



COMPARATIVE STUDY ON STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN DIFFERENT BOARDS OF EDUCATION IN TIRUNELVELI CITY

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ABSTRACT

Student engagement is a crucial determinant of academic success, skill development, and holistic personality formation among school students. In India, multiple boards of education State Board, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), and Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) follow different curricular frameworks and pedagogical approaches, which may influence the level and dimensions of student engagement. The present study aims to comparatively analyze students' engagement across different boards of education at the higher secondary level in Tirunelveli City. Using a descriptive research design, primary data were collected from 218 students through a structured questionnaire covering behavioral engagement, academic rigor, school culture, peers and physical education, and college and career readiness. Statistical tools such as ANOVA, F-test, and t-test were employed for analysis. The findings reveal significant differences in several dimensions of student engagement among the boards, with CBSE students showing relatively higher engagement in behavioral, academic rigor, and career readiness dimensions. The study highlights the importance of board-specific pedagogical strategies in fostering student engagement and offers implications for educators, policymakers, and parents.

Keywords: Student Engagement, Boards of Education, CBSE, State Board, ICSE, Academic Rigor, School Culture

1. Introduction

Student engagement is a multifaceted construct encompassing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions that reflect students' involvement in learning activities. Engagement is widely recognized as a reliable predictor of academic achievement, social development, and long-term educational outcomes. When students are actively engaged, they demonstrate curiosity, enthusiasm, persistence, and a willingness to invest effort in learning tasks. In the Indian education system, students are exposed to diverse boards of education such as the State Board of Tamil Nadu, CBSE, and ICSE, each emphasizing different teaching-learning approaches. While CBSE focuses on conceptual understanding and national-level competitiveness, State Boards emphasize curriculum aligned with regional context and language, and ICSE places strong emphasis on language proficiency and holistic education. These variations may significantly influence students' engagement, motivation, and preparedness for higher education and careers. Given the growing concern about skill gaps, employability, and student well-being, it becomes essential to examine how different boards of education contribute to student engagement. This study attempts to address this gap by comparing student engagement across boards of education at the higher secondary level.

2. Importance of Student Engagement

Student engagement plays a vital role in shaping academic performance and personal development. High levels of engagement are associated with better grades, lower dropout rates, improved social skills, and enhanced emotional well-being. Conversely, low engagement has been linked to absenteeism, behavioral problems, and academic failure.



Engaged students tend to take ownership of their learning, participate actively in classroom activities, and demonstrate resilience in overcoming academic challenges. For teachers and institutions, fostering engagement enhances teaching effectiveness and classroom dynamics. Therefore, understanding factors influencing engagement such as curriculum, pedagogy, assessment methods, and school culture is critical.

3. Boards of Education in India

3.1 State Board

State Boards operate under respective State Governments and follow region-specific curricula. They emphasize local language, culture, and context. While the syllabus is often considered less intensive, it supports students preparing for state-level examinations and nurtures cultural identity.

3.2 Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)

CBSE is a national-level board widely adopted across India. It emphasizes conceptual clarity, analytical skills, and uniform curriculum standards. CBSE prepares students for national competitive examinations and promotes continuous and comprehensive evaluation.

3.3 Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE)

ICSE follows a comprehensive and balanced curriculum with strong emphasis on English language proficiency, arts, and humanities. The board aims to provide a globally accepted education framework and holistic development of students.

4. Dimensions of Student Engagement

Student engagement can be broadly classified into:

- **Behavioral Engagement:** Participation in classroom activities, attentiveness, and involvement in school events.
- **Emotional Engagement:** Students' feelings toward learning, teachers, peers, and school environment.
- **Cognitive Engagement:** Investment in learning, problem-solving, critical thinking, and self-regulated learning.

These dimensions collectively determine the overall engagement level of students.

5. Statement of the Problem

Despite increasing access to education, unemployment and skill mismatch remain major challenges in India. One key reason is inadequate student engagement during schooling, which affects skill development and career readiness. Since different boards of education adopt varied teaching approaches, student engagement may differ significantly across boards. This study seeks to examine these differences and identify areas for improvement.

6. Objectives of the Study

1. To compare student engagement among different boards of education.
2. To analyze the dimensions of student engagement across boards.
3. To examine gender differences in student engagement at the higher secondary level.

7. Research Methodology

7.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive research design.



7.2 Area of the Study

The research was conducted in Tirunelveli City, Tamil Nadu.

7.3 Sample Size

A sample of 218 higher secondary students was selected using stratified random sampling.

7.4 Data Collection

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms.

7.5 Statistical Tools

ANOVA, F-test, and t-test were used for data analysis.

8. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis reveals significant differences among boards of education in behavioral engagement, academic rigor, college and career readiness, school culture, and physical education. CBSE students generally exhibited higher mean scores in behavioral engagement, analytical abilities, critical thinking, and career readiness. ICSE students showed strength in communication skills and participation, while State Board students demonstrated comparatively moderate engagement levels. Gender-wise analysis indicates slight variations in engagement levels, with female students showing marginally higher emotional and behavioral engagement.

9. Findings of the Study

- Significant differences exist in student engagement across boards of education.
- CBSE students demonstrate higher engagement in academic rigor and career readiness.
- ICSE students exhibit stronger participation in communication and extracurricular activities.
- State Board students show better cultural and regional orientation but comparatively lower analytical engagement.
- Gender differences in engagement are present but not substantial.

10. Conclusion

The study concludes that boards of education play a significant role in shaping student engagement. Pedagogical practices, assessment patterns, and school culture associated with each board influence students' learning experiences and preparedness for future challenges. Policymakers and educators should adopt best practices across boards to enhance engagement and ensure holistic development of students. Strengthening student engagement at the school level will contribute to improved academic outcomes, employability, and overall societal development.

References

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