience skills average	17	9
ability to plan and think strategically average	18	8
good written and verbal communication skills	19	8
demonstrate the propensity to take initiative average	18	8
demonstrate an ability to manage change average	16	11
collaboration and teamwork average	20	7
communication skills average	21	6
people development coaching average	14	13
Inspire and empower others by evaluating, analyzing, and providing critics average	16	10

Source: compiled by the author

It is seen from the Table 11 that respondents' average number who chose more than 2,5 is more than those whose less than 2,5. Closest average rate is people development and coaching skills, which 14 students graded it more than 2,5 in average, and 13 students graded it less than 2,5 for courses. However, even though this questionnaire covered average from all courses, it is wide to make conclusions from the results, therefore, to have better and more detailed results, author organizes a focus group from all years' students to ask questions for the qualitative research. Focus group contained 5 students from the Bachelor Business Administration Program, and there were 2 students from 3rd course, 2 students from 2nd course, and 1 student from the 1st year course. The reason why there was one person from 1st class is that first year students have not finished majority of the courses yet.

Appendix B represents questions for interview with students.

All respondents from focus group interview asked to be anonymous and not share their personal information. Each of the respondents is from different country. For having a better understanding of respondents' backgrounds on leadership soft skills, question was asked if the respondents had experienced leadership soft skills before coming to university. Interviewees all agree that they had some basic practice of skills from high school or at work, or volunteering experiences. Table 12 shows the respondents information, even though the interview was promised to stay anonymous, the basic information was allowed to share in this bachelor thesis.

Table 12. focus group interview respondents' details

Interviewee	Gender	Course year
Respondent A	Male	2 nd year
Respondent B	Male	2 nd year
Respondent C	Male	1 st year
Respondent D	Female	3 rd year
Respondent E	Female	3 rd year

Source: compiled by the author based on focus group interview

Later, the motivation and the understanding of opportunity to use was asked from students. Students showed different opinions, and most common answer about the opportunity to use and motivation was the internships and future work where students hope or want or already have experienced to develop these skills. Other than that, students are motivated to develop skills, and understand the importance of leadership soft skills

“Today, they're one of the biggest things that the employers look for the employees”

Students see the opportunity not only in professional level, but also applying on everyday life for being healthier.

“Leadership soft skills also important for your everyday life, like apart from the work, it's like, your if you want to have a healthy lifestyle, if you want to be in a healthy mindset, I feel like you should develop yourself”

After, the question about support from peers or lecturers was asked. Support as was mentioned before is one of the factors of training transfer design of training environment. Students agree that they get most of the support during team works when one has less experience in something, or better in another thing; or hard assignment when they have to brainstorm or don't know how to proceed to get more advice or explanation of the task. However, students mentioned that there was less interaction or support due to Covid-19 restrictions in the country, as they couldn't meet each other face to face.

Later author proceeded asking questions from Theme 3, first question was about the personal effectiveness and mastery skills. Mostly students said that these skills are acquired during the hard time periods when they had to face deadlines and they had met these skills

almost in all courses provided in BBA program, because of deadlines, but mostly courses like Financial Management, Corporate Finance, Human Resources Management, Principles of Management, Statistics and Research Methods were mentioned as the most challenging and courses which helped a lot to develop personal effectiveness skills.

“It gives us the opportunity to really learn ourselves and learn our possibilities, like how much time we really need to get the work done” (Focus Group, Respondent D).

It is possible to review the fact that students learn leadership soft skills not only in Managerial courses or courses which teach soft skills, but also in courses where there are hard skills. But the difference is that in author's opinion, in managerial courses it is possible to see that those courses were designed for improving the skills, and had more interactive methods for learning, while in hard skill oriented courses, it is happening naturally because of the deadlines and assignments:

“I would say that courses that had a really hard material to think and learn like financial management, corporate finance, these are the ones that really challenge you and your self-efficiency skills” (Focus Group, Respondent D).

However, one of the respondents stated that not all courses contributed to the development of personal effectiveness skills:

“some of the courses I do remember for all of my life, and some of them don't, because it was partially boring or not challenging for me at all” (Respondent E)

In authors point of view, this tells more about the importance of the structure and design of the courses, to impact more on students and have a better result of transfer of training.

Later, the presentation skills were discussed among the students. Students state that approximately in all subjects they had to present either their group-work, or project, so it was a good opportunity to improve these skills. Course “Principles of Entrepreneurship” was

mentioned as a good way to start and train pitching. Even Quantitative Methods in Economics and Statistics was mentioned as a course where students developed their presentation skills, because of the random choosing methods of lecturers.

“I remember was three or four people in the group and all of them had to be ready to present there so that the lecturer would just randomly see name, and then we had to present”
Respondent D.

Author believes that transfer of leadership skills is not only necessarily based on the courses' content, but also the methods or strategy the lecturers use during the class environment. After, the working under pressure skills were discussed, it is found that again, courses which provide team works, or strict deadlines and more intense and hard skills in general, made students to get out of their comfort zones and work under pressure. This is linked to the theory with the appropriate training design and the training environment. However, there is a difference between developing and designing these skills on purpose and just accidentally having them because of the training environment. According to Respondent E, it is not so beneficial when there is a time to work under pressure and it is not analyzed and not practiced.

“There are times when everyone has a part and you can do their part or someone just leaves everything for the last minute and in this way they make you to work under pressure as well, because you either have to do their part and do some like additional stuff or either you going to just loose some points because you did not follow the deadlines, it also happened to me”
(Respondent E)

To avoid this kind of situations and social loafing, in author's opinion it is important to practice and analyze these skills, and give a better understanding of what could be done further to transfer these skills.

Next discussion topic of skills was verbal and written communication skills. Students agreed that the course “Business Communication” was especially designed for improving and analyzing these skills, but at the same time, in general, the BBA program curriculum enabled students to improve these skills wherever there was a written homework:

“where you have to submit homework of 10 pages of text, and it definitely develops your written skills, because you start thinking about how to fill these pages with some text” (Focus group Interview, Respondent A)

Furthermore, Respondent B highlighted courses which have more reading literature materials in the program, like Macroeconomics or Baltic Sea Region, which were providing many reading materials, and later the written assignment. In author's opinion, the curriculum itself provides variety of options to develop skills, but mainly courses like Business communication are designed exactly for the analysis and development of such skills.

When it comes to take the initiative and manage change, it was hard for interviewees name the specific course, it is more about the situation when students have to overcome, for instance, “Moodle” group selection was mentioned as a sample:

“when you have a random team, which you did not choose yourself, which was randomized by the Moodle, our status system. So when you have this kind of sort of thing, where no one wants to do nothing, anything. So in this in this kind of situation, you always have to be the one to take initiative. So when you have a team where none of team members is willing to do his or her job, there's their definitely helps you to be the one to take the initiative” (focus group interview, Respondent A).

Regardless of courses, Respondent E highlighted the practical training and spark hub events as a situation when a person should take a leader role and take an initiative. In author's point of view, these arguments from students represent the availability and the variety of not only teaching methods, but also strategies and the impact of technology in the BBA program.

Afterwards, the collaboration and teamwork skills were discussed, however, interviewees were asked to tell from both online and offline experience, as past 3 semesters were held online, or partly online. It was pointed out that in the beginning of pandemic, everyone was less prepared and experienced, but everyone is used to this kind of learning and it is much easier than it was before. However, overall, even now in students' opinion, the communication and

collaboration is still going on smoothly. For Respondent C for example, it took more time and effort in online environment:

“We had the class in in the data center, then we agreed on the dock after class, we just stay there for an hour and then do it. But now it requires more effort and time, or initiative”

Respondent C.

While for Respondent C it is harder, for respondent D it is much different, as it is a comfort zone and much easier.

“whenever it's an online class, it's much easier to stay comfortable to stay hidden” (Focus Group Interview, Respondent D).

In this regard, it is possible to see the difference of trainee characteristics between 2 students. Even in interview with lecturers it was highlighted that students show less motivation and initiative during these online classes, but students mentioned a class where a lecturer could overcome this problem:

“We had our lecturer who would like ask a question and no one would answer but then he would just randomly have called names” (Respondent D).

In author's opinion, from the question answer from students above, it is possible to say that even when students don't have much motivation to overcome a task or be active and collaborate, it is still possible to make work harder with various methods of motivation or inspiration, or even with the more situations with deadlines and working under pressure.

During the interview, training environment component, smaller or bigger groups topic was mentioned as well, and mostly respondents prefer smaller group, to avoid social loafing in the teams, this point of view also was discussed with the lecturers from BBA program.

Afterwards the topic was Conflict solving, students didn't name specific courses but Teams in Organization which was the special course to analyze and teach to how to solve problems or conflicts within a team or personally. Author would like to comment that even if

there was no Teams in Organization course, students would transfer these skills according to answers they have provided, because of the environment they had to face.

Moreover, the development and coaching skills was brought as a research question, where students could not specifically name courses but mentioned that the situations when they need help or don't understand how to deal with the given task, they ask from peers, or vice versa, try to explain it to the course mate. Author believes there's no such method to analyze or improve these skills, despite practicing it naturally within the class.

Inspiring and empowering others by evaluating, analyzing and providing critics on the feedback is transferred from courses when the feedback sessions are provided, for example, the most popular mentioned course among students is statistics, where there was a project.

"Statistics was the most helpful in that regard. Because we had, the projects.

Actually, we also were not only the ones who raised the project, but also the ones who reviews the project. So this definitely helped me a lot in giving feedback" (Respondent A).

Not only the feedback from students, but also from lecturers and practical training mentors was implied as a very important side of the process to be better for future in students' opinion.

In the end as a concluding part of the interview, interviewees were asked to generally assess the program, how well they think there was a transfer of leadership soft skills in the BBA program. Students answered that program and university provide a lot of opportunities, but only that is not enough.

"It is not about what is being given but what you take from it" (Respondent B).

Furthermore, talking about the perspectives and opportunities, students believe that Bachelor business Administration Program at University of Tartu is designed to support a transfer of leadership soft skills.

"I think the university definitely has some courses designed for our soft skills, and to improve them, like, for example, our University have this requirement that we have to take

internship. Also, semester abroad, I took this opportunity, basically, what's that semester is for is for your soft skills, you have to be more communicative.” (respondent D).

One of the most important things to mention about the conclusion part of the interview is the understanding the importance of the leadership soft skills.

“Everything about humans, machines already can do everything. So I feel like nowadays, like people are more competing with their leadership soft skills, and that universities should have more prepare us more in that sense.” (Respondent D).

However, Respondent E mentioned leadership soft skills’ importance not only in business and professional career growth, but also for life.

“All educational institutions, they should be more be about teaching this soft skills and not only about hard skills, and because the leadership soft skills is not only for our professional, huge career or anything, but like for being like human beings”. (Respondent E).

Conclusion part of the interview was designed to understand the opportunity to use these skills which is the training environment factor (Table 13).

Table 13.

Main finding from interviews, focus group and a questionnaire

Methods	Main results
Semi-structured interviews with lecturers	All teaching methods except business games (Farashahi, 2018) were held in classes (Table 4) In some courses, these methods are intentionally used to enable the transfer of leadership soft skills. However, some courses do not analyze and practice it, and transfer of leadership soft skills occur accidentally
Online questionnaire (students)	From all 27 respondents, there are more of those who think that courses on the BBA program at the University of Tartu rather do support the transfer of soft skills

	Students understand the opportunity to use the leadership soft skills.
Focus group interview (students)	On different courses students have different motivation and contribution, causing differences in transfer of leadership soft skills.

Source: compiled by the author

As we can see from Table 13, students have different kinds of motivation during different courses. Author can conclude that methods do affect motivation of students. However, there are also different factors enhancing the transfer of leadership soft skills like the environment and support. It is possible to say that all factors influencing on the transfer training are practiced in the BBA Program, but the difference is that in some courses or situation it is partly or accidentally, without analysis and practice, so the transfer is also dependent not only on the availability of these factors but also the practicing them. Author wants to highlight that the transfer of leadership skills is potentially positive based on all results from the research, however how well there was a transfer depends not only on one component, but the composition of all of them, that is the reason why all these 3 methods were implemented in this paper.

Based on table 3, it is possible to say that the main aim of this paper is successfully reached, teaching methods are analyzed, the courses contribution to the development of leadership soft skills for students was asked from the 1-5 range, and qualitative analysis was done in order to have a deeper results of the collected data. Online questionnaire and focus group interview are backing up each other making even more detailed analysis. The connection of theory and empirical part during writing was smooth, as all steps were structured and author tried to make a research not only from one angle, but also from both sides to see the situation clearer.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to investigate which of the main leadership soft skills are being touched in the Tartu University and how, with which training transfer process components they are being transferred on example of the Bachelor's Business Administration Program. The importance and relevance of the research topic was introduced in the very beginning of the paper. First of all, the aim and tasks to reach this aim were introduced in the Introduction part. To achieve the aim, tasks author has revealed in the theoretical and empirical parts of this paper.

The structure of paper was divided into 2 parts: theoretical and empirical. In theoretical part, leadership soft skills and the training transfer process and its components were defined and analyzed with the examples of various authors. Leadership soft skills were divided into 2 parts: interpersonal and intrapersonal (Dixon, Belnap, Albrecht, & Lee, 2010). Three Training transfer components: training design, environment and trainee characteristics by Baldwin and Fords (1988) were introduced as application in University of Tartu case. Each component was defined, introduced to the reader and applied in the context of this Bachelor's Thesis.

In empirical part, author has described the process and the research plan, lecturers and theoretical part were used as focus group interview and online survey questions for students in the empirical part. Later the training transfer process was defined and discussed, several previous empirical studies were mentioned. According to the variation and combination of empirical studies which were done before, author proceeded with interview, survey, and a focus group interview. Each of the components were described in the context of the Tartu university and how this theory was correlated with the empirical research of this paper. Author wanted to make sure that the reader understands the process of the whole paper, and made Tables 4 and 6 to generalize and visualize the steps, methods, and the theory. First of all information about the teaching contents from Study Information System was introduced. Twenty seven students from the Bachelor's Business Administration program at the University of Tartu were asked about each leadership soft skills separately, to what extend do they believe that how each course has contributed to the development of the transfer of leadership soft skills. Results from the survey show that students mostly agree that courses from the BBA program positively impacted on the transfer of their skills, however, results from the survey also show that, in students' opinion, in some courses the leadership soft skills were not transferred or were

transferred partly. To investigate these facts deeper, author proceeds with the focus group interview. Focus group interview results backed up the findings from survey and made sure to study the topic more in details. Findings showed that the BBA program positively has contributed to the development of transfer of leadership soft skills, however, in some courses the transfer process is analyzed and practiced, but in some courses this process occurs accidentally because of the environment and the availability of the teaching methods.

For future studies, author recommends to research bigger sample of students and ask more University of Tartu students in general. Moreover, it would be recommended to study this topic for other universities as well, and having a comparison, what is different in another places, what is better and where there is a place for the improvement. For future studies, if the number of respondents will be more, it would be recommended to make a quantitative research instead of a qualitative.

From the combination of both empirical and theoretical researches author was able to discover the findings of transfer of leadership soft skills and the training transfer process in the example of University of Tartu. In conclusion, the paper has reached its aim and the investigation from this Bachelor Thesis shows that in BBA program at the University of Tartu, in general, the transfer of leadership soft skills is positive and each of training components affect the transfer of leadership soft skills.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Information about courses structure from study information system, 2021

Obligatory, Elective Mobility modules of BBA in University of Tartu	Information regarding the studies and skills according to OIS (technical or narrow-oriented were excluded)
Practical Training in Economics and Business Administration	Student's self-analysis, experiencing work environment, plans further development needs based on the aim and tasks of the internship
Basics of Business Ethics	Is able to identify (and prevent if possible) ethical issues in organizational performance, - Is able to explain why the particular decision is ethical or unethical.
Business Communication	Knowledge of the communication process and the factors that affect it, can respectfully analyze the wordings of co-students' idea students` cooperation and promote joint activities, communicate efficiently.
Principles of Management	Knows and distinguishes different management basic functions (planning, organizing, controlling, leadership, communication and decision making) and understands their essence on the assumption of management as a whole. understands management associative functions (communication, decision making) on the assumption of management as a whole.
Total Quality Management	Realize TQM arrangement in the organization.
Human Resource Management and Organization Behavior	Understands the key issues of organizational behavior: beliefs, values, motivation, group/teamwork principles, and connectedness in organization. Can relate human resource management and organizational behavior with management as a whole from both perspectives: theoretical and practical.

Marketing management	Case studies
Teams in Organization	Develop teamwork skills in order to become an effective team member. intensive, interactive, and experiential course focusing on teamwork
Studies Abroad	Changing environment and adapting to people

Source: compiled by the author with reference from Study Information System

Appendix B

Interview details and research questions

Theme	Research Question	Application in theory and empirical part	Sources
Theme 1. Introduction	What is your age and gender? Could you please briefly describe yourself?	Trainee characteristics Trainee characteristics	Compiled by the author Compiled by the author
Theme 2.	Did you have a prior learning or experience in leadership soft skills in general before coming to University of Tartu?	Trainee characteristics	Compiled by the author
Theme 2.	Do you have a support from course mates and/ or from lecturers?	Work environment	Baldwin and Ford,1988
Theme 2.	Do you have a motivation and do you think you understand what could be the opportunity to use these skills?	Work environment	Baldwin and Ford, 19888
Theme 3.	To what extend courses contributed to the development of personal effectiveness or mastery skills from our program?	Leadership Skills	Crosbie,2005
Theme 3.	To what extend courses contributed to the development of planning and organizing skills in our program?	Leadership Skills	Crosbie, 2005
Theme 3.	To what extend courses contributed to the development of presentation skills ?	Leadership Skills	Crosbie, 2005
Theme 3.	To what extend courses contributed to the development of Ability to work under pressure?	Leadership Skills	Andrews & Higson, 2008
Theme 3.	To what extend courses contributed to the development of ability to plan and think strategically?	Leadership Skills	Andrews & Higson, 2008

Theme 3.	To what extend courses contributed to the development of written and verbal communication skills?	Leadership Skills	Andrews & Higson, 2008
Theme 3.	To what extend courses contributed to the development of demonstrate the propensity to take initiative and manage change?	Leadership Skills	Ginting, Mahiranissa, Bektı & Febriansyah, 2020
Theme 4.	To what extend courses contributed to the development of collaboration and teamwork (online and offline)?	Leadership Skills	Crosbie, 2005
Theme 4.	Do you prefer smaller or bigger groups in teams?	Leadership skills	Compiled by the author
Theme 4.	To what extend courses contributed to the development of conflict solving?	Leadership Skills	Compiled by the author
Theme 4.	To what extend courses contributed to the development of communication skills?	Leadership Skills	Crosbie, 2005
Theme 4.	To what extend courses contributed to the development of people development/ coaching?	Leadership skills	Crosbie, 2005
Theme 4.	To what extend courses contributed to the development of inspire and empower others by evaluation, and giving feedback?	Leadership Skills	Ginting, Mahiranissa, Bektı & Febriansyah, 2020
Theme 4.	How, in general, would you asses the transfer of leadership soft skills in our program?	Leadership Skills	Compiled by the author

Source: compiled by the author from the interview results

Appendix C

Google Forms Questionnaire for students:

<https://forms.gle/NjSjzMjEQJZQmREm6>

Appendix D

Interview questions with lecturers

Questions	Source and year
In which courses are you currently lecturing?	Compiled by the author
What kind of teaching methods were used during the courses?	Compiled by the author
What kind of leadership soft skills were or could be transferred for students during the courses?	Duygulu & Kublay, 2011
How well is the contribution of students?	Compiled by the author
How did the online education impact on the teaching?	Tseng, Yi & Yeh, 2019

Source: Compiled by the author

Estonian summary

Pehme eestvedamisoskuste ülekandmine Tartu ülikooli ettevõtte majanduse üliõpilaste näitel

Antud töö eesmärk on välja uurida, milliseid peamisi pehmeid oskusi Tartu Ülikoolis puudutatakse ning kuidas ja milliste koolituse ülekandeprotsessi komponentidega neid bakalaureuse ärijuhtimise programmi näitel üle kantakse. Pehme juhtimisoskuste ülekandeprotsessi kõiki komponente on töös kajastatud empiiriliste ja teoreetiliste uuringute põhjal ning neid rakendati Tartu Ülikooli näitel praktilises osas.

Selle uurimistöö eesmärgi saavutamiseks määratleti ja analüüsiti esiteks juhtimise pehmeid oskusi, kõige tavalisemad liigitati inimestevaheliste ja intrapersonaalsete oskuste hulka (Dixon, Belnap, Albrecht ja Lee, 2010). Empiirilises osas kasutati neid oskusi õpilaste fookusgrupi intervjuus ja veebiküsitluses küsimustena. Koolituse ülekandeprotsess määratleti ja arutati seda, mainiti mitmeid varasemaid empiirilisi uuringuid. Vastavalt varasemate empiiriliste uuringute variatsioonile ja kombinatsioonile jätkas autor intervjuud, küsitlusi ja fookusgrupi intervjuusid. Kui koolituse ülekandeprotsess ja selle komponendid (koolituse ülesehitus, keskkond ja praktikandi omadused vastavalt Baldwinile ja Fordile (1988) olid määratud, teostati analüüsi. Autor soovis veenduda, et lugeja mõistab kogu töö protsessi, ja koostas tabelid 4 ja 6 etappide, meetodite ja teooria üldistamiseks ja visualiseerimiseks. 27 Tartu Ülikooli bakalaureuseõppe programmi üliõpilaselt küsiti iga juhtimise pehme oskuse kohta eraldi, mil määral usuvad nad, et iga kursus on aidanud kaasa juhtimise pehmete oskuste edasiandmisele. Uuringu tulemused näitavad, et tudengid nõustuvad enamasti väitega, et BBA programmi kursused mõjutasid positiivselt nende oskuste edasiandmist. Lisaks sellele uuringu tulemused näitavad ka seda, et üliõpilaste arvates ei kantud mõnel kursusel juhtimise pehmeid oskusi või kandusid need osaliselt üle. Antud faktide uurimiseks jätkab autor fookusgrupi intervjuudega. Fookusgrupi intervjuu tulemused kinnitasid uuringu tulemusi ja uurisid teemat üksikasjalikumalt. Tulemused näitasid, et BBA programm on positiivselt kaasa aidanud juhtimise pehmete oskuste edasiandmise arengule. Mõnel kursusel analüüsitakse ja praktiseeritakse ülekandeprotsessi, kuid mõnel kursusel toimub see protsess kogemata keskkonna ja õpetamise meetodite kättesaadavuse tõttu. Edasiseks uuringuteks soovib autor uurida suuremat üliõpilaste valimit ja küsitleda

rohkem Tartu Ülikooli üliõpilasi. Kui vastajate arv on suurem tulevaste uuringute jaoks, soovitatakse kvalitatiivse uuringu asemel teha kvantitatiivne uuring.

Kokkuvõttes töö on oma eesmärgi saavutanud. Antud bakalaureusetöö uurimine näitab, et Tartu Ülikooli BBA programmis on juhtimise pehmete oskuste ülekandmine üldiselt positiivne ja kõik koolituse komponendid mõjutavad juhtimise pehmete oskuste edastamist.

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