HUMAN RESOURCE SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO FACING THE CHALLENGES OF ERA 6.0

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the importance of developing Human Resources (HR) Soft Skills to face the challenges of the 6.0 era. The rapid advancement of technology has transformed nearly every aspect of life, including business, industry, and education. In this technological era, Soft Skills have a positive impact by opening various job opportunities, especially with the rise of social media, SEO specialists, web developers, content creators, and other professions. However, developing Soft Skills faces several challenges, one of which is resistance. Therefore, HR must be developed to address the 6.0 era's challenges, such as a fast-paced lifestyle and increasingly modern, sophisticated behaviors. In the workplace, employees must possess competent and high-quality Soft Skills, and the same applies in education. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with a literature approach to provide an overview and insight into the importance of developing HR Soft Skills in the 6.0 era. Data is collected from various theoretical sources such as books, journals, and online publications discussing the development of HR Soft Skills in facing the 6.0 era's challenges, including what those challenges are and strategies to overcome them. The findings emphasize that HR today must be developed in both Soft and Hard Skills, especially among Generation Z and Alpha, to face the challenges of this advanced technological era.

Keywords: *Soft Skills Development, Challenges of the 6.0 Era, Soft Skills Development Strategy*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pentingnya pengembangan *Soft Skills* Sumber Daya Manusia (SDM) dalam menghadapi tantangan era 6.0**.** Kemajuan teknologi yang pesat telah mengubah hampir semua aspek kehidupan, termasuk dunia bisnis, industri, dan pendidikan. Di era teknologi ini, *Soft Skills* memberikan dampak positif dengan membuka berbagai peluang kerja, terutama seiring dengan munculnya profesi-profesi seperti spesialis media sosial, spesialis SEO, pengembang web, kreator konten, dan profesi lainnya. Namun, pengembangan *Soft Skills* juga menghadapi sejumlah tantangan, salah satunya adalah resistensi atau penolakan terhadap perubahan. Oleh karena itu, SDM perlu dikembangkan untuk mampu menghadapi tantangan era 6.0, seperti gaya hidup yang serba cepat serta perilaku masyarakat yang semakin modern dan canggih. Di dunia kerja, setiap karyawan dituntut untuk memiliki *Soft Skills* yang kompeten dan berkualitas tinggi, begitu pula dalam dunia pendidikan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan literatur untuk memberikan gambaran dan wawasan mengenai pentingnya pengembangan *Soft Skills* SDM dalam menghadapi tantangan era 6.0. Data dikumpulkan dari berbagai sumber teoretis seperti buku, jurnal, dan publikasi daring yang membahas pengembangan *Soft Skills* SDM dalam menghadapi tantangan era 6.0, termasuk apa saja tantangan tersebut dan strategi untuk mengatasinya. Temuan penelitian menekankan bahwa SDM saat ini harus dikembangkan baik dalam hal Soft Skills maupun

Hard Skills, terutama di kalangan Generasi Z dan Generasi Alpha, guna menghadapi tantangan di era teknologi yang semakin maju ini.

Kata Kunci: *Pengembangan Soft Skills, Tantangan Era 6.0, Strategi Prngembangan Soft Skills*

INTRODUCTION

The world of education is required to prepare competent and high-quality human resources (HR) who are capable of competing in the global market (Muhmin, 2018). In ancient times, interaction, socialization, and even economic activities only occurred within certain regions. However, as time has progressed into this highly modern era, all systems have begun to develop and continue to evolve. In today's modern era, social systems, education, the economy, and even the world of work have been gradually improving over time. The same applies to the professional world, which is becoming increasingly modern and demanding for workers. The world of work is a place full of challenges for everyone or for all human resources (HR), without exception, and these challenges must be faced and overcome. Success comes from those who have gone through various challenges, and successful people are those who have the courage and determination to face and conquer the challenges of the working world (Wijaya & Hariani, 2015).

In the rapidly growing era of digitalization, technology and innovation have transformed nearly every aspect of life, including the business, industrial, and educational sectors. Companies today require not only human resources (HR) with technical skills (Hard Skills) but also non-technical abilities, known as Soft Skills. Soft skills encompass interpersonal abilities, communication, teamwork, leadership, time management, and problem-solving skills that are becoming increasingly relevant in a dynamic and ever-changing work environment. Furthermore, one of the key factors determining the success or failure of education and employment lies in the presence of both Hard Skills and Soft Skills. In practice, these skills can be applied through various approaches, one of which is *Interpersonal Skills*. Interpersonal Skills can be defined as the ability to appreciate others' perspectives, demonstrate social responsibility, work collaboratively, show tolerance, and communicate effectively with others (Syahputra, 2022).

In addition, education has a significant influence on the development of Human Resources (HR). In the current Era 6.0, there is a concept known as Soft Skills Education, which is often referred to as education that is closely related to an individual's personal abilities (Rokhimawan, 2024). Through Soft Skills Education, students or individuals who are still in the learning process are taught to develop the ability to communicate and socialize effectively within their social environment (Nur, 2010). The 6.0 Era is an era that signifies further technological advancement and focuses on the use of technology to enhance human capabilities, quality of life, productivity, and societal well-being. The 6.0 Era is still in the process of development both in terms of technological progress and the development of individual human resources thus, it does not yet have a clearly defined concept. The development of Soft Skills can be achieved through character education, which serves as an integrated lifelong learning process. This education aims to cultivate personality and skills toward the creation of well-rounded and excellent human resources (Indrawati & Hartati, 2024).

In realizing character education in the 6.0 era, there are several real challenges that must be faced, namely how human resources can become aware, proactive, and reflective in maintaining balance (Indrawati & Hartati, 2024). Therefore, optimizing the development of Soft Skills in human resources is very important, especially for the millennial and Generation Z populations in this 6.0 era. Soft Skills can also be considered as one of the driving aspects within individuals that is closely related to emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence refers to a person's ability to motivate themselves, endure frustration, control impulses and avoid excessive indulgence, manage emotions, and effectively cope with stress (Firdaus, 2017). With this in mind, the school age is considered an ideal stage and serves as one of the key ways to develop individual human resource potential, particularly in terms of Soft Skills (Fathul Hamdani, Ana Fauzia, L. Azwar Efendi, Sesi

Safitri Liani, Melsanna Togatorop, Risky Wulan Ramadhani, 2022).

Furthermore, companies or institutions play an important role in improving the quality of Soft Skills development. The excellence of human resources greatly depends on how companies treat their employees, both in honing Hard Skills and nurturing Soft Skills, especially in the current era. The development of Soft Skills has a significant impact on individuals, allowing them to be well-regarded within society. In the organizational or corporate world, the desired Soft Skills include the ability to interact politely and respectfully, flexibility, the confidence to express opinions, good character, broad knowledge, proper manners, a sense of responsibility, and discipline (Hutauruk & Wicaksana, n.d.).

Furthermore, to achieve these goals, companies must have a human resource management system that is supportive and can be effectively implemented by every employee. A human resource management system is not only about governance but also about how human resources can develop their potential to achieve the company's objectives by thinking more creatively and innovatively. In addition, most human resources today believe that to remain competitive in this era of rapid technological advancement, they must adopt all aspects of foreign cultures without distinguishing between the good and the bad. As a result, many tend to ignore the values of Pancasila, which has led to the gradual fading of these fundamental values (Hutauruk & Wicaksana, n.d.). Furthermore, the development of human resource quality can be achieved through the introduction of the industrial world, which should especially be introduced to the younger generation today, so that they do not become a backward society (Nugroho et al., 2020).

The types of Soft Skills required by human resources include adaptability and communication skills, active listening, critical thinking and quick problem-solving abilities, as well as strong adaptability and patriotism. Patriotism teaches human resources to understand the diversity within their culture, be sensitive to their cultural richness, and strive to preserve and promote their cultural heritage (Y Rahmawati, A Ridwan, S Faustine, 2020). The development of Soft Skills is an important aspect in supporting individual success, both in academic and professional environments. To enhance the Soft Skills of human resources, proper training is required. However, there are several challenges that must be faced in the process of developing these skills. One of the main challenges is that the definition and measurement of Soft Skills are often unclear and difficult to assess objectively. The lack of clear definitions and metrics makes it challenging to accurately evaluate and develop these skills. (Farid Wajdi, Suanto, Ansarullah Lawi, Erma Yulaini, Nurul Husnah Mustika Sari, Tuti Nurhaningsih Santoso, Eka Prihatin, Fajriyah Rachmatika, Nour Ardiansyah Hernadi, Ahmad Faridh Ricky Fahmy, Sulastri, 2024a). Another challenge faced is the diversity of cultures and individual preferences. This challenge makes it difficult to develop skills that align with each individual's specific needs. Furthermore, the development of Soft Skills in human resources often requires significant resource investment, such as training programs, mentoring, or other learning resources. However, for individuals or organizations with limited budgets, this can become a major challenge to overcome (Farid Wajdi, Suanto, Ansarullah Lawi, Erma Yulaini, Nurul Husnah Mustika Sari, Tuti Nurhaningsih Santoso, Eka Prihatin, Fajriyah Rachmatika, Nour Ardiansyah Hernadi, Ahmad Faridh Ricky Fahmy, Sulastri, 2024b).

In this rapidly developing era, with technology advancing at an incredible pace, soft skills have a positive impact by offering diverse job opportunities especially with the rise of social media, SEO specialist (Robertus Saptoto., 2024). In addition, soft skills also influence cross-cultural mobility and interaction, as individuals are required to have the ability to communicate and interact effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. This also impacts international cooperation in various aspects such as economics, politics, and the environment. However, besides having positive impacts, the lack of soft skills can negatively affect human resources leading to delays in securing employment or even the inability to obtain jobs that require essential skills in this modern era (Annisa Lestari Kadiyono., 2022).

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the importance of developing soft skills in human resources (HR) to face the challenges of the 6.0 era. Through this research, it is expected to reveal how essential soft skills are for HR in the 6.0 era, particularly in the fields of education, companies or institutions, and both domestic and international workplaces. This study not only identifies the importance of soft skills but also explores the challenges, efforts, and impacts of soft skills on HR in the 6.0 era. The results of this research are expected to provide a deeper understanding of how to develop high-quality and competent HR capable of adapting to the professional world, as well as strategies companies can implement to enhance HR development and face various challenges in the 6.0 era. For companies or institutions, this research is useful for identifying high-quality and competent human resources.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to provide an overview and insight into the importance of developing soft skills in human resources (HR) in the 6.0 era. It also uses a literature study, with data collected from various theoretical sources and references such as books, journals, and relevant online publications that discuss the development of soft skills in HR in facing the challenges of the 6.0 era, including the specific challenges encountered and strategies for soft skill development. The purpose of this research is to provide knowledge and information to all generations particularly Generation Z and Generation Alpha about the significance of soft skill development in human resources (HR) during the 6.0 era, especially within the education sector. This research is conducted in several stages, starting with the collection of data from various relevant sources, followed by an in-depth analysis of the discussion to ensure comprehensive results. With the applied research methods and approach, this study is expected to present clear insights into how crucial soft skill development is for HR in the 6.0 era, the challenges faced, and the strategies to overcome those challenges effectively.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
1. **The Benefits and Importance of Developing Soft Skills in Human Resources in the 6.0 Era**

Soft skills are very important in the professional world, especially in today's era. Soft skills include communication and interpersonal skills, integrity and loyalty, as well as creativity and initiative (M. ZahariMS., 2022). Soft skills play a very important role in determining a person's level of maturity, especially for Vocational High School (SMK) students. In today's education system, success is not only focused on motor or technical abilities, but soft skills are also highly considered in determining students' overall success. Karena perkembangan ilmu dan teknologi di era 6.0 ini sangat begitu pesat Due to the rapid advancement of science and technology in the 6.0 era, and the continuous demands from businesses and industries for highly competitive human resources, one of the nation's main goals is to create intelligent individuals through education. As science and technology continue to advance and become essential for everyone, there is another equally important aspect soft skill (Widarto., 2015).

Soft skills have a significant influence in helping individuals build a successful career both in the present and in the future. According to Marlina, soft

skills are intangible aspects that can have a profound impact on a person's life. If a person possesses strong soft skills, it can shape them into a quality individual who is also capable of influencing others to develop good character as well. This becomes one of the advantages for a company when its employees have well-developed soft skills (Lie & Darmasetiawan, 2018). In addition, a person with well-developed soft skills greatly benefits their career and can also have a positive impact on their social life (Apriyani et al., 2020).

According to Notoadmojo, the quality of human resources (HR) consists of two aspects: physical and non-physical, which involve the ability to work and think. Human resource development is an effort to enhance individuals through activities in the fields of education and training. High-quality HR is essential to support productivity and achieve goals effectively, as human resources are a key factor in economic reform. In addition to improving HR quality through education, it is also necessary to enhance skills, particularly soft skills, which can be developed through training programs. Such training aims to improve HR capabilities and overall quality, thereby fostering confidence and a strong competitive spirit (Lubis et al., 2022). Therefore, it is very important for Generation Z and Generation Alpha to be equipped with soft skills from an early stage in order to achieve their future goals.

2. Challenges in Developing Soft Skills in the 6.0 Era

The development and advancement of life systems continue to increase, and globalization in various aspects can no longer be avoided. This has given rise to terms such as the Industrial Revolution 3.0, 4.0, and even in some high-tech fields, the era of 5.0 and beyond, reaching 6.0. These are remarkable developments and present significant challenges for educational institutions in preparing their main output human resources, particularly their graduates (alumni) (Muslim et al., 2023). When discussing education, it cannot be separated from the role of teachers, whose presence plays a highly strategic role in shaping generations for the eras of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, 5.0, 6.0, and beyond. Therefore, it is necessary to align the education system between the old and new paradigms, as education in the digital revolution era demands the effective use of digital technology as a tool to enhance academic quality (Cholily, 2020).

Furthermore, along with the emergence of the Local Genius 6.0 paradigm and advancements in the Internet of Things (IoT), new challenges have arisen for educators particularly in Islamic educationn preparing the younger generation to face the digital era. The application of IoT has produced significant impacts across various sectors, including the education sector. One of the key aspects of IoT in the educational sphere is its role in creating intelligent learning environments. (Kurniawan et al., 2024). In addition, the development of soft skills in human resources, particularly among university students, can be achieved through various methods one of which is by actively participating in student organizations. Through active involvement in such organizations, students gain firsthand experience in addressing diverse challenges, which ultimately strengthens their soft skills significantly. However, the development of soft skills within organizational contexts also faces its own challenges, as increasingly complex organizational dynamics require specialized training to further enhance students' soft skills (Ramadhania et al., 2024).

Resistance to change also represents a major challenge in the development of soft skills, particularly in the 6.0 era. Beyond Islamic education, the challenges in developing human resource soft skills are also evident in mathematics education. As the era continues to advance, mathematics education faces new challenges in preparing students to succeed in an increasingly digital and interconnected world. The tradition of mathematics education has often focused on the direct teaching of mathematical concepts and techniques, without giving sufficient attention to the development of the skills required for success beyond the classroom. On the other hand, the drastic changes brought about by digital technology have transformed the ways people learn, work, and interact. The main challenge faced by mathematics education in the digital era is how to integrate mathematics learning with the development of soft skills in a synergistic manner. This integration is not merely about using digital technology in teaching, but also about building a learning foundation that enables students to develop the essential skills needed to succeed in a complex digital environment. (Nasution et al., 2024).

The following are some statistical data illustrating the challenges in developing soft skills:

Table 1: Statistical Data on the Challenges in Developing Soft Skills

No	Challenge Aspect	Statistical Data
1.	**Soft Skills Gap among University Students**	According to data from the article titled *"The Impact of Soft Skills on Work Readiness in the Industry 4.0 Era"*, it can be concluded that the research indicates university students often lack adequate soft skills, such as communication and teamwork abilities, which are crucial for meeting the demands of today's workforce (Ayaturrahman & Rahayu, 2023).
2.	**The Need for Soft Skills in the Workplace**	According to the *Kartu Prakerja* Report, out of 144 million workers in Indonesia, there are 8.4 million unemployed individuals, of whom 83% have never participated in training programs that could enhance their soft skills. This situation should be promptly addressed by implementing strategies to develop soft skills.
3.	**Experiencing Resistance**	Based on the article titled *"Entrepreneurship Soft Skills Development Training in the Digital Era at SMK Al Mujahidin Cikarang"*, they encountered resistance from internal parties regarding changes in teaching methods. The development of soft skills training was hindered due to a tight class schedule and the absence of a structured curriculum (Siswandi et al., 2024).

3. Strategies for Developing Human Resource Soft Skills

In the workplace, human resources must manage themselves effectively, as this has a significant impact on work processes and career development. (Suwarno, 2013). The methods or strategies that can be implemented to develop soft skills in the digital era are as follows (INyoman Sucipta., 2023):

a. Observe, emulate, and apply the positive soft skills of others, using their abilities as motivation to develop your own soft skills.
b. Learn from various literature sources, such as books, podcasts, or online courses.
c. Set specific soft skills as targets for improvement or development.
d. Practice and continue learning, as soft skills will not develop on their own without dedicated learning and training.
e. Conduct regular training sessions and workshops.
f. Companies can implement mentoring and coaching programs.
g. Implement leadership development programs.

Furthermore, in terms of educational advancement, soft skills can be developed by improving the quality of teaching provided by teachers. The education sector must be able to keep pace with these developments specifically the eras of 4.0, 5.0, 6.0, and beyond to enhance and balance the quality of education and competencies within the educational system. In the development of education, skilled human resources (HR) and a competent workforce are required to meet the demands of the workplace. Teachers play a vital role and bear the responsibility of delivering quality education through high-standard teaching and learning processes, with the goal of producing human resources who possess strong soft skills and life skills (Soe'oed et al., 2022).
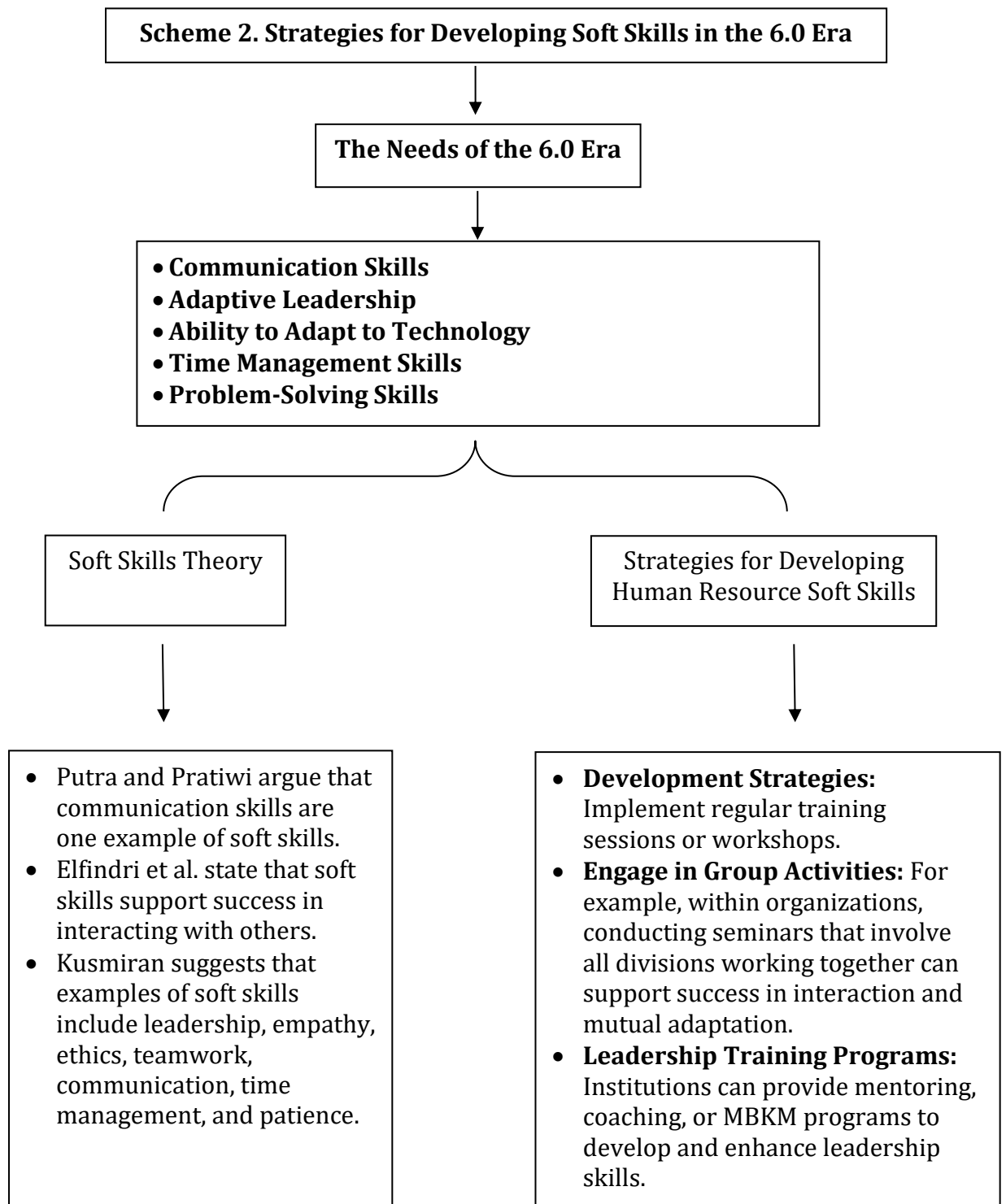
Next, regarding the soft skills of early childhood education (PAUD) teachers, the learning methods they implement are necessarily different from those of teachers in general. The development of soft skills for PAUD teachers is based on the realities of daily life experienced by the teachers, critical thinking, the creativity of both teachers and students, student activities, cooperative assessment, and the cultivation of akhlaqul karimah (noble character). The greatest expectation in developing soft skills for PAUD teachers is that they can implement character-based learning processes. According to the definition of soft skills by Putra and Pratiwi, these are invisible abilities necessary for success, such as communication skills, honesty, and other forms of integrity. These skills are highly relevant to the strategies that PAUD teachers can apply within the school environment. Specifically, teachers should be good listeners, communicate effectively with colleagues, students, and parents, respect differing opinions, motivate students in their creative endeavors, and provide opportunities for students to complete tasks independently (Wahyuni et al., 2022).

Not all teachers are able to implement these practices, as not every teacher understands or possesses soft skills themselves. Therefore, training is necessary. This aligns with the opinion of Elfindri et al., who stated that soft skills are not formed automatically but can be developed through training. One approach that can be applied is leadership-based training programs, which have

been widely implemented in the education sector, particularly for university students. Hal This is consistent with the definition of soft skills presented by Kusmiran, who identified leadership as an example of a soft skill and one of the key factors for an individual's success. Through such leadership training programs, human resources can be equipped to address challenges arising in the 6.0 era due to rapidly advancing technological factors.

The next strategy focuses on university students. The development of students' soft skills can be achieved through the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program. This program aims to enhance graduates' competencies, ensuring that both their soft skills and hard skills are better prepared and aligned with contemporary demands. Through MBKM activities, it is expected that students' soft skills will be strengthened, providing them with essential preparation to face competition in the workforce (Nurhidayah Agustin et al., 2022).

Scheme 2. Strategies for Developing Soft Skills in the 6.0 Era

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The Needs of the 6.0 Era

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- **Communication Skills**
- **Adaptive Leadership**
- **Ability to Adapt to Technology**
- **Time Management Skills**
- **Problem-Solving Skills**

Soft Skills Theory

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- Putra and Pratiwi argue that communication skills are one example of soft skills.
- Elfindri et al. state that soft skills support success in interacting with others.
- Kusmiran suggests that examples of soft skills include leadership, empathy, ethics, teamwork, communication, time management, and patience.

Strategies for Developing Human Resource Soft Skills

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- **Development Strategies:** Implement regular training sessions or workshops.
- **Engage in Group Activities:** For example, within organizations, conducting seminars that involve all divisions working together can support success in interaction and mutual adaptation.
- **Leadership Training Programs:** Institutions can provide mentoring, coaching, or MBKM programs to develop and enhance leadership skills.

Moreover, soft skills also have a significant impact on economic development, both in the present and in the future. Mastery of skills such as effective communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and adaptability enables human resources to contribute more productively to economic processes, enhancing competitiveness and innovation. Within the framework of Islamic economics, the principles of social justice, Sharia-based financial inclusion, and Islamic microfinance have the potential to reinforce the pillars of national economic development, as outlined in the Indonesia Golden 2045 vision, particularly through poverty alleviation and the enhancement of societal welfare

(Hidayat et al., 2024). Thus, the integration of individual soft skills development with the application of Islamic economics in national economic policy can serve as a complementary strategy for building an inclusive and sustainable economy.

CONCLUSION

The development of soft skills in human resources (HR) is highly important, particularly in an era of rapid technological advancement. By focusing on the development of technical, managerial, and emotional skills, both individuals and institutions can seize opportunities in the 6.0 era while addressing emerging challenges. Companies and organizations are now competing to adapt to the changing times through digital competition. In this context, both hard skills and soft skills are essential elements that individuals must possess to navigate the 6.0 era, where technology continues to become increasingly advanced and sophisticated. Companies can develop soft skills, such as communication abilities, through training for example, sessions on effective speaking and proper language use when interacting with clients. By providing appropriate training, companies can enhance employees' communication skills to be more effective and aligned with the specific needs of each work area. Additionally, another strategy for developing soft skills is through leadership training programs. This aligns with Kusmiran's definition of soft skills, which identifies leadership as one example and a key factor in an individual's success. In the field of education, teachers must possess soft skills to equip their students, which can be achieved by participating in regular training sessions or workshops. With the development of soft skills in human resources, they are better prepared to face the challenges of the highly advanced 6.0 era. The resulting human resources are expected to be high-quality, skilled, adaptive, innovative, leadership-oriented, and capable of managing both their emotions and time effectively.

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