



Beyond Medical Degrees: What Employers View as Indicators of Quality in Medical Graduates in Saudi Arabia

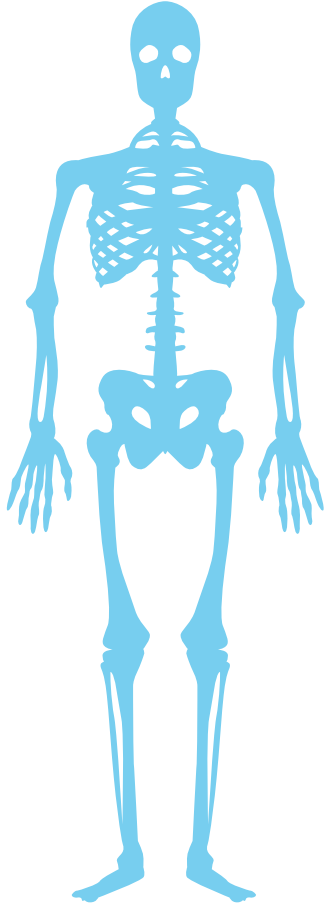
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Background



- In 2018, 12,000 Saudi health practitioners are unemployed.
(Arabian Business, 2018)
- Only 45.7% of health workers are Saudis.
(General Authority of Statistics, 2016)

Service Quality



- **Service Quality:** “Measure of how well the service level delivered matches the customer’s expectations”.

Lewis and Booms (1983, pg. 100)

- Newly Introduced to higher education; HEdPERF.

Research Aim and Questions



Research Question 1: How do health sector employers conceptualize quality in higher education?

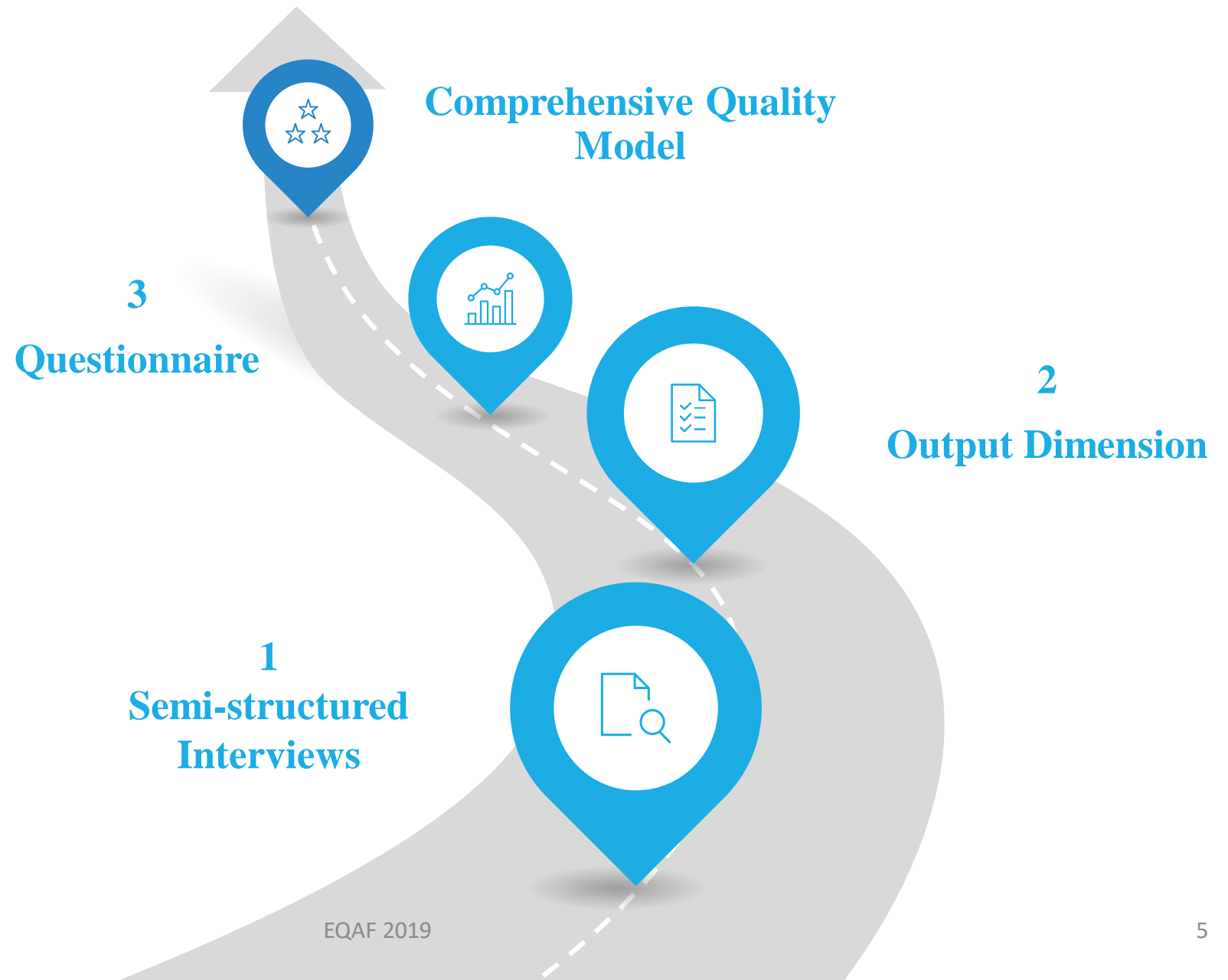


Research Question 2: From the perspective of health sector employers, what are the essential attributes of a high quality medical graduate?



Research Question 3: To what extent does the perception of employers toward quality in higher education differs from the perspective of quality specialists/managers in higher education?

Developing a Comprehensive Quality Model in Medical Education in Saudi Arabia: Employers' Perspective



Methods: Interviews

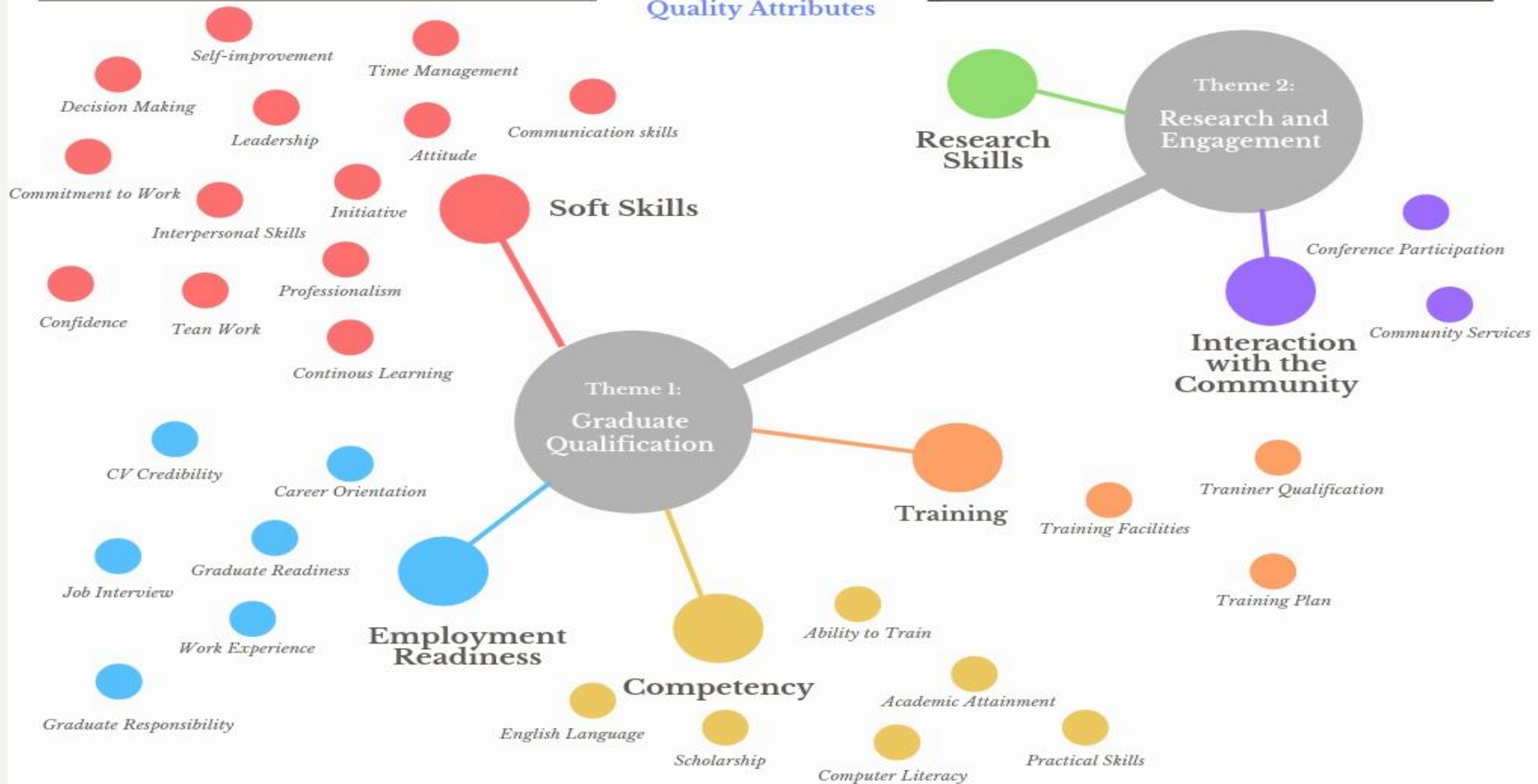
Sample size:

- 5 Hospitals; 3 Public and 2 Private.
- 14 Medical Department Heads.
- 7 Saudis and 7 other Nationalities.



Target Population:
Health Sector Employers

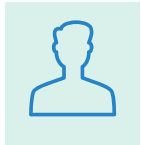
Medical Graduate Quality Attributes



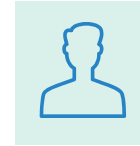
Employment Readiness

Debate on preparing medical graduates for the labor market.

University' responsibility vs. Labor Market's Responsibility



*Universities cannot prepare fully competent and qualified graduates, so the focus should rather be on making students independent learners. **Participant 3***



*You cannot expect a perfect student graduating from a university. Nobody could do that. Not in any university around the world. **Participant 8***



Soft Skills

- Employers attempt to recruit the smartest graduates who have accomplished outstanding academic attainment. (Velasco, 2012)
- However, medical employers emphasize on soft skills.

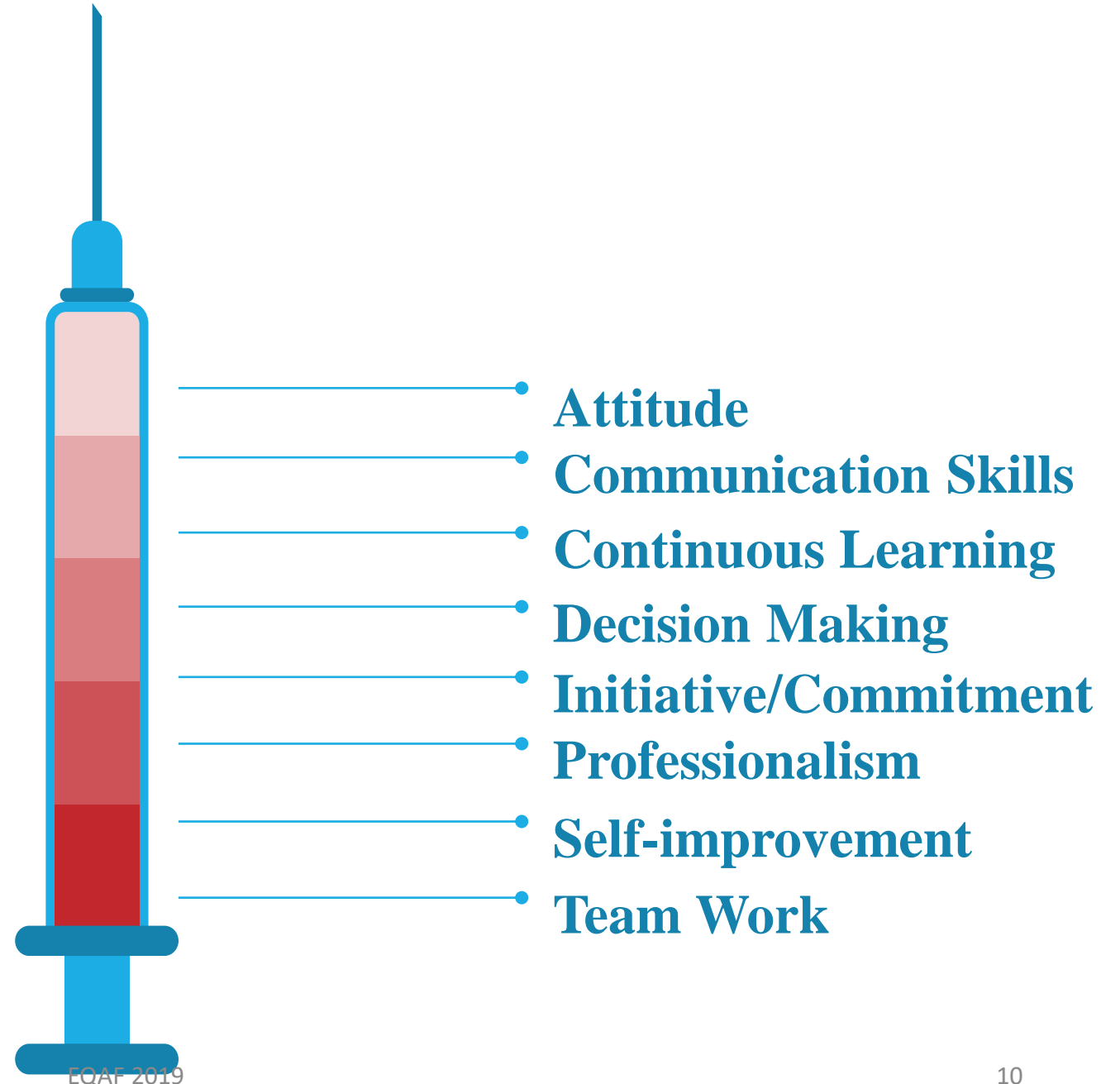


*Whether their theoretical knowledge is good or not [is less important], they can learn anytime if they wanted to. Soft skills are more important for me. **Participant 13***



*A surgeon cannot perform on his/her own without nurses and assistants. If doctors do not have a concept of cooperating... they will cause a lot of trouble. **Participant 9***

From the perspective of medical employers, the following soft skills are necessary in the medical workplace:



Practical Skills

No correlation between grades and performance at workplace.

(Willis and Taylor , 1999)



*High grades do not necessarily indicate good performance. Students might be good at memorizing but bad at practicing what they have learned. **Participant 5***



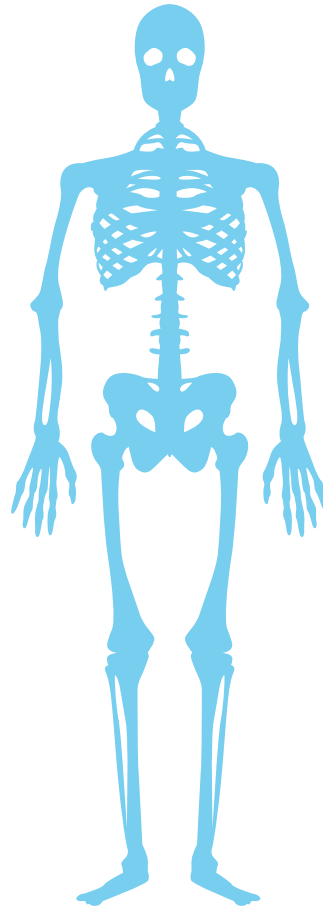
*It's great if students study and pass exams with high marks, but what I need to know is if he is able to integrate his knowledge with his practical skills. **Participant 3***

Innovated Medicine vs. Traditional Medicine

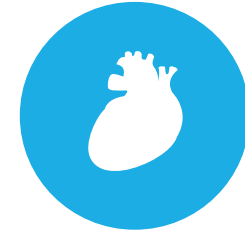
- General computer literacy and technological competency.



*I see it [robotic surgeries] as a promising opportunity that will grow in the future... Distance education and robotic surgery, endoscopy, minimal access surgery is very open opportunity and would eliminate the traditional surgeries. **Participant 1***



- Traditional medicine is also crucial.

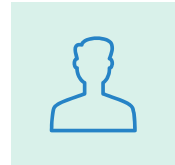


*Medical students should be trained in the basic skills and how to traditionally examine and diagnose. This should be complemented with knowledge of the innovative and technical sides of medicine. There should not be an emphasis on the technological part at the cost of the basic and fundamental skills required... [Students] are unable to traditionally examine patients because they were trained in the easy way by relying on different types of x-ray. **Participant 3***

Work Experience



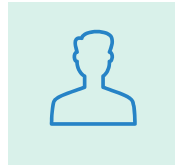
- Confident to take full responsibility of patients.



*A newly graduated doctor must be ready as he/she might be hired in a place and find him/herself the only doctor in that place. He/she must be able to take the responsibility for a patient. **Participant 11***



- Training/internship substitute work experience.



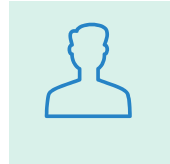
*Nobody reaches 100% at college. That is where the internship year comes in handy. **Participant 8***



Medical Training/Internship



- Lack of university hospital hinders practical skills development.



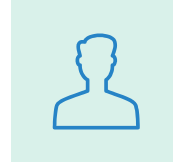
*A graduate that has studied in a university that has no hospital belonging to it tends to have limitations. **Participant 4***



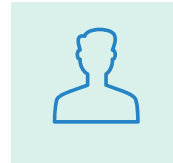
Scientific Research



➤ Scientific Research Skills and Conferences to be Self and continuous Learners.



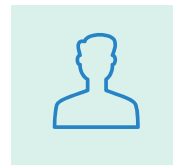
*Students nowadays do not do a lot of research because they know that the university or the professor would take credit for their hard work ... that is considered a crime, as they are stealing students' hard work. **Participant 11***



*Conferences are a chance to exchange experiences with others and a good chance to gain experience from different people. **Participant 13***



➤ Concerns about unethical research conduct.



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Community Services



- Community services give an indication that students are hard workers.



*Involvement in community service gives you an indication that they are willing to work more than what they are supposed to do. **Participant 4***



- Community Services indicates hard working and Voluntary habits.



*Involvement in community service gives you an indication that they are willing to work more than what they are supposed to do. **Participant 4***

Conclusion



- Limited studies on service quality in higher education.
(Sultan and Wong, 2010)
- Comprehensive model: Input, process and output.
- Quality models are developed from the perspective of academics and students.
(Garvin, 1988, Noaman et. Al, 2017 and Ilies, Osoian and Zaharie, 2010)

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