

# Soft Skills Role In Self-Management Catapulting Leadership Qualities Through Gamification.

Dr. Sree Lekha  
*ELT Specialist*

---

## **Abstract:**

*Soft skills are usually estimated through the conduct, behaviour or the attitude towards conducting the things, where they play a dominant role in the assessment of one's self. Self-Management the need of the hour proves an individual in various contexts once the person attains the command on one's emotional stability by raising emotional quotients. It also which reflects the person as a highly valued individual. This paper speaks about the necessity of increase of values to be top prioritised than the only focus on skill development. The paper projects the AICTE content that on leadership abilities are through the build-up of values when compared to that of only skill attainment. The paper also focuses on the gamification method of imparting inputs for the under graduates based on the theory absorbed from AICTE Leadership. The paper thus starts with self-management and finally destinates to turn out to be a wholesome individual of being a leader who can in turn help the society around him. It is a trial which proved that through gamification, it is jolly and interesting for the young to learn the art of encouraging leadership qualities such as mentioned above.*

**Keywords:** *self-management, values inculcation, skill development, leadership, gamification*

---

Date of Submission: 20-06-2024

Date of Acceptance: 30-06-2024

---

## **I. Introduction:**

Communicative skills, recognized as one of the core components in the Washington Accord by seventeen world countries, are a critical part of the Soft Skills curriculum. When examined alongside other established core aspects of soft skills, it becomes evident that leadership capabilities, communication skill development, and the inculcation of values are central to discussions on self-management. Effective leaders are those who not only motivate themselves but also inspire their peers, either through words or actions. To instill the best values in young individuals, it is essential to expose them to situations that demand the traits of an influential leader. By creating environments that challenge them to exhibit leadership qualities, we can foster the development of these crucial skills. These environments encourage individuals to navigate complex scenarios, make informed decisions, and motivate others, thereby reinforcing their own self-management abilities. Through this approach, the integration of communicative skills, leadership, and values becomes a holistic method to nurture future leaders who are capable of making significant contributions to society.

A leader is someone who not only motivates people but is also ready to commit to taking risks and identifying themselves as part of the team. A leader must act as a torchbearer, guiding the team towards reaching their goals. Torchbearing involves not just labeling oneself as a leader but being prepared to face the challenges and responsibilities of the task at hand. This requires readiness to shoulder responsibility and proudly carry the flag. To bear the torch, one must self-motivate, even when facing potentially difficult or dangerous situations. Once in the fray, a leader must move forward with the expectation that success will be achieved by the team. This requires motivating oneself and the team with a unified mindset. Without this, failure is inevitable. If team members do not align with the leader's ideology, it is the leader's additional responsibility to foster team spirit. Leaders strategically select and position active and engaged team members, beginning with a win-win attitude. The vitality of a leader lies in their confidence and team spirit, which is another crucial aspect of leadership.

Moreover, a leader's attitude should aim to benefit as many people as possible, often leaving the leader with nothing but the traits they have exhibited. In this way, the leader becomes a guide and is the first to face any setbacks. Based on these attitudes and ideologies, AICTE courses emphasize developing values over merely focusing on skills. Today's generation tends to prioritize skills over values, which is a crucial point for youth to understand.

The course also categorizes four types of people, which are explained in detail in the paper. This categorization helps in understanding the diverse approaches individuals might take in leadership roles and how values play a significant role in shaping effective leaders. By focusing on value development, the course aims to nurture leaders who are not only skilled but also possess the integrity and ethical grounding necessary to make a

positive impact on society. This holistic approach ensures that leadership development is comprehensive, addressing both the acquisition of skills and the cultivation of essential values.

According to the AICTE leadership paper, individuals are classified into four categories based on their traits and character. This theory is elucidated with a Sanskrit quotation: "Saahithya sangeethakala vaheenaha sa pashu puchiksh naheenaha themyaloke ba vibhaarabh thaa," which emphasizes the importance of cultural and artistic values in human life. To make this concept clearer for young students, a graphical representation is used to explain the integration of hard and soft skills. The four categories are visualized as four quadrants formed by the intersection of the X-axis and Y-axis, where the X-axis represents hard skills and the Y-axis represents soft skills.

As the values on both axes increase, they indicate the rise in the respective skill sets. When these intersecting lines are drawn, they form four quadrants, each representing a different combination of hard and soft skills. In my paper, I explain these quadrants as the four pathways to achieve personality development, leadership, and success through self-management.

The quadrants are described as follows:

**First Quadrant (Top Right):** This quadrant represents individuals with high levels of both soft skills (values) and hard skills (technical skills). It is the ideal quadrant, indicating well-rounded individuals who excel in both areas. It is a combination of strong skills and also strong values which occupies the top prioritized position of all the quadrants.

**Second Quadrant (Top Left):** This quadrant indicates individuals with high soft skills but lower hard skills. These individuals possess strong values and interpersonal abilities but may lack technical proficiency. Here, it is a combination of strong values but weak technical skills which can be developed at a certain period of time. This quadrant can also be considered as technical skills needs a stipulated period to practice and do not demand the actual inculcation right from a very tender age.

**Third Quadrant (Bottom Right):** This quadrant includes individuals with high hard skills but lower soft skills. These individuals are technically proficient but may lack interpersonal skills and values. This quadrant clearly states that the combination is with strong technical skills but weak values which cannot be taken for priority. Acquisition of soft skills otherwise here termed as values is not that easy to be acquired within a stipulated period of time rather they can be acquired by continuous exposure and refinement in thought process for a longer period of time and can be tested when subjected to various conditions.

**Fourth Quadrant (Bottom Left):** This quadrant represents individuals with lower levels of both soft skills and hard skills. These individuals need significant development in both areas to achieve their full potential. The fourth Quadrant shows the combination of weak skills and weak values too. Here the individuals do not possess any kind of potential as they fail to prove both technical ways as well as the values.

Hence in all these cases values are top prioritized and proven with examples in the later part of the paper.

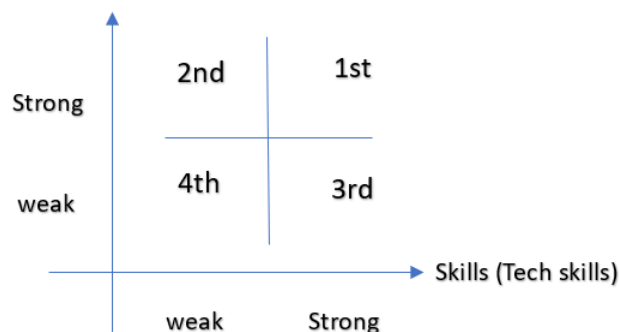
The graphical representation, as shown in the paper, helps to visually differentiate and understand these quadrants.

The Y-axis, representing values or soft skills, grows vertically, indicating the development of interpersonal abilities and self-discipline through continuous practice and focus. The X-axis, representing hard skills or technical skills, grows horizontally, signifying the acquisition of technical knowledge through dedicated effort within a specific timeframe. As the values on these axes increase, they reflect an individual's progress in both skill sets.

The top right quadrant, known as the 1st quadrant, is the most desirable, followed by the 2nd quadrant (top left), the 3rd quadrant (bottom right), and finally the 4th quadrant (bottom left). This model underscores the importance of balancing both soft and hard skills to achieve leadership and success through self-management.

The accompanying diagram provides a clear illustration of these four quadrants and their significance.

#### Diagram



The first quadrant, positioned at the top right corner along the y-axis, represents individuals characterized by a harmonious blend of robust skills and exemplary values. According to AICTE, notable examples embodying this quadrant include Lord Krishna and Arjuna, celebrated for their technical prowess as well as their unwavering commitment to high moral principles. Their proficiency in skills, such as archery, is complemented by their steadfast adherence to Dharma, illustrating the axiom 'Dharmo Rakshathi Rakshithaha.' These individuals epitomize excellence by consistently nurturing both their hard skills and ethical values, thereby setting a standard for exemplary conduct and leadership. Consequently, it is paramount for the youth to aspire towards the 1st quadrant, symbolizing the holistic development of both technical and moral aptitudes. Despite the competitive landscape, emphasis is placed on the challenge of maintaining strong soft skills in this environment, which serves as a segue into the discussion of the second quadrant.

The second quadrant delineates individuals distinguished by robust moral principles yet constrained technical proficiency. Dharmaraj from the Mahabharata and Vibheeshan exemplify this category, embodying steadfast commitment to Dharma despite their limited combat skills. Dharmaraj, though proficient in archery, did not attain Arjuna's renown; however, his moral integrity earned him recognition as a leader. Similarly, Vibheeshan, while residing in Ravana's court, steadfastly upheld Dharma, refusing to endorse wrongful ideologies. Despite their initial skill limitations, individuals in this quadrant possess the potential for skill development over time. This prioritization is underscored by the enduring nature of values compared to the acquirable aspect of skills. While technical expertise can be cultivated through concentrated effort, values necessitate continuous practice and adherence from an early age.

The rationale behind this emphasis lies in the fundamental importance of values in shaping character and guiding behavior. Moreover, the adherence to ethical principles serves as a foundation for sustainable personal and societal growth. Individuals in the second quadrant are encouraged to prioritize the cultivation of both skills and values, recognizing the symbiotic relationship between the two. While technical skills may be acquired through formal education and training, the embodiment of values requires introspection, self-discipline, and a commitment to ethical conduct.

Furthermore, the experiences of Dharmaraj and Vibheeshan underscore the enduring legacy of moral integrity, transcending transient skill-based achievements. Their unwavering commitment to Dharma, despite facing adversities, highlights the transformative power of ethical principles. As such, individuals in the second quadrant are urged to prioritize the cultivation of moral values alongside skill development. This holistic approach not only fosters personal growth but also contributes to the betterment of society, creating a ripple effect of positive influence and ethical leadership. Thus, while technical proficiency is valuable, it is the integration of values that ultimately defines one's character and legacy.

The third quadrant signifies individuals endowed with strong skills yet lacking in ethical values. This juxtaposition denotes individuals who excel in technical prowess but exhibit deficiencies in moral conduct. Prime examples encapsulating this quadrant include Dhuryodhana and Dussasana, who, despite possessing skills comparable to Arjuna, failed to earn acclaim in the epics due to their moral shortcomings. Their disregard for Dharma, which inherently elevates an individual's worth, underscores the insufficiency of skills alone. This serves as a poignant reminder that leadership cannot be solely attained through technical proficiency; rather, it is the embodiment of ethical values that truly distinguishes a leader. Recent trends have predominantly emphasized skill enhancement, neglecting the importance of soft skills. While this approach may yield short-term gains, it risks long-term repercussions as societal preferences evolve. Ultimately, individuals who prioritize the mastery of hard skills at the expense of soft skills may find themselves marginalized in a society increasingly valuing ethical leadership. Thus, while technical competence is undeniably valuable, it is the integration of moral values that fosters enduring success and societal acceptance.

The fourth quadrant delineates individuals characterized by both weak skills and values, representing a lack of proficiency in both domains. The stagnation evident in the x and y axes indicates a failure to develop skills or uphold moral principles, rendering their potential unfulfilled. These individuals neither prioritize the acquisition of technical nor soft skills, making it challenging for them to establish their identity or achieve success. Positioned as the last and least distinguished category, they are often overlooked or disregarded. A poignant example from the Mahabharata is the hundred Kauravas, whose legacy remains obscure due to their lack of notable achievements or adherence to ethical principles. Consequently, they are deemed lacking in self-management, reflecting an inability to cultivate and demonstrate essential skills and values necessary for personal and professional growth.

The most adept individuals in self-management effortlessly inhabit the first quadrant, seamlessly acquiring both skills without undue pressure, as outlined above. Consequently, the graphical representation elucidates the intrinsic relationship between skill development and self-management. The narratives of individuals in the second and third quadrants underscore how adept self-management facilitated their ascent as successful leaders and administrators, immortalized in the greatest epics. Their enduring influence, evident in contemporary references and emulation, attests to their monumental achievements and underscores their

adeptness in self-management across diverse circumstances. In essence, the significance of soft skills cannot be overstated, as they are indicative of an individual's proficiency in self-management.

Even as the AICTE leadership paper cites a Sanskrit sloka: 'Saahithya sangeethakala vaheenaha sa pashu puchiksh naheenaha themyaloke ba vibhaarah thaa', emphasizing the importance of humans acquiring skills or art forms to distinguish themselves from animals. It's crucial to acknowledge that animals also exhibit forms of self-discipline only in exceptional cases showcasing a rudimentary understanding of self-regulation. However, humans possess a unique capacity to cultivate a broader range of skills and values, facilitated by language and complex social structures. While animals may adhere to instinctual behaviors, humans have the cognitive ability to comprehend and internalize concepts such as Dharma and empathy, enabling them to evolve as self-managed individuals with robust skill sets.

## **II. Method:**

In regular undergraduate teaching classes, the concept of self-management and leadership is explained through a sport, which is part of a gamification approach. The gamification allows students to engage with the task with interest and learn without any hurdles. It is very inquisitive for the students to participate in games and sports, which in turn teaches them to maintain self-management techniques. This game results in students developing their concepts on how to be a leader, how to think like a leader, how to think strategically to become a leader, sticking to values and applying technical skills for success.

For this game, a section of 60 members is taken to the ground. The playground is clearly defined without any pits and puddles. A plus symbol is drawn in the middle, and at the intersection point, a circle with a radius of one hundred centimeters is drawn, which is designated as the final goal. Taking another fifty centimeters from the circle, the students are divided into equal teams, with fifteen members placed in each line one after the other. All four teams stand facing the goal point.

The first player from each team takes the torch bearer position, holding a signifying colored torch in his or her hand. Once the whistle blows, the four torch bearers pass the torch back to the next player, and finally, it reaches the last (fifteenth) player. This player then starts taking a round of all the remaining three teams from the outer circle drawn, covering the entire four teams. By the time the last player reaches their respective team, the remaining team members move one step back, allowing the runner to take the first place. Likewise, all the fifteen players from all four teams take each one's turn and run quickly to keep their torch at the goal point. At the end, the first torch bearer is in the fifteenth position, where he or she has to take the last turn around and place the torch in the center of the circle drawn. Whichever team places the torch in the center first is declared the leading team, and the torch bearer becomes the leader.

The learning outcomes of this game include the strategic placement of team members based on how quickly they can run. Apart from developing a sound body and mind, it serves as excellent recreation for the youngsters. It develops a sense of abiding by the rules while remaining goal-oriented. There is significant learning that success or leadership is achieved through team effort, and everyone learns to stand by the leader. It fosters a team-winning spirit as well. The leader plays a crucial role in motivating the entire team, exhibiting the skills of an influential leader. It is not only during the sport but also after the game is completed, observing how team members react demonstrates the stability levels of the players and their self-management skills. The strategic arrangement of the players relies on the intelligence of the torch bearer, providing every player a chance to exhibit his or her methodology of thinking.

This gamification method of learning also teaches students to abide by the law, be strategic, understand the art of giving, experience the joy of sharing, and grasp the principle of "one for all and all for one." This comprehensive learning approach through gamification highlights the importance of strategy, team spirit, leadership, and adherence to values, thus preparing students for future challenges in both personal and professional spheres.

By engaging students in such dynamic and interactive activities, educators can impart essential life skills and values in an enjoyable and memorable manner. This method not only emphasizes physical activity but also mental acuity, strategic thinking, and ethical behavior, thereby contributing to the holistic development of the students. This gamified approach to learning and teaching self-management and leadership principles aligns well with contemporary educational strategies aimed at fostering well-rounded individuals who are equipped to navigate and excel in diverse environments.

## **III. Findings:**

The observation of student engagement and interest reveals a notable level of enthusiasm, particularly in their eagerness to showcase their self-management abilities. This keen interest suggests a genuine engagement with the material being taught and a proactive involvement in the learning process.

Furthermore, there is a palpable sense of curiosity among students, as evidenced by their anticipation of the upcoming phases of the class. This curiosity reflects an active engagement with the learning activities and a desire for continuous intellectual stimulation.

The facilitator's practice of soliciting frequent feedback from students every thirty minutes fosters a culture of reflection and self-assessment among students. This structured approach to feedback enables students to evaluate their learning progress at regular intervals, promoting a deeper understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement.

Students demonstrate remarkable discipline in adhering to self-management techniques, showcasing a willingness to learn from one another by observing and responding effectively to various situations encountered during the class sessions. This disciplined approach underscores their commitment to personal and academic growth.

Moreover, approximately 80% of students exhibit proficiency in speaking and effectively agreeing to various scenarios presented during class activities. For the remaining 5%, individual clarification provided by the teacher aids in enhancing their understanding, fostering a supportive learning environment conducive to academic success.

Through game participation, value-added individuals emerge, emphasizing that exemplary leadership extends beyond winning to encompass how one responds to diverse situations. This observation highlights the importance of self-management in leadership roles and underscores its role in shaping effective leaders.

Furthermore, students approach the game with a positive, win-win attitude, embracing failure as a valuable learning opportunity. This mindset fosters empathy and understanding among students, promoting a non-judgmental view of their peers and fostering a collaborative learning environment.

Enhanced cognitive thinking is evident in students during subsequent game rounds, as reflected in the evolution of team selection and strategic decision-making. This indicates a progressive refinement of leadership and self-management skills, with students demonstrating an ability to adapt and innovate in response to changing circumstances.

Individuals gain insights into their areas of strength and areas needing improvement in self-management, facilitating targeted self-improvement efforts and contributing to overall personal growth. This self-awareness enhances students' ability to navigate complex social and academic environments effectively.

Collaborative discussions and strategic thinking lead to improved communication abilities among students, highlighting the transformative impact of experiential learning activities on students' interpersonal skills and teamwork capabilities. These findings underscore the importance of strategic thinking in problem-solving and decision-making processes, with implications for students' personal and professional development.

In summary, the findings highlight the effectiveness of experiential learning methods in cultivating essential skills and attributes among students, with implications for their personal and professional development.

#### **IV. Limitations:**

Several limitations were identified during the implementation of the gamification approach. Firstly, the infrastructure proved to be a significant factor, with the game being more engaging when played in open areas compared to closed, confined spaces. This suggests that the availability of suitable spaces for such activities can impact the overall effectiveness of the approach.

Another limitation was the necessity to distribute an equal number of members among teams to maintain fairness and adherence to game rules. This requirement posed logistical challenges, particularly when dealing with varying class sizes or student attendance rates.

Supervision also emerged as a critical consideration, with the need for an additional observer to assist in processing judgments regarding the winning team. This ensured impartiality and accuracy in determining the outcome of the game, enhancing its credibility as an educational tool.

Furthermore, it was observed that the identification of truly self-managed individuals or leaders often occurred in the later rounds of the game, rather than in the initial stages. This delay in recognizing leadership qualities suggests that the full benefits of the gamification approach may not be immediately apparent and require sustained engagement over multiple sessions.

Effective refereeing proved essential in ensuring compliance with game rules and maintaining a fair and orderly gameplay environment. Given the active participation of all players in pursuing the game's objectives, a vigilant referee played a crucial role in resolving disputes and upholding the integrity of the activity.

Lastly, there was a risk of lingering grudges or resentments among participants, particularly in later rounds where competition intensified. Here, the presence of a vigilant referee became even more critical, as they could mediate conflicts and facilitate constructive resolution strategies, thereby reinforcing the learning outcomes related to self-management and conflict resolution skills.

In summary, while the gamification approach offered numerous benefits for student engagement and skill development, it also presented several logistical and supervisory challenges that require careful consideration and management to ensure its successful implementation in educational settings.