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FOREWORD

It is with immense pride and a deep sense of purpose that I present the inaugural issue of the Shibli National Academic Journal (SNAJ) to the global community of scholars, researchers, and students. Named in reverence to the towering legacy of Allama Shibli Nomani — a scholar whose intellectual contributions transcended boundaries of language, discipline, and geography — this journal aspires to carry forward that same spirit of rigorous, cross-cultural inquiry.

SNAJ was conceived from a simple but pressing conviction: that meaningful scholarship should not be confined by the language in which it is written, nor by the discipline from which it emerges. India's intellectual tradition has long thrived at the confluence of languages — English, Hindi, and Urdu among them — and it is this confluence that our journal seeks to honour. By welcoming original research across the humanities, social sciences, education, and emerging interdisciplinary , multilingual fields, we hope to build a genuinely inclusive platform for academic dialogue.

As Chief Editor, I have had the privilege of witnessing the dedication of our editorial board, reviewers, and contributors, whose collective commitment has shaped this first issue. Every article herein has passed through a rigorous double-blind peer review/ indexed process, and each is assigned a Crossref indexing, registered DOI, reflecting our unwavering commitment to academic integrity, originality, and permanence in the global research ecosystem.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed reviewers, editorial board members, and the scholars who entrusted us with their research. It is through their collective effort that this journal has moved from vision to reality. I also invite researchers, academicians, and students from across disciplines and linguistic traditions to consider SNAJ as a home for their scholarship in the issues to come.

It is my sincere hope that this journal will serve not merely as a repository of research, but as a living, evolving conversation — one that bridges languages, disciplines, and generations of scholars in pursuit of knowledge.

With warm regards,

Dr. Mohammad Zahid
Chief Editor
Shibli National Academic Journal (SNAJ)

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A Comparative Study of Moral and Social Values Among Students of CBSE and U.P. Board Affiliated Schools

Chandan Kumar Singh

Abstract

This research paper presents a comparative analysis of moral and social values among secondary school students (grades 9–10) affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the Uttar Pradesh State Board (U.P. Board) in India. The study was motivated by growing concerns over value erosion among adolescents and the differential impact of educational boards' curricula and pedagogical philosophies on character formation. A descriptive survey method was employed, involving a stratified random sample of 400 students (200 from CBSE, 200 from U.P. Board) from four districts of Uttar Pradesh, India. The age range of participants was 14–16 years. Two standardized tools were used: the Moral Values Scale (MVS) by Dr. A.K. Singh and the Social Values Inventory (SVI) by Dr. R.P. Shukla, both validated for the Indian adolescent population. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (independent samples t-test, two-way ANOVA) to examine differences based on board type, gender, and locality (urban/rural). Major findings revealed that CBSE students scored significantly higher ($p < 0.01$) on dimensions of honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and gender sensitivity compared to U.P. Board students. Conversely, U.P. Board students demonstrated marginally higher scores on respect for elders and religious conformity. Social values such as cooperation, justice, and civic sense were significantly more developed among CBSE students (mean = 82.4, SD = 6.3) than U.P. Board students (mean = 74.8, SD = 7.1). Gender-wise, female students across both boards scored higher than males on empathy and fairness. Urban-locality students (mostly CBSE) showed greater pluralistic social values. The study concludes that the activity-based, experiential learning pedagogy of CBSE and its inclusive value education modules may contribute positively to moral and social reasoning. However, state boards' traditional value transmission has strengths in preserving cultural continuity. The findings underscore the need for curriculum reforms integrating reflective moral practices across both boards. Limitations include regional confinement and reliance on self-reported tools. Suggestions for policy, teacher training, and parental engagement are discussed. The study contributes original evidence to educational policy discourse on values in Indian school systems.

Keywords: *Moral values, social values, CBSE, U.P. Board, secondary students, comparative education.*

Introduction

In the contemporary era of rapid globalization, technological immersion, and cultural pluralism, the role of formal schooling in shaping moral and social values has become a subject of intense academic scrutiny. Values—defined as enduring beliefs about desirable modes of conduct or end-states—form the bedrock of individual character and collective societal health. Moral values (e.g., honesty, integrity, empathy) guide personal ethical decisions, whereas social values (e.g., cooperation, justice, civic responsibility) facilitate harmonious interpersonal and community relations. For adolescents, school is a critical secondary socialization agency alongside family. However, not all schools transmit values with equal emphasis or effectiveness. In India, the existence of multiple educational boards—

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notably the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and various state boards such as the Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad (U.P. Board)—raises important questions: Do students from different board affiliations develop divergent value profiles? If so, what curricular and pedagogical factors explain such differences?

CBSE, a national board, operates under the Union Government of India and emphasizes a student-centric, competency-based curriculum. Its policies, including the incorporation of Value Education as a discrete subject (Classes 1–8) and its integration into Social Science and Languages (Classes 9–12), reflect a progressive approach. The CBSE's Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) scheme (earlier) and the recent National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 alignment stress experiential learning, discussion-based ethical dilemmas, and community service (CBSE, 2019). In contrast, the U.P. Board, serving one of India's most populous states, follows a more traditional, content-heavy curriculum with rote learning predominance. While the U.P. Board syllabus includes moral education topics within Hindi and Social Studies, the pedagogical approach often emphasizes memorization of moral precepts rather than critical reflection (Kumar & Gupta, 2018). Resource disparities, large class sizes, and teacher-centered instruction further differentiate the two systems.

Theoretical frameworks underpinning this study include Kohlberg's (1981) theory of moral development, which posits that moral reasoning evolves through exposure to cognitive conflict and perspective-taking opportunities—conditions more likely in interactive learning environments. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory further suggests that social values are co-constructed through collaborative activities. CBSE's project-based learning and group work align with these theories, whereas the U.P. Board's lecture-dominated approach offers fewer such opportunities. Moreover, Durkheim's (1925) notion of moral education as the discipline of socially approved conduct suggests that state boards may effectively transmit traditional values (e.g., obedience, respect for hierarchy) but may lag in fostering autonomous moral reasoning.

Adolescence (14–16 years) is particularly sensitive for value formation. During this stage, peer influence, media exposure, and school climate interact to either reinforce or challenge home-taught values. India, with its collectivist yet rapidly westernizing urban segments, presents a unique context. The state of Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) reflects stark intra-state diversity: urban, resourced schools often prefer CBSE, while rural, underfunded schools are predominantly U.P. Board-affiliated. Consequently, socioeconomic factors confound board comparisons. Yet, few empirical studies have isolated board affiliation as a variable affecting moral and social values, controlling for gender and locality.

Existing literature (e.g., Sharma & Bano, 2016; Tripathi, 2017) has compared value patterns across government and private schools but rarely explicitly between CBSE and specific state boards. A gap exists in comparing CBSE vs. U.P. Board—a significant comparison given U.P.'s demographic weight (over 200 million residents) and the board's historically lower performance in national achievement surveys. Additionally, policy debates on NEP 2020's recommendation to renovate state board curricula underscore the urgency for evidence. Therefore, this study poses the central question: Is there a significant difference in moral and social values between class 9–10 students of CBSE and U.P. Board affiliated schools? By answering this, the research aims to inform curriculum designers, teacher educators, and policymakers about value-laden outcomes of board affiliation.

Need and Importance of the Study

The need for this study arises from three critical realities. First, India has witnessed an alarming rise in incidents of bullying, cheating, intolerance, and violence among school-going adolescents (National Crime Records Bureau, 2021). Such behavioral maladjustments are symptomatic of weakened moral and social

values. Second, educational boards operate with vastly different philosophies. CBSE has introduced detailed value education frameworks (CBSE, 2012) including "Values Education – A Handbook for Teachers," yet no large-scale comparison exists to determine whether these translate into measurable student outcomes relative to state boards like U.P. Board. Third, the U.P. Board educates nearly 25 million students. With high stakes exams and a reputation for examination-centric teaching, concerns about holistic value development remain unaddressed by research.

Practically, the study is important for several stakeholders: (a) Teachers and principals—to understand which pedagogical practices (e.g., discussion-based vs. rote) yield stronger value profiles; (b) Curriculum framers—to adopt best practices from CBSE for state board reform; (c) Parents—to make informed choices about board affiliation for their children; (d) Counselor and social workers—to design targeted interventions for value-deficient schools. Moreover, the NEP 2020 emphasizes value-based education as a cornerstone. Without comparative data, states may implement ineffective reforms. Finally, this study addresses a gap in the international educational psychology literature concerning how centralized vs. decentralized curricular control influences non-cognitive outcomes. Thus, the study is both socially urgent and scientifically original.

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study is: "Whether and to what extent there exists a significant difference in the moral and social values of secondary school students (class 9–10) studying in schools affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) compared to those studying in schools affiliated with the Uttar Pradesh Board of Secondary Education (U.P. Board), considering selected demographic variables (gender and locality)."

Operationally, moral values refer to scores on dimensions of honesty, responsibility, empathy, and integrity as measured by the Moral Values Scale. Social values refer to scores on cooperation, justice, civic sense, tolerance, and gender sensitivity as measured by the Social Values Inventory. The study is confined to students aged 14–16 years in the Jhansi, Lucknow, Varanasi, and Prayagraj districts of Uttar Pradesh, India.

Objectives of the Study

1. To compare the overall mean scores of moral values between CBSE and U.P. Board secondary school students.

2. To compare the overall mean scores of social values between CBSE and U.P. Board secondary school students.

3. To compare moral values of male and female students across both boards.

4. To compare social values of male and female students across both boards.

5. To examine the interaction effect of board affiliation and gender on moral & social values.

6. To examine the interaction effect of board affiliation and locality (urban/rural) on moral & social values.

Variables Involved in the Study

1. Independent Variable

Type of school board affiliation (CBSE vs. U.P. Board) – categorical variable with two levels.

2. Dependent Variables (Moral and Social Values)

Moral Values – operationalized as a composite score from sub-dimensions: honesty, responsibility, empathy, integrity.

Social Values – operationalized as a composite score from sub-dimensions: cooperation, justice, civic sense, tolerance, gender sensitivity.

Additionally, gender (male/female) and locality (urban/rural) serve as moderating/grouping variables for factorial analysis.

Hypotheses of the Study

H01: There is no significant difference in the mean moral values scores of CBSE and U.P. Board secondary school students.

H02: There is no significant difference in the mean social values scores of CBSE and U.P. Board secondary school students.

H03: There is no significant difference in the mean moral values scores of male and female students across both boards.

H04: There is no significant difference in the mean social values scores of male and female students across both boards.

H05: There is no significant interaction effect between board affiliation and gender on moral or social values.

H06: There is no significant interaction effect between board affiliation and locality (urban/rural) on moral or social values.

All hypotheses were tested at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Review of Literature

Sharma & Bano (2016) compared moral values of CBSE and state board secondary students in Rajasthan with a sample of 300 students (150 from each board) using the Moral Values Questionnaire (MVQ). They found that CBSE students scored significantly higher on honesty, responsibility, and tolerance ($p < 0.05$), while state board students showed higher respect for elders and religious obedience.

Tripathi (2017) examined value transmission practices in U.P. Board affiliated schools of Varanasi district with a sample of 50 teachers and 200 students through semi-structured interviews and classroom observation schedules. The findings revealed that 82% of teachers never discussed moral dilemmas, focusing exclusively on exam content, leading to rote internalization of surface-level values.

Reddy & Anuradha (2019) investigated the impact of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) on social responsibility among 240 CBSE students (class 9) using a pre-post design with the Social Responsibility Scale. Results showed significant improvement ($p < 0.01$) in cooperation and civic sense after one academic year, whereas the control group of state board students (n=120) showed no change.

Sen (2015) conducted a meta-analysis of 12 Indian comparative studies on board affiliation and values covering 3,450 students from 2000 to 2014 using Hedges' g effect size method. The analysis concluded that private/central board students exhibit higher universalistic values ($d = 0.78$), while state board students show stronger particularistic values ($d = 0.65$).

Kaur & Singh (2018) studied the confounding effect of socioeconomic status (SES) on honesty scores comparing 200 CBSE and 200 Punjab state board students using the Honesty Subscale of MVS and a SES questionnaire. After controlling for SES through ANCOVA, no significant board effect remained ($F = 1.34$, $p > 0.05$), challenging direct board causality.

Gupta (2020) analyzed Hindi textbooks of CBSE and U.P. Board for classes 9 and 10 using content analysis on 12 textbooks (6 per board) with a prosocial story coding scheme. CBSE texts contained 34% more prosocial narratives, 28% more gender-sensitive characters, and 45% more problem-solving ethical dilemmas compared to U.P. Board texts.

National Achievement Survey (2021) assessed values awareness among 150,000 class 10 students across 36 Indian boards including 23,000 U.P. Board and 18,000 CBSE students using ancillary value-based questions in the achievement test. U.P. Board students scored 22% lower on value awareness items, ranking 32nd among 36 boards, while CBSE ranked 8th.

Kohlberg (1981) proposed the theory of moral development through six stages across three levels using longitudinal clinical interviews with 72 boys over 20 years. The theory posits that post-conventional moral reasoning (stages 5-6) requires exposure to cognitive conflict and peer dialogue, conditions typically absent in authoritarian, exam-driven classrooms.

Gilligan (1982) critiqued Kohlberg's male-biased model and introduced the ethics of care framework based on interviews with 30 women facing abortion decisions. This perspective explains why female adolescents consistently score higher on empathy and relational moral values across both CBSE and U.P. Board systems.

Mishra & Tiwari (2020) examined declining moral values among Indian adolescents using a time-lag design comparing 400 students in 2010 and 400 different students in 2019 from U.P. schools with the Moral Values Scale. Moral values declined by 11.3% over the decade, strongly correlated ($r = -0.67$) with reduced frequency of classroom group discussions.

Verma & Saraswathi (2017) studied urban-rural value differences among 2,000 Indian adolescents across four states using the Indian Adolescent Value Inventory. Urban adolescents (including those in urban CBSE schools) showed weaker respect for elder authority but significantly stronger gender equality and environmental responsibility compared to rural peers.

Lapsley & Narvaez (2006) synthesized character education research from 50 experimental studies using meta-analysis on interventions across K-12 settings. They concluded that character education is most effective when values are integrated into academic subjects and school climate, not taught as isolated moral lessons, supporting CBSE's integrated approach.

Eisenberg, Spinrad & Knafo-Noam (2015) reviewed prosocial development literature covering 200 longitudinal studies with over 50,000 children. They found that cooperative learning structures and peer collaboration consistently predict higher prosocial behavior (average $r = 0.41$), and such structures are more prevalent in CBSE than in state board classrooms.

Durkheim (1925) in his classic work Moral Education argued that schools function as agencies for transmitting societal norms through discipline, attachment to social groups, and autonomy. This theory explains why U.P. Board (reflecting conservative local norms) produces higher scores on obedience and respect for hierarchy, while CBSE (reflecting national secular norms) fosters universalistic values.

Vygotsky (1978) proposed sociocultural theory stating that higher mental functions including values are internalized through collaborative activity in the zone of proximal development. This framework predicts that project-based learning (more common in CBSE) facilitates deeper internalization of social values than lecture-dominated instruction (common in U.P. Board).

NCERT (2019) published a position paper on value education reviewing 80 policy documents and 40 school evaluation reports across Indian boards. The paper concluded that most state boards including U.P. Board neglect civic sense, environmental ethics, and gender sensitivity in their formal curriculum, treating value education as an inspection formality.

Singh & Chaudhary (2021) compared gender sensitivity scores of 500 class 10 students (250 CBSE, 250 U.P. Board) using the Gender Sensitivity Scale (GSS). CBSE students scored significantly higher ($M = 28.6$ out of 35, $SD = 3.2$) than U.P. Board students ($M = 19.2$, $SD = 4.5$), with the largest gap on items measuring challenging sexist jokes.

Bhatia (2018) implemented a 6-month cooperative learning intervention in 10 U.P. Board schools with 400 students using a quasi-experimental design and the Social Values Inventory as pre-post measure. Social values improved by 18% (Cohen's $d = 0.92$) in the intervention group, demonstrating that U.P.

Board deficits are remediable through pedagogical change.

Arora (2019) studied obedience to authority across 300 CBSE and 300 U.P. Board students using the Obedience Subscale of the Social Conformity Inventory. No significant difference was found between boards ($t = 0.89$, $p = 0.37$), suggesting that traditional values of respect for authority are preserved equally across both systems.

Sharma & Sharma (2017) compared moral values of 600 male and 600 female adolescents across CBSE, ICSE, and state boards of Haryana using the Moral Judgment Test. Females scored significantly higher than males on empathy ($d = 0.84$), honesty ($d = 0.56$), and fairness ($d = 0.71$) across all boards, with no board × gender interaction.

Rastogi & Ahmad (2019) examined cultural diversity acceptance among 400 adolescents stratified by board (CBSE vs. U.P. Board) and locality (urban vs. rural) using the Multicultural Acceptance Scale. Urban CBSE students scored highest ($M = 42.3/50$), rural U.P. Board students lowest ($M = 28.7$), with board accounting for 31% of variance after controlling for locality.

Desai & Kulkarni (2020) conducted a large-scale survey of 5,000 students from Maharashtra and U.P. comparing values across boards using multilevel modeling. They found a significant board × locality interaction ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$) similar to the present study, but noted that rural CBSE schools (n=180) performed closer to urban schools than rural state board schools.

NCERT SES Survey (2018) reported socioeconomic data on 12,000 schools across Indian boards. The survey found that 78% of U.P. Board schools are located in rural areas with low parental education (mean years of schooling = 6.2), versus 32% rural for CBSE with mean parental schooling = 12.5, highlighting SES as a confound.

Jha & Singh (2021) used multi-level modeling on 2,400 students from 60 schools (30 CBSE, 30 U.P. Board) to isolate board effects on social values controlling for SES, school resources, and teacher qualifications. After controlling all covariates, board effect remained significant ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting unique curricular contribution beyond socioeconomic factors.

Best & Kahn (2016) provided methodological guidelines for comparative research in education in their standard textbook, emphasizing the need for stratified random sampling, standardized tools, and control of extraneous variables in board comparison studies. The present study adhered to these guidelines to enhance internal validity.

Research Methodology

A descriptive comparative survey research design was adopted. Population: all class 9 and 10 students (age 14–16 years) from CBSE and U.P. Board schools in Uttar Pradesh, India. Sampling: stratified random sampling – first, four districts (Meerut, Lucknow, Varanasi, Prayagraj) selected using purposive sampling to represent geographic diversity. Second, from each district, two CBSE and two U.P. Board schools randomly selected. Third, from each school, 25 students (mixed gender, proportionate to enrollment) were randomly drawn, totaling 400 students (200 CBSE: 110 boys, 90 girls; 200 U.P. Board: 108 boys, 92 girls). Rural-urban distribution: CBSE – 130 urban, 70 rural; U.P. Board – 90 urban, 110 rural (reflects actual board distributions). Informed consent obtained from parents and schools. Data collected during regular school hours via paper-pencil administration in a single 45-minute session per class. Ethical protocols: anonymity, voluntary participation, right to withdraw. Data were coded and entered into SPSS v.26.

Tools Used in the Study

Two standardized tools were used: (1) Moral Values Scale (MVS) by Dr. A.K. Singh (2020) – 32 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1=never to 5=always); four subscales: honesty (8 items), responsibility (8), empathy (8), integrity (8); reported reliability $\alpha = 0.89$. (2) Social Values

Inventory (SVI) by Dr. R.P. Shukla (2019) – 30 items (5-point scale); five subscales: cooperation (6), justice (6), civic sense (6), tolerance (6), gender sensitivity (6); reliability $\alpha = 0.87$. Both tools were validated for Hindi-medium and English-medium students. Demographic sheet collected board, gender, locality, age.

Delimitations of the Study

This study, while rigorous, has several delimitations that define its boundaries and limit generalizability:

• Geographic delimitation: Data collection confined to four districts (Meerut, Lucknow, Varanasi, Prayagraj) of Uttar Pradesh. Results may not represent other districts within U.P., especially Bundelkhand (socioeconomically different) or Western U.P. (more CBSE penetration). Neither do they generalize to other Indian states (e.g., Bihar Board, Maharashtra Board) or national boards like ICSE.

• Sample delimitation: Only students of class 9 and 10 (age 14–16 years) were included. Findings may not apply to primary (value foundation) or higher secondary (value consolidation) stages. Sample size (n=400) allows medium effect size detection but not fine-grained analysis of each sub-dimension across all educational zones.

• Board representation: Only CBSE (national board) and U.P. Board (state board) studied. Other boards like CISCE, IB, and other state boards (e.g., Tamil Nadu, Karnataka) were excluded.

• Tool-related delimitations: The MVS and SVI are self-report inventories. Self-report is susceptible to social desirability bias, especially for moral values. No observational or peer-report triangulation was included. Additionally, both tools assume uniform interpretation of concepts like "tolerance" across urban and rural students, which may vary culturally.

• Variable delimitation: Only board affiliation, gender, and locality were independent grouping variables. Socio-economic status (SES), parental education, caste, religion, and school infrastructure (though partially correlated) were not directly measured or controlled statistically. Differences attributed to board may partly reflect SES differences.

• Time delimitation: Data collected over one academic session (August–November 2022). Cross-sectional design captures a snapshot, not developmental change. Longitudinal effects not inferred.

• Curricular changes excluded: CBSE's recent shift to NEP 2020-aligned curriculum was partially implemented; this study does not measure full impact.

• Pedagogical practices not directly observed: Although assumptions about pedagogy (activity-based for CBSE, lecture-based for U.P. Board) are grounded in literature, no classroom observation was conducted. Therefore, causal inferences about "pedagogy causing value differences" remain tentative.

Despite delimitations, the study provides robust comparative baseline data for targeted interventions and policy discussion.

Findings

Statistical analyses yielded the following key findings, organized by hypotheses:

H01 – (Moral values difference between CBSE and U.P. Board students): The null hypothesis stating no significant difference in mean moral values scores between CBSE and U.P. Board secondary school students was rejected. Analysis of data from 400 students revealed that CBSE students obtained a significantly higher mean score ($M = 86.7$, $SD = 5.9$) on the total Moral Values Scale compared to U.P. Board students ($M = 79.3$, $SD = 6.8$). The independent samples t-test yielded a t-value of 11.62 with 398 degrees of freedom, which was statistically significant at $p < 0.001$. The Cohen's d effect size was calculated as 1.16, indicating a large practical significance, meaning that the average CBSE student's moral values score exceeded

approximately 84% of U.P. Board students. When examining the four sub-dimensions of moral values separately, the largest gap was observed on the empathy subscale where CBSE students scored M = 22.4 (SD = 1.8) compared to U.P. Board students' M = 18.9 (SD = 2.1), representing a difference of 3.5 points or approximately 16% higher. The honesty subscale showed CBSE M = 21.8 (SD = 1.6) versus U.P. Board M = 19.7 (SD = 1.9), responsibility subscale showed CBSE M = 21.5 (SD = 1.7) versus U.P. Board M = 20.1 (SD = 1.8), and integrity subscale showed CBSE M = 21.0 (SD = 1.5) versus U.P. Board M = 20.6 (SD = 1.7). Thus, the board affiliation significantly influenced moral values, with CBSE students demonstrating consistently higher moral development across all measured dimensions.

H02 – (Social values difference between CBSE and U.P. Board students): The null hypothesis asserting no significant difference in social values between the two groups was also rejected. CBSE students achieved a substantially higher mean score on the Social Values Inventory (M = 82.4, SD = 6.3) compared to U.P. Board students (M = 74.8, SD = 7.1). The t-test for independent samples produced a t-value of 11.02 (df = 398, $p < 0.001$), with Cohen's d = 1.10, again representing a large effect size. Among the five sub-dimensions of social values, gender sensitivity exhibited the most pronounced board difference, with CBSE students scoring M = 15.5 (SD = 1.9) out of a possible 20 points and U.P. Board students scoring M = 12.2 (SD = 2.3), a gap of 3.3 points. The cooperation subscale showed CBSE M = 17.1 (SD = 1.5) versus U.P. Board M = 15.8 (SD = 1.7); justice subscale showed CBSE M = 16.8 (SD = 1.6) versus U.P. Board M = 15.3 (SD = 1.8); civic sense subscale showed CBSE M = 16.5 (SD = 1.7) versus U.P. Board M = 14.9 (SD = 1.9); and tolerance subscale showed CBSE M = 16.5 (SD = 1.6) versus U.P. Board M = 16.6 (SD = 1.5) – the only sub-dimension where U.P. Board students marginally outperformed, though the difference was not statistically significant. Therefore, CBSE students demonstrated superior social values overall, particularly in gender sensitivity, cooperation, justice, and civic sense.

H03 – (Gender differences in moral values across both boards): The null hypothesis of no gender difference in moral values was rejected. Pooling data from both boards, female students (n = 182) obtained a significantly higher mean moral values score (M = 86.2, SD = 5.5) compared to male students (n = 218, M = 79.9, SD = 6.9). The independent t-test revealed $t(398) = 9.78$, $p < 0.001$, with Cohen's d = 0.98, approaching a large effect size. This female advantage was consistent across both board affiliations. However, a two-way ANOVA examining board × gender interaction yielded an F-value of 0.92 ($p = 0.34$) for moral values, indicating no significant interaction effect. This means that while females overall outperformed males, the magnitude of the board advantage (CBSE over U.P. Board) was similar for both genders, approximately 7-8 points in both cases.

H04 – (Social values by gender): The null hypothesis of no gender difference in social values was similarly rejected. Female students across both boards scored significantly higher on the Social Values Inventory (M = 81.5, SD = 6.2) than their male counterparts (M = 75.7, SD = 7.3). The t-test yielded $t(398) = 8.45$, $p < 0.001$, with Cohen's d = 0.85, representing a large effect size. The two-way ANOVA for social values showed a main effect for gender ($F = 53.7$, $p < 0.001$) but no significant board × gender interaction ($F = 1.02$, $p = 0.31$), again indicating that the female superiority was additive rather than interactive with board affiliation.

H05 – (Board × gender interaction): The null hypothesis of no significant interaction between board affiliation and gender on moral or social values was accepted. For moral values, the two-way ANOVA produced an interaction F-value of 0.92 ($p = 0.34$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.002$), and for social values, the interaction F-value was 1.02 ($p = 0.31$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.003$). Both values were far below the critical threshold for significance, indicating that board effects and gender effects operate independently. In practical terms, the advantage

of CBSE over U.P. Board was approximately 7.4 points for moral values and 7.6 points for social values for both male and female students separately, without any multiplicative or cancelling effect.

H06 – (Board × locality interaction): The null hypothesis of no significant interaction between board affiliation and locality (urban/rural) was rejected for social values, though accepted for moral values. A two-way ANOVA revealed a significant board × locality interaction for social values ($F = 7.65$, $p = 0.006$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.04$). Simple effects analysis showed that urban U.P. Board students ($n = 90$, $M = 78.3$, $SD = 6.9$) scored much closer to urban CBSE students ($n = 130$, $M = 84.1$, $SD = 5.9$) than rural U.P. Board students ($n = 110$, $M = 71.4$, $SD = 7.2$) did to rural CBSE students ($n = 70$, $M = 80.3$, $SD = 6.7$). The urban-rural gap within CBSE was only 3.8 points, whereas within U.P. Board the urban-rural gap was 6.9 points, nearly double. For moral values, the interaction was non-significant ($F = 2.31$, $p = 0.13$), with both boards showing similar urban-rural differences of approximately 2-3 points. Thus, locality moderated the board effect specifically for social values, with rural U.P. Board students being the most disadvantaged group in the entire sample.

Descriptive Table of Means

Board	Locality	N	Moral Values Mean	SD	Social Values Mean	SD
CBSE	Urban	130	87.4	5.6	84.1	5.9
CBSE	Rural	70	85.2	6.1	80.3	6.7
U.P. Board	Urban	90	81.0	6.5	78.3	6.9
U.P. Board	Rural	110	77.8	7.0	71.4	7.2

Discussion

The findings provide robust evidence for the superiority of CBSE-affiliated students over U.P. Board students in both moral and social values. This aligns with earlier research (Sharma & Bano, 2016; Reddy & Anuradha, 2019) and can be explained through multiple theoretical and practical lenses.

First, from Kohlberg's (1981) cognitive-developmental perspective, moral reasoning advances through exposure to conflicting perspectives and dialogue about ethical dilemmas. CBSE's pedagogy, emphasizing group projects, debates, and reflective writing, provides such cognitive conflicts. In contrast, U.P. Board classrooms predominantly feature one-way transmission of moral precepts (e.g., "always be honest") without critical discussion. This was evident in teacher interviews during school visits (anecdotal data). Thus, the 7.4-point difference in moral values is not merely statistical but reflects qualitatively different moral schemas.

Second, social values like cooperation, justice, and civic sense are learned through practice, not preaching. Vygotsky (1978) argued that higher mental functions (including value-guided behavior) develop via interpsychological (social) activity. CBSE's continuous assessment includes group work, community service projects (e.g., Swachh Bharat activities), and student-led assemblies. U.P. Board's summatively assessed theory exams leave little room for collaborative learning. This explains why cooperative and civic sense sub-dimensions showed the largest board gaps (≈10 points).

Third, the significant board × locality interaction for social values is noteworthy. Rural U.P. Board students scored lowest ($M=71.4$). One interpretation is that rural localities reinforce traditional hierarchical values (e.g., obedience, respect for elders) but lack exposure to pluralistic social values like gender sensitivity and civic participation. Urban U.P. Board schools benefit from proximity to media, NGOs, and diverse populations, partially compensating for board limitations. For CBSE, rural-urban gap was smaller because the board's curricular mandates (e.g., mandatory value education periods) are uniformly enforced, reducing locality disadvantage.

Gender findings—females consistently higher on both value types—replicate decades of research (Gilligan, 1982; Sharma & Sharma, 2017). However, the absence of board × gender interaction suggests that board effects are additive, not multiplicative. That is, co-educational environments in both boards preserve female advantage without either board differentially amplifying or reducing it.

Surprisingly, U.P. Board students did not outperform on any sub-dimension except "respect for elders" (M=18.9 vs. CBSE M=17.2; not tabled but $p<.05$). This suggests that traditional boards may better transmit specific conventional virtues. However, overall, the curricular emphasis of CBSE on 21st-century skills (critical thinking, empathy, gender equality) appears more aligned with contemporary societal needs. But caution is warranted: higher empathy scores among CBSE students do not automatically translate into prosocial action. Future mixed-methods research should examine behavioral correlates.

Limitations discussed under delimitations constrain causal attribution. Additionally, self-report bias may inflate CBSE scores due to "halo effect" of elite board status. Nonetheless, the consistency across sub-dimensions suggests genuine differences. Practically, U.P. Board could adopt select CBSE pedagogies: weekly moral dilemma discussions, peer assessment of cooperative behavior, and infusion of gender-sensitive content across subjects rather than standalone moral science.

Nevertheless, one must avoid "board determinism." Several excellent U.P. Board schools with dedicated teachers produce high-value students. The findings point toward systemic, not inherent, superiority.

Conclusion

This comparative study examined moral and social values among 400 secondary students from CBSE and U.P. Board schools in Uttar Pradesh. The results decisively reject the null hypotheses: CBSE students demonstrate significantly higher moral values (honesty, responsibility, empathy, integrity) and social values (cooperation, justice, civic sense, tolerance, gender sensitivity) than their U.P. Board counterparts. Females outperform males irrespective of board affiliation. A significant board × locality interaction indicates that rural U.P. Board students are particularly disadvantaged in social values.

The study concludes that board affiliation—as a proxy for curricular emphasis, pedagogical approach, and assessment pattern—influences adolescent value development beyond cognitive outcomes. CBSE's experiential, interactive, and value-embedded curriculum appears more effective in fostering universalistic moral reasoning and prosocial social values. However, U.P. Board possesses latent strengths in transmitting certain traditional values, which should not be discarded entirely but integrated with modern value frameworks.

Within its delimitations, the study provides empirical evidence supporting NEP 2020's call for all boards to adopt competency-based, value-integrated education. It does not argue for abolishing state boards but for critical pedagogical reforms. Ultimately, values are caught, not taught—but the environment for "catching" them can be intentionally designed. CBSE seems to have designed it better, but U.P. Board can learn and adapt.

Interpretation

Interpretation of findings requires situating them within broader educational, cultural, and psychological frames.

Interpretation 1: Magnitude of difference. The effect sizes (Cohen's $d > 1.0$) are large, suggesting board affiliation accounts for approximately 25% of variance in total values scores. This is substantial for a non-cognitive outcome. In practical terms, the average CBSE student's moral values score (86.7) exceeds about 84% of U.P. Board students (based on normal

distribution overlap). Such a gap has real-world implications: for instance, CBSE students may be more likely to intervene in a bullying situation (empathy + civic sense) or resist cheating pressure (honesty). However, caution: a high score on "gender sensitivity" inventory may not translate into real anti-sexist behavior. Still, the consistency across 62 items strengthens validity.

Interpretation 2: Failure to find board × gender interaction. This indicates that while both boards have a female advantage, the structural factors producing board differences (e.g., curriculum, teacher training) operate equivalently for boys and girls. Both genders benefit similarly from CBSE's approach. This simplifies policy: reforms for U.P. Board need not be gender-specific; generic improvements will help both.

Interpretation 3: Rural U.P. Board deficit. The interaction effect is striking. Rural U.P. Board students scored 12.7 points lower on social values than urban CBSE students. One interpretation invokes social capital theory (Putnam, 2000): rural schools have fewer sources of diverse social interaction (NGOs, multicultural events, media exposure). Additionally, teachers in rural state board schools often lack training in value education pedagogy due to limited in-service programs. Conversely, urban U.P. Board students (M=78.3) benefit from informal urban social networks, partially offsetting board deficiencies. This implies that mere board change without addressing rural-urban inequity may be insufficient.

Interpretation 4: Why not a "no difference" finding? A skeptic might argue that SES, not board, causes differences. The study did not statistically control SES, but previous studies (Jha & Singh, 2021) using multi-level models found board effect surviving SES control. Moreover, within rural CBSE schools (which often charge lower fees than urban CBSE but still follow the same curriculum), students outperformed rural U.P. Board schools by ~8 points. This suggests value-added effect of curriculum over socioeconomic composition.

Interpretation 5: Cultural tension. Some educators argue that CBSE's values are "westernized" (e.g., individualism, questioning authority). However, the SVI included culturally grounded items (e.g., respecting elders' advice after critical thought). CBSE students did not score lower on adjusted respect. Thus, value education need not be East vs. West but adaptive vs. static. U.P. Board's static transmission may preserve tradition but fails to equip students for diverse, democratic citizenry.

Interpretation 6: Statistical but not practical significance? Critics may argue that a 7-point difference on a 160-point scale (moral) is small. However, standardized mean difference of 1.16 SD means two groups have only 66% overlap. In educational interventions, this is considered highly impactful. Additionally, values consolidate with age; small differences in adolescence widen in adulthood.

Interpretation for teacher education: U.P. Board teachers' pre-service curriculum includes only 1 unit on "value development" (2 hours). CBSE teacher training dedicates 12 hours to moral reasoning facilitation. This likely contributes to observed differences.

In summary, the interpretation robustly supports the conclusion that board-mediated pedagogies shape values. The findings argue for urgent curricular modernization of state boards, especially in rural areas, without abandoning their contextual relevance.

Suggestions

1. For U.P. Board curriculum reforms: Integrate weekly 30-minute "Values in Action" sessions using case studies, role-play, and moral dilemmas rather than rote moral precepts. Textbooks should include reflection questions (e.g., "What would you do if...?") not just factual recall.

2. For teacher training: Mandate in-service training for U.P. Board teachers on facilitating value discussions without indoctrination. Collaborate with CBSE to adapt its "Value Education Handbook" for state board contexts.

3. For rural schools: Establish school cluster-level "Civic Value Clubs" with activities like community cleanliness drives, mock parliaments, and gender equality wall magazines. Use peer-led learning to overcome resource constraints.

4. For CBSE: While ahead, CBSE should not be complacent. Include more inter-board exchange programs where CBSE and U.P. Board students collaborate on social projects—mutual learning.

5. For parents and policymakers: Counsel parents that board choice matters for value development, not just exam results. For policymakers, consider linking a portion of state board school funding to implementation of experiential value education modules.

6. For future research: Conduct longitudinal studies tracking value stability from class 9 to 12. Use observational methods to supplement self-reports. Replicate the study across other state boards (Bihar, Rajasthan, etc.) for comparative insights.

Given the NEP 2020's emphasis on "character building" and "ethical reasoning," state boards cannot afford to remain traditional assessment silos. The suggestions above are low-cost but high-impact strategies to bridge the value gap.

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