

Scientific Journal of Applied Social and Clinical Science

WORKABILITY: THE INEXORABILITY OF AVAILABILITY TO BE AN ETERNAL LEARNER, AS A COMPASS TO REMAIN IN THE JOB MARKET

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Abstract: The objective of this article is to explore workability as a future requirement for sustainability in the labor market. The importance of workers developing both hard and soft skills is assessed, in addition to adopting a mentality of continuous learning. This combination is essential for workers to adapt to new demands and remain competitive in a dynamic and constantly changing work environment. Therefore, hard skills and, especially, soft skills are presented as guides for the future of work. Furthermore, the crucial need for availability to be a lifelong learner is recognized as a sine qua non condition for workers to remain in the job market. Finally, the question arises whether individuals are truly willing to learn continuously, which is not only a competitive advantage, but a fundamental necessity to ensure permanence and success in the job market of the future.

Keywords: workability; hard skills; soft skills; availability.

INTRODUCTION

At the moment, jobs are constantly changing with astonishing speed. In this panorama, it is no longer possible to conceive of workers merely endowed with technical skills, which previously proved to be sufficient; that is, the higher the academic degree, the greater the chances of reaching the pinnacle. Nowadays, this is no longer the case. Future skills are not restricted to technical ones, but also include behavioral ones. This way, the inexorability of improving interpersonal skills is evident, such as the predisposition for continuous learning, flexibility, adaptability, communication capacity, conflict resolution, the ability to correlate data, among others, which are configured as a guide to ensure a sustainable and successful professional trajectory in the long term. Thus, the question

arises whether today's workers are prepared to venture into the unexplored in order to prepare for the future.

This study aims to demonstrate the need to be an eternal learner and to capitalize on all the learning opportunities, which are countless and constant and, if observed carefully, whether at work, with colleagues, with children, will make it possible to maintain of workability. The aim is to demonstrate that, to this end, it is essential to be willing to learn, as it is always possible to learn more, there is no limit.

HARD SKILLS, SOFT SKILLS AND THE VUCA WORLD: DEFINITIONS

The evolutionary trajectory of the world of work, from the beginnings to the present day, has been characterized by profound and significant transformations. Yuval Noah Harari, in his works, especially in the book "21 Lessons for the 21st Century"¹, argues that the future of the job market is extremely uncertain and will be completely different from the current one. He mentions that the skills valued in the future will not necessarily be specific techniques, but rather continuous learning, creativity and critical thinking skills. It is therefore necessary to understand the concepts of hard skills, soft skills and the VUCA World.

Hard skills are conceptualized as specific technical skills related to a certain field of knowledge². These skills, originating from academic training, are no longer sufficient, since individuals need the ability to extract meaning from information and, above all, they need to have a comprehensive vision and skills to deal with new things.

1. HARARI, Yuval Noah; **21 lessons for the 21st century**. Translation by Paulo Geiger. São Paulo: ``Companhia das Letras``, 2018.

2. GOLDSCHMIDT, Cristina. **Employability, workability and career**. Rio de Janeiro: FGV, 2022.

From this perspective, soft skills emerge, which refer to more subjective or interpersonal skills of professionals, linked to personality traits, character or values, and, therefore, are not easily measurable.

According to Cristina Goldschmidt:

From those individuals who have developed soft skills, skills are expected, such as: communication, resilience, flexibility, patience, easy engagement in new work groups, initiative, cordiality, originality, critical thinking, ability to listen carefully, team spirit, empathy, emotional intelligence, skills related to tolerance to stress and frustration, mental skills, among others³.

Humanity has already gone through and continues to face numerous crises, most recently the Covid-19 pandemic and the calamity of the floods in Rio Grande do Sul. Gilberto Stürmer and Andressa Munaro Alves warn that humanity is, in fact, faced with a complex and ambiguous reality:

[...] we live in a social context characterized by the volatility of personal relationships and, even more so, by the uncertainties of their continuity. Nowadays, greater scope is opened up by the acronym VUCA which, created to define a post-war context, defines – even better today – the world through the acronyms that make up it. ⁴.

The term VUCA (or VICA in Portuguese) is, in fact, an acronym that began to be used in the late 1990s. Originating from North American military vocabulary, it is used to describe volatility, uncertainty (uncertainty),

the complexity and ambiguity of the contemporary scenario. In other words:

The acronym “Vuca” represents the results of the rapid changes that current times present us, namely: 1) Flexibility: it is the speed with which changes occur and their impact; 2) Uncertainty: related to doubts, choices and general inaccuracies in the context in which information is often incomplete, due to continuous change; 3) Difficulty: refers to the difficulty of understanding the result of the interaction of countless variables in a given situation, challenge or problem, that is, there are several internal and external factors that can affect the business and that are often out of control from the manager; 4) Ambiguity: many situations we live in accept many possibilities in different ways because they can have different meanings⁵.

The inevitability of transformation can be seen. The only way to enter and remain in the world of work is through a willingness to change, continuous learning and the reinvention of one’s own human being. Change is not easy; on the contrary, leaving your comfort zone is extremely stressful. Therefore, balance, resilience and, above all, a desire to change, evolve and navigate the unknown are necessary.

It appears that, “The Information Age brought a new context and an avalanche of opportunities for organizations, surprising most of them completely unprepared for this new reality”⁶. Angelina de Paula Castro Costa adds that:

3. Ibidem, loc.cit.

4. STÜRMER, Gilberto; ALVES, Andressa Munaro. Right to work and digital nomads: boiling labor relations and modern interpretations of unconstitutional guarantees. **Journal of Labor Law and Social Security**, São Paulo, v. 229, year: 49, p. 113-130. may/june 2023. Available on the website: <https://juslaboris.tst.jus.br/handle/20.500.12178/231257>. Accessed on: May 25th. 2024.

5. SANTOS JÚNIOR, Donarte Nunes dos; LAHM, Regis Alexandre. Technology: some socio-spatial-temporal reflections. **To where?! – Magazine of the Postgraduate Program in Geography**, Porto Alegre, v. 2, n. 2, p. 01-27, 2008. Available on the website: <https://seer.ufrgs.br/paraonde/article/view/22074>. Accessed on: May 25th. 2024.

6. COSTA, Angelina de Paula Castro. Workability: adapting durable skills for a dynamic market. **Brazilian Business Law Journal/ Business Administration in Magazine**, v. 3, n. 29, p. 1-18, 2022. Available on the website: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=bth&AN=158536043&lang=pt-br&site=ehost-live>. Accessed on: May 26, 2024.

Due to the speed and intensity, the changes brought significant impacts, tending to increasingly challenge the ability of individuals, entities, organizations and societies to adjust to the dynamic conditions of technological innovations⁷.

With the new behavioral requirements for the work environment, workability in a VUCA World stands out, which demands a worker capable of adapting, evolving and seeking new ways of working in a world in constant transformation.

WORKABILITY IN A VUCA WORLD

In the VUCA World, there is no room for stability, whether in work or identity, since the increasing use of technology eliminates the possibility of becoming outdated. Thus, workability assumes prominence in discussions about the future of work, especially in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous context. Unlike traditional “employability,” which refers to the ability to obtain and maintain a job, workability emphasizes the ability to adapt, evolve and discover new ways of working in a scenario of constant change.

Therefore, given technological and social advances, it is essential to invest in education and multidisciplinary learning as a means of developing skills and conditions for work:

The greater integration of hard and soft skills is necessary to meet the profile of jobs that are changing at an astonishing speed; It is no longer acceptable to think of professionals with exclusively hard or soft skills. Hard and soft skills must complement each other.⁸

7. Ibidem, loc.cit.

8. GOLDSCHMIDT, Cristina. **Employability, workability and career**. Rio de Janeiro: FGV, 2022.

9. COSTA, Angelina de Paula Castro. Workability: adapting durable skills for a dynamic market. **Brazilian Business Law Journal/ Business Administration in Magazine**, v. 3, n. 29, p. 1-18, 2022. Available on the website: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=bth&AN=158536043&lang=pt-br&site=ehost-live>. Accessed on: May 26, 2024.

10. WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM. **The Future of Jobs Report 2020**. Available on the website: <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-future-of-jobs-report-2020>. Accessed on: May 26, 2024.

By knowing that it is impossible to predict the future, it is up to each individual to develop, in addition to technical skills, more general skills related to personality, character and attitude, essential for maintaining long-term workability.

THE CONCEPT OF WORKABILITY

The concept of workability refers to personal and professional development, addressing creativity, talent and the ability to advance at work, placing the individual in a context in which the objective is the possibility of generating income beyond the traditional “job”, being entrepreneurial through your own creative and emotional knowledge⁹.

According to a recent survey carried out by the World Economic Forum, the skills most in demand from professionals in the future will be: complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management, coordination, emotional intelligence, judgment and decision-making, service orientation, negotiation and cognitive flexibility¹⁰.

The research also revealed that organizations identify skills gaps and the inability to attract talent as the main barriers preventing industry transformation. Skills gaps remain large despite accelerating investments in skills training.

Therefore, companies’ engagement in skills development can be seen. To better prepare workers, a multisectoral agenda is needed that involves political, business and investment decisions made by leaders as a way to enable them to move forward in the face of social, environmental and technological transformations. However, it is questionable

whether this engagement will reap the expected rewards, as all efforts will be in vain if there are not people willing to travel the constantly evolving road, staying in the game through change, continuous learning and frequent reinvention of themselves.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

How can you prepare for the future when you can't predict what it will be like? In this context, Rosa R. Krausz highlights that:

People will need to prepare themselves, no longer for employability, but for workability, that is, to develop and renew those abilities and skills that have a value in the job market, investing in their personal and professional development, updating themselves and managing your own career¹¹.

In the article "Workability: adapting durable skills for a dynamic market", Angelina de Paula Castro Costa explores the emerging concept that places professionals as managers of their own professional trajectory, highlighting the market's demand for qualified, capable, innovative and emotionally intelligent professionals¹².

Sociologist, writer and lecturer Rosa R. Krausz emphasizes that it is up to the individual to take responsibility for updating their skills, seeking productive employment and generating income. For her, it is not just technical qualifications (hard skills), but also permanent competencies, a set of skills, aptitudes, talents, experiences, self-knowledge, way of being and vision of oneself, which provide sufficient internal stability to deal with constructively with external instability. It highlights the following essential skills for workability: self-knowledge, interpersonal

skills, sensitivity and intuition, ability to create networks, flexibility and adaptability, negotiation and conflict management skills, and willingness to learn and rebuild experiences.

To ensure better results in a work-shaped future, individuals will need to constructively take advantage of the numerous and constant learning opportunities available. Staying up to date and capable is crucial to face current changes and those to come, adjusting the boat's sails to sail smoothly, taking advantage of breezes and dodging storms.

Thus, the future of workability may be in the hands of individuals, who must make proactive decisions instead of passively waiting for what is to come. It is essential to take control of your destiny and follow the guidance of your compass to successfully navigate this dynamic landscape.

CONCLUSION

In this article, we initially addressed the rapid evolution of the world of work, which demands from professionals not only hard skills and academic titles, but also essential soft skills such as continuous learning, flexibility, adaptability, communication, conflict resolution and analysis skills. data, fundamental to a sustainable and successful career.

It was highlighted that the world of work has undergone profound transformations, as argued by Yuval Noah Harari in "21 Lessons for the 21st Century", emphasizing uncertainty and the substantial difference between the present and the future of work. Skills such as continuous learning, creativity and critical thinking are valued over specific technical skills (hard skills), while soft skills

11. KRAUSZ, R. **Trabalhabilidade**. Second edition, São Paulo: Scortecci, 2016.

12. COSTA, Angelina de Paula Castro; Workability: adapting durable skills for a dynamic market. **Brazilian Business Law Journal/ Business Administration in Magazine**, v. 3, n. 29, p. 1-18, 2022. Available on the website: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=bth&AN=158536043&lang=pt-br&site=ehost-live>. Accessed on: May 26, 2024.

such as communication, resilience, flexibility, empathy and emotional intelligence become increasingly crucial.

In the current context of pandemics and catastrophes, in a VUCA World (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity), the ability to adapt, continuous learning and personal reinvention are fundamental for relevance in the job market. The rapid changes brought about by the Information Age challenge both individuals and organizations to continually adjust to new dynamic and technological realities.

Guided by the concept of workability, which encompasses personal and professional development, highlighting creativity, talent and the ability to generate income beyond traditional employment, promoting entrepreneurship through creative and emotional knowledge, it was revealed that the skills most in demand in the future include

complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management, coordination, emotional intelligence, judgment and decision making, service orientation, negotiation and cognitive flexibility.

Although companies are committed to skills training, a multisectoral effort involving policies, business decisions and investments is essential. However, success depends on people's willingness to constantly evolve through change and continuous learning.

To shape a successful professional future, the inevitability of being available to be an eternal learner is clear, acting as a guiding compass for sustainability in the job market. Therefore, it is crucial to proactively take advantage of learning opportunities, staying up to date and empowered. This will allow you to face changes with resilience and effectiveness, taking control of your own destiny instead of passively waiting for the future.

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