



EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING IN DEVELOPING SOFT SKILLS: A STUDY OF MANAGEMENT GRADUATES

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Abstract

Soft skills development plays a vital role for an individual for its growth and success. Screening and training of the personal traits is required by the employers in order to build up the competencies and to get the fruitful results. Individual's positive attitude and ability to face the various challenges smartly helps the organization in moving ahead firmly. These skills must be present in every individual working within the framework of the organization because these can only help in building up the relationships with good faith and dedication towards the goal and can lead to the achievement of the target efficiently and effectively. They also contribute towards the situational awareness and the ability to read and tackle a situation. It states that soft skills are the one that need to incorporate all aspects of generic skills that include the cognitive elements associated with non-academic skills. Soft skills are identified to be the most critical skills in the current global job market especially in a fast moved era of technology. The re orientation of education which is one trust of education for sustainability also relates the importance of these soft skills. Various types of soft skills are negotiation skills, team spirit, inter-personal communication, time management, business etiquettes, sociability, ethics and morals, etc. These skills are essential for the company's reorganization and development. The main objectives of the research was to know about various components of soft skills required now a days and to assess the effectiveness of training in developing different soft skills among management students and to know the overall effectiveness of training in developing different soft skills among them.

Comparison was made among the students prior to the training provided and after the training provided. The data revealed that training is highly beneficial for the management graduates to improve their efficiency and capability to work in an organized manner to attain corporate success and to sustain for a longer duration.

Key Words: Soft Skills, Management Graduates, Personal Traits, Efficiency

Introduction

Soft skills refer to a broad set of skills, competencies, behaviors, attitudes, and personal qualities that enable the person to interact and present effectively, work well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals. These skills are broadly applicable and essential as these complement other skills such as technical, vocational and academic skills.

Benefits of the soft skills:

In today's era soft skills plays major role for the organizational growth and sustainability, without these the organization is unable to move and develop. The individuals having the tact of handling the situations with a good communication and capability can lead to the development of whole enterprises. When an employer is self motivated and is able to understand the problems of the employees than he can easily make them satisfied and relax apart from the various disturbances. People will prefer the one who is pleasant enough and is willing to listen to you and is able to answer firmly without impatience and anger. Ethics, emotional intelligence and positive attitude keep a person intact & help in moving ahead on the path of career. Individuals and organizations must be smart enough to develop and utilize new soft

skills by providing training in order to maintain the competitive level.

Having a proper balance of hard and soft skills is one way to compete and attain the best against hundreds of others applicants in a tedious job market. Therefore, one must focus on the soft skills properly as now a days there is extreme need of the soft skills along with the hard skills as one can be expert in the hard skills but it is essential for him to understand the things calmly and act maturely.

Components of soft skill:

Soft skills are required at each and every step of the life for betterment and success. It is essential for an MBA student to learn to work in groups, cooperate with the others, in order to withstand and resolve conflict, one must be able to interact with the people of diverse culture and intellectual. Sense of belongingness is needed to work in a dynamic environment without any fear or anxiety, patience is must to compete with the various situations.

Human resource manager of six companies were invited to interview MBA students of selected colleges. The opinions of HR managers regarding the following variables of soft skills of students were recorded with the help of a questionnaire. The same students were again interviewed after 3 months intensive soft skills training.

Review of Literature

Laura H. Lippman, Renee Ryberg, Rachel Carney & Kristin A. Moore (2015) reviewed more than 380 resources from around the world across the fields, including rigorous empirical studies, employer studies, and findings of international consensus projects. These resources examined the relationship between soft skills and key workforce outcomes, including employment, performance on the job, wages, and entrepreneurial success. A set of key skills was identified as being important elements of all aspects of workforce success, are applicable across sectors and diverse world regions. These are social skills, communication skills, problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, decision-making skills, self-control skills and positive self-concept skills.

R Venkatesan Iyenger (2015) Employers when they recruit people for administrative positions

usually look for candidates with an MBA degree, which has come to be seen as the leading postgraduate business degree. MBA degree holder is expected to possess the necessary knowledge and skills to manage business.

MBA professionals are recruited for positions in such diverse fields as consulting, finance, accounting, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, technology, manufacturing, products and services, and education. It was observed that companies expect a number of skills from the MBAs like Oral communication, Listening skills, Written communication, Presentation skills, Adaptability etc.

Revathi Turaga (2015) emphasized that in order to attain the success at workplace a manager has to observe & follow the below mentioned points-

- Listen to the other person's point of view and show empathy.
- Learn where to accommodate and where to collaborate and when to compromise.

Objectives of the study:

1. . To know the overall level of soft skills among management students from employers perspective.
2. To know the effectiveness of training in developing selected soft skills among management students.

Hypothesis of the study:

H01. Overall level of soft skills is not good among management graduates from employers' perspective.

H02. Effect of training in developing different soft skills among management students is not significant.

Sample of the study:

250 management graduates were selected from colleges of southern Rajasthan.

Method of data collection in study:

Human resource managers of six companies were invited to interview MBA students. The opinion of HR managers regarding different soft skills was recorded with the help of a questionnaire. The same students were again interviewed; after 3 month's intensive soft skills training . Their opinion regarding different soft skills was again recorded with the help of a questionnaire. Thereby level of different soft

skills among MBA students were judged before and after soft skills training.

For the purpose of analysis following scores were assigned to each option:

Option	Level of soft skill
Excellent	4
Good	3
Average	2
Poor	1
Very Poor	0

Data analysis and Interpretation:

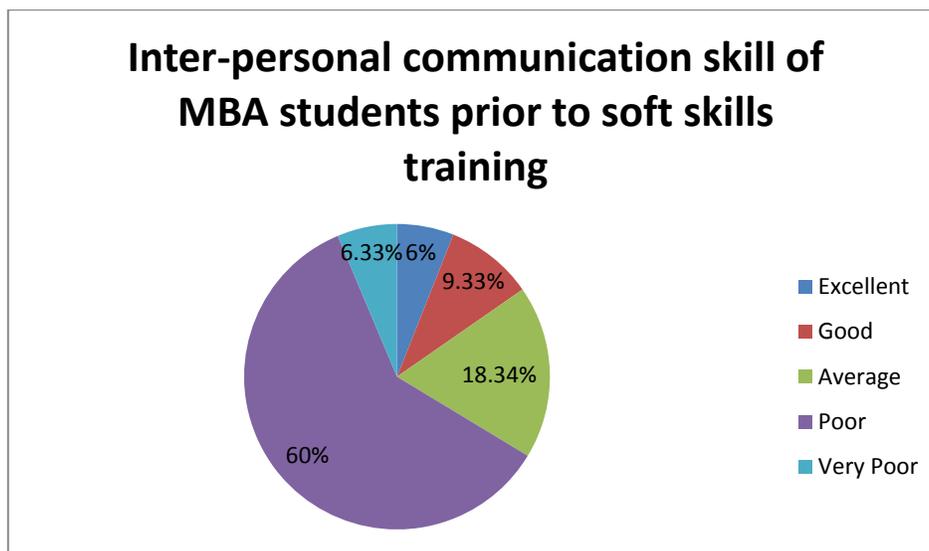
Inter-Personal Communication Skill:

Data relating to Inter-personal communication skill of 250 MBA students were collected and tabulated as below-

Table 1 : Inter-personal communication skill among MBA students prior to soft skills training

Soft Skill	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Total
Inter-personal communication skill	90	140	275	900	95	1500
Points	4	3	2	1	0	
Scores	360	420	550	900	0	2230

Chart 1



Analysis of above table and chart shows that majority of MBA graduates i.e. 60% were poor at Inter-personal communication. Merely 15.33% MBA graduates were between the ranges of good to excellent. Human resource managers of all the six companies were quite disappointed with the students' inability to

interact effectively. They were not confident, fluent and precise. They were quite hesitant even in speaking about their area of specialization.

After three months intensive training of soft skills having good number of sessions on Inter-personal communication improvement the

following data relating to Inter-personal communication skill of same 250 MBA graduates was collected & tabulated as below-

Table 2 :Inter-personal communication skill among MBA students after soft skills training

Soft Skill	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Total
Inter-personal communication skill	198	426	387	414	75	1500
Points	4	3	2	1	0	
Scores	792	1278	774	414	0	3258

Chart 2

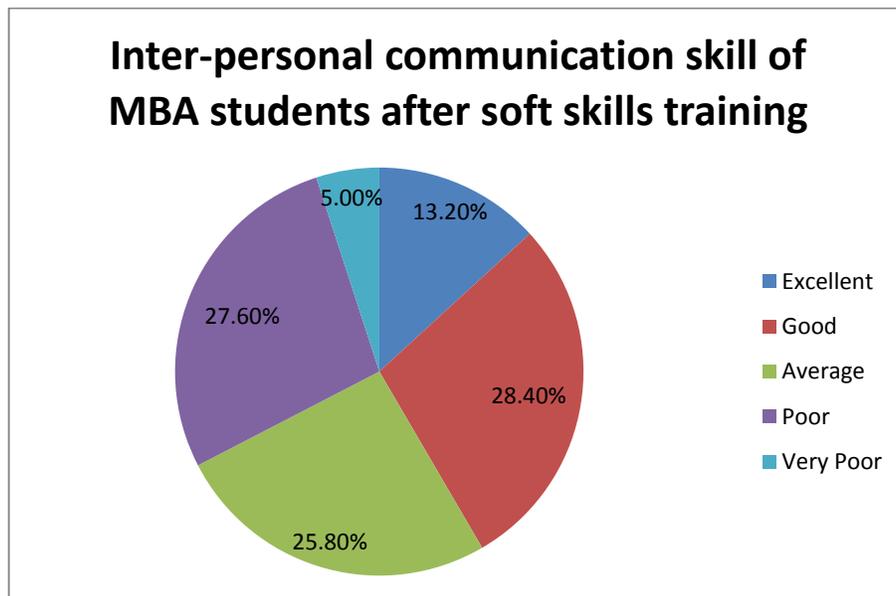
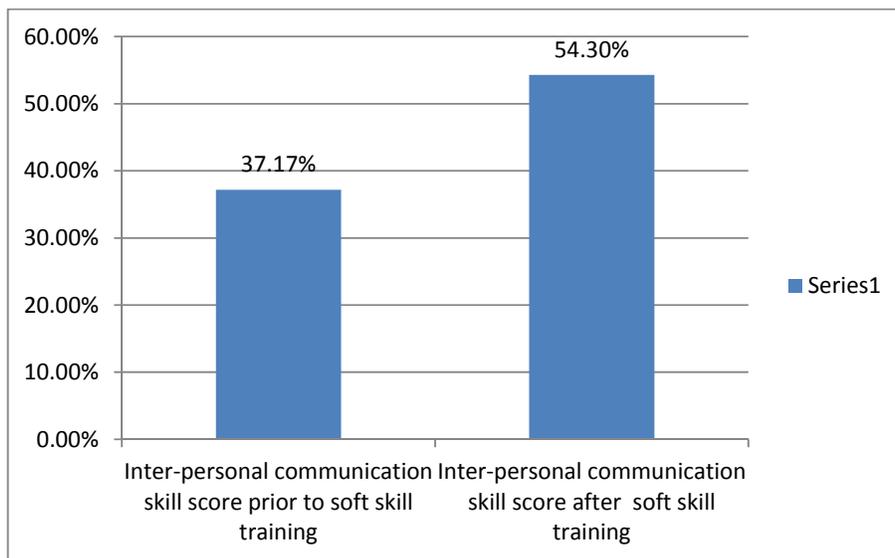


Table 2 and chart 2 reveals that just 32.60% MBA students were poor or very poor in inter personal communication after 3 months intensive soft skills training. 41.60% MBA students were between the range of good to excellent. This assessment was done by the same human resource managers who interviewed these 250 MBA students earlier. HR managers were not all that dissatisfied after interviewing the same students again.

They were little more confident, fluent and precise. They spoke quite confidently about their area of specialization.

Chart 3 clearly shows that inter personal communication scores of MBA students which were 37.17% (total marks 2230) prior to soft skills training improved and reached upto 54.30% (total marks 3258) after three months intensive soft skills training. It clearly indicates that level of inter personal communication is low among MBA students and it can be improved by intensive soft skills training.

Chart 3: Comparative scores of inter personal communication of MBA students prior to & after soft skills training



To ascertain whether the improvement achieved in level of inter personal communication of MBA students through intensive soft skills training is significant or not; Z test was conducted.

$$|Z| = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sqrt{P_0 Q_0 \left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2} \right)}}$$

$$|Z| = \frac{.543 - .3717}{\sqrt{.45735 \times .54265 \left(\frac{1}{250} + \frac{1}{250} \right)}}$$

$$|Z| = 3.85$$

Since the computed value of Z= 3.85 is higher than critical value of Z = 1.96. It does not lie in acceptance region at 5% level of significance. Thus we can say that there is significant difference between level of inter personal communication prior to soft skills training & after soft skills training. It improves significantly after intensive soft skills training.

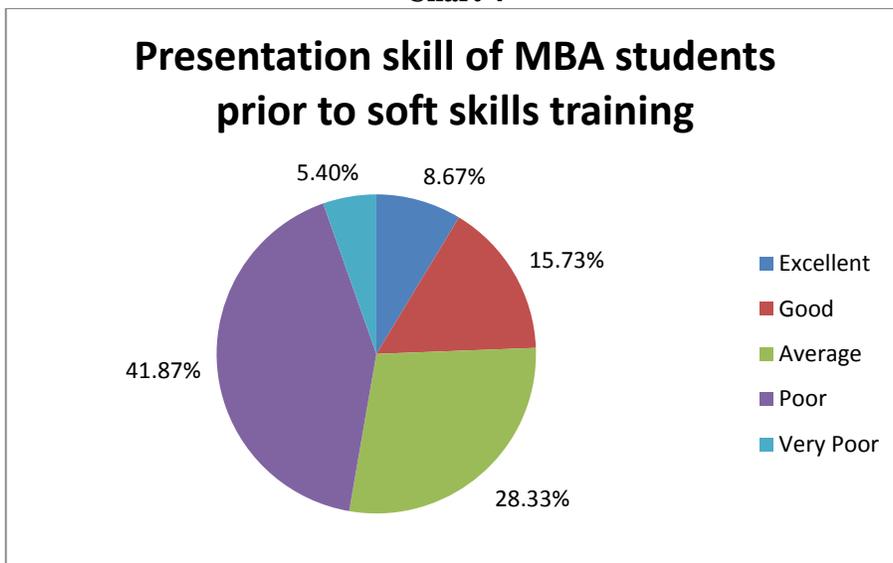
Presentation Skills

Data relating to Presentation skills of 250 MBA students were collected from the human resource managers of 6 companies and tabulated as below-

Table 3: Presentation skill among MBA students prior to soft skills training

Soft Skill	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Total
Presentation skill	130	236	425	628	81	1500
Points	4	3	2	1	0	
Scores	520	708	850	628	0	2706

Chart 4



Analysis of table 3 and chart 4 shows that majority of MBA students i.e. 42% were poor at presentation skill. Merely 24.40% MBA students were between the ranges of good to excellent. Human resource managers of all the six companies were quite disappointed with the students' inability to give the presentations. They were not confident, were having stage fear, shy and language barrier. They were quite hesitant

and thus, were not able to express their views. Lack of knowledge was also one of the reasons. After three months of intensive training of soft skills having good number of sessions on presentation skills, improvement was found and the following data relating to presentation skill of same 250 MBA students were collected from the same human resource managers of 6 companies and tabulated as below-

Table 4: Presentation skill among MBA students after soft skills training

Soft Skill	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Total
Presentation skill	157	488	531	270	54	1500
Points	4	3	2	1	0	
Scores	628	1464	1062	270	0	3424

Chart 5

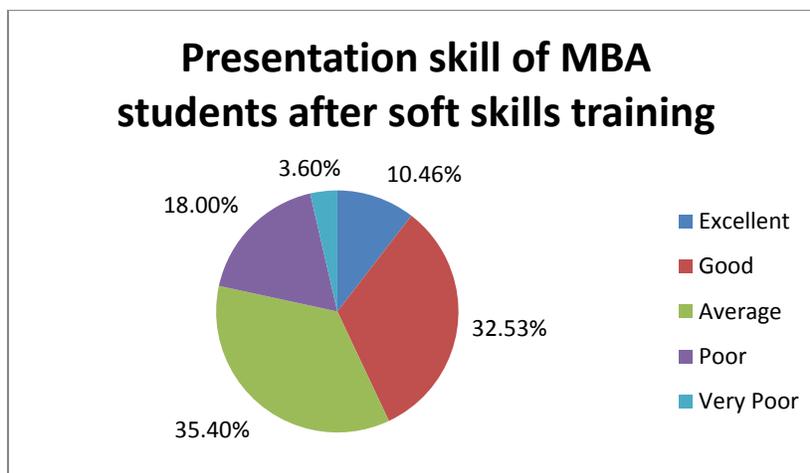
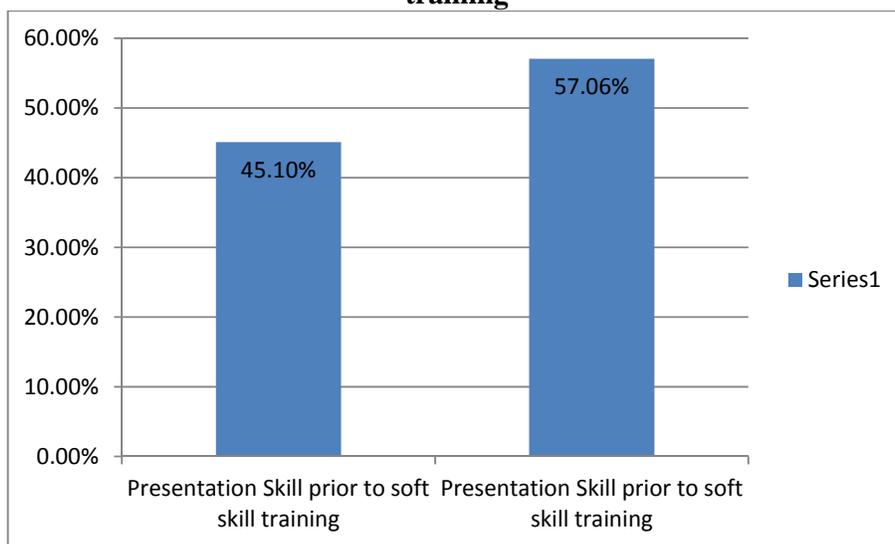


Table 4 and chart 5 reveals that only 21% of the MBA students were found poor or very poor regarding the presentation skill after 3 months of intensive soft skills training. Around 43% MBA students were between the range of good to excellent. This assessment was done by the same human resource managers who interviewed these 250 MBA students earlier. Thus, it was found that HR managers were not all that dissatisfied after interviewing the same students again. Students were little more confident, fluent and

precise. They spoke more confidently regarding the matter.

Chart 6 clearly shows that presentation skill scores of MBA students which were 45.10% (total marks 2706) prior to soft skills training improved and reached up to 57.06% (total marks 3424) after three months intensive soft skills training. It clearly indicates that level of presentation skill was low among MBA students and it can be improved by intensive soft skills training.

Chart6: Comparative scores of Presentation skills of MBA students prior to & after soft skills training



To ascertain whether the improvement achieved in level of presentation skill of MBA students through intensive soft skills training is significant or not; Z test was conducted.

$$|Z| = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sqrt{P_0q_0(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2})}}$$

$$|Z| = \frac{.5706 - .4510}{\sqrt{.5108 \times .4892 (\frac{1}{250} + \frac{1}{250})}}$$

$$|Z| = 2.68$$

Since the computed value of Z= 2.68 is higher than critical value of Z = 1.96. It does not lie in acceptance region at 5% level of significance. Thus we can say that there is significant difference between level of presentation prior to soft skills training & after soft skills training. It improves significantly after intensive soft skills training.

Findings:

- Inter personal communication skill scores of MBA students were 37.17% prior to soft skills training. It improved and reached upto 54.30% after three months intensive soft skills training. Z value is 3.85 which imply there is significant & meaningful improvement in inter personal communication skill of MBA students by soft skill training.
- Presentation skill scores of MBA students were 45.10% prior to soft skills training. It improved and reached upto 57.06% after three months intensive soft skills training. Z value is 2.68 which imply there is significant & meaningful improvement in presentation skill of MBA students by soft skill training.

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