Abstract

Communication and collaboration are key competencies in the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), intended to enhance teamwork, relationships, and emotional development. Yet some learners still experience loneliness, raising questions about how well collaborative skills meet their emotional needs. The study sought to examine the relationship between communication and collaboration competencies and loneliness among Grade 9 learners. A descriptive correlational design was used with 292 Grade 9 learners selected via stratified random sampling. Data was collected using research developed questionnaire based on collaborative learning theory and the UCLA Loneliness Scale Version 3. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation. Results showed that 50% of learners demonstrated high levels of collaborated communication, 43.33% moderate, and 6.67% low. Collaboration was measured using three indicators: Positive Interdependence (3.96), reflecting mutual support; Promotive Interaction (3.79), capturing active group engagement; and Individual Accountability (3.80), assessing each member's responsibility. The collaboration mean was 3.85, indicating high collaborative engagement. Participants reported a relatively high level of loneliness (M = 2.90) on a 4-point scale. Learners reported having friends and engaging with peers but also experienced emotional loneliness. The correlation between collaborative communication and loneliness was weak and statistically insignificant ($r = .045$, $p = .442$). The study concludes that communication and collaboration competencies alone are insufficient to reduce loneliness among Grade 9 learners. The findings highlight the need to complement the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum with structured social-emotional learning, guidance and counselling programs, and inclusive classroom practices that foster meaningful peer relationships and a stronger sense of belonging.