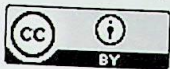# SOCIAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

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## Introduction

People with better social skills are able to develop productive and long lasting personal and professional relationships. Social skills are specific behaviours which lead to assertive and positive interpersonal communications during social interactions. It is the ability of a person to generate actions in an interpersonal communication that showcases emotions, expectations, desires, beliefs or privileges in a satisfactory manner, values others and can fix issues quickly, which mitigate problems in the future (Gresham, 2016). Communication, cooperation and interpersonal skills are all part of social skills. When social demands are increasingly complex, individuals both personally and professionally must develop their social. This is because social competence is important and appreciated in the professional environment.

Social skills are linked to the well-being of students, as well as their academic progress and career success. For successful interactions, people need to expand their repertoire and recognize the abilities that are present and those that need to be developed, and determine action plans required for the improvement of these abilities to develop social competencies (Angélico, Crippa, & Loureiro, 2013). This assists in developing social skills in an assertive way helpful for professional growth.

Cooperation and development in all sorts of educational, labour and social institutions, where individuals are substituted as the key production entity by a broad variety of teams and groups of staff, are becoming more necessary, while gradually requiring expertise on the workforce (Mendo-Lázaro, León-del-Barco, Felipe-Castaño, Polo-del-Río, & Iglesias-Gallego, 2018). In reality, workers are becoming increasingly valued and respected for collective social skills. To meet these demands, educators are working together to allow group-based learning methods to encourage collaboration among students, to learn to collaborate in teams, to enhance results, and to learn and build interpersonal skills and competencies.
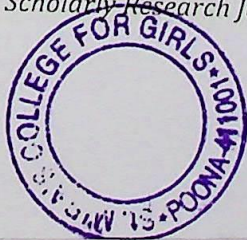
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## Table 1: Attributes of Social Competence

| Social competence | Description |
|---|---|
| Self-awareness | The acceptance of one's feelings, beliefs and abilities and shortcomings |
| Self-management | Management of thoughts and actions to accomplish one's goals |
| Social awareness | Express awareness and concern for others. |
| Relationship skills | Build healthy partnerships, operate in teams and resolve disputes directly. |
| Responsible decision making | Making positive and moral decisions. |

*Source: (Dymnicki, Sambolt, & Kidron, 2013)*

Self-awareness ensures that one's emotions, desires, beliefs and abilities are correctly measured and a strong sense of self-confidence is retained. The capacity to control feelings and to follow methods to maintain a balance during overwhelming circumstances (Paolini, 2020).

Social awareness is characterized as the capacity to interact at and understand others; to identify and acknowledge differences and differences between individuals to groups; to identify and utilize social resources such as families, friends and educational institutions. The willingness to consider and value experiences of others in social encounters is a crucial element of social awareness. Such capacity influences both positive working interactions and spiritual and pro-social actions (Rizkiya, Hakam, & Agustin, 2020). The willingness to recognize circumstances in which social assistance can act as a tool to handle challenges is also a crucial component of this skill.

Relationship skills are the ability of an individual create and sustain relationships which are stable and satisfying, centred on trust, to avoid unsuitable social pressure and dispute prevention, management and resolution, and to pursue assistance where possible. For instance, students' fear of communicating with students from different backgrounds and teaching staff can interfere with their sense of belonging to college and hinder the process of adaptation (Dymnicki, Sambolt, & Kidron, 2013). Relationship capabilities make it easier for students to interact together in diverse cultures and experiences.

Responsible decision-making relates to decision focused on ethical principles, safety considerations, adhering to social values, conformity with certain criteria and possible implications of the various actions, the application, in the academics and society, and the commitment to the welfare of the society. Such abilities are becoming even more relevant as students enter different environments such as colleges and workplaces.

Educators can also include education in social skills. Training on social skills is a proactive, positive response that replaces more desirable negative behaviour and teaches students more constructive and socially rewarding behaviour methods (Gibbons, Fernando, & Spedding, 2016). In addition, studies have found that training in social skills for students is extremely beneficial as it is critical for to overcome both academic and behavioural difficulties.

**Need for Social Skills among students:**

The college students are from the age group where they become career oriented and want to focus on their upcoming job. In the absence of the basic social skills, it would severely limit the quality of work that they would produce in future. We can therefore also state that social skills may predict how well the students would perform at home, educational institution and in the future workplace. Promoting social skills also helps in promoting our happiness and satisfaction which in turn boosts our self-esteem and reduces our day-to-day life stress. Better social skills result in better communication which results in us relating efficiently to a larger group of people. A person with a well-developed social skill finds it very comfortable to communicate his outlook, thoughts or ideas to a larger group of people and even convey his negative thoughts or disagreements to people who may not agree to his / her point of view.

**Research Question:**

What is the existing social skill status of the F.Y.B.A. students?

**Statement of the Problem:**

To find the social skill status among the F.Y.B.A. students studying in colleges in Pune.

**Objective:**

1. To assess the social skill of the F.Y.B.A. students in Pune.

**Conceptual Definitions:**

**Social Skill:** Socially acceptable learned behaviours that an enable an individual to interact effectively with others and to avoid or escape negative social interactions with others (Gresham & Elliott, 1990).

**Operational Definition:**

**Social Skill:** For the present study social skills refers to assessment of the five skills such as Empathy, Interpersonal Relationships, Effective Communication, Coping with Emotions and Decision Making among the F.Y.B.A. students.

**Theoretical Foundation:**

Daniel Goleman puts it as "We are wired to connect".

**Erikson's Psychosocial Theory** of personality development emphasizes the interrelationship between social and emotional domains. He emphasized the role of interpersonal relationships in solving a series of conflicts in a person.

**Vygotsky (1978)** highlighted that cognitive functions are connected to the external or social world. Vygotsky explained that children learn in a systematic and logical way as a result of dialogue and interaction with a skilled helper within a zone of proximal development (ZPD). The lower boundary of the ZPD are activities the learner can do on his or her own without the assistance of a teacher or mentor.

**Bandura (1965, 1977, 1986),** in his theories of social learning and social cognition, theorized three categories of influences on developing social competence: (1) behaviors children and adolescents observe within their home or culture, (2) cognitive factors such as a student's own expectations of success, and (3) social factors such as classroom and school climate.

**Theory of Social Isolation:** Wilson (1987) defined social isolation as "the lack of contact or of sustained interaction with individuals or institutions that represent mainstream society."

**Review of Related Literature:**

Researchers across the globe have time and again proved that apart from the importance of daily interaction, social skills have a big impact on the child's ability to succeed in an academic setting. The classroom acts both as a training ground for social skills development as well as an arena in which these skills are put to use.

**Scope:**

1. This study focuses on the F.Y.B.A. students studying in the under-graduation colleges in Pune.

2. This study is related to the assessment of five parameters of social skills –Empathy, Interpersonal Relationships, Effective Communication, Coping with Emotions and Decision- Making skills.

**Delimitations:**

1. This study was delimited to the F.Y.B.A. students studying in six under graduation college of Pune.

2. The data collection for the study has been done using the standardized test (Life Skill Assessment Scale).

3. Only five selective parameters of social skills have been considered in this study.

**Limitations:**

1. The assessment of Social Skills is dependent on the truthfulness of the responses given by the F.Y.B.A. students during the study.

2. The researchers had no control over factors like stress, fatigue, family background, socio-economic background, span of attention, interest, etc.

**Research Method:** Survey Method

**Population:** All the F.Y.B.A. students studying in the under-graduation colleges in Pune.

**Sampling Technique:** Purposive Sample

**Sample Size:** 600 F.Y.B.A. students

**Data Collection Tool:** Standardised Test – **Life Skills Assessment Scale (LSAS)** developed by Radhakrishnan Nair, B. Subasree and Sunitha Ranjan. This scale consisted of measuring 10 dimensions of life skills and the scores obtained under each life skill represented the level of life skills in the respective domain. After the summation of all the scores under each of the dimensions the global score for life skills can be evolved. For the present study, the researcher considered only the five dimensions of empathy, interpersonal relationship, effective communication, coping with emotions and decision-making had been considered. The interpretation of raw scores was done on the basis of the Table No. 7 given in the manual of the standardised test.

**Data Analysis Tool:** Mean

**Data Representation:** Graph

The data analysis has revealed the following results:
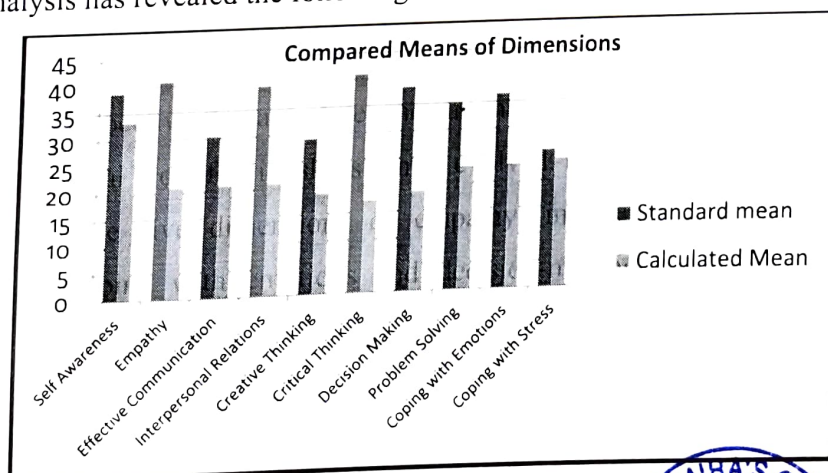
| Dimensions | Standard Mean | Calculated Mean |
|---|---|---|
| Self-Awareness | 38.84 | 33.31 |
| Empathy | 40.77 | 24.96 |
| Effective Communication | 30.21 | 21 |
| Interpersonal Relations | 39.43 | 21.06 |
| Creative Thinking | 29.22 | 18.98 |
| Critical Thinking | 40.99 | 17.3 |
| Decision Making | 38.34 | 18.82 |
| Problem Solving | 35.04 | 23.07 |
| Coping with Emotions | 36.51 | 23.25 |
| Coping with Stress | 25.74 | 24.1 |

**Observation:**

The result from the survey data reveals that, the 10 dimensions of F.Y.B.A. students have difference in the standard mean and calculated mean. Out of the 10 dimensions of FYBA students have low calculated mean in the areas of empathy 24.96, interpersonal relationships 21.06, effective communication 21, coping with emotions 23.43 and decision-making 18.82 from the social skills competencies. It has been observed that the F.Y.B.A students have low or very low scores in the social skill competencies.

**Interpretation:**

From the above data analysis of the 10 dimensions of social skills, the FYBA students social skills are low compared to standard mean of the five social skills such as empathy, effective communication, interpersonal relationships, coping with emotions and decision making are low and needs to be developed.

**Conclusion:**

The areas of social skills such as empathy, effective communication, interpersonal relationships, coping with emotions and decision making can be developed through training program for FYBA students. The program will definitely help FYBA students to develop social skills effectively. Educators need to take initiatives to design effective need based social skill programs and also evaluate the progress of the students so that we may help them to succeed in their academics as well as life.

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