



**Research Article**

**EFFECT OF GENDER AND EDUCATION ON SOCIAL CAPITAL**

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to examine the effect of gender and educational level on different dimensions of social capital. Sample comprised of 200 students as respondents drawn randomly from semi-urban degree colleges located in Vaishali district of Bihar (India). For measuring social capital, Lakshmi (2015) scale was used. The findings revealed that male and female students did not differ significantly in terms of their scores on different factors of social capital such as *bonding with friends*, *acceptance of system*, *support & cooperation*, *selfishness* and *harmony*. The findings also revealed that undergraduate and postgraduate students did not differ significantly in terms of their scores on *bonding with friends*, *support & cooperation*, *selfishness* and *harmony* component of social capital. However, the difference between undergraduate and post graduate students in terms of their scores on *acceptance of system* component of social capital was statistically significant.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Social capital has been getting good traction among development agencies and social scientists. The concept has been widely discussed among various streams of social sciences giving impetus to theoretical and empirical research efforts. Social capital has been defined in the dictionary as the network of social connections that exists between people, and their shared values and norms of behaviour, which enable and encourage mutually advantageous social cooperation. According to World Bank (1999) ‘Social capital refers to institutions, relationships and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society’s social interaction.

The central premise of social capital is that social networks have values. It refers to the collective value of all “social networks” (who people know) and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other (“norms of reciprocity”). . The term ‘social capital’ is a relatively new concept and has been dealt with extensively by social scientist such as Putnam (1993), Coleman (1988), Bourdieu (1980) and Fukuyama (1999). It arose because neo-classical economists can explain only about 80 per cent of economic activities; while the remaining 20 per cent is explained by human nature and behaviour. Fukuyama (1999), Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1993, 2000) were unanimous in defining trust as a key component of social capital.

Hanifan (1916) described social capital as “those tangible assets (that) count for most in the daily lives of people: namely goodwill, fellowship, sympathy and social intercourse

among the individuals and families who make up a social unit”. Bourdieu (1986) described social capital mainly in terms of networks of relations. He defined it as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition- or in other words, to membership in a group”. Bourdieu described three dimensions of capitals each with its own relationship to class: economic, cultural and social capital. These three resources become socially effective, and their ownership is legitimized through the mediation of symbolic capital. Thus Bourdieu’s concept of social capital is instrumental, focusing on the advantages to possessor of social capital and the “deliberate construction of sociability” for the purpose of creating this resource. James Coleman (1990) explained social capital as aspects of a social structure that function as a resource of the individuals in a group, claiming that social capital ‘inhere in the structure of relation between persons and among persons’. Thus, social capital can be comprehended in the relations between individuals and groups, not in individuals per se. In other words, Coleman identified social capital in functional terms as a resource that the individual attempt to pursue and accumulate. He identified three forms of social capital: obligations and expectations, information channels, and norms. Putnam (1993) makes a distinction between two kinds of social capital: bonding capital and bridging capital. Bonding social capital is inward looking and refers to relations within homogeneous groups such as families or social or ethnic groups. But in order to create peaceful societies in a diverse multi-ethnic country, one needs to have a second kind of social capital: bridging. Bridging is evident when people make friends with others who are not like them, like supporters of another football

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team. Bridging social capital refers to relations between different groups, networks and encompasses people across diverse social cleavages. Fukuyama (1999) claims that concept like trust, networks, and civic society that have been associated with social capital are, in fact, only a secondary phenomenon, emerging as an outcome of social capital but not being social capital itself. His definition characterizes social capital as an informal norm that promotes cooperation between (two or more) individuals. Fukuyama (1995) argues that social capital is necessary pre-condition for successful development, but a strong rule of law and basic political institution are necessary to build social capital. He further believes that a strong social capital is necessary for a strong democracy and strong economic growth. The influence of social capital on education has been highlighted in number of studies (e.g., Braatz & Putnam, 1996; Temple, 1998; Francis et al. 1998). Temple (1998) found a significant positive association between social capital and schooling.

The aim of the present study is to examine how gender and education level affect individual's social capital. The following hypotheses have been formulated:

- It was hypothesized that the male students do not differ significantly from female students in terms their scores on different factors of social capital, such as bonding with friends, acceptance of system, support & cooperation, selfishness and harmony.
- Undergraduate and post graduate students do not differ significantly from post graduate students in terms of their scores on different factors of social capital.

**Method of study**

**Sample**

Sample comprised of 200 students randomly drawn from degree colleges in the district of Vaishali (Bihar). While 111 students were male representing 55.5% of sample, the remaining 89 were female representing 44.5% of sample. The respondents were on average 25.25 (SD = 4.60) years old with the range of 20 to 28 years. In terms of educational level, while 64.5% of the respondents were undergraduate, remaining 35.5% were postgraduate.

**Measures**

A questionnaire was developed by Lakshmi (2015) having two parts. Part one contained sixty statements pertaining to the participants' social capital. The statements measured social capital on a 5-point scale ranging from 'strongly agree' (5), agree (4), neither agree nor disagree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The sample statements were as follows: (i) you trust your friends; (ii) you talk freely with your friends.

Initially, the questionnaire comprised of 60 items to assess the social capital of the respondents. Subsequently, eight items were dropped on the basis of item analysis. Finally, responses to the remaining 52 items were factor analyzed using the principal component analysis (PCA) with rotated varimax solution on the criteria that eigenvalue should not be less than 1(one) and the factor must have acceptable reliability (alpha coefficient > .60). An initial analysis (SPSS-17 version) was run to obtain eigenvalue for each factor of the data.

Factor I was given the name, 'Bonding with friends'. The factor explained 78.20 per cent of the common variance and also showed higher reliability ( $r_{ii} = .80$ ).

Factor II was given the name, 'Acceptance of system'. The factor explained 24.36 per cent of the common variance and also showed higher reliability ( $r_{ii} = .73$ ).

Factor III was given the name, 'Support and cooperation'. This factor explained 34.64 per cent of the common variance and also showed higher reliability ( $r_{ii} = .72$ ).

Factor IV was given the name, 'Selfishness'. This factor explained 12.93 per cent of the common variance and also showed higher reliability ( $r_{ii} = .60$ ).

Factor V was given the name, 'Harmony'. This factor explained 14.50 per cent of the common variance and also showed higher reliability ( $r_{ii} = .68$ ).

Part two of the questionnaire measured age, gender and educational level of the respondents. Data were collected from June to August 2015.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In order to test the hypothesis that male and female students would not differ significantly on the scores of different factors of social capital, one- way ANOVAs have been computed.

Table 1 presents the summary of statistical analysis.

**Table 1** One-Way ANOVA Displaying the Effects of Gender on Different Factors of Social Capital

Factors	Groups	SS	MS	F Ratio df=1/198
Bonding with friends	Between	.19	.19	.42
	Within	91.89	.46	
Acceptance of System	Between	.28	.28	.41
	Within	134.36	.68	
Support & Cooperation	Between	.41	.41	.95
	Within	84.71	.43	
Selfishness	Between	.81	.81	1.00
	Within	160.04	.81	
Harmony	Between	1.14	1.14	2.87
	Within	79.02	.40	

\*p <.05, \*\*p<.01, N=200

Table 1 displays that F-test such as, *bonding with friends*  $F(1/198) = .42$   $p > .05$ , *acceptance of system*  $F(1/198) = .41$ ,  $p > .05$ , *support & cooperation*  $F(1/198) = .95$ ,  $p > .05$ , *selfishness*  $F(1/198) = 1.00$ ,  $p > .05$  and *harmony*  $F(1/198) = 2.87$ ,  $p > .05$  are not statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis has been accepted. Male and female students show identical views on the different factors of social capital. The present findings do not support the previous findings of Norris (2006) who reported that men and women have different kinds of social capital. When entering the labour force, women move from bonding social capital to bridging social capital, with possible larger positive externalities.

In order to compare the direction of the differences between male and female students' scores on different factors of social capital, descriptive statistics has been performed. Table 2 presents the summary of descriptive statistics. Table 2 displays the Mean and SD of male and the female students. Male students have higher mean scores on factor such as *bonding with friends* ( $M = 3.32$ ,  $SD = .68$ ) and factor, *support & cooperation* ( $M = 2.79$ ,  $SD = .72$ ) than female on *bonding with*

friends ( $M= 3.26, SD= .68$ ) and support & cooperation ( $M= 2.70, SD= .56$ ). However, female students have higher mean scores on factors, acceptance of system ( $M= 2.65, SD=.83$ ), selfishness ( $M=3.01, SD=.91$ ) and harmony ( $M=4.42, SD=.68$ ) than the male on acceptance of system ( $M=2.58, SD=.82$ ), selfishness ( $M=2.88, SD= .89$ ) and harmony ( $M= 4.27, SD= .59$ ).

**Table 2** Comparisons of Mean & SD of Male and Female Scores on Different Factors of Social Capital

Factors	Groups	M	SD
Bonding with friends	Male	3.32	.68
	Female	3.26	.68
Acceptance of System	Male	2.58	.82
	Female	2.65	.83
Support & Cooperation	Male	2.79	.72
	Female	2.70	.56
Selfishness	Male	2.88	.89
	Female	3.01	.91
Harmony	Male	4.27	.59
	Female	4.42	.68

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ ,  $N=200$

In order to verify the hypothesis that postgraduate and undergraduate students would not differ significantly on the factors of social capital, one-way ANOVAs have been computed. Table 3 presents the summary of statistical analysis.

**Table 3** One-Way ANOVA Displaying the Effects of Educational level of Respondents on Different Factors of Social Capital

Factors	Groups	SS	MS	F df=1/198
Bonding with friends	Between	.78	.78	1.70
	Within	91.3	.46	
Acceptance of System	Between	5.15	5.15	7.87**
	Within	129.49	.65	
Support & Cooperation	Between	.12	.12	.28
	Within	84.99	.43	
Selfishness	Between	.62	.62	.76
	Within	160.23	.81	
Harmony	Between	.71	.71	1.78
	Within	79.45	.40	

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ ,  $N=200$

Table 3 displays those F-tests such as, bonding with friends  $F(1/198) = 1.70, p > .05$ , support & cooperation  $F(1/198) = .28, p > .05$ , selfishness  $F(1/198) = .76, p > .05$  and harmony  $F(1/198) = 1.78, p > .05$  are not statistically significant. Thus the undergraduate and postgraduate students show the identical views on bonding with friends, support & cooperation, selfishness and harmony factors of social capital. However, acceptance of system  $F(1/198) = 7.87, p < .05$  is statistically significant, that shows undergraduate and postgraduate respondents differ significantly on acceptance of system factor of social capital. The null hypotheses of no difference hypothesis have been accepted in the case of bonding with friends, support & cooperation, selfishness and harmony. Null hypothesis has been rejected in the case of acceptance of system and alternative hypothesis has been accepted. In other words, the respondents who have higher educational qualification believe in system. The present finding is also supported by earlier study of Sinha (2016) who found that educational development of family was predicted by social capital factor such as acceptance of system.

In order to compare the direction of the differences between undergraduate and postgraduate students on different factors of social capital, descriptive statistics has been performed. Table 4 presents the summary of descriptive statistics.

**Table 4** Comparison of Mean & SD of Postgraduate and Undergraduate Students on Different Factors of Social Capital

Factors	Groups	Mean	SD
Bonding with friends	Undergraduate	3.34	.72
	Postgraduate	3.21	.61
Acceptance of system	Undergraduate	2.49	.78
	Postgraduate	2.83	.86
Support & cooperation	Undergraduate	2.73	.67
	Postgraduate	2.78	.62
Selfishness	Undergraduate	2.98	.89
	Postgraduate	2.86	.91
Harmony	Undergraduate	4.29	.64
	Postgraduate	4.42	.63

Table 4 displays the mean and SD of educational level of students. The undergraduate students have higher mean scores on bonding with friends ( $M=3.34, SD=.72$ ), and selfishness ( $M=2.98, SD=.89$ ) than postgraduate students on bonding with friends ( $M=3.21, SD=.61$ ) and selfishness ( $M=2.86, SD=.91$ ). However, postgraduate students have higher mean scores on acceptance of system ( $M= 2.83, SD=.86$ ), support & cooperation ( $M=2.78, SD=.62$ ) and harmony ( $M=4.42, SD=.63$ ) than undergraduate students on acceptance of system ( $M=2.49, SD= .78$ ), support & cooperation ( $M=2.73, SD= .67$ ) and harmony ( $M=4.29, SD= .64$ ).

In general, the study showed that male and female students did not differ significantly on different components of social capital. The study also showed that higher studies (post-graduation) affect different components of social capital differently. While the undergraduate and postgraduate students show the identical views on bonding with friends, support & cooperation, selfishness and harmony factors of social capital, undergraduate and postgraduate respondents differ significantly on acceptance of system of social capital. In addition, there are several considerations that need to be taken into account when considering the findings of the current study. First, the study was primarily based on self-report data. As a result, the strength of relations between variable was overestimated due to common method of variance. Second, the nature and forms of social capital change over time as well as the multidimensional construct of social capital.

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