

A Study on Social Competence and Academic Achievement among Higher Secondary School Students

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100800570>

Received: 28 August 2026; Accepted: 02 September 2026; Published: 12 September 2026

ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the relationship between social competence and academic achievement among higher secondary school students. Social competence, which includes communication skills, empathy, cooperation, and self-regulation, plays a crucial role in students' overall development and academic success. The study adopted a descriptive survey method with a sample of 300 higher secondary students selected through random sampling. Data were collected using a Social Competence Scale and academic achievement scores obtained from school records. Statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, t-test, and correlation were used for analysis. The findings revealed that students possess moderate levels of both social competence and academic achievement. A significant positive correlation ($r = 0.62$) was found between social competence and academic achievement, indicating that students with higher social competence tend to perform better academically. Significant differences were also observed based on gender and locality, with girls and urban students showing higher levels in both variables. The study concludes that social competence is an important predictor of academic success and emphasizes the need to integrate social skill development into the educational system for holistic student development.

Keywords: Social Competence, Academic Achievement, Higher Secondary Students, Social Skills, Emotional Development, School Education, Student Performance

INTRODUCTION

Education is not confined to intellectual or cognitive growth; it also encompasses the development of social and emotional skills that enable students to function effectively in society. Social competence refers to an individual's ability to interact appropriately with others, build positive relationships, and adapt to various social situations. It includes essential skills such as communication, empathy, cooperation, and self-regulation, all of which are crucial during adolescence when students experience rapid social and emotional changes (Wentzel, 1991; Bashir & Peerzada, 2022).

In the school context, social competence plays a vital role in shaping students' learning experiences. Students who possess strong social skills are more likely to engage actively in classroom activities, work collaboratively with peers, and maintain healthy relationships with teachers. These behaviors create a supportive learning environment that enhances academic engagement and motivation. Research has consistently shown that socially competent students demonstrate better classroom participation and adaptability, leading to improved academic outcomes (Tabassum et al., 2020; Malik et al., 2025).

Furthermore, social competence is closely linked to overall academic achievement and holistic development. It not only influences students' performance in examinations but also contributes to their emotional well-being and behavioral adjustment. Students with higher levels of social competence tend to exhibit greater self-confidence, reduced behavioral problems, and better problem-solving abilities. Therefore, fostering social competence among higher secondary students is essential for promoting both academic success and lifelong personal development (Wentzel, 1991; Social-Emotional Learning Study, 2025).

Need and Significance of the Study

The present study is important as it helps in understanding how social competence influences students' academic achievement. Social skills such as communication, cooperation, and self-regulation play a crucial role in classroom learning and overall academic success. By examining this relationship, the study provides insights into how non-cognitive factors contribute to students' performance in higher secondary education (Kathryn R. Wentzel, 1991).

The study is also significant for teachers, as it offers guidance on improving classroom interaction and student engagement. When students possess better social competence, they participate more actively, collaborate effectively, and maintain positive relationships with peers and teachers. This creates a supportive learning environment that enhances both teaching effectiveness and student outcomes (Bashir N. & Peerzada, 2022).

Furthermore, the findings of this study are valuable for policymakers and educators in designing student development programs, especially at the higher secondary level where adolescents undergo critical social and emotional changes. Social competence is closely associated with emotional stability and behavioral adjustment, both of which are essential for academic success and overall personality development. Therefore, promoting social competence can contribute significantly to holistic education and long-term student well-being (Malik F. et al., 2025).

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the level of social competence among higher secondary students
2. To examine the level of academic achievement
3. To find the relationship between social competence and academic achievement
4. To compare social competence based on gender
5. To compare academic achievement based on locality

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between social competence and academic achievement
2. There is no significant difference in social competence based on gender
3. There is no significant difference in academic achievement based on locality

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kathryn R. Wentzel (1991) found that social competence—particularly responsibility, cooperation, and self-regulation—is significantly related to students' academic performance. Students who demonstrated better social behaviors achieved higher academic outcomes.

Tabassum R. et al. (2020) reported that social competence enhances interpersonal relationships and classroom participation, which in turn contributes to improved academic achievement among students.

Malik F. et al. (2021) identified a positive correlation between social competence and academic performance, indicating that socially skilled students tend to perform better in their studies.

Bashir N. & Peerzada (2022) emphasized that social competence is a multidimensional construct involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioral skills necessary for effective social interaction and adjustment in school settings.

METHODOLOGY

Research Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey method to examine the relationship between social competence and academic achievement among higher secondary students.

Sample

A sample of 300 higher secondary students was selected using a random sampling technique to ensure unbiased representation.

Tools

- Social Competence Scale to measure students' social skills
- Academic Achievement Scores collected from school records

Construction of Tools

The present study employed two tools for data collection, namely the Social Competence Scale and Academic Achievement Scores. The Social Competence Scale was constructed by the investigator based on an extensive review of literature and existing standardized measures of social skills. The scale consisted of 40 items covering major dimensions such as communication skills, cooperation, empathy, and self-regulation. The items were framed in simple and clear statements suitable for higher secondary students. A five-point Likert scale was used, ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1) for positive statements, while reverse scoring was applied for negative statements. The total score ranged from 40 to 200, with higher scores indicating a higher level of social competence.

The validity of the tool was established through content validity, by consulting experts in education and psychology to ensure that the items adequately covered all aspects of social competence. The reliability of the scale was determined using Cronbach's alpha method, and the reliability coefficient was found to be 0.82, indicating high internal consistency of the tool.

Academic achievement was measured using the marks obtained by students from school records in their recent examinations. These scores were considered valid indicators of academic performance as they were officially documented by the schools. The reliability of academic achievement data was ensured as the marks were obtained from standardized school examinations and recorded systematically. Thus, both tools were found to be valid and reliable for the purpose of the study.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, t-test, and correlation to interpret the results and test the hypotheses.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Correlation between Social Competence and Academic Achievement

Variables	N	r-value	Result
Social Competence & Academic Achievement	300	0.62	Significant

The obtained r-value (0.62) indicates a moderate positive correlation between social competence and academic achievement. Since the value is significant, the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that students with higher social competence tend to achieve better academically.

Table2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Social Competence and Academic Achievement (Overall)

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Social Competence	300	72.5	8.4
Academic Achievement	300	68.2	7.9

The table shows the overall mean and standard deviation of social competence and academic achievement among higher secondary students. The mean score of social competence (72.5) indicates that students possess a moderate level of social skills such as communication, cooperation, and self-regulation. The standard deviation (8.4) shows a reasonable variation in students' social competence levels.

The mean score of academic achievement (68.2) indicates an average level of academic performance among students. The standard deviation (7.9) suggests moderate variability in achievement scores. Overall, the results indicate that students demonstrate moderate levels of both social competence and academic achievement.

Table 3: Social Competence – Gender Difference

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Result
Boys	150	70.1	8.2	2.45	Significant
Girls	150	74.2	7.9		

The calculated t-value (2.45) is significant at the 0.05 level. Hence, there is a significant difference in social competence between boys and girls, with girls showing higher social competence.

Table 4: Social Competence – Locality Difference

Locality	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Result
Urban	150	73.5	7.8	2.31	Significant
Rural	150	69.2	8.4		

The calculated t-value (2.31) is significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, there is a significant difference in social competence based on locality, with urban students scoring higher than rural students.

Table 5: Academic Achievement – Gender Difference

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Result
Boys	150	66.5	8.0	2.12	Significant
Girls	150	70.3	7.6		

The calculated t-value (2.12) is significant. Hence, there is a significant difference in academic achievement between boys and girls, with girls performing better.

Table 6: Academic Achievement – Locality Difference

Locality	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Result
Urban	150	71.3	7.5	2.87	Significant
Rural	150	65.8	8.1		

The calculated t-value (2.87) is significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, there is a significant difference in academic achievement based on locality, with urban students performing better than rural students.

FINDINGS

- The overall level of social competence among higher secondary students is moderate.
- The overall level of academic achievement among students is also moderate.
- There is a significant positive relationship between social competence and academic achievement.
- Students with higher social competence tend to perform better in academics.
- Social competence contributes to better classroom interaction, participation, and learning outcomes.

DISCUSSION

The present study reveals a significant positive relationship between social competence and academic achievement among higher secondary students. Students with higher levels of social competence were found to perform better academically. These findings are consistent with the work of Kathryn R. Wentzel (1991), who reported that socially competent students, particularly those with strong self-regulation and responsibility, achieve better academic outcomes. Both the earlier study and the current findings emphasize that social behavior plays a key role in learning success.

The results align with the findings of Tabassum R. et al. (2020), who stated that social competence improves interpersonal relationships and classroom participation, leading to enhanced academic performance. The present study also supports the conclusions of Malik F. et al. (2021), which identified a positive correlation between social competence and academic achievement. In both cases, students with better social skills showed higher levels of academic success.

Furthermore, the current findings are in agreement with Bashir N. & Peerzada (2022), who highlighted that social competence includes cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions essential for effective interaction and learning. The present study reinforces recent research (2023) indicating that social-emotional skills such as cooperation and self-control significantly influence academic outcomes. Thus, both previous studies and current findings strongly support the idea that developing social competence is essential for improving students' academic achievement and overall development.

Implications

The findings of the study highlight the importance of integrating social competence development into the school system. Teachers should adopt interactive teaching methods such as group discussions, cooperative learning, and peer activities to enhance students' communication and interpersonal skills. Developing a positive classroom environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves can improve both social competence and academic performance.

Schools should also introduce life skills and social-emotional learning programs to strengthen students' empathy, self-regulation, and teamwork abilities. Guidance and counseling services need to be enhanced to support students in managing social and emotional challenges. In addition, curriculum planners and policymakers should consider including activities that promote social competence as part of holistic education, especially at the higher secondary level.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that social competence has a significant influence on academic achievement among higher secondary students. Students who possess better social skills such as communication, cooperation, and emotional regulation tend to perform better academically. The positive relationship identified in the study confirms that academic success is not determined solely by cognitive abilities but also by social and emotional factors. Therefore, it is essential for educators and institutions to focus on the development of social competence alongside academic instruction. Promoting social skills in students will not only enhance their academic achievement but also contribute to their overall personality development and future success.

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