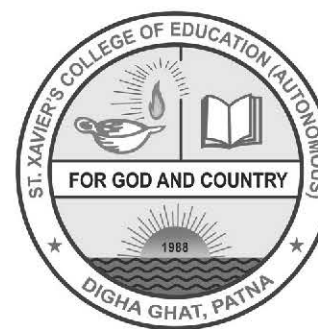


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A Comparative Study of Interpersonal Relationship Skills between the Students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) Program

Abstract

MSW and M.A. (Sociology) programs equip students for careers centred on understanding society and the behavioural patterns that can disrupt the daily functioning of communities or individuals. Both programs share a deep commitment to social advocacy and the pursuit of social justice, but both fields employ different theoretical frameworks and methodologies. These programs should cultivate specific skill sets in students to ensure their career success. Interpersonal relationship skills are among the essential skills that students in both fields should develop during their academic journey. The main objective of this research is to compare the interpersonal relationship skills of students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) programs. A survey technique under the descriptive research method is used for this research. The researchers assessed a sample of 47 MSW and 51 M.A. (Sociology) students were assessed with an Interpersonal Relationship Scale. Conclusions suggested that the students of MSW have significantly better interpersonal relationship skills than M.A. (Sociology) students. Other results indicated that the female students of MSW have significantly better interpersonal relationship skills than the female students of M.A. (Sociology).

Keywords: MSW program, M.A. (Sociology) program, Interpersonal Relationship Skills, Career Success

Introduction

Life is rife with challenges, interpersonal relationships become a pillar of strength during trying times, providing a comforting presence and a trusted confidant with whom to share one's burdens. Much like learning math or other subjects, nurturing interpersonal skills in education creates a vital foundation for future success. When interpersonal skills are fostered in students they thrive in all aspects of their daily lives, including their performance in college. Cultivating these abilities provides students with various advantages, including building friendships, connecting over shared interests, and enhancing their self-confidence. Safety consciousness, college planning, and the mental soundness of college students are positively linked to Interpersonal relationships (Sun, 2023). Social connection and social isolation significantly influence biological responses and behaviors, each of which plays a crucial role in shaping overall health (Pietromonaco & Collins, 2017).

Interpersonal relationship skills are also crucial in shaping workplace dynamics, improving teamwork, enhancing communication, and creating a positive work atmosphere. Strong interpersonal relationship is key to building trust, increasing productivity, and promoting cooperation among employees. The level of rapport, communication, and interaction between employees greatly influences the quality of interpersonal relationships in the workplace, either fostering stronger connections or creating barriers (Patricia, 2015). It has long been hypothesised that increased interaction among individuals enhances the quality and creativity of ideas, which can, in turn, lead to higher productivity (Cimenler et al., 2016).

Developing strong interpersonal relationship skills takes time and dedication, but if students practice it consistently, it paves the way for them to establish deeper connections and greater success in their personal and professional realms. Thus, there is a need to analyze the status of interpersonal relationships in higher education students to bring positive changes in the curriculum of higher education.

Objectives:

The objectives of the study were

- To compare the interpersonal relationship skills in students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) programs.
- To compare the interpersonal relationship skills in male students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) programs.
- To compare the interpersonal relationship skills in female students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) programs.

Hypotheses:

- There is no significant difference between the interpersonal relationship skill mean scores of students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) programs.
- There is no significant difference between the interpersonal relationship skill mean scores of male students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) programs.
- There is no significant difference between the interpersonal relationship skill mean scores of female students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) programs.

Research Methodology:

The quantitative approach is used for the present study. The survey technique under the Descriptive method of research is used.

Population:

Students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) programs of all the universities of Lucknow city.

Sample:

Three universities were randomly selected from the list of all universities in Lucknow city. From the selected universities students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) programs were randomly selected. The sample consists of 47 students of MSW and 51 students of M.A. (Sociology).

Tool:

The Interpersonal relationship scale prepared by the researchers was used in the research to measure interpersonal relationship skills. The calculated reliability of Interpersonal relationship skill Scale through Cronbach alpha method was 0.9368. There were total fifty-six items in the tool and the measurement was based on five point Likert Type of scale.

Statistical Technique:

The obtained data from the students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) has been analyzed statistically by using mean, standard deviation and t-test.

Data Analysis:

The data was analyzed, to compare and interpret the results, the interpersonal relationship skill in MSW and M.A. (Sociology) students is depicted, as shown in the following Tables:

Table no.1 - Mean, SD and t-value of Interpersonal relationship skills of Students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) programs

Programs	N	Mean	SD	t-test
MSW	47	205.17	30.34	2.74*
M.A. (Sociology)	51	189.63	25.33	

*significant at 0.05 level

Table 1 demonstrates that the Interpersonal relationship skill mean score and standard deviation of MSW students are 205.17 and 30.34 respectively. The Interpersonal relationship skill mean score and standard deviation of M.A.(Sociology) students are 189.63 and 25.33 respectively. It could also be observed that the t-value between interpersonal relationship skill mean score of students of MSW and M.A.(Sociology) programs is 2.74 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The Interpersonal relationship skill mean scores of MSW and M.A.(Sociology) students differ significantly in favour of MSW program students. Thus, the hypothesis that there is **no significant difference between the Interpersonal relationship skill mean scores of students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) programs is not retained.**

Figure 1 shows that the interpersonal relationship skill mean score of MSW students is higher than the interpersonal relationship skill mean score of M.A. (Sociology) students.

Figure 1- Showing bar graph of Interpersonal relationship skill mean score of Students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) Programs

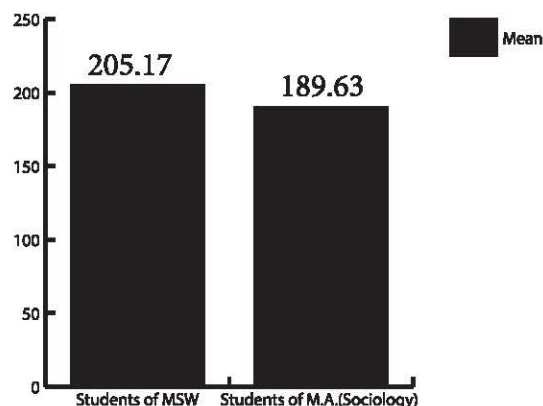


Table no. 2 -Mean, SD and t-value of Interpersonal relationship skills of Male Students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) Programs

Gender	Programs	N	Mean	SD	t-test
Male	MSW	23	205.69	31.66	1.80 (not significant at 0.05 level)
	M.A. (Sociology)	20	189.90	24.42	

It is evident from Table No. 2 that the interpersonal relationship skill mean score and standard deviation of male students of MSW are 205.69 and 31.66 respectively. The interpersonal relationship skill mean score and standard deviation of male students of M.A. (Sociology) are 189.90 and 24.42 respectively. It could be observed that the t-value between the interpersonal relationship skill mean score of male students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) is 1.80 which is not significant at 0.05 Level of significance. The interpersonal relationship skill mean scores of male students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) programs do not differ significantly. Thus, the hypothesis that there is **no significant difference between the interpersonal relationship skill mean scores of male students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) programs is retained.**

Figure 2 shows that the interpersonal relationship skill mean score of male students of MSW is higher than the interpersonal relationship skill mean score of male students of M.A. (Sociology).

Figure 2- Showing bar graph of Interpersonal relationship skill mean score of Male Students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) programs

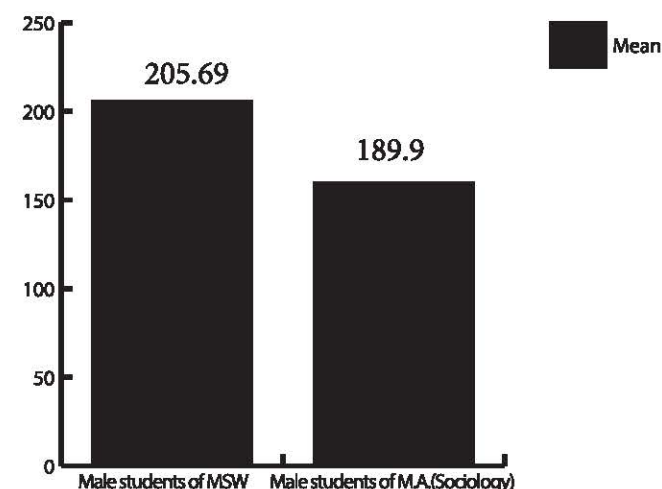


Table no. 3- Mean, SD and t-value of Interpersonal relationship skill of Female Students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) Programs

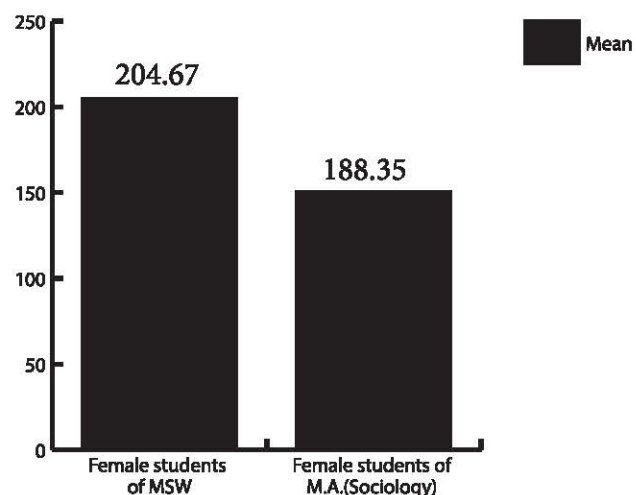
Gender	Programs	N	Mean	SD	t-test
Female	MSW	24	204.67	29.71	2.11*
	M.A.(Sociology)	31	188.35	26.61	

*significant at 0.05 level

It is evident from Table No. 3 that the interpersonal relationship skill mean score and standard deviation of female students of MSW are 204.67 and 29.71 respectively. The interpersonal relationship skill mean score and standard deviation of female students of M.A.(Sociology) are 188.35 and 26.61 respectively. It could be observed that the t-value between the interpersonal relationship skill mean score of female students of MSW and M.A.(Sociology) is 2.11 which is significant at 0.05 Level of significance. The interpersonal relationship skill mean scores of female students of MSW and M.A.(Sociology) programs differ significantly. Thus, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the interpersonal relationship skill mean scores of female students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) programs is not retained.

Figure 3 shows that the interpersonal relationship skill mean score of female students of MSW is higher than the interpersonal relationship skill mean score of female students of M.A.(Sociology).

Figure 3- Showing bar graph of Interpersonal relationship skill mean score of Female Students of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) Programs



Findings

The students of MSW have significantly better Interpersonal relationship skill as compared to the students of M.A. (Sociology).

The female students of MSW have significantly better Interpersonal relationship skill as compared to the female students of M.A. (Sociology).

Conclusion

The intend of the present study was to look into the impact of MSW and M.A. (Sociology) programs on interpersonal relationship skill of post-graduate students. It was found that students of MSW program have significantly better Interpersonal relationship skill as compared to the students of the M.A. (Sociology) program and the female students of the MSW have significantly better Interpersonal relationship skills as compared to the female students of the M.A. (Sociology). MSW involves weekly fieldwork, this exposure enhances students' interpersonal relationship skills and fosters consistency in their interactions with others, ultimately boosting their confidence and enhancing their awareness of their own emotions. In social work, students learn to demonstrate compassion and empathy toward others, which significantly enhances their interpersonal skills. They are trained to assist others in resolving conflicts through negotiation strategies, which in turn heightens their awareness of their strengths and challenges as communicators. They develop the ability to gracefully reflect others' ideas, showing genuine interest and understanding of different perspectives. This skill enables them to foster more enjoyable and productive interactions.

Whereas, in MA (Sociology) students focus more on conducting research and analysing data than on directly engaging with clients. There is no field work apart from a summer internship, and lack of practical experience limits opportunities for students to discover and realize their true potential. Thus it can be said that experiences form the basis for the development of high level of interpersonal relationship skills in MSW program students.

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