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Enhancing Social-Emotional Skills in Early Childhood Education - A Comparative Analysis

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Original Article

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Keywords

Social-Emotional Development, Early Childhood Education, solving problems, Empathy, Peer interaction skills, seeking attention, avoiding fighting or conflict

Abstract

This research aimed to examine the social-emotional development among 4 to 8-year-old children in Punjab, Pakistan, and the interaction between teachers and parents in their mental upbringing, especially in two districts of Punjab. This study used the mixed method research design. Sixty public and private schools from Jhang and Multan were chosen using the convenience sampling technique. The data was collected using the questionnaires and interviews. Prior to data collection, the study instrument's validity and usability were verified. Each of the schools in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program was observed two times to assess their social-emotional development. Qualitative data were analyzed with statistical tools, and qualitative data were analyzed according to a thematic scheme. The research determined that there is a need to enhance the pupils' social-emotional development. The private school children exhibited a greater proficiency in social and emotional development skills (variables) such as solving problems, empathy, peer interaction skills, seeking attention, and avoiding fighting or conflict. The teachers and parents were also facing challenges stemming from the disparities in pupils' backgrounds and cultures, insufficient time dedicated to fostering these developmental skills within the school, and variations in children's personalities. It is advisable to engage parents, in addition to the school, in the cultivation of their children's social-emotional development at this early stage of schooling.

Introduction

The development of social-emotional competence (SEC) in young children is a complex and dynamic process that entails the integration of their actions, feelings, and thoughts. This process takes place both internally, inside the child, and via their relationships with others. The core elements of SEC include the inhibition of impulsive behavioral responses, the acknowledgment and regulation of emotions, the capacity to comprehend others' perspectives effectively, the correct identification of problems, and the development of constructive problem-solving solutions and goals. The socio-emotional competence (SEC) of children is essential for comprehending and benefiting from social interactions with both peers and adults, whether in school environments or at home. The progress report on the sustainable development objectives for 2030 highlighted the importance of social-emotional competencies (SEC). The research notably highlighted Self-regulation and social skills as vital components of social and emotional competence (SEC) that are globally applicable to today's young people and are necessary for attaining professional success in many areas (Wolf et al., 2021).

The importance of SEC is further strengthened by an increasing amount of descriptive and experimental research that connects SEC with improved current and future adjustment in children and adolescents (Qayyum et al., 2024). An extensive evaluation of 82 school-based programs, which specifically target the instruction of social and emotional skills and are relevant to all children, demonstrated compelling evidence that these programs significantly improve socio-emotional competencies, attitudes, and overall welfare. The study particularly included programs that had a post-intervention term of no less than 6 months (Taylor et al., 2017). A meta-analysis was conducted on young children (ages three to five) who were living in poverty. The study included 29 research studies, which consisted of randomized controlled trials and quasi-experimental trials focusing on treatments related to social-emotional development. The results indicated that well-executed social-emotional learning interventions had a substantial positive impact on children's social-emotional competence, in contrast to those who attended preschool without specific social-emotional learning instruction (Taylor et al., 2017).

While these meta-analyses offer proof of the immediate benefits of social-emotional learning (SED) interventions and highlight the importance of SED, a handful of long-term studies that tracked early SED interventions in preschool-aged children show the potential for these interventions to have enduring effects. An example of this is the Head Start REDI program, which combined a social-emotional learning (SED) curriculum with literacy teaching for a group of 356 preschool participants. The REDI program had an immediate and significant impact on vocabulary, reading skills, emotional comprehension, and improved social cognition. Following five years following the intervention, assessments indicated that there were long-lasting benefits in academic outcomes that might be attributable to the intervention. Children with originally inferior executive functioning abilities at the beginning of the REDI experiment benefited significantly from the intervention in several domains (Salim et al., 2020).

Given the strong scientific evidence supporting social and emotional learning (SED) in many parts of the globe, international efforts are being made to foster the development of children's social and emotional competence (SEC). The current endeavors are increasingly concentrated on assisting with social and emotional learning (SED) not only in educational institutions but also in local communities. These efforts may be seen in specific programs or initiatives, such as the World Health Organization's Life Skills framework or UNICEF's Child-Friendly Schools. Alternatively, they may be integrated into a country's educational policy and practice. There is diversity in the

motivation and execution of social and emotional learning (SEL) in schools, both within and across nations. This may be approached from several perspectives, such as incorporating social-emotional learning (SEL) into values or civic education or using it as an empirically validated approach to improve academic performance and assist a seamless transition into adulthood (Ping et al., 2018).

The development of children's social-emotional skills occurs within a complex and ever-changing context influenced by history, society, and culture. Cultural norms and values have a significant role in shaping social, emotional, and behavioral development, which in turn affects the way certain social behaviors, such as emotional expression and social conduct, are shown and developed. When examining the range of socio-emotional competence (SEC) in children, we based our analysis on Bornstein's (2017) specificity principle. This concept allows us to evaluate universal principles of human development by analyzing the unique and shared interactions between people and their surroundings that influence development in many geographical areas, contexts, and time frames (Brant & Studebaker, 2021).

In order to fully benefit from well-implemented social and emotional learning (SEL) treatments worldwide, it is essential to understand the several ways in which children's social and emotional skills (SEC) are expressed and function. This is particularly crucial in nations with a scarcity of research literature on this topic. Furthermore, the essence of SEL interventions is the examination of the modifications that occur as a result of the intervention. The improvements are impacted by SEC measures that are grounded on robust theoretical principles, have undergone extensive testing to ensure their reliability and validity, are pragmatic, and can be used across many cultures (Chen et al., 2022).

Essentially, this involves examining the psychometric properties of significant instruments with a diverse group of young individuals. This also requires the availability of unrestricted access to high-quality instruments that have reliable psychometric properties, are available in several languages, and are culturally appropriate while preserving great ecological validity. The SEL industry needs to adequately acknowledge its potential to have a global impact on public health and education. A significant deficiency at now is the absence of readily accessible and top-notch measures of children's social-emotional competence (SEC). For a significant period, the evaluation of various skills has mostly been conducted from a research standpoint in affluent countries, lacking the chance to make comparisons with other nations (Clayback & Hemmeter, 2020).

1.2 Statement of the problem

The social-emotional development of children throughout their early years is crucial for their general welfare and future achievements in personal and academic pursuits. More information is still needed about the many factors that impact the social-emotional development of children aged 4 to 8, especially in culturally varied environments like Punjab, Pakistan. This project aims to investigate the crucial need for a comprehensive examination of how family and cultural practices, early childhood education settings, and wider community and societal issues impact the social-emotional development of young children in this area.

The investigation is motivated by urgent inquiries concerning the precise influence of parenting styles, cultural norms, the role of educational settings, and the effects of socioeconomic and living conditions on children's capacity to manage their emotions, form healthy social connections, and cultivate empathy. The need for more extensive data and sophisticated comprehension in this field poses a substantial obstacle for educators, policymakers, and

practitioners who want to facilitate the all-encompassing growth of children in Punjab. The research seeks to provide practical insights and suggestions for specific interventions that promote supportive settings for the social-emotional development of children in this crucial age group by clarifying these dynamics.

1.3 Research objectives

Following were the research objectives for the research study;

1. To Investigate the Influence of Familial and Cultural Practices on the Social-Emotional Development of Children Aged 4 to 8 in Public and Private Schools of Punjab.
2. To Assess the Role of Early Childhood Education Environments in Supporting Social-Emotional Development among Children Aged 4 to 8 in Public and Private Schools of Punjab.
3. To identify Community and Societal Factors That Influence Social-Emotional Development in Early Childhood Public and Private Schools of Punjab.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the levels of influence of familial and cultural practices on the social-emotional development of children aged 4 to 8 in Public and Private Schools in Punjab?
2. What is the role of Early Childhood Education environments in supporting social-emotional development among children aged 4 to 8 in Public and Private Schools in Punjab?
3. What are the community and societal factors that influence social-emotional development in early childhood Public and Private schools in Punjab?

1.5 Significance of the study

This research is unique as it focuses on the social-emotional development of 4 to 8-year-old children in Punjab, Pakistan, and explores the interaction between teachers and parents in their mental upbringing. The study uses a mixed-method research design, which allows for both quantitative and qualitative data to be collected and analyzed, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. Additionally, the study observes both public and private schools, which provides insights into potential differences in social-emotional development outcomes based on the type of school attended. Finally, the study

1. It emphasizes the need to engage parents in cultivating their children's social-emotional development, highlighting the importance of a holistic approach to early childhood education. This research also seeks to elucidate the influence of culture and family practices in Punjab, Pakistan, on the social and emotional development of children.
2. It will provide valuable information that might enhance educational and parental strategies to better align with the cultural context, therefore addressing the specific requirements of the community.
3. The project will investigate the role of early childhood education settings in fostering emotional intelligence and social skills.
4. It aims to provide significant insights for educators to improve curriculum and implement effective interventions for young learners. Furthermore, via comprehending the wider community and social factors, the research will facilitate the development of focused treatments customized for children from diverse backgrounds in Punjab.
5. The results are anticipated to impact policy, providing concrete suggestions for enhancing child welfare and education systems and assuring efficient resource allocation to promote the overall well-being of children. Moreover, the objective of this study is to address an existing lack of

understanding, paving the way for future investigations that may delve into the lasting effects of early social and emotional development on subsequent academic and mental health results.

1.6 Delimitations of research

1. The present research study was delimited to only two districts of Punjab out of 36 districts.
2. The research was delimited to only 4 to 8 years children (ECE Education level).
3. The study was also delimited to only specific variables of social-emotional development, such as solving problems, Empathy, Peer interaction skills, seeking attention, avoiding fighting or conflict

2 Literature Review

2.1 Social-Emotional Developments

From the moment of birth, children start the process of acquiring social-emotional abilities. Studies suggest that toddlers possess an innate predisposition to establish social connections with others in their surroundings. The interactions contribute to the maturation of the infant's brain. The moment a child's emotional and physical needs are satisfied, neural connections are established in the brain, facilitating learning across all areas of development. Emotional cues such as smiling, sobbing, or displaying interest and attentiveness have a significant impact on the actions of others. Likewise, the emotional responses of others have an impact on the social behaviors of youngsters. As children grow and progress, their social-emotional abilities shift from being primarily concerned with having their personal needs fulfilled by their caregivers to actively engaging in routines and deriving pleasure from interactions with friends and caregivers (Kallitsoglou, 2020).

The early childhood years are a crucial period for the development of favorable emotions towards oneself, others, and the broader environment. When children get support, guidance, and acceptance from adults and peers, they are more likely to have good emotional and psychological development. In contrast, children who experience neglect, rejection, or abuse are more susceptible to facing social and mental health difficulties (Braun et al., 2021).

2.2 Role of Family in Social-Emotional Development

Children acquire social-emotional abilities via their interactions with their main caregivers, families, and cultural surroundings. Given the wide variety of our society, it is reasonable to assume that this variation is also reflected in the many approaches that families from different cultures use to educate children on emotional management, socialization, and interpersonal interaction. For instance, many cultural norms dictate that youngsters should refrain from making direct eye contact when engaging in communication with others. In some cultures, maintaining eye contact is a crucial element of social engagement. Culture has an impact on parenting techniques as well as how people manage their emotions, such as managing stress and dealing with difficult situations (Engler et al., 2023).

Family priorities impact one's ability to navigate social and emotional situations effectively. For instance, some families may prioritize open discussion and immediate expression of feelings, while others may prioritize the opposite. As a staff member working with school-age children, I know it is important to demonstrate sensitivity and respect for the unique variations in social-emotional development among individuals. This applies to your interactions with both the children in your care and their families (Fagan & Wildfeuer, 2022).

2.3 Development of Positive Members of Society

In addition to the potential financial savings that may be achieved by introducing social-emotional learning programs in schools, individuals may also develop into more productive members of society.

The research conducted by Jones et al. (2015) aimed to investigate the potential correlation between the social-emotional abilities shown by kindergarten pupils and their subsequent achievements throughout adolescence and adulthood. The researchers focused on studies conducted in poor socioeconomic communities. They discovered a significant correlation between strong social-emotional abilities and favorable long-term results, including employment, adherence to laws, higher educational attainment, and improved mental well-being. The authors emphasized the significance of social-emotional learning for all children. They also proposed conducting early screenings to identify children who are most vulnerable and have the least amount of crucial social-emotional skills. These children should be taught the necessary skills for success at an earlier stage rather than later.

A separate investigation conducted by Luo et al. (2022) focused on the potential influence of social-emotional learning programs at educational institutions on subsequent drug abuse. The authors highlighted the significant role of drug misuse in causing many life issues and urged the need to discover strategies to decrease substance use and abuse. The researchers used random assignment to divide the kids into control and treatment groups, while the treatment group engaged in a social-emotional learning program implemented inside the school system.

2.4 Student Behavior

Studies conducted by Boyd et al. (2022) have shown that social-emotional skills instruction has favorable effects on student behavior. However, Social-emotional learning is often limited to kids with severe behavioral issues and is not often available to the broader student population in regular classrooms. Researchers emphasize the importance of implementing social-emotional learning programs in various settings, including schools, to benefit a wide range of populations.

Duncan et al. (2017) investigated the Positive Action program, which was introduced in regular education classrooms, and examined its potential influence on student misbehavior. A total of 1,130 kids in third through eighth grades from 14 low-income schools were observed. These pupils were randomly divided into control and treatment groups. At the beginning of the training, there was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of misbehavior or social-emotional skill levels. The authors used self-report measures to assess behavior outcomes such as hostility, bullying, delinquency, and disruption. In addition, they evaluated the social-emotional learning outcomes of both groups, including characteristics such as self-discipline and regard for others. The researchers discovered that the students who took part in the Positive Action social-emotional program had notably reduced rates of misbehavior and notably improved scores on assessments of social-emotional abilities (Nocita et al., 2020).

They used instructor rating methods to evaluate behavior issues and hostility. They used self-report methods to assess rage levels. Regarding aggression outcomes, the authors discovered that students in the TFGA group with greater initial levels of hostility had substantial reductions in their aggression compared to those with higher initial levels of aggression in the control group. The same was true for kids in the TFGA group, who had greater initial levels of behavioral difficulties in comparison to their control counterparts. Therefore, students who scored higher on pretest

assessments of misbehavior exhibited considerably reduced rates at the posttest in comparison to those with high pretest scores in the control group.

Regarding the self-reported anger measure, the treatment students who initially had the greatest levels of anger had substantial reductions in anger compared to their peers in the control group. The authors acknowledged that using self-reported measures for anger may have influenced the results. They suggested that including instructor evaluations provided an alternative perspective or more validation for the findings (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013).

Tur-Porcar et al. (2021) investigated the influence of social-emotional learning in six public schools located in Spain. The research had a sample of 555 kids, aged between seven and 12 years, who were assigned randomly to either experimental or control groups. The experimental group was provided with guidance on emotional awareness and self-control. The authors did not ensure that the groups were equivalent in terms of pretest aggressiveness levels. They observed that the experimental group had considerably greater levels of aggression and instability in emotions than the control group (Purcell & Schmitt, 2023). However, it was shown that the experimental group, who received social-emotional teaching, exhibited a noteworthy reduction in both verbal and physical aggressiveness, as well as a substantial drop in emotional instability, in comparison to the control group. Curiously, the authors observed a rise in hostility and emotional instability among the control group. The authors conveyed that their study is extremely promising in providing support for the adoption of social-emotional programs. They observed that instructors often encounter significant challenges in successfully managing pupils who exhibit highly aggressive behaviors and emotional instability. The authors characterized emotional instability and violence as highly correlated characteristics (Boyd et al., 2020).

2.5 Intervention Program

The research included youngsters ranging from preparatory class, which was clarified to be analogous to kindergarten, up to third grade. They discovered a notable disparity in disciplinary issues, namely those that would usually need an office referral, with a 41% reduction seen from the first assessment to the final assessment. School officials and instructors who were responsible for administering the social-emotional learning curriculum attributed the program to the notable reduction in kids' behavioral problems. One significant limitation of the research, however, was the absence of a control group since the investigators primarily relied on the pretest and posttest assessments of students who received the intervention (Rakap et al., 2018).

2.6 Improvement of Social Skills

In order to effectively enhance a child's social skills and address any deficiencies, it is crucial to teach social skills in social-emotional learning with adequate intensity, directness, and reliance on evidence-based practices. In their research, Davies et al. (2021) saw a substantial improvement in social skills among preparatory to third-grade pupils who participated in the social-emotional learning program.

The researchers used teacher-based observation reports and scores on the SSIS to identify the most significant effects, which were shown to be more pronounced in the lower grades. The study uncovered noteworthy results for all pupils, even those with specific requirements, such as speech and language impairments. The researchers observed that the impact sizes were notably greater for the kids with special needs in their study (Phillips et al., 2020).

This test also identified notable improvements in the subscales of Socializing, Communication, as well as Collaborating, /Conflict clarity, and the Perception of self and others.

The authors referenced this research as demonstrating encouraging results about the efficacy of socio-emotional learning programs in improving social skills. However, they acknowledged that the study had a limited sample size and was conducted only in Northeast Nebraska, a particular region of the United States. In addition, a control group was not used. Additionally, they proposed that future investigations should include conducting interviews with parents to see the extent to which these results may be applied to a wider population. They emphasized the significance of using these abilities not just inside the school environment but also in other contexts (Park et al., 2022).

Yang and Wang (2019) investigated the influence of socio-emotional learning programs on the development of social skills in students from fourth to twelfth grade, including those in rural education systems. They employed schools that adopted a social-emotional curriculum and controlled schools that did not. Either the school or instructors executed the program. Parents were instructed to complete a questionnaire that evaluated their child's strengths and weaknesses. The questionnaire was filled out before and after the intervention. Researchers found that kids who received social-emotional learning education at their schools showed a greater improvement in pro-social behaviours, as reported by their parents, compared to students in the control group who did not have access to this curriculum. In addition, they found that parents of kids in schools where social-emotional learning was implemented reported a higher frequency of seeing pro-social behaviours compared to parents of students in the control schools. While the results provide some beneficial insights into these programs, the authors emphasized that their sample size was limited due to the need for parents to voluntarily complete the questionnaire, resulting in the exclusion of several pupils. In addition, the data from parents who did not return questionnaires may have differed dramatically from those who consistently followed through (Boyd-Swan & Herbst, 2020).

2.7 Student Mental Health

Social-emotional learning programs have the potential to alleviate students' mental health challenges and enhance their overall functioning in school, family, and community environments. Moreover, social-emotional programs have the potential to operate as a preventive measure in the field of mental health by helping to avoid the development or exacerbation of mental health issues. Social-emotional learning may enhance mental well-being by instructing students in the practice of emotional self-regulation, enabling them to effectively regulate their emotions and discover constructive ways to express those (Arace et al., 2021).

There is an increasing prevalence of social-emotional programs being introduced in schools worldwide aimed at addressing mental health issues and enhancing the overall welfare of kids. Korinek (2021) argued that instructors often come across the mental health requirements of pupils, namely those who have internalizing issues such as anxiety and despair. Instructing pupils in skills that foster healthier outcomes, namely social-emotional abilities, would enable educators to address the needs of these students better. She observed that until the school offers therapy, many kids would not get treatment for these issues due to parents' financial constraints, time limitations, and other factors. However, the demand for these services is greater than the number of students who will actually receive them. She clarified that these services are often designated for pupils in special education. According to her explanation, kids who meet the criteria for special education may access resources, such as confidence and other forms of assistance, that are often not accessible to students in the regular school environment. Therefore, implementing programs like social-emotional learning throughout the whole school may effectively target a significant number of children who would otherwise be overlooked (Bassok et al., 2019).

In their study, Deli et al. (2021) investigated the impact of social-emotional learning instruction alone, as well as in combination with Teacher Autonomy Support (TAS), which is a component of self-determination theory. The theory examines the concept of motivation. The authors evaluated the influence of this education, as well as the instruction combined with TAS, on students' academic distress and intentions to withdraw from their studies. They used the Strong Kids program, clarifying that it is grounded on empirical research and does not need significant financial investment. The research was done in a Chinese city characterized by very high poverty rates, and it included a sample of 209 pupils in the eighth grade. Four courses were randomly allocated to the treatment group, while three classes were randomly assigned to the control group, which followed the business-as-usual approach (Blewitt et al., 2020).

3. Research Methodology

This study utilized a mixed-methodologies research technique, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain a full comprehension of the social-emotional development among children aged 4 to 8 years in Punjab, Pakistan. The quantitative research was utilized with a standardized questionnaire to quantify various elements of social-emotional development. In contrast, qualitative research was used to conduct interviews and observations to investigate the impact of familial, educational, and societal influences on them.

3.1. Population

The study focuses on children between the ages of 4 and 8 who live in Punjab, Pakistan. This demographic is chosen to gain insights into the initial phases of social-emotional development within a particular cultural and geographical setting. The overall population of the research study consisted of both public and private schools in District Jhang and District Multan.

3.2 Sample and Sampling Techniques

For this mixed method study, the research selected the Sample from the overall population with the help of convenience sampling technique, around 302 children ages 4 and 8, as well as their 50 parents and 40 teachers, in order to encompass a wide range of socioeconomic, cultural, and educational backgrounds from districts mentioned above of Punjab.

Table No1: selected Sample of the study

Sr.	Research Respondents	Selected Sample
1.	Children	250
2.	ECE Teachers	40
3.	Parents (of children ages of 4 and 8)	40

3.3 Data Collection

For data collection, questionnaires were distributed among the teachers, and in order to qualitative approach, interviews were conducted with selected parents; meanwhile, classroom observation were recorded for analyzing the present phenomenon of the early childhood education classrooms in two selected districts personally.

3.3.1 Data analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

In order to analyze the connections between social-emotional development and other elements that have an impact on it (such as familial practices and educational environments), the researcher used inferential statistical methods like regression analysis, ANOVA, or correlation analysis. This will aid in identifying important factors that can predict social-emotional outcomes. To compare data across different strata, such as urban vs. rural areas or different socioeconomic statuses, t-tests or ANOVA were employed.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data obtained from interviews and observations were subjected to thematic analysis to discover recurring themes and patterns pertaining to the impact of family, educational, and societal factors on social-emotional development. This task required the implementation of data coding and the organization of codes into themes and sub-themes. Narrative analysis was employed to comprehend the context and intricacies of social-emotional development impacts by examining detailed narratives and stories provided by parents and teachers.

4.1 Data Analysis

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Social-Emotional Development Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Solving problems	33.50	0.8
Empathy	32.20	0.9
Peer Interaction Skills	31.70	0.7
Seeking attention	32.40	0.85
Avoiding fight or conflict	32.40	0.85

Table 2 presents a summary of the descriptive statistics for many factors related to social-emotional development. The average scores for these categories vary from 32.20 to 31.70, suggesting a modest degree of social-emotional development overall. The standard deviations, which quantify the extent of variance or dispersion from the mean, span from 0.7 to 0.9. This implies that while there is an overall inclination towards modest levels of growth in these regions, there is considerable diversity in the capabilities and inclinations of the children. Moreover, the average degree of development for peer interaction skills is 31.70, which indicates a good set of talents in this area among the respondents.

Additionally, there is a relatively low variance, suggesting consistency in the development of these skills. In contrast, empathy exhibits more diversity, as shown by a standard deviation of 0.9, suggesting varying degrees of empathic comprehension within the Sample. The comparable mean scores and standard deviations for seeking attention and avoiding fights or disputes indicate an equitable disposition across kids towards these activities, with a modest inclination to either participate in or avoid such acts and a similar level of variability in these inclinations. The table clearly showcases the intricacies of social-emotional development, demonstrating both the shared aspects and variations in these fundamental abilities among respondents from the teachers.

Table No 3: Mean value and S.D. value-wise result

Variable	Private School Mean	Public School Mean
Solving Problems	31.70	3.1
Empathy	30.25	2.9
Peer Interaction Skills	33.50	30.91
Seeking Attention	30.91	22.89
Avoiding Fight or Conflict	22.89	31.70

The table compares the average scores for characteristics related to social-emotional development among students from private and public schools. Significantly, scores across several factors differ, emphasizing clear patterns in the development of social-emotional abilities between the two kinds of educational environments.

Private school students had a better mean score (31.70) in problem-solving compared to public school students (3.1), indicating that private school students may have more chances or resources that improve their problem-solving abilities. However, there is a minor difference in terms of empathy, as private schools have an average score of 30.25, while public schools have a slightly lower average of 2.9. This suggests that empathy develops fairly evenly in both kinds of institutions.

There is an intriguing reversal in peer interaction skills, as public school pupils have a better score (30.91) compared to their counterparts at private schools (33.50). This suggests that the setting or the type of interactions in public schools promote peer relationships more efficiently. Private and public schools vary considerably in terms of seeking attention, with private school students showing a stronger inclination (30.91) compared to public school students (22.89). This discrepancy may be attributed to variations in classroom dynamics or the level of individualized attention given to pupils.

Public school students exhibit a higher mean score (31.70) in terms of avoiding fights or disagreements compared to private school students (22.89). Public school students may possess a greater inclination or better skills in managing problems without resorting to physical altercations.

Table No4: Variables result regarding Coefficient test

Predictor Variable	Coefficient (Beta)	Standard Error	t-Statistic	p-Value
Solving Problems	0.25	0.07	33.507	0.001
Empathy	0.20	0.08	2.50	0.015
Peer Interaction Skills	0.30	0.09	3.33	0.002
Seeking Attention	-0.15	0.06	-2.50	0.014
Avoiding Fight or Conflict	0.10	0.07	1.43	0.157

The regression analysis table displays the correlation between several predictors of social-emotional growth and a dependent variable, which presumably represents a comprehensive assessment of social-emotional competence. The analysis includes coefficients (Beta), standard errors, t-statistics, and p-values for each predictor, offering insight into the contribution of each element of social-emotional development to the total score.

The positive correlation of 0.25 for Solving Problems indicates that an improvement in problem-solving skills is linked to a substantial rise in the total score for social-emotional competence. The link between the variables is well supported by a t-statistic of 33.507 and a p-value of 0.001, indicating a high level of statistical significance. The coefficient for empathy is 0.20, with a t-statistic of 2.50 and a p-value of 0.015. These findings indicate that there is a favourable correlation between increased empathy and better scores in social-emotional development. However, the impact of empathy on scores is less significant compared to problem-solving abilities.

The variable "Peer Interaction Skills" has the greatest positive coefficient among the predictors, with a value of 0.30. This, coupled with a t-statistic of 3.33 and a p-value of 0.002, suggests a substantial and statistically significant positive influence on social-emotional competence. This emphasizes the significance of peer relationships in the development of social-emotional skills. On the other hand, the variable "Seeking Attention" has a negative coefficient of -0.15, indicating that greater levels of attention-seeking behaviour may have an unfavourable relationship with social-emotional development. The negative association is statistically significant, as shown by a t-statistic of -2.50 and a p-value of 0.014. The variable "Avoiding Fight or Conflict" has a coefficient of 0.10 and a p-value of 0.157, indicating a positive link with the total social-emotional score. However, this relationship is not statistically significant. Within this research, it is evident that the capacity to prevent disputes or conflicts does not have a substantial influence on the overall assessment of social-emotional competence.

In conclusion, regression analysis highlights the intricate relationship between many factors of social-emotional development and overall proficiency in this domain. Significant beneficial contributions to social-emotional development are attributed to problem-solving abilities, empathy, and peer interaction skills. Meanwhile, seeking attention is recognized as having a detrimental influence. Although there is a favourable association, avoiding disputes or disagreements does not have a meaningful impact in this model. These results emphasize the complex and diverse aspects of social-emotional development and the factors that influence it.

Table 5: ANOVA Test for Differences in Emotional Understanding by Socioeconomic Status

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	41.68	2	1.28	5.2	.007
Within Groups	48.9	300	0.248		
Total	51.46	302			

The table displays the results of an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), a statistical technique used to compare means across various groups in order to ascertain whether there are any statistically significant disparities between them. The Between Groups Sum of Squares is 41.68, with 2 degrees of freedom (representing the comparison of public and private school groups since df is derived by subtracting one from the number of groups)—the Mean Square, calculated as 1.28. The F-statistic is computed, resulting in a value of 5.2. The significance level (Sig.) of .007 indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the group means since the p-value is lower than the customary value of 0.05. On the other hand, the calculated value within groups is 48.9, and the mean square within groups is 0.248, respectively.

4.2 Dualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis was based on interviews taken from the parents and SED observations of the selected schools in the sample schools of District Jhang and District Multan. The qualitative analysis results are based and analyzed on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Vygotsky's Social Development Theory as below;

1. Environmental Context

The regression analysis demonstrates a significant disparity in social-emotional abilities between pupils attending private and public schools, which is consistent with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. This theory proposes that a child's development is impacted by several systems, such as the micro-system (e.g., the school environment). The results indicate that the specific kind of school, which is considered a component of a child's microsystem, has a substantial influence on their social-emotional development. Possible factors contributing to this variation include disparities in available resources, the ratio of teachers to students, the focus on social-emotional development in the curriculum, and the nature of peer relationships in these environments (Artman-Meeker et al., 2021).

2. Interpersonal Skills and Peer Interaction

The key factors that strongly influence a child's social-emotional development, including problem-solving abilities, empathy, and skills in interacting with peers, highlight the crucial role of interpersonal capabilities in a child's progress in this area. These findings align with Vygotsky's Social Development Theory. Vygotsky highlighted the pivotal significance of social contact in the process of cognitive development. The robust association between peer interaction skills and overall social-emotional competence underscores the interconnectedness of social engagement and emotional development, indicating that promoting good peer interactions may greatly improve social-emotional learning (Anderson & Boutelier, 2021).

3. Individual Differences: Attention-Seeking Behavior and Conflict Avoidance

The regression analysis also indicates the subtle impact of individual variations on social-emotional development. Seeking attention has a detrimental effect on social-emotional development, although avoiding arguments or confrontations does not have a substantial influence. The interpretation of these data may be analyzed using Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which highlights the significance of observational learning, imitation, and modelling in the evolution of behaviour. Children's attention-seeking behaviours and conflict-resolution techniques are impacted by the behaviours they witness in their peers and adults. This suggests that these individual distinctions are moulded by both inherent inclinations and external observations (Blewitt et al., 2021).

4. Statistical Significance and Real-World Implications

The ANOVA findings demonstrate statistically significant differences between groups, while the substantial p-values in the regression analysis provide empirical evidence supporting the practical consequences of these ideas. They propose that while individual and contextual variables play a crucial role, the educational methods used to promote social-emotional development should be sophisticated and customized to meet the shared and distinct requirements of students in various contexts.

5. Summary of thematic analysis

The thematic analysis, based on theories of social-emotional development, proposes a comprehensive strategy for improving social-emotional skills in children and teenagers. It emphasizes the need to establish nurturing, stimulating, and participatory educational settings that

not only concentrate on scholastic accomplishments but also prioritize the cultivation of essential social-emotional abilities. This method necessitates collaborative endeavours from educators, parents, politicians, and the students themselves, highlighting the significance of education in moulding not just cognitive but also affective and interpersonal welfare.

5.1 Discussion

When considering this approach, it becomes clear that establishing such an educational setting necessitates substantial changes in existing educational paradigms. Schools should transform into environments where emotional intelligence is prioritized alongside intellectual development, acknowledging the significant influence of social-emotional skills on students' overall achievement and welfare. It is vital to have a curriculum that includes social-emotional learning (SEL) components. These teacher training programs provide educators with the required tools to promote these abilities, as well as policies that encourage the overall development of pupils. Furthermore, the active participation of parents and the broader society in this educational process is essential. Providing parents with information on the significance of social-emotional development and equipping them with strategies to foster their children's progress in this domain enhances the connection between home and school settings. In addition, legislators have a crucial role in distributing resources and establishing policies that give priority to the growth of people who possess not just academic excellence but also emotional intelligence and social responsibility (Beisly & Lake, 2021).

This conversation indicates a future in which education is seen as a holistic journey that fosters the development of the whole kid. By acknowledging the significance of social-emotional development and using tactics that cater to these requirements, we may equip a cohort of emotionally sound and socially adept people. The collective endeavour of all parties involved in this comprehensive approach is not only advantageous but vital for cultivating settings that support the varied requirements of students, equipping them not just for scholastic achievement but for life as well (Oztemir & Asi, 2020).

5.2 Conclusion

The thorough examination of social-emotional development in many educational environments has provided valuable insights into the elements that influence the acquisition of essential skills in children and teenagers. This study has emphasized the intricate interaction between individual, interpersonal, and environmental factors by combining descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and ANOVA with fundamental theories of social-emotional development. The key results suggest that the kind of educational setting, namely private vs. public schools, has a significant influence on social-emotional abilities. Private schools may provide distinct benefits in cultivating problem-solving abilities and empathy, attributed to variations in resources, teacher-student ratios, or pedagogical priorities. Moreover, research has demonstrated that interpersonal skills, such as engaging with peers, and individual behaviours, such as seeking attention and avoiding conflict, have a substantial impact on social-emotional development. This emphasizes the crucial role of fostering positive social environments and addressing individual needs. The complex aspect of social-emotional evolution is emphasized by these ideas, which are based on theoretical frameworks such as Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, Vygotsky's Social Development Theory, and Bandura's Social Learning Theory. The research promotes a comprehensive approach to education that emphasizes not only academic accomplishments but also places importance on the cultivation of social-emotional skills, which are crucial for the overall well-being and success of children and teenagers in their personal, academic, and future professional endeavors.

5.3 Recommendations

In light of the research findings on social-emotional development in the context of Pakistani schools, tailored recommendations for public and private educational sectors are essential to address the nuanced differences and capitalize on opportunities for enhancing student well-being and academic success.

1. Inclusive SED Curriculum: Public and private schools should adopt culturally relevant social-emotional development (SED) curricula that cater to diverse student needs across different regions and communities in Pakistan.
2. Teacher Training and Resources: Schools must prioritize providing comprehensive training and sufficient resources to educators for effective implementation of SED programs. Partnerships with NGOs and international organizations can help bridge resource gaps, particularly in public schools.
3. Community and Parental Engagement: Schools should actively involve parents and community members in SED initiatives through workshops, seminars, and regular communication. This collaborative approach extends SED principles beyond the classroom, creating a supportive environment for student development.

Implementing these recommendations can significantly enhance social-emotional development among young students in Pakistan, leading to improved well-being and academic success.

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