
Assessing Social Competence in Haryana's Youth: A Study of Gender and Locality in Senior Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

Social competence equips adolescents with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of adulthood, such as establishing meaningful relationships, succeeding in their careers, and contributing positively to their communities. The present study investigated senior secondary students' mean differences in social competence concerning their gender and locality in Haryana. For this study, 600 (300 boys, 300 girls) students from 8 (4 urban, 4 rural) senior secondary schools were selected randomly. The data was gathered using the Social Competence Scale (SCS) developed by Dr V.P. Sharma, Dr Prabha Shukla, and Dr Kiran Shukla. The t-test was calculated to analyze senior secondary students' mean difference in social competence. The results showed that rural and urban students and males and females differ significantly regarding social competence. Developing students' capacity for effective communication, teamwork, analysis, and problem-solving is a top priority for NEP 2020. These skills are crucial for navigating social situations effectively and building healthy relationships.

Introduction

Humans have a unique characteristic that distinguishes them from animals: social behavior. Society and basic needs are essential for them. They believe in maintaining social relationships and try to

adapt to people. However, this does not mean the child is born with such social behaviors and qualities. As in other parts of growth and development, the child builds the required traits in him.

During the last 40 years, there has been a boom in research on the social circumstances of development. Several factors have contributed to this concentration, including a growing realization of the relationship between peer issues and poor social, emotional, and academic success. Introducing social competence at the secondary level aims to equip adolescents with the social skills necessary to navigate the complexities of adulthood. Adolescents with social competence are better equipped to establish meaningful relationships, succeed in their careers, and contribute positively to their communities. Social competence also improves mental health, self-esteem, and overall well-being, all necessary for succeeding in a competitive society.

When social competency is prioritized at the secondary level, students are better prepared for personal and professional adulthood. It promotes academic performance by encouraging resilient peer interactions, effective teacher communication, and collaborative learning settings. Social competence fosters a healthy school culture, which is necessary for a safe and nurturing educational setting where adolescents may thrive.

Social competence is defined as the capacity to navigate social interactions proficiently. It pertains to interpersonal harmony, the capacity to establish and sustain intimate relationships, and the ability to respond appropriately in social situations. Social competence arises from a combination of cognitive talents, emotional processes, behavioural skills, social cognition, and individual and cultural values influenced by the dynamics of social interactions. The comprehension of this concept is further complicated by the fact that social competence is contingent upon developmental characteristics (i.e., expectations of social competence vary with age), social contexts (e.g., a child may exhibit greater competence when engaging with a socially adept partner compared to a reticent individual), and cultural characteristics (i.e., specific manifestations of social competence are constrained by cultural norms).

Social competence refers to the ability of individuals to effectively navigate social interactions, demonstrate appropriate behavior, and form positive relationships with others. Social competence equips adolescents with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of adulthood, such as establishing meaningful relationships, succeeding in their careers, and contributing positively to their communities. Socially competent adolescents are more likely to have higher self-esteem,

experience fewer mental health issues, and effectively cope with stress and adversity. Improved Academic Performance Strong social competence supports academic success by fostering positive peer relationships, effective teacher communication, and collaborative learning environments.

Individuals with high social competence tend to form positive and meaningful relationships, excel in teamwork, adapt to new environments, and effectively resolve conflicts. It also contributes to improved mental health, self-esteem, and overall well-being. Adequate social competence enables individuals to collaborate with colleagues, communicate their ideas, resolve conflicts, and build a positive work culture. It facilitates students' ability to interact with peers, form friendships, collaborate on projects, and navigate social challenges in educational environments. Social competence also equips individuals with the skills to develop and maintain healthy relationships, manage conflicts, and support their loved ones.

Review of related literature

Ranjhe and Shujja et al. (2010) examined the correlation between emotional intelligence and sociopsychological adjustment among nurses in emergency and non-emergency wards of private and public hospitals. The research demonstrated a positive correlation between nurses' sociopsychological adjustment and emotional intelligence. Maria et al. (2017) investigated the relationship between emotional understanding and academic progress in primary school students by analysing age, gender, fluid intelligence, mother's educational attainment, and social competence. The mother's educational attainment was a significant predictor of her social-emotional competence. About the gender effect, emotional understanding did not significantly predict the social-emotional competence of either girls or boys. Kaur, Amanpreet (2020) found significant positive relationships between social competence and emotional intelligence and self-esteem variables. The social competence and social skills of boys and girls in secondary schools do not significantly differ from one another, according to Devi, S., Rajkumari, & Jyoti (2022). Binu, Aswathy (2023) concluded that the correlation between social competence and self-efficacy was significant. Aneesh, et al. (2023) found significant correlations between PCR, dimensions of ER, and SC with the PWB of adolescents. Furthermore, ER moderates the relationship, while SC partially mediates it between PCRs and adolescents' PWB.

Justification of the study

In the 21st century, characterized by rapid technological advancements and increasing

globalization, social competence has become desirable for students' success and well-being. They face challenges such as forming new friendships, dealing with peer pressure, and establishing their identity. The introduction of social competence in research aims to understand its impact on individual well-being and success in various areas of life. The challenges senior secondary-level students face in adjusting to society are numerous. Adolescents go through significant physical, emotional, and cognitive changes as they transition from childhood to adulthood. These changes can be overwhelming and challenging to navigate, especially given the complexities of the social world. Adolescents must learn to balance academic demands with social relationships, including forming and maintaining close relationships, responding adaptively in social contexts, and getting along with others. They must also learn to navigate complex social situations, such as bullying, peer pressure, and discrimination. Students with strong social skills are better equipped to build and maintain healthy relationships, cope with stress and peer pressure, and develop a positive self-image, all of which contribute to greater emotional well-being and resilience. Students who can effectively communicate, collaborate, and resolve conflicts perform better academically and are more engaged in learning. It is highly valued in the workplace. Employers seek individuals who can communicate effectively, work collaboratively in teams, solve problems, and navigate interpersonal dynamics. We better prepare students for future career success by fostering social competence in secondary school.

Additionally, students must learn to balance their personal and cultural values with social expectations, which can be challenging given the diversity of today's society. Finally, students must learn to cope with the stress and adversity that come with academic and social demands. Social competence at the secondary level is essential to addressing these challenges and preparing students for adulthood. By equipping students with the necessary social skills, students can navigate these challenges more effectively and thrive today. Enhancing social competence benefits individuals personally and has broader implications for society. By prioritizing developing and accessing social competence, we can encourage positive social interactions, foster empathy and understanding, and create a more inclusive and harmonious world. The findings will provide insights for teachers, administrators, and parents to establish supportive learning environments that promote the development of socially competent individuals equipped to succeed in the 21st century.

Objectives of the study

1. To compare the social competence of senior secondary school students concerning their gender.

2. To compare the social competence of senior secondary school students concerning their locality.

Hypotheses of the study

1. The social competence of senior secondary pupils is not significantly different based on gender.
2. Their location does not significantly influence the social competence of senior secondary pupils.

Research Methodology:

The data was analyzed using the descriptive Survey method, i.e., Mean, SD, and t-test.

Social competence: The capacity to effectively regulate social interactions is referred to as social competence. It pertains to establishing and sustaining personal relationships, interacting effectively with others, and responding appropriately in social situations. The Social Competence Scale (SCS) devised by Dr V.P. Sharma, Dr Prabha Shukla, and Dr Kiran Shukla (1992) is employed to evaluate social competence in the current study.

Population and Sampling: The population for this study consisted of all senior secondary students in Haryana. The sample consisted of 600 senior secondary students from eight senior secondary schools. The children were randomly chosen from educational institutions in Haryana's Hisar, Fatehabad, Bhiwani, and Kurukshetra districts. The sampled students are aged between 16 and 18, with an average age of 17.

Tools used: The researcher used the Social Competence Scale (SCS) developed by Dr. V.P. Sharma, Dr. Prabha Shukla, and Dr. Kiran Shukla (1992). The social competence scale has 18 factors: social sensitivity, maturity, skills, relations, commitment, appreciation ability, socio-economic integrity, involvement, respect-ability, leadership, cooperation and compliance, acceptability, tolerance, competition, authority, adult-resource exploitability, participation, and pro-social attitude which has 50 items to measure social competence and the response of the student is reported in the form of a 5-point Likert scale. A predictive validity of $r = 0.72$ was achieved. The scale's reliability was tested using the test-retest method, and the reliability coefficient was 0.67.

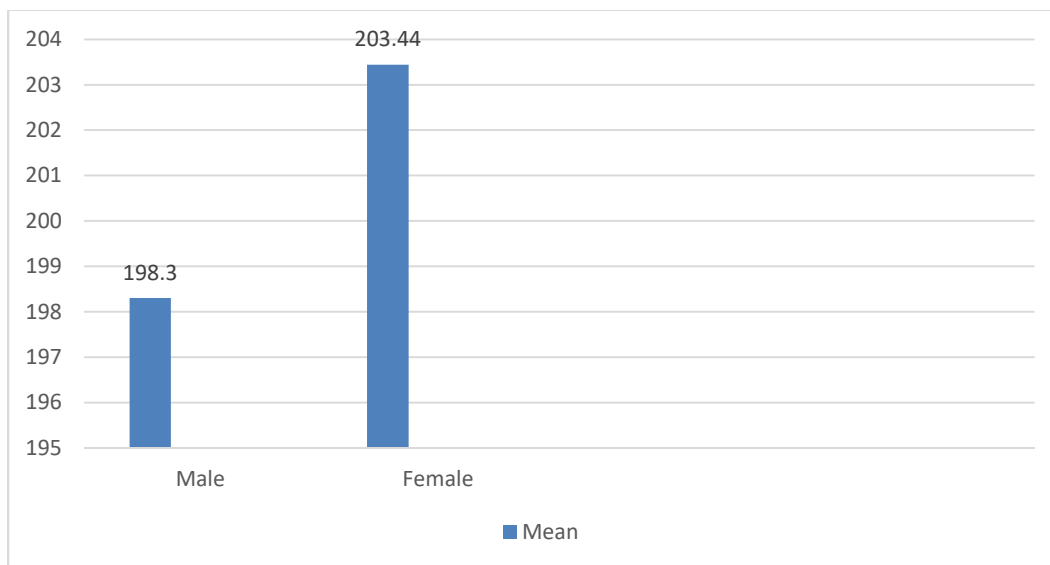
Results And Discussion:

Table 1 Mean, SD, and t-ratio of social competence of male and female senior secondary students

Variable	Gender	Sample size	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Level of significance
Social competence	Male	300	198.30	24.61	2.80	0.01
	Female	300	203.44	20.16		

Interpretation:

The data presented in Table 1 indicates that the average scores for the two comparable groups regarding social competence are 198.30 and 203.44, accompanied by standard deviations of 24.61 and 20.16, respectively. The calculated t-ratio is 2.80, demonstrating significance at the 0.01 level.

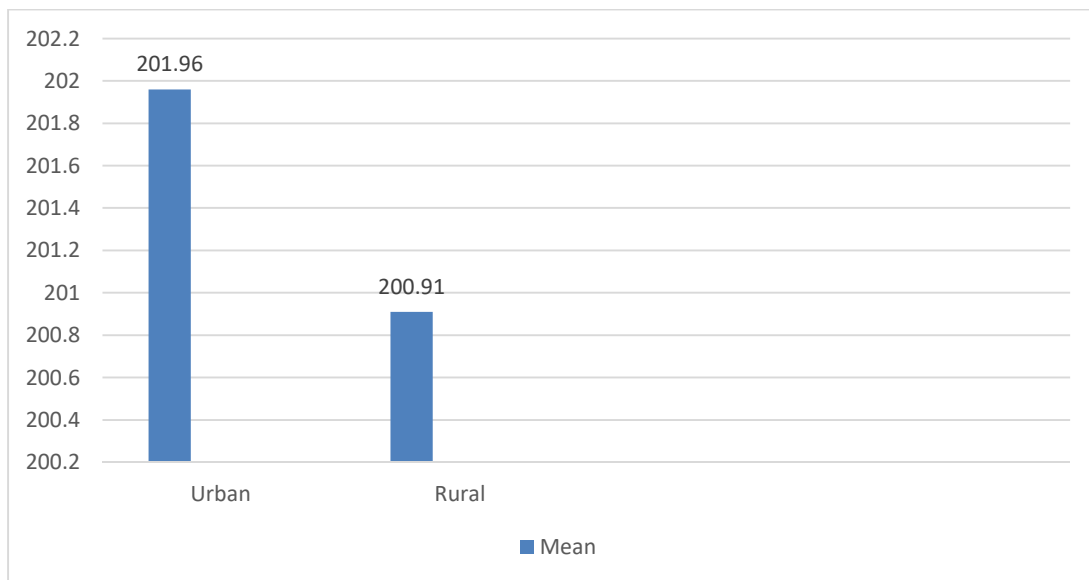


The results indicate a significant difference in social competence between male and female students. The findings showed that the social competence of female students surpasses that of their male counterparts in senior secondary education.

Table 2 Mean, SD, and t-ratio of social competence of urban and rural senior secondary students

Variable	Locality	Sample size	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Level of significance
Social competence	Urban	300	201.96	19.30	6.03	0.01
	Rural	300	200.91	23.14		

The data presented in Table 2 reveals that the mean scores for the two comparable groups regarding social competence are 201.96 and 200.91, accompanied by standard deviations of 19.30 and 23.14, respectively. The calculated t-ratio is 6.03, demonstrating significance at the 0.01 significance level.



The results indicate a significant difference in social competence between urban and rural students. The findings showed that urban students exhibit superior social competence to their rural counterparts.

Discussion

The findings of the study showed significant differences in the social competence of secondary school students with respect to their Locality. Urban students have scored higher mean scores in their social competence than rural students. The study also showed significant differences in the social competence of senior secondary school students with respect to their gender. Female students have obtained higher mean scores in their social competence than male students.

NEP 2020 and Social Competence

The National Education Policy 2020 marks a significant shift in India's education landscape, emphasizing a holistic approach to education that goes beyond academic learning. The policy explicitly recognizes the importance of social competence for senior secondary students, acknowledging its role in their overall development and future success.

NEP 2020 promotes hands-on learning experiences and encourages student participation in activities that foster teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills. This practical approach can help senior secondary students develop social competence in real-world settings.

The policy advocates for a broader, more integrated curriculum that includes subjects like arts, sports, and humanities. This can provide students with diverse opportunities to interact with peers from different backgrounds and develop their social skills.

Developing students' capacity for effective communication, teamwork, analysis, and problem-solving is a top priority for NEP 2020. These skills are crucial for navigating social situations effectively and building healthy relationships.

Conclusion

Many students face challenges in adapting to their surroundings (family, school, and society) during adolescence. During this period, anxiety, rage, fear, love, and depression reach their maximum. Academic achievement is a significant concern at the secondary school level, which depends on pupils' academic resilience, study habits, adaptation, and social competence. Improving social competence requires consistent effort and practice. These skills can help students achieve higher academic and personal achievement, better relationships with others, and improved emotional well-being. Social competency is essential in a competitive environment because it helps pupils effectively navigate difficult social circumstances and forge positive relationships with others. Students with high social competence are better equipped to succeed in their personal and professional lives by communicating effectively, collaborating with others, resolving conflicts, and building a positive work culture. Developing social competence at the secondary level prepares adolescents for adulthood by providing them with the necessary skills to establish meaningful relationships, succeed in their careers, and contribute positively to their communities. Additionally, social competence contributes to improved mental health, self-esteem, and overall well-being, essential for thriving in a competitive world. NEP 2020's primary focus is enhancing students' effective communication, teamwork, analytical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. These skills are essential for effectively navigating social situations and fostering healthy relationships.

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