

Alexander Salvisberg, 2010:

**Soft Skills auf dem Arbeitsmarkt: Bedeutung und Wandel (Zurich: Seismo Verlag)**

(Soft skills on the labour market: significance and change)

[abstract]

Flexible, creative, able to work in a team, enthusiastic: job advertisements reveal the enormous importance that soft skills have acquired in the world of work. But methodological, social and motivational competencies are also taking up more and more space in curricula – from kindergarten to university. What has so far been missing, however, beyond the flashy buzzwords, is a systematic, empirically founded study of the (changing) significance of these skills, which are not really certified by any educational qualifications. The study seeks to close this gap. Against the background of a broad theoretical frame of reference, it shows how important the individual soft skills are, and what role they play for the different employees, how the demand for soft skills is changing long-term, and what the reasons for these changes are. The empirical basis of the study consists of 40,000 job ads from the years 1950 to 2006. The statistical analysis makes it clear how much more demanding and complex job requirement profiles have become over the last 50 years, but also points to the contradictions in the ideal candidates imagined by the advertisers. The study shows that the role of soft skills is constantly in flux, and suggests that more attention should be paid to this in labour market and inequality research, but also in educational practice: in the 21st century, more than ever before, it is inadequate to explain labour-market inequality solely in terms of school grades and technical knowledge.