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Teachers' Perspectives on the Effectiveness of Social and Emotional
Learning (SEL) in Enhancing Learners' Emotional and Intellectual
Growth

The Case of Second Year Students of Mohamed Ben Ahmed Secondary
School, Mostaganem, and Middle & Secondary School English Teachers

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my loving parents. Nothing I do could ever repay them for all the love, patience, and support they have given me.

Acknowledgement

This year has been one of the hardest on both an academic and a personal level. However, despite all the hardships and frustration that came our way, we have been blessed with family, good health, and a group of friends who keep us smiling against all the odds. I would like to give my utmost gratitude to my best friend whom without, I could not have coped with the stress and pressure which overwhelmed me at times.

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Abstract

In recent decades, more emphasis has been placed on “soft skills” in education due to technological advancements that reshaped the skills required in workplaces in the 21st century. This study seeks to study teachers’ perspectives on the effectiveness of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in enhancing learners’ emotional and intellectual growth. Specifically, it investigates teachers’ awareness about educating “the whole learner”, sheds light on the challenges they face, and how to overcome them. To test the hypothesis that the acquisition and application of social and emotional skills can result in personal and academic growth for learners, as well as enable educators to facilitate learning, a quantitative research design was adopted in the process of collecting data. An online questionnaire was distributed to both middle, and secondary school English teachers to gain insight into their attitudes and experiences in the educational field. The research findings showed that the majority of educators recognize the significance of caring for learners’ social and emotional needs and believe in the potential positive impact it can have on students’ behaviour, relationship with peers, and overall learning atmosphere.

Keywords: Social and Emotional Learning, learners’ conduct, whole-learner education

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General Introduction

Education is the backbone of human prosperity in every domain, as it is the entity that transmits knowledge from one generation to the next. In the past, academic achievement was viewed from a purely cognitive perspective. However, in the last two decades, educators, scholars, and psychologists argued that there was a big learning gap in educational systems. This argument arose from the notion of success after graduation. The question is as follows: why do some people do well in their personal and professional lives while others do not? The roles that adults have in any society are surely bound to be inherited by the coming generations. This is why educational institutions must prepare coming generations for not only academic tests, but for the tests of life and the unavoidable responsibilities that await them in their communities, workplaces, and future families.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which learners develop awareness and management of their emotions, set and achieve important personal and academic goals, use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships, and demonstrate decision making and responsible behaviours to achieve school and life success. This research was conducted to shed light on the humanistic side of the learner that is affected by social and emotional factors daily and to support the act of tending to that important but somehow neglected part of learning for the sake of producing better learners and ultimately productive members of society. Teachers' roles have shifted greatly in recent years towards a learner-centred direction, but there is still a shortage of educators who are equipped to guide learners not only through their academic lives but through their hardships as well by helping them hone their interpersonal and intrapersonal skill to achieve academic and personal success.

This present work aims to investigate teachers' attitudes about the implementation of SEL in schools and to what extent it would be effective in developing students' emotional and intellectual growth. The main question that guided this research is as follows: What are teachers' perspectives on the underlying impact of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) on learners' emotional and intellectual growth?

The following sub-questions mark the different steps that this study has taken:

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1. What are the social and emotional skills that contribute to the personal, academic development of the learner?
2. To what extent are teachers aware of the importance of developing social and emotional skills to maximize learning?
3. What kind of challenges do teachers encounter in their educational setting?
4. What are the measures that teachers take to overcome those challenges?
5. What is the administration's role in managing students' misbehaviour?

The researcher hypothesizes that either direct or indirect development of learners' Social and Emotional skills would increase their involvement in the classroom and help them achieve growth on both personal and academic levels. Also, to account for the sub-questions that were investigated we suggest the following hypotheses:

- ❖ The five skills consisting of self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making skills would collectively contribute to learners' personal and academic growth.
- ❖ Teachers face several challenges relating to both linguistic proficiency, as well as emotional factors such as motivation, attitude towards learning.
- ❖ Teachers use traditional ways to deal with the challenges they come across.
- ❖ The administration works hand in hand with teachers to support them in reducing behavioural issues that occur in classrooms.

We can divide this dissertation into two major chapters. Chapter one reviews the literature relating to Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and the skills it consists of, as it reveals its close ties to various aspects of academic achievement. In addition to that, the literature review offers a scientific background on SEL and highlights its significance, teachers' role within it, and how it can be integrated within learning materials.

The second chapter discusses the methodology and the data collection tool conducted in this study. Next, it depicts the data analysis methods and presents the findings obtained from the survey questionnaire that was distributed online to English teachers of both middle school and secondary school. In conclusion, the researcher presents a general conclusion that highlights the major aim and objectives of this study. Furthermore, it provides answers to the research question and sub-questions that guided this present work. In the end, a set of

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limitations and recommendations are suggested to advance research endeavours for the future.

Chapter One

The Theoretical Framework

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1. Chapter One: The Theoretical Framework

1.1 Introduction

Today's learners are very different from those of a generation or two ago, despite them having far greater means to learn such as the internet and technology and the numerous advantages that are meant to facilitate learning, students all over the world are more prone to psychological disorders like depression and anxiety, as well as an increasing lack of interest that renders them unable to fulfil deep learning. This is to say that there is a huge gap in education because traditional academic learning is not enough to equip students to thrive in this fast-evolving world. Indeed, they must be adept at collaboration, communication, and problem-solving, which are some of the skills developed through social and emotional learning (SEL).

Before delving into the interrelated connection between social-emotional learning and academic performance, this chapter gives a historical overview of what and who led this growing movement towards educating the whole learner. It also thoroughly defines SEL and sheds light on its significance, teachers' roles within it, and further enumerate the skills it consists of. Moreover, it will relate some skills with certain areas of academic success. Furthermore, to introduce the reader to a more scientific background on the importance of SEL, the chapter provides insight into the neuroscience behind SEL and how it is closely tied to academic learning.

1.2 The roots of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): a short history

“educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all” Aristotle. Similar to various western concepts, a form of SEL dates back to ancient times in Greece. In his dialogues in *The Republic*, *Laws*, and *Statesmen*, Plato suggested a holistic curriculum to produce good citizens. He explained, “by maintaining a sound system of education and upbringing, you produce citizens of good character”. Education, according to Plato, has the aim of shaping a person who is developed intellectually, morally, and aesthetically. Nowadays, parents from all over the globe send their children to school intending to prepare them to be responsible and productive members of society. However, the best way to achieve that goal in current western school systems is still a new and evolving area of study and practice. It is the SEL movement's main concern.

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The notable success of the CDP made New Haven a capital for SEL research which caused the arrival of various researchers who would later become leading figures in the SEL movement, such as Roger.P. Weissberg (Yale psychology professor), and Timothy Shriver. The two collaborated with other local educators for the sake of creating the k-12 New Haven Social Development Program between the years 1987 and 1992. In the same period, a program called The School-Based Promotion of Social Competence and co-chaired by Weissberg, and Maurice Elias. They collaborated with a group of youth-development experts to release a framework to incorporate SEL in schools.

In 1994, the Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) was created. Nine collaborators coauthored a book that established and defined the field” Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for educators (1997)”. After Roger P. Weissberg became a director in 2001, CASEL changed the A, from advance to academic to ensure that the new research included Academic competencies as well. CASEL’s mission is “to establish SEL as an essential part of education”.

While different disciplines have produced frameworks describing and defining SEL, the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework is among the most prominent, extensively implemented and regarded as a “comprehensive multi-dimensional framework of the skills essential for successful social and emotional development” (Ross & Tolan, 2018, p. 1188). Nowadays, CASEL and many universities and organizations continue to advance SEL in schools nationally, as well as globally. Research is ongoing in its quest to study SEL’s impact on children’s academic and personal success.

1.3 Definition

Elias et al. (1997) say that schools are more than just buildings. They are “contexts that impart important socialization messages to children” (p.90). Students will only regard themselves as important and believe in their future if they are welcomed, empowered, and nurtured by their schools. However, that alone is not enough for them to handle the challenges of living and learning in a modernized society, they would also require social and emotional skills to do so. Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, et al (2011) share similar views. According to them, schools serve a vital purpose in producing healthy children by nurturing not only their mental development but also their social and emotional development. Elias et al., (1997) defines SEL as the process through which we learn to recognize and manage

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emotions, care about others, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, develop positive relationships, and avoid negative behaviors.

SEL is a relatively new term, but the needs for its efforts and the approaches it employs are not, at all new. Merrell & Gueldner (2010) state that SEL is an effective way to enhance outcomes for children and adolescents in a school setting. They further classify the broad potential benefits SEL has to offer in various fields starting with the positive impact it has on academic achievement, affective or emotional development, cognitive skills like higher-order thinking and problem solving, social interactions, and behaviour. Despite the vast aspects that SEL encompasses, scholars agree on five elements that the CASEL framework identifies as the core competencies which include self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills.

1.4 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies

The work that the Collaborative of Academic of Social–Emotional Learning (CASEL) suggests that SEL helps learners deal effectively and ethically with daily challenges by providing them with the tools that enable them to integrate skills, attitudes, and behaviours that promote the development of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competence. CASEL's framework presents five core competencies that can be taught in many ways and can fit in various learning settings. The framework represented in Figure 1.1 shows the kind of skills that learners need to feel motivated to learn, believe in their abilities to succeed, have a good relationship with their peers and their teachers, to set academic goals, to organize themselves to achieve these goals, to overcome difficulties, and so forth.

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Self-Awareness

Identifying and recognizing emotions
Accurate self-perception
Recognizing strengths, needs, and values
Self-efficacy
Spirituality

Social Awareness

Perspective taking
Empathy
Appreciating diversity
Respect for others

Responsible Decision Making

Problem identification and situation analysis
Problem solving
Evaluation and reflection
Personal, moral, and ethical responsibility

Self-Management

Impulse control and stress management
Self-motivation and discipline
Goal setting and organizational skills

Relationship Management

Communication, social engagement, and building relationships
Working cooperatively
Negotiation, refusal, and conflict management
Help seeking and providing

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Figure 1.1 The Framework of Person-Centered Key Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Competence (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004, p. 7)

Ever since the beginning of formal education three thousand years ago in Greece, Egypt, and India, the concept of emotional learning dates back to those ancient times. The words “know thyself” were carved on the wall of the oracle of Apollo at Delphi and that notion served as an organizing idea for the Greek society. Dunham and Brown (2010) define self-awareness as having the ability to assess personal feelings, interests, values, and strengths. This aspect of SEL also enables one to identify and categorize one’s feelings. CASEL’s definition states that it is the ability to accurately recognize one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behaviour, knowing one’s strengths and limitations, having a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and fostering a growth mindset.

The next competence is self-management which according to Dunham and Brown (2010), entails being productive in the way one’s emotions are handled. It includes awareness of feelings, monitoring them, and modifying them when it is needed to be of help to the individual, as opposed to impeding the way situations are tackled and coped with. This aspect of SEL also enables stress management, perseverance despite obstacles, and expressing emotions appropriately. Simultaneously, other non-emotional aspects of self-management are paramount to success in the preschool to primary school years; these include being able to use some non-SEL skills (e.g., working memory, attention, and inhibitory control) to regulate one’s social and academic behaviour (Dunham and Brown, 2010). CASEL’s (2018) definition does not stray far from what Dunham and Brown (2010) suggested. It states that self-management is the ability to successfully regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviours in different situations. It enables learners to self-motivate to set and work toward both personal and academic goals.

Another social-emotional competence is social awareness which is responsible for embracing other people’s different perspectives, having the ability to understand their feelings by possessing empathy, and allows individuals to be appreciative of others’ similarities and differences (Dunham and Brown, 2010). CASEL (2018) defines social-awareness as the ability to understand the perspectives of others and empathize with them, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. It includes the ability to comprehend

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social and ethical norms for behaviour and to recognize family, school, and community resources and support.

The third competence SEL consists of is responsible decision-making which according to Dunham and Brown (2010), is “the intersection of a number of other SEL components” (p.657). they elaborated this statement by providing examples such as incorporating the comprehension of emotions inherent in current interactions, and their consequences. Also, this SEL skill increasingly includes having the ability to make sound ethical decisions that consider and respect others, as well as insure the well-being of the school and community. At the stage of adolescence, lack of aggression or disruptive behaviour, and following classroom rules demonstrates responsibility in making decisions.

CASEL (2018) defines the fourth competence- relationship skills- as the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. Several skills are needed to be competent in this area of SEL including, clear communication, listening, taking turns, seeking help, resisting peer pressure to engage in unsafe, unethical behaviour, negotiating conflict constructively, giving feedback, and to seek and offer help when it is needed.

When SEL is mentioned in the learning context, it can be defined as the process for binding thinking, feeling, and behaviour for the sake of accomplishing essential social tasks; fulfilling personal and social needs; and enhancing the skills required to be considered an efficient, productive part of society (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). All the competencies SEL contains are most likely interrelated (Dunham and Brown, 2010). They each, in turn, relate to academic success in various ways. The literature related to these connections will be reviewed in subsequent parts of this literature review.

1.5 Affect and cognition

The concept of affect has been visited numerous times by scholars and philosophers across time. The word affect refers to aspects of our emotional being. It is not an easily defined term. Damasio (1994) separates emotions (changes in body state in response to a positive or negative situation) and feelings (perception of these changes). Young (1943) defined it as “acute disturbance [s] of the individual as a whole “(p.263). This definition corresponded with one of the western traditions in western thought which viewed emotion as

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“disorganized interruptions of mental activity” (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p.2). In contrast, Leeper (1943) suggests that emotion is an organizing response on the account that it focuses on cognitive functions and subsequent action in an adaptive fashion. Instead of regarding emotions as chaotic, Leeper (1943) argued that emotions are motivating factors.

Green (2002) noted that the affective side of learning and the cognitive side of learning are not on opposite ends to each other. When the two are paired, the learning process can be built on stronger grounds. Neither one dominates the other and the two are indeed inseparable. Decades of clinical and experimental work on a neurobiological level enabled Damasio to gather evidence that shows that emotions are a part of the reason and their absence compromises said rational capacity. Furthermore, neural scientist LeDeux (1996) describes emotion and cognition as partners in the mind, he further highlights their linkage by saying “minds without emotions are not really minds at all” (p.25).

New insights in the field of neuropsychology strengthen the argument which asserts the importance of SEL for successful academic learning. Several parts of learning are based on relationships, and those learning activities that are traditionally deemed cognitive require social and emotional skills so that thinking can be developed effectively. Current views do not regard thinking as a collection of purely cognitive processes, but rather it is seen as a process that necessitates absolute synergy between emotion and cognition (Elias et al., 1997).

1.6 Intelligence

The most often cited definition of intelligence is a statement by Wechsler (1944) which suggests that “intelligence is the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with his environment” (P. 3). This definition opposes more restrictive definitions suggested by Terman (1921) and others, such as, the ability to carry on abstract thinking. The notion that there are multiple types of intelligence has been part of the intelligence field ever since it began. Researchers and scholars in that field established that we learn and organize information in various ways, for example, Gardner (1983) who identified a category of intelligence named personal intelligences (divided into inter-and intrapersonal intelligence) that includes knowledge about the self and others.

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1.6.1 Social Intelligence (SI)

Social Intelligence (SI) is a concept that started coming to light in the 1920s with the work of Edward. L. Thorndike who originally set SI apart from other forms of intelligence, and defined it as "the ability to understand and manage people" (Thorndike and Stein, 1937, p.275). Many of these early studies focused on the description, definition, and assessment of socially competent behaviour (Chapin, 1942; Doll, 1935; Moss and Hunt, 1927; Thorndike, 1920). However, several research papers were published such as, Doll's (1935) publication of the first instrument to measure socially intelligent behaviour in young children. David Wechsler designed his well-known test of cognitive intelligence that serves the purpose of measuring aspects of social intelligence in 1939. One year later Wechsler (1940) provided an additional reference to this construct about the influence of non-intellective factors on intelligent behaviour, possibly influenced by the work of Thorndike and Doll (1943). Moreover, Wechsler (1943) argued that until they could describe those factors adequately, their models of intelligence would remain incomplete.

Wechsler's (1943) view caused a shift in scholar's attention from describing and assessing Social Intelligence to understanding the purpose of interpersonal behaviour and the role it plays in adapting effectively (Zirkel, 2000). That research offered a new viewing point of human effectiveness from a social perspective, as well as supported one crucial part of Wechsler's definition of general intelligence "the capacity of the individual to act purposefully" (1958, p.7). This helped social intelligence take its place as a part of general intelligence.

1.6.2 Emotional Intelligence (EI)

The term Emotional Intelligence (EI) was formally defined when two articles were published in 1990. The first article defined EI as "the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p.189). The second article offered an empirical demonstration of EI testability as mental ability (Mayer, D'Paolo, & Salovey, 1990). Findings from the empirical study joined emotion and cognition in a close alliance capable of performing more elaborate information processing. However, the concept was popularized in 1995 by Daniel Goleman's book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ* (Goleman, 1995) made a statement that was rather similar to the findings of the study mentioned above, he wrote that "these two minds, the emotional and

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the rational, operate in tight harmony, for the most part, intertwining their very different ways of knowing to guide us through the world” (p.16). This suggests that to behave intelligently, people need to have capacities to understand and deal with emotion and that a failure in the development of these capacities can interfere with the process of thought and reasoning.

Goleman (1995) made rather bold claims regarding the importance of EI, as he stated that it was “as powerful and at times more powerful than IQ” in foreseeing success in life (p. 34). His definition was not limited to the abilities mentioned by Salovey and Mayer (1990); it gathered a broader list of personal attributes including self-confidence, political awareness, achievement motive, among other personality attributes (Goleman, 1995, pp.26-28; Goleman, 1998). Early definitions of social intelligence had an impact on the future conceptualization of emotional intelligence. Theorists like Peter Salovey and John Mayer viewed emotional intelligence as a part of social intelligence (Salovey and Mayer,1990), which suggests that the two concepts are interrelated and are most likely, inseparable components of the same construct.

1.6.3 Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI)

Ever since the work of Thorndike in the 1920s, there has been a great deal of research concerning social intelligence, and emotional intelligence. The literature shows that there were various attempts to combine the two concepts under one wider construct. For instance, Howard Gardner (1983) who joined the two in his conceptualization of personal intelligences. Besides, Carolyn Saarni (1990) suggests that emotional competence includes eight interrelated emotional and social skills.

Daniel Gardner (1995) also supports the notion of ESI with much evidence in his book *Emotional Intelligence* (1995). He describes it as “the complex and multifaceted ability to be effective in all the critical domains of life, including school” (p.2). He further states the gist of that statement simply:” It’s a different way of being smart”. Moreover, Reuven (2006) published *The Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence* and defined it as “a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands” (Reuven, 2006, p.14).

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1.7 Integrating Social-Emotional Learning and Academic Learning

Weaving SEL into the traditional academic curriculum seems like a rather difficult and drastic step to take. However, the process of teaching and learning already consists of strong social, emotional, and academic components (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). Research in the field of SEL often relates to school performance and addresses it from various angles. Nevertheless, even the very first examination of their interrelated nature, and due to its solid research base, (Hawkins, 1997) concluded that “an important task for schools and teachers is to integrate the teaching of academic and social and emotional skills in the classroom” (p.293).

In the CASEL (2003) review of the 80 SEL programs available in the United States, 34% contained ways to integrate SEL with teaching practices and academic curricula. For instance, some suggest infusing SEL with an academic subject matter such as a literary piece of writing that requires resolving a conflict between two characters in a novel using the SEL skills they learned, others encouraged students to improve their studying habits using competencies such as goal-setting, and responsible decision-making (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Wallberg, 2004).

Elias et al. (1997) speak about creating The Personal-Academic Connection between teachers and learners, more specifically adolescent learners in this context. Moreover, since learners at that critical age are known to have more focus on themselves, their peers, and their lives outside of the classroom than they have on their studies. Elias et al. (1997) suggest that educators should stop competing for their attention, and start channelling those emotions that learners have by giving them a constructive place in the classroom. In simpler words, they recommend that teachers use learners' concerns as a bridge to completing academic assignments. That integration of social and emotional needs within the academic side of learning would allow students to personalize and internalize their learning. Examples of such assignments would, for instance, involve storytelling via written stories, videos, or acting out plays that address their concerns. These kinds of activities, according to Elias et al. (1997), can create new opportunities for teaching and learning. Once social-emotional skills are infused into the regular academic curriculum, learners would be able to coordinate and reinforce the skills they acquired to enhance their study behaviours and maximize their academic achievements.

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1.8 Social-Emotional Learning Approaches

Research by many scholars, particularly members of CASEL has demonstrated that healthy social and emotional development can be achieved, and the skills, attitudes, and behaviours can be taught to learners with the use of various approaches that have both short-term outcomes, as well as long term academic, and behavioural outcomes. SEL can be taught in many contexts, such as homes, communities, and schools. However, when we speak about SEL in the classroom, there needs to be an evidence-based program such as the CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL (2019) that offers guidance, resources, tools, and templates related to the classroom experience. With this being said, these programs do not contain something drastically different from what teachers, in their essence, are supposed to do with their learners. The first approach is explicit SEL skill instruction, which consists of designing free-standing lessons to enhance students' social and emotional competence explicitly. This would lead to SEL skill acquisitions of the five competence areas and would lead to positive social behaviour within the classroom.

Another approach would be to teach practices like, cooperative learning, and project-based learning which promotes SEL and leads to improved attitudes, fewer disciplinary problems, and less emotional distress. CASEL (2018) also suggests that SEL should be integrated across classroom activities and the academic curriculum. This includes fostering academic mindsets (learners who have an academic mindset view themselves as learners who have something to contribute in the classroom) and aligning SEL with academic objectives. This would result in students' have a greater attachment to school, be more engaged, have closer communication with their peers, and teachers which in turn results in them being able to seek help when they need it.

1.9 Teachers' Roles and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Ever since the 1970s, teachers' roles as facilitators have become increasingly important. John Heron (1989) elaborated on the distinctions that exist within the role of facilitation by dividing it into three different modes. This was done for the sake of avoiding the frustration that teachers face when they give learners more responsibility than they can handle at the beginning. In the *hierarchical mode*, as facilitators, teachers take full responsibility for all important decisions in the process of learning; in the *cooperative mode* teachers share some of their power with learners by involving them in the process of decision-making in the

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classroom and guide them in becoming more self-directing; in the *autonomous mode* teachers give their learners full freedom to do things without any interference. Heron (1989) states that the latter mode “does not mean the abdication of responsibility” (p. 17). Performing the role of a facilitator effectively entails using all three modes at some point while alternating from one to another when it is required. One of the benefits of this approach of teaching is that it equips learners with the skills needed to keep learning even after they leave the classroom (Arnold, 2002).

Elias et al. (1997) interestingly noted that “Many teachers already use important elements of SEL. What is less common is a comprehensive framework that provides coherence and consistency to specific objectives and instructional methods” (p. 73). Moreover, the vast majority of schools insist on reverting to the traditional teacher-directed classrooms, grades, tests. And by doing so, they only encourage learners’ intrinsic motivation which presents a counterproductive effect on the development of learners’ emotional growth because this kind of incentive leads students to strive for pleasing teachers, authorities, instead of growing a love for knowledge in their autonomous minds (Arnold, 2002). In that respect, Bruner (1962) mentioned the concept of the autonomy of self-reward and affirmed that liberating learners from the restraints of reward and punishment is one of the most effective ways to help them think and learn. Arnold (2002) specified that language learners, in particular, would have far better chances to succeed if teachers helped them in developing intrinsic forms of motivation. She summarizes the role teachers should have by stating that “As we cannot be sure that what we think we are teaching is what is being learned, we are well-advised to equip our learners to learn.” (Arnold, 2002, p.20).

1.10 The Heart-Brain Connections: The Neuroscience of Social-Emotional Learning

Most researchers have assumed that academic learning has little to no relation to one’s emotions or social environment. However, currently, neuroscience suggests the exact contrary. Emotional centres in the brain are intermingled with the areas involved in cognitive learning in a complex manner. SEL skills are predictors of major life outcomes, such as antisocial behaviour, financial awareness, healthy interpersonal relationships, and even health. It has been proven that from a neuroscientific angle, the brain circuits that are

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essential for SEL interact with the circuits that are important for cognitive learning (Davidson,2015). Besides, Davidson (2015) provides a rather significant insight from neuroscience that entails that the brain circuits responsible for SEL have a feature called plasticity, in high degrees – these circuits are built to change in response to experience, environment, and training- and it is most sensitive in the stage of early childhood, and during adolescence.

Simply stated, negative or positive emotions will interfere with cognitive functions due to the intricate connections between social-emotional skills, and cognitive skills, for instance when the learner is in a state of distress while trying to learn, the centres of learning are obstructed. This would, in turn, lead to the preoccupation of the learner's attention with the source of the problem, and since attention in its nature is a limited capacity, the ability to hear, comprehend, or recall what the teacher is saying is automatically hampered (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). As such, emotions are directly linked to learning, and SEL can likely allow educators to beneficently reshape their learners' brain circuits.

1.11 Linking Components of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) to Academic Success

Extensive research in the field of SEL resulted in an array of findings that are aligned with the view that SEL promotes academic success. Its very nature makes it rather difficult to separate it from academics. Adelman and Taylor (2000) argue that if educational institutions help students reach academic success by focusing only on academic instruction and school management, they will likely fail in reaching their desired outcomes. Instead, they suggest a model that promotes academic success and deals with obstacles in learning, development, and teaching. It includes several activities such as home involvement in schooling and SEL which ultimately serves an important role in helping students navigate the social and emotional contexts of the classroom efficiently. Dunham and Brown (2010) presented various studies that relate SEL competencies to different aspects of academic success which will be briefly reviewed in the coming part of this literature.

Self-awareness and academic success are interrelated in the sense that self-concept and self-perceived academic competence and academic achievement are likely to influence each other, This is to say that a learner who feels competent in a specific academic field may be more likely to feel a desire to improve current skills by seeking out more learning opportunities, thereby obtaining an increased perception of competence. Self-efficacy and

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self-esteem can also affect learners' academic success, because of variations in resilience levels in the face of learning struggles. future academic achievement may depend on a learner's self-awareness and perceived competence in learning subjects, and that may be due to the resulting confidence that can help learners take more risks in the classroom, in both engaging in learning activities and surpassing difficult academic hurdles.

Self-management is another component of SEL that can influence academic success. Developing an intrinsic motivation that helps them deal with learning challenges, thus helping them sustain their engagement to learning. Also, for the case of young learners, controlling emotional impulses and outbursts enables them to sit through a lesson and effectively interact with peers and teachers (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004).

Students' ability to understand self and others, receive social information accurately to make good decisions, interact efficiently, and regulate behaviour makes a large number of classroom learning tasks much easier because learning is infused within a social context. Various benefits can result from having social-emotional skills. Learners who possess those tools are likely capable of paying more attention, have better learning strategies, devote more time and effort in their academic pursuits. Moreover, prosocial interchanges between peers and teachers can elevate mood which can, in turn, make learning easier and vice versa. This leads us to say that social-awareness, as well as the other components of SEL, is more than likely to predict or help students' achieve greater academic performance.

1.12 Conclusion

Over the past decade, there has been extensive research about variables that influence various aspects of learners' academic performance. Academic achievement is generally seen as the display of knowledge attained, or skills developed in school subjects. However, several researchers investigating the different factors associated with high academic performance visited an array of concepts such as academic self-concept, social behaviour, and emotional competence. These examples require enhancing more than the traditional type of intelligence, they require developing learners' social intelligence, as well as emotional intelligence. And, Social and Emotional learning is a marriage of the two. In this review of the literature, we discuss several studies that are primarily focused on understanding SEL and its intricate relationship with various aspects of academic success. It also addresses how educators can infuse the two in their classrooms to foster the notion

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of educating “the whole learner”. This chapter also regards SEL from a neuroscientific point of view, thus providing further scientific evidence for the sake of strengthening the argument that social and emotional aspects of learning are just as essential as traditional academic learning and that combining the two is likely to produce many beneficial outcomes for both learners and teachers.

Chapter Two

The Empirical Framework

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2. Chapter Two: The Empirical Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter offers insight on the empirical data gathered for this quantitative study that seeks to examine the various social and emotional factors that contribute to the academic and personal development of the learner, as well as to investigate teachers' perceptions about the possible effects that Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) can have on their students' conduct, attitudes toward learning, involvement, and other aspects of academic achievement. Moreover, this research aims to discover the behavioural challenges that educators face daily, and the methods they employ to overcome them. In doing so, one is attempting to confirm or refute the research hypothesis which claims that the development of certain social and emotional skills can result in substantial personal and academic growth for all types of learners, and enable educators to facilitate learning and manage their classrooms more effectively. However, before delving into the section of analysis and discussion of the research findings, we begin the chapter by the first section which describes the research design, participants involved in the study. It will also give detailed information about the data collection tool employed in this research for the sake of highlighting the journey taken to reach this study's goals and objectives.

2.2 Research Design

For the aim of investigating teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in enhancing learners' social-emotional and intellectual growth, as well as the teaching-learning process, a quantitative research design was considered to gather data about teachers' perceptions, attitudes, awareness with regards to SEL's significance, and effective practices. Furthermore, the study seeks to find out the underlying effects it would have on both students conduct, involvement, academic performance, and the teaching-learning process. A survey questionnaire was administered to English teachers during July and August 2020. The results of this survey were gathered online using a survey site called GoogleForms.com. It was distributed through teacher chat groups on social media platforms, as well as through teacher emails.

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2.2.1 Participants

This research was conducted through an online platform where survey questionnaires were distributed to English teachers. The number of teachers who participated in this research is 24, consisting of both middle school and secondary school teachers. The participants of this research are characterized by diversity since the target population comes from different cities and regions in Algeria. It includes equitable distribution of both genders: male and female, a range of differences in teaching experience varying from 1 to 22 years which can be beneficial in attaining insight from both novice and experienced educators.

2.2.2 Questionnaire Description

This research instrument was selected in an attempt to evoke sincere answers from teachers since unlike interviews, questionnaires are characterized by anonymity which enables participants to express themselves without inhibitions. This survey sought to know teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of SEL in enhancing students' conduct, involvement, academic performance, as well as the learning atmosphere. Moreover, it aimed to investigate the most common behavioural challenges that educators encounter daily, and the methods they employ in reducing them. This survey consists of sixteen questions (four open questions and twelve closed, multiple-choice questions) that inquire about teachers' perceptions, awareness, and experiences in teaching and dealing with daily challenges (see Appendix). This questionnaire seeks to obtain an overview of teachers' attitudes with regards to the development of social and emotional skills for learners and the effect it could have on their performances and the school atmosphere in general.

the questionnaire began with three closed-ended questions. The first one was about the participants' gender. It was followed by an open question about the number of years in teaching experience to see if teachers with more years of experience are as willing to try new things in the classroom as the newer teachers.

The third question was a closed-ended question that asks about how crucial it is for learners to acquire and apply the following social and emotional skills: understanding and managing emotions, setting and achieving positive goals, making responsible decisions, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and feeling and showing empathy for others. Teachers are required to rate the degree of importance for each skill using the scale

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1 to 5, from not important to very important. This question is meant to investigate which skills teachers deemed relevant and essential for students to acquire and apply at school to enhance learning.

The following question is an open question that requires teachers to answer using a scale of 1 to 5 from strongly disagree to strongly agree about the four different effects that can result from applying social and emotional skills in the learning atmosphere. These effects are as follows: reducing behavioural issues, better student achievement, improved school climate, improve students' overall behaviour. This question aimed to implore teachers to hypothesize the possible changes that can happen after implementing Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).

The fifth question was about how important teachers found promoting the development of social and emotional skills for learners to extend their education and become better members of society. The next two questions were meant to investigate how often teachers came across behavioural issues within their classrooms and an open question about the most common challenges they faced daily. The eighth question had multiple choice answers about the various methods that teachers use to resolve issues that occur in their classrooms and they were provided with an open-ended answer option to elaborate on their ways of dealing with such situations. The next question was a yes/no, or sometimes question which was about whether the administration played a vital role in conflict management within the classroom for the sake of verifying the amount of support that teachers have had in these situations.

The three following questions targeted the topic of teacher training. First, a yes/no question was asked about whether teachers received any form of training on how to enhance and support the social and emotional aspects of learners. The second one was an open-ended question about the kind of training they received to give teachers the chance to share their personal experiences in developing their skills as educators. The third question evaluated teachers' interest in receiving training on the best practices that help learners develop social-emotional skills using a Linkert scale with five points ranging from slightly interested to very interested.

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The next three questions aimed to discover teachers' attitudes and beliefs about the prospects of implementing a Social and Emotional Learning program. The first one was a multiple-choice question that required them to select or provide the most effective practices that can help incorporate the development of social and emotional skills within the traditional learning setting. The second question was an open-ended question that targeted teachers' personal beliefs about the possible effects that could result from adopting an SEL program on both students and the school environment. The very last question was a simple yes/no question that sought to find out whether the teachers who filled in this online survey would be interested in joining a committee to implement a school-wide program that encourages learners' social and emotional growth in their schools.

2.3.1 Questionnaire Results

The online survey was addressed to a totality of 24 (100%) teachers consisting of 29.2% middle school English teachers and 70.8% secondary school English teachers, 75% were females and the remaining 25% were male. Twelve teachers said their teaching experience ranged from 1 to 6 years. The other twelve remaining stated that their teaching experience was longer ranging from 6 to 22 years. This implies that approximately 50% of participants have had considerable experience in teaching the English language.

The researcher sought out to discover to what extent teachers found it important for learners to acquire and apply five different social and emotional skills. A Linkert scale with five points ranging from not important to very important was used to measure the different degrees of importance teachers give said skills.

First, the majority of teachers 54.16% found the setting and achieving positive goals as the most important skill for learners to acquire and apply at school. 20.8% chose to rate it as important, followed by 12.5% who said it was fairly important, and a small percentage of 8.3% gave it slight importance.

Feeling and showing empathy others came second since 50% of teachers said that it was very important for learners to acquire and apply in the classroom. 20.8% said it was slightly important, 16.6% stated that it was important, 8.3% rated this skill as fairly important, and only 4.1% said it was not.

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Next, 45.8% of educators stated that making responsible decisions was very important to enhance for learners, 29.1% said it was important. 8.3% of teachers rated this skill as fairly important and the same percentage stated that it was only slightly important to have it. A small percentage of 4.1% denied its importance altogether.

The fourth skill to be given high importance was establishing and maintaining positive relationships with a percentage of 41.6%. It was rated as important by 20.8 of teachers, while 16.6% said it was fairly important, 12.5% gave it slight importance, and 4.1% did not believe it was important to enhance for learners.

The last skill to be given a high rating was understanding and managing emotions with a percentage of 33.3% responses. 29.1% rated this skill as an important one, coincidentally, 12.5% was the number of teachers who rated this specific skill as: fairly important, slightly important, and not important at all. The results reported above are represented in Figure 2.1 below:

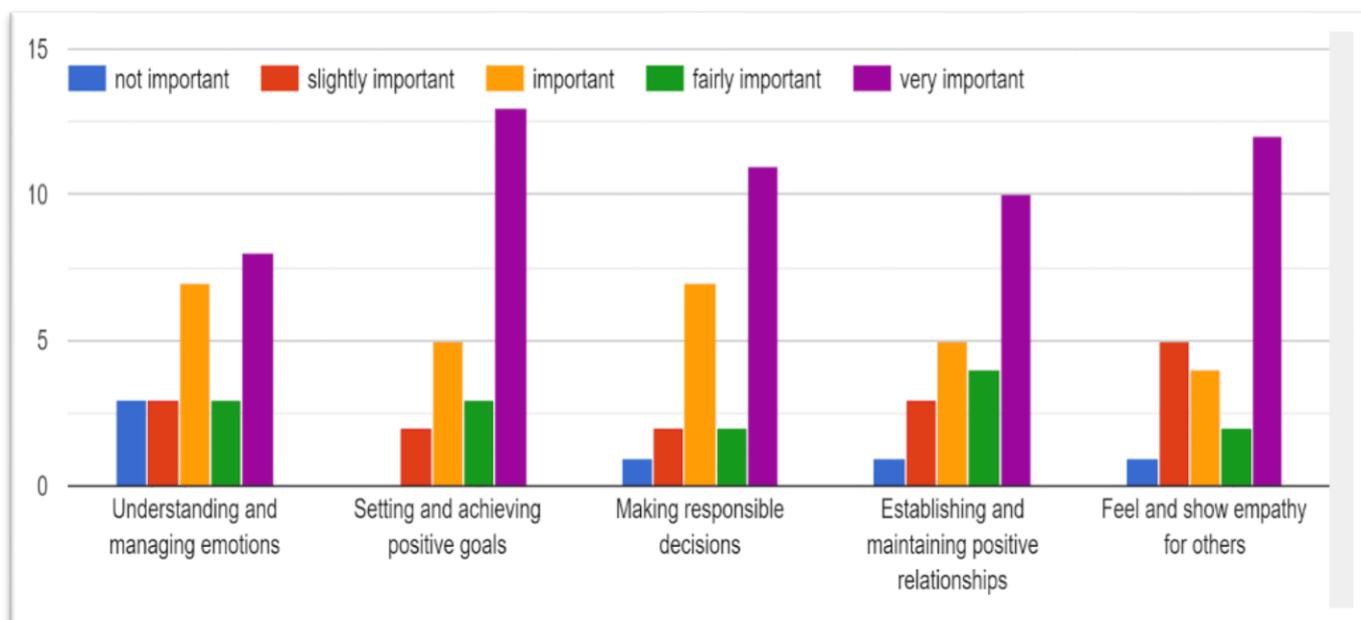


Figure 2. 1 Teachers' Attitudes about the Importance of the Acquisition and the Application of Social and Emotional Skills

The next question dealt with the possible effects of learners' acquisition and application of social and emotional skills. The researcher asked teachers to give rate their agreement from a scale of slightly disagree to strongly agree about the likelihood of each outcome.

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First, 54.1% of the teachers surveyed strongly agreed that supporting students in the acquisition and application of SE skills is an effective way to improve students' behaviour, 25% of them simply agreed. On the other hand, 12.5% felt neutral about the aforementioned statement, and a few 8.3% strongly disagreed.

Second, 50% of teachers agreed that the implementation of SEL could result in reducing behavioural issues altogether, and 29.17% strongly agreed with that statement. 12.5% felt neutral, while 4.1% disagreed.

Third, 50% of teachers agreed that the acquisition and application of SE skills in the classroom would improve students achievement, and 29.17% said that they strongly agreed with the same statement. However, 12.5% of participants were neutral, 4.16% said that they disagreed, and the same number of participants stated that they strongly disagreed with that statement.

The next possible outcome that was presented to teachers was improving the school climate. 41.6% of surveyed teachers agreed, and 33.3% strongly agreed that enhancing learners' SE skills would indeed have that positive impact on school climate. Nevertheless, 16.6% were neutral about this statement and a few 8.3% strongly disagreed with it.

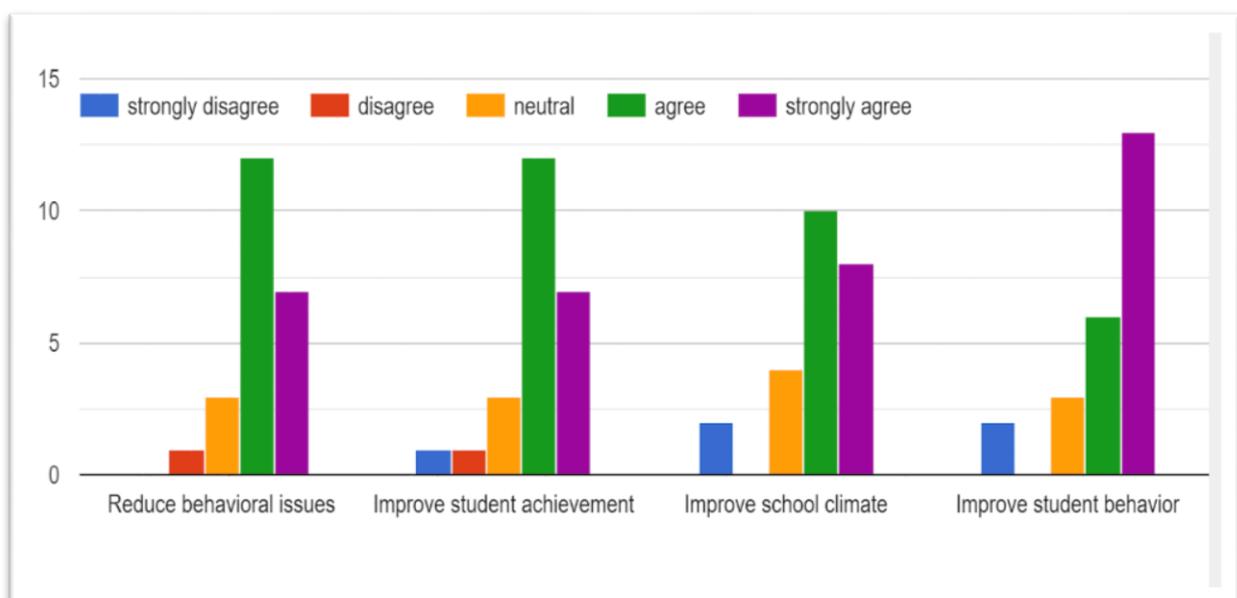


Figure 2. 2 Teachers' Feedbacks about the Possible Effects of the Acquisition and the Application of Social and Emotional Skills

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The following pie chart showcases the responses concerning the question that was asked about whether educators believe that it is important for schools to promote the development of social and emotional skills as a part of educating students to become better individuals. 56.5% of teachers said that it is very important, 26.1% said it was fairly important, and the remaining 13% said it was important. Overall, the responses varied in the degree of importance and not whether it was important or not.

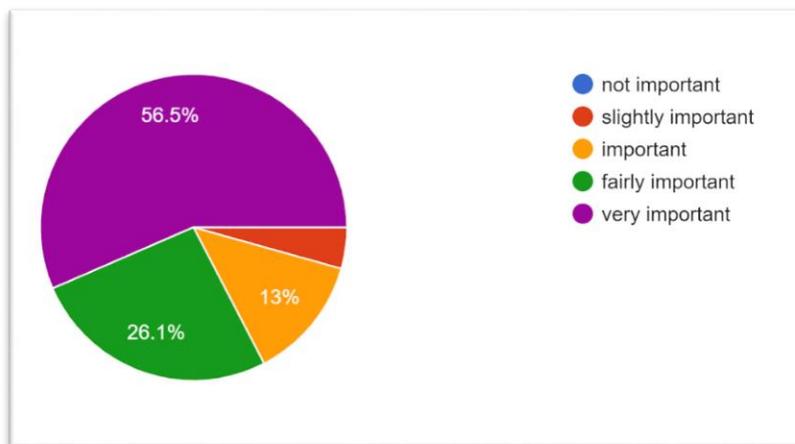


Figure 2. 3 Teachers' Beliefs about the Importance of Promoting the Development of Social and Emotional Skills for Learners

In the next question, the researcher moved from asking teachers about their beliefs and attitudes towards aspects of Social and Emotional Learning to their own experiences in teaching. The following pie chart displays the frequency of teachers' encounters with behavioural issues in their classrooms. 41.7% said that they occurred often, 33.3% mentioned that it happened occasionally, and only 25% of teachers said that they always face behavioural issues with students.

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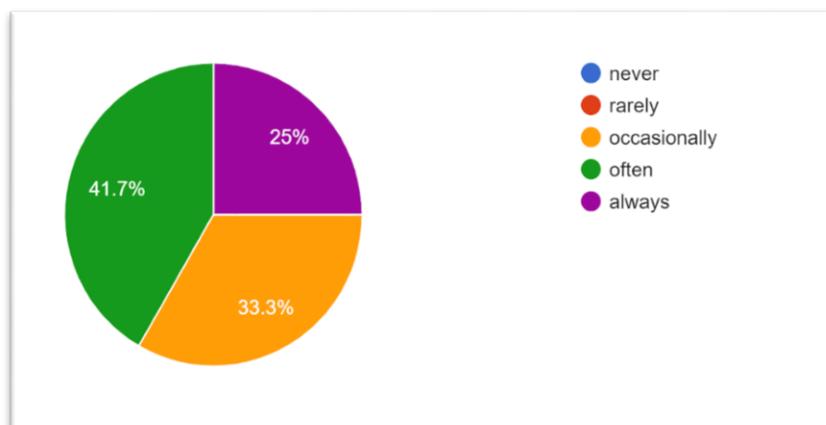


Figure 2. 4 The Frequency of Behavioral Issues in the Classroom

The next question was an open-ended one about the most common issues teachers face daily. Classrooms are different by nature, given the fact that there are various types of learners and teachers alike. Thus, the responses for this next question are presented in themes since it is using qualitative data consisting of teachers' words to show their different perspectives and experiences. The themes that were drawn from the data are respect, motivation, bullying, social and personal factors, and discipline. However, only one answer did not fit within the extracted themes since it did not speak of any behavioural challenges, but rather stated that the struggle was *“a lack of language basics and a poor proficiency in English”*.

Respect

Respect emerged as a trait highly valued by 37.5% of teachers when they discussed the most common challenges that they face daily. One teacher answered by *“disrespectful acts towards the teacher or classmates”*. And, another one said that his most common challenges include *“misbehaving and a lack of respect”*.

Motivation

Motivation is a theme that was mentioned regularly by 25% of teachers when answering the question. One teacher said, *“learners' lack of interest in learning English (as a major issue), some learners don't concentrate well, and others misbehave”*. Another answer was *“unmotivated learners who attend just to fulfil an obligation”*. The answers revolved around

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the matter of motivation describing learners as “careless students”, “*rude, unmotivated students*”, and “*indifferent*”.

Bullying

Another issue highlighted by teachers was bullying. One teacher asserted this matter by answering that issues were “so many, but the most important is being aggressive with each other”. Besides, 16.6% of teachers described these challenges as “*verbal and physical aggression*”. Another participant said: “*that’s not an issue, but a challenge: maintaining a positive atmosphere and safe environment. Safe here refers to protecting students’ emotions from bullying and so on*”.

Social and Personal Factors

There were 25% teacher responses that described social variables that can cause challenges for both learners and teachers within the learning environment, as follows:

- *Large size, mixed ability students from a different social and economic background*
- *Lack of support among classmates in case of personal or learning problems.*
- *Some students face difficulties in dealing with adolescence, others have family problems that have a negative impact on their behavior.*
- *Bad behaviors which results in other students misbehaving.*

Discipline

Discipline emerged as a theme when 25% of teachers were describing their daily challenges. One teacher said: “*I try to impose discipline for the whole class, but the majority don’t make efforts*”. Other teachers described their students as “*noisy pupils*”, and highlighted behaviours like, “*disruption, anger fits, sleeping in class, no homework*”. These teachers often attributed these behaviours to managing a large class and to students’ tendency to be careless and rude.

The next question was a multiple-choice question about the methods used to handle behaviour issues with students where they can choose one of several methods, as well as suggest their solutions. 79.2% of teachers stated that they warn students of the consequences of misbehaviour. Whereas, 66.7% said they would praise and reward positive behaviour.

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Moreover, 54.2% chose the method of modelling positive behaviour for their students, while 45.8% said they would talk to students' parents. However, only 29.2% of teachers said that they would resort to asking the administration for help, and the same number of teachers stated that they would ignore misbehaviour in the classroom.

Asking students to leave the classroom was a method that Only 16.7% used. Six of the suggested solutions revolve around speaking with learners privately and resolving issues in isolation. One example from a teacher who stated: *“talk to them individually, making a pact between students and the teachers in which there is a code of conduct to be respected and what happens when it's not followed”*. Other methods teachers suggested were deducting marks, and having *“restorative practices”* with learners.

The question that came after was a multiple choice question that gave the chance of having one open-ended answer about whether teachers received any support from the administration when resolving conflict in their classrooms. 41.7% said yes, while 33.3% answered by sometimes. Only 12.5% stated that they do not receive any support from the administration. One teacher stated that *“sometimes administration makes things worse”*, and another one mentioned that they rarely ask the administration to interfere. Figure 2.5 below is a representation of the data described:

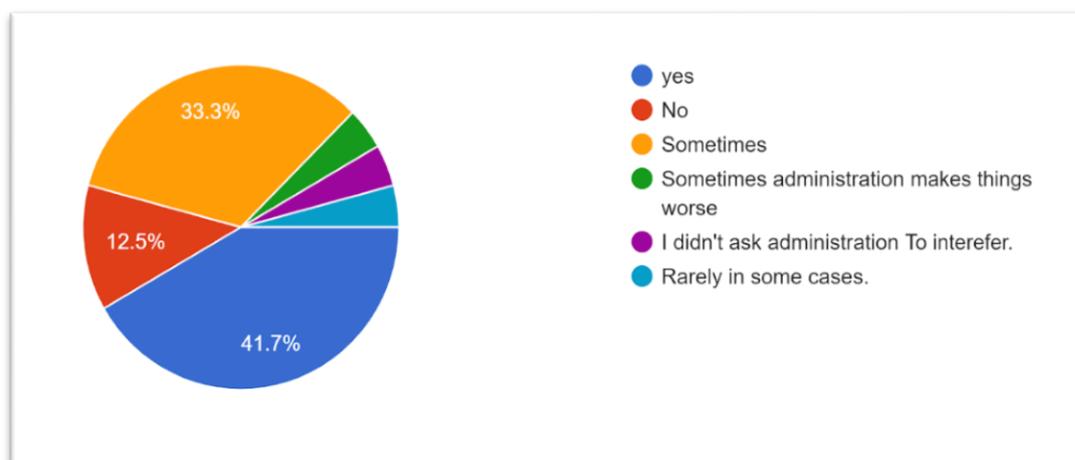


Figure 2.5 Administrative Support in Conflict Resolution within the Classroom

The following question was a multiple choice question with an open-ended response option about whether teachers received training on ways to support students to apply and

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acquire social and emotional skills. The majority of teachers 58.3% responded by “no, I have not received training”, while only 29.2% replied by “yes, in both pre-service and in-service training”. Four teachers provided their answers as follows:

- *Experience teaches you how to deal with such a situation.*
- *I have taken it upon myself to take classes outside of school.*
- *My supervisor gave us help and guidance.*
- *It was a slight part of a module I studied in the Master cycle.*

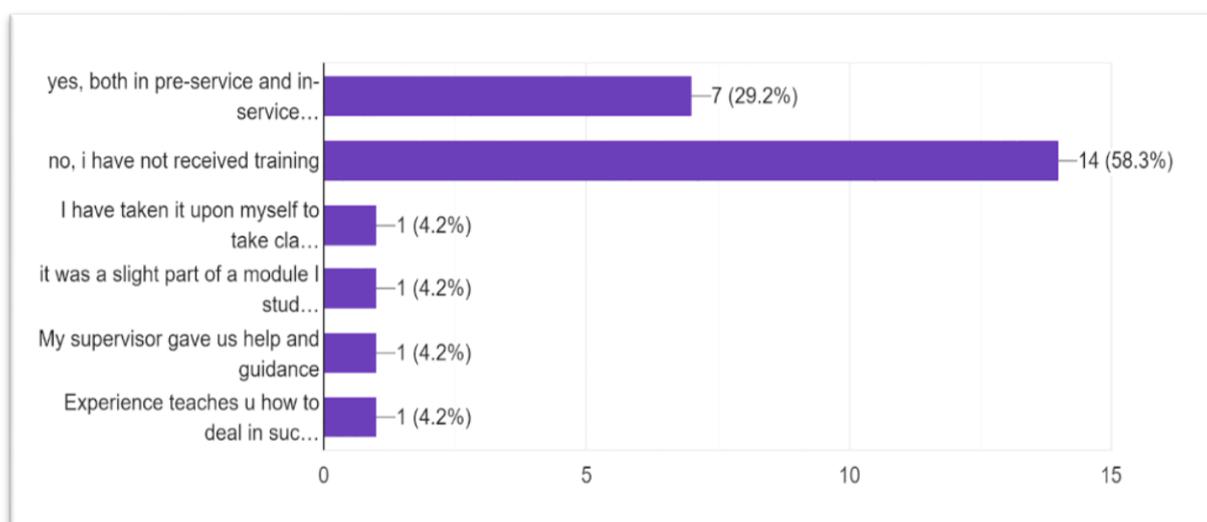


Figure 2.6 Teachers' Experience with Training to Support Social and Emotional Skill Development

When teachers were asked to specify the kind of training they had received in supporting students' SE skills, their answers varied from online workshops, community trainers, TEFL, psychology module at university, as well as ENS, seminars, and workshops with inspectors, teacher meetings and conferences, and some even said that real-life experiences were their forms of training.

Question number twelve was about whether teachers were interested in receiving training on the best practices that would support students' growth both socially and emotionally, and the results showed that 50% of them were very interested in learning more about this field. 29.2% of them said that they were interested, whereas 12.5%

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answered by fairly interested. Only a small percentage of surveyed educators said that would be slightly interested in receiving this kind of training.

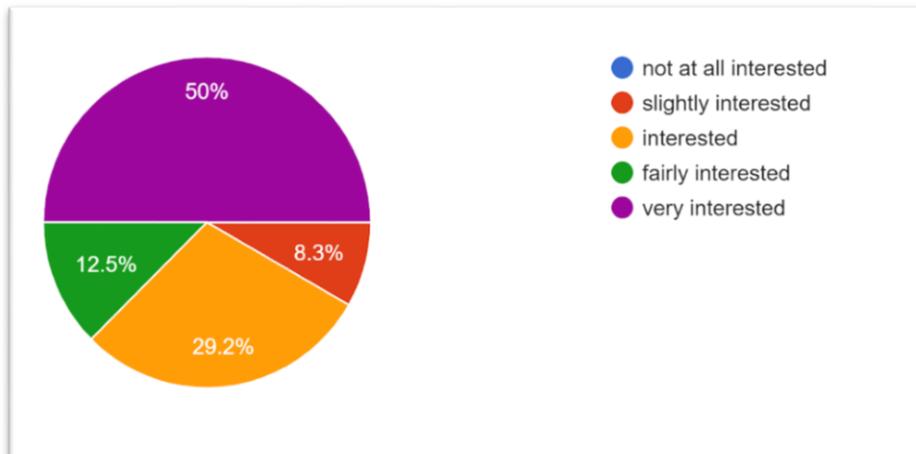
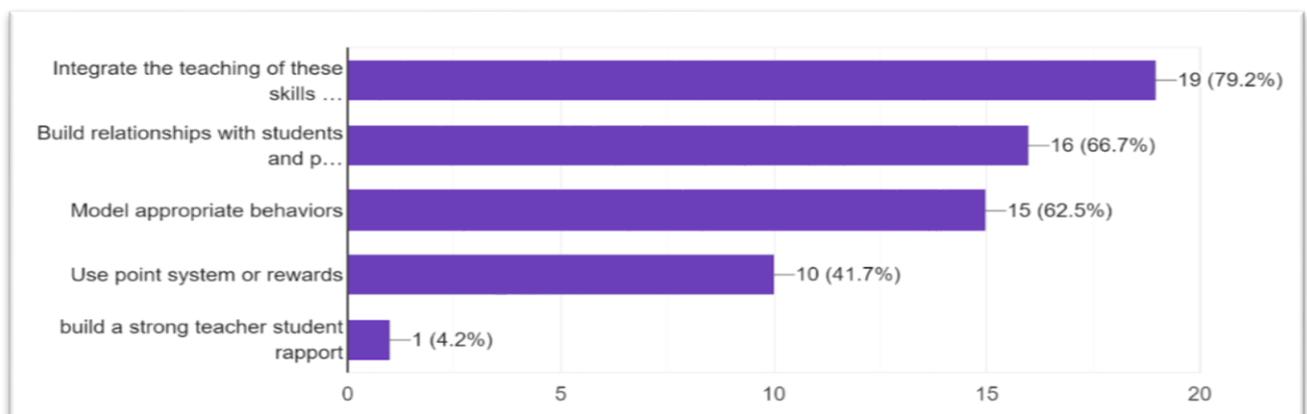


Figure 2. 7 Teachers' Interest in Receiving Training on the Best Practices That Support Students' Social and Emotional Growth

The thirteenth question required teachers to select the three most effective practices to improve students' social and emotional competence. 79.2% chose the integration of these skills within the curriculum, whereas 66.7% selected building relationships with students and parents. Moreover, 41.7% picked the strategy of using a point system or rewards and one teacher suggested building a strong teacher-student rapport. This data can be represented in Figure 2.9 below:



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Figure 2. 8 Teachers' Selection of Effective Practices for Enhancing SEL skills

The following question was an open one about the effects that adopting a program that develops learners' social and emotional skills would have on both the school and students. When it comes to the impact that this would have on schools, some teachers had responses like:

- *It would make learners behave in a good way which would affect their level and results, and that would give a good image of the school*
- *It works well as school regulations.*
- *It would create a better learning atmosphere at school, and be positive all the way around.*

Other responses addressed the effect this could have on the whole process of learning and teaching by stating that " *Taking into consideration these behaviours when designing the program facilitates the process of learning and teaching*". However, the majority of teachers placed more focus on the effect that this initiative would have on students. Some of Their responses were as follows:

- *Better understanding and better communication between students and teachers.*
- *Of course, many students need to be taken care of on different levels to help them improve and progress in their studies and lives.*
- *It would build a strong bond between students.*
- *It will improve students 'achievement and the atmosphere inside the classroom in general. Also, it will help to generate responsible citizens.*
- *I think it will greatly contribute to the wellbeing of both the students and the schools together with the improvement of their achievements and success.*

The final question in the survey asked teachers whether they would be interested in joining a committee to assist with the implementation of a school-wide program that would support the development of social and emotional skills. The majority of teachers 54.2% answered by yes, while the remaining 45.8% answered by maybe, but no participant chose to say no.

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2.4 Discussion of the Findings

2.4.1 Questionnaire Discussion

The survey questionnaire's results demonstrated that the vast majority of participants 70.8% taught in secondary schools, whereas only 29.2% were middle school English teachers. Their teaching experiences also varied since half the population were relatively new teachers with a 1 to 6 years experiences, and the other half's teaching experience ranged from 6 to 22 years. This distinction in educational institutions, as well as experience in the field of teaching, provides a broader insight into teachers' perspectives on learners from different age groups and learning environments. Most teachers who were surveyed in this study showcased an awareness of the importance of enhancing students' social and emotional skills to help them grow both as learners and as individuals.

To find out which SE skills teachers deemed crucial for students' to acquire and apply both inside and outside the classroom, they were given five skills to rate by importance. The responses to this question showed that setting and achieving positive goals was the skill that received the highest importance, followed by feeling and showing empathy, making responsible decisions. However, the skills of relationship management and self-awareness and self-management were not given much importance. This can imply that most educators encourage the skill of goal setting and achieving the most because it would make learners more self-dependent and responsible for their learning. This is aligned with what Zins, Bloomberg, Weissberg et al. (2007) stated about this aforementioned skill being preferred by most teachers due to its effect in improving students' learning habits, conditioning them to take ownership of their learning and becoming life-long learners. Moreover, feeling and showing empathy in the classroom would lead to peer-learning and the creation of a caring, supportive atmosphere within the classroom. , teachers failed to recognize the importance of self-awareness, self-management, and relationship skills which are key ingredients in insuring students' ability in reaching both their academic and personal goals. Collectively, these skills mould together to create learning attitudes that can help students self-motivated, believe in their abilities and success, organize themselves to reach their objectives, have positive communication with peers and teachers, and overcome any obstacles that may come their way (Zins, Bloomberg, Weissberg et al., 2007).

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This present study investigated teachers' predictions of the possible outcomes of implementing SEL in their classrooms by stating their degree of agreement. The results showed that most teachers agreed that it would have a direct impact on student behaviour and school climate, but there was disagreement in whether it would impact students' achievement. This leads us to believe that student achievement may still be measured only through test scores and mastery of the subject, whereas academic achievement is a multilayered concept that could be seen from several different angles. When discussing the effects that SEL can have on school success, Zins, Bloomberg, Weissberg et al (2007) confirm that success can come in many shapes through effective SEL practices. Examples include school performance (grades, subject mastery), school attitudes (accountability, attachment, agency), and school behaviour (study habits, attendance, involvement...etc). It is worth noting that most teachers realize that having students who have SE competence would not only affect them and their peers but rather the teaching-learning process as a whole. This is confirmed by Elias, Zins, Graczyk, & Weissberg's (2003) prior studies which revealed that socially and emotionally competent students would greatly affect learning environments, students' wellbeing, academic achievement, and build stronger teacher-students bond which would, in turn, enable teachers to manage their classrooms more effectively.

This survey's results showed that all the teachers who participated in filling out the questionnaire, be it a novice or more experienced in the field, have an awareness of how significant it is to take care of learners' social and emotional needs to enhance learning. Consequently, no response denied the importance of developing learners' SE skills, but only a variation in the degrees of importance of such an initiative. Yet, having faith in the effectiveness of SEL does not ensure that teachers would take measures to help their students learn values and skills that go beyond the contents of the subjects being taught.

An important objective of this study was to investigate the most common challenges that teachers face in their classrooms. The examination of previous studies showed that teachers view their challenges as social skills (Fox & Lentini, 2006), and Social and Emotional difficulties (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009). Similarly, the questionnaire findings revealed that the majority of teachers described their challenges through concepts relating to student behaviour and not linguistic proficiency or students' cognitive competencies. The themes

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that were extracted from their responses were: respect, motivation, bullying, social and personal factors, and discipline. This is aligned with what Charles (1992) said about educators encountering SE problems often in their classrooms such as bullying, defiance towards authorities, disrespect, and procrastination. This data shows that challenges relating to learners' cognitive abilities did not appear to be a great worry for teachers, who instead valued SEL as a means for students to learn positive behavioural competencies and social and emotional skills and eventually help them reach their academic goals. This could imply that most teachers place students' conduct at the highest regard, as they cannot ensure that effective learning is taking place without limiting disruptive behaviour and resolving students' social and emotional hindrances.

To find out the different methods that teachers use when dealing with issues of a behavioural nature, and whether they are similar to what an SEL approach would suggest. The results showed that the methods chosen by teachers to reduce those issues in the classroom suggest that most of them are aware of the impact of teaching learners how to behave by setting a good example with their teacher conduct. Also, by choosing to address disruptive students privately and rewarding positive behaviour regularly. Teachers realize that limiting disruption and negative behaviour is something which is done with the most care because learners are sensitive and easily affected by teachers' words and actions.

Surveyed teachers had different things to say about the administrations' role in dealing with behavioural situations. The results displayed that most teachers do call for assistance, whilst others believe that the administration's intervention would escalate situations instead of defusing them. However, when it comes to this issue, research highlights the importance of shared responsibility. That is, teachers, administrators, and students all have a role to play in effectively managing behaviour in school. For instance, in a study that conducted in more than 1,000 schools, teachers consistently identified lack of administrator support for management issues as among the most pressing problems in their schools (Marzano, 2006). Although teachers have the largest share of responsibility in managing their classrooms, administrators must also fulfil their roles in establishing the proper schoolwide foundation by clarifying rules and procedures for students' behaviours in the courtyard, hallways, and all around the school grounds, as well as monitoring their adherence to those regulations. This would not only ensure that students know what constitutes appropriate and

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inappropriate behaviour but also provide teachers with a strong sense of support and safety while performing their respective roles efficiently within their classrooms.

Considering the findings of this study, teachers have a genuine interest and a willingness to learn about SEL which confirms the research done by Collie, Shapka and Perry (2011) which revealed that teachers volunteer to enhance their own, as well as their students' SE competencies. This was more apparent when teachers were asked about whether they had received any training on how to handle such sensitive matters as students' behaviour and emotional wellbeing. The answers showed that the vast majority were not trained but rather strived to learn through various ways, such as: learning from experience, taking certain modules at university, or attended workshops both in teacher conferences or online platforms to become better at their craft and improve their SE skills. Consequently, the vast majority stated that they would agree to join a committee that would assist with the implementation of a school-wide SEL program further showing their commitment to this initiative.

To explore the most effective practices that teachers would adopt to enhance their students' SE competencies, a list of practices was given to them to pick from. The results highlighted strategies such as integration of SE skills within the existing curriculum, building trusting relationships with both learners and their parents, as well as designing a special reward system to motivate students to become more socially and emotionally aware. After imploring educators to imagine the possible effects that can result from implementing SEL in schools, they had many different things to say about the effectiveness of such a program in many areas. Examples include improving students' behaviour, wellbeing, and academic success; facilitating teaching-learning process, allow better communication between teachers, learners, parents; create a positive learning atmosphere; generating responsible citizens; and even improving school image.

2.5 Recommendation

2.5.1 Teachers' Social and Emotional Competence

One reason for conducting this research was to identify teachers' perspectives on the incorporation of Social and Emotional Learning in classrooms. However, teaching can be a very demanding job on so many levels. It can be very stressful for teachers to perform at the

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same pace every day. That stress can lead to occupational burnout –characterized by depression, emotional exhaustion, and a low sense of achievement in one’s work. This is to say, that teachers who are not socially and emotionally competent themselves, would find it very difficult to provide a healthy and safe environment for learners, and successfully infuse Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in classrooms. Moreover, teachers’ wellbeing greatly influences their relationship with learners, and their ability to efficiently manage their classrooms because their stress can either be transmitted to learners and raise their anxiety levels or be increased by them being disruptive and unmotivated. It is recommended that teachers are trained to deal with the stress that comes with the job by acquiring and applying social and emotional skills so that they can, in turn, teach learners those same skills by setting a good example in front of.

2.5.2 Cooperative Learning

One of the ways of promoting SE skills and learning is altering the instructional process. An example by Johnson and Johnson (1990) entails dividing the class into small groups so that they work together for the aim of maximizing their own and each others’ learning. Within such a learning environment students not only experience the excitement of learning the academic material from one another, but they also develop a set of skills and attitudes that help them both in their academic and personal lives, such as:

- ❖ Better attitudes toward school and teachers generally.
- ❖ By working together, students develop more effective communication and interpersonal skills like active listening, non-violent conflict resolution...etc.
- ❖ This kind of learning setting increases responsibility in individual students because they would be aware that they must take part in certain portions of the learning activities given to them.
- ❖ Working with others allows students to learn more about themselves. They would find out if they are leaders, good listeners, able to share ideas and respect other opinions. These interactions lead to increased self-awareness, improved self-concept, and higher confidence in cognitive abilities.

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General Conclusion

Education has long been a means to fulfil pragmatic purposes. This is to say, students were given the knowledge they require to better understand the world, and how to function in it in a way that adds to the country's economy. However, after the early 20th century, psychologists and scholars like John Dewey revolutionized the foundations of education by arguing that it should serve an intrinsic aim of helping children develop fully into good citizens. The contemporary world recognizes that education no longer serves purely economic purposes, but it extends to support the development of a child's personhood. 21st-century learners face issues like cyberbullying, low self-esteem, and anxiety, and many other serious challenges that contain both social and emotional components. These changes in students' lives call for the enhancement of skills beyond cognitive ones. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is an approach that aims to teach students to be self-aware, socially cognizant, capable of making responsible decisions, as well as having the skills of self-management and relationship management that enable them to set and achieve personal and academic goals.

This present research aimed mainly to study teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness and implementation of SEL within their classrooms to promote their students social, emotional, and academic growth. The researcher attempted to assess the validity of the main hypothesis which states that the development of certain social and emotional skills can result in substantial personal and academic success for learners of all types, as it can help educators facilitate and enhance learning both inside the classroom and outside of it. The conclusions of this study are based upon the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data gathered through an online survey questionnaire which had different objectives such as, Identifying which of the five core skills were deemed relevant and important for students to acquire and apply in school; investigating the daily challenges that teachers come across with their students and the methods they use to overcome them; investigating whether they were trained to handle the difficulties of students' social and emotional struggles and if they would be willing to receive training of this kind if they had the opportunity; and to investigate the administrations' role in resolving behavioural issues with students.

It was established that the vast majority of challenges teachers face having a direct relation to their learners' behaviour, as opposed to their cognitive abilities. Also, the solutions that

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teachers chose and suggested reflected their awareness of setting a good example in front of their learners, as well as resolving issues discretely to avoid inflicting emotional damage to their disruptive learners and giving them an active role in the classroom, as opposed to ignoring and alienating them. Furthermore, the research findings revealed that the vast majority of teachers who participated in this study possess a high degree of awareness about the importance of implementing SEL in school through practices such as integration of SE activities within the curriculum, forming strong bonds with students and being in contact with their parents. The skills that were given the most importance were self-management and social-awareness, followed by responsible decision-making. Despite the importance of understanding and managing one's emotions, as well as managing healthy relationships with others

The results also show that there is a disconnect between teachers and administrators when it comes to managing students' disobedience to school regulations. This is one of the many reasons that cause teacher burnout and occupational depression since they feel as though they hold full responsibility in managing students' behaviour, thus taking most the blame in case of difficult situations. Teachers, students, administrators, and parents all have a role to play in the learning environment. Furthermore, most teachers stated that they had not received the proper training to deal with sensitive matters such as learners' social and emotional wellbeing, but it is worth noting that some were self-taught through online workshops, teacher conferences, and almost all of them learned through trial and error in their teaching careers. This only solidified the argument that teachers have a willingness to learn and improve for the sake of their students' growth both as learners and as individuals.

Teachers anticipated a variety of possible outcomes that can result from helping students acquire and apply the necessary SE skills that would help them prosper in their personal and academic lives, teachers anticipated a variety of outcomes. First, having students with SE competence would make classroom management much easier for teachers resulting in a significant improvement in teacher-student communication, a more caring and safe learning atmosphere. Besides, when teachers predicted that taking care of learners' emotional wellbeing and creating a sense of unity among them would eventually lead to an increase in motivation, involvement, and eventually academic achievement.

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Limitations

During the long journey of conducting research, various obstacles and struggles stood in the way of motivation and complete credibility of the presented project.

- ❖ The generalization of the results is limited by the relatively small population that participated in the research. Moreover, learners who were observed studied in a unique learning environment and they may reflect attitudes that may not generalize to other groups of learners.
- ❖ Due to schools closing because of the global pandemic COVID-19, the researcher could not test out SEL activities with students who were observed for a month. The classroom observation alone did not contain the necessary data from the third-semester results that were going to be compared to those of the second semester to verify whether there were any changes in learners' tests and exam scores. This is why the classroom observation instrument was not included in the current research design.
- ❖ Methodological choices were made under a lot of stress regarding time and access to schools and participants.

Advocating the development of learners' social and emotional skill set is imperative to sustain a caring and healthy learning atmosphere where effective learning can smoothly take place. Taking into account all the different social, emotional, academic layers that exist within the process of learning would help increase not only students' chances at personal success but also help them reach their academic and professional goals in the future. In closing, due to global circumstances which hindered the possibility of conducting more experimental research, we implore future researchers to provide more in-depth evidence about how SEL can be integrated into the existing curriculum, and whether it can visibly contribute in enhancing students' academic performance.

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Appendix

Teachers' Questionnaire

Various studies have demonstrated the tremendous benefits of teaching learners social and emotional skills to enhance learning. With this in mind, we would like you to fill in this questionnaire so that we can have a better understanding of your knowledge of the skills that can help your students become better learners. Please before answering, be sure to provide your own beliefs and experiences so that this research is credible and realistic. Individual responses will be kept confidential and will be treated with great care. Thank you for your interest in providing your feedback on this issue.

1. Teachers' Gender
 - Female
 - Male
2. Educational Institution
 - Middle school
 - Secondary school
3. Years of Teaching Experience

.....
4. as an educator, how important do you think it is for learners to acquire and apply the following skills at school? (using the scale: 1 to 5, not important to very important, please write your answer for each)

	Not important	Slightly important	important	Fairly important	Very important
Understanding and managing emotions					
Setting and achieving positive goals					

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Making responsible decisions					
Establishing and maintaining relationships					
Feel and show empathy for others					

5. To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements?

"Supporting students in acquiring and applying social and emotional skills is an effective way to..."

	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
Reduce behavioural issues					
Improve student achievement					
Improve school climate					
Improve student behaviour					

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6. how important do you believe it is for schools to promote the development of these social and emotional skills as a part of educating students to become better individuals?
 - not important
 - slightly important
 - important
 - fairly important
 - very important

7. how often do you personally encounter students with behavioural issues?
 - Never
 - Rarely
 - Occasionally
 - Often
 - always

8. What are the most common issues that you face in the classroom?
.....
.....

9. what are some of the methods you use to handle behaviour issues with your students?
 - Warn students from the consequences of misbehaviour
 - Ask the administration for help
 - Ignore misbehaviour in the classroom
 - Model positive behaviour for your students
 - Ask them to leave the classroom
 - Talk to students' parents
 - Praise and reward positive behaviour
 - Other.....

10. do you receive any support from the administration in resolving conflict in your classroom?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Sometimes
 - Other.....

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11. Have you received training on how to support students to acquire and apply social and emotional skills?

- yes, both in pre-service and in-service training.
- no, I have not received training.
- Other

12. What kind of training? (a course in university, workshop, online course...etc.)

.....
.....

13. How interested are you in receiving training on the best practices that support students in acquiring and applying social and emotional skills?

- not at all interested
- slightly interested
- interested
- fairly interested
- very interested

14. please select the three most effective practices, programs, or strategies you think are necessary to improve students' social and emotional skills

- Integrate the teaching of these skills into the curriculum
- Build relationships with students and parents
- Model appropriate behaviours
- Use point system or rewards
- Other

15. how do you think adopting a program that enhances social and emotional skills would affect your students and your school?

.....
.....
.....

16. would you be interested in joining a committee to assist with implementing a school-wide program that supports the development of those social and emotional skills?

- Yes
- no
- maybe