The Importance of Social Emotional Learning for Children and Adults

Rayhana [1], Wardani Rahayu[2], Yuli Rahmawati[3]

[1]Departement of research and evaluation, Faculty of Science Education, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia
[2]Departement of research and evaluation, Faculty of Science Education, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia
[3]Departement of research and evaluation, Faculty of Science Education, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

Children's social and emotional development in the early years is crucial to help them learn how to become good, mature adults. Studies show that children who have a supportive home environment and have the opportunity to attend preschool early learning programs that support their overall development will have better performance at school and better life prospects in the long run. Emotional development at an early age is critical to overall brain development and has significant effects throughout life with a strong emotional foundation in managing everyday social interactions.

Adults demonstrating good, social and emotional skills around them, is the best way to instill righteous values in children. Research shows that teachers are severely affected by poor physical and mental health issues as a result of the workload they face. Teachers who experience low job satisfaction result in poor student learning outcomes due to pressure on their mental health.

Implementing SEL for teachers can help them overcome their frustrations and stress. In addition, SEL helps teachers perform their roles better, improving the classroom environment and overall climate, creating a safe environment for young people to grow. Parents, guardians, or community members who need to be involved in SEL initiatives. Studies have shown that students are more likely to adopt SEL practices if they see their parents acting in the same way. They also do better academically and socially.

Keyword: *Social Emotional Learning* (SEL); Children's *Social Emotional Learning*; Adults Social Emotional Learning

1. Introduction

Social-emotional development needs are believed to need to be met from an individual's earliest age as preparation for absorbing and retaining academic information (Kaspar & Massey, 2023). Social emotional development from an early age is very important because this period is a critical period in the formation of the basics of social and emotional skills (S. A. Denham et al., 2009). Social emotional development is not only important in childhood and early childhood, but is also very important during adolescence and adulthood (Daniel Goleman, 2021; Weiner, 1977).

Social Emotional Development from an early age is the basis for Healthy Social Relationships, forming self-identity, empathy for others, being able to interact positively with their environment, skills in problem solving and decision making, long-term influence on academic success, emotional well-being, and a person's social life in adulthood (Daniel Goleman, 2021; Martikainen et al., 2023; Rachman et al., 2023).

The very high need for social emotional development in every human being from an early age requires social emotional development intervention with a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) approach (Dussault & Thompson, 2024; Kaspar & Massey, 2023) including teaching staff (Gimbert et al., 2023).

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is an educational framework that focuses on developing a variety of skills, attitudes, and behaviors that help individuals manage their emotions effectively, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, build and maintain positive relationships, and create responsible decisions (Dussault & Thompson, 2024; Zins & Elias, 2007).

Social Emotional Learning

The SEL process occur from childhood to adulthood where a person can acquire and apply the attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy towards others, build and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Elias, M., Zins, J. E., & Weissberg, 1997; Jones et al., 2019; Moreno-Gómez & Cejudo, 2019).

The basis of SEL (Elias, M., Zins, J. E., & Weissberg, 1997) is

1. Self-Awareness: recognizing and naming one's emotions; understand the reasons and circumstances behind these feelings;

2. Emotional self-regulation: expressing and dealing with anxiety, anger, and depression; controlling lust, aggression, and self-destructive antisocial behavior; recognize strengths and mobilize positive feelings about self, school, and family.

3. Self-Monitoring and Performance: concentrate on the work that has been done; set goals for yourself and your family.

4. Empathy and Perspective Taking: being a good listener; increase empathy and sensitivity to other people's feelings; learn how to improve oneself and develop feedback mechanisms to use in everyday life; and understanding other people's perspectives, points of view, and feelings.

5. Social Skills in Handling Relationships: Controlling emotions in relationships, harmonizing various perspectives and feelings, expressing emotions effectively, practicing assertiveness, leadership and persuasion; work together in teams or cooperative learning groups; shows sensitivity to social cues; acquire decision-making and social problem-solving skills; respond constructively and in a problem-solving manner to obstacles and barriers in relationships.

SEL concerns not only academic growth, but also emotional and social well-being, both of which are critical to success in long-term personal and professional life. Structured school programs, inclusive curricula, and teaching practices that support students' holistic development are ways that are often used to implement this (Bailey et al., 2019; Maurice J Elias & Ryan, 2015; Jones et al., 2019).

Method

This narrative review is reviewed from scientific articles using Google scholar, Proquest, Science direct and Scopus. Articles are made narrative to provide psychological reinforcement and theme development. The discussion regarding social emotional learning is so broad that it is limited to education, sociology and psychology for children and adults.

Result

SEL in early childhood

SEL from an early age is very necessary as part of social emotional development in forming the basics of social and emotional skills that will be carried throughout life. If children have been introduced from an early age to the basics of healthy relationships, communication skills, the ability to resolve conflict, independence and self-confidence, better academic performance as they grow older, these abilities have been embedded in their souls (Ahmed et al., 2020; Susanne A. Denham et al., 2012).

The basis for healthy relationships, especially in early childhood, has good social emotional development skills and tends to be able to form healthy relationships with other people so that they learn how to interact with peers, develop a sense of empathy, and understand other people's perspectives(Cao et al., 2022; Yüksel et al., 2021). Communication skills introduced in early childhood tend to have strong social emotional development resulting in better communication skills because children learn to express their needs and feelings clearly, and understand how to listen and respond appropriately to other people (Kaspar & Massey, 2023; Martikainen et al., 2023).

The ability to overcome conflict in early childhood by learning to manage their emotions in difficult situations and finding good solutions to interpersonal problems. Social

emotional development helps children learn how to resolve conflicts constructively (Arda Tuncdemir et al., 2022).

Independence and self-confidence in young children is seen when they feel comfortable in facing challenges and interacting with new environments. Children who have strong social emotional skills tend to be more independent and confident(Kaspar & Massey, 2023; Panayiotou et al., 2019; Thomson et al., 2018).

Better Academic Performance is seen in children when they can focus on learning without being distracted by social or emotional problems. Based on previous research, academic achievement tends to increase when their social emotional development is good (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012; McCormick et al., 2021).

Therefore, paying sufficient attention to social emotional development from an early age is very important to help children become emotionally healthy and successful individuals in their lives(Jones et al., 2014; Martikainen et al., 2023).

SEL in the development of children into adolescents and adults

Social and emotional skills from childhood can predict increased academic achievement, reduced crime, steady employment, future success. Providing social and emotional skills is very good at an early age, a sensitive period for brain development. Several studies have shown that the likelihood of developing mental health disorders was less, and levels of well-being were higher in those who received SEL interventions over 12 and 15 years. There is a positive relationship between social emotional skills and long-term SEL intervention. (Durlak & Weissberg, 2011; Elias, M., Zins, J. E., & Weissberg, 1997; Lawlor et al., 2023; McCormick et al., 2021).

SEL during school years

The role of SEL in students involves a multi-faceted approach that includes, explicit and evidence-based SEL instruction, the infusion of SEL into academic courses, and the creation of opportunities for student voice and agency. SEL programs are an important means of developing skills. High-quality programs offer evidence-based programs of sequential skill development with programs that involve connections and a coordinated series of activities to teach skills; Modules and lessons build on each other Active: programs allow active forms of learning to help students master new skills Focused: emphasis on personal development and social skills Explicit: programs explicitly target specific social and emotional skills(Durlak & Weissberg, 2011; N. Ibarra, 2022).

The SEL program is systematically integrated into the curriculum

SEL must involve systematic and intentional integration. SEL can and likely should be incorporated into school curricula and woven into daily routines and rhythms. Teachers can integrate SEL approaches into the curriculum(Ștefan et al., 2022). SEL practices are important teaching strategies and practices that enhance SEL skills. These strategies and

practices can be woven into the daily routine and rhythm of the classroom/school (Durlak & Weissberg, 2011; Ismail, 2015).

Integrating SEL outside of the program should be an ongoing and iterative process. Effective SEL integration provides repeated opportunities to practice new skills and behaviors within the program structure and with real-life situations or opportunities throughout the school day. These efforts are also strengthened when continued over several years with content building each year the previous year (Durlak & Weissberg, 2011; Kim et al., 2021; Panayiotou et al., 2019; Theses & Warner, 2021)

SEL in Adults

Research conducted on SEL provides knowledge about the fundamental links between brain and behavior relationships with social, emotional, and cognitive development affecting a person's life. Especially in higher education, mental health, economic security, social involvement are very much needed in the life of the school environment. In adult humans, growth and development are closely related to skills, social, emotional competencies and the influence of experiences from various aspects of life as well as the implementation of a series of programs and practices that have proven to be effective in developing competencies that are applied in the environment both in formal and informal learning from an early age to adulthood.(Erika K. Thomas-Brown, 2022; Jagers et al., 2019; Mahoney et al., 2018).

Previous studies, both multiprogram trials and specific intervention trials conducted in adults, have shown very good success (Thomson et al., 2018; Yaeger, 2017).

SEL Intervention Research with randomized trials, has a positive impact in the intervention target areas. SEL intervention programs including PATHS emphasize improving academics, behavior and emotions which has been proven to increase academic performance, reduce problem behavior (decreased aggressive and disruptive behavior and increased empathy), increased emotional regulation(Panayiotou et al., 2019), MindUp places greater emphasis on self-regulation and physiology, the results show increased self-regulation and emotional skills (Moreno-Gómez & Cejudo, 2019), RULER which targets emotions broadly by developing emotional skills produces changes in emotional competence (Ahmed et al., 2020), 4Rs Emphasizes improving academic performance, a positive classroom environment, social and emotional enhancement, reducing behavioral problems by reading aloud, discussing and reflecting, writing (expressing their thoughts and feelings, reflecting on their learning, and practicing communication skills, role playing and simulations) (Ji et al., 2021; Voith et al., 2019).

Institutions are better prepared to implement SEL programs, this can be seen from the effective and optimal SEL interventions implemented in schools. SEL programs provide more benefits for both students and teachers. Several studies conducted on schools facing major challenges show the fastest progress. Several SEL studies conducted with measurements of classroom processes and interactions show that teacher practices have an impact in the classroom by showing improved learning outcomes. (M J Elias et al., 2006;

Erika K. Thomas-Brown, 2022; Fernández-Martín et al., 2022; Jones et al., 2019; Zhou & Ee, 2021; Zins & Elias, 2007)

SEL in Teachers

SEL programs are important for teacher implementation with students effectively through teacher motivation, self-efficacy, and commitment. Implementation of the RULER (A Theory-Driven, Systemic Approach to Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning) program by teachers has an impact on comfort in teaching SEL, greater confidence to teach the program, greater perception regarding the effectiveness of the program (Brackett et al., 2019; Mahoney et al., 2018).

Research using the Attitudes Associated to Trauma-Informed Care scale (ARTIC scale) conducted on educators in the intervention group showed a significant reduction in emotional exhaustion, and a significant increase in the reaction subscale and overall score on the ARTIC scale. The greatest increase in self-efficacy and personal achievement occurred in educators who implemented MindUP for two consecutive years. The results of this research are that combining trauma-based training with mindfulness-based SEL interventions can encourage teachers to adopt trauma-sensitive attitudes and reduce burnout

According to research conducted on teachers in group interventions, the Attitudes Associated to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) scale has shown a significant reduction in levels of emotional exhaustion. In addition, there were significant improvements in both ARTIC subscales and overall scores, and the highest levels of self-efficacy and personal achievement were recorded by teachers who used MindUP for two consecutive years. Conclusions from this study suggest combining trauma-based care with MindUP (Kim et al., 2021).

Conclusion, Implication, and Recommendation

The importance of SEL in children and adults can be seen from research that has been conducted with various ages and programs. This shows that SEL is not only important for early childhood but for adult children and teachers who need an SEL Program. The SEL program is best implemented in early childhood but can also be applied in adulthood, best in a school environment.

References

Ahmed, I., Hamzah, A. B., & Abdullah, M. N. L. Y. B. (2020). Effect of social and emotional learning approach on students' social- emotional competence. *International Journal of Instruction*, *13*(4), 663–676. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2020.13441a

Arda Tuncdemir, T. B., Burroughs, M. D., & Moore, G. (2022). Effects of philosophical ethics in early childhood on preschool children's social–emotional competence and theory of mind. *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, *16*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40723-022-00098-w

Ashdown, D. M., & Bernard, M. E. (2012). Can Explicit Instruction in Social and Emotional Learning Skills Benefit the Social-Emotional Development, Well-being, and Academic Achievement of Young Children? *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *39*(6), 397–405. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-011-0481-x

Bailey, R., Stickle, L., Brion-Meisels, G., & Jones, S. M. (2019). Re-imagining social-emotional learning: Findings from a strategy-based approach. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *100*(5), 53–58. https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721719827549

Brackett, M. A., Bailey, C. S., Hoffmann, J. D., & Simmons, D. N. (2019). RULER: A Theory-Driven, Systemic Approach to Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning. *Educational Psychologist*, *54*(3), 144–161. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1614447

Cao, Y., Chen, X., & Wang, Z. (2022). The Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in the Primary Classroom. *Proceedings of the 2021 International Conference on Education, Language and Art (ICELA 2021)*, *637*(Icela 2021), 1147–1152. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220131.208

Daniel Goleman. (2021). Leadership The Power of Emotional Intellegence. In *Harvard Business School Press.*

Denham, S. A., Wyatt, T. M., Bassett, H. H., Echeverria, D., & Knox, S. S. (2009). Assessing social-emotional development in children from a longitudinal perspective. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, *63*(SUPPL. 1). https://doi.org/10.1136/jech.2007.070797

Denham, Susanne A., Bassett, H., Mincic, M., Kalb, S., Way, E., Wyatt, T., & Segal, Y. (2012). Social-emotional learning profiles of preschoolers' early school success: A person-centered approach. *Learning and Individual Differences*, *22*(2), 178–189. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2011.05.001

Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2011). Promoting social and emotional development is an essential part of students' education. *Human Development*, *54*(1), 1–3. https://doi.org/10.1159/000324337

Dussault, M., & Thompson, R. B. (2024). Fundamental Themes in Social–Emotional Learning: A Theoretical Framework for Inclusivity. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *21*(4). https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph21040506

Elias, M., Zins, J. E., & Weissberg, R. P. (1997). P. social and emotional learning: G. for educators. A. (1997). *promoting-social-and-emotional-learning-1.pdf.*

Elias, M J, O'brien, M. U., & Weissberg, R. P. (2006). Transformative Leadership for Social-Emotional Learning. *Principal Leadership*, *7*(4), 10–13.

Elias, Maurice J, & Ryan, D. P. (2015). The essential convergence of social-emotional learning, character, and school culture and climate for our students' success. *Tipica, Boletín Electrónico de Salud Escolar*, *11*(2), 186–192.

Erika K. Thomas-Brown. (2022). *The Impact of Social Emotional Learning Interventions on Student Behavior and Achievement.*

Fernández-Martín, F. D., Moreno-Guerrero, A. J., Marín-Marín, J. A., & Romero-Rodríguez,

J. M. (2022). Adolescents' Emotions in Spanish Education: Development and Validation of the Social and Emotional Learning Scale. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, *14*(7), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.3390/su14073755

Gimbert, B. G., Miller, D., Herman, E., Breedlove, M., & Molina, C. E. (2023). Social Emotional Learning in Schools: The Importance of Educator Competence. In *Journal of Research on Leadership Education* (Vol. 18, Issue 1). https://doi.org/10.1177/19427751211014920

Ismail, C. (2015). Social emotional learning skills and educational stress. *Educational Research and Reviews*, *10*(7), 799–803. https://doi.org/10.5897/err2015.2114

Jagers, R. J., Rivas-Drake, D., & Williams, B. (2019). Transformative Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Toward SEL in Service of Educational Equity and Excellence. *Educational Psychologist*, *54*(3), 162–184. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1623032

Ji, P., DuBois, D. L., & Flay, B. R. (2021). Social-emotional and character development scale: Validation with urban middle school students. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *127*(January 2022). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2021.106124

Jones, S. M., Bailey, R., & Jacob, R. (2014). Social-emotional learning is essential to classroom management. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *96*(2), 19–24. https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721714553405

Jones, S. M., McGarrah, M. W., & Kahn, J. (2019). Social and Emotional Learning: A Principled Science of Human Development in Context. *Educational Psychologist*, *54*(3), 129–143. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1625776

Kaspar, K. L., & Massey, S. L. (2023). Implementing Social-Emotional Learning in the Elementary Classroom. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *51*(4), 641–650. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-022-01324-3

Kim, S., Crooks, C. V., Bax, K., & Shokoohi, M. (2021). Impact of Trauma-Informed Training and Mindfulness-Based Social–Emotional Learning Program on Teacher Attitudes and Burnout: A Mixed-Methods Study. *School Mental Health*, *13*(1), 55–68. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-020-09406-6

Lawlor, M. S., Baelen, R. N., & Schonert-Reichl, K. A. (2023). Social and emotionallearning: Strengtheningstudents' and educators'resilience and well-being. *Brief*, *February*, 1–22.

Mahoney, J. L., Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2018). An update on social and emotional learning outcome research. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *100*(4), 18–23. https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721718815668

Martikainen, S., Kalland, M., Linnavalli, T., Kostilainen, K., Aittokoski, M., Reunamo, J., Vasileiou, Z., & Tervaniemi, M. (2023). Supporting social-emotional development in early childhood education and care–a randomized parallel group trial evaluating the impact of two different interventions. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2023.2204119

McCormick, M. P., Neuhaus, R., O'Connor, E. E., White, H. I., Horn, E. P., Harding, S., Cappella, E., & McClowry, S. (2021). Long-Term Effects of Social-Emotional Learning on Academic Skills: Evidence from a Randomized Trial of INSIGHTS. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, *14*(1), 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/19345747.2020.1831117

Moreno-Gómez, A. J., & Cejudo, J. (2019). Effectiveness of a Mindfulness-Based Social–Emotional Learning Program on Psychosocial Adjustment and Neuropsychological Maturity in Kindergarten Children. *Mindfulness*, *10*(1), 111–121. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-018-0956-6

N. Ibarra, B. (2022). Understanding SEL to Create a Sense of Belonging: The Role Teachers Play in Addressing Students' Social and Emotional Well-Being. *Current Issues in*

Education, *23*(2), 2018–2019. https://doi.org/10.14507/cie.vol23iss2.2049

Panayiotou, M., Humphrey, N., & Wigelsworth, M. (2019). An empirical basis for linking social and emotional learning to academic performance. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *56*(January), 193–204. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2019.01.009

Rachman, Y. A., Sumarwan, U., Latifah, M., & Herawati, T. (2023). Factors Influencing The Social-Emotional Development of Children And Adolescents: A Study Systematic Literature Review. *Journal of Family Sciences*, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.29244/jfs.vi.49789

Ștefan, C. A., Dănilă, I., & Cristescu, D. (2022). Classroom-Wide School Interventions for Preschoolers' Social-Emotional Learning: A Systematic Review of Evidence-Based Programs. In *Educational Psychology Review* (Issue May). Springer US. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-022-09680-7

Theses, M., & Warner, W. H. (2021). *Scholarship & Creative Works @ Digital UNC A NEW CURRICULUM : SUPPORTING SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING USING MINDFULNESS MOTIVATED CHOREOGRAPHY*.

Thomson, K. C., Oberle, E., Gadermann, A. M., Guhn, M., Rowcliffe, P., & Schonert-Reichl, K. A. (2018). Measuring social-emotional development in middle childhood: The Middle Years Development Instrument. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *55*, 107–118. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2017.03.005

Voith, L. A., Yoon, S., Topitzes, J., & Brondino, M. J. (2019). A Feasibility Study of a School - Based Social Emotional Learning Program : Informing Program Development and Evaluation. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, *0123456789*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-019-00634-7

Weiner, A. S. (1977). Cognitive and social-emotional development in adolescence. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, *2*(3), 87–92. https://doi.org/10.1093/jpepsy/2.3.87

Yaeger, D. (2017). Social and Emotional Learning Programs for Adolescents. *Future of Children*, *27*(1), 73–94. http://web.b.ebscohost.com.proxygw.wrlc.org/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=2b78f5d2-09a2-45cc-a273-ae3d107fc5cb%40sessionmgr103&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3D%3D#AN=123568102&db=sih

Yüksel, M., Üniversitesi, M., Bölümü, B., Türkiye, İ. /, Üniversitesi, M. S., Harp Okulu, H., & Bilgisi Öz, M. (2021). *The Research of The Relationship Between The Problem Solving Skills & Metacognitive Awareness of Middle School Students and The Social Emotional Learning * Ortaokul Öğrencilerinin Problem Çözme Becerileri ve Üst Bilişsel Farkındalıklarının Sosyal Duygusal*. 487–506. https://doi.org/10.14812/cufej.747349

Zhou, M., & Ee, J. (2021). Development and validation of the social emotional competence questionnaire (SECQ). *The International Journal of Emotional Education*, *18*(3), 1–23. www.enseceurope.org/journal

Zins, J. E., & Elias, M. J. (2007). Social and emotional learning: Promoting the development of all students. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, *17*(2–3), 233–255. https://doi.org/10.1080/10474410701413152