

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFORMANCE IN SOFT SKILLS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS

Research
Paper

ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study is to find out the significant relationship between performance in soft skills and academic achievement among higher secondary students. The survey method is adopted in this study. The sample consists of 300 students studying in standards XI and XII, randomly selected from 11 higher secondary schools in Tuticorin. PARS softskill scale developed by Annaraja and the investigator (2008) has been used for collecting data. 't' test, ANOVA and Pearson product moment correlation are used for analyzing the data. The major finding is that there is a significant relationship between academic achievement of the students and their soft-skills, oral communication skill, written communication skill, collaboration skill, study skill, computer skill, time-management skill, leadership skill, self-motivation skill.

INTRODUCTION

Relationship plays a vital role in human life and one of the keys to successful relationship is development of soft skills. A teacher / student who has interpersonal problems and another who has difficulty in taking decision, suffer from lack of soft skills. Hence, a continuous, renewal of soft skills is essential for students and teachers. This will make their dealings effective and successful.

Soft skills is a sociological term which refers to the cluster of personality traits, social graces, facility with language, personal habits, friendliness and an optimism that mark people to varying degrees.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Soft skills play a vital role for professional success. They help one to excel in the work place and their importance cannot be denied in this age of information and knowledge. Good soft skills which are in fact scarce in the highly competitive corporate world will help us stand out in a milieu of routine job seekers with mediocre skill and talent.

Soft skills can enhance the career mobility of a person and increase the chances of success in getting the job he/she wants. They are essential for a student to develop so that he/she can cope with different situations in the study/work place. Soft skills are essential for children

and adolescents to achieve success in academic and professional fields.

It is a widespread belief that teenage years are the best years of an individual's life. One can easily spot happy groups of high school students energetically involved in a sporting event, or a group of college students enjoying a movie with their friends. This is only one side of the coin. Life for many young people is a painful tug of war filled with mixed messages and conflicting demands from parents, teachers, lecturers, peers and friends. Growing up negotiating a path between independence and reliance on others is a tough business. It creates stress and at times serious depression for adolescents who are unable to cope with the pressure and solve their problems.

The teacher should be in a position to train our students in a meticulous fashion and mould a new group of youths to meet the challenges of the modern era. It will certainly add a new dimension to their life.

To give students, the needed energy for a successful life, long learning and team work are very much essential

R. Sasipriya

Research Scholar, St. Xavier's College of Education (Autonomous), Palayamkottai

Dr. P. Annaraja

Associate Professor, St. Xavier's College of Education (Autonomous), Palayamkottai

and they become the basis for an active learning approach to our educational system. The investigator promoted the learning of soft skills, like teamwork, communication, critical thinking and, particularly, FITness skill. FITness (Fluency with Information Technology) requires that persons understand information technology broadly enough to be able to apply it productively at work and in their everyday lives.

OBJECTIVES

To find out and analyse the level of performance in softskill of higher secondary students with regard to Oral communication skill, Written communication skill, Collaboration skill, Study skill, Computer skill, Time management skill, Leadership skill, Self motivation skill, Risk taking skill and Inter-personal skill among the following groups.

1. Boys and girls
2. Hostel and Day-scholar students
3. Tamil medium and English medium students
4. Hindu, Christian and Muslim students

NULL HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference between (i) boys and girls (ii) hostel an day scholar (iii) Tamil and English mediam students in their Soft skills - Oral communication skill, Written communication skill, Collaboration skill, Study skill, Computer skill, Time management skill, Leadership skill, Self motivation skill, Risk-taking skill and Inter personal skill.
2. There is no significant difference among Hindu, Christian, Muslim students in their soft skills.
3. There is no significant relationship between Academic Achievement of the students and their soft skills.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher has used the survey method for obtaining the data.

SAMPLE

The sample consists of 300 students studying in standards XI and

XII randomly selected from 11 Higher Secondary Schools in Tuticorin. The sample is selected using the stratified random sampling technique. The various stratification factors selected are sex, age, religion, caste, class, subject, medium of instruction, type of management of the school, locality of residence, parents education, occupation of the parent and annual income of the parent.

TOOLS USED

PARS softskill scale developed by Annaraja and the investigator. (2008)

SOURCE FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The investigator collected the half-yearly examination marks of the sample respondents from the school records.

STATISTICS USED

The mean, standard deviation, t-test, chi-square test, Pearson's product moment correlation and ANOVA were used for analyzing the data.

Table 1
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS IN THEIR SOFT SKILLS

Soft Skills	Boys (N = 171)		Girls (N = 129)		Calcula ted 't' value	Re mar k
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
	Oral communication Skill	49.5	10.08	50.67		
Written communication skill	49.59	10.36	50.54	9.52	0.82	NS
Collaboration skill	48.48	10.62	52.01	8.76	3.15	S
Study skill	48.32	10.9	52.23	8.19	3.55	S
Computer skill	49.82	10.37	50.24	9.52	0.37	NS
Time-management skill	49.28	11.1	50.95	8.27	1.49	NS
Leadership skill	48.45	9.7	52.05	10.07	3.12	S
Self-motivation skill	47.71	10.67	53.03	8.14	4.9	S
Risk-taking skill	49.48	10.05	50.69	9.93	1.04	NS
Inter-personal skill	48.94	10.51	51.4	9.14	2.16	S

(At 5% level of significance, the table value of 't' is 1.96)

It is inferred from the above table that there is significant difference between boys and girls in their Collaboration skill, Study skill, Leadership skill, Self-motivation skill and Inter-personal skill.

Table 2
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HOSTELLERS AND DAY SCHOLARS IN THEIR SOFT SKILL

Soft skills	Hostellers (H = 31)		Day Scholars (H=269)		Calculated 't' value	Remark
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Oral communication Skill	54.76	9.08	49.45	9.97	3.05	S
Written communication skill	51.9	10.77	49.78	9.9	1.05	NS
Collaboration skill	47.08	11.01	50.34	9.84	1.58	NS
Study skill	50.21	11.91	49.98	9.78	0.1	NS
Computer skill	51.35	10.57	49.84	9.94	0.76	NS
Time-management skill	53.06	12.96	49.64	9.57	1.43	NS
Leadership skill	54.2	10.08	49.52	9.9	2.45	S
Self-motivation skill	53.02	9	49.65	10.07	1.95	NS
Risk-taking skill	51.33	9.94	49.85	10.01	0.78	NS
Inter-personal skill	53.71	8.24	49.57	10.11	2.58	S

(At 5% level of significance, the table value of 't' is 1.96)

It is inferred from the above table that there is significant difference between hostellers and day scholars in their Oral Communication skill, Leadership skill and Inter-personal skill.

Table 3
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TAMIL MEDIUM AND ENGLISH MEDIUM STUDENTS IN THEIR SOFT SKILLS

Soft skills	Tamil (N=224)		English (N = 76)		Calculated 't' value	Remark
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Oral communication Skill	51.17	9.69	46.54	10.15	3.48	S
Written communication skill	50.87	9.91	47.42	9.89	2.63	S
Collaboration skill	49.95	9.79	50.14	10.77	0.14	NS
Study skill	50.71	9.99	47.9	9.8	2.16	S
Computer skill	49.9	10.4	50.31	8.77	0.34	NS
Time-management skill	51.21	9.82	46.43	9.72	3.69	S
Leadership skill	51.43	10.12	45.8	8.36	4.8	S
Self-motivation skill	51.2	9.5	46.46	10.64	3.44	S
Risk-taking skill	50.86	9.92	44.46	9.85	2.6	S
Inter-personal skill	50.88	9.37	47.39	11.33	2.42	S

(At 5% level of significance the table value of 't' is 1.96)

It is inferred from the above table that there is significant difference between Tamil medium and English medium students in their Oral Communication skill, Written communication skill, Study skill, Time-management skill, Leadership skill, Self-motivation skill, Risk-taking skill and Inter-personal skill.

Table 4
'F' VALUE AMONG HINDU, CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM STUDENTS IN THEIR SOFT SKILLS

Soft skills	Source	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square variance	Calculated 'F' value	Remark
Oral communication Skill	Between	198.52	2	99.26	0.99	NS
	Within	29701	297	100		
Written communication skill	Between	68.34	2	34.17	0.34	NS
	Within	29832	297	100.44		
Collaboration skill	Between	114.22	2	57.11	0.57	NS
	Within	29786	297	100.29		
Study skill	Between	240.61	2	120.3	1.2	NS
	Within	29659	297	99.86		
Computer skill	Between	14.68	2	7.34	0.07	NS
	Within	29885	297	100.62		
Time-management skill	Between	34.38	2	17.19	0.17	NS
	Within	29866	297	100.56		
Leadership skill	Between	274.24	2	137.12	1.37	NS
	Within	29626	297	99.75		
Self-motivation skill	Between	20.04	2	10.02	0.1	NS
	Within	29880	297	100.61		
Risk-taking skill	Between	103.68	2	51.84	0.52	NS
	Within	29796	297	100.32		
Inter-personal skill	Between	22.61	2	11.3	0.11	NS

(For 2, 197 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance, the table value of 'F' is 3.03)

It is inferred from the above table that there is no significant difference among Hindu, Christian, Muslim students in their soft skills.

Table 5
CORRELATION BETWEEN ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT OF THE STUDENTS
AND SOFT SKILLS

Soft skills	Calculated value of 'r'	Remark
Oral communication Skill	0.204	S
Written communication skill	0.154	S
Collaboration skill	0.176	S
Study skill	0.197	S
Computer skill	0.083	NS
Time-management skill	0.11	NS
Leadership skill	0.205	S
Self-motivation skill	0.194	S
Risk-taking skill	0.102	NS
Inter-personal skill	0.09	NS

(At 5% level of significance, the table value of 'r' is 0.113)

It is inferred from the table that there is significant relationship between academic achievement of the students and their Oral communication skill, Written communication skill, Collaboration skill, Study skill, Computer skill, Time-management skill, Leadership skill and Self-motivation skill.

FINDINGS

1. There is significant difference between boys and girls in their Collaboration skill, Study skill, Leadership skill, Self-motivation skill and Inter personal skill. But there is no significant difference between them in their Oral communication skill, Written communication skill, Computer skill, Time-management skill and Risk taking skill. That is girls have better Collaboration skill, Study skill, Leadership skill, Self-motivation skill and Inter personal skill than boys.
2. There is significant difference between hostellers and day scholars in their Oral communication skill, Leadership skill and Inter-personal skill. That is, the hostellers are better than day scholars in Oral communication skill, Leadership skill and Inter personal skill
3. There is significant difference between Tamil medium and English medium students in their Oral communication skill, Written communication skill,

Study skill, Time management skill, Leadership skill, Self motivation skill, Risk-taking skill and Inter personal skill.

That is Tamil medium students are better than English medium students in Oral communication skill, Written skill, Study skill, Time-management skill, Leadership skill, Self motivation skill, Risk taking skill and Inter personal skill.

4. There is no significant difference among Hindu, Christian and Muslim students in their soft skill.
5. There is significant relationship between academic achievement of the students and their Oral communication skill, Written communication skill, Collaboration skill, Study skill, Computer skill, Time-management skill, Leadership skill and Self-motivation skill.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Teachers and students should be trained in soft skills so as to build a cordial relationship among the staff and students.
2. The students must be encouraged to participate in the teaching- learning process.
3. Self-booster programmes for both students and staff could be conducted in schools.
4. Students must be given different types of projects by forming small heterogeneous groups in the class.
5. The head of the Institution can conduct meetings with teachers and parents to analyse the achievement of the students.
6. The teachers should develop the student's involvement by providing psychological experiments, assignments, projects etc., to improve the achievement in psychology.

REFERENCE

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