

A Study On Social Competence In High School Students

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ABSTRACT

Social competence is a critical developmental construct that encompasses the skills, behaviors, and attitudes necessary for effective interpersonal functioning. During high school years, adolescents experience significant social, emotional, and cognitive changes that shape their ability to interact successfully with peers, teachers, and the broader community. This article examines the concept of social competence in high school students, its core components, influencing factors, and its impact on academic performance and psychological well-being. Additionally, it explores the role of schools and educators in fostering social competence through structured interventions and supportive environments. The primary aim of the present investigation was to find out impact of social competence among High School Students. The sample consisted of 240, 8th & 9th class students drawn from different Schools located in and around the kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. Social Competence Scale by Thorpe Clark and Tiegs was using to assess the social competence of students consists of 40 items.

The paper concludes that social competence among high school students is significantly influence by gender and management, no significance difference on class and with recommendations for integrating social-emotional learning into high school curricula to promote holistic student development.

Key Words: Social competence, High school students, Gender, Social, Emotional and Cognitive changes

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical period of development marked by significant physical, emotional, and social changes. High school students, typically between the ages of 14 and 18, are in a transitional phase where peer relationships, identity formation, and social expectations become increasingly complex. In this context, social competence emerges as an essential skill that enables students to navigate interpersonal interactions effectively and build meaningful relationships.

Social competence refers to the ability to interact appropriately and successfully with others in various social situations. It encompasses a range of skills, including communication, empathy, emotional regulation, cooperation, and problem-solving. These skills are not only important for maintaining positive peer relationships but also play a crucial role in academic success and overall well-being.

In the high school environment, students are exposed to diverse social settings that require them to adapt their behavior, manage conflicts, and collaborate with others. Those with higher levels of social competence are more likely to engage actively in classroom activities, develop supportive friendships, and cope effectively with stress and challenges. Conversely, students with limited social competence may experience difficulties such as social isolation, peer rejection, or behavioral issues.

The growing recognition of the importance of social competence has led educators and researchers to emphasize its role in holistic student development. Schools are increasingly seen as key environments for fostering these skills through structured programs and supportive interactions. Understanding the development and significance of social competence in high school students is therefore essential for promoting positive educational and life outcomes.

Social competence, as defined by Guralnick (1990), refers to the ability of children, especially in early development, to successfully and appropriately achieve their interpersonal goals. It means that children can engage in positive and satisfying interactions with both adults and peers (Katz et al., 1995). In simple terms, social competence is shown through effective and appropriate behavior in relationships and social interactions. It is closely related to peer acceptance, emotional well-being, social adjustment, and readiness for school. Children who are socially competent—meaning they are assertive, cooperative, and friendly—tend to perform better socially and academically. They also show higher levels of psychological resilience. On the other hand, children who lack social competence often display negative behaviors and face difficulties in social interactions.

Importance of Social Competence in High School

a) Academic Achievement Social competence is a key factor in the comprehensive development of high school students, affecting their relationships, academic progress, and emotional health. As adolescents encounter increasingly complex social situations, the ability to communicate effectively and behave responsibly becomes crucial for successful adaptation and personal growth.

b). Mental Health and Well-being In addition, social competence plays an important role in mental health and emotional stability. Students who can manage their emotions and maintaining healthy relationships are less prone to stress, anxiety, and depression. They often display higher self-confidence and are better prepared to handle challenges, which enhances their overall resilience.

c). Peer Relationships Another crucial aspect is its role in fostering positive peer relationships. Since peer acceptance and friendships are highly significant during adolescence, socially competent students are more successful in forming and sustaining meaningful connections. They are also more adept at resolving conflicts peacefully and avoiding harmful behaviors such as bullying and aggression, thereby contributing to a supportive social environment.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Several studies have been conducted to assess social competence among High students. The investigator reviewed relevant and recent studies closely related to the present research.

Botvin (1996) study revealed that interventions intended to enhance social competence are often a combination of health promotion and problem prevention programs such as life skills training programs, which attempt to reduce risk behaviours as well as promote healthy adjustment and development. It has

been found that the most effective programs are multi-dimensional and multi-level such as the combination of skill-based approaches with environmentally-oriented approaches. The importance of addressing affective, cognitive, and behavioral components of social competence in enhancement efforts has been suggested by many researchers.

Ladd, (1999) Interacting normally with parents, peers and teachers enable the adolescents to have proper growth and development in their life. Especially, the quality of peer relationships found to be greatly contributed by the social competencies

Katz, L. G., & McClellan, D. E. (2007). Suggest that children who do not have a basic level of social competence by the age of 16 may have trouble with relationships when they are adults. The long range risks for a child who cannot interact well with other children may include poor mental health, low academic achievement and other school difficulties and poor employment history.

Rose-Krasnor (2008) concludes that social competence in youth is a complex, multidimensional, and context-dependent construct. It cannot be understood as a single trait but must be viewed in relation to: social skills and behaviors, peer relationships, cultural and environmental contexts. The study emphasizes that adolescents' social competence develops through real-life interactions, especially within peer groups and school settings. It highlights that success in one context does not guarantee success in another, showing that social competence varies across situations. Focus more on contextual and situational factors. Use longitudinal studies to understand development over time. Integrate multiple perspectives (behavioral, emotional, and social)

S. S. (2013). Social competence refers to an individual's ability to behave effectively in social situations and to interact successfully with others across different environments. The present study assessed the social competence of adolescents aged 13–15 years. A total of 120 students were selected randomly, including 60 boys and 60 girls from Classes IX and X of Sadhu Vaswani Public School, Jaipur. Data were collected using the Social Competence Scale (SCS) developed by V. P. Sharma, Kiran Shukla, and Prabha Shukla. The data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, and the t-test. The results showed that 93.33% of adolescents fell in the low and very low categories of social competence. These findings are consistent with White (1963), suggesting that limited interaction with the social environment reduces opportunities for social learning and successful social experiences.

Anish K R et.al (2014) The intervention was carried out with 37 students from a government school, out of which 34 students completed the 18-hour program. A paired sample t-test comparing pre-test and post-test scores showed significant improvement in all five areas of social competence. There were also significant improvements in the sub-areas of pro-social behavior, including empathy, communication, assertiveness, and cooperation ($p < 0.05$). Correlation results indicated consistent positive changes in self-concept, communication skills, and problem-solving skills among the participants. Overall, the study confirmed that the Social Competence Model is effective in improving the social competence of adolescents.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To examine the impact of selected demographic variables like, Gender, management and class on the Social Competence of High School Students.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There will be no significant influence between boys' and girls' students regarding their social competence.
2. There will be no significant influence between government and private school students regarding their social competence.
3. There will be no significant influence between 8th and 9th class students regarding their social competence.

TOOL

Social Competence Scale by Thorpe Clark and Tiegs was using to assess the social competence of students consists of 40 items.

SAMPLE & DATA COLLECTION

The present study consisted of sample 240 High school students in and around the Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. The stratified random sampling was applied. The investigator personally visited schools with permission of head master. The personal data sheet and social competence scale were given to the students and data was collected. The inferential statistical technique mean, SD and 't' test was employed to test the hypotheses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis-1: There are no significant differences between the means of boys' and girls' students on social competence

Table – 1 Shows Mean, SD and t-value of Boys and Girls students on Social Competence

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Boys	120	111.68	14.82	2.235 *
Girls	120	106.58	20.11	

* - Significant at 0.05 level

It is clear from Table-1 that the pertained above the t value is 2.235 the calculated 't' value is greater than the table value at 0.05 level.it can concluded that their significance difference between boys and girls in their social competence. Hence hypothesis-1 is rejected from the mean scores.it is also clear that boys have more social competence then girls.

Hypothesis-2: There are no significant differences between the means of Government and Private school students on social competence

Table -2 Shows Mean, SD and t-value of Government and Private school students on Social Competence

Locality	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Government	120	113.28	13.55	3.703 **
Private	120	104.98	20.47	

** - Significant at 0.01 level

It is clear from Table-2 that the pertained above the t value is 3.703 the calculated 't' value is greater than the table value at 0.01 level.it can concluded that their significance difference between government and private school students in their social competence. Hence hypothesis-2 is rejected from the mean scores.it is also clear that government school students have high social competence than private school students.

Hypothesis-3: There are no significant differences between the means of 8th and 9th class students on social competence

Table- 3 Shows Mean, SD and t-value of 8th and 9th class students on Social Competence

Management	N	Mean	SD	t-value
8 th class	120	107.93	19.80	1.626 @
9 th class	120	103.90	18.60	

@ - Not significant at 0.01 level

It is clear from Table-3 that the pertained above the t value is 1.626 the calculated 't' value is less than the table value at 0.01 level.it can concluded that their no significance difference between the 8th and 9th class students in their social competence. Hence hypothesis-3 is accepted.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the study suggest several important implications for school education, teaching practices, and student development programs.

Focus on school environment and experiences

Since social competence is influenced more by management type and class level than gender, schools should focus on improving the overall learning environment rather than relying on demographic assumptions. Creating a positive, inclusive, and participatory school climate can enhance students' social skills.

Strengthening government and private school practices

As government school students showed higher social competence, private schools may need to:

- increase opportunities for group activities and peer interaction
- encourage cooperative learning methods
- reduce overly competitive academic pressure
- promote value-based and social skill-oriented education

Targeted support for class-level differences

Since 8th class students showed slightly higher social competence than 9th class students, schools should:
 provide transition support in higher classes
 address academic stress that may reduce social interaction
 ensure continuous engagement in social activities across grades

Gender-sensitive but not gender-biased approach

equal opportunities should be ensured for both boys and girls
 girls should be encouraged equally in leadership and participation activities
 boys and girls should be given balanced roles in group tasks

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study reveal that Social Competence among High School Students does not significantly differ based on Gender and management Class have significant influence on social competence of High school students. In terms of gender boys have more social competence than girls, the government school students have high social competence than private school students, and 8th class students have little high social competence than 9th class students. Overall, the results emphasize the need to focus on contextual and experiential factors rather than demographic variables in high school students

Social competence is a foundational skill that significantly impacts high school students' academic success, mental health, and prospects. Schools, families, and communities must collaborate to create environments that nurture these essential skills. By prioritizing social competence, educators can support the holistic development of adolescents and prepare them for the complexities of adult life.

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