

## The Role of Co-Curricular Participation in Enhancing Social Competence among Secondary School Adolescents

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### ABSTRACT

The present study examined the influence of co-curricular participation on the development of social competence among secondary school adolescents. Using a mixed-method case study design, data were collected from a sample of 50 Class VIII students from government and private schools in urban and rural areas of Lucknow through a Co-Curricular Participation Rating Scale, Social Competence Rating Scale, structured observations, and teacher questionnaires. Findings revealed high student participation in creative activities (art and craft), leadership roles, and indoor/outdoor sports, with moderate engagement in quizzes and dance. Students demonstrated high levels of social competence in peer communication, respect for others, group cooperation, friendship formation, and helping behaviour, while emotional control, conflict resolution, and adaptability were moderate to high. Observation and teacher feedback confirmed a strong positive association between active co-curricular involvement and enhanced social skills, confidence, and interpersonal relationships. The study concludes that co-curricular activities provide essential platforms for real-life social interactions and skill-building, recommending that schools systematically integrate them into the timetable, promote inclusive participation, and give targeted attention to emotional regulation and conflict resolution.

**Keywords:** *Co-curricular activities, social competence, adolescents, holistic development, secondary school students, experiential learning*

Education today has moved beyond the narrow focus on academic achievement and examination marks. The modern educational paradigm emphasizes the all-round development of students — intellectual, emotional, physical, moral, and social. In the rapidly evolving digital age, adolescents are bombarded with information from multiple sources, which, while beneficial, often leads to distraction, information overload, and diminished real-life social engagement.

Secondary school adolescents (aged 13–16 years) are at a critical stage of development characterized by rapid physical, emotional, and social changes. This period involves identity formation, increased peer influence, emotional volatility, and a strong desire for independence and social recognition. Schools, therefore, need to provide structured opportunities that support healthy social development.

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Co-curricular participation offers such opportunities by engaging students in meaningful, non-academic activities. Through active involvement in these activities, students develop social competence — a key life skill that enables them to navigate complex social environments successfully. In an age dominated by digital interactions, co-curricular participation becomes even more crucial as it promotes real-world social experiences and helps counter the negative effects of excessive screen time.

Education in the contemporary world has undergone a significant transformation from a narrow focus on academic achievement to a broader emphasis on holistic development. Traditionally, schools were primarily concerned with imparting subject knowledge and preparing students for examinations. However, modern educational philosophy recognizes that true education extends beyond cognitive development to include emotional, social, physical, and moral growth. In this context, co-curricular activities have emerged as an essential component of the educational process.

Co-curricular activities refer to structured experiences that take place alongside formal academic instruction. These activities include sports, music, dance, drama, debates, quizzes, art, craft, social service, and participation in school clubs. Such activities provide students with opportunities to explore their interests, express creativity, and engage in collaborative learning experiences. Unlike classroom-based learning, which is often theoretical and individualistic, co-curricular activities are experiential and interactive in nature.

The importance of co-curricular participation lies in its ability to contribute to the overall development of students. These activities help in building self-confidence, enhancing communication skills, promoting teamwork, and developing leadership qualities. Through participation, students learn how to work with others, respect diverse perspectives, and take responsibility for shared tasks. These experiences are crucial for preparing students to function effectively in real-life situations.

The concept of holistic education emphasizes the integration of various dimensions of human development. It recognizes that students are not merely learners of academic content but individuals with emotional, social, and physical needs. Holistic education aims to nurture well-rounded personalities by addressing all aspects of development simultaneously. In this regard, co-curricular activities serve as a bridge between academic knowledge and real-world application.

Adolescence is a particularly important stage in the context of holistic development. It is a transitional phase marked by rapid physical growth, emotional sensitivity, and increasing social awareness. During this period, individuals begin to form their identity, develop interpersonal relationships, and seek independence. At the same time, they face challenges such as peer pressure, emotional fluctuations, and academic stress. These challenges make it essential for adolescents to develop strong social and emotional skills.

Social competence, in this context, refers to the ability of individuals to interact effectively with others, maintain positive relationships, and respond appropriately to social situations. It includes a range of skills such as communication, cooperation, empathy, emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and adaptability. Social competence is a key factor in determining an individual's success in both personal and professional life.

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Co-curricular activities provide an ideal environment for the development of social competence. Through group participation, students learn how to communicate their ideas, listen to others, and work collaboratively towards common goals. Activities such as sports encourage teamwork and discipline, while cultural programs like drama and music enhance self-expression and confidence. Debates and discussions promote critical thinking and effective communication, while social service activities foster empathy and social responsibility.

Despite the recognized importance of co-curricular activities, many educational systems continue to prioritize academic achievement over holistic development. Examination results and grades often serve as the primary indicators of success, leading to a neglect of co-curricular programs. This imbalance can limit students' opportunities to develop essential life skills and may hinder their overall growth.

In recent years, educational reforms have emphasized the need to integrate co-curricular activities into mainstream education. Policies and frameworks advocate for a balanced approach that combines academic learning with experiential and skill-based activities. Such an approach not only enhances academic performance but also contributes to the development of socially competent and emotionally resilient individuals.

The present study is situated within this broader context of holistic education. It seeks to examine the role of co-curricular participation in the development of social competence among secondary school adolescents. By focusing on students at the secondary level, the study addresses a critical stage of development where social skills are actively shaped and refined.

### ***Research Problem***

**“The Role of Co-Curricular Participation in Enhancing Social Competence among Secondary School Adolescents”**

### ***Objectives of the Study***

1. To identify the level of participation of secondary school students in co-curricular activities.
2. To examine the key components of social competence among adolescents.
3. To analyze the relationship between co-curricular participation and social competence.

### ***Significance of the Study***

The significance of the present study lies in its focus on the role of co-curricular activities in promoting social competence among adolescents. In an era where education is increasingly viewed as a means of preparing individuals for life rather than merely for examinations, the development of social skills has become a critical concern.

Firstly, the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between co-curricular participation and social competence. While previous research has examined these aspects separately, there is a need for studies that explore their interconnection in a school-based context.

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Secondly, the findings of the study have practical implications for educators and school administrators. By highlighting the benefits of co-curricular participation, the study encourages schools to allocate time, resources, and support for such activities. It also emphasizes the importance of creating inclusive opportunities that allow all students to participate and benefit.

Thirdly, the study is relevant for policymakers who are responsible for designing educational frameworks and curricula. The results can inform policy decisions aimed at promoting holistic education and integrating co-curricular activities into the formal education system.

Furthermore, the study is beneficial for parents, as it underscores the importance of encouraging children to participate in activities beyond academics. Parents often prioritize academic achievement, sometimes at the expense of other aspects of development. This study highlights the value of a balanced approach to education.

Finally, the study is significant for students themselves, as it emphasizes the role of co-curricular activities in enhancing their personal and social development. By participating in such activities, students can develop confidence, build relationships, and acquire skills that are essential for their future success.

### *Operational Definitions*

- **Co-Curricular Participation:** Co-curricular participation refers to the involvement of students in activities that complement the academic curriculum. These activities are organized within the school environment and provide opportunities for experiential learning. Participation may vary in terms of frequency and level of involvement, but it generally reflects the extent to which students engage in non-academic pursuits.
- **Social Competence:** It includes skills such as communication, cooperation, empathy, emotional regulation, adaptability, and conflict resolution. Social competence is essential for maintaining positive relationships and functioning successfully in social contexts.
- **Adolescents:** In the present study, adolescents refer to students studying at the secondary school level, particularly those in Class VIII. This age group represents early adolescence, a stage characterized by significant developmental changes and increased social interaction.

### *Delimitation of the Study*

- Every research study is conducted within certain boundaries, and the present study is no exception. The scope of the study is limited to secondary school students studying in Class VIII.
- The sample includes students from government and private schools located in both urban and rural areas.
- The study focuses only on co-curricular activities conducted within the school environment. Activities outside the school context are not considered.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

A review of related literature is a crucial component of any research study as it provides a theoretical and empirical foundation for the research problem. It helps in understanding what has already been explored, identifying gaps in existing knowledge, and situating the present study within a broader academic context. The present study focuses on the influence of co-

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curricular participation on the development of social competence among secondary school adolescents. Therefore, literature related to co-curricular activities, social competence (or social intelligence), adolescent development, and their interrelationship has been reviewed. The review is organized into thematic sections, including theoretical perspectives, studies on social competence, research on co-curricular activities, and studies examining the relationship between these two variables. This structured approach enables a comprehensive understanding of the research domain and highlights areas requiring further investigation.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **Social Intelligence Theory**

The concept of social competence is closely linked with social intelligence theory, which emphasizes the ability to understand and manage social relationships effectively. According to Goleman (2006), social intelligence involves skills such as empathy, social awareness, communication, and relationship management. Individuals with high social intelligence are better able to interpret social cues, respond appropriately to others' emotions, and maintain positive interpersonal relationships.

In the context of adolescence, social intelligence becomes particularly significant as individuals are increasingly exposed to complex social environments. Schools serve as primary social settings where adolescents interact with peers and teachers, making social intelligence a critical factor in their development.

#### **Experiential Learning Theory**

Experiential learning theory, proposed by Kolb (1984), provides a theoretical basis for understanding the role of co-curricular activities in student development. According to this theory, learning occurs through experience, reflection, and active engagement. Co-curricular activities offer experiential learning opportunities where students participate in real-life situations, reflect on their experiences, and develop practical skills.

Activities such as sports, debates, and group projects allow students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts. These experiences contribute to the development of social competence by enhancing communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.

#### **Holistic Development Theory**

Holistic education emphasizes the development of the whole person, including intellectual, emotional, social, and physical dimensions (Miller, 2007). This approach recognizes that education should not be limited to academic achievement but should also focus on nurturing well-rounded individuals.

Co-curricular activities align with the principles of holistic development by providing opportunities for students to explore their interests, develop talents, and build interpersonal relationships. These activities contribute to emotional well-being and social competence, which are essential for overall development.

#### **Social Competence among Adolescents**

Social competence refers to the ability to interact effectively with others, maintain positive relationships, and adapt to social situations. It includes various components such as communication skills, empathy, cooperation, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution.

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Research indicates that social competence plays a significant role in adolescents' psychological well-being and academic success. Nagra (2014) found that secondary school students generally exhibit average levels of social competence and adjustment, with no significant differences based on gender or school type. This suggests that social competence is a universal developmental need among adolescents.

Arora and Kaur (2018) examined the relationship between social intelligence and mental health among adolescents. Their study revealed that students with better mental health demonstrated higher levels of social competence, including patience, cooperation, and confidence. This finding highlights the interconnection between emotional well-being and social skills.

Kumar and Bhat (2021) conducted a study on social intelligence among adolescents and found variations in social competence levels, although no significant differences were observed across gender or locality. This indicates that social competence is influenced by multiple factors beyond demographic variables.

Raj and Komalavalli (2022) explored the relationship between social intelligence and academic achievement. Their findings showed a positive correlation, suggesting that students with higher social competence tend to perform better academically. This underscores the importance of integrating social skill development into educational practices.

Studies have also emphasized the role of social competence in peer relationships. Sunehari and Singh (2025) found that adolescents with higher social intelligence were better able to build and maintain friendships. This is particularly important during adolescence, a stage where peer relationships significantly influence behavior and self-concept.

### ***Role of Co-Curricular Activities in Student Development***

Co-curricular activities have been widely recognized as an essential component of education. These activities provide opportunities for students to engage in learning experiences beyond the classroom, contributing to their overall development.

Mehmood et al. (2012) examined the effects of co-curricular activities on secondary school students and found that participation in such activities enhances physical and psychological well-being. The study also highlighted that students willingly participate in these activities and that teachers play a supportive role in encouraging participation.

Khan et al. (2020) investigated the impact of co-curricular activities on academic performance and found a positive relationship between participation and academic achievement. The study concluded that co-curricular activities do not hinder academic performance; instead, they contribute to improved learning outcomes.

Sharma and Sharma (2024) explored the influence of co-curricular activities on adolescent development using qualitative methods. Their findings indicated that these activities improve social skills, emotional health, and confidence among students. However, the study also noted challenges related to time management.

Aggarwal (2020) studied co-curricular participation among Grade VIII students and found that students who actively participate in such activities tend to be more confident, healthier,

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and socially active. This supports the idea that co-curricular activities contribute to personality development.

Tripathi (2023) examined parents' perceptions of co-curricular activities and found that parental support plays a significant role in students' participation. The study also revealed that students with supportive family environments are more likely to engage in co-curricular activities.

### ***Co-Curricular Activities and Social Competence***

Gill (2015) found that students who actively participate in co-curricular activities demonstrate better social and emotional adjustment compared to those who do not participate. This indicates that co-curricular engagement contributes to the development of social competence.

Rahman et al. (2021) analyzed the relationship between co-curricular participation and academic performance and found that students involved in such activities exhibit better problem-solving skills and social behavior. These findings indirectly support the role of co-curricular activities in developing social competence.

International research also supports this relationship. Ivaniushina and Zapletina (2015) found that extracurricular activities enhance teamwork, communication, and time management skills among adolescents. Similarly, Meijs et al. (2008) highlighted the role of social intelligence in determining peer popularity, suggesting that social competence is influenced by participation in social activities.

Liu (2023) emphasized the importance of peer relationships in adolescents' psychological well-being and noted that social interactions play a key role in emotional development. Co-curricular activities provide structured opportunities for such interactions, thereby contributing to social competence.

### ***Adolescent Development and Social Context***

Hashmi and Fayyaz (2022) studied academic well-being among adolescents and found that emotional and social factors significantly influence students' performance. This highlights the importance of addressing social competence in educational settings.

Schools play a central role in adolescent development by providing opportunities for social interaction and skill development. Co-curricular activities serve as important platforms for students to engage with peers, develop relationships, and learn social norms.

### ***Research Gap***

Although a considerable body of research has highlighted the importance of co-curricular activities and social competence in adolescent development, several gaps remain in the existing literature. Most previous studies have examined co-curricular participation in relation to academic achievement, personality development, or general well-being, while relatively limited attention has been given to its direct influence on the development of social competence among secondary school adolescents.

Furthermore, many studies have discussed social competence or social intelligence independently, without adequately exploring how structured co-curricular engagement

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contributes to specific social skills such as communication, cooperation, empathy, and emotional regulation. There is also a lack of integrated research that connects experiential learning through co-curricular activities with measurable social outcomes.

Another significant gap lies in the limited focus on the contemporary context of information abundance, where adolescents face challenges such as reduced face-to-face interaction and increased digital dependency. Existing studies do not sufficiently address how co-curricular participation can counterbalance these challenges and support social development in the digital age.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology forms the backbone of any scientific investigation, as it provides a systematic framework for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. The present study, which examines the influence of co-curricular participation on the development of social competence among secondary school adolescents, required a carefully designed methodology to capture both behavioural patterns and measurable outcomes.

#### ***Research Design***

The present study adopted a case study research design, which is particularly suitable for in-depth exploration of a specific phenomenon within a real-life context. The case study approach allows the researcher to examine the relationship between co-curricular participation and social competence in a detailed and contextualized manner.

Although the study primarily follows a qualitative orientation, quantitative methods were also incorporated to enhance the objectivity of the findings. Specifically, numerical scoring and percentage analysis were used to interpret students' responses on rating scales. This mixed-method approach ensured a more holistic understanding of the data by combining descriptive insights with measurable indicators.

The choice of a case study design was justified by the need to observe students' behaviour within their natural school environment. Since co-curricular activities involve dynamic interactions among students, it was essential to study these processes in context rather than in controlled experimental settings.

#### ***Population of the Study***

The target population included students enrolled in Class VIII across different types of schools. This age group was selected because students at this stage begin to develop more structured social relationships, enhanced communication skills, and increased awareness of social norms.

#### ***Sample***

A total of 50 students were selected using purposive sampling from government and private schools across urban and rural areas. The sample included students from diverse educational backgrounds to ensure representation of different school environments. These included: Government schools, Private school, Urban schools, Rural schools and the inclusion of different types of schools allowed the study to capture variations in co-curricular opportunities and social experiences across different contexts.

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### *Construction of Tools*

In the present study, appropriate research tools were carefully developed to collect reliable and relevant data regarding co-curricular participation and social competence among secondary school adolescents. The construction of these tools was carried out systematically to ensure clarity, validity, and suitability for the selected age group.

Initially, an extensive review of related literature was conducted to identify the key dimensions of co-curricular engagement and social competence. Based on theoretical concepts and previous studies, important variables such as communication, cooperation, empathy, emotional control, leadership, and participation in various activities were identified. These dimensions formed the basis for developing the research instruments.

Two main rating scales were constructed for students. The first was the Co-Curricular Participation Rating Scale, which included statements related to different school activities such as sports, arts, debates, cultural programs, social service, and leadership roles. The second was the Social Competence Rating Scale, which focused on students' interpersonal behaviour, including communication skills, cooperation, empathy, adaptability, and conflict resolution.

All items were framed in simple and clear language to ensure easy understanding by adolescents. A three-point response format—*Always, Sometimes, and Never*—was used to obtain responses.

In addition to rating scales, an Observation Sheet and a Teacher Questionnaire were also developed to collect supplementary qualitative data. The use of multiple tools ensured a comprehensive and reliable assessment of the variables under study.

### *Tools*

- Co-Curricular Participation Rating Scale
- Social Competence Rating Scale
- Observation Sheet
- Teacher Questionnaire

The tools were validated by experts and pilot tested to ensure reliability.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

- **Scoring Procedure**

The rating scales used in the study followed a **three-point scoring system**:

- Always = 3
- Sometimes = 2
- Never = 1

Scores were calculated for each item and then aggregated to obtain overall scores for co-curricular participation and social competence.

Higher scores indicated:

- Greater participation in co-curricular activities
- Higher levels of social competence

The observation data were also converted into numerical scores using the same scale to facilitate comparison.

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### Data Analysis Techniques

Data Analysis Quantitative methods included mean, percentage. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically.

### Validity and Reliability

Validity and Reliability Content validity was ensured through expert review. Reliability was maintained through consistent administration and pilot testing.

### *Ethical Considerations*

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the concerned school authorities prior to data collection. Informed consent was secured from all participants, and they were clearly informed about the purpose and nature of the study. The researcher ensured that the confidentiality of all collected data was strictly maintained, and participants' identities were not disclosed at any stage. All information gathered during the study was used solely for academic and research purposes. Furthermore, ethical considerations were carefully followed to ensure that the study did not cause any harm, discomfort, or distress to the participants.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### *Objective 1: To identify the level of participation of secondary school students in co-curricular activities*

The findings reveal that secondary school students demonstrate an overall high level of participation in co-curricular activities. Participation is particularly strong in creative and activity-oriented domains such as art, craft, and sports. Students are actively involved in both indoor and outdoor sports, indicating regular engagement in physically interactive activities that promote teamwork and discipline.

Leadership-related activities also show a high level of involvement, suggesting that students are frequently provided opportunities to take responsibility and develop decision-making skills. This reflects a supportive school environment that encourages student participation and leadership development.

Participation in social service activities is found to be moderate to high, indicating that students are somewhat engaged in socially responsible tasks. However, activities such as quizzes and dance show relatively moderate levels of participation, which may be influenced by factors such as student interest, confidence, and availability of opportunities.

Overall, the findings indicate that students are actively engaged in a variety of co-curricular activities, with higher participation in creative, sports, and leadership domains compared to performance-based or competitive activities.

### *Objective 2: To examine the key components of social competence among adolescents*

The analysis of social competence indicates that students possess a generally high level of social skills. Communication emerges as one of the strongest components, with students demonstrating confidence in expressing their ideas and interacting effectively with peers.

Respect for others and cooperation in group work are also highly developed, reflecting students' ability to maintain positive relationships and work collaboratively. The ability to form friendships is another strong aspect, indicating that students are socially active and comfortable in peer interactions.

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Helping behaviour is observed as a prominent component, suggesting that students exhibit empathy and are willing to support their peers when needed. These findings indicate a positive social environment within schools.

However, certain components such as emotional control, conflict resolution, and adaptability are found to be moderately developed. Students show some ability in managing emotions and resolving conflicts, but these skills are not as strong as other aspects of social competence. This suggests the need for further development in these areas.

### ***Objective 3: To analyze the relationship between co-curricular participation and social competence***

The findings indicate a strong positive relationship between co-curricular participation and social competence among adolescents. Students who actively participate in co-curricular activities demonstrate higher levels of communication, cooperation, empathy, and leadership. The data suggest that co-curricular activities provide practical environments for social interaction, where students learn to work in groups, express their ideas, and understand others' perspectives. Activities such as sports, cultural programs, and leadership roles contribute significantly to the development of interpersonal skills.

Observation data further support this relationship, showing that students who are actively engaged in activities display cooperative behaviour, effective communication, and respect for others. These behaviours are consistently observed during group tasks and co-curricular participation.

Teacher responses also reinforce this finding, indicating that students involved in co-curricular activities show noticeable improvements in confidence, teamwork, and social interaction.

Thus, the findings clearly establish that co-curricular participation plays a significant role in enhancing social competence and contributes to the holistic development of adolescents.

### ***Interpretation and Discussion***

#### **Objective 1: Level of Participation in Co-Curricular Activities**

***Table 1: Co-Curricular Participation***

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Art Activities</b>	2.32	77.33%
<b>Leadership Roles</b>	2.27	75.67%
<b>Craft Activities</b>	2.26	75.33%
<b>Indoor Sports</b>	2.22	74.00%
<b>Outdoor Sports</b>	2.19	73.00%
<b>Social Service</b>	2.14	71.33%
<b>Quiz Activities</b>	2.04	68.00%
<b>Dance Activities</b>	1.87	62.33%

#### **Interpretation**

The table shows that students have a high level of participation in co-curricular activities, with mean scores ranging between 1.87 to 2.32. The highest participation is observed in art

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activities, followed by leadership and craft activities, indicating strong interest in creative and responsibility-based tasks.

Sports activities also show high engagement, reflecting active student involvement in teamwork and physical development. However, relatively lower mean scores in quiz and dance activities suggest moderate participation, possibly due to differences in interest or confidence levels.

Overall, the results indicate that students are actively involved in co-curricular activities, especially in creative and interactive domains.

### Discussion

The high level of participation supports the idea that co-curricular activities are becoming an integral part of school education. These activities provide platforms for self-expression, teamwork, and practical learning, which are essential for holistic development. The variation in participation highlights the need for inclusive and diversified programs that cater to different student interests and abilities.

### Objective 2: Social Competence among Adolescents

*Table 2: Social Competence*

Social Skill	Mean Score	Percentage (%)
Communication	2.67	89.00%
Respect for Others	2.57	85.67%
Cooperation	2.47	82.33%
Friendship Skills	2.47	82.33%
Helping Behaviour	2.42	80.67%
Emotional Control	2.26	75.33%
Conflict Resolution	2.23	74.33%
Adaptability	2.20	73.33%

### Interpretation

The findings reveal that students possess a high level of social competence, with mean scores ranging from 2.20 to 2.67. Communication skills show the highest mean, indicating that students are confident in expressing their ideas and interacting with peers.

Respect, cooperation, and helping behaviour also show strong values, reflecting positive interpersonal relationships. However, emotional control and conflict resolution show comparatively lower mean scores, indicating that students need further development in managing emotions and resolving disagreements.

Overall, the data suggest that students demonstrate strong social competence, particularly in interpersonal skills.

### Discussion

The strong interpersonal skills observed among students suggest that the school environment supports positive social interaction. Co-curricular activities appear to play a significant role in enhancing communication and cooperation through group-based experiences.

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At the same time, the moderate development of emotional and conflict management skills indicates that these competencies require structured guidance and practice. Schools should incorporate activities such as role plays, group discussions, and counseling sessions to strengthen these aspects of social competence.

### Objective 3: Relationship between Co-Curricular Participation and Social Competence

*Table 3: Comparative Analysis*

Variable	Mean Score	Percentage (%)
Co-Curricular Participation	2.29	76.40%
Social Competence	2.42	80.67%
Observed Behaviour	2.14	71.47%

#### Interpretation

The comparative table shows that both co-curricular participation and social competence have high mean scores, indicating a strong relationship between the two variables. Social competence has the highest mean, followed by co-curricular participation, while observed behaviour also shows a moderately high level.

This suggests that students who actively participate in co-curricular activities tend to develop better communication, cooperation, and social interaction skills. The close alignment between mean scores indicates that participation in activities directly contributes to observable social behaviour.

Thus, the data clearly establish a positive relationship between co-curricular participation and social competence.

## DISCUSSION

The relationship can be explained through the experiential nature of co-curricular activities. These activities provide real-life social situations where students learn by interacting, collaborating, and solving problems together. As a result, students develop practical social skills rather than merely theoretical understanding.

The consistency between self-reported data and observed behaviour further strengthens this relationship, indicating that co-curricular participation leads to genuine behavioural development. Teacher feedback also supports this finding, highlighting improvements in confidence, teamwork, and interpersonal relationships among students.

#### Overall Interpretation

The overall findings of the study confirm that secondary school students actively participate in co-curricular activities, which play a significant role in their overall development. It is evident that students who are engaged in such activities demonstrate a strong level of social competence, particularly in areas such as communication, cooperation, and interpersonal relationships. The results further indicate a clear and positive relationship between co-curricular participation and social behaviour, suggesting that increased involvement in these activities contributes to improved social skills. Co-curricular activities provide real-life learning environments where students interact, collaborate, and engage in meaningful experiences. Through these practical situations, students develop essential competencies such

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as effective communication, teamwork, empathy, and leadership, which are crucial for their personal and social development.

### ***Suggestions***

#### **Educational Implications**

- Co-curricular activities should be integrated into the regular school curriculum rather than treated as optional or secondary.
- Schools should adopt a holistic approach to education that equally emphasizes academic achievement and social skill development.
- Teachers should be trained to facilitate co-curricular activities effectively and link them with learning outcomes.
- Educational policies should recognize social competence as an essential component of student development.
- Assessment systems should include evaluation of co-curricular participation and social skills.

#### **Suggestions for Improvement**

- Schools should provide equal opportunities for all students to participate in various co-curricular activities.
- A wide range of activities should be introduced to cater to different interests and abilities of students.
- Special focus should be given to developing emotional control and conflict resolution skills through structured programs.
- Schools should ensure proper infrastructure, resources, and time allocation for co-curricular activities.
- Teachers should encourage shy or less confident students to participate actively.
- Group-based activities such as debates, role plays, and team projects should be promoted to enhance social interaction.

#### **Suggestions for Further Research**

- Future studies may include larger and more diverse samples to improve generalizability.
- Comparative studies can be conducted between rural and urban schools or government and private institutions.
- Longitudinal studies may be carried out to examine the long-term impact of co-curricular participation.
- Experimental research can be conducted to analyze the effect of specific activities on social competence.
- Further research may explore the role of digital platforms in supporting or hindering co-curricular engagement.

## **CONCLUSION**

The present study concludes that co-curricular participation plays a significant role in the development of social competence among secondary school adolescents. Students who actively engage in co-curricular activities demonstrate higher levels of communication, cooperation, empathy, and leadership. Co-curricular activities provide practical learning environments where students can develop essential social skills. These activities contribute to holistic development by addressing emotional, social, and behavioral aspects of learning. The study also highlights that while students exhibit strong social competence in many areas,

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certain skills such as emotional control and conflict resolution require further attention. This indicates the need for targeted interventions to enhance these competencies.

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### Conflict of Interest

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