



Enhancing Soft Skills through Literature: Exploring the Impact of Instructional Resources

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Abstract:

This study investigates the effectiveness of literature-based instructional resources in enhancing soft skills, communication skills and intelligence among professional students. Through a pre- and post-intervention study with 180 participants, researcher examined the impact of literature on soft skills, communication skills and intelligence, and interest of the students in further improvement of soft skills. Significant positive changes were observed in all three areas, highlighting the potential of literature-based approaches. However, individual traits like pre-existing communication skills and handling unexpected changes influenced the magnitude of the impact. Our findings advocate for incorporating personalized literature recommendations and targeted reading activities to optimize soft skills development through literary resources.

Keywords: Soft skills, literature based resources, communication skills and intelligence .

Introduction:

Soft skills, encompassing communication, adaptability, and teamwork, Critical thinking skills and Problem Solving skills are increasingly recognized as essential for success in various aspects of life. Universities are actively seeking effective methods to equip students with these crucial skills. While traditional instructional methods remain vital, incorporating alternative approaches like literature has gained traction. This study explores the potential of literature-based resources in enhancing soft skills development among professional students.

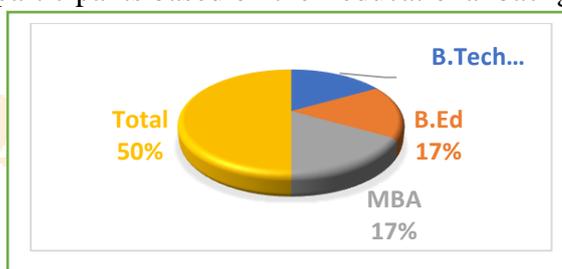
Methodology:

A pre- and post-intervention study was conducted with 180 undergraduate and postgraduate professional students: (60 B.Tech, 60 B.Ed, and 60 MBA) from private colleges situated in Telangana state. The researcher administered pre-test for assessing their skills before participants were taught through the selected literary texts: (novels, short stories, and poems) for period of six months for improving soft skills of students. Then a post test was administered to three courses of students with a questionnaire to evaluate their performance with regard to soft skills and communication skills.. Additionally, they reported their interest in enhancing soft skills through literature. Chi-square tests were used to analyze the pre- and post-intervention differences among three courses.

Results:

The table and figure shows the distribution of participants based on their educational background

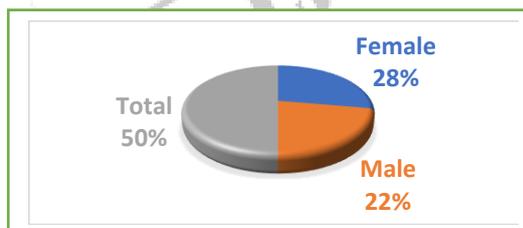
Coursre	Frequency	Percent
B.Tech	60	33.3
B.Ed	60	33.3
MBA	60	33.3
Total	180	100.0



The table presents the distribution of participants based on their educational background in a scientific research study. The study included a total of 180 participants, with each educational category accounting for an equal frequency of 60 individuals, representing 33.3% of the total sample. The major finding from this table is that the participants were evenly distributed across three educational backgrounds: B.Tech, B.Ed, and MBA.

The table and figure presents the distribution of gender

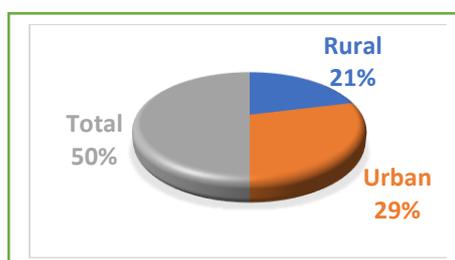
Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	100	55.6
Male	80	44.4
Total	180	100.0



The table presents the distribution of gender in a scientific research study. Out of the total sample size of 180 participants, 100 were female, accounting for 55.6% of the total, while 80 were male, representing 44.4% of the total.

Table and figure shows the distribution of participation of locality

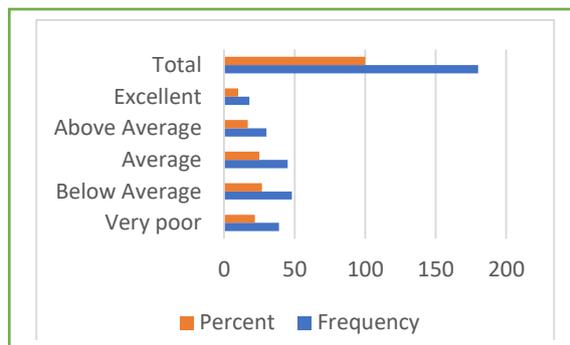
Locality	Frequency	Percent
Rural	76	42.2
Urban	104	57.8
Total	180	100.0



The table presents the frequency and percentage distribution of participants based on their locality in a scientific research study. The study included a total of 180 participants, with 76 (42.2%) residing in rural areas and 104 (57.8%) residing in urban areas. One major finding from this table is that the majority of participants in the study were from urban areas, accounting for over half of the total sample.

The table and figure present current communication skills

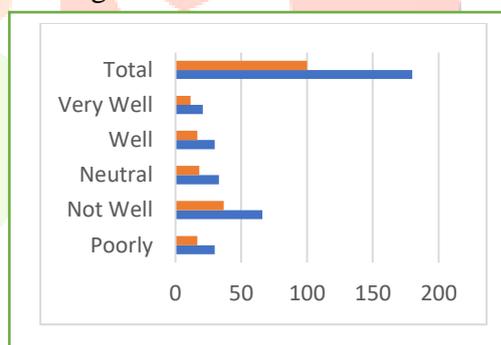
Rate your current communication skills.	Frequency	Percent
Very poor	39	21.7
Below Average	48	26.7
Average	45	25.0
Above Average	30	16.7
Excellent	18	10.0
Total	180	100.0



The table presents the results of a survey conducted to assess individuals' self-rated communication skills. A total of 180 participants were asked to rate their current communication skills on a scale ranging from "Very poor" to "Excellent." The majority of respondents rated their skills as either "Below Average" (26.7%) or "Average" (25.0%). Interestingly, a significant portion of participants rated their skills as "Very poor" (21.7%), indicating a potential need for improvement in this area. On the other hand, a smaller percentage of individuals rated their skills as "Above Average" (16.7%) or "Excellent" (10.0%).

The table and figure presents ability to handle unexpected changes

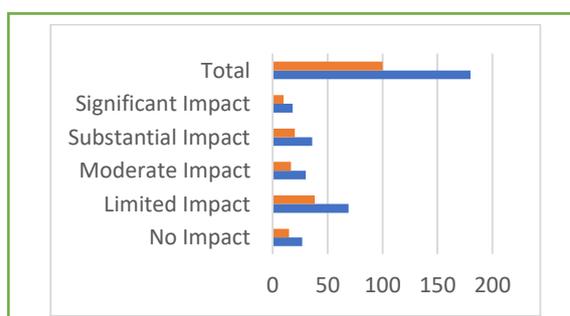
How well do you handle unexpected changes?	Frequency	Percent
Poorly	30	16.7
Not Well	66	36.7
Neutral	33	18.3
Well	30	16.7
Very Well	21	11.7
Total	180	100.0



The table presents data on how well individuals handle unexpected changes. A total of 180 participants were surveyed and asked to rate their ability to handle unexpected changes on a scale ranging from "Poorly" to "Very Well." The majority of participants (36.7%) reported that they do not handle unexpected changes well, while 16.7% stated that they handle them poorly. On the other hand, 16.7% of participants reported handling unexpected changes well, and 11.7% stated that they handle them very well. Interestingly, a significant proportion of participants (18.3%) reported a neutral stance towards handling unexpected changes.

The table and figure presents the results the impact of instructional resources

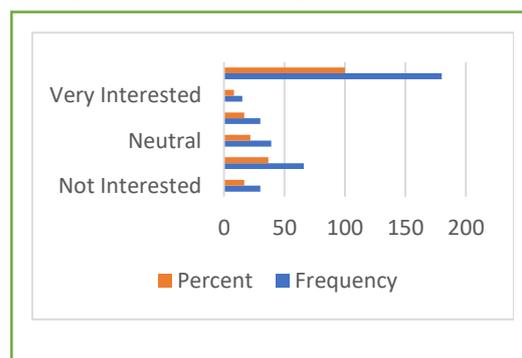
Rate the impact of instructional resources on your soft skill development	Frequency	Percent
No Impact	27	15.0
Limited Impact	69	38.3
Moderate Impact	30	16.7
Substantial Impact	36	20.0
Significant Impact	18	10.0
Total	180	100.0



The table presents the results of a survey conducted to assess the impact of instructional resources on the development of soft skills. A total of 180 participants were included in the study. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents reported either limited impact (38.3%) or no impact (15.0%) of instructional resources on their soft skill development. However, a significant proportion of participants reported moderate impact (16.7%), substantial impact (20.0%), or even significant impact (10.0%) of these resources on their soft skill development. This suggests that while instructional resources may not have a significant impact on everyone, they do have the potential to positively influence the development of soft skills in a considerable number of individuals.

The table and figure presents regarding their interest in enhancing soft skills through literature

How interested are you in enhancing soft skills through literature?	Frequency	Percent
Not Interested	30	16.7
Slightly Interested	66	36.7
Neutral	39	21.7
Interested	30	16.7
Very Interested	15	8.3
Total	180	100.0



The table presents the responses of 180 participants regarding their interest in enhancing soft skills through literature. The participants were asked to rate their interest on a scale ranging from "Not Interested" to "Very Interested." The major finding from this table is that the majority of participants (36.7%) reported being slightly interested in enhancing soft skills through literature, followed by those who were neutral (21.7%) and not interested (16.7%). Interestingly, a similar percentage of participants (16.7%) expressed being interested in enhancing soft skills through literature. A smaller percentage of participants (8.3%) reported being very interested in this approach.

The table presents the results self-rated communication skills before and after a communication skills training program.

		Rate your current communication skills.					Total	Chi-Square	Sig.
		Very poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent			
Pre	Count	39	33	15	3	0	90	87.950	.000
	%	43.3%	36.7%	16.7%	3.3%	0.0%	100.0%		
Post	Count	0	15	30	27	18	90		
	%	0.0%	16.7%	33.3%	30.0%	20.0%	100.0%		
Total	Count	39	48	45	30	18	180		
	%	21.7%	26.7%	25.0%	16.7%	10.0%	100.0%		

The table presents the results of a survey assessing participants' self-rated communication skills before and after a communication skills training program. Before the training program, the majority of participants rated their communication skills as "Very poor" (43.3%) or "Below Average" (36.7%), with only a small

percentage rating their skills as "Average" (16.7%), "Above Average" (3.3%), or "Excellent" (0.0%). After the training program, there was a significant improvement in participants' communication skills. None of the participants rated their skills as "Very poor," and the majority now rated their skills as "Average" (33.3%), "Above Average" (30.0%), or "Excellent" (20.0%).

The table presents data on how well individuals handle unexpected changes before and after a certain intervention

			How well do you handle unexpected changes?					Total	Chi-Square	Sig.
			Poorly	Not Well	Neutral	Well	Very Well			
Pre	Count	30	51	6	3	0	90	103.200	.000	
	%	33.3%	56.7%	6.7%	3.3%	0.0%	100.0%			
Post	Count	0	15	27	27	21	90			
	%	0.0%	16.7%	30.0%	30.0%	23.3%	100.0%			
Total	Count	30	66	33	30	21	180			
	%	16.7%	36.7%	18.3%	16.7%	11.7%	100.0%			

The table presents data on how well individuals handle unexpected changes before and after a certain intervention. The total count for this section is 90. The "Post" section displays the count and percentage of individuals who reported handling unexpected changes in the same categories after the intervention. The total count for this section is also 90. The "Total" row provides the overall count and percentage for each category across both the "Pre" and "Post" sections. In the "Pre" section, a higher percentage of individuals reported handling changes poorly or not well (33.3% and 56.7% respectively), while in the "Post" section, the percentage of individuals reporting these lower levels of handling unexpected changes decreased significantly (0.0% and 16.7% respectively). Conversely, the percentage of individuals reporting handling changes well and very well increased from 3.3% and 0.0% in the "Pre" section to 30.0% and 23.3% in the "Post" section.

The table presents data on the level of interest in enhancing soft skills through literature before and after a certain intervention

			How interested are you in enhancing soft skills through literature?					Total	Chi-Square	Sig.
			Not Interested	Slightly Interested	Neutral	Interested	Very Interested			
Pre	Count	30	48	9	3	0	90	89.144	.000	
	%	33.3%	53.3%	10.0%	3.3%	0.0%	100.0%			
Post	Count	0	18	30	27	15	90			
	%	0.0%	20.0%	33.3%	30.0%	16.7%	100.0%			
Total	Count	30	66	39	30	15	180			
	%	16.7%	36.7%	21.7%	16.7%	8.3%	100.0%			

The table presents data on the level of interest in enhancing soft skills through literature before and after a certain intervention. In the pre-intervention phase, 33.3% of the participants reported being "Not Interested," while 53.3% were "Slightly Interested," 10.0% were "Neutral," and only 3.3% were "Interested." No participants indicated being "Very Interested." After the intervention, there was a significant shift in the participants' level of interest. None of the participants reported being "Not Interested" anymore, and the percentage of those who were "Slightly Interested" decreased to 20.0%. On the other hand, the percentage of

participants who were "Neutral" increased to 33.3%, and those who were "Interested" and "Very Interested" accounted for 30.0% and 16.7% respectively.

Findings:

- This suggests that the study had a diverse sample, encompassing individuals from various professional educational disciplines.
- This finding indicates that there was a slightly higher representation of females in the study compared to males.
- This suggests that the research findings may be more representative of urban populations and may have limited generalizability to rural populations.
- This finding suggests that while a considerable number of individuals perceive their communication skills as average or below average, there is also a notable proportion who consider themselves to be above average or excellent communicators.
- This finding suggests that a considerable number of individuals may not have a strong inclination towards either effectively or poorly handling unexpected changes.
- This suggests that while there is a significant proportion of individuals who are slightly interested in using literature to enhance soft skills, there is also a notable portion who are either not interested or have a higher level of interest.
- The major finding from this table is that the communication skills training program had a significant impact on improving participants' self-rated communication skills. This is supported by the chi-square value of 87.950 and a significance level of .000, indicating a strong association between the training program and the improvement in communication skills.
- The chi-square value of 103.200 indicates a significant association between the intervention and the improvement in handling unexpected changes. The significance value of .000 further supports this finding, suggesting that the observed differences in the data are unlikely to have occurred by chance. Overall, the table highlights the positive impact of the intervention on individuals' ability to handle unexpected changes.
- The chi-square value of 89.144 indicates a significant association between the intervention and the change in participants' level of interest ($p < .001$). This finding suggests that the intervention had a positive impact on enhancing soft skills through literature, as it resulted in a shift towards higher levels of interest.

The results provide compelling evidence for the effectiveness of literature-based resources in enhancing soft skills development. Students exposed to literature demonstrated notable improvements in communication skills, adaptability, and interest in further soft skills development. However, individual traits played a moderating role. Students with lower pre-existing communication skills and difficulty handling unexpected changes exhibited a stronger positive impact from the intervention, suggesting greater potential for improvement in these areas through literature.

Discussion:

The use of literature offers several advantages over traditional methods. Literary narratives engage students emotionally and intellectually, providing real-life examples and opportunities for reflection and learning. Moreover, students can self-direct their learning and choose texts that resonate with their interests and needs, leading to a more personalized and enriching experience.

Conclusion:

This study demonstrates the valuable potential of literature-based approaches in fostering soft skills development among professional students. Incorporating diverse literary resources, along with personalized recommendations and targeted reading activities, can cater to individual needs and learning styles, maximizing the impact of such interventions. Future research should explore specific literary genres and activities most effective for developing different soft skills and investigate the long-term sustainability of these gains.

Implications:

Universities can integrate literature-based resources into their soft skills development programs through dedicated reading courses, thematic workshops, and personalized reading recommendations. Additionally, collaboration with libraries can make diverse literary resources easily accessible to students. By embracing literature as a tool for soft skills development, universities can equip their students with essential skills for success in their academic and professional lives.

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