

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOFT SKILLS MANAGEMENT AND TEACHING COMPETENCY OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS

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Abstract

This paper aims at finding the significant relationship between teaching competency and its dimension and soft skills management of prospective teachers. Using a simple random sampling technique the investigator selected 900 prospective teachers from various Colleges of Education in Kanyakumari District as sample. The data was collected using the tools Sherlin Amaladoss Soft Skills Management Scale (SASSMS) developed and validated by the investigator in 2012 and Teaching Competency Rating Scale developed by Amaladoss Xavier in 2009. The percentage analysis and Pearson's product moment correlation were the statistical techniques used for analysing the data. The findings revealed that, teaching competency and soft skills management of prospective teachers were positively correlated.

Key Words: Soft Skills Management, Teaching Competency and Prospective Teachers.

Introduction

Education is meant for the total development of personality. In this sense, education provides all those experiences which affect the individual from birth to death and is a lifelong process of growth and development (Saxena, 2007). As far as the formal education is concerned, the teacher is a person who provides schooling for pupils. In order to mould and modify the behaviour of the child, the teacher employs various strategies and tactics to achieve the desired behavioural changes in him/ her. Any educational effort loses its vitality, if it does not give adequate attention and importance to the teacher, since they are the most important pillars of education. It is based on the belief that, 'Teachers are made, not born' in contrary to the assumption 'Teachers are born, not made' (Mohanty, 2008). According to Good's Dictionary of Education (1959), Teacher Education means all the formal and non-formal activities and experiences that help to qualify a person to assume responsibilities of the educational profession or to discharge his responsibility more effectively. The candidates who are admitted to a teacher education programme and pursuing the course is known as the prospective teachers. They are prepared as teachers by providing sound foundation of the theoretical knowledge, understanding, skills, attitude and interests through the teacher education course.

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Significance of the Study

India is a nation which is proud of striving and thriving towards achieving the status of a developed nation in the years to come and, no doubt, education has a major role in this mega-effort. Though India boasts of the increase in quantity of education, the question whether the status quo of high quality is maintained, remains cloudy and doubtful. In today's teaching community, many teachers are facing the ongoing challenges in their efforts to become competent and effective. It should be developed step by step and its foundation should be laid in the teacher education course itself.

Teaching is a skill based profession. Teachers must be skillful, and only then, they can perform well in their profession. The 21st century brings in a new face to the skills i.e., soft skills. The emergence of soft skills lightens the learners and professionals that, there are plenty of skills apart from the Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills which are considered as the essential skills required for learning. The inculcation of essential soft skills produces quality human capital and thus, develops their knowledge, understanding, and values and hence its importance to teacher is unquestionable. Mere possession of soft skills won't help a teacher. To become successful in teaching, a teacher must be able to know how to use the soft skills in new and problematic situations. The usage of soft skills in a wise manner is called by the investigator as soft skills management.

After a very careful analysis and synthesis the investigator realized the importance of this study, and tried to find out the relationship between soft skills management and teaching competency of prospective teachers.

Objectives

1. To find out the level of soft skills management of prospective teachers;
2. To find out the level of teaching competency and its dimension of prospective teachers; and
3. To find out whether there is any significant relationship between teaching competency and soft skills management of prospective teachers.

Null Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between teaching competency and soft skills management of prospective teachers.

Methodology

The population for the present study consists of all the prospective teachers studying in Colleges of Education in Kanyakumari District which are affiliated to Tamil Nadu

Teachers Education University, Chennai. From that the investigator selected 900 prospective teachers as the sample from various Colleges using simple random sampling technique. The data were collected using the tools Sherlin Amaladoss Soft Skills Management Scale (SASSMS) developed and validated by the investigator in 2012 and Teaching Competency Rating Scale developed by Amaladoss Xavier in 2009.

Findings

The raw data was analysed using the statistical techniques such as percentage analysis and Pearson's product moment correlation and presented in the following tables.

Objective 1: To find out the level of soft skills management of prospective teachers.

Table 1
Level of Soft Skills Management

Soft Skills Management	Low		Moderate		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
	136	15.1	600	66.7	164	18.2

It is observed from the above table that 18.2% of prospective teachers have high level soft skills management.

Objective 2: To find out the level of teaching competency of prospective teachers.

Table 2
Level of Teaching Competency of prospective teachers

Dimension	Low		Moderate		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Content	158	17.6	527	58.6	215	23.9
Organization	187	20.8	296	32.9	417	46.3
Knowledge	324	36.0	179	19.9	397	44.1
Clarity	204	22.7	453	50.3	243	27.0
Communication	176	19.6	312	34.7	412	45.8
Rapport	285	31.7	309	34.3	306	34.0
Audiovisual Aids	172	19.1	461	51.2	267	29.7
Personality	155	17.2	542	60.2	203	22.6
Teaching Competency	165	18.3	580	64.4	155	17.2

The above table shows that 46.3%, 44.1% and 45.8% prospective teachers have high level in the teaching competency and its dimensions such as organization, knowledge and

communication. But 64.4%, 58.6%, 50.3%, 34.3%, 51.2% and 60.2% of prospective teachers have moderate level in teaching competency and its dimensions such as content, clarity, rapport, audiovisual aids and personality.

Null Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between teaching competency and its dimension and soft skills management of prospective teachers.

Table 3

Relationship between Teaching Competency and its Dimension and Soft Skills Management of Prospective Teachers

Dimension	N	Calculated 'r' Value	p value	Remarks
Content	900	0.11	0.00	S
Organization		0.11	0.00	S
Knowledge		0.00	0.95	N.S
Clarity		0.10	0.00	S
Communication		0.08	0.02	S
Rapport		0.07	0.03	S
Audiovisual aids		0.08	0.02	S
Personality		0.07	0.02	S
Teaching Competency		0.10	0.00	S

It is inferred from the above table that there is a significant relationship between teaching competency and its dimensions such as content, organization, clarity, communication, rapport, audiovisual aids and personality and soft skills management of prospective teachers. But there is no significant relationship between teaching competency and its dimensions such as knowledge and soft skills management of prospective teachers.

Interpretations and Recommendations

The correlation test reveals that there is a significant relationship between teaching competency and its all dimensions except the dimension of knowledge and soft skills management of prospective teachers. This may be due to the fact that, teaching competency includes communication abilities, interpersonal relationships, characteristics, attitude, personality, nature and behaviour of a teacher or in other ways these are the attributive skills

or the soft skills expected from a teacher to perform his/her profession in an efficient manner. Thus, it is clear that teaching competency may have a direct relationship with soft skills.

Based on the above findings, following recommendations has been given by the investigator:

Most of the prospective teachers possess moderate level soft skills management and teaching competency. It is not a healthy state in the field of teacher education. So, the curriculum must be revamped enriched with several activities, plenty of situations and record works which are very essential for the development of skills and competency.

The prospective teachers get the first chance to mould and improve their teaching competency and skills during their intensive teaching practice. The role of guide teachers in the practice teaching schools play a vital role in shaping them as competent teachers. So, necessary actions must be taken to establish proper liaison between the teacher education institutions and the schools where the prospective teachers take practice as well as the guide teacher and teacher educator for the betterment of prospective teachers.

Teaching competency is the trade mark of the teachers which reflects the quality of teachers and their teaching. It's not so easy to create competent teachers. To enhance competency and soft skills management, in-service training programmes must be arranged for teacher educators.

Citizenship training camps, special camps, educational clubs and educational tours should be executed as compulsory programmes in teacher education. All these activities play a vital role in the promotion of interpersonal skills and thus soft skills too.

Prospective teachers must develop a healthy rapport with the teacher educators, which may help them to imbibe all the needed skills and competency required for their profession without any fear or hesitation.

A positive attitude towards life and deep passion towards the teaching profession may be developed among the prospective teachers. It's better to have an attitude test at the entry level for the prospective teachers.

These recommendations may assist to improve the teaching competency and soft skills management of prospective teachers through the curriculum, institution and teacher educators.

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