

Relationship between Social Competence and Home Environment of Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to find the relationship between social competence and home environment of adolescents. This study also aimed at finding the relationship between dimensions of social competence (Personal adequacy, interpersonal adequacy and communication skills) and dimensions of home environment (Protectiveness, parental involvement, academic stimulation, reward, parental warmth, punishment, participation in home affairs, control, permissiveness and parental expectations). Descriptive method was used in this study. The study was conducted on a sample of 800 students of +1 class taken randomly from schools of Jalandhar and Kapurthala affiliated to Panjab school education board, Mohali. Social competence scale by Sharma & Rani (2012) was used to find social competence among adolescents. Home environment scale by Akhtar & Saxena (2014) was used to study the home environment of adolescents. The analysis of data was done by using product moment correlation, mean, standard deviation, coefficient of skewness and coefficient of kurtosis were also calculated to know the nature of data. The results of the study show that the Personal Adequacy (PA) dimension of social competence has positive, low but significant relation with academic stimulation dimension of home environment. All other nine dimensions of home environment have positive, very low and not significant correlation with personal adequacy of adolescents. The results show that there exists positive, very low but significant correlation between interpersonal adequacy dimension of social competence and parental involvement, academic stimulation, reward, parental warmth, participation in home affairs, permissiveness and parental expectation dimensions of home environment respectively while there exists a positive, very low and not significant relation between interpersonal adequacy & protectiveness, punishment and control dimensions of home environment. There exists a positive, low, but significant correlations between communication skills dimension of social competence and parental involvement, parental expectations, academic stimulation and permissiveness dimensions of home environment while the correlation of communication skills with the remaining dimensions of home environment is not significant. There exists a positive,

low but significant correlation between social competence and home environment of adolescents. The results indicated that as home plays an important role in developing social competence among adolescents, such a loving and caring environment should be provided at home that gives academic stimulation, protectiveness, freedom to express ideas and opportunities to participate in home affairs.

Keywords: Social competence, home environment, adolescents

Contemporary world is becoming more and more competitive. Now-a-days along with good academic achievement, the personal trait that strongly supports child's developmental graph is his social competence that refers to one's ability to successfully master the social, emotional and intellectual skills required within specific settings, in accordance with developmental level and the norms and expectations of society to make and maintain positive social outcomes (Bierman and Welsh, 2008). Among the various social groups, home occupies the first and most important place for the development of the individual. There is a considerable body of evidence from a variety of fields that substantiate the view that everyday family experiences and relationships with parents are fundamental to children's developing social skills (Parke and Ladd, 1992). Moreover, children learn social competency skills through the modeling and quality of social interactions within their families. These skills are also related to personality and broader social factors like self-esteem, self-efficacy, inter personal efficacy, communication skills and cognitive skill which are themselves impacted by family environment.

Social Competence

Social competence is an umbrella term that covers a wide variety of behaviour. It refers to a child's ability to establish and maintain high quality and mutually satisfying relationships and to avoid negative treatment or victimization from others. It refers to the virtues of taking responsibility and showing respect, positive work habits, the ability to solve problems and adjust to routines, and the readiness to explore new things. Social competence can be well explained under three dimensions:

1. Personal Adequacy (PA)
 2. Interpersonal Adequacy (IA)
 3. Communication Skills (CS)
1. Personal Adequacy involves self-efficacy (i.e., self-direction, physical development and personal responsibility) and self-control (i.e. self-monitoring/coping ability)
 2. Interpersonal Adequacy involves social awareness (i.e. accurate identification and understanding of social cues/rules present in one's social environment, social perception, interpretation of social behavior and respect for individual differences), social ability and social skills (i.e. using appropriate gestures, greetings etc. while interacting with others).
 3. Communication skills involve skills of effective communication in various social contexts.

Knight and Hughes (1995) define social competence as “the ability to initiate and maintain satisfying relationships especially with peers.” Benard (1995) defines social competence as the ability to possess relationship skills. It involves responsiveness, empathy, caring, communication skills, and a sense of humor. Synthesizing the gist of the given definitions, it can be said that social competence is a construct that reflects the child’s capacity :- a) to integrate behavioural, cognitive and affective skills (Bierman & Welsh, 2000); b) to adapt to the diverse social contexts and demands (Stewart Brown & Edmund, 2003; Weare, 2000); c) to develop good relationships (Sanson & Smart, 2003), d) to enable children and adults to be successful in tasks involving others (Spence & Donovan, 1998); and e) alludes how well an individual uses specific social skills to attain social objectives or to control or regulate a social environment (Spence, 2003).

The development of social behavioural competencies during childhood and adolescence has important implications for adjustment, satisfaction and opportunities in life as well as fostering well being (Merrell, 2002; Park, 2004). Without adequate social competence skills a person may experience problems in the fields of employment, daily living skills, independent living and participating in community (Reugg, 2004). Social competence is also integral to how well a young person transitions into adulthood. Socially competent Individuals are able to elicit positive responses from others, interact effectively, and are adept at forming close relationships (Sanson & Smart, 2003). Furthermore, social competence has a significant long term influence upon psychological, academic and adaptive functioning (Elliot, 2001). It facilitates social acceptance by peers, positive self-esteem and self-confidence (Lund & Merrell, 2001). Socially competent children are more likely to manifest better coping strategies and problem solving techniques in a range of cognitive situations. Those who display inappropriate social behavior are less adjusting with their peers have been found to have continual problems in life (Schaffer, 2006).

Family influences have always been stressed on the acquisition of social skills. Prior, (2000) showed that aspects of family functioning such as connectedness and support were powerful correlates of Social competence. Similarly high quality parent–child relationships were associated with better-developed social competence. Poor social skills were found to be more common among children who were experiencing family disruption (e.g., marital discord, divorce) and dysfunction (e.g., parental depression, child abuse). Aspects of parent’s child-rearing practices and disciplinary styles, such as warmth, agreeableness, and responsiveness, were linked with children’s social competence whereas directiveness, disagreeableness and coercion are correlated with skill deficits and behavior problems.

Home Environment

Family is the strongest social-biological unit that leaves the greatest influence on the development and perpetuation of the individual’s behaviour. It provides the settings for social and intellectual experiences from which they acquire and develop the skills, attitudes, virtues which shape their choice and performance of adult roles. Home, which constitutes the immediate environment of an adolescent, is a system whose texture and tone is saturated mainly with parental practices and parental beliefs. It is the place, where they learn how family relationships work, by observing their parents, grandparents, siblings and rest

of the family members. Healthy family relationships, love of the dearest people, understanding and care by the members of the family are the gains one gets from his family. Various researchers have identified the following characteristics of home environment - willingness to devote time to the child, parental guidance, parental aspiration for achievement, provisions for the child's intellectual needs, affective rewards, physical punishment, strict discipline, neglect, deprivation of privileges, protectiveness, conformity, independence, involvement with the child etc. The perception and attitude of adolescents towards their parents and the family is the basis of their behavioral and emotional responses.

It's necessary for the today's society to understand the importance of having healthy family environment. It is easier to achieve successful career, professional success, happiness and peace of mind for those who are leading their life in a healthy home environment. Research has indicated that the home environment and parental involvement greatly contribute towards a child's development and learning. In a study done by Suninder and Rupan (2006), it has been found that adolescents with high control, social isolation, deprivation of privileges and rejection at home have shown significantly lower problem solving, decision making, coping with emotion, coping with stress and overall psychosocial competence. Children with high protectiveness, punishment, conformity, reward, nurturance and permissiveness have better empathy, critical thinking, empathy, self-awareness, coping with stress, interpersonal relations and effective communication as well as overall psychosocial competence.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Tung and Dhillon (2006) in their study on 250 adolescents have revealed a negative relationship between autonomy and psycho-social adjustment of adolescents and have shown that strong desire of emotional autonomy from parents leave the youth in a rather vulnerable position, a situation that causes low self-esteem and influences their psycho-social adjustment.

Kaur, Rana and Kaur (2009) did research on home environment and academic achievement as correlates of self-concept among adolescents. For the present study a sample of 300 adolescents was taken. The results of the study revealed self-concept to be positively correlated with academic achievement, though not significantly so. A significantly positive relationship of home environment components of protectiveness, conformity, reward, and nurturance with self-concept is revealed, thereby meaning that use of rewards and nurturance from parents should be done for positive self-concept development among adolescents. However, the correlation of social isolation, deprivation of privileges and rejection components of home environment is significantly negative with self-concept among adolescents indicating that for positive self-concept development among adolescents, there should be less or no use of social isolation, deprivation of privileges.

Singh (2013) found in his study on social competence of adolescents in relation to emotional intelligence and home environment that there is a significant positive relation between social competence and emotional intelligence and also there is a significant positive relation between social competence and all the dimensions of home environment.

Mishra and Shanwal (2014) found in their study that, the family has an important role in development of different aspects of a person, particularly the virtues resulting from experiences gained during the process of socialization. The present study investigates the role of family environment in developing self-efficacy, also called as perceived ability of adolescents. As India has the largest population of adolescents, so their contribution in giving it a new shape would be prominent. The sample of 130 respondents with the age range of 13-18 (average age of 14.91) were evaluated in this study to investigate the relationship between family environment and self-efficacy. The results showed positive association between family environment and self-efficacy.

Singh, Pandey and Singh (2015) found that, the home-environment primarily consists of the prevalent customs, codes & traditions of the community. It is at the same time made highly personal by the human interaction involved. The child first comes in contact with the mysteries of a community in the mirror of family. The level of his aspiration is influenced by his family standards. As aspirations are ego-involved, success leads to increased self-esteem, while failure brings embarrassment, remorse and feeling of personal inadequacy and inferiority.

Significance of the study

Social competence is an important ingredient of modern civilization, and is the essential quality of the members of progressive society. It is the process of learning to conform to group standards, mores and traditions and becoming imbued with a sense of oneness, intercommunication and cooperation. As family has a special role in a child's life, it acts as a socialising agent to develop social sensitivity among children. Through his interactions with his parents and other family members, the child becomes able to identify himself and the position that he occupies with reference to others. Many research studies indicated negative psychological changes in the adolescence period as an outcome of the maladjustment in the social surroundings. Parents and peer group are an essential part of adolescent's social surroundings. Parental attitude, relationship behaviour and expectations towards their offspring, mark a deep impact on the growth pattern of the child and finally on their character. According to Anjana Ahuja (2006), 'It is not enough to be intelligent. It is not enough, even, to be emotionally intelligent. The rules of the game have changed: we also have to be socially competent.'

In order to be successful in today's competitive world it is imperative for an individual to not only have high intelligence but also good interactional skills. Family being the powerful agent of social development, can play an important role in developing social competence and lead the children to get well adjusted in society as per the changing conditions. Present study aims at observing the relation between social competence and family environment, in order to reach at the conclusion about the role of various factors of family environment that influence social competence of a child and to suggest measures to improve the family environment to provide the supportive system to the child.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the relationship between dimensions of social competence- personal adequacy

(PA), interpersonal adequacy (IA) and communication skills (CS) and dimensions of home environment- protectiveness, parental involvement, academic stimulation, reward, parental warmth, punishment, participation in home affairs, control, permissiveness and parental expectation.

2. To study the relationship between social competence and home environment of adolescents.

Hypotheses of the study

1. There will be no significant relationship between dimensions of social competence- personal adequacy (PA), interpersonal adequacy (IA) and communication skills (CS) and dimensions of home environment- protectiveness, parental involvement, academic stimulation, reward, parental warmth, punishment, participation in home affairs, control, permissiveness and parental expectation.
2. There will be no significant relationship between social competence and home environment of adolescents.

Research method

The nature of problem undertaken and the kind of data required for the purpose of study lead to the selection of the research method. In the present study descriptive survey method was used.

Sample

The sampling frame of the present study was the +1 class students of secondary schools of Jalandhar and Kapurthala districts affiliated to Punjab School Education Board. The complete sample comprised 800 students of +1 class of secondary students (boys and girls) taken from urban and rural, government and private schools affiliated to Punjab School Education Board. Stratified Random Sampling technique was adopted to form the sample.

Tools used

- Social Competence Scale by Sharma and Rani (2012) was used to find social competence among adolescents.
- Home Environment Scale by Akhtar and Saxena (2014) was used to study the home environment of adolescents.

Analysis of data and interpretation

Product –moment correlation was used to analyse the data. Further mean, standard deviation, coefficient of skewness and coefficient of kurtosis were also calculated to know the nature of the data.

Table 1 shows the coefficient of correlation between three dimensions of social competence viz., personal adequacy (PA), inter-personal adequacy (IA), communication skills (CS) with 10 dimensions of home environment viz., protectiveness, parental involvement, academic stimulation, reward, parental warmth, punishment, participation in home affairs, control, permissiveness, parental expectation

Table 1: Correlation Coefficients between Dimensions of Social Competence and Dimensions of Home Environment (N=800)

Variable	Dimensions of Home Environment									
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
PA	-0.02	0.03	0.09*	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.04
IA	0.00	0.08*	0.08*	0.07*	0.07*	-0.00	0.08*	0.02	0.13*	0.07*
CS	-0.01	0.09	0.13*	0.03	0.04	-0.00	0.06	0.02	0.12**	0.07

* Significant at 0.05 level of significance ** Significant at 0.01 level of significance

Interpretation

1. Table 1 shows that personal adequacy (PA) dimension of social competence has 0.09 correlation coefficient with academic stimulation dimension of home environment. This correlation coefficient is positive, very low but significant at 0.05 level of significance. All the other coefficients of correlation of personal adequacy with remaining 9 dimensions of home environment are positive, very low and not significant.
2. Table 1 shows that inter-personal adequacy (IA) dimension of social competence has 0.08, 0.08, 0.07, 0.07, 0.08 and 0.07 correlation coefficients with parental involvement, academic stimulation, reward, parental warmth, participation in home affairs and parental expectations dimensions of home environment respectively. These correlation coefficients are positive, very low but significant at 0.05 level of significance. The correlation coefficient between inter-personal adequacy and permissiveness dimension of home environment is 0.13, which is positive, very low but significant at 0.01 level of significance. The other coefficients of correlation of inter-personal adequacy with protectiveness, punishment and control dimensions of home environment are positive, very low and not significant.
3. Table 1 shows that communication skills (CS) dimension of social competence has 0.09 and 0.07 coefficient of correlation with parental involvement and parental expectations dimensions of home environment. These correlations are positive, very low but significant at 0.05 level of significance. Further, the correlation of communication skill with academic stimulation and permissiveness dimensions of home environment are 0.13 and 0.12 respectively, which are

positive, very low but significant at 0.01 level of significance. The remaining correlations of communications skills with protectiveness, reward, parental warmth, punishment, participation in home affairs and control dimensions of home environment are not significant at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 2 shows the coefficient of correlation between social competence and home environment

Table 2: Correlation Coefficients between Social Competence and Home Environment (N=800)

Variable	<i>r</i>	Significance level
Social Competence Vs Home Environment	0.16**	p < 0.01

Interpretation

Table 2 shows that correlation coefficient between social competence and home environment as a whole is 0.16 which is positive, very low but highly significant at 0.01 level of significance.

Thus, it can be concluded that social competence and home environment have positive, very low but significant relationship. Hence, the hypothesis that there exists no significant relationship between social competence and home environment cannot be accepted.

Discussion of results

The results of the study revealed that Social competence of adolescents is positively and significantly related to home environment. Home environment influences the development of social competency skills among adolescents. Similar results have been reported in the studies of Mishra, S. & Shanwal, V.K (2014), Singh, Mittra and Upadhyay, (2010), Kaur, Rana and Kaur, (2009), Kaur and Singh (2009), Pardhasaradhi, V. & Goel, (2015), Singh, G. (2013), Bhat and Vijayalaxmi (2011) etc. Good home environment leads to the development of skills of personal adequacy, interpersonal adequacy and communication skills among children that contribute in their general wellbeing as well as in their psychosocial, academic and adaptive functioning. Parents play an important role in developing social competence among their children. This implies that they should take proper care of their children and prevent them from dangerous behaviour. Their protective attitude would develop self-confidence and healthy interpersonal relationships among children. The more they involve themselves in different aspects of child’s life i.e. his schooling, friends, career etc, the more it will be beneficial for him. Through healthy involvement and academic stimulation, parents can bring desirable social skills among their children. Such an environment should be provided at home that enhances learning capabilities and achievement. Adequate rewards provided by parents would strengthen the probability of desired behaviour. Their love, warmth and motivation develop positive self-efficacy, interpersonal adequacy and good communication skills. The more they let the adolescents participate in home affairs the more they will gain social competence. By providing opportunities to express views freely and giving them

desirable independence, parents pave a way for healthy social skills among children. In order to avoid occurrence of undesirable behaviour, relevant and affective punishment should also be provided along with strict actions to implement discipline.

The results have revealed that social skill of personal adequacy is positively and significantly related with academic stimulation which an adolescent gets from his home environment. Parents play an important role in extending academic motivation to their children. Their words of appreciation go a long way in promoting self-efficacy and self-control. The academic achievement of children if gets proper motivation and guidance leads to the development of better sense of personal responsibility and self-monitoring abilities.

The results of the study have concluded that the interpersonal adequacy of adolescents is positively and significantly related to the factors of parental involvement, academic stimulation, reward, parental warmth, parental expectations, participation in home affairs and permissiveness. Social awareness, social ability and social skills are definitely influenced by the level of childrens' participation in social affairs of the family. Continuous guidance by the parents develop an insight into the desirable social behaviour. Awareness about the social environment is inculcated through the freedom given to express ideas freely and to act accordingly. Undue restrictions by parents hinder the social growth of a child, whereas more participation in social activities help in gaining confidence in maintaining healthy relations and developing respect for individual differences. Realistic parental expectations and warmth in relations develop positive and healthy social ability.

The results have shown that the communication skills of an adolescent are positively and significantly related with the factors of parental involvement, parental expectation, academic stimulation and permissiveness. Effective communication skills are essential to maintain social relations and to gain an impressive social figure. If one is not able to give proper expression to his thoughts and ideas, it may lead to confused state of affairs in social relations that ultimately lands one to social troubles and tensions. Parents need to become the part and parcel of child's social life and communication. They play an important role in showing him direction to express himself effectively and for this they should provide him adequate opportunities at home. Their expectations and motivation stimulate an adolescent to adopt impressive communicative skills. Hence such an environment should be developed at home that gives adequate space to adolescent to interact freely with his parents and encourages him to seek their guidance in case of any problem in life.

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