

Perceived Assimilative Integration Approach in Assessment Indicator Practices of Enhancing the Soft Skills of Students in a New Normal

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Abstract

In every educational intent, a student's soft skills and the teacher's approach are equally crucial. This is particularly relevant in a school context. Soft skills are crucial and will be necessary for success in the information systems industry. The purpose of this study was to ascertain whether the Assimilative Integration Approach—self-regulation, self-validation, and self-enhancement—have any bearing on improving the soft skills of LSPU-SPCC students including interpersonal, collaborative, communication, and critical-thinking abilities. The study used the descriptive-correlational research methodology. 228 undergraduates from the university's colleges, ranging from the first year to the fourth year, participated in this survey as respondents. The survey's items were adapted and modified from research and writings by Martin, S. (2022); Half, R. (2022); and Worksheets on Self-Regulation in the Classroom. The independent and dependent variable questionnaire was provided via Google Forms and sent through email. Tests of significance and descriptive statistics were employed by the researchers. The statistical tools employed in this study were frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson's *r* correlation coefficient. Cronbach alpha was utilized to establish the instrument's validity. The results showed that the assimilative integration strategy is well regarded by the respondents in terms of self-validation, self-regulation, and self-enhancement. The respondents have an affirmative impression of Self-validation, Self-Regulation, and Self-Enhancement on the Assessment indicator practices in Interpersonal Skills, Collaborative Skills, Communication Skills, and Critical Thinking Skills. This study identified the strengths and weaknesses of both the teachers and the students.

Keywords: Assimilative Integration Approach; self-regulation; self-validation; self-enhancement; soft skills; interpersonal; collaborative; communication; critical thinking

1. Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel coronavirus disease COVID-19 a global public health outbreak on January 23, 2020. COVID-19 was classified as the first pandemic caused by a coronavirus by the WHO on March 11, 2020, just two months after its initial declaration, with more than 182,000

confirmed cases in more than 150 countries and territories around the world. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), until COVID-19 is aggressively controlled, the number of people who could potentially be infected will increase. The Department of Health (DOH) reported 3.6 million cases of Corona Virus transmissions and over 60,000 deaths as of May 2022, just two years after the outbreak began. To control the spread of COVID-19, the collaboration between national, international, governmental, and non-governmental bodies, as well as local communities, is critical.

The aggressive efforts to stop the virus's spread necessitated a coordinated effort from a variety of sectors, including education, healthcare, travel, faith-based organizations, and businesses. As a result, the virus has taken over these sectors, particularly higher education, which has a direct and indirect impact on the ability of the students in various courses to a meaningful opportunity.

Soft skills are abilities that may be transferred to any task, such as the ability to work well in a team or adjust to changes in your environment. Being able to exhibit this on job applications will demonstrate that you got more than simply a degree certificate from the university (E. P. U. D., & Patenall, W. E., 2021).

According to E. P. U. D. & Patenall, W. E. A degree surely increases your work prospects, but it is not the only advantage of attending university. Your degree will not only provide you with the technical knowledge for your desired job, but it will also teach you the required soft skills to thrive in the workplace. According to Gold, J., & Stricker, G., (2001). Assimilative integration is a therapeutic approach that combines a strong foundation in one theoretical approach with a willingness to incorporate techniques from other therapeutic approaches. The same variety of techniques is displayed in technical eclecticism, but without a binding theoretical understanding.

As a student in tertiary education, on various courses, holistic development plays an important role upon completion of higher education programs. In general, the classroom interaction between students and teachers is a task-specific exchange of service for experience between a student and a real-life professional setting. As students interact and learn in a professional setting, they transform classroom concepts into real-world tools of the trade. And even though they were in different year levels of their course, observations, activities, and simulating what their mentors did in their class played an important role in enhancing their soft skills.

But due to the limitations of face-to-face classes caused by the pandemic, students have been shifted to online interactions, synchronous and asynchronous activities, and limited face-to-face.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Assimilative Integration Approach

According to Gold, J., & Stricker, G. (2001). Assimilative integration is a therapeutic approach that combines a strong foundation in one theoretical approach with a willingness to incorporate techniques from other therapeutic approaches. The same variety of techniques is displayed in technical eclecticism, but without a binding theoretical understanding.

Based on the study of Muangkaew, K., Sakunpong, N., & Langka, W., 2022, assimilative integration is used to design a training program for psychology students in which the Satir model is predominantly used, with empowerment counseling and training skills as supplement strategies. The findings show that the training approach effectively promotes congruence and humanistic counseling competence among psychology students.

2.2 Soft Skills

In the journal of Noah, J. B., & Abdul Aziz, A., 2020, to be hired, a person must not only have the necessary knowledge, but also the necessary skill set to perform the task well. Tertiary education at

universities and higher education institutions can provide both the necessary knowledge and skill set. However, graduates appear to be lacking in that skill set, namely soft skills.

According to Ağcam, R., & Doğan, A. 2021, Soft skills are the abilities, competencies, and characteristics that are related to personality, attitude, and behavior rather than formal or technical knowledge. While these skills are necessary for a person's success, they are difficult to prove through a CV, diploma, or certificate and can only be assessed by specialists. Soft skills, which include communication, problem-solving, time management, teamwork, and leadership, are regarded as essential, particularly for teachers, because they are at the heart of the teaching and learning process.

According to Kostikova, I., Holubnycha, L., Girich, Z., & Movmyga, N., 2021, there are eight soft skills that university students can develop through educational games in English classes were identified. They were critical thinking, creativity, team management, emotional intelligence, interpersonal interaction, conflict resolution, adaptability, and stress resistance. The characteristics of the identified soft skills were discussed. The impact of game activities on various soft skills was discovered. Various game activities to develop soft skills were demonstrated during English lessons. The effectiveness of game-based learning for soft skills development was investigated. The effectiveness of soft skills development based on game-based teaching in English was demonstrated.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

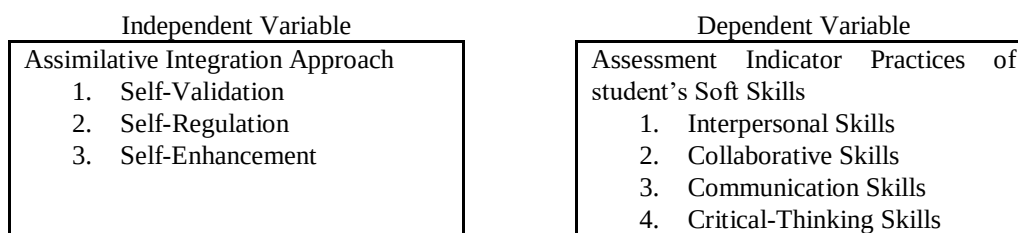


Figure 1. Research Paradigm

3. Hypotheses

Is it true that there is no significant relationship between the Assimilative Integration Approach and the Assessment Indicator of Students' Soft Skills in terms of Interpersonal Skills, Collaborative Skills, Communication Skills, and Critical-Thinking Skills?

4. Methodology

The researchers used the descriptive-correlational method. This study's respondents were 228 students drawn from various levels and courses at the university (1st to 4th year from the College of Teacher Education (CTE), College of Business Administration (CBMA), College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), College of Industrial Technology (CIT), College of Engineering (COE), College of Computer Science (CCS), College of Criminal Justice Education (CCJE), and College of Hospitality Management and Tourism (CHMT). The items in the survey were adapted and modified from the articles and studies of Martin, S. (2022, January 24); Robert Half, (2022, May 9); and Self-regulation in the Classroom Worksheets. The instrument was subjected to validation with a pool of evaluators from the selected internal and external faculty members. The researchers virtually conducted the floating of the survey after seeking permission from the Dean of Instruction. Frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson-r Correlational Coefficient were the statistical treatments used in this study. The questionnaire regarding independent variables and dependent variables was given in Google Forms and sent through e-mail. Further measures were undertaken for the

refinement and finalization of the major instrument, and to ensure the validity of the instrument, Cronbach alpha was applied. Before the conduct of the research, the questionnaire was drafted, revised, and finalized to assure that it contained all the pertinent information and data needed in the investigation. This is covered until May 2023. The researchers used descriptive statistics and tests of significance in determining the perceived level of significance of the respondents. For the profile of the respondents, the frequency and percent of the statistical tool were used. For the perception of the assimilative approach and the perception of the assessment indicators on soft skills, mean and standard deviation were applied. In determining the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of the study, Pearson's Product Moment of Correlation was used.

5. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Perceptions of the respondents in the Assimilative Integration Approach

Assimilative Integration Approach	Mean	Std. Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Self- Validation	4.20	0.77	Agree
Self-Regulation	4.31	0.67	Agree
Self-enhancement	4.26	0.745	Agree

Legend: 4.50-5.00- Strongly Agree; 3.50-4.49- Agree; 2.50-3.49- Moderately Agree;
 1.50-2.49- Disagree; 1.00-1.49- Strongly Disagree

In terms of Self-Validation, Table 1 implies that students can easily collaborate with other students; they can feel that they have good qualities. Thus, according to Briol, P., & Petty, R. E. 2022, skills such as concentrating, sharing, and taking turns to develop as a child learns to self-regulate. This allows a child to transition from relying on others to learning to manage on their own.

Students use self-regulated learning strategies (SRLS) to self-observe their progress and evaluate the strengths of the learning strategies they use, as well as become aware of any weaknesses, throughout their learning process. According to current literature, for students to learn successfully through digital learning, they must arm themselves with self-regulated learning strategies (SRLS).

Self-enhancement is a type of motivation that works to make people feel good about themselves and maintain self-esteem. This motivation becomes more apparent in times of risk, rejection, or self-esteem setbacks. Positive self-views are preferred over negative ones as part of self-enhancement.

Table 2. Perceptions of the respondents in Self-Validation on the Assessment indicator practices

Self-Validation on the Assessment indicator practices	Mean	Std. Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Interpersonal Skills	4.29	0.722	Agree
Collaborative Skills	4.34	0.66	Agree
Communication Skills	4.06	0.823	Agree
Critical Thinking Skills	4.26	0.68	Agree

Legend: 4.50-5.00- Strongly Agree; 3.50-4.49- Agree; 2.50-3.49- Moderately Agree;
 1.50-2.49- Disagree; 1.00-1.49- Strongly Disagree

Everyone needs validation to feel accepted and understood. The validation of others is not always possible, though. So, it's crucial to understand how to evaluate yourself. In Table 2, it is reflected that respondents may

know their strengths and weaknesses for them to improve their weaknesses and be accepted by others. respondents commit mistakes and after they realize to correct others.

Perception is a process that provides information about the elements that are critical to our survival. Hence, it creates an experience of the world and allows one to act within the environment. Having collaboration improves the way to work together and have problem-solving successfully.

Being able to communicate effectively brings strength, builds trust, and develops a sense of belongingness that will assure and guarantee to be more productive. Otherwise, validating is essential to have a better understanding.

Being able to share thoughts and emotions can increase the quality of life that will forsake all the negative situations and limiting beliefs, and focus more on the strengths of the context.

Table 3. Perceptions of the respondents in Self-Regulation on the Assessment indicator practices

Self-Regulation on the Assessment indicator practices	Mean	Std. Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Interpersonal Skills	4.30	0.73	Agree
Collaborative Skills	4.32	0.67	Agree
Communication Skills	4.32	0.64	Agree
Critical Thinking Skills	4.22	0.65	Agree

Legend: 4.50-5.00- Strongly Agree; 3.50-4.49- Agree; 2.50-3.49- Moderately Agree;

1.50-2.49- Disagree; 1.00-1.49- Strongly Disagree

In terms of Interpersonal Skills, Table 3 implies that students were controlling their behavior for the benefit of others. According to Cuncic (2022), self-regulation can be beneficial to relationships with others, well-being, and overall life success. People who can control their emotions and manage their actions are better equipped to deal with stress and conflict and achieve their goals.

It is shown in that table that in terms of Collaborative Skills, most of the students acted and expressed themselves following their firmly held ideals or social conscience and values with each other even during a hard time. According to Cuncic (2022), If you value academic performance, you will be motivated to study rather than slack off before an exam. If you value assisting others, you will be able to assist a coworker with a project even if you are on a tight deadline.

In terms of Communication Skills, most of the students monitor their behavior and control their skills to listen, accept, and answer what other people want to say. Based on the study by Ipp (2017), self-regulation allows us to feel and express our emotions. It gives us the confidence to change our self-expression in any circumstance with other people.

It can be seen from the results in terms of Critical Thinking Skills that thinking critically will make students control their behavior, have good decisions, and solve various problems. According to Rymanowicz, (2021), every day, we apply critical thinking skills. They assist us in making sound judgments, comprehending the effects of our actions, and resolving difficulties. These crucial abilities are employed in everything from putting together puzzles to determining the best route to work. It is the process of applying concentration and self-control to solve issues and set and achieve goals.

Table 4. Perceptions of the respondents in Self-Enhancement on the Assessment indicator practices

Self- Enhancement on the Assessment indicator practices	Mean	Std. Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Interpersonal Skills	4.19	0.76	Agree

Collaborative Skills	4.33	0.61959	Agree
Communication Skills	4.26	0.65	Agree
Critical Thinking Skills	4.18	0.70	Agree

Legend: 4.50-5.00- Strongly Agree; 3.50-4.49- Agree; 2.50-3.49- Moderately Agree;
 1.50-2.49- Disagree; 1.00-1.49- Strongly Disagree

In terms of Interpersonal Skills, Table 4 implies that students improving themselves need to interact both individually and in groups to make the task successful. According to Paolini (2021), interpersonal skills are the abilities we need to communicate and connect with others both individually and in groups. Listening is actively and intently listening and validating the individual.

In terms of Collaborative Skills, all of the respondents agreed that to be able for oneself to excel and enhance their performance, they need to work together with different individuals or groups. According to Indeed Editorial Team (2021), working together is vital since it contributes to a more efficient work environment. Team members can work together to attain goals or finish projects and activities by offering assistance or exchanging suggestions. Aside from increasing productivity, making employees feel at ease with their coworkers can contribute to a more favorable work atmosphere.

In terms of Communication Skills, Table 4 implies that if the students talked to themselves, to their friends and families to become better on what he/she right now. Based on the article of Roanoke (2019), we may lessen the stress associated with keeping things to ourselves and be more conscious and productive by talking with people and even paying attention to our feelings.

In terms of Critical Thinking Skills, students assess themselves and think critically for them to make changes for themselves. According to Indeed Career Guide (2020), critical thinkers are born with the ability to see problems from multiple perspectives. By deflecting the reaction to secure their personal beliefs, critical thinkers are more self-reflective and can modify their life, minds, and opinions in light of new information.

Table 5. Relationship Between Assimilative Integration Approach in terms of self-validation and Assessment Indicator Practices of student's Soft Skills

Assimilative Integration Approach	Assessment Indicator Practices of student's Soft Skills			
	Interpersonal Skills	Collaborative Skills	Communication Skills	Critical-Thinking Skills
	r-value	r-value	r-value	r-value
Self-Validation	.653**	.687**	.535**	.417**
Self-Regulation	.424**	.501**	.427**	-.051
Self-Enhancement	.029	-.035	.017	.036

**-. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 shows the relationship between the assimilative integration approach and assessment indicator practices of students' soft skills. Self-validation under the Assimilative Integration Approach shows a significant relationship among all the different assessment indicator practices of students' soft skills such as interpersonal skills, collaborative skills, communication skills, and critical-thinking skills. It means that if you already know what you are and accept who you are, you can also have all the mentioned skills above. Because accepting yourself first can help you to improve your soft skills. According to Hall (2014), self-validation will assist you in accepting and better understanding yourself, resulting in a stronger identity and improving the soft skills of an individual.

In terms of Self-regulation, the table shows a significant relationship to the indicator practices of student's soft skills such as interpersonal skills, collaborative skills, and communication skills but did not have a

significant relationship to critical-thinking skills for the reason that knowing how to control your cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects of yourself can prevent you to think critically because you are the focus in controlling yourself. According to Concordia University (2020), our thinking is self-serving by nature. Our thoughts serve to further our self-interest. As a result, we are prone to self-justifying thinking. We embrace concepts and beliefs that are neither rational nor logical, but they appear to serve us well.

And for self-enhancement, the table shows that self-enhancement and all the assessment practices students' soft skills did not have a significant relationship to each other. This means that improving yourself into a better individual does not mean you are enhancing your interpersonal, communication, collaborative, and critical-thinking skills. One reason for that is the priority of self-enhancement is enhancing their personality traits such as adaptability, flexibility, and self-aware and not the soft skills mentioned. According to McPartlan, Umarji & Eccles (2020), experimental studies have shown that students are often more motivated to engage in self-enhancement than self-assessment, selectively retrieving feedback that positively depicts important personality traits.

6. Conclusion

A therapy strategy known as assimilative integration combines a solid theoretical foundation with a propensity to apply strategies from different therapeutic interventions. Technical eclecticism exhibits the same range of methods, but without a guiding theoretical concept. After higher education programs are completed, overall development is crucial. Their soft skills were much strengthened by replicating their mentors' conduct in class.

The importance of this study rests on the educators' guidance to the learners. It boosted the Assimilative Integration Approach and significantly relates to evaluating the Soft Skills indicator practices. The current study is anticipated to be beneficial to deans, educators, curriculum designers, and learners.

This research reveals that learners can work well with others and feel confident about themselves. Throughout their learning process, individuals self-monitor their development, assess the benefits and drawbacks of the learning tactics they employ, and become aware of any inadequacies. They assist individuals to preserve their self-esteem and think positively about themselves. To address their deficiencies and gain acceptance from others, respondents are conscious of their strengths and limitations. Even during difficult times, the majority of students continued to act and communicate following their deeply held moral compass and principles.

Moreover, it is affirmed that they are capable of communicating which can enrich living standards. To complete the work successfully, students must communicate both individually and in groups. To enhance where they are at this moment, students should connect to their family, friends, and themselves. To make improvements in themselves, students evaluate themselves and use critical thinking.

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