



A STUDY ON SOCIAL SKILLS AND GENERAL MENTAL ABILITY OF ADOLESCENTS IN SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT :

The present research study was undertaken to examine the Social Skills and General Mental Ability of Adolescents in School. Descriptive Survey method was adopted for the study. Social Skills Inventory constructed by the investigator and Revan's General mental Ability test were used for Collection of data. Percentage Analysis, t-test, Person Product moment correlation techniques were used for analysis of the data. The result showed that Majority (68%) of adolescents were found to possess moderate level of Social Skills only (18%) of adolescents were found to possess high level of Social Skills, Majority (64%) of adolescents were found to possess moderate level of General Mental Ability only (18%) of adolescents were found to possess high level of General Mental Ability, No significant difference was found in Social Skills of male and female adolescents. No significant difference existed in General Mental Ability of male and female adolescents; No significant relationship was found to exist between General Mental Ability and Social Skills.

KEYWORDS : Descriptive Survey method, t-test, Person Product moment correlation, Social Skills, General Mental Ability.

1. INTRODUCTION

The major problems facing the world today can be solved only if we improve our understanding of human behavior" (Schlinger, 2005). Educational leaders, teachers, school counselors, social workers and school psychologist have long argued that some adolescents were under performing academically because they lack proper social skills were inattentive and unprepared instructional hours, aggressive toward classmates and educational staff, unable to engage in cooperative learning and exhibited disruptive behavior in classroom this affected their academic skills vis, study skills, problem-solving skills, critical and decision making skills, mastery performance skills and task management skills. Students who struggled to master social skills faced more disciplinary consequences when they failed to engage in appropriate behavior. Students need to be taught these skills directly and systemically skills to achieve academic success.

The lack of social skills has precluded the students' quest to experience academic success in school. Effective social interactions are necessary for emotional and behavioral adjustment, and successful functioning at home, school, work, and social settings. It can be especially challenging for adolescents to establish and maintain competent social interactions because of the many developmental changes that occur during this developmental stage. The physical and emotional changes associated with puberty, as well as the more advanced cognitive and verbal abilities, impact the adolescent's interactions with both peers and adults (Bierman & Montminy, 1993; Hansen et al., 1995; Kelly & Hansen, 1987). Social interactions and relationships become increasingly complicated and adult

like, as the peer group becomes larger and more complex. Adolescents experience a variety of other changes that affect their social relationships, including school and peer group changes, changes in family structure or functioning, and alterations in societal and community expectations (Hansen et al., 1995; Petersen & Hamburg, 1986). Social skills possessed by the adolescents affect their social relationships and social participation and hence the other aspects of development too.

1.1 Social Skills

Social skills are characterized by a set of behaviors displayed by individuals in an interpersonal context in which they express feelings, attitudes, desires, opinions or rights adequately for the situation, respecting the same behavior in others (Caballo, 1986). They are therefore characterized by the performance of the individuals given the demands of a social situation. These skills are learned and the performance level differs depending on the developmental stage and cultural and situational variables.

The development of social skills is influenced by two distinct factors: the individual temperament and environment. The temperament is configured by the tendency that the individual has to relate socially. The influence of the temperament on the development of social skills can be counterbalanced by the environmental factor. This is because the environment acts to reinforce social behaviors, as well as enabling the learning of new skills through observation and interactions (Caballo, 2003).

Two types of social skills seem to be especially important for a good experience of adolescence: assertiveness and self-control (Bakker, Ormel, Lindenberg, Verhulst & Oldehinkel, 2010). Socially skilled adolescents are able to express their feelings and desires, managing to control their impulses and alter emotions and thoughts. Furthermore, deficits in social skills favor victimization among the peers and conflict with authorities. The victimization and conflict resulting from deficits in social skills, when lasting, can result in mental problems (Bakker et al., 2010). Individuals with good social skills have a low chance of developing depression and being lonely and socially anxious (Segrin & Flora, 2000). Thus, the studies indicate an interaction of the deficits in social skills with victimization among peers and psychiatric disorders (Bakker et al., 2010; Segrin & Flora, 2000; Wagner & Oliveira, 2007). Conversely, socially skilled behaviors are seen as favorable for the development of strategies when faced with adverse situations, reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience.

Learning of effective Social Skills and establishing productive social relationship with peers and family members may require a basic level of General Mental Ability. The General Mental Ability of an individual may help them to gauge the emotions, feelings and behaviours of others and have an impact on the way they interact with others.

1.2 General Mental Ability:

General Mental Ability is a concept rather than a power or a thing that can be observed. An attempt to define it leads to a great variety of interpretations. Intelligence, as far as a layman is concerned, manifests itself in terms of how an individual behaves in society. According to Stern (1914), "Intelligence is the general capacity of an individual to consciously adjust his thinking to new requirements. It is general mental adaptability to new problems and conditions of life. Sternberg's (1985) theory of intelligence contains three sub-theories, one about context, one about experience and one about cognitive components of information processing. The contextual sub-theory attempts to specify what would be considered intelligent in a given culture or content. According to Sternberg, culturally intelligent behaviour involves adapting to one's present environment, selecting a more optimal environment or respecting one's current environment. The theory claims that expression of any intelligent behaviour will be a function of experience one has with particular class of tasks being tested. According to McMillan (1990) intelligence means the ability to reason and to profit by experience. An individual's level of intelligence is determined by a complex interaction between his heredity and environment. According to Gardner's (1999) theory of multiple intelligence, there are at least eight separate intelligences - logical, linguistic, spatial, bodily, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist. He has stressed that there may be more kinds of intelligence-eight is not a magic number.

Recently, he has speculated that there may be spiritual intelligence and an existential intelligence or the abilities to contemplate big questions about the meaning of life. He says that individuals may excel in one of these eight areas but have no remarkable abilities in the other seven.

2. Need and importance of the study

Adolescence is a developmental stage in which the social skills play an important role considering the need for social integration and the search for self-assertion and independence. It is therefore a stage of the life cycle where adaptations and changes in personal and social skills need to be made. It is a critical period for learning social skills. In adolescence, the peers influence development, serving as models and sources of reinforcement for the social skills (Caballo, 2003). The period of adolescence has specific characteristics, including the tendency for group interaction, which indicates the propensity that the adolescent has to relate to peer groups. This group tendency (Knobel, 1981) is derived from the individual's need to identify with someone or something, such as sports activities so that they can construct their own identity, with this being considered the main task of adolescence (Erikson, 1972). The group tendency and the acquisition of identity are, therefore, relevant aspects in the experience of adolescents, which require social interactions, since it is from the interaction with others that the sense of identity is formulated.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The statement of the problem is,

“A Study on Social Skills and General Mental Ability of Adolescents in Schools of Mysuru city”.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken with the following objectives;

1. To study the level of Social Skills of Adolescents.
2. To study the level of General Mental Ability of Adolescents.
3. To compare the Social Skills of Male and Female Adolescents.
4. To compare the General Mental Ability of Male and Female Adolescents.
5. To examine whether there is a significant relationship between Social Skills and General Mental Ability of Adolescents.

5. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses were formed in pursuance of the objectives of the study;

1. There is no significant difference in the Social Skills of male and female Adolescents.
2. There is no significant difference in the General Mental Ability of male and female Adolescents.
3. There is no significant relationship between Social Skills and General Mental Ability of Adolescents.

6. Variables of the Study

Main variable

- Social skills
- General Mental Ability

Background variable

- Gender

7. Operational Definition of the Key terms

Social Skills: Social Skills are any competence facilitating interaction and communication with others where social rules and relations are created, communicated and changed in verbal and non verbal ways.

The following are the components of Social skills:

- ✧ Assertiveness
- ✧ Empathy

- ✧ Communication
- ✧ Cooperation
- ✧ Self Control
- ✧ Selflessness

In this study Social skills represented by the scores on Social Skills inventory constructed by the Researcher.

General Mental Ability: General Mental Ability (GMA) is a term used to describe the level at which all individual learns understands instructions and solves problems. Tests of general mental ability include scales that measure specific constructs such as verbal mechanical ,numerical, social and spatial ability. The overall score is considered the most important factor , explaining more variation in individual performance than specific abilities. The Raven's progressive Matrices (RPM)is a non-verbal test for measuring the intelligence of persons above the age of eleven .In this RPM booklet , there are five sets of problems .they are sets ,A,B,C,D and E . Each set has 12 problems. Every problem requires the user to select the design that completes the pattern.

8. Method

Descriptive Survey method was adopted for this study.

9. Sample of the study

The sample of the study comprised of hundred secondary schools students in Mysuru city. The students were selected by using simple random sampling technique.

10. Tools used for Collection of Data

- Social Skills Inventory Constricted by the researcher.
- Reven's Progressive Matrices (RPM) is used to collect the data.

11. Statistical techniques used for Analysis of Data

Percentage Analysis, t-test, Person Product moment correlation techniques were used to analyze the collected data.

12. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Objective-1:

To study the level of Social Skills of Adolescents.

Table No.1: Table showing the percentage of adolescents' possessive low, moderate and high level of Social Skills.

Social Skills	Criteria	Score Limit	Secondary school students	
			Frequency	Percentage
Low	Below $M-\sigma$	209.64	14	14
Moderate	Between $M-\sigma$ & $M + \sigma$	210-245	68	68
High	above $M+\sigma$	245.54	18	18
Total			100	100%

Figure No.1 : Figure showing the percentage of adolescents possess low, moderate and high levels of Social Skills.

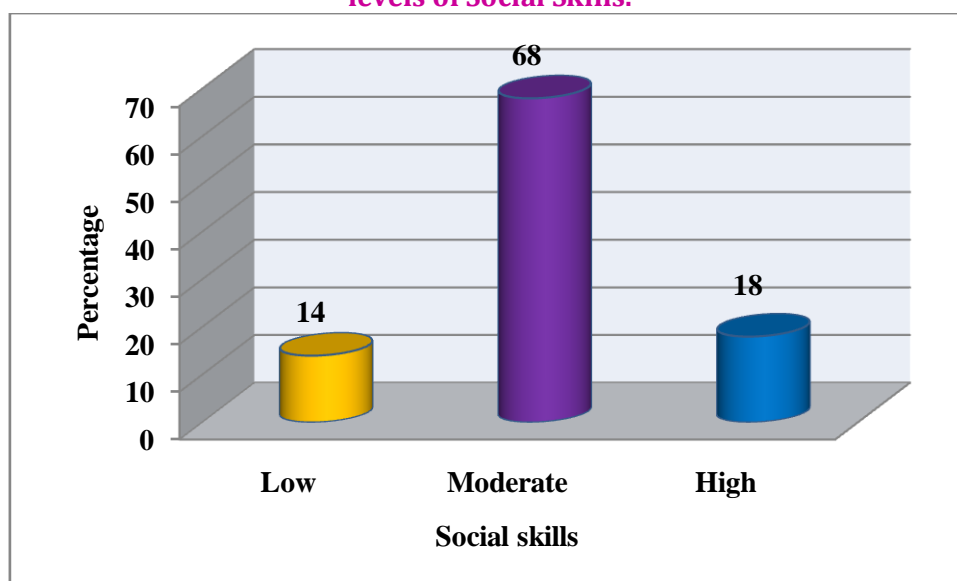


Table no.1 and Figure No.1 reveal that majority (68%) of adolescents possess moderate level of Social Skills. It is also seen that only (14%) and (18%) of the adolescents possess low and high level of Social Skills respectively.

Objective-2

To study the level of General Mental Ability of Adolescents.

Table No.2: Table showing the percentage of adolescents possessing low, moderate and high level of General Mental Ability.

General Mental Ability	Criteria	Score Limit	Secondary school students	
			Frequency	Percentage
Low	Below $M-\sigma$	37.72	18	18
Moderate	Between $M-\sigma$ & $M+\sigma$	38-53.60	64	64
High	above $M+\sigma$	53.66	18	18
Total			100	100%

Figure No.2 : Figure showing the percentage of adolescents possess low, moderate and high levels of General Mental Ability.

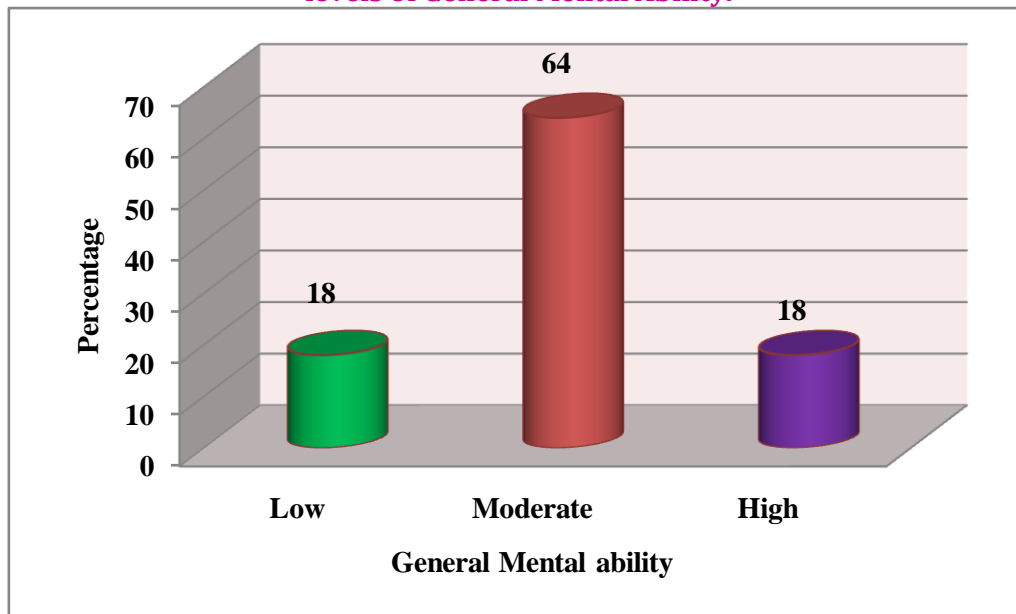


Table no.2 and Figure No.2 reveal that majority (64%) of adolescents possess moderate level of General Mental Ability. It is also seen that only (18%) and (18%) of the adolescents possess low and high level of General Mental Ability respectively.

Hypothesis -1

There is no significant difference between Social Skills of male and female adolescents.

Table No.3: Table showing the Number, Mean, Standard deviation, 't' value and level of significance in the Social Skills scores of adolescents belonging to male and female.

Variables		N	Mean	S.D.	't' value	Level of significance
Gender	Female	50	227.62	17.458	0.017	NS
	Male	50	227.56	18.616		

NS= Not significant.

The data in the above table shows that obtained 't' value of 0.017 is lesser than table value of 1.98 at 0.05 level. It is not significant. Therefore null hypothesis (Ho1) is accepted and it is concluded that there is no significant difference between Social Skills of male and female adolescents.

Hypothesis -2:

There is no significant difference between General Mental Ability of male and female adolescents.

Table No. 4: Table showing the Number, Mean, Standard deviation, 't' value and level of significance in the General Mental Ability scores of adolescents belonging to male and female.

Variables		N	Mean	S.D.	't' value	Level of significance
Gender	Female	50	46.48	8.234	0.991	NS
	Male	50	44.90	7.704		

NS= Not significant.

The data in the above table shows that obtained 't' value of 0.991 is lesser than table value of 1.98 at 0.05 level. It is not significant. Therefore null hypothesis (Ho2) is accepted and it is concluded that there is no significant difference between General Mental Ability of male and female adolescents.

Hypothesis -3:

There is no significance relationship between the general mental ability of adolescents and their Social Skills.

Table No. 5: Table Showing the Number, Mean, 'r' value between the General Mental Ability scores of adolescents and their Social Skills.

Variables	N	'r' value	Level of significance
General Mental Ability	100	0.013	NS
Social Skills	100		

The data in the above table shows that obtained 'r' value of 0.013 is lesser than table value of 0.138 at 0.05 level. It is not significant, therefore, the above null hypothesis is accepted, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between mean General Mental Ability and their Social Skills. The r-value shows that a positive but insignificant relationship exists between Social Skills and General Mental Ability.

13. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The following are the findings of the study:

- Majority (68%) of adolescents were found to possess moderate level of Social Skills only (18%) of adolescents were found to possess high level of Social Skills.
- Majority (64%) of adolescents were found to possess moderate level of General Mental Ability only (18%) of adolescents were found to possess high level of General Mental Ability.
- No significant difference was found in Social Skills of male and female adolescents.
- No significant difference existed in General Mental Ability of male and female adolescents.
- A positive but insignificant relationship is found between Social Skills and General Mental Ability of Adolescents.

14. CONCLUSION

The present study reveals that majority of adolescents have moderate level of Social skills. Social Skills becomes more important in today's world, since adolescents need to be trained to attain Social skills in their life to exhibit group compatibility, show sympathy, and adjust emotionally, be polite, dependable, co-operative and cheerful.

15. REFERENCES

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