# A Study on Communication Skill Inventory

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

The main objective of the paper is to study the communication skills (listening, speaking, writing, and reading) among the students. The paper attempts to study the gaps where exactly the students are lacking in either writing or speaking. As such, there is growing competition among the job seekers to win at employment interviews; recruiters are highly testing the communication skills among the candidates. The word communication does not mean just only speaking, however the other skills writing, listening and reading also have a prominent role in developing core competencies. The study has adopted stratified random sampling method to select the sample; the data have been collected by using well-developed questionnaire, which consists of twenty items fewer than four factors. The analysis of the data has been done using statistical tools with the help of SPSS.

## Introduction

The need for developing communication skills among the students to enhance their employability is highly recommended in various research articles by several authors. In the fast-paced technology revolution, to sell, to market, to promote, to run a business or to do any job, the basic skills of communication, listening, speaking, reading, and writing are quite essential to succeed in all walks of life. However, today we see many facilities like photocopy, power point presentations, social media, you tube educational videos, and Internet, etc. are playing a vital role in communicating large number of people. During the course of education students tend to learn and develop the skills but they realize it when they fail to get employment. Communication skills are highly required to

develop professionally while working in an organization. The effectiveness of organizing and managing the tasks depends on the effectiveness of communication skills. In this context, Drucker quoted "… very few students bother to learn it. This one basic skill is the ability to organize and express ideas in writing and speaking. As soon as you move one-step from the bottom, your effectiveness depends on your ability to reach others through the spoken or the written word" Drucker, P. F. (1995).

Speaking and writing are similar in many important ways. Each requires the same clarification of the purpose to accomplish, the same ability to keep always in mind the nature and needs of the audience. Both require an adequate command of language.

Listening, speaking, reading and writing skills need to get improved and develop a student as a whole person to succeed in all walks of life. All the four skills of communication are the basic competencies which have to be possessed by each and every student. The ability to listen, speak, read and write appropriately and effectively is highly required to get employable.
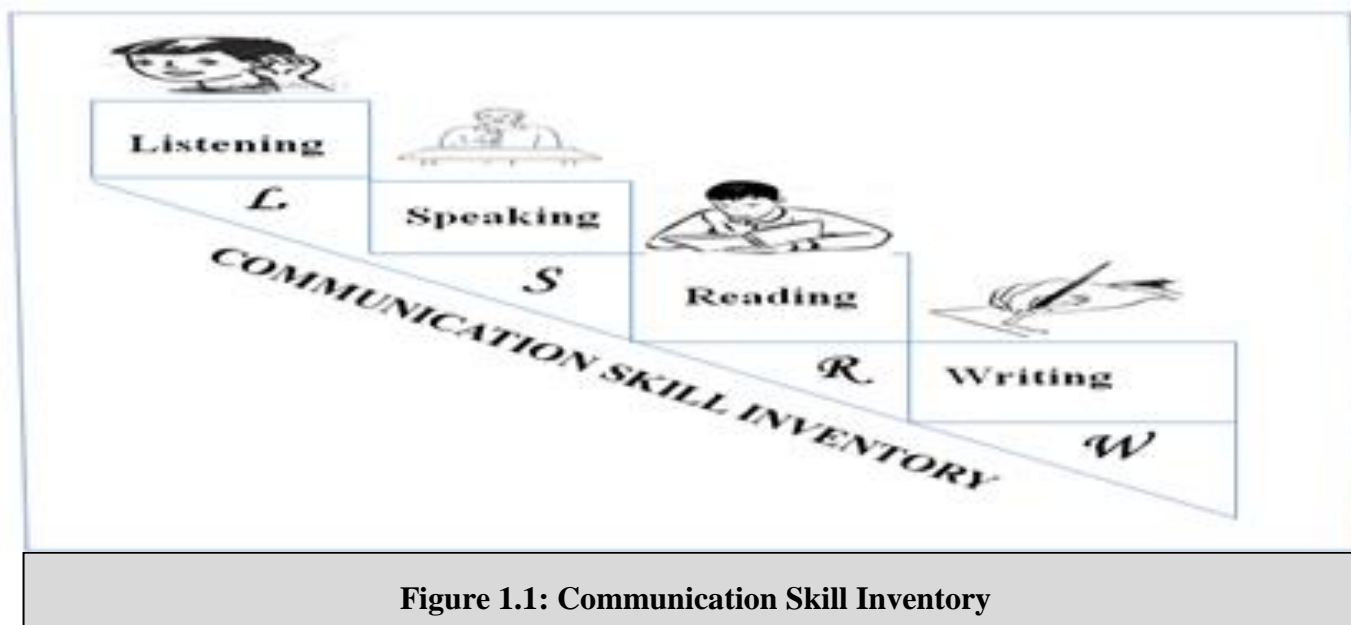
**Figure 1.1: Communication Skill Inventory**

There are numerous articles, books and journals which have emphasized the need and development of communication skills. Further a few researchers have done empirical studies on key competencies of communication skills among students of various Universities. Morreale & Pearson (2008) stated a rationale that communication skills are critical to student's future personal and professional success. Listening and speaking are considered to be the basic employable skills while reading and writing help the student to get a desirable job as well as to start his or her own business. The applications of basic competencies of communication skills can be in various forms as shown in the table 1.1.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Listening** | Gaining ideas, Improvement in - memory power, Increase in concentration levels, Empathy to others, Builds social relationship. |
| **Speaking** | Meetings, Client Interviews, Oral Presentations, Public participation. |
| **Reading** | Information –gathering, Newspapers, Current events, Acquiring Knowledge. |
| **Writing** | Job Applications, Business proposals, Letters, Memos. Emails, Publications, Applications for promotions, Reports, Media, Press notes, Complaints. |
| **Table 1.1: Applications of LSRW Skills** | |

**Meaning:** The word communication is originated from a Latin word "communicare" which implies to share. Communication blocks may arise at any time to any extent, for an effective communication the basic requirement is willingness to communicate that interest need to be generated among the students. Next active listening and attentive reading plays vital role in oral communication. *Listening* the essence of good communication is to increase the amount of listening with empathy for proper understanding. Listening means 'paying attention' it is an effective or positive stroke. Listening is an art, it is '*Sine Qua Non*' for understanding Sravanam (listening), and Grahanam (understanding) are interrelated.

*Speaking,* the primary tool for instructions while speaking is your voice. *Reading,* The research conducted by Alexander and Burke shows that there are five kinds of reading skills Scanning, Scouting, Skimming, Critical reading and Interpreting. *Writing,* Speaking and writing are alike in many important ways. Both require an adequate command of language.

Ford, Wolvin (1993). Identified four significant areas such as being confident to oneself, comfortable with others views, reasoning with others with appropriate usage of language.

The basic skills of speaking and listening have marked the essence to develop communication skills in multiple scenarios and situations starting from high school studies (Mann, (1999).

The relevance of communication skill in the workplace is highlighted by McPherson, (1998) stating that these skills are essential to prepare more for the students to have successful careers as well as in their business.

The ability to speak and write are considered to be the basic communication tools for multiple purposes, thereafter the practice of oral communication in classroom is often neglected (Witkin et al. 1996).

**Objectives of the Study:** The present study has the following objectives.

i. To study and examine communication skills difference between males and females.

ii. To examine the significant differences of competencies between different age groups of students.

**Need of the Study:** Nevertheless to say that communication plays a prominent role in the development of organizations as well as individuals. Communication skills have an impact on

the performance of an individual. The present study has made an attempt to find to what extent engineering and management students are confident with the ability to express and present their skills. The effectiveness of communications skills highly rests on the ability to organize and reach others through speaking or writing.

**Purpose of the Study:** The role of communication is vital in all areas nevertheless the students also know the importance of communication, yet they underestimate themselves of developing the skills in which they are lacking. A student has a fear to talk in group, although he is good at reading, writing and listening as such fear makes the student to be low confident. The basic skills of communication have to be learned from early childhood, followed by continued improvement in various work place situations.

The art of presentation comes out through good handwriting, thereafter to present an idea, views, to extract any information it requires good reading skills. Further to gain any thoughtful insights from experts, news and society a candidate need to possess good listening skills. It's often articulated that people never bother what others say, yet they make others to listen them. Although the students possess degrees some students fail to exhibit their performance to excel, due to lack of basic skills of learning and practice.

**Research Methodology:** The present study is empirical and has adopted stratified random sampling technique without proportionate, the sample size of the study includes one hundred and seventy six students who belong to B.Tech I year, III year and M.BA I year as shown in the table 1.2.

Data collection includes primary data from the respondents through a well-structured questionnaire that consists of twenty items of four factors namely *LSRW*.

| Course | Age Group | Male | Female | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| B.Tech I year | 17 - 20 | 30 | 32 | 62 |
| B.Tech III year | 21- 22 | 55 | 07 | 62 |
| M.B.A I year | 23 -25 | 20 | 32 | 52 |
| Total | | 105 | 71 | 176 |

**Table 1.2: Sample of the Study**

**Hypotheses of the Study:** The study has set the following hypotheses based on the objectives of the study.

H1: The mean scores of listening skills are higher among females as compared to males.

H2: The mean scores of speaking skills are lower among males as compared to females.

H3: The mean scores of reading skills are higher among females as compared to males.

H4: The mean scores of writing skills are lower among males as compared to females.

**Analysis of Data:** The internal consistency of the scale had been checked through reliability statistics, the calculated Cronbach's alpha value is 0.914 for N=4 that indicates excellent consistency as shown in the table 1.3.

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|---|---|
| .914 | 4 |

**Table 1.3: Reliability Statistics**

*Source: SPSS Results*

The descriptive statistics of four factors namely listening, speaking reading and writing skills between males and females are shown in the table 1.4.

| | | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Reading | 1.00 | 105 | 17.2571 | 3.57617 | .34900 | 16.5651 | 17.9492 | 5.00 | 25.00 |
| | 2.00 | 71 | 17.7324 | 2.91282 | .34569 | 17.0429 | 18.4218 | 10.00 | 25.00 |
| | Total | 176 | 17.4489 | 3.32397 | .25055 | 16.9544 | 17.9434 | 5.00 | 25.00 |
| Writing | 1.00 | 105 | 16.9714 | 3.50400 | .34196 | 16.2933 | 17.6495 | 5.00 | 25.00 |
| | 2.00 | 71 | 17.1690 | 3.26884 | .38794 | 16.3953 | 17.9427 | 10.00 | 25.00 |
| | Total | 176 | 17.0511 | 3.40297 | .25651 | 16.5449 | 17.5574 | 5.00 | 25.00 |
| Listening | 1.00 | 105 | 17.8095 | 3.26136 | .31828 | 17.1784 | 18.4407 | 8.00 | 25.00 |
| | 2.00 | 71 | 17.9718 | 2.99510 | .35545 | 17.2629 | 18.6808 | 10.00 | 25.00 |
| | Total | 176 | 17.8750 | 3.14892 | .23736 | 17.4065 | 18.3435 | 8.00 | 25.00 |
| Speaking | 1.00 | 105 | 17.2571 | 4.26305 | .41603 | 16.4321 | 18.0821 | 6.00 | 25.00 |
| | 2.00 | 71 | 18.0563 | 3.46364 | .41106 | 17.2365 | 18.8762 | 10.00 | 25.00 |
| | Total | 176 | 17.5795 | 3.96909 | .29918 | 16.9891 | 18.1700 | 6.00 | 25.00 |

**Table 1.4: Descriptive Statistics**

*Source: SPSS Results*

Table 1.4 shows the descriptive statistics of the four variables reading, writing, listening and speaking between males and females. The mean value of reading skills of female students is higher (M =17.7324) than the male students (M=

17.2571), while the mean value of writing skills of females is higher (M=17.1690) as compared to males (M= 16.9714) on other hand the mean value of listening skills and speaking skills of males is lower (M=17.8095) (M=17.2571) than the females (M=17.9718) (M= 18.0563) respectively.

Looking at the mean values of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills of males it indicates that the mean value of writing skills of males is lower (M=16.9714) as compared to

other skills. While it also found to be same in case of females as the mean value of writing skills is low (M=17.1690).

**Hypotheses Testing**: Analysis of variance (ANOVA), statistical tool has been applied to test the significant difference between the two sample means. It is noticed from the table – 1.5, that the probability value is greater than 0.05 at 5% level of significance with five degree of freedom.

|  |  | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reading | Between Groups | 9.567 | 1 | 9.567 | .865 | .354 |
|  | Within Groups | 1923.973 | 174 | 11.057 |  |  |
|  | Total | 1933.540 | 175 |  |  |  |
| Writing | Between Groups | 1.654 | 1 | 1.654 | .142 | .707 |
|  | Within Groups | 2024.886 | 174 | 11.637 |  |  |
|  | Total | 2026.540 | 175 |  |  |  |
| Listening | Between Groups | 1.116 | 1 | 1.116 | .112 | .738 |
|  | Within Groups | 1734.134 | 174 | 9.966 |  |  |
|  | Total | 1735.250 | 175 |  |  |  |
| Speaking | Between Groups | 27.055 | 1 | 27.055 | 1.724 | .191 |
|  | Within Groups | 2729.832 | 174 | 15.689 |  |  |
|  | Total | 2756.886 | 175 |  |  |  |
| **Table 1.5: ANOVA** | | | | | | |
| *Source: SPSS Results* | | | | | | |

The findings of the study have supported to accept the null hypotheses as shown in the figure 1.2



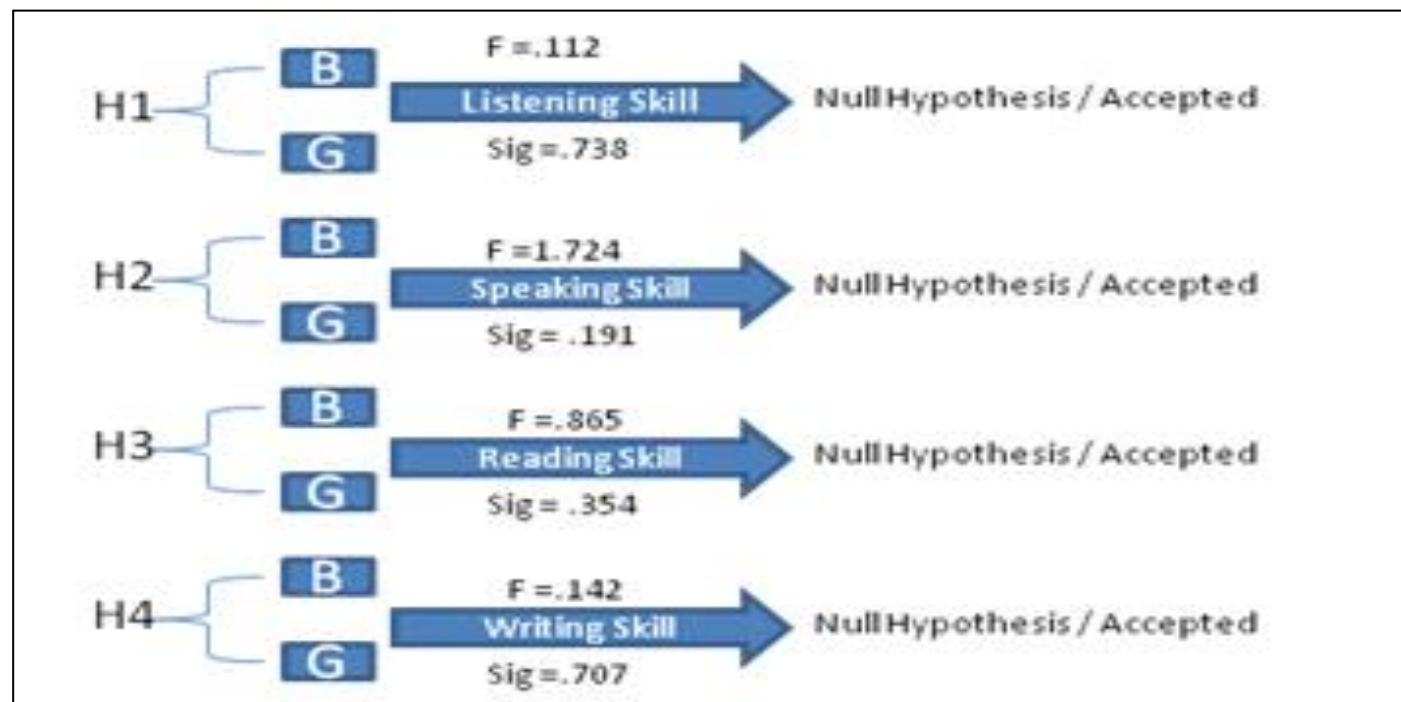**Figure 1.2: Hypotheses Results**
*Source: SPSS Results*

**Correlation Analysis:** To measure the association between the four variables the correlation analysis has been done. Table 1.6 shows that there is strong positive correlation association

between writing and reading (**0.801**$^{**}$) as the P- value is less than 0.05. Remaining all other variables is positively correlated respectively.

| Variable | Listening | Speaking | Reading | Writing |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Listening | 1 | .715** | .701** | .688** |
| Speaking | .715** | 1 | .759** | .739** |
| Reading | .701** | .759** | 1 | .801** |
| Writing | .688** | .739** | **.801**** | 1 |
| **Table 1.6: Pearson Correlations** | | | | |
| *Source: SPSS Results* | | | | |

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

| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | | .923 |
|---|---|---|
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 1558.666 |
| | df | 190 |
| | Sig. | .000 |
| **Table 1.7: KMO and Bartlett's Test** | | |
| *Source: SPSS Results* | | |

**Factor Analysis:** The Kaiser–Meyer–Oklin (KMO) measure of sample adequacy (MSA) criterion tells that values between .5 and .7 are mediocre, .7 and .8 are good, .8 and .9 are great above .9 are excellent. According to Anderson and

Tatham, 2006 KMO helps to measure the degree of inter correlation of the variables and thereby identifies the weather the data is appropriate for factor analysis.

Therefore, the scale of variables data collected has put to reliability test; high value of KMO .923 indicates that a factor analysis is quite useful for the data being used in this study. It also gives confidence that the sample size is adequate for factor loadings. Similarly, the significant value for Bartlett's test of Sphericity is 0.000, which indicates that there exists a significant relationship between the variables. The computed tested value x = 1558.666, is highly significant (p ^ 0.000) indicating that the sample for application of factor analysis is significant statistically.

The first observation is done towards the Eigen values in the table 1.9 of total variance only three components had an Eigen value greater than 1. Assessment of component loadings is necessary to name each component. Components were composed of both negative and positive loadings, noting the variables with the highest loadings followed by lowest loadings. Table 1.10 rotated component matrix displays how variables were loaded into the components after rotation.

| Component | Initial Eigen values | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 8.555 | 42.777 | 42.777 | 8.555 | 42.777 | 42.777 | 4.328 | 21.640 | 21.640 |
| 2 | 1.116 | 5.579 | 48.356 | 1.116 | 5.579 | 48.356 | 4.040 | 20.200 | 41.840 |
| 3 | 1.056 | 5.281 | 53.637 | 1.056 | 5.281 | 53.637 | 2.359 | 11.797 | 53.637 |
| 4 | .949 | 4.745 | 58.382 | | | | | | |
| 5 | .887 | 4.434 | 62.817 | | | | | | |
| 6 | .865 | 4.326 | 67.142 | | | | | | |
| 7 | .737 | 3.687 | 70.829 | | | | | | |
| 8 | .717 | 3.586 | 74.415 | | | | | | |
| 9 | .648 | 3.242 | 77.657 | | | | | | |
| 10 | .628 | 3.140 | 80.798 | | | | | | |
| 11 | .564 | 2.819 | 83.617 | | | | | | |
| 12 | .504 | 2.519 | 86.136 | | | | | | |
| 13 | .448 | 2.239 | 88.375 | | | | | | |
| 14 | .431 | 2.153 | 90.528 | | | | | | |
| 15 | .398 | 1.988 | 92.515 | | | | | | |
| 16 | .374 | 1.868 | 94.383 | | | | | | |
| 17 | .332 | 1.660 | 96.044 | | | | | | |
| 18 | .304 | 1.518 | 97.561 | | | | | | |
| 19 | .261 | 1.304 | 98.865 | | | | | | |
| 20 | .227 | 1.135 | 100.000 | | | | | | |
| *Source: SPSS Results* | | | | | | | | | |

The factors loading of each factor have been shown in the table 1.11. The first component had eight items with the highest factor loading ranging from .769 to the lowest .514 range.

|  | Component | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| VAR00001 | .514 | .481 | .029 |
| VAR00002 | .769 | .276 | .100 |
| VAR00003 | .554 | .101 | .506 |
| VAR00004 | .111 | .028 | .738 |
| VAR00005 | .723 | .136 | .178 |
| VAR00006 | .319 | .424 | .439 |
| VAR00007 | .562 | .210 | .485 |
| VAR00008 | .040 | .566 | .501 |
| VAR00009 | .342 | .639 | -.057 |
| VAR00010 | .299 | .644 | .100 |
| VAR00011 | .487 | .492 | .181 |
| VAR00012 | .253 | .699 | .120 |
| VAR00013 | .364 | .634 | .250 |
| VAR00014 | .244 | .431 | .419 |
| VAR00015 | .436 | .339 | .470 |
| VAR00016 | .429 | .468 | .335 |
| VAR00017 | .656 | .348 | .166 |
| VAR00018 | .555 | .297 | .200 |
| VAR00019 | .621 | .337 | .199 |
| VAR00020 | .110 | .599 | .314 |
| *Source: SPSS Results* | | | |

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.

The second component includes nine items with the factor loadings ranging from highest .699 to the lowest .431, while the third component includes three items ranging from .738 to .439, respectively. Each factor along with the item loadings has been detailed vividly with the help of the statistical data.

| Item06 |  |  | **.439** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Item 15 |  |  | **.470** |
| Total | 08 | 09 | 03 |
| *Source: SPSS Results* | | | |

**Table-1.11: Factor Loadings –Commuincation Skill**

| Components | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Item 01 | **.514** |  |  |
| Item 02 | **.769** |  |  |
| Item 03 | **.554** |  |  |
| Item 05 | **.723** |  |  |
| Item 07 | **.562** |  |  |
| Item 17 | **.656** |  |  |
| Item 18 | **.555** |  |  |
| Item 19 | **.621** |  |  |
| Item 08 |  | **.566** |  |
| Item 09 |  | **.639** |  |
| Item 10 |  | **.644** |  |
| Item 11 |  | **.492** |  |
| Item 12 |  | **.699** |  |
| Item 13 |  | **.634** |  |
| Item 14 |  | **.431** |  |
| Item 16 |  | **.468** |  |
| Item 20 |  | **.599** |  |
| Item 04 |  |  | **.738** |

**Factor 1: Written Communication**

| Questions | Factor Loadings | Mean Scores | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| I am familiar with specialized vocabulary in my field as well as general vocabulary. | .769 | 3.2784 | .87295 |
| I am familiar with proper memo, letter and report formats for business documents. | .723 | 3.2500 | .94112 |
| I can evaluate a document to determine its probable success. | .656 | 3.2670 | .95752 |
| I sense that I have credibility when I make a presentation. | .621 | 3.4773 | .98535 |
| I feel at ease in speaking before a group of people. | .562 | 3.2045 | 1.12284 |
| I can read and comprehend college level material. | .555 | 3.7955 | .93392 |
| I feel at ease in speaking with friends | .554 | 3.8580 | 1.01263 |

| Questions | Factor Loadings | Mean Scores | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| I passes basic spelling grammar and punctuation skills. | .514 | 3.7159 | .82044 |

**Note: Eigen value = 8.555**
**Percentage of Variance = 21.640**

Written Communication is the most important factor accounting for 21.640 % of total variance. The item loadings ranged from .769 to .514. There are eight statements (2, 5, 17, 19, 07, 18, 03, and01) in this factor. The mean scores of the items ranged from 3.2784 to 3.204.

### Factor 2: Oral Communication

| Questions | Factor Loadings | Mean Scores | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| I can summarize a speakers ideas and anticipating what is coming during pauses. | .699 | 3.3523 | .88853 |
| I am willing to look up definitions whenever necessary. | .644 | 3.5568 | .91786 |
| I can analyze writing problem and quickly outline a plan for solving the problem. | .639 | 3.4432 | .93023 |
| I am able to organize data coherently and logically. | .634 | 3.3750 | .95394 |
| I listen with the expectation of gaining new ideas and information. | .599 | 3.9545 | .94305 |
| I am able to concentrate on speakers words despite distractions. | .566 | 3.5600 | .90057 |
| I can adopt my presentation to the audience. | .492 | 3.4034 | 1.03746 |
| I provide feedback such as nodding, paraphrasing. | .468 | 3.4375 | .99517 |
| I am able to move from recreational to serious reading. | .431 | 3.4545 | .99610 |

**Note: Eigen value = 1.116**
**Percentage of Variance = 20.200**

Oral Communication is also considered to be one of the most important factors accounting for 20.200% of total variance. The item loadings ranged from .699 to .431. There are nine statements (12, 10, 09, 13, 20, 08, 11, 16 and14) in this factor. The mean scores of the items ranged from 3.352 to 3.454.

### Factor 3: Listening

| Questions | Factor Loadings | Mean Scores | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| I spend at least half the time listening during conservations. | .738 | 3.5771 | .86672 |
| I am confident in pronouncing and using words correctly. | .470 | 3.6364 | 1.05486 |
| I can concentrate despite distractions. | .439 | 3.3829 | .91397 |

**Note: Eigen value = 1.056**
**Percentage of Variance = 11.797**

Oral Communication is also considered to be one of the most important factors accounting for 1.056 % of total variance. The item loadings ranged from .738 to .439. There are three statements (04, 15 and06) in this factor. The mean scores of the items ranged from 3.577 to 3.382.

**Findings of the Study**

From the findings of the study it has been observed that overall among all the students, belonging to different age groups and courses, students do face problems with regard to writing, speaking, listening or reading. From the study it's noticed that very few students are good at all four factors of communication skills. Comparatively males, females are little fair, further there is need for improvement for all the students to excel and develop their skills.

**Conclusions**

The study draws a few points to draw the conclusions of the present research paper. Today at competitive facet there is need to develop and improve communication skills i.e., the ability to speak, write, read and listen in order to be successful in career, business and life. Bruce Barton an American author rightly said that "Most successful men have not achieved their distinction by having some new talent or opportunity presented to them. They have developed the opportunity that was at hand. It is quite essential to develop the habit of learning continuously among young boys and girls to become perfect in sharpening their skills. The results of the study shows that both oral and written communication are highly required for all the students to improve.

**Further scope of research:** To draw the generalizations of the study, further the research can be done on all students compromising different courses and age groups.

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