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# The Effects of a Life Skills Enhancement Program on Violence Management Among Adolescents: A Case Study of Samut Songkhram Province

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## Abstract

Adolescent violence is a growing public health concern that affects emotional development, social functioning, and long-term well-being. This study aimed to examine the effects of a life skills enhancement program on violence management among adolescents in Samut Songkhram Province, Thailand. A mixed-methods quasi-experimental design was employed with 60 secondary school students (Grade 8), divided equally into an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group participated in a two-day life skills training program, focusing on emotional regulation, positive communication, stress management, problem-solving, and empathy development.

Data were collected using three instruments: (1) a 30-item adolescent violence behavior questionnaire (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.87$ ), (2) a 20-item satisfaction survey ( $\alpha = 0.90$ ), and (3) semi-structured interviews for qualitative analysis. Descriptive statistics and independent t-tests were used for quantitative data, and thematic analysis was used for qualitative data interpretation.

Results revealed that the experimental group showed a statistically significant improvement in emotional control and violence management skills compared to the control group ( $p < .05$ ). Participants reported higher awareness of emotional triggers, better self-regulation, and improved empathy in peer relationships. The overall satisfaction with the program was high (Mean = 4.25, SD = 0.46). Thematic findings emphasized positive behavioral change and enhanced communication, leading to reduced aggressive responses and better conflict resolution.

The study concludes that the life skills enhancement program effectively strengthens adolescents' ability to manage emotions and interpersonal conflicts, thereby reducing violent behaviors. The findings align with the World Health Organization's framework for life skills education, suggesting that integrating such programs into school curricula can promote positive youth development and sustainable mental well-being.

**Keywords:** Life skills, adolescent violence, emotional regulation, conflict

## 1. Introduction

Adolescent violence is a critical social and public health issue that affects both mental and behavioral development. Recent reports from the Department of Mental Health (2022) indicate a continuous increase in aggressive behaviors among Thai adolescents, particularly in physical bullying, verbal aggression, and online harassment. Exposure to violence during adolescence has been linked to emotional dysregulation, depression, and heightened risk of delinquency (Espelage & Hong, 2019). Globally, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) highlights that youth violence contributes to long-term psychosocial problems and requires early preventive interventions that strengthen emotional and social skills.

In Thailand, Samut Songkhram Province, though small in population, exhibits a growing rate of adolescent aggression. Data from the Provincial Public Health Office (2022) revealed that over 30% of Grade 7 students reported experiencing or engaging in bullying or violent behaviors. Similarly, a study by the Department of Juvenile Observation and Protection (2021) found that adolescents in the province displayed a higher tendency toward violence compared to the national average. These findings emphasize the urgent need for early intervention programs that address emotional management and conflict resolution skills among students.

The WHO (2021) and UNICEF (2022) recommend life skills education as a key strategy to prevent adolescent violence by enhancing emotional regulation, decision-making, and effective communication. International research supports that life skills training significantly reduces aggressive behaviors and improves social adjustment (Salmivalli et al., 2018; Shek & Sun, 2013). In Thailand, however, few programs have been systematically developed to fit local school and community contexts.

This study therefore aimed to develop and evaluate a Life Skills Enhancement Program tailored to the socio-cultural context of Samut Songkhram adolescents. The program was designed to strengthen emotional regulation, stress management, positive communication, and problem-solving skills through participatory learning activities. It is expected that this approach will reduce violent behaviors and promote emotional resilience in secondary school students.

### 1.1 Research Objective

1. To examine the effects of the Life Skills Enhancement Program on adolescents' violence management.
2. To assess participants' satisfaction and application of learned skills.

## 2. Body of paper

### 2.1 Theoretical Background

This study was based on:

**Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977):** Behavior is learned through observation and reinforcement.

Erikson's Psychosocial Theory (1968): Adolescents develop identity and social control.

Goleman's Emotional Intelligence (1995): Emotional awareness and empathy are key to prosocial behavior.

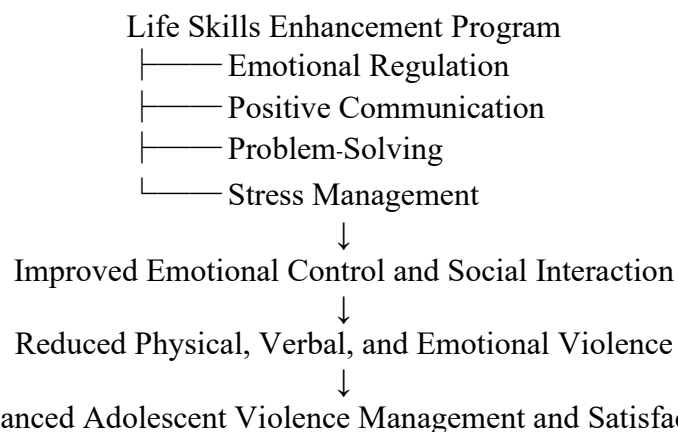
The WHO (2021) outlines ten core life skills self-awareness, empathy, communication, problem-solving, and emotional regulation which guided the program modules.

## 2.2 Life Skills Education Framework

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) defines life skills as psychosocial competencies that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. The ten core life skills—self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, effective communication, interpersonal relationships, coping with stress, and coping with emotions form the foundation for this study's program modules. Research demonstrates that life skills training helps adolescents manage emotions, solve problems constructively, and communicate without violence. Studies by Durlak et al. (2011) and Botvin & Griffin (2015) confirm that social-emotional learning (SEL) and life skills programs reduce aggression, bullying, and risk behaviors in schools, while promoting emotional balance and academic success. In Thailand, the Department of Mental Health (2022) reported that life skills-based interventions lowered school violence rates by improving emotional intelligence and peer support networks.

## 2.3 Conceptual Framework

Based on the synthesis of theories and prior studies, the conceptual framework of this research was developed as follows:



This framework reflects the interaction between social learning (Bandura), emotional development (Goleman), and life skills competencies (WHO), illustrating how psychosocial training can reduce violence and foster resilience among adolescents.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

A mixed-methods pretest–posttest control group design was employed to assess behavioral and emotional outcomes.

### 3.2 Participants

Participants included 60 Grade 8 students from two schools in Samut Songkhram Province, selected via purposive sampling.

Experimental group (n = 30): Received the Life Skills Enhancement Program.

Control group (n = 30): Continued regular school activities.

### 3.3 Instruments

1. Life Skills Enhancement Program Manual 2-day module developed based on WHO life skills framework.

2. Adolescent Violence Behavior Questionnaire (30 items) Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.87$ .

3. Program Satisfaction Questionnaire (20 items)  $\alpha = 0.90$ .

4. Semi-Structured Interview Guide qualitative feedback on behavioral change.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using paired-sample t-tests and independent t-tests at  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis, focusing on emotional regulation and communication change.

### 3.5 Ethical Approval

Approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (No. SSRU-REC-2567-045).

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Quantitative Results

The experimental group showed significant improvement in violence management compared to the control group.

**Table 1. Comparison of Violence Management Scores Before and After Participation in the Life Skills Enhancement Program (n = 60)**

Group	Test	Mean	SD	t	p	Interpretation
Experimental	Pre-test	3.48	0.12	8.22	0.000*	Significant improvement
	Post-test	4.18	0.26			
Control	Pre-test	3.52	0.14	1.02	0.314	No difference
	Post-test	3.55	0.13			

\*p < 0.05

## 4.2 Program Satisfaction

Participants reported high satisfaction in all aspects.

Table 2. Participants' Satisfaction Toward the Life Skills Enhancement Program (n = 30)  
Interpretation based on 5-point Likert scale (1 = Very low, 5 = Very high)

Satisfaction Item	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	Interpretation
Appropriateness of program content	4.10	0.85	High
Activities and learning methods	4.25	0.44	Very high
Practical usefulness	4.04	0.86	High
Facilitator's effectiveness	4.35	0.49	Very high
Overall satisfaction	4.25	0.46	Very high

## 4.3 Qualitative Findings

Data from semi-structured interviews supported the quantitative results, revealing three major themes:

Three themes emerged:

1. Improved Emotional Control: Students managed anger more effectively.
2. Empathy & Communication: Better listening and calm interaction.
3. Problem-Solving: Used nonviolent methods for conflict resolution.

## 4.4 Summary of Results

Both quantitative and qualitative data consistently demonstrated that the Life Skills Enhancement Program effectively enhanced adolescents' emotional regulation, communication, and stress management abilities. Participants in the experimental group showed significant behavioral improvements and high satisfaction levels, confirming the effectiveness and applicability of the program in school settings.

## 5. Conclusion

The Life Skills Enhancement Program effectively improved adolescents' emotional regulation, communication, and conflict management, leading to a significant reduction in violent behaviors. These findings are consistent with Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory and Goleman's (1995) concept of Emotional Intelligence, emphasizing that behavioral change occurs through observation, reflection, and emotional self-awareness.

The program's success aligns with previous studies indicating that structured and participatory life skills education enhances students' self-control, empathy, and prosocial behavior (Shek & Sun, 2013; Salmivalli et al., 2018; Botvin & Griffin, 2015). In Thailand, similar research integrating life skills into educational applications also showed improvements in students' understanding, attitudes, and social behavior (Winatchanan & Chutosri, 2019), supporting the relevance of experiential learning approaches in school-based programs.

In conclusion, this study provides empirical evidence that life skills–based interventions can effectively prevent youth violence and promote emotional well-being. It is recommended that educational institutions incorporate such programs into student development curricula, consistent with WHO (2021) guidelines and Thailand’s National Adolescent Development Plan (2022–2027), which emphasize emotional literacy, nonviolent communication, and sustainable youth development.

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