



Clinical & Counselling Psychology Review (CCPR)

Volume No. 1, Issue No. 1, Spring 2019

ISSN(P): 2412-5253 ISSN(E):2706-8676

Homepage: <https://icp.umt.edu.pk/ccpr/home.aspx>

Article: **The Development of a Social Skills Scale for Adolescents**

Author(s): Sana Hamid
Ayesha Jabeen
Zahid Mahmood

Online Published: Spring 2019

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/ccpr.11.02>

Article QR Code:



Hamid, S., Jabeen, A., & Mahmood, Z. (2019). The development of a social skills scale for adolescents. *Clinical & Counselling Psychology Review*, 1(1), 15–27.
[Crossref](#)

To Cite Article:



A publication of the
Institute of Clinical Psychology
University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan.

The Development of a Social Skills Scale for Adolescents

Sana Hamid¹
Ayesha Jabeen²
Zahid Mahmood³

Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to develop an indigenous tool to find out the level and nature of social skills in adolescents. Initially, a pool of 32 items was generated after interviewing 20 participants (both girls and boys). It was reduced later to 25 items excluding repetitions. These 25 items about social skills were administered on 20 new participants as a self-report measure on a 4-point rating scale. Moreover, one item considered ambiguous by participants was dropped and a final list of 24 items was given to 300 girls (50%) and boys (50%; $M= 14.9$ & $SD= 1.07$) along with Demographic Proforma and School Children Problem Scale (Saleem & Mahmood, 2011). The sample for the study was selected from government schools using stratified random sampling technique. Exploratory factor analysis revealed three factor solutions which were labelled according to their emerging themes like Getting Along Skills, Social Attributes and the Friendship Skills. The inter scale correlation ranged between ($r=.66-.86$) and alpha co-efficient showed high reliability ($\alpha .80$). The tool can be used by school psychologists in assessing and training children with social skills deficits.

Keywords: adolescents, scale development, social skill

Introduction

The period of adolescence is one of the most important stages of human development and growth that incorporates various steps and experiences which become the basis for further improvement during the later stages of life. Home is the locus of development of social skills of adolescents, while stepping out of their homes and into the outside world prepares them to interact with their surroundings (Brown, 1990). School is the place where individual is exposed to the extremity of the learning process. Although it enhances the knowledge and intelligence level of adolescents, it is also the place from where most of their problems, tensions and stressors arise which

^{1,2,3}Institute of Clinical Psychology, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

*Corresponding author ayesha.jabeen@umt.edu.pk

further affect the related assets of their lives. During this period of emotional upheavals, adolescents who enjoy a high level of socialization would effectively deal with their problems (Eccles, [1983](#)) and individuals who respond negatively may experience decrease in their social support (Eysenck, [1982](#)).

In order to acquire closeness, affiliation and emotional support, adolescents tend to interact more through disclosing their thoughts and feelings (Buhemester & Furman, [1987](#)). When adolescents achieve a certain level of understanding, they start to differentiate relationships on the basis of their complexity in order to make sense of them. They tend to move in social events to apply their social understanding in developing real life relationships (Parke & Ladd, [1992](#)). Youngsters who lack the skills required for the formation of social contacts are less accepted by peers and have fewer affiliations (Saygili, [2014](#)).

According to Mueser and Sayers ([1992](#)) social skills could be assessed through the identification of social needs within adolescents and the evaluation of the outcomes of the treatment. The outcomes of social skills are subjective and could be analyzed according to the level of skills that are important for the adolescents to interact with others and to fulfil the needs they are lacking in themselves to achieve their life's valuable goals (Gresham, [1986](#)).

Human nature favors socially acceptable behavior which is likely to repeat itself in their lives due to the appreciation of others. Adolescents learn the sense behind their behavior; that is if they behave according to the norms and values of the prevailing culture then they would receive reinforcement and acceptance. This kind of learning is based on Bandura's ([1977](#)) social learning theory which states that we learn from our interactions with others in a social context.

Social skills constitute the specific and appropriate abilities that make the adolescents competent enough to perform in a social situation with the help of their actions, cognitions and by regulating their emotions (Caldarella & Merell, [1997](#)).

Social skills play the most important role in the development and growth of adolescents both in learning and in socialization (Bilancia & Rescorla, [2010](#)). Quinn, Kavale, Rutherford and Forness ([1999](#)) used a meta-analysis to analyze the social skills of adolescents by using different quantitative

measurements in order to measure the intervention points of adolescents with their emotional and behavioral problems. The results of this meta-analysis showed the progress of adolescents in handling their emotional and behavioral problems with their developed social skills.

A number of tools have been designed in the West to assess social skills in children including School Social Behavior Scales (SSBS; Merrell, [1993](#)), Social Skills Rating System (SSRS; Gresham & Elliott, [1990](#)), School Social Skills Rating Scale (S3; Brown, [1984](#)) and Social Behavior Assessment Inventory (SBAI; Stephens & Arnold, [1992](#)) etc. However, no exclusively developed scale for social skills measurement was found for Pakistani adolescents other than the study carried out by Rashid ([2010](#)) which explored the development of social skills among children at elementary level. The five most frequently focused social skills including accepting criticism, showing respect, solving problems, accepting rights and responsibilities and tolerance of individual differences were selected from the social studies curriculum in the said study. The results indicated that social skills have not developed among children to the extent expected. The study was found to be limited in revealing the phenomenological expression of the said variables. Therefore, the need was felt to explore the expression and pattern of skills required for being social in Pakistani culture.

2. Method

The scale was developed through the following stages.

2.1. Phase 1: Exploring Phenomenology

2.1.1. Participants and procedure. The aim of the phase 1 of this study was to explore the phenomenon of social skills in the adolescents of Pakistan. For this purpose, twenty boys and girls of 8th, 9th and 10th classes were selected randomly from government schools. The interview was conducted and the responses were taken one by one from each student by asking the question *what kind of qualities and skills does a person possess who is thought to be very friendly?* The responses of each adolescent against this question were noted on a paper separately in their verbatim. Furthermore, their verbatim were compiled as phrases and those found to be repeating, dubious or ambiguous were dropped. Out of the 32 items, eight items were dropped due to their repetition and ambiguity and the remaining items were placed under the title of Social Skill Scale (SSS).

2.2. Phase II: Empirical Validation

2.2.1. Participants and procedure. A list of 25 items was given to four clinical psychologists having a minimum of two years of experience in dealing with school children for expert validation. The experts were asked to verify each response and discuss its relevance to the construct under study, culture and to the desired age range. Almost all the items were found to have a 90% ratio of agreement. After empirical validation, a total number of 24 items was obtained and given a 4-point rating scale.

2.3. Phase III: Pilot Study

The purpose of this phase was to determine the layout, user friendliness and time taken to fill the Social Skills Scale. After empirical validation, the items of the scale were translated and typed in Urdu for the adolescents to make the tool easy to understand. Then it was again administered on boys and girls of classes 8th, 9th and 10th (10 students from each class). The participants easily understood the items of the scale and took 10 minutes to respond to it.

2.4. Main Study Phase

The aim of this phase was to determine the psychometric properties of Social Skills Scale.

2.4.1. Participants. The sample of the study was selected from government schools of Lahore, Pakistan through multistage sampling technique. Firstly, the main strata of gender was divided into girls and boys which were further divided according to their class, that is 8th, 9th and 10th class with equal proportion from each class. The adolescents from these strata were selected through simple random sampling. The age range of these adolescents was found to be from 13 to 17 years ($M= 14.9$ & $SD= 1.07$).

3. Measures

3.1. Demographic Questionnaire

The demographics of the current study consisted of the variables of age, gender, class, family system, father's education and mother's education. These variables were selected by reviewing the relevant literature and found to be pertinent on its basis.

Social Skill Scale (SSS) was an indigenously developed scale by the researcher that comprised a total of 24 items and three factors which ranged from “seldom” to “always”.

School Children Problem Scale (SCPS, Saleem & Mahmood, [2011](#)) is an indigenously developed scale used to measure emotional and behavioral problems of adolescents of classes 8th, 9th and 10th. It consists of six factors including anxiety, academic problems, anger, rejection, withdrawal and somatic. The scale was found to have good psychometric properties.

3.2. Procedure

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study keeping in view all its ethical concerns for research purposes. Initially, permission was taken from schools after explaining the nature and aims of the current research project. The school authorities were assured that all of the information would be kept confidential and would only be used for research purposes only. All ethical concerns like right to withdraw, confidentiality etc. were also taken into account. Then the indigenously developed scale SSS was administered to the adolescents of 8th, 9th and 10th classes along with the demographic questionnaire and SCPS. They were provided with complete guidelines and were asked to rate each item to the extent of their preferences. It took 20-25 minutes to complete the research protocol. After its completion, the participants were given feedback and debriefing about the whole procedure.

4. Results

The collected data was carefully computed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics was used for the computation of mean, standard deviation and frequency of the demographics of participants. Inferential statistics was used to analyze the factor structure of the scale.

4.1. Factor Analysis of Social Skill Scale for Adolescents

Factor analysis was used to collate the common items according to the scree plot on the basis of the Eigen values. Scree plot is the graph of the Eigen values set against the factors of social skills (Brown, [1990](#)). The three factors of the Social Skills Scale were analyzed by using the scree plot. Factor analysis was performed by using the three factor solution with the

help of Varimax Rotation (Costello & Osborne, [2005](#)) to maximize the sum of total squared loadings.

Table 2
Eigen Values and Variances Explained by 3 Factors of Social Skills Scale (SSS)

Factors	Eigen values	% of variance	Cumulative %
Getting along skill	1.00	33.4	33.4
Social attributes	1.00	33.4	66.9
Friendship skills	.99	33.0	100.0

4.2. Factor Description of Social Skills Scale

Social skill scale has 24 items. The scoring option of this scale was based on the Likert type format which ranges from 0-3. “0” for never, “1” for sometimes, “2 for often” and “3” for always. It measures the three dimensions of social skills of adolescents which include getting along skills, attributes and friendship skills in adolescents.

4.3. Getting Along Skills

The getting along skills are defined as the skills that an adult needs to get along with others and to manage ups and downs of life which is important for good mental health and wellbeing. These skills are gauged by eleven items such as “taking care of others’ feeling”, “helping each other in studies”, “being confident”, “amiable” and “could tell the difference between good and bad”.

4.4. Social Attributes

Social attributes are referred to as the explanatory pattern that describes how adults tend to explain the various attributes of others to themselves. These attributes are gauged by six items such as “giving useful ideas to others”, “to be honest”, and “be courteous”.

4.5. Friendship Skills

Friendship skills are the skills that are based on a relationship that requires care, sharing, mutual interest, respect and trust. Friendship skills are gauged by seven items including “shares everything”, “don’t let you feel inferior”, don’t talk inappropriately with others” and “never tell a lie”.

Table 3

Items of three Factors of Social Skills Scale (SSS)

Factors 1: Getting Along Skills (11 items)

1. Having friendly relationship with everyone
2. Always in contact with everyone
3. Good way of talking
4. Help others to understand their point
5. Having good intentions for others
6. Being approving and supportive of peers
7. Respects everyone
8. Helps others during studies
9. Cares for other people emotions
10. Self-confident
11. Have soft temperament

Factor 2: Social Attributes (5 items)

1. Cheerful
2. Amiable
3. Honest
4. Gives you best opinion
5. Caring of peers emotions

Factor 3: Friendship Skills (7 items)

1. Share everything
 2. Never let anybody feel inferior
 3. Never disrespects others
 4. Never shuffles anybody words in front of others
 5. Never lie
 6. Never talk behind people back
 7. Never talk rudely
-

Table 4

Summary of Inter-Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations of the Participants (N=300) on 3 Factors of the Social Skills Scale for Adolescents

Factors	F1	F2	F3	Total SSS
Getting along skills	---	.49***	.32***	.86***
Social attributes	---	---	.22**	.71***
Friendship skills	---	---	---	.66***
<i>M</i>	21.9	12.2	12.6	46.8
<i>SD</i>	5.21	3.26	3.74	9.32

Note. $df=299$, *** $p<0.001$; ** $p<0.01$, SSS = *Social Skills Scale*.

Table no. 4 shows the significant positive relationship between the three factors of the Social Skills Scale which depicts the strong relationship between the factors of SSS.

Table 5

Cronbach Alpha of Social Skills Scale (SSS) and 3 Factors of SSS

Factors	No of items	α
Getting along skills	11	.74
Social attributes	6	.67
Friendship skills	7	.51
Total	24	.80

The above table indicates acceptable internal consistency between the three factors of SSS for adolescents. The total value of Cronbach alpha is .80 which represents a good level of internal consistency.

5. Discussion

Social skills are important for individuals to perform their functions and roles and for living in a community. Social skills are necessary for an individual to participate in community events. The purpose of the current research was to develop a scale for assessing social skills in adolescents keeping in view their level of comprehension of stressful life experiences.

Social skills are very important in the social development of adolescents. It takes an entire life of a person to achieve all the milestones of social development. At first, home is the only place where a child develops his/her social skills. With the passage of time, children grow up and begin to move outside of their home in the society where they use their observational skills that they have gained through their communication within their homes. Their observational skills enable them to learn from their environment and enhance their social skills according to their environment and also learn the norms and values of society (Buhemester & Furman, [1987](#)).

According to the culture specific priorities of communication skills, a scale was developed for the adolescents of Pakistan in which their responses were taken based on their opinions. During the process of its development, three factors or skills were identified which include the Getting Along Skill, Social Attributes and Friendship Skills. This scale was found to be different as compared to Western scales in which greeting others, taking initiative, and responding through gestures were given importance. On the contrary, in SSS the significance of moral values in relating with others was highlighted. This difference could be due to cultural and religious factors, such as in Pakistani culture taking initiative in greeting others, shaking hands and giving smiles is performed as an obligation and a routine matter contrary to the West where people usually relate mostly to familiar persons only. The School Social Behaviour Scales (SSBS; Merrell, [1993](#)) being a famous measure of social skills is criticized because of its poor ethnic representation (Demaray et al., [1995](#)). An important difference found in SSS and other scales was that the items related to behavioural problems or antisocial domain were not found in SSS. The theme found in SSS was mainly related to giving respect to others and providing help in different scenarios which is also found in western scales (SSBS; Merrell, [1993](#); SSRS; Gresham & Elliott, [1990](#)., SBAI; and Stephens & Arnold, [1992](#)) but to a limited extent, because the values of the western countries focus on the development of children into individuals who are autonomous and self-sufficient (Rideout, [2006](#)).

There was no difference found between boys and girls on the subscale of Friendship Skills. However, there was a significant mean difference between boys and girls on the subscale of Getting Along Skills and Social Attributes. This could be due to the reason that in a collectivistic culture like

ours girls are appreciated for being introvert and lacking pro and active social behaviors.

Good social skills are very important for a successful life. These skills enable us to make good decisions and behave in a specific way according to the cultural preferences in diverse situations. The extent to which adolescents possess social skills have a direct and indirect influence on their behaviour and performance in school, social environment, in extracurricular activities inside and outside of the school, home and other environmental areas. Social skills are the most vital skills that adolescents use to depict their quality of behaviour in the social environment. The factor 1(Getting Along skills) and 2 (Social Attributes) of SSS include items related to face to face interaction with others in the social environment and the explanatory behaviour that is necessary for interaction with the societal environmental processes according to the norms and values of Pakistani culture, respectively. As expertise in these two skills increases, it is most likely to decrease the emotional and behavioural problems in adolescents that are causing conflicts and interrupting their daily life through the challenges they face.

5.1. Limitations and Conclusion

This study has addressed the important issue of culture specific manifestation and presentation of the social skills of adolescents. The scale is representative of experience of both genders, since separate versions for boys and girls required tedious effort and more time. The scale is found to have good psychometric properties and can be used in various settings. In Pakistani culture, the adolescents feel more emotional and behavioral problems which are likely to influence their current and future ability to function, both socially and academically. Hence, identifying social skills of adolescents in schools is essential for fostering the best possible growth and adjustment in young people.

References

- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bandura, A., Ross, D., & Ross, S. A. (1961). Transmission of aggression through the imitation of aggressive models. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 63, 575–582.

- Bilancia, S. D., & Rescorla, L. (2010). Stability of behavioral and emotional problems over 6 years in children ages 4 to 5 or 6 to 7 at time 1. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 18*(3), 149–161.
- Brown, B. B. (1990). *Peer groups and peer cultures at the threshold: The developing adolescent*. Cambridge, MA: Springer Verlag.
- Buhemester, D., & Furman, W. (1987). *The changing functions of friendship in childhood: A neo Sullivanian perspective. Friendship and social interaction*. New York: Springer Verlag.
- Caldarella, P., & Merrell, K. W. (1997). Common dimensions of social skills of children and adolescents: Taxonomy of positive behaviors. *School Psychology Review, 26*, 264–278.
- Costello, A.B., & Osborene, J.W. (2005) Best Practices in exploratory factor analysis: Four recommendations for getting the most from your analysis. *Practicle Assessment, Research and Evaluation, 10*(7), 1-9.
- Demaray, K. M., Ruffalo, L. S., Carlson, J., Busse, R. T., Olson, E. M., McManus, M. S., & Leventhal. A. (1995). Social skills assessment: A comparative evaluation of six published rating scale. *School Psychology Review, 24*(4).
- Eccles, S. (1983). Defining and identifying coping strategies. *Journal of Applied psychology, 22*(4), 392–407.
- Eysenck, H. J. (1982). Negative effects of poor coping strategies among adolescents. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 39*, 109–122.
- Furman, W., & Buhemester, D. (1985). Children’s perceptions of the personal relationships in their social networks. *Developmental Psychology, 21*, 1016–1024.
- Gresham, F. M. (1986). Conceptual and definitional issues in the assessment of children’s social skills: Implications for classification and training. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 15*, 3–15.
- Gresham, E. M., & Elliott, S. N. (1990). *Social skills rating system*. Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service.
- Merrell, K. W. (1993). *School Social Behavior Scales*. Bradon, VT: Clinical Psychology Publishing Company.

- Mueser, K. T., & Sayers, M. S. D. (1992). *Social skills assessment: An overview and practical handbook*. London: Chapman and Hall.
- Parke, R. D., & Ladd, G. W. (1992). *Family-peer relationships: Modes of linkage*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Quinn, M. M., Kavale, K. A., Rutherford, R. B., & Forness, S. R. (1999). A meta-analysis of social skills interventions for students with emotion and behavioral disorder. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 7, 54–64.
- Rashid, T. (2010). Development of Social Skills among Children at Elementary Level. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 32(1), 69–78.
- Rideout, G. W. (2006). Education beliefs and the learning environment. *Academic Exchange Quarterly*. Retrieved from <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Educational+beliefs+and+the+learning+environment.-a0149613308>
- Roff, M. (1961). Childhood social interactions and young adult bad conduct. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 63, 333–337.
- Saleem, S., & Mehmood, Z. (2011). Development of a Scale for Assessing Emotional and Behavioral Problems of School Children. *Pakistan Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 9, 73–78.
- Saygili, G. (2014). Social skills of children in public and primary schools in Turkey: A case study. *International Journal of Recent Scientific Research*. 5(1), 148–152.
- Stephens, T. M., & Arnold, K. D. (1992). *Social behavior assessment inventory: Professional manual*. Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc.