



Social-Emotional Skills and Adolescent Well-Being Among Secondary School Students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State

Onojedje Ovuoke Stephen

Department of Guidance and Counselling, Delta State University Abraka, Nigeria

obasteve75@gmail.com

08030692837

Oyearone Iroko

Department of Guidance and Counselling, Delta State University Abraka, Nigeria

iroyearone@gmail.com

09040493464

Abstract

The study examined the relationship between Social-Emotional skills and Adolescent Well-Being among Secondary School Students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State. The research used a correlational survey design with a population of 20,000 secondary school Adolescent students. The sample size included 500 secondary school Adolescent students chosen using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Data was collected using the "Social Skills, Emotional Skills, and Adolescent Well-being Questionnaire" (SSESAWBQ). The research questions were addressed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, while the hypotheses were tested using linear regressions at a 0.05 significance level. The findings indicated a positive impact of social skills on adolescent well-being among secondary school students in the Delta Central senatorial district. However, no significant relationship was found between emotional skill and adolescent well-being. The study concluded that social skills significantly correlate with student well-being, while emotional skills do not. Based on the findings, schools were recommended to implement programs to enhance students' social competencies and incorporate comprehensive programs that integrate social and emotional learning.

Keywords: Social-Emotional Skills; Adolescent; Well-Being.



Introduction

Adolescent well-being refers to the holistic state of health and positive functioning experienced by individuals in the adolescent stage of development, typically defined as ages 10 to 19. Adolescent well-being is a multifaceted concept that encompasses the emotional, psychological, physical, and social dimensions of young people's lives. As adolescents transition from childhood to adulthood, they face a period of significant change and development, which makes their well-being a critical area of focus. According to Patton et al. (2018), ensuring comprehensive support during this transformative stage is essential for fostering healthy development and helping adolescents navigate their challenges. Emotional and psychological well-being is at the core of adolescent development. This aspect involves managing emotions, coping with stress, and maintaining a positive self-image. According to Kumar & Smith. (2022), adolescents often experience intense and fluctuating emotions due to hormonal changes and social pressures, making it crucial for them to develop resilience and healthy coping strategies. Positive self-esteem and a strong sense of identity are key components of emotional well-being. Support from family, friends, and mental health professionals can help adolescents build these attributes and address issues such as anxiety, depression, and self-esteem struggles.

Physical well-being is equally important during adolescence. This period is marked by rapid growth and changes in the body, and maintaining good physical health supports overall well-being. Adequate nutrition, regular exercise, and sufficient sleep are fundamental to physical health. According to Sawyer et al. (2019), adolescents are also at a stage where they may engage in risky behaviours, such as experimenting with substances or neglecting healthy habits. Education on healthy lifestyle choices and access to healthcare resources are essential for promoting physical health and preventing potential health issues. Nguyen & Patel (2022) pointed out that social well-being involves the quality of relationships and social interactions adolescents experience. As they seek independence and build their social networks, positive relationships with family, peers, and mentors play a significant role in their well-being. Supportive relationships provide emotional support, guidance, and a sense of belonging. Adolescents benefit from healthy social interactions, including positive friendships and involvement in community or extracurricular activities. Navigating social pressures and developing effective communication skills are critical for fostering strong, supportive relationships.

According to Garcia & Lee (2023) academic and career development also significantly impact adolescent well-being. Success in school and planning for future career paths contribute to a sense of achievement and direction. Support in educational settings, including access to academic resources and career counselling, helps adolescents set and achieve goals, manage academic stress, and explore their interests and aspirations. Encouraging a balance between academic responsibilities and other aspects of life is essential for preventing burnout and promoting overall well-being. Adams, & Thompson, (2023) believed that access to mental health support is a crucial element of adolescent well-being. Mental health issues can significantly affect an adolescent's quality of life and development. Providing early intervention, counselling, and mental health education can help address issues before they escalate. Schools, families, and communities play a vital role in creating an environment where mental health is openly discussed and support is readily available. Reducing stigma around mental health and promoting awareness are important steps in ensuring that adolescents receive the help they need. Parental involvement and community support are critical in promoting adolescent well-being. Families provide the foundation for emotional support and guidance,

while communities offer additional resources and opportunities for growth. Engaging parents and caregivers in understanding adolescent development and fostering open communication strengthens the support system for young people. Community programs, such as youth centers, mentorship initiatives, and health education, provide valuable resources and opportunities for adolescents to thrive. (Williams & Brown, 2024). From the above, it can be understood that adolescent well-being is influenced by different factors, for the sake of this study, the researcher will consider social-emotional skills and their relationship with the well-being of adolescents in Secondary school.

Social-emotional skills play an increasingly important role in the well-being of adolescents in secondary school, as they profoundly influence how young individuals navigate the complex social and emotional landscapes of their teenage years. These skills encompass a wide range of abilities that assist adolescents in managing emotions, building positive relationships, and making responsible decisions—factors that are crucial for their overall well-being. According to recent studies, social-emotional skills include emotional regulation, empathy, interpersonal communication, self-awareness, and problem-solving, all of which directly affect adolescent well-being and development (Jones & Doolittle, 2021). One of the most significant components of these skills is emotional regulation, which refers to the ability to manage and respond to one's emotions in a way that is both healthy and balanced. This skill is especially vital for adolescents as they experience significant emotional turbulence during a period of profound developmental change. During adolescence, hormonal shifts and evolving social dynamics contribute to heightened emotional fluctuations. According to research, the hormonal changes associated with puberty often intensify emotional responses, making feelings more vivid and sometimes overwhelming (Crone & Dahl, 2022). Alongside these biological changes, adolescents face increasing pressures from social interactions, academic responsibilities, and the process of identity formation, which further contribute to the complexity of their emotional landscape.

The ability to regulate emotions effectively allows adolescents to handle these fluctuations more constructively. Rather than becoming overwhelmed or controlled by their emotions, adolescents with strong emotional regulation skills can approach their feelings with balance and clarity. According to Gross (2020), this involves recognizing and understanding their emotional states, identifying triggers, and employing strategies to manage their responses. According to Kwon et al. (2023), techniques such as mindfulness can be particularly effective in helping adolescents stay grounded during stressful moments. For example, deep breathing exercises and mindfulness practices can calm the nervous system and prevent impulsive reactions. Similarly, reflective journaling offers adolescents an outlet to process and understand their emotional experiences, providing them with a non-reactive way to explore and express their emotions (Lu et al., 2022). Developing emotional regulation skills also contributes to healthier interpersonal relationships. Adolescents who are skilled in managing their emotions are less likely to react defensively or aggressively in social situations. According to Hamedani and Darling-Hammond (2022), when adolescents can communicate their feelings clearly and constructively, they foster more supportive and empathetic relationships. Moreover, emotional regulation can reduce the likelihood of emotional outbursts and impulsive behaviour, leading to more positive interactions with peers and adults (Osher et al., 2021). In this way, the development of social-emotional skills not only improves adolescents' well-being but also strengthens their capacity to build meaningful and supportive relationships with others.

Empathy stands as a critical social-emotional skill, enabling adolescents to understand and share the emotions of others. This ability fosters compassionate interactions, paving the

way for strong, supportive relationships with peers and adults. According to research by Jones and Kahn (2021), empathy not only enhances interpersonal bonds but also contributes to adolescents' social well-being by promoting deeper connections and emotional support. Interpersonal communication, which encompasses active listening and effective expression of thoughts and feelings, is essential for maintaining healthy social connections and resolving conflicts constructively. Osher and colleagues (2021) highlight how clear communication minimizes misunderstandings and promotes conflict resolution, which becomes increasingly vital as social dynamics grow more complex during adolescence. Self-awareness, another crucial social-emotional skill, involves recognizing one's own emotions, strengths, and limitations. This self-knowledge equips adolescents to set realistic goals and make informed decisions, thereby enhancing both academic and personal growth. Rimm-Kaufman and Hulleman (2022) emphasize that adolescents with strong self-awareness are better positioned to assess their strengths and areas for improvement. Problem-solving skills, according to Zhou and colleagues (2023), are equally important, involving the identification of issues, evaluation of options, and implementation of solutions. These skills are essential for managing daily challenges and making sound decisions, which contribute to adolescents' growing sense of competence and confidence.

The development and application of these social-emotional skills are directly linked to various aspects of adolescent well-being. Emotional regulation, for instance, contributes to psychological stability and resilience. Adolescents who manage their emotions effectively, as Lu et al. (2022) explained, are better equipped to handle stress, reduce the risk of anxiety and depression, and maintain a positive outlook on life. This emotional stability not only enhances their mental health but also positively impacts their academic performance, a connection explored by Crone and Dahl (2022), who found that emotionally regulated students tend to perform better academically due to improved focus and learning capacity.

Empathy, combined with strong interpersonal communication skills, plays a fundamental role in building supportive relationships, which are key to social well-being. Adolescents who can empathize with others form deeper connections by understanding and sharing the emotions of their peers. Kwon et al. (2023) noted that these empathetic connections foster a sense of belonging and emotional security, which significantly contribute to adolescents' self-esteem. Moreover, empathy enables adolescents to offer emotional support, creating a network of friends that acts as a buffer against the social and emotional challenges of adolescence. Effective communication is a cornerstone of building and sustaining meaningful relationships, especially during adolescence. According to Jones and Kahn (2021), when adolescents communicate effectively, they can express their thoughts and feelings with precision and sincerity, helping to prevent misunderstandings. Clarity in communication allows adolescents to articulate their needs or concerns directly and respectfully, leading to a more cooperative and supportive social environment. Furthermore, active listening, as Rimm-Kaufman and Hulleman (2022) described, is another key component of meaningful communication. Adolescents who practice active listening are better able to demonstrate empathy and validation, which strengthens their interpersonal connections and fosters deeper trust among peers.

The ability to navigate social nuances is another critical aspect of communication. Adolescents who can read social cues and adjust their communication style accordingly are better equipped to manage complex social interactions. Zhou and colleagues (2023) observed that these skills, which include interpreting non-verbal signals like body language and facial expressions, allow adolescents to respond appropriately to varying emotional contexts. Such

skills not only help adolescents build stronger friendships but also contribute positively to their broader social environments, fostering inclusivity and cooperation. In school settings, positive peer relationships create an atmosphere of inclusion and respect. Osher et al. (2021) observed that when students interact with empathy and communicate effectively, they model behaviours that promote understanding and acceptance. This, in turn, fosters a supportive and respectful environment, which benefits the entire school community. According to Hamedani and Darling-Hammond (2022), classrooms that emphasize empathy and clear communication are key to enhancing students' social-emotional development, contributing to a more positive school climate overall.

Self-awareness and problem-solving skills are also pivotal for academic and personal success. Kwon and colleagues (2023) found that self-awareness enables adolescents to understand their strengths and areas for improvement, which is essential for setting realistic and achievable goals. Adolescents who possess strong self-awareness are more likely to devise effective strategies for their development and seek support when necessary. Problem-solving skills empower adolescents to approach challenges methodically, evaluate solutions, and implement effective decisions. Zhou et al. (2023) explained that mastering problem-solving strengthens adolescents' sense of agency and resilience, enabling them to navigate complex situations with greater confidence. Secondary schools play a crucial role in nurturing social-emotional skills through structured programs and practices. Incorporating social-emotional learning (SEL) into the curriculum, according to Jones and Kahn (2021), helps students develop these skills systematically. SEL programs, which include lessons on emotional literacy, conflict resolution, and teamwork, contribute significantly to students' overall social-emotional development. Teachers and school staff, as highlighted by Hamedani and Darling-Hammond (2022), can support this growth by fostering positive classroom environments that promote open communication, mutual respect, and emotional support. Furthermore, providing students with opportunities for collaboration, peer mentoring, and reflective practices enhances their social-emotional development, ultimately preparing them for the challenges of both academic and personal life.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between social skills and adolescents' well-being among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State?
2. What is the relationship between emotional skills and adolescents' well-being among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between social skills and adolescents' well-being among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State.
2. There is no significant relationship between emotional skills and adolescents' well-being among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State

Methods

This study adopted the correlational survey research design, focusing on a population of 20,000 secondary school students in the Delta Central Senatorial District. A sample of 500 students was selected using a combination of stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques. To ensure that various subgroups, such as gender, were proportionately represented, the study first applied stratified sampling. This approach minimises sampling bias and reflects the diversity within the population. Once the population was stratified, a simple random sampling technique was employed within each stratum to choose participants, guaranteeing that every student within a specific subgroup had an equal chance of being included in the study. Data collection was conducted using a self-designed questionnaire titled the Social Skills, Emotional Skills, and Adolescent Well-being Questionnaire (SSESAWBQ). The questionnaire employed a four-point Likert scale for responses. The research questions were analysed using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, and the hypotheses were tested using linear regression at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research question 1 What is the relationship between social skills and adolescents' well-being among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State?

Table 1: *Pearson Product Moment Correlation(r) and Coefficient of Determination (r^2) between social skills and Adolescents' well-being among Secondary School students*

Variables	n	r	r^2	$r^2\%$	Decision
Social skills Adolescent well-being	500	0.141	0.020	0.18	positive relationship

Table 1 shows the r -value of 0.141 as the amount of relationship between social skills and adolescents' well-being among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State. The coefficient of determination (r^2) was 0.020 and the amount of influence of social skills on adolescents' well-being was 18%. The result showed a positive relationship between social skills and adolescents' well-being among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State.

Research question 2 What is the relationship between emotional skills and adolescents' well-being among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State?

Table 2: *Pearson Product Moment Correlation(r) and Coefficient of Determination (r^2) between emotional skills and Adolescents' well-being among Secondary School students*

Variables	n	r	r^2	$r^2\%$	Decision
Emotional skills Adolescent well-being	500	0.003	0.000	-0.002	Negative relationship

Table 1 shows the r -value of 0.003 as the amount of relationship between emotional skills and adolescents' well-being among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial

District, Delta State. The coefficient of determination (r^2) was 0.000 and the amount of influence of emotional skills on adolescents' well-being was -02%. The result showed a negative relationship between emotional skills and adolescents' well-being among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State.

Hypotheses 1

There is no significant relationship between social skills and adolescents' well-being among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State.

Table 3: Linear regression of the analysis of the relationship between social skills and adolescents' well-being among secondary school students

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	803.146		803.146	12.055		
Residual	39842.127	498	66.626		001	Null hypothesis rejected
Total	40645.273	499				

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 3 reveals a linear regression output of the relationship between social skills and adolescents' well-being among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State. The computed F-value of 12.055 and a p-value of 0.032. Testing the null hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value of 0.001 was less than the alpha level of 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicated that social skills have a significant relationship with adolescents' well-being among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State

Hypotheses 2

There is no significant relationship between emotional skills and adolescents' well-being among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State.

Table 4: Linear regression of the analysis of the relationship between emotional skills and adolescents' well-being among secondary school students

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	.304		.304	.004		
Residual	40644.970	498	67.968		947	Null hypothesis accepted
Total	40645.273	499				

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 4 reveals a linear regression output of the relationship between emotional skills and adolescents' well-being among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State. The computed F-value of 0.004 and a p-value of 0.947. Testing the null



hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value of 0.001 was less than the alpha level of 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicated that emotional skills have a significant relationship with adolescents' well-being among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State.

Discussion of findings

The findings show that there is a significant relationship between social skills and adolescents' well-being, but no significant relationship between emotional skills and well-being among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State. The significant relationship between social skills and adolescents' well-being suggests that the ability to navigate social environments plays a critical role in the mental, emotional, and even academic health of these students. Adolescence is a period where peer interactions become paramount, as social acceptance, friendships, and group belonging are key developmental goals. Strong social skills allow adolescents to engage in positive peer relationships, manage conflicts effectively, and build supportive networks, all of which are essential for fostering a sense of belonging and self-esteem. One plausible reason for the strong correlation between social skills and well-being may lie like adolescence itself. During this period, students are increasingly exposed to social environments that require effective communication, teamwork, and interpersonal negotiation. Schools, extracurricular activities, and even online interactions challenge adolescents to cultivate and exercise their social competencies. Adolescents with well-developed social skills are likely to feel more connected and less isolated, which, in turn, contributes positively to their overall well-being. They may also experience greater social support, a key protective factor against stress and emotional challenges. This finding aligns with Garcia & Lee, (2023) who found a positive relationship between social skills and adolescent well-being.

In contrast, the second finding shows that there is no significant relationship between emotional skills and well-being among these students might seem unexpected, given that emotional regulation is often linked to mental health. First, it is possible that in this particular context, adolescents may prioritize social connectedness over emotional self-regulation when considering their well-being. In many cultural settings, external social relationships can sometimes overshadow the importance of internal emotional regulation. Adolescents in this region may place greater emphasis on group harmony, peer acceptance, and social reputation, with emotional skills taking a back seat to the immediate demands of maintaining these social bonds. Additionally, the measurement of emotional skills could be a factor. Emotional regulation and emotional intelligence are complex and may not be fully captured by conventional measures in the study. Adolescents in Delta Central might possess emotional skills that are less about individual emotional regulation and more about collective emotional dynamics, such as understanding group emotions or managing social harmony. From the literature reviewed, they all found a significant relationship but, in this study, there is no significant relationship.

Conclusion

The study's findings demonstrate a significant relationship between social skills and adolescents' well-being among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State. This indicates that the ability to effectively navigate social environments, build supportive relationships, and maintain positive peer interactions plays a crucial role in enhancing adolescents' overall well-being. However, the lack of a significant relationship between emotional skills and well-being suggests that, in this context, emotional regulation and related emotional competencies may not have as immediate or visible an impact on adolescents' perceived well-being as social skills do.



Recommendations

1. Schools in Delta Central Senatorial District should implement programs that enhance students' social competencies. This could include activities that promote teamwork, conflict resolution, effective communication, and peer support systems.
2. Schools should incorporate comprehensive SEL programs that integrate both social and emotional learning, ensuring that students develop emotional regulation skills alongside their social abilities.
3. Teachers and school counsellors should provide culturally sensitive emotional education that resonates with the student's daily experiences, ensuring that emotional well-being is nurtured in a way that aligns with local values and social structures.
4. Schools should engage parents and community leaders in their efforts. Workshops and community activities that promote open communication and emotional literacy can help reinforce the importance of emotional and social skills outside the classroom, creating a supportive network for adolescents.



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