

Research Article

Students Perception on Soft Skills in Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati, Cirebon, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Background: Soft skills is important attributes of professionalism in the practice of medicine. Soft skills to be known as person's ability beyond knowledge, intelligence, or competence. Faculty of Medicine in Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati, Cirebon, Indonesia, has used various learning methods to support students' skills, allowing students to have different perspectives in understanding soft skills.

Aims: To identify the perception of medical students at Faculty of Medicine, Swadaya Gunung Jati University, in the pre-clinical stage towards soft skills.

Methods: This was an observational descriptive study. Respondents were selected using Stratified Random Sampling techniques, sample size was 262 respondents were obtained from semester 2, 4, 6 and 8. This study used primary data with 42 statement items with univariate analysis.

Results: From 262 respondents, of 93.1% students (244) have a good perception of the definition of soft skills. As many as 50.4% (123) of 262 respondents have a good perception of time management. As many as 81.3% (213) of 262 respondents have a good perception of critical thinking. 73.7% (193) of 262 respondents have a good perception of teamwork. As many as 87.4% (229) of 262 respondents have a good perception of public speaking.

Conclusion: This study showed medical student perception of soft skills regarding definition, time management skills, critical thinking, teamwork, and public speaking had a good perception. In the future, Faculty needs to provide space for students to develop these soft skills through training or interprofessional education and other programs.

Keywords: Perception, Soft skills, Time management, Critical thinking, Medical students.

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1. Introduction

Medical practice designated only for qualified and competent professional personnel permitted by authorized institution. Professional behavior is mandatory for medical doctor. Within medical education, professionalism is a part of standard competency, whereas mandatory for medical doctor. To assess professionalism, Arnold and Stern visualize professionalism with clinical competence, communication skills, and understanding of law and ethics as the base of professionalism, and the pillars are excellence, humanism, accountability, and altruism.

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Based on the definition, professionalism is a quality indicator for a medical doctor that described by a set of behaviors and skills or soft skills within their duties (Purwanti, Armyanti, and Asroruddin 2020).

According to The Collins English Dictionary as cited by Achmadi, et al., soft skills are qualities required by a worker beyond knowledge, intelligence, or competency to perform a skill, such as the ability to interact and adapt with others. Soft skills commonly divided into two types of personality aspects which is of intra-personal and inter-personal (Achmadi, Anggoro, and Sari 2020.).

Based on the research done by Achmadi, et al., about 10 soft skills mostly needed by 21st century students. Among the ten most needed soft skills, it's found that social responsibility is the top most needed with 59,5%, on the other hand, perspective taking are the least needed by only1,4% (Achmadi et al. 2020.).

There are several studies related to soft skills for doctors and dentists., One of them is the research conducted by Khajeghyasi et al. at the University of Isfahan, Iran. The study explains that among the various soft skills components examined, there are relative weights for professional ethics as follows. Work ethic has a relative weight of 0.212, responsibility (0.188), respecting patient privacy (0.187), righteous and honesty (0.160), and lastly teamwork with relatively lower weight of 0.052. On the other hand, in the management skills domain, time management holds a substantial relative weight (0.481). In the cognitive domain, reasoning and decision-making have a relative weight of 00.290, while critical evaluation and thinking have a lower weight (0.080). Moving on to the communication skills domain, verbal and nonverbal communication as well as listening have a relative weight of 0.266 (Khajeghyasi et al. 2021).

Another study conducted by Ibrahim et al. at the University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia, it is explained that students' perceptions of the benefits of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) include a significant impact on developing interpersonal relationships at 92.5%, enhancing teamwork at 89.6%, and fostering critical thinking improvement at 82.1%.. Furthermore, the study also found that students' responses to PBL related to the acquisition of soft skills overall had a mean score of 3.32 SD 0.45, that indicates a high level. These results comprise several aspects, two of which are students' perceptions regarding the development of communication skills, with a mean score of 3.48 SD 0.59, and promoting cooperation in small groups, with a mean score of 3.15 SD 0.74 (Ibrahim et al. 2018).

Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati has been using several teaching methods to support the skills and abilities of students on its curriculum. Learning methods such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL), skills lab, discussion with experts are instruments to enhance students' soft skills through processes like self-directed learning, critical thinking about problems, communication and public speaking skills, and time management. These findings accord to theories stated in AMEE Guide No. 48, that small group learning can assist students in developing critical thinking, decision-making, teamwork, collaborative learning, and communication skills. This is achieved through processes of questioning, listening, speaking, explaining, and responding to the theories discussed during the learning process (Edmunds and Brown 2010).

The following processes of learning experience at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati, will allow students to gain different perspectives to understand soft skills. Based on that description, it is interesting to conduct further research on the "Students Perception on Soft Skills in Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati.

2. Methods

This research was conducted at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati, in July 2023. The descriptive research design is conducted with observational approach research, with primary data collected through a questionnaire. The research targeted pre-clinical stage students on semester 2, 4, 6, and 8 at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati.

Measurements

The data was carried out by researchers using a set of validated questionnaire distributed to the students that met the criteria. Respondents' characteristics have been documented. This study observed the perception

of respondents about soft skills. several indicators of soft skills questionnaire are soft skills regarding definition, time management skills, critical thinking, teamwork, and public speaking.

Analysis data

The respondents' characteristics and perceptions of soft skills among students were collected using questionnaire. The research results are presented in the form of table. Statistical analysis used univariate analysis. The test results are displayed in a frequency and distribution table of data related to student soft skills as well as a description of soft skill indicators.

Ethical Clearance

This research has obtained approval from the Ethics Commission of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati, with the number 44/EC/FKUGJ/V/2023. The data were analyzed using univariate analysis with computer software to describe the characteristics of variables along with frequency distribution tables.

3. Results

Data obtained from 291 subjects, with 29 entries were excluded as they had already become respondents during the questionnaire's validity and reliability testing. In results, 262 subjects from students of Faculty of Medicine at UGJ met the inclusion criteria for depicting their perceptions regarding soft skills.

Respondent characteristics

TABLE 1. FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION ON GENDER

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	99	37,8
Female	163	62,2
Total	262	100,0

Table 1 indicated that female had higher percentage than male, with 163 respondents (62.2%), while the remaining 99 respondents (37.8%), are males.

TABLE 2. MEDICAL FACULTY STUDENT PERCEPTIONS ON SOFT SKILLS DEFINITION, TIME MANAGEMENT, CRITICAL THINKING, TEAMWORK, AND PUBLIC SPEAKING.

Categories	Measurements	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Definition of Soft Skills	Good	244	93,1
	Fair	13	5,0
	Poor	5	1,9
	Total	262	100,0
Time Management	Good	132	50,4
	Fair	126	48,1
	Poor	4	1,5
	Total	262	100,0
Critical Thinking	Good	213	81,3
	Fair	47	17,9
	Poor	2	0,8
	Total	262	100,0
Teamwork	Good	193	73,7
	Fair	67	25,6
	Poor	2	0,8
	Total	262	100,0
Public Speaking	Good	229	87,4
	Fair	33	12,6
	Poor	0	0,0
	Total	262	100,0

The table above indicates that student perception on Soft Skills definition is good (93.1%), Time Management is good (50.4%), Critical Thinking is good (81,3%), Teamwork is good (73.7%), Public Speaking is good (87.4%), The "Definition of Soft Skills" variable shows the highest score with a percentage of 93.1%. Conversely, the variable "Time Management" has the lowest percentage in the "Good" category, which is 50.4%.

Semester	Measurements	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Semester 2	Good	66	93,0
	Fair	2	2,8
	Poor	3	4,2
	Total	71	100,0
Semester 4	Good	66	94,3
	Fair	3	4,3
	Poor	1	1,4
	Total	70	100,0
Semester 6	Good	54	93,1
	Fair	3	5,2
	Poor	1	1,7
	Total	58	100,0
Semester 8	Good	58	92,1
	Fair	5	7,9
	Poor	0	0,0
	Total	63	100.0

TABLE 3. MEDICAL FACULTY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON DEFINITION OF SOFT SKILLS

Table 3 above illustrated the frequency distribution of the perceptions of students at the Faculty of Medicine, Swadaya Gunung Jati University, regarding the definition of soft skills. Based on the table, the semester with the highest percentage in the "Good" category is "Semester 4" with a percentage of 94.3%, while the semester with the lowest percentage in the "Good" category is "Semester 8" with a percentage of 92.1%. Despite being slightly lower, this indicates that in this semester as well, the majority of students have a strong level of similarity in understanding the definition of soft skills, although there is a slight difference compared to other semesters.

Semester	Measurements	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Semester 2	Good	37	52,1
	Fair	34	47,9
	Poor	0	0,0
	Total	71	100,0
Semester 4	Good	35	50,0
	Fair	34	48,6
	Poor	1	1,4
	Total	70	100,0
Semester 6	Good	33	56,9
	Fair	24	41,4
	Poor	1	1,7
	Total	58	100,0
Semester 8	Good	27	42,9
	Fair	34	54,0
	Poor	2	3,2
	Total	63	100,0

TABLE 4. MEDICAL FACULTY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON TIME MANAGEMENT

Table 4 shows the frequency distribution of students' perceptions at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati, regarding time management skills. In terms of assessing the "Good" category related to time management across different semesters, "Semester 6" shows the most positive result with a percentage of 56.9%. However, in "Semester 8," the percentage in the "Good" category reaches 42.9%, indicating that a significant portion of students in that semester feels less confident in managing their time effectively.

Semester	Measurements	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Semester 2	Good	56	78,9
	Fair	13	18,3
	Poor	2	2,8
	Total	71	100,0
Semester 4	Good	53	75,7
	Fair	17	24,3
	Poor	0	0,0
	Total	70	100,0
Semester 6	Good	52	89,7
	Fair	6	10,3
	Poor	0	0,0
	Total	58	100,0
Semester 8	Good	52	82,5
	Fair	11	17,5
	Poor	0	0,0
	Total	63	100,0

TABLE 5. MEDICAL FACULTY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON CRITICAL THINKING

Table 5 shows the frequency distribution of students' perceptions at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati, regarding critical thinking skills. Regarding the assessment category "Good" related to critical thinking across different semesters, "Semester 6" stands out as the semester with the highest result, with a percentage of 89.7%. Meanwhile, in "Semester 4," the percentage in the "Good" category reaches 75.7%, which is the lowest percentage. This suggests that the majority of students in this semester also possess good critical thinking skills, although there is a slight difference compared to other semesters.

Regarding the perceptions of students at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati, regarding teamwork skills at Table 6, the semester with the highest percentage in the "Good" category for teamwork is "Semester 8" with a percentage of 87.3%. On the other hand, the semester with the lowest percentage in the "Good" category for teamwork is "Semester 6" with a percentage of 69.0%.

Table 7 presents the perceptions of students at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati, regarding public speaking skills, the semester with the highest percentage in the "Good" category for public speaking is "Semester 6" with a percentage of 89.7%. Conversely, the semester with the lowest percentage in the "Good" category for public speaking is "Semester 2" with a percentage of 85.9%.

Semester	Measurements	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Semester 2	Good	57	80,3
	Fair	13	18,3
	Poor	1	1,4
	Total	71	100,0
Semester 4	Good	50	71,4
	Fair	19	27,1
	Poor	1	1,4
	Total	70	100,0
Semester 6	Good	40	69
	Fair	18	31
	Poor	0	0
	Total	58	100,0
Semester 8	Good	55	87,3
	Fair	8	12,7
	Poor	0	0
	Total	63	100,0

TABLE 6. MEDICAL FACULTY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON TEAMWORK

Semester	Measurements	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Semester 2	Good	61	85,9
	Fair	10	14,1
	Poor	0	0,0
	Total	71	100,0
Semester 4	Good	61	87,1
	Fair	9	12,9
	Poor	0	0,0
	Total	70	100,0
Semester 6	Good	52	89,7
	Fair	6	10,3
	Poor	0	0,0
	Total	58	100,0
Semester 8	Good	55	87,3
	Fair	8	12,7
	Poor	0	0,0
	Total	63	100,0

TABLE 7. MEDICAL FACULTY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON PUBLIC SPEAKING

4. Discussion

From the research results with a total of 262 respondents regarding the definition of soft skills, 93.1% (244) respondents perceive it as good, 5% (13) have fair perception, and 1.9% (5) have a poor perception. Therefore, it can be concluded that in this study, more than half of the respondents have a positive perception of the definition of soft skills. The UGJ medical students' perception regarding the definition of soft skills is considered good because the respondents have similar understanding the statements in the questionnaire. They also agree on the definition of soft skills and the various aspects of tasks and the role of future doctors.

The research results from a total of 262 respondents regarding time management show that 50.4% (123) of the respondents have a good perception, 48.1% (126) have a fair perception, and 1.5% (4) have a poor perception. Therefore, it can be concluded that more than half of the respondents have a good perception of time management skills. This aligns with the study by Roghayeh Valipour Khajeghyasi et al. in 2021, which found that time management skills accounted for 48% of the total management skills. (Khajeghyasi et al. 2021) Another study by Hanafi et al. revealed that most students had moderate time management skills, with 79.5% in the moderate category, 19.1% in the high category, and 1.4% in the low category (Hanafi and Widjaja 2021).

When analyzing the distribution by semester, semester 8 had the lowest percentage of good results, with 42.9%, compared to semesters 2, 4, and 6. This differs from other studies, such as one by Macan et al. in 2021, which suggested that older age is associated with better time management skills (Najafi et al. 2022). Despite the older age of students in semester 8, their time management skills were not better than those in semesters 2, 4, and 6. This could be influenced by various factors, including stress, peer interaction, cultural differences, personality, procrastination habits, perceived control over time, age, gender, motivation, and anxiety.

Overall, the perception of FK UGJ students regarding time management is considered good because respondents share a common understanding of the statements in the questionnaire about time management skills and agree on the importance of time management in their roles as future doctors. Respondents believe that good time management skills come from effectively utilizing free time, planning clear weekly schedules, and avoiding deviations from the planned activities.

The research results on critical thinking show that 81.3% (213) of the 262 respondents have a good perception, 17.9% (47) have a fair perception, and 0.8% of the students (2) have a poor perception. This suggests that more than half of the respondents have a positive perception of critical thinking abilities. Another study by Roghayeh Valipour Khajeghyasi et al. in 2021 found that critical evaluation and thinking skills accounted for 8% of the total cognitive skills (Khajeghyasi et al. 2021). According to Ali Achmadi's study in 2020 on the analysis of 10

levels of soft skills needed by students in the 21st century, 73.9% believe that critical and logical thinking is highly needed (Achmadi et al. 2020.).

When analyzing results by semester, semesters 2 and 4 had lower percentages of good critical thinking skills, with 78.9% and 75.7%, respectively. This could be influenced by various factors, including differences in experiences, reflection, observation, and analysis. Another study in Iran revealed that 98.6% of medical students did not have a tendency for critical thinking (Mehrpour et al. 2023). The variation in critical thinking skills among medical students may be influenced by the education system and various factors such as stress, peer interaction, cultural differences, personality, procrastination habits, perceived control over time, age, gender, motivation, and anxiety. The perception of FK UGJ students regarding critical thinking is considered good because respondents share a common understanding of the statements in the questionnaire about critical thinking skills and agree on the importance of critical thinking in their roles as future doctors. The integrated curriculum and Student-Centered Learning (SCL) at FK UGJ are identified as factors contributing to the students' good critical thinking skills (Masic and Pandza 2018).

The research results on teamwork show that 73.7% (193) of the 262 respondents have a good perception, 25.6% (67) have a fair perception, and 0.8% (2) have a poor perception. This indicates that more than half of the respondents have a positive perception of teamwork. This aligns with Akbar RR's study on the perception of medical students towards Interprofessional Education, where 97.4% expressed the need for collaboration and 89.7% perceived that collaboration is essential (Akbar 2021). Another study by Taofan Ali Achmadi in 2020 on the analysis of 10 levels of soft skills needed by students in the 21st century found that 80.3% believe collaboration and 62.7% teamwork are highly needed (Achmadi et al. 2020) The perception of FK UGJ students regarding teamwork is considered good because respondents share a common understanding of the statements in the questionnaire about teamwork skills and agree on the importance of teamwork in their roles as future doctors. Problem Based Learning (PBL) and group learning methods are seen as effective in enhancing teamwork skills (Vioren & Hamidi, 2019).

The research results on public speaking show that 87.4% (229) of the 262 respondents have a good perception, 12.6% (33) have a fair perception, and 0% (0) have a poor perception. This concludes that more than half of the respondents have a positive perception of public speaking skills. This is consistent with Indah Puspasari Kiay Demak's study in 2019, which reported a 75% proficiency in communication skills (Demak, Juraejo, and Rupawan 2019). The perception of FK UGJ students regarding public speaking is considered good because respondents share a common understanding of the statements in the questionnaire about public speaking skills and agree on the importance of public speaking in their roles as future doctors. Activities such as Problem Based Learning (PBL) and class presentations are believed to enhance public speaking skills (Siqueira et al. 2022).

In the context of effective communication, three basic components—verbal, non-verbal, and para-verbal—can be applied to public speaking. Communication, especially in public speaking, is crucial in medical practice, as it relates to processes such as anamnesis, informed consent, information delivery, and delivering bad news. Communication skills, including public speaking, are essential in medical practice, and developing these competencies is crucial in medical education (Edmunds and Brown 2010).

The positive perception of soft skills among students at the Faculty of Medicine, UGJ, is largely due to the effective learning methods applied in their education. Methods like Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Skills Lab, expert discussions, and other academic programs create a dynamic and hands-on learning environment. These approaches help students not only to grasp theoretical knowledge but also to develop essential skills such as critical thinking, communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. As a result, these learning methods play a key role in shaping well-rounded, competent future healthcare professionals

5. Conclusion

Based on the results, the medical student perceptions of Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati on soft skills are good. Considering that soft skills are very important for students, it is hoped that this good perception will also be in line with students' soft skills. In the future, Faculty needs to provide space for students to develop these soft skills through training or interprofessional education and other programs.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest. Nothing to disclosure

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