A Study on the Social Competency of Undergraduate Students

S. Emimah¹, Dr. V. Thamodharan²
Research Scholar, V.O.C. College of Education, Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu
Principal, V.O.C. College of Education, Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu

Abstract
Social competence is the ability to achieve personal goals in social interactions while simultaneously maintaining positive relationships with others over time and across situations. This study explored the relationship of social competency of undergraduate students with demographic variables like gender, subject studying and area of residence. The study was conducted on the sample of 1000 undergraduate students of Thoothukudi District. The social competence scale developed by Emimah and Thamodharan (2013) was used to measure the social competence of under graduate students. The findings of the study reveal that social competence of male undergraduate students differs significantly from the female students; on the other hand subject studying and area of residence has no significant impact on the social competence of undergraduate students. This study suggests under graduate students to develop social competencies in order to successfully interact with others and to cope with the complexities, stress, and expectations of modern life.

Keywords: Social Competence, Social Interactions, Impact, Under Graduate Students, Meta-Cognition

1 Introduction
In India, college life starts around the age of 17 to 21 years. This age span corresponds roughly to the late adolescence or early adult years. Collectively, this young people are referred to as youths. Typically this period of life is considered as a time when the young person’s distance themselves from parents, and peers and other relationships take on increasing importance. Young individuals face various types of challenges such as physical, cognitive, social and emotional changes during their transition to adulthood. Their capability to adjust and adapt to their problems plays a role in determining their level of achievement and development of necessary and essential skills for success in their vocation and in life.

2 Social Competence And Its Impact On Under Graduate Students
Social competence is about being able to manage and contribute to the social interactions we have. Social competence includes those skills necessary for effective interpersonal functioning such
as adaptive behavior, social skills, and peer acceptance. Social competence is the ability to achieve personal goals in social interaction while simultaneously maintaining positive relationships with others over time and across situations. Social competence reflects automaticity in our thinking, and in carrying out the following steps: selecting a social goal, examining the environment, accessing and selecting strategies, implementing a strategy, and evaluating the outcome of the strategy (Rubin & Rose-Krasnor 1992). Socially competent adolescents have a sense of belonging, are valued, and are given opportunities to contribute to society (Gullotta, 1990).

Social competence plays an integral part in how well a young person transitions into adulthood. Without adequate social competence a person may experience trouble in the areas of employment, daily living skills, independent living and participating in the community. While social competency will ultimately be necessary to succeed in the working world, it also plays a major role in classroom success. A socially competent person can correctly determine which behaviors are appropriate in a given situation. These learned social skills are crucial for academic success. Social skills are necessary for students to attain and maintain independence and success in adulthood. The need for social competency can be seen in almost every part of everyone’s life. The mastery of social skills links directly to academic success, better peer relationships and greater satisfaction in adulthood.

3 Significance of the Study

In today’s world, where college students constantly communicate globally via Twitter, Facebook, blogs, etc., it is unfortunate that most of our classrooms are disconnected where students’ voices are silent. Many college students find the pressures of making new friends and struggling for social recognition and acceptance. The reason for this fact is that students lag behind in their social competencies and they are not ready to interact and express their views in social situations. Social competencies promote successful adjustment in the educational environment of the students and also it promotes academic achievement. Lack of social competence has been found to contribute to underemployment, adult criminal behavior and mental health problems (Williamson & Dorman 2002). Social Competence is the ability to recognize, interpret, and respond appropriately in social situation. Students long term social and emotional adaptations, academic and cognitive development and citizenship are enhanced by frequent opportunities to strengthen social competence. To successfully interact with others and cope with the complexities, stress, and expectations of modern life, it is vital that all the students should acquire social competencies.

4 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To find out the significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in their social competency.
2. To find out the significant difference between arts and science undergraduate students in their social competency.
3. To find out the significant difference between rural and urban undergraduate students in their social competency.

5 Hypothesis of the study

1. There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in their social competency.
2. There is no significant difference between arts and science undergraduate students in their social competency.
3. There is no significant difference between rural and urban undergraduate students in their social competency.

**6 Methodology**

The investigator has adopted survey method for the present study.

**6.1 Sample**

By using stratified random sampling technique a sample of 1000 under graduate students was selected from all arts and science colleges in Thoothukudi district, Tamilnadu.

**6.2 Tool used in the study**

To measure the social competency of the sample the investigator used the social competency scale developed and standardized by Emimah and Thamodharan (2013)

**7 Results of the study**

**Table 1: Difference in the Social Competency of Under Graduate Students with Respect to Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>Calculated ‘t’</th>
<th>Table value at 5% level</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>284.25</td>
<td>34.426</td>
<td>3.279</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>291.13</td>
<td>30.091</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Difference in the Social Competency of Under Graduate Students with Respect to their Subject**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Studying</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>Calculated ‘t’</th>
<th>Table value at 5% level</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>287.91</td>
<td>32.747</td>
<td>0.379</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>288.68</td>
<td>31.426</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3: Difference in the Social Competency of Under Graduate Students with Respect to their Area of Residence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Residence</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>Calculated ‘t’</th>
<th>Table value at 5% level</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>288.63</td>
<td>31.288</td>
<td>0.393</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>287.83</td>
<td>33.164</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the table 1 it is inferred that the calculated ‘t’ value is greater than the table value. Hence the null hypothesis is Rejected. That is, there exists significant difference in the Social Competency of undergraduate students with respect to gender. While comparing the mean scores, female (291.13) undergraduate students have more social competency than male (284.25) undergraduate students. From the table 2 it is inferred that the calculated ‘t’ value is less than the table value. Hence the null hypothesis is Accepted. That is, there exists no significant difference in the Social Competency of undergraduate students with respect to their subject studying.

From the table 3 it is inferred that the calculated ‘t’ value is less than the table value. Hence the null hypothesis is Accepted. That is, there exists no significant difference in the Social Competency of undergraduate students with respect to their area of residence.

8 Findings and discussions

Significant difference exists in the meta-cognition of undergraduate students with respect to gender, but no significant difference exists in the meta-cognition of undergraduate students with respect to their subject studying and area of residence.

While comparing the mean scores, female (291.13) undergraduate students have more social competency than male (284.25) undergraduate students. Saroj Yadav and Shiv veer Singh (2011) found that there is significant difference between the Social Competence of Undergraduate male and female students and Social Competence of undergraduate male students is more than Undergraduate female students. But this study contradicts the findings of the above study and places the female on par excellence with male.

Now days the number of female students enrolled in arts and science are significantly increasing than males and female students performs very well in curricular as well as co-curricular activities of the college. So naturally their social skills, social involvement, social leadership has widened remarkably when compared to male under graduate students. Also females are better able to identify and express their emotions (Denham et.al; Underwood, 2003). This may help the female students to have better understanding and examining about their views of themselves and how they fit in the world, identify and strengthen their social skills that might increase the likelihood of maintaining inter personal relationship, explore their social information processing and attention to social cues than male undergraduate students. Generally women have very rigid social expectations than males, so it may help the females to better social acceptability than males.

9 Recommendations to develop the Social competency of students

- Train the students to understand and recognize one's own emotions and the emotions of others. Also equip the students to read facial gestures and other nonverbal cues like eye contact, facial expression, body language so that they can respond with the appropriate skill required of the situation.
- Training may be given to use the appropriate verbal responses (eg, in tone, volume) and Teach the students about the rules of social etiquette including respecting personal space and maintaining eye contact during a conversation.
- Encourage the good posture of the students and discourage socially inappropriate behaviours
- Educators can facilitate the students to have accurate perceptions of a situation to enable correct interpretation of social cues and appropriate responses.
• Activities that emphasize flexibility of thinking and seeing things from another person's perspective help the students to eliminate the rigid ways of seeing others thus decreasing prejudicial thinking. Think before acting, helps to reduce stress and sadness, to replace aggression with positive behavior, and to control anger.

• Social skills allow children to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships, understand and express their own feelings, and interpret others’ feelings. Most social skills are learned through observations and visual modeling. So ample opportunities should be provided in the classroom environment to develop the social skills through discussion, modeling of the desired response and reinforcement.

• Educators should incorporate instructional strategies to build personal and social competencies within the classroom environment.

• Conducive and cooperative college atmosphere can foster social problem-solving, cooperative behavior, understanding and use of group processes, and the development and maintenance of peer relationships among students.

• Teachers and parents also help students become socially competent by encouraging friendships (Jalongo & Isenberg, 2004). College students care more about the feelings of friends than about those of other people (Corso, 2003). Adolescents are more likely to be successful when initiating contact with friends, thus increasing their confidence (Howes & Ritchie, 2002), which improves their social competence.

10 References