



## **Emotional Problems Facing Adolescents in Senior High Schools**

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### **Abstract**

Various important educational institutions and lifelong outcomes for adolescents' link to the psychological notion of belonging. The research objective was to examine the role of loneliness in relationships among adolescents' personal well-being, psychological problems, and school-related conceptions. 244 high school students in the senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis in Ghana took part in this study. Three questionnaires were used to gather the data. The data analysis was done using Pearson correlation, mediation, regression, and coefficients analysis. According to the results, social inclusion and exclusion in schools' influence feelings of isolation, psychological issues, and personal well-being. In addition, inclusion in society and psychological issues are related to both individual happiness and loneliness. The relationship between social isolation and subjective happiness is mediated by isolation, and the relationship between social isolation and adolescents' psychological problems is mediated as well. Through personal well-being, social inclusion as well as exclusion predicted psychological issues. From the data, loneliness contributes to the emotional and physical well-being of adolescents. The findings emphasize the significance of school-based preventions and treatments that aim to advance psychological wellness and health in educational settings.

**Keywords:** Adolescent, Emotional problems, Loneliness, School belongingness, Screen time, Well-

being

### **Introduction**

Statistics from the World Health Organization (WHO) state that about 10–20% of adolescents worldwide suffer from disorders related to mental health. The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that 50% of adults with psychological disorders manifest their health between the ages of 14 and 18. Generalized anxiety disorder and depression are the most prevalent disorders in adolescents. Psychological behavior difficulties in adolescents are affected by behavioral disorders (Gagnon, 2022). A detrimental impact of internalizing issues for interference benefit has been observed for children with math disabilities (MD), concurrent behavioral disorders and trouble with reading are demonstrated to increase the likelihood of uneducated. The combination of factors has consequences for interference and subsequent results (Aro et al., 2022). Positive psychology-based educational programs that emphasize the growth of beneficial sentiments, resiliency and beneficial personality traits have been established to increase student happiness, well-being and academic accomplishment. Psychological therapies are created and applied in schooling to enhance adolescents' peace of mind and wellness (Alam, 2022). Eighty-one autistic participants among populations depend upon longitudinal research has detected for mental as well as emotional disorders at the ages of 16 and 23. Furthermore, explored at age 16 are verbal intelligence (IQ) and neurological flexibility (Hollocks et al., 2022). Analyzing the effects of adolescents' mental illnesses and internet addiction on adolescent self-esteem, with a focus on how online platform usage may operates the relationship among mental health and self-confidence (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019). The mental health of student has received particular attention during pandemics due to their constant uncertainty, fears, routine changes and isolation. An individual's viewpoints, emotions and actions that influence a student's psychological development (Cho & Jung, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the amount of time that adolescents spend online or playing games because that technology has evolved into platforms for social networks. Tablets, smart phones, television, computers and gaming consoles were their sources of spending time without parental control, children and adolescents spend many hours each day utilizing the Internet and other mobile devices (Rodrigo et al., 2023). Stress factors for adolescent's physical and mental health include exploitative employment situations 77% of sample teen farm workers who were depressed are claimed. Even if they assume adult roles during their adolescent years, such as attractive, financially independent and shouldering significant care and generous responsibilities, they can sometimes feel like individuals (Barican et al., 2022). The development and psychological health of a adolescents are impacted by psychological difficulties during adolescence. Adolescents struggling with behavioural issues are inclined

to move on to experience additional mental illnesses, including depression, anxiety, or bipolar disorder.

The objective of this study is to investigate the role of loneliness in relationships among adolescents' personal well-being, psychological problems, and school-related conceptions, with a focus on the impact of inclusion and exclusion in educational settings. The study aims to determine how feelings of isolation, psychological issues, and personal well-being are influenced by the social dynamics within schools, and to explore the mediating factors that connect these aspects.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the influence of inclusion and exclusion in schools on feelings of loneliness, mental health issues, and personal satisfaction among adolescents.
2. Investigate the mediating role of loneliness in the relationship between inclusion and exclusion, and both individual happiness and adolescents' psychological problems.
3. Analyse how inclusion and exclusion predict mental health issues through their impact on personal satisfaction.
4. Explore how belongingness at school, as affected by loneliness, contributes to the emotional and personal satisfaction of adolescents.

### **Literature Review**

Katagiri et al. (2021) examined infancy; a range of behavioural trajectories begins to appear. Early childhood problems may prevent children from developing a range of interpersonal, mental and intellectual skills. The early stages were crucial for the development of behavioral issues linked to psychological adaptation problems to stop the emergence of violent behaviors, it was essential to recognize the stages of growth and formative years of emotional disorders. Galazzo et al. (2020) determined that an environment for raising children in early life can have a big impact on the prevalence of behaviours in children. Children's development and parental parenting styles were influenced by the social structure of the family. Children's social environments as they grow up are impacted by gender. An element of nature that had an essential effect on an individual generates personality traits. Garcia and Serra (2019) analysed the influences on how parenting habits develop in children, which are usually constant over time. Depending on the parenting approach they choose, parents choose from a variety of discipline techniques to control their children's conduct and these techniques are seen as an essential component of parenting. MacAlister (2022) defined rigidly enforced rules and decrees made by parents as well as strong oversight of children's independence. It was high in demand and poor in sensitivity. Families of undemocratic parents receive a minimum of independence and are disciplined through requests. Furthermore, they communicate with their parents and children rudely and without affection.

Park and Oh (2022) examined the essential behavioural ideas linked to several adolescent academic and quality-of-life outcomes, school belongingness is the level at which students feel valued, incorporated and recognized in the school environment. It incorporates adolescent's perceptions of themselves as significant, worthwhile and influential components of their institution. Lee et al. (2020) determined the instances on a quantitative and scientific stage; identity was a crucial psychological concept for psychological well-being and emotional wellness. In corresponding with the need-to-belong model, the desire to fit was a fundamental psychological principle that was crucial for establishing and preserving good relationships with other individuals. Smith and Victor (2019) contributed the optimism and confidence that served as mediators between the impacts of social exclusion on the internal state of mind in youth and its strong association with individual happiness. Being isolated from others in terms of both physical and mental health was referred to as social isolation. Korpershoek et al. (2020) described the strategy of having to integrate; an absence of a feeling of belonging was associated with poor results and an essential reason for feeling lonely. The subjective perception of social relationship inadequacies was referred to as isolation. Loneliness is defined as a shortage of close, meaningful interactions with others and considered as an essential indication of an unsatisfied desire.

Hajal and Paley (2020) explained the hereditary predisposition to psychopathology or to act by lessening the response of parents and the standard of parent-child connection. The parental involvement in mental health and the psychological and behavioural issues that were referred to as behavioural issues in adolescents have been minimal, representative, based on selective samples, or the absence of the mother's nervousness as an important confounder into consideration. Flouri et al. (2019) determined that parenting was a small number of long-term analyses in the overall population that considered maternal psychological distress, examined the effects and responses at discrete times and concentrated during the postpartum duration. Berthelot et al. (2020) examined a prenatal connection with early childhood competency, issues, and child development. Parental depression and anxiety during pregnancy and adolescence were linked to the behaviours of the children. The children's mental and emotional health was related to reduce levels of maternal connectivity among childhood. ArguzCildir et al. (2020) considered that the mother and child's connection and interaction emerge before delivery and this psychological bonding process was referred and evaluated as prenatal attraction. They developed the phrase parent-to-infant sympathy to describe the tie or sense of belonging between the two sympathies felt by both parents towards developing an adolescent.

## Methodology Data Set

A total of 244 adolescents in senior high schools who responded to the current questionnaires were students at high-level schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Several 14- to 18-year-olds aged ( $M = 16.27, SD = .1.02$ ) 52.5% of them are female and 47.5% of them are male. Every student was made aware of the study's goals, its methodology and the fact that the data collected would be kept anonymous and used for exploration until it was given to them. Figure 1 depicts the general structure of affecting adolescent's improvement (Arslan, 2021).

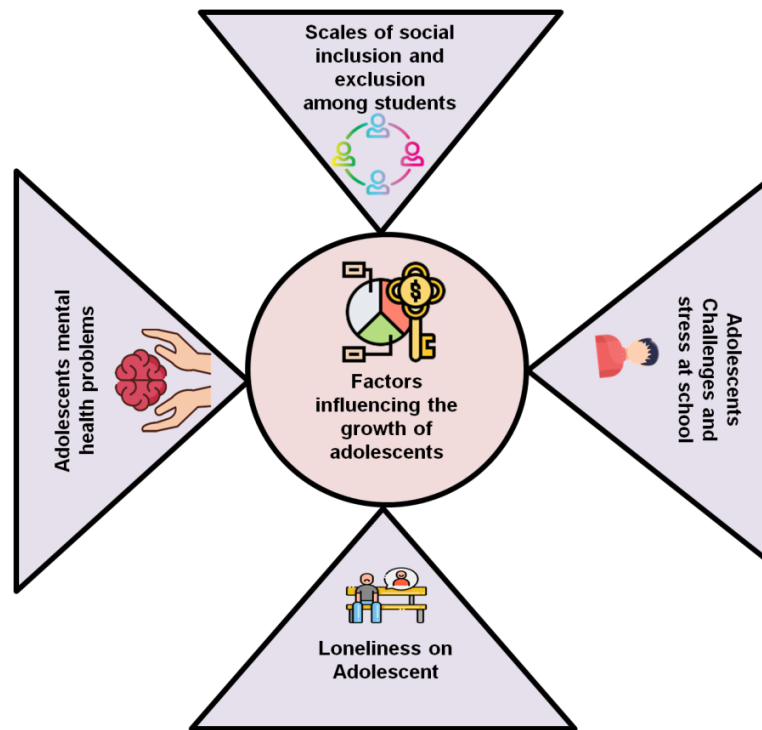


Figure 1: Structure of affecting adolescents' enhancement

### Measurement of Variables

To calculate the data's Scales that were well-established were modified from earlier research. The five aspects of elements impacting adolescent development are as follows: mental health problems (MHI), personal satisfaction (PS), and loneliness among adolescents (LA). The five-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire's design. There were forty questions in related to the structures of the model. There were five points on the

Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Each design was based on previously conducted research. It was shared with the students on various social media platforms and distributed online using Google Forms.

### Data Analyses

Initial studies analysed the scale's features and tested the normal distribution assumption. The normality hypothesis was examined by comparing skewness and kurtosis values against predetermined cutoff points. Using correlation analysis, associations between the variables in the research were also examined. The expected mediation models describing the relationships between the variables were examined in Figure 2 and 3. Utilizing 10,000 samples and the bootstrapping approach, the 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals for the indirect effects were calculated. The mediated effect is statistically significant if the bootstrapping-calculated confidence interval for the mediated impact is non zero. Every statistical test was performed using IBM SPSS AMOS 22.0.

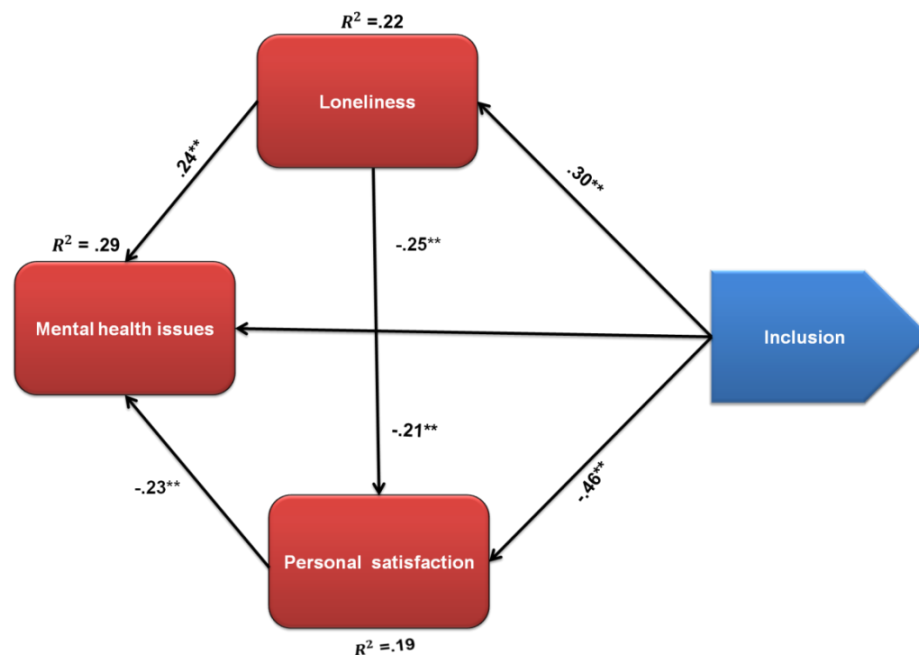


Figure 2: Through the lens of loneliness, the standardized regression analysis demonstrates the impact of exclusion criteria on both adolescent personal satisfaction and mental health issues.

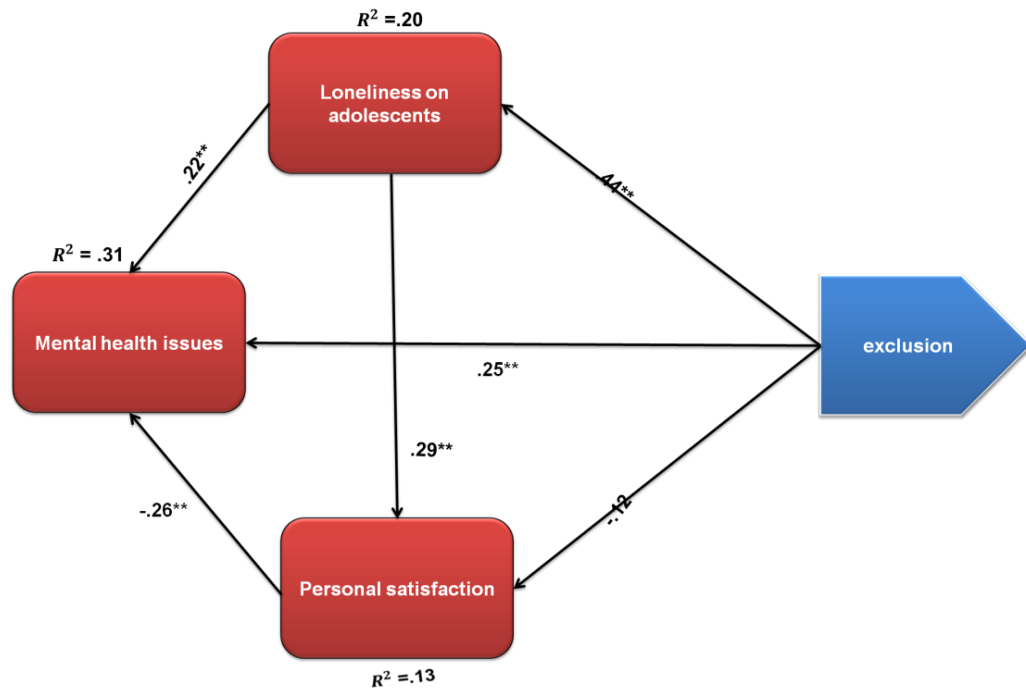


Figure 3: Through the lens of loneliness, the standardized regression analysis demonstrates the impact of inclusion criteria on both adolescent personal satisfaction and mental health issues.

## Result and Discussion

### Analyses

There was a slightly normal distribution across all variables, as shown by skewness scores between  $-.60$  and  $.80$  and kurtosis norms between  $-.38$  and  $-.06$  which is shown in Table 1. Results from a correlation study showed that exclusion criteria were inversely connected with happiness ( $r = -.24$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and psychological distress ( $r = .35$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and but positively linked to feelings of isolation ( $r = .45$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In addition, inclusion criteria were correlated favourably with happiness ( $r = -.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and it was correlated adversely with feelings of isolation ( $r = .49$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and psychological distress ( $r = -.49$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Furthermore, loneliness was positively connected with mental health issues ( $r = -.40$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and negatively correlated with subjective satisfaction ( $r = -.35$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Table 1: Measurement description statistics and correlation matrices

Statistical descriptions					Coefficients of correlation (r)				
Measurements	Mean	Standard deviation	1	2					
IC	5.34	.57	.60	.33	.43*				
EC	.17	.02	.80	.19					
LA	2.32	.25	.39	.26	.24*	.38*			
MHI	1.59	0.92	.43	.06	.25*	.41*	.40*	.41*	
PS	5.17	.71	.53	.38	.45*	.49*	.34*		

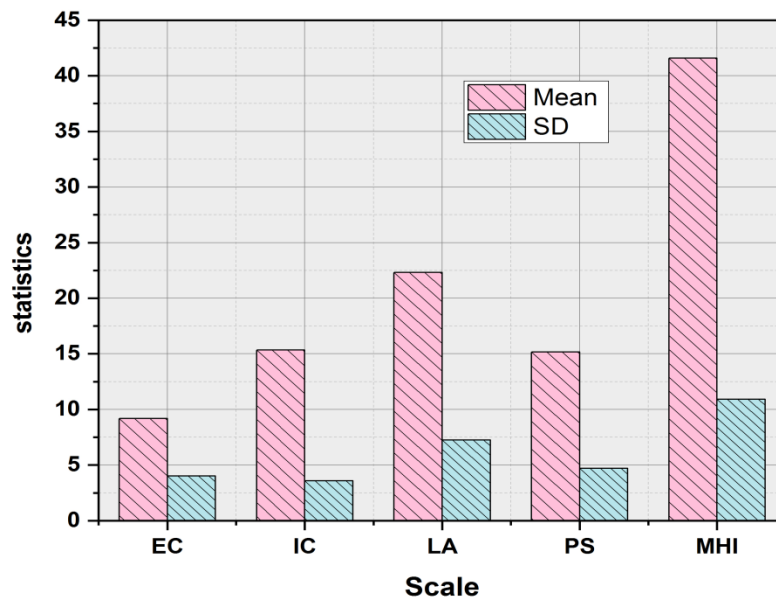


Figure 4: Mean and standard deviation of Measurements

### Mediation Analyses

Following these in-depth examinations, mediation research was performed specifically; we aimed to see whether LA mediated the association between EC and MHI.



(See Table 2). An EC is a significant risk factor for LA and MHI but not for PS, as estimated by conventional regression models. LA was also a strong predictor of both subjective and objective measures of PS, as well as MHI.

Table 2: Model-specific, non-standardized mediation coefficients

M <sub>1</sub> (LA)							Consequent M <sub>2</sub> (PS)					Y (MHI)			
Antecedent		oeff	E				oeff.	E				oeff.	E		
M <sub>1</sub> (LA)						.21	.47	12	3.87	.01	.1	50	17	.13	.01
X (EC)	.1	.53	.08	.77	.01	.2	.23	14	1.61	.11	.	70	19	.66	.01
Constant	m <sub>1</sub>	0.33	.77	3.41	.01	m <sub>2</sub>	1.46	.78	7.66	.01	y	6.60	.88	.44	.01
R <sup>2</sup> = .20 f(1,242) = 45.84; P < .01							R <sup>2</sup> = .13 f(2,241) = 14.38; P < .01								
M <sub>2</sub> (PS)						-					.2	.39	10	3.99	.01
M <sub>1</sub> (LA)						d <sub>21</sub>	.33	12	2.81	.01	.1	57	17	.39	.01
X (IC)	.1	.60	.08	7.17	0.1	d <sub>2</sub>	.62	15	.05	.01	.	.69	22	3.07	.01
Constant	m <sub>1</sub>	4.31	1.31	8.45	0.1	im <sub>2</sub>	7.83	.57	.00	.01	y	1.73	.30	.77	.01
M <sub>2</sub> (PS)						-					.2	.34	10	3.35	.01
R <sup>2</sup> = .19 f(1,241) = 22.25; P < .01							R <sup>2</sup> = .29 f(3,240) = 25.39; P < .01								

The link between EC and feelings of LA was slightly mediated by loneliness, whereas the link between EC and feelings of depression and anxiety was totally mediated by loneliness. We also conducted a mediation study (see Table 2) to determine whether or not loneliness moderated the connection with inclusion criteria happiness and MHI. Inclusion criteria was shown to have a significant predictive influence on LA ( $\beta = .46$ ,  $p < .01$ ), PS ( $\beta = .30$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and MHI ( $\beta = .22$ ,  $p < .01$ ) in this study. In addition, LA was a strong predictor of both PS ( $\beta = .21$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and MHI ( $\beta = .24$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Figure 2 shows the substantial relationship between subjective well-being and MHI ( $\beta = .23$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Table 3 and figure 5 show the indirect impacts of adolescents' social participation

on personal satisfaction and mental health issues. Table 4 and Figure 6 show that the confidence interval was statistically significant. The studies showed that the connection with inclusion criteria and personal satisfaction and mental health issues was partially mediated by loneliness.

Table 3: Measurement's ramifications for exclusion and inclusion

Modifiers of the resulting effects	secondary result	
	Effect	SE
overall impact	.46	.13
EC → LA → MHI	.28	.10
EC → PS → MHI	.09	.07
EC → LA → PS → MHI	.10	.04
EC → LA → PS	-.25	.07
Total effect	-.63	.15
IC → LA → MHI	-.34	.11
IC → PS → MHI	-.21	.10
IC → LA → PS → MHI	-.07	.04
IC → LA → PS	.20	.08

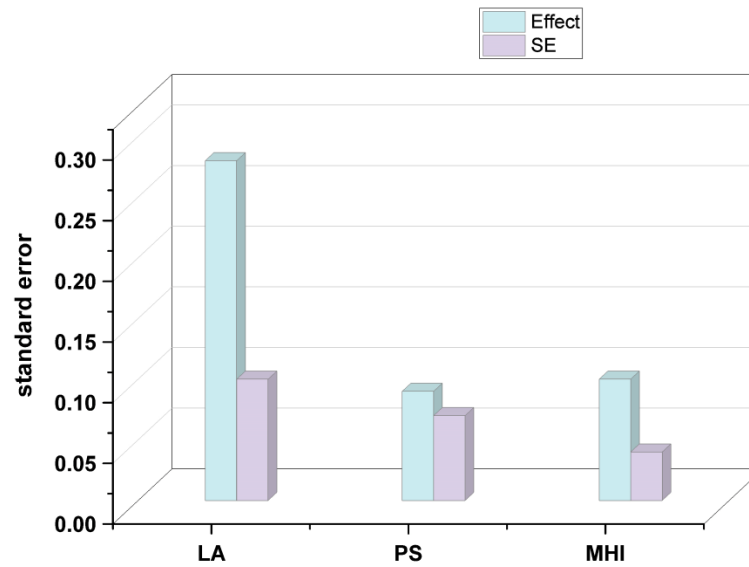


Figure 5: The standard deviations of measures

Table 4: Confidence Interval of exclusion and inclusion on measures

Modifiers of the resulting effects	95% Confidence Interval	
	Lower	Upper
overall impact	.22	.74
EC → LA → MHI	.09	.48
EC → PS → MHI	-.03	.26
EC → LA → PS → MHI	0.3	.18
EC → LA → PS	-.40	-.12
Total effect	-.94	-.34
IC → LA → MHI	-.57	-.13
IC → PS → MHI	-.43	-.05
IC → LA → PS → MHI	-.16	-.01
IC → LA → PS	.07	.37

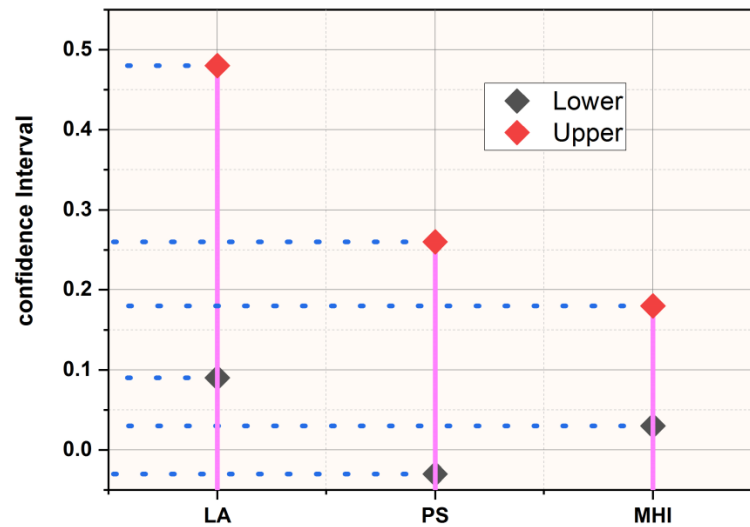


Figure 6: Confidence Interval of measures

Additional mediation analysis was conducted to investigate the mediating role of LA in the relationship between IC, PS and MHI. The results of the analysed data showed that MHI, LA, and PS were significantly predicted by IC. In addition, LA was a significant predictor of MHI and PS. As displayed in Figure 2, MHI was also strongly predicted by PS. Significant indirect effects of IC through loneliness on PS and MHI were observed. The findings suggested that LA had a partly mediating role in the relationship between PS, IC and MHI among the respondents.

## Discussion

The study's findings shed light on the critical roles that inclusion and a sense of belonging play in the psychological development of adolescents. This supports the findings of Katagiri et al. (2021), who explained that issues among adolescents, including exclusion, may prevent students from developing critical cognitive and interpersonal abilities. In a similar vein, the research highlights the necessity of early interventions that address these problems during the adolescent years, as social exclusion during adolescence can lead to increased psychological distress and isolation. The relationship between exclusion criteria and several psychological outcomes, such as emotional challenges and loneliness, has received significant attention. During the growing stage of adolescence, the way that adolescents connect and interact with one another changes. For example, the function of friendship changes from being mostly about company in childhood to offering psychological support during adolescence, when most the adolescents desire to be independent of the parents who initiated the association. Adolescents seek greater intimacy

from their friends than they experienced as teenagers to navigate these demands while exploring their identities. Adolescents turn to balance their changing values and beliefs which could be at odds with their prior relationships—with their need for emotional support. As a result, there is some relational instability at the start of the adolescent years. Galazzo et al. (2020) add to the conversation in the present study about the changes in adolescent relationships by highlighting the impact of parenting and family structure on the development of adolescents. The adolescents grow up and stop depending on their parents for emotional support, instead turning to their friends for it. Galazzo et al. note that parental relationships might complicate this transformation and may further impact how the adolescents negotiate their feeling and sense of belonging. In this situation, parental support plays an especially important role since adolescents need to strike a balance between receiving emotional support from their peers and their families. Additionally shedding light on the effects of authoritarian parenting methods on adolescents, MacAlister (2022) notes that adolescents from non-democratic homes frequently experience little independence and are subjected to rigid expectations. This is consistent with the idea that throughout their formative years, adolescents desire more autonomy, which may be restricted in these kinds of family settings. According to this study, adolescents must balance the emotional demands of relationships with their emerging identities. A lack of independence may worsen feelings of exclusion and lead to mental health problems.

A few long-term studies support the idea that adolescents' psychological stability and satisfaction are moderated by their separation from others such as their family members and parents. In one-dimensional argumentation, psychological wellbeing has been defined as the absence of social, emotional, and behavioural problems. Adolescents who experience loneliness become hypervigilant and avoidant while interacting with others in an attempt to shield themselves from social discomfort. Depression is the result of interpersonal communication describing an inability to meet both the number and quality of one's own demands.

The conclusions drawn by Berthelot et al. (2020) on the impact of parental depression and anxiety at pregnancy and adolescence support with the research's focus on adolescent psychological health. Parental mental health problems may hinder maternal connectivity, which is crucial for adolescents' emotional and psychological well-being both for the unborn child and the mother. This might result the disconnection that persists into adolescence, where issues such as loneliness and exclusion further compound emotional problems. Also, ArguzCildir et al. (2020) reflected the importance of the psychological bond between mother and child that begins before birth.

The prenatal bond influences how children and adolescents later perceive emotional support from their parents that affects their social interactions. A positive maternal bond buffer the negative effects of exclusion and loneliness highlighted in the research, underscoring the importance of early emotional bonds for adolescent well-being.

This study emphasizes that loneliness leads to heightened vigilance in social interactions, contributing to mental health challenges like depression and other psychological imbalances.

There are studies that confirm the moderating role of loneliness on adolescents' mental health and wellbeing. The Strengths, Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and Short Warwick and Edinburgh Wellbeing Scale (SWEWBS), each self-report tool for adolescents, are used to evaluate the level of mental health issues and personal satisfaction. Several sociodemographic and flexible variables were considered to assess the disparities in adolescents' mental health and personal satisfaction that occurred over a three-year period for all genders. In comparison to the males, the females reported significantly higher overall levels of difficulties with a wide range of mental health conditions and happiness. These growth trends persisted even after a large range of potential confounders were considered. Adolescents showed significant signs of mental discomfort as they grow older. Adolescents may currently need to make significant adjustments in their physical, mental, and social lives. Also, transitioning to a higher education exacerbate their distress. Among the females, there was a discernible change in behaviour. On the other hand, mental illness is a broad term that encompasses a variety of difficulties that teenagers may face, ranging from less serious conditions like stress, anxiety, and loneliness to more serious conditions like clinically significant depression, psychosis, and other mental health problems. The Adolescents Internalizing and Externalizing Behaviour Investigators are tools used to assess the mental health conditions affecting those in the adolescent age bracket. During this adolescent period, an adolescent's life goes through a lot of physical, emotional, and social changes, and going to secondary school might exacerbate suffering. Which may have a significant effect on their overall level of happiness. The information gained highlights how important early therapy is in reducing the likelihood of discomfort down the road. Personal satisfaction among adolescents is a multifaceted that encompasses social, psychological, and developmental aspects. Adolescents' happiness is greatly influenced by factors such as family dynamics, self-esteem, peer interactions, and self-identity. Furthermore, the research indicates that the correlation between inclusion/exclusion and psychological problems may be understood by using the framework of personal well-being.

The research's mediation analysis demonstrates how complex the connection is between adolescents' psychological health and social dynamics in school environments. According to the research, loneliness has a significant mediating role in the association between inclusion and exclusion and a range of psychological consequences. This emphasizes how crucial it is to consider the social and emotional components of belongingness when creating successful preventative and intervention plans for educational institutions. The study's findings highlight the need of comprehensive, school-based treatments that give adolescents' psychological well-being and health priority. Teachers and legislators have a direct impact on the general wellbeing of adolescents by

tackling exclusion related concerns and encouraging a feeling of community within the school setting. The detrimental impacts of social exclusion and loneliness on psychological health may be lessened in school settings by interventions that emphasize building strong peer connections, encouraging inclusion, and offering social support networks. The study's emphasis on a city in Ghana and its adolescent's population offers insightful information on the social and cultural background of psychological well-being and belonging.

### **Conclusion**

The current study established a relationship between screen use, school stress and students' social ties as well as their mental health. The connections were higher for adolescents and weakened with age, indicating a significant age difference. In a supportive environment, students must overcome obstacles to their success. Adolescents' loneliness or mental health issues are the primary contributors to our unhealthy society. Adolescent's mental health issues and self-reported happiness were found to be strongly predicted by school belongingness categories and loneliness moderated the relationship between these characteristics and developmental results. Several components are analysed to overcome difficulties in maintaining stable physical and mental health. The findings presented in the above table and figures show that the students in our sample have strong psychological foundations, but to avoid permanent detrimental effects, it is important to handle stress-related risk factors. Establish a strategy to identify students with familial difficulties or difficulty adjusting to school to ensure that students can receive psychological treatment.

### **Limitation**

While analysing or treating emotional issues among adolescents, researchers, including healthcare providers can stumble across some restrictions. The findings emphasize the significance of avoiding therapies based on a sense of school belongingness that aims to advance psychological wellness and health in educational environments.

### **Future Scope**

Future research should investigate further analyses of emotional behaviour, such as how students manage or control their physical and mental health in the context of school belonging. To improve this research and create more theory and evidence-based therapies, potential research should make use of a model of flexibility and emotional and social health concepts.

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