Teacher Perceptions about Their Soft Skills at Secondary Level in Karachi Pakistan

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate how teachers acquire soft skills to ascertain the value of these abilities in the teaching profession. Future holistic human capital will acquire soft skills like communication, critical thinking and problem-solving, teamwork, lifelong learning and information management, entrepreneurship, ethics, morals, and leadership. This study looks into discrepancies between the soft skills that novice teachers acquired during their professional training as teachers and those they need at work. Simple random sampling was used to choose a sample of 120 teachers from all secondary schools in District Korangi, Karachi, Pakistan. The quantitative method was used in this study to gather information from teachers and data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics Mean, Standard deviation, frequency, percentage, independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA in SPSS version 22. The study's results demonstrated that the acquisition of soft skills and leadership skills were highly valued in their workplace. The soft skill component with the lowest capacity was teamwork and communication skills due to a lack of coordination among teachers in the school and required in their place of employment. No significant difference was found among teachers' opinions by their gender, qualification and experience at the secondary level in Karachi, Pakistan. The research found that integrated and embedded learning are the most effective ways to improve teachers' soft skills. The study suggested that creating a model or strategy/training/workshops should be conducted to promote soft skills.
Keywords: Soft Skills, Dominate Leadership, Teamwork, Acquisition of Soft Skills, Communication skills

Introduction

Working nowadays is greatly impacted by the era of collaboration, involvement in the law, and advancement from external sources (Heckman & Kautz, 2012). As soft skills are necessary for effective work, employers are increasingly utilizing them alongside hard talents in the workplace. A soft skill was early education and business development. Soft skills are difficult to define, but they are a person's emotional intelligence, which has to do with interpersonal interactions, friendship practices, and positive thinking at all levels of society (Litecky et al., 2004). Soft skills are very helpful for things like career advancement and work ethics. Soft talents include taking the initiative, having integrity, logical reasoning, openness to learning, intention, success-driven motivation, being enthused, being able to communicate effectively, being convincing and creative as initiating, paying attention to details, being cautious, and working as a team (Vasanthakumari, 2019).

It is essential for developing a person's personality, and the graduates' hard and soft skills qualifications undoubtedly aid in their job search (Zhang, 2012). Hard skills are necessary for some jobs, whereas soft talents help employees function more efficiently. Numerous studies and expert opinions have attempted to identify specific abilities that should be used in highly educational administration. According to the results of Tang (2020), study's findings indicated that the seven skills that make up soft skills are as follows: innovation, invention, and development skills; communication; critical and problem-solving skills; teamwork; leadership; lifelong learning and information management; ethics, morality, and professional skills. The work of teachers involves a variety of persons, including teaching, interacting with other school staff, and reaching out to parents and outside communities (Schulz, 2008).

In addition to teaching ability, teachers need other skills. Working as a teacher involves interacting with various people, including students, parents, other school staffs members, and the general public. In addition to the ability to educate, teachers often require other abilities to make their jobs easier. Some abilities require practice to develop. Teacher helpers are beginning educators who have primary work histories at educational institutions. If they do not have certain talents, they could get into problems (Mitchell et al., 2010).

There are many striking and fascinating types of soft skills that new secondary school teachers possess. Soft skills then represent everyone's capacity for excellence. Teaching is the practice of purposefully creating circumstances that allow a certain learner to act in a specific way to

experience particular targeted aims or objectives. The definition of competent includes being suitable, sufficient, legally qualified, admissible, or capable for the task at hand. Teachers' competencies are tested. Teaching competency refers to a teacher's capacity to influence pupils' conduct. Competence is a quality or behaviour pattern that results in greater effectiveness, meaning Good soft skills are essential for success (Gillard, 2009; Widad & Abdellah, 2022).

Objectives of the Research

➢ To examine the soft skill of teachers at secondary level in Karachi.

➢ To evaluate the soft skill of teachers from their demographics variable at secondary level in Karachi.

Research Questions:

1) What are the perceptions of teachers about their soft skills at secondary level in Karachi?

2) What are the perceptions of teachers about soft skills from their demographic perspective at secondary level in Karachi?

Literature Review

Soft skills enhance a person's connections, effectiveness at work, and career prospects. Personality qualities, social grace, language proficiency, routines, friendliness, and optimism are soft skills. A high-performance setting is necessary for the operation of a teacher education program. Officials from the School of Teacher Education claim that the best methods and instruments for evaluating instructors' and students' future capacities are those that focus on soft skills. Curriculum designers have thus had to consider the importance of developing soft skills (Ibrahim et al., 2017). Teacher education institutions contribute significantly to this by helping students acquire employable skills. This study investigates the non-academic qualities, or "soft skills," that help recently graduated business students succeed in their careers. There is almost as much study as a contradiction in non-academic attributes, such as soft skills, that help recently graduated business students succeed in their jobs. For example, there is very little overlap between the top ten soft skills in demand in Europe and those in the United States (Seetha, 2014; Volkov et al., 2022).

Acquisition of Soft Skills (ACSS)

To execute their jobs well, teachers need to be outstanding communicators who can interact with various people. They need to be proficient communicators with both parents and students. To be effective, teachers need to be able to speak with their pupils, not at them. As a teacher, your main

duty is to inform and enlighten students about a particular subject. Instructors need to develop strategies to get pupils engaged in studying, not just memorize textbook facts. By connecting their lesson plans to current events, teachers can aid students in understanding them. Alternatively, they can modify their lessons to accommodate a variety of learning styles and grade levels. In addition to teaching students the course materials, teachers need to build communication channels with their pupils. When a student feels alone or bullied, teachers should be able to establish trust with them and use their communication abilities to help them. This study investigates the non-academic traits, or "soft skills," that help recently graduated business students succeed in their careers. There is nearly as much study as there is contradictory information regarding the non-academic traits (soft skills) that help recently graduated business students succeed in their employment (Andrews & Higson, 2008; Widad & Abdellah, 2022).

Development of Generic Communication (DGC)

The capacity for efficient communication is the most crucial life skill. It enables us to grasp what is stated and communicate with others. See a baby pay close attention to its mother and try to mimic her sounds to get an understanding of the basic need for communication. Communication is the flow of information from one place to another at its most fundamental. Delivery options include speech, written (via books, magazines, websites, or emails), visual (through logos, maps, charts, or graphs), and nonverbal (through body language, gestures, tone, and pitch of voice). In actuality, a mix of these is usually used. If one has mastered communication abilities, it may take a lifetime. Nonetheless, you can do plenty of rather simple things to hone your communication abilities and ensure you can send and receive information efficiently. Your life can be improved by having effective communication skills in social and professional contexts and everywhere (Bhatnagar, 2011).

It is important to remember that accurate, clear, and intended information communication is a vital life skill. It is never too late to work on your communication abilities since doing so generally raises your standard of living. Professionally, communication skills are necessary if you are looking for a new career or hoping to advance in your existing position. To listen well, present your ideas appropriately, write succinctly and clearly, work well in a group, speak appropriately with a variety of people while maintaining good eye contact and show that you have a varied vocabulary and can adapt your language to your audience are all examples of communication skills.

A large number of them are critical abilities that most employers seek out. The process of conveying information verbally and nonverbally from the one providing it to the person receiving it is generally called communication. Verbal communication is the most often used kind of communication; it is a two-way process that includes comments on the message received. To communicate is to exchange information, ideas, and opinions with a purpose in mind. Signage or symbols can be used to transmit information in addition to spoken communication. Another definition of communication is exchanging meaning through symbolic interactions while providing meaning (Laker & Powell, 2011).

Teachers Dominate Leadership (TDL)

Several essential competencies are necessary for effective leadership, although distinct leaders have varied traits and approaches. Since there is no ideal approach to lead in every situation, one of the most crucial traits of effective leaders is their capacity for adaptation. Employees prize leadership abilities because they necessitate interacting with people in a way that inspires, encourages, and fosters respect. It is not new to emphasize the individual leader. Leadership is attributed to persistent personal traits like intelligence and dominance, which have long been utilized as viable models for understanding leader effectiveness (Ellis et al., 2014; Ahmad et al., 2020; Ahmad & Hamid, 2021).

The skills-based model of leader performance does not undervalue the significance of qualities. In reality, this model views abilities as a result of the interaction between characteristics and experience. Leadership responsibilities: Leaders must pinpoint critical problems, compile information, generate concepts, and build functional prototypes of solutions. These complex, creative problem-solving skills suggest that understanding the nature of the problem and the particular kind of leadership work at hand is necessary. Without the ability to recognize and create answers for critical organizational obstacles, leaders will be unable to achieve their goals with all the preparation and persuasion in the world. However, it should not be inferred from these remarks that leadership consists solely of figuring out hypothetical problems (Ahmad et al., 2021; Ali et al., 2022).

The only effective solutions to leadership issues are those that fit into the structure of the business. Leaders, therefore, evaluate the ramifications of a solution within the organization's context by looking outside of themselves. Although it is important to consider limits, identify downstream effects and pinpoint root causes, little is known about these skills for creating, which

can appear to be relatively simple in some ways. The first and most fundamental of these claims is that samples of organizational leaders can be tested for these abilities and the knowledge structures accompanying them. Second, the model suggests that if these skills can be evaluated, they can predict leader success while accounting for variance not accounted for by trait measures (Succi & Canovi, 2020: Crosbie, 2005).

Teamwork is a Domain of Soft Skills (TDSS)

A tradition for those taking part, bowling teams, like those for baseball, soccer, commandos, and fundraising, deplete energy and give competitors a place to vent. Sports teams provide spectators with a sense of spirit. Teams for leadership, excellence, and design Teams and other types of teamwork are displacing the egocentric, I'll-do-my-job-by-myself mentality that was once prevalent. This has made it difficult for America to compete in the international market. Most tasks in large organizations are completed by teams or small groups working collaboratively. When such teams perform poorly, which they usually do, even the most talented individuals may not be able to realize their full potential. They can elevate ordinary people's performance to spectacular heights when they work well (Cimatti, 2016).

Stories of underdog teams winning championships over teams with better players but not a stronger squad are common in sports. Though cooperation is increasingly valued in business, this is often done without a clear understanding of what makes a team work. The many theories and suggestions in management literature sometimes leave out the more intricate specifics of how successful organizations or teams get to the special state of peak performance. In collective endeavor, you will witness remarkable situations in which the group performs beyond the sum of its talents. It occurs in business, symphony, ballet, theatre, athletics, and other performing arts. It is simple to identify yet tough to pin down. However, it is rarely produced by work, training, and cooperation alone (Adnan et al., 2012).

Methodology

This section addresses research instrument processes, population sampling size, sample procedure, design, information collection methods, and data processing methodologies. This study employed a quantitative research methodology, gathering data using a survey that collected responses from public secondary school teachers in Korangi, Karachi. The survey questionnaires were self-developed. The researcher used survey sample based on descriptive method questions to get the answer regarding the subject under study. Through this researcher found the

knowledge of the public secondary school teacher' opinion about their soft skills. Population of the study was all male and female government secondary school teachers at district Korangi Karachi in Pakistan. A sample of 120 male and female secondary school teachers from district Korangi randomly selected. The primary tool in this study to examine teacher's soft skills was research questionnaire including nineteen items. 150 questionnaires were distributed among teachers, with instructions to carefully read the statements provided and choose the proper response using a 5-point Likert scale, where one represents strongly disagree. 2 denotes disagree, three is neutral, 4 is agree, and 5 is strongly agree. There were two sections to the research questionnaire. Teachers' gender and other demographic data were to be gathered in the first portion, while their knowledge about soft skills obtained in second portion. 120 responses were received and other refused to participate in the study. Response rate was 80 percent. The scale was pilot tested before collecting data and found reliable at 0.730 Cronch's Bach Alpha. The overall reliability of the scale is given in table 1:

Table 1
Cronbach's Alpha:

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.792	19

Data Analysis Techniques

Collected data was entered in SPSS version 22 for screening purposes and for frequency and percentage distribution. Analyses of the data included descriptive statistics, frequency and percentage distributions, the independent sample t-test, and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Data Analysis and Results

Demographics

Table 2 provides demographic details of the participants in the study. The table indicates that 44.2 percent of males and 55.8 percent female teachers participated in this study and reasonable percentage of teachers (35.8%) were holding 01-05 years teaching experience where majority of them (55%) having the qualification of graduation.

Table 2
Demographic Information

Demographics		Frequency.	Percent.
Gender	Male	53	44.2%
	Female	67	55.8%
	Total	120	100%
Experience	1-05 yrs	43	35.8%
	6-10 yrs	39	32.6%
	11-15 yrs	16	13.3%
	15 yrs and above	22	18.3%
	Total	120	100%
Academic Qualification	Graduation	66	55.0%
	Masters	40	33.3%
	M Phil.	14	11.7%
	Total	120	100%

Table 3

Comparison of teacher's gender on their Soft Skills

Gender	N	Mean	S. D	df	t	P
Male	53	4.150	0.618	118	0.431	0 .668
Female	67	4.203	0.686			

p>0.05

To determine whether or not there was a significant difference between the perspectives of male and female teachers regarding soft skills, a t-test was conducted. Statistically, the test revealed no significant results t (118) = 0.431, p = 0.668). In contrast to the perception of female instructors (M=4.203, SD=0.686), the perception of male teachers was found to be (M=4.150, SD=0.618). There was no discernible gender disparity in the perspectives of educators regarding their soft skills, according to the findings.

Table 4
Comparison of teacher's qualification on their Soft Skills

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.096	2	0.548	1.283	0.281
Within Groups	49.976	117	0.427		
Total	51.072	119			

p>0.05

The outcomes of teachers regarding their soft skill qualifications are detailed in Table 4. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to investigate educators' perspectives in public secondary institutions regarding their soft skills, controlling for qualifications. Based on the outcomes of an analysis of variance, it was determined those educators' perspectives concerning their soft skills did not differ significantly by qualification. Without significance, the test yielded $F(2, 117) = 1.283$ p (0.281). The results of the study indicated that there was no statistically significant variation in teachers' perceptions regarding their soft skills in the teaching profession based on their level of qualification.

Table 5
Comparison of teachers by experience on their Soft Skills

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.231	3	0.410	0.955	0.417
Within Groups	49.841	116	0.430		
Total	51.072	119			

p>0.05

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare teachers' perceptions regarding their soft skills in public secondary schools according to their teaching experience in the classroom. An analysis of the determinants that impact educators' perspectives on soft skills in the teaching profession unveiled that there were no discernible variations in viewpoints among teachers according to their tenure in the field. Without significance, the test yielded $F(3, 116) = 0.955$, p (0.417). The study's results indicated no statistically significant variations in teachers' perceptions regarding their teaching experience at the secondary level.

Table 6
Development of Generic Communication

S. No	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Conclusion
1.	DGC1	120	4.125	0.903	Strongly Agree(SA)
2.	DGC2	120	3.850	1.227	Agree(AG)
3.	DGC3	120	3.991	1.184	Agree(AG)
4.	DGC4	120	3.941	1.047	Agree(AG)
5.	DGC5	120	3.900	0.964	Agree(AG)
Development of Generic Communication Overall		120	3.961	0.765	Agree(AG)

Table 6 indicates that development of generic communication of teacher's factor of soft skills in teaching profession of public secondary, the item namely 'DGC1 is placed at the highest level by the respondents with a mean 4.125 followed by DGC3 (3.991), 'DGC4 (3.941), DGC5 (3.900), and 'DGC2 (3.850) respectively. Overall mean score of the respondents on development of generic communication was 3.961.

Table 7
Teachers Dominate Leadership

S. No	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1.	TDL1	120	3.925	0.757	Agree(AG
2.	TDL2	120	4.020	0.943	Strongly Agree(SA)
3.	TDL3	120	3.933	0.905	Agree(AG)
4.	TDL4	120	4.016	0.943	Strongly Agree(SA)
5.	TDL5	120	4.125	0.783	Strongly Agree(SA)
Overall Teachers Dominate Leadership		120	4.003	0.591	Strongly Agree(SA)

Table 7 indicates that teacher's teachers dominate leadership factor of soft skills of teachers in teaching profession of public secondary school teachers, the item namely 'TDL5 is placed at the highest level by the respondents with the mean score 4.125 followed by TDL2 (4.020), 'TDL4 (4.016), TDL3 (3.933), and 'TDL1 (3.925) respectively. Overall perceptions of the participants on teacher's teachers dominate leadership of teacher's soft skills with the mean of 4.003.

Table 8
Teamwork Domain of Soft Skills

S. No	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1.	TDSS-1	120	3.875	1.057	Agree(AG)
2.	TDSS-2	120	3.870	0.983	Agree(AG)
3.	TDSS-3	120	3.825	1.192	Agree(AG)
4.	TDSS-4	120	3.950	1.035	Agree(AG)
Teamwork Domain of Soft Skills Overall		120	3.881	0.759	Agree(AG)

Table 8 indicates that teacher's teamwork domain of soft skills factor of public secondary school

teachers, the item namely 'TDSS4 is placed at the highest level by the respondents with the mean

score 3.950 followed by TDSS1 (3.875), TDSS2 (3.870), and 'TDSS3 (3.825) respectively.

Overall perceptions of participants regarding teacher's teamwork domain of soft skills with the

mean score of 3.881.

Table 9
Acquisition of Soft Skills (ACSS)

S. No	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1.	ACSS-1	120	4.091	0.995	Strongly Agree(AG)
2.	ACSS-2	120	3.858	1.055	Agree(AG)
3.	ACSS-3	120	4.433	0.774	Strongly Agree(AG)
4.	ACSS-4	120	4.191	0.937	Strongly Agree(AG)
5.	ACSS-5	120	4.325	1.101	Strongly Agree(AG)
Acquisition of Soft Skills Overall		120	4.180	0.655	Strongly Agree(AG)

Table 9 indicates that acquisition of soft skills factor of public secondary school teachers, the

item namely 'ACSS3 is placed at the highest level by the respondents with the mean score 4.433

followed by ACSS5 (4.325), ACSS4 (4.191), ACSS1 (4.091) and ACSS2 (3.858) respectively.

Overall participant's perceptions on acquisition of soft skills with the mean score of 4.180.

Table 10
Factor wise Soft Skills of Teachers

S. No	Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1.	Development of Generic Communication	120	3.961	0.765	Agree(AG)
2.	Teachers Dominate Leadership	120	4.003	0.591	Strongly Agree(SA)
3.	Teamwork Domain of Soft Skills	120	3.881	0.759	Agree
4.	Acquisition of Soft Skills	120	4.180	0.655	Strongly Agree

Table 10 indicates factors of teacher's soft skills in the profession of teaching in public

secondary school teachers, the factor namely acquisition of soft skills is placed at the highest

level by the respondents with the mean score 4.180 followed by teachers dominate leadership

(4.003), development of generic communication (3.961) and teamwork domain of soft skills (3.881) respectively.

Discussion

All of the arguments that were made based on the study's findings can be seen in the context of the respondents' demographics, who were primarily secondary teachers who were female (55.8%), had a graduate degree (55%) and had 1-5 years or more of teaching experience (35.8). This study addressed the first research question: "What are teachers' perceptions about their soft skills at the secondary level in Karachi? The study's findings revealed that secondary school teachers demonstrated the highest level of teacher perception about their acquisition of soft skills in secondary-level schools (4.180). The work of (Higson, 2023; Vasanthakumari, 2019 Mailool et al., 2020; Fernandes et al., 2021) supports this relationship between teachers' motivation and soft skills. Teachers' dominate leadership is the second-highest category (4.003). The environment is ripe for secondary teachers to develop their leadership with soft skills, as evidenced by studies like (Ahmad et al., 2021) (Fikri et al., 2020; Ismail et al., 2020; Ahmad & Hamid, 2021). Development of generic communication mean (3.961), which also reflects good behavior in secondary schools and is directly related to the soft skills of secondary school teachers (Deep et al., 2019; Ahmad et al., 2023; Andrews & Higson, 2008).

The teamwork domain of secondary teachers for their soft skills (3.881) came in as the factor with the fourth-highest ranking. This factor also reflects the soft skills condition in secondary schools that affects teachers' soft skills (Tang, 2020; Naibaho, 2021; Vasanthakumari, 2019; Doghonadze & Zoranyan, 2021). The studies cited in this section support the claim that secondary school teachers should be in good communication, teamwork, leadership, and acquisition of soft skills, indicating that respondents strongly agree because they want to continue their education and learn new soft skills. The relationship between all the factors and soft skills is thus established. Hence, the first research question is answered. The study's second research question was: What are teachers' perceptions about soft skills from their demographic characteristics at the secondary level in Karachi? According to the results of the gender analysis, female and male teachers have demonstrated the same level of perception of secondary school teachers regarding their soft skills (Ali et al., 2023; Widad & Abdellah, 2022).

However, the perception of teachers' soft skills also does not significantly differ from their qualifications and teaching experience. There was no disagreement among the respondents about

how well-qualified teachers were perceived in terms of their communication, teamwork, leadership, and professional development soft skills. It indicates that secondary school teachers with master's degrees and college degrees have voiced their agreement regarding how satisfied they are with their soft skills as secondary school teachers. No significant difference was found in opinion among respondents regarding how they perceived their soft skills in terms of communication, teamwork, leadership, and professional development compared to their teaching experience (Ahmad et al., 2023).
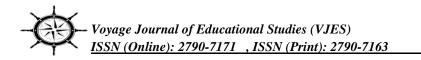
Recommendations

1. Based on the conclusions of the study, it is recommended that.
2. The soft skills of teachers enhance their motivation in school; the steps should be taken to improve their soft skills at the secondary level.
3. Both male and female educators have demonstrated the same perception regarding how teachers perceive their soft skills. So, male and female teachers should be trained to develop their humanistic side to enhance their soft skills.
4. Teachers in secondary schools have demonstrated significantly lower perceptions in the teamwork domain of secondary school teachers' soft skills. As a result, action should be taken to improve this situation so they can develop teamwork among teachers in school.

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