

## A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOCIO-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE AND CITIZENSHIP SKILLS AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY STAGE SCHOOL STUDENTS

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### Abstract:

The present study is a comparative investigation of socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills among secondary stage school students. Adolescence is a significant developmental phase marked by emotional growth and increasing civic awareness. Schools play a vital role in fostering both socio-emotional abilities and citizenship competencies necessary for responsible participation in society. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and employed simple random sampling to select 1325 secondary stage students across different boards of study (State, CBSE, ISC), academic streams (Science, Commerce, Arts), and gender. Socio-emotional competence was conceptualized through an integrated framework focusing on emotional awareness, regulation, interpersonal effectiveness, and responsible decision-making, while citizenship skills were examined through cognitive, participatory, and value-based dimensions. The findings provide comparative insights into the development of these competencies and their variation across demographic categories.

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### Introduction:

The present study is a comparative investigation of socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills among secondary stage school students. Adolescence is a significant developmental phase marked by emotional growth and increasing civic awareness. Schools play a vital role in fostering both socio-emotional abilities and citizenship competencies necessary for responsible participation in society. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and employed simple random sampling to select 1325 secondary stage students across different boards of study (State, CBSE, ISC), academic streams (Science, Commerce, Arts), and gender. Socio-emotional competence was conceptualized through an integrated framework focusing on emotional awareness, regulation, interpersonal effectiveness, and responsible decision-making, while citizenship skills were examined through cognitive, participatory, and value-based dimensions. The findings provide comparative

insights into the development of these competencies and their variation across demographic categories.

The 21st-century education is not confined within the four walls of academic learning; more than an institutional activity, it is a holistic training wherein students' overall well-being occupies a central position. In today's dynamic modern societies, people are increasingly required to exercise not only a broad range of knowledge, but also emotional intelligence and social responsibility as well as the ability for meaningful and active citizen. Therefore, schools and universities play a crucial role in promoting and developing core socio-emotional competences, as well as the key citizenship skills necessary for promoting not only individual personal development but also social development of the entire community.

Adolescence, and specifically high school, is a crucial period for adolescent development; it is a socially sensitive phase in which adolescents face turbulent emotional experiences, expand their social networks

and type of relationships with peers, as well as develop civic identity. When navigating at this important intersection in their lives, students encounter all manner of complex social issues and challenges that require good emotional regulation as well as empathy, ethical reasoning, and responsible decision-making. Such competencies are necessary so that young people grow up learning to think and becoming informed, responsible citizens while exercising the right to engage in thought and speech. Socio-emotional competence refers to the ability to understand and manage one's emotions, relate positively with others, and make responsible choices. These competencies are closely connected to ethical behavior and effective social functioning. Citizenship skills include the knowledge, abilities, and values required for active and responsible participation in civic life, such as critical thinking, cooperation, communication, responsibility, tolerance, and respect for diversity. Since active citizenship is grounded in empathy, cooperation, and ethical reasoning, socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills are closely linked.

The National Education Policy (2020) highlights the importance of integrating emotional, social, ethical, and civic development within school education. However, empirical research examining the relationship between socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills among senior secondary students remains limited. Therefore, the present study examines this relationship among Grade XI students with respect to gender, board of study, and stream of study to provide evidence supporting holistic educational practices.

#### Review of Related Literature:

- *Jiménez-Rodríguez, T., de la Barrera, U., Schoeps, K., Valero-Moreno, S., & Montoya-Castilla, I. (2022).* Longitudinal analysis of adolescent adjustment: The role of attachment and emotional competence.

This longitudinal study examined how emotional competence predicts adolescents' psychological adjustment. Findings showed that higher socio-emotional competence was associated with better emotional regulation, fewer behavioural problems, and healthier peer relationships.

- *Geijssel, F., Ledoux, G., Reumerman, R., & ten Dam, G. (2012).* Citizenship in young people's daily lives: Differences in citizenship competences of adolescents.

This large-scale study explored adolescents' citizenship competences and found significant differences based on gender, educational context, and socio-demographic factors, highlighting the role of schooling in civic development.

- *Sarmiento, P., Lobo, M., & Kirtikumar, K. (2024).* The impact of adolescents' voice through an online school radio: A socio-emotional learning experimental project.

This experimental study showed that participation in socio-emotional learning projects improved adolescents' communication skills, self-awareness, and civic participation, demonstrating the link between socio-emotional learning and citizenship engagement.

- *Zalewska, A. (2023).* Citizenship activity in emerging adults: The role of self-esteem, social skills, and well-being. *Current Issues in Personality*
- The study found that social skills, emotional well-being, and self-esteem significantly predicted active citizenship behaviours, supporting the role of socio-emotional factors in civic engagement.

- *Sethi, S. (2020).* Emotional competence of adolescents from an underprivileged socio-economic background.

This qualitative Indian study highlighted how socio-economic context influences adolescents' emotional competence, revealing gaps in emotional

regulation and coping skills among underprivileged youth.

- *Dasgupta, P. (2020)*. A study of emotional intelligence and university citizenship behaviour among students pursuing management education in universities in Tripura, India.

This study found a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and citizenship behaviour among Indian university students, indicating that emotional competence supports responsible and cooperative civic behaviour.

#### **Rationale of the study:**

Furthermore, the review of literature indicates that most existing studies have examined socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills independently, with limited research exploring them together within a comparative framework. While prior research has established the importance of socio-emotional development for adolescent adjustment and the significance of citizenship education for civic participation, there remains insufficient empirical evidence examining the comparative strength and balance of these competencies within the same student population. Additionally, many studies have focused either on intervention outcomes or specific aspects of emotional intelligence, without assessing how socio-emotional competence translates into practical citizenship abilities. This gap highlights the need for a focused investigation that comparatively examines both competencies to better understand their relative development and educational implications at the secondary stage.

#### **Statement of Problem:**

A comparative study of socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills among secondary stage school students.

#### **Variables of the study:**

The current study's variables were Socio-Emotional Competence (SEC) and Citizenship Skills (CS), and a

correlation between them was found. Gender, academic streams, and board of study were the moderator variables taken into consideration for the study.

#### **Definitions of the terms:**

##### **A) Socio-emotional competence:**

Socio-emotional competence is operationally defined as the ability of students to understand and manage their own emotions while recognizing and empathizing with others. It includes regulating thoughts and behaviour, maintaining positive relationships, and responding appropriately in social situations. contexts.

##### **B) Citizenship skills**

Citizenship skills are operationally defined as the abilities that enable students to act as responsible citizens by understanding their rights and duties and contributing to the common good. These skills include critical thinking on civic issues, problem-solving, informed decision-making, and active participation in community life.

##### **C) Higher Secondary stage students**

Higher Secondary Stage Students are operationally defined as students enrolled in Grade XI in recognized higher secondary schools or junior colleges.

#### **Aim of the Study:**

To conduct a comparative analysis of socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills among secondary stage school students.

#### **Research Questions:**

1. Is there a significant difference in socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills among higher secondary stage school students?
2. Is there a significant difference in socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills among higher secondary stage school students with respect to gender?
3. Is there a significant difference in socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills among higher

secondary stage school students with respect to the board of study?

4. Is there a significant difference in socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills among higher secondary stage school students with respect to the academic stream of study?

#### Objectives of the Study:

1. To compare the mean scores of socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills of Higher Secondary stage school students
2. To compare the mean scores of socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills of Higher Secondary stage school students with respect to gender
3. To compare the mean scores of socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills of Higher Secondary stage school students with respect to the board of study. (State, CBSE, ISC)
4. To compare the mean scores of socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills of Higher Secondary stage school students with respect to the academic stream of study. (Science, Arts, Commerce)

#### Hypotheses of the study:

- H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills of Higher Secondary stage school students
- H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills among Higher Secondary stage school students with respect to gender. (Male, Female)
- H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference between socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills among Higher Secondary stage school students with respect to the board of study. (State, CBSE, ISC)

**H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant difference between socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills among Higher Secondary stage school students with respect to the academic stream of study. (Science, Arts, Commerce)

#### Research Design:

The present study adopted a descriptive survey research design to conduct a comparative analysis of socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills among secondary stage school students. This design was considered appropriate as it allows the researcher to compare mean scores across variables without manipulating them. The study focused on examining differences in the development of these competencies across gender, board of study, and academic stream.

#### Methodology:

The investigation aimed to compare socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills among secondary-stage school students. A descriptive survey method was employed to systematically collect and analyse data related to the selected variables.

#### Sample and Sampling Technique:

A simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample. The study comprised 1325 secondary stage school students from institutions affiliated with SSC, CBSE, and ISC boards. Students from Science, Commerce, and Arts streams were included, with representation of both male and female students.

#### Tools for the study:

The following tools were employed for the study:

- A researcher-developed tool to assess the socio-emotional competence of Grade XI students.
- A researcher-developed tool to assess the citizenship skills of Grade XI students.

Both tools were constructed using a **four-point Likert scale format**, with each tool consisting of **20 items**. The response options were designed to measure the degree of agreement with each statement, enabling quantitative assessment of the respective competencies

### Data Analysis:

The collected data were analysed to compare the mean scores of socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills among secondary stage school students. Statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, and t-test were used to determine significant differences across gender, board of study, and academic stream.

**Table 1: Comparison of Mean Scores of Socio-Emotional Competence and Citizenship Skills among Secondary Stage School Students**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	Mean difference	SED	t value	Level of significance at 0.05	Hypothesis accepted/rejected
SEC	1325	55.63	5.66	1323	0.43	0.212	2.03	S	Rejected
CS	1325	55.2	5.27	1323					

The overall comparison between SEC and CS reveals that the mean score of SEC ( $M = 55.63$ ,  $SD = 5.66$ ) is slightly higher than that of CS ( $M = 55.20$ ,  $SD = 5.27$ ). The obtained mean difference ( $MD = 0.43$ ) indicates a small but noticeable variation in performance between the two groups. The calculated t-value ( $t = 2.03$ ) is greater than the critical value at the 0.05 level of significance (1.96).

Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it is concluded that there exists a significant difference between SEC and CS at the overall level. Although the difference in mean scores is relatively small, it is meaningful due to the large sample size ( $N = 1325$  in each group).

**Table 2: Comparison of Mean Scores of Socio-Emotional Competence and Citizenship Skills among Secondary Stage School Students with Respect to Gender**

Gender	N	MEAN		SD		df	Mean Difference	SED	t value	Level of significance at 0.05	Hypothesis accepted/rejected
		SEC	CS	SEC	CS						
MALE	674	55.74	55.24	5.73	5.08	672	0.50	0.295	1.69	NS	ACCEPTED
FEMALE	651	55.65	55.14	5.58	5.46	649	0.51	0.306	1.67		

The comparison of mean scores between SEC and CS students with respect to gender shows that in the Male group, the mean difference ( $MD = 0.50$ ) yields a calculated t-value (1.69), which is less than the critical value at the 0.05 level of significance. **Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted**, indicating no significant difference between the SEC and CS of male students.

Similarly, in the Female group, the mean difference is zero ( $MD = 0.00$ ), and the calculated t-value (0.00) is far below the critical value. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted, showing no significant difference between SEC and CS of female students.

Thus, gender does not show any significant difference between SEC and CS

**Table 3: Comparison of Mean Scores of Socio-Emotional Competence and Citizenship Skills among Secondary Stage School Students with Respect to Board of Study**

Board	N	Mean		SD		df	MD	SED	t-value	Level of significance at 0.05	Hypothesis accepted/rejected
		(SEC)	(CS)	(SEC)	(CS)						
STATE	650	54.96	55.01	6.17	5.11	648	0.05	0.314	-0.16	NS	ACCEPTED
CBSE	451	56.50	56.33	4.85	5.34	449	0.17	0.340	0.50	NS	ACCEPTED
ISC	224	56.25	53.47	5.36	5.04	222	2.78	0.492	5.65	S	REJECTED

The comparison of mean scores between SEC and CS students under different Boards of Study indicates varied results. In the STATE Board, the mean scores of SEC ( $M = 54.96$ ) and CS ( $M = 55.01$ ) show a negligible mean difference ( $MD = -0.05$ ). The calculated t-value ( $-0.16$ ) is less than the critical value at the 0.05 level of significance; therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating no significant difference between the two groups.

In the CBSE Board, the mean difference ( $MD = 0.17$ ) between SEC ( $M = 56.50$ ) and CS ( $M = 56.33$ ) is very small. The obtained t-value (0.50) is also lower than the critical value, and hence the null hypothesis is accepted, showing no significant difference between SEC and CS students.

However, in the ISC Board, a noticeable mean difference ( $MD = 2.78$ ) is observed between SEC ( $M = 56.25$ ) and CS ( $M = 53.47$ ). The calculated t-value (5.65) exceeds the critical value at the 0.05 level; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a statistically significant difference between SEC and CS students under the ISC Board.

**Table 4: Comparison of Mean Scores of Socio-Emotional Competence and Citizenship Skills among Secondary Stage School Students with Respect to Academic Stream**

ACADEMIC STREAM	N	MEAN		SD		df	Mean Difference	SED	t value	Level of significance at 0.05	Hypothesis accepted/rejected
		SEC	CS	SEC	CS						
SCIENCE	650	54.96	55.00	6.17	5.11	648	-0.04	-0.04	0.31	NS	ACCEPTED
COMMERCE	429	56.52	56.29	4.80	5.39	427	0.23	0.35	0.66	NS	ACCEPTED
ARTS	224	56.22	53.80	5.38	5.09	222	2.42	.049	4.89	S	REJECTED

The comparison of mean scores between SEC and CS students with respect to different Academic Streams reveals varied results. In the Science stream, the mean scores of SEC ( $M = 54.96$ ) and CS ( $M = 55.00$ ) show a negligible mean difference ( $MD = -0.04$ ). The calculated t-value ( $-0.13$ ) is less than the critical value at the 0.05 level of significance; therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating that there is no significant difference between SEC and CS students in the Science stream.

Similarly, in the Commerce stream, the mean difference ( $MD = 0.23$ ) between SEC ( $M = 56.52$ ) and CS ( $M = 56.29$ ) is very small. The obtained t-value (0.66) is also less than the critical value at the 0.05 level; hence, the null hypothesis is accepted, showing no significant difference between SEC and CS students in the Commerce stream.

However, in the Arts stream, a noticeable mean difference ( $MD = 2.42$ ) exists between SEC ( $M = 56.22$ ) and CS ( $M = 53.80$ ). The calculated t-value (4.89) is greater than the critical value at the 0.05 level of significance; therefore, the

null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a statistically significant difference between SEC and CS students in the Arts stream.

Thus, while no significant differences are observed in the Science and Commerce streams, a significant difference exists in the Arts stream.

### Major findings:

- The study revealed a clear and statistically significant difference between socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills among higher secondary students. Overall, socio-emotional competence emerged as comparatively stronger, indicating that students tend to possess better emotional awareness, interpersonal sensitivity, and self-regulation than active civic engagement skills.
  - The observed pattern remained consistent across gender, suggesting that male and female students do not differ meaningfully in the relative development of these competencies. Similarly, variations across boards of study did not substantially influence the comparative pattern, indicating structural uniformity in the educational environment at the higher secondary stage.
  - Across academic streams as well, the trend remained stable, demonstrating that subject specialization does not significantly alter the balance between socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills.
  - Taken together, the findings suggest that while socio-emotional competencies are reasonably developed, citizenship skills may require more focused academic and experiential reinforcement
- Educational Implications:**
- The findings show that although students demonstrate relatively strong socio-emotional competence, their citizenship skills require further development. This indicates that emotional awareness and interpersonal skills do not automatically lead to active civic engagement. Schools should therefore create structured opportunities that connect emotional learning with real-life civic experiences.
  - Curriculum and classroom practices should integrate socio-emotional learning with citizenship education through experiential activities such as community projects, collaborative tasks, and reflective discussions on social issues. Since the observed pattern appears consistent across students, interventions can be implemented at a whole-school level rather than targeting specific groups.
  - Teacher training programs should focus on how students can use their skills to do good things for society. The study shows that schools need to teach students about emotions and how to be citizens at the same time to help them grow as people.
  - This study looked at how secondary school students develop skills and learn to be good citizens. It compared gender, types of schools and different subjects. The results showed that students are better at understanding emotions than they are at being good citizens. This is true for all the groups that were studied. It means that students are good at understanding how they feel and how to get along with others. They need to learn more about how to be active citizens.
  - The study found that this is not a problem for one group of students but for all of them. This means that schools need to do more than just teach about citizenship in class. They need to give students chances to learn by doing things in their communities. This will help students learn to be citizens and understand their emotions at the same time.
  - The study shows that just because students are good at understanding emotions it does not mean they

will automatically be citizens. Schools need to give students opportunities to participate in their communities, think critically about issues and learn about values. Therefore, schools need to make sure they are teaching both skills and citizenship skills equally. This will help students become ethical and caring members of society.

In conclusion the study says that schools need to teach the person, not just the mind. They need to find ways to help students develop skills and learn to be good citizens, at the same time. This will help students become rounded and responsible people

#### Conclusion:

The present comparative study examined socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills among secondary stage school students, with specific reference to gender, board of study, and academic stream. The findings revealed a statistically significant difference between the two competencies, with socio-emotional competence emerging as comparatively stronger than citizenship skills across all categories examined. This consistent pattern suggests that while students demonstrate adequate emotional awareness, interpersonal understanding, and self-regulation abilities, their active civic engagement skills and citizenship-related competencies require further strengthening.

The absence of major variations across gender, board of study, and academic streams indicates that the observed pattern is not confined to a particular subgroup but reflects a broader educational trend at the secondary stage. This underscores the need for educational systems to move beyond theoretical civic instruction and incorporate experiential, participatory, and community-based learning opportunities that foster responsible citizenship alongside socio-emotional development.

The study highlights that emotional competence alone does not automatically translate into active civic

behaviour; structured opportunities for civic participation, critical thinking on social issues, and value-based engagement must be deliberately integrated into school practices. Therefore, a balanced and intentional approach to education—one that equally prioritizes emotional growth and civic responsibility—is essential for preparing students to become thoughtful, ethical, and socially committed members of society.

In conclusion, the study reinforces the importance of holistic education at the secondary stage and calls for systematic educational strategies that bridge the gap between socio-emotional competence and citizenship skills to nurture well-rounded and socially responsible individuals.

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