

Including Soft Skills in the School Curriculum for Secondary School Students

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate including soft skills in the school curriculum for secondary school students. It seeks to identify the soft skills appropriate to include in the school curriculum for secondary school students. It also attempts to discover methods for including soft skills in the school curriculum for secondary school students. It used the descriptive survey. There are many methods for including skills in the school curriculum, whether through the modular method or offering a course specialized only in soft skills, or through the integration method or what is also called the bridging method. Given the nature of soft skills and their density in curricula at the secondary level, the researcher suggests including soft skills in the school curriculum. It is vital to include soft skills in the curriculum for secondary school students. This is done by taking advantage of the list of soft skills found in the current research. Methods of embedding soft skills through integration or study units can be done.

Keywords: *Soft skills, school, curriculum, secondary stage.*

Introduction

Development and the investment of innovations achieves the goals and objectives of education. This is one of the characteristics of education and the components of its success. It is linked to an organism that lives in a society influenced by innovations and developments. It requires all pillars of education and its institutions to invest and employ innovations in a way that achieves its goals. Successful education, in the midst of continuous changes, should be reflected in its methods in terms of the preventive and remedial aspects. The educational process comes at the forefront of the pillars of education. Education should keep pace with new developments and innovations in a way that achieves its goals to bear fruit.

Successful positive education aims to prepare generations that not only excel in cognitive levels, but to succeed in the world of life problems that require more excellence in the skill aspect, in a time when information is accelerating. The challenges remain in the extent to which generations possess skills of all kinds.

The openness in the contemporary world, the acceleration of the pace of technical development and the transmission of people's cultures at high levels contributed to doubling the roles of the educational process. It is important to provide learners with many life skills of all kinds, and focus on developing multiple thinking skills. This is one of the tools of the preventive and therapeutic side at the same time in order to enhancing

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the personality of learners, and their possession of the skills through which they preserve their religious and national identity. They will become the tools of positive influence in their society. This is what the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 emphasizes.

Among the skills that have recently emerged are the so-called soft power skills. They are a group of skills that have an impact on the learner's personality and behavior. Therefore, some researchers highlight the importance of studying and developing them through the school curricula and imparting them to the learners.

Based on investigating this topic for a long time, the researcher noticed that the topic still needs research and study. It is not sufficient to follow some researchers with enumerating lower and higher thinking skills.

In short, soft skills in some education systems have been in use for a long time. Therefore, some researchers disagree about their definition, some of whom believe that they are as according to Al-Shammari (1445):

- The art of dealing with others in an appropriate manner. They are personal traits and abilities through which an individual can communicate his/her ideas in a civilized manner to improve his/her personality.

Soft skills are considered basic life skills that complement hard skills. They are related to a person's ability to deal with others, present his/her ideas, use leadership behaviors in a convincing and tactful manner, and ability to communicate effectively. They bring success, and psychological and social harmony.

- A set of personal traits that characterize a person's relationship with the environment. These skills include communication skills, dialogic linguistic skills, time management, teamwork, and leadership traits.

In view of the emergence of so-called soft skills and the importance of developing them among learners, they are important for them and their society. The school curriculum is one of the vessels and tools for cultural and societal change. Some studies have indicated the importance of including soft skills in the school curriculum and developing them among learners. The current research is an attempt to identify soft skills and methods for including them in the school curriculum.

Research Objectives

- Identifying the soft skills appropriate to include in the school curriculum for secondary school students.
- Discovering methods for including soft skills in the school curriculum for secondary school students.

Research questions

1. What soft skills are appropriate to include in the school curriculum for secondary school students?
2. What are the scientific methods for including soft skills in the school curriculum for secondary school students?

Research Significance

The importance of the research is highlighted in keeping pace with modern educational interests and trends that call for activating skills and employing them in the school curriculum, including soft skills. The current paper may also contribute to drawing the attention of researchers to carry out studies and research related to soft skills. It also shows the importance of research in trying to come up with a list of soft skills, materials and methods for including them in the school curriculum.

Research method: descriptive survey.

Soft skills:

Definitions vary. Al-Shammari (2023) referred to a number of definitions, including:

- The art of dealing with others in an appropriate manner, which are personal traits and abilities through which an individual can communicate his/her ideas in a civilized manner and improve his personality.
- Soft skills are considered basic life skills that complement hard skills, which are related to a person's ability to deal with others, present his/her ideas, use leadership behaviors in a convincing and tactful manner, his/her ability to communicate effectively. This brings success, and psychological, and social harmony.
- A set of personal traits that characterize a person's relationship with the environment. These skills include communication skills, dialogic linguistic skills, time management, teamwork, and leadership traits.
- Skills that are variable, fluctuating, depend on the person more than on the job. They are affected by the surroundings such as mood, the person's ability and ability to learn and develop them, as well as the age stage. These skills are transferred with the individual in different tasks. He/she can use them everywhere and for many purposes.
- Those basic skills related to a person's experience in dealing with others, presenting his/her ideas, and using leadership behaviors in a convincing and tactful manner, as well as one's ability to communicate, and interact with customers while serving.
- Providing individuals with skills required by the labor market by developing them personally and socially. They qualify people to deal with others and communicate with them effectively and enable them to bear the burdens and pressures of work.

Therefore, it is clear that soft skills share with communication skills and the skills of the twenty-first century. However, soft skills are specialized in achieving a good mental image of the desired thing through indirect methods, in the so-called hidden curriculum. The researcher also believes that they are skills that overcome the aspect of dealing and communication. Therefore, they are achieved largely and at high levels whenever the learner achieves its prerequisites: thinking skills and readiness and positive behavioral patterns. Therefore, Joseph defines soft power as "the ability to influence the behavior of others to obtain the results that the person seeks." (Moroccan Journal of Social and Human Sciences, 19, 2022). Soft skills include a set of characteristics as follows:

- Soft skills are acquired and learned and can be developed.
- The interconnection between them - the interconnection of soft skills among them.
- Basic skills related to a person's ability to deal with others.
- They are based on the distinctive personal characteristics and traits of a person.
- Their arrangement varies according to the requirements of each specialty or field.
- They are considered interactive and exchange skills at the same time. (Al-Shammari, 2023).

Some researchers have classified soft skills into six basic skills: communication, time management, leadership, working within a team, problem solving, and decision-making (Al-Zahrani, 2021). On the other hand, some researchers classified them into planning - leadership - negotiation - working within a team - communication and communication - crisis management; time management - social relations management). According to Al-Shammari (2023), solving problems are a skill that an individual needs in private and

public life. It is a mental perception that includes a series of organized steps with the aim of reaching a solution. (Zeitoun, 2010).

The current study (2020) aims to find out the relationship of soft skills, individually and collectively, with the entrepreneurial orientation of students at the College of Business at Mutah University. The study used the questionnaire tool on a sample numbering (275). The study found that there is a strong positive relationship between soft skills and entrepreneurial orientation among students at the College of Business. Students possess a set of soft skills at large. Al-Hanaqta's study (2023) also aimed to identify the soft skills included and proposed to be included in the books of the first three grades and the degree to which teachers practice them in Jordan. The study used the descriptive, analytical and survey approach. The study sample consisted of the textbooks of the first grades and grade teachers. The first is the use of the content analysis checklist, and the questionnaire. The results of the study showed the availability of all soft skills in the textbooks of the first three grades. The study also showed that teachers practiced soft skills to a high degree. Karras's study (2022) also came to reveal the importance of future primary school teachers acquiring soft skills. Educating teachers to integrating soft skills is crucial to career success. The term "soft skills" refers to a wide range of personal and personality traits that seek to change the individual and society as a whole. The researcher used a mixed method (questionnaires and semi-structured interviews) to collect information. The target group was faculty members in colleges of education in four European countries. The study concluded that the most important soft skills in educational are social skills.

Analyzing and discussing the results:

First: Presentation of the study results

1- Answer to the first question: What soft skills are appropriate to include in the school curriculum for secondary school students?

To arrive at an answer to this question, the researcher did the following:

- Reviewing studies and research related to the subject of soft skills.
- Presenting a list of soft skills to some specialists. The study came up with a list of soft skills appropriate to include in the school curriculum for secondary school students as follows:
 - Communication
 - Cooperation.
 - Problem Solving.
 - Flexibility.
 - Time management.
 - The initiative.
 - Achievement.
 - Accept others.

2- Answer to the second question: What are the scientific methods for including soft skills in the school curriculum for secondary school students?

Soft skills can be included in the school curriculum for secondary school students through the following:

There are many methods for including skills in the school curriculum, whether through the modular method or offering a course specialized only in soft skills, or through the integration method or what is also called the bridging method. Given the nature of soft

skills and their density in curricula at the secondary level, the researcher suggests including soft skills in the school curriculum. Through the method of consolidation or the introduction of units, this can be clarified through the following Table:

Table 1 A proposed suggestion to include soft skills in the school curriculum

Objectives The Objectives should be characterized by the following :	Content	Teaching methods and strategies
Encouraging students to communicate positively	Texts and stories that demonstrate the skill of communicating with others	Cooperative learning Dialogue Multiple Intelligences Discovery Guided discovery
Developing cooperation skills	Select some texts and stories that indicate this	
Emphasizing and encouraging the skill of initiative	Stories and incidents in the importance of the initiative	
Encouraging the skill of achievement	Stories, role models and their benefits	
Emphasize time management skills	Comparing the ages of great scientists with their achievements and time management methods	
Encourage acceptance of others	Social impact and achieving peace and harmony	Cooperative learning Educational trips
Improving problem-solving skill	Stories and Tales	Project-based learning Problem Solving Discussion and dialogue

Recommendations and suggestions:

- Including soft skills in the curriculum for secondary school students. This is done by taking advantage of the list of soft skills found in the current research.
- Benefiting from methods of embedding soft skills through integration or study units.

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