

Students' High Assertiveness Skill Level: A Key to Academic Achievement in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between assertiveness skill and students' academic achievement at secondary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The objectives of the study were to explore the relationship between assertiveness skill and students' academic achievement at secondary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and to propose the strategies that could be used to develop students' assertiveness skill level at secondary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This was a single-method research design and quantitative in nature. A 5-point Likert type scale was used as tool for data collection regarding their peer relation skill. Population was all the secondary school students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A sample of five hundred students, ten from each school was randomly selected. Data were collected through questionnaire and students' academic achievement was assessed through self-developed academic achievement test. The validity of the instruments was checked with the help of expert committee while the reliability of instruments was checked through Cronbach alpha and was found as 0.768. Data were analyzed through SPSS using Pearson Product moment correlation. It was found that an accurate relationship existed between assertiveness skill and students' academic achievement with $r=0.590$ at secondary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It was recommended for all the stake-holders. i.e. parents, teachers, policy-makers etc. that they may motivate the students to be assertive with their peers for achieving high academic achievement.

Keywords: *Assertiveness, Students, Academic Achievement, Secondary Level.*

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1. Introduction

Since humans are social beings, they must build positive relationships with their fellow members of their community in order to succeed in life (Parmar, 2013). This process is known as socialization (Sharma, Goswami & Gupta, 2016). Socialization is crucial because it helps people build and maintain positive relationships with others and follow social norms, which is the foundation of an individual's success. It also helps people adapt to their surroundings. Social skills have various dimensions (Caldarella, 1995), but this study only looked at assertiveness skills. Assertiveness is an important social skill which has been considered and is a learned fundamental interpersonal communication skill that is helpful in fulfilling the social demands of society. Assertiveness involves the expression of an individual's legitimate rights and refusing unreasonable request. Assertiveness is the quality of self-assurance and respecting others as well. In this skill, other people's wants and needs are skillfully pursued. Assertiveness level is directly related with self-actualization level. More the assertive an individual, higher will be his/her self-actualization level. People having assertive skill are communicative, free-spirited, secure, self-assured and are able to influence and guide others. There is an inverse relationship between assertiveness and anxiety level; the lower the assertiveness level, the higher the anxiety level, and even then, the individual's rights may be neglected; conversely, the higher the assertiveness level, the higher the sense of cooperation and interaction; assertiveness enhances students' communication skills, self-esteem, and decision-making ability, which overcomes shyness and anger; this allows students to have more time for studying, which improves their academic performance; assertiveness also affects personality, and as a result, different personalities, such as aggressive behaviour, where people believe in their own rights but do not believe in the equal rights of others. People of this sort typically struggle with communicating. These individuals use rudeness, aggression, and insults to get what they want (Sitota, 2018). Personality development is the process by which these abilities are acquired. One can improve their personality for a prosperous existence. It is the growth of the intellect and body. It is the process of skill development. It is referred to as socialization in sociology. Because they are learnt through social interactions, skills are referred to as social skills. Learning life skills is the process of developing one's personality. These are referred to as life skills since they are necessary for a successful existence (Nitonde, 2014). Additionally, academic performance suffered. These social skills were not well developed during the COVID-19 pandemic isolation because of a lack of motivation

(Maelan et al., 2022). What is the current level of social skills among students, however, and how can these skills be learnt? The greatest way to acquire these talents is through education. The process of giving people the necessary abilities, knowledge, and skills to live successful lives in society and so contribute to the advancement of their nation is known as education. Curriculum refers to the educational experiences that are specifically created for individual pupils at a specific moment in order to achieve the pre-established goals. It is a tool for supervised learning. Every society has a unique conceptual framework for curriculum design and its objectives. A society's demands evolve over time, and in accordance with these needs, modifications may be. However, since future prosperity depends on academic achievement, it is the primary issue in today's cutthroat society. Academic attainment is measured by a student's performance on standardized tests provided by the state. Academic performance demonstrates a student's short- or long-term success in reaching the objectives of a given education. Completing high school or earning a degree from a college or university is, in general, considered academic achievement. High academic success during a semester entitles a student to the honour roll. Achievement is defined as a student's scores on a test created by the teacher. Although academic achievement has been defined differently by various professions, it is generally accepted to be a measure of academic advancement. Proficiency is another word for academic success, which can be assessed in a variety of ways. This academic accomplishment is influenced by a number of factors, including intelligence, memory, and so forth, but it is also influenced by non-cognitive aspects, such as attitudes, beliefs, and social and emotional traits. Academic accomplishment is the term used to describe educational outcomes. It is the degree to which the educational system's objectives are met. It is the degree to which pupils acquire the abilities, competencies, and knowledge that the instructor imparts or assigns. Another name for it is academic intelligence. Academic intelligence encompasses both general and related skills. Exams and ongoing evaluations are typically used to quantify it. There are various testing techniques. According to Preeti (2013), academic accomplishment is a multifaceted variable that is linked to a child's overall development, including their human growth, cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development. An indicator that shows how well students are doing academically is. According to Kadiyono and Hafiar (2017), this internal indicator demonstrates the productivity level of a certain educational institution. The question that now emerges is how social skills relate to pupils' academic success. Research indicates a good correlation between pupils' academic success and their social skills. Research on the connection between social skills

and academic success yields conflicting findings. While social skills are not always a reliable indicator of academic success, there are instances where they have a substantial positive correlation (Gustavsen, 2017). Numerous studies show a direct and moderately high correlation between students' academic success and their prosocial behaviour. Numerous pieces of evidence indicate a connection between students' academic performance and their classroom behaviour (Elliott, Malecki & Demaray, 2014). This investigation was carried out at the secondary school level. The secondary level serves as a bridge connecting the elementary and higher education levels. Students in secondary school range in age from 15 to 18. A broad range of social-emotional abilities is necessary for a healthy adjustment during this period of social and personal growth. Teenagers engage in peer interaction (Akelaitis & Malinauskas, 2016). It is the time between childhood and adulthood. Social development moves from parents to peers when it is balanced. This stage is crucial from the perspective of character development (Eskin, 2003). Adolescence is a time of significant transformation. Emotional shifts play a significant role in these transformations. Self-image and expectations are brought into balance during this time. Interaction with other teenagers is crucial during this time. It is among the most important and complex phases of life. Puberty is the cause of this. Teenagers are empowered during this time of crisis (Ghodrati et al., 2016). According to Devi (2017), this stage is the time between childhood and adulthood and is marked by changes in biology, cognition, and socio-emotion. It is the time of life where pupils need to be continuously motivated, trained, and focused. At this point, appropriate support is required for both healthy development and seamless learning. At this point, learning standards rise (Zahidullah, 2015). Positive relationships with their instructors and other adults in the community, social skills are crucial. These are also crucial for raising pupils' academic performance (Sharma, Goswami, & Gupta, 2016). It is evident from the information above that social skills improve pupils' academic performance. However, what is the nature and degree of the relationship between social skills and academic accomplishment, how can it be measured, and what part does the socialization process play in students' academic performance and social interactions? Research can be conducted in this area. It has been determined that social skills are crucial for a successful life and the development of one's personality. As a result, a program for their improvement may be implemented at the secondary level. Thus, these can be incorporated into the curriculum at any level, but especially at the secondary level. Prior research in this area has been conducted in other nations, but not in Pakistan.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The study's main goal was to determine the relationship between assertiveness skill level and students' academic achievement at the secondary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Since the primary goal of education is to help students develop as people, each student is expected to contribute to society in some way. To achieve this, they may obey certain laws and develop certain social skills like assertiveness skill. High assertiveness skill level among pupils will improve their academic achievement. This study aimed to propose the strategies that could be used to develop students' assertiveness skill level at secondary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the relationship between assertiveness skill level and students' academic achievement at secondary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
2. To propose the strategies that can be used to develop students' assertiveness skill level at secondary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

1.3. Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between assertiveness skill level and students' academic achievement at secondary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?
2. What are the strategies that can be used to develop students' assertiveness skill level at secondary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?

1.4. Hypothesis

Ho: There is no relationship between assertiveness skill level and students' academic achievement at secondary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study will provide curriculum planners with a current evaluation of students' assertiveness skills and further the field of educational research. The results of this study could be used as a standard to evaluate how assertive pupils are. This study assessed secondary school students' present academic performance levels and identifies several barriers that students need to get past in order to improve their academic accomplishment levels. This study will also propose the strategies that would develop assertiveness skill level of secondary school pupils' in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The importance of children's assertiveness is brought to light by this study.

1.6. Delimitations

This study is delimited to:

- i. Secondary level Grade 9th.
- ii. Districts Peshawar & Mohmand.

2.Literature Review

2.1. Assertiveness Skill

The key to a successful life is assertiveness. For pupils to develop their communication skills, assertiveness is crucial. Students' academic performance improves as a result of this ability. Students' self-efficacy and interpersonal skills can be enhanced by this ability. When there is a flaw in this ability, young people face numerous issues. Because of their age and peer pressure, assertiveness is crucial for adults. This ability is intimately linked to anxiety, self-esteem, and confidence. Being assertive means having the ability to speak for oneself in a courteous and truthful manner and communicating in a healthy manner. This ability involves being considerate of others' feelings and phrasing requests or complaints in a courteous yet strong way. A fundamental interpersonal communication skill that can be acquired, assertiveness aids in meeting societal expectations. Expressing one's legal rights and turning down irrational requests are two aspects of assertiveness. Self-assurance and respect for others are traits of assertiveness. This ability involves deftly pursuing the interests and desires of others. The degree of assertiveness and self-actualization are intimately correlated. An individual's degree of self-actualization will increase with his level of assertiveness. Communicative, free-spirited, confident, and self-assured, people with assertiveness skills can influence and mentor others. Anxiety and assertiveness are adversely correlated. The poor the assertive level, the higher will be anxiety level and even then the individual's own rights may be neglected. Similarly, when assertive level is high, sense of cooperation and interaction will be high. Assertiveness improves students' communication skill, self-esteem and decision-making ability which overcomes shyness and anger. Thus more time becomes available to students for study and thus students' school performance is enhanced. Assertiveness has also effect on personality and due to this behavior, different personalities result. e.g. aggressive behavior. In this behavior, individuals believe in their own rights but do not believe in equal rights of other people. Such type of people tend to have poor communication skills. These people get their own way by being rude, pushy and insulting. This is a particularly hurtful act which includes both verbal and physical attacks, threats and insults.

Conversely, people who engage in passive behaviour frequently prioritize the needs of others over their own. These individuals therefore think they are less than others. As a result, we can conclude that they lack the ability to make independent decisions. These are dissatisfied with other people's choices. As a result, their needs are neglected, leading to low self-esteem, sadness, rage, and several other mental and physical issues. Sometimes, these people lose the respect of others. There is a connection between academic success and aggressiveness. Research has shown that pupils who are forceful perform better academically at the secondary level. These pupils are able to freely express their thoughts, feelings, and opinions. Conversely.. When his or her pals ask to go out, the insecure student won't say "no" and will instead go out rather than complete the project. Similar to this, a student's academic life will suffer if they receive grades and, properly, feel that they should have received higher marks for an assignment but choose to do nothing about it (Sitota, 2018). The ability to properly and fearlessly express one's thoughts, feelings, and beliefs is known as assertiveness. An individual who is forceful defends their legal rights in a way that does not override those of others. Being assertive is acknowledging that one has the right to let people know how their actions impact you and to request that they alter their behaviour. It's the method. It manifests as behaviour when a person openly communicates his or her feelings, stands up for his or her objectives in both general and particular contexts, and builds satisfying and fruitful relationships with others. This is a social skill with a multifaceted construct. One of these aspects is the capacity to express oneself in various contexts without becoming hostile or nervous. The ability to express one's demands, desires, and opinions in a straightforward, appropriate manner without demeaning others is known as assertiveness. Both positive and negative emotions can be expressed and responded to by assertive people without excessive hostility or nervousness. It serves as a tool for establishing and preserving relationships that promote social support, which improves emotional wellbeing. Self-improvement and achieving the highest level of personal fulfilment are facilitated by assertiveness. Social skills and, thus, personality are developed via assertiveness. One desired behavioural quality is assertiveness. It has to do with effective communication. It is the capacity to ask for things, to dispute, to voice opinions and feelings, to assert one's own rights, to start and continue conversations, and to defend oneself without acting inappropriately. One quality that affects a child's ability development is assertiveness. Being assertive is expressing one's true emotions, defending one's rights, and turning down unwarranted requests. It is the rejection of arbitrary group norms and excessive social influences. It is the ability to communicate emotions,

such as love and appreciation. Social influence is used by assertive persons to achieve their objectives (Pagaduan-Apostol, 2017). One type of communication is assertiveness. It is the capacity to openly, honestly, and directly communicate one's needs, wants, opinions, and sentiments without undermining the rights of others. It also involves respecting other people and having confidence in oneself. Learning is hampered by inadequate assertiveness. One communication ability that is useful in satisfying societal expectations is assertiveness. Learning is how one acquires this skill. It is a critical social skill since it is associated with healthy personality adjustment and has a negative correlation with shyness, social anxiety, and neuroticism. Assertiveness has a multidimensional nature which include three classes. i.e. positive assertiveness, negative assertiveness and self-denial. Positive assertiveness is the expression of positive feelings e.g. admiration, agreement and affection. Negative assertiveness is the expression of negative feelings e.g. disagreement, anger while self-denial includes interpersonal anxiety, unnecessary apologizing and exaggerated worry about the feelings of others. Assertiveness is the ability of individual to express positive or negative emotions, opinions and needs openly, confidently and sincerely in interpersonal contexts while respecting the personal boundaries of others. Those people who have high assertiveness, are more communicative, free-spirited, secure, self-assured and able to influence and guide others. On the other hand, non-assertive people are more defensive, submissive, less expressive, adaptable and socially adaptable and socially sensitive. Studies show that assertiveness is positively correlated with extraversion

. There is no relationship of assertiveness with emotional stability (Kirst, 2011). Different studies show that assertive and non-assertive students show differences in five personality factors. Assertive students have lower neuroticism and higher extraversion, openness to experience and conscientiousness while no relationship was found between assertiveness and agreeableness. Some studies show that assertiveness is directly related to extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness while it is related inversely to neuroticism. Extraverted students are more talkative and comfortable than introverted students. When students are extraverted, they will be more expressive. Students having high openness to experience, will be more assertive. Those individuals having high conscientiousness, will have high self-efficacy. Numerous studies demonstrate a favourable correlation between assertiveness and agreeableness as well as a direct association between conscientiousness and assertiveness degree. It was shown that assertiveness and neuroticism were inversely

correlated. Therefore, it might be claimed that others may disregard and treat neurotic people disrespectfully. These individuals will have depressive symptoms. In addition to the distinctions between assertive and non-assertive individuals discussed above, variations in affective and cognitive personality traits have also been observed. People who lack confidence are more likely to experience anxiety, inferiority complexes, and low self-esteem. There is a favourable correlation between assertiveness and self-esteem. It has been observed that assertive people are more confident and succeed greatly in social situations than non-assertive persons. Fear of rejection has an inverse relationship with assertiveness. The other significant personality trait that is negatively correlated with. Since assertiveness fosters competitiveness, achievement, advancement, communication, control over the environment, and expectations from subordinates for initiative and trust-building based on calculation, it is a social and personal trait. Students are crucial to a country's social development, thus they should be inclined to act assertively in order to succeed in school and in their future lives with greater bravery and self-assurance. There are several types of assertive behaviours, including social, interpersonal, communicative, and self-assertiveness. This ability enhances social skills, which in turn enhances personality. Since assertiveness is a means of self-actualization and self-improvement, students can cultivate this ability to succeed in both their academic and personal lives. Thus, the pupils will learn how to properly articulate their thoughts and feelings (Prakash). Assertiveness is a social skill that promotes personal wellbeing. In interpersonal contexts, it is the manifestation of ideas, emotions, and wants. It highlights the importance of individual rights. Human relationships are improved, people may act in their own best interests, defend their rights without fear, communicate their true feelings in a comfortable way, and exercise their rights without compromising those of others. The individualistic interpersonal approach is emphasized by assertiveness. In order to establish and preserve socially supportive connections and hence enhance emotional wellness, assertive social skills are crucial (Eskin, 2003). For teenagers, developing and fostering assertiveness skills is crucial (Ghodrati et al., 2016). Men are generally thought to be more assertive than women. This premise is supported by certain circumstances. Men are more assertive than women in Nigeria, whereas in the United States, men are.

2.2. Academic Achievement

The demands of a society evolve throughout time, and curriculum modifications may be necessary to meet these needs. However, since future prosperity depends on academic achievement, it is the

primary issue in today's cutthroat society. Achievement is defined as a student's scores on a test created by the teacher. Although academic achievement has been defined differently by many professionals, it is generally accepted to be a measure of academic development. Academic accomplishment, also known as proficiency, can be assessed in a variety of methods, such as tests and exams. This academic achievement is affected by certain factors e.g. intellect, memory etc. but besides these, there are some non-cognitive factors which affect this academic achievement e.g. attitudes, beliefs. It is the degree to which pupils acquire the abilities, competencies, and knowledge that the instructor imparts. Another name for it is academic intelligence. Academic intelligence encompasses both general and related skills. Exams and ongoing evaluations are typically used to quantify it. There are various testing techniques. According to Preeti (2013), academic accomplishment is a multifaceted variable that is linked to a child's overall development, including their human growth, cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development. GPA is an indicator that shows how well students are doing academically. According to Kadiyono and Hafiar (2017), this internal indicator demonstrates the productivity level of a certain educational institution. The question that now emerges is how social skills relate to pupils' academic success. While social skills are not always a reliable indicator of academic success, there are instances where they have a substantial positive correlation (Gustavsen, 2017). Numerous studies show a direct and moderately high correlation between students' academic success and their prosocial behaviour. Numerous pieces of evidence indicate a connection between students' academic performance and their classroom behaviour (Elliott, Malecki & Demaray, 2011). Academic attainment is measured by a student's performance on standardized tests provided by the state. Academic performance demonstrates a student's short- or long-term success in reaching the objectives of a given education. Completing high school or earning a degree from a college or university is, in general, considered academic achievement. During a specific semester.

2.3. Secondary School Level

This study has been conducted at secondary level. Secondary level is a link between elementary level and higher education level. Secondary school students have age period (15-18 years). It is a time of personal and social development that requires a sophisticated repertoire of social-emotional skills for healthy adjustment. Adolescents interact with peers. It is a transition period from childhood to adulthood. When there is a balance in social development, it shifts from parent to peers. From character development point of view, this stage is very important (Eskin,

2003). Adolescence is the period of great changes. In these changes, emotional changes are important. This period creates harmony between self-image and expectations. This period is important for interaction with other teens. It is among the most important and complex phases of life. Puberty is the cause of this. Teenagers are empowered during this time of crisis (Ghodrati et al., 2016). According to Devi (2017), this stage is the time between childhood and adulthood and is marked by changes in biology, cognition, and socio-emotion. It is the time of life where pupils need to be continuously motivated, trained, and focused. At this point, appropriate support is required for both healthy development and seamless learning. At this point, learning standards rise (Zahidullah, 2015). In order to fit in with their peer group and build positive relationships with their instructors and other adults in the community, social skills are crucial. Additionally, these are crucial in helping students'

From above mentioned detail, it is clear that social skills enhance students' academic achievement. But what is the role of socialization process in students' academic achievement and interaction in the society and what is the nature and extent of relationship between social skills and students' academic achievement and how it may be determined? Study may be done in this regard. It is concluded that assertiveness skill is very important for successful life and personality development and may be developed and therefore, a program for its development may be introduced at secondary level. So this may be included in curriculum at all level particularly at secondary level.

2.4. Relationship Between Assertiveness Skill Level and Academic Achievement Level

Mixed findings have been found in the association between pupils' social skills and academic achievement (Jurkowski & Hanze, 2016). The relationship between social skills and academic achievement has been the subject of conflicting research. While some studies indicate a strong positive correlation, others find no connection between academic success and social abilities (Gustavsen, 2017). According to research, students' social behaviour influences teachers' conduct and, in turn, students' academic performance (Elliott, Malecki & Demaray, 2014).

There is less documented research demonstrating the relationship between social skills and academic success. According to one study, children' academic performance is directly impacted by their prosocial classroom behaviour. For instance, the quality of instructional exchange is impacted by the behaviour of the students in the classroom. Academic success is a result of students acting properly. It was clarified that social skills and academic achievement are significantly correlated.

During the transition period, the correlation between social skills and academic success is crucial (Emily J & Comedis, MA, 2014). Students' social behaviour determines whether their learning is promoted or demoted. Research indicates a connection between the intellectual and social aspects of school life (Trei, 2006). Social skills are crucial for demonstrating and using academic aptitude. These are connected to academic success, peer relationships, interpersonal relationships, and self. Research demonstrates a correlation between academic success and social abilities. Youngsters with strong social skills perform better and earn high grades. As people mature, this relationship shifts (Zsolnai & Kasik, 2014). The academic success of kids can be predicted by a number of factors such as motivation, personality, attitude, and cognitive capacity. The non-cognitive predictor of academic success among these is personality. The Big Five Personality Factors are a collection of dimensions that make up this personality. These include conscientiousness, neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to new experiences. Research has shown that students' conscientiousness and GPA, which is a measure of their academic ability, are strongly positively correlated, whereas the other five key personality qualities are only poor predictors. Research indicates that academic achievement is higher for pupils who are socially accepted and lower for those who are socially rejected. According to Munoz-Hurtado (2018), these expelled pupils have greater behavioural and attention issues, are more likely to drop out, and more controversial. Pearson-product moment correlation is used to measure correlation. A scatterplot graph illustrates this association (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009).

3. Research Design & Materials

3.1. Research Design

This study was a descriptive survey with correlational analysis. This design was quantitative and only used one approach (Creswell, 2012). Data for this study was gathered by having students respond to questions concerning their social abilities. Because it established if and to what degree assertiveness and academic success are related, the study was correlational (Gay & Mills, 2000). This study sought to ascertain the connection between students' academic success and their degree of assertiveness. One does not necessarily cause the other just because of a significant connection. The data in this study was analyzed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. Mills and Gay (2000).

3.2. Population Of the Study

The population of the study were as under:

1. All the secondary level students in public sector schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
2. The details were as under (ASR, 2021-2022).

S. No.	Secondary Schools	Students
1.	2690	460331

3.3. Sample

According to Gay and Mills (2000), a sample size of 400 is sufficient if the population has grown over a specific threshold ($N=5000$). However, a sample size of 60 or 70 is sufficient for qualitative research (Gay & Mills, 2000). The entire population is used as a sample for smaller populations ($N=100$). However, the accuracy of the result will increase with the size of the sample. Just 50 secondary schools were chosen at random from a total of 2690 schools. Ten ninth-grade students were chosen from each of these chosen schools. Therefore, there were 500 students in the whole sample. The sample size was as follows, and schools and students were chosen at random using the sampling technique.

1. 500 secondary school students---ten students from each school.

3.4. Research Instruments

The researcher developed one 5-point Likert instruments and one 4-point achievement test for data collection:

- i. Self-developed scale for identification of assertiveness skill level (ASRS).
- ii. Self-developed 9th grade Pak Study Test (PSAAT).

Since there were no such equipment, these were created to obtain the necessary data. The assertiveness skill rating system (ASRS) was used to rate the pupils' assertiveness level. This is the modified 10-item scale. A 5-point Likert scale (1 being never, 2 being seldom, 3 being occasionally, 4 being often, and 5 being always) makes up this scale. The assertiveness skill is the only factor-based scale on this measure. A 4-point test has been used to gauge academic achievement. Achievement tests are significant in the subject of education. The researcher first examined the several question papers from the Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education (BISE) Peshawar for Pakistan Studies at the secondary level before creating the accomplishment test. Following review, it was determined that an accomplishment test based on Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational

Objectives was necessary. The researcher conferred with Pakistan Studies SST secondary school teachers for this aim.

An initial draft was created. The researcher took these actions in order to create and standardise the accomplishment exam. (i) test planning; (ii) test preparation; (iii) test administration; (iv) item analysis; and (v) test standardisation. The first and most crucial stage in creating an achievement exam is planning. The researcher considered factors including subject level, to whom, what, when, and how to measure in order to do this. The researcher made selections regarding the test's objectives, substance, scoring methodology, quantity and kind of items, duration, and other factors. The researcher opted to create multiple-choice questions (MCQs) for this accomplishment test after choosing Pakistan Studies for grade 9. Following that, a blueprint was created using Bloom's Taxonomy. Three categories comprise Bloom's classification of educational aims.

3.5. Validity & Reliability of the Instrument

Table:3.1. Reliability of Assertiveness Skill

S.No	Factor	No of items	Cronbach alpha
1.	Assertiveness	10	0.768

4. Results & Discussion

4.1. Findings

This survey was regarding the assertiveness skill. This survey contained ten items.

Summary of Findings

Assertiveness skill

1. 60 % of the students were of the view that they always defend themselves.
2. 70 % of the students responded that they always say "thank you" easily.
3. 32 % of the students had the opinion that they always talk a lot about problems.
4. 44 % of the students were of the opinion that they always apologize easily.
5. 36 % of the students opined that they always introduce themselves to others easily.
6. 55 % of the students responded that they always work well on a team.

7. 40 % of the students were of the view that they always ask friends for help easily.
8. 39 % of the students expressed their views that they always say nice things for themselves.
9. 35 % of the students responded that they often join ongoing activity.
10. 42 % of the students were of the opinion that they always appear confident with opposite gender.

Table 4.1. Assertiveness Skill

S.No	Statements	N	Mean	S.D
1	Defending oneself.	1200	4.29	1.128
2	Saying “thank you” easily	1200	4.45	0.996
3	Talking a lot about problems	1200	3.43	1.385
4	Apologizing easily.	1200	3.98	1.127
5	Introducing oneself to others easily	1200	3.69	1.332
6	Working well on a team	1200	4.41	0.816
7	Asking friends for help easily	1200	3.72	1.257
8	Saying nice things for self	1200	3.42	1.529
9	Joining ongoing activity	1200	3.70	1.178
10	Appearing confident with opposite gender	1200	3.75	1.394

The mean score of 4.29 for self-defence indicates that they are moderately in agreement, as shown in Table 4.1. Average score for expressing gratitude 4.45 indicates a high level of agreement. Average score for discussing issues a lot 3.43 demonstrates their lack of agreement. Apologizing’s mean score of 3.98 indicates that they are less in agreement. Average score for making an introduction 3.69 signifies their agreement. They are moderately in agreement, as indicated by their mean score of 4.41 for team work. Average score for seeking assistance from friends The mean score for speaking good things is 3.72, which indicates that they are somewhat in agreement. 3.42 demonstrates their lack of agreement. They are less in agreement, as indicated by their mean score of 3.70 for joining ongoing activities, although their mean score for confidence is the reverse.

For determination the nature and strength of relationship between assertiveness skill and academic achievement, the researcher used Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient.

4.2. Determination of Relationship Between Assertive Skill and Students' Academic Achievement

For determination of relationship between assertiveness skill and academic achievement, the researcher used Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient.

Table:4.2. Correlation of Students' Academic Achievement with Assertiveness Skill

Scale	N	R	P
Assertiveness Skill	500	0.590**	.00

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

Table # 4.2 shows the correlation coefficient $r=0.590$ with $p=0.00$ shows a moderate relationship between assertiveness skill and academic achievement. Thus the hypothesis "There is no relationship between assertiveness skill level and students' academic achievement at secondary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" was rejected.

4.3. Discussion

In the light of statistical analysis and findings, following conclusions were drawn.

Majority of the students were of the view that they always defend themselves. Majority of students opined that they always say "thank you" easily. Majority of the students were in favour that they always do not talk a lot about problems. Majority of the students opined that they always do not apologize easily. Majority of the students responded that they always do not introduce themselves to others easily. Majority of the students had the opinion that they always work well on a team. Majority of the students of the students were of the view that they always do not ask friends for help easily. Majority of the students were in favour that they always do not say nice things for themselves. Majority of the students responded that they often do not join ongoing activity. Majority of the students had the opinion that they always do not appear confident with opposite gender. A positive correlation coefficient ($r=0.590$) of assertiveness skill with academic achievement was found.

4.4. Recommendations

In the light of the views of students about their assertiveness skill and their relationship with students' academic achievement, following recommendations were drawn.

1. It was found that majority of the students have low social skill level. Although this level plays an important role in improving students' academic achievement level, so their development in post COVID-19 pandemic era, is strongly recommended that government may include the teaching of social skills in curricular and cocurricular activities.
2. It was found that students' assertiveness skill score is low. Therefore, its development is strongly recommended.
3. It was examined that majority of the students scored low in Pakistan Study Test(PSAAT) while others scored high. This low score was due to deficiency in assertiveness skill. In development of this skill, there are some hurdles e.g. economic weaknesses, heavy workload etc. So for improvement of academic achievement and development of students' social skills, the removal of these hurdles is strongly recommended.
4. It was determined in this study that assertiveness skill was positively correlated with students' academic achievement. So it is recommended for educational planners to make assertiveness skill an integral component of school curriculum at secondary level particularly in post COVID-19 pandemic era so that students may achieve higher academic achievement. Following suggestions may be made.

Research may be carried out at primary level to assess the assertive skill level at gross root Level particularly in post COVID-19 pandemic era. Research may be done to determine the relationship between other dimensions of social skills like empathy, planning, perseverance skill, decision-making skill, problem-solving skill etc and students' academic achievement. Research may be conducted with longitudinal survey design in which data are collected two or more times. This design is very useful for understanding dynamics of a problem over time. Research may be carried out in whole of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa public and private schools in order to familiarize the importance of socialization process and message may be conveyed to parents, curriculum experts and teachers that development of social skills is very important for better academic achievement.

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