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RESEARCH PAPER

Study of Social Competence Level among Secondary Schools' Students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to assess the social competence level of secondary school students. This was a single-method design quantitative study. Cross-sectional survey type technique was used. The population of study was all the secondary school students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A sample of 560 secondary students, 27 from each of 28 secondary schools were randomly selected. For data collection, a questionnaire.i.e.4-point Likert type scale developed by Shujja et al. (2015) was used for assessment of students' social competence level. The validity of scale was checked with the help of expert committee while reliability was checked through Cronbach Alpha and was determined as 0.726. Data were analyzed with the help of SPSS, on the basis of research question using frequency distribution, independent sample t-test and ANOVA. From the findings, it is concluded that social competence level is different for different students. So the development of students' social competence is recommended and for this, intervention/training is suggested at school level.

| Keywords: | ANOVA, Frequency Distribution, Independent Sample T-Test, Secondary School, Social Competence |

Introduction

Education is the main agent for bringing changes in the society. It is the process of equipping the individuals with the appropriate skills, qualities and competencies that enable them to participate effectively in development. To do so, the required curriculum is designed in schools to achieve the pre-determined objectives. One of these objectives is to make the individuals good citizens and useful member of society and be socially developed. This is the social competence. It has also been defined as the ability to make use of environmental and personal resources to achieve a desired social outcome (Hussong et al., 2005). Bierman (2004) defines social competence as the capacity to organize social behavior in different social contexts, in a manner beneficial to oneself, and consistent with social conventions and morals. According to Strickland (2001), children's social competence is a fundamental developmental process that implies possessing the necessary social, emotional, and cognitive abilities and behaviors for them to be well-adjusted to society and to prevail as a successful member of a society. The child's social competence depends on many factors, such as social skills of the child, his social awareness, and his confidence. With the development of these skills, and with the sound psychosocial adaptation in the surrounding, one might say that the child has reached the appropriate level of social competence. Social competence is the key to the adjustment process. It is the ability to explicit socially acceptable learned behavior which are marked by the positive social interactions. Social competence depends upon a person's ability to learn and adapt in new challenging environment and it grows with experience (Tabassum, Akhter & Iqbal,2020). So it is necessary to inculcate social competence in curriculum at all levels, particularly at secondary level which are essential for developing the personality of students. So in this vein, the researcher selected the topic to assess social competence level at secondary level.

Literature Review

Social competence is the process of development of one's social, emotional, emotional intellectual abilities and behavior which are essential for flourishment in society (Jyoti & Devi, 2022). Social competence is the level of getting the emotional, social and cognitive skills and behaviors which make an individual successful member of society. The success of an individual depends upon the extent which he/she has acquired the level of social competence which is necessary for self-actualization, growth and development. Social interaction and integration of culture in different socio-cultural setting give opportunity to individuals for acquiring social competence. Social competence is the aptitude of an individual which enables him/her to behave in a socially acceptable ways in various situations (Rani, 2019). Social competence is very important for mental health as it has been determined an educational objective of 1st order. The development of social competence has been a challenge when they encounter the demands of educational institutions. Social competence is desirable as well as adaptive. The development of appropriate social competencies during childhood and adolescence give rise to important implications for adjustment, satisfaction and opportunities later in life. Individuals who are socially competent can interact effectively with peers and adults and can establish close relationships. Social competence has a significant long-term influence upon psychological, academic and adaptive functioning. Social competence is an important factor for children by preventing them from serious emotional and behavior problems later in life. Social competence is directly related to social values. Social competence has been a point of interest by researchers by connecting it with psychopathology. Individuals having less social competence often appear anxious when playing or interacting with other children. Poor social competence and relationship difficulties with peers and other society members are associated with psychopathology as including social phobia, autism and early onset of schizophrenia. Poor social competence has also been linked to drop outs, job termination, suicide and dishonorable discharges from the military. Therefore, it is necessary to launch such strategies which enhance social competence but cultural community context and family environment etc. may be kept in mind while launching it(Amandeep, 2016).In the present study, the researcher considered only six sub-scales of social competence which are as under:

i)   Sociability. i.e. the ability of being social
ii) Self-efficacy. i.e. the ability of completing a task
iii) Adaptability. i.e. the ability of adjusting to surroundings
iv) Leadership. i.e. the ability of leading a group.
v)   Self-confidence. i.e. the ability of feeling positive about oneself and ones' abilities
vi) Social initiative .i.e. the ability of changing a social system

Hypotheses

Ho1**.** There is no significant difference in social competence among secondary school students.

Ho2. There is no significant difference in social competence among male and female secondary school students.

Ho3.There is no significant difference in students' social competence among different districts.

Theoretical Framework

This study of social competence is based on Erikson's theory of cognitive development and Bandura theory of Social cognitive theory of personality. According to both these theories, the development of social competence is influenced by physical and

intellectual development of children in collaboration with social factors like interactions, lifestyles etc. Capacity of understanding and following school rules and directions and other regulations etc. contribute to the development of social competence. Thus the students are possessing less social competence and thus have less relationship support. Such students can establish weaker interactions with their teachers as well as with their classmates which results in lower achievement (Tabassum, Akhtar & Iqbal, 2020). To explain the theoretical framework, three assumptions are considered.

1. According to Mueser, Bellack,Morrison & Wixtel(1990), social competence and academic achievement are directly related with each other.

2. According to Caprara et al.,(2009) the social competence and academic achievement are indirectly related with each other.

3.   According to different researchers like Magelinskaite, Kepalaite & Legkauskas(2014), the development of social competence takes place in a series of stages, through which students achieve better adjustment and academic performance(Tabassum et al.,2020).

Conceptual Framework

In the light of theoretical framework, the researcher's framework was to inculcate the social competence in secondary school curriculum.

Material and Methods

This study was a single-method design developed quantitatively. This is a descriptive survey type study. It involves collecting data to answer questions about students' social competence (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012 & Gay, 2000).

Research Design

This is a quantitative study conducted in two phases. For assessment of students' social competence level, 4-point Likert type questionnaire (SCSA) (developed by Shujja, et al; 2015) and was used.

Population

The population of the study comprises all the secondary level students in public sector schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which is given as under:

Table 1
Population in the Study

S.No	Secondary Schools	Students
1	2690	460331

Sample

Gay (2000) stated that if the population is beyond certain point (N=5000), then 400 sample size will be enough (Gay, 2000). The sampling technique was random for selection of schools and students and =the sample size was n= 560 secondary school students and n=20 students from 28 schools.

Research Instrument

The research instrument was divided into two parts: Part A containing demographic information of respondents including age, gender, class, village and district while part B containing the social competence rating form.

iSocial Competence Scale for Adolescents (SCSA) (developed by Shujja, et al; 2015). The researcher got permission from the author for using this scale in written form.

Social Competence level of students was rated by using Social Competence Scale for Adolescents (SCSA). This is the 53-items scale which consists of 4-point Likert Scale (1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Always).

Scoring Procedure

For assessing the social competence of students, the researcher used 4-point scale developed by Shujja, et al. (2015). This scale consists of 53-items having six sub-scales.i.e. self-efficacy, sociability, adaptability, leadership, self-confidence, and social initiative. The reliability of scale and sub-scales are given below. Based on scoring, the students have been divided into three main categories.

1. Low Social Competence group ranging below 170.
2. Medium Social Competence group ranging from 171 to 180.
3. High Social Competence group ranging from 181 to upper limit.i.e.212 (Jyoti & Devi, 2022).

Validity and Reliability

The validity of the instruments was checked with the help of experts in the field, instruments was modified according to their opinions. The reliability of the instrument was checked through Cronbach Alpha and was found as 0.726.

Table 2
Scale Statistics

Items	Reliability	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation
53	0.726	163.84	150.826	12.281

Data Collection

Researcher personally visited the schools and collected the data from respective institutes while in case of girls' schools, data were collected through research assistant. Data were collected through survey for measurement of social competence level of students at secondary level. The researcher conducted the students' social competence survey in classroom. Social competence scales were given to students to fill. This scale consisted of 53-items with four options. Each option had a specific score. i.e. never=1 point, sometimes=2 points, often=3 points, always=4 points. Each student was assigned a code and the sum of scores of all the statements of each respondent yielded a total score on SCSA. Thus the maximum score on the scale came out=53x4=212 and the minimum score=53x1=53.

Results and Discussion

Table 3
Summary of Selected Secondary Schools

S.No.	District	Gender		Total
		Boys	Girls	Schools
1.	Peshawar	06	01	07
2.	Charsadda	06	01	07
3.	Mohmand	06	01	07
4.	Bajaur	06	01	07
5.	04	24	04	28

Table3 shows the number of schools selected in each district. The number of schools in district Peshawar is seven, six boys and one girl. Similarly, seven schools have been selected from each district.

Table 4
Summary of Respondents

S.No.	District	Gender		Total
		Boys	**Girls**	**Respondents**
1.	Peshawar	120	20	140
2.	Charsadda	120	20	140
3.	Mohmand	120	20	140
4.	Bajaur	120	20	140
5.	04	480	80	560

Table 4 shows the number of respondents selected in each district. The number of respondents in district Peshawar is one hundred and forty, one hundred and twenty boys and twenty girls. Similarly, one hundred and forty respondents have been selected from each district. To find the characteristics of test score distributions, descriptive statistics like mean, median and standard deviation were used.

Table5
Social Competence of Secondary School Students

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
Social competence	560	164.09	12.323	.521

Table 5 shows that the mean and standard deviation of students in social competence was 164.09 and 12.323 respectively. The researcher used frequency distribution for distribution of students on the basis of students' social competence score.

Table 6
Distribution of Students on the Basis of Social Competence Score

S.No.	Levels	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.	Low	371	66.3	66.3	66.3
2.	Medium	172	30.7	30.7	97.0
3.	High	17	3.0	3.0	100.0
4.	03	560	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 6 shows that out of 560, 371 students possess low social competence (66.3%), 172 are possess medium social competence (30.7 %) and 17 students possess high social competence (3%). So majority of the students possess low social competence. As the social competence of different students is different. Hence, the null hypothesis Ho1**.** "There is no significant difference in social competence among secondary school students" is rejected. The researcher used independent sample t-test for comparison of social competence between boys and girls.

Table 7
Gender-Wise Comparison of Students' Social Competence Score

S.No	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Social	Boys	480	163.77	12.341	.563
competence	Girls	80	164.25	11.984	1.340

Table 7 shows that the mean and standard deviation of boys in social competence was 163.77 and 12.341 respectively. The mean and standard deviation of girls was 164.25 and 11.984 respectively. As the observed probability value of the Levene's test is greater than .05, the top row of t-test statics was considered. Here equal variances are assumed and

so there is no significant difference in the social competence scores among boy and girl secondary students. This study is in line with study done by Jyoti & Devi (2022) and Rani (2019).So the null hypothesis Ho2."There is no significant difference in social competence among boy and girl secondary school students" is accepted. The researcher used ANOVA for comparison of students' social competence among four districts.

Table 8
District-wise Comparison of Students' Social Competence Score

Social competence	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4325.350	3	1441.783	10.022	.000
Within Groups	79986.186	556	143.860		
Total	84311.536	559			

Table 8 shows the ratio of between-group variance to within-group variance, F=10.022 and associated probability value p= .000. From this value of F, it is concluded that social competence differs for students at different districts. Hence the null hypothesis Ho3. "There is no significant difference in students' social competence among different districts" is rejected.

Findings

This study revealed that most of the students scored low in social competence (66.3%) and the social competence score is different for different students. This study is in contradiction with the study of Singh (2014).

There is no significant difference in the social competence score among boys and girls secondary school students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This finding is in contradiction to the study of Shehu (2019) and gets support from the study of Jyoti & Devi (2022) and Rani (2019).This may be the result of the fact that during adolescent stage, social competence becomes crucial.

There was significant difference in social competence scores among students at different districts. This finding is in line with the study of Amandeep (2016).

Discussion

In the study, social competence level of students at secondary level was identified and it was found that majority of the students were having low social competence level (66.3%). This is a significant finding because development of social competence level is very important as it causes high academic achievement level. This development of social competence level will bring prosperity in province like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Conclusion

The study concludes that social competence of students in KPK is an essential factor for improving school students' social competence and skills. Ataendance policy is an essential part of developing social competence of students. if the school curriculum does not pay attaention to social competence of students in school, they may lack many other skills which can prevent their academic performance. Low social competence can be increased through activity-based real life model behaviour, dialogue practice, social engagement programmes, encouragement of active participation in all types of co-curricular activities and other events.

Recommendations

In the light of the views of students, following recommendations were drawn.

- It was found that majority of the students have low social competence so their development is strongly recommended.
- It was found that students' self-efficacy level is low so its development is recommended.
- It was found that students' sociability level is low so its development is recommended.
- It was found that students' adaptability level is low so its development is recommended.
- It was found that students' leadership level is low so its development is recommended.
- It was found that students' self-confidence level is low so its development is recommended.
- It was found that students' social initiative level is low so it may be developed on priority basis.
- It was recommended that following four supportive intervention strategies may be adopted for enhancement of social competence of students. (a) Environmental Arrangement: It includes physical structures, objects and organization of classroom, routines and activities in such a way that flourish students' social competence. Here the classroom is arranged into well-defined interest areas that can accommodate small groups of students sets the stage for the development of inter-personal skills and knowledge. By this grouping of students, the social demands are easily managed. (b)Naturalistic Strategies: These are the techniques which are integrated within the natural flow of classroom. These techniques require teachers' awareness, quick thinking and thoughtful intentional use. These techniques include On-the-Spot support and conflict mediation. On-the-spot support is the spontaneous coaching and modeling. Conflict mediation is the process of scaffolding the students, building ability to resolve through discussion and without resorting to aggression. (c)Planned Routine Activities: These are the activities which are planned for achieving particular objectives. These activities which are planned for enhancement of social competence are of certain categories. i.e. cooperative learning activities, PLAS centres, literature sharing and discussion, puppetry, group affection activities, signing, listening to, reflecting about songs and group discussion of real-life, classroom social issues (d) High Intensity Interventions: These are highly planned, teacher-directed and teacher-monitored approaches involve directly instructing students about their social competence. In these interventions, students' behaviors are assessed. These interventions are used when other strategies fail to enhance the social competence.

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