



## EFFECTIVENESS OF SELECT SOFT SKILLS IN AUGMENTING BEHAVIOURAL PROFILE OF TEACHER EDUCANDS

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### ABSTRACT :

*Teacher Educands need a repertoire of knowledge about themselves- their attitudes, beliefs, personality, temperament and behaviour. They must acquire general and specific understanding and judgment of their own behaviour to engage all students in worthwhile learning. They need to have opportunities to reflect upon and think about what they do, how to make decisions and how to modulate their behaviour while transacting in the classroom. The goal of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of select Soft Skills in augmenting Behavioural Profile of Teacher Educands, thereby initiating and promoting desirable behaviour quotient. The Experimental Method with the Single Group Pre-test Post-test Design was used for the study. The study found that the Behavioural Profile of teacher educands improved considerably after the Soft Skills intervention.*



**KEYWORDS :** Soft Skills, Behavioural Profile, Teacher Educands.

### INTRODUCTION

The role of teachers has changed drastically over the few years in our society. In the changed scenario, the additional roles envisaged of a Teacher are that of planner, facilitator, advisor, negotiator among groups, expert in articulation and communication of ideas, mediator, reformer, etc. These roles demand specialized knowledge and skills not ordinarily available in the existing profession. This has necessitated the evolution of teaching schools to equip teacher educands with the essential skills required for the new generation teacher.

To prepare teachers for the unprecedented responsibilities they are required to take on, the teacher preparation programmes must incorporate innovative activities and mentoring programmes. To help the nation compete in the global economy, today's teachers will have to be educated to the same high levels of learning outcomes and 'Graduate Attributes', as stated by the Higher Education Council. It must be ensured that all student teachers are multi-taskers-they master rigorous course content and are master communicators, as well as are able to apply what they learn, think critically and solve problems. They must be able to focus a balance on their emotional self, their academic learning and social and emotional developmental needs(Garcia, 2010).The significance is laid, but there are various questions on the "how" factor, which demands proper tackling.Soft Skills were thought to be most appropriate means of bringing about a positive change in augmenting teacher educands' Behavioural Profile.

Student teachers do not have the benefit of years of experience to help them deal with day-to-day classroom issues. Thus, they are not only facing the stress of teaching while going to school, but they also have to deal with classroom situations while trying to line upon a job upon graduation. In light of this, there is a need of a dramatic overhaul in the process of preparing teachers (Hadiyanto et al., 2017). Teacher education has too often been segmented with subject-matter preparation, theory and pedagogy taught in isolated intervals and too far removed from actual classroom practice. Soft skills embedded practice focuses on developing complex analytic and practical skills. It provides real-world contexts for developing a constellation of complex skills that are orchestrated differently in different contexts, including the full range of the socio-emotional developmental needs of the learners.

In order to prepare effective teachers, Teacher Education programme must shift away from a norm which emphasizes academic preparation and course work loosely linked to school-based experiences. This can be accomplished through a combination of both curriculum embedded practice and learned experiences. The curriculum may move to programmes that are fully grounded and interwoven with academic content under the tutelage of soft skills.

Soft Skills are a cluster of personality traits, social graces, communication, language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism that characterize relationships with other people (Lorenz, 2009). Although many definitions may be found in the literature on the concept of 'skill', most emphasize that all skills are learned, or are capable of being learned and developed, and necessarily involve the appropriate (and observable) performance of particular types of activity and task. By and large, skills are behaviours that are carried out when knowledge, aptitudes and personality traits are put into practice. They constitute a corpus of knowledge, procedures, competencies, aptitudes and attitudes that are needed to carry out various activities (e.g. doing a job or solving problems) to a certain degree of quality and effectiveness. The Soft Skills selected for enhancing the Behavioural Profile of teacher educands were: Team Work Skills and Personal Management Skills.

Since Soft Skills are primarily geared towards personality development, social participation and workplace success in general, they are more suitable to provide guidelines for Teacher Educands in real world practice.

### NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Perspectives on Behaviour have been undergoing change from time to time and the definition of the construct itself is invasive. It is imperative for the Teacher Educand to have the correct appropriation of behaviour and inculcate an appropriate Behavioural Profile, suitable for the profession. Despite the importance of Behaviour, the scenarios in teacher education curriculum with regard to behaviour augmentation appear to be dismal (Gelisli, 2007).

It is noteworthy that other Graduate disciplines, including Engineering and Business Schools, have acknowledged the relevance of soft skills and teach them extensively. Studies by Satyanaraya et al. (2018), Sethi (2018), Chaitanya (2018) etc, are onus of proof in this regard. Teacher education institutes worldwide are also gaining impetus from the critical soft skills deemed important for the profession. Related studies by Lavilles (2017), Boudersa (2016) etc. points to this direction. Hence, there is no reason why the teaching methods used so successfully in other professions cannot be introduced into teacher education programme, particularly in the Indian context.

Most often academic disciplines are fore fronted in the teacher education curricula; while the behavioural components are ousted to the background. There needs to be created an emergent insight among the educational stake holders for the implementation or operationalisation of Soft skills programmes. The need for a pro-active approach viz., Soft Skills to augment Behaviour is the need of the hour and its impact is yet to be analysed.

The knowledge about how to manage self- behaviour is important. There is an ardent necessity to ensure better performance of teacher educands before they enter into the teaching profession. The paper attempts to probe into the issue of behavioural management of teacher educands, to test their basic

behavioural profile and suggest Soft Skills as a viable means to enhance behaviour. Soft Skills is the buzzword which aims at holistic development of the individual. The study is hoped to give some new orientation and direction to the Teacher Education community at large.

Implementing Soft Skills intervention can ensure the Teacher Educands to inculcate capabilities, to re-evaluate attitudes, behaviour, personality and temperament and to make adjustments as needed. It is possible to encourage teacher educands to adapt themselves to a new thought process and behaviour pattern and consider themselves as agents of change, through the intervention of Soft Skills.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To compare the effectiveness of the soft skills in augmenting behavioural profile among teacher educands for the total sample.
- To compare the effectiveness of the soft skills in augmenting behavioural profile among teacher educands for the sub samples based on core course at graduate level.

### HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. Soft skills will be significantly more effective in augmenting behavioural profile of teacher educands for the total sample
2. Soft skills will be significantly more effective in augmenting behavioural profile of teacher educands for the subsamples based on core course at graduate level.

### METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF

The study adopted a single group pre-test post-test experimental design for gathering essential data for the study. The sample comprised 120 teacher educands from 2 colleges of teacher education (1 aided and 1 unaided) in Kannur District of Kerala. A Situational Judgement Test on Behaviour was developed to gather data from the participants. Situational Judgement Tests are a type of psychological aptitude test which tries to measure the applicants' attitude towards a dilemma in a particular situation. In the Test, teacher educands were presented with a variety of hypothetical situations they are likely to encounter as a teacher educand, on the job and in life in general. Real world scripted scenarios and case-based situations were used as vignettes. The key domains of personality and temperament were explored. The Soft Skills selected for enhancing the Behavioural Profile of teacher educands were Team Work Skills and Personal Management Skills.

The test was validated by a panel of Experts. Two weeks of mentoring sessions was held with the students based on the select Soft Skills, viz., Team Work Skills and Personal Management Skills. Simple statistical techniques were employed for analysing the data.

### RESULTS AND FINDINGS

**Table 1: Pre- and Post-test Scores of Behavioural Profile for the Total Sample**

Test	N	AM	Mdn	SD
Pre-test	120	7.88	8.00	2.61
Post-test		12.58	12.00	3.53

Table-1 shows that the mean pre-test score of behavioural profile of the students was low. The maximum score on the test being 30, the low pre-test mean score (7.88) implies that the students had an extremely low behavioural profile before the experiment. It can be inferred that the behavioural profile of teacher educands was low before the experiment. The mean post-test score of behavioural profile of the students were high (12.58). This implies that behavioural profile of students were high after the experiment. Thus, it can be inferred that the soft skills were effective in augmenting behavioural profile of teacher educands for the total sample. Hence the hypothesis-1 is accepted.

**Table 2: Results of the Test of Significance of Difference between the Mean Pre- and Post-test Scores of Behavioural Profile on the Core Course Subsamples**

Core Course	N	Groups	AM	SD	Paired 't' value	p
Arts Students	62	Pre-test	8.10	2.67	10.71	p<0.01*
		Post-test	12.18	2.89		
Science Students	58	Pre-test	7.66	2.56	9.09	p<0.01*
		Post-test	13.02	4.08		

Result: \*'t' value is significant

for df 61 (Arts Students),  $t_{0.01}=2.66$  & df 57 (Science Students),  $t_{0.01}= 2.66$

From Table-2, it can be seen that the post-test scores (12.18) of behavioural profile are higher than the pre-test scores (8.10) among arts students. The t-value 10.71 is significant at 0.01 level. This means that there is significant difference between the means of the pre- and post-test scores of arts students. Since the means of the post-test scores is greater than that of the pre-test scores, it can be inferred that there is significant enhancement in the behavioural profile of arts students as a result of the experimental treatment. It is also seen that the post-test scores (13.02) of behavioural profile are higher than the pre-test scores (7.66) among science students. The t-value 9.09 is significant at 0.01 level. This means that there is significant difference between the means of the pre- and post-test scores of science students. Since the means of the post-test scores is greater than that of the pre-test scores, it can be inferred that there is significant enhancement in the behavioural profile of science students as a result of the experimental treatment. Soft skills integrated strategy was successful in augmenting behavioural profile among both arts students and science students. Hence the hypothesis-2 is accepted.

### IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Behaviour is a complex and invasive construct, and providing means to understand and create awareness, is a challenge. The need to provide relevant pro-active strategies, orientation programmes and soft skills intervention becomes mandatory. We need to provide teacher educands relevant information regarding ethical conduct and behaviour, starting at the point of initial years of teacher education programme to the time of initiation to the career and throughout, through continuous professional development programmes. Further, sessions on personality development can be provided through relevant spaces like class rooms, or even cyberspaces. Forums, debates and awareness campaigns can also play a role in imparting necessary behaviour quotients required for the profession.

Appropriate behaviour is the key to a safe and caring classroom climate that invites and supports positive behaviour and skilled problem solving. By mastering the knowledge base, skills and dispositions of practice in their profession, teacher educands will become better equipped in their prospective careers.

### CONCLUSION

The study attempted to describe the effectiveness of select Soft Skills for augmenting Behavioural Profile of Teacher Educands at Secondary Level. A single best answer multiple choice Situational Judgement Test on Behaviour (SJTb) was developed to assess teacher Educands' ability to judge behaviour in relation to their Personality and Temperament. The findings of the study revealed that the select Soft Skills, viz., Team Work Skills and Personal Management Skills are effective in enhancing the Behavioural Profile of teacher educands significantly, irrespective of their core course. To conclude, the best means to empower teacher educands and aid them in behaviour modification is through the integration of Soft Skills in the teacher education curriculum.

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