

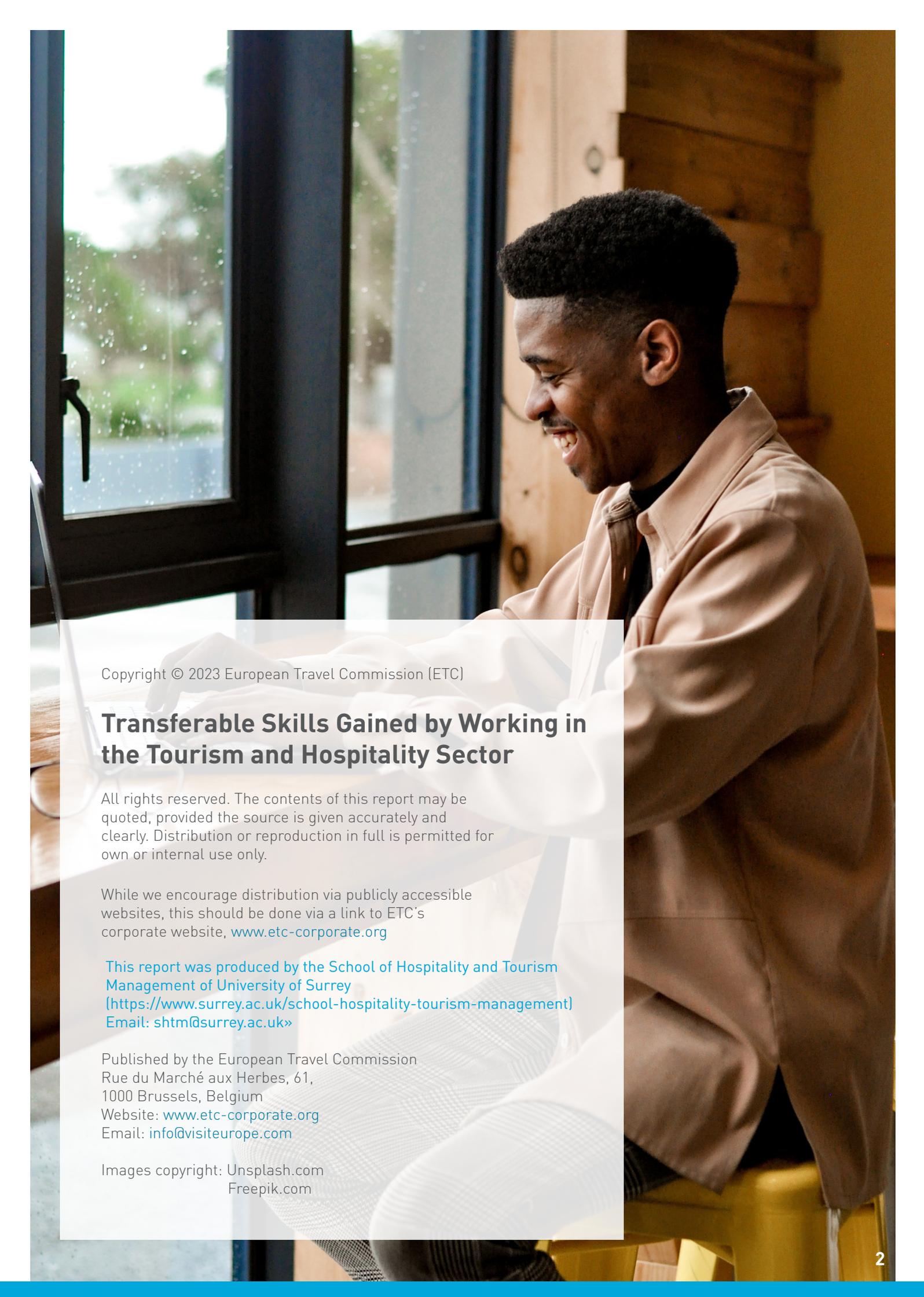


**TRANSFERABLE SKILLS GAINED
BY WORKING IN THE TOURISM AND
HOSPITALITY SECTOR**

EUROPEAN
TRAVEL
COMMISSION



UNIVERSITY OF
SURREY



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Transferable Skills Gained by Working in the Tourism and Hospitality Sector

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	03
FOREWORD	04
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	05
LIST OF FIGURES	08
LIST OF TABLES	08
1 INTRODUCTION	09
Mission	11
Objectives and Research Design	11
2 LIST OF TRANSFERABLE SKILLS	13
2.1 Sample Description	14
2.2 Career Aspiration for Children	14
2.3 Barriers to Work in Our Industry	17
2.4 Transferable Skills Learned	18
2.5 Transferable Skills Needed	18
2.6 Comparing Transferable Skills Learned & Needed	19
2.7 Transferable Skills Needed in Other Industries	22
2.8 Transferable Skills Learned in our Industry Versus Needed in Other Industries	22
3 TRANSFERABLE SKILLS MODEL	25
4 TRAINING	28
4.1 Approaches to Training Hard Skills	29
4.2 Approaches to Training Soft Skills	30
4.3 Approaches to How Children Learn	32
5 METHODOLOGY	33
5.1 List of Transferable Skills - Survey	34
5.2 Transferable Skills Model - Focus Group	35
5.3 Approaches to How Children Learn	42
IMPRESSUM	44



FOREWORD

Travel embodies the essence of human connection. It revolves around shared moments and interactions that leave lasting impressions. At the core of this intricate tapestry of experiences are hosts—proficient individuals who intricately link travellers with the soul of the destinations they explore.

In the wake of the pandemic, discussions about the revival of the Tourism and Hospitality sector often emphasise digital advancements and the need for a green transition. Yet a vital aspect is often overlooked—the human touch. We must not forget the dedicated workforce that forms the backbone of European tourism.

We are already battling a significant shortage of skilled workers in tourism. Reduced flight schedules, struggling restaurants, and hotels closing entire floors due to lack of staff are among the crippling consequences. This scarcity poses a significant obstacle to Europe's tourism recovery, second only to economic challenges and global conflicts, according to UNWTO.

This challenge demands action. We need to engage the next generation and show them the opportunities within our industry. The narrative surrounding tourism careers must be rewritten. Often misunderstood, these professions offer invaluable skills—communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and customer service—that are versatile and applicable in many other sectors.

Jobs may be evolving, but the essence of hospitality remains unchanged. In 2023, the European Year of Skills, decided to shed light on the promising paths within tourism. We are crafting a narrative that showcases the diverse journeys that start with a career in our industry.

At the European Travel Commission, we stand united to champion our professionals of tomorrow. This study is the first step towards rekindling the passion, the pride, and the profound sense of purpose that comes with a job that shapes dreams and forges connections. We hope that this is the start of a journey towards a future where the warmth of human interaction continues to define European tourism.

Teodora Marinska
COO
European Travel Commission





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Addressing labour shortages affecting the travel and hospitality sector demands a multifaceted approach, focusing on facilitating worker mobility, adopting innovative technologies, and changing the sector's image as a workplace. In collaboration with the University of Surrey's School of Hospitality and Tourism Management (SHTM), the European Travel Commission (ETC) has embarked on a long-term strategy to reshape the perception of the sector among the next generation of workers. The project aims to develop two series of children's books, each consisting of six books, to introduce transferable skills learned in the Tourism and Hospitality industry to children aged 5-11. These books are set to be available in February 2024 and will serve as a unique way to promote the industry's advantages as a career path.

The primary mission of this project is to address the challenges faced by the Tourism and Hospitality industry, including labour shortages and an unfavourable image. The project seeks to accomplish the following:

• **Support the industry:** The books aim to attract individuals eager to learn and explore diverse opportunities within the Tourism and Hospitality sector, providing them with valuable on-the-job training and the flexibility to work across different roles and countries.

• **Build confidence and pride of people working in the sector:** To not only contribute to personal satisfaction, but to drive the ripple effect that fosters a positive work culture, promotes personal and professional growth, and contributes to overall well-being and success.

• **Empower parents:** By offering books that introduce transferable skills taught in the sector, the project aims to empower parents to educate their children about key skills essential for various careers. The project emphasises that the Tourism and Hospitality industry can serve as a platform for developing these skills, allowing individuals to pivot into other professions without being tied to a single area or location.

OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH DESIGN: To achieve its goals, the project conducted a three-step sequential, mixed-method research to answer key questions:

1. **Identify transferable skills:** An online panel-survey with people who have been, or are working in the travel and hospitality sector was designed and used to reveal:

- parental aspirations in terms of career choice of their children.
- barriers to work in the Tourism and Hospitality sector.
- transferable skills acquired when working in the Tourism and Hospitality industry.
- transferable skills the sector is looking for.
- transferable skills non-tourism sectors are demanding.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2. Develop a transferable skills model:** Two focus groups with eight participants each categorized 116 transferable skills identified via the survey. The participants, a mix of industry professionals and academics, grouped these skills into clusters.
- 3. Understand how children aged 5-11 learn transferable soft skills:** Three focus groups were conducted, with a total of 21 participants who had diverse backgrounds related to children's education and development. The sessions, led by a moderator and an observer, focused on discussing how to actively create situations that allow children to acquire transferable soft skills. A summative content analysis approach was used to analyse the data.

RESULTS

- Parents hope for their children to pursue careers in engineering followed by law, finance, and healthcare. Tourism and Hospitality is in the mid-field.
 - Key barriers to work in the sector are low income, long working hours, difficult customers, lack of training, and stressful and complex working environments but also others such as job instability, low social recognition, negative social image, and limited career progression.
 - Skills learned by working in the sector include communication, customer service, teamwork, problem-solving, multitasking, patience, time management, flexibility, leadership, language proficiency, attention to detail, empathy, and many more.
 - Skills needed largely overlap with skills learned.
 - Transferable skills acquired in the Tourism and Hospitality industry are highly relevant in other sectors. These skills include communication, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, adaptability, and more, highlighting the industry's potential as a training ground for diverse careers.
 - **Transferable skills model:** The model comprises soft skills and hard skills. The first large group of **soft skills** is called (Inter)Personal Effectiveness which consists of two broad categories called Interpersonal Communication Skills (i.e., Workplace Etiquette, Intercultural Communication, Communication with/to Others, and Emotional Intelligence) and Personal Growth and Development (i.e., Positive Character Traits, Self-Mastery, Attitude and Mindset, Wellbeing and Agility). The second soft skill group is Professional Excellence (i.e., Creativity, Productivity, and Strategic Leadership Skills).
- Hard Skills** are called Hospitality and Business Proficiency and comprise Business Management Skills, IT Skills and Digital Knowledge, Culinary Skills and Events, and Industry Knowledge. The link between soft and hard skills is seen as a mutual relationship impacting each other.
- A wealth of suggestions with regard to how children could learn soft skills is provided.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONCLUSION:

This project involved three main components: identifying transferable skills, categorization of 116 transferable skills, and an exploration of effective approaches for children to learn soft skills. A Transferable Skills Model has been developed that comprises categories of soft and hard skills and demonstrates the interconnectedness of various skills. Notably, soft and hard skills were found to influence each other mutually. In the context of children's education, a diverse group of experts discussed methods for teaching soft skills. The project successfully generated valuable insights into skill classification and educational strategies.

By introducing transferable skills in adventure stories to children through engaging children's books, the project seeks to inspire the next generation to consider careers in the Tourism and Hospitality sector. Additionally, the research has highlighted the industry's potential to provide skills valuable across a range of professions. As a long-term strategy, this project contributes to shaping a brighter future for the industry by addressing labour shortages and changing perceptions. The first two books (one for the age group 5-7 and one for the age group 8-11) will be released in early 2024.





LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1 The research design

Figure 4.2.1 Preferred career choice for children

Figure 4.2.2 Frequency of how often a certain job category appears at a certain rank

Figure 4.2.3 Frequency of rank position of Tourism & Hospitality as a desired field of employment

Figure 4.3.1 Barriers to work in the Tourism & Hospitality Sector

Figure 4.4.1 Transferable skills learned in the Tourism & Hospitality Sector

Figure 4.5.1 Transferable skills needed to be successful in the Tourism & Hospitality Sector

Figure 4.6.1 Comparison of transferable skills learned and needed

Figure 4.7.1 Transferable skills needed in industries other than Tourism & Hospitality

Figure 4.8.1 Comparison of skills learned in our field and skills needed in other industries

Figure 5.1 Model of transferable skills for the Tourism & Hospitality industry

Figure 7.2.1 Transferable skills mind map focus group 1

Figure 7.2.2 Transferable skills mind map focus group 2

Figure 7.2.3 Final mind map of transferable skills in the Tourism & Hospitality industry

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.6.1 Transferable skills learned but not mentioned as needed and vice versa

Table 4.8.1 Transferable skills learned in the hospitality and tourism sector but not mentioned as needed in other industries and vice versa

Table 6.1.1 Approaches to training Business Proficiency

Table 6.2.1 Approaches to training soft skills

Table 7.1.1 Profile of focus group participants of hospitality and tourism experts



INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

According to a study by the World Travel and Tourism Council (2021), one in six vacancies will not be filled and the hospitality sector and travel agencies are the most affected. Suggested ways to deal with the positions not filled are phrased as “facilitating worker mobility with a more favourable visa policy, allowing flexible and remote work, adopting innovative technological and digital solutions, and offering training, refresher programs and benefits to employees” (euronews.com, 2022). None of these measures considers changing the image of the sector as a workplace from a rather unpopular one to one that provides opportunities to learn transferable skills in an environment that offers many different roles (e.g., from waiter/waitress, to tour guide, receptionist all the way to data analyst or technology related jobs) which one can start in any country and which provide the opportunity to move between countries and travel the world while working.

In collaboration with the University of Surrey, School of Hospitality and Tourism Management (SHTM) the European Travel Commission (ETC) developed a project to examine perceptions of the industry and how those perceptions might be changed by pursuing a long-term strategy to shape how the sector is viewed by the next working generation. The set goal is to develop two series of children’s books (each consisting of 6 titles) which package transferable skills one can learn by working in the Tourism and Hospitality industry as adventures for 5–7-year-olds and for 8–11-year-olds. The basis for the books is a series of research projects to reveal transferable skills imparted by work in the Tourism and Hospitality industry to provide an understanding of which of those skills are key drivers of successful careers in Tourism and Hospitality and in other sectors.

As such, this report presents transferable skills one can learn in our industry and related topics such as barriers to entering our industry and how those transferable skills can be communicated to children to make the sector more attractive as a career or as a jumping board for other professions. The innovative, non-traditional approach of distributing insights of this project as stories in children’s books is seen as a long-term strategy and we are proud to announce the first book of each series – based on the insights of this report – will be available in May 2024.



MISSION

The books aim to help the tourism industry, which wants to employ people who are eager to learn by engaging in a wide variety of opportunities without having to commit long-term to a single job/field/country, and by being paid and trained on the job without “severe consequences for mistakes” unlike other fields/jobs that do not allow any mistakes and do not teach such a great variety of transferable skills.

The project also aims to help people (parents) who want to teach their children transferable skills crucial for most jobs. The books demonstrate to parents and children how the tourism sector can be a diverse learning platform and jumping board for other professions, offering flexibility and the opportunity to gain valuable experience without longterm commitment, unlike other professions.

OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The goal of this report is to answer:

- Which transferable skills do people learn/need when working in our industry? Based on the results, a transferable skills model will be introduced which demonstrates how the various skills are linked to each other.
- What are the barriers to participation in our industry?
- Which transferable skills learned in Tourism and Hospitality are required in other industries?
- What field do parents want their kids to work in?
- How do children aged 5-11 learn transferable skills?



INTRODUCTION

The research comprised three steps (Figure 3.1). First, people working in the Tourism and Hospitality sector were contacted to provide information about which transferable skills they have learned from working in the sector. After cleaning and compiling the transferable skills gathered, Tourism and Hospitality experts were gathered in two face-to-face focus groups and asked to group the collected transferable skills and provide information concerning how the various groups are linked to each other. Finally, three focus groups were organised with child education experts, who were asked to discuss how one can actively encourage children to learn various groups of transferable soft skills.



Figure 3.1 The research design

Note: Details about the methodology used for each step are provided at the end of the report.



LIST OF TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

2.1 SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

The survey comprised 52.2% females, 43% males and 4.8% indicated as others. On average, participants are 38.36 years old (STD=14.45, max=73, min=20) and started working in the Tourism and Hospitality industry at an age of 21.52 years (STD=5.88, max=52, min=14). More than half (55.7%) started working in the sector below the age of 21 years and another 40.3% between 22 and 31 years. 30.4% worked in hotels, followed by 24.8% working in restaurants, and 20.7% in travel agencies. Others worked in events (6.5%), transport (3.3%), destinations management/national tourism organisation (4.4%), and areas such as museums, public sector, tour operator, tourism & real estate, tourism education, tour guide, and travel technology. On average they worked in the industry for 15.2 years (STD=12.82, max=54, min=1). The vast majority has been working in customer facing positions (85.9%). More specifically 39.1% worked at a management level, 37% in a non-management position, 12% at executive level (e.g., general manager, director), 8.7% are owners of the business, and the final 3.3% specified other.

A quarter are residents of the Britain and Northern Ireland (25%) but there is a good mix of countries from all over the world represented, with 8.7 % from both Greece and Portugal followed by Poland (6.5%) and Austria (5.4%). Then there are various countries with 4.3%, namely Spain, the USA, and Vietnam, 3.3% from both Italy and Switzerland, and 2.2% from Czech Republic, South Africa, Sweden, and the United Arab Emirates. Further, there are respondents from Australia, Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, the Netherlands, and New Zealand. Most participants categorize their ethnic origin/themselves as white (78.3%), followed by Asian (13%), a mix of more ethnic groups (3%), and black/African/Caribbean and others (e.g., Arab) account for 2.2% each.

2.2 CAREER ASPIRATION FOR CHILDREN

Looking at their marital status, 39.1% have never been married, 27.2% are married, 23.9% live with their partner, and 9.8% are divorced or separated. 68.5% have no children, 16.3% have two and 12.0% have one. 1.1% and 2.2% have three and four children respectively. Concerning the aspiration participants have for (their) children, they rank a career in engineering highest followed by law, finance, and healthcare. Tourism and Hospitality is in the mid-field (Figure 4.2.1).

Considering how often a certain job category is ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. Figure 4.2.2 shows that Engineering, Healthcare, Law, and Finance have been ranked first most often.

Tourism & Hospitality appeared most often on the 5th rank (14.72%) of the most desirable field parents want to see their children work in, followed by the 8th rank (11.04%) and the 6th (10.12%) – see Figure 4.2.3 for details.

A few chose the category “Other” and specified that they want their children to work in education/teaching, gender studies, human resources and anthropology, informatics, depends on child’s interest, technology, and politics.

LIST OF TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

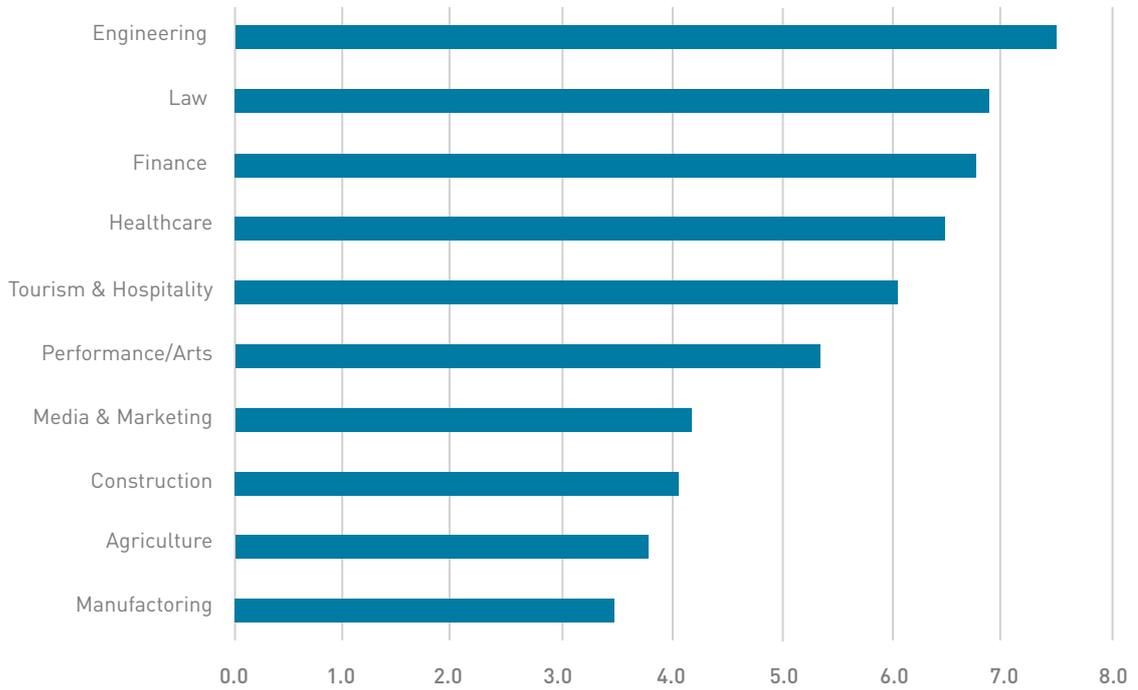


Figure 4.2.1 Preferred career choice for children

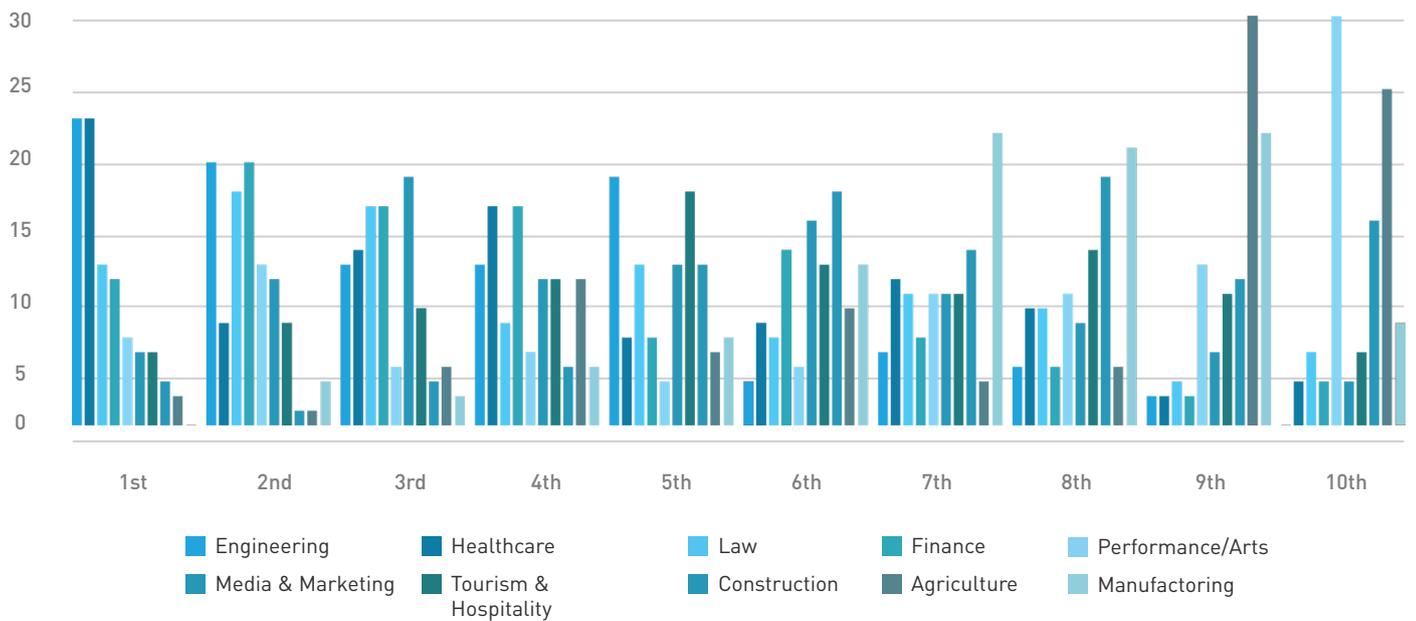


Figure 4.2.2 Frequency of how often a certain job category appears at a certain rank

LIST OF TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

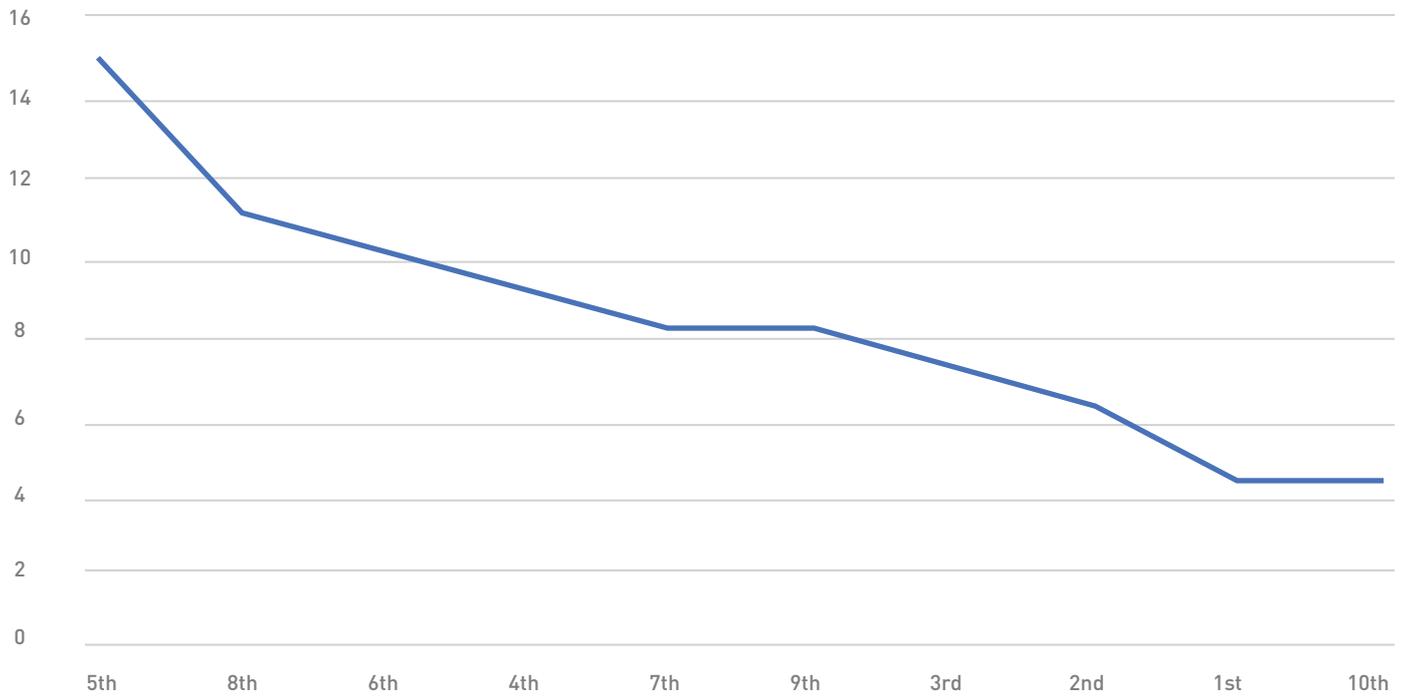


Figure 4.2.3 Frequency of rank position of Tourism & Hospitality as a desired field to work in



LIST OF TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

2.3 BARRIERS TO WORK IN OUR INDUSTRY

People who are working in, or previously worked in the sector stated multiple reasons why they think people do not select Tourism and Hospitality as a preferred career choice (Figure 4.3.1).

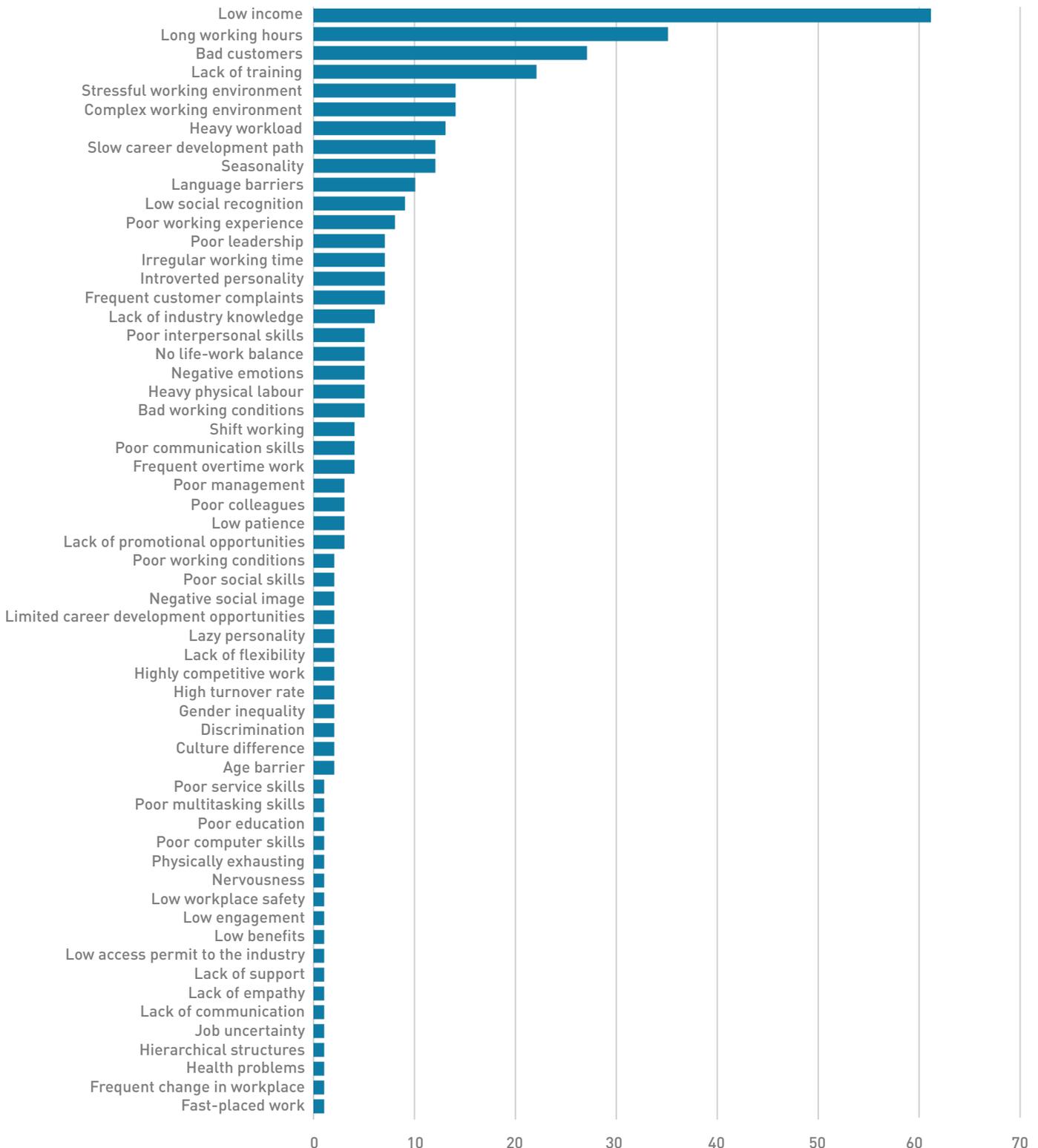


Figure 4.3.1 Barriers to work in the Tourism & Hospitality Sector

LIST OF TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

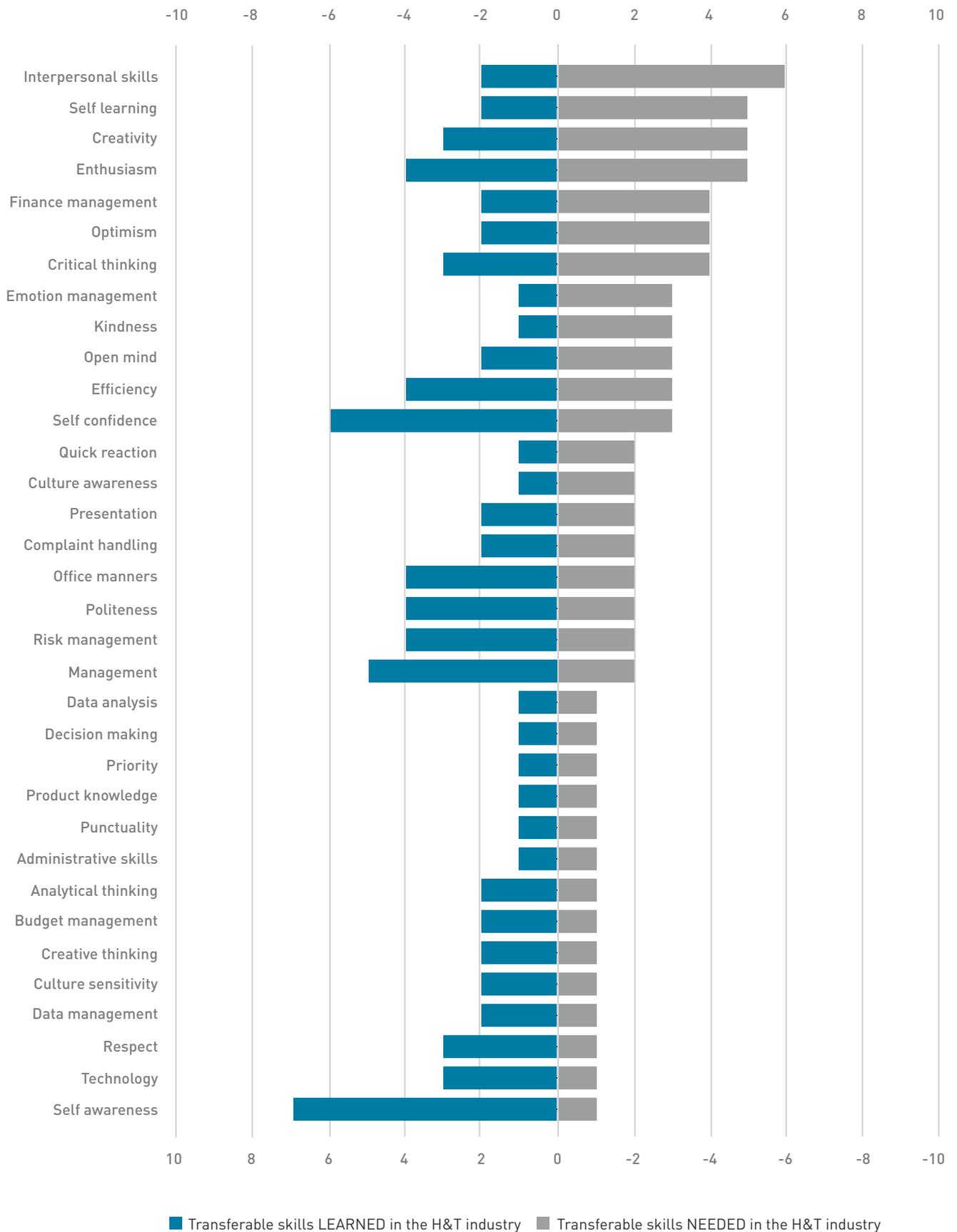


Figure 4.6.1 Comparison of transferable skills learned and needed

LIST OF TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Transferable skills	
Learned	Needed
Accounting	Conflict management
Body language	Consistency
Business management	Customer management
Cognitive flexibility	Digital knowledge
Concentration	Eloquence
Content management	Endurance
Cooking skills	Friendliness
Dedication	Human resource management
Event planning	Improvisation
Fine dining table setting	Innovation
Forward thinking	Integrity
Geography knowledge	Logical thinking
Health	Passion
Interaction	Precision
Logistics	Process management
Networking	Productivity
Office software	Professionalism
Product development	Public speaking
Project management	Quality management
Protocol	Quick thinking
Research	Sense of humour
Reservation system	Work-life balance
Revenue management	
Sales skills	
Self-control	
Serving skills	
Settlements	
Social media analytics	
Strategic planning	
Strategic vision	
Task management	
Tourism statistics analysis	
Web design	

Table 4.6.1 Transferable skills learned but not mentioned as needed and vice versa

LIST OF TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

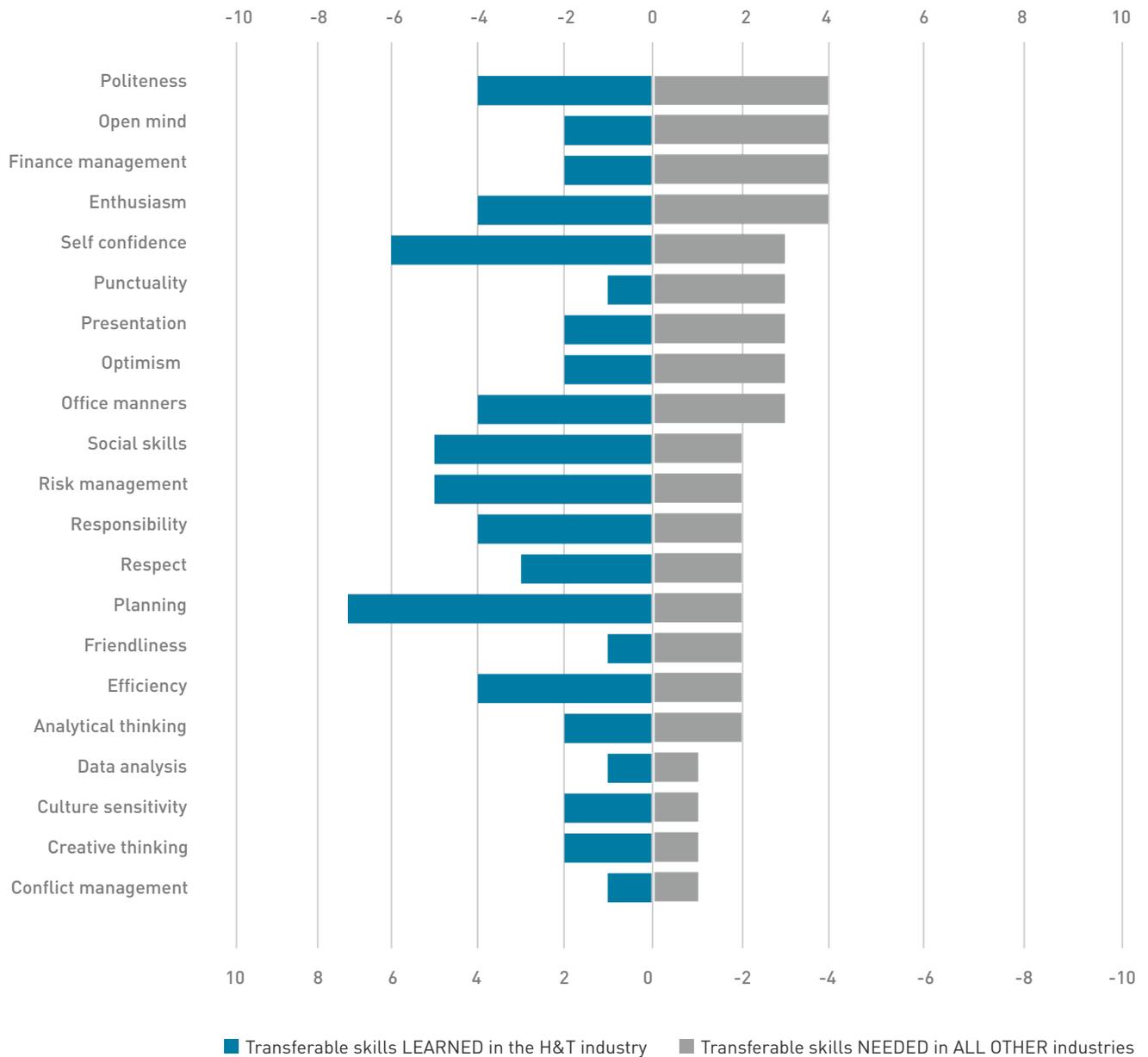


Figure 4.8.1 Comparison of skills learned in our field and skills needed in other industries

We also have a list of skills which have been learned in hospitality and tourism but were not mentioned in what is needed in other industries nowadays and we have some skills which are needed but have not come up on the learned side. While some might in fact not be needed outside Tourism and Hospitality others will be needed but simply were not mentioned by the participants and vice versa. See Table 4.8.1 for details. Please note, all those skills have only been mentioned once except for administrative skills, body language, budget management, cooking skills, cultural awareness, event planning, research, serving skills, and social media analytics were mentioned twice. Data management and sales skills were both mentioned three times, and complaint handling was mentioned four times.

LIST OF TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Transferable skills	
Learned	Needed
Administrative skills	Accounting
Body language	Analytical skills
Budget management	Charisma
Business management	Compassion
Cognitive flexibility	Curiosity
Complaint handling	Digital knowledge
Content management	Emotional intelligence
Cooking skills	Emotional stability
Culture awareness	Endurance
Data management	Engagement
Decision making	Engineering
Dedication	Improvisation
Emotion management	Independence
Event planning	Integrity
Fine dining table setting	Motivation
Forward thinking	Office politics
Geography knowledge	Passion
Health	Positive attitude
Interaction	Productivity
Kindness	Public speech
Logistics	Professionalism
Networking	Self-awareness
Office software	Storytelling
Priority	Training
Product development	Work-life balance
Product knowledge	
Project management	
Protocol	
Quick reaction	
Research	
Reservation system	
Revenue management	
Sales skills	
Self-control	
Serving skills	
Settlements	
Social media analytics	
Strategic planning	
Strategic vision	
Task management	
Tourism statistics analysis	
Web design	

Table 4.8.1 Transferable skills learned in the hospitality and tourism sector but not mentioned as needed in other industries and vice versa



TRANSFERABLE SKILLS MODEL

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS MODEL

A combined list of learned and needed transferable skills resulted in 116 unique skills. Those 116 skills were used as a basis for discussion in two focus groups with tourism and hospitality experts to reveal which skills can be grouped together and how they are linked to each other. The following Figure 5.1 shows the “Transferable skills model” which is the outcome of the focus groups and comprises all the different transferable skills.

It is worth noting that well established skills in the Interpersonal Communication Skills group (i.e., skills with regards to workplace etiquette, intercultural communication etc.) are interrelated with positive character traits. Also, self-mastery, attitude & mindset, and wellbeing allow agility, which in turn affects creativity, as only a physical and mentally healthy individual is able to be creative. The link between soft and hard skills is seen as a mutual relationship impacting each other.

We would like to introduce approaches suggested in the survey in terms of how to train employees in the sector by assigning them to the umbrella groups of the transferable skills presented in Figure 5.1. Results presented in Chapter 5 show that besides training hard skills there is a need for training soft skills such as team building, communication skills, leadership, flexibility, building relationships with peers, psychological training, emotional support, confidence, or emotional intelligence.



TRANSFERABLE SKILLS MODEL

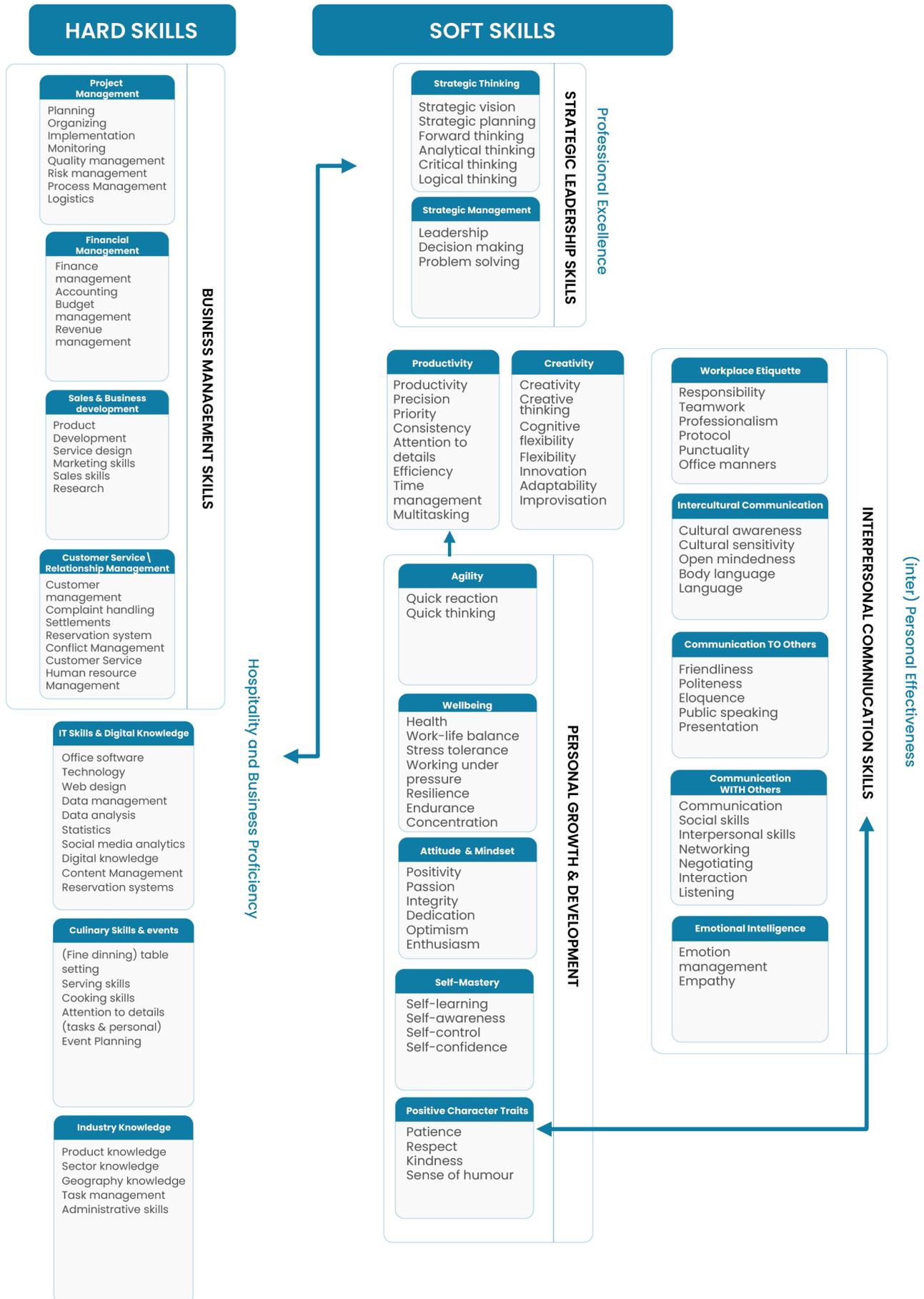


Figure 5.1 Model of transferable skills for the Tourism & Hospitality industry



TRAINING

4.1 APPROACHES TO TRAINING HARD SKILLS

In terms of hard skills, i.e., Hospitality and Business Proficiency, there were suggestions for business management skills, IT skills and digital knowledge, and industry knowledge. Surprisingly, there were no suggestions concerning the clusters culinary skills and events.

Table 6.1.1. shows that while most suggestions clearly belong to the presented category, some are not so clear-cut. For instance, “role play”, “conflict resolution skills”, “handling unfriendly people”, “how to deal with difficult situations” or “training on how to treat people with special needs” might also be described as soft skills. This shows that while hard skills are important, soft skills play a huge role in employees’ success with regards to business management duties such as customer service and relationship management.

Business management skills
Job rotation
Cross-training
Language courses
Training on organising and planning
Customer service courses and training
Apprenticeship programs
Clear working procedures
Funded courses in management skills
Having strong shift schedules
Implement European Standards in vocational training
Learn from the experienced workers
Mandatory courses in entrepreneurship
More opportunities to actually experience certain work situations/customer encounter situations
More role play
Providing competent managers to teach employees the correct way of work
Quality control disciplines
Training on accounting skills
Training on basic knowledge and tools
Training on conflict resolution
Training on dealing with complaints
Training on handling unfriendly people
Training on how to deal with difficult situations
Training on how to treat people with special needs and requests
Training on managing specific situations
Using competitions to motivate employees
Work diversity

IT skills and Digital knowledge

Implementing more technology

Using data efficiently

Technology training

Training on digital communication

Use IT and update working tools

Using audiovisual education systems

Industry knowledge

Career path assistance

More business trips

Posters with useful information

Push employees to study the industry

Send employees to other hotels as a guest

Update employees on industry news

Using competitions to motivate employees

Table 6.1.1 Approaches to training Business Proficiency (results are presented in alphabetical order)

4.2 APPROACHES TO TRAINING SOFT SKILLS

Along with the suggestions regarding the development of hard skills, it was interesting to see the huge demand and varied suggestions in terms of training soft skills. Table 6.2.1 shows that there are suggestions for all categories, i.e., for interpersonal communication skills, personal growth & development as well as professional excellence. Again, some of the training suggestions will allow employees to strive in multiple groups suggested in the transferable skills model, and we appreciate that arguments could be made to assign some of the suggestions in a different way due to overlaps.



(Inter)Personal Effectiveness		
Interpersonal communication skills	Personal growth & development	Professional Excellence
Additional training to the protocols of specific workspace	Emotional intelligence training	Be open to new ideas from your employees
Assign responsibilities to individuals	Employee inspiration	Flexibility
Brainstorming sessions for marketing and digital communication	Employee wellbeing and development programs	Involve employees in strategic work decision
Communication	Engagement activities	Leadership programs and training
	Healthy working environment	Logistics training
Direct line of communication to your employees	Less pressure on employees	More innovation programs
Empathy for the customer	Less working hours	Reward employees for their useful ideas
Familiarization trips during induction	Making employees feel part of a family	Share the future vision with employees
Time to listen to feedback from customers and develop response strategies employees can refer to/use	Managers need to show empathy and emotional intelligence	Stimulate creativity
Help employees to build relationships with peers	Mental health awareness seminars	Training on employee mindset
Helping each other if needed	More breaks	Training on problem solving
Introducing organisational culture	More family trips	Training on strategy and innovation
Multicultural roster of employees	More support when employees are faced with abusive customers	
Networking	Nice and friendly working atmosphere	
Social events	Psychological courses and training	
Soft skills training	Physical and mental assistance to avoid burnout	
Team building activities	Policies on anti-bullying	
Train employees on how tourists feel and how they expect to be treated	Providing emotional support	
Training on basic manners	Recruiting for attitude	
Training on communication skills	Resilience training	
Training on conflict resolution skills	Self-awareness	
Training on inter-personal skills	Self-responsibility	
Training on multicultural background	Supportive environment	
Training on personal responsibility	Training on confidence	
Training on time management	Training on emotional management	
	Training on resilience	
	Training on stress management	
	Work-life balance	

Table 6.2.1 Approaches to training soft skills (results are presented in alphabetical order)

4.3 APPROACHES TO HOW CHILDREN LEARN

In the first focus group participants started to emphasise the importance of parents, teachers, and others whom children regard as role models (e.g., celebrities). It was highlighted that using those characters in teaching situations may help create a more approachable environment for children.

In all three groups there was agreement that teaching for 5–7-year-olds and 8–11-year-olds differs with regards to the complexity of concepts they can deal with, but to engage both groups it is important to create situations that are perceived as enjoyable and fun. There was also agreement that soft skills are partly linked to an individual's personality, meaning some skills may come naturally to certain children while others need to work to learn them.

There was a wealth of suggestions regarding how children could learn the skills identified in this study. Generally, it is emphasised that regardless of the learning environment and stimuli used, children must enjoy the process, as a positive attitude and fun naturally support learning. Different approaches may work for different transferable skill groups and there are overlaps in terms of learning a certain groups of skills.

While technology is sometimes still seen as “not appropriate” from a pedagogical point of view, it seems important that we recognize and acknowledge that we can get a lot of good out of it and, when used the right way, technology can prepare children for future work environments and can make learning more fun, for instance by gamifying tasks.





METHODOLOGY

Following the research design presented in Figure 3.1, we first present the methodology used for the survey, then the focus group with experts, and finally the focus group with experts in child education.

5.1 LIST OF TRANSFERABLE SKILLS - SURVEY

An online questionnaire was developed incorporating a Delphi study. The first round of the questionnaire comprised nine parts starting with the introduction and the participation information sheet including the consent form, followed by a screening question asking if the participant is (or has worked in) the Tourism and Hospitality sector. Only those who did were eligible and received questions concerning when, for how long, and in which part of the sector they have been employed in. Part 3 then stated a definition of transferable skills and asked participants to state five skills they think they have learned from working in the industry. Part 4 asked what skills they think are needed to be successful in our industry, while Part 5 asked respondents to outline barriers that prevent people from working in the Tourism and Hospitality sector. Part 6 asked about what skills they think are needed when working in industries other than Tourism and Hospitality. Part 7 asked for five ways in which participants wish Tourism and Hospitality organizations would help/train employees to gain transferable skills. In Part 8 we asked what respondents think parents, schools, and the wider community could do to cultivate transferable skills, and finally, Part 9 covered demographics including age, gender, country of residence, work position in the Tourism and Hospitality industry, ethnic origin, marital status, number of children, and which field they would wish their child would work in.



5.1.1 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The questionnaire was pre-tested on 17 people which led to minor changes in terms of wording and the addition of a definition of transferable skills not only in the introduction but also in the questions which explicitly referred to transferable skills.

The participants were people who have relevant working experience in hospitality and tourism (including currently working in our industry or used to work in this industry) with an estimated sample size of 100 participants, which were considered as relatively reliable for an inductive method study comprising numerous open questions. By adopting a convenience sampling strategy first, the questionnaire was distributed via social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, Instagram, WeChat, Facebook, and LinkedIn groups, the ETC, and SHTM network. For the second and third round the questionnaire was distributed via Prolific.

The results of the first round of data collection concerning the transferable skills 1) learned in the hospitality and tourism industry as well as those 2) needed in the sector and 3) those needed in other industries were presented as tag clouds and implemented in the questionnaire of the second and third rounds. The intention was to take advantage of what we know from open innovation (Chesbrough, Vanhaverbeke, & West, 2006) and use the tag cloud as a trigger to find even more transferable skills. The results of this second round of data collection were then used to update the tag clouds generated by the first round and, following a Delphi approach (Linstone & Turoff, 1975), a shortened version of the questionnaire was re-sent to the participants to see if the new insights resulted in any new transferable skills being identified.

A total of 270 people participated in the survey, with 92 fully completed questionnaires (the incomplete questionnaires were inspected to see if any additional transferable skills were present, but this was not the case). The third round clearly indicated that data saturation in terms of revealing new transferable skills was reached.

After data cleaning, a total list of 116 transferable skills in the hospitality and tourism industry (including 90 LEARNED skills and 82 NEEDED skills), and a list of 73 NEEDED skills in all other industries, was gathered and visualized using word clouds. In addition, a comparison of transferable skills was also presented in charts. Otherwise, we used frequencies and percentages to present the results. To determine the parents' preferred career choice for their children, we distributed 10 points for the first position, 9 for the second, and so on until 1 for the 10th position, and the divided the achieved points by the number of participants (i.e., 92) to gain insights into the ranking.

5.2 TRANSFERABLE SKILLS MODEL - FOCUS GROUP

Two focus groups with eight participants each were organised to group the 116 transferable skills and to discuss how those skills are linked with each other. The profile of the participants is presented in Table 7.2.1. The participants were recruited from the SHTM team.

Participant	Gender	Age	Profession/Education
#1	Female	59	Worked in the hospitality industry ranging from Michelin star hotel, coffee shops, licensed pubs, and restaurant manager. Work experience: 20 years in industry and more than 10 years in academia. Expertise in food and beverage operations.
#2	Female	47	Worked in the hotel industry as an HR supervisor. Work experience: 2 years in industry and more than 20 years in academia. Expertise in human resource management, organisational behaviour, business strategy, and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).
#3	Female	40	Tour guide, event service, housekeeper, restaurant server, restaurant manager, and youth hostel manager. Work experience: about 4 years in industry plus professor in academia. Expertise in restaurant and banquet service.
#4	Female	37	Worked in various waitress positions but main career in academia. Work experience: 11 years in academia. Expertise in behavioural geography and tourism research focusing on decision-making theories.
#5	Female	37	Various roles as a waitress, in the kitchen, hotel front desk, UNWTO. Work experience: 17 years in industry and about 8 years in academia. Expertise in tourism, climate change, aviation, and consumer behaviour.
#6	Male	41	Career in academia. Work experience: 12 years in academia. Expertise in tourism economics, tourist behaviour.
#7	Female	43	Project manager, subject-matter-expert, learning & development manager in air transport management and civil aviation. Work experience: 21 years in industry and 11 years in academia. Expertise in air transport management and civil aviation.
#8	Female	36	Various roles in the event industry. Work experience: 11 years in industry and 8 in academia. Expertise in events industry: planning, production, operation, health & safety.
#9	Male	44	Experience in various hotel positions up to general manager level; has a wide industry network. Work experience: 7 years in industry and more in academia. Expertise in hotels, food and beverage (F&B), restaurant innovation, service design, education.
#10	Female	50	Project manager, management level roles in various international travel companies, founder and co-owner of a travel agency. Work experience: more than 30 years of industry experience and 4 in academia. Expertise in bespoke and luxury travel, travel management, customer service, business management, team leadership, consultancy, evaluation & impact assessment, sustainable operations, research, teaching & capacity building, strategy.

Participant	Gender	Age	Profession/Education
#11	Female	49	Conference manager/events manager. Work experience: 15 years. Expertise in event management, specifically MICE.
#12	Female	47	Tourism consultant, DIT consulting, Spanish Tourist Office in London (UK), government connections in Spain and in networks with entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial stakeholders. Work experience: 21 years in industry and 10 in academia. Expert in tourism innovation, entrepreneurship and tourism planning.
#13	Male	51	Various roles as an executive and a manager in the events sector. Work experience: 10 years in the industry and 17 in academia. Expertise in event management and strategic planning.
#14	Male	43	Various roles in the hospitality industry, mostly in F&B department, all roles up to F&B manager; worked in hotels (2, 4 and 5* in several locations in Spain, France, the UK). Also volunteered in an eco-lodge in The Gambia, and worked in a small, privately-owned restaurant Work experience: 15 years. Expertise: Hospitality sector, F&B, sustainability.
#15	Female	49	Freelance consultant for Thailand's small and independent tour operators and community enterprises, providing new product development (tourism routes and packages) and promoting them to target markets. Worked for Tourism Council of Thailand (TCT) as a member of the Academic Committees whose role was to provide advice for members on key tourism issues from academic perspectives and on human resources development. Has connections with the Thailand's Tourism Council, Tourism Authority of Thailand and Thai Hotel Association. Work experience: 23 years in industry and academia. Expertise in tourism marketing, destination marketing via popular culture such as films, drama, niche tourism.
#16	Male	60	Managerial capacity in various roles in retail, engineering, insurance, textiles, and hospitality. Work experience: 23 years in industry and academia. Expertise in hospitality, consulting, business, consumer behaviour.

Table 7.1.1 Profile of focus group participants of hospitality and tourism experts

5.2.1 FOCUS GROUP DESIGN, DATA COLLECTION, AND ANALYSIS

After welcoming the participants, the aim of the project was summarised again, reminding participants that the goal is to group the transferable skills and to label the groups.

Participants were asked to join in during the focus group and to try to verbalise their thoughts on why (or why not) they think certain transferable skills belong (or do not belong) to a particular group. It was emphasised that some transferable skills may not belong to one group only but there might be overlaps between clusters. It was also emphasised to not simply agree with a certain categorization suggested by someone but raise any thoughts and contribute to the discussion to the best of their ability by drawing on their expertise. Finally, we suggested that in the event they felt there were some skills missing we could create new cards and that we could offer explanations for certain skills should they be required.

Next, all transferable skills were presented on cards (one transferable skill per card – card size half an A4 page, landscape format) and the focus group participants were asked to group them according to how they define them. It was mentioned again that some terms might be 1) perceived as synonyms, 2) very similar, 3) belong to more than one group, and 4) a sub-category while others might be an umbrella term.

Next, participants were told that colourful cards and board markers were available, allowing them to label the various clusters. Bigger cards (i.e., A4) represented umbrella categories while smaller cards represented sub-categories. There was no limit in terms of how many levels participants could introduce.

Finally, participants were asked to identify how the various groups of transferable skills relate to each other, i.e., if they are highly related or less related. At the conclusion of the session, the participants were thanked for their time and informed about the next steps.

DATA ANALYSIS: We followed a content analysis approach. During the focus group process, the raw data obtained from participants such as the classification of transferable skills, ideas for classification terms (i.e., sub-categories), and discussion of how certain transferable skills or categories could be linked were recorded. Then, these qualitative data were put into the Xmind software for further analysis. The outcome of data analysis for each group was visualized through a mind map. There was also an additional analysis comparing the models from both groups (i.e., similarities and differences) to investigate whether the results from both groups could be combined, or need to be discussed separately.

5.2.2 FOCUS GROUP INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

Based on data analysis for the first focus group, a mind map/model with five different levels of granularity has been developed. First, the 116 transferable skills are classified into Soft Skills and Hard Skills and then allocated under more sub-categories. Soft skills were divided into Work Environment and Work Outcome, which in turn were further divided into Interpersonal Skills & Teamwork (consisting of five sub-groups), Intrinsic Norms & Values (comprising five sub-groups) and Creativity, Productivity, and Management & Leadership skills (comprising two sub-groups) respectively.

Hard Skills were divided into Management Skills (comprising two sub-groups), Industry Knowledge, IT Skills, and Operational Skills which comprise four sub-groups. Figure 7.2.1 provides the mind map of the developed model. As for the interaction and links among these categories, it is found that Interpersonal Skills & Teamwork—Emotional (Intrinsic), Creativity—Positivity, Creativity—Resilience, Creativity—Intrinsic Norms & Values, Management & Leadership Skills—Management Skills—Operational Skills, Work Outcome—Hard Skills have close relations (see dotted arrows in Figure 7.2.1).

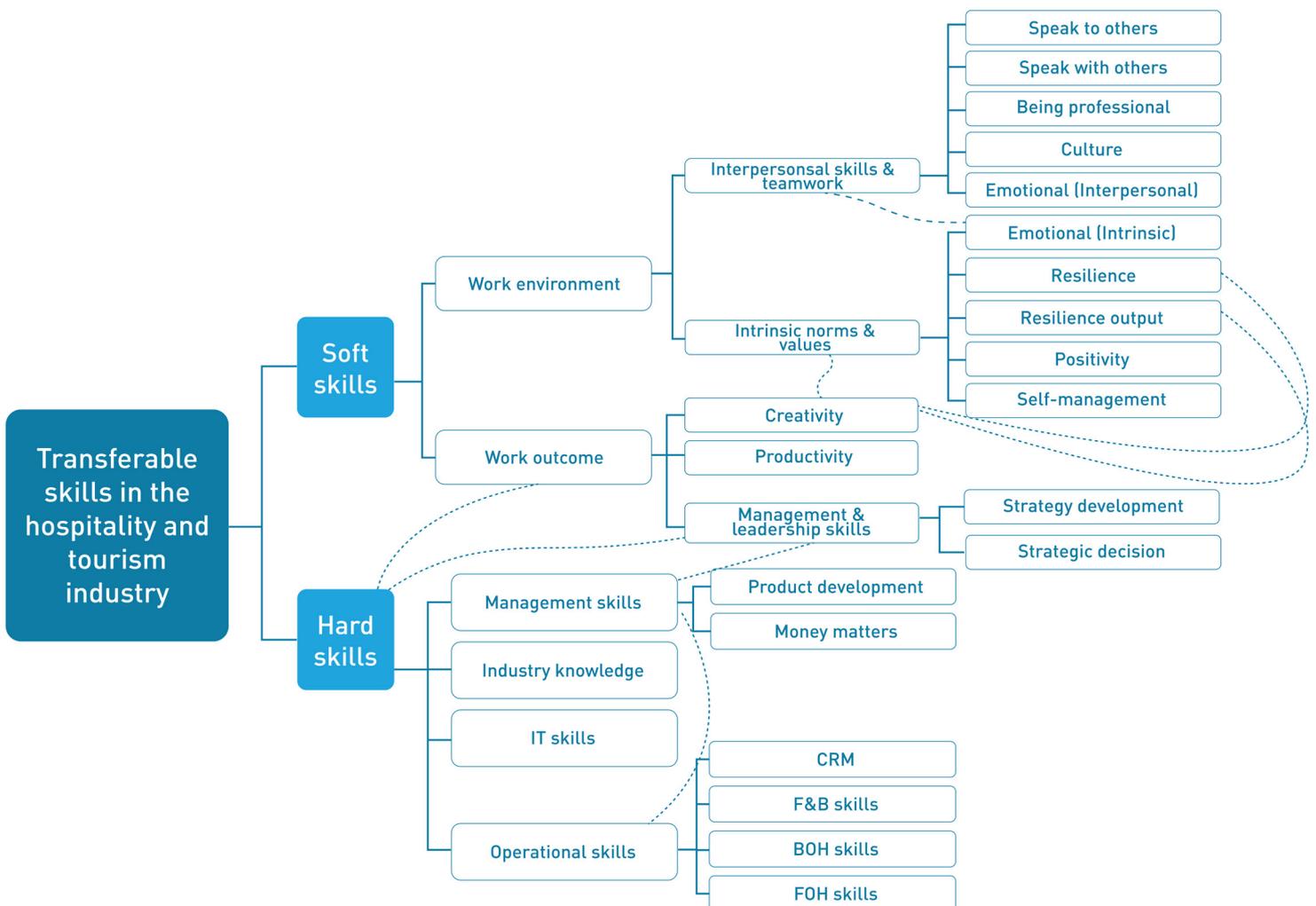


Figure 7.2.1 Transferable skills mind map focus group 1

The insights based on data analysis for the second focus group also resulted in a mind map/model with five different levels. In this group, the 116 transferable skills are clustered into five different groups from the very beginning. The participants labelled those groups Personal, Interpersonal, Values, Business Environment, and Organisational Adaptability. As Figure 7.2.2 shows, three of those groups comprise sub-groups and sub-sub-groups respectively.

In terms of links between these groups, it is identified that Business Skills—Operations—Finance Skills—IT Skills—Management Skills—R&D Skills have strong internal links with each other. Organisational Adaptability has a close relationship with Well-Being and Stress Management. Also, there was a discussion about whether the Values group should be considered as a fundamental base for all the other categories, and thus should have a close link with all the transferable skill groups, but in particular with Character Traits, Attitude, and Self-Awareness.

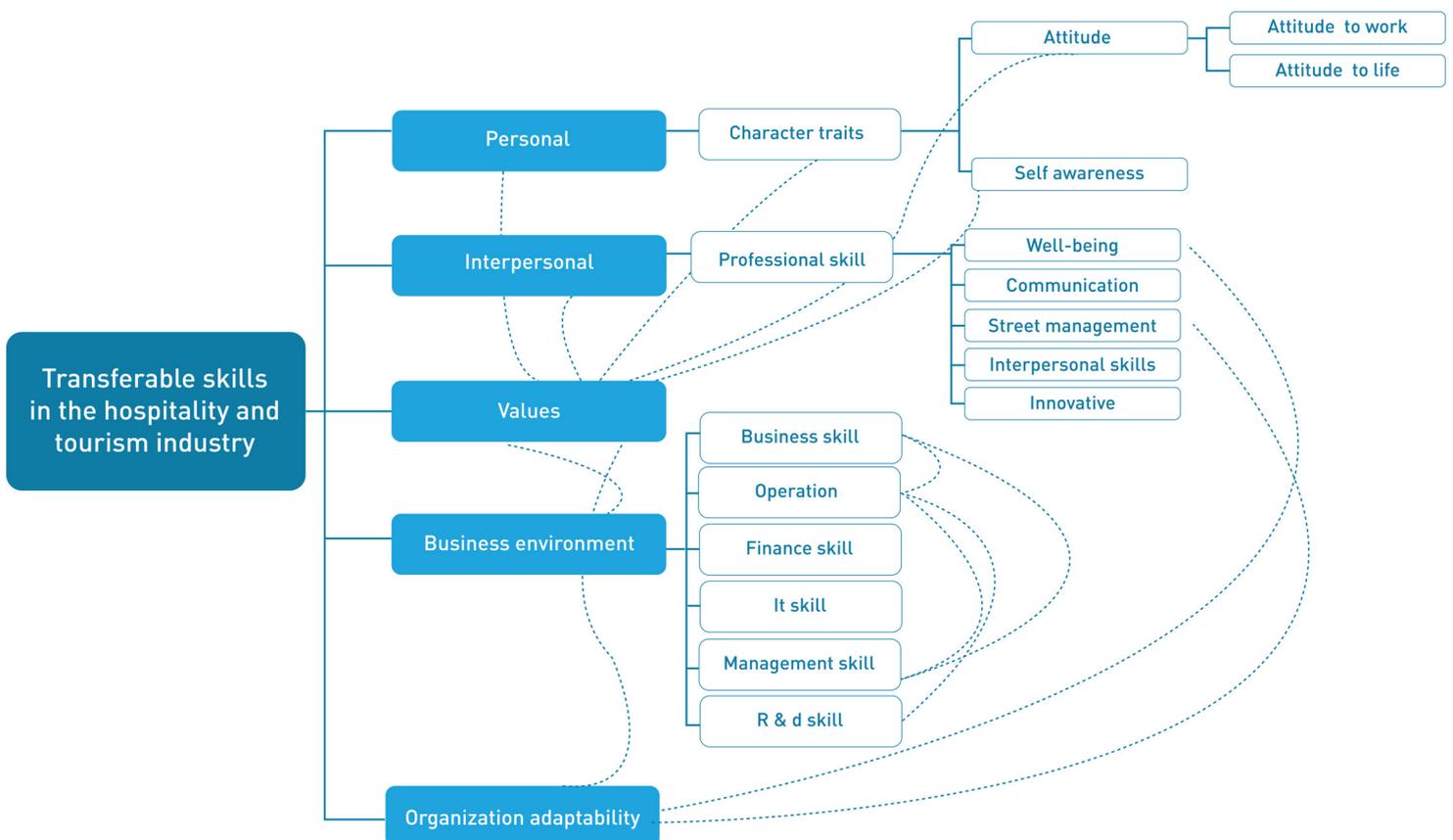


Figure 7.2.2 Transferable skills mind map focus group 2

After further analysis and a comparison of the discussions in the two focus groups and the resulting mind maps/models, it appeared that even though the two models have a different structure, and labels given to the groups differ significantly, the principle of skill classification was highly similar. For instance, the specific transferable skills: Cultural Awareness, Cultural Sensitivity, Open Mind, Body Language, and Language, are clustered as the Culture category in focus group 1, while the same skills are classified in the Professional Skills category by the second focus group. Again, the transferable skills Communication, Social Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Networking, Interaction, and Listening are classified in the Speaking to/ with Others category by the first group, while they are grouped into Communication by the second. In fact, a closer look at the results revealed that among 116 transferable skills, only 14 skills (accounting for 12%) are classified into entirely different categories in the two mind maps/models, which indicates that mind map/model 1 and mind map/model 2 have 88% similarity in terms of the classification of the specific transferable skills.

Considering the input of both focus groups, we then developed a combined final model. The research team agreed to go with the split between soft and hard skills suggested by the first focus group as a starting point, but the hard skills were called Hospitality and Business Proficiency. Next, the various groups which received a quite clear assignment of skills by both focus groups were addressed. In order to come up with labels for the various groups, ChatGPT was used to generate ideas, which were then used as a basis for discussion among the research team. Finally, the transferable skills which were assigned differently by the two focus groups were addressed and solutions to deal with those skills were discussed.

The entire process resulted in the final model presented in Figure 14. As one can see, the Soft Skills comprise two sub-categories (i.e., (Inter)Personal Effectiveness and Professional Excellence) which split into two and three clusters respectively, of which three clusters split into even more granulated clusters. The Hospitality and Business Proficiency group splits into 4 smaller groups, of which only Business Management Skills was split further into Project Management, Financial Management, Sales & Business Development, and Customer Service & Relationship Management. There was also an attempt to retain the mentioned interconnections between the various transferable skills, which are visualised as dotted arrows in Figure 7.2.3.



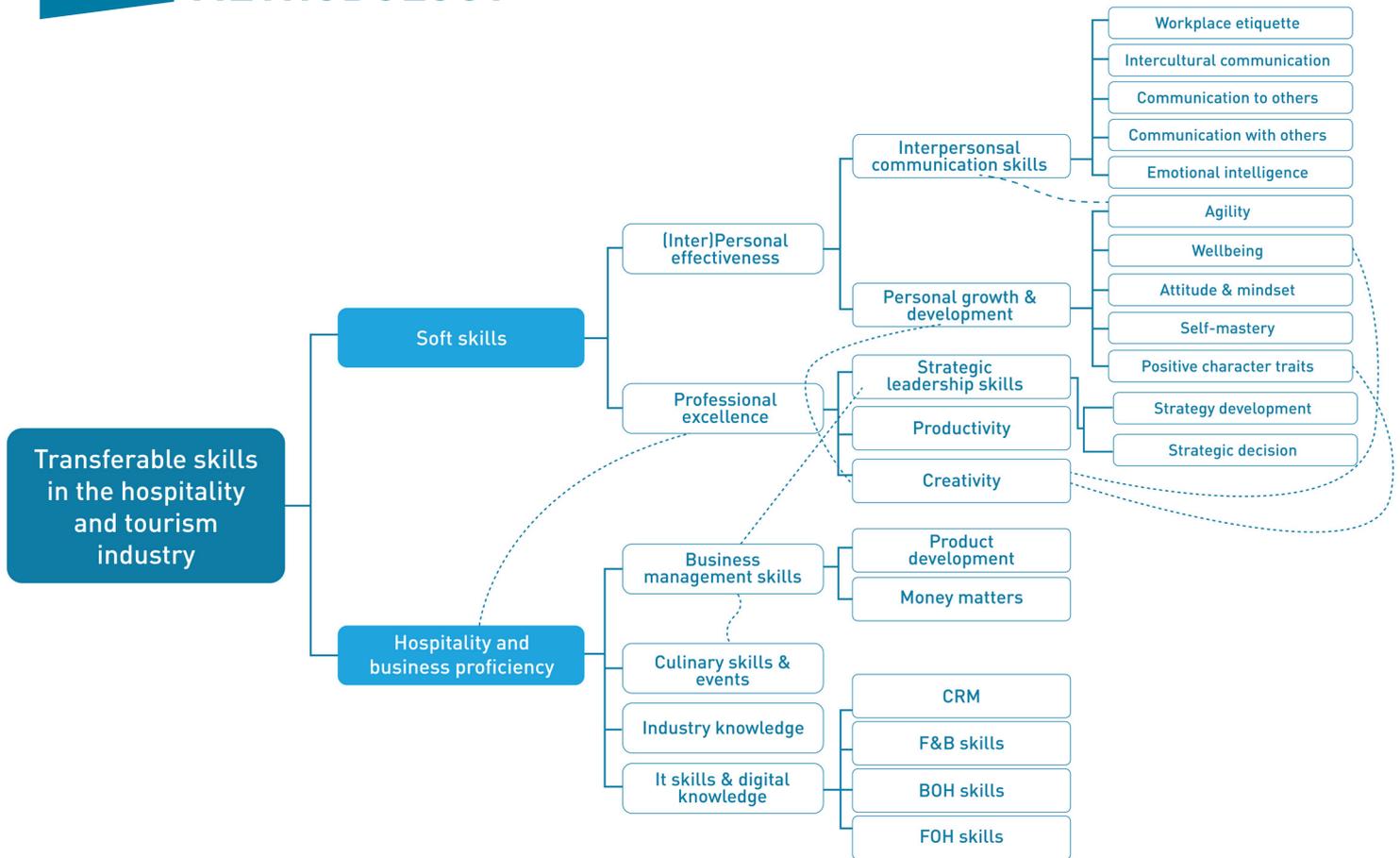


Figure 7.2.3 Final mind map of transferable skills in the Tourism & Hospitality industry

5.3 APPROACHES TO HOW CHILDREN LEARN

For each focus group we recruited eight participants who had expertise in children's education via LinkedIn groups, Facebook groups and email lists gathered by the researchers. Potential participants completed a small survey comprising the consent form as well as a list of potential dates the focus group could take place, and some demographic information (i.e., age, profession, education, gender). Finally, we asked for their email address to be able to contact them to provide the MS Teams link which was used to run the focus groups.

We had a good mix in terms of people teaching various subjects as well as other professions working with children (e.g., psychologists, paediatricians, or people working with kids with special needs or a play therapist). In total we ran three focus groups, in each group one person did not show up which left us with seven people in each group.

The focus groups were led by one moderator and another researcher who was observing the discussion and taking notes. The focus groups were audio recorded and followed the following process:

After the participants were welcomed, they were reminded that the focus group is audio recorded. Then there was a round of introductions.

Next, a slide deck was used to introduce the transferable skills model (Figure 5.1). It was also explained that we will mainly focus on the soft skills, as hard skills already generally form part of school curricula. We also made it clear that we take it as a given that children copy and imitate grown-ups such as parents, teachers, or celebrities, and that we were specifically seeking to uncover as many ideas as possible in terms of how we can actively create environments/situations in which children can learn the various soft skills described.

Then, we opened the discussion asking the participants to go through the various transferable soft skills clusters and discuss how children best learn those skills. The participants were asked to not put any limits in terms of ideas about what would work best, as even if the education system in a certain country may not allow implementation of certain approaches, everything is possible in a book or a game. After 2-3 groups of transferable skills, participants were asked about differences in approach to imparting these skills to 5–7-year-old students compared to 8–11-year-olds.

At the conclusion of the session, participants were asked to comment on some aspects specifically relevant to the narratives of the books.

Finally, we thanked participants for their participation, asked them if we are allowed to contact them for potential follow-up questions, and told them that they would shortly receive their £50 Amazon e-voucher.

Participant	Gender	Age	Profession/Education
#1	Female	51	Reader in developmental psychology (PhD)
#2	Male	32	Mathematics teacher
#3	Female	25	Anti-bullying teacher
#4	Male	30	K12 teacher – special education
#5	Female	52	Home school link worker/Special education needs coordinator
#6	Male	27	English teacher
#7	Female	51	Play therapist
#8	Male	31	Mathematics teacher
#9	Female	54	Creative writer / Children's book author
#10	Female	39	Nanny with a degree in early childhood education
#11	Female	72	Retired educational psychologist
#12	Female	45	Communications support / MA in Creative Writing specialising in Children's Literature and Writing for Children
#13	Male	29	Psychologist
#14	Female	28	Paediatrician
#15	Female	61	Retired teacher
#16	Female	30	Psychologist
#17	Male	28	Teacher
#18	Female	28	Gradual learning teacher
#19	Male	30	Care giver

Table 7.3.1 Profile of focus group participants of child education experts



Dr Brigitte Stangl began her career as a Research and Teaching Assistant at WU Vienna's Institute for Tourism and Leisure Studies. Then, she served as a Project Manager at the Institute for Tourism & Leisure Research, Switzerland. In 2012, Dr Stangl joined the University of Surrey in the UK, where she acts as the Director of the Centre for Digital Transformation in the Visitor Economy (DIGMY) and holds the role of Communication Director. She serves on the boards of various academic journals. Her research primarily revolves around services/tourism/hospitality marketing, digital marketing, and innovation, with a particular interest in technological innovations.



Yu Li (Kevin) is currently a PhD researcher in the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Surrey, and is part of for the Research Centre for Competitiveness of the Visitor Economy (COVE). His research interests include organizational behaviour and human resource management in the hospitality and tourism industry. Besides his academic career with a position as a student supervisor in Dongbei University of Finance & Economics in charge of student management, Kevin also has industry experience working in various positions in the luxury hospitality sector.

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