



Post-Emergency Remote Instruction: Relationships Between Adolescents' Social-Emotional Learning, Extracurricular Activities, and School Connectedness



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Background and Key Terms

- Since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in **emergency remote instruction** across the U.S. Adolescents' self-reported major concerns have been about loneliness and missing friends (*Scott et al., 2021*).
- **SEL** can help youth be more resilient.
 - SEL is a framework based on the concept of emotional intelligence. CASEL 5's specific SEL framework identifies 5 competencies: (1) **self-awareness**, (2) **self-management**, (3) **social awareness**, (4) **relationship skills**, and (5) **responsible decision making** (*Elias et al., 1997*).
- **Engagement** in schools has been defined as either being behavioral, emotional, or cognitive (*Fredricks et al., 2004*).
- **School-connectedness** is how much students feel accepted, included, respected, and supported by staff and even peers in their school environment (*Goodenow, 1993*), but by the time students begin high school, **40-60%** feel disconnected (*Durlak et al., 2011*).

Research Aim & Questions

- **Research Aim:** To investigate the relationships between middle school students' SEL competencies, engagement levels, and perceptions of their in-person school climate, post-pandemic.
- **Research Questions:**
 - While attending a northeastern public middle school, how are middle school students' developed levels of SEL competencies related to their levels of engagement in extracurricular activities?
 - How does SEL and engagement influence these middle school students' school connectedness?



Proposed Methodology

- Participants:**
- 60 students from a northeastern public middle school.
- Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods Design:**
- **Quantitative Phase:**
 - Data will be collected from the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA), a tool that measures each students' SEL competency levels, and is completed by teachers.
 - Based on T-score results, students will be placed into comparison groups: high, average, low SEL.
 - **Qualitative Phase:**
 - There will 12 focus groups (4 per grade level).
 - Questions will look into how they feel about in-person learning vs. remote, how many clubs they are in, why they joined, and how supported they feel by their teachers.
 - **Sessions will be recorded, transcribed, and coded.**

Data Analysis/Anticipated Findings

- Significant positive relationship between SEL and engagement (*linear regression model*)
- Significant increase in school connectedness due to interaction between SEL and engagement (*multiple regression model*)
- Significant positive association between engagement levels and school connectedness levels (*chi-square test*)

Discussion/Conclusion

- This study will show the role that SEL plays on students' quality of school life in middle schools.
- SEL, engagement levels, and school connectedness are potential factors that need to be focused upon by administrators in order to make more students perceive their school positively.
- Key policy priorities among school systems should be to implement and strengthen SEL-based interventions within middle schools to foster connectivity.

Selected References

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