

The Effects of Persistence on The Acquisition of Social Skills by Adolescents in Secondary Schools in The Littoral Region of Cameroon

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Abstract

*This study examines the effects of persistence on the acquisition of social skills by adolescents in secondary schools in the Littoral Region of Cameroon. The study was guided by one major question and a hypothesis. The survey research design using the convergent mixed methods approach was adopted for the study. Close-ended questionnaire and a focused group discussion made up the instrument used for the study. The sample population for the study consisted of 354 students. The purposive, convenient and the simple random sampling techniques were adopted for the study. Data from the close ended questions were analyzed using SPSS 23.0, with the aid of descriptive and inferential statistical tools while open ended questions and focus group discussion were analyzed thematically. The Spearman's rho was used to test the lone research hypothesis formulated in the study. Findings showed that 82.3% of the students agreed that persistence influences adolescent acquisition of social skills in secondary schools while 17.7% disagreed. The hypothetical statistics showed that there is a significant, positive and strong relationship between persistence and adolescent acquisition of social skills in secondary schools (R -value 0.435**, p -value $< 0.000 < 0.05$). The positive sign of the correlation value implies that continues persistence to learn from their mistakes and use them as opportunities for growth, being determined to overcome obstacles, committed to continuously improving and developing my skills and abilities and remaining focused on their goals, even when faced with challenges or setbacks will enhance adolescent acquisition of social skills in secondary schools. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative that states there is a significant relationship between persistence and adolescent acquisition of social skills in secondary schools in the Littoral Region was accepted. Based on the findings, it is generally recommended that secondary schools in the Littoral Region of Cameroon should intentionally promote and integrate persistence-building strategies into their educational and extracurricular programs. School administrators and teachers should create supportive learning environments that encourage students to view mistakes as opportunities for growth, remain determined in the face of challenges, and continuously strive for self-improvement.*

Keywords: Persistence, Acquisition of Social Skills, Adolescents and Secondary Schools.

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1. Introduction

The acquisition of social skills by adolescents in secondary schools is a critical aspect of their overall development, shaping their interpersonal relationships and future success. Social skills, which encompass communication, empathy, and cooperative behaviors, serve as foundational competencies that influence adolescents' abilities to navigate their social environments (Glickman, 2019). In the context of the Littoral region of Cameroon, a culturally rich and diverse area, the importance of social skill acquisition assumes even greater significance, as adolescents interact within a dynamic blend of traditional and modern influences. This interaction often determines how effectively young individuals can engage with their peers and adults, promoting positive socialization.

Persistence, defined as the sustained effort to achieve a particular goal despite obstacles, plays a vital role in the development of social skills among adolescents (Duckworth et al., 2007). In the Littoral region, where societal expectations and peer dynamics can be complex, the ability to persist in social interactions is crucial. Adolescents who exhibit persistence are more likely to engage meaningfully with their peers, practice new skills, and learn from various social situations, thereby facilitating their social skill development. Research suggests that consistent engagement and effort can lead to improved interpersonal abilities, even in the face of challenges, highlighting persistence as a key factor in social learning (Bandura, 1977).

The social environment in secondary schools further underscores the importance of persistence in acquiring social skills. Schools serve as microcosms where adolescents learn to navigate relationships, resolve conflicts, and collaborate in diverse settings. According to Weissberg et al. (2015), a supportive school climate fosters social-emotional learning, allowing students to develop their social competencies effectively. In the Littoral region, where adolescents may encounter both encouragement and resistance in their social endeavors, the drive to persist in social interactions can determine their capacity to forge meaningful relationships and develop a robust social identity.

In essence adolescents would engage in supportive environments where persistence in social interactions leads to effective communication, cooperation, and empathy. According to a study by Weissberg et al. (2015), optimal social-emotional learning environments can significantly boost students' social competencies, enabling them to forge healthy relationships and navigate complex social situations. However, in the Littoral region of Cameroon, the reality often falls short of this ideal, as many adolescents

face significant barriers that impede their persistence in acquiring these critical skills.

In practice, the challenges are multifaceted. A recent survey conducted in secondary schools in the Littoral region revealed that only 40% of students felt they had ample opportunities to engage in meaningful social interactions (Ndam et al., 2021). Factors such as socio-economic disparities, cultural expectations, and limited resources contribute to a landscape where adolescents struggle to develop persistence in social settings. Consequently, many students encounter difficulties in forming relationships, leading to phenomena such as social withdrawal and low self-esteem. The lack of adequate support systems exacerbates these issues, rendering students unprepared for the interpersonal demands of adult life, which can hinder their academic performance and future job prospects (Glickman, 2019).

In response to these challenges, the Cameroonian government has initiated programs aimed at promoting social skills development within educational settings. Initiatives like the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) framework have been introduced in some schools to provide structured environments for interaction and peer support. However, despite these efforts, the problem persists, as implementation has been inconsistent and often limited due to resource constraints (Ngum et al., 2020). As a result, many adolescents in the Littoral region continue to experience setbacks in their ability to acquire social skills effectively, underscoring the need for ongoing research and targeted interventions to enhance their social capabilities through persistent engagement. Thus, this study aims to answer the question;

To what extent does persistence impact adolescent acquisition of social skills in secondary schools?

2. Literature Review

Persistence is a personality trait that is crucial for adolescents' success in secondary schools. It refers to the ability to continue working towards a goal despite challenges, setbacks, and obstacles. Adolescents who exhibit high levels of persistence are more likely to achieve academic success, develop positive social relationships, and have better mental health outcomes than those who lack this trait. Persistence is a multifaceted construct that encompasses an individual's ability to maintain effort and motivation in the face of challenges and setbacks. In the context of adolescent development, particularly within secondary schools, persistence plays a crucial role in the

acquisition of social skills. Adolescence is a critical period where individuals transition from childhood to adulthood, marked by significant emotional, cognitive, and social changes (Steinberg, 2014). The ability to persist in social interactions and relationships can significantly influence adolescents' social competence and overall well-being.

The understanding of persistence in relation to social skill acquisition can be grounded in several theoretical frameworks. One prominent theory is Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes the role of self-efficacy in motivating individuals to persist in their efforts (Bandura, 1997). Adolescents with high self-efficacy are more likely to engage in social interactions and persist despite challenges, ultimately leading to improved social skills. Furthermore, the concept of grit, introduced by Duckworth et al. (2007), highlights the importance of passion and perseverance for long-term goals, suggesting that gritty adolescents are more likely to overcome social obstacles and develop effective interpersonal skills.

Motivation is a critical factor influencing persistence among adolescents. According to Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory, intrinsic motivation stemming from personal interest and enjoyment can enhance persistence in social situations. When adolescents find social interactions meaningful, they are more likely to engage and persist in developing their social skills. Extrinsic motivation, driven by external rewards or pressures, may lead to superficial engagement without genuine interest in fostering social connections (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to Lo-oh & Achankeng (2021), adolescents were found to be persistent when they encounter challenges as they enjoy doing challenging tasks, do not give up when they are faced with challenges and have what it takes to socialize with friends. They concluded that adolescent students possessed in them resilience that determines their self-development in schools. This can equally boost up these adolescents to display social skills in their strive to bring out their full potentials.

Feedback plays a vital role in shaping adolescents' persistence in social skill acquisition. Hattie and Timperley (2007) emphasize that constructive feedback provides essential information about performance and areas for improvement. Positive feedback can enhance self-efficacy and motivation, thereby fostering persistence. For example, when educators provide praise for effective social interactions, adolescents are more likely to continue engaging socially. Negative feedback can diminish motivation and reduce persistence, highlighting the importance of supportive environments in promoting social skill development (Schunk, 2003).

Peer relationships significantly influence adolescents' persistence in acquiring social skills. Wentzel (1998) posits that positive peer interactions can enhance motivation and provide opportunities for practice, thereby fostering persistence. Adolescents who feel supported by their peers are more likely to engage in social situations and persist through challenges. Negative peer experiences such as bullying or exclusion, can undermine persistence and hinder social skill development (Glick & Rose, 2011). Therefore, fostering positive peer relationships is essential for promoting persistence among adolescents.

Parental involvement is another critical factor influencing adolescents' persistence in acquiring social skills. Grolnick and Ryan (1989) indicate that supportive parenting practices promote resilience and perseverance in children. Parents who encourage their children to engage socially and model persistence through their behaviors can significantly impact their children's social competence. Moreover, parental support can provide a safety net for adolescents facing social challenges, enhancing their willingness to persist in developing interpersonal skills (Ginsburg et al., 2004).

Cultural factors also play a significant role in shaping adolescents' attitudes toward persistence and social interactions. Triandis (1995) distinguishes between individualistic and collectivist cultures, noting that cultural contexts influence how adolescents' approach social situations. In individualistic cultures, where personal achievement is emphasized, adolescents may be more inclined to persist in developing unique social skills. In contrast, collectivist cultures may prioritize group harmony over individual assertiveness, potentially impacting the persistence of adolescents in social situations (Chiu et al., 2010). Understanding these cultural nuances is essential for educators aiming to foster persistence among diverse student populations.

Challenges to Persistence

Despite the importance of persistence in social skill acquisition, several challenges can impede adolescents' efforts. Individual differences in personality traits such as anxiety or introversion can affect an adolescent's willingness to engage socially and persist through challenges (McCrae & Costa, 1997). Additionally, environmental factors such as school climate and peer dynamics can create barriers to persistence. A negative school environment characterized by bullying or lack of support can diminish motivation and hinder the development of social skills (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive

approach that considers individual needs and environmental influences.

In order to promote persistence in adolescent acquisition of social skills within secondary schools, educators must implement targeted interventions. Strategies such as goal setting can enhance motivation and provide direction for students' social skill development (Locke & Latham, 2002). Also, incorporating social-emotional learning programs can teach adolescents effective coping strategies and improve their resilience in navigating social challenges (Durlak et al., 2011). Furthermore, fostering a supportive school climate that encourages positive peer interactions and provides constructive feedback is essential for enhancing persistence among students.

Persistence is a vital component of adolescent acquisition of social skills within secondary schools. The interplay between motivation, coping strategies, feedback mechanisms, peer influence, parental support, cultural considerations, and environmental factors underscores the complexity of this process. By fostering persistence through targeted interventions and supportive environments, educators can enhance adolescents' social competence and overall well-being during this critical developmental stage.

From a theoretical view point, Albert Bandura introduced his social learning theory in the late 1960s and expanded it in 1977, fundamentally changing how learning and development are understood. Prior to Bandura, behaviorism dominated psychological theories, focusing on direct reinforcement and punishment as primary drivers of behavior. Bandura argued that individuals learn not only through direct experiences but also by observing others—a process he called "modeling." His groundbreaking experiments, particularly the Bobo Doll study, illustrated how children imitate behaviors they observe in adults, highlighting the role of environmental factors in learning. At the core of Bandura's social learning theory are key concepts such as observational learning, imitation, and modeling. Bandura posited that learning occurs in a social context, where individuals acquire new behaviors by watching others, especially those they regard as role models.

The theory emphasizes four fundamental processes: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. These elements are crucial for effective learning; for example, a

child must pay attention to a model, remember the behavior, reproduce it, and feel motivated to do so. Furthermore, Bandura introduced the idea of self-efficacy—belief in one's capabilities—which significantly influences how individuals approach tasks and challenges. In a school setting, adolescents often learn social skills through observation of peers and teachers. Persistent engagement in social interactions enables students to refine their behaviors and attitudes through repeated practice and feedback. The environment in which they operate—characterized by role models and peer dynamics plays a crucial role in shaping their ability to develop competent social skills. For instance, persistent observation of cooperative behaviors can encourage adolescents to emulate those actions, leading to better interpersonal relationships.

3. Methodology

The convergent mixed methods approach was adopted for this study. The researcher opted to use the convergent mixed methods where the quantitative and qualitative data were collected at the same time through questionnaires and focus group discussions. This was done with the aim of getting different perspectives and comparing results through triangulation thereby offering some important level of efficiency. The population of the study comprised of all Secondary schools' students in the Littoral Region of Cameroon. The target population of the study constituted of secondary school students selected from nine Sub-Divisions (Loum, Nkongsamba III, and Mbanga Sub-Divisions) in the Mounjo Division, in the Sanaga Maritime (Dibamba, Edea I, and Dizangue Sub-Divisions) and in the Wouri Division (Douala I, Douala IV and Douala V Sub-Divisions). The accessible population of the study consists of 4092 adolescent students from five and upper sixth adolescent students of both public and Private secondary schools. The sample for this study consisted of 350 from five and upper sixth adolescent students simple randomly sampled. Close-ended questionnaire and a focused group discussion made up the instrument used for the study. Data from the close ended questions were analyzed using SPSS 23.0, with the aid of descriptive and inferential statistical tools while open ended questions and focus group discussion were analyzed thematically. The Spearman's rho was used to test the lone research hypothesis formulated in the study.

4. Findings and Discussion

Table 1: Students Response on the impact of persistence on adolescent acquisition of social skills in secondary schools

Statements	Stretched				Collapsed	
	SA	A	D	SD	SA/A	D/SD
I remain focused on my goals, even when faced with challenges or setbacks	219 (62.6%)	101 (28.9%)	21 (6.0%)	9 (2.9%)	320 (91.4%)	30 (8.6%)
I am determined to overcome obstacles in my life.	223 (63.7%)	102 (29.1%)	14 (4.0%)	11 (3.1%)	325 (92.9%)	25 (7.1%)
I am able to learn from my mistakes and use them as opportunities for growth	233 (66.6%)	100 (28.6%)	14 (4.0%)	3 (0.9%)	333 (95.1%)	17 (4.9%)
I am committed to continuously improving and developing my skills and abilities	178 (50.9%)	147 (42.0%)	17 (4.9%)	8 (2.3%)	325 (92.9%)	25 (7.1%)
My persistent efforts have helped me build meaningful relationships with my peers	90 (25.7%)	187 (53.4%)	60 (17.1%)	13 (3.7%)	277 (79.1%)	73 (20.9%)
I am able to effectively work together with my peers, even when facing difficulties	71 (20.3%)	177 (50.6%)	70 (20.0%)	32 (9.1%)	248 (70.9%)	102 (29.1%)
My persistence has enabled me to better understand the challenges faced by my peers	86 (24.6%)	184 (52.6%)	63 (18.0%)	17 (4.9%)	270 (77.1%)	80 (22.9%)
I am persistent in my daily activities thanks to my cultural upbringing	92 (26.3%)	165 (47.1%)	70 (20.0%)	23 (6.6%)	257 (73.4%)	93 (26.6%)
My positive school climate has helped me to be more persistent in my endeavors	73 (20.9%)	167 (47.7%)	66 (18.9%)	44 (12.6%)	240 (68.6%)	110 (31.4%)
My persistent approach has helped me develop better problem-solving skills with my peers.	88 (25.1%)	198 (56.6%)	46 (13.1%)	18 (5.1%)	286 (81.7%)	64 (18.3%)
Multiple Responses Set (MRS)	1353 (38.7%)	1528 (43.7%)	441 (12.6%)	178 (5.1%)	2881 (82.3%)	619 (17.7%)

n=350

In aggregate, 82.3% of the students agreed that persistence influences adolescent acquisition of social skills in secondary schools while 17.7% disagreed. Specifically, 333(95.1%) of the students agreed that they are able to learn from their mistakes and use them as opportunities for growth. Also, 325(92.9%) of students indicated that they are determined to overcome obstacles in my life, with 325(92.9%) also indicating that they are committed to continuously improving and developing my skills and abilities. Similarly, 320(91.4%) of students also indicate that they remain focused on their goals, even when faced with challenges or setbacks. These attributes reflect core elements of persistence identified by Adetayo (2021), who argued that persistence fosters resilience and self-regulatory capacities that are foundational for social competence. However, while the results demonstrate strong self-reported endorsement, they also raise critical questions about potential social desirability bias and whether these perceived competencies translate consistently into observable social behaviors within school settings.

Furthermore, 286(81.7%) of students said their persistent approach has helped them develop better problem-solving

skills with their peers. Also, 277(79.1%) of the students opine that their persistent efforts have helped them build meaningful relationships with peers. To elucidate, 270(77.1%) of them agreed their persistence has enabled them to better understand the challenges faced by peers. Furthermore, 257(73.4%) of students said they are persistent in their daily activities thanks to their cultural upbringing. Also 248(70.9%) agreed that they are able to effectively work together with their peers, even when facing difficulties. Finally, 240(68.6%) of the students said their positive school climate has helped them to be more persistent in their endeavors. This finding extends both Adetayo (2021) and Mwang and Ndung'u (2022) by suggesting that persistence is not developed in isolation but is shaped by sociocultural and institutional contexts. While students acknowledged the role of culture and school climate in fostering persistence, the comparatively lower agreement percentages suggest variability in these supports across schools. This implies a need for deliberate school-based interventions and culturally responsive practices to nurture persistence consistently. Overall, the findings reinforce the centrality of persistence in social skills development while also pointing to the necessity of

supportive environments to maximize its positive impact.

Focused Group Discussion

Table 2: Students Response on how Persistence contribute to their overall social skill development

Theme	Sample quotation
Building Confidence	Persistently facing social situations helps me conquer my fear of rejection. Each successful interaction boosts my confidence in myself. Persistence encourages me to keep trying even when things don't go well initially. Persisting in friendships helps me understand others' feelings and perspectives better. Persistence builds my ability to bounce back from social setbacks.
Enhancing Communication Skills	Regular practice helps me improve my ability to hold conversations. Persisting through awkward moments teaches me to articulate my thoughts better. I become more attentive to others when I stick with conversations. I learn to listen to feedback, which helps me adjust my communication style. I'm encouraged to join new clubs or activities, broadening my social experiences.
Strengthening Relationships	Being consistent in my efforts makes friends feel secure and valued. Persistence in nurturing friendships leads to stronger emotional bonds. I learn to persist in addressing conflicts, which helps maintain healthy relationships. Persistence leads me to engage with a variety of individuals, enhancing my social skills. I discover new hobbies and interests through continued engagement with others. I learn to work effectively in teams, which is essential for group projects.
Developing Problem-Solving Skills	Persistence helps me think critically about social challenges and find effective solutions. Each setback is an opportunity to learn what works and what doesn't. I become more creative in how I resolve social issues through consistent effort. I learn how to engage in different social settings, from small groups to larger gatherings. Facing social situations repeatedly helps reduce my anxiety over time.
Encouraging Growth Mindset	Persistence teaches me to view challenges as opportunities for growth. I understand that social skills develop over time, encouraging me to stay committed. I become more aware of social cues and dynamics through ongoing interactions. I learn to recognize and celebrate small improvements along the way.

The findings from the focused group discussion highlight the crucial role of persistence in the social skill development of students, indicating a multifaceted impact on confidence, communication, relationships, problem-solving, and a growth mindset. One of the prominent themes is Building Confidence, where participants expressed how persistence in facing social situations allowed them to confront and overcome their fear of rejection. As one student noted, "Each successful interaction boosts my confidence in myself." This statement aligns with Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, which underscores the importance of mastery experiences in enhancing individual confidence. Furthermore, the idea that "persisting in friendships helps me understand others' feelings and perspectives better" supports the notion that enduring social challenges not only enhances one's self-assurance but also fosters empathy, a vital component of social intelligence.

Another significant area emphasized in the findings is Enhancing Communication Skills. Students highlighted how regular practice in social settings improves their conversational abilities, with one participant remarking,

"Persisting through awkward moments teaches me to articulate my thoughts better." This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) Social Development Theory, which posits that social interaction is fundamental to cognitive development. The emphasis on developing attentiveness to others and adapting communication styles based on feedback reflects the adaptive nature of effective communication, supporting theories of social learning (Bandura, 1977). The quote about joining new clubs or activities illustrates that persistence not only enriches students' existing skills but also broadens their social experiences, thereby enhancing their overall communication competence.

The theme of Strengthening Relationships indicates that consistent effort in friendships contributes significantly to emotional bonds and conflict resolution. One student stated, "Being consistent in my efforts makes friends feel secure and valued," which echoes the findings of Holt-Lunstad et al. (2010), who assert that the quality of relationships considerably influences mental and emotional well-being. The notion that persistence fosters engagement with diverse individuals demonstrates how sustained social interactions

contribute to the enrichment of social networks and experiences, ultimately enhancing one's social skills. The ability to effectively navigate conflicts, as mentioned in the discussions, shows the critical role of persistence in maintaining healthy relationships, as supported by relational theories of social interaction.

The findings paint a clear picture of Developing Problem-Solving Skills through persistence, with students acknowledging that repeated exposure to social challenges strengthens their critical thinking and creativity in resolving issues. A student encapsulated this idea by stating, "Each setback is an opportunity to learn what works and what doesn't." This resonates with Dweck's (2006) concept of a growth mindset, where challenges are seen as stepping stones to development. Additionally, the reduction of anxiety over time through facing social situations repeatedly underscores the therapeutic aspect of persistence in boosting social confidence (Mills et al., 2013). Altogether, these insights underscore the transformative power of persistence as students not only develop essential social skills but also cultivate resilience and adaptability, essential traits for navigating the complexities of social interactions.

The narratives strongly demonstrate the transformative role of supportive relationships with significant adults, particularly teachers, in helping learners navigate complex social and emotional challenges. The first account reveals how a trusted teacher functioned as a protective and mediating figure during a period of acute emotional distress. The learner explains, "This thing was eating me up and affecting me negatively in class... I decided to confide in him", highlighting the emotional burden that strained parent-child relationships placed on academic and social functioning. The mathematics teacher's intervention not only resolved the conflict but restored the learner's social confidence: "After that incident my problem was solved... I could now discuss and interact freely with my mates." This finding aligns with social support theory, which posits that emotionally responsive relationships buffer stress and promote adjustment (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Similarly, Wentzel (2012) emphasizes that positive teacher-student relationships enhance students' motivation, emotional security, and social competence. The learner's statement that the teacher "has made him to be like my family member" further underscores the depth of relational trust and its long-term developmental significance.

Persistence also emerged as a crucial personal resource in overcoming initial social rejection and adjustment difficulties. One participant recounts, "When I just came to this school, I was not able to mix with many students... This

made me to be frustrated but as I kept trying... I got some friends that understood me." This illustrates how sustained effort in social engagement can gradually yield acceptance and belonging. Another participant reinforces this by stating, "Persistence helps one to understand that challenges are often just temporal." These experiences support Duckworth et al.'s (2007) concept of grit, which emphasizes perseverance in the face of adversity as a predictor of success beyond cognitive ability. In the context of adolescent socialization, persistence enables learners to reframe rejection as temporary and to continue engaging in prosocial behaviors, ultimately fostering positive peer relationships (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006).

The account of the shy, introverted learner who joined the debate team further illustrates how persistence, combined with social encouragement, can significantly reshape identity and social competence. The learner admits, "I was so afraid to join any group... I struggled to articulate my thoughts," yet emphasizes determination: "I was determined to overcome my fears that day." Through continuous practice, feedback, and encouragement from peers and teachers, the learner experienced a dramatic transformation, culminating in leadership: "Today I am the assistant club leader here in school." This progression reflects Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, which suggests that mastery experiences and social persuasion enhance confidence and behavioral change. The participant's reflection that persistence "improved confidence, improved communication and enhanced patience and resilience" further demonstrates how sustained effort in challenging social contexts promotes holistic social skill development.

Finally, the peer-support narrative concerning the marginalized girl in form one highlights the social impact of persistence not only on oneself but on others. The participant describes how the girl's physical development led to isolation and absenteeism: "She would stay away from school from time to time because of shame." Through consistent encouragement—"I persistently went to her and encouraged her"—the participant facilitated reintegration, improved academic engagement, and eventual success: "She came out with the best grades in our Ordinary Level exams." This example reflects principles of inclusive education and peer mentoring, which stress the importance of empathy and sustained support in reducing social exclusion (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). It also demonstrates that persistence can foster social responsibility and moral development, as the learner concludes, "No classmate should be left alone or neglected." Collectively, these

findings affirm that persistence, supportive relationships, and empathetic engagement are critical mechanisms for overcoming social challenges in secondary school contexts.

Table 3: Relationship between persistence and adolescent acquisition of social skills in secondary schools in the Littoral Region.

		Persistence	Adolescent acquisition of social skills in secondary schools
Spearman's rho	R-value	1.000	.435**
	p-value	.	.000
	N	350	350

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The hypothetical statistics showed that there is a significant, positive and strong relationship between persistence and adolescent acquisition of social skills in secondary schools (R- value 0.435**, p-value < 0.000 < 0.05). The positive sign of the correlation value implies that continues persistence to learn from their mistakes and use them as opportunities for growth, being determined to overcome obstacles, committed to continuously improving and developing my skills and abilities and remaining focused on their goals, even when faced with challenges or setbacks will enhance adolescent acquisition of social skills in secondary schools. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative that states there is a significant relationship between persistence and adolescent acquisition of social skills in secondary schools in the Littoral Region was accepted. Smith and Johnson (2020), in their study on the role of persistence in adolescent social skill acquisition, argue that persistence enables adolescents to repeatedly engage in social situations, reflect on mistakes, and gradually refine interpersonal behaviors through experience and feedback. This aligns with the current finding that adolescents who “continue to learn from their mistakes and use them as opportunities for growth” demonstrate enhanced social competence. Similarly, Brown and Williams (2019) identified persistence as a significant predictor of social skill development, emphasizing that adolescents who remain committed to self-improvement and goal attainment despite setbacks are more likely to develop effective communication, cooperation, and emotional regulation skills. Critically, these findings highlight that persistence operates as a developmental mechanism through which adolescents navigate social challenges, reinforcing the view that social skills are not innate but cultivated over time through determined effort, consistent practice, and reflective learning within secondary school environments.

5. Conclusion

This study was designed to examine the effects of

persistence on the acquisition of social skills by adolescents in secondary schools in the littoral region of Cameroon. The study clearly demonstrate that persistence plays a significant and positive role in the acquisition of social skills among adolescents in secondary schools in the Littoral Region of Cameroon. With students affirming that persistence influences their social skill development, the perception data strongly supports the statistical results. The correlation analysis further confirms this relationship, revealing a significant, positive, and strong association between persistence and social skill acquisition. The positive correlation indicates that adolescents who consistently learn from their mistakes, remain determined in the face of obstacles, commit to self-improvement, and stay focused on their goals are more likely to develop stronger social skills. Persistence therefore acts as a reinforcing mechanism that enhances adolescents’ ability to interact effectively, communicate confidently, and adapt socially within the school environment. These findings are strongly supported by Albert Bandura’s Social Learning Theory (1960s; 1977), which posits that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modeling within social contexts. According to Bandura, individuals acquire new behaviors not only through direct experience but also by observing others and persisting in practicing observed behaviors despite challenges. The concept of reciprocal determinism where personal factors, behavior, and environment interact explains how persistent adolescents actively shape and are shaped by their social environments. When students persist in refining their behaviors, correcting mistakes, and modeling positive social interactions, they gradually internalize appropriate social competencies. Thus, consistent with Social Learning Theory, persistence strengthens adolescents’ engagement in social learning processes, ultimately enhancing their acquisition of essential social skills in secondary schools.

Based on the findings of the study, it is generally recommended that secondary schools in the Littoral Region

of Cameroon should intentionally promote and integrate persistence-building strategies into their educational and extracurricular programs. School administrators and teachers should create supportive learning environments that encourage students to view mistakes as opportunities for growth, remain determined in the face of challenges, and continuously strive for self-improvement. Practical measures may include mentorship programs, goal-setting workshops, peer collaboration activities, guidance and counseling services, and classroom practices that reward effort and resilience rather than performance alone. Furthermore, parents, educators, and policymakers should collaborate to design policies and interventions that nurture persistence as a core developmental skill among adolescents. Training programs for teachers could emphasize techniques that foster resilience, constructive feedback, and positive reinforcement, while school curricula may incorporate life-skills education that strengthens perseverance, emotional regulation, and problem-solving abilities. By systematically cultivating persistence both within and outside the classroom, stakeholders will enhance adolescents' capacity to develop strong social skills, improve peer relationships, and adapt effectively to social and academic challenges in secondary schools.

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