

DO HOBBIES INFLUENCE SOCIAL SKILLS? A CASE STUDY OF STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS UNDER PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

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ABSTRACT: *Not only the academic achievement but social skills are also essential for students to learn through their school period because positive social control helps students to focus their attention in class activities by interacting positively with their peers and teachers. Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) has intervened to enroll "out of schools children" and the students falling under poverty studying in private sector schools under arrangement of Public Private Partnership through its Education Voucher Scheme (EVS). The data of class 9th student's hobbies and their social skills of two districts were collected in class room setting through a rating scale developed by researcher i.e. "Rabbani Social Skills Rating Scale" on four point likert scale with .9 reliability. To determine the effect of students hobbies on their social skills One Way ANOVA was applied and it revealed that students' hobbies effect their social skills ($F=4.33$, $p<0.000$). The results showed that the students with skill oriented hobbies are well-behaved as compared to ones adopting other hobbies while the students those did not mention their hobbies have least score for their social skills.*

Operational Key Words: Public Private partnership, Education Voucher, Voucher Student, Non Voucher Student, EVS partner school, Social Skills.

BACKGROUND

Around the world, it is being hotly debated as to what constitutes the elements of good education. Similarly, the part of debate revolves around the fact whether the student should learn social sciences or natural sciences, whether skill based training or theoretical subject based on philosophical concepts are more important. In the final analysis, it seems that the students should learn a comprehensive set of skills plus certain kinds of subjects to know what is happening in the world. It is further advised by the experts that the collective set of values imbibed and learnt by society should be taught to the students so that they can exercise these skills with ethics. For example our doctors should not only be doctors, rather they should be good doctors who are caring for humanity besides being experts of their subjects. Moreover, they should be able to take responsibility for what they are trained.

It is very important to train the person not only on the basis of school or academic learning, but social learning should be there so that the desired kind of personality can come into existence. By doing this we shall be able to foster an environment where all the children would be able to contribute fully [1]. Social scientists and economists are agreed on this issue that it is only the education through which destiny of people and the nation can be changed. The upward social mobility can be possible through skill based learning.

According to UNESCO[2] in this century of information around seventy two million children in their age of school going are not in schools and the ratio of girls is more than four percent high than boys. They enter late in schools and dropout early without learning any basic skills. It is also a question mark on the education system why millions of students left school without achieving certain basic skills. Although it is still not decided that availability and access of the students to schools and provision of textbooks free of cost will increase the enrollment in schools because sending the children to school also depends on the financial and social

conditions of the parents [3]. The question arises how to motivate the households to send their kid in the schools? A number of interventions have been initiated in different forms. For example, student scholarships, student loans and voucher scheme etc to recover the excess demand [4].

Public Private Partnership

The word "Privatization" has different meanings. In general, it stands for transfer of ownership from government to public sector. This ownership may be in the form of business or service, etc. This shift can take the form of "cessation of public programs and disengagement of government from specific kinds of responsibilities. Private and public leagues are although different, but they also have analogous characteristics. It is a general perception that the private sector is interested to generate more income for their product or service. At the same time public sector tries to be in charge of publicly generated merchandise and services. Both sectors have to propagate for their survival. The public sector has the political power by local school boards, legislative bodies and administrators, and the government. These governments needs favour of other stakeholders like teachers or lecturers' associations, school owner unions and moderate public and civil societies and interested groups.

Individually speaking, the public and private schools have their own set of problems. For example the public schools and their management dislike change whereas the private schools are desirous of change but lack the financial resources to meet their educational objectives. This combined set of problems has forced the experts to introduce the concept of Public Private Partnership. The Pakistani experiment of nationalization of private schools in 1971 did not prove to be a successful experience, that is why later on private sector was allowed to grow. After seeing rapid growth of private sector and analyzing its potential, government entered into Public Private Partnership (PPP) like financial support to private schools, working with private school

organizations (including NGOs) in order to meet its objective of increasing enrollment and quality of education.

There are three main types of PPP arrangement: (a) inviting private sector to evaluate the public sector and give suggestion to improve the situation. This arrangement is usually called third party evaluation (b) government or the private sector takes over responsibility of the management of the other's organization after deciding certain terms and conditions; e.g. The 'Adopt a School' program is an example of the second type of PPP arrangement in education that was defined above. In the province of Punjab, Pakistan, CARE, a private sector non government organization (NGO) has partnered with the provincial government and has taken over the management of more than 180 government schools across the province. (c) Government provides financial assistance to the other's institute and governmental finances are used by private sector to enrich the human resource of private sector in teacher training and conducting surveys. Punjab Education Foundation is an example of the third type of partnership

Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) was established in 1991 and in 2004 PEF was restructured as autonomous organization with the goal: "To promote quality education through Public Private Partnership, encourage and support the efforts of private sector through technical and financial assistance, innovate and develop new instruments to champion wider educational opportunities at affordable cost to the poor"[5]. The Foundation has since developed many initiatives to promote affordable quality education for the less privileged and disenfranchised sections of the society and has introduced new initiative in PPP mode like Foundation Assisted Schools (FAS), Continuous Professional Development Program (CPDP), New School Program (NSP), Education Voucher Scheme (EVS). The schools working under EVS have been selected for this study. Areas stricken with poverty, high dropout, lowest literacy rate etc have been selected by PEF for EVS.

Social skills are combination of various cognitive, affective and psychomotor behaviors that human shows in society in order to live in an acceptable way. Different aspects of social skills like cooperation, assertion, interpersonal skills, flexibility and self control were discussed in this study. People with good social skills mostly have good friends and fewer rivalries, good acceptance and fewer rejections, well communicating and less deceptive. Social skills are more than manners. Children with more social skills get more pleasure in their activities and the children with less social skills may not fit in their groups. Social skills are the backbone of success in personal and professional life. Social skill is a vast term and it includes class discussions, how soft should be spoken, how food should be eaten etc. Social skills are a basic pattern of behavior of a person for its relations with different people [6].

Social skills can be defined in a number of ways. Before going into the definition it is necessary to distinguish between social skills and social competence. Usually social skills are considered as behavior that is reflected during interpersonal interaction [7] and social competence is considered as quality already learned from the interaction with society members[8]. Some psychologists have classified the social skills as

"cognitive self-regulation" or "emotional self-regulation." Cognitive self-regulation includes planning, controlling of attention, task persistence, and inhibition of impulsive responses while "emotional self-regulation" consists the ability to control emotions like anger, sadness and joy etc. Social skills are learnt and used throughout the life but in the childhood, social skills can be taught comparatively easily. The teaching of social skills should be sequenced; that is from simple to complex one and these must be planned for ongoing skills[9]. Methods have been developed by the teachers, professionals, psychologists and researchers to teach social skills. Some intellectuals think social skills can only be learnt by practice [10]. Social skills are learnt in steps. Baby learns from the smile of the mother and during his childhood, he needs more developed skills. The strategy to teach social skills would be different for elementary and older students. For elementary students, the teachers may even guide through physical demonstration besides the verbal repetition while for older students prompting will help to teach the social skills. Social skills are the process needed in daily life for effective communication with the society members and the students with effective social skills are successful in their school life [11]. Inculcation of social skills is a process and without following this process the result can be contrary to expectations. There should be some agreement among teachers and parents upon a set of social skills including behavioral expectations.

In order to measure the social skills levels, Arslan [12] conducted a study on 514 students collecting data through "multidimensional scale" and "Matson evaluation of social skills with youngsters". The received values were compared through 't' test and concluded as "Children with high levels of perfectionism have more negative social behavior than the children with low levels of perfectionism". This result could be described as the students with high level of perfectionism are much organized and wanted everyone to behave in same manner without any distress. If there is some non compliance on the part of their peers, their satisfaction level is low, resulting in low self esteem.

Need and Purpose for the Study

Not only the academic achievement but social skills are also essential for students to learn through their school period because positive social control helps students to focus their attention in class activities by interacting positively with peers and teachers [13]. Westby [14]concluded "social skills are essential for students to learn through schooling along with academic skills and these could be best learned with in class rooms." If students are ensured to acquire successful experiences and positive feelings at the beginning of their science education, they will be more successful in their scientific experiences in the future [15]. It is considered that schools should develop the citizenship among student [16].

Research on children's social skills has encompassed various different aspects without mentioning those specific facets[17]. The social skills have been identified through literature review and discussed with the experts. A number of social skills to be developed in the students of middle school have been discussed in the literature and a number of inventories have been identified for social skills. Around 100

different social skills have been identified from the curriculum taught to middle/elementary students.

METHODOLOGY

The schools that have been in PEF partnership for at least last three years were selected for this study. The analysis is based on a primary data collected through a self developed questionnaire for social skills. Factors like class room environment, teaching methodology, school environment were controlled in this study to assess whether academic achievement and behavior of the students is influenced by voucher setting in EVS partner schools apart from other factors including admission criteria and curriculum.

The population of the study comprised of all male and female students who passed out from 8th class and were studying in 9th grade in private sector high schools working under EVS in the Punjab province. The students with three years continuous studying were selected to investigate the effect of education voucher scheme. There were two districts in which schools signed the partnership agreement with EVS for more than three years. These two districts were Lahore and Kasur. These schools were working in slum areas in district headquarters. Total schools working under EVS for a period of three years in these districts were 30 with 970 students. Out of 970 half were EVS and other half were non-EVS.

Several rating scales were available in the market. Sung (2009) worked on five factors, (1) Self-control, (2) Interpersonal skills, (3) Externalizing problem behaviors, (4) Approaches to learning and (5) Internalizing problem

behaviors for his study [18]. McClelland and Morrison (2003) studied social skills based on cooperation, self-control and assertion and their impact for learning achievement [19]. McDermott (1999) selected four factors, (1) Competence Motivation, (2) Attitude toward Learning, (3) Attention/Persistence, and (4) Strategy/Flexibility. These scales developed and validated in different countries [20]. There was need to develop a scale to measure the social skills of the students in Pakistani context. The researcher developed RSSRS (*Rabbani Social Skills Rating Scale*) was a multi-component social skill rating scale aimed at behaviors that affect parent-child relations, teacher-student relations, and peer acceptance. Different behaviours cooperation, assertion, flexibility, interpersonal skills, and self control were measured through RSSRS. The instrument was developed in Urdu as Urdu was the medium of instruction. The RSSRS was developed on four point scale as (1 = *never*, 2 = *sometimes*, 3 = *often* and 4 = *very often*). It was designed to assess the various developmental aspects of social skills of children from the onset of their formal schooling through their elementary school years. The scale was self report instrument. This scale was pilot tested for reliability and validity. Overall reliability of the scale was increased to .906 while validity of the scale was ensured through expert opinion.

The data of hobbies were categorized into seven hobbies and One Way Anova was applied to determine the effect of hobbies on social skills

Table 1: Effect of hobbies on social skills

Hobby	N	Mean	SD	F.value	p.value
Not mentioned	105	96.60	14.20	4.33	.000*
Playing games	126	95.10	14.36		
Skilled Oriented	47	103.66	12.15		
Social Welfare	16	102.19	12.64		
Entertainment	68	100.35	11.80		
Book reading	133	101.16	11.90		
Misc.	9	99.66	10.86		

*p < .000

Table 1 shows the results of One Way ANOVA applied to determine the effect of students hobbies on their social skills. Results of ANOVA shows (F=4.33, p<0.000) that students hobbies affect their social skills. But Analysis of variance does not indicate which student hobby affects the social skills.

To see which student hobby affect the social skills, Tukey test was applied to see the difference on social skills due to student's hobbies. The analysis related to Tukey test is given in the table 2.

Table 2: Effect of hobbies on student's social skills

Hobbies			
I	J	Mean Difference (I-J)	P. value
Not mentioned	playing games	1.49683	.977
	Skilled Oriented	-7.05957*	.036
	Social welfare	-5.58750	.687
	Entertainment	-3.75294	.518
	book reading	-4.56541	.107
	Misc	-3.06667	.994
playing games	Skilled Oriented	-1.49683	.977
	Social welfare	-8.55640*	.003
	Entertainment	-7.08433	.389
	book reading	-5.24977	.108
	Misc	-6.06224*	.004
	Not mentioned	-4.56349	.951
Skilled Oriented	Social welfare	7.05957*	.036
	Entertainment	8.55640*	.003
	book reading	1.47207	1.000
	Misc	3.30663	.836
	Not mentioned	2.49416	.920
	playing games	3.99291	.981
Social welfare	Entertainment	5.58750	.687
	book reading	7.08433	.389
	Misc	-1.47207	1.000
	Not mentioned	1.83456	.999
	playing games	1.02209	1.000
	Skilled Oriented	2.52083	.999
Entertainment	book reading	3.75294	.518
	Misc	5.24977	.108
	Not mentioned	-3.30663	.836
	playing games	-1.83456	.999
	Skilled Oriented	-.81247	1.000
	Social welfare	.68627	1.000
book reading	Misc	1.49875	1.000

Table 2 shows that the social skills of students with skilled oriented hobbies are better as compared to other adopted hobbies. This has been represented in figure 1.

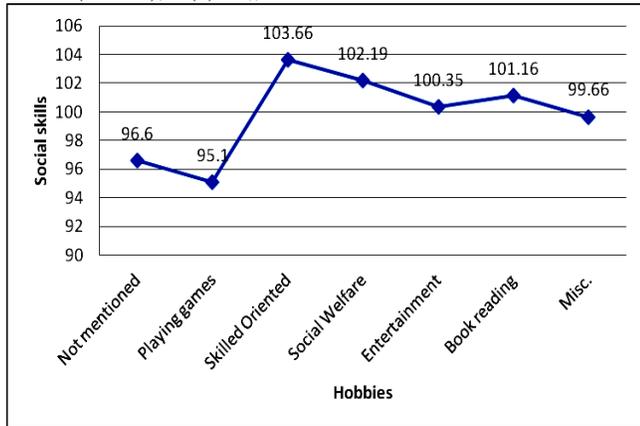


Figure 1

The figure 1 shows that the students with skill oriented hobbies are well behaved as compared to other hobbies while the students those did not mention their hobbies have least score for their social skills.

CONCLUSION:

The results of the study show that the hobbies do affect the social skills of the students. It has been observed that the social skills of children residing in poor area are positively affected by the hobbies they adopt and it is probably due to their relatively poor backgrounds. They have tendency to prefer outdoor games over indoor games like web surfing and playing video games. This in turn makes them more amenable to be influenced by their peers' attitudes rather than the values learned during indoor games. This is unlike well-off localities where children are mostly confined within their houses and usually engage in door games.

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SECTION b

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