

The Effects of Social Interaction and Communication on the Improvement of Communication Proficiency in Bangladesh

Khondaker Mohammad Shamerul Huda¹

Khondaker Mohammad Shaherul Huda²

Khondaker Mohammad Shariful Huda³

Sk. Moniruzzaman⁴

Abstract: Recent times have increasingly shown the importance of communication skills, be it for students or for working adults. There is almost no job sector that does not require ample communication skills. However, despite having much focus in other countries in Bangladesh, there is not much importance put on the development of communication yet. There are many factors that can contribute to development, but the most modern and indirect method is occurring through social interaction, both physically and via social media. They lead to interaction and communication among many individuals, leading to shared ideas and innovation. The outcome and significance of the relationship between these two variables have not been investigated. There have been some studies of social interaction and cognitive development (Hinde, 1985), but these are in the past, and it is important to know the effect right now in a developing country such as Bangladesh. It is expected to see a high correlation between social interaction and communication skills after the data analysis.

Keywords: Social Interaction, Communication Proficiency, COVID-19.

1. Introduction

Not much importance is given to the level of communication proficiency; usually, people get by with just enough. However, that sort of mentality is dangerous as it leads to communication errors in many aspects of life that are more costly than imaginable. The lack of communication proficiency has a hidden impact on people's lives. In Bangladesh, many do not realise this, thinking it is a natural thing. But with some effort and time into social interaction and communication, it is possible to drastically improve communication standards, which in turn improves living standards in the country, along with being able to understand and cooperate with people across the world. Right now, there are many reasons why there is a lack of social interaction and communication, and of these, the prime cause is the COVID-19 lockdown, which led to the isolation of many people. There is less social interaction and communication between people than ever before, and this is a different scene for Bangladesh. Usually, kids play with each other at school, in some field, or even on the streets. Right now, the only interaction they have is

¹ Graduate Researcher, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, University of Putra Malaysia.

² Graduate Researcher, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, University of Putra Malaysia.

³ Professor, Geography and Environment, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka-1342.

⁴ Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Science, University of South Asia, Aminbazar, Savar, Dhaka.

with close families to remain safe from the dangers of the virus. Even though there is some interaction in online schools, colleges, universities, and at work, we can all agree that it is not to the same extent as before. Moreover, this phenomenon also has a profound effect on those in their childhood and school years. Children learn the most at young ages. With a lack of social interaction, this learning is hampered, as interaction and communication between other children develops their understanding of the world and improves their communication proficiency. Studies regarding social interaction and communication proficiency have been undertaken in western literature (Ademiluyi, 2019). However, there is limited research being conducted in many countries, especially in Asia, to determine the connection between social communication and communication proficiency. In the context of Bangladesh, there have not been undertaken in this area. The main objective of this research is to understand the impact and importance of social interaction in the development of communication proficiency. The research aims to find out what is the most optimal path for Bangladesh and its citizens to develop and improve their living standards eventually by improving the standard of communication. Furthermore, this research will be able to guide education experts and can be used as a reference for those seeking excellent communication proficiency. It can also be used as guidelines to measure the impact of major events such as the lockdown on children, students, teens, parents, and adults.

2. Research problem

When used effectively, social media may have a substantial impact on how students are taught and how they learn in the classroom. However, due to the variety of languages and writing styles utilized on the media platforms, social media contact may also disrupt university students' ability to concentrate, potentially harming their ability to study and communicate. There is no reason to think that the impact of social interaction on schooling would change any time soon. On the contrary, with new social media being developed and introduced, the trends suggest an approaching explosion in the ubiquity of social interaction with great implications for teaching and learning in business education and other fields. There is therefore a need to determine the influence of social interaction on communication skill acquisition of university students in Bangladesh (Ademiluyi, 2019).

3. Research questions

- How does social interaction affect the development of communication?
- What are the primary areas of improvement in communication skills from social interaction?
- What is the relationship between social interaction and communication skills of the people in Bangladesh?

4. Research objectives

- To determine the extent of the influence of social interaction on communication skills of people in Bangladesh.
- To assess the extent of the influence of the amount of social interaction on

communication skill improvement of people in Bangladesh.

- To find specific areas of effect of communication skills with a change in amount of social interaction.

5. Importance of study

The findings of this study will benefit the schools and universities of Bangladesh as they will have a better understanding and evidence of how social interaction and communication interact with one another. To improve the overall communication literacy in the country by educating using these findings. Students in university and adults can start to understand the importance of social interaction and this will help them communicate and cooperate amongst each other leading to a better learning and working environment.

The main terms of interest are the independent and the dependent variable in the research at hand. The independent variable (Social interaction and communication) is a broad and diverse term that refers to all manners of communication, activity, and interaction between different individuals. It is an intricate process that calls for the stimulation or reaction of two or more people. This includes the relationship between a parent and child or intricate relationships with people throughout life. Cooperation and rivalry, the impact of social roles and status, group dynamics, leadership, and a sense of belonging are all influenced by social contact. Relationships are formed by ongoing social interaction between people. Through this research we can find the relationship between social interaction and communication skills so we can start to inter-relate their benefits and impact on all the criteria mentioned. Finally, Self-understanding, Educators and the Government of Bangladesh will understand the importance of social interaction and how it is related to improvement of communication.

On the other hand, the dependent variable (Communication Proficiency) is a straightforward term that measures skill, fluidity, and consistency of communication. Communication skill is the ability to give and receive information efficiently. Communication skills involve listening, speaking, observing, and empathizing. Findings of the study will clarify the advantages of using a quantitative method to analyze data to find the relationship between the two variables using a Pearson correlation test. The reliability of the test is measured by using Cronbach's alpha.

6. Literature review

6.1 Social Media

Interactive computer-mediated technologies that enable the creation or sharing of knowledge, concepts, professional interests, and other forms of expression through online communities and networks are referred to as social media. Numerous well-known platforms are covered by this description, such as WeChat, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, and blogging sites. Social media's pervasiveness in our daily lives has had a significant impact on how we communicate. It has developed into a platform for information sharing despite the controversy surrounding its use in education. Although social media is understood in terms of the technology that is now in use, communication studies lack a standard description for its functionality and philosophy.

Theorizing on the use and effects of social media is limited due to this lack of information.

6.2 Communication Skills

One of the fundamental components of general skills that university students need is communication abilities. Students would have encountered scenarios during their time in college, both inside and outside of lecture halls, where they would need to employ their communication skills, such as group projects and presentations in class. In addition to academic performance, the university's role in generating graduates in a variety of fields to meet market demands also emphasizes the development of generic talents, or "soft skills," that are necessary for students to compete in the global market. Furthermore, 'while selecting their future workforce, businesses increasingly give significant weight to personality and general skills' Penbek, Yurdakul, and Cerit (2009). In our globalized world, university students need to master communication skills in diverse cultural contexts. Harlak (2008) proposed that 'university students be exposed to activities that can develop their communication skills starting from their first year at university'. Hence, Iksan and others (2012) said that 'universities must provide many more activities to develop the student's communication skills to meet the challenges of the globalized world'.

6.3 Verbal Communication Skills

The process of conveying information from the one giving it to the person receiving it, both verbally and nonverbally, is referred to as communication. The exchange of words is a fundamental component of communication. It is crucial to understand human communication. Verbal communication, which is two-way and involves responding to the message received, is the most generic form of communication. Other definitions of communication include the sharing of thoughts, opinions, and facts with a specific objective. Researchers have grouped language and social interaction under the same banner (Rocci, 2016). There is no doubt that this is a sector to investigate as a factor affecting communication skills. There has already been recent research showing that verbal communication has a significant positive impact on the learning of English (Sutiyatno, 2018) which is an example of development in communication skills.

6.4 Written Communication Skills

Written communication skills are another core area of focus as it is a standard measure of communication skills in most communication skill sectors. Written communication focuses on expressing oneself clearly utilizing language with high precision. It also includes constructing a logical argument to discuss ideas and more generic written skills such as note taking, editing, summarizing and report writing (Masclé, 2013). Therefore, written communication skills are also chosen as a construct in the research.

6.5 Social Communication Skills

Social communication skills are usually used for formalities, manners and politeness but also include non-verbal communication skills used during social interaction such as gestures, body language and eye contact. Social communication includes communication

skills within groups; these could be diverse groups as well. These skills also create confidence in communication to avoid barriers such as communication initiation in a group, taking constructive criticism and cooperation in groups (Iksan *et al*, 2012). This section also covers leadership communication skills learned from leadership programs such as the (Duke of Edinburgh's Award, 2022).

7. Research methodology

7.1 Research Design

This study is quantitative research by using an online survey. By separating the dependent variable (Communication Proficiency) and the independent variable (Social Interaction and Communication) into smaller specific components. These sectors contained multiple questions, which represent them and indicate a total measurable value of the sector. All the values are used to measure the value of the dependent variable (Communication Proficiency). By collecting numerical data via Google forms to analyze and find the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Table 01: Communication Skills Constructs and Sub-constructs.

Construct	Sub-construct
Verbal Communication Skills	Presenting ideas verbally Listening and Understanding Feedback skills Presentation skills
Written Communication Skills	Presenting ideas in a written format Feedback in written format Understanding and explanation in written format
Social Communication Skills	Negotiation and Persuasion skills Intercultural Communication skills Language variety and adaptability Politeness and manners of communication

(Source: Compiled by Author, 2022)

7.2 Research Method

The Google based online survey form was developed based on the available literature on social media and communication skills alongside discussions among researchers. The constructs of communication skills are included as oral skills, written skills, and social skills. These have been reviewed earlier showing how they each have a significant role in the development of communication skills. Every construct in the Google based survey

form has been measured based on a few sub-constructs that in turn are measured by several items. Participants were told to respond to a five-point Likert scale: strongly disagree, disagree, slightly disagree, agree, and strongly agree. The Google based survey form has been pretested, and Cronbach's alpha test has been carried out based on the surveyed data. Social interaction has been measured as constant formed by the average time spent per individual on social interaction. The dependent variable has been split into three constructs: Verbal, Written and social communication skills.

Table 02: Social Interaction Constructs and Sub Constructs.

Construct	Sub-construct (Range between 0-24 hours)
Social interaction	Interpersonal interaction Average amount of social interaction daily 1. Lower than 1 hour 2. 2-4 hours 3. 5-7 hours 4. 8-10 hours 5. More than 10 hours.

Source: Compiled by Author, 2022)

7.2.1 Cronbach's Alpha Test

This test used the given sub constructs to measure the reliability of the items; a value of over 0.70 will show high reliability. A Google survey form was made using the sub constructs as a basis for questions that has been transformed into the data frequencies which was compared with a set of mean ranges. This indicates if the items chosen as measures of the variable measure the same construct whilst being valid and reliable for the construct.

7.2.2 Pre-test Research

To ensure the reliability of the test a pilot test with a small sample size was conducted and the Cronbach's alpha has been measured using SPSS to find the items inter relationship, number, and dimensionality these items are the ones that have been chosen to represent the variable in the final test. This was indicating if the items are suitable for the test and if the test can be conducted with given items.

7.2.3 Location and Subject

The research location that has been selected is Dhaka the capital city Bangladesh. By selecting a large area such as Dhaka it is possible to get a diverse and wider variety of Bangladeshis to respond to the survey. The target respondents were directed towards students and teachers in schools and universities and towards any working adults. As these individuals were able to understand and answer the questionnaire without bias. They were able to answer based on their own personal experience. Students in schools and universities, working adults were the focus of this research as it is important for these areas to improve communication skills since they were still in a developing stage of life. They were able to identify their lack in skills and will understand the importance of such skills.

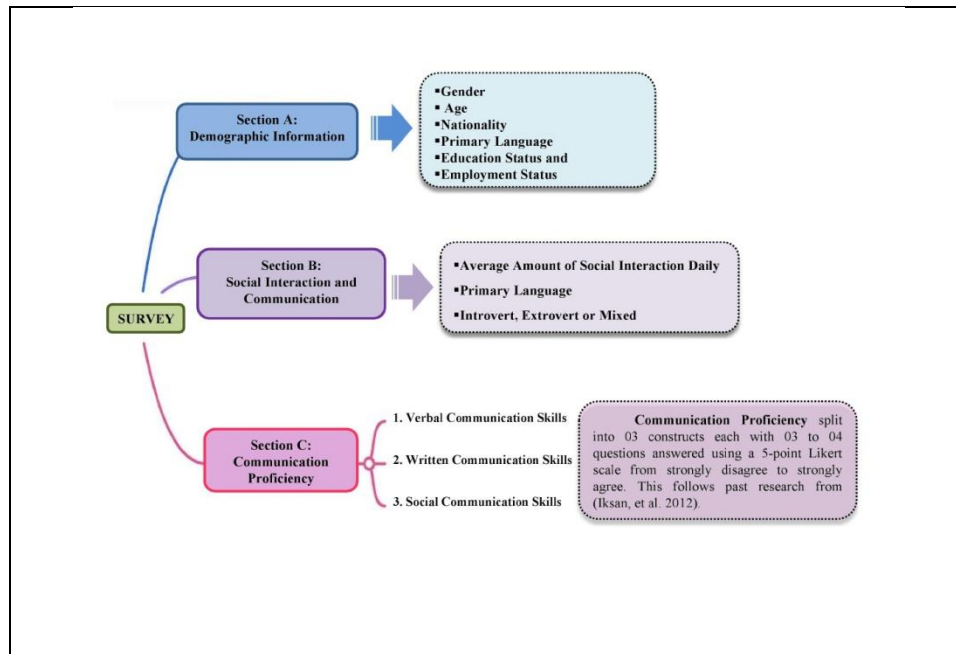


Figure-01: Research Instruments.

(Source: Compiled by Author, 2022)

7.3 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed after the target number of online surveys are collected. The data received was determined and converted into a specific code to simplify the measurement procedures. All the code has been computed for analysis processes. The program SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used to analyze the data obtained. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis. The descriptive statistics dissemination involved frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. After that, the data was computed together to make a correlation test. From the correlation data that was analyzed, a clear result can be seen on whether there is significant relationship or not between the research variables.

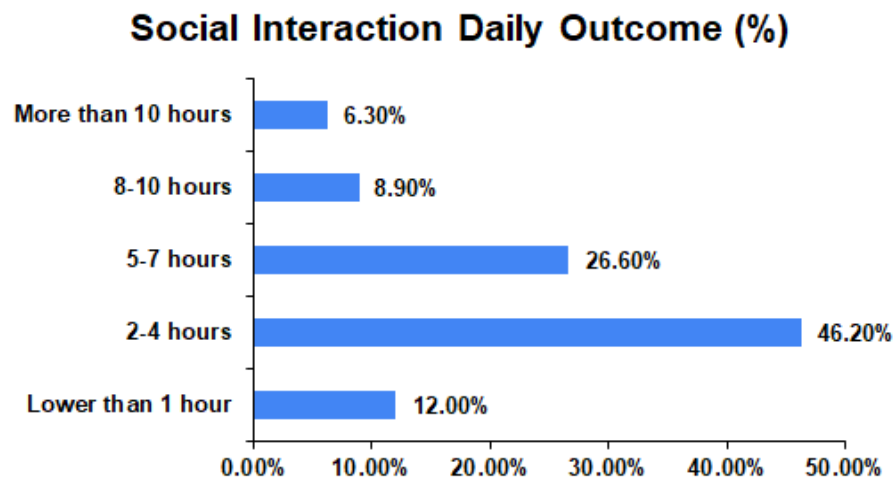
7.4 Pearson Correlation Test

To measure the statistical relationship between the variables the Pearson correlation coefficient was found using SPSS. This was given the linear relationship between the two variables and hence we have already found how much the variables are correlated with each other.

8. Results and discussion

8.1 Respondents Profile

The total number of respondents for this study was 157. Based on surveyed data, as seen from the demographic information of the respondent's 63.3 percent were male among them, so the survey reached more males than females (36.7%). The ages of respondents were mainly from those in the groups of 20 or below, 21-26 and 27 or above with 1.90, 47.5 and 50.6 percent respectively. There were only a few under 20 years who took the survey. Since the research is on Bangladeshis only, that is the only Nationality undergoing the survey. We can also see that most of the respondents had Bangla as their first language with 91.8% the rest being English. Also, most of the respondents were from university 94.9% with only a few from school and none. Lastly, there were almost equal numbers of people working and not working with 48.7% and 51.3% respectively. The chart (figure 02) below shows the respondents average amount of social interaction daily. For our independent variable we separated the amount of social interaction into five groups as seen 2-4 hours daily was most common with 46.2% and next was 5-7 hours with 26.6% then we had lower than 1 hour and 8-10 hours with 12% and 8.9% respectively and lastly, we have 6.3% represents more than 10 hours. By analyzing this chart, we can tell that the respondents usually must undergo a lot of social interaction in their life, maybe because of their current position in university or even because some are working.



(Source: Surveyed by Author, 2022)

Figure 02: Average amount of Social Interaction Daily Outcome

8.2 Cronbach's Alpha Result

The Cronbach's Alpha Value for the 11 items to measure Communication skills is at (.823) which shows that the items are very reliable for this research. A value of over 0.8 shows that the research items have very good reliability and validity.

Table 03: Cronbach's Alpha Result.

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Item
0.823	0.828	11

(Source: Surveyed by Author, 2022)

8.3 Verbal Communication Skills Analysis

As seen in the item statistics for verbal communication skills all the sub constructs mean values are around 3.81- 4.36 out of 5 for 157 respondents. Since we are using a Likert scale, 1 strongly disagrees and 5 strongly agree. By using the mean values, we can analyze the respondent's answers. Most people are comfortable to agree that they can listen and understand during verbal communication (4.36). Feedback skills and idea presenting skills are similar (3.99) whilst the lowest being presentation skills (3.81).

Table 04: Verbal Communication Skills Outcome.

Verbal Communication	Mean	Std. Deviation
Presenting ideas verbally	3.99	0.923
Listening and Understanding	4.36	0.651
Feedback skills	3.99	0.881
Presentation skills	3.81	0.975

(Source: Surveyed by Author, 2022)

8.4 Written Communication Skills Analysis

As seen in the item statistics for written communication skills all the sub constructs' mean values are around 4.04-4.22 out of five for 157 respondents. Since we are using a Likert scale, one strongly disagrees and 5 strongly agree. By using the mean values, we can analyze the respondent's answers. The means for the items are almost similar with no stark difference. Respondents agree they can present ideas in written format (4.12), they can give feedback in written format (4.04), and they can understand and explain in written format (4.22). Understanding and explanation being the most agreeable and feedback being the least agreeable.

Table 05: Written Communication Skills Outcome.

Written Communication Skills	Mean	Std. Deviation
Presenting ideas in a written format	4.12	0.929
Feedback in written format	4.04	0.973
Understanding and explanation in written format	4.22	0.85

(Source: Surveyed by Author, 2022)

8.5 Social Communication Skills Analysis

Social communication skills have the lowest mean values compared to the other items other than politeness and manners of communication (4.31). Respondents are less confident on their negotiation and persuasion skills and have lesser language variety and adaptability 3.65 and 3.37, respectively. However most agree that they can communicate efficiently with people from other cultures (3.90).

Table 06: Social Communication Skills Outcome.

Social Communication Skills	Mean	Std. Deviation
Negotiation and Persuasion skills	3.65	1.085
Intercultural Communication skills	3.9	0.893
Language variety and adaptability	3.37	1.145
Politeness and manners of communication	4.31	0.724

(Source: Surveyed by Author, 2022)

8.6 Pearson Correlation Test Analysis for Verbal Communication Skills

The Pearson correlation test was conducted to assess relationships among verbal communication skills variables. The amount of social interaction showed non-significant correlations with presenting ideas verbally, listening and understanding, feedback skills, and presentation skills, with a marginal significance observed in its correlation with feedback skills ($r = 0.14$, $p = 0.079$). Presenting ideas verbally demonstrated highly significant positive correlations with listening and understanding ($r = 0.377$, $p < 0.001$), feedback skills ($r = 0.370$, $p < 0.001$), and presentation skills ($r = 0.497$, $p < 0.001$). Listening and understanding were significantly and positively correlated with presenting ideas verbally, feedback skills, and presentation skills. Feedback skills showed significant positive correlations with presenting ideas verbally, listening and understanding, and presentation skills. Presentation skills exhibited highly significant positive correlations with presenting ideas verbally, feedback skills, and, to a lesser extent, listening and understanding. In summary, effective verbal communication is strongly associated with presenting ideas verbally and receiving/providing feedback, emphasizing their interconnectedness in these communication skills.

Table 07: Pearson Correlation Test Outcome for Verbal Communication Skills

Verbal Communication Skills Variables and Test		Amount of social Interaction	Presenting Ideas verbally	Listening and Understanding	Feedback skills	Presentation skills
Amount of social Interaction	Pearson Correlation	1	0.127	0.011	0.14	0.11
	Sig.(2-tailed)		0.113	0.886	0.079	0.17
Presenting Ideas verbally	Pearson Correlation	0.127	1	.377**	.370**	0.497**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.113		<.001	<.001	<0.001
Listening and Understanding	Pearson Correlation	0.011	.377**	1	.452**	0.219**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.886	<.001		<.001	0.006
Feedback skills	Pearson Correlation	0.14	.370**	.452**	1	0.379**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.079	<.001	<.001		<0.001
Presentation skills	Pearson Correlation	0.11	.497**	.219**	.379**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.17	<.001	0.006	<.001	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed).

(Source: Surveyed by Author, 2022)

8.7 Pearson Correlation Test Analysis for Written Communication Skills

The results of the Pearson correlation test for written communication skills reveal insights into the interrelationships between different variables. The amount of social interaction exhibits no statistically significant correlations with presenting ideas in a written format, providing feedback in a written format, or understanding and explanation in a written format. However, presenting ideas in a written format is significantly and positively correlated with providing feedback ($r = 0.753$, $p < 0.001$) and understanding/explanation ($r = 0.600$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, providing feedback in a written format is strongly correlated with presenting ideas in a written format ($r = 0.753$, $p < 0.001$) and understanding/explanation ($r = 0.626$, $p < 0.001$). Understanding and explanation in a written format also show significant positive correlations with presenting ideas in a written format ($r = 0.600$, $p < 0.001$) and providing feedback in a written format ($r = 0.626$, $p < 0.001$). In summary, the findings highlight the robust connections between presenting ideas, providing feedback, and understanding/explanation in the context of written communication skills, whereas social interaction has a limited association with these skills.

Table 8: Pearson Correlation Test Outcome for Written Communication Skills

Written Communication Skills Variables and Test		Amount of social Interaction	Presenting ideas in a written format	Feedback in written format	Understanding and explanation in written format
Amount of social Interaction	Pearson Correlation	1	0.058	0.124	0.128
	Sig.(2-tailed)		0.467	0.122	0.111
Presenting ideas in a written format	Pearson Correlation	0.058	1	0.753**	0.600**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.467		<0.001	<0.001
Feedback in written format	Pearson Correlation	0.124	0.753**	1	0.626**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.122	<0.001		<0.001
Understanding and explanation in written format	Pearson Correlation	0.128	0.600**	0.626**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.111	<0.001	<0.001	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed). (Source: Surveyed by Author, 2022)

8.8 Pearson Correlation Test Analysis for Social Communication Skills

The Pearson correlation test reveals key relationships in social communication skills. Amount of social interaction significantly correlates with politeness and manners of communication ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$). Negotiation and persuasion skills correlate significantly with intercultural communication skills ($r = 0.373$, $p < 0.001$) and language variety and adaptability ($r = 0.249$, $p = 0.002$). Intercultural communication skills show significant correlations with negotiation and persuasion skills ($r = 0.373$, $p < 0.001$) and language variety and adaptability ($r = 0.319$, $p < 0.001$). Language variety and adaptability significantly correlate with politeness and manners of communication ($r = 0.370$, $p < 0.001$). Lastly, politeness and manners of communication correlate significantly with the amount of social interaction ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$) and language variety and adaptability ($r = 0.370$, $p < 0.001$). These findings emphasize the interconnections within social communication skills.

Table 9: Pearson Correlation Test Outcome for Social Communication Skills

Social Communication Skills Variables and Test		Amount of social Interaction	Negotiation and Persuasion skills	Intercultural Communication skills	Language variety and adaptability	Politeness and manners of communication
Amount of social Interaction	Pearson Correlation	1	0.095	0.035	0.007	0.58
	Sig.(2-tailed)		0.234	0.662	0.935	0.468
Negotiation and Persuasion skills	Pearson Correlation	0.095	1	.373**	0.249**	0.205**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.234		<0.001	0.002	0.01
Intercultural Communication skills	Pearson Correlation	0.035	0.373**	1	.319**	0.357**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.662	<0.001		<0.001	<0.001
Language variety and adaptability	Pearson Correlation	0.007	0.249**	0.319**	1	0.370**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.935	0.002	<0.001		<.001
Politeness and manners of communication	Pearson Correlation	0.058	0.205**	0.357**	0.370**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.468	0.01	<0.001	<0.001	

**** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed).**

(Source: Surveyed by Author, 2022)

9. Conclusion

This research was conducted to find the relationship between social interaction and communication proficiency. The findings of the research show enough evidence to prove that these factors are correlated, meaning they directly affect each other. The more social interaction the more the development in communication skills leads to improvement in communication proficiency. Social interaction can occur through many mediums as it is interpersonal communication between people. So, it is important for anyone who wishes to develop their communication skills to interact socially as much as possible. This is because during social interaction people are practicing communication skills and learning new skills from others. It is a two-way learning process, and this is the foundation of development communication theory.

The research evaluated the level of communication skills of three constructs alongside sub constructs which were items to represent the overall construct. These communication skills were compared with the average amount of social interaction daily by those individuals. There was a positive correlation between most of the constructs. Which emphasizes the importance of the constructs on the improvement of communication skills be it verbal, written or social. The development of communication skills is an intertwining process where one skill helps in the growth of another.

The primary emphasis of this research centers on the development of communication theory by the facilitation and identification of growth in communication skills. The intention is to contribute to the advancement of communication skills and play a pivotal role in the nurturing of the youth in Bangladesh. A key takeaway from this study is the practical application of the data and findings to bolster the development of communication skills across various contexts. The insights generated can prove valuable for educational institutions, such as schools and universities, seeking to enhance student communication development. The aim is to provide actionable information that can be instrumental in fostering effective communication skills and contributing to the overall growth and development of individuals.

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