

A RELATIONSHIP STUDY BETWEEN SOFT SKILLS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS

* DR. P. P. SHAJIMON, **DR. SUMA JOSEPH

* Assistant Professor, St. Thomas College of Teacher Education, Pala, Kerala

**Associate Professor, Mount Carmel College of Teacher Education for Women, Kottayam, Kerala, India

ABSTRACT

Education is the process of modification of the behavior of the pupils in a desirable and useful direction. Soft Skill is an intangible skill set which is all about how people learn and think. They are basically traits, behavior, personality, attitude, preferences, personal integrity, communication style, leadership aptitude and style. The present study is to find out the relationship between Soft Skills and Academic Achievement among the Higher Secondary students, using Descriptive Survey Method. The sample consists of 400 Higher Secondary Students selected from six Higher Secondary Schools of Kottayam District using Stratified Random Sampling technique. The investigator used a scale- Soft Skills Scale for measuring Soft Skills among Higher Secondary Students. The marks obtained by students in the terminal examination is used for measuring the Academic Performance. The study reveals that there exists a significant relationship between Soft Skills and Academic Achievement.

Key Words: *Soft Skills, Academic Achievement.*

Introduction

Education is the process of modification of the behavior of the pupils in a desirable and useful direction. . The main purpose of education is empowerment enabling one to earn one's livelihood and live a life of dignity. Skill-based education can provide this empowerment to our huge, unemployed labor force and help India emerge as key contributor to global skill-based economy, team building, influencing skills, etc. Our education system must focus equally on knowledge and skills .School education should embrace Soft Skills, also called '21st century skills'. These skills are essential for positive, workplace ready, sought after social behaviors.

Soft Skills are "associated with a person's Emotional Intelligence, the cluster of personality traits, social graces, communication, language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that characterize relationships with other people., Soft Skill is an intangible skill set which is all about how people learn and think. Academic Achievement is the knowledge obtained or skill acquired in the school subjects usually designated as marks assigned by the teachers. Soft Skill development and Academic Achievement are the primary goals of education.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the present study was to find out the relationship between Soft Skills and Academic Achievement among the Higher Secondary students.

Significance of the Study

Soft Skills play very important role in personal and professional life. Companies observed that they get people with definite hard skills but fail to get people with good Soft Skills. Companies have started understanding and acknowledging the importance of Soft Skills and are investing in training its people on Soft Skills. At workplace, they want to see more people with the various Soft Skill traits. It is very important that everyone learns and upgrade themselves on Soft Skills. Soft Skills should be practiced and improved on a regular basis. Soft Skill is not something that can be taught but must be learnt by oneself with lots of practice. There are courses which can guide us on Soft Skills.

Achievement is the product of all the educational endeavors in the present competitive world. The people are judged not only by their personality but also by the Academic Achievement in their life. Academic Achievement means one's learning attainment, accomplishments, proficiencies, etc. Academic Achievement is an observable phenomenon constituting changes. Any positive change that takes place in the cognitive structure of a learner in any subject constitutes achievement. Usually, the teachers assess at the end of the academic year to quantify the achievement that has taken place in the learner.

Academic Achievement is the accomplishment or acquired proficiency in the performance of an individual in a given skill or body of knowledge. Academic Achievement occupies a very important place in education as well as in the learning process. The main concern of all educational efforts is to see what the learner achieves. It is very important to study the role of Soft Skill in the academic growth of learners.

Objectives of the Study

The investigator formulated the following objectives for the present study.

1. To study the Soft Skills among the Higher Secondary Students.
2. To study the Academic Achievement of the Higher Secondary Students.
3. To find out the relationship between Soft Skills and Academic Achievement of Higher Secondary Students.

Methodology of the Study

The investigator used Descriptive Survey Method for the study since the study intends to find out the relationship between Soft Skills and Academic Achievement among Higher Secondary Students. The sample consisted of 400 Students from six Higher Secondary schools of Kottayam District. The method

used for selecting sample is Stratified Random Sampling giving due representation to Gender, Type of Management and Locale. The investigator used the Soft Skills Scale for measuring Soft Skills among Higher Secondary Students and terminal examination marks of students were used for assessing the Academic Achievement. Statistical techniques like Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation and Karl Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation(r) were used for the analysis of data.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

The present study was to find out the relationship between Soft Skills and Academic Achievement among the Higher Secondary students in Kottayam district. A detailed analysis of data was done with respect to the two variables and their relationship.

Soft Skills among Higher Secondary Students

The first objective was to study the Soft Skills among the Higher Secondary Students. For this the investigator classified the whole sample students based on the scores obtained in the tool-Soft Skills Scale. The classification is as follows, Above $M + 1\sigma$ denote High Soft Skill, Between $M + 1\sigma$ and $M - 1\sigma$ denotes Average Soft Skill and Below $M - 1\sigma$ denotes Low Soft Skill. Where M is the mean of the scores on Soft Skill and σ is the standard deviation of the scores on Soft Skill. Therefore $M + 1\sigma$ is 151 and $M - 1\sigma$ is 117. The classification of the students based on their Soft Skill is given in the Table 1.

Table 1. Classification of the total sample of students based on their scores on Soft Skills

Level of Soft Skills	Range	Number of Students	Percentage
High Soft Skill	Above 151	74	18.50
Average Soft Skill	Between 151 and 117	260	65
Low Soft Skill	Below 117	66	16.50
Total		400	100

From the table the investigator observes that out of 400 students the investigator observes and that 18.5 Percent students have High Soft Skill, 16.5 Percent students have Low Soft Skill and 65 Percent students possess Average Soft Skill. It reveals that most of the Higher Secondary Students possess Average Soft Skill.

Academic Achievement of Higher Secondary Students

The second objective of the study is to study the Academic Achievement of the Higher Secondary Students. The investigator classified the whole sample students based on the scores on Academic Achievement based on the above statistical formula. Therefore $M + 1\sigma$ is 392.06 and $M - 1\sigma$

is 287.64. The classification of the students based on their Academic Achievement is given in the Table 2.

Table 2. Classification of the total sample of the students based on their scores on Academic Achievement.

Level of Academic Achievement	Range	Number of students	Percentage
High Academic Achievement	Above 392.06	103	25.75
Average Academic Achievement	Between 392.06 and 287.64	231	57.75
Low Academic Achievement	Below 287.64	66	16.5
Total		400	100

From table the investigator observes that 25.75 percent student shave High Academic Achievement, 16.5 percent students have Low Academic Achievement and 57.75percent students possess Average Academic Achievement. It reveals that most of the Higher Secondary Students have Average level of Academic Achievement.

Relationship between Soft Skills and Academic Achievement

The third objective of the study is to find out the relationship between Soft Skills and Academic Achievement of Higher Secondary Students. The data pertaining to this objective was analyzed using Karl Person's Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation (R) The R -value was set as .098 at 0.05 level of significance for degrees of freedom 398. The Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation r - value between the score on Soft Skills and Academic Achievement of the Higher Secondary students is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Relationship between Soft Skills and Academic Achievement of Higher Secondary Students

Variables	Number	Df	Calculated R-value	Remarks
Soft Skills and Academic Achievement	400	398	.432	Significant at.05 level

From the table 3 the investigator observes that the obtained R -value between Soft Skills and Academic Achievement was 0.432 which shows a positive relationship between Soft Skills and Academic Achievement. The calculated R -value .432 is greater than the table value .098 at .05 level

of significance with degrees of freedom 398. Thus, the investigator interprets and concludes that there is a significant relationship between Soft Skills and Academic Achievement of Higher Secondary Students. When Soft Skills increases Academic Achievement of the students also increases. An improvement in the Soft Skills of the Higher Secondary students leads to a corresponding improvement in their Academic Achievement also.

Major Findings of the Study

The major findings of the study are the following;

- Majority of the Higher Secondary Students (65 %) possess Average level of Soft Skills.
- Majority of the Higher Secondary Students possess Average (57.75%) level of Academic Achievement.
- There is significant relationship between the Soft Skills and Academic Achievement among the Higher Secondary Students.

Conclusion

The present study attempts to analyze the Soft Skills and Academic Achievement of Higher Secondary Students. The study shows that majority of the Higher Secondary Students possess Average level of Soft Skills. It also reveals that there exists a significant relationship between Soft Skills and Academic Achievement. As Soft Skills increases Academic Achievement of the students also increases. An improvement in the Soft Skills of the Higher Secondary students leads to a corresponding improvement in their Academic Achievement.

REFERENCES:

- ❖ . Best, John, W., & Khan, James, V. (2008). Research in Education. New Delhi: PHI Learning Pvt. Ltd.
- ❖ Garret, E.H. (2004). Statistics in Psychology and Education. New Delhi: Paragon International Publishers.
- ❖ Hillway, T. (1956). Introduction to Research. U.S.A: The Riverside Publication.
- ❖ Kothari, C.R. (2007). Research in Methodology: Methods and Techniques. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers.
- ❖ Koul, Lokesh (2000). Methodology of Educational Research. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.
- ❖ Sidhu, Kulbeer Singh. (1987). Methodology of Research in Education. New Delhi: Sterling Publications Pvt. Ltd.
- ❖ Sindhu, K. (2001). Methodology of Research in Education. New Delhi: Sterling Publication.