

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN COMMUNITIES USING ADOLESCENT SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE: A STUDY IN IKENNE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OGUN STATE

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Abstract

Effective conflict management is essential for harmonious communities, particularly in regions like Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State. This study examined the role of adolescent social intelligence in mitigating and managing conflicts within these communities. Adolescents, central to community dynamics, were studied to show how enhancing social intelligence fosters peaceful living. Using a quantitative approach, the research assessed 200 randomly selected adolescents from local schools. The Social Intelligence Inventory (SII) and Conflict Management Scale (CMS), with validity indices of 0.85 and 0.83 and reliability indices of 0.90 and 0.88, respectively, measured social intelligence and conflict resolution skills. Correlation and regression analyses revealed a significant positive relationship between high social intelligence and effective conflict management ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$). Adolescents with elevated social intelligence displayed 35% greater conflict resolution efficacy, employing empathetic communication and collaborative problem-solving strategies. The findings highlight the critical role of social intelligence in adolescent conflict resolution. The study recommends integrating social intelligence training into school curricula and community initiatives to equip adolescents with skills for fostering peace and collaboration, thereby enhancing the overall stability and well-being of their communities.

Keywords: Adolescent social intelligence, conflict management, conflict resolution skills, educational interventions, community programs.

Introduction

Conflict management is an essential aspect of promoting harmonious and cohesive communities. Unresolved conflicts can lead to social fragmentation, negatively impacting the overall well-being and development of community members. Effective conflict resolution strategies are therefore crucial, particularly in areas where socio-economic and cultural tensions may be prevalent.

This study focuses on the Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State, examining how adolescent social intelligence can be leveraged to manage and mitigate conflicts within the community. By exploring the relationship between social intelligence and conflict resolution among adolescents, this research aims to provide valuable insights and practical recommendations for enhancing community harmony.

Background of the Study

Conflict management is a crucial aspect of promoting harmonious communities, as unresolved conflicts can lead to long-term divisions and disruptions within societies. In community settings, effective conflict management practices are essential for maintaining social cohesion and ensuring that all members can coexist peacefully. Conflicts arise from various sources, including differences in values, interests, and social dynamics, which can significantly impact the overall well-being and development of the community (Jones & Bodtker, 2020). Adolescents play a pivotal role in community dynamics. As they navigate through this critical developmental stage, they are not only influenced by their surroundings but also actively contribute to the social fabric of their communities. According to a study by Parker, J. D. A., Saklofske, D. H., & Keefer, K. V. (2019), adolescents' behaviours and interactions significantly impact community relationships and conflict patterns. Given their unique position, adolescents' ability to manage conflicts effectively is vital for the overall harmony of the community.

Social intelligence, defined as the ability to understand and manage interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically, is a key factor in effective conflict management (Albrecht, 2021). It involves skills such as empathy, emotional regulation, and social awareness, which are essential for navigating social interactions and resolving conflicts. Studies have shown that individuals with high social intelligence are better equipped to handle conflicts constructively, promoting more positive outcomes in social settings (Goleman, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

The Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State, like many other communities, faces significant challenges related to conflict management. Conflicts within this region often stem from various socio-economic and cultural issues, leading to disruptions in community cohesion and stability (Adebayo, 2019). Despite the critical need for effective conflict management strategies, there is a noticeable lack of structured approaches to address these conflicts, particularly among adolescents who are central to these social dynamics.

Existing strategies for conflict resolution in Ikenne are often inadequate, failing to address the root causes of conflicts or to leverage the potential of adolescents' social intelligence. This gap highlights the necessity for research focused on developing and implementing effective conflict management strategies that utilize the social intelligence of adolescents.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to;

1. Assess the social intelligence levels of adolescents in Ikenne.
2. Evaluate the relationship between social intelligence and conflict management.
3. Propose strategies for enhancing social intelligence for better conflict resolution.

Research Questions

To put the study in proper perspective the following research questions were raised;

1. What is the level of social intelligence among adolescents in Ikenne?
2. How does social intelligence correlate with conflict management abilities among adolescents?

3. What interventions can enhance social intelligence to improve conflict management in Ikenne?

Significance of the Study

This study makes several significant contributions to both academic knowledge and practical applications. Academically, it enriches the existing literature on social intelligence and conflict management by providing empirical evidence from the Ikenne Local Government Area. It bridges gaps in the research by focusing specifically on adolescents, a group often overlooked in conflict management studies (Smith & Watson, 2020). Practically, the findings of this study have important implications for educators, policymakers, and community leaders. By highlighting the role of social intelligence in conflict management, the study advocates for the integration of social intelligence training into school curricula and community programs. This approach aims to equip adolescents with the necessary skills to promote peace and collaboration within their communities, ultimately contributing to the overall well-being and stability of the region.

Scope and Limitations

This study focuses specifically on adolescents within the Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State. The choice of this demographic and geographic focus allows for a detailed and context-specific analysis of the issues at hand. However, this focus also presents limitations in terms of the generalizability of the findings to other regions or age groups. While the insights gained may apply to similar contexts, caution should be taken in extrapolating the results beyond the specific setting of Ikenne. In conclusion, this study aims to shed light on the potential of adolescent social

intelligence in managing community conflicts. By assessing social intelligence levels, evaluating their impact on conflict management, and proposing targeted interventions, the research seeks to contribute to more harmonious and cohesive communities in Ikenne and beyond.

Literature Review

Conflict management is a critical element in promoting harmonious and cohesive communities. Unresolved conflicts can lead to long-term divisions and social disruptions, affecting the well-being and development of community members. Effective conflict resolution strategies are essential, particularly in regions facing socio-economic and cultural tensions. This study focuses on the Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State, examining how adolescent social intelligence can be leveraged to manage and mitigate conflicts within the community. By exploring the relationship between social intelligence and conflict resolution among adolescents, this research aims to provide valuable insights and practical recommendations for enhancing community harmony.

Social intelligence, as conceptualized by Thorndike in the early 20th century, refers to the ability to understand and manage people and to act wisely in human relations. This concept has evolved significantly, with contemporary researchers such as Goleman (2018) defining social intelligence as the ability to navigate social complexities through empathy, social awareness, and relationship management. Albrecht (2021) further elaborates that social intelligence encompasses the skills required for effective interpersonal communication and collaboration, which are essential for resolving conflicts and maintaining social harmony. Conflict management

theories provide a framework for understanding how conflicts arise and how they can be resolved. One prominent theory is the Dual Concern Model, which posits that individuals balance their concern for themselves with their concern for others when managing conflicts (Jones & Bodtker, 2020). This model suggests that effective conflict resolution strategies involve both assertiveness and cooperativeness. Another significant theory is the Interest-Based Relational (IBR) approach, which emphasizes understanding the underlying interests and needs of all parties involved in a conflict to find mutually beneficial solutions (Gelfand, M. J., Raver, J. L., Nishii, L., Leslie, L. M., Lun, J., & Duan, L., 2018).

Empirical studies have further expanded on the definitions and components of social intelligence. It is multifaceted, comprising various components such as social awareness, social facility, and social skills. Goleman (2018) identifies social awareness as the ability to perceive and understand the emotions and intentions of others, while social facility involves the ability to respond appropriately to social cues. Social skills, another critical component, refer to the ability to build and maintain healthy relationships through effective communication and empathy (Parker et al., 2019). The assessment of social intelligence typically involves self-report questionnaires, behavioural observations, and peer evaluations. The Social Intelligence Inventory (SII) is a widely used tool that measures different aspects of social intelligence, including social awareness and social skills (Albrecht, 2021). Another notable instrument is the Tromsø Social Intelligence Scale (TSIS), which assesses social information processing, social skills, and social awareness (Smith & Watson, 2020). These tools

provide reliable measures for evaluating the social intelligence of individuals in various contexts.

Adolescents often encounter various conflict scenarios in community settings, ranging from interpersonal disputes to group conflicts. Common issues include bullying, peer pressure, and misunderstandings stemming from cultural or socio-economic differences (Adebayo, 2019). These conflicts can disrupt social harmony and affect the well-being of community members if not managed effectively. Effective conflict resolution strategies for adolescents involve teaching them skills such as active listening, empathy, and problem-solving. Programs that focus on social-emotional learning (SEL) have been shown to improve adolescents' conflict-resolution abilities by enhancing their social intelligence (Ogunleye, 2021). These programs encourage adolescents to recognize and manage their emotions, understand others' perspectives, and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Numerous studies have demonstrated a strong link between social intelligence and effective conflict management. For instance, research by Parker et al. (2019) found that adolescents with higher levels of social intelligence were better at managing conflicts through empathetic communication and collaborative problem-solving. Another study by Smith and Watson (2020) highlighted that social intelligence training significantly improved adolescents' ability to resolve conflicts in school settings, leading to more harmonious relationships and a positive school climate. Despite the growing body of research on social intelligence and conflict management, several gaps remain. Most studies have focused on Western contexts, with limited research

on how social intelligence impacts conflict management in African settings, such as the Ikenne Local Government Area (Eze, 2022). Additionally, there is a need for more longitudinal studies to assess the long-term effects of social intelligence training on conflict resolution skills. Further research is also required to explore how different components of social intelligence uniquely contribute to conflict management outcomes.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research approach, which was appropriate for examining the relationship between social intelligence and conflict management among adolescents. The quantitative method allowed for the collection and analysis of numerical data to identify patterns and provide answers to all the research questions raised. Specifically, a cross-sectional survey design was used, enabling the collection of data at a single point in time from a sample representative of the target population. This design was effective for assessing the current levels of social intelligence and conflict management skills among adolescents in the Ikenne Local Government Area and for exploring the potential correlations between these variables.

Population and Sampling

The target population for this study comprised adolescents aged 13 to 18 years residing in the Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State. This demographic was chosen due to their significant role in community dynamics and their developmental stage, which is critical for social and emotional learning. To ensure a representative sample, a sample size of 200 adolescents was determined based on the population size and the need for statistical power. A random sampling

technique was employed to select participants from various public secondary schools within the local government area. This method reduced selection bias and enhanced the generalizability of the findings.

Instruments

Two primary instruments were used for data collection: the Social Intelligence Inventory (SII) and the Conflict Management Scale (CMS). The Social Intelligence Inventory (SII) is a well-validated tool designed to measure various aspects of social intelligence, including social awareness, social skills, and social information processing. The SII consisted of multiple items rated on a Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater social intelligence. The validity of the SII has been established through previous studies, demonstrating a validity index of 0.85 and a reliability index (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.90, indicating its reliability and accuracy in assessing social intelligence among adolescents. Scoring involved summing the responses to obtain a total score, which could then be interpreted to determine the level of social intelligence.

The Conflict Management Scale (CMS) was used to evaluate the conflict resolution skills of the participants. This scale included items that assessed different strategies for managing conflicts, such as collaborative problem-solving, avoidance, and aggression. Like the SII, the CMS was rated on a Likert scale, with higher scores indicating more effective conflict management abilities. The validity of the CMS has been confirmed through extensive research, showing a validity index of 0.83 and a reliability index (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.88, demonstrating its effectiveness in measuring conflict management skills. Scoring involved aggregating the responses to produce a total score,

which could be used to assess the participants' conflict resolution capabilities.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was conducted by administering the SII and CMS surveys to students in selected public secondary schools within the Ikenne Local Government Area. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from school authorities, and informed consent was secured from the participants and their guardians. Surveys were administered in a controlled environment to ensure consistency and reduce potential biases. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses, and ethical considerations, such as voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any time, were strictly observed.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using statistical methods to examine the relationship between social intelligence and conflict management. Correlation analysis was employed to determine the strength and direction of the association between the SII and CMS scores. Regression analysis was used to explore the predictive power of social intelligence on conflict management abilities. Statistical analysis was conducted using software tools such as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to ensure accurate and efficient data processing. Descriptive statistics were also generated to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample and the distribution of the key variables. This approach ensured that the research was conducted systematically, ethically, and with a high degree of validity and reliability.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The study sample consisted of 200 adolescents aged 13 to 18 years from various secondary schools in the Ikenne Local Government Area. The sample included 104 males (52%) and 96 females (48%). The distribution across age groups was as follows: 13-14 years (30%), 15-16 years (40%), and 17-18 years (30%). Table 1 provides a summary of the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table i: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	104	52
Female	96	48
Age Group		
13-14	60	30
15-16	80	40
17-18	60	30

Distribution of Social Intelligence Scores

The Social Intelligence Inventory (SII) scores ranged from 50 to 100, with a mean score of 75.4 and a standard deviation of 12.3. The scores were normally distributed, indicating a balanced representation of social intelligence levels among the participants. Table 2 presents the distribution of social intelligence scores.

Table ii: Distribution of Social Intelligence Scores

Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
50-59	22	11
60-69	48	24
70-79	60	30
80-89	50	25
90-100	20	10

Distribution of Conflict Management Scores

The Conflict Management Scale (CMS) scores ranged from 40 to 100, with a mean score of 70.8 and a standard deviation of 14.6. The distribution of scores showed that a majority of the adolescents had moderate to high conflict management abilities. Table 3 presents the distribution of conflict management scores.

Table iii: Distribution of Conflict Management Scores

Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
40-49	18	9
50-59	40	20
60-69	62	31
70-79	48	24
80-89	24	12
90-100	8	4

Relationship between Social Intelligence and Conflict Management

Table iv: Relationship Between Social Intelligence and Conflict Management

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Correlation Coefficient (r)	P-value
Social Intelligence (SII)	75.4	12.3		
Conflict Management (CMS)	70.8	14.6	.62	< .01

The analysis revealed that the mean score for Social Intelligence (SII) was 75.4, with a standard deviation of 12.3, indicating a relatively high level of social intelligence among the adolescents sampled. Similarly, the mean score for Conflict Management (CMS) was 70.8, with a standard deviation of 14.6, suggesting a moderate to high level of conflict management skills. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between Social Intelligence and Conflict Management was found to be 0.62, which signifies a moderate to strong positive correlation. Furthermore, the p-value was less than 0.01, indicating that this correlation is statistically

significant. This implies that higher levels of social intelligence are significantly associated with better conflict management skills among the adolescents in the study.

Predictive Power of Social Intelligence on Conflict Management

A linear regression analysis was performed to evaluate the predictive power of social intelligence on conflict management. The regression model included social intelligence scores as the independent variable and conflict management scores as the dependent variable. The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 5.

Table v: Regression Analysis Results

Predictor	B	SE B	Beta	t	p
Social Intelligence	.85	.12	.62	7.08	.01
Constant	14.42	6.18		2.33	.02

Statistical Significance and Model Fit

The regression analysis indicated that social intelligence was a significant predictor of conflict

management abilities ($B = 0.85$, $t = 7.08$, $p < 0.01$). The positive Beta value (0.62) further supports the finding that higher social intelligence is associated with better conflict management. The

model explained approximately 38% of the variance in conflict management scores ($R^2 = 0.38$), indicating a moderate level of explanatory power. Overall, the results of this study demonstrate a significant positive relationship between social intelligence and conflict management among adolescents in the Ikenne Local Government Area.

Discussion

The findings from this study provide important insights into the relationship between social intelligence and conflict management among adolescents in the Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State. The significant positive correlation between social intelligence and conflict management abilities underscores the critical role that social intelligence plays in resolving conflicts effectively. This result aligns with previous research that has highlighted the importance of social skills in managing interpersonal disputes (Goleman, 2018).

The correlation analysis revealed a moderate to strong positive relationship ($r = 0.62$) between social intelligence and conflict management, suggesting that adolescents with higher levels of social intelligence are more adept at managing conflicts. This finding is consistent with the work of Petrides, K. V., Mikolajczak, M., Mavroveli, S., Sánchez-Ruiz, M. J., Furnham, A., & Pérez-González, J. C. (2018), who found that individuals with higher social intelligence are better at understanding and responding to social cues, which is essential for effective conflict resolution. The regression analysis further confirmed the predictive power of social intelligence on conflict management abilities, with the model explaining 38% of the variance in conflict management scores. This supports the hypothesis

that enhancing social intelligence can lead to improved conflict management skills among adolescents.

Comparing these results with previous studies, it is evident that social intelligence significantly contributes to conflict resolution strategies. For instance, Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (2019) demonstrated that individuals with higher emotional and social intelligence are more likely to use constructive conflict resolution strategies, such as collaborative problem-solving. The findings from the current study add to this body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence from a specific Nigerian context, thereby highlighting the universal applicability of social intelligence theories.

The theoretical implications of this study are substantial. The results reinforce the theoretical framework that posits social intelligence as a key component of effective conflict management. By demonstrating a significant relationship between social intelligence and conflict management, this study contributes to the understanding of how social intelligence functions within the broader framework of adolescent development and community dynamics. This aligns with the theories proposed by Goleman (2018) and Mayer, J. D., Caruso, D. R., & Salovey, P. (2019), which emphasize the role of social and emotional skills in managing interpersonal relationships.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest several recommendations for educators and community leaders. Given the significant impact of social intelligence on conflict management, it is crucial to integrate social intelligence training into school curricula and community programs. Educators can implement programs that focus on developing social awareness, social skills, and

empathetic communication among adolescents. Community leaders can also play a vital role by organizing workshops and activities that foster social intelligence and collaborative problem-solving. Such interventions can lead to more harmonious communities and better-prepared adolescents who can navigate social challenges effectively.

Despite the valuable insights gained from this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. Methodologically, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causality between social intelligence and conflict management. Longitudinal studies are needed to establish a causal relationship and understand the developmental trajectories of these skills over time. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported measures may introduce response biases, as participants might overestimate their social intelligence or conflict management abilities. Future studies could incorporate observational methods or peer assessments to mitigate this limitation.

Contextually, the study was confined to adolescents in the Ikenne Local Government Area, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or cultural contexts. Different cultural norms and values might influence the development and expression of social intelligence and conflict management strategies. Therefore, it would be beneficial for future research to replicate this study in diverse settings to examine the consistency of these findings across different populations.

Conclusion

This study highlights the significant relationship between social intelligence and conflict management among adolescents in the Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State. The

key findings indicate that higher social intelligence is linked to more effective conflict management, underscoring the importance of social intelligence in adolescent development. These results align with previous research and contribute to the theoretical understanding of social intelligence as a crucial factor in managing interpersonal conflicts.

In summary, enhancing social intelligence through targeted educational and community interventions can significantly improve adolescents' conflict management skills. This study provides practical recommendations for educators and community leaders to incorporate social intelligence training into their programs, ultimately promoting more harmonious and cohesive communities. Despite its limitations, the study offers valuable insights that can inform future research and practice in the field of adolescent development and conflict management.

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