



Effects Social Skills Training on Interpersonal Relationship of Senior Secondary School Students in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract. The study investigated the effects of social skills training on the interpersonal relationship of senior secondary school students in Lagos state. This study aimed at using social skill trainings to strengthen interpersonal relationship among senior secondary students in Lagos State. A pretest-posttest, control group, quasi-experimental design was used for this study. There are three Senatorial Districts in Lagos State out of which two public secondary schools used for the study were randomly selected. One hundred and twenty participants consisting of sixty male and sixty female, who had low interpersonal relationship were assigned to one treatment group and a control group. The instrument- Multidimensional Relationship Questionnaire (MRQ), was used to elicit responses from the participants. Two hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data collected were analysed using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The results showed that there was a significant main effect of treatment on interpersonal relationship of adolescents in public Senior Secondary Schools. Family type had no significant effect on the interpersonal relationship of the adolescents. Findings demonstrated that the package could be used as veritable tool in equipping adolescents with necessary skills that can enhance good relationship with others in the society. Social skills' training was recommended for use by teachers, counsellors, psychologists, parents and others.

Keywords: Interpersonal relationship, Social Skills Training, Adolescence, Family type

1. Introduction

When a person grows from childhood to adulthood, they unavoidably go through the transitional stage of adolescence. It is a time of transition and turning a

child into an adult. It terminates childhood and marks the commencement of adulthood. It is the pubescence stage between the ages of 13-19 years. Adolescents always feel on top of the world and develop a larger-than-life attitude towards events around them. They often mismanage difficult challenges because of their wrong perceptions of themselves coupled with their inappropriate interpersonal skills and lack of prosocial behaviours. As a result, adolescents have always been involved in a number of anti-social behaviours that arise from their different interpersonal relationships deficiencies (Adepegba, 2023)

There are numerous negative behaviours that have been found to exist as a result of deficiencies in interpersonal relationship among adolescents especially in senior secondary schools. This is the case because, according to Adegoke (2011), interpersonal relationships are a process that focuses on social skills, self-analysis, successful interaction techniques, and conflict resolution. The adolescents in senior secondary schools who do not possess these social skills cannot engage in self-analysis for effective interaction and are not able to find solution to interpersonal issues. They often find themselves in police net, charged to juvenile courts and at times sent to correctional homes.

Human relationships heavily rely on interpersonal ties. These are the actions and behaviors that are fundamental to human interactions and are a part of both spoken and nonverbal communication. It is an established relationship in which the thoughts, feelings, and emotions of its members are interconnected. Positive relationships are characterized by closeness, trust, devotion, and concern. However, when it is negative, it shows defensiveness, disdain, criticism, and a lack of trust.

Jokes, storytelling, body language or facial expressions, and other such behaviours are also examples of interpersonal connections. It also has a deep relationship that occurs between two or more persons of a length ranging from temporary to permanent.

Pitan (2017) defines interpersonal relationship as a procedure that involves the non-stop related thoughts and behaviours of persons in a partnership or group where they use social skills and engage actively. It is also the nature of interaction that occurs between two or more people who fill one another's open or close, physical or emotional needs in some ways. Sadovnikova (2016) states that the word 'personal' centers on the closeness between two people, and the behaviour being exhibited between these two individuals will depend on the circumstance of their relationship. It is a strong bond between two or more people, a feeling of being understood or appreciated. Adolescents are in a crucial developmental stage, and the way their interpersonal interactions develop has a significant impact on society's overall harmony and advancement in addition to their own mental health. adolescents' interpersonal relationships offer a vast and varied terrain, encompassing both pleasant encounters and overcoming many obstacles and problems, from home to school, from reality to virtual space (Yongmei, 2026).

There have been a number of studies that have been carried out on the behavioural outcomes of adolescents who do not possess the required interpersonal skills relationship. Literature is replete with several examples of these behavioural deficiencies. They include sadistic attacks by adolescents like car stealing, vandalism, rape, drug abuse, cigarette smoking, fighting, rudeness, sexual offences/harassment, lateness to school, disobedience, alcoholism, bullying and emotional distress among others (Adedokun, 2013; Abdullahi, Dembe and Kura, 2014; Widle and Widle, 2014, Adeshina, Beckley and Shittu, 2012; Amadi-Ali and Anokwuru, 2024).

It has been reported that a lot of efforts have been made towards curbing adolescents' negative interpersonal relationship through various psychological interventions and treatments. For example, Amadi and Anokwuru (2024) made use of social skills and behaviours among students. Aderanti and Hassan (2011) use cognitive restructuring and self-management to treat adolescents' rebellious behaviour, Busari (2012) employed the cognitive behavioural therapy to manage adolescent conduct disorders. Ayodele (2014) used Rational Behavioural Therapy, thinking skills and social skills training as

means of fostering adolescents' inter and intra-personal relationship, among others. However, with the number of various forms of crimes and brigandage being witnessed daily, particularly in secondary schools, colleges of education, polytechnics and universities, it is clear that a lot still needs to be done to curb adolescent's related crimes arising from deficiencies in their interpersonal relationship.

Social skills are skills that can help individuals to easily attach, socialize with people and survive better. These skills help pupils to accomplish tasks and collaborate with peers to achieve shared or set goals. Possessing good social skills helps pupils not only to relate well and accomplish tasks, it also helps them to relate well with peer groups and maintain good relationship with teachers (Gould, 2022) Social Skill training is a method that is used in developing good social relationship among people. For example, Social Skills Training programme can increase the quality of adolescents' interpersonal relationship and prosocial behaviour by addressing the aspect of the relationship that is most problematic. Various researchers have used social skills training to treat different problematic behaviours, which range from social withdrawal (Akintunde, 2017); competence of female adolescents with deafness (Naini, Arshadi, & Hatamizadeh,, 2013): to foster interpersonal relationship (Ayodele, 2011); and to help a group of teens develop healthy social skills and relationships (Amadi and Anokwuru, 2024) among others.

Social skills training as a therapy has been used to enhance interpersonal relationships and prosocial behaviours among adolescents and the results have been far-reaching. For example, Ayodele (2011) in a study conducted on adolescents in Nigeria, came out with the findings that social skill training leads to positive improvement in interpersonal relationship among adolescents. Olanrewaju and Aliyu (2017) also affirm that there is a significant effect of social skills training on prosocial behaviour of adolescents. Also, in a study carried out by Schippers, Merillas and Marker, (2015) on social skill training, prosocial behaviour and aggression on incarcerated offenders, it was discovered that there is a significant rise in size of social understanding and social interaction of the participants. Thus, social skills training will give an adolescent the understanding of himself, others and his society at large (Ayodele, 2014).The present study established the effectiveness of social skills training on interpersonal relationship among senior secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria with family type as moderating variable.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

One of the stages of human development that affect later stages is the adolescence. Adolescent stage has been associated with turbulence and as a result of this, many of the adolescents' relationships have displayed maladaptive behaviours and disorders that always require psychological interventions. Such behaviours include vandalism, assault, examination malpractice, riots, unruly behaviours, bullying, fighting, disrespect for elders, lack of care for others, among others.

In today's society, adolescents are unable to manage interpersonal relationship among themselves in homes, schools and the community. They display lack of consideration and positive outcomes for others everywhere they are in all nations of the world, including Nigeria. One of the reasons most adolescents especially in secondary schools, find themselves in messy situations according to literature is their inability to manage their interpersonal relationship and their lack of prosocial behaviour.

A number of studies have been carried out using different therapies to enhance interpersonal relationship and prosocial behaviour among adolescents resulting in varying degrees of success. Yet the cases of negative interpersonal relationship and antisocial behaviour among adolescents remain endemic indicating that there is need for efforts towards providing necessary treatments.

Against this background, this study examined the effectiveness of social skills in strengthening senior secondary school students' interpersonal relationship. It also aimed to establish which of the two independent variables (transactional analysis and social skills training) is more potent in enhancing interpersonal relationship and prosocial behaviour among senior secondary school students in Lagos State. The study also examined the interaction effects of the moderating variables (family type) on senior secondary student's interpersonal relationships.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study aimed at using social skill trainings to strengthen or enhance positive interpersonal relationship among senior secondary students in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study set out to achieve two cardinal objectives:

- Investigate the effectiveness of social skill training on senior secondary school student's interpersonal relationship

- Determine whether the moderating role of family type would have effects on the experimental conditions.

1.3 Statement of Hypotheses

- There is no significant main effect of social skills (treatment) on interpersonal relationship among senior secondary school students in Lagos State.
- There is no significant main effect of family type on interpersonal relationship of senior secondary school students in Lagos State.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study adopted a pretest-posttest control group experimental design. There were two rows consisting of one-treatment strategy of Social Skills Training (SST) and the control group. The researcher adopted a factorial design because of the fact that the design accomplishes in one experiment what otherwise might require two or more separate studies (Aron, Coups and Aron, 2013)

2.2 Population and Sample

The population for the study comprised all the adolescents in senior secondary 2 in Lagos State. The sample consisted of one hundred and twenty (120) senior secondary year two (SS 2) students who were selected by simple random sampling from two randomly selected public secondary schools in the three senatorial districts of the state. A sample of 120 students was chosen through the multi-stage random sampling technique. The first stage involved the use of stratified random sampling technique to select two local government areas from the twenty (20) local government areas in the three senatorial districts. This was done by writing the names of the LGAs on pieces of paper of equal size. They were folded equally and dropped into the three bowls tagged with the names of the senatorial districts. After thorough reshuffling of the contents of the bowls, the researcher picked one Local Government Area from each bowl. The local government areas picked from this process were Ifako-ijaye local government from Lagos West Senatorial District, and Ikorodu Local Government from Lagos East Senatorial District.

The second stage involved selecting a secondary school from each of the selected local government areas using simple random sampling technique. The same procedure employed in selecting the local

government areas was also followed in selecting the two secondary schools.

After obtaining permission from the school authority of each of the selected schools, the researcher, thereafter administered the prosocial behaviour questionnaires to all the senior secondary school (SS2) students. Only respondents who had low means scores in each of the selected school were selected as participants in the study. One school constituted the experimental group while the other school constituted the control school. The population of the study comprised of entire Senior Secondary School 2 in the public secondary schools in Lagos State. A total of one hundred and twenty (120) students were randomly selected from two co-educational schools. Their age ranged between fourteen (14) and nineteen (19) years. They were randomly assigned to SST and control. The alphabets A and B were written on separate slips, which were used in assigning the participants to the two the treatment group and the control group.

2.3 Instruments for Data Collection

The Multidimensional Relationship Questionnaire (MRQ), developed by Snell (1997) as a measure of psychological tendencies associated with interpersonal relationship, was adopted by the researcher. The MRQ contains 60 items rated on a five- point Likert-type scale with responses ranging from 1= not at all characteristic of me to 5 = very characteristic of me. Sample items on the scale include: *“I think about my relationships all the time”* and *“I feel nervous when I interact with others”*. The developer established the internal consistency reliability of the scale and reported a Cronbach’s alpha of .79. The construct validity of the MRQ has been demonstrated through significant positive relationship

with measures of social association (Adenuga & Ayodele, 2010) and psychological well-being (Fasasi & Oledikwa, 2007).

2.4 Procedure for Data Collection

The study was carried out in three stages as follows:

- (a): Pre-treatment stage involved a familiarization visit to the three selected schools, which focused on general introduction, establishment of rapport as well as administration of Multidimensional Relationship Questionnaire (MRQ) to all the SS2 students and also pretest to determine the baseline score. Also, a simple random sampling procedure was used to select 120 participants.
- (b) The treatment Session: The participants in the experimental group were subjected to eight (8) weeks of treatment programmes. The control group participated in pre and post-test sessions but was given placebo training on English language. The subjects in experimental group were subjected to Social Skills Training. The treatment has eight sessions of the therapy.
- (c) Post-treatment Session: This is the evaluation stage. At the end of the eight (8) weeks training, both the experimental and control groups were subjected to post-test using the same MRQ to see result arising from training.

2.5 Method of Data Analysis

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was adopted to analyze data generated and to test the hypothesis at 0.05 significant level. The statistical tool was used to investigate the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable and the control group.

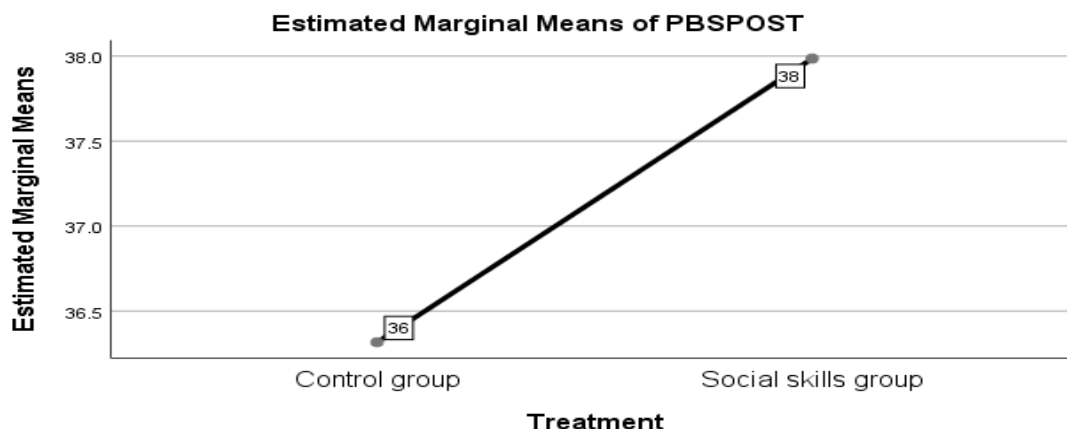
3. Results

There is no significant main effect of d social skills (treatments) on interpersonal relationship among senior secondary school students in Lagos State.

Table 1: Main effect of treatment

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	435.421 ^a	6	72.570	1.824	.101	.092
Intercept	1386.100	1	1385.100	34.811	.000	.244
PBSPRE	125.406	1	125.406	3.152	.079	.028
Treatment	56.224	1	58.224	8.991	.000	0.013

Table 1 reveals the F-value (5.386) for treatment which is significant at 0.05. It follows that there is a significant main effect of d social skills (treatments) on interpersonal relationship among senior secondary school students in Lagos State., The chart below shows the treatment that is better.



Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: PBSPRE = 36.37

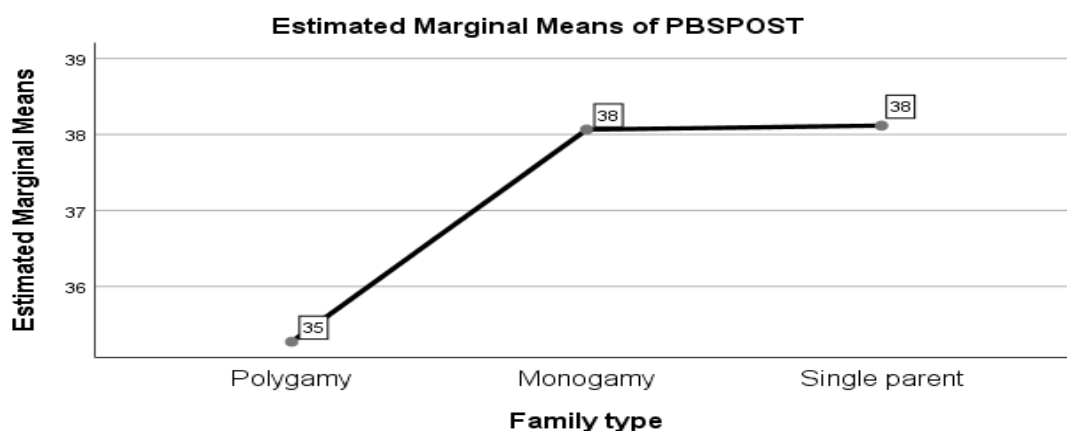
The chart shows that social skills group has better effect on interpersonal relationship with marginal mean (38.0) than the family type with marginal mean (36.0).

There is no significant main effect of family type on interpersonal relationship of senior secondary school students in Lagos State.

Table 2: Main effect of family type

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	435.421 ^a	6	72.570	1.824	.101	.092
Intercept	1385.100	1	1385.100	34.811	.000	.244
PBSPRE	125.406	1	125.406	3.152	.079	.028
FAMILY TYPE	138.331	2	69.165	1.738	.181	.031

Table 1 reveals the F-value (1.738) for family type which is not significant at 0.05. It follows that there is no significant main effect of family type on interpersonal relationship of senior secondary school students in Lagos State. The partial eta square (0.031) which determines the effect size is very small, confirming the insignificant effect. Despite the insignificant effect, the chart below shows the family type that is better.



Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: PBSPRE = 36.37

The chart shows that the marginal means increases from polygamy to monogamy and to single parent. It follows that the effect is more from single parents, followed by monogamy and polygamy the least.

4. Discussion

The result of the first hypothesis shows that there was a significant main effect of social skills training

(treatment) on interpersonal relationship of adolescents. From the result of the analysis and presented in table 1, this hypothesis could not be upheld. It was found that the treatment package, which

was social skills training, had significant effects on the participants' interpersonal relationship. The experimental groups outperformed the control group in terms of participant performance. This is mostly because the intervention program was introduced to the participants in the experimental group. In contrast, the members of the control group received no therapy at all and instead took part in activities that were unrelated to the exposures of the other participants. This means that social skills training had significant effect on the adolescents as evident in the post-test scores of interpersonal relationships of the experimental groups. This finding can be plausibly explained by the fact that the SST intervention helped the participants better understand themselves, express concern about their relationships with others, set realistic goals for themselves, and manage their lives, which improved interpersonal relationships and prosocial behaviors. This outcome also aligned with the findings of Akintunde (2017), who discovered that social skills training and transactional analysis significantly improve social withdrawal behavior in Nigerian adolescents. It is also concordant with Ayodele (2011) who reported that social skills training fostered interpersonal relationship of adolescents. This finding also corroborates the results of the work of Amadi & Anokwuru (2024) found out that social skills have significant effects on interpersonal relationship of pupils.

The result of the second hypothesis indicates there was no significant main effect of family type on interpersonal relationship of senior secondary school students in Lagos State. Table 2 revealed that since the hypothesis that there is no significant main effect of family type on interpersonal relationship of senior secondary school students in Lagos State. The hypothesis was confirmed. This means that family type status of adolescents did not influence the post experimental observation of their interpersonal relationship. Ugoji and Ebebuwa (2015) also revealed in a study that family type had no significant effect on the behavioural outcome of the adolescents.

The result is in agreement with the findings of Ella, et al (2015) and Onogeha (2015) in their separate studies, that the family type of the adolescents either, polygamy, monogamy or single parents, had no effects on the adolescents' relationships and behaviours. Nonetheless, the result negates the opinion of Ekechukwu (2018) Omoruyi (2014) who revealed that the environment of a child has a way of determining the future of such a child; that it lays the foundation for the moral, psychological and spiritual development of the child.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated the effectiveness of social skills training (SST) on interpersonal relationship of adolescents in Lagos State, Nigeria. The goal of the study was to determine how much social skills training techniques would help senior secondary school adolescents maintain positive relationships, develop sound personalities, and receive sound social support in their daily lives. It also went further to examine if family type would have moderating effects on the outcome of the study. The findings have demonstrated that the treatment plans can be effective in equipping adolescents with the necessary abilities to foster positive social interactions with other members of the community. As a result, these have the potential to improve and peacefully coexist with people around the world; however, interpersonal relationship was improved through the development of suitable social and communication skills.

6. Recommendations

As a result of these findings and conclusion reached, the following recommendations are made:

- Social skills training should begin in later childhood In order to help adolescents grow with it, become knowledgeable about it, and acquire the necessary skills for productive relationships.
- In accordance with the National Policy on Education, the government should immediately mandate that all public and private schools have access to professional school counsellors.
- Since social skills are the cornerstone of all other talents that young people need to succeed in life, the government should make them available. Therefore, it is necessary to support and encourage further scientific research in order to help adolescents succeed academically and socially.
- Experts in the field of Educational Psychology ought to step up its efforts to host conferences and seminars on the implications of this intervention as a successful strategy for improving interpersonal relationship in secondary school-aged adolescents.
- Establishing and/or participating in school volunteer service groups should be encouraged for students.

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