

Social Interaction among the Higher Secondary Students

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Abstract: *This study examines social interaction among higher secondary students. The study was conducted using a survey approach. A sample of 937 students was selected from the Tenkasi revenue district using simple random sampling. The Social Interaction measure, developed and validated by Antony Raj (2009), was adopted. The tool's aspects were cooperation, conflict management, social exchange, competition, subordination, and accommodation. The findings indicated that the majority of the higher secondary students demonstrate average social interaction skills. Hobbies appear to have minimal influence on overall social interaction, except for cooperation. It is recommended that educators foster environments that promote cooperation, effective communication, and positive social relationships.*

Keywords: Social interaction, higher secondary students, hobbies with social interaction

1. Background of the Study

Social interaction is how people communicate and respond to one another. In education, it is crucial for sharing ideas, learning from peers, and receiving guidance from teachers and parents. Vygotsky (1978) argued that learning is a social process, with students building knowledge through engagement with others. Positive student-teacher relationships, as noted by Pianta, Stuhlman, and Hamre (2015), boost motivation, achievement, and well-being, whereas negative ones can harm performance. Student-student interaction helps develop communication and teamwork skills, and, according to Johnson and Johnson (2019), cooperative learning leads to better outcomes. Parental involvement, as reported by Hill and Tyson (2019), also improves grades and attitudes towards school, whereas limited involvement can harm achievement.

2. Rationale and Importance of the Study

Social interaction plays a critical role in the overall development of higher secondary students. It fosters positive relationships, effective communication, idea sharing, and collaborative learning. Proficient social skills further support cooperation, conflict resolution, and other competencies essential for academic achievement, emotional well-being, and future professional success. Moreover, positive relationships contribute to a supportive learning environment and enhance students' ability to manage academic and personal challenges. Multiple factors, such as personal characteristics, social context, and family environment, influence the development of social interaction skills among students. Participating in hobbies offers opportunities to engage in activities that can shape interpersonal interactions. Understanding the relationship between hobbies and social interaction enables educators to identify activities that promote positive social development in adolescents. This study examines the extent of social interaction among higher secondary students and explores the association between their hobbies and these interactions. The findings may

inform teachers, parents, counsellors, and school administrators in designing effective activities and programmes to enhance students' social skills and holistic development.

3. Objectives of the study

- To find out the level of social interaction of higher secondary students.
- To find out and assess the social interaction among higher secondary students with respect to their hobbies.

4. Hypothesis

Based on the objectives, the following hypotheses were framed to be tested

- There is no significant association between the hobbies of higher secondary students and their social interaction and its dimensions.

5. Methodology

The study used a survey to assess social interaction among higher secondary students. It relied on the Social Interaction scale, developed and validated by Antony Raj (2009). The scale comprises six dimensions: cooperation, conflict management, social exchange, competition, subordination, and accommodation. The research focused on higher secondary students in the Tenkasi revenue district, using a sample of 937 students from 21 randomly selected schools.

6. Analysis of Data and Findings

As the investigator aims to assess the Social Interaction of higher secondary students with respect to hobbies, the following presents the data analysis in line with the formulated hypotheses.

Objective 1: Level of social interaction of higher secondary students

Table 1: To find out the level of social interaction of higher secondary students

Social interaction and its Dimensions	Low		Average		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Cooperation	117	12.5	694	74.1	126	13.4
Conflict Management	137	14.6	645	68.8	155	16.5
Social exchange	129	13.8	661	70.5	147	15.7
Competition	164	17.5	634	67.7	139	14.8
Subordination	175	18.7	607	64.8	155	16.5
Accommodation	123	13.1	709	75.7	105	11.2
Social interaction	130	13.9	695	74.2	112	12.0

The table above (1) presents the levels of social interaction and their dimensions among higher secondary students in the total sample. Among higher secondary students, 12.5% have low, 74.1% average, and 13.4% high levels of cooperation. Among higher secondary students, 14.6% have low, 68.8% average, and 16.5% high levels of conflict management. Among higher secondary students, 13.8% have low, 70.5% average, and 15.7% high levels of social exchange. Among higher secondary students, 17.5% have low, 67.7% average, and 14.8% high levels of competition. Among higher secondary students, 18.7% have low, 64.8% average, and 16.5% high levels of subordination. Among higher secondary students, 13.1% have low, 75.7% average, and 11.2% high levels of accommodation. Among higher secondary students, 13.9% have low, 74.2% average, and 12.0% high levels of social interaction.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant association between the hobbies of higher secondary students and their social interaction and its dimensions.

Table 2: Association between the hobbies of higher secondary students and their social interaction and its dimensions

Social interaction and its Dimensions	Df	Calculated ' χ^2 ' value	Calculated P value	Remarks at 5% level
Cooperation	6	13.194	0.040	S
Conflict management		6.940	0.326	NS
Social exchange		7.676	0.263	NS
Competition		2.507	0.868	NS
Subordination		7.221	0.301	NS
Accommodation		5.852	0.440	NS
Social interaction		4.672	0.587	NS

NS: Not Significant; S: Significant

Table 2 above indicates that there is no significant association between the hobbies of higher secondary students and their conflict management, social exchange, competition, subordination, accommodation, and social interaction overall. However, there is a significant association between the hobbies of higher secondary students and their cooperation, a dimension of social interaction.

Post Chi-square table on Cooperation

Table 2(a): Association between the hobbies of higher secondary students and their cooperation, one of the dimensions of social interaction among them.

Categories of Hobby		Cooperation among Higher Secondary Students			
		Low	Moderate	High	Total
Reading	Count	26	86	19	131
	Adjusted Residual	2.7*	-2.4	0.4	
TV/Mobile	Count	39	214	44	297
	Adjusted Residual	0.4	-1.0	0.8	
Sports/ Games	Count	37	301	43	381
	Adjusted Residual	-2.1	2.9*	-1.6	
Gardening	Count	15	93	20	128
	Adjusted Residual	-0.3	-0.4	0.8	

*Significant at 5% level.

Among higher secondary students, those who have reading as their hobby show significantly lower levels of cooperation, whereas those with moderate cooperation have sports or games as their hobbies.

7. Interpretations of the Findings

The finding that the majority of higher secondary students possess average levels of cooperation, conflict management, social exchange, competition, subordination, accommodation, and overall social interaction may be attributed to the developmental characteristics of adolescence. During this stage, students are exposed to diverse social environments, including schools, families, peer groups, and digital platforms, that provide opportunities for social learning. However, the academic pressure and examination-oriented culture prevailing at the higher secondary level may limit extensive social engagement, resulting in average rather than high levels of social interaction.

The absence of a significant association between hobbies and most dimensions of social interaction suggests that social interaction among higher secondary students may be influenced more by factors such as family environment, peer relationships, school climate, and personality traits than by leisure activities alone. Although hobbies provide opportunities for engagement and self-expression, they may not necessarily determine how students manage conflicts, exchange ideas, compete, accommodate others, or interact socially. This indicates that social interaction is a multidimensional construct shaped by a broader range of experiences beyond recreational interests.

The significant association between hobbies and cooperation, particularly the lower levels of cooperation among students who enjoy reading and the comparatively moderate cooperation among students interested in sports and games, may reflect the nature of the activities involved. Reading is often an individual, solitary activity that requires limited interaction with others, whereas sports and games typically involve teamwork, communication, mutual support, and collective goal achievement. Consequently, students participating in sports and games may have more opportunities to develop cooperative behaviours through regular interaction with peers, leading to higher levels of cooperation.

8. Educational Implications

Based on the interpretations above, the following educational implications are offered as guidelines for further action.

- a) Schools may help higher secondary students build social skills by offering more collaborative activities, such as group projects, peer tutoring, and teamwork-based learning.
- b) Teachers may support students' social growth by encouraging them to join sports, games, clubs, and other team activities, which help build cooperation and interpersonal skills.
- c) Students who prefer reading shall also have chances to join group discussions, book clubs, and other shared learning experiences to balance independent study with social development.
- d) School counsellors and teachers may create programs that help students build social skills like communication, conflict management, and cooperation, especially for those who find social interaction more challenging.
- e) Schools may create a supportive environment that fosters healthy friendships, teamwork, respect, and inclusion, helping students interact positively with one another.

9. Conclusion

The findings indicate that the majority of the higher secondary students demonstrate average social interaction skills. Hobbies appear to have minimal influence on overall social interaction, except for cooperation. Students who participate in sports and games generally exhibit stronger cooperative skills than those who prefer reading. These results imply that schools should provide increased opportunities for teamwork. It is recommended that educators foster environments that promote cooperation, effective communication, and positive social relationships.

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