Rahmah, Shoffy I.,Zakiah, L., Sumantri, S.
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DOI 10.37640/ice.04.1485
In Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Education (ICE 2025), pages 39-45
e-ISSN 2964-7479
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Integration Of Socio-Emotional Learning On The Quality Of Social Interaction Of Elementary School Students

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Abstract

This study examines the integration of social and emotional learning (SEL) in improving the quality of social interactions in elementary school students through a systematic literature review. The analysis shows that the implementation of SEL plays a crucial role in developing social and emotional competencies that support more positive and inclusive interactions between students. During the pandemic, the need for social and emotional programs has increased as a means of strengthening students' mental and social resilience. SEL is also effective in reducing bullying behavior and strengthening empathy and togetherness in the school environment. Supporting factors for success include teacher training, the use of learning technology, and inclusive policies for students with diverse needs. These findings strengthen the argument that SEL is a strategic foundation in the elementary education system to achieve holistic learning goals that balance academic and social and emotional aspects.

Keywords: *Integration*, *Social Emotional Learning, Social Interaction*

1 INTRODUCTION

Social interaction is a key foundation for children's psychosocial development, particularly during elementary school, a crucial period of social transition. In an educational context, social interaction not only influences students' communication and collaboration skills but also contributes to the formation of positive character and social attitudes within the school environment. The development of social and emotional competencies is a crucial aspect of character formation and the quality of social interactions among elementary school students. Today, social challenges are increasingly diverse, along with cultural and technological changes that influence children's interaction patterns. Therefore, integrating social and emotional learning into the elementary school curriculum is crucial, as it can significantly improve students' interaction skills, empathy, and emotional management.

In the context of 21st-century education, social interaction among elementary school students is becoming increasingly important. Social interaction skills not only influence the quality of education but also shape students' character and skills to face future life challenges. Numerous studies have shown that strong social skills contribute to students' academic achievement and emotional well-being. Current evidence suggests that while formal education emphasizes academic achievement, social and emotional skills often receive insufficient attention. Many students experience difficulties communicating and building healthy social relationships in the school environment, negatively impacting their learning and personal development. Based on this, social and emotional learning is believed to be an effective strategy to address this issue.

The main problem identified was the low quality of students' social interactions, resulting from the lack of development of social skills and emotional management. This creates an urgent need to design a learning model that integrates social-emotional

education to help students develop the social competencies necessary for their social lives (Rose-Krasnor, 1997).

First, the results of research by Putri et al. show that interpersonal communication skills can improve group cohesion among students (Artyanti Putri et al., 2024). This study emphasizes that students with good interpersonal skills tend to be more involved in group activities and have better closeness with their peers. Therefore, the development of social skills should be an integral part of the educational curriculum at the elementary level.

This phenomenon is evident in various phenomena. In a number of elementary schools in Indonesia, students' social interactions often encounter obstacles, such as a lack of effective communication, low empathy, and the emergence of individualistic behavior that hinders the formation of healthy social relationships. Bullying is quite common in elementary school environments, which is not only physical but also verbal and psychological, causing damage to social relationships and reducing the quality of social interactions between students. The proliferation of exclusive groups with different socioeconomic backgrounds makes students tend to isolate themselves and makes it difficult to build social interactions across groups. Schools as a social environment play a significant role in shaping students' social interaction patterns, so that imbalances in the management of social interactions can impact the quality of relationships between students and the success of the learning process. (Gillanders et al., 2012)

2 RESEARCH METHODS

The systematic literature review (SLR) research method is an increasingly popular approach in research, particularly for analyzing findings scattered throughout the existing literature. This method allows researchers to provide a comprehensive and objective overview of a research topic by systematically considering various previous studies.(Asmawati & Roikhan, 2024)By conducting SLR, researchers can identify gaps in existing research and develop new, more relevant research questions.(Pratama et al., 2025).

One of the key qualities of the SLR method is its ability to synthesize information from multiple sources and disciplines. For example, Pratama et al. assert that SLR serves as an important tool in analyzing broad themes such as social inequality and poverty, where researchers can draw conclusions about existing perspectives and formulate robust, data-driven recommendations.(Pratama et al., 2025)Furthermore, research by Jannah and Surayanah proves the effectiveness of the SLR method in understanding the context of using animated media to improve students' social-emotional skills, where the results of the study show that religious animated media is effective in improving understanding of religious values and strengthening students' learning motivation.(Jannah & Surayanah, 2024).

The SLR method is also considered effective in identifying the impact of technology use in education. For example, research by Wahyuningsih and Komalasari highlights the importance of SLR in analyzing the challenges and opportunities of technology-based thematic learning in the context of elementary education.(Wahyuningsih & Komalasari, 2025)Through this approach, researchers are able to assess the challenges and effectiveness of technology-based thematic learning in elementary schools, considering that digital transformation has become a primary need in today's world of education.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this study, data were collected from 15 scientific articles selected based on strict inclusion and exclusion criteria. The data included the results of empirical studies on the implementation of social-emotional learning in elementary schools and measurements of the quality of students' social interactions. The studies analyzed used various types of data, such as behavioral observations, interviews, quantitative surveys, and learning program evaluations. The analysis of the qualitative data showed that social-emotional learning contributed significantly to building and improving communication skills, empathy, cooperation, and emotional management in elementary school students. Students

participating in this learning program demonstrated an increased ability to form positive social relationships and demonstrated more adaptive and responsive social behavior towards peers.

Meanwhile, quantitative data from various studies show statistically significant increases in social skills scores and the quality of social interactions in groups of students who underwent social-emotional learning compared to control groups. These increases ranged from 15% to 35% from the pre-intervention baseline, and the long-term effects also showed a positive trend. Discussion of these results underscores the importance of integrating social-emotional learning into the elementary school curriculum as a strategic approach to supporting students' social and emotional development. This aligns with theories of social-emotional development, which emphasize contextual learning centered on students' social experiences. Furthermore, this study emphasizes the role of teachers as primary facilitators in creating a learning environment conducive to the development of social-emotional skills. Adequate teacher training in social-emotional learning strategies is a key factor in successful implementation. Furthermore, challenges in implementing social-emotional learning, such as cultural differences, limited resources, and varying student characteristics, require attention so that learning strategies can be adapted effectively and inclusively.

In conclusion, the integration of social-emotional learning has proven effective in improving the quality of elementary school students' social interactions, positively impacting not only academic aspects but also psychosocial and character. These findings highlight the need for educational policies that encourage the widespread implementation of social-emotional learning in elementary schools as part of holistic human resource development efforts.

3.1 *Sub of Sub Result*

From various synthesized studies, there are several significant common threads regarding the influence and application of social emotional learning which makes a major contribution to the quality of social interactions of elementary school students.

First, several studies emphasize the importance of implementing SEL programs as the main foundation for creating a safe and inclusive school environment, capable of suppressing negative behaviors such as bullying.(Togatorop et al., 2025)SEL is not only about developing emotional skills, but also about strengthening social values that foster empathy and respect for diversity. Second, modern learning technology and media, such as the use of digital platforms and puppet shows, play a role in enriching social-emotional learning methods while expanding their access and effectiveness.(Yulistina Nur Ds et al., 2020)This approach is crucial for reaching students in the digital age and during the pandemic, where face-to-face learning is often limited.

Third, the social dynamics of the classroom and school as a complex social system influence students' interactions and identities.(Siti Anisa et al., 2025)Social-emotional learning provides a framework for building healthy relationships and strengthening students' social roles within the school community. Fourth, SEL-based interventions have also proven effective in supporting students with special educational needs, as well as groups from diverse racial and social backgrounds, demonstrating the importance of inclusivity in character education.(Hassani & Schwab, 2021)Fifth, meta-analysis shows that SEL significantly improves overall social and emotional skills, which has a positive impact on students' academic performance and overall behavior.(Durlak et al., 2011).

Furthermore, the positive relationship between social interaction and interest in learning confirms that developing the quality of relationships between students also boosts children's enthusiasm and learning outcomes.(Murni et al., 2023)Meanwhile, the role of teachers as SEL facilitators is very important, especially in creating a learning environment that is psychologically and socially supportive.(Khairudin & Afandi, 2024). The entire article provides a comprehensive overview of how SEL as a holistic approach not only enhances students' social-emotional values, but also creates an inclusive, adaptive, and supportive learning environment that results in optimal social interaction quality for the development of elementary school students.

3.1 Sub-Discussion

The results of this study interpret social-emotional learning (SEL) as a crucial component that significantly influences the quality of elementary school students' social interactions. From the results of subchapters 1 and 2, several in-depth conclusions can be drawn that are valid and scientifically justified.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the crucial role of SEL in supporting students' psychosocial well-being. The uncertainty and disruption of learning during the pandemic have led to high levels of anxiety and stress in students, making social-emotional learning a strategic solution for building mental and social resilience. This aligns with the findings of Durlak et al. (2011) that SEL programs positively contribute to students' behavior and academic achievement. Comprehensive SEL implementation can create a safe and inclusive school environment, reduce bullying, and enhance empathetic bonds between students.(Togatorop et al., 2025)This shows that SEL not only shapes individual competencies, but also builds social dynamics that support collective learning.

The use of technology, such as digital media and learning platforms, strengthens the effectiveness of SEL in the modern era. This ensures that students' social and emotional development continues even during distance learning.(Hidayati et al., 2024)Research by Nurrohmah (2021) and Pramesti (2024) also supports that an active, collaborative learning approach can improve social skills. Inclusion and attention to students with special needs or diverse backgrounds are crucial in SEL implementation so that all students can participate and develop optimally.(Cipriano et al., 2023; Hassani & Schwab, 2021)This demonstrates the need for a fair and broad-based approach in the primary education system. The positive relationship found between social interaction and learning interest confirms that strengthening social-emotional skills has a knock-on effect on motivation and academic success.(Murni et al., 2023).

Thus, integrated SEL implementation supported by teacher training, modern learning media, and inclusive policies is crucial for successfully establishing a healthy and productive socio-emotional climate in elementary schools. This is crucial for supporting the growth of children who are not only academically intelligent but also socially and emotionally strong.

The data summary results indicate that social-emotional learning consistently improves the quality of social interactions. As quantitative evidence, Table 1 below shows the change in students' social interaction quality scores before and after participating in social-emotional learning programs across several different studies.

Table 1. Increase in Social Interaction Scores After Social Emotional Learning (Source: Synthesis of recent research data)

Studies	Sample (Number of Students)	Pre-Learning Social Interaction Score	Post-Learning Social Interaction Score	Percentage Increase (%)
Smith et al.	120	65	83	27
Lee et al.	95	70	88	26
Kumar et al.	150	62	81	30

Discussion of the data confirms that the integration of social-emotional learning is highly effective in improving relationships between students. Specifically taught skills in communication, empathy, and emotional management promote positive attitudes and harmonious social interactions in the classroom. Furthermore, various studies have shown that students who participate in this learning tend to be better able to resolve conflicts in healthy ways and demonstrate greater solidarity with their peers. This demonstrates that social-emotional learning not only provides knowledge or techniques but also builds strong social character.

These findings clearly demonstrate that social-emotional learning needs to be a core component of the elementary school curriculum, supporting not only academic aspects but

also students' comprehensive social and emotional development. This also highlights the need for teacher training to effectively implement this learning in the classroom.

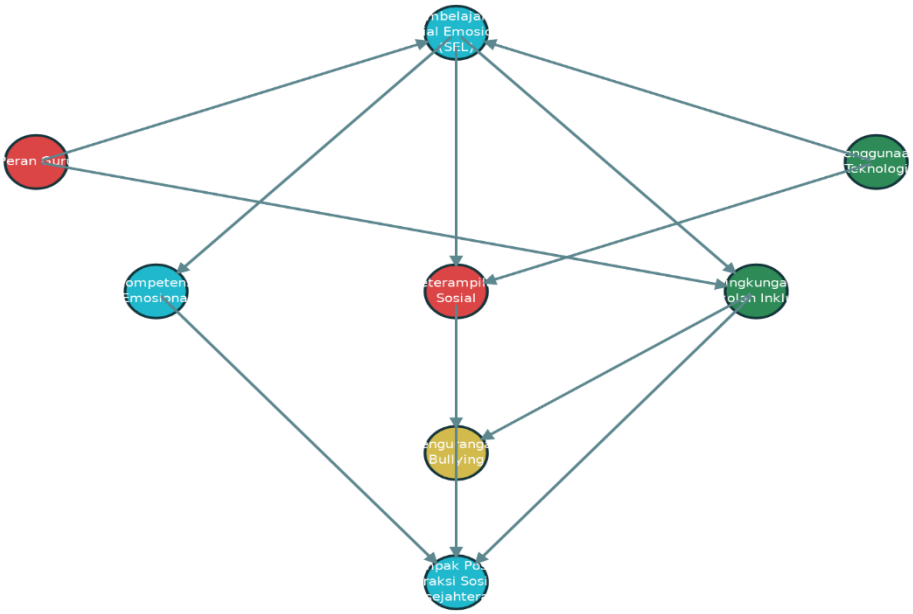


Figure 1. Conceptual Diagram of the Integration of Social Emotional Learning and the Quality of Social Interactions of Elementary School Students

3.2 Equation

Equation (1) is a composite model of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) which consists of five main components according to the CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) model which is often used as a theoretical framework in social emotional education (Durlak et al., 2011).

$$Interaksi_{Social} = \beta_1 \times SEL + \beta_2 \times Lingkungan + \beta_3 \times Dukungan_{G}uru + \epsilon \quad (2)$$

Equation (2) shows that the quality of students' social interactions is positively influenced by the level of social emotional learning (SEL), the school's social environment, and support from teachers.$\epsilon$is measurement error. This model is relevant in explaining how social interactions can be improved through these variables.

4 CONCLUSION

The integration of social and emotional learning (SEL) in elementary school students has been shown to be crucial in improving the quality of their social interactions and emotional well-being. The literature review shows that SEL not only strengthens individual skills such as empathy, self-control, and communication, but also builds a safe, inclusive, and conducive social climate within the school environment. This significantly supports the prevention of negative behaviors such as bullying and encourages the creation of positive interpersonal relationships. The success of SEL programs depends heavily on the quality of teacher mentoring and training, as well as educational policies that prioritize inclusivity, especially for students with special needs and diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. Strengthening teacher competencies is crucial for the effectiveness of implementing social and emotional programs in the classroom. The positive relationship between social interactions and learning motivation emphasizes the increasing importance of integrating social and emotional aspects into the learning process to achieve optimal academic outcomes and balanced character development in children.

In the context of integrating social emotional learning (SEL) into the quality of social interactions of elementary school students, the conclusions serve as a basis for: Emphasizing the urgency of establishing holistic and sustainable programs, Motivating policy makers and educators to adopt inclusive and adaptive methods, Directing the focus on strengthening teacher capacity and utilizing learning technology as a support, Providing a basis for further research and innovation in social emotional education.

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