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Analysis of adolescents' social competence: A Ghanaian perspective

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The study examined social competence of adolescents and ascertained variations in the group based on gender, type of parents they lived with, and community of residence. The comparative analysis study utilised adolescents in their formative years of development. Descriptive survey design was utilised and questionnaire was the sole data collection tool. The study revealed that most of the adolescents demonstrated moderate levels of social competence in social settings. The research did not find difference in the social competence of adolescents living with real and pseudo parents; and male and female adolescents. The results, nonetheless, showed significant difference in the social competence of the adolescents living in the rural, semi-urban and urban communities. The results evince that location of residence matters in the development of adolescents' social competence. Policies, strategies and programmes intended to help improve adolescents' social competence in the developing world need to target those residing in rural communities more than those in the other communities.

Key words: Learning outcomes, social competence, real and pseudo parents, rural, semi-urban and urban communities.

INTRODUCTION

Learning outcomes vary from academic to social competence. Both competences are essential for learners' growth and well-being. Both academic and social competences are essential for the learners' development (Vimple and Sawhney, 2017). Romera et al. (2017) explain social competence constitutes the skills and behaviours that people put into practice in their social life with recourse to the characteristics in the setting in which they operate. On their part, Huitt and Dawson (2011) provide a comprehensive definition of social competence to include people's knowledge, attitudes and skills related to at least six components: (i) being aware of one's and others' emotions, (ii) managing impulses and behaving appropriately, (iii) communicating effectively, (iv) forming healthy relationships, (v) working well with others, and (vi) resolving conflict. Bierman and Welsh (2008) aver that social competence entails an array of relational components dependent on situational and cultural factors. Han and Kemple (2006) aptly refer to social competence as an effective and appropriate

human interactions and relationships. Reitz (2012) also defines it as the entire knowledge and skills that individuals possess, which determine their social competent behaviour while Vimple and Sawhney (2017) define social competence as the ability to create, sustain high quality and jointly filling relationship and to avoid negative behaviour or ill-treatment from others. The collection of definitions portrays that this human development phenomenon is of high interest to researchers.

Broderick and Blewit (2010) identified four categories of foundational social competence, which are (a) affective processes (including empathy, valuing relationships and sense of belonging), (b) cognitive processes (including cognitive ability, perceptive taking and making moral judgment), (c) social skills (including making eye contact, using appropriate language and asking appropriate questions), and (d) high social self-concept. Similarly, Tariq and Masood (2011) contend that social competence entails social skills, social awareness and self-confidence. It also entails the ability to comprehend other people's emotions, perceive social cues, understand complex social situations and understand people's motivation and goals.

Han and Kemple (2006) posit that the concept of social competence is indexed by effectiveness and appropriateness in human interactions and relationships. Therefore, social competence is vital for individuals to have effective interactions with other people. This is because people's development in all aspects of functioning is influenced by their ability to develop and maintain positive, consistent and primary relationship with adults and peers (Treat and Wearsing, 2007).

Osman (2001) seems to narrow the concept of social competence to only social skills that are necessary for effective interactive functioning. These skills comprise both verbal and non-verbal behaviours that are socially cherished and are likely to stimulate favourable responses from other people. Ten Dam and Volman (2007) aver that social competence is an aspect of educational objectives, which is made up of positive skills necessary for getting along well with others and functioning constructively in social groups. Social competence connotes the ability to relate positively and fruitfully with others. It encompasses the interpersonal skills of perspective taking, empathy and altruism and the ability to function effectively in groups that require cooperation, collaboration and conflict resolution as essential skills and characteristics (Puckett and Black, 2006).

It is essential that the school plays its parts in developing social competence of students. As it is an educational objective for all students regardless of the type of education they pursue and their socio-economic background (Ten Dam and Volman, 2007). That is why in the school curricular of some countries the teaching of social competence is unambiguously stipulated (Kirkpatrick et al., 2001). For instance, social competence development of the student is clearly indicated in the national curricular of the Danish comprehensive school system. In that jurisdiction, social competence is taught through pedagogies that make students take the responsibility for the learning progress (Rasmussen, 2007). In some countries which curricular do not explicitly outline the teaching of social competence have vital interaction acumen consciously and unconsciously imbibed in students in the school system. Kraft and Grace (2016) discovered that teachers via various instructions and other means teach social skills which influence students' development. All these are done due to the fact that social competence is very vital for the overall development of human beings (Reitz, 2012; Roma and Bakashi, 2015).

Components of social competence

The three main components of social competence as identified by Katz and McClellan (1997) are individual, social and peer relation skills. Individual skills refer to the features that show one's personality. They demonstrate who somebody is, what other individuals see in him/her that they may like. Social skills describe a person's knowledge of and ability to use different kinds of social behaviours that are fitting to a given interpersonal situation and that are pleasing to others in the situation. These skills are the ability for one to interact with others in a manner which is both appropriate and effective (Segrin, 2003). This is because social skills aid people to navigate everyday interactions such as exchanging greetings and holding conversation, starting friendships and maintaining them, and asking for help and instructing others (Maria's IEP team cited in Steadly et al., 2011). People's social skills aid them to recognise and manage emotions, develop care and concerns for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions and handle challenging situations effectively (Zins et al., 2004).

Social skills are also deemed to promote academic competence. Research has revealed that social skills are a good predictor of academic superiority. According to Steadly et al. (2011), successful learning requires students to closely interact with both teachers and peers. The situation in the school system requires students to interact with other students and teachers to get things done. Students, therefore, need to possess effective social skills in order to successfully navigate through social discourses in class, school and the general society.

Another aspect of social competence is peer relation skills, which are discrete abilities of people which contribute to friendships and peer acceptance (National Council on Developing Child (NCES), 2004). These skills enhance people's effective interactions with others.

Hence, the significance of peer relations for adolescents' psycho-social well-being cannot be over-stressed (Spence et al., 2000, Ladd and Troop-Gordon, 2003).

Relevance of social competence

Jung (2014) posits that a socially competent person possesses good social interaction skills and establishes and maintains positive relationships with others while a socially incompetent person may display aggressive or withdrawal behaviour that does not satisfy either the child or the partner's social interaction goals. In an apparent support of this view, O'Shaugh-nessy (2016) asserted that children's development in all aspects of functioning is influenced by their ability to develop and maintain positive, consistent and primary relationship with adults and peers. Learners need to be socially competent to be able to adapt to various aspects of the dynamic and ever-changing society, by taking into consideration the environment, the people in it, the thoughts, beliefs and needs of the individual and others who share the environment, whether or not they are in direct communication as well as individual and collective history of knowledge and experience (Winner, 2002). Junttila (2010) also contends that a socially competent person needs to behave well on the dimension of pro-social behaviour or low on the dimension of anti-social behaviour.

Many empirical studies have unveiled the relevance of social competence to individuals' development. According to a research conducted by Mostoro et al. (2002), children who offended others via their actions and inactions and did not communicate well with other people did not gain the acceptance of others due to the harm they may have caused. Social skill as a component of social competence is a good predictor of peer acceptance. It has also been found that people who are able to communicate, co-operate, handle conflicts, achieve goals, adapt easily, develop the initiative and to take responsibility are regarded as socially competent (Valeeva and Karimuva, 2014). A study by Padilla-Walker et al. (2015) also found association between friendship, sympathy and pro-social behaviour towards friends and Parfilova and Karimova (2015) discovered that socially competent graduates are able to work with others, listen, understand and empathize with others and demonstrate good behaviour in challenging situations. These discoveries are indicative of the fact that social competence is a veritable trait for human development. This assertion finds expression in the following that social competence is increasingly important predictors of success in school (Roma and Bakashi, 2015), for successful work (Parfilova and Karimova, 2015) and in society (Roma and Bakashi, 2015). On their part, Padilla-Walker et al. (2015) regarded social competence as a crucial factor in promoting social interactions and social

acceptance from others and friendships. Individuals really need social competence to be successful in their personal and social life (Reitz, 2012). Social competence is very essential as every individual needs to possess some sort of social skills and abilities to be able to efficiently interact with others throughout their lives (Gedviliene et al., 2014).

Spence (2003) posits that there is considerable evidence that social skill deficits are integral to many emotional and behavioural problems. An experimental study by Tariq and Masood (2011) showed positive relationship between social competence and parental promotion of peer relations. Social competence has also been associated with successful school programmes, transition into school and work setting, better job opportunities, corresponding adult support and overall interactions with others (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2000). The outcomes of the various studies elucidate the importance of social competence in human development and also give credence to the contribution of social competence to peer acceptance.

In addition, socially competent people have been found to possess personal knowledge and skills to engage in enjoyable interactions, activities and relationships with peers and adults (Han and Kemple, 2006). Such individuals are able to act effectively in achieving individual and group goals. People who are socially competent are able to decipher the appropriate behaviour to display at different times. Lack of social skills leads to peer rejection, isolation from peers and difficulty in making friends. Usually, people who feel lonely lack appropriate social competence, which affects their participation in different social activities (Adel, 2004).

Evidence also abounds to demonstrate that successful learning requires students to interact closely with teachers and peers (Steadly et al., 2011). Studies have unveiled that social competence is emphasized in all European and national documents on higher education as the key foundation for all people in a knowledge-based and diverse societies (Gedviliene et al., 2014).

Categories of young people

Young people are brought up by different people who may be considered real, adopted and pseudo-parents. Real parents are the biological ones who bring forth young people and see to their upbringing. Adopted parents, on the other hand, are the non-biological ones who go through formalities to acquire young from care homes or parents. Adopted parents usually undergo formal and demanding screening before finalizing an adoption process (Farr et al., 2010). Those parents go for such young either at birth or a later stage in their development. Adopted young do enjoy a lot of protection from the state, international organisations, civil society organisations (CSOs) and the media. Safeguarding the

interest and welfare of adopted young people is embedded in adoption laws and policies. The principle of safeguarding the best interest of the child has been resolutely ingrained as a permanent consideration in all issues concerning child adoption (United Nations, 2009).

Several studies have sought to compare academic success of adoptees to young of biological step parents and single parents non-adopted counterparts (Whitten, 2002; Burrow et al., 2004; Lansford et al., 2001). Van Ijzendoorn et al. (2005) also compared the academic achievement of young people who were adopted and those who remained in institutional care homes. Further, the study conducted by Toussaint (2008) sought to determine the relationship among adoptive status, social capital and academic achievement. The study revealed that the adopted young people had more in-school behaviour difficulties and lower GPA. However, Van Ijzendoorn et al. (2005) meta-analytical study of adopted status and academic achievement discovered that most non-adoptees had similar achievement as the adoptees. The meta-analytical study found that only a small group of adoptees performed below the non-adoptees in academic performance.

It is realised from literature that researchers seem to have been oblivious of young people who do not live with real parents, adopted parents or in institutional care homes. These are young people who live with relatives and non-relatives in the society. Such people have not been formally adopted. Parents who live with such people are usually termed as foster or pseudo-parents. Pseudo-parents do not go through formal process of getting the children to stay with. These young people are also usually referred to as wards, whose education and interest ought to be dear to the hearts of educationists and researchers.

Justification of the study

A survey of literature on student learning outcomes unequivocally revealed that academic performance of students, which is a variant of learning outcomes had been extensively studied. Nonetheless, relatively little research has been paid to other essential aspects of learning outcomes such as social competence. Meanwhile both intellectual and social behaviour are a functional pre-requisite for effective living in the society (Riyato, 2002). Conspicuously, the only few studies which have been conducted to gauge the social competence of children were done in advanced nations. It was also noted that studies on young people's social competence have mainly focused on children with developmental challenges and pre-school children. Hence, the need to study the adolescent child's social competence was felt.

Besides, studies on comparative analysis of academic performance of children as a learning outcome have focused on children living with real and adopted parents,

neglecting those living with pseudo-parents. Consequently, the current study purported to compare social competence of adolescent living with real and pseudo-parents, male and female students, and children domiciled in rural, semi-urban and urban communities.

Research questions

The study addressed the gaps identified in literature by answering the following questions:

1. To what extent do adolescents demonstrate social competence in social settings?
2. What is the gendered nature of social competence of adolescents?
3. To what extent do adolescents of real and pseudo parents differ in social competence?
4. To what extent do adolescents in rural, semi-urban and urban settings differ in social competence?

METHODOLOGY

Design

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The design aided to get samples from basic schools in the various communities in Ghana.to provide data to answer the questions derived from literature. The quantitative study used questionnaire to gather numeric data from respondents to describe the adolescents' social competence.

Population and samples of the study

The study focused on adolescents who stayed with real and pseudo parents respectively. It excluded students with emotional and behavioural problems. The study sampled students from basic schools in rural, semi-urban and urban communities in Ghana to respond to the research instrument. Form masters ensured that students who did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded from the sample frame.

After stratifying the communities into rural, semi-urban and urban, simple random sampling technique was adopted to select the schools and students while purposive sampling technique was relied on to get peers and form masters to provide the requisite data. The samples were further stratified into students living with biological and non-biological parents, and male and female. The peers and form masters responded to the questionnaires to provide data on the sampled students' social competence. The two data sources were relied on to gauge the social competence of the students. Data source triangulation was employed to gather data about the students' social competence due to the nature of human behaviour. This technique was used with the view to reducing rater bias on the students' social competence.

Sociometry as a technique that is employed to know popularity of a person or who other people or group members would prefer to play, study or work with was used to get peers who could competently rate the sampled students' social competence. This technique was employed to select the peers because as Titkova et al. (2013) assert, sociometry brings out a student's locus in the structure of friendship network and mirrors the like and dislike that group members for the student.

Table 1. Age group of the respondents.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Below 12 years	152	8.7
Between 12-15 years	1,380	78.6
Above 15 years	223	12.7
Total	1,755	100

Form masters were also chosen to rate the social competence of the students because in the basic schools in Ghana, these staff are mandated to report on students' conduct and academic performance in their terminal reports at the end of every academic term. As part of their responsibilities, form masters are to hold meetings, once every week, with their students to discuss challenges the students face in school, in class as well as individual students' conduct. The form masters, therefore, were deemed to have appreciable level of knowledge about the students' conduct generally. The essence of relating peers' responses with the teachers' reports was to ascertain divergence or convergence of judgment of the students' social relationship with peers and adults.

Data collection tools and procedure

A questionnaire was the main tool designed to gather primary data from the respondents. Both peers and teachers responded to the same sets of questionnaire for triangulation purposes. The research instrument tagged *Adolescents' Social Competence Questionnaire (ASCQ)* was made up of four Sections, which respectively sought to measure the students' demographic information, personal, social and peer relations skills. The two set of questionnaires were found to be reliable measures of adolescents' social competence after validation by two experts in Education and Sociology respectively. The instruments' reliability co-efficient was calculated and the outcomes of the peer and teacher questionnaires were 0.85 and 0.84, respectively. The instruments were also found to be highly internally consistent.

Before embarking on the data collection, written and oral permissions were sought from the schools' authorities and the students, their peers and teachers respectively. During the filling of the questionnaire, the respondents were permitted to ask questions on any item that was unclear to them. Finally, in order to strengthen the findings of the study, factor analysis was conducted to ascertain the major factors of the components of social competence. The suitability of the data for factor analysis was estimated prior to performing Principal Component Analysis. The correlation matrix disclosed that most of the co-efficients were above 0.3, which is acceptable for the analysis.

Data analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were conducted to analyse the data. The data was subjected to statistical analysis using means and standard deviations for the descriptive statistics. The statistics was computed for the various variables that measured students' social competence. To determine the differences in the social competence of the adolescent living with real and pseudo parents, and male and female students, independent samples t-test was run. On the other hand, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run to check the differences in the social competence of the adolescents residing in rural, semi-urban and urban communities while Tukey's Post-hoc test was used to check where the differences were.

RESULTS

The age range of the students who partook in the study are presented in Table 1. The age ranges of the subjects used in the study depict that a disproportionate chunk of them were between 12 and 15 years, which is the normal age of basic school students in Ghana. In the country, students commence basic education at age six (6) and complete the nine (9) year basic education programme at age 15, *ceteris peribus*. Those who fell outside the normal age range of the basic school constituted just about 20% of the study subjects. The majority of them were then in their early adolescence stage of development, who were expected to be developing social competence from both home and school.

Students' social competence

The study's preoccupation was to gauge the social competence level of the adolescent in the formative development stage in life. Various items which measure social competence were used to achieve that intention. The social competence was measured along personal attributes, social skills and peer relationship skills.

The results of the peers and teachers' ratings are presented separately in Table 2. Comparison of the means of the items on all the three subscales of social competence revealed that the means are above the mid-point. On the personal attributes' subscale, the means of items like "Is usually in a good mood" (M=2.60, SD=0.76), "Usually come to school willingly" (M=2.77, SD=0.86), "Joins group activities willingly" (M=2.59, SD=0.82), "Shows interest in others' welfare" (M=2.62, SD=0.82), and "Shows the capacity to empathize" (M=2.55, SD=0.73) are all above the mid-point of the scales.

Also, on the social skills subscale, the means of items like "Interacts non-verbally with others with smiles" (M=2.52, SD=0.78), "Asserts their rights and needs appropriately" (M= 2.67, SD=0.74), "Gains access to ongoing groups at play" (M=2.53, SD=0.78), "Usually takes turn fairly easily" (M=2.50, SD=.81), "Shows the capacity of caring about peers" (M= SD=2.54, SD=0.79) and "Is able to maintain friendships with peers even after disagreement" (M=2.52, SD=0.83) are above the mid-point of the scales.

Further, on the peer relationship subscale, "Is usually

Table 2. Social competence rating by peers and teachers.

Variable	Peers		Teachers	
	Mean	**Standard Deviation**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Personal attributes				
Is usually in a good mood	2.60	0.76	2.61	0.76
Usually come to school willingly	2.77	0.86	2.76	0.66
Joins group activities willingly	2.59	0.82	2.59	0.86
Shows interest in others' welfare	2.62	0.82	2.62	0.82
Shows the capacity to empathize	2.55	0.73	2.55	0.72
Social skills				
Interacts non-verbally with others with smiles	2.52	0.78	2.52	0.78
Asserts their rights and needs appropriately	2.67	0.74	2.67	0.74
Gains access to ongoing groups at play	2.53	0.78	2.53	0.78
Usually takes turn fairly easily	2.50	0.81	2.50	0.80
Shows the capacity of caring about peers	2.54	0.79	2.54	0.79
Is able to maintain friendships with peers even after disagreement	2.53	0.83	2.53	0.82
Peer relationship				
Is usually named by others as friends	2.59	0.76	2.59	0.76
Shows respect for individual differences	2.61	0.72	2.61	0.77
Is usually sensitive to others' feeling	2.55	0.91	2.48	0.75
Demonstrates physical aggression towards peers	2.51	0.76	2.57	0.77
Demonstrates verbal aggression towards peers	2.48	0.75	2.46	0.76

named by others as friends" (M=2.59, SD=0.76), "Shows respect for individual differences" (M=2.61, SD=0.77), "Is usually sensitive to others' feeling" (M=2.55, SD=0.91), "Demonstrates physical aggression towards peers" (M=2.51, SD=0.76) and "Demonstrates verbal aggression towards peers" (M=2.48, .SD=0.75) are above the mid-point of the scales.

Generally, the peers rated the students' social competence above average, which insinuates that most of them were socially competent. Thus, an overwhelming majority of the students were regarded as been socially competent.

On the teacher rating, comparison of the means of the items on all the three sub-scales of social competence reveals that all the means are above the mid-point. On the personal attribute subscale, "Is usually in a good mood" (M=2.61, SD=0.76), "Usually come to school willingly" (M=2.76, SD=0.66), "Join group activities willingly" (M=2.59, SD=0.86), "Shows interest in others' welfare" (M=2.62, SD=0.82), "Shows the capacity to empathize" (M=2.55, SD=0.73),

On the social skills attributes subscale, "Interacts non-verbally with others with smiles" (M=2.52, SD=0.78), "Asserts their rights and needs appropriately" (M=2.67, SD=0.74), "Gains access to ongoing groups at play" (M=2.53, SD=0.78), "Usually takes turn fairly easily" (M=2.50, SD=0.80), "Shows the capacity of caring about

peers" (M=2.54, SD=0.79), and "Is able to maintain friendships with peers even after disagreement" (M=2.53, SD=0.82) have mean scores that are above the mid-point of the scales.

Lastly, on the peer relationship attribute subscale, "Is usually named by others as friends" (M=2.59, SD=0.76), "Shows respect for individual differences" (M=2.61, SD=0.77), "Is usually sensitive to others' feeling" (M=2.55, SD=0.91), "Demonstrates physical aggression towards peers" (M=2.48, SD=0.75), and "Demonstrates verbal aggression towards peers" (M=2.46, SD=0.76), have mean scores well above the mid-point of the scales.

There was unanimity in the peer and teacher ratings that the adolescent demonstrated relatively high levels of social competence during social interactions with their contemporaries and adults. Thus, the evaluators shared similar views about the social competence of the students as the majority of them were adjudged to be socially competent.

Gender difference in students' social competence

An issue of interest was the gendered nature of social competence. Scores of peer and teacher ratings were analysed, respectively to achieve this end. The outcomes of the analyses are presented in Tables 3 and 4. The

Table 3. Gender difference in students' social competence (Peer rating).

Group	N	Means	SD	Df	T	p
Male	875	30.4309	4.39182	1753	0.82	0.519
Female	880	30.4114	4.98383	175363		-

Table 4. Gender difference in students' social competence (Teacher rating).

Group	N	Means	SD	df	T	p
Male	875	28.3866	4.233 92	1753	1.685	0.527
Female	880	28.0545	4.27035	175363	-	-

Table 5. Adolescents' social competence (Peer rating).

Group	N	Means	SD	df	T	p
Adolescents living with real parents	1397	160.7845	24.52769	1753	-1.264	0.577
Adolescents living with pseudo parents	358	165.5754	25.75033	534.913	-	-

results of peer ratings of the students' social competence are presented first.

A perusal of the results in Table 3 illuminates that there is no difference in the social competence of the male and female students. The results unveil no significant difference in the ratings of social competence of male students (M=30.43, SD=4.39) and female students (M=30.41, SD=4.98; t(1753)= 0.82, p=0.519 at 0.05 significant level.

The outcomes of teacher ratings of the social competence of students are presented in Table 2. The results in Table 2 indicate no difference in the social competence of the students. This is evident in the fact that the male students had a rating score of (M=28.39, SD=4.23), which is not significantly different from the score of the female students (M=28.05, SD=4.27).

The outcome of the teachers' rating scores is consistent with that of the peer ratings. Comparison of the ratings of peers and teachers insinuates that both male and female students tend to demonstrate similar levels of social competence in their interactions with peers and adults. This gives credence to the fact that both the male and female students are rated almost the same in terms of their interactions with their peers and adults.

Social competence of adolescence living with real and pseudo parents

The comparison of peer ratings with teacher ratings of the social competence of adolescents living with real and pseudo parents was done using independent samples t-test.

The results of the data analysis in Table 3 demonstrate no significant difference in the social competence of the adolescent living with real parents (M=160.78, SD=24.53) and those staying with non-biological parents (M=165.58, SD=25.75; t (1753), =--1.264, p=0.577). That is, adolescents living with real and pseudo parents were rated equal on social competence score.

Teacher rating of social competence of the adolescents was also done. The outcome of the analysis is presented in Table 6.

The results of the teacher ratings of the students' social competence also did not yield significant difference between children and wards. The results in Table 4 indicate no significant difference in the social competence of children living with real parents (M=35.85, SD=8.25) and those living with pseudo parents (Mean 36.39, SD=8.5; t(168)=-1.058), p=0.568. The children and wards living with the real and pseudo parents were rated equal on social competence score.

Data from the two sources (peer and teacher ratings) show consistent evidence, indicating that both children and wards demonstrated similar behaviours in social discourses.

Social competence of adolescents in rural, peri-urban and urban communities

On the study of social competence of the adolescents residing in rural, semi-urban and urban communities, results are presented in Table 5.

The results displayed in Table 5 show significant

Table 6. Adolescents' social competence (Teacher rating).

Group	N	Means	SD	Df	T	p
Adolescents living with real parents	1321	35.8509	8.24730	1648	-1.058	0.568
Adolescents living with pseudo parents	329	36.3921	8.50151	493.043	-	-

Table 7. ANOVA (Peer rating).

Variable	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5373.917	2	2686.958	123.112	0.000
Within Groups	38237.903	1752	21.825	-	-
Total	43611.820	1754	-	-	-

Table 8. Multiple comparisons.

Which type of community do you reside?	(J) Which type of community do you reside?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Standard. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Rural	Semi urban	-3.02382*	0.27422	0.000	-3.6671	-2.3806
	Urban	-4.15467*	0.27319	0.000	-4.7955	-3.5138
Semi urban	Rural	3.02382*	0.27422	0.000	2.3806	3.6671
	Urban	-1.13085*	0.27212	0.000	-1.7692	-0.4925
Urban	Rural	4.15467*	0.27319	0.000	3.5138	4.7955
	Semi urban	1.13085*	0.27212	0.000	.4925	1.7692

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 9. ANOVA (Teacher rating).

Variable	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4295.706	2	2147.853	137.075	0.000
Within Groups	27452.390	1752	15.669	-	-
Total	31748.097	1754	-	-	-

difference in the social competence of children living in rural, semi-urban and urban communities, F(2, 1752) = 123, p<0.001. Children in the various communities did not demonstrate similar levels of social competence in their interactions with their colleagues and adults. The differences in students' social competence called for ascertainment of where the differences lied. Tukey's post hoc test was used for further analysis and the results are shown in Table 8.

The scores of social competence of the adolescents residing in the rural communities are different from those residing in the semi-urban and then in the urban communities. The outcome of the analysis illuminates significant difference in social competence of children

living in these communities (Table 9).

The outcome of the analysis in Table 7 demonstrates statistically significant difference in the social competence of children living in the three geographical settings, F(2, 1752)=137.1, p<0.001. The result implies differences in the social competence level of children domiciled in rural, semi-urban and urban communities (Table 10).

The results depict that there is significant difference in the social competence of children living in the urban communities, those living in the semi-urban communities and then those in the rural communities.

The results of both peer and teacher ratings show significant difference in the social competence level of the students in the communities. The children residing in the

Table 10. Multiple comparisons.

Which type of community do you reside?	(J) Which type of community do you reside?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Standard. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Rural	Semi urban	-2.94669*	0.23235	0.000	-3.4917	-2.4017
	Urban	-3.61048*	0.23148	0.000	-4.1535	-3.0675
Semi urban	Rural	2.94669*	0.23235	0.000	2.4017	3.4917
	Urban	-0.66379*	0.23057	0.011	-1.2046	-0.1229
Urban	Rural	3.61048*	0.23148	0.000	3.0675	4.1535
	Semi urban	0.66379*	0.23057	0.011	0.1229	1.2046

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

rural, semi-urban and urban communities were not exhibiting the same levels of relationship with peers and adults as those in the urban communities did.

DISCUSSION

Social competence of adolescents

This study sought to assess the quality of adolescents' interpersonal skills and behaviours as they demonstrated them in interactions with their peers and adults. Generally, the students were adjudged to be socially competent.

Social competence of male and female students

The outcome of the analysis of the gendered nature of social competence illuminates no significant difference. The ratings of both peers and teachers produced similar results, which support the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the social competence of male and female students. The results signal that male and female students were fairly similar with regard to the quality of their interactions with others. The lack of gender difference in social competence of male and female students, as per the results of the study, does not reflect societal expectations and are inconsistent with the studies conducted by Aunola et al. (2000), Benzies et al. (2009), and Altay and Gore (2012) which found that girls demonstrated more pro-social behaviour than boys. The finding also contradicts Flynn et al. (2015) findings, which revealed that male students better adjusted socially than the female students.

Social competence of adolescents living with real and pseudo-parents

The results of the research did not show significant difference in the social competence of the adolescents living with real and pseudo parents. Both peer and teacher ratings did not reveal significant difference in the social competence of the sampled students. The study findings are inconsistent with results of a study that disclosed that adopted adolescents had lower grade point average (GPA) than the non-adopted adolescent (Toussaint, 2008).

Social competence of children in rural, seri-urban and urban communities

Significantly however, results demonstrate difference in the social competence of adolescents living in the various communities. Both raters adjudged the social competence of the adolescents residing in the rural, semi-urban and urban communities differently. The raters considered the adolescents living in the communities to be exuding and displaying different levels of social competence during social discourses. It is further observed from the results that the adolescents in the urban communities were rated high and rural children low, with semi-urban adolescents falling somewhere in-between. The finding corroborates Owoeye and Yara (2011), Alokan and Arijesuyo (2013) and Onoyase (2015) study findings that uncovered differences in academic performance of students in rural and urban settings. The finding is also consistent with Totan et al. (2014) revelation of differences in the social competence of the adolescents who resided in different settings.

Conclusion

In spite of the recognition that social competence is also a gain from formal education, little efforts had been expended to assess how the adolescents demonstrate it in social discourses. The present research sought to help bridge that knowledge gap and the results of the study have amply shown possession of similar levels of social competence by male and female students, and the

adolescents staying with real and pseudo-parents. The study, however, found that differences existed in the social competence of the adolescents living in urban, semi-urban and rural communities.

The evidence emanated from the study has helped to advance understanding on the social competence concept. Again, the study provides guidance with respect to where to target intervention or embark on serious education for adolescents to improve on their social competence. The findings also add to the repertoire of studies on their social development. Furthermore, the research introduces a cultural dimension to social competence literature from a developing country in Africa. Lastly, the research has provided direction for future research on the social competence subject.

More social intervention programmes should be developed and implemented especially for the children in the rural communities to improve on their social competence.

Further studies could focus on social competence of the adolescents living with single parents and factors that account for the disparity in the social competence of the adolescents domiciled in rural, semi-urban and urban communities.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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