

# Dubai (United Arab Emirates)

This site note provides an overview of how social and emotional skills are distributed among different student groups and how they relate to students' health, well-being, educational outcomes and future aspirations in Dubai. It draws on data from the Survey on Social and Emotional Skills (SSES) 2023.

Dubai is a city in the United Arab Emirates.

SSES 2023 measured the following skills among 15-year-old students in Dubai:

- Task performance skills (persistence, responsibility, self-control and achievement motivation)
- Emotional regulation skills (stress-resistance, emotional control and optimism)
- Engaging with others skills (assertiveness, sociability and energy)
- Open-mindedness skills (curiosity, creativity and tolerance)
- Collaboration skills (empathy and trust)

Results for Dubai (United Arab Emirates) in this note are compared to the average across participating sites. This average includes:

- Sites that participated in SSES 2023 in all analyses: Bulgaria, Bogotá (Colombia), Chile, Delhi (India), Dubai (United Arab Emirates), Emilia-Romagna (Italy), Gunma (Japan), Helsinki (Finland), Jinan (China), Kudus (Indonesia), Peru, Sobral (Brazil), Spain, Turin (Italy) and Ukraine
- The following cities that participated in SSES 2019, where possible: Daegu (Korea), Houston (United States), Istanbul (Türkiye), Manizales (Colombia), Ottawa (Canada), and Suzhou (China)

Data for achievement motivation is not comparable to 2023, therefore analyses for this skill only include SSES 2023 sites.

The target population in Dubai includes 15-year-old students in private schools only. In most sites, the target population includes both public and private schools. Differences by socio-economic background in Dubai should therefore be interpreted with caution, including comparisons to other sites and the average across sites, as the full range of student backgrounds in the site is unlikely to be represented.

The OECD collaborated with the Knowledge and Human Development Authority as the national project partner to implement the SSES in Dubai.



For further information, refer to 'Social and emotional skills for better lives: Findings from the OECD Survey on Social and Emotional Skills 2023' and the Survey on Social and Emotional Skills 2023 Technical Report (forthcoming).

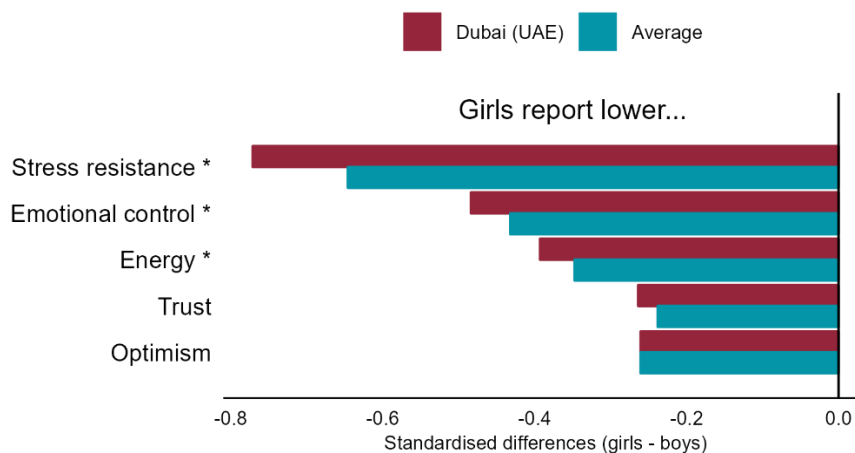
## How are students' social and emotional skills distributed across socio-demographic groups in Dubai?

### **Differences in skills between boys and girls**

- 15-year-old girls in Dubai reported lower levels of emotional regulation skills (stress resistance, emotional control, optimism), engaging with others skills (energy, sociability, assertiveness), trust, self-control, and persistence than boys, on average. Gender differences in stress resistance, emotional control, energy, and assertiveness were larger in Dubai than on average across sites.
- 15-year-old boys in Dubai reported lower levels of empathy, tolerance, and achievement motivation than girls, on average. Gender differences in empathy were larger in Dubai than on average across sites.

**Figure 1. Largest gender differences in skills in Dubai compared to the average across sites**

Standardised differences between the scores of 15-year-old girls and boys in Dubai compared to the average across sites.



Note: The five skills with the largest gender differences in Dubai are included, ordered from the largest to smallest difference. All standardised differences between boys and girls are statistically significant with a threshold  $p < 0.05$ . Differences in Dubai that are significantly different to the average across sites are indicated by the asterisk against each skill.

Source: OECD, SSES 2023 Database Table B2.4

### **Differences in skills between advantaged and disadvantaged students**

- Disadvantaged 15-year-old students in Dubai reported lower levels of sociability and assertiveness than their peers, on average, while advantaged students reported lower levels of trust. Unlike most sites, the target population in Delhi only included private schools. Therefore, differences in socio-economic background may be smaller compared to the average across sites, in part, because the full range of student backgrounds in Dubai are not represented.

## How are students' social and emotional skills linked to their educational outcomes and career prospects in Dubai?

### ***Levels of absence and tardiness and students' ambitions for the future***

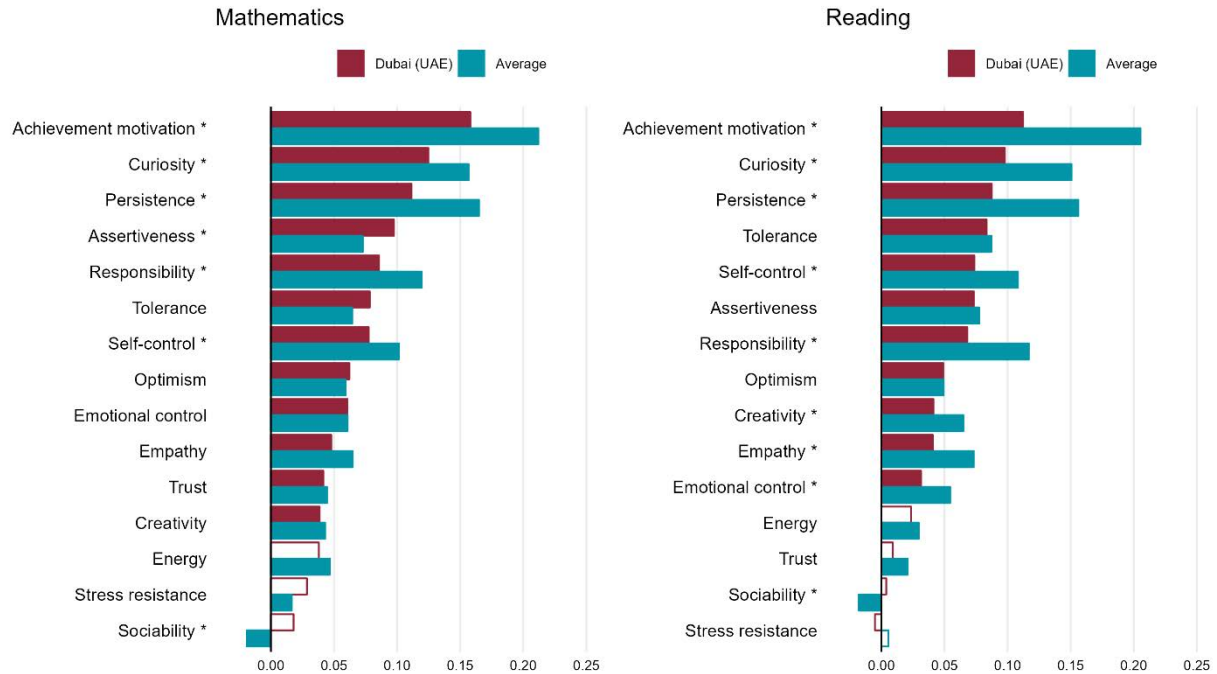
- In Dubai, 41% of 15-year-olds had arrived late for school at least once in the two weeks prior to the SSES assessment, below the average across sites (48%). In addition, 28% had skipped classes, similar to the average across sites (29%), and 42% had skipped at least one day of school, above the average across sites (31%).
- In Dubai, 72% of 15-year-olds expect to complete tertiary education, below the average across sites (84%) and 72% expect to have a managerial or professional job when they are 30, above the average across sites (57%).

### ***Relationships between social and emotional skills and academic outcomes***

- In Dubai, 15-year-olds with higher task performance skills (achievement motivation, persistence, responsibility, and self-control), open-mindedness skills (curiosity, tolerance, and creativity), assertiveness and empathy received higher grades in mathematics, reading and arts. Higher levels of optimism and emotional control were also linked to higher mathematics and reading grades.
- The relationship between grades and all task performance skills and curiosity were smaller in Dubai than on average across sites, while the relationship between assertiveness and maths grades is larger than average.
- Higher levels of almost all skills were also linked to lower levels of absence and tardiness: task performance skills, open-mindedness skills, emotional regulation skills (emotional control, stress resistance and optimism), collaboration skills (trust and empathy) and energy.
- The relationship between many skills and lower levels of absence and tardiness in Dubai were larger than on average across sites: responsibility, curiosity, self-control, emotional control, stress resistance, collaboration skills (trust and empathy) and open-mindedness skills (curiosity, tolerance and creativity).

**Figure 2. Relationships between students' social and emotional skills and grades in Dubai compared to the average across sites**

Standardised regression coefficients of individual skills on maths and reading grades among 15-year-olds in Dubai compared to the average across sites



Note: Significant coefficients at a threshold of  $p < 0.05$  are coloured, non-significant coefficients are outlined. Coefficients in Dubai that are significantly different to the average across sites are indicated by the asterisk against each skill.

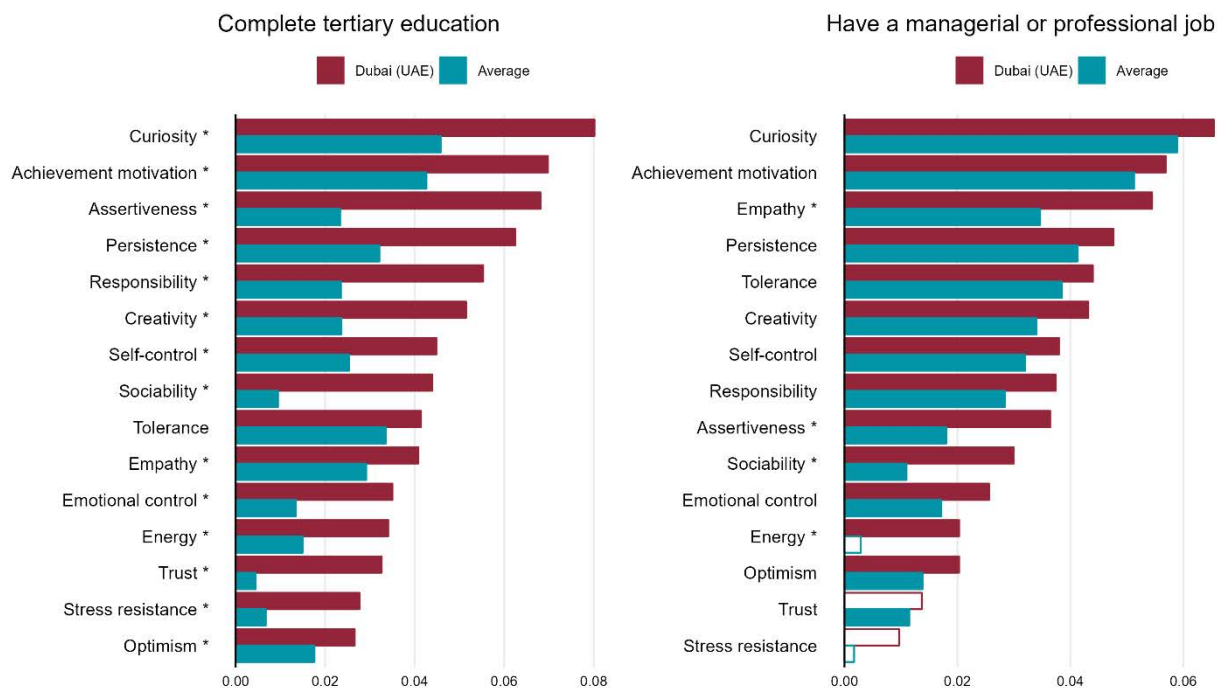
Source: OECD, SSSES 2023 Database Tables B4.1 and B4.4

### ***Relationships between social and emotional skills and students' ambitions for the future***

- In Dubai, most skills are associated with 15-year-old students having higher expectations of completing tertiary education and holding a managerial or professional job at age 30. Higher task performance skills, open-mindedness skills and engaging with others skills, emotional control, optimism and empathy were associated with higher levels of both expectations, while stress resistance and trust were also positively associated with expectations of completing tertiary education.
- Compared to other sites, the relationships between empathy, assertiveness, and sociability and both expectations in Dubai were larger than on average across sites. The relationship between most other skills and expectations of completing tertiary education were also higher than on average across sites: task performance skills, emotional regulation skills, curiosity, creativity, stress resistance and optimism.

### Figure 3. Relationships between students' social and emotional skills and their future aspirations in Dubai compared to the average across sites

Standardised regression coefficients of individual skills on students' expectations to complete tertiary education and have a managerial or professional job in the future among 15-year-olds in Dubai compared to the average across sites



Note: Significant coefficients at a threshold of  $p < 0.05$  are coloured, non-significant coefficients are outlined. Coefficients in Dubai that are significantly different to the average across sites are indicated by the asterisk against each skill.

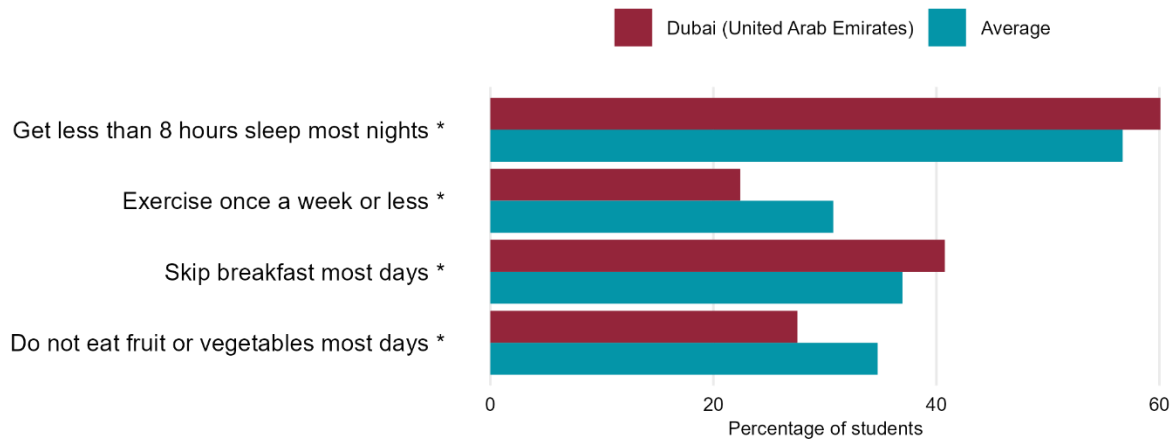
Source: OECD, SSSES 2023 Database Tables B4.19 and B4.30

## How are students' social and emotional skills linked to their health and well-being outcomes in Dubai?

### Students' health behaviours

- In Dubai, 60% of students reported getting less than 8 hours of sleep most nights, above the average across sites (57%). 15-year-old students in Dubai also reported higher frequencies of skipping breakfast (41% in Dubai, compared to 37% on average).
- On the contrary, 15-year-olds in Dubai reported lower levels of two unhealthy behaviours compared to the average across sites: 22% said they only exercised once a week or less (compared to 31% on average), while 28% did not eat fruit or vegetables most days (compared to 35% on average).

**Figure 4. Percentage of 15-year-old students engaging in unhealthy behaviours in Dubai compared to the average across sites**



Note: Frequencies of each behaviour in Dubai that are significantly different to the average across sites are indicated by an asterisk against the behaviour.

Source: OECD, SSSES 2023 Database Table B3.3

### **Gender differences in health and well-being outcomes**

- On average across sites, girls tended to report poorer levels of all health and well-being outcomes (life satisfaction, current psychological well-being, test and class anxiety, health behaviours, relationship satisfaction and body image) than boys. In Dubai, girls also reported poorer levels of all these outcomes, on average.
- Gender differences in Dubai were larger than the average across sites for current psychological well-being, health behaviours and relationship satisfaction, while such differences in body image and test and class anxiety were smaller than average. Gender differences in life satisfaction in Dubai were similar to the average across sites.

### **Relationships between social and emotional skills and students' health and well-being outcomes**

- In Dubai, higher levels of all skills were associated with better health and well-being outcomes, except for tolerance and test and class anxiety, where there was no relationship. These relationships were strongest for emotional regulation skills, energy, task performance skills and trust.
- Compared to other sites, the relationship between creativity and all health and well-being outcomes was stronger in Dubai than on average across sites. Higher levels of sociability were also more strongly linked to higher relationship satisfaction and body image, as well as lower test and class anxiety, than on average across sites. Higher assertiveness was more strongly linked to better life satisfaction, current psychological well-being, relationship satisfaction and lower test and class anxiety in Dubai than on average across sites.

## Key features of SSES 2023

### ***What is the Survey on Social and Emotional Skills?***

The Survey on Social and Emotional Skills (SSES) is an international survey designed by the OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation to improve understanding of social and emotional skills among 10- and 15-year-old students. The Survey aims to understand how levels of these skills differ among students with different characteristics; how these skills matter for important student outcomes; and how students' school and home environments influence skill development.

### ***Which social and emotional skills are covered in the Survey?***

The 15 skills measured in the Survey were selected to provide a comprehensive coverage of those that are relevant for children's and adolescents' success and well-being. Further information on why and how these skills were selected can be found in the SSES assessment framework (Kankaraš and Suarez-Alvarez, 2019<sup>[1]</sup>).

### ***How were these skills measured?***

All students complete a questionnaire where they indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements. Examples of statements include: 'I keep working on a task until it is finished', 'I stay calm even in tense situations' and 'I am able to defend my interests when they are challenged'.

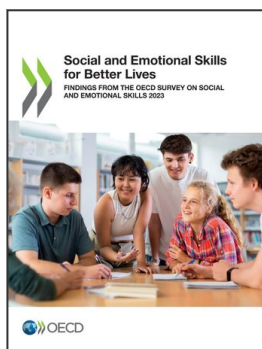
### ***Who participated in the Survey?***

All sites in SSES 2023 surveyed 15-year-olds and surveying 10-year-olds was optional. Students in sixteen sites – six countries and ten sub-national entities – participated in SSES 2023. Data from seven sites who participated in the first round of SSES in 2019, but not in 2023, are also included in analyses in this report wherever possible to expand the coverage of the international average.

Some 18,000 10-year-old and 52,000 15-year-old students took the SSES assessment in 2023, representing about 630,000 10-year-olds and 3 million 15-year-olds in the schools of the 16 participating sites. In Dubai approximately 3,500 15-year-old students completed the assessment, representing about 14,800 15-year-old students.

## References

- Kankaraš, M. and J. Suarez-Alvarez (2019), "Assessment framework of the OECD Study on Social and Emotional Skills", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 207, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5007adef-en>. [1]



**From:**

## **Social and Emotional Skills for Better Lives**

Findings from the OECD Survey on Social and Emotional Skills 2023

**Access the complete publication at:**

<https://doi.org/10.1787/35ca7b7c-en>

### **Please cite this chapter as:**

OECD (2024), "Dubai (United Arab Emirates)", in *Social and Emotional Skills for Better Lives: Findings from the OECD Survey on Social and Emotional Skills 2023*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/e106f205-en>

This document, as well as any data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area. Extracts from publications may be subject to additional disclaimers, which are set out in the complete version of the publication, available at the link provided.

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at <http://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions>.