



Investigating Soft Skills that English Studies High-Quality Program Students Gain After Participating in the Field Trip Course

Ngoc Anh Thu Nguyen^{1*}, Ngoc Ngan Tran¹, Phan Phuong Quynh Le¹, Hoang Truc Vo¹, Doan Bao Vy Luong¹

¹English Studies High-Quality Program, Can Tho University, Can Tho, Viet Nam

ABSTRACT

Published Online: October 13, 2023

This study aimed to investigate the soft skills that English studies high-quality program students gain after taking part in the field trip course. The quantitative and qualitative research was conducted at the School of Foreign Languages of Can Tho University (CTU). The participants were 196 English studies high-quality programs of the School of Foreign Languages, cohorts 46 and 47. The questionnaire and in-depth interviews were used to examine the soft skills that students gained and the opportunities for students to develop soft skills after the field trip course. The findings showed that the researchers correctly predicted that most students majoring in English Studies in the high-quality program before participating in the field trip course have basic knowledge about the definition of soft skills but do not have enough opportunities and practical situations to apply these soft skills. That is why the field trip course becomes essential for students to practice the soft skills they have learned in school and put them into practice. Thereby understanding soft skills that students are diverse and honing these skills through a field trip course. This study helps undergraduates have a more comprehensive view of the ways to apply the knowledge learned in school to the real environment. Besides, the field trip course helps students recognize and improve their soft skills, aids in exams, and might be useful for future work for students majoring in English studies high-quality program students.

KEYWORDS:

soft skills, field trip course, students, high-quality program

1. INTRODUCTION

Soft skill is a necessary factor in the modern world, especially in environmental work. Schulz (2008) admitted, "The 21st Century employers are looking for graduates who possess soft skills that include responsibility, self-confidence, social and communication skills, flexibility, team-spiritedness, good work attitude, self-motivation, and self-management.". However, for English studies high-quality students at Can Tho University, the application of soft skills theories to the real world has not yet been effective, because most students' perception is still limited. Because students do not have many opportunities to apply theory to the outside environment. Therefore, the field trip course plays an important role because it can help students apply their knowledge in the real world.

Students often did not perceive which skills they were using in some situations because they did not have many opportunities to be exposed to diverse situations. Hence, it is difficult for students to develop soft skills, or how to combine those skills effectively. This problem is further complex because no agreement exists about what these skills are actually, which are of significance, and how acquiring them should be approached in higher education (Adomssent et al., 2007). This study investigates the soft skills that English studies high-quality program students gain after taking part in the field trip course. In addition, it also identifies what skills are essential during the field trip. According to Schulz (2008), employers complain about a lack of soft skills among graduates from tertiary education institutions.

Field trips are defined as any journey undertaken for instructional objectives under the aegis of the school (Sorrentino and Bell, 1970). In general, students are transferred from a regular learning setting (classroom) to a real site for a specific learning experience. Field trips of this magnitude may necessitate substantial travel and time (Burton, 1985). However, in order to organize a field trip, requires the professional organization of the school and the strict management of teachers, so schools often rarely

Corresponding Author: Ngoc Anh Thu Nguyen

**Cite this Article: Ngoc Anh Thu Nguyen, Ngoc Ngan Tran, Phan Phuong Quynh Le, Hoang Truc Vo, Doan Bao Vy Luong (2023). Investigating Soft Skills that English Studies High-Quality Program Students Gain After Participating in the Field Trip Course. International Journal of Social Science and Education Research Studies, 3(10), 2045-2053*

Ngoc Anh Thu Nguyen et al, Investigating Soft Skills that English Studies High Quality Program Students Gain After Participating in the Field Trip Course

organize field trips for students. However, they do not know that field trips are valuable experiences for students to learn and develop soft skills. In addition, students can apply theoretical knowledge in practice to deeply understand classroom knowledge and expand their own skills. Likewise, Nasr and her partner agreed that field trips help increase the student's motivation and curiosity. Field trips can add variety to the regular classroom instructional program and they tend to be special and enjoyable learning experiences. In addition to increasing student-centered learning and student-teacher interaction, field trips raise learners' awareness of daily activities in real life through developing social awareness. In short, a well-organized field trip to a certain place is an excellent method of teaching students to observe and ask questions in real-life situations (Nasr, A., & Rasheed, T. A. (2022)).

II. METHOD

This section contains fundamental details regarding how the research was carried out.

Quantitative research is used in this research. Our research has two research questions: What soft skills are gained after the field trip course? Does the field trip course provide enough opportunities for students to develop soft skills?

This information is collected through a large-scale questionnaire survey. The combination of quantitative is demonstrated through a questionnaire developed from a survey questionnaire.

+ Part one includes demographic information (including the student's full name, student's code, and cohort).

+ Part two explores the soft skills students realized need to develop before participating in a field trip course.

+ Part three measures the frequency of using soft skills of students during the field trip course.

+ Part four finds out the results of the trip with questions about the soft skills students develop after participating in the field trip course.

The data was collected at Can Tho University (CTU), namely in the School of Foreign Languages. Can Tho University is one of the most esteemed universities in the Mekong Delta. High-quality students in the third and fourth years were encouraged to take part in this survey.

In addition, to facilitate drawing conclusions from the research process on the soft skills that CTU students gained from the questionnaires, we divided them into 4 main groups according to the "Four pillars of Education for the 21st Century" that Jacques Delors (2001) refers to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). We present 4 groups in the table below.

Table 1. Four groups of soft skills according to UNESCO

Learning to know	Problem-solving skills
	Cognitive skills
	Critical skills
	Planning and organizing work skills

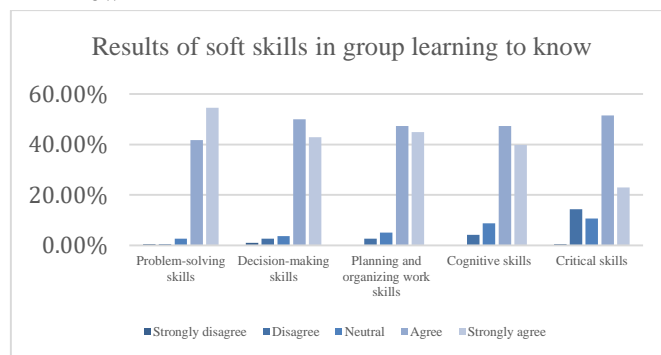
Learning to be	Decision-making skills
	Self-management skills
	Time management skills
Learning to live together	Financial management skills
	Respecting the collective skills
	Living and working with others skills
	Teamwork skills
Learning to do	Interpersonal and social communication skills
	Presentation skills
	Using technology skills
	Negotiation skills
	Handle urgent situations skills

III. RESULTS

This survey of study involved 196 students, including third-year and fourth-year students majoring in English Studies High-Quality from the School of Foreign Languages, Can Tho University. The number of students in course 47 participating in the survey was higher (accounting for 56.1 percent) than those in course 46 (accounting for 43.9 percent). All students participating in the survey completed the field trip course of the curriculum.

1. Soft skills that students realize need to develop before participating in the field trip course

Chart 1. Results of Soft Skills in Group learning to know

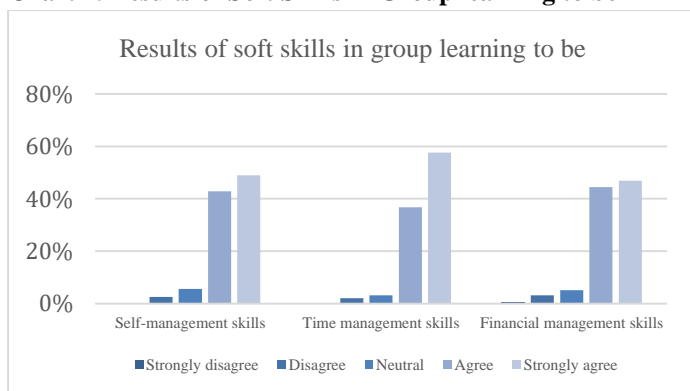


The researchers gathered information about the soft skills in groups of learning to know in Chart 1. Problem-solving skills are a skill that 96.4 percent of students believed to be needed to develop before participating in field trips and only 1 percent of students static that do not need to develop before taking part in this course. Decision-making skills were thought to be needed to develop by 92.9 percent of students. Some participants (3.6 percent) considered that they do not need to develop decision-making skills before taking part in field trip course. Most students believed that planning and organizing work skills were needed to develop (92.3 percent). However, 2.6 percent of students believed that they do not need to develop planning and organizing work skills before

Ngoc Anh Thu Nguyen et al, Investigating Soft Skills that English Studies High Quality Program Students Gain After Participating in the Field Trip Course

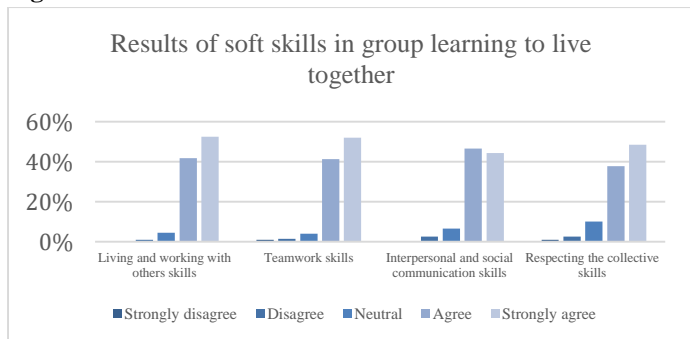
participating field trip course. 87.2 percent of students claimed that cognitive skills were needed, and 4.1 percent of students realized that they did not need to develop these skills. Others (74.5 percent) thought that critical skills were needed to develop before students took part in the field trip course. Furthermore, 14.8 percent of students realized that they do not need to develop critical skills before participating in this course.

Chart 2. Results of Soft Skills in Group learning to be



Data analysis in Chart 2 depicted that the majority of students participating in the survey have important skills that need to be developed before participating in field trip course. 93.3 percent of students realized that they needed to develop self-management skills, and some students (2.6 percent) stated that they did not need to develop these skills before taking part in field trip course. 94.4 percent and 91.3 percent of students thought that time management skills and financial management skills need to be developed before participating in field trip course. However, only 2.5 percent of students realized that they did not develop time management skills, and 3.6 percent of students believed that they did not develop financial skills before taking part in field trip course.

Chart 3. Results of Soft Skills in Group learning to live together

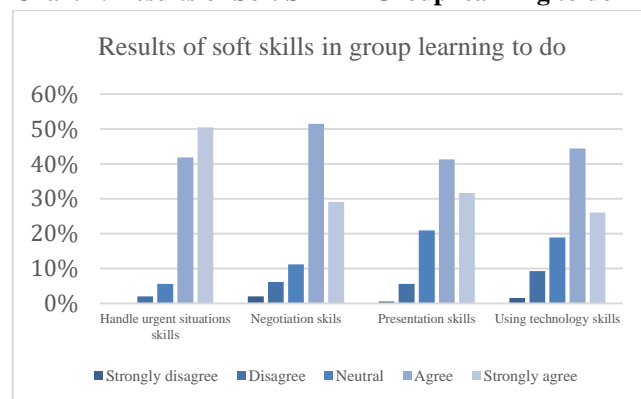


According to Chart 3 soft skills that students need to develop in groups of good citizenship skills before taking part in field trip course: a large proportion of students realized that they need to develop living and working with others skills (94.4 percent) and 93.3 percent have already developed Teamwork

skills. Furthermore, only 1 percent of students considered that they do not need to develop living and working with others skills, and 2.5 percent of students realized that they do not need to develop teamwork skills before taking part in the field trip course.

The number of students thinking that interpersonal and social communication skills make up 90.8 percent, some students (2.6 percent) realized that they do not need to develop these skills before taking part in the field trip course. Then 86.3 percent pointed out respecting the collective skills that need to be developed before taking part in the field trip, and only 3.6 percent of students stated that they do not need to develop. Similarly, we conducted interviews with 4 random students in the school of Foreign Languages to learn more about the soft skills that students need to develop before taking part in the field trip course. Through interview results, students' soft skills that need to be developed are also identified similarly as above. 2 out of 4 students participating in the interview said that time management skills are skills that need to be developed before participating in practical modules. The interviewed students also shared the soft skills in the group of good citizenship skills that need to be developed before participating in field trip.

Chart 4. Results of Soft Skill in Group learning to do



According to Chart 4, the following are the soft skills in group of learning to do that students need to develop before taking part in the field trip course. 92.3 percent of students responded handle urgent situations skills and only 2 percent of students thought that this skill was not necessary to develop before participating in the field trip course. Furthermore, 80.6 percent of students stated that Negotiation skills need to be developed before participating in this course, and not many students responded that these skills were unnecessary to develop (8.1 percent).

Presentation skills were thought to be the skills that need to be developed before field trips by 71.4 percent of students and 6.1 percent considered that they do not need to develop this skill. About 70.4 percent stated that they need to develop using technology skills. Furthermore, 10.7 percent of learners considered that they do not need to develop using technology skills before taking part in the field trip course.

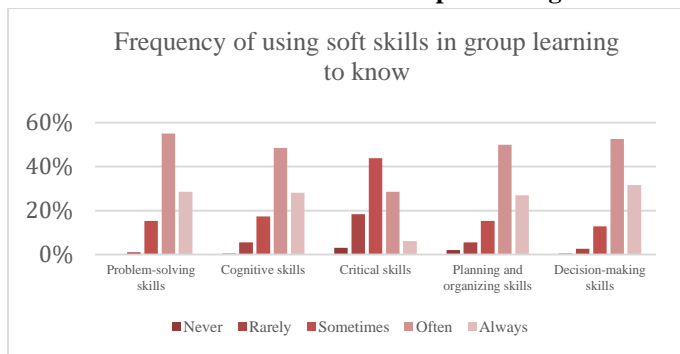
2. Frequency of using soft skills of students during the field trip course

After studying the realization of High-Quality English Studies students about the soft skills developed before participating in the field trip course, researchers recognize that the majority of students participating in the survey did not essentially determine the necessary level of soft skills before participating in the field trip. Therefore, researchers continue to survey the frequency of students' use of soft skills while taking part in field trip course.

In this section, researchers surveyed the frequency of students' use of soft skills while participating in field trip. According to the 16 soft skills, the researchers have chosen to survey, in this section the researchers continue to divide the 16 soft skills into 4 main groups.

These skill groups are intended to research the frequency with which students use soft skill groups during their field trips, measured on a frequency scale of: Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Often (4), and Always (5).

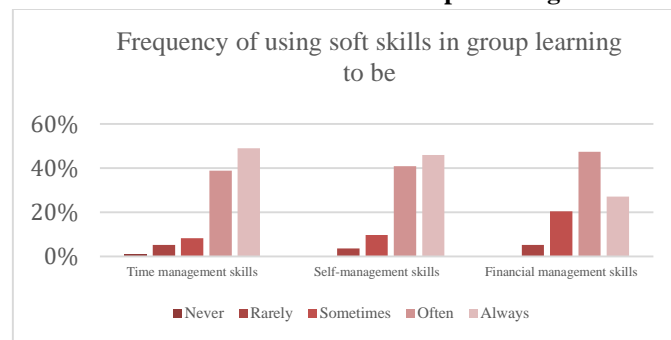
Chart 5. Results of Soft Skills in Group Learning to know



The data of Chart 5 showed that the Learning to Know group includes 5 skills, this group has the most skills among the 4 groups. Of these, 4 soft skills including problem-solving skills, cognitive skills, planning and organizing skills, and decision-making skills have the highest frequency of frequent use, accounting for half of the Likert scale of 55.1 percent, 48.5 percent, 50 percent, and 52.6 percent. While negotiation skills only account for 28.6 percent of the 5 levels of the Likert scale. In addition, according to the data table, the use of frequencies often in the field trip course includes problem-solving skills, cognitive skills, critical skills, planning and organizing skills, and decision-making skills choice of students is quite low. Problem-solving skills accounted for 28.6 percent, cognitive skills 28.1 percent, planning and organizing skills 27 percent, decision-making skills 31.6 percent and Critical skills chose the lowest 6.1 percent. Problem communication skills, cognitive skills, planning and organizing skills, and decision-making skills have a sometimes use frequency of 15.3 percent, 17.3 percent, 15.3 percent, and 12.8 percent is lower than cognitive skills of 43.9 percent. The frequency of rarely used critical thinking skills is the highest (18.4 percent) among the five skills, and

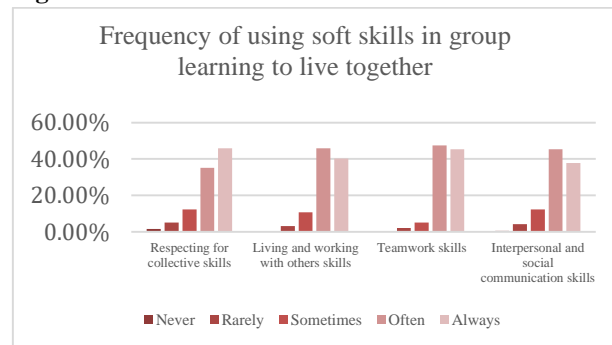
problem-solving skills have the lowest frequency of rarely used at 1 percent. Both skills: Cognitive skills, planning, and organizing skills have rarely equal frequency percentages of 5.6 percent, and decision-making skills are 2.6 percent. No student chose to never use problem-solving skills during their participation in the field trip course. Both cognitive skills and decision-making skills have a 0.5 percent percentage of students choosing a frequency that is never used during the field trip course. Critical skills and planning skills have a rarely used frequency of 3.1 percent and 2 percent.

Chart 6. Results of Soft Skills in Group learning to be



According to analytical data in Chart 6 - Learning to Be, the majority of students say that time management skills are used the most, with 49 percent of students saying that they always use time management skills throughout the trip and 38.8 percent choose to use them regularly. However, 8.2 percent choose sometimes, 3.1 percent rarely and 1 percent never use the time manager skills during the field trip. In addition, self-management skills have the second highest percentage of votes in the group of three soft skills of learning to be: 45.9 percent chose always, 40.8 percent chose often use, 8.2 percent chose sometimes, the number of students who chose rarely and never they use self-management skills during their field trip are 3.1 percent and 1 percent.

Chart 7. Results of Soft Skills in Group learning to live together

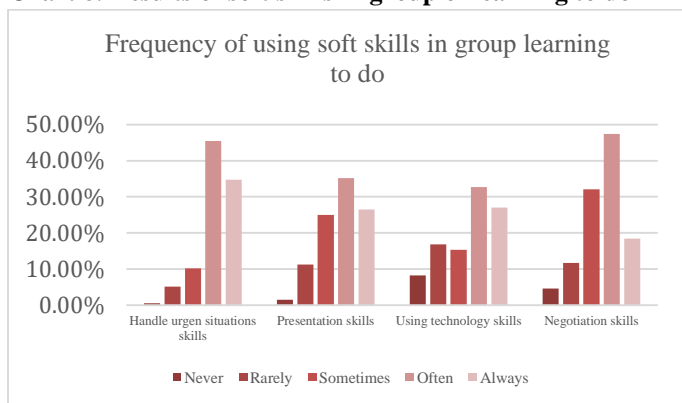


According to the data in Chart 7, students rate the learning to live together groups as having relatively equal frequency of use. The frequency of always using the respect for collective skills is 45.9 percent, often 35.2 percent, sometimes 12.2 percent, rarely 5.1 percent, and 1.5 percent representing the

Ngoc Anh Thu Nguyen et al, Investigating Soft Skills that English Studies High Quality Program Students Gain After Participating in the Field Trip Course

frequency of never. In contrast to respecting the collective skills, living and working with others skills, teamwork skills, and interpersonal and social communication skills, the frequency "often" has the highest percentage instead of the frequency "always" of Respecting collective skills. The frequency of always use of the remaining three skills is 40.3 percent, 45.4 percent, and 37.8 percent while the frequency of frequent use reaches 45.9 percent for living and working with others skills, teamwork skills (47.4 percent), and 45.4 percent for interpersonal and social communication skills. The frequency of occasional use of the three skills: living and working with others, teamwork, and interpersonal and social communication are 10.7 percent, 5.1 percent, and 12.2 percent. In addition, living and working with others skills, teamwork skills, and interpersonal and social communication skills have a rarely used frequency of 3.1 percent, 2 percent, and 4.1 percent. No students chose the frequency of never in the two skills of living and working with society and teamwork skills, and only 0.5 percent chose the frequency of never in interpersonal and social communication skills.

Chart 8. Results of soft skills in group of learning to do



Similar to the learning to live together group, the data in Chart 8 shows that the skills in the learning to do group have a frequency of use that is always lower than the frequency of often. Handle urgent situations skills that students think that are often used are 50 percent and always 34.7 percent. The frequency of using sometimes, rarely, and never is relatively low at 10.2 percent, and 5.1 percent, and no student thinks that this skill is never used when practicing the field trip course. Presentation skills, using technology skills, and negotiation had equal percentages of frequent use at 35.7 percent, 32.7 percent, and 33.2 percent. The frequency of sometimes use of negotiation skills is quite high (32.1 percent) while Presentation skills and skills in Using technology skills only account for 25 percent and 15.3 percent. In addition, the rare use frequency of presentation skills, using technological skills and Negotiation skills were chosen by students less than accounting for about a quarter of the Likert scale at 11.2 percent and 16.8 percent and 11.7

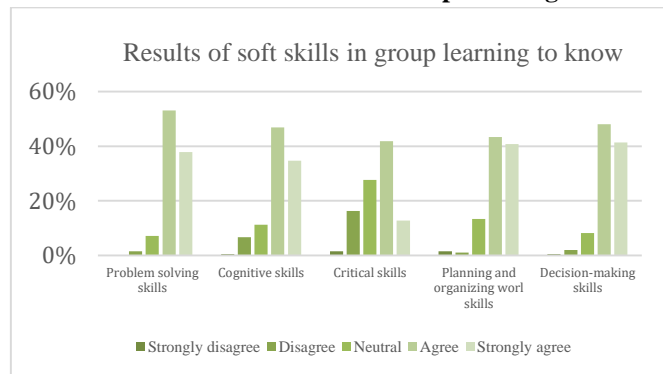
percent, and the never-used frequencies of the three skills are 1.5 percent, 8.2 percent, and 4.6 percent.

3. Soft skills that students developed after participating in the field trip course

To summarize, after examining the frequency of soft skills that students in English majors high-quality use while participating in the field trip course, the researchers continued to discover students' realization of the soft skills they achieved and developed after the end of the trip. Give an explicit picture of improving students' soft skills through field trip courses.

Based on the analyzed data, the researchers to show the percentage of students participating in the survey choosing according to the 5-level scale, (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree

Chart 9. Results of Soft Skills in Group learning to know



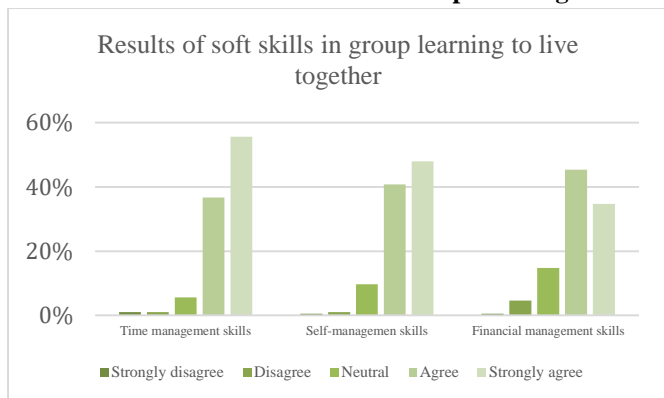
Looking at Chart 9, it can be seen that the majority of English Studies high-quality program students agree that they developed their planning and organizing work skills after participating in the field trip course, accounting for 43.4 percent, or the percentage of students strongly agree is 40.8 percent. In addition, problem-solving skills are the second skill that the vast of students agree developed in the learning to know group (53.1 percent), and the percentage that strongly agrees with this statement is 37.8 percent. Simultaneously, 41.3 percent of students also agree that they developed decision-making skills and the number of students who strongly agree accounted for 48 percent. With the development of cognitive skills, the percentage of strongly agree is 37.8 percent and agree is 46.9 percent. In terms of critical skills, the percentage of students who find themselves agreeing with the statement about developing this skill is 41.8 percent, but only 12.8 percent strongly agree, lower than the 3 skills above.

In the table data, a tiny number of students strongly disagree that they developed all four skills, ranging from 0.5 percent to 1.5 percent, and disagree with problem-solving skills, planning and organizing work skills and decision-making just ranging from 1 percent to 2 percent. The percentage of students choosing cognitive skills is 6.6 percent. On the contrary, the number of students who think they did not

Ngoc Anh Thu Nguyen et al, Investigating Soft Skills that English Studies High Quality Program Students Gain After Participating in the Field Trip Course

develop critical skills is up to 16.3 percent, the highest in the learning to be skills group.

Chart 10. Results of Soft Skills in Group learning to be

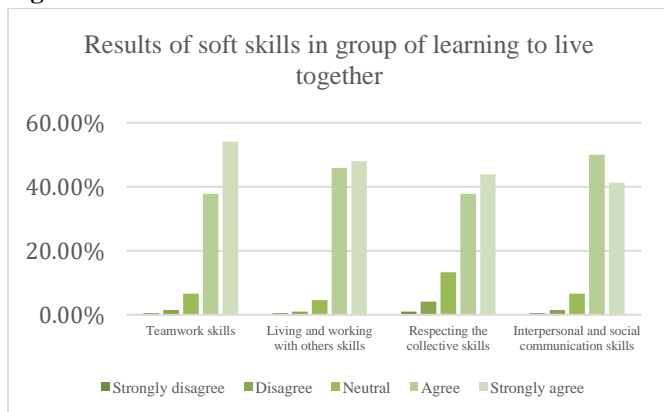


The researchers continue to consider the development of soft skills after participating in the field trip course according to group learning to be at table 14 according to the 5-level scale, (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree.

More than half of the students participating in the survey strongly agreed with the statement that time management skills were developed after participating in the field course, accounting for 55.6 percent, and the percentage of agreement is 36.7 percent. At the same time, self-management skills in the learning group are in chart 10, with 48 percent of students strongly agreeing with this statement, in addition 40.8 percent agreeing. However, there is a small difference between the percentage of students who strongly agree that they developed financial management skills with the percentage of the two skills just mentioned, which is only 34.7 percent, but the percentage that agrees is higher at 45.4 percent.

In Table 14, a modest number of students strongly disagree that they developed all three skills, ranging from 0.5 to 1 percent. Self-management skills and time management share a similar percentage of disagree with 1 percent. In learning to be group, financial management skills are the skills that did not agree with the most of students, occupying 4.6 percent.

Chart 11. Results of Soft Skills in group learning to live together

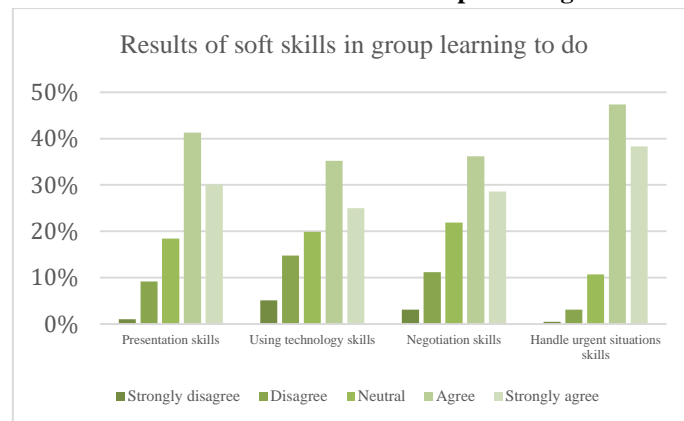


The researchers continue to analyze the development of soft skills after participating in the field trip course according to group learning to live together at Chart 11 according to the 5-level scale, (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree.

As can be seen from Chart 11, teamwork skills are the skills that students strongly agree that they developed, accounting for 54.1 percent, and the percentage of students who agree is 37.8 percent. Similarly, the strongly agree percentage of living and working with others skills is 48 percent, and the number of students choosing to agree is 45.9 percent. Regarding respecting collective skills, the percentage of students who strongly agreed and agreed that they developed was 37.8 percent and 43.9 percent respectively. More than half of the students agreed that they had developed interpersonal and social communication skills (50 percent), and the percentage that strongly agreed was 41.3 percent.

The percentage of students who strongly disagree and disagree that they developed the three skills of living and working with others, teamwork skills and interpersonal and social communication skills is only a small number, ranging from 0.5 percent to 1.5 percent, only the disagree percentage of students choosing respecting the collective skills is 4.1 percent.

Chart 12. Results of Soft Skills in Group learning to do



In Chart 12, the percentage of agreement with the statement of developing 4 skills of the learning to do group is lower than in the above three groups. Specifically, the percentage of students agreeing is 41.3 percent, 35.2 percent, 36.2 percent, and 47.4 percent respectively. The percentage of students completely agreeing on all 4 skills above is 30.1 percent, 25 percent, 27.6 percent, and 38.3 percent respectively.

The total percentage of students who strongly disagree and disagree with using technology skills and negotiation skills are 19.9 percent and 14.3 percent respectively, higher than the other two skills, specifically, presentation skills occupied 9.3 percent and Handle urgent situations skills account for 3.6 percent.

IV. DISCUSSION

From the above findings, the researchers correctly predicted that most students majoring in English Studies in the high-quality program at Can Tho University before participating in the field trip course have basic knowledge about the definition of soft skills but have not yet determined exactly which soft skills should be applied to the right situation and context. In addition, students majoring in English Studies in high-quality programs do not have enough opportunities and practical situations to apply these soft skills. That is why the field trip course becomes essential for students to practice the soft skills they have learned in school and put them into practice. Besides, it also helps students hone new soft skills that they will learn from observing and experiencing some unexpected situations during the course. Sharing the equivalent ideas with Harahap, D. I., & Firdaus, F. (2020), organized field trips can provide educational opportunities that are not available in the classroom environment. Furthermore, students can come up with creative responses to complex problems that challenge explained explanations. Most ideas and phenomena can be easily identified, internalized, and assimilated through educational field trips. Thus, creating opportunities for self-experience, self-observation, and long-term self-learning. In particular, a small number of participants gave 12 unequivocal answers about strongly disagreeing with one of the soft skills that the research team suggested was necessary to develop before participating in the field trip. This not only sheds light on students' realization that these soft skills are not clear, so need more opportunities to apply. Therefore, it demonstrates the effectiveness of the field trip that helps students have more situations and frequency of applying the skill.

The study is consistent with the conclusion reached by P.V. Dharmarajan et al. (2012), in which the author emphasizes the relevance of soft skills in both students' personal and professional lives. According to the researcher, soft skills, in addition to being required, are mandated alongside other technical talents. Allison Academy acknowledged that early understanding of the importance of soft skills helps students succeed in school, fulfill their academic responsibilities without incident, make more friends who may be useful in the future, and present themselves more favorably to teachers who may also have a significant impact on their careers (Allison Academy 2022). Rani and Mangala discovered in their research that soft skills are learned behaviors that require training and careful practice. Soft skills will enable students with strong conceptual and practical knowledge to develop, create, and lead teams. They provide a substantial contribution to the student's overall personality development, which increases their employment prospects. Soft skills training provides students with a strong practical emphasis and helps them build their interpersonal, teamwork, leadership, time management, and communication abilities. Students benefit from soft skills in interviews, group

discussions, and other social situations. It also helps students with career visioning and planning, résumé writing, and interacting with recruiters and placement counselors. They also stated that having a high IQ is no longer adequate in an age when interpersonal relationships between people and organizations are growing increasingly complex. Aside from having great arithmetic skills and obtaining excellent grades in classes, there are additional variables that lead to success in both professional and personal life. In each given situation, the ability to manage one's emotions and comprehend those of others allows one to supplement academic intelligence/cognitive capacities (IQ) with a humanitarian understanding of difficulties. This ability is referred to as emotional intelligence or soft skills (Rani, E., & Mangala, S. (2010)).

On the other hand, similar to the information the research team mentioned previously, in order for students to have the opportunity to develop their soft skills in the most complete way, participating in a field trip course is the best choice for them. As Harahap, D. I., and Firdaus, F. (2020) pointed out, organizing field trips is a challenge for schools and management. Nonetheless, scheduled field trips can give educational opportunities that are not available in the classroom. Students can come up with innovative solutions to challenging situations that defy theoretical explanations. Most ideas and occurrences can be easily detected, digested, and assimilated through educational field trips. As a result, possibilities for self-experience, self-observation, and long-term self-learning emerge. In addition, based on our survey, students also said that besides the soft skills suggested by the researchers, they also developed other soft skills such as emotional management skills, observation skills, etc. This proves that students have a broad vision of the importance of soft skills, so they took advantage of this field trip course to develop those skills. Concerning the significance of soft skills in universities, Sethi, R. (2016) stated that firms are increasingly recognizing soft skills. Although job-related skills are important, they are insufficient for progressing up the corporate ladder. Today's society has a large number of competent job seekers, and competition for job acquisition and retention is expanding. People must combine their hard skills with soft skills in order to demonstrate their full potential and get an advantage over others. A person with great soft skills would be able to differentiate himself from other job seekers. Furthermore, the author highlights a lack of competency in soft skills as one of the reasons for low employability in his study. However, students may still have a vague understanding of the definition of soft skills because there are too many names that bring together important skills in work and life. As other researchers have declared, it is difficult to define soft skills in a clear and succinct manner because they vary depending on culture, geography, and hierarchy. Soft skills are called by numerous other names: transferable skills, basic skills, core skills, generic skills, key

Ngoc Anh Thu Nguyen et al, Investigating Soft Skills that English Studies High Quality Program Students Gain After Participating in the Field Trip Course

skills, employability skills (Tran, 2013), functional skills (Brolin & Loyd, 2004), 21st Century skills, life skills, career skills, social-emotional skills (Kamenetz, 2015), and thinking disposition (Claxton, Costa, & Kallick, 2016). Furthermore, Rani, E., and Mangala, S.'s research revealed that Soft Skills are classified into two types. The first comprises cultivating character traits, while the second involves honing communication talents to successfully transmit character traits, concepts, and thoughts. For productive employment, ideas and attitudes must be perfectly integrated with appropriate written, verbal, and nonverbal communication abilities. Soft skills are a blend of attitudes and abilities (Rani, E., & Mangala, S., 2010).

What is more, students believe that soft skills help them be creative, and stimulate their thoughts and emotions to come up with special and unique opinions. However, students do not have the right opportunities and environments for them to apply and develop their full potential. From there, the field trip course organized by the school becomes a bridge between knowledge and experience, or in other words, applying the knowledge of soft skills learned in school to a real-life experience environment through the course. Similarly, Jordan's (2014) study demonstrates how field trip approaches increase the resources available to students in the classroom. They improve learning by exposing students to real-world situations. Teachers include field trips in their lessons to accomplish this. Field trips are linked to the classroom since they are integrated into the curriculum. According to Hefferan, Heywood, and Ritte (2002), students interact with a field trip in a variety of ways. Mid-level students can experience unexpected levels of excitement, attentiveness, and inquiry. Students with good records, on the other hand, maybe less adept in the area and dread the challenge of succeeding in a new profession or environment. Because each student is unique and each field experience is unique, each field experience leads to a range of academic, cognitive, and social advantages (Rennie, 2007). Prior knowledge and experience help students identify cognitive platforms on which to connect (NRC, 2009). If done correctly, students can build a lasting memory of the field trip experience, especially among high school and college students (Wilson, 2011). Because each student is distinct and each field experience varies, each field experience provides a variety of academic, cognitive, and social benefits (Rennie, 2007). Prior knowledge and experience assist students in identifying cognitive platforms to link to (NRC, 2009). If done appropriately, students, particularly students from high schools and universities, can form a lasting impression of their field trip experience (Wilson, 2011).

Aside from instructional benefits, field trips help students share a bond, are good for physical fitness, and provide amusement. Additionally, field trips provide future professional and career guidance. They open students' eyes not only to information but to ideas. (Harahap, D. I., and F.

Firdaus 2020). Similarly, Nasr and her colleague suggest that field trips broadened students' perspectives while improving their critical thinking, analytical, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. Field trips also helped them enhance their language flow and foster contact with other students and teachers. Furthermore, field trips increase learners' self-awareness and social awareness through interaction with individuals (Nasr, A., & Rasheed, T. A. (2022)). Furthermore, Putz and colleagues found in their study that field trips are an efficient technique to successfully convey knowledge and are suited for eliciting attitude and behavior changes. Students get theoretical and practical understanding through practitioner involvement and practical experience. (Putz, L. M., Treiblmaier, H., and S. Pfoser 2018).

Researchers believe that honing and learning soft skills is not difficult, it is just that students do not have enough opportunities and favorable environments to develop if they only study theory and practice in school. Students are encouraged to participate in the field trip course because students can experience it with their friends and teachers. In addition to building relationships, group work activities will help students develop their skills like living and working with others skills as well as presentation skills and many other skills. Furthermore, when participating in the field trip course in general, students should apply the soft skills they have learned in daily life to practice their ability and flexibility in using language and fluency skills. Soft skills are a vital feature for any student to prepare for the future, which will help students improve and perfect themselves in a variety of ways. Soft skill development should begin when students are still in school, according to researchers, because it helps them do well in their academic setting and, later, in their future workplaces. Soft skills are valued since they not only assist people in achieving their personal and professional goals but also contribute considerably to the development of their general quality of life. Communication and teamwork skills, for example, help us develop and maintain friends and relationships. Many years have gone by since the development of field trips, which are now frequently employed as an effective technique in foreign language teaching and learning. By delivering these benefits, field trips help to improve pupils' linguistic and social abilities (Doan, H. D. A). The combination of two aspects of applying soft skills when registering to participate in the field trip course is a great blend for high-quality English major students.

V. CONCLUSION

The study aims to investigate the soft skills gained by Can Tho University students majoring in English Studies (High-quality program, courses 46 and 47) after participating in the field trip course. Regarding the research findings and discussion, the researcher developed the following conclusions based on the research questions given above:

Ngoc Anh Thu Nguyen et al, Investigating Soft Skills that English Studies High Quality Program Students Gain After Participating in the Field Trip Course

The majority of participants have general basic knowledge of the concept of soft skills. However, due to the limitations of the living environment, soft skills are not used and practiced regularly, and students do not have the motivation to take full advantage of the soft skills they know to improve themselves and develop beyond their limits to excel in both soft skills and hard skills. Some students find having a few soft skills completely unnecessary in life and study. On the contrary, this explains that their way of Handle urgent situations skills and solving problems is hardly maximized because they do not have enough experience. Furthermore, the meaning of soft skills is clearly tied to the situational context, and immediate reflexes, which require experience and knowledge.

This field trip course is now regularly used as an effective method of teaching and learning foreign languages. Students have the opportunity to develop their soft skills in the most complete way by participating in a field trip course is the best choice for them. Most ideas and facts can be easily discovered, absorbed, and internalized through educational field trips. Students interact with field trips in a variety of ways, but if done correctly, students can have a lasting memory of the field trip experience. Besides, field trips are excursions used by teachers to complete certain learning experiences and are an integral part of the school curriculum, as they help students put the knowledge they have learned into practice, and make the best use of their existing soft skills, as well as learn new soft skills during the course of the field trip.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research was funded by Can Tho University, Vietnam. We are extremely grateful to those who participated in the questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews.

REFERENCES

1. Brolin, D. E., & Loyd, R. J. (2004). Career development and transition services: A functional life skills approach.
2. Claxton, G., Costa, A., & Kallick, B. (2016). Hard thinking about soft skills. *Educational leadership*, 73(6)
3. Denney, V., Haley, G., Rivera, E., & Watkins, D. V. (2020). Project management leadership and interpersonal skills: the past, present, and future. *Global Journal of Management and Marketing*, 4(1), 135.
4. Doan, H. D. A Study on the Application of Field Trips in English Teaching in Vietnam: *Effectiveness and Solutions*.
5. Dharmarajan, P. V., Pachigalla, R., & Lanka, K. (2012). The significance of inculcating Soft Skills in students in the process of teaching Hard Skills. *International Journal of Applied Research and Studies*, 1(2), 1-11.
6. Harahap, D. I., & Firdaus, F. (2020). The Implementation of Field Trips as Edu-Tourism to Improve Students' Speaking Ability at University Level. *SALTeL Journal (Southeast Asia Language Teaching and Learning)*, 3(2), 44-50.
7. Hefferan, K.P., Heywood, N.C., & Ritte, M.E. (2002). Integrating field trips and classroom learning into a capstone undergraduate research experience. *Journal of Geography*, 101(5), 183-190
8. Kamenetz, A. (2015). Nonacademic skills are key to success. But what should we call them. *National Public Radio*.
9. Nasr, A., & Rasheed, T. A. (2022). The Effect of Using Field Trips for EFL Primary Stage Students on Developing Empathy and English Fluency. *Online Submission*.
10. National Research Council (2009). Learning science in informal environments: *People, places, and pursuits*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press
11. Nguyen, L. D. T., & Nguyen, K. D. (2022). Twenty-First Century Essential Employability Skills for English as a Foreign Language Undergraduates in a Context of the Mekong Delta. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 11(2).
12. Putz, L. M., Treiblmaier, H., & Pfoser, S. (2018). Field trips for sustainable transport education: Impact on knowledge, attitude and behavioral intention. *The International Journal of Logistics Management*, 29(4), 1424-1450.
13. Rodrigues, Z. B. (2021). Education: A study based on the UNESCO report on the four pillars of knowledge. *Revista Científica Multidisciplinar Núcleo Do Conhecimento*, 1(4), 53
14. Tran, T. T. (2013). Limitation on the development of skills in higher education in Vietnam. *Higher Education*, 65(5), 631- 644.
15. Wilson, M. (2011). Field Trip Fundamentals. *Educational Digest*, 76(6), 63-64