



Impact Of Teacher Soft Skills On Academic Performance In Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Teachers' soft skills are becoming increasingly important in higher education, as they strongly influence students' academic performance in a competitive academic setting. The present study entitled "*Impact of teachers' soft skills on students' on academic performance in higher education*" was conducted with three objectives: to identify the level of teacher soft skills as perceived by students in higher education; to analyze the current level of students' academic performance; and to determine the impact of teachers' soft skills on students' academic performance in higher education. A quantitative research approach was used to conduct this study. The population comprised students and teachers of public universities in Punjab. Through multistage random sampling, 14 universities, 100 teachers and 400 students were included in the sample. Two self-developed questionnaires were used for data collection to evaluate teachers' soft skills through students' responses, while academic performance data were obtained from official departmental records. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean scores, and correlation analysis. Results indicated that teachers' soft skills were at a moderate level, with leadership and emotional intelligence rated higher than communication skills. Students' academic performance was found to be at an average level, with low academic awards and attendance barriers mainly due to work commitments. Furthermore the analysis concluded that teachers' soft skills had a statistically significant positive impact on students' academic performance, with emotional intelligence emerging as the strongest predictor among the soft skills dimensions. The study recommends that universities should organize professional development programs focusing on communication skills, leadership, and emotional intelligence to enhance teachers' effectiveness. It is also suggested that future research should be conducted on a larger scale using longitudinal and mixed-method approaches for deeper understanding of these relationships.

Keywords: Teacher Soft Skills, Emotional Intelligence, Leadership, Communication Skills, Academic Performance, Higher Education Institutions

INTRODUCTION

Soft skills are non-technical abilities that facilitate effective interpersonal communication and collaboration. These competencies encompass leadership, problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, cooperation, flexibility, and emotional intelligence, all of which are crucial for personal and professional success (Marin-Zapta et al., 2022). Specifically,



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teacher soft skills refer to the interpersonal and communicative attributes that educators possess beyond their subject-matter expertise, including effective communication, leadership, adaptability, ethical conduct, and the ability to foster a supportive and inclusive classroom environment (AlHouli & Al-Khayatt, 2020). In today's competitive educational landscape, skills are increasingly derived from the integration of knowledge and practical experience, determining one's ability to perform effectively and achieve excellence (Kanokorn et al., 2014). The global scene is developing speedily, accompanying in a novel competitive age defined by technological development, revolution, and a high demand for focused proficiencies (Dixon et al., 2010).

To steer these contests, individuals must foster a diverse skill set, with communication, leadership, interpersonal, creativity, and management skills, which are mainly significant for administrative leaders (Stewart, 2015). Skills form the basis of innovation, and among the several competencies, "soft skills" are gradually predictable as dominant for constant success (Matteson et al., 2016). Academic performance, a multilayered concept, is a critical indicator of students' achievement and competences. Result of learning experiences are measured through grades, standardized test scores, and qualitative assessments of skills and knowledge acquisition (Schunk et al., 2014). In the framework of higher education which includes undergraduate and graduate programs, academic performance is fundamental to students' career readiness and further academic detections (Altbach et al., 2019). Modern 21st century stresses a holistic, multidisciplinary, and project-based curriculum that stress teamwork, critical thinking information evaluation, and problem-solving (Deep et al., 2019). This method equips learners not only with theoretical expertise but also with crucial non-academic skills, aiding them to challenge real-world contests and accept professional responsibilities successfully (Lee, 2024).

Although, soft skills are widely recognized for enhancing employability and social relations (Semenove et al., 2021; Gibb, 2014), their influence extends directly to the academic sphere. Effective communication and interpersonal skills develop students' ability to compete in professional life and increase employment opportunities (Semenova et al., 2021). Soft skills help students manage teams and develop their personalities, improving their professional responsibilities and social relations (Semenova et al., 2021). They support career success and social interaction, becoming a major requirement for employment (David-Tenorio & Torres-Rojas, 2025). Students identify teamwork, decision making, problem solving, time management and critical thinking as crucial soft skills (Bee & Hie, 2015). In the corporate climate, human resources are valued for their reliability, resourcefulness, moral conduct, and communication skills (Hong, 2016; Mattajang, 2023). Employers prefer employees with a sophisticated combination of discipline-based knowledge and interpersonal competencies, as soft skills are essential for achieving organizational goals and interacting with stakeholders (Semenova et al., 2021). In all organizations, soft skills are now considered a major competency, even in technical environments, and students must make deliberate efforts to acquire them (Ansari, 2021). Research indicates that factors such as motivation, learning strategies, and socioeconomic background significantly influence academic outcomes (Hattie, 2009). Furthermore, when teachers model and integrate soft skills into their pedagogy, it creates a positive learning environment conducive to improved academic achievement (Ngo & Thuy, 2024). Recent empirical work has demonstrated a positive correlation between soft skills and academic success, suggesting that cognitive and soft skills are complementary rather than competing, in the production of educational attainment (Keng, 2024).

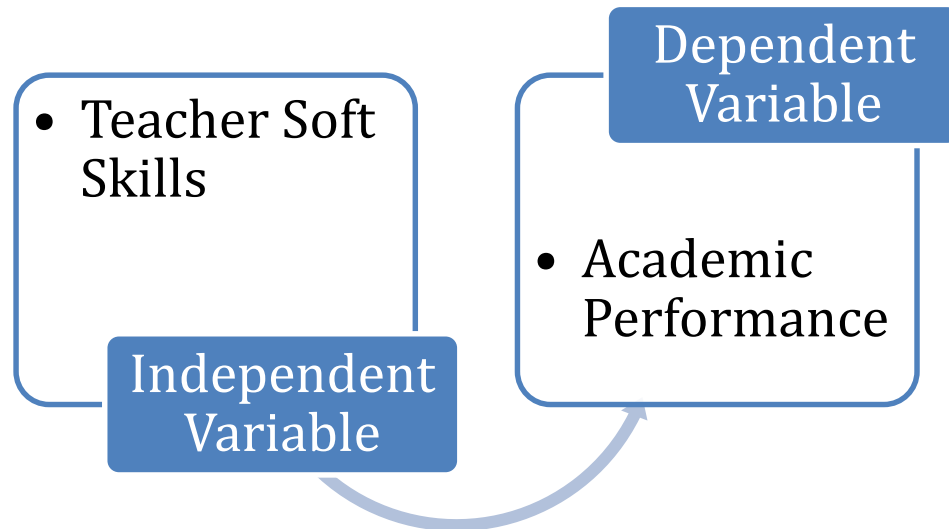


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the study

Statement of the Problem

The world has been changing more rapidly and competition increasing with this changing world. There is a need for time to emphasize innovation and develop soft skills to compete in this challenging world. The innovative age needs to develop new knowledge and teacher soft skills for a strong future (Milanovich-Eagleson et al., 2015). Teacher soft skills develop communication skills, adaptability, emotional intelligence, and leadership skills in educators, which in turn influence students (Gotel et al., 2009). It is the need of time to develop soft skills among higher Education teachers and students. The growth of soft skills among teachers and students is very necessary for academic performance (Shaulska et al., 2015). However, critical gap is not only students' soft skills, but the lack of attention to teachers' own soft skills and their impact on students' academic performance. But the issue is that the government of developing countries is not ready to pay attention to soft skills in education to train teachers. Pakistan is also one of them where Higher Education Commission (HEC) has never paid attention to soft skills development in teachers for academic performance of students at higher education level. Further, there is lack of proper evidence-based research conducted in the context of Pakistan at graduate or postgraduate level that examines the impact of teachers' soft skills on students' academic performance specifically in alignment with the key dimensions of communication, adaptability, leadership and emotional intelligence. Therefore, this study was designed to identify the level of teacher soft skills, assess the current state of student's academic performance, and determine the impact of teacher soft skills on students' academic performance at higher education level.

Research Objectives

To identify the level of teacher soft skills as perceived by students in higher education

To analyze the current level of students' academic performance in higher education

To determine the impact of teacher soft skills on students' academic performance in higher education

Significance of the Study

This study clarify how teachers' soft skills specifically communication, adaptability,



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leadership, and emotional intelligence, support a more comprehensive approach to student development in higher education. By identifying the perceived level of teacher soft skills, the study provides experimented based evidence on the current state of these competencies among higher education faculty, helping institutions identifies areas for improvement. By assessing the current state of students' academic performance, the study's emphasis on academic achievement highlight the role that teachers play in helping students to achieve academically. The study shed light on how teachers' soft skills may help students develop resilience, integrity, empathy, and responsibility qualities that are becoming more and more important for negotiating challenging professional and social environments. Furthermore, by determining the impact of teachers' soft skills on students' academic performance, the results of the study support the inclusion of soft skills instruction in teacher training programs, giving educators the means to inspire students' academic performance. This study serve as an empirically supported tool for policymakers who want to update educational frameworks, curriculum designing and standards to include teacher soft skills development, and their measureable impact on students' academic outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Past literature on the topic under study was searched. A brief report is given under subheadings related to topic and variables of the study.

Teachers' Soft Skills

Crefton (2022) conducted a study to make an effort to look at the connection between instructors' soft skill sets and the quality of instruction they provide. For this study, four essential soft skills communication, teamwork, leadership, and critical thinking were taken into account. In Penang, Malaysia, 190 excellent primary school teachers participated in this study. Through a specially created soft skill and quality teaching questionnaire, researchers gathered data. Teachers possessed all four soft skill components as well as overall soft skills, according to descriptive and inferential statistical research, which also suggested that Critical thinking abilities, problem-solving abilities, and collaborative/teamwork are important indicators of high-quality instruction (Crefton, 2022). Tang (2020) conducted research to examine how lecturers acquire soft skills and assess the value of soft skills in the teaching profession. Questionnaire and interview protocols were used as research tools in a mixed study design that combined quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. The study's conclusions showed that providing high-quality and effective instruction, lecturers' professional growth and enrichment, and the requirement for classroom and student management abilities are all significant components of acquiring soft skills. It was found that while teachers' soft skills can impact both the quality of their teaching and the academic presentation of their students, they are commonly realized as usual assets since they can be transferred and used to advance knowledge in accordance with local responsibilities (Tang, 2020).

In order to facilitate baseline data for future research, Quieng et al. (2015) set out to regulate the supposed level of mixing of 21st century-based soft skills in the academically demanding dentistry curriculum and to examine the participants' insights of these skills. The results showed that the most important factors in inspiring students are communication, interpersonal, and teamwork skills. Motivated students are more persuaded to think critically and take steps to reach their objectives (Quieng et al., 2015). In their research, Abu Kasim et al. (2014) tried to investigate about the use of teaching in pairs approach to help clinical students to develop their soft skills. It was discovered that communication and pair teaching were most common. Furthermore, this study established



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the potential for pairing to be used as an instructional strategy to help students to extend their soft skills. However, a qualitative research approach might offer more understanding into how students develop and apply soft skills in their clinical practice (Abu Kasim et al., 2014).

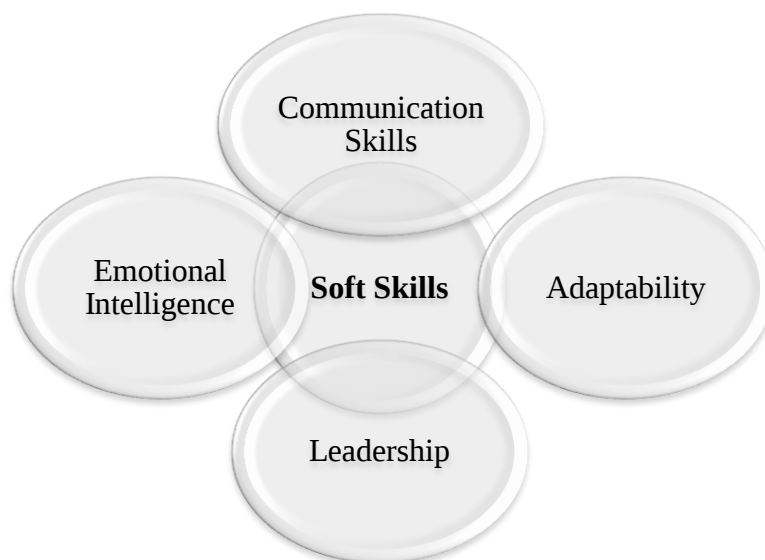


Figure 1 Dimensions of Soft Skills

Soft Skills and Academic Performance

Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) stated that the effective teacher-student relationship leads to getting better academic results from the perspective of being able to increase the motivation of students (students are motivated to study subject again); less anxiety in class leads to study performance and finally classroom opportunities (different types of interactions with both students and teachers) lead to better cooperation in studies, hence better output in academics. With traditional rote-learning based approaches being predominant in Pakistan, applying soft skills-based practices in the education sector can help counter the shift in focus towards critical thinking, conceptual understanding, which is addressed by Alam et al. (2022). The students excel their academic performance level better with trained professionals like teachers with exceptional communication and motivational skills since they can handle diverse learning requirements in a more accurate way irrespective of the education setting. The efficacy of teacher soft skills in Pakistan operates within a complex matrix of socio-cultural and institutional dynamics. The continued implementation of traditional teachings focusing on rote learning rather than thought processing and student involvement is among (the biggest) challenges.

Pakistani classrooms, in many cases, still encompass an authoritarian way of teaching, where knowledge is shared in one direction and student-teacher interaction is minimized (Gull et al., 2024). Teachers with soft skills who incorporate interactive learning, inquiry-based teaching, and discussion-oriented pedagogy have been shown to enhance academic outcomes through inclusive, student-centered learning (Bashir et al., 2021). But the absence of institutional assistance for these kinds of transformative pedagogies presents a significant barrier to their widespread adoption. Priya (2011) investigated the relationship between the academic success of their students and the instructional competency of postgraduate level chemistry teachers. A self-rating teaching competence rating scale was utilized to examine postgraduate chemistry teachers' teaching proficiency using a survey approach. The Kanyakumari district's postgraduate chemistry teachers were determined to have an average level of teaching competency. It was also discovered that teachers'



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dimension content was average (Priya, 2011).

Research showed that teacher soft skills seriously impact students not only in their lessons but personal development and academic performance (Ngo & Thuy, 2024). Duckworth and Seligman (2005) noted that despite the myriad ability's students may possess, the ability to persevere and self-discipline are more impactful factors at play, and characteristics teachers can role model and reinforce through soft skill application. However, Batool et al. (2018) described the importance of communication skills to keep the students hooked, especially in a diverse and multicultural class such as those in Pakistan. The research conducted by Azhar et al. (2015) highlighted the importance of teacher-student relationships, focused on trust and empathy, as well as a track record of success which are essential to a motivated and resilient student. As world is globalized now, educational organizations have started including soft skills for teachers in their training programs (Charoensap-Kelly et al., 2016).

In Pakistan, at the national level, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) has designed overarching teacher training programs that integrate soft skills like ethical responsibility, empathy, and leadership (HEC Pakistan, 2021). To promote these, the classroom rhetoric in Pakistan is changing focused on student centric designs which ask teachers to learn interpersonal and intrapersonal faculties (Naz et al., 2025). Pakistan has adopted these competencies as part of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST), which are based on global standards (Altaf & Saeed, 2020). These contexts highlighted that real teaching goes beyond content familiarity; it also involves meaningful associations between students and teachers, student engagement, and emotional resilience (Ali et al., 2026). Indeed, there are a range of foreign studies which showed that teachers with well-developed soft skills have a measurable impact on students' academic achievement. Perseverance and self-discipline are essential to student achievement, as shown by Duckworth and Seligman (2005) research, and teachers who exemplify these qualities have a profound impact on their students. In a similar way, Robles (2012) differentiated two types of soft skills: interpersonal and personal attributes, and shows how both contribute to what makes a teacher effective.

The Effect of Teacher Soft Skills on Students' Academic Performance

Teaching is more than just delivering content; it is creating a learning and growing environment for students (Jamal et al., 2025). In this sense, soft skills communication, empathy, adaptability and emotional intelligence are essential for academic success with students alike (Touati, 2023). Several studies have provided evidence that teacher soft skills are key determinants of student academic performance. According to Hattie (2009) research, teacher-student relationships influence student achievement, developed through competent communication and emotional intelligence. Cornelius-White (2007) conducted a meta-analysis to focus specifically on the influence of learner-centered teaching approaches that exhibit high levels of teacher empathy and respect on students' success. Adaptability, or the ability to adjust teaching practices to accommodate student needs, is positively associated with enhancing academic performance. Darling-Hammond (2000) contended that flexible teachers utilize differentiated instructional strategies, providing a range of level of skill acquisition, to better meet the needs of varied learners. Rueda (2012) Indicated that flexible teaching methods, provide enhancements to student engagement, motivation, and participation. Pakistan's high disparity of education resources between cities and various rural areas requires teachers to be adaptable and to provide the best-learning methodologies possible to bring students up to a satisfactory level of learning.



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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive correlational approach, using a survey method to collect data to achieve the study objectives. The study population comprised all students (763,314) and teachers (115,402) from 56 public sector universities in Punjab, Pakistan. From this, a target population of 14 major public universities (9 from Central Punjab, 5 from South Punjab) was purposively selected to ensure geographic representativeness.

A multistage sampling technique was employed in five stages including: Stage 1 random selection of 14 universities; Stage 2 purposive selection of 3 departments per university (sciences, arts/humanities, and social sciences), each with at least 9 teachers; Stage 3 proportionate random sampling of 126 teachers from a pooled targeted teacher population of 238, using simple random sampling from departmental rosters, with a net target of 100 teachers after accounting for non-response; Stage 4 two stage cluster sampling of 504 students, with students nested within teachers and simple random sampling from each teacher's class roster to achieve initially 4 students per net teacher, with a net target of 400 students after accounting for non-response; Stage 5 census of the same 400 students for academic performance evaluation.

Two self-developed instruments were used for data collection. Teachers' Soft Skills Evaluation Questionnaire (24 items, 5-point Likert), was used to measure the 4 key dimensions of communication, adaptability, emotional intelligence and leadership; and the Academic Performance Evaluation Form (categorical items on GPA, awards, attendance). Content validity of tools was established through review of 5 subject matter experts, and a pilot testing conducting on 40 students and 10 teachers provided construct-related evidence for the questionnaire factors structure. Reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.73 for the teacher soft skills questionnaire. Teachers' soft skills were evaluated by their students but data about their academic achievements was collected from official records. Data were analysed using SPSS software using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and correlation statistics.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Keeping in view objectives of the study, data was analyzed using suitable statistical procedure. Report about the analysis is reported below.

Level of Teachers Soft Skills in HEIs

First objective of the study was to evaluate the soft skills of teachers of HEIs. For this purpose acquired data was analyzed, and mean score and standard deviation were calculated to evaluate the level of multiple soft skills dimensions (see Table 1).

Table 1 Teachers Soft Skills

Sr No.	Soft Skills Dimension	Mean	SD	Perceived Level
1	Communication Skills	3.59	1.17	Moderate
2	Adaptability	3.81	0.99	High
3	Leadership	3.88	0.94	High
4	Emotional Intelligence	3.87	0.97	High
Overall		3.79	1.02	High



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Findings regarding the level of teacher soft skills in table 1 revealed that students perceived their teachers' soft skills at an overall moderate level ($M = 3.79$). Among the four dimensions, Leadership was rated the highest ($M = 3.88$), followed closely by Emotional Intelligence ($M = 3.87$) and Adaptability ($M = 3.81$). But, Communication Skills established the lowest mean score ($M = 3.59$), demonstrating that while teachers determine quite strong leadership and empathy, their clarity of expression, open-door availability, and overall talkative quality are comparatively weaker areas needing targeted professional development.

Level of Students Academic Performance in HEIs

Second objective of the study was to assess academic performance of students in HEIs. Collective data regarding students' existing CGPA, received educational awards and class attendance accounts based on official records were evaluated (see table 2).

Table 2 Academic Achievement

Indicators	Groups	f	Percentage
Current CGPA	2.5-3.0	144	36
	3.01-3.5	204	51
	>3.5	52	13
Received academic award	Yes	12	3
	No	388	97
Class Attendance Rate	<50%	60	15
	50-69%	120	30
	70-89%	176	44
	>90	44	11

Data of table 2 explains students' attainments about three indicators of students' learning accomplishment. Concerning the current level of students' educational performance, the majority of students (51%) stated a GPA in the 3.01–3.5 range, with only few (13%) attaining a CGPA above 3.5, signifying that high educational distinction remains relatively uncommon. Formal academic appreciation was significantly occasional, as only few students (3%) had ever secured an academic award, while contribution in co-curricular activities (15%) and related awards (5%) also continued low. Regarding attendance, almost half of the students (44%) maintained a 70–89% attendance rate, though a significant proportion (30%) attended only 50–69% of classes, and 15% attended less than 50% classes. Work commitment was identified as the primary barrier to regular attendance, cited by 39% of students, followed by personal commitments (11%)

Impact of Teachers' Soft Skills on Students' Academic Performance in HEIs

Third objective of the study was to determine the impact of teachers' soft skills on students' academic performance. To attain this objective, correlation between scores of multiple dimensions of teachers' soft skills and indicators of students' academic achievement were computed applying spearman correlation statistics (see Table 3).

Table 3 Spearman's Correlations between Teacher Soft Skills and Students' Academic Performance

Teacher Soft Skill Dimension	Correlations	Interpretation
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	Current GPA	Class Attendance Rate	Received Academic Award	
Communication Skills	0.21**	0.28**	-	Weak positive correlation with GPA & attendance
Adaptability	0.23**	0.30**	-	Weak with GPA, Moderate with attendance
Leadership	0.26**	0.33**	-	Weak with GPA, Moderate with attendance
Emotional Intelligence	0.27**	0.35**	-	Weak with GPA, Moderate with attendance
Overall Soft Skills	0.24**	-	0.18**	Weak positive correlation with GPA and awards
Key Findings	Weak, Significant	Moderate, Significant	Weak, Significant	Strongest predictor: Emotional Intelligence ($\rho = 0.35$ with Attendance); Weakest impact: Academic Awards ($\rho = 0.18$).

The correlational analysis examining the impact of teacher soft skills on academic performance demonstrated statistically significant yet practically weak-to-moderate associations. While all four soft skills dimensions showed weak positive correlations with current CGPA ($\rho = 0.21$ to 0.27), a stronger relationship was observed with class attendance, where correlation coefficients ranged from $\rho = 0.28$ for Communication Skills to $\rho = 0.35$ for Emotional Intelligence, with the latter emerging as the strongest predictor of student regularity. But, the impact on getting formal academic rewards was slight ($\rho = 0.18$). Overall, these results indicate that while teachers' soft skills predominantly emotional intelligence absolutely influence students' class attendance, their direct involvement to traditional grade-based educational achievement remains limited, signifying that factors such as learners' aptitude, prior knowledge, and study habits likely play more leading roles in shaping CGPA and formal appreciation.

DISCUSSION

The current study research objectives achieved by derived data and indicated the results of the study "Impact of teachers' soft skills on students' academic performance in higher education". Results showed that current study findings are similar and dissimilar to some extend from the findings of the existing studies. The current study data indicated that overall teachers' soft skills are at moderate level. This findings of the current study directly align with the study conducted in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan by Ahmad et al. (2013), who indicated that university teachers effectiveness need to be enhanced by targeted faculty development program due to their average soft skills. Dimensionally, educational



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quality in HEIs improved by faculty leadership (Hiller et al. 2011), leadership played the role of basic pillar of quality education and a systematic review of current study also indicated similarly as leadership showed highest ratings. Another findings from data indicated that Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Adaptability is exceptionally high, aligned with the documented findings of the research conducted by Costa (2015) on university professors to determine their emotional intelligence level which is directly linked with students' academic achievement. Similarly, another study conducted by Emon et al. (2023) in HEIs of Bangladesh showing positive and effective impact of adaptability on academic performance and motivation of faculty. In the context of Pakistan, Najmi et al. (2018), study revealed that strong adaptation of teaching methods by HEIs faculty needed for faculty professional development and students' academic performance. Current data findings showed lowest score for Communication skills as compared to all others dimensions of faculty professionalism, showing dissimilarity with the findings of study conducted by Dahmani et al. (2024) in the United Arab Emirates (UAEs), which indicated that students' academic success is directly and significantly linked with teachers' strong communication skills. This difference in findings is due to cultural and contextual difference between Pakistan and UAE, as well as pedagogical dynamics inherent to Pakistan, where conventional lecture-based teachings do not prioritize interactive, and clear communication, therefore Pakistani students have a limited exposure to appreciate the communication skills of teachers as soft skill.

Findings of the current study indicates moderate to high academic learning achievement by students due to work commitment and others factors. Similarly a research conducted in Singapore by Jayanth et al. (2014) founded that work commitment by students significantly affect the students' academic performance especially in higher education institutions. Formal academic recognition in Pakistan in the form of academic award is less common in Pakistan, as also indicated by another study conducted by Chung and Khandhaai (2024). Students who performed better in academic learning and received academic awards, take less participation in co-curricular activities. Findings of current study indicated that one-third of the students absents from the classes due to work commitment and others non-significant activity due to socioeconomic challenges among students of developing countries, aligned with the findings of Kassaring et al. (2017), experienced that financial pressures compel students to balance work-education responsibilities.

Moreover, findings of the current study indicating weak to moderate relation between teachers' soft skills and students' academic performance, indicating that instead of the importance of students' academic achievement, their direct explanatory power over CGPA and formal distinctions remains limited as also showed the findings of the Nurudeen et al. (2024). Greenhenson (2016) observed the strongest relation between teachers' soft skills and students' class attendance, also showed significant in current study data, but with Emotional Intelligence, which act as a strongest predictor, and similarly described by the Brackett and Katulak (2013). Lopez-Martin et al. (2023) findings also authenticated the findings of the current study about strongest and positive relation of teachers' Emotional Intelligence with students' academic performance. However, the weak effect sizes observed in the current study not aligned with others studies reporting the considerable impacts. This difference in the result of current data due to Pakistan contextual differences in assessment paradigms, directly and significantly rely on high stakes, rote memorization of lectures and lecture-based exams, where teacher interpersonal behave is also a significant factor, but only interactive pedagogies amplify these effects. The insignificant correlation between academic awards indicated that teachers' soft skills limited the process



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of admitting the exceptional academic performance. Conversely, Gershenson (2016) study showed stronger relation with attendance aligns with teachers' autonomy supportive, interactive, caring and informing behavior to motivate students and enhance their engagement in academic learning. Another study by Jayanthi et al. (2014) favored the findings of the current study, as socioeconomic factors and work commitment played a leading role in the academic performance of students.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded from the results of data and discussion on the basis of data results, soft skills in HEIs in Pakistan perceived at a moderate level, where communication skills is lower than emotional intelligence and leadership, indicating the need of professional development in communicative effectiveness of faculty as professional soft skill. Students' academic performance was also at moderate level due to absenteeism to balance work load for decreasing financial pressure within academic performance and non-rewarding behaviors of HEIs on exceptional performance. Teachers' soft skills have a positive and significant impact on students' academic performance, with Emotional Intelligence engaging as the strongest predictor as compared to others three dimensions (leadership adaptability and communication skills). Especially, teacher soft skills have stronger relations with class attendance and students' academic learning achievement (CGPA), indicating they purpose as enabling factors that foster student engagement and class regularity. In this way, this study subsidize the empirical evidence from the Pakistani context, asserting the relevance of teacher soft skills while also showing that their direct effect on grade based students' academic achievement. On the basis of this research, it is recommended that communication skills training is necessary for faculty in HEIs. It is also helpful to develop supportive policies to enhance students' academic performance and minimize the challenges such as students' attendance and socio-economic factor.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance educational quality and student success within higher education institutions (HEIs) in Pakistan.

This study concluded that teacher soft skills have a statistically significant positive impact on student academic performance, but teachers' soft skills as perceived by their students are at a moderate level, with communication skills rated comparatively lower than emotional intelligence and leadership. Since this gap represents a critical area for intervention. Therefore, it is recommended that the Human Resource Development departments and relevant faculty development committees within each HEI should design and implement a mandatory, semester-long professional development workshop series specifically on practical communication strategies. This training should include effective lecturing techniques, active listening, and constructive feedback delivery to directly address the identified deficiency in communicative effectiveness.

Keeping in view that emotional intelligence emerged as the strongest predictor of students' academic performance among the four soft skills dimensions, It is recommended that the Office of the faculty training coordinators should incorporate modules on emotional intelligence including self-awareness, empathy, and relationship management into all faculty development programs. This can involve self-assessment tools and scenario-based learning exercises to help faculty to cultivate these crucial interpersonal competencies, thereby leveraging the most impactful soft skill dimension for improving student outcomes.

The study directed that work commitments are a primary hindrance to student attendance, combined with the observation that teachers' soft skills showed a stronger relationship with attendance than with GPA. Since high attendance functions as a key enabling factor for student success. Therefore, it is recommended that the University Academic Council and the Registrar's



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Office should formulate a flexible attendance policy that can accommodate working students. This policy should offer hybrid learning options, such as recorded lectures and online participation for specific modules, without compromising overall academic standards to address the practical barriers that limit student engagement.

The moderate perception of teacher soft skills suggests that their importance may be underemphasized in the institutional culture, motivating a recommendation for formal recognition. It is recommended that the University administration and the Quality Enhancement Cell should integrate an assessment of soft skills via student evaluations and peer observation into the annual faculty performance review process. Additionally, introducing a "Teaching Excellence Award" that specifically acknowledges outstanding communication and emotional intelligence in the classroom can provide tangible incentives for faculty to invest in developing these skills.

The identified need for professional development in communicative effectiveness at the higher education level suggests a systemic gap that should be addressed before faculty enter the profession and motivating a recommendation for pre-service training. Therefore, it is recommended that the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan and the curriculum development bodies for education departments should revise the curriculum of Master's and Ph.D. programs in education to include a mandatory core course on "Pedagogical Soft Skills." This course should cover emotional intelligence, communication, and leadership in a teaching context, ensuring that future faculty are better prepared from the outset of their careers.

The finding that work commitments hinder attendance, which is a key mediating factor for academic performance, indicates a need for holistic student support beyond academic interventions. It is recommended that the Office of Student Affairs establish a dedicated student support center that provides guidance on time management and study-work balance. This center should also facilitate on-campus employment opportunities to reduce the need for off-campus work.

The study's conclusion that the direct contribution of soft skills to grade-based achievement is limited, while its impact on attendance and engagement is stronger, suggests a complex, indirect influence requiring further investigation. Therefore, it is recommended that the University's research department or the Quality Enhancement Cell, in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission should fund and conduct a multi-year longitudinal research project tracking a cohort of students. This study should examine how teachers' soft skills influence long-term outcomes like graduation rates, job placement, and career progression, rather than just immediate GPA, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their true impact.

Finally, the study confirmed the relevance of soft skills in the Pakistani context, providing empirical evidence to move from a purely qualitative assessment to a structured, data-driven approach. It is therefore recommended that the Quality Enhancement Cell of each institution, with input from faculty and student representatives should develop a standardized and validated tool for students and peers to evaluate teachers on the four dimensions Communication, Emotional Intelligence, Leadership, and Teamwork identified in this study. This framework should be designed to ensure the data for formative feedback and professional growth, creating a systematic mechanism for continuous improvement in teacher soft skills across higher education institutions in Pakistan.

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