# THE DEVELOPMENT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL TRAINING: PORTRAIT OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN MADRASAH

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## Abstract

*Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is a learning program recommended by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia to be implemented to increase students' mental health. This study aims to develop a psycho-education program called Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) based on participatory action research which results in 10 sessions for this program. Furthermore, researchers also examine the effectiveness of it in increasing teachers' knowledge about student development, the student's social skills, and student's perceptions about the implementation of SEL in schools. The participants are 30 teachers from several schools who were assigned to the experimental group with a pre-post one group study design. Also, some teachers assessed 30 students to know the increase in their social skills, and five students participated in interview sessions. Before and after the implementation of the training program, teachers were given a pre-test and post-test related to the knowledge about student's development (physics, cognitive, social, and emotional) and students were assessed by their teachers (pre and post) related to student's social skills (communication, cooperation, assertive, responsible, empathy, engagement, self-control). Results showed there is increasing teacher's knowledge about student's development with $Z = -3.839$, $p = 0.000$ and also there is increasing in children's social skills with the value $t = -4.071$, $p = 0.000$. Furthermore, based on student's perceptions, there are five themes, and seven categories obtained, which is student's feeling satisfied with the implementation of SEL in learning.*

**Keywords:** *Madrasah, Social Emotional Learning, Social Skills, Student Development, Participatory Action Research.*

## Abstrak

*Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) merupakan program pembelajaran yang direkomendasikan oleh Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Indonesia untuk dilaksanakan sebagai upaya peningkatan kesehatan mental siswa. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengembangkan program psikoedukasi yang disebut Social Emotional Learning (SEL) berdasarkan penelitian tindakan partisipatif yang menghasilkan 10 sesi untuk program ini. Selanjutnya, peneliti juga menguji efektivitasnya dalam meningkatkan pengetahuan guru tentang perkembangan siswa, keterampilan sosial siswa dan persepsi siswa tentang penerapan SEL di sekolah. Partisipan adalah 30 guru dari beberapa sekolah yang ditugaskan ke kelompok eksperimen dengan desain studi satu kelompok pre-post. Selain itu, ada*

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30 siswa yang dinilai oleh guru untuk mengetahui peningkatan keterampilan sosial mereka dan lima siswa sebagai peserta dalam sesi wawancara. Sebelum dan sesudah pelaksanaan program pelatihan, guru diberikan pre-test dan post-test terkait pengetahuan tentang perkembangan siswa (fisik, kognitif, sosial, dan emosional) dan siswa dinilai oleh guru (pre dan post) terkait keterampilan sosial siswa (komunikasi, kerjasama, asertif, bertanggung jawab, empati, engagement, pengendalian diri). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan ada peningkatan pengetahuan guru tentang perkembangan siswa dengan Z = -3.839, p = 0.000 dan juga ada peningkatan keterampilan sosial anak dengan nilai t = -4.071, p = 0.000. Selanjutnya, berdasarkan persepsi siswa, ada lima tema dan tujuh kategori yang diperoleh yaitu siswa merasa puas dengan penerapan SEL dalam pembelajaran.

***Kata kunci:*** *Madrasah, Social Emotional Learning, Social Skills, Student's Development, Participatory Action Research.*

## INTRODUCTION

The condition of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia has passed where the learning process was previously conducted as online learning, now is already implemented offline. Several aspects must be considered to achieve meaningful learning for students as the effect of online learning. Wahana Visi Indonesia (2020) surveyed 943 students consisting of early childhood and elementary school students in 9 provinces, 53 districts/cities, and 251 villages in Indonesia. The results showed that apart from the decline in students' academic performance during online learning due to limited facilities and learning resources, students also experience psychological problems. The psychological problems experienced by students are anxiety about the economic situation of their parents and their inability to understand learning, as well as stress due to the lack of learning support received from parents and teachers. Students also feel that they lack interaction with their peers and cannot pursue hobbies and do extracurricular activities.

The Policy Research Center Ministry of Education and Culture Indonesia collaborated with the Indonesian Association of Clinical Psychologists (2020) to survey a sample of 15.840 elementary, middle school, high school, and vocational school students regarding emotional mental disorders, and psychological well-being during online learning. The results showed that the majority of students, 64.39%, are in the normal emotional mental state category, 19.00% are in the borderline category, and 16.61% are in the abnormal category. These results showed that during the pandemic, students experienced emotional and mental disorders (The Policy Research Center Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021).

The survey's results also showed that the average psychological well-being of students is in the medium category. Based on aspects of psychological well-being, it was found that students have many problems in the aspect of environmental mastery, followed by aspects of personal growth, positive relationships, self-acceptance, and life purpose (The Policy Research Center Ministry of Education, 2021). The results of research regarding the social emotional state of students during online learning have led the Ministry of Education and Culture to recommend that special attention is

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needed regarding students' psychological well-being during learning. Schools also need to create programs that promote students' mental health on an ongoing basis (The Policy Research Center Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021).

The Ministry of Education and Culture Indonesia recommended a set of curriculum to recover the learning process in schools to the impact of learning loss due to the pandemic Covid-19, the curriculum is called "Merdeka Curriculum". Merdeka curriculum has been encouraged since 2021 with the main goal being to give meaningful learning for children which is delivered through four aspects, that are communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. Based on the Merdeka curriculum, there is a learning method that is recommended to be implemented, that is project-based learning. Project-based learning is carried out through integrated subjects. The goal is for students to have the independence to do some projects to solve problems in their lives (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022).

Several characteristics of the Merdeka Curriculum are believed to occur during the learning process. First is to focus on essential material and student's competencies based on their phase of development, and learn the material deeper, more meaningful, and fun. The second is to focus on students' interests, talents, and aspirations in the material and implementation of learning. Three is more relevant and interactive learning. Through project activities provide wider opportunities for students to actively explore current issues for example environmental issues, health, and others to support character development and Pancasila student profile competencies (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022).

Based on the literature and results of learning in pandemic situations which recommend implementing learning that concerns the student's psychological well-being. Also, the policy of the Merdeka curriculum concerns student's interests and development. This is similar to a study conducted by Skoog-Hoffman (2024) that found more schools in the U.S. are integrating social-emotional learning into their curriculum, and teachers who teach social-emotional learning report more positive school climates and increased student interest in learning. This research highlights the importance of policies that support the effective implementation of social-emotional learning in schools.

Therefore, schools and teachers need to implement learning methods that concern the student's characteristics and build emotional, social, and moral competencies for students. Social-emotional learning (SEL) is a learning process where students can acquire and apply knowledge and skills to regulate emotions, set goals, show empathy, build positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Reicher, 2010). Previous research conducted by Bridgeland, Bruce, and Hariharan (2013) showed that the application of social-emotional learning (SEL) by teachers in schools can provide benefits of 97% for students with low and high socio-economic status backgrounds, increasing school attendance by 80%. and graduation, increasing academic achievement by 77%, increasing adjustment to college by 78%, and increasing work readiness by 87%. In

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addition, The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (2010) emphasized that teachers need to understand SEL well to better understand students' cognitive and social-emotional development. For several years, research results have shown that teachers who have a good understanding and skills in social-emotional learning (SEL) can better design lessons and organize classes optimally (Hamre & Pianta, 2006).

There are five competencies in the social-emotional learning (SEL) program. First, self-awareness, the ability to understand emotions, thoughts, and their influence on behavior. Second, self-management is the ability to regulate emotions, thoughts, and behavior effectively in different situations. Third, social awareness, the ability to empathize with the views of other people from different backgrounds. The fourth is relationship skills, the ability to build good relationships with other individuals and groups. Finally, the fifth is responsible decision-making, which is the ability to make responsible choices by ethical standards and social norms (CASEL, 2015)

This research focuses on learning in elementary schools. This is based on the theory of Rimm-Kaufman (2009) which states that social-emotional abilities are very important to develop in elementary school students. This is because elementary school students are starting to adapt to a wider environment than the family environment, where the school environment provides opportunities for students to interact more often with peers and teachers at school.

This study used teachers and students in Madrasah as a research sample. Referring to the exploration by Alwani dan Celik (2021) who stated that in Madrasahs, the concept of SEL is closely related to moral and ethical teachings taken from religious texts. The development of students' social and emotional skills is directed at strengthening their relationships with God, family, and community so that SEL in madrasahs is more holistic compared to public schools. Ahmad (2023) also revealed that Madrasahs provide greater space for the integration of religious rituals into SEL learning. Time for spiritual reflection, such as prayer, is used as a moment for introspection and emotional regulation. This provides an additional dimension not found in public schools.

This research is conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods and using participatory action research (PAR) phase to develop the social-emotional learning program. This study aims to develop the social-emotional learning program by combining aspects of social-emotional learning and the participatory action research phase. After developing the program, we examine the effectiveness by examining the increasing teacher's knowledge about student development, student's social skills, and student's perception of the implementation of social-emotional learning.

**METHOD**

This research used quantitative and qualitative methods. As the first step of the research, we conduct the development of a social-emotional learning program by combining the aspects of social-emotional learning and the phase of participatory action research. Participatory action research is methods that involve the active participation of participants where individuals play a key role in identifying the problem, designing and planning the

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action, implementing the program in the classroom, and evaluating the program.

We used one group pre-test and post-test design to examine the effectiveness of social-emotional learning and measure the increase of two aspects, those are 1) The teacher's knowledge about student's development, 2) The student's social skills before and after the implementation of social-emotional learning in the class. In addition, we also surveyed five students to know their perception of the implementation of social-emotional learning.

## Participants

Participants in this study are 30 Madrasah (Islamic-based elementary schools) teachers from several schools in Bandar Lampung City, Indonesia. Also, five students from grades 4 - 6 will be the participants in the interview session in order to know their perception about the implementation of social-emotional learning.

## Stages of Social-Emotional Learning

The researcher gave participants informed consent in order before involved in this study. This work is done as an ethical clearance effort as there's no ethics committee in our university. In implementing the social-emotional learning training, this research used a participatory action research approach by implementing five cycles which is to know, to understand, to plan, to action, and to reflect (Koshy, 2005). The five cycles are combined with five stages of social-emotional learning training (CASEL, 2015).

### Stage I

In stage I, we begin the training with an introduction between the facilitator and participants. The activity was conducted by doing games which enabled all the facilitators and participants to introduce themselves. After the introduction phase, the facilitator gives a questionnaire to the participants in order to get data about the school's values, goals, and also the characteristics of the student which the data gained through the story written by the teachers.

Table 1
The procedure of Social-Emotional Learning Training

| Stages | Activity |
|---|---|
| Stage I | Introduction |
| Stage II (To Know) | Knowing emotions and types of emotions Manage the Emotions |
| Stage III (To Understand) | Case study of teachers-students relationships |
| Stage IV (To Understand) | Physics and Motorics Development Cognitive Development |
| Stage V (To Understand) | Social-Emotional Development Moral Development |
| Stage VI (To Understand and Plan) | Social Emotional Learning |
| Stage VII (To Understand and Plan) | Non-Cognitive Assessment in Learning Cognitive Assessment in Learning |
| Stage VIII – IX (To Action) | Implementation in Classroom |
| Stage X (To Evaluate) | Evaluation |

### Stage II

The facilitator gives knowledge to the participants about the definition of emotions, types of emotions, and how to manage the emotions. The material was delivered through lecturing, then teachers identified the emotions and circumstances they felt during the learning process. Teachers also practice how to express emotions appropriately by using emotion

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words and telling their consideration about the problems that occurred.

### Stage III

The facilitator gives a case about the teacher-student relationship and then asks the teachers to analyze how to overcome the situations using iceberg u-analysis.

### Stage IV - V

The facilitator gives knowledge to the participants about the physics, cognitive, social, emotional, and moral development. Then, the facilitator gives a task to the teacher to share their perception about their student's physics, cognitive, social, emotional, and moral development.

### Stage VI

The facilitator gives knowledge to the participants about social-emotional learning, what social-emotional learning is, the aspects, and how to implement it in the classroom.

### Stage VII

The facilitator gives knowledge to the participants about the non-cognitive assessment, that is an assessment of the student's emotional condition which can be carried out through a questionnaire, a story written by the students, a story which is told by the students, and pictures which are drawn by the students. This assessment was implemented as an effort to know the student's characteristics which are important in social-emotional learning and implementing Merdeka curriculum. Then, the teachers design a non-cognitive assessment that they can deliver in the classroom.

The facilitator also gives knowledge about the cognitive assessment in order to know the student's knowledge level of the previous material. Then, the teachers

design a cognitive assessment that they can deliver in the classroom.

## Instruments

The instruments used in this study is the student's development knowledge test (consists of 15 items) which was constructed by the researcher based on aspects of students' development, which are physics-motorics development (4 items), cognitive development (4 items), social-emotional learning (4 items), and moral development (3 items). We tested the instrument's validity and reliability and gained a validity value range between 0.393 and 0.731 and a Cronbach alpha value of 0.872.

This research also used the social skills improvement systems (SSIS) teacher's form which was developed by Gresham and Elliott (2008) which initially consisted of 46 items, then based on validity and reliability 32 items are valid and reliable. The validity of the items ranges between value 0.266 – 0.759 and reliability with a Cronbach alpha value of 0.949. The SSIS scale used in this study consists of 32 items which measured communication (5 items), cooperation (5 items), assertion (2 items), responsibility (5 items), empathy (6 items), engagement (5 items), and self-control (5 items). Teachers assess students' behavior based on the last three days and respond to the items with four response options, there are Never = 0, Seldom = 1, Often = 2, and Always = 3.

This research also used an interview guide based on social-emotional learning aspects to know student's perception of the implementation of social emotional learning in the classroom.

## Data Technique Analysis

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Based on the normality test, the Kolmogorov Smirnov significance value of the development knowledge test is $p = 0.000$ which means that the data is not distributed normally, so we used a non-parametric test which is the Wilcoxon sign test. However, based on Kolmogorov Smirnov's normality test of the SSIS Scale, the significance value $p > 0.05$ which means the data is distributed normally. Therefore, we used a dependent t-test to know the increase of a student's social skills after and before the implementation of a social-emotional learning program.

For the qualitative data we use thematic analysis was used to identify patterns or themes based on the data obtained. First, the researcher made an understanding of the data by writing verbatim then re-read and grouped the categories. Researchers conducted a grouping process in which each category was grouped into a larger framework to generate themes in the research (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION
### Result

A hypothesis test was conducted to determine the difference in teacher's knowledge about student's development before and after social-emotional learning training. The hypothesis test used in this study is the Wilcoxon sign test analysis technique and the results are explained in Table 2 below.

Table 2.
The Results of the Wilcoxon Sign Test

|  | *Z* | *Sig* |
|---|---|---|
| *Pretest-Posttest* | -3.839 | 0.000 |

The results of the Wilcoxon sign test showed a significance value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a difference in scores between the pretest and post-test, that is the hypothesis that states that there is a difference in teacher knowledge about student's development before and after the social-emotional learning training is proven.

Table 3
Comparison of Mean Pretest and Posttest of Teachers Knowledge About Student's Development

|  | *Mean* | *Std. Deviation* |
|---|---|---|
| *Pretest* | 11.63 | 3.755 |
| *Posttest* | 14.00 | 1.114 |

Descriptive results regarding the average pretest and posttest scores showed that the average pretest score obtained by participants was 11.63. Furthermore, the average post-test score obtained by participants was 14.00.

The second hypothesis test was conducted to determine the difference in children's social skills before and after the implementation of social-emotional learning in the classroom. The hypothesis test used in this study is the dependent t-test analysis technique and the results are explained in Table 4 below.

Table 4
The Results of the Dependent T-Test

|  | *Z* | *Sig* |
|---|---|---|
| *Pretest-Posttest* | -4.071 | 0.000 |

The results of the dependent t-test showed a significance value of 0.000,

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which is less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a difference in children's social skills based on the pretest and posttest. Then, the hypothesis which stated that there is a difference in in children's social skills before and after the implementation of social-emotional learning in the classroom is proven.

Table 5
Comparison of Mean Pretest and Posttest of Children's Social Skills

|  | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Pretest | 55.57 | 14.958 |
| Posttest | 62.97 | 11.769 |

Descriptive results regarding the average pretest and posttest scores showed that the average pretest score of children's social skills was 55.57. Furthermore, the average post-test score of children's social skills was 62.97.

Five students were the subjects of the researcher's interviews which are taken as the representative of each grade from 1 to 5. This interview aims to find out how students perceive social-emotional learning implemented by teachers in the classroom. Based on thematic analysis, five themes were obtained, that are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsive decision-making; and seven categories were obtained which are explained in detail in Table 6.

Table 6
The Themes

| Theme 1: Self-Awareness | Theme 2: Self-Management | Theme 3: Social Awareness | Theme 4: Relationship Skills | Theme 5: Responsible Decision-Making |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Category 1: Understanding emotions | Category 1: Knowing how to manage and express emotions | Category 1: Showing Prosocial Behavior | Category 1: Showing cooperative | Category 1: Learning how to cooperate and support in group learning |
|  | Category 2: Motivate in learning |  | Category 2: Finish the conflict with appropriate ways |  |

## The Impact of Self-Awareness on Students in Classroom Learning

Students said that they knew the types of emotions based on the lessons delivered by the teacher during the lesson. Initially, they only knew that emotion meant anger. However, in turn, they know that there are six basic types of emotions, which are anger, sadness, happiness, fear, disgust, and surprise. Students said that at the beginning of learning, the teacher asked several questions about the students, such as how the students felt that day, what kind of learning methods they liked, their closest friends, and what they disliked most in class. After the teacher gave several questions, the teacher asked each student to give their answer. During the session stories about what they dislike the most in class, each student understands better how to behave well towards their friends.

*"Through this learning, I enjoy studying in class more, not only do I understand the material better, but the class atmosphere becomes more enjoyable."* (Student interview 12, 19 September 2023).

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*"Working on group assignments and making projects made me understand the material better because it was practiced directly."* (Student interview 12, 19 September 2023).

### The Impact of Self-Management on Students in Classroom Learning

Students said that they learned to control negative emotions that would arise, one of which was by understanding their friends' views more wisely and applying breathing relaxation. Students also learn how to express emotions well, for example, when a friend bullies them, the student tries to express that they don't like it and asks his friend to stop. Then there was a student who said that if a friend insisted on borrowing school equipment, he tried to state assertively that his friend could borrow it after he had finished using the equipment.

Students said that they were better able to understand situations in which they experienced these emotions and tried to control them. Apart from that, with sessions on recognizing emotions and likes and dislikes, students understand better what makes them enjoy learning and become motivated to learn. Students can volunteer to take part in the class and choose certain roles in working on group assignments.

*"For me, learning like this is good because it doesn't just look and read books."* (Student interview 12, 19 September 2023).

### The Impact of Social Awareness on Students in Classroom Learning

Students said that after implementing social-emotional learning, students became more sensitive to the conditions in the classroom, both physically in the form of cleanliness and tidiness, as well as how students understood their friends. Interaction between students in group work makes students learn to not only see situations and problems from their point of view but also from other people's points of view.

One form of prosocial behavior that can be seen is that students are getting used to not relying on each other to clean up rubbish in the classroom or wipe down the whiteboard. Some students also began to show an attitude of helping each other when a friend had difficulty doing assignments in class. Concerning lessons, in science lessons about healthy and nutritious food, students understand better how to keep their bodies healthy and know about the natural food ingredients that are around them.

*"Through this lesson, I learned that not all delicious food is healthy even though I still cannot avoid unhealthy food."* (Student interviews 12, 19 September 2023).

### The Impact of Relationship Skills for Students in Classroom Learning

Social-emotional learning, which is designed through collaboration and project learning at each stage helps students develop their abilities in building friendships and cooperation.

*"Even though not all friends do the same thing, I see a change where friends become more caring and*

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help each other." (Student interview 12, 19 September 2023).

*"This way of learning makes me closer to all my friends in class, they are fun and enjoyable."* (Student interview 12, 19 September 2023).

### The Impact of Decision-Making on Students in Classroom Learning

Students can demonstrate their ability to solve problems in interactions between friends in class. Students try to show an attitude of being willing to listen and restrain debates that occur when interacting with friends.

*"If there is a friend who is difficult to work with, I and other friends try to hold back negative emotions and try to invite that friend."* (Student interview 12, 19 September 2023).

*"When we have different opinions from our friends, my group friends and I try to listen first and discuss together so that an agreement can be reached."* (Student Interview 12, 19 September 2023).

### Discussion

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is a learning model that focuses on student characteristics as the basis for teachers in designing, implementing, and evaluating learning. Responding to the Merdeka curriculum which is being promoted by Indonesia's Government to be implemented where students are expected to be able to have critical thinking, creative, communication, and collaboration skills; SEL learning can facilitate the creation of an independent curriculum in schools through understanding student development.

Besides that, teachers are encouraged to carry out creative, project-based, and integrative learning. In essence, project-based learning in the curriculum Merdeka allows students to learn something through real problems that occur in everyday life, and then find the best solution based on the knowledge and experience they have (Liu & Zhang, 2019). Project-based learning requires teachers who can facilitate students to explore actual problems that occur based on the student's interest, not by forcing topics given by the teacher. Likewise, with the solutions given by students, teachers are given the task of facilitating students to create appropriate projects that suit the students' wishes (Smith & Adams, 2020). Therefore, teachers who understand the characteristics of students in terms of cognitive, social, emotional, and moral aspects of students are certainly able to become the best facilitators in implementing an independent curriculum and project-based learning.

The implementation of social-emotional learning is expected to have a positive impact on students, such as increasing psychological well-being and positive interactions between individuals at school. This research is carried out by combining five cycles of participatory action research, which are to know, to understand, to plan, to act, and to evaluate as well as five stages of social-emotional learning training. In the first step, the trainer together with the participants identify the problems that occur in the school environment.

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Participants identify self-values, institutional/institutional values, and goals that will be developed in students. After understanding the problems and values that will be developed, participants need to understand the theory and practice that will be applied, regarding understanding emotions, personal strength, regulating emotions, and focusing on the goals to be achieved.

Next, the participant designs learning strategies based on students' social, emotional, and moral development to then be applied in learning at school. Then, participants apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired to learn and are then evaluated together. This research was carried out over 10 activity sessions (Koshy 2005; CASEL, 2015). At the beginning and end of the research, researchers gave knowledge tests to teachers regarding knowledge of students' social-emotional development. The test results are processed using data analysis techniques to determine the effectiveness of this training.

Hypothesis testing begins with testing the validity and reliability of each question through statistical testing techniques to obtain valid questions so that knowledge test questions can be used. The researchers conducted a normality assumption test to determine the distribution of research data. The assumption test results show that the knowledge test data is not normally distributed. Hypothesis testing of teachers' knowledge about student's development was carried out using the Wilcoxon sign test analysis technique.

The results showed the value Z = -3.839, p = 0.000, which means the research hypothesis is accepted. The interpretation of these results is that there is a difference in teachers' knowledge about student development before and after social-emotional learning training. The descriptive results also showed that the average posttest value M = 14.00 is greater than the average pretest value M = 11.63.

The results are according to a meta-analysis study conducted by Bracket et al., (2012). The implementation of SEL curricula has shown an increase in teachers' knowledge about emotions and their impact on students' academic performance. Teachers involved in the program reported an increased understanding of how to manage students' emotions in the classroom and how to guide students' social-emotional development.

Schonert-Reichl, Hanson-Peterson, and Hymel (2015) ran qualitative research with interviews with 35 teachers in elementary and secondary schools in Canada. Results revealed that Teachers who participated in SEL training showed increased knowledge about students' emotional development and how it impacts classroom behavior and learning. This research suggests that SEL programs help teachers recognize students' social-emotional needs and support their moral development through more inclusive teaching approaches.

Hypothesis testing of children's social skills was carried out using the dependent t-test analysis technique. The results showed the value t = -4.071,

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p = 0.000, which means the research hypothesis is accepted. The interpretation of these results is that there is a difference in children's social skills before and after the implementation of social-emotional learning in the classroom. The descriptive results also showed that the average posttest value M = 55.57 is greater than the average pretest value M = 62.97.

The results of the qualitative analysis revealed that students preferred social-emotional learning not only because the material is easier to understand and it is practiced directly, but also because the classroom atmosphere becomes more enjoyable because students can understand themselves and others better. Apart from that, students also learn how to control and express emotions appropriately, that is, instead of showing excessive emotions, students tend to express their opinions assertively.

This is congruent with case studies in various schools that have implemented SEL programs systematically by Oberle et al., (2016). Research uncovered that implementing SEL programs systematically in school's results in improvements in student engagement, motivation to learn, and social-emotional skills. Many students reported preferring learning that involved SEL because this approach supported their social and emotional needs.

Durlak et al., (2011) also revealed that the application of social-emotional learning can improve student learning outcomes, reduce behavioral problems, and increase prosocial behavior. The prosocial behavior shown by students in the research conducted by the researchers was the behavior of caring for the environment and helping each other among students. Through social-emotional learning, students practice good social skills and build friendships both during class and outside class. This is said by the students that with group learning students can get to know the personalities of their friends in class and form positive relationships. The results of this research are in line with research conducted by Elmi (2020) which shows that social-emotional learning can develop multiple intelligences in students, increase students' interest and involvement in learning in class, and control themselves.

**CONCLUSION**

Social-emotional learning program proven to increase teacher's awareness and knowledge about student's development, also escalate the student's social skills. Student's ability to understand and manage emotions, motivation in learning, prosocial behavior, and cooperative behavior also improved by the implementation of social-emotional learning in the classroom.

This study recommends continuity in training and professional development for teachers on the implementation of SEL programs. By understanding students' social and emotional skills, teachers can create more supportive and responsive learning environments, which in turn enhance students' competencies in learning.

In addition, Integrating SEL programs into the curriculum can

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improve teachers' understanding of student development. This recommendation involves developing a curriculum that focuses not only on academics but also on social and emotional skills. This will facilitate more holistic learning and increase student engagement.

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