

ASSESSING SOCIAL SKILLS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS OF CHANDIGARH

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Abstract

The present study was designed to assess the social skills of students studying in secondary classes of government schools of Chandigarh. A representative sample of 150 students from government model senior secondary schools of Chandigarh was selected randomly. Social Skills Rating Scale was used to collect the data. Major findings of the study reveals that most of the students have moderate level of social skills and also no significant difference was found in case of social skills of boys and girls.

Introduction

The main aim of education is to modify the behaviour of the child according to the needs and expectancy of the society. Children's social skills are important for early school success and later adjustment. Cooperative learning, role-playing, and participation in social and emotional learning programs foster the acquisition of these skills. Teachers and parents assume major responsibility in shaping children social behaviours. In addition, a positive school climate supports social learning by providing an environment in which all students are valued and respected. Research has documented that children without adequate social skills are at risk for difficulties including peer rejection, behaviour problems, and poor academic achievement. Moreover, recent research shows disturbing rates of expulsion in preschool and kindergarten, which has fuelled efforts to promote these skills (Gilliam & Shahar, 2006). Research has found that interpersonal skills are important for peer acceptance and social adjustment throughout childhood and adolescence (Masten et al., 2005).

From early childhood through adolescence, social skill development occurs through a reciprocal and bidirectional relationship between a child's individual characteristics (e.g., temperament) and the environment (e.g., parent warmth and sensitivity, family factors, and peers). Children begin developing social skills within the context of the parent-child attachment relationship (Rubin, Bulkow-ski, & Parker, 2006). It is from this relationship that children learn to read emotional cues, regulate their own emotions and behaviour, and incorporate the responses of their parents into their own experiences with people and situations; a process known as social referencing (Thompson & Lagattuta, 2006). A number of developmental changes occur in early childhood that also facilitate the development of social skills, including a significant increase in vocabulary (Thompson & Lagattuta, 2006) and brain maturation in the prefrontal cortex (Blair, 2002). These developmental changes

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lead to an improved ability to communicate and regulate feelings and behaviours. Children and adolescents who have difficulty empathizing or self-regulating have few positive social interactions and are likely to be rejected or neglected by peers, which can significantly impact social well-being and academic outcomes (Rubin et al., 2006).

Need and significance of the study

High School is a time of dramatic physical, cognitive, emotional, and social change (Cole & Cole, 1993). At this stage, children begin to learn how to establish healthy relationships, find socially acceptable ways to engage in activities that interest them, and make their way through school. Some are unable to find solid emotional and social ground as they progress through their developmental stages. In addition to their general competence for daily interaction, social skills can have a big impact on a child's ability to succeed in an academic setting. The classroom becomes both a training ground for development of social skills and an arena in which those skills are put to use. Therefore, in this study an attempt has been made to assess the social skills of secondary school students of Chandigarh.

Objectives of the study

The study was carried out with the following objectives:

1. To assess the social skills of secondary school students of Chandigarh.
2. To compare the social skills of boys and girls studying in secondary schools of Chandigarh.

Hypothesis of the study

To achieve the objectives of the study, following hypothesis was formulated:

- There exists a significant difference between the mean scores of social skills of boys and girls studying in secondary schools of Chandigarh.

Delimitations of the study

The present study was delimited to:

- The study was limited to a sample of 150 students.
- The study was limited to students studying in Grade IX (Session 2014-15) of government schools of Chandigarh only.

Method

In the present study, descriptive method of investigation was used to study the social skills

of secondary school students of Chandigarh.

Sample

Researcher used the random method of sampling to collect the sample and sample consisted of 150 students (75 boys and 75 girls) studying in Class IXth of Government Secondary Schools of Chandigarh. Researcher has taken the sample from the school of different zones of Chandigarh.

Sample of Students from Different Schools of Chandigarh

Sr. No.	Name of School	Number of students
1.	GMSSS-8B	30
2.	GHS-52	30
3.	GMSSS-37	30
4.	GMSH-28	30
5.	GMSSS-19	30

Tools Used

In this study, 'Social Skills Rating Scale' by Gresham and Elliott (1990) was used to assess the social skills of secondary school students.

Procedure

In the present study, data was collected from the 150 school students of IXth class of government schools of Chandigarh. Before collection of data, permission of the head of the school was sought by explaining him/her the purpose of the study. After getting the permission, tool of social skills was administered to the students. Students were provided proper instructions regarding the objectives of the study and filling up of questionnaires. The collected questionnaires were properly scored and analyzed by using statistical techniques and then interpreted accordingly.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The data of the present study was analyzed and interpreted in the following sections: Section I: Profile of Social Skills of Secondary School Students of Chandigarh. Section II: Comparison of Social Skills of Boys and Girls studying in Government Secondary Schools of Chandigarh.

Section I: Social Skills of Students Studying in Class IX of Government Secondary Schools of Chandigarh

Table -1

Level of Social Skills of Government Secondary School Students of Chandigarh

Level of Social Skills	%age of Students
High	11.3
Moderate	58.7
Low	30

Table 1 reveals that most of the boys (58.7%) studying in Class IX of Government Secondary Schools of Chandigarh have moderate level of social skills. Very few i.e. 11.3% students have high level and only 30% students have low level of social skills.

Table -2

Level of Social Skills of Boys of Government Secondary School Students of Chandigarh

Level of Social Skills	%age of Boys
High	10.7
Moderate	68
Low	21.3

It is evident from the table 2 that the most of the boys (68%) studying in Class IX of Government Secondary Schools of Chandigarh have moderate level of social skills. Very few i.e. 10.7% boys have high level and only 21.3% boys have low level of social skills.

Table -3

Level of Social Skills of Girls of Government Secondary School Students of Chandigarh

Level of Social Skills	%age of Girls
High	12
Moderate	49.3
Low	38.7

Table 3 shows that most of the girls (49.3%) studying in Class IX of Government Secondary Schools of Chandigarh have moderate level of social skills. Very few i.e. 12% girls have high level and only 38.7% girls have low level of social skills.

Section II: Comparative Analysis of Social Skills of Boys and Girls Studying in Class IX of Government Secondary Schools of Chandigarh

Table 4

Comparison of the Levels of the Social Skills of Boys and Girls studying in Class IX of Government Secondary Schools of Chandigarh

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-test
Boys	75	48.9	9.3	0.7824**
Girls	75	48.5	9.0	

**Insignificant at 0.01 level

Researcher compared the mean scores of the social skills of boys and girls of IXth class of Government Secondary Schools of Chandigarh. It was found that the mean and standard deviation of boys of IXth class are 48.9 and 9.3 respectively. The mean and standard deviation of girls of IXth class are 48.5 and 9.0 respectively. It can be observed from the table-4 that the t-ratio for the levels of skills for the boys and girls of IXth class of Government Secondary schools of Chandigarh is 0.7824. It indicates that the value of 't' i.e. 0.7824 is insignificant at 0.01 level. So the hypothesis "There exists a significant difference between the mean scores of social skills of boys and girls studying in Government Secondary schools of Chandigarh" is rejected. Boys and girls of Class IX of Government Secondary Schools of Chandigarh seem to be equally social.

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