

## **Integrating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in Primary Education: a Systematic Literature Review**

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### **Abstract**

The integration of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in primary education is a strategic step to address the challenges of 21st-century education. Modern education focuses not only on students' cognitive abilities but also on their social and emotional aspects. SEL aims to develop crucial skills such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Previous research indicates that integrating SEL into the primary education curriculum positively impacts students' well-being, leading to improved academic performance, reduced problematic behaviors, and enhanced social-emotional skills. This study employs a systematic literature review method to synthesize academic literature on the integration of SEL in primary education, searching for articles through the ScienceDirect database using specific keywords. Article selection was conducted in six stages, resulting in 10 relevant articles from an initial 391 based on stringent inclusion and exclusion criteria. Results show that school based SEL programs, such as PATHS, significantly enhance students' social, emotional, and academic outcomes. However, variations in program effectiveness highlight the need for further research on long-term impacts and cultural responsiveness. Challenges such as varying school readiness and cultural beliefs about SEL must be addressed through ongoing support and professional development. Future research should expand the scope to include larger and more diverse samples and use mixed-methods approaches for a deeper understanding of SEL effectiveness. Successful SEL integration requires a comprehensive approach, contextual flexibility, and sustained support to fully support student development.

**Keywords:** *Effectiveness; Implementation; Performance; Social-Emotional Learning; Student Well-being*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The integration of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in primary education is a strategic step necessary to face the challenges of 21st-century education (Ferreira et al., 2020; Maoulida et al., 2023). Modern education does not only focus on developing students' cognitive abilities but also on their social and emotional aspects (Biletska et al., 2021; Maoulida et al., 2023; Tangahu et al., 2021). Children today are faced with various complex situations that require them to have adequate social-emotional skills (Abrahams et al., 2019; Rubin et al., 2011). SEL aims to develop important skills such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible

decision-making (Rubab et al., 2024; Sandilos et al., 2023; Schonert-Reichl, 2017; Zieher et al., 2024). These skills are essential to help students manage their emotions, build healthy relationships, and make positive decisions in their daily lives (Brackett & Rivers, 2014; Rubab et al., 2024; Sandilos et al., 2023).

Previous research shows that integrating SEL into the primary education curriculum has a significant positive impact on students' well-being (Kim-Ju et al., 2024; Koslouski et al., 2024; Panayiotou et al., 2019; Sandilos et al., 2023; Zieher et al., 2024). Students involved in SEL programs demonstrate improved academic performance, reduced problematic behaviors, and enhanced social and emotional skills (Greenberg et al., 2017; Koslouski et al., 2024; LaBelle, 2023; Panayiotou et al., 2019). A learning environment that emphasizes SEL can create a more inclusive and supportive atmosphere, fostering holistic student development (Cefai, 2022; Darling-Hammond, 2017; Yeh et al., 2022). Therefore, a deep understanding of the various aspects and implementation of SEL through a comprehensive literature review is crucial for designing effective and sustainable educational policies (Cefai, 2022; Jagers et al., 2019; Oberle et al., 2019).

Despite the growing body of evidence supporting the benefits of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in primary education, significant gaps remain in this research. One major gap is the high variation in the quality of evidence among existing studies. Many studies lack rigorous methodologies, resulting in inconsistent and sometimes unreliable findings. This variation complicates efforts to draw definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of SEL interventions. Furthermore, there is a notable lack of comprehensive data on the long-term impacts of SEL programs, especially in diverse educational settings. Future research needs to employ more rigorous, high-quality studies to build a strong evidence base that can inform effective SEL practices and policies.

Another critical gap is the insufficient data on subgroup effects within SEL research. Many existing studies do not adequately explore how SEL interventions affect different groups of students, such as those from various socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, or with differing levels of prior emotional and social skills. This lack of detailed subgroup analysis makes it difficult to determine whether SEL programs are equally effective for all students or if certain groups benefit more than others. Addressing this gap is crucial for developing tailored SEL interventions that can meet the specific needs of diverse student populations. Future studies should prioritize subgroup analysis to provide a deeper understanding of the differential effects of SEL interventions and ensure that all students can benefit from these programs.

This research is very important because Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) has a significant impact on students' academic performance and well-being. Integrating SEL into primary education can enhance students' classroom participation, academic achievement, and emotional well-being. Thus, this research contributes to improving the quality of primary education and the better development of students. This fact is supported by various previous studies, such as those conducted by Schonert-Reichl and

Cao et al., which show that SEL increases student participation, emotional well-being, and academic achievement.

This research is very important because it helps improve the quality of primary education and contributes to better student development. It also helps correct errors in previous research and debates several aspects of SEL research, emphasizing that the integration of SEL in primary education is a necessary step to face the challenges of education in the modern era.

## METHODS

This study uses a systematic literature review method to synthesize existing academic literature on the integration of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in primary education (Nightingale, 2009). Wicaksono (2022) emphasizes that this method allows for reliable and accurate assessment of various studies conducted, as well as providing an evaluation of the validity of the method used, determining decisions on prioritizing literature to be studied, analyzed, and critiqued. This systematic review not only identifies relevant topics but also creates new knowledge through the synthesis of existing literature (Lame, 2019; Nightingale, 2009; Wicaksono, 2022).

Literature search was conducted through the ScienceDirect database with a focus on articles discussing the topic "Integrating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in Primary Education." The search was restricted to English-language articles published between 2014 and 2024. Keywords used included "Integrating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) AND Primary Education AND (Effectiveness OR Impact OR Implementation OR Outcomes)." Inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to ensure that only relevant and high-quality articles were included in this review.

The article selection process was carried out in six stages, as presented in Figure 1. In the first stage, articles not meeting the inclusion criteria based on publication year (2014-2024) were removed. In the second stage, remaining articles were further screened based on publication type, including only review or research articles and excluding encyclopedias, book chapters, conference abstracts, conference information, discussions, editorials, short communications, and other irrelevant publication types.

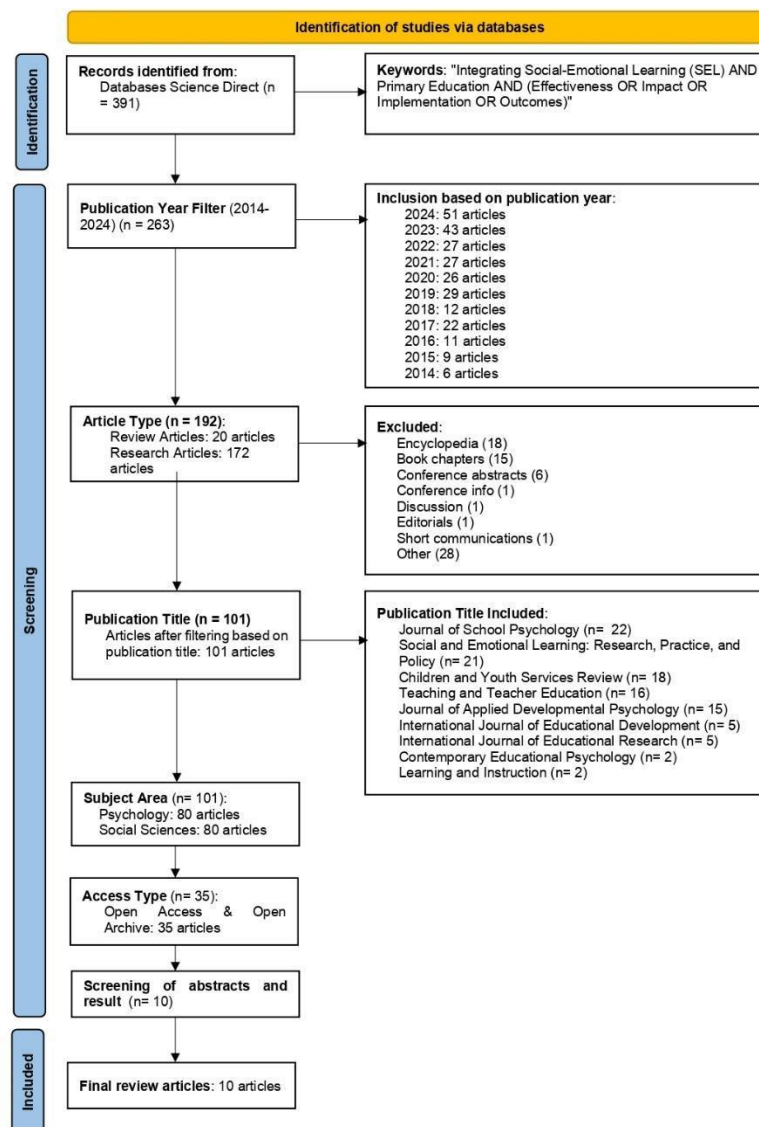
In the third stage, articles were screened based on publication titles, resulting in 101 articles meeting the criteria. In the fourth stage, articles were filtered based on subject areas, focusing on psychology and social sciences, resulting in 80 articles in each field. In the fifth stage, articles were screened based on access type, yielding 35 articles available in open access and open archives. In the sixth stage, the researcher carefully read the abstracts and results of these 35 articles and further screened them until 10 articles met the final inclusion criteria.

Characteristics of the studies included in the review were recorded in a worksheet summarized in Table 2, which includes number, author, year, title, research objective, research type, study location, and results. The data analysis used is illustrated in the PRISMA flow diagram of article selection, showing the process of filtering from the initial 391 articles to the final 10 articles.

The articles analyzed in this study discuss various aspects of integrating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in primary education. Details of these articles are presented in a table that includes information on publication year, research type, publisher title,

subject area, access, and final assessment based on abstracts and results. Through this process, this study provides a comprehensive overview of the effectiveness, impact, implementation, and outcomes of integrating SEL in primary education, which can be used to support better educational practices and policies.

PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for new systematic reviews which included searches of databases



**Figure 1.** Article Screening Procedure Based on PRISMA for Systematic Literature Review

**Table 1.** Details of Article Reviewed

No	Characteristic	Result
1	Year of Publication	
	2024	17
	2023	9
	2022	5

	2019	1
	2016	3
2	Article type	
	Review article	3
	Research article	32
3	Publication title	
	Social and Emotional Learning: Research, Practice, and Policy	21
	Journal of School Psychology	7
	Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology	3
	Children and Youth Services Review	2
	Teaching and Teacher Education	1
	Contemporary Educational Psychology	1
4	Subject areas	
	Psychology	34
	Social Sciences	14
5	Access type	
	Open access and Open archive	35
6	Related to this research	
	Based on abstract and result	10

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESULTS

#### Overview of the Selection Process

This study began with an initial search that yielded 391 articles from the ScienceDirect database using the keywords "Integrating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) AND Primary Education AND (Effectiveness OR Impact OR Implementation OR Outcomes)." The article selection process was carried out through several stringent stages to ensure that only relevant and high-quality articles were included in this review.

The first stage involved screening articles based on publication year, with inclusion criteria set for articles published between 2014 and 2024. Out of the initial 391 articles, 263 articles met the publication year criteria and proceeded to the next stage. In the second stage, articles were filtered based on publication type. Only review articles and research articles were included, while encyclopedias, book chapters, conference abstracts, conference information, discussions, editorials, short communications, and other non-relevant publication types were excluded. From the 263 articles, 192 articles advanced to the next stage, consisting of 20 review articles and 172 research articles.

The third stage involved screening articles based on publication titles, resulting in 101 articles that met the criteria. The included publication titles covered various academic journals relevant to the research topic. In the fourth stage, articles were filtered based on subject area, focusing on psychology and social sciences. From the 101 articles,

80 articles from each of the psychology and social sciences fields advanced to the next stage.

The fifth stage involved screening based on article access type, including only articles available in open access and archives. This resulted in 35 articles meeting the access criteria. The final stage involved reading and evaluating the abstracts and research results of the remaining 35 articles. Based on this screening, 10 articles were selected for further review as they met all final inclusion criteria and were relevant to the research topic.

This rigorous selection process ensures that the systematic literature review is based on the most relevant and high-quality articles, thereby providing a reliable and accurate synthesis of the integration of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in primary education.

## Characteristics of Included Studies

**Table 2.** Characteristics of Included Studies in the Systematic Literature Review

No	Author	Year	Title	Purpose of Research	Type of Research	Study Location	Result
1	Greg M. Kim-Ju Casey A. Knifsend Arianna Gonzales	2024	Putting social and emotional learning into practice: Best practices in developing and implementing an SEL program through a university-1st-8th grade partnership	The purpose of the research was to discuss the SEL curriculum and steps to integrate it into existing 1st-8th grade curriculums, describe the development and continuation of university-elementary/middle school partnerships,	Practice-based research	Urban school district in Sacramento, California, USA	The SEL Project, initiated in 2014, successfully implemented SEL programs in elementary and middle schools, promoting positive social, emotional, health, and academic outcomes for students. Formal assessments show high retention, with over 90% of teachers and 95% of SEL mentors continuing after the first semester.
2	Almut K. Zieher, Craig S. Bailey, Christina Cipriano, Tessa McNaboe, Krista Smith, Michael J. Strambler	2024	Considering the "How" of SEL: A framework for the pedagogies of social and emotional learning	The research presents a theoretical framework for understanding and studying the pedagogies of social and emotional learning (SEL).	Perspectives/Reviews	Yale Child Study Center, Yale School of Medicine, New Haven, CT, USA	The proposed framework integrates three types of SEL knowledge with five pedagogies: modeling, practice promotion, transfer promotion, elaboration, and validation. The framework highlights the importance of culturally responsive practices.
3	Aidyn L. Iachini, Tasha M. Childs, Rachelle Curcio, Robbie A. Ross, Kate E. Ascetta, Shea E. Ferguson, Jessie D. Guest	2023	Building schoolwide readiness for social emotional learning: A feasibility and acceptability study of the ReadySET intervention	The study developed, piloted, and implemented the ReadySET intervention, a brief, innovative program designed to help schools assess their readiness, identify	Mixed-method study	Two elementary schools in one southeastern school district in the United States	The ReadySET intervention was found to be feasible and acceptable to school stakeholders, with implementation largely adhering to the designed program.

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No	Author	Year	Title	Purpose of Research	Type of Research	Study Location	Result
				needs and resources, and address challenges in SEL implementation.			
4	Christina Cipriano, Cheyeon Ha, Miranda Wood, Kaveri Sehgal, Eliya Ahmad, Michael F. McCarthy	2024	A systematic review and meta-analysis of the effects of universal school-based SEL programs in the United States: Considerations for marginalized students	The purpose of this study was to systematically review and meta-analyze the evidence for universal school-based social-emotional learning (SEL) programs within the United States.	Systematic review and meta-analysis	United States	The results indicated that universal school-based SEL programs generally produced significant positive effects on students' social, emotional, and academic outcomes.
5	Margarita Panayiotou, Neil Humphrey, Michael Wigelsworth	2019	An empirical basis for linking social and emotional learning to academic performance	The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between social and emotional learning (SEL) and academic performance.	Empirical research study.	The study was conducted in various schools across the United States.	The study found that SEL programs significantly improve students' social and emotional skills, which in turn positively affect their academic performance.
6	Jessica B. Koslouski, Emily A. Iovino, Sandra M. Chafouleas	2024	Feel Your Best Self: Insights from elementary teachers' use in teaching emotion-focused coping strategies	This study aims to explore how elementary school teachers use emotion-focused coping strategies in teaching, as well as to understand the feasibility and effectiveness of implementing the Feel Your Best Self (FYBS) program.	Qualitative research with in-depth interviews and artifact collection.	Several elementary schools, including Cedar Elementary School, Maple Elementary School, and Oak Elementary School.	Emotion-focused coping strategies can be taught effectively and flexibly in classroom settings, demonstrating steps to expand the FYBS materials.



No	Author	Year	Title	Purpose of Research	Type of Research	Study Location	Result
7	James L. Merle, Andrew J. Thayer, Madeline F. Larson, Sydney Pauling, Clayton R. Cook, Joseph A. Rios, Jenna L. McGinnis, Margaret M. Sullivan	2022	Investigating strategies to increase general education teachers' adherence to evidence-based social-emotional behavior practices: A meta-analysis of the single-case literature	This study aimed to address the gap in understanding the strategies that effectively increase general education teachers' adherence to evidence-based social-emotional behavior (SEB) practices.	Mixed-method study	Schools in the United States	The study found that active implementation strategies, such as performance feedback, implementation planning, and prompts/reminders, are more effective than passive methods like one-time training sessions.
8	Yihan Sun, Andrea Tamblyn, Heather Morris, Crystal Boothby, Helen Skouteris, Claire Blewitt	2024	Early childhood and primary school Teachers' experiences and needs in working with trauma-impacted Children: A systematic review and thematic synthesis	The purpose of this study was to conduct a meta-analysis of peer-reviewed single-case experimental design (SCED) studies examining the types and effects of implementation strategies used to increase general education teachers' adherence to evidence-based practices (EBPs) designed to address student social-emotional behavior (SEB) needs.	Meta-analysis of peer-reviewed SCED studies	United States	The study concluded that active implementation strategies, including performance feedback, implementation planning, and prompts/reminders, are more effective than large-group, one-time trainings.
9	Neil Humphrey, Alexandra Barlow, Michael Wigelsworth, Ann Lendrum, Kirsty Pert, Craig Joyce, Emma Stephens,	2016	A cluster randomized controlled trial of the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) curriculum	The research aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) curriculum in promoting social	Randomized controlled trial (RCT)	Manchester, United Kingdom	The study found that the PATHS curriculum significantly improved students' social and emotional competence, as well as reduced incidences of

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No	Author	Year	Title	Purpose of Research	Type of Research	Study Location	Result
	Lawrence Woo, Garry Squires, Kevin Woods, Rachel Calam, Alex Turner			and emotional well-being among children.			problematic behaviors in the participating schools.
10	Fiona M. Hollands, Stephen M. Leach, Robert Shand, Laura Head, Yixin Wang, Dena Dossett, Florence Chang, Bo Yan, Minetre Martin, Yilin Pan, Sandra Hensel	2022	Restorative Practices: Using local evidence on costs and student outcomes to inform school district decisions about behavioral interventions	To identify methods for providing information to help school district decision-makers determine which programs and practices to invest or reinvest in, focusing on the costs and effectiveness of integrating Restorative Practices with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).	Research-practice partnership (RPP)	Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS)	The study found that schools integrating Restorative Practices with PBIS experienced additional costs but fewer disciplinary referrals and suspensions, reduced racial disparities in disciplinary actions, and higher scores on measures of school culture and climate.

## **Summary of Findings**

### **1. Quantitative Synthesis**

This study involves various Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programs implemented in primary and secondary schools, showing significant results in improving students' social, emotional, and academic outcomes. Quantitatively, most studies involved large numbers of participants, with some programs covering entire school populations. These programs generally exhibited high retention rates, with over 90% of teachers and 95% of SEL mentors continuing their participation after the first semester. The duration of the interventions varied, from one semester to several years, with programs like PATHS showing significant impacts after long-term implementation. The outcomes measured included social and emotional skills, academic performance, social competence, emotion regulation, and the readiness of schools to implement SEL. Studies indicate that SEL programs implemented by classroom teachers tend to be more effective compared to those delivered by other facilitators. Overall, the results show that school-based SEL programs produce significant positive effects on students' social, emotional, and academic outcomes, with no significant differences between primary and secondary school levels.

### **2. Qualitative Synthesis**

Qualitative findings from the included studies reveal several important themes related to the integration of SEL in primary education. SEL programs like The SEL Project use structured approaches that encompass competencies such as self-management and responsible decision-making. Adaptations to contexts, such as the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on mental health, demonstrate the flexibility and relevance of programs across different situations. Additionally, the findings underscore the importance of culturally responsive approaches, emphasizing the need for further research to explore the best pedagogical combinations for various contexts. The findings also show that active implementation strategies, such as performance feedback and implementation planning, are more effective than passive methods like one-time training sessions. Multi-component strategies that incorporate various Behavioral Change Techniques (BCTs) have a greater impact compared to single-component strategies. Continuous support is also crucial to maintain high adherence to SEL interventions, contributing to better student outcomes. Programs such as PATHS and FYBS significantly improve students' social and emotional skills while reducing incidents of problematic behavior, and they create supportive learning environments that foster positive emotional outcomes. These findings suggest that the success of SEL implementation depends on contextual adaptation, culturally responsive approaches, active implementation strategies, and ongoing support.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The analysis of various studies consistently shows that social-emotional learning (SEL) interventions are effective in enhancing social, emotional, and academic outcomes for students in primary education. For instance, the research by Greg M. Kim-Ju et al. (2024) highlights the success of SEL programs in promoting positive social and emotional health, as well as academic achievements, with a high retention rate of participants. Similarly, the systematic review and meta-analysis by Christina Cipriano et al. (2024) confirm that universal school-based SEL programs have significant positive effects on students' social, emotional, and academic outcomes, particularly when implemented by classroom teachers.

Successful SEL programs often share several key strategies and approaches. A structured and comprehensive approach, as seen in The SEL Project, involves using well-defined lesson plans that cover essential SEL competencies like self-management and responsible decision-making. This project also adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic by addressing mental health concerns, demonstrating the program's flexibility and relevance in various contexts. Another common strategy is the use of active implementation techniques, such as performance feedback and implementation planning, which have been shown to be more effective than passive methods like one-time training sessions. For example, the study by James L. Merle et al. (2022) emphasizes that multi-component strategies incorporating various Behavior Change Techniques (BCTs) are more impactful in ensuring teachers adhere to evidence-based SEL practices.

While the overall effectiveness of SEL interventions is well-documented, there are some variations and contradictions in the findings. For instance, the study by Aidyn L. Iachini et al. (2023) found that while the ReadySET intervention was feasible and acceptable, there was a slight decline in beliefs about SEL culture among participants, highlighting the need for further research to sustain engagement over time. Additionally, Fiona M. Hollands et al. (2022) observed no statistically significant effects on most measured outcomes after one year of implementing restorative practices integrated with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), although a reduction in suspensions was noted for Black students after two years. These variations may be attributed to differences in program implementation, the specific context of each study, and the unique needs of the student populations involved. The emphasis on culturally responsive practices, as noted in the framework proposed by Almut K. Zieher et al. (2024), also suggests that tailoring SEL programs to the cultural and contextual specifics of each school is crucial for maximizing their effectiveness.

SEL interventions in primary education are generally effective in improving students' social, emotional, and academic outcomes. Common successful strategies include structured lesson plans and active implementation techniques. However,

variations in findings highlight the importance of considering cultural and contextual factors, as well as the need for ongoing support and research to address potential challenges and sustain engagement in SEL programs.

### **Implications for Practice**

Integrating Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) into primary education requires a multifaceted approach that involves structured lesson plans, active implementation strategies, and culturally responsive practices. Educators should utilize well-defined SEL curricula, such as The SEL Project, which includes lesson plans covering key competencies like self-management and responsible decision-making. This structured approach not only facilitates effective teaching but also promotes positive social, emotional, and academic outcomes for students. Policymakers should ensure that SEL programs are adaptable to changing circumstances, as demonstrated by the successful adaptation of SEL initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, training university students as SEL mentors, as highlighted by Greg M. Kim-Ju et al. (2024), can provide additional support and enrich the educational environment.

Despite the documented benefits, several challenges and barriers can impede the effective integration of SEL in primary education. One significant challenge is the varying levels of school readiness and the existing cultural beliefs about SEL. For example, the study by Aidyn L. Iachini et al. (2023) found a decline in beliefs about SEL culture, suggesting the need for continuous engagement and motivational strategies to maintain support for SEL programs. Another barrier is the inconsistency in program implementation. As noted by James L. Merle et al. (2022), active implementation strategies such as performance feedback and implementation planning are more effective than passive methods. Therefore, it is crucial for schools to adopt multi-component strategies that incorporate various Behavior Change Techniques (BCTs) to ensure high fidelity in SEL practice. Additionally, the study by Fiona M. Hollands et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of long-term commitment and follow-up to observe significant changes, particularly in reducing suspensions among minority students. To overcome these challenges, it is essential to provide ongoing professional development for educators, involve the whole school community in SEL initiatives, and ensure that programs are tailored to meet the specific cultural and contextual needs of each school.

Integrating SEL into primary education requires a comprehensive and adaptable approach, supported by active implementation strategies and culturally responsive practices. Addressing challenges such as varying school readiness, cultural beliefs, and implementation inconsistencies through continuous support and tailored interventions can enhance the effectiveness of SEL programs and promote sustained positive outcomes for students.

### **Implications for Future Research**

The current body of literature on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in primary education has several gaps that future research should address. While there is substantial evidence supporting the effectiveness of SEL programs, there is limited research on the long-term impacts of these interventions. Most studies, such as those by Greg M. Kim-Ju et al. (2024) and Christina Cipriano et al. (2024), focus on short-term outcomes and immediate benefits. Future research should investigate the sustained impact of SEL programs on students' social, emotional, and academic development over multiple years. Additionally, the cultural responsiveness of SEL programs needs further exploration. Almut K. Zieher et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of culturally responsive practices, but more studies are needed to understand how these practices can be effectively integrated and what their specific impacts are on diverse student populations.

Several methodological limitations are present in the included studies, which future research should aim to address. One significant limitation is the reliance on self-reported data, which can introduce bias and affect the reliability of the findings. For example, the study by Jessica B. Koslouski et al. (2024) utilized self-reported measures from teachers, which may not accurately capture the effectiveness of the emotion-focused coping strategies being implemented. Future research should incorporate more objective measures, such as direct observations and longitudinal data, to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of SEL interventions. Additionally, many studies, like those by Aidyn L. Iachini et al. (2023) and James L. Merle et al. (2022), used relatively small sample sizes or were limited to specific geographic locations, which can limit the generalizability of the findings. Expanding the scope of future studies to include larger, more diverse samples can help to validate the effectiveness of SEL programs across different contexts and populations.

The integration of qualitative and quantitative methods can also enhance the robustness of future research. Mixed-methods approaches, as seen in the study by Neil Humphrey et al. (2016), provide a more nuanced understanding of the processes and outcomes associated with SEL programs by capturing both numerical data and detailed participant experiences. Moreover, the studies reviewed often lacked rigorous implementation fidelity checks, which are crucial for understanding the true impact of SEL interventions. Ensuring high fidelity in program delivery and using standardized fidelity assessment tools can help to better attribute observed outcomes to the SEL programs themselves. Future research on SEL in primary education should address the identified gaps by exploring the long-term impacts of SEL programs, enhancing cultural responsiveness, and improving methodological rigor through the use of objective measures, larger sample sizes, and mixed-methods approaches. These steps will contribute to a more comprehensive and reliable understanding of SEL's effectiveness and its potential to support students' holistic development.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that social-emotional learning (SEL) interventions are effective in improving students' social, emotional, and academic outcomes in primary education. Several studies have affirmed that school-based SEL programs have significant positive effects, especially when implemented by classroom teachers. A comprehensive structural approach, active implementation techniques such as performance feedback, and adaptations to conditions such as the COVID-19 pandemic are key strategies supporting the success of SEL programs. However, variations in outcomes highlight the importance of considering cultural and contextual factors, as well as the need for ongoing support and further research to address implementation challenges and maintain engagement in SEL programs. For practice, SEL integration requires a multifaceted approach involving a structured curriculum, active implementation strategies, and culturally responsive practices. Challenges such as varying school readiness and existing cultural beliefs must be addressed through continuous professional development and whole-school community involvement in SEL initiatives. Future research should focus on the long-term impacts of SEL programs, enhancing cultural responsiveness, and improving methodological rigor with the use of objective measures, larger and more diverse samples, and mixed methods approaches to gain a deeper understanding of SEL processes and outcomes. These steps will contribute to a more comprehensive and reliable understanding of SEL effectiveness and its potential in supporting student development.

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