

Analysis of the Level of Social Skills among Educational Personnel:A Field Study in the Educational Institutions of Sebseb Municipality

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Abstract:

The present study aimed to analyse the level of social skills among educational personnel in the municipality of Sebseb, Ghardaïa. The investigation encompassed a total population (n = 88) of educational staff—including principals, teachers, and superintendents — comprising 30 males and 58 females, all of whom were assessed via exhaustive sampling. Employing a descriptive research design consonant with the study's objectives, data were gathered using the Social Skills Scale developed by Nasr-El-Din Abdel-Hamid (2011). Statistical analyses were conducted with the Social Sciences Statistical Package (SPSS), utilising frequency distributions, percentages, arithmetic mean, and standard deviation as primary techniques, results indicated that:

1. The overall level of social skills among the educational personnel in Sebseb municipality is high.

2. No statistically significant differences in social skills levels were observed across gender.
3. No statistically significant differences in social skills levels were observed across age groups.
4. No statistically significant differences in social skills levels were observed across varying lengths of professional experience.
5. No statistically significant differences in social skills levels were observed across different workplace settings.
6. No statistically significant differences in social skills levels were observed across types of educational roles.

Keywords: social skills level; educational personnel .

Problem Statement

Education is the primary engine driving the construction of societies, the advancement of civilizations, and the elevation of individuals. It constitutes an organized, deliberative process delivered by families, schools, universities, and educational institutions at large, with the aim of transmitting skills and knowledge, eradicating illiteracy, and shaping the attitudes of learners.

Teaching, in particular, involves the intentional effort of the instructor to engage with students and deliver fruitful, effective instruction through direct interaction. Such instruction may occur within or beyond formal educational settings and encompasses skills, knowledge, and experiential learning. More broadly, the term “education” refers to any process—whether deliberate or incidental—through which individuals acquire knowledge (Mohsen Ali Atiya, 2013, p. 260).

Recently, social skills have garnered significant attention as a foundational pillar of societal equilibrium. Many individuals possess advanced cognitive abilities but fail to leverage their social competencies, which can precipitate aggression, conflict, social isolation, or shyness. Indeed, social behavior and associated skills permeate every facet of an individual's life, profoundly influencing adaptation and well-being across developmental stages. The capacity to forge successful interpersonal relationships determines one's social standing within both academic and communal milieus. Moreover, social skills manifest through various behaviors, such as offering assistance to others (Al-Nufai, 2009, p. 50).

Educational institutions and practitioners bear a responsibility to cultivate diverse social skills in learners—particularly strategies for interacting positively with society and others, and for managing stress, conflict, and unexpected situations. This entails equipping every participant in the educational process—students, teachers, and administrators alike—with a repertoire of competencies necessary to navigate their environments. Such skills represent essential educational needs that shape personality development and are instilled both within the classroom and through broader socialization contexts.

A review of prior studies on social skills reveals several contributions:

- Jaid, A. (2011) examined the relationship between ambition and social skills among secondary-school principals.
- Al-Nuaymi and Al-Kharrouji (2014) investigated life skills variances among University of Diyala students according to gender (male/female) and academic major (arts/sciences).

- Abu Atiyaa, Al-Faiz, and Al-Saud (2015) explored whether female university students who do or do not use social networking sites differ in their social skills under various demographic variables.

These investigations underscore the significance of social skills in individuals' social functioning within academic settings, shaped by prior socialization agents such as family and school.

Given the foregoing, it is imperative to assess social skills among all categories of educational personnel. We have therefore selected a sample of directors, superintendentss, and teachers in Sebseb Municipality to analyze their levels of social competence. Sebseb Municipality an area noted for its low rates of school violence within the Ghardaïa Educational Directorate, yet one exhibiting strong primary-level achievement followed by declines in middle and secondary stages.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following questions:

1. What is the overall level of social skills among educational personnel in Sebseb Municipality?
2. Do social-skill levels differ by gender within the study sample?
3. Do social-skill levels differ by age within the study sample?
4. Do social-skill levels differ by years of professional experience within the study sample?

Hypotheses

1. It is anticipated that the social-skill levels of educational personnel in Sebseb Municipality will be moderate.
2. Social-skill levels will vary according to gender.
3. Social-skill levels will vary according to age.

4. Social-skill levels will vary according to professional experience.

Operational Definitions

1. Social Skills

○ Conceptual

Definition

Riggio (1999) defines social skills as an individual's capacity to express emotional and social content verbally, alongside their ability to regulate and organize nonverbal expressions—such as role-playing and the projection of a socially coherent self (Abdel-Hamid, 2010, p. 95).

○ Operational

Definition

The operational measure of social skills in this study is the total score obtained by each participant on the Social Skills Scale developed by Nadiya Nasr-El-Din Abdel-Hamid (2001). This instrument comprises five subscales:

1. **Peer Relations** (interactions with colleagues)
2. **Self-Management** (emotional and behavioral regulation)
3. **Academic Competencies** (skills pertaining to the educational role)
4. **Compliance** (willingness to follow rules and directives)
5. **Assertiveness** (capacity to express one's needs and rights)

2. Educational Personnel

Conceptual

Definition:

Educational personnel are individuals who perform a variety of professional functions within an educational institution under formal contractual arrangements, receiving both financial and moral remuneration.

Operational**Definition:**

In this study, “educational personnel” refers specifically to those staff members employed in Sebseb’s educational institutions who occupy one of the following roles:

- **Director:** the individual legally responsible for the overall administration and leadership of the institution.
 - **Teacher:** the staff member with the most frequent instructional contact with students.
 - **Superintendent:** the professional charged with overseeing student conduct and daily routines within the school.
- All three groups are presumed to require social-skill competencies to perform their respective duties effectively.

Conceptual Definitions and Theoretical Approaches to the Social-Skills Variable

Researchers have long debated whether social skills constitute learned behavioural patterns or inherent capacities. The following perspectives illustrate this conceptual divergence :

1. Social Skills as Learned Behavioural Patterns

Abdel-Salam (2001, p. 53) defines social skills as “a set of behavioural patterns that emerge as positive, interactive responses in multiple roles within one’s environment, commensurate with the social situations encountered and congruent with a society’s prevailing values and norms.”

2. Social Skills as Capacities

Fakher (1976, p. 419) defines social skill as “the ability to acquire the fundamental traits required for effective social interaction—such as empathy, friendliness, patience, and unselfishness—which facilitate

acceptance by others, initially within the family, then the school, and finally the broader social milieu.”

Abdel-Rahman (1998, p. 16) describes it as “the capacity to initiate interaction with others, express positive and negative emotions toward them, and regulate one’s affective responses in social situations in a manner suited to the context.”

Upon examining these definitions, several commonalities emerge:

- Social skills encompass both verbal and nonverbal behaviours.
- All definitions underscore the role of learning in acquiring social competencies.
- These skills are integral to human life, enabling adaptation and interaction within society.
- They can be viewed as the art of relating to others.
- Effective social skills hinge on the relationship between the individual and their social environment.
- Such competencies operate within the normative framework of the individual’s community.

Accordingly, we define social skills in this study as an individual’s ability to acquire and deploy a range of observable behavioural patterns—whether verbal or nonverbal—that elicit contextually appropriate responses during interactions with others.

Explanatory Theories of Social Skills

1. Behavioral

Theory

Behavioral approaches posit that new behaviours are acquired through learning rather than innate predisposition. Riggio (1999) similarly argues that social skills are not inborn but are learned through ongoing social interactions. From early childhood, an individual internalizes

social values via classical and operant conditioning, a process reinforced by competency development (Salama, 1993, p. 125).

2. Social Learning Theory

Bandura's model emphasizes the reciprocal interplay between an individual's internal processes (cognitive, affective) and external environmental factors. Learning occurs through this dynamic interaction—what Bandura terms “reciprocal determinism.” Neither internal drives nor environmental stimuli alone dictate behaviour; rather, psychological functioning emerges from the bidirectional exchange among personal determinants, environmental influences, and cognitive processes such as symbolization, self-regulation, and reflection. Observational learning—or modelling—constitutes the core mechanism by which social skills are acquired (Ibrahim, 2010, pp. 40–41).

3. Cognitive Theory

Cognitive perspectives maintain that responses are not automatic but result from sequential mental operations. Through stages of information processing, an individual integrates new inputs with existing knowledge to generate context-appropriate behaviours. Deficits in social skills, from this vantage, stem from maladaptive cognitive patterns—such as negative expectations—that impede effective interpersonal performance (Abdullah, 2000, p. 259). Consequently, cognitive theorists focus on the structure and content of one's beliefs, self-schemas, and past experiences as determinants of social competence.

Components of Social Skills

Bellack and colleagues classify social skill into three primary components:

1. Conversation

Skills

The capacity to initiate, maintain, and terminate a dialogue. Maintaining a conversation comprises three elements:

- ✓ **Questioning Others:** Formulating and posing relevant questions to interlocutors.
- ✓ **Providing Information:** Voluntarily offering appropriate information in response.
- ✓ **Active Listening:** Demonstrating attentive and responsive listening behaviors.

2. Assertiveness

Skills

The ability to express one's needs, feelings, and opinions openly. Assertiveness divides into two categories:

- ✓ **Positive Assertiveness:** Expressions of positive regard toward others, including:
 - ✓ **Complimenting:** Offering praise or commendation for achievements or possessions.
 - ✓ **Empathy:** Sharing others' emotional states in moments of joy or distress.
 - ✓ **Justification:** Providing reasons for one's behavior when errors occur.
 - ✓ **Negative Assertiveness:** Expressions of refusal, displeasure, or self-defense, such as:
 - ✓ Rejecting unreasonable requests.
 - ✓ Protesting or voicing objections.

- ✓ Expressing anger and negotiating solutions.

3. **Social Perception Skills**

The ability to discern when, where, and how to produce contextually appropriate responses. This includes sensitivity to social cues, attentional focus during interaction, and the ability to anticipate others' reactions (Ibrahim Abdel-Hamid & Heba, 2010, pp. 15–16).

Factors Influencing the Development of Social Skills

1. **Gender**

Gender plays a significant role in shaping social behavior in interactional contexts. Females often excel at interpreting both verbal and nonverbal emotional cues and expressing their feelings, whereas males tend to regulate emotional displays to avoid criticism or feelings of guilt, fear, or vulnerability (Goleman, 2000, pp. 190–191).

2. **Age**

Early childhood constitutes a critical period for the emergence of social behaviors and attaining the social maturity necessary for adaptive functioning. From a young age, individuals progressively develop the capacity to form effective social bonds, learn appropriate social roles, and engage successfully with peers (Shirawi, 2011, p. 166).

3. **Socialization**

Socialization contributes to social maturity by instilling societal norms and expectations. Through ongoing relationships, individuals learn acceptable behaviors that align with their community's standards, thereby facilitating context-appropriate responses (Zahran, 2000, p. 243).

4. **Occupation**

Social skills represent a crucial component of professional leadership and workplace effectiveness. In occupational settings, the mastery of

interpersonal competencies manifests in performance quality and the ability to interact constructively with colleagues and stakeholders (Buck, 1991, p. 26).

Field Study Procedures

Research

Design

The study employed a descriptive design, deemed most appropriate for the objectives and nature of the study.

1. Population of the Study

The target population comprised all educational personnel in Sebseb Municipality during the 2021–2022 academic year. Table 1 presents the distribution of staff by institution:

Table 1: Distribution of the Study Population by Educational Level (Primary, Middle, and Secondary Schools)

No.	Institution Name	Number of Staff
1	El-Aour Bouhafis Primary School	8
2	Chadhli Ben Jedid Secondary School	24
3	El-Aour Abdelkader Middle School	26
4	Ben Khalifa Abdelrahman Primary School	11
5	New School Complex (Laharith)	7
6	Hotia El-Mabrouk Primary School	9
7	School Complex (New Branch)	3
	Total	88

Note: The study focused exclusively on those holding the positions of school director, teacher, or superintendent, and data collection was conducted via exhaustive sampling of the entire population.

2. Data-Collection Instrument

Data were gathered using the Social Skills Scale developed by Nadiya Nasr-El-Din Abdel-Hamid (2011). Its structure is summarized in Table 2:

No.	Subscale	Item Numbers	Number of Items
1	Peer Relations	1–12	12
2	Self-Management	13–18	6
3	Academic Competencies	19–25	7
4	Compliance	26–31	6
5	Assertiveness	32–40	9
Total			40

3. Validity of the Scale

The scale validity was assessed through:

- **Content Validity:** Established through review by a panel of subject-matter experts, who confirmed the appropriateness of all items.
- **Discriminant Validity:** Assessed via extreme-groups comparison; results were significant at the 0.01 level, indicating the scale validly differentiates between high and low scorers.

5. **Reliability of the Scale**
Cronbach's alpha was computed to assess internal consistency. As shown in Table 3, the overall alpha coefficient was 0.67, which is considered acceptable for applied research and supports the instrument's suitability for use with the study sample.

Table 3 – Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient for the Study Scale

Number of Items	Cronbach's α
40	0.67

Results and Discussion

1. Analysis of The First Hypothesis

The first hypothesis posited that educational personnel in Sebseb Municipality will exhibit a high level of social skills. To classify

participants' scores, we divided the attainable range (40–120) into three equal intervals:

- $120 - 40 = 80$
- $80 \div 3 \approx 26.66$, rounded to 26
- Thresholds
 - **High level:** scores ≥ 94 ($120 - 26$)
 - **Medium level:** scores from 68 to 93 ($94 - 26$)
 - **Low level:** scores from 42 to 67 ($68 - 26$)

Table 4. Distribution of Social-Skills Levels

Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
High (≥ 94)	57	64.77 %	95.79	5.87
Medium (68–93)	31	35.23 %		
Low (42–67)	0	0 %		
Total	88	100 %	—	—

Based on the previous table, the participants' scores on the Social Skills Scale were categorized into three levels. A total of **57 individuals** scored in the **high social-skills range**, representing **64.77%** of the sample. Meanwhile, **31 individuals** fell within the **medium level**, accounting for **35.23%**. No participant was classified at the low level.

To illustrate how social-skill levels vary according to job roles, the distribution is presented in the following table:

Table 5: Relationship Between Social Skill Levels and Job Role Among the Study Sample

Social-Skills Level	Superintendent (n=17)	Teacher (n=64)	Director (n=7)	Total
High	15	39	3	57
Medium	2	25	4	31
Total	17	64	7	88

This table shows that the majority of those with high social skills were teachers (39), followed by supervisors (15), and principals (3).

Similarly, in the medium level, most were teachers (25), with fewer among supervisors (2) and principals (4).

Thus, the data support our hypothesis: educational personnel in Sebseb display predominantly high social-skills levels.

Our study's findings correspond with those of Al-Miqdad, Batayna, and Al-Jarrah (2011), whose research titled "*The Level of Social Skills Among Mainstream Children and Children with Learning Disabilities in Jordan from the Perspective of Teachers*" aimed to assess social skill levels among both groups and explore whether these levels varied by gender, age, or any interaction between the two. The sample included 278 students: 181 classified as mainstream, and 97 identified with learning difficulties. These students were selected from schools in the Irbid Second Directorate that had resource rooms for special education. Data were collected using a modified version of the Social Skills Scale developed by Haroun (2005) for students with disabilities. Results showed that both groups—mainstream and those with learning difficulties—displayed moderate levels of social skills.

Ahmed's (2013) study offers further support. It examined "*The Level of Social Skills Among Adolescents in Care Institutions Compared to Their Peers in the Lower Galilee*." The goal was to investigate whether adolescents living in care differed from those in regular schools in terms of social competence. The sample consisted of 200 adolescents. The researcher used a social skills scale and calculated internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha. Findings showed that adolescents in care exhibited a moderate level, while their peers in regular school environments demonstrated a higher level of social skills. Statistically significant differences appeared between the two groups across most domains—except for the ability to recognize others' emotions, where no substantial difference was found. Overall, results favored adolescents in mainstream settings.

Also relevant is Rami Mahmoud Al-Youssef's (2008) research: "Social Skills and Language Competence, and the Relationship Between Them Among Kindergarten Children in Zarqa Governorate." This study aimed to evaluate both social skill levels and linguistic competence, and to identify any link between the two. The sample included 200 kindergarten children, equally split between boys and girls, enrolled during the first semester of the 2018/2019 academic year. Two tools were used: the Social Skills Scale developed by Al-

Youssef (2008) and the Language Competence Scale created by Fadli (2013), both validated for reliability and construct accuracy. Results indicated that the children generally demonstrated high levels of social skills, as well as strong language competence. A positive correlation was found between the two. Moreover, no statistically significant differences were found based on gender—though girls tended to score slightly higher—and no differences were reported in relation to birth order.

Several local conditions may explain the elevated social-skills levels observed:

- The rural, agrarian setting of Sebseb fosters tranquility and strong community bonds.
- Very small class sizes at all educational levels allow teachers to engage more deeply and form positive relationships with students.
- Provision of housing reduces external stressors on staff.
- A work schedule aligned with local rhythms supports well-being.
- Additional professional benefits encourage positive social functioning.

2. Presentation and Analysis of the Second Hypothesis

The second hypothesis posited that the level of social skills among the study sample varies according to gender.

To test this, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted. The results are presented below:

Table 6. Differences in Social Skills by Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	<i>t</i> -value	df	<i>p</i> -value
Male	30	95.80	4.97	0.005	16	0.996
Female	58	95.79	6.33			

The data show that the mean score for male educational personnel was 95.80 (SD = 4.97), while the mean for females was nearly identical at 95.79 (SD = 6.33). The computed *t*-value was 0.005, with 16 degrees of freedom and a *p*-value of 0.996.

Since the *p*-value far exceeds the conventional significance threshold of 0.05, the difference is not statistically significant. This leads us to reject the hypothesis that social skills differ by gender, and to retain the null hypothesis:

There is no significant difference in social-skills levels based on gender.

To further explore the distribution of high and medium social-skills levels across genders, the following cross-tabulation was constructed:

Table 7. Cross-Tabulation of Social Skills Level by Gender

Social-Skills Level	Male	Female	Total
High	21	36	57
Medium	9	22	31
Total	30	58	88

We observe from this test that 21 male workers demonstrated a high level of social skills, compared to 36 female workers. Similarly, 9 male workers scored at a medium level, alongside 22 female workers, bringing the total sample to 88 participants.

This result is consistent with the findings of Epstein et al. (1985), who reported no substantial differences between males and females in terms of social skills. According to Zahran (1984, p. 203), both gender and communication are inherently interconnected, serving as core elements in the formation of social relations. No interaction between two individuals can occur without some form of communicative exchange.

However, the outcome of this study diverges from the findings of Haseeb (2001), Abdel Rahman (1992), and Al-Youssef (2013), which identified gender-based differences in social skills.

The absence of differences in the present study may be attributed to the fact that both sexes live in similar environments, which fosters comparable adaptation to social situations and leads to parallel levels of social behavior. It may also reflect the evolution of social upbringing in contemporary society, which increasingly avoids discriminating between males and females in terms of opportunities to build and expand social networks. This, in turn, has promoted the development of social skills for both genders.

Moreover, the emergence of modern communication platforms—such as Facebook, Twitter, and others—has made it possible for individuals of all genders and backgrounds to form diverse social ties. These changes have played a significant role in diminishing the traditional differences between males and females regarding social skill development.

3. Presentation and Analysis of the Third Hypothesis

The third hypothesis stated that the level of social skills among the study sample varies according to age.

To test this hypothesis, a one-way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was conducted. The results are presented in the following table:

Table 8. Social Skills Variance by Age Group

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	151.157	3	50.386	1.484	0.225
Within Groups	2851.161	84	33.942		
Total	3002.318	87			

As shown, the calculated F-ratio is 1.484, with a *p*-value of 0.225, which is higher than the significance threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the difference in social skills across age groups is not statistically significant.

In other words, the hypothesis suggesting a variation in social skills based on age is rejected, and we retain the null hypothesis:

There is no significant difference in social-skills levels among educational personnel in Sebseb based on age.

Ali (1987, p. 163) noted that adults generally exhibit more emotional stability due to their accumulated life experiences, as well as stability in their professional and domestic lives, and a sense of security regarding their future. This often enables adults to regulate their emotions more effectively, even delaying emotional expression until a more appropriate time and context arises.

This finding aligns with the results of Abou Helo (2008), who concluded that there were no significant age-based differences in social-skill levels among female leaders in Palestinian civil society organizations.

4. Presentation and Analysis of the Fourth Hypothesis

The fourth hypothesis stated that the level of social skills among the study sample varies according to professional experience.

To test this, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The results are summarized in the following table:

Table 9: Differences in Social Skills According to Professional Experience

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. Level
Between Groups	95.481	3	31.827	0.920	0.435
Within Groups	2906.837	84	34.605		
Total	3002.318	87			

From the table above, we see that the F-value is 0.920 at a significance level of 0.435—well above the 0.05 threshold. This clearly indicates that **there is no statistically significant difference in social skills based on years of professional experience.**

This outcome is consistent with the findings of Jaid Aisha (2011), whose study examined the relationship between ambition levels and social skills among secondary school principals in the western region. Her research also investigated whether those with high or low ambition differed in their social skills, and whether differences appeared based on years of professional experience. While the study did find a significant positive relationship between ambition and social skills overall, as well as differences between high- and low-ambition principals across most dimensions, no statistically significant differences were found in social skills scores attributable to years of experience—neither in the total score nor in subdimensions like emotional expression or social control.

The same pattern appeared in Abu Helo's (2008) research, which also found no differences in social skills linked to years of experience.

Even so, one cannot entirely dismiss the possible impact of professional experience on social interaction. Repeated exposure to real-life situations across years of service could indeed shape how individuals handle social contexts. Yet, as Ali (1987) noted, what one acquires in the workplace—or elsewhere—depends fundamentally on internal factors: ability, readiness, and motivation to learn. Without those, experience alone does not translate into genuine acquisition of interpersonal skill. In effect, for professional experience to matter, the content of that experience must be matched with the individual's cognitive and emotional maturity, and their willingness to evolve.

It is also worth mentioning what some researchers have pointed out—that learning curves in skill development tend to plateau. At a certain point, known as the physiological threshold, progress slows. Not

everyone reaches that point. Some could, if they continued training or made sustained effort. But others may voluntarily stop short of it—either because they do not see the need to go further, or because the effort required outweighs the gains they expect. For many, that trade-off defines the limit of their development.

General

Conclusion

Following the completion of both the theoretical framework and empirical procedures of this study—and after reviewing and discussing the findings in light of the study’s hypotheses—the following conclusions were drawn:

- Educational personnel in Sebseb Municipality exhibit a high level of social skills.
- Gender does not significantly influence the level of social skills.
- Age does not produce significant differences in social skills.
- Years of professional experience do not lead to differences in social skill levels.

In a nutshell, it can be stated that all the objectives initially set forth have been achieved. Within the limits of our knowledge, this study represents the first of its kind conducted in educational institutions in the municipality of Sebseb. It reinforces the essential role that social skills play in the educational field—not only in the professional performance of educational staff but, more broadly, in shaping student character across all levels of schooling.

Moreover, the relevance of social competence extends beyond the boundaries of formal education. We hope this research contributes to a wider recognition that social skills must be part of the educator’s formation across all domains of life—especially within the family unit, which remains the child’s primary environment for personality development. The quality of these early social foundations carries direct implications for children’s maturity and social functioning later in life.

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