

## SOCIAL COMPETENCE AS RELATED TO RESPONSIBLE ENVIRONMENT BEHAVIOUR OF ADOLESCENTS

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### Abstract

*It is increasingly recognised that contemporary ways of life are harming the environment and, in turn, that environment is harming, or at least threatening to harm, contemporary ways of life. In a statement the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) dramatically declared: "imagine a world, in which environmental change threatens people's health, physical security, material needs and social cohesion. This is world beset by increasingly intense and frequent storms, and by rising sea level. Some people experience extensive flooding, while others endure intense droughts. Species extinction occurs at rates never before witnessed. Safe water is increasingly limited, hindering economic activity. Land degradation endangers the lives of millions of people. This is the world today.(UNEP 2007) The present study was conducted on 100 adolescents with a goal to find the relationship between social competence and the responsible environmental behaviour of adolescents. The study confirmed that there exists a significant and positive relationship between social competence and responsible environmental behaviour of adolescents.*

**Keywords:** *Social Competence, Responsible Environment Behaviour, Adolescents*

Social competence refers to a person's ability to get along with other people. A child's social competence is affected by how well he/she communicates with other children and adults. A young child's ability to get along with other children contributes much to all aspects of his development. How well a child gets along with others may be "the single best childhood predictor of adult adaptation", (Hartup 1992). Social competence refers to the social, emotional and cognitive skills (behaviour) that children need for successful social adaptations and healthy social development. Goldfried and D'Zurill (1969) define social competence as "the effectiveness of adequacy with which an individual is capable of responding to various problematic situations which confront him." Ford (1982) defines social competence as, "an attainment of relevant social goals in specified social contexts, writing appropriate means and resulting in positive developmental outcome." Water and Gresham (1986) states, "social competence is the ability to make use of environmental and personal resources to achieve a good developmental outcome". Rubin and Rose-Krasnor (1992) define

social competence as, "the ability to achieve personal goals in social interaction while simultaneously maintaining positive relationships with others over time and across settings". Law Wong and Song (2004) explain that the study of social competence has its roots in Thorndike's (1920) proposition that intelligence has three broad based components. One of three described intelligences in the social arena is the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls to act wisely in human relations. The term responsible environmental behaviour refers to "the variety of recognised approaches to environmental action available to individuals or groups for use in preventing or resolving environmental problems and issues" (Peyton, 1977; Marcinkowski 1989). Environmental responsible behaviour is a measure of how far a person is prepared to take an active part in protecting the environment. It is a reflection of a person's understanding of environmental issues and his or her views towards them. Environmentally responsible behaviour is a composite attribute involving both personal habits and collective actions. Hines, Hungerford and Tomera (1987)

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analysed responsible environmental behaviour by identifying four elements in environmental education: (a) knowledge of environmental issues; (b) knowledge of specific action strategies to apply to these issues; (c) the ability to action on environmental issues; and (d) the ownership of certain effective qualities and personality attributes. These elements were used as a framework for constructing learning about global issues that was related and integrated to a student's life. When studying about global issues, the goal needed to be more than merely acquiring scientific knowledge. A relationship must be made between the individual action and responsibility to the global issue. Carmen (1993) in her article, - global issues and Environmental Education reminded us that whichever approach is used, the relationship of the individual action in regard to global issues must be central to the instruction if the desired outcome is that of responsible environment behaviour. A relationship must be made between the individual action and responsibility to the global issue. Hsu (2004) studied the effect of environmental education course on college student's responsible environmental behaviour and associated environmental literacy variables. The result of the study showed that the course significantly promoted the student's responsible environmental behaviour, locus of control, environmental responsibility, intention to act, perceived knowledge of evaluation and skills in using environmental action strategies. NEEFT & Roper Research (2005) reported that individuals having higher attitudes towards environment also display higher environmental behaviour. In the same year Goldman, Yavetz and Peer worked on environmental literacy of teacher training in Israel and investigated the relationship between future teacher's responsible environmental behaviour and background in three major teacher-training colleges. Their study revealed that those future teachers manifest a low level of environmental literacy which was reflected in their environmental behaviour.

Bamberg and Ser (2007) studied meta-analysis on psycho-social determinants of pro-environmental behaviour. Results confirmed that besides attitudes and behavioural control personal moral norm is a

third predictor of pro –environmental behavioural intention (52% explained variance). The MASEM also indicated that problem awareness was an important but the indirect determinant of pro environmental intention. Its impact seemed to be mediated by moral and social norms, guilt and attribution process. Following Bamberg and SerKalantri, Fami, Asadi and Mohammad (2007) found that environmental problem such as air and water pollution, urban garbage and climate changes in urban areas were the results of human behaviour. Only change in human behaviour can reduce these environmental problems. Results of the study showed that environmental behaviour of people in urban areas directly and indirectly were under the influence of variables like age, gender, income, education, problem based knowledge, environmental legislation, environmental attitude, feeling of stress and preparedness to act of the residents. All these together can influence and change people's behaviour to preserve urban environment.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To study responsible environment behaviour of adolescence.
2. To study social competence of adolescence.
3. To study the relationship between social competence and responsible environment behaviour of adolescence.

#### **METHOD**

In the present study Karl Pearson product moment correlation method was used to establish the relationship between social competence and responsible environment behaviour.

#### **SAMPLE**

Study was conducted on 100 adolescents studying in GMSSS Sector 25 Chandigarh, which was affiliated to C.B.S.E. Random sampling technique is used to collect data.

#### **VARIABLES**

Independent variables- social competence  
Dependent variables- responsible environment behaviour.

#### **MEASURES**

Following tools are used for the collection of data for the given study.

- Responsible environment behaviour- constructed by the investigator

- Social competence - by V.P. Sharma and Prabha Shukla.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

To analyse the data mean, median, standard deviation and correlation was used. Graphical representations were also used for better understanding of the data. Following are the results.

**Objective 1 - To study the Responsible environmental behaviour of adolescents.**

Table 1 depicts that the mean value (29.10) of responsible environmental behaviour of

adolescents is approximately equals to the median (29). The value of skewness came to be 0.270 hence the data is positively skewed whereas the value of kurtosis is -.867 which means that the distribution is platykurtic. The value of skewness and Kurtosis between the range of -2 to +2 is considered to be acceptable (Gravetter and Wallnau 2014). From the results it can be inferred that the data is normally distributed. Table 1 presents the descriptive analysis of responsible environmental behaviour of adolescents and figure 1 presents them graphically:

*Table1: Descriptive analysis of responsible environmental behaviour scores of adolescents*

Statistics	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Values	29.10	29.00	9.156	0.270	-.867

**Objective 2 - To study the social competence of adolescents.**

Table 2 depicts that the mean value (100.3) of social competence of adolescents is approximately equals to the median (99.50). The value of skewness came to be 0.594 hence the data is positively skewed

whereas the value of kurtosis is -.617 which means that the distribution is platy-kurtic. From the results it can be inferred that the data is normally distributed. Table 2 presents the descriptive analysis of responsible environmental behaviour of adolescents and figure 2 presents them graphically:

*Table1: Descriptive analysis of social competence scores of adolescents*

Statistics	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Values	100.30	99.50	9.156	0.594	-.617

**Objective 3: To find the relationship between Responsible environmental behaviour and responsible social competence of adolescents.**

The value of coefficient of correlation (as shown in table 3) between the scores of Social competence and scores of Responsible environmental behaviour came to be 0.819 which is positive and significant, thus indicating the high and positive relationship between social competence and responsible environmental behaviour. Thus hypothesis No-1-“There exists no significant relationship between responsible environmental behaviour and social competence of adolescents” stands rejected. Figure 3 presents this significant relationship graphically.

There could be many possible reasons behind the significant and positive relationship between social competence and responsible environmental behaviour. One possible reason is that socially competent people are socially skilled and more aware of social issues. Another possible reason could be that socially competent people consider environment as integral part their life. So they may have feeling to conserve and protect it. Socially competent people contribute not only in social relations but also in environmental relations. They are more aware of environmental issues and responsible towards mother earth.

*Table 3: Coefficient of correlation between Social competence and Responsible environmental behaviour*

Variables	Social competence	Responsible environmental behaviour
Social competence	1	0.819
Responsible environmental behaviour	0.819	1

## CONCLUSION

On the basis of above analysis, it can be inferred that social competences have positive and significant relationship with responsible environmental behaviour of adolescents. From the above results it can be interpreted that socially competent human beings are sensitive not only to their peers but also towards their mother earth and natural environment. Schools are miniature form of the society to prepare young minds to become an active member of society and make them able to deal effectively with other members of the society and issues related to the society. If young minds are made aware of issues related to environment they can contribute back to the society positively.

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