DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SKILLS SCALE

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Abstract: *The present study was undertaken to construct and standardize the 'Social Skills Scale' to measure the social skills of elementary school students. Initially, a pool of items was framed by reviewing the related literature, which was then given to experts for analyzing the content. After preliminary try out and item analysis was done, only 40 items were retained for the final form of the scale. The reliability of the test was ascertained by test – retest method and split half method and it was found to be relatively high. The content validity of the scale was also ascertained.*

Key words: *Social skills, elementary school students, construction & standardization*

Introduction

Man is a social being who is influenced by others' behaviour and influenced them by his behaviour. Every society has some norms and standards concerning social development. A child follows the traditions, customs and adjusts with the social norms is said to be sociable. Education is the most significant means to socialization. Namka (1997) observed that socialization is the ability of a child to relate positively to people in society in a manner appropriate to his or her age. Social skills are the skills every person needs to possess in order to relate to others. Skills that children should acquire include discussing, compromising, negotiating, stating feelings and desires, articulating preferences, articulating reasons for making good choices or decisions, cooperating, turn taking, asserting themselves, empathizing with others, and gaining access to and interacting with their peers (Knight & Hughes, 1995).

According to Cartledge and Milburn (1995), social skills are seen as socially acceptable learned behaviors that enable individuals to interact in ways that elicit positive responses and assist in avoiding negative responses from them. They are specific strategies used by an individual to perform social tasks effectively and thus be judged socially competent. Social skills are composed of competencies necessary for students to initiate and maintain positive social relationships with their peers, teachers, family, and other community members (Walker et al., 1995).

Walker (1983) defines social skills as "a set of competencies that a) allow an individual to initiate and maintain positive social relationships, b) contribute to peer acceptance and to a satisfactory school adjustment, and c) allow an individual to cope effectively with the larger social environment".

Social skills can also be defined within the context of social and emotional learning — recognizing and managing our emotions, developing caring and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically (Zins, Weissbert, Wang, &

Walberg, 2004). With this understanding, researchers and educators seek to evaluate and build students' social skills within a variety of social contexts.

Today, in elementary education teaching social skills has become one of the most significant tasks for teachers and educators. Deficits in social skills may be present in a range of psychiatric disorders, particularly in the more serious and persistent conditions, and have an influence on functioning across various domains. Here lies the need to construct a social skills scale that will measure the social skills of elementary school students as it will help the educators to identify the students who lack social skills and accordingly plan how to inculcate social skills among such students.

Objectives of the Study

1. To construct a Social Skills Scale.
2. To establish the reliability of Social Skills Scale.
3. To establish the validity of Social Skills Scale.

Methodology of the Study

For construction and standardization of Social Skills Scale to assess the social skills of elementary school students, the following steps were followed.

➢ Preparation of Items

In order to prepare the items for Social Skills Scale, relevant books, journals, articles, newspapers, magazines, etc. were consulted to collect the statements which deal with social skills. In this scale, the five dimensions social skills are taken into consideration viz. cooperation (i.e., listening to others, following the steps, following the rules, talking turns when talking, getting along with others), self-control (i.e., paying attention to work, staying calm with others), assertion (i.e., asking for help), responsibility (i.e., doing the right thing), and empathy (i.e., doing nice things for others). Initially, 91 items were framed related to these five dimensions of social skills.

➢ Reviewing and Editing of the Items

The initial draft containing the 91 statements was given to 10 experts in the field for analyzing the content, language, nature of items as well as for editing the statements. Based on the opinions and comments of the experts, some of the items were modified. Out of the 90 statements, 61were retained while 29 were rejected.

➢ Preliminary Try Out of the Scale

The tool was then administered to 100 elementary school students of Panipat district (Haryana) to determine the level of understanding of the appropriateness of the dimensions and the items of the scale. Out of the 61 statements, 04 items were discarded and the scale now comprises of 57 items related to five dimensions of Social Skills.

➢ Final Try Out of the Scale

For the try out, the Social Skills Scale consisting of 57 items was then administered to 200 students of Class VIII selected randomly from five schools of Panipat district. The questionnaires were collected and scored for each individual separately.

➢ Scoring of the Scale

The Social Skills Scale is a five point Likert type scale, which has the responses as *strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree* and *Strongly Disagree.* Scoring for each

item of the scale was done by giving a score of 4, 3, 2, 1 and 0 for positive statements and 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4 for negative statements

➢ **Item Analysis**

The responses of the subjects were scored by weight age to the items described above. The weighted score for each item and for each subject was summed up. For the purpose of item analysis, the top 27% as well as the bottom 27% of the score were taken aside. The t-values for significance of the differences between the mean scores of the top and bottom 27% group of respondents, that were indicative of their difficulty and discrimination values, were calculated for all the 57 statements. Only those items which showed significant values at 0.05 level of confidence were retained in the final form of the scale.

➢ **Final form of the Scale**

The final form of the scale consists of 41 items related to five social skills, 36 positive items and 05 negative items. There were 9 items in self control, 6 items in responsibility, 10 items in assertion, 11 items in cooperation and 5 items in empathy. These 41 items were arranged in a random order for the final administration. The maximum score on this scale is 164 and the minimum score is 0.

Table 1: Distribution of Items for Final Scale

Sr. No.	Dimensions	Positive Items	Negative Items	Item Number	Maximum Score
1	Self Control	05	04	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9	36
2	Responsibility	05	01	10,11,12,13,14,15	24
3	Assertion	10	00	16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25	40
4	Cooperation	11	00	26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34,35,36	44
5	Empathy	05	00	37,38,39,40,41	20
	Total	36	05	41 items	164

➢ **Estimating the Reliability of the Scale**

For finding out the reliability, the split half method to estimate the internal consistency of the scale was used on a sample of 200 students of Class VIII selected randomly from five schools of Panipat district. The scale was divided into two equivalent groups. Half test reliability coefficient was computed by 'Pearson's Product Moment Correlation'. From the half test reliability coefficient, the whole test reliability coefficient was estimated by using Spearman Brown Prophecy Formula. In addition, Cronbach Alpha is also being calculated for finding out the internal consistency of the scale. The results are shown in the table-

Table 2: Internal Consistency of the Scale

Reliability Method	No. of Students	Reliability Coefficient
Split Half Method	200	0.87
Spearman Brown Formula	200	0.91
Cronbach Alpha (α)	200	0.89

➢ **Estimation of Validity of the Scale**

After the items were constructed, the draft was given to experts in the field of education. Based on their suggestions and recommendations, the items were modified accordingly. Some of the items were rejected. The content validity of the scale was confirmed on the basis of the opinion of the experts that it does convey the concept it purports to measure.

➢ **Interpretation of Scores**

The score of any elementary student on the Social Skills Scale will fall between 0 and 164. It indicates higher the score higher is the level of social skills and vice-versa. The interpretation of the score values on the Social Skills Scale is given in the following table:

Scores	Interpretation
Mean + S.D	High Level of Social Skills
Mean –S.D	Low level of Social Skills

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