

Gender Difference in Social Skills among Secondary Schools' Students

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Abstract

This study investigates gender differences in social skills among secondary school students in Martin Grammar School, Kakching, Manipur; with the aim of identifying whether male and female students significantly differ in their social behavior and interpersonal competencies. A total of 100 students (50 boys and 50 girls) were selected using stratified random sampling method from a secondary school in Kakching to participate in the research. This study employed a quantitative research design, utilizing a standardized social skills assessment questionnaire. The findings reveal a notable variation in specific areas of social skills among male and female students in a secondary school in Kakching.

Keywords: Social Skills, Senior Secondary School, Female

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I. Introduction:

Social skills are not a new term in today's generation; these are the skills that an individual need to adjust in their surroundings. We use social skills in our daily life like when we talk with others, listen to someone's talk carefully, our body language, also the tone we use while talking, etc. there are so many that we use them. They are very important in every phase of our life. We learn basic social skills generally from our home (within family members) then school, college, etc. But we can learn social skills from anywhere what importance to us is which skill helps us to solve our problem. By learning these social skills, later it will help in socialization process. By learning these social skills, it makes a person competent enough to communicate and form relationship in different social settings. While there are various types of social skills that an individual develops, this study will only focus on 7 social skills which are commonly observed among school students which are co-operation, peer-relationship, leadership, respect for rules at school, basic manners, communication, self-management.

Cooperation:

It is the skill in which people communicate and work together towards a common goal which is not easy to handle alone. We, as a human live within a society and at some points of life, we need to help and listen to others to achieve something. By working together with respect and proper communication, we can consider that almost half of our goal is achieved.

Peer Relationship:

Relationship plays a vital role in our life especially during adolescent period. In this age, most of our new experiences are faced along with our similar age or same friend circle. If an individual's social friend circle is either good or bad, it will surely have impact on the individual during these adolescent years. As the understanding and decision-making ability are not fully developed in their adolescent (school students) period in general. So, having good relationship skills with peers who can influence them in a good way is important to them.

Leadership:

During this adolescent period (school students), to develop the leadership skill is very important. By leading, it does not mean only to lead and control others at this age. These leadership qualities in a child can be seen when they child can clearly express his opinions to others, help others, accept other thoughts when working together in class. By seeing these good qualities, other children will try to learn the behavior that's what makes the child a good leader in the class.

Respect for rules at school:

There are certain rules at schools; by following these rules regularly, a student is showing his/her respect and self-discipline. A school's rules are not just about do's and don't but they are teaching a student to be more responsible in their life and focus on develop their moral behavior. These skills are important as in later life it will make a person more reliable and accountable in any work, he/she does.

Basic manners:

Having basic manners is crucial and we should teach the children about these Basic manners is the behavior of a person to show respect and appreciation towards others. For instance, when a friend helps with our homework, we can thank them by showing works of appreciation or listening to others saying without interrupting their talk in the middle of their talking. By teaching children about basic manners at such young age, we are helping them in developing a good social skill.

Communication:

It is the skill where we express our ideas through verbal (language), non-verbal (body language, voice tone, facial expression), visual forms to interact with other people. Not just expressing our ideas, but listening to other and understanding their thought is also important in communication. When we say communication, it is not just about sharing information but also having the understanding of what the other person is actually trying to convey the other one.

Self-management:

Is the skill where a person is able to control and regulate his emotions, thoughts and actions in any social setting? To achieve this skill, we should teach the

children at school or home about how to manage oneself so that our behavior or the way we act does not hurt ourselves or others. Also this skill is very important after school life.

II. Literature review:

Ahirrao (2023), a research study was carried out involving 200 male and 242 female junior college students aged between 15 and 18 years. The study compared males and females on specific social skill variables, including personal adequacy, interpersonal adequacy, and communication skills. The findings revealed no significant gender differences in interpersonal adequacy, communication skills, or overall social skills. However, a gender difference was observed in the area of personal adequacy among the adolescents that is male students have higher personal adequacy than female students. (Ahirrao,2023)

Rahaman (n.d.) conducted a study on social competence involving 198 male and 194 female secondary-level students from the Malda district, under the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education. One of the key findings revealed that female students demonstrated stronger social skill abilities compared to their male counterparts. (Rahaman, n.d.)

Claudel and Gonzalez (2024) carried out an exploratory study involving 116 students, comprising 56% women and 44% men, to examine social skills related to assertiveness and empathy. The findings indicated that there were no significant gender differences in the development of students' levels of assertiveness and empathy. (Claudel & Gonzalez, 2024)

The studies mentioned above were conducted by various researchers to examine gender differences in social skills. Their findings varied, highlighting that:

1. Male students scored higher in personal adequacy, a dimension of social skills, compared to female students.
2. Female students demonstrated stronger overall social skills than male students.
3. No significant gender differences were found in social skills between male and female students.

III. Objective

The following are the objectives of the present study: -

1. The study the gender difference on 7 different dimensions of social skills such as cooperation, peer relations, leadership, respect for rules at school, basic manners, communication and self-management among secondary students.
2. To study the gender difference on social skills of secondary students.

IV. Hypothesis:

- a) There will be significant gender difference in Cooperation among secondary students.
- b) There will be significant gender difference in Peer-relations among secondary students.

- c) There will be significant gender difference in Leadership among secondary students.
 - d) There will be significant gender difference in Respect for rules at school among secondary students.
 - e) There will be significant gender difference in Basic manners among secondary students.
 - f) There will be significant gender difference in Communication among secondary students.
 - g) There will be significant gender difference in Self-management among secondary students.
2. There will be significant difference in social skills among secondary students.

V. Methodology:

The present study is exploratory research and it aims to find out the gender difference among secondary students in Martin Grammar School, Kakching, Manipur. To select a sample of 100 students studying in class 9 and class 10 in this particular school, stratified sampling method was used.

Student Distribution at Martin Grammar School (Class 9 & Class 10)

Class	Number of Boys	Number of Girls
Class 9	35	36
Class 10	35	34
Total	70	70

To apply stratified random sampling on student population and select 100 students from the secondary students at Martin Grammar School, the researcher followed the following steps:

- a) The student population was divided into 4 groups i.e., Class 9 Boys, Class 9 Girls, Class 10 Boys and Class Girls.
- b) After this, the researcher finds out the total population by adding the students' number altogether in Class 9 and Class 10 which is 140.
- c) Calculate the proportional allocation for sample of 100, we use the formula

$$n_h = N_h/N \times n$$

Where

N = total population

n = total desired sample size

N_h = Population size of stratum

n_h = sample size to draw from stratum

Group	Population	Proportion	Sample size (Out of 100)
Class 9 Boys	35	$35/140 = 0.25$	$0.25 \times 100 = 25$
Class 9 Girls	36	$36/140 \approx 0.2571$	$0.2571 \times 100 \approx 26$
Class 10 Boys	35	$35/140 = 0.25$	$0.25 \times 100 = 25$
Class 10 Girls	34	$36/140 \approx 0.2429$	$0.2429 \times 100 \approx 24$
Total	140		100

After getting the sample size of 100 out of the 4 groups, the data were collected in the year 2024 by using Social

Skill Scale for Adolescents by Badesaba Gour and Punita Govil (2023). The scale contains 31 questions in which there are 7 dimensions of social skills.

Variables:

- Independent variable – Gender
- Dependent variable – Social skills

V. Data Analysis and findings:

The scoring of the collected answer sheets was done manually by the researcher. To decide which statistical test to use for analysis of the data, the researcher used the Shapiro-Wilk test on the combined dataset of 100 students. Where W statistic = 0.905 and p-value = 0.00000257. Since $p < 0.05$, the combined data is not normally distributed. So, the researcher decided to use Mann-Whitney U test for the gender comparison and the statistical significance was assessed at the $\alpha = 0.05$ level.

Table 1: Gender difference in Cooperation

Variable	Gender	N	Median	IQR	U statistic	P-value
Cooperation	Boys	50	16	2	835.0	0.0029
	Girls	50	16	3.75		

Note: P-value is significant at 0.05 level.

Hypothesis no. 1a: There will be significant gender difference in cooperation among secondary students.

Table 1 shows that both groups (boys and girls) have the same median but girls have a wider IQR (Interquartile Range), indicating more variability in their co-operation scores. Since the p-value (0.0029) < 0.05 , the result is statistically significant. This means there is a significant difference in co-operation scores between boys and girls.

Table 2: Gender difference in Peer relations

Variable	Gender	N	Median	IQR	U Stat	P-value
Peer relations	Boys	50	6	0	267.5	3.47×10^{-12}
	Girls	50	12	3		

Note: P-value is significant at 0.05 level

Hypothesis no. 1b: There will be significant gender difference between in peer relations among secondary students.

Table 2 shows that girls have significantly higher peer relation scores (median 12) than boys' peer relation scores (median =6). Girls also show more variability than boys. The p-value is extremely small ($<< 0.05$) which means we reject the null hypothesis. This indicates a statistically significant difference boys' peer relation scores and girls' peer relation scores.

Table 3: Gender difference in leadership

Variable	Gen	N	Median	IQR	U Statistic	P-value
Leadership	Boys	50	20	2	2259.0	2.49×10^{-12}
	Girls	50	11	5		

Note: P-value is significant at 0.05 level

Hypothesis no. 1c: There will be significant difference in leadership among secondary students.

Table 3 shows that boys scored significantly higher (median 20) than girls (median 11). Girls scores are more spread out (IQR = 5) compared to boys (IQR = 2), meaning girls' scores vary more. The p-value is extremely small (< 0.05), indicating a statistically significant difference between girls and boys.

Table 4: Gender difference in Respect for rules at school

Variable	Gender	N	Median	IQR	U Statistic	P-value
Respect for rules at school	Boys	50	29	5.25	1212.0	0.787
	Girls	50	28	2.0		

Note: No significant difference

Hypothesis no. 1d: There will be significant difference in Respect for rules at school among secondary students.

Table 4 shows that medians are close (Boys 29, Girls 28) and IQR shows that boys' scores are more spread out. The p-value = 0.787 is much greater than 0.05 which shows that there is no statistically significant difference in "Report for rules at school" scores between boys and girls at the 0.05 significance level.

Table 5: Gender difference in Basic Manners

Variable	Gender	N	Median	IQR	U Statistic	P-value
Basic Manners	Boys	50	15.5	5	1157.0	0.516
	Girls	50	17	1		

Note: Not significant at 0.05 level

Hypothesis no. 1e: There will be significant gender difference in Basic manners among secondary students.

Table 5 shows that girls have a slightly higher median score (17) compare to boys (15.5) and boys' score are more variable (IQR = 5) than girls (IQR = 1). Here, the p-value = 0.516 is much greater than 0.05. the difference in basic manners scores between boys and girls is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 6: Gender differences in Communication

Variable	Gender	N	Median	IQR	U Statistic	P-value
Communication	Boys	50	12	2	1173.0	0.588
	Girls	50	13	2		

Note: Not significant at 0.05 level

Hypothesis no. 1f: There will be significant gender difference in communication among secondary students.

Table 6 shows that girls have a slightly higher median communication score than boys (13 vs 12). The score variability is the same for both groups. The p-value = 0.588 is above 0.05 which shows that the difference in communication scores between boys and girls is not statistically significant at 0.05 level.

Table 7: Gender difference in Self-Management

Variable	Gender	N	Median	IQR	U Statistic	P-value
Self-management	Boys	50	24	2	993.0	0.073
	Girls	50	25	3		

Note: No significant at 0.05 level

Hypothesis no. 1g: There will be significant difference in Self-management among secondary students.

Table 7 shows that girls have a slightly higher median self-management score (25 vs 24). Girls show greater variability in scores than boys. Then, the p-value = 0.073 which is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Also, girls scored slightly higher on self-management but the difference is not statistically significant at 0.05 level.

Table 8: Gender difference in social skills

Variable	Gender	N	Median	IQR	U Statistic	P-value
Social skills	Boys	50	121	P	1130.0	0.410
	Girls	50	120	4		

Note: No significant at 0.05 level

Hypothesis no. 2: There will be significant gender difference in social skills among secondary students.

Table 8 shows that despite having difference in median and IQR between boys and girls in terms of social skills, there is no statistically significant gender difference between boys and girls since p-value = 0.410 > 0.05.

Conclusion:

1. Significant gender difference found in Cooperation among secondary students.
2. Significant gender difference found in Peer- relation among secondary students.
3. Significant gender difference found in Leadership among secondary students.
4. No significant gender difference found in Respect for rules at school among secondary students.
5. No significant gender difference found in Basic manners among secondary students.
6. No significant gender difference found in communication among secondary students.
7. No significant gender difference found in Self-management among secondary students.
8. No significant gender difference found in social skills among secondary students.

The findings of the study shows that there is no significant gender difference in social skills among secondary students. However, in terms of cooperation and peer relation girls have a higher score in average than boys. But in leadership, boys have higher score in average than girls.

Limitation of the study

1. The findings cannot be generalized to all the secondary students in kakching city as it is

exploratory research conducted in only one secondary school in kakching.

2. The sample of the study is limited to secondary school students only.

Suggestion:

1. Further more extensive research can be conducted on this social skills area by using this research as a base
2. There are so many dimensions of social skills (other than the 7 dimensions that are studied in this research) which need to be studied.

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