Reinvigorating Social Skills in Children and Adolescents: Emphasis on Courtesy and Politeness

by

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Abstract

Cultural Intelligence plays a vital role in shaping the social skills of children and adolescents, influencing their ability to interact effectively across diverse cultural settings. Social skills such as politeness, courtesy is essential for fostering positive relationships, self-esteem, and teamwork. However, various societal changes, including increased reliance on technology and shifting social norms, have led to a decline in these critical interpersonal skills. This paper explores the role of parents, teachers, and therapists in reinforcing social skill development and highlights the impact of peer influence on shaping behaviors. Furthermore, it examines strategies for promoting politeness and courtesy, such as modeling respectful behavior, teaching social norms, and encouraging pro-social actions. By implementing structured interventions and reinforcing positive interactions, children and adolescents can develop stronger social skills that contribute to their overall well-being and societal harmony.

Keywords: Courtesy, social skills, children, adolescents, politeness

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Cultural Intelligence or Cultural Quotient, is the ability to relate to others and interact effectively across cultures (Earley & Ang, 2003). As generations give rise to new generations, the cultural value is fading out and this has become a challenge to the society. Upholding Cultural Intelligence invariably results in sound social skills. Social skills (or interpersonal skills) are essential for success in our everyday lives, personally and professionally. Children and adolescents who possess strong social skills can form positive relationships with their peers, communicate effectively, and navigate social situations with confidence (American Psychological Association, 2020). However, the increasing reliance on technology and social media has led to a decline in face-to-face interactions, which can hinder the development of social skills in young people (Lenhart, 2015). Politeness and courtesy are important social skills that play a significant role in the development of children and adolescents. These skills involve showing respect for others, being considerate of their feelings and needs, and being mindful of the impact of one's words and actions on others. In children and adolescents, politeness, and courtesy help to foster positive relationships, build self-esteem, and encourage cooperation and teamwork.

Before children can take charge of their own experience by spending time with peers in social groups outside the home, almost everything they learn comes from their families to whom society has assigned the task of socializing children (Hart & Risley, 2003). However, in recent years, there has been a growing concern about the decline of politeness and courtesy in children and adolescents. This trend is often attributed to various factors such as the increasing influence of technology and social media, the breakdown of traditional social norms, and the lack of emphasis on these skills in education and parenting.

This study explored strategies for reinvigorating social skills in children and adolescents, including the role of parents, teachers, and therapists in promoting social skill development. It also delved into the importance of politeness and courtesy in children and adolescents and discuss how

these skills can be fostered and developed in the younger generation. It equally examined the benefits of politeness and courtesy, the factors that influence their development, and the strategies that can be used to promote and encourage these skills in children and adolescents.

The Role of Parents in Promoting Social Skill Development

Parents play a critical role in the social skills development of their children. From an early age, parents can model appropriate social behaviors, such as taking turns, sharing, and healthily expressing emotions (American Psychological Association, 2020). As children grow, parents can continue to support their social skill development by providing opportunities for face-to-face interactions, encouraging participation in group activities, and teaching conflict resolution skills. (Bornstein, 2015).

Parents can also create a positive home environment by setting clear boundaries and expectations for social interactions, providing consistent discipline, and promoting open communication (Thompson, 2006). By fostering a supportive and nurturing environment, parents can help children feel confident and secured, translating into stronger social skills. (Guralnick, 2006).

The Role of Teachers in Promoting Social Skill Development

Teachers also play a significant role in promoting social skill development in the classroom. According to Hughes & Kwok (2007), elementary school students gain more academic achievement with supportive teachers, this positively influences their overall academic outcomes. Teachers can encourage social interaction and cooperation among students by creating a positive and inclusive classroom culture. (American Psychological Association, 2020). This can be achieved through a variety of strategies, including cooperative learning activities, small group work, and structured social skills training.

Teachers can also teach social skills directly through explicit instruction and role-playing activities (Wentzel, 2014). For example, teachers can teach students how to initiate conversations, take turns, and respectfully resolve conflicts. Additionally, teachers can provide feedback and reinforcement for appropriate social behaviours, which can help students learn and practise new skills (Bear, 2010).

The Role of Therapists in Promoting Social Skill Development

Therapists, including psychologists, social workers, and occupational therapists, can also play a valuable role in promoting social skill development in children and adolescents. For individuals with social skills deficits or social anxiety, therapists can provide targeted interventions to help improve social skills (Spence, 2003). These interventions can include cognitive-behavioural therapy, social skills training, and exposure therapy.

Therapists can also work with parents and teachers to help identify strategies for supporting social skill development at home and in the classroom (American Psychological Association, 2020). This may involve guiding how to structure social interactions, teaching specific social skills, and helping individuals practise new skills in a supportive and safe environment.**The Importance of Politeness and Courtesy in Children and Adolescents**

Politeness and courtesy are essential social skills that enable individuals to interact effectively with others and navigate social situations with ease. These skills involve showing respect for others, being considerate of their feelings and needs, and being mindful of the impact of one's words and actions on others. In children and adolescents, politeness, and courtesy help to foster positive relationships, build self-esteem, and encourage cooperation and teamwork.

There are several benefits of politeness and courtesy for children and adolescents. Firstly, politeness and courtesy help build and maintain positive relationships with others. Respecting others and being considerate of their feelings and needs will foster strong and healthy relationships with peers, teachers, and other adults. This results in increased social support and a sense of belonging, that's vital for mental health and well-being. Secondly, politeness and courtesy can help to build self-esteem and confidence in children and adolescents. When individuals are treated with respect and kindness, they are more likely to feel positive about themselves and their place in the world. (Eisenberg et al., 2015). This can help boost self-confidence and self-worth, which are important for personal and social development. Thirdly, politeness and courtesy can encourage cooperation and teamwork in children and adolescents. (Wentzel, 2014). Respecting others and being considerate of their feelings and needs will help individuals work together effectively and

achieve common goals. This can be particularly important in group settings, such as in classrooms or on sports teams, where teamwork and cooperation are essential for success.

Factors Influencing the Development of Politeness and Courtesy in Children and Adolescents

There are several factors that can influence the development of politeness and courtesy in children and adolescents. (Grusec & Davidov, 2010). These include:

Parenting style: How parents interact with their children and model appropriate behaviour can have a significant impact on the development of politeness and courtesy. Parents who are warm, nurturing, supportive, and model polite, courteous behaviours, are more likely to raise children who are polite, courteous themselves. According to Grusec & Hastings (2015), parental behaviour influences children's social and moral development, including politeness and courtesy.

Peer influences: Children and adolescents are heavily influenced by their peers, and this can have a significant impact on development of politeness and courtesy. Children and adolescents who spend time with polite, courteous peers are more likely to adopt similar behaviours. (Wentzel, 2014).

Social and cultural norms: The social and cultural norms of a particular community or

society can influence the development of politeness and courtesy in children and adolescents. (Hofstede, 2001).

Several strategies can promote and encourage politeness and courtesy in children and adolescents. Some of these strategies include:

Modeling appropriate behaviour: One of the most effective ways to teach politeness and courtesynhildrennddolescentssoodelppropriateehaviour.hiseanshowing respect for others, being considerate of their feelings and needs, and being mindful of the Impact of one's words and actions on others. (Bandura, 1977). When parents, teachers, and other adults model this behavior, children and adolescents are mor likely to adopt it themselves.

Encouraging positive communication: Another way to promote politeness and courtesy in children and adolescents is to encourage positive communication . This means teaching

children and adolescents how to express their thoughts and feelings in a respectful and considerate manner, and listen actively to empathize with others. (Gleason, 2017).

Practise Opportunities: Children and adolescents need opportunities to practise and develop their social skills, including politeness and courtesy. (Gresham, 2018). This can be done through practices like role-playing, group discussions, and social skills training programmmes.

Teaching social norms and etiquette: Teaching children and adolescents about social norms and etiquette can also help to promote politeness and courtesy. (Fox & Rutter, 2018). For example, how to greet others, introduce oneself, and behave appropriately in different social situations.

Encouraging pro-social behaviour: Promoting pro-social behaviour, or behaviours intended to benefit others can also help encourage politeness and courtesy in children and adolescents. (Eisenberg et al., 2015). This can be accomplished through volunteering, Community service, and helping others in need.

Summary

At the end of the research, the study shows the following key points:

1. Cultural Intelligence (CQ) is crucial for effective interaction across cultures. Strong social skills enable children and adolescents to build positive relationships and navigate social situations confidently.

2. Increased technology use and social media reliance have reduced face-to-face interactions, impacting social skills.

3. Parents significantly influence social skills through modeling behaviours. Creating a nurturing home environment with clear expectations fosters social intelligence in children.

4. Teachers can cultivate an inclusive classroom culture through cooperative learning and explicit social skills instruction. Reinforcement strategies help students develop essential interpersonal skills.

5. Therapists assist children with social skill deficits by offering interventions like cognitive

behavioural therapy and social training.

6. A respectful and considerate social environment benefits individual well-being and broader community harmony.

7. Politeness and Courtesy can be promoted through modeling, positive communication, providing practice opportunities, teaching social norms and etiquettes, and pro-social behaviours.

Conclusion

In conclusion, politeness and courtesy are crucial social skills that play a significant role in the development of children and adolescents. These skills help to foster positive relationships, build self-esteem, and encourage cooperation and teamwork. While there has been a growing concern about the decline of politeness and courtesy in children and adolescents, there is a number of strategies that can be used to promote and encourage these skills. We can help to reinvigorate politeness and courtesy in the younger generation by modeling appropriate behavior, encouraging positive communication, providing opportunities for practice, and teaching social norms and etiquette.

Recommendations for Further Research

There are gaps from the findings and further research would benefit the public. A realistic evaluation is crucial to extend and further test the theory developed here; there is need for:

1. An in-depth exploration of the long-term effect of early social skill training on academic and professional success.

2. More methodological work on how to robustly capture different parenting style influence on the development of politeness, courtesy, and broader social skills.

3. Research to analyze how the rise of digital communication and social media affects children's ability to engage in face-to-face interactions.

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