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## EVALUATION OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF THE COLLEGE STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

Interpersonal refers to two, three or more individuals sending and receiving messages and meaning (Fiordo, 1990). Individuals with strong Interpersonal Communication Skills cope better with stress, handle major life transitions, and are less likely to suffer from depression and anxiety (Segrin and Flora, 2000). The purpose of the study is to evaluate the interpersonal communication skills of the college students. For this purpose I have collected the sample from MMM University of Technology Gorakhpur. Both MBA and B-tech students were given their response. For evaluating the interpersonal communication skills of the college student the 15 item scale was used. The scale is developed by Kalia & Agarwal. descriptive research design is used for the study. Though, the data is not normal; therefore, we used the non-parametric test. The result suggests that the interpersonal communication skill of the college students was moderate. They should improve their interpersonal communication skills. The limitation of the study was the data collection method. For the further research one should go through find out the relationship between problem solving inventory and interpersonal communication skills.

**Keywords-** Evaluation, Communication, Interpersonal Communication Skills, Non-parametric test

### INTRODUCTION

It is an indisputable fact that communication is an essential activity for every area of life. According to (Dettmer, Thurston, & Dyck, 1996), (West & Cannon, 1988), and (Rogers, 1962); communication is among the most important skills for students to possess. The role of communication is emphasized also by (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996, p. 76) as: "Communication is the lifeblood of the school; it is a process that links the individual, the group, and the organization".

Good teaching and communication skills include the ability to: understand and apply principles of active and cooperative learning to diverse audiences, facilitate learning in small and large groups, explain technical information to lay audiences, speak and write clearly for diverse audiences, share your enthusiasm for your material, give and receive criticism effectively for continuous improvement, assess the effectiveness of your communication methods and adapt them to the needs of different groups, practice active listening, and learn to hear other perspectives and points of view, and use various delivery systems including technology to effectively communicate ideas (Helm, Mason, & Stoddart, 2010).

Hartley (1993) defines interpersonal communication as a face-to-face meeting between two people. However, much of modern-day communication, especially organizational communication, is neither face-to-

face nor confined to two people. Hartley also claims that interpersonal communication does not simply mean the exchange of messages between two people. Instead, he focuses on the exchange and creation of meaning. This highlights a potential problem arising from the structural properties of e-mail communication. It examines the question of whether e-mail communication can ever be classed as conversation (in Hartley's sense of creating shared meaning) or whether it is limited to the mere exchange of messages. However, it may be that Hartley's emphasis on the joint creation of meaning, even in face-to-face meetings is a rather idealized notion of a conversation.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Exploring the literature on Interpersonal Communication there were few studies conducted under the title of interpersonal communication, which marked the beginning of the field of interpersonal communication. The usage of the term communication demonstrated that it indeed played a significant role in human behavior (Health & Bryant, 2000). The 1960s research studies influenced the development of the interpersonal field of communication. The studies of personality and its influence on relationships revealed that many psychiatric problems are due to interpersonal relations as well as self-problem (Segrin and Flora, 2000). Studies in humanistic psychology conceptualized that relationships could be improved through effective communication (Gable & Shean, 2000). Initially, interpersonal research focused on persuasion, social influence, and small group processes (Berger, 2005). Persuasion is one way that leaders influence teacher's attitudes, ideas, and behaviors. The principal as a persuasive communicator employs credibility, expertise, trustworthiness. Here, the principal may deliver a variety of degrees of reasons in his or her message. For example, he or she may deliver a message of fear, or comfort. The audience that receives the message is of a variety of demographics and personality traits. The principal normally chooses his or her best method of communication such as email, face-to-face or the printed word. Social influence is so tied to interpersonal communications in that people's thoughts, feelings, as well as behaviors affect others. Group processes are the way people interact and influence each other in a group setting. Principals employ groups to improve decision-making. The studies of Kurt Lewin (1939), the father of modern Social Psychology, influenced the emerging field of interpersonal communication. He proposed that an individual's environment had much to do with an individual's behavior. He also developed theories of individual personalities and interpersonal conflicts. The early research studies of Festinger (1959), Heider (1958), and Hovland (1953) were a direct impact from Lewin.

These three researchers studied under the tutelage of Lewin and further extended his work. Festinger became the father of cognitive dissonance theory that leads to a change in attitude and behavior. Heider explored the nature of interpersonal communications and developed the attribution theory. He also published *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations* that was a major breakthrough in the field (Heath & Bryant, 2000). This is explained by the means in which people attribute the behavior of others. For example, a person may give because he or she is pressured to give. Hovland used his knowledge of applied psychology learned from Lewin to explore interpersonal communication process.

The 1970s accompanied in a change in focus into the domain of social interactions, relational development, and relational control (Kelly & Thibaut, 1978). Shannon and Weaver (1949) developed a mathematical theory called information theory of communication that led Berger's Uncertainty Reduction Theory. Berger and Calabrese (1975) have been accredited with the Uncertainty Reduction Theory that paved the way for interpersonal communication. The Uncertainty Reduction Theory is defined as the numerous ways in which an interaction may behave in a given situation. The greater the level of uncertainty in a relationship decreases the chance of predicting behaviors and occurrences.

The 1980s was the period of cognitive approaches to interpersonal communication. The work of Knapp (1984), Planalp and Honeycutt (1985) helped mold interpersonal communication as it is known today. Because of their research efforts, interpersonal communication not only focuses on language, social cognition, and social psychology, but also interpersonal communication focuses on dynamic communication (Elfenvein, Foo, Boldry,

and Tan, 2006), face-to-face-interaction (Kikoski, 1998) or as a communication to develop others (Bennis, 1999 and Nuttall, 2004).

The Importance of Interpersonal Communication Skills is within every human being, there is a need to interact with others (Affi& Guerrero, 2000). The need to communicate satisfies the building of social bonds (Leary, 2001). For example, by observing our early ancestors who lived in groups to survive, he hypothesized that those who lived in groups were more likely to survive than those who lived alone. Coover and Murphy (2000) interjected that self develops identity through interaction

Engaging in effective communication contributes to a healthy emotional state (Gable &Shean, 2000). In line with the same thinking, when one engages in communication that is not meaningful, the result is usually loneliness, unhappiness, and depression (William and Zadiro, 2001).

Individuals with strong interpersonal communication skills cope better with stress, handle major life transitions, and are less likely to suffer from depression and anxiety (Segrin and Flora, 2000). Those who are skilled in interaction are resilient to down falls in life (Segrin, 2000). In light of these research findings, training is now being offered for many organizations (Argyle, 1999). Successful managers are equated with having good interpersonal communication skills (Hargie& Tourish, 2000). Entrepreneurs who possess good interpersonal communication skills have advantages in obtaining funding, establishing a positive relationship with customers, and securing quality employees (Baron &Markman, 2000).

## **NEED OF THE STUDY**

While exploring the above literature the interpersonal communication skill is need to explore at workplace and educational institute. There is very little work on evaluation of interpersonal communication skill of university students. The student of MMM university of technology are admitted to learn professional knowledge. The students are in professionals courses, and they required to possess the interpersonal communication skills at most. In this study I tried to evaluate their interpersonal communication skills and suggest improving their interpersonal communication skills.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study is follows:

1. To evaluate the interpersonal communication skills of student
2. To compare the interpersonal communication skill of student from different stream

Based on the above literature two hypothesis formulated

**H1**There is no significant difference of interpersonal communication skills between male and female students

**H2**There is no significant difference of interpersonal communication skills between MBA students and B-tech Students

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this chapter we discuss the methodology adopted for this study. A research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation as to obtain answers to research questions and problems. The plan is the complete scheme or program of the research. It includes an outline of what the investigator will do from writing the hypotheses and their operational implications to the final analysis of data (Kerlinger, 1986). The research design is a blueprint of any study. In this study we have used descriptive research design. Main purposes of descriptive studies can be explained as describing, explaining and validating research findings. The techniques used in this study are quantitative research techniques.

**Population**

The whole students of MMM University of Technology are the population of the study

**Sampling Techniques** For collecting the data convenience sampling used in the study

**Sample Size** the total sample collected 361 both B-tech and MBA students. 89 of them MBA students 272 are B-tech Students.

**Questionnaire Design**

In order to evaluating the interpersonal communication skills of the Students of MMM University of Technology, the interpersonal communication skills scale was used. The scale was already used by Kalia& Agarwal, Business Communication Practice Oriented Approach Wiley India. The responses were measure in five points Likert scale 1- Strongly Disagree to 5- Strongly Agree. The scale has 15 questions/items related to the interpersonal communication skills.

**Data Collection**

The data was collected through the questionnaire. The data filled by the students in the university campus. The phase of data collection was done from September 2016 to December 2016 wherein 90 questionnaires were personally administered to MBA students. 271 questionnaires were personally administered to the students of B-tech.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

**Demographic Profile of Respondents**

**Gender**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	188	52.1	52.1	52.1
Female	173	47.9	47.9	100.0
Total	361	100.0	100.0	

**Stream**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid MBA	89	24.7	24.7	24.7
B-tech	272	75.3	75.3	100.0
Total	361	100.0	100.0	

**Analysis of Interpersonal Communication Skills**

**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ICS_TOTAL	361	33.00	73.00	55.9501	9.23356
Valid N (listwise)	361				

The average score of the respondents are 55.95. It suggests that the respondents can be said to having Excellent Interpersonal Communication Skills, because the score close to 56. The respondents understand the significance of interpersonal communication at workplace and use their interpersonal communication skills effectively in different situations.

**HYPOTHESIS TESTING**

**H1** There is no significant difference of interpersonal communication skills between male and female students. For testing the hypothesis we should check the normality of the data. The below table suggested that the data is not normal. Hence, the non-parametric test performed.

**Tests of Normality**

	Gender	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
ICS_TOTAL	Male	.070	188	.026	.977	188	.003
	Female	.125	173	.000	.945	173	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

**Ranks**

	Gender	N	Mean Rank
ICS_TOTAL	Male	188	166.87
	Female	173	196.36
	Total	361	

**Test Statistics<sup>a,b</sup>**

	ICS_TOTAL
Chi-Square	7.203
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.007

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Gender

The result statistic suggests that the p value is not greater than .05, hence the null hypothesis got rejected and alternative hypothesis got accepted. It suggests that there is significant difference between the genders of the student. When we further investigate, the average score of the female students are 57.14 and the average score of the male students are 54.86. It suggests that the female students have greater interpersonal communication skills.

**H2** There is no significant difference of interpersonal communication skills between MBA students and B-tech Students

For testing the hypothesis we should check the normality of the data. The below table suggested that the data is not normal. Hence, the non-parametric test performed.

**Tests of Normality**

	Stream	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
ICS_TOTAL	MBA	.076	89	.200 <sup>*</sup>	.975	89	.086
	B-tech	.120	272	.000	.950	272	.000

**Ranks**

	Stream	N	Mean Rank
ICS_TOTAL	MBA	89	176.25
	B-tech	272	182.55
	Total	361	

**Test Statistics<sup>a,b</sup>**

	ICS_TOTAL
Chi-Square	.245
df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.621

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Stream

The result statistic suggests that the p value is greater than .05, hence the null hypothesis got fail to reject. There is no significant difference of interpersonal communication skills between MBA and B-tech students. The average score of both the stream are similar.

## CONCLUSION

In all companies and organizations, interpersonal communication determines whether a team can operate effectively and accomplish core business goals. "It underlies the efficiency of key business functions such as managing, training, selling and resolving conflicts within an organization,"These skills provided to a student to handle the situation.

The result statistics showed that the average score of both the stream were close to 56. This suggest that they understand the relevance of interpersonal communication skill, but they sometimes face difficulty in handling interpersonal issues, especially while handling conflicts and negotiations. It is recommended that the students should provide training on improvement of interpersonal communication skills

For increasing the interpersonal communication skill the first and foremost thing is trust. Trust is especially necessary for open and effective communication. When we have a high degree of trust in the other person, we tend to be willing to share our thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Trust simplifies our interactions by giving us confidence in other people's words and deeds.

In order to improve interpersonal skills, a few things need to be changed and followed. Students' verbal communication skills need to be worked on. Students also need to speak with clarity and use non-aggressive, positive and formal tones. Their body language needs to change in order to give off a warm and assuring vibe to others.

## LIMITATION

No study can be done without some limitations. The present study is not the exceptions. The researcher has to face numerous problems during his field work. However, the researcher could overcome quite a few of them but still he has to face some.

The first issue was the variables that are considered in the study. In the present study at hand we considered Interpersonal Communication Skills. There are other variable like problem solving skills, problem solving inventory. Further research is required to understand the interrelationships between other these variables. The second issue was the sampling method. Convenience sampling not always gives the exact representation of the population.

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