



American Journal of Interdisciplinary Research and Innovation (AJIRI)

ISSN: 2833-2237 (ONLINE)

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 3 (2025)

PUBLISHED BY
E-PALLI PUBLISHERS, DELAWARE, USA

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) of Students: Effective SEL Programs and How They Increase Academic Success

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Article Information

Received: July 05, 2025

Accepted: August 11, 2025

Published: August 23, 2025

Keywords

Academic Success, Effective SEL Programs, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), Students

ABSTRACT

Students' ability to learn well is influenced by a variety of elements, including the school atmosphere, a sense of belonging among classmates, positive connections with teachers, and the feedback they receive. One approach is to develop successful SEL programs in our schools. SEL is essential for the development of competencies that are essential for students to succeed in both academic and professional environments, in addition to their academic content knowledge. Therefore, this study seeks to provide a systematic review on effective SEL programs and how they increase students' academic success. The study employed the PRISMA guidelines for selecting the articles. 11 articles that delved into effective SEL programs and their impact on the long-term academic success of students were involved in the review. The study revealed two main findings. Firstly, Student Success Skills-SEL classroom manual, Social-Emotional Learning Foundations Intervention program, Second Step program, Ready for Success program, and SPARK program have been evaluated as effective SEL programs for student success. Secondly, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs have a significant impact on students' academic performance, emotional and social well-being by nurturing crucial abilities such as emotion awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and the formation of meaningful relationships. Therefore, stakeholders and policymakers should provide resources to teachers who are the primary implementers of Students' SEL to enable them to facilitate SEL instruction within students. Also, teachers must tailor their instructional approaches to accommodate SEL in the classroom.

INTRODUCTION

According to research, social and emotional learning (SEL) improves academic performance by an average of 11 percentile points, promotes prosocial behaviors (such as compassion, sharing, and empathy), improves student attitudes towards school, and reduces student sadness and stress (Durlak *et al.*, 2011). Studies indicate that throughout the pandemic, there was a marked increase in the prevalence of learning difficulties, academic performance concerns, and mental health disorders. Students necessitate substantial support from their parents, educators, and classmates to surmount these hurdles. The pandemic-induced stress, social isolation, absence of in-person classroom interaction, technology-based online education, disruption of routines, and limited public engagement resulted in a decline in conventional socio-cognitive activities within the teaching-learning framework and contributed to peripheral learning. Considering that more than fifty percent of public-school students have reported experiencing anxiety or depression, social-emotional learning (SEL) is a crucial element of the post-COVID educational framework.

The pandemic impacted many nations. For instance, schools throughout the United States have the pressing challenge of their students mitigate the repercussions of pandemic-induced educational disruptions. While much discourse among policymakers and the media has focused

on deteriorations in academic performance (Barnum, 2022), numerous young individuals have faced declines in mental health and have been deprived of both in-school and extracurricular opportunities to develop inter- and intrapersonal skills such as teamwork, leadership, and self-regulation (Centre on Reinventing Public Education, 2023). In addressing this complex array of challenges, education scholars have promoted a whole-child approach to education, recognizing the interconnection of academic, social, and emotional learning as essential for future student success (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2020; Knudson & Cantor, 2020), which includes instruction commonly referred to as social and emotional learning, or SEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], n.d.). The processes through which people acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and abilities necessary to understand and control their emotions, create and achieve positive goals, develop and maintain positive relationships with peers and adults, and make wise and healthful decisions are all included in the field of social and emotional learning (SEL) (CASEL, 2013; Greenberg *et al.*, 2003; Weissberg *et al.*, 2007). The study therefore aims to address two main objectives. Firstly, to find effective SEL programs for students in schools. Also, the study determines the impact of SEL on long term academic success of students. The study therefore sought to find answers to the questions: what are the SEL programs that are effective for students

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in schools? And how does SEL impact the long-term academic success of students?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Vygotsky's socio-cultural learning theory underscores the significance of empathy and self-expression in students' educational experiences (Moore, 2011). According to this theory, social interaction and learning are based on the connections between children's language and cognitive abilities and those of their peers. Socio-cultural learning influences students' interest and involvement in class activities by highlighting the importance of social experiences in the acquisition of concepts. Teachers' and students' interactions both within and outside of the classroom can improve social and emotional learning (SEL). Teachers are in charge of teaching students social-emotional skills, and educational authorities are in charge of providing a nurturing atmosphere for teachers to develop their own social-emotional skills. These objectives yield favourable academic results at educational institutions, as they align with one of their primary aims.

Conceptual Framework

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) was founded in 1994 via the collaboration of specialists in bullying prevention, preventative science, emotional intelligence, public health, and child development. Their objective was to ascertain essential abilities and competencies that facilitate student achievement in both academic and life contexts. These professionals developed SEL as a unified framework to consolidate many initiatives aimed at addressing kids' social and emotional challenges. To integrate policy, research, and practice in promoting students' social and emotional development, they founded the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) was established as a formal framework in the mid-1990s, recognizing that emotional intelligence and social skills are essential for students' success in both academic and real contexts. The notion of SEL was influenced by several study domains such as emotional intelligence, child development, public health,

and bullying prevention. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), founded in 1994, significantly contributed to the formalization of SEL as an educational framework by delineating essential abilities for emotional and social development.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is an educational methodology aimed at enhancing students' capacity to engage with and apply five fundamental core competencies. These competencies are intended to facilitate student success in diverse life contexts, including education, employment, and familial relationships. The five fundamental skills are Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Responsible Decision-Making, Social Awareness, and Relationship Skills. Self-awareness enables pupils to recognise their strengths and shortcomings, enhance decision-making, and cultivate good relationships (Pratheesh & Zita, 2024). Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) includes the cultivation of healthy identities, emotional regulation, empathy demonstration, formation of supportive connections, and the execution of responsible decision-making.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) strategies at the institutional level are often executed via policies, practices, or frameworks aimed at cultivating a constructive school environment and a culture that promotes development in academic, personal, and social spheres (Cohen, 2006; Meyers *et al.*, 2015; Jones & Bouffard, 2012). These policies and practices may include the formulation of a code of conduct that specifies the social, emotional, and behavioural norms, values, and expectations for students and staff at the school, the execution of equitable disciplinary policies, the creation of anti-bullying prevention protocols, and the offering of professional development opportunities in social and emotional learning (SEL). It is essential that teachers and personnel at all levels of the school are sufficiently prepared and trained to implement SEL practices both within and outside the classroom. This can be achieved by teaching prospective teachers during their in-service training and by offering high-quality professional development programs for current educators (Schonert-Reichl *et al.*, 2015; Schonert-Reichl, Oberle, *et al.*, 2015).

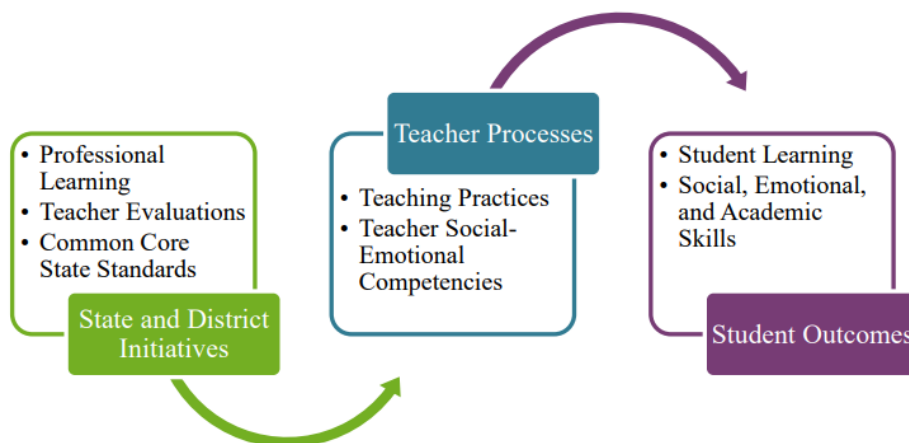


Figure 1: SEL integration in schooling (American Institute for Research, 2014)

Alongside classroom and school-based methods, family and community initiatives can integrate social-emotional learning (SEL) into the home and neighbourhood environments, which are the primary developmental contexts for children outside of school (Albright & Weissberg, 2010; Catalano *et al.*, 2010; Gullotta, 2015). School-family connections are crucial for supporting socio-emotional learning in early children, as their primary influence in defining values, social objectives, and acceptable behaviours remains the home. Community partners can enhance school-based social-emotional learning (SEL) by offering children supplementary opportunities to implement acquired SEL skills in diverse practical contexts, such as after-school programs and other community initiatives (Fagan *et al.*, 2015).

When SEL is properly integrated in the schooling process, this is to say, State and district initiatives are to favour the development of teachers both professionally and emotionally as they are the central point to effect changes in students, this goes a long way to positively affect students SEL and learning as shown in figure 1.

SEL Skills In The Classroom; How to Build These Skills

It is vital to educate and model social and emotional skills in order to nurture social and emotional development in all students. Additionally, it is necessary to give chances for students to practice and enhance their SEL abilities, and it is necessary to allow students to execute these SEL skills in a range of contexts. Train teachers to deliver explicit lessons that teach social and emotional skills and then identify opportunities for students to reinforce their use throughout the day. This is one of the most common SEL approaches. A different curricular approach involves the integration of SEL instruction into content areas, including English language arts, social studies, and math (Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Merrell & Gueldner, 2010; Yoder, 2013; Zins *et al.*, 2004). From preschool through secondary school, there are numerous research-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs that improve students' behaviour and competence in developmentally appropriate ways (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2013, 2015). Teachers can inherently cultivate abilities in students through their interpersonal and student-centered instructional engagements during the school day. Interactions between adults and students enhance social-emotional learning (SEL) by fostering positive student-teacher connections, allowing instructors to exemplify social-emotional abilities, and encouraging student participation (Williford & Sanger Wolcott, 2015). Teachers' strategies that offer emotional support and foster student voice, autonomy, and mastery experiences enhance student involvement in the learning process.

The relationship between academic and socio-emotional skills is evident, as learning in the school context is inherently a social activity (Vandeboncoeur & Collie, 2013; Zins *et al.*, 2004a, 2004b). Learning is a process that transpires in diverse social contexts and entails

collaboration, negotiation, and cooperation among peers, educators, and staff members. Elias and Haynes (2008), Payton *et al.* (2000), and Zins & Elias (2006) assert that students proficient in social and emotional competence are more adept at managing their emotions, making responsible decisions, navigating challenging situations, and understanding their own and others' emotions during stressful circumstances. Consequently, children with social and emotional competence experience greater comfort in school and classroom settings, enabling them to focus more effectively on assigned academic tasks compared to those who face social and emotional challenges (Welsh *et al.*, 2001).

According to recent empirical research, adult achievement is predicted by children's social and emotional skills. A seminal study found a significant correlation between kindergarten teachers' evaluations of their students' prosocial abilities and both steady, full-time work and high school and college graduation rates. On the other hand, the length of time children spent in special education programs and the number of years they repeated grades were inversely connected with these abilities (Jones *et al.*, 2015). Additionally, early prosocial abilities were linked to fewer mental health problems, less substance use, and fewer interactions with the criminal justice system in early adulthood, according to the authors.

In summary, the implementation of high-quality social-emotional learning (SEL) in the classroom benefits educators by fostering a positive classroom environment and equipping students with fundamental social-emotional skills that enhance and motivate their academic progress. A safe, well-managed, and compassionate learning environment with opportunities for rewards and positive behaviours is the result of evidence-based SEL programming. Students can more effectively manage their emotions and relationships and exhibit fewer negative and more positive behaviours when they become competent in fundamental SEL skills. Additionally, students develop a stronger sense of attachment to their school, which results in an increase in their engagement and commitment to the institution. Zins *et al.* (2004) have demonstrated that these factors collectively have a beneficial impact on academic learning and contribute to the academic success of students.

Supporting SEL in School Settings

SEL strategies are often implemented at the school level via policies, procedures, or structures related to student support services and climate (Meyers *et al.*, in press). Safe and supportive school climates and cultures improve students' academic, behavioural, and mental health results (Thapa *et al.*, 2013). School leaders play an important role in the establishment of school-wide programs and policies that promote positive school environments. This entails forming a team to address the building atmosphere, adults modelling social and emotional competency, and establishing clear standards, values, and expectations for students and staff members.

Bear *et al.* (2015) assert that bullying prevention practices and fair and equitable discipline policies are more effective than solely behavioural methods that rely on reward or punishment. Structures such as routinely scheduled morning meetings or advisories that offer students the opportunity to connect with one another can be organized by school leaders to foster positive relationships and a sense of community among students. Integration into multi-tiered support systems is a critical aspect of schoolwide SEL. The services offered to

students by professionals such as counsellors, social workers, and psychologists should be consistent with the universal initiatives implemented in the classroom and structure. Frequently, students support professional reinforce and supplement classroom-based instruction for students who require early intervention or more intensive treatment through small-group work. However, there are several teaching strategies that support SEL in schools. Figure 2 presents these strategies that foster the development of SEL in our schools.

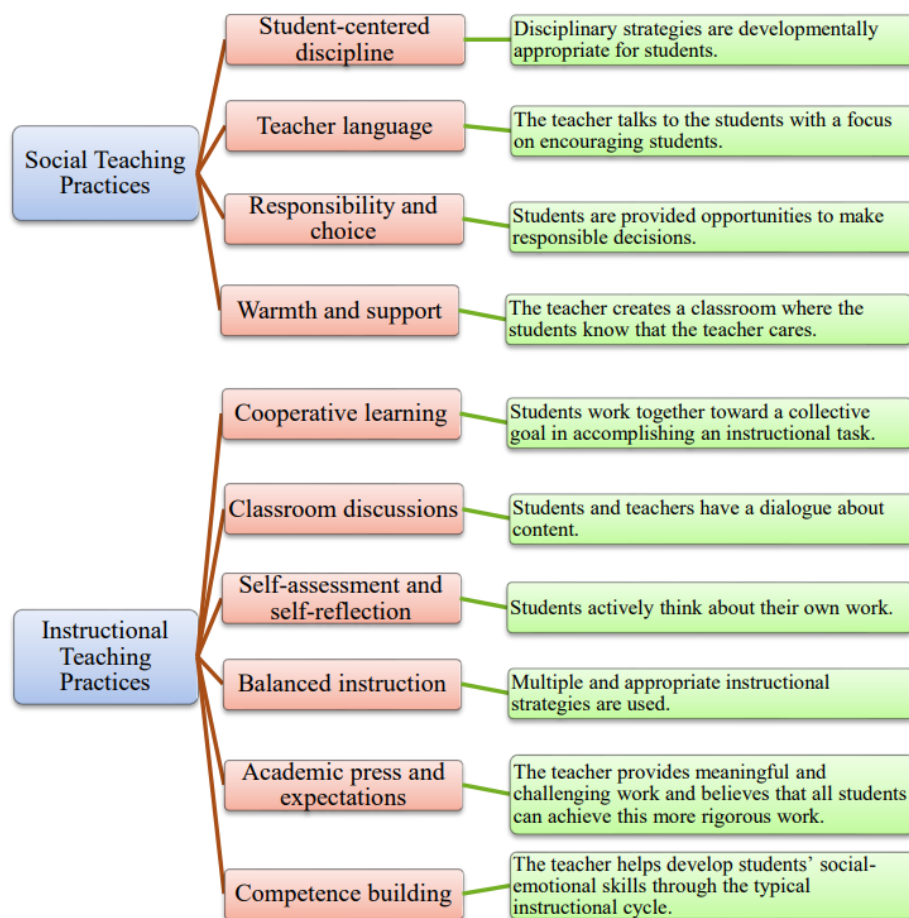


Figure 2: Strategies that support SEL in schools (American Institute for Research, 2014)

The Essence of SEL in Our Schools

Assessing the long-term and short-term advantages of SEL in educational institutions is crucial for improving its efficacy. Students achieve more success in academic and everyday endeavours when they:

- Exhibit self-awareness and self-regulation
 - Comprehend others' viewpoints and engage with them effectively
 - Make judicious decisions about personal and social matters
- Social and emotional competencies represent several immediate student outcomes fostered by SEL programs

(Durlak *et al.*, 2011; Farrington *et al.*, 2012; Sklad *et al.*, 2012). Additional advantages encompass:

- Improved self-perception, interpersonal relations, and engagement in tasks, characterized by heightened self-efficacy, confidence, perseverance, empathy, connectivity, dedication to education, and a feeling of purpose
- Enhanced social conduct and connections with peers and adults
- Mitigated conduct issues and risk-taking behaviours
- Alleviated mental distress
- Enhanced test scores, academic performance, and attendance

Over time, enhanced social and emotional competence can elevate the probability of high school graduation, preparedness for post-secondary education, career achievement, constructive familial and professional relationships, improved mental health, diminished criminal activity, and active citizenship (Hawkins *et al.*, 2008; Jones *et al.*, 2015)

SEL and Students' Positive Outcomes

A plethora of research has substantiated the effectiveness of SEL programs. Durlak *et al.* (2011) performed the most extensive meta-analytic assessment to date, incorporating 213 school-based universal SEL programs and involving 270,034 children from kindergarten through high school, published between 1970 and 2007. The authors found that, unlike students who did not participate in a SEL program, those who did demonstrated significantly improved social-emotional skills and attitudes, an increase in prosocial behaviours, a decrease in antisocial behaviours, and an 11-percentile-point rise in standardized academic achievement test scores. Two moderating variables that predicted the positive enhancement in student outcomes were the degree of fidelity in the implementation of the SEL program and the quality of the SEL program (Durlak & DuPre, 2008).

A meta-analysis of 75 universal school-based social and emotional learning programs evaluated by experimental or quasi-experimental research published between 1995 and 2008 was carried out by Sklad *et al.* (2012). The authors found that participation in a social-emotional learning (SEL) program predicted significant improvements in students' prosocial behaviour, social-emotional skills, and academic achievement as well as significant reductions in

antisocial behaviour, mental health problems, and mental disorders. Effect sizes were much reduced at follow-up (6 months or more after program completion), but they were still positive. The effects were most noticeable in the near term (up to 6 months post-program completion).

Weare and Nind (2011) conducted a review of prior meta-analytic and narrative evaluations of SEL programming. The authors incorporated 46 reviews in their study, encompassing hundreds of individual program evaluations and almost half a million students. The authors concluded that school-based universal promotion programs yielded beneficial effects on mental health promotion, social-emotional skills, and academic achievement soon after the treatments. The authors emphasized the necessity of investigating the long-term impact of such interventions as a critical subsequent step.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

I conducted a systematic review using the guidelines of PRISMA. PRISMA is a framework and guideline employed to assess systematic reviews and meta-analyses (Zarate *et al.*, 2022). The reading material may include articles, books, transcripts, notes, periodicals, newspapers, inscriptions, agendas, and meeting minutes (Arikunto, 2016). The review aimed to find effective SEL programs for students in schools and to determine the impact of SEL on long term academic success of students. ERIC (EBSCO), Jstor, Google scholar and Web of science were used as search databases to retrieve the required articles for the study. The search terms employed in the databases were "SEL and Students' academic success" OR "SEL and Students' long term academic success" OR "SEL programs and Students' success".

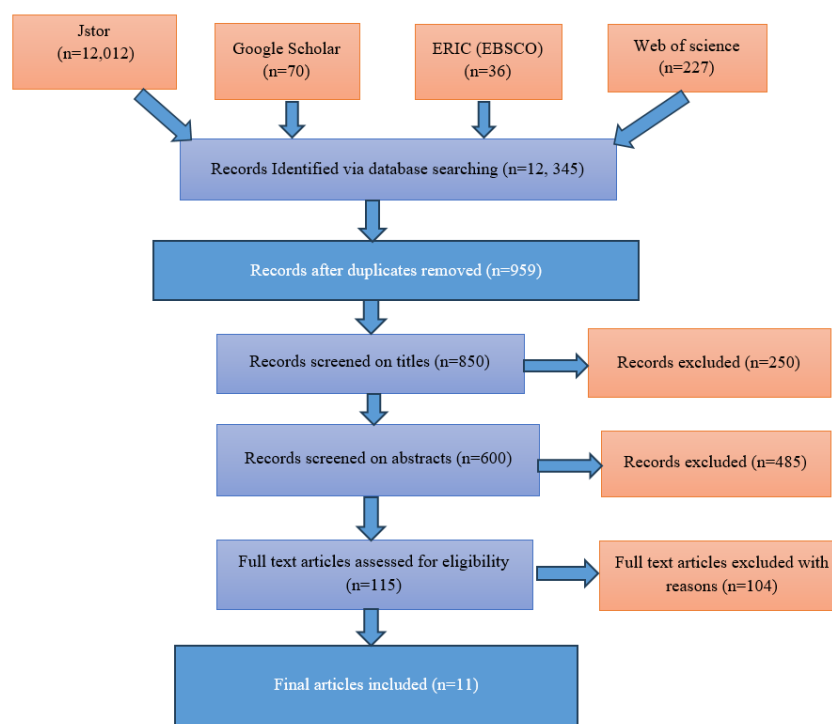


Figure 3: PRISMA flow diagram of the systematic literature review search adapted from Moher *et al.* (2009).

The search retrieved journals published within the last 10 years between the period frame of 2015-2025. The inclusion criteria included articles with a focus on SEL of students, effective SEL programs and SEL impacts on students' long term academic success. Since studies in this area remain limited, the internet databases used were broader. Additionally, papers published between 2015 and 2025 were considered. Articles published beyond the designated time frame were excluded. Furthermore, articles that were published in other language apart from English were excluded. Figure 3 presents the flowchart illustrating the mapping of the selection of relevant articles for systematic review.

A total of 12,345 articles were obtained from the database searches (Figure 3). The articles identified from the searches were evaluated for duplicates using Mendeley's "check for duplicates" method, and the proposed duplicates were subsequently eliminated manually. The remaining 959 articles were subsequently evaluated for eligibility. The articles were assessed based on their titles, resulting in the acquisition of 850 articles. However, 250 were eliminated after evaluating the titles and then remained 600 articles. I subsequently rejected 485 papers through abstract screening, as they did not concentrate on SEL programs and their effects on students' long-

term academic success, leaving 115 articles for eligibility assessment. Complete articles were evaluated by two separate reviewers. Microsoft Excel served as a data management instrument for the classification and analysis of full-text articles. The 115 studies were further deliberated until unanimous consensus was achieved over the analyses to be incorporated into the review. Consequently, 104 items were omitted according to the exclusion criteria. A total of 11 articles were ultimately incorporated into this systematic review.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The search retrieved 12,345 articles and by assessing the articles (Figure 3), 11 of them were considered and presented in Table 1. The remaining were excluded. Among the 11 articles included, the first two emphasized the historical overview of SEL instruction in education, the need for supporting SEL development and its effectiveness in enhancing development in children and youth. The remaining articles focused on the impact of SEL on the long academic success of students and the various SEL programs that have resulted in positive learning outcomes among students. Figure 4 shows the various number of articles that were obtained in the time frame (2015-2025).

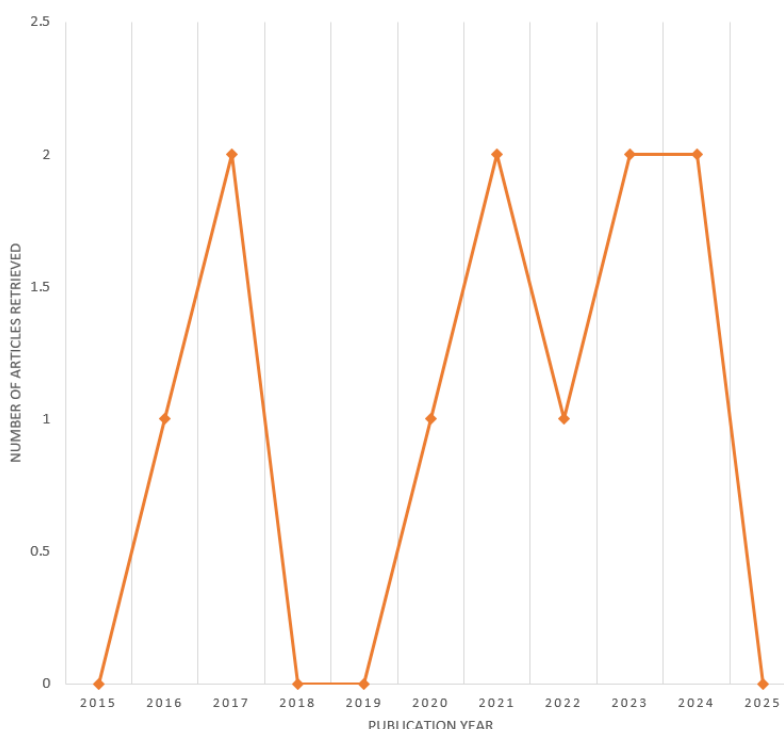


Figure 4: Number of articles retrieved by publication year

Two articles were retrieved from 2017, 2021, 2023 and 2024 (Figure 4). One article was also retrieved from 2016, 2020 and 2022. However, no article on students SEL in relation to the constructs of the present study was retrieved in 2015, 2018, 2019 and 2025 as indicated in Figure 4.

Table 1 demonstrates that when properly implemented,

SEL advantages students across all age groups. Numerous studies have demonstrated that SEL programs are advantageous for students. For instance, as illustrated in Table 1, SEL facilitates students in cultivating robust social lives, forging connections within their communities, and fostering enduring skills and habits that promote diligence and advancement

Table 1: Overview of the articles retrieved

S/N	Author and year	Study's purpose	Findings
1.	Oberle and Schonert-Reich (2017)	The review of the state of research on the effectiveness of SEL instruction in enhancing positive developmental outcomes in children and youth, as well as the historical overview and the status quo on SEL instruction in elementary through high schools, outlined critical areas of future development for going to scale with SEL.	A significant transition from the total lack of formal Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in schools at the close of the twentieth century to a surge of interest in SEL, the creation of numerous school-based SEL programs, enhanced SEL implementation in educational institutions, and the emergence of recent frameworks that direct schools and districts in systemic SEL.
2.	Kim <i>et al.</i> (2024)	Promoting the social and emotional growth and learning of students. The authors offered a thorough understanding of the subject.	The integration of a versatile theoretical framework with emerging technologies presents new opportunities and should foster optimism for the future of SEL interventions.
3.	Pham (2024)	The Impact of Social and Emotional Learning on Academic Achievement, Emotional Health, and Implementation Approaches	Enhancing students' academic performance, emotional control, and interpersonal connections requires the five fundamental skills of socio-emotional learning: self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills.
4.	Mariani <i>et al.</i> (2022)	The impact of the Student Success Skills SEL curriculum	The study demonstrates students evidenced self-reported gains in some SEL skills.
5.	Daunic <i>et al.</i> (2023)	The impact of social-emotional learning programs on students' development and success	The SELF intervention provided a proactive strategy to assist pupils in acclimating to school, particularly those at risk of internalizing behavioural problems. The study emphasized the significance of student self-regulation and the utilization of SEL language, together with improvements in social-emotional competence and their impact on long-term performance
6.	Wallender <i>et al.</i> (2020)	The disparity in reported self-regulation competency levels between elementary and middle school students receiving formal instruction in social and emotional topics through the Second Step program.	Students believed they possessed elevated levels of self-regulation, social skills, and problem-solving abilities due to their lack of understanding of these concepts. The study examined the significance of self-regulation and students' autonomy in managing their social-emotional development through a validated curriculum.
7.	Chance <i>et al.</i> (2023)	The impact of the Ready for Success program on the social-emotional skills and competencies of third-grade students	RFS enhanced students' self-awareness, self-regulation, and social-emotional proficiency. Their findings indicated that these skills persisted for up to three months post-intervention, with results being more pronounced at the three-month mark than immediately thereafter. Furthermore, they identified self-awareness and social-emotional competence as significant domains of development for students in the long run.

8.	Green <i>et al.</i> (2021)	The SPARK program was examined as a potentially efficacious social-emotional initiative.	The study indicated substantial improvement in students' content knowledge and a medium to high effect size in communication, decision-making, and problem-solving skills. Students experienced reduced challenges in emotional regulation and resilience following the SPARK intervention.
9.	Jackson (2021)	Linking social-emotional learning to students' long-term success.	Certain high schools were more proficient in facilitating students' development of good social lives, community connections, and enduring skills and habits that foster diligence. Furthermore, educational institutions that implement a comprehensive and purposeful social-emotional curriculum get more favourable long-term outcomes for students.
10.	Low <i>et al.</i> (2016)	The impact of effective implementation of social-emotional learning.	The engagement of educational professionals was essential to guarantee student achievement. Approximately fifty percent of the educators conducted classes with high-quality implementation. These courses exhibited superior involvement, exceptional adherence to lesson and integration activities, and robust student engagement. This group demonstrated student achievement and development across multiple facets of the social-emotional curriculum.
11.	Duncan <i>et al.</i> (2017)	The correlation between the Positive Action Program and socio-emotional advantages.	All students benefited from the universal program, and behaviour trajectories improved in Positive Action Schools. Additionally, the fidelity with which SEL programs were taught aligned with their long-term impacts.

in content knowledge. It also exhibits a medium to substantial effect size on communication, decision-making, and problem-solving abilities, in addition to the enhancement of social-emotional competencies, self-regulation, and students' autonomy in their social-emotional learning. Social-emotional learning (SEL) aids students in acclimating to school by validating their self-reported improvements and cultivating essential social-emotional competencies. Others illustrate its effect on students' long-term academic advancement

(Table 1). Schools must therefore create an appropriate environment for teachers to instruct and promote social-emotional learning in their students.

Presentation of Results by Objectives

SEL Programs That are Effective for Students in Schools

To determine the effective SEL programs for students in schools, the various studies were further analysed and the SEL interventions employed in the studies identified and presented in Table 2.

Table 2: SEL programs effective for students in schools

S/N	Author	Purpose of the study	SEL programs employed/Intervention	Results of the intervention
1.	Mariani <i>et al.</i> (2022)	The impact of the Student Success Skills SEL curriculum.	Student Success Skills-SEL classroom manual	The study demonstrates students evidenced self-reported gains in some SEL skills
2.	Daunic <i>et al.</i> (2023)	The impact of social-emotional learning programs on students' development and success	Social-Emotional Learning Foundations Intervention program	The SELF intervention provided a proactive strategy to assist pupils in acclimating to school, particularly those at risk of internalizing behavioural problems. The study emphasized

				the significance of student self-regulation and the utilization of SEL language, together with improvements in social-emotional competence and their impact on long-term performance.
3.	Wallender <i>et al.</i> (2020)	The disparity in reported self-regulation competency levels between elementary and middle school students receiving formal instruction in social and emotional topics through the Second Step program	Second Step program	Students believed they possessed elevated levels of self-regulation, social skills, and problem-solving abilities due to their lack of understanding of these concepts. The study examined the significance of self-regulation and students' autonomy in managing their social-emotional development through a validated curriculum.
4.	Chance <i>et al.</i> (2023)	The impact of the Ready for Success program on the social-emotional skills and competencies of third-grade students	Ready for Success program	RFS enhanced students' self-awareness, self-regulation, and social-emotional proficiency. Their findings indicated that these skills persisted for up to three months post-intervention, with results being more pronounced at the three-month mark than immediately thereafter. Furthermore, they identified self-awareness and social-emotional competence as significant domains of development for students in the long run.
5.	Green <i>et al.</i> (2021)	The SPARK program was examined as a potentially efficacious social-emotional initiative.	SPARK program	The study indicated substantial improvement in students' content knowledge and a medium to high effect size in communication, decision-making, and problem-solving skills. Students experienced reduced challenges in emotional regulation and resilience following the SPARK intervention.

Table 2 illustrates that various research has substantiated the effectiveness of SEL programs for students. The review revealed that the Student Success Skills-SEL classroom manual, Social-Emotional Learning Foundations Intervention Program, Second Step program, Ready for Success program, and SPARK program have been applied to students in various instances, yielding positive and favourable results. Students exhibited an enhancement in their development of social-emotional competences and social-emotional learning (SEL) skills. Moreover, students demonstrated the ability to acclimatize to their educational surroundings. Moreover, the execution of several intervention within the students' settings led to the enhancement of self-regulation, social skills, problem-solving capabilities, and emotional regulation (Table 2).

SEL Impact on Long-Term Academic Success of Students

The outcomes of the various studies were analysed and those with emphasis on academic success were presented in Table 3.

Table 3 revealed that numerous areas of pupil performance were enhanced through the implementation of SEL programs. Most individuals formed positive relationships with the communities in which they resided, enhanced their social lives, developed positive habits, and acquired long-term skills that were pertinent to academic success and diligent work. This clearly illustrates that the successful implementation of SEL programs has a positive impact on the long-term academic success of students.

Table 3: The impact of SEL on students' long term academic success

S/N	Author and year	Purpose of study	Participants	Findings
1.	Jackson (2021)	Linking social-emotional learning to students' long-term success	157,630 students	Certain high schools were more proficient in facilitating students' development of good social lives, community connections, and enduring skills and habits that foster diligence. Furthermore, educational institutions that implement a comprehensive and purposeful social-emotional curriculum get more favourable long-term outcomes for students.
2.	Low et al. (2016)	The impact of effective implementation of social-emotional learning.	3,586 students in the fall and 3,277 students in the spring. 157 teachers	The groups exhibited student success and development in a variety of areas within the social-emotional curriculum.
3.	Duncan et al. (2017)	The correlation between the Positive Action Program and socio-emotional advantages	1,130 children	All students benefited from the universal program, and behaviour trajectories improved in Positive Action Schools. Additionally, the fidelity with which SEL programs were taught aligned with their long-term impacts.

From the study, Student Success Skills-SEL classroom manual, Social-Emotional Learning Foundations Intervention program, Second Step program, Ready for Success program, and SPARK program were among the effective SEL programs that reported a positive impact on students, according to the present study. The Student Success Skills-SEL classroom manual was observed to demonstrate that students self-reported improvements in certain SEL skills (Mariani *et al.*, 2022). The Social-Emotional Learning Foundations Intervention program provided a method that facilitated students' adjustment to school. Again, the program guaranteed their long-term success and promoted their development of social-emotional competence, as well as their use of self-regulation and SEL language (Daunic *et al.*, 2023). Additionally, the Second Step program allowed students to regulate their own social-emotional learning and assume responsibility for it (Wallender *et al.*, 2020). Similarly, the Ready for Success program resulted in the development of self-awareness, self-management, and social-emotional competence in students, which was evident in their long-term capacity (Chance *et al.*, 2023). Following the adoption of the SPARK program, Green *et al.* (2021) noted a significant enhancement in students' content understanding and a medium to large impact size for their communication, decision-making, and problem-solving abilities. This unequivocally illustrates that the varied SEL programs were conducive to students, hence enhancing their capacity for critical thinking and content interpretation. As a result, this yields advantageous outcomes for the kids. These findings align with the studies undertaken by Durlak *et al.* (2011). Durlak *et al.* (2011) give evidence that the adoption of SEL programs, such as PATHS, in economically disadvantaged institutions leads to significant increases in emotional regulation and

academic achievement.

Secondly, students have reaped several benefits from SEL programs. The review indicated that students developed healthy social lives, community connections, and enduring skills and habits that fostered diligence following the introduction of SEL (Jackson, 2021). Furthermore, Low *et al.* (2016) conducted a study revealing that children exposed to social-emotional learning (SEL) exhibited success and growth across several domains of the social-emotional curriculum. Duncan *et al.* (2017) noted that SEL programs produced enduring impacts and modified behavioural trajectories in pupils. This indicates that the students participated in the SEL activities in a way that ensured lasting and substantial learning. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) was instituted to create favourable circumstances for students to internalize the topics being taught. This discovery is congruent with the findings of Taylor *et al.* (2017), who underlined that educational institutions that used SEL frameworks observed significant improvements in students' focus and overall learning efficacy, which led to improved academic achievement. This study's finding corroborates Konadu's (2025) research, which indicated that the implementation of SEL programs by teachers improves student outcomes.

Implications of The Study

SEL contributes to the academic success and achievement of students in numerous ways. Initially, the investigation demonstrated that students acquire SEL competencies, which encompass self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills, through the effective implementation of SEL programs. These competencies are essential for the enhancement of their academic performance, emotional management, and interpersonal relationships (Pham,

2024). The academic success of students is not solely dependent on the teaching and learning of subject content, but rather on the inclusiveness of SEL in the teaching and learning process. SEL creates conducive conditions for both students and teachers to engage with and derive meaning from the content. The rate at which students learn is influenced by their emotions; positive emotions guarantee effective learning.

In addition, for SEL to be effective in schools, stakeholders and policymakers should prioritize the implementation of SEL programs to improve the capabilities of both students and instructors. Consequently, the present review provides stakeholders with the necessary information to ensure that in-service and pre-service teachers receive ongoing training, while also fostering collaboration with families and community groups and investing in high-quality training. Students have the opportunity to apply and reinforce their social-emotional learning (SEL) skills in a variety of contexts when the school, family, and community work together, which can lead to enduring and significant learning. Finally, the study will improve the effectiveness of SEL programs for teachers and offer insight into the beneficial effects of SEL on the academic performance of students. Teachers can more effectively model and instil SEL skills in their students when they are provided with the appropriate training. This will foster a more positive and conducive classroom environment that will benefit all students.

Limitations

The study focused on students receiving SEL programs without taking into consideration the perspective of SEL of teachers, parents or other stakeholders. The study reviewed articles on students SEL from 2015 to 2025. Articles beyond 2015 would have been beneficial to the study objectives however they were not considered. Also, the review focused on exploring effective SEL programs and determining SEL impact on students' long-term academic success and did not consider potential challenges in the implementation of SEL in schools.

CONCLUSIONS

The study has demonstrated that social and emotional learning (SEL) is crucial for students in the realm of education. The Student Success Skills-SEL classroom manual, Social-Emotional Learning Foundations Intervention program, Second Step program, Ready for Success program, and SPARK program have been assessed as effective in enhancing student success. The advantages of SEL surpass the enhancement of individual talents, leading to ripple effects that impact classroom dynamics and school cultures. The implementation of SEL has been associated with a decrease in classroom disruptions and an enhancement in the quality of teacher-student relationships, therefore promoting a more harmonious and collaborative educational environment.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs significantly influence students' academic achievements

and their emotional and social well-being by fostering critical abilities like emotional awareness, emotional control, empathy, and the formation of meaningful relationships. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) fosters situations where students feel esteemed, interconnected, and inspired to participate in their academic pursuits by encouraging empathy, collaboration, and dispute resolution.

Stakeholders and policymakers must allocate resources to educators, the principal executors of students' social-emotional learning, to empower them in delivering SEL teaching effectively. Nonetheless, educators must tailor their pedagogical methods to include social-emotional learning in the classroom. This will provide a favourable climate for all pupils to participate in the class. To achieve their educational goals, educators should employ SEL programs that are both efficacious and tailored to their discipline. Research on the social and emotional learning (SEL) of students and educators remains insufficient; so, further investigation is necessary to discern the barriers that may hinder the effective implementation of the program in educational institutions and to develop ways for overcoming these barriers.

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