Background: Sociability and shyness are orthogonal personality traits, wherein both are characterized by varying behavioral and psychophysiological correlates. Shyness should not be equated with the lack of sociability, as shyness relates to discomfort that occurs in the presence of others and sociability is identified with an individual’s preference for being with others rather than alone. Objectives: The objective of this study was to examine the effect of type of schooling on sociability and shyness among students and to study the gender differences between sociability and shyness among students. Methodology: The sample comprised 210 students from both private and government schools situated in Delhi. Data were collected using Eysenck Personality Profiler for measuring sociability and Revised Cheek and Buss Shyness Scale. Results and Conclusion: The results obtained from ANOVA revealed that government school students were observed to be more sociable as compared to private school students. On the other hand, private school students were found to be more shy as compared to government school students. Females were observed to be more shy as compared to males. In addition, significant interactive effect was observed for sociability when school and gender were taken altogether.

Keywords: Interactive effect, shyness, sociability

In the recent years, the term “sociability” is being used more frequently for describing numerous facets of social interactions and inclination to associate with others. Sociability plays a vital role in the development and maintenance of social networks, intimate relationships, and social supports. The structure of an individual’s social networks, the support they receive from others, and the quality and quantity of their social interactions have all been identified as potential predictors of health and well-being. Sociability is a disposition that is generally recognized as a determinant of quality and quantity of social interaction. It relates to the quality of seeking others and being agreeable. The sociable person not only seeks out others but is also warmly responsive to their presence. They emit positive social cues and these in turn elicit positive social interactions. This positive feedback cycle enhances social interactions and tends to strengthen the individual’s social responses. A person low in sociability neither emits nor elicits the positive aspects of social interaction and the relative absence of reinforcement further diminishes his/her initially weak social responses.

Shyness is a state of discomfort or inhibition in interpersonal situations that interferes with pursuing one’s interpersonal or professional goals. It is a blend of fear that is universally manifested across cultures. It leads to inhibition among people and hinders the process of achieving healthy interpersonal relationships. Shyness is a psychological state that causes feelings of discomfort, leading to avoidance of social contact. According to Henderson and Zimbardo, the manifestation of shyness occurs at various levels varying from cognitive level (e.g., excessive negative evaluation of self), affective level (e.g., feelings of anxiety), physiological level (e.g., arousal of sympathetic nervous system) to behavioral level (e.g., failure to respond appropriately), and may also be caused by various other situational cues. Some of the physical symptoms associated
with shyness include blushing, sweating, a pounding heart or upset stomach, negative feelings about oneself, worries about how others view them, and a tendency to withdraw from social interactions.

Shyness might be more of an issue in today’s modern society than it might have been for people in earlier times, because nowadays we are more subjected to a continually changing array of relationships and social interactions. According to Asendorpf and Meier, different forms of shyness exist and these may emerge as a result of differences in sociability. Shyness might limit people’s prospects for social interactions, which in turn are essential for the development of social relationships. Although shyness and sociability may be related, they are orthogonal traits, each of which is associated with distinct behavioral and psychophysiological correlates. Individuals scoring high on measures of shyness do not necessarily report low sociability. The present study examined the effect of type of schooling on sociability and shyness among students and also studied the gender differences between sociability and shyness among students.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Sample**
The study was carried out on a sample of 210 students (males = 110 and females = 100) enrolled from both private and government schools situated in Delhi. A purposive sampling approach was carried out, wherein data were collected from 108 private school students (males = 54 and females = 54) and 102 government school students (males = 56 and females = 46). Their education level varied from Class IX to XII with an age range of 13–16 years and their mean age was 14.91 years. The choice of school was guided by the convenience of collecting data and ready cooperation extended by the school authorities.

**Tools**
The following tools were used in the study:

- Sociability scale by Eysenck was used to find a person’s inclination to seek out the company of other person. Sociability was measured with the help of Eysenck Personality Profiler V6, which is a multidimensional modular personality inventory for three dimensions: extraversion, emotionality (neuroticism), and adventurousness (psychoticism). Sociability is one of the aspects that is measured under extraversion. The sociability subscale of extraversion consisted of twenty items and the responses were rated either “yes” or “no.” There were ten positive and ten negative items.

- Shyness Scale by Cheek was used to assess shyness. This scale consisted of twenty items. The alpha coefficient of internal consistency reliability for the 20-item shyness scale is 0.94 and it correlated with the original Cheek and Buss 9-item shyness scale at 0.96. The revised Cheek and Buss scale is one of the most commonly employed measures of dispositional shyness. There are few revised versions of the scale with 13, 14, and 20 items. The 20-item scale used for the present study was rated on a 5-point rating scale.

**Procedure**
For collecting the data from schools, their respective principals were contacted personally. The procedure of stratified random sampling was followed. The stratification was done for gender and type of schooling. The students were selected from both private and government schools situated in Delhi. As desired by the institution, the confidentiality was strictly maintained. Only those who volunteered to participate in the study were enrolled as participants. After establishing a good rapport with the students, the data were collected by administering the questionnaires. The students were asked to read the instructions and respond to all the items given in the questionnaires carefully. The total data collected from students were further analyzed.

**RESULTS**

ANOVA was carried out to find the effect of type of schooling (private vs. government), gender (male vs. female), and their interactive effect on sociability and shyness, i.e., whether schooling, gender as well as altogether schooling and gender had significant or nonsignificant effect on the variables of sociability and shyness.

**Sociability**
Table 1 depicts the mean and standard deviation (SD) for the main effects of type of schooling and gender on sociability.

| Gender | Type of schooling | Main means (gender) |
|--------|-------------------|---------------------|
|        | Private | Government |         |
| Males  |         |           |         |
| Mean (SD) | 9.67 (3.06) | 8.82 (2.70) | 9.24 (2.49) |
| n      | 54     | 56        |         |
| Females|         |           |         |
| Mean (SD) | 7.67 (2.76) | 10.37 (2.50) | 8.91 (2.96) |
| n      | 54     | 46        |         |

Table 1: Main and cell means of type of schooling and gender on sociability

SD – Standard deviation
The main means for the sociability score was found to be 9.08 and the SD was 2.72.

ANOVA was carried out to find the significant effect of two main variables – type of schooling (private and government) and gender (male and female) as well as their interactive effect (type of schooling × gender).

Table 2 reveals the summary of ANOVA, which indicated the type of schooling as a significant source of variance as indicated by $F$ as 6.93 being significant beyond 0.001 level of probability at 1 and 206 degrees of freedom.

It was observed that government school students had higher sociability scores (9.52) in comparison to private school students (8.67), indicating that enriched environment emerged as a buffering effect for sociability. However, gender as a main effect did not emerge as a significant source of variance ($F \leq 1$), since males and females had comparable means (9.24 and 8.91, respectively).

Altogether, type of schooling and gender showed a significant interactive effect, as indicated by $F$ as 25.28.

Figure 1 displays the mean sociability scores of males and females at private and government schools. The figure exhibits a differential effect of type of school in females, as females of private schools displayed a mean score of 7.67 in comparison to females at government schools, where the mean score was 10.37. However, in case of males, the private and government school males displayed a mean score of 9.67 and 8.82, respectively.

### Shyness

Table 3 depicts the mean and SD for main effects of type of schooling and gender on shyness.

The variable of shyness indicated a mean score of 54.20 with a SD of 11.09.

ANOVA revealed that the type of schooling and gender emerged as a significant source of variance as indicated by $F$ as 24.09 and 11.61, respectively.

It was observed that private school students were more shy (57.69) in comparison to government school students (50.51). In addition, gender as a main effect emerged as a significant source of variance. Females were observed to be more shy (56.93) as compared to males (51.73) [Table 4].

However, a nonsignificant interactive effect emerged between type of schooling and gender ($F = 0.17$, df = 1/206) since females were more shy in both types of schooling.

### Table 2: Summary table of ANOVA for sociability

| Sources                  | Sum of squares | df  | Mean square | $F$   | Significant ($P$) |
|--------------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------------------|
| School (type)            | 45.03          | 1   | 45.03       | 6.93  | <0.00            |
| Gender                   | 2.66           | 1   | 2.66        | 0.41  | <0.52            |
| School and gender        | 164.28         | 1   | 164.28      | 25.28 | <0.00            |
| Residual (error)         | 1338.93        | 206 | 6.50        |       |                  |
| **Total**                | 1545.62        | 209 | 7.40        |       |                  |

### Table 3: Means of type of schooling and gender on shyness and cell means

| Gender  | Type of schooling | Mean (SD) | n  | Main means (gender) | Mean (SD) | n  |
|---------|-------------------|-----------|----|---------------------|-----------|----|
| Males   | Private           | 54.98 (11.14) | 54 | 51.73 (10.48)       |
|         | Government        | 48.59 (8.81)  | 56 |                     |
| Females | Private           | 60.41 (10.34) | 54 | 56.93 (11.14)       |
|         | Government        | 52.85 (10.76) | 46 |                     |
|         | Main means (type of schooling) | 57.69 (11.04) | 210 | 54.20 (11.09) |

SD – Standard deviation

### Table 4: Summary table of ANOVA for shyness

| Sources                  | Sum of squares | df  | Mean square | $F$   | Significant ($P$) |
|--------------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------------------|
| School (type)            | 2540.05        | 1   | 2540.05     | 24.09 | <0.00            |
| Gender                   | 1223.87        | 1   | 1223.87     | 11.61 | <0.00            |
| School and gender        | 17.78          | 1   | 17.78       | 0.17  | <0.68            |
| Residual (error)         | 21721.51       | 206 | 105.44      |       |                  |
| **Total**                | 25682.20       | 209 | 122.88      |       |                  |
Results revealed that type of schooling emerged as a significant source of variance for the variables of sociability as well as shyness. Government school students were found to be more sociable as compared to private school students, and on the other hand, private school students were found to be more shy in comparison to government school students.

Generally, it is observed that students from government schools come from families with low socioeconomic status and therefore they do not maintain any hierarchy when they interact with their peer groups. They not only mix well with others, but also display much of the sociability skills as compared to private school students. These findings are in line with another finding which states that private school students were observed to be shy as compared to government school students. Lack of sociability led to shyness among private school students.

Besides this, it is also observed that students with low socioeconomic status have rural background. Research suggests that rural children offer sociable initiations of behavior to others more often than do children with urban background. Children with rural background are more often engaged in general sociability whereas children with urban background more often seek sociability from others.

It is also found that students from private schools receive less social support from their friends in school, which usually results in shyness. The social and emotional support received from friends helps in effectively coping with stress to a great extent. Students from private schools lack in seeking such support system from their peers and are hence likely to remain shy. In addition, it has been observed that parents of private school students usually do not have much time to spend with their children. Lack of parental attention often results in withdrawal behavior from social situations. Decreased parental involvement makes these children believe that they are not worthy of others’ attention, which in turn affects their social relationships. In most cases, it is found that students from private schools have overprotective parents. Research shows that overprotective parents promote withdrawal behaviors in their children.

The findings of the study also reflected that gender emerged as a significant source of variance for shyness in case of private school students, that is, females were observed to be more shy as compared to males. These findings have been supported by many researches carried out in this area.

Gender differences in terms of social withdrawal tend to emerge in late childhood and early adolescence. This has been supported with a recent research finding, wherein girls were found to be shier and more inhibited than boys beginning in late childhood and early adolescence. According to Kerr, shyness can have rather different consequences for men and women. For example, it might be more acceptable to be shy for women than for men, as men might be more pressured to change their behaviors in order to fit in. Women might be more expected to socialize than men; however, as not interacting with others might be more accepted for men. Another explanation could be that as men deal with their own early shyness, women could be given the signal that they should not prefer isolated activities, and in that way become self-conscious about their usual preferences and develop the self-conscious type of shyness as they grow up. Another research by Prakash and Coplan also revealed that girls are more socially withdrawn and shy as compared to boys.

The way an individual is brought up in a family plays a very important role in developing his/her personality. Initial upbringing leaves an impact on how the person deals with people around him/her. Most of the researches reveal that shyness is mainly caused by parenting practices that are not consistent. There are differences in the ways boys and girls are being brought up in a family. Usually, in our culture, it is observed that parents are overprotective toward their children, especially more toward girls as compared to boys. Girls who are overprotected by their parents often get less opportunity to be independent and hence this gets reflected in their personality which often leads to insecurity and lack of self-confidence, thus ultimately leading to shyness. The family environment is found to be associated with the development of shyness. Generally, children of anxious parents appear to be more inhibited themselves.

There are gender stereotypes also that are associated with parents. Often parents tend to think that it is all right to be shy and even a virtue, in case of a girl, but not in case of a boy. According to Verma, females are more socially withdrawn as compared to males due to the persisting cultural expectations that assume females to be more submissive, obedient, and to perform more traditional gender role. Other researches show that gender differences gradually become apparent across childhood, with girls appearing more fearful and anxious than boys during adolescence.

**CONCLUSION**

Shyness is something that all people experience at one time or another. In most cases, it is normal temporary behavior. However, it becomes a problem when it interferes with relationships, social situations, and other important aspects.
of one’s life. Therefore, sociability needs to be improved at the initial years of one’s life so that it helps in dissipating shyness.

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