PEER RELATIONSHIPS AS INFLUENCED BY SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE OF ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT

Social intelligence is quickly becoming a global requirement and a critical element of success for individuals in all type of settings. The process of becoming more socially intelligent involves investigating what motivates drives and influences people. Good interpersonal and social skills not only dictate the success a person achieves in his human relationships but also in his job pursuits as one needs to be socially skilled particularly with jobs that involve direct contact and communication with other people. Thus the present study was undertaken to study the peer relationships as influenced by social intelligence of adolescents. Descriptive Research design" was adopted and 180 adolescents in the age group of 15 to 18 years belonging to three different types of socio economic status i.e., lower, middle and upper which were selected through stratified random sampling technique from various schools and colleges of Allahabad city. Socio economic status of the sample was ascertained by using revised **Kuppuswamy (1962)** Socio Economic Status Scale revised by **Kumar and Tiwari (2012).** Social Intelligence Scale developed by **Chaddha and Ganesan (1971)** was used to ascertain the social intelligence of college students and Social Acceptability Test developed by **Chopra (1997)** (Sociometric measures in Hindi) was used to assess the social acceptance of adolescents. Results revealed that respondents belonging to upper socio economic group had better social and girls possessed better social intelligence than boys. Significant impact of

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socio economic status was seen on social intelligence of respondents and a significant correlation was seen between social intelligence and peer relationships among female respondents and a non-significant impact was seen with regard to boys.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is marked as a period when the youth move towards gaining social and economic independence, develops identity, acquires skills needed to carry out relationship and roles, and develops capacity for abstract reasoning.During the period of adolescence, socialization plays important role. It is the process by which an individual begins to acquire the skills necessary to perform as a functioning member of their society, and is the most influential learning process one can experience. Social intelligence is also associated with the socialization process. It is the capacity to effectively negotiate complex social relationship and environments. Social intelligence is quickly becoming a global requirement and a critical element of success for organizations. The process of becoming more socially intelligent involves investigating what motivates drives and influences people. Social intelligence is useful in many ways: it helps in the creation of a sense of identity for the individual in addition to emphasizing self-management and interpersonal skills; more importantly, it focuses on thinking and resultant behaviour within social contexts.During adolescence, when the child is ready to step into a wider world, acquiring social intelligence becomes an important prerequisite as it helps him to develop competence to understand his or her environment optimally and react appropriately for socially successful conduct. Good interpersonal and social skills not only dictate the success a person achieves in his human relationships but also in his job pursuits as one needs to be socially skilled particularly with jobs that involve direct contact and communication with other people.In this technologically advanced era social skills of children are significantly impaired due to their over involvement with cell phones, computers, social network and even gaming consoles which deprive them from putting themselves into real life social situations and acquiring related skills which not only proves detrimental to their developing social competence but also proves hazardous to their developing good peer relationships.Thus, the present study was an attempt to evaluate the social intelligence and its impact on peer relationships of adolescents so that their attitudes and behavior can be altered in response to their social environment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

"Descriptive Research design" was adopted for the present study and Survey Method was used to collect the data from a sample of 180 adolescents in the age group of 15 to 18 years belonging to three different types of socio economic status i.e., lower, middle and upper which were selected through stratified random sampling technique from various schools and colleges of Allahabad city. Socio economic status of the sample was ascertained by using revised **Kuppuswamy (1962)** Socio Economic Status Scale revised by **Kumar and Tiwari (2012).**Social Intelligence Scale developed by **Chaddha and Ganesan (1971)** was used to ascertain the social intelligence of college students and Social Acceptability Test developed by **Chopra (1997)** (Sociometric measures in Hindi) was used to assess the social acceptance of adolescents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 4.1 Distribution of respondents belonging to different socio economic groups on the basis of their level of social Intelligence.

F=Frequency, **%=**Percentage

Table 4.1 highlightsthe level of Social Intelligence possessed by boys and girls belonging to different socio economic groups. It is observed from the table that 86 percent boys belonging to low socio economic group had average social intelligence followed by 7 percent having high level and 7 percent having low level of social intelligence. Whereas in case of girls belonging to lower socio economic groups it was seen that 97 percent had average, 3 percent possessed low level and none of them had high social intelligence.

Levels of Social Intelligence	Lower socio economic status				Middle socio economic status				Upper socio economic status			
	Boys (n=30)		Girls (n=30)		Boys (n=30)		Girls (n=30)		Boys (n=30)		Girls (n=30)	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Low Social Intelligence	2	7	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Average Social Intelligence	26	86	29	97	26	87	14	47	12	40	6	20

High Social Intelligence	2	7	0	0	4	13	16	53	18	60	24	80

In middle socio economic status 87 percent boys had average, 13 percent had high level of social intelligence and none of them had low level of social intelligence but in girls 47 percent had average, 53 percent had high and none had low level of social intelligence. The result of the study conducted by **Babu (2007)** highlighted that students have average social intelligence and gender based comparison of social intelligence proved to be significant.

However, in upper socio economic status it was seen that 60 percent boys have high, 40 percent had average and none had low level of social intelligence, whereas, among girls 80 percent had high, and 20 percent had average and none had low level of social intelligence. It is clear from the above table the as the social economic status increases the level of social intelligence is also be increases. The above table also expresses that the girls have higher social intelligence than boys in all the three socio economic groups. **Sharma (1980)** also found that high socio economic group demonstrated more sociability, emotional stability, thoughtfulness in comparison to low socio economic group.

Table 4.2 Comparative analysis of social intelligence of boys and girls belonging to different socio economic groups.

Socio economic status	Boys		Girls		t-value	p-value
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation		
Lower	90	8.2	88.6	8.3	0.6572	0.5136
Middle	94	7.0	100	7.6	3.1806*	0.0024
Upper	103.8	12.4	105.3	8.4	0.5486	0.5854

*Significant

Table 4.2 focuses on the Social Intelligence of boys and girls belonging to different socio economic strata. The above table emphasizes that there is a non-significant difference in social intelligence levels of boys and girls belonging to lower socio economic status and upper socio-economic status as the p-value are 0.5136 and 0.5854 respectively. The mean

value indicates that the boys belonging to lower socio economic status have higher social intelligence than their female counterparts. But in upper socio economic groups the boys have a slightly lower level of social intelligence than the girls. The above table also reveals a significant difference in the social intelligence among boys and girls of middle socio economic groups as the p-values is 0.0024.The mean score of girls belonging to middle socio economic status i.e.,100 is higher than the boys (94). The result is supported by the study conducted by **Saxena and Jain (2013)** on social intelligence of adolescents which indicated that female students possess more social intelligence than male students.

Table 4.3 ANOVA of social intelligence of boys and girls belonging to different socio economic status.

Source of variation	Degree of freedom	Sum of square	Mean sum of square	F(cal)	F (tab) 5%
Due to gender	1	6.408	3.2	0.4	18.5
Due to socio economic status	2	230.66	230.7	30.2*	19.0
Due to error	2	15.282	7.6		
Total	5	252.35			

*= Significant

Table 4.3 shows the analysis of variance in social intelligence across gender and socio economic strata. The table revealed a non-significant variance in social intelligence among boys and girls as the calculated value of 'F' was found to be 0.4 which was non-significant at 5 percent probability level. The table also highlights that there is a significant variance found in social intelligence of the respondents belonging to different socio economic status as calculated score of 'F' was found to be 30.2 which was significant at 5 percent level of significance. **Gnanadevan (2011)** conducted a study to find out the social intelligence of higher secondary students in relation to their socioeconomic status. The result of the study revealed that social intelligence of higher secondary students was found to be high. The social intelligence scores of higher secondary students were found to differ significantly with respect to socio economic status. Differences with respect to gender, father's education and mother's occupation were found to be non-significant.

Table 4.4 Distribution of respondents belonging to different socio economic groups on the basis of their levels of social acceptance.

Levels of Social Acceptance	Lower socio economic status				Middle socio economic status				Upper socio economic status			
	Boys (n=30)		Girls (n=30)		Boys (n=30)		Girls (n=30)		Boys (n=30)		Girls (n=30)	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
High	13	43	12	40	12	40	13	43	15	50	18	60
Average	9	30	9	30	12	40	8	27	9	30	6	20
Low	8	27	9	30	6	20	9	30	6	20	6	20

F = Frequency   %= Percentage

Data in table 4.4 exhibits the social acceptance among boys and girls belonging to lower socio economic status. The table indicates that 43 percent boys had high level of social acceptance followed by 30 percent having average and 27 percent having low social acceptability. However in case of girls 40 percent had high level, 30 percent had average and an equal percent had low level of social acceptability. The table thus reveals that boys had high level of social acceptability than girls in general among adolescents belonging to lower socio economic groups. This might be due to the reason that girls do not get an opportunity to spend more time with their peers as they are occupied in household tasks or income generating activities particularly in the lower socio economic strata. **Clark and Ayers (1988)** conducted a study on the role of reciprocity and proximity in junior high school friendship. The result of the study revealed that adolescents with non-reciprocated friendships are seen as less attractive and have lower social status than adolescents with reciprocated friendships in higher social status.

The data on social acceptance of the respondents belonging to middle socioeconomic groups represented in Table and figure 4.11(b) confess that less than half of male respondents (40 percent) had high level followed by 40 percent possessing average and 20 percent having low level of social acceptability. Whereas, among girls 43 percent had high level, 27 percent had average and 30 percent possessed low level of social acceptability.

A cursory glance at the data represented in table 4.14 and figure 4.11(c) indicates that the 50 percent boys had high social acceptability followed by 30 percent having average level and 20 percent having level of low social acceptability. Among girls it was seen that 60 percent had high level, 20 percent had average and 20 percent possessed low level of social

acceptability. Hence the table reveals that girls had high level of social acceptability than boys belonging to upper socio economic strata.

Thus, overall it is concluded that levels of social acceptability vary with the socio economic status of the respondents. **Wentzel and Caldwell (1997)** revealed from their study that better socially accepted students benefit more from resources that promote academic achievement than the less socially accepted students, and thereby enhance their academic performance. Less accepted students also may not perform well academically because they do not know how to use the available resources. Although socially intelligent, they may fail in their attempts to use their peers as a resource because of their less accepted status, and thereby become even less accepted.

Table 4.5 Correlation between Social Intelligence and Social Acceptance among adolescent boys and girls belonging to different socio economic status.

Socio economic status	Boys		Girls		t- tab (5 %)
	R	t (cal)	r	t(cal)	
Lower	0.3	1.913	0.5*	3.23	
Middle	0.3	1.603	0.7*	4.78	2.048
Upper	0.7*	5.65	0.7*	4.65	

*= Significant

Table 4.5 represents the correlation between social intelligence and social acceptance of respondents belonging to three different socio economic statuses. The table clearly indicates a non-significant correlation in social intelligence and social acceptance of boys belonging to lower and middle socio economic status as the value of 'r' was found to be 0.3 and 0.3 which was non-significant at 5 percent probability level. The table also indicates a significant correlation between social intelligence and social acceptance among boys belonging to upper socio economic status as the calculated value of 'r' was 0.7. The results are in accordance with the study conducted by **Biswas (1981)** who found that adolescents from high socioeconomic group were high on social desirability scale and had more stabilized

friendships and were less rejected by their peers. But a non-significant difference was found in lower and middle socio economic groups.

On the other hand while considering the correlation between social intelligence and social acceptance among girls the table represents a significant correlation among girls belonging to all three socio economic groups as the calculated value of 'r' was found to be 0.5, 0.7, 0.7 respectively which is significant at 5 percent probability level. **Newcomb *et al.* (1993)** showed that sociometrically popular children's array of competencies make them likely to be the recipients of positive peer nominations, whereas high levels of aggression, withdrawal behaviour and low levels of sociability and cognitive abilities were found to be associated with rejected peer status.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded from the present study that majority of adolescents possessed average level of social intelligence. The respondents belonging to upper socio economic strata had better social intelligence as compared to their counterparts from middle and lower socio economic strata.Significant gender differences were seen in respondents belonging to middle socio economic groups wherein girls had better social intelligence than their male counterparts. Maximum number of respondents irrespective of their socio economic status and gender had high level of social acceptance. Socio economic status had a significant impact on the social intelligence of the respondents. A significant correlation was seen between social intelligence and social acceptance of the female respondents whereas, the male respondents revealed a non-significant impact of social intelligence on their social acceptance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Social intelligence equips us to live well in the social domains. The study recommends to inculcate qualities like patience, cooperativeness, confidence, sensitivity, tactfulness, sense of humor and recognition of social environment so that one is able to enhance his interpersonal skills which will help to impact peer acceptance positively.

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