

ATTACHMENT STYLES AND SOCIAL COMPETENCE OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate attachment styles and social competence of high school students. Stratified random sampling technique and quantitative approach was used in this study. A total of 658 high school students (330 male and 328 female) from six basic education high schools in Yangon Region and Rakhine State participated in this study. In this study, four attachment styles were measured with Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ) conducted by Van Oudenhoven, Hofstra and Bakker (2003). It includes 24 items (7 items for secure attachment style, 5 items for fearful attachment style, 7 items for preoccupied attachment style and 5 items for dismissing attachment style) in which each item is rated with a five-point Likert scale. The Multidimensional Social Competence Scale (MSCS) developed by Trevisan, Tafreshi, Slaney, Yager and Iarocci (2018) was used to measure social competence of high school students including 77 items (11 items for social motivation, 11 items for social inferencing, 11 items for demonstrating empathic concern, 11 items for social knowledge, 11 items for verbal conversation skills, 11 items for nonverbal conversation skills and 11 items for emotion regulation) with five-point Likert scale. Alpha reliability for ASQ and MSCS revealed at 0.545 and at 0.77 respectively. Although there were no significant associations between high school students' attachment styles and gender, age and Grade, it was found that attachment styles were significantly associated with schools and region at 0.001 level. There was significantly associated with high school students' attachment styles and cooperation in group activities at 0.01 level. The results of independent samples *t*-test revealed that there were significant differences on social competence with gender and cooperation in group activities at 0.01 level and with region at 0.001 level. And regarding the Grade and age, there were no significant differences on social competence. Again, ANOVA results showed that there was a significant difference on social competence among schools at 0.001 level. Finally, there was a significant association between high school students' attachment styles and social competence level at 0.001 level. The findings of this study will be desired for parents, teachers and counsellors to help the high school students have secure attachment style and support them to develop social competence.

Keywords: Attachment, Attachment styles, Social competence

Introduction

People interact with their environment for developing social relations. In the process of interaction, people can develop robust relations by acquiring social skills adequately (Deniz, 2002). Moreover, human beings could not live isolated from one another. They always live together in a society and they are dependent on other people for their survival.

Social competence is the ability to interact successfully with peers, teachers, family members and adults. People with higher social competence can make friends easily in everywhere in every time. A lack of social competence is a frequently cited characteristic of aggressive and delinquent children and adolescents (Bender & Loesel, 1997). Therefore, it is necessary for everyone especially adolescent high school students to have a good foundation of social competence to lead their daily life activities properly and successfully.

Cassidy et al. (1996) stated that social skills are related with each other and attachment style is a good predictor of social skills. There are many factors that can affect adolescents' social

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competence such as temperament, attachment and parenting styles (Wikipedia, 2023). Among them, it is attachment style that stands an important point in determining the tempo of the social competence of the adolescent high school students. Each attachment style has a different impact on adolescents' social competence. So, individuals may have different social competence according to types of attachment style they received from their respective parents or primary caregivers.

Attachment is the emotional bonding with someone that endures across time and space (Ainsworth, 1973; Bowlby, 1969). Emotional bonding in life has a profound effect on the individual's development. The process of attachment begins in the first days of our lives. Their parents take care and provide emotional and physical security towards children can effect on child's attachment from early years. Attachment is also formed in early childhood or in adolescence has great effect on later life (Ainsworth, 1970).

Attachment styles are categorized by the behavior exhibited within a threaten relationship (Bowlby, 1969). All attachment styles in adults according to the respective attachment styles in childhood. They are also essential elements in evoking human behavior. The essential social capabilities of adolescents are adapting to positive well-being at home, school and peer adjustments. Mostly, accomplishment of academic pursuits of adolescent students seem to get initiated by the affectionate bond from their parents or from their caregivers. Therefore, the present study examines attachment styles and social competence of high school students. Based on the research, researcher can find out how much high school students have the level of social competence regarding to four types of attachment styles.

Significance of the Study

During the period of adolescent high school students, students face several challenges as they gradually move from their family group to a peer group (Mabey & Sorensen, 1995). They need to adjust to peers and other social members, to make friendships successfully, and to cooperate with them. Adolescents with social competence can form and maintain healthy relationships with peers and adults. So, social competence becomes a vital role in their daily life.

During this time, social competence is related to a wide variety of positive outcomes, such as educational attainment, employment status and lower levels of substance abuse, depression, and self-reported delinquency. Moreover, social competence is a protective factor in good mental health (Alduncin et al., 2014). It helps them to get strong social supports from the adults around them and to work effectively with others.

The social competence promotes adequate interpersonal interactions of individuals as well as facilitates appropriate fitness in organizing social circumstances. And these competencies are greatly significant during the adolescent period in order to have enough social abilities and easily entering into adult social life (Elicker Englund & Sroufe, 1992). In fact, higher social competence promises acceptance and admiration from peers, adaptive behavior, and social skills in the healthy social development of the adolescents (Gresham & Reschly, 1988). Social development is playing a vital role in academic achievement. So, there is a strong need to explore social competence of high school students for today's researchers.

The attachment styles have the greater effects on the adolescents' social relationship. The studying of the life span development of adolescents along with their attachment relationships

has been considered imperative by recent researchers (Kobak & Sceery, 1988; Shulman et al., 1994; Rosenstein & Horowitz, 1996). According to Bowlby (1980), the attachment does not end when the child moves beyond infancy; rather, secure attachment continues in early childhood, but different behaviors based on attachment are observed during infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood (Ward et al., 2000).

Attachment styles are very important in relationships. In fact, understanding the attachment styles is very helpful for the high school students because it offers them insight into how they felt and developed in their childhood. And it let them know what attachment styles they possess and how these relate to their level of social competence. It also clarifies ways that they are emotionally limited as an adolescent and what they need to change for improving their relationship with other people. Therefore, the present study is extremely important for many reasons. One of those is that this study benefits parents in helping them to understand the importance of attachment styles as these factors related to engaging social competence. Moreover, educators and school teachers need to have a broad awareness about the attachment styles of their students. Teachers can attach to their students in the classroom that is more effective in treating challenging students. Thus, this study also contributes the necessary awareness to the entire education society.

Hence, this current study is very beneficial for examining attachment styles and social competence of high school students. It is considered that attachment style of adolescents is an important variable for social competence. Children who experience secure attachment with the caregivers and peers result in positive outcomes such as higher self-esteem, better academic achievement, better emotion regulation and higher social competence (Bergin & Bergin, 2009). In contrast, children who experience poor attachment with their caregivers and friends are more likely to result in negative outcome such as behavioral problems and delinquency (Elgar et al., 2003). Therefore, this study examines attachment styles of high school students and how these patterns of attachment relate to their social competence.

Purposes of the Study

The primary purpose of the study is to investigate attachment styles and social competence of high school students.

Definitions of Key Terms

Attachment. Attachment is the emotional bonding with someone that endures across time and space (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1973).

Attachment styles. Attachment styles are defined as typical ways of interacting in close relationships (Akhtar, 2011).

Social competence. Social competence is defined as the ability to handle social communications effectively, get along well with others, form and maintain close relationships and respond in adaptive ways in social settings (Orpinas, 2010).

Methodology

Sample of the Study

The population of the study comprised of Grade 10 and Grade 11 students from Minbya Township, Rakhine State and Yangon Region. The sample was chosen from the population by

using stratified random sampling technique. A total of 658 participants (15-20 age groups) from Minbya Township, Rakhine State and Yangon Region participated in the study.

Research Method

In this study, descriptive survey design was used.

Research Instrumentation

To explore attachment styles and social competence of high school students, two instruments were adopted. One instrument was Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ) conducted by Van Oudenhoven, Hofstra and Bakker (2003) and another was Multidimensional Social Competence Scale (MSCS) developed by Trevisan, Tafreshi, Slaney, Yager and Iarocci (2018).

Attachment style questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale has 24 items and four subscales consisting 7-item for secure attachment style, 5-item for fearful attachment style, 7-item for preoccupied attachment style and 5-item for dismissing attachment style. The questionnaire contained positive as well as negative items. So, the scoring key for positive items was 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and that for negative items was reversed 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Students who scored the highest mean percentage in secure subscale among subscales were identified as secure attachment style. Students who scored the highest mean percentage in fearful subscale among subscales were identified as fearful attachment style. Students who scored the highest mean percentage in preoccupied subscale among subscales were identified as preoccupied attachment style. Students who scored the highest mean percentage in dismissing subscale among subscales were identified as dismissing attachment style. But, among subscales, some students were the same highest mean percentages in two subscales, they were placed in undefined group. The researcher did not take into account the undefined group in data analysis.

Multidimensional Social Competence Scale (MSCS) contains a total of 77 items, with the 7 content domains that represent social competence. Each domain contains 11 items. Each item was scored with five-point Likert-type format (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= not sure, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree). The questionnaire contained positive as well as negative items. So, the scoring key for positive items was 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and that for negative items was reversed 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. High scores on the scale were an indication of high in that subscale of social competence and low scores on the scale were an indication of low in that subscale of social competence.

Data Analysis and Research Findings

Descriptive Statistics of Attachment Styles

Table 1 Frequencies and Percentages of Attachment Styles of High School Students

Attachment Styles	Number of Students (f)	Percentage
Secure	324	49.24%
Fearful	117	17.78%
Preoccupied	77	11.70%
Dismissing	140	21.28%
Total	658	100%

As shown in Table 1, most of the students in this study had secure attachment style. The secure attachment style had the highest frequency 324 and the highest percentage 49.24% when

compared to the other attachment styles. Dismissing attachment style was the next common category with the frequency of 140 and a percentage of 21.28% and fearful attachment style had the frequency of 117 and a percentage of 17.78%. The lowest frequency of 77 and the lowest percentage of 11.70% were belonging to the preoccupied attachment style in the whole sample. The result showed that majority of the students from the sample had secure attachment style. It can be said that most of the high school students in this study got responsive and attuned of their needs from their caregivers that enable them to develop secure attachment style.

Attachment Styles of High School Students by Gender

After analyzing the descriptive procedure, a Chi-square test was conducted to scrutinize whether there were significant differences between male and female students with regard to their preferred attachment styles.

Table 2 Chi-square Analysis of the Attachment Styles of High School Students by Gender

Gender	N	Attachment Styles								χ^2	p
		Secure		Fearful		Preoccupied		Dismissing			
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Male	330	166	50.3%	50	15.15%	37	11.22%	77	23.33%	3.971	0.265
Female	328	158	48.17%	67	20.43%	40	12.2%	63	19.2%		
Total	658	324	49.24%	117	17.78%	77	11.7%	140	21.28%		

Table 2 showed the Pearson Chi-square results and indicated that male and female students were no significantly different on whether they have the preferred attachment styles ($\chi^2=3.971$, $df=3$, $n=658$, $p>0.05$). It can be interpreted that there was no association between attachment styles of high school students by gender.

Attachment Styles High School Students by Age

To investigate whether or not there is significant difference in attachment styles of high school students among age groups, a Chi-square statistics was used.

Table 3 Chi-square Analysis of the Attachment Styles of High School Students by Age

Age (years)	N	Attachment Styles								χ^2	p
		Secure		Fearful		Preoccupied		Dismissing			
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
15-16	393	203	51.66 %	58	14.7 5%	45	11.45 %	87	22.14 %	8.713	0.190
17-18	245	111	45.3 %	52	21.2 4%	31	12.64 %	51	20.82 %		
>18	20	10	50%	7	35%	1	5%	2	10%		
Total	658	324	49.24 %	117 7	17.7 8%	77	11.7%	140	21.28 %		

Table 3 showed the Pearson Chi-square results and indicated that age of students were no significantly different on whether they have the preferred attachment styles ($\chi^2=8.713$, $df=6$,

$n=658$, $p>0.05$). It can be interpreted that there was no association between attachment styles of high school students by age.

Attachment Styles of High School Students by Grade

To investigate whether or not there is significant difference in attachment styles of high school students between grades, Chi-square statistics was used.

Table 4 Chi-square Analysis of the Attachment Styles of High School Students by Grade

Grade	N	Attachment Styles								χ^2	p
		Secure		Fearful		Preoccupi-ed		Dismissing			
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Grade 10	333	173	51.95%	49	14.72%	43	12.9%	68	20.43%	5.891	0.117
Grade 11	325	151	46.47%	68	20.91%	34	10.47%	72	22.15%		
Total	658	324	49.24%	117	17.78%	77	11.7%	140	21.28%		

Table 4 showed the Pearson Chi-square results and indicated that Grade 10 and Grade 11 students were no significantly different on whether they have the preferred attachment styles ($\chi^2=5.891$, $df=3$, $n=658$, $p>0.05$). It can be interpreted that there was no association between attachment styles of high school students by Grade.

Attachment Styles of High School Students by Schools

Participants were selected from the six basic education high schools from Region 1 and Region 2. The difference in attachment styles of high school students among schools was analyzed. To investigate whether or not there is significant difference in attachment styles of high school students among schools, a Chi-square statistics was used.

Table 5 showed the Pearson Chi-square results and indicated that the students from different schools were significantly different on whether they have the preferred attachment style ($\chi^2=41.799$, $df=15$, $n=658$, $p<0.001$). It can be interpreted that there was association between attachment styles of high school students by schools. The calculated effect size of 0.146 was considered a moderate effect size, as it falls greater than 0.1 to typical according to Dai et al. (2021).

Table 5 Chi-square Analysis of the Attachment Styles of High School Students by Schools

School	N	Attachment Styles								χ^2	p
		Secure		Fearful		Preoccupi- ed		Dismissing			
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
School 1	114	55	48.25%	13	11.4%	15	13.1%	31	27.19%	41.799***	.000
School 2	108	45	41.69%	19	17.63%	11	10.23%	33	30.45%		
School 3	107	38	35.51%	31	28.97%	7	6.54%	31	28.98%		
School 4	112	59	52.68%	24	21.42%	14	12.5%	15	13.4%		
School 5	109	65	59.63%	15	13.76%	15	13.76%	14	12.85%		
School 6	108	62	57.4%	15	13.89%	15	13.89%	16	14.82%		
Total	658	324	49.24%	117	17.78%	77	11.7%	140	21.28%		

*** $p<.001$

Attachment Styles of High School Students by Region

Participants in this study were from Region 1 and Region 2, the difference in attachment styles of students between regions was analyzed. To investigate whether or not there is significant difference in attachment styles of high school students between two regions, a Chi-square statistics was used.

Table 6 Chi-square Analysis of the Attachment Styles of High School Students by Region

Region	N	Attachment Styles								χ^2	p
		Secure		Fearful		Preoccupi-ed		Dismissing			
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Region 1	329	138	41.95%	63	19.15%	33	10.03%	95	28.87%	25.063***	.000
Region 2	329	186	56.54%	54	16.41%	44	13.37%	45	13.68%		
Total	658	324	49.24%	117	17.78%	77	11.7%	140	21.28%		

*** $p < .001$

Table 6 showed the Pearson Chi-square results and indicated that the students from different regions were significantly different on whether they have the preferred attachment styles ($\chi^2=25.063$, $df=3$, $n=658$, $p<0.001$). It can be interpreted that there was association between attachment styles of high school students by region. The calculated effect size of 0.195 was considered a large effect size, as it falls greater than 0.15 to typical according to Dai et al. (2021).

Attachment Styles by Cooperation in Group Activities

In order to test whether high school students' attachment styles depend on their cooperation in group activities or not, demographic data were collected to get some information deal with participation in group activities and to investigate whether or not there is significant difference in attachment styles of high school students between the two groups, a Chi-square statistics was used.

Table 7 Chi-square Analysis of the Attachment Styles of High School Students by Cooperation in Group Activities

Coopera- tion in Group Activities	N	Attachment Styles								χ^2	p
		Secure		Fearful		Preoccupi- ed		Dismissing			
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Yes	482	259	53.73%	80	16.6%	47	9.75%	96	19.92%	15.13**	.002
No	176	65	36.93%	37	21%	27	15.34%	47	26.73%		
Total	658	324	49.24%	117	17.78%	74	11.25%	143	21.73%		

** $p < .01$

Table 7 showed the Pearson Chi-square results and indicated that the students' cooperation in group activities were significantly different on whether they have the preferred attachment styles ($\chi^2=15.13$, $df=3$, $n=658$, $p<0.01$). It can be interpreted that there was association between attachment styles of high school students by cooperation in group activities. The calculated effect size of 0.152 was considered a large effect size, as it falls greater than 0.15 to typical according to Dai et al. (2021).

Descriptive Statistics of Social Competence

Table 8 Mean Comparison for Social Competence of High School Students

	<i>N</i>	Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Minimum	Maximum
Social Motivation	658	11	35.64	6.446	15	52
Social Inferencing	658	11	39.47	5.107	25	75
Demonstrating Empathic Concern	658	11	40.83	4.292	20	50
Social Knowledge	658	11	44.56	5.195	26	86
Verbal Conversation Skills	658	11	37.02	5.654	19	51
Non- Verbal Conversation Skills	658	11	37.77	5.244	20	55
Emotion Regulation	658	11	62.62	8.912	31	88
Social Competence (Total)	658	77	501.98	38.059	360	637

According to the results shown in Table 8, the mean score for emotion regulation of social competence was the highest and the mean score for social motivation of social competence was the lowest among subscales. It could be interpreted that most of the high school students in this study were better in monitoring, evaluating and controlling the intensity of their internal emotion and outward behaviors. But they were less desire to interact with others, to involve actively in activities and to interact social contact.

Mean Comparison for Social Competence of High School Students by Gender

To find out the differences in social competence with regard to gender, descriptive statistics and independent samples *t*-test were applied. The mean scores of male and female students for social competence were reported in Table 9.

Table 9 Results of Independent Samples *t*-test of Social Competence by Gender

	Gender	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Social Motivation	Male	330	35.52	6.561	-.473	656	.636
	Female	328	35.76	6.336			
Social Inferencing	Male	330	39.26	5.382	-1.045	656	.296
	Female	328	39.68	4.813			
Demonstrating Empathic Concern	Male	330	40.25	4.204	-3.543***	656	.000
	Female	328	41.42	4.306			
Social Knowledge	Male	330	44.03	5.619	-2.616**	656	.009
	Female	328	45.09	4.680			
Verbal Conversation Skills	Male	330	36.51	5.685	-2.346*	656	.019
	Female	328	37.54	5.584			
Nonverbal Conversation Skills	Male	330	37.06	5.230	-3.513***	656	.000
	Female	328	38.48	5.169			
Emotion Regulation	Male	330	64.60	8.815	5.836***	656	.000
	Female	328	60.64	8.576			
Social Competence (Total)	Male	330	497.68	38.638	-2.924**	656	.004
	Female	328	506.30	37.024			

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

To explore whether the mean differences were significant or not, independent samples *t*-test was calculated. The result of *t*-test showed that there were significant differences in demonstrating empathic concern, nonverbal conversation skills and emotion regulation at 0.001 level by gender. And there was significant difference in social knowledge at 0.01 level by gender. Moreover, there was significant difference in verbal conversation skills at 0.05 level by gender. However, there was no significant gender differences in social motivation and social inferencing. The result of independent samples *t*-test showed that there was significant difference in social competence total at 0.01 level by gender.

Mean Comparison for Social Competence of High School Students by Age

To find out the differences in social competence of high school students with regard to age, One-Way ANOVA was conducted (see Table 10).

Table 10 ANOVA Results of Social Competence by Age

	Age	N	M	SD	F	p
Social Motivation	15-16	393	35.44	6.378	.899	.407
	17-18	245	35.82	6.669		
	>18	20	37.25	4.745		
Social Inferencing	15-16	393	39.37	5.004	.226	.798
	17-18	245	39.64	5.247		
	>18	20	39.35	5.566		
Demonstrating Empathic Concern	15-16	393	41.06	4.016	1.429	.240
	17-18	245	40.51	4.666		
	>18	20	40.25	4.689		
Social Knowledge	15-16	393	44.80	5.113	1.099	.334
	17-18	245	44.21	5.314		
	>18	20	44.00	5.301		
Verbal Conversation Skills	15-16	393	37.09	5.719	.312	.732
	17-18	245	36.85	5.520		
	>18	20	37.75	6.189		
Nonverbal Conversation Skills	15-16	393	37.56	5.098	.800	.450
	17-18	245	38.10	5.437		
	>18	20	37.90	5.748		
Emotion Regulation	15-16	393	62.81	8.738	.288	.750
	17-18	245	62.29	9.237		
	>18	20	63.05	8.550		
Social Competence (Total)	15-16	393	502.06	35.507	.104	.902
	17-18	245	501.56	41.106		
	>18	20	505.55	48.584		

In order to find out whether there were any significant differences in social competence by age or not, One-Way ANOVA was conducted. The results revealed that there were no significant differences in all subscales: social motivation, social inferencing, demonstrating empathic concern, social knowledge, verbal conversation skills, nonverbal conversation skills

and emotion regulation and social competence total. The results revealed that the mean score of above 18 years was the highest and that of 17-18 years was the lowest in social competence total. It could be interpreted that high school students' social competence did not differ according to their age.

Mean Comparison for Social Competence of High School Students by Grade

To find out the differences in two variables with regard to Grade, descriptive statistics and independent samples *t*-test were calculated. The results were mentioned in Table 11.

Table 11 Results of Independent Samples *t*-test of Social Competence by Grade

	Grade	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Social Motivation	Grade 10	333	35.72	6.482	.326	656	.745
	Grade 11	325	35.55	6.418			
Social Inferencing	Grade 10	333	39.41	4.805	-.334	656	.739
	Grade 11	325	39.54	5.405			
Demonstrating Empathic Concern	Grade 10	333	41.32	4.062	2.926**	656	.004
	Grade 11	325	40.34	4.469			
Social Knowledge	Grade 10	333	44.95	5.282	1.982*	656	.048
	Grade 11	325	44.15	5.082			
Verbal Conversation Skills	Grade 10	333	36.80	5.553	-1.015	656	.311
	Grade 11	325	37.25	5.756			
Nonverbal Conversation Skills	Grade 10	333	37.98	5.176	1.032	656	.302
	Grade 11	325	37.56	5.313			
Emotion Regulation	Grade 10	333	62.89	9.214	.761	656	.447
	Grade 11	325	62.36	8.598			
Social Competence (Total)	Grade 10	333	503.90	37.181	1.314	656	.189
	Grade 11	325	500.01	38.896			

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

In order to find out whether there were any significant differences in social competence by Grade or not, independent samples *t*-test was conducted again. The results revealed that there was significant difference in demonstrating empathic concern at 0.01 level by Grade. And there was significant difference in social knowledge at 0.05 level by Grade. It could be interpreted that Grade 10 students have more social competence than Grade 11 students. There were no significant differences in social motivation, social inferencing, verbal conversation skills, nonverbal conversation skills and emotion regulation of social competence by Grade.

The mean score of social competence for Grade 10 students was 503.90 and the mean score of social competence for Grade 11 students was 500.01. So, the mean score of Grade 10 students was slightly higher in social competence than that of Grade 11 students. To explore whether the mean difference was significant or not, independent samples *t*-test was calculated. The result of independent samples *t*-test showed that there was no significant difference in social competence total by Grade.

Mean Comparison for Social Competence of High School Students by Schools

To find out the differences in social competence of high school students with regard to schools, One-Way ANOVA was conducted (see Table 12).

Table 12 ANOVA Results of Social Competence by Schools

	School	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Social Motivation	School 1	114	34.81	6.637	5.089***	.000
	School 2	108	34.69	6.937		
	School 3	107	34.02	6.432		
	School 4	112	35.82	5.678		
	School 5	109	37.07	6.046		
	School 6	108	37.42	6.292		
Social Inferencing	School 1	114	40.07	5.412	1.928	.088
	School 2	108	39.62	5.880		
	School 3	107	38.64	4.903		
	School 4	112	38.63	4.696		
	School 5	109	40.12	4.774		
	School 6	108	39.73	4.753		
Demonstrating Empathic Concern	School 1	114	40.42	5.181	2.530*	.028
	School 2	108	39.79	5.159		
	School 3	107	40.85	3.560		
	School 4	112	41.01	3.745		
	School 5	109	41.47	3.952		
	School 6	108	41.48	3.624		
Social Knowledge	School 1	114	45.40	4.642	1.832	.105
	School 2	108	43.94	5.796		
	School 3	107	44.04	4.696		
	School 4	112	43.96	4.835		
	School 5	109	45.22	4.937		
	School 6	108	44.77	6.032		
Verbal Conversation Skills	School 1	114	37.56	4.899	8.180***	.000
	School 2	108	34.64	5.819		
	School 3	107	36.11	5.778		
	School 4	112	38.08	5.722		
	School 5	109	38.87	5.262		
	School 6	108	36.78	5.525		
Nonverbal Conversation Skills	School 1	114	37.36	5.087	3.314**	.006
	School 2	108	37.09	5.241		
	School 3	107	37.21	4.766		
	School 4	112	37.33	5.705		
	School 5	109	39.44	5.329		
	School 6	108	38.20	4.997		

	School	N	M	SD	F	p
Emotion Regulation	School 1	114	63.67	9.709	2.055	.069
	School 2	108	60.78	9.243		
	School 3	107	61.36	8.859		
	School 4	112	63.34	9.026		
	School 5	109	63.41	8.768		
	School 6	108	63.08	7.438		
Social Competence (Total)	School 1	114	503.14	38.030	7.577***	.000
	School 2	108	489.97	41.717		
	School 3	107	492.29	35.470		
	School 4	112	501.56	33.938		
	School 5	109	516.16	36.842		
	School 6	108	508.48	36.421		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

From the above Table 12, the mean score of high school students from School 6 was the highest and that from School 3 was the lowest in social motivation. The mean score of high school students from School 5 was the highest and that from School 4 was the lowest in social inferencing. The mean score of high school students from School 6 was the highest and that from School 2 was the lowest in demonstrating empathic concern. The mean score of high school students from School 1 was the highest and that from School 2 was the lowest in social knowledge. The mean score of high school students from School 5 was the highest and that from School 2 was the lowest in verbal conversation skills and nonverbal conversation skills. The mean score of high school students from School 1 was the highest and that from School 2 was the lowest in emotion regulation.

In order to find out whether there were any significant differences in social competence among six high schools or not, One-Way ANOVA was conducted. The results revealed that there was significant difference in social motivation, verbal conversation skills and social competence total by schools at 0.001 level. There was significant difference in nonverbal conversation skills by schools at 0.01 level. And there was significant difference in demonstrating empathic concern by schools at 0.05 level. But there were no significant differences in social inferencing, social knowledge and emotion regulation by schools.

The results revealed that the mean score of high school students from School 5 was the highest in social competence total and that from School 2 was the lowest in social competence total. It could be interpreted that high school students from School 5 were the highest social competence and that from School 2 were the lowest social competence.

Table 13 Results of Tukey HSD Multiple Comparisons for Social Competence of High School Students by Schools

	(I)School	(J)School	Mean Difference (I-J)	p
Social Competence	School 2	School 5	-26.184***	.000
		School 6	-18.509**	.004
	School 3	School 5	-23.866***	.000
		School 6	-16.192*	.018
	School 4	School 5	-14.593*	.042

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

To obtain more detailed information, the significant mean difference of high school students' social competence by schools, Post-hoc Test was conducted by Tukey HSD method (see Table 13). Concerning social competence, high school students from School 5 and School 6 were more social competence than that from School 2 and School 3. And high school students from School 5 were more social competence than that from School 4 (see Table 13).

Mean Comparison for Social Competence of High School Students by Region

To find out the differences in two variables with regard to region, descriptive statistics and *t*-test were calculated. The results were mentioned in the following Table 14.

From above Table 14, the mean scores of students from Region 2 were slightly higher in social inferencing, social knowledge and emotion regulation. But the mean scores of students from Region 2 were higher in social motivation, demonstrating empathic concern, verbal conversation skills, nonverbal conversation skills subscales of social competence than that of students from Region 1. It could be interpreted that students from Region 1 have more social competence than the students from Region 2.

In order to find out whether there were any significant differences in social competence between students by region or not, independent samples *t*-test was conducted again. The results revealed that there was significant difference in social motivation and verbal conversation skills at 0.001 level by region. And there was significant difference in demonstrating empathic concern and nonverbal conversation skills at 0.01 level by region. But there were no significant differences in social inferencing, social knowledge and emotion regulation subscales of social competence by region.

The mean score of social competence total for students from Region 1 was 495.29 and the mean score of social competence total for students from Region 2 was 508.67. So, the mean score of selected students from Region 2 was higher in social competence total than that of selected students from Region 1. To explore whether the mean difference was significant or not, independent samples *t*-test was calculated. The result of *t*-test showed that there was significant difference in social competence total at 0.001 level by region.

Table 14 Results of Independent Samples *t*-test of Social Competence by Region

	Region	N	M	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Social Motivation	Region 1	329	34.51	6.661	-4.535***	649.567	.000
	Region 2	329	36.76	6.028			
Social Inferencing	Region 1	329	39.46	5.431	-.061	656	.951
	Region 2	329	39.48	4.769			
Demonstrating Empathic Concern	Region 1	329	40.35	4.713	-2.895**	625.880	.004
	Region 2	329	41.32	3.771			
Social Knowledge	Region 1	329	44.48	5.096	-405	656	.686
	Region 2	329	44.64	5.299			
Verbal Conversation Skills	Region 1	329	36.13	5.617	-4.095***	656	.000
	Region 2	329	37.91	5.558			
Nonverbal Conversation Skills	Region 1	329	37.22	5.023	-2.681**	656	.008
	Region 2	329	38.32	5.410			
Emotion Regulation	Region 1	329	61.97	9.343	-1.889	649.080	.059
	Region 2	329	63.28	8.423			
Social Competence (Total)	Region 1	329	495.29	38.810	-4.577***	656	.000
	Region 2	329	508.67	36.129			

p* < .01, *p* < .001

Social Competence Levels of High School Students

Based on the descriptive analysis, selected high school students in this study were identified into three groups: 15.06% of high school students with scores one standard deviation above the sample mean were considered high level of social competence, 72.64% of high school students with scores around the sample mean were grouped into moderate ones and they were identified as moderate social competence level, and the remaining high school students of 12.30% who scored one standard deviation lower than the sample mean were identified as low level of social competence. In this research, most of the students reported as moderate level of social competence. This made highlight a good sense of social competence of students in this study.

Social Competence Level by Cooperation in Group Activities

In order to test whether social competence level of high school students depend on their cooperation in group activities, demographic data were collected to get some information about it and to investigate whether or not there is significant difference in social competence level of high school students between the two groups, a Chi-square statistics was used.

By cooperation in group activities, 10.37% of students who cooperate in group activities and 17.6% of high school students who do not cooperate in group activities were found to be low level of social competence, 72.2% of students who cooperate in group activities and 73.86% of students who do not cooperate in group activities were found to be moderate level of social competence and 17.43% of students who cooperate in group activities and 8.54% of students who do not cooperate in group activities were found to be high level of social competence (see Table 15).

Table 15 Chi-square Analysis of the social competence level of High School Students by Cooperation in Group Activities

Cooperation in Group Activities	N	Social Competence Level						χ^2	p
		Low		Moderate		High			
		f	%	f	%	f	%		
Yes	482	50	10.37%	348	72.2%	84	17.43%	12.334**	.002
No	176	31	17.6%	130	73.86%	15	8.54%		
Total	658	81	12.3%	478	72.64%	99	15.06%		

** $p < .01$

Table 15 showed the Pearson Chi-square results and indicated that the cooperation in group activities of students were significantly different on whether they have the preferred attachment style ($\chi^2=12.334$, $df=2$, $n=658$, $p<0.01$). It can be interpreted that there was association between attachment styles of high school students by cooperation in group activities. The calculated effect size of 0.137 was considered a moderate effect size, as it falls greater than 0.1 to typical according to Dai et al. (2021).

Social Competence Level by Attachment Styles

To investigate the association between attachment styles and social competence level, a Chi-square test was conducted (see Table 16).

Table 16 Association between Attachment Styles and Social Competence Level of High School Students

Attachment Styles		Social Competence Level			Total	χ^2	<i>p</i>
		Low	Moderate	High			
Secure	Count	23	232	69	324	31.048***	.000
	%	28.4%	48.53%	69.7%	49.24%		
Fearful	Count	21	86	10	117		
	%	25.93%	18%	10.1%	17.78%		
Preoccupied	Count	10	59	8	77		
	%	12.35%	12.34%	8.08%	11.7%		
Dismissing	Count	27	101	12	140		
	%	33.33%	21.13%	12.12%	21.28%		
Total	Count	81	478	99	658		
	%						

*** $p < .001$

Generally, out of 658 students, 324 secure attachment style students (49.24%) in this study produced 28.4% of low social competence, 48.53% of moderate social competence and 69.7% of high social competence. And 117 fearful attachment style students (17.78%) in this study produced 25.93% of low social competence, 18% of moderate social competence and 10.1% of high social competence. Similarly, 77 preoccupied attachment style students (11.7%) in this study produced 12.35% of low social competence, 12.34% of moderate social competence and 8.08% of high social competence. And 140 dismissing attachment style students (21.28%) in this study produced 33.33% of low social competence, 21.13% of moderate social competence and 12.12% of high social competence (see Table 16). Therefore, it could be said that social competence level of high school students were likely to be related with attachment styles. This finding was consistent with the study of Sujana Kumar and John Michael Raj (2016). They found that adolescents with secure attachment style had higher levels of social competence than insecure ones. But, 23 (28.4%) of total secure attached students were low social competence level. This could be said that because of their inborn temperaments and their personalities.

Table 16 showed the Pearson Chi-square results and indicated that the social competence level of high school students were significantly different on whether they have the preferred attachment styles ($\chi^2=31.048$, $df=6$, $n=658$, $p<0.001$). It could be interpreted that there is association between attachment styles of high school students by social competence level. Statistical significance does not provide information about the strength of the relationship. The calculated effect size of 0.154 was considered a strong effect size, as it falls greater than 0.15 to typical according to Dai et al. (2021).

Conclusion

It is important for the teachers and parents to realize how they should nurture their children to have secure attached people besides being physically strong people. There is a strong need to investigate attachment styles as well as how these styles contribute to their social competence of high school students. By helping high school students to develop secure attachment style, they can be more socially competent people in their lives.

Limitations of the Study

Interview methods could be used to measure the different variables as well as self-reported measures. In the case of the study of the attachment styles and social competence, longitudinal design is more desirable. Due to the scarcity of time and resources, such design is impossible for this study.

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