

UNDERSTANDING SOCIO-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF ADOLESCENTS IN THE LIGHT OF LOCALE AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Socio-emotional competence is the capability of an individual to not only learn but also constitute and cultivate healthy and meaningful relationships. It entails effectively managing emotional reactivity and constructively engaging in social situations. Thus, socio-emotional competence is very vital for the overall development of adolescents at the secondary school stage. Hence, this study is a genuine attempt to identify the status of socio-emotional competence among teenagers with regard to locale. Goals of this investigation were to study the levels of socio-emotional competence, to find out the differences in five domains of socio-emotional competence between rural and urban adolescents, and to ascertain the association between socio-emotional competence and academic outcomes among them. In this study, the descriptive survey method was used, and a sample of 400 adolescents from 10 secondary schools (five government and five private schools) in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory was selected by stratified random sampling. The study's findings claimed that teenagers had varying levels (i.e., high, average, and low) of socio-emotional competence. Overall, rural and urban adolescents had similar socio-emotional competence, and urban adolescents were superior in self-management skills than rural *adolescents*. Academic achievement and socio-emotional competence were positively correlated with each other, and high socio-emotional competence leads to high academic achievement. As a result, the findings of the study have significance for educators, parents, social reformers, administrators, and guidance counselors in terms of creating a positive environment at home and at school, as well as instilling moral education so that socio-emotional competence can be developed. The school activities are to be reframed or revised in light of the National Education Policy 2020 by including all academic activities that shall improve the socio-emotional competence of students at the secondary school level.

Keywords: Socio-Emotional Competence, Adolescence, Locality, Academic Achievement

Introduction

Adolescence is the most vital and crucial stage of human life that takes a person from childhood to adulthood. This stage has been denoted as the stage of stress and storm," which includes the confusion of roles in society and the urge for identity and existence in this world. As Sharma and Goswami (2014) indicated, "The social self, one's identity, and one's comprehension of the self in connection to the social world all evolve and become more solidified during a person's adolescence. Adolescence is a phase of development". The unexpected modifications in the bodies of children and their intellectual operations drive them to ask questions like, "Who am I exactly?" What do I have to become? What am I expected to do, and how am I supposed to act? Thus, educators, mothers, and fathers should give special attention and support the young one in all aspects of that crucial stage to make them socially and morally responsible. Stakeholders should support them in deciding their aim in life and choosing their path, which can help them in their educational, professional, and skill development.

Adolescents with secure and insecure attachment styles differ greatly in terms of social competence. Adolescents using secure attachments are more socially competent than those with insecure attachment styles. The reason behind this is that a secure attachment style is associated with better social skills, emotional regulation, and other problem-solving abilities (Kumar and Raj, 2016). Socio-emotional competence is essential to being successful in life. High school students require a high level of socio-emotional skills for success in competitive employment. There are some creative ways in which teachers integrate these five components of SEL into their curriculum and classroom practice (Beland, 2007). Parental neglect did not impact emotional, social, or educational adjustment between the students who perceived themselves to be highly neglected by their mothers and those who did not. Parental neglect did not impact these areas of adjustment, but it may impact other areas of students' lives (Dash & Patra, 2014). Parental involvement with academic stress among senior

secondary schools has a significant positive relationship, but emotional competency with academic stress among senior secondary students has a negative relationship (Sunita, 2016). The students who had acquired good socio-emotional learning competencies had long-term positive outcomes and also had a greater likelihood of graduating from the college from which they were graduating, the capability of more positive work, and were competent in family relationships (Jones et al., 2017). As socio-emotional competence impacts almost every field of life, it is not mandatory that the social and emotional competences of adolescents are always correlated with each other. Sometimes these two competencies become altogether different and work independently. (Kaberi, 2019). Social and emotional skills are correlated to communication skills, and due to this, students become able to make connections with other people in and outside the school. Students with socio-emotional skills are better able to understand and regulate the emotions of others (Alzahrani et al., 2019). The effectiveness of teaching depends on the socio-emotional competence of teachers. Further, female teachers are socio-emotionally more competent than male teachers. The study also reveals no difference in social and emotional competence between rural and urban areas (Nonglait, 2019).

Socio-emotional skills are the combination of several essential elements like knowledge, attitudes, etc. that help adolescents identify and keep control over their emotions and related behaviors. As it is related to social aspects, it also helps in the establishment of positive relations with society by taking spontaneous decisions, setting goals, and accomplishing them. Socio-emotional skills are also contributing to the promotion and enhancement of 21st-century skills. Students with low socio-emotional skills tend to have academic, social, and emotional problems, such as trouble making friends, using drugs, and acting violently (Lopes et al., 2011). Students who are high in socio-emotional competence are able to manage emotions and have good academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011; Hagood, 2015; Jones, Crowley, and Greenberg, 2017). There is a link between socio-emotional competence and good social relationships, such as friendships, peer acceptance, and less bullying (Ladd et al., 2011). Socio-emotional skills are linked to an academic career and life success, so they should be fostered in youth and given priority in both in-school and after-school settings. These skills consist of conversation, previewing, listening, checking one's perception of others, exceptional cultures and groups, knowledge of social cues, empathy, greetings, keeping control over emotions, rules and discipline, respect for others and their views, self-monitoring, self-esteem, self-determination, creativity, self-awareness, communication process, interpersonal competence, and dealing with feelings (Kurian and Prakasha, 2016). The growth of social and emotional skills gives students the strength to face and overcome challenges. This makes them more resilient and helps them deal with stress better (Bradshaw, Mitchell, and Leaf, 2010). Lastly, one's socio-emotional competence is widely regarded as a significant factor in being able to accurately forecast one's capacity to adjust to one's surroundings.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the levels of socio-emotional competence among adolescents.
2. To find out the locality differences in socio-emotional competence among adolescents.
3. To examine the locality differences on five domains of socio-emotional competence, i.e., "(i) self-awareness; (ii) social awareness; (iii) self-management; (iv) relationship management; and (v) responsible decision-making."
4. To ascertain the relationship between socio-emotional competence and academic achievement among adolescents.

Hypotheses of the study

1. Adolescents are not different in their levels of socio-emotional competence.
2. There will be no significant difference in socio-emotional competence among adolescents based on locale.
3. There will be no significant difference between urban and rural adolescents on the five dimensions of socio-emotional competence, i.e.,
 "Self-awareness"
 "Social awareness"
 "Self-management"
 "Relationship management"
 "Responsible decision-making"
4. There will be no significant relationship between socio-emotional competence and academic achievement among adolescents.

Research design

This study employed the descriptive survey method to collect data from adolescents. The adolescents of district Anantnag in J&K, UT, were the population of this study. The researcher used stratified random sampling

method in this study. A total of 400 students were selected. The researcher used the socio-emotional scale (2012) by Dr. Mingming Zhoe and Dr. Jessie Ee to collect the data from students. The following statistical techniques were used:

- Percentage
- Mean
- SD
- T-value
- Pearson’s coefficient of correlation

Results and discussion

1. Levels of socio-emotional competence among adolescents

Level of Socio-emotional Competence	Total number	Percentage (%)
High	87	21.75
Average	204	51.00
Low	109	27.25
Total	400	100

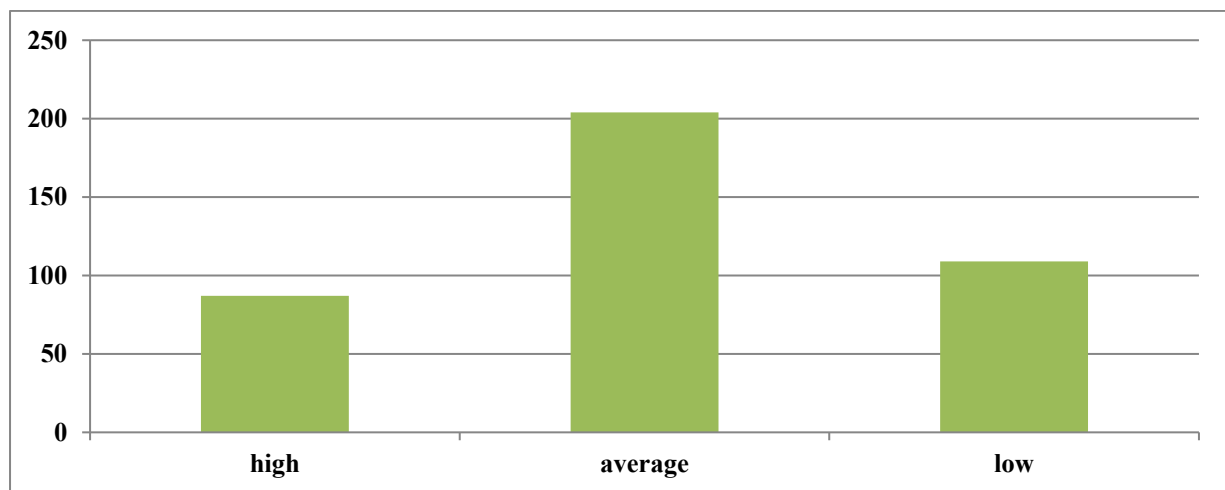


Fig-1: levels of socio-emotional competence among adolescents

From the table and Figure 1, it is inferred that adolescents have various levels of socio-emotional competencies. Out of 400 adolescents, only 87 (21.75%) had a high level of socio-emotional competence, 109 (27.25%) had a low level, and 204 (51%) had an average level of socio-emotional competence. Therefore, hypothesis No. 1, that "adolescents are not different in the levels of socio-emotional competencies", has been rejected. Hence, adolescents had various levels of socio-emotional competence.

2. Comparison of rural and urban adolescents on socio-emotional competence

This section analyzes and interprets data regarding the comparison of rural and urban adolescents on socio-emotional competence, and the same is given in the following table and figure:

Table-2: Comparison of rural and urban adolescents on socio-emotional competence

Locality	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	Level of Significance
Rural	208	98.69	4.61	0.20	Not significant
Urban	193	98.78	4.49		

Table 2 indicates that the mean scores of rural adolescents are 98.69; the standard deviation is 4.61; and the mean score of urban adolescents is 98.78; the standard deviation is 4.49 on socio-emotional competence; and the t-value is 0.20, which is lower than the table value and also not significant at any level of significance. Thus,

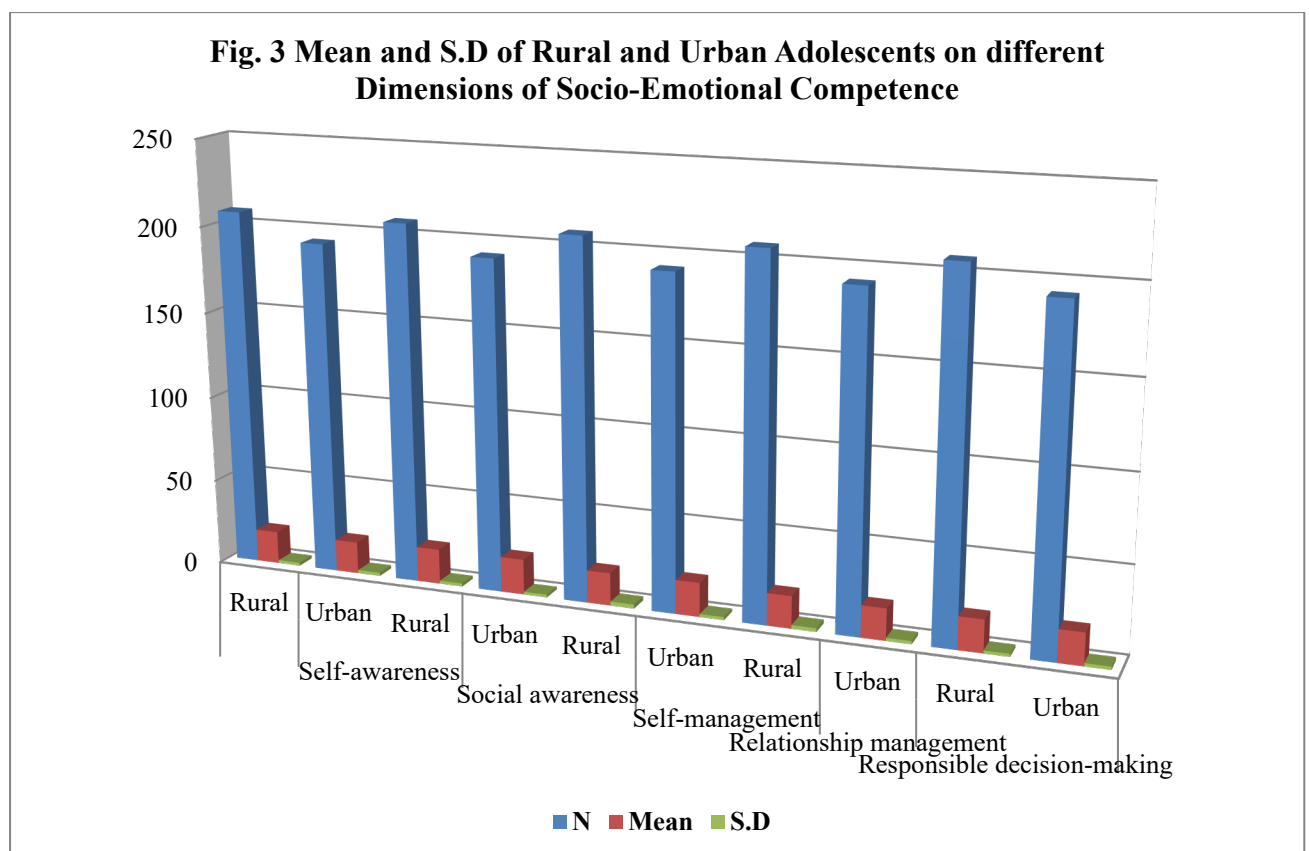
hypothesis no. 2 that "there will be no significant difference in socio-emotional competence between rural and urban adolescents" has been accepted. Hence, rural and urban adolescents have equal socio-emotional competency.

3. Comparison of rural and urban adolescents on socio-emotional competence (Dimension wise)

This part of the section deals with rural and urban adolescents on five different dimensions of "socio-emotional competence", and the same is given in the below table and figure:

Table-3: rural and urban adolescents' on different dimensions of socio-emotional competence

Dimension name	Locality	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	Level of Significance
Self-awareness	Rural	208	18.96	1.72	1.77	Not significant
	Urban	193	18.64	1.87		
Social awareness	Rural	208	20.39	1.75	1.25	Not significant
	Urban	192	20.59	1.59		
Self-management	Rural	208	18.94	2.36	4	Significant at 0.01 level
	Urban	192	19.74	1.74		
Relationship management	Rural	208	18.72	2.13	1.6	Not significant
	Urban	192	18.40	1.83		
Responsible decision-making	Rural	208	18.96	1.72	1.77	Not significant
	Urban	193	18.64	1.87		



This part of the study compared the levels of “self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management, and responsible decision-making” (shown in the above table and fig. 3) between urban and rural adolescents. The results show that teenagers who live in cities and those who live in rural areas don't have very different levels of self-awareness and social awareness. But the results show that there is a difference between groups when it comes to self-management. The urban adolescents were better at self-management than the rural teens. There were no big differences between urban and rural teenagers when it came to managing relationships and making good decisions.

The findings of this part of the study are significant because they bring attention to the urgent need for programs to boost rural adolescents' capacity for self-management. The findings imply that while rural teenagers share similar levels of self- and social awareness as their urban counterparts, they may be lacking in the abilities necessary to effectively manage their emotions and behaviors. As a result, programs that help teenagers in rural areas develop techniques for self-management may be useful.

It's interesting that adolescents in urban and rural areas don't differ much from one another when it comes to handling relationships or making mature decisions. The results reveal that both groups have similar skills in these areas, suggesting that teenagers' relationship management and decision-making abilities are not significantly influenced by the social milieu in which they grow up. This finding is significant because it suggests that programs to foster healthy relationships and responsible decision-making may be successful, whether they are provided in urban or rural areas. Overall, the results emphasize the value of fostering self-management abilities among rural teenagers and suggest that interventions emphasizing positive interpersonal connections and mature decision-making may be applicable in a variety of settings.

4. The relationship between teenagers' level of socio-emotional competence and their academic accomplishments

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data regarding the correlation between socio-emotional competence and academic achievement among adolescents. The same is given below in the table:

Table-4 Coefficient of correlation between socio-emotional competence and academic achievement among adolescents

Variables	N	r	Level of Significance
“Socio-emotional Competence and Academic Achievement”	400	0.670	0.01 level Significance

Table 4 reveals that the ‘r-value’ is 0.670, which is significant at the 0.01 level of significance. Hence, the hypothesis no. 4 that "there will be no significant relationship between Socio-Emotional competence and academic achievement among adolescents" is rejected. This implies that positive and strong association exists between “socio-emotional competence and academic achievement” among adolescents. This result of the study was supported by Mona Alzahrani, Monal Alharbi, and Aman Aldowani (2019).

Major findings of the study

The present study aimed to investigate the levels of Socio-Emotional competence among rural and urban adolescents. The study found the following key findings:

- 1. Adolescents have different levels of Socio-Emotional competence:** Results showed wide variation in adolescents' levels of social and emotional development.
- 2. On average, rural and urban adolescents have similar levels of Socio-Emotional competence:** The study claimed that, on average, no substantial difference existed in the levels of social and emotional maturity between rural and urban teenagers.
- 3. Rural and urban adolescents were different only in one dimension out of five:** “self-awareness, social-awareness, relationship-management, and responsible decision-making” were recognized as the four pillars of “socio-emotional competence”. Adolescents in rural and urban areas did not differ significantly on these measures of socio-emotional competence, according to the study.
- 4. Academic achievement and Socio-Emotional competence were positively correlated with each other:** The study also found that academic achievement and Socio-Emotional competence were positively correlated with each other in both rural and urban settings. That is to say, teenagers who performed better in school were also more likely to be emotionally and socially well-adjusted. The results of this study were supported by Alzahrani, Alharbi, and Aldowani (2019).

Educational implications

The essentiality of socio-emotional competence in academic achievement and the role of locale cannot be overstated. Here are some educational implications of socio-emotional competence in light of locale and academic achievement:

- Schools in diverse communities should implement programs that promote inclusiveness, empathy, and social consciousness. This can contribute to the development of students' socio-emotional competence and facilitate their academic success.
- Students from low socioeconomic circumstances have limited exposure to opportunities for socio-emotional learning. In order to increase academic achievement, schools in such areas should prioritize the implementation of programs that target socio-emotional competence.
- Teachers should receive ample training in socio-emotional learning and be equipped with the tools and resources necessary to identify students who need additional support. This can assist in fostering healthy emotional development and improved academic outcomes.
- Students deficient in socio-emotional competence may struggle to manage stress, anxiety, and depression. Consequently, schools should employ trained counselors to assist students in coping with these issues.
- Schools can utilize online learning platforms to provide students with access to socio-emotional learning resources in light of the current pandemic. This can support their emotional health while fostering their academic development.

In conclusion, socio-emotional competence plays a crucial role in academic success, especially in diverse environments. The implementation of socio-emotional learning programs, teacher training, and counseling services can aid in the development of "socio-emotional competence" in students, resulting in improved academic performance and well-being.

Conclusion of the study

The research examined the link between socio-emotional competence and academic achievement among adolescents. Socio-emotional competence was found to facilitate positive behavioral change, which is required to increase social cohesion and respect for human rights, peace, and cultural diversity. While there is variation in the levels of Socio-Emotional competence among adolescents, the study demonstrates that rural and urban adolescents have comparable levels of Socio-Emotional competence on four dimensions. In addition, a Positive association between academic achievement and socio-emotional competence was found. Therefore, schools must put a high priority on helping students develop "social and emotional competence" by creating supportive learning environments. This may include incorporating social and emotional learning into the curriculum and putting greater emphasis on the role that instructors play in helping children build their social and emotional competence. The schools should also take into account the individual differences and location of the students during the socio-emotional learning process. The findings have significant implications for educators, policymakers, and families who seek to promote the healthy development of adolescents in diverse contexts.

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