



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Education

SOCIAL COMPETENCY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN RELATION TO DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

KEY WORDS: Social Competency, Social Skills, Education etc.

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ABSTRACT

Social competence can be defined as the social skills that an individual require to successfully adapt himself/herself to the society. It is one of the important attribute of the member of the progressive society. In the society, the success of an individual depends upon the extent to which he/she has attained the social competence required for his self-development and self-realization. The high level of social competency is an important feature for the effective social interaction. The present study has been done with the aim to study the significance of difference in social competency with respect to gender, locality, types of family and birth order. Descriptive research method has been adopted. 200 post graduate students were selected by using simple random sampling technique. Social Competence Scale (Sharma & Rani, 2012) was used to gather the required data. The collected data have been analysed using statistical techniques like mean, standard deviation, critical ratio and one-way ANOVA. The results of the study depicted that gender, locality, type of family and birth order have no significant influence on social competency of university students.

INTRODUCTION

Education is crucial to human development. An instinctive behaviour of an individual is converted into rational or social behaviour through education. Education makes an individual cultured, civilized and advanced. Education is the process through which abilities are developed among individuals which will enable them to adjust with their environment. It helps an individual to live a better social life. Education is the process of acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude that helps in the modification of behaviour. It inculcates the required competencies among individuals so that they can face problems in life. One of the important facets of development is social development. Social competency is an important aspect of social development. It includes the social, emotional and cognitive abilities required to handle social situation effectively, form relationships and interact with others in an effective way.

Several studies have focused on social competency in the university environment because of its relevance for education and society over the last few decades. The degree to which an individual has obtained the richness and strength of social competence necessary for his self-actualization, growth and development determine his success in the society. Cognitive, social and emotional skills and behaviour that people require to successfully adapt to the social environment is referred to as social competence (Jennifer, 2015). Social competence is the capacity to adapt and communicate in certain social situations (Hoermann & Goerke, 2014). It is a group of abilities or skills of a person to respond to others responses in social situations. When confronted with a new social circumstance, those who are socially competent will handle social situation in an easy manner (Ren, 2015).

Social competency is the basis on which expectation for future relationship with other people is formed. A student gains experience from past interactions and applies that knowledge in social situations for effective adjustment. It includes interpersonal communication and social skills (Beazidou & Botsoglou, 2016). Social competencies may be broadly defined as the abilities that allow individuals to live in collaboration with others in the world. It comprises aspects of social, civic, intercultural and interpersonal competencies. When a person does not have sufficient social skills, he/she may face problem in daily living skills, work life, independent living and participation in the social work.

General social competencies are hard to define due to the reason that for living in collaboration with others in the world and for attaining social objectives, the behaviour and skills needed change with the requirement of specific situation. The idea of social competence is of great importance to social researchers as it is significant for the adjustment in various

social contexts. Social competencies determine adjustment in the home, educational institutions, work, society and in more situation of life. It also emphasises on other aspects of social competence like trust, empathy, respect for others and self-control.

Review of Related Literature

Charak, Monika & Kiran (2025) examined to what extent social competency influenced by gender, economic status and locality. Incidental sampling method was used to select the sample of 140 students of Integrated B.A. B.Ed. programme. Data was collected through Social Competence Scale (Sharma & Rani, 2010). The result depicted that the social competency of female students was higher than that of the male students. Regardless of locality, female students reveal greater social competence in comparison to male students. Females belonging to middle class family exhibit greater social competence as compared to middle class males.

Manzoor & Malhotra (2024) conducted a study on 11th and 12th class students studying in govt. and private schools with an aim to examine to what extent their academic performance effected by social competence. Stratified random sampling was employed to select 600 students. The result of the mean showed that girls belonging to both public and private schools have better social competency than boys. It is also revealed that social competence had positive correlation with academic performance of students of both public and private institutions.

Sharma (2023) conducted study on B.Ed. students to examine relationship between social competency and study habits. Random sampling method was adopted to select the sample of 200 students (110 females and 90 males) from four B.Ed. colleges. The social competency scale by Sharma, Shukla and Shukla and Study Habits Inventory by Dr. B. V. Patel were used to collect the data. The results of Pearson's Product Moment method revealed that social competence of B.Ed. students had a positive relationship with their study habits.

Baidya & Chowdhury (2023) investigated social competence of higher learning students by adopting descriptive survey method. Simple random sampling method was used to select 200 universities and college students from one district of Tripura. Social Competence Scale by Latika Sharma and Dr. Punita Rani was used to gather data. The results of t test revealed that gender has no impact on social competence.

Devi, Rajkumari & Jyoti (2022) conducted a study on 100 secondary school students with an aim to investigate whether social competency had relationship with social skills. Data was collected with the help of Social Competency Scale by Dr. Kiran Shukla (1971) and Social Skill Scale by Dr. Vishal Sood

(1971). Data was analysed with the help of mean, SD and t test. The results depicted that social competency of boys and girls did not differ from each other. Social competency had significant relationship with social skills.

Kimo & Ayele (2021) conducted a study to measure the role of social competency and coping strategies in predicting the academic achievement of the first semester students. The sample of 360 students were selected on whom adapted versions of Coping Strategy Scales (Carver, 1999) and Social Competency Scale (Silvera, Martinussen, & Dahl, 2001) were administered. The results depicted that social competency had strong positive relationship with academic achievement. Male and female students differ significantly with respect to social competency and academic achievement.

Kaur & Singh (2020) conducted a study to examine whether social competency had relationship with self-esteem and emotional intelligence. Random sampling method was used to select 600 adolescents as sample from six districts of Punjab state. The results of correlation depicted that social competency had significant and positive correlation with emotional intelligence and self-esteem.

Significance of the Study

In the recent past, social researchers across disciplines and policy makers pay more attention to social competencies. To some degree, this may be due to the increased concern about the erosion or lack of social competencies in present society. In the present competitive world, success depends not only on high intelligence but also on effective communication skills. A high level of social competency is an essential character of an individual for a successful interpersonal communication. Social competence helps in successful adjustment in the school and promote academic achievement.

Children who are socially and emotionally intelligent can confidently manage their social and educational needs and they can compete with normal students in each and every aspect of life. Our old education system follows an integrated approach as it focuses on the mental development of children along with providing essential knowledge and developing some general competencies only. It neglects the development of social competency skills among students. The prior researches reported mixed type of results. Kaur (2018), Pal & Misra (2019), Sathish (2019), Alfred & Hillar (2021), Kiran (2022) and Devi, Rajkuri & Jyoti (2022) reported no significant difference in social competency with respect to gender whereas Kharluni & Erigala (2018) and Jyoti & Devi (2022) revealed that gender had played significant role in influencing social competency. Sathish (2019) found that locality and type of family had no significant influence on social competency whereas Srivastava & Mittal (2021) reported significant influence of type of family on social skills. Borne & Mears (2009) and Sathish (2019) found that birth order had no significant role in influencing social competency of university students. So, it is important to conduct the present research to investigate the influence of gender, locality, birth order and type of family furthermore on social competency of university students.

The present piece of research focuses on the study of influence of gender, locality, birth order and type of family on social competency of university students and suggest measures how to improve their social competencies.

Objectives

1. To study difference in social competency of university students with respect to gender.
2. To study difference in social competency of university students with respect to locality.
3. To study difference in social competency of university students with respect to type of family.

4. To study difference in social competency of university students with respect to Birth order.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in social competency of university students with respect to gender.
2. There is no significant difference in social competency of university students with respect to locality.
3. There is no significant difference in social competency of university students with respect to type of family.
4. There is no significant difference in social competency of university students with respect to Birth order.

Methodology

The present research is descriptive in nature. Descriptive research is a type of research which aimed at describing a population, event or phenomenon in an accurate and organized manner.

Population and Sample

The population of the study comprised of post graduate students of Jammu Province of Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. In Jammu province, there are six universities namely Central University of Jammu, Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Cluster University of Jammu, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Science & Technology, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University and University of Jammu. In the present study, University of Jammu was selected randomly using lottery method.

200 post graduate students were selected as sample by using simple random sampling technique from 10 teaching departments of University of Jammu. The scale was distributed among 200 students. But, only 171 students filled the tool appropriately and completely. The rest of the students had submitted the scale without filling it.

Tool Used

Social Competence Scale by Latika Sharma and Punita Rani (2012) was used for data collection. The scale consists of 47 items having five alternative responses i.e. Never, Sometimes, Mostly and Always. It comprises three competencies- 1) Personal Adequacy 2) Interpersonal Adequacy 3) Communication Skills.

Data Analysis

The statistical techniques used to analyse the collected data on the variable are given below:

- Mean, Standard deviation and Critical Ratio are used to find out the significance of difference in social competency of university students with respect to gender, locality and family type.
- One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is used to find out the significance of difference in social competency of university students with respect to birth order.

RESULTS

Table 1- Showing Significance of Difference in Social Competency of University Students with Respect to Gender.

| Variable | Social Competency | | | | | Level of Significance |
|----------|-------------------|------|--------|-------|------|-----------------------|
| | N | Mean | SD | CR | | |
| Gender | | | | | | |
| | Male | 36 | 142.69 | 13.77 | 0.81 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 135 | 140.59 | 14.17 | | |

Interpretation

The mean score of male university students on social competency is 142.69 and of female students is 140.59. The standard deviation of social competency of male university students is 13.77 and of female students is 14.17. The calculated CR value for significance of mean difference between male and female university students on social competency is 0.81 which is found to be not significant. It

means that male and female university students do not differ significantly in social competency. Hence, the null hypothesis i.e. "There is no significant difference in social competency of university students with respect to gender" is accepted. Male and female university students possess similar level of social competency.

Table 2- Showing Significance of Difference in Social Competency of University Students with Respect to Locality.

| Locality | Social Competency | | | | | Level of Significance |
|----------|-------------------|--------|--------|-------|------|-----------------------|
| | N | Mean | SD | CR | | |
| | Urban | 76 | 140.55 | 14.28 | 0.40 | |
| Rural | 95 | 141.42 | 13.98 | | | |

Interpretation

The mean score of urban university students on social competency is 140.55 and of rural students is 141.42. The standard deviation of social competency of urban university students is 14.28 and of rural students is 13.98. The calculated CR value for significance of mean difference between urban and rural university students on social competency is 0.40 which is found to be not significant. It means that urban and rural university students do not differ significantly in social competency. Hence, the null hypothesis i.e. "There is no significant difference in social competency of university students with respect to locality" is accepted. Urban and rural university students have similar level of social competency.

Table 3 - Showing Significance of Difference in Social Competency of University Students with Respect to Family Type.

| Type of family | Social Competency | | | | | Level of Significance |
|----------------|-------------------|--------|--------|-------|------|-----------------------|
| | N | Mean | SD | CR | | |
| | Nuclear | 134 | 141.28 | 14.51 | 0.82 | |
| Joint | 31 | 139.23 | 12.07 | | | |

Interpretation

The mean score of university students living in nuclear family on social competency is 141.28 and of students living in joint family is 139.23. The standard deviation of social competency of university students living in nuclear family is 14.51 and of students living in joint family is 12.07. The calculated CR value for significance of mean difference between university students living in nuclear and joint family on social competency is 0.82 which is found to be not significant. It means that university students living in nuclear and joint family do not differ significantly in social competency. Hence, the null hypothesis i.e. "There is no significant difference in social competency of university students with respect to family type" is accepted. University students living in nuclear and joint family have similar level of social competency.

Table 4 - Showing Significance of Difference in Social Competency of University Students with Respect to Birth Order.

| Birth Order | Social Competency | | | | | | Level of Significance |
|---------------|--------------------|----------------|----------|---------------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| | Source of Variance | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Sum of Squares | F-ratio | | |
| | Between Groups | 294.9883 | 3 | 98.32945 | 0.49 | Not Significant | |
| Within Groups | 33388.8 | 167 | 199.9329 | | | | |
| Total | 33683.79 | 170 | | | | | |

Interpretation

The calculated F-ratio for significance of difference in the mean scores for social competency of university students with respect to birth order is 0.49 which is found to be not significant (in comparison to the table value). Hence, the null hypothesis i.e. "There is no significant difference in social competency of university students with respect to birth order" is accepted. The results show that birth order has no

significant impact on social competency of university students.

DISCUSSION

In the present study, no significant difference was found in social competency of male and female university students. This finding is in agreement with the studies done by Kaur (2018), Pal & Misra (2019), Sathish (2019), Alfred & Hillar (2021), Devi, Rajkuri & Jyoti (2022), Binu & Chaturvedi (2023) and Baidya & Chowdhury (2023) but not supported by Kharluni & Erigala (2018), Jyoti & Devi (2022) and Charak, Monika & Kiran (2025).

With respect to locality, it was found that university students from urban and rural area did not differ significantly in their social competency scores. This finding is in line with the study of Sathish (2019) who found that urban and rural secondary school students did not differ in their social competence.

When social competency was analysed on the basis of family type, no significant difference was found. This finding is in accordance with the study of Sathish (2019) who explored that secondary school students belonging to nuclear and joint family did not differ significantly in their social competency but opposed to the study of Srivastava & Mittal (2021) who revealed that social skills of secondary school students belonging to nuclear and joint family differ significantly.

It was also seen that social competency of university students is not influenced by birth order. The finding is supported by Borne & Mears (2009) and Sathish (2019).

It was concluded that demographic variables like gender, type of family, locality and birth order have no significant impact on social competency of the students. It may be due to the reason that a positive university life improves social competency that serves as a foundation for future academic and professional success. Moreover, positive feedback from peer groups and society play a significant role in improving all aspects of social competence.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. The present study was undertaken on a small sample (N=200), it is suggested that further study can be conducted on large sample.
2. The present study was limited to university students only. The further study can be done on college students.
3. The present study was limited to students of University of Jammu. A similar kind of study can be conducted on other universities of Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
4. The study can be made more comprehensive by taking more variables.
5. The further study should emphasis on the influence of technology in the development of social competencies.

Implications of the Study

The present study has implications for parents, teachers and students

1. Parents should be conscious of the needs and interest of their children in order to improve their social competency.
2. Parents as well as teachers should be conscious of their role in the development of social competencies and skills of children as these competencies will help them to deal with social and academic problems of life.
3. There should be training programs for parents to enhance their awareness level and capacities so that they can help their children in the social development.
4. Teachers and parents should present model of effective communication, interaction and good relationship in front of students so that they can make these skills a part of their life.
5. Teachers should encourage the students to participate in co-curricular activities. In this way, they will learn to

respect the feelings of other children, take the responsibilities and make their friends.

6. The students should be given enough freedom and space by their parents so that they can chase their dreams by expressing their ideas.
7. The students should be encouraged to take part in group discussion and ask questions so that they can learn to converse with other group members in an effective way.
8. Social skill training should be provided to the students as an intervention to enhance interpersonal skills, increase adjustment and lessen disruption.

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