

## EFFECTS OF INNOVATIVE SEL APPROACHES ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND TEACHER PERFORMANCE

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### ABSTRACT

The 21st-century education system increasingly demands holistic approaches that go beyond cognitive skills to foster social, emotional, and ethical competencies. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) has emerged globally as a framework to enhance both academic achievement and well-being. However, its implementation in Pakistan remains limited and largely untested within local contexts. This study investigated the effects of innovative SEL interventions—mindfulness-based, culturally responsive, and technology-integrated—on student achievement and teacher performance in urban schools of Lahore. A mixed-methods convergent parallel design with a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test control group was employed, involving 500 middle school students and 32 teachers over 16–20 weeks. Quantitative findings demonstrated significant improvements in experimental group students' performance in English and mathematics ( $p < .001$ ), alongside enhanced collaboration, emotional regulation, and prosocial behavior. Teachers in the intervention group reported higher emotional intelligence, reduced burnout, and more effective classroom management. Qualitative data from interviews, observations, and journals corroborated these results, highlighting cultural relevance, stronger teacher-student relationships, and improved school climate. The study concludes that SEL is not an optional add-on but an essential driver of academic and emotional development in Pakistan. Policy integration, teacher training, culturally adapted curricula, supportive leadership, and community partnerships are recommended for sustainable implementation. These findings provide evidence that SEL, when locally contextualized, can transform classrooms into emotionally intelligent learning communities and address critical educational challenges in resource-constrained environments.

**Key Words:** Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), student achievement, teacher performance, mindfulness, cultural adaptation, Pakistan, mixed-methods

### INTRODUCTION

The 21st-century education is in the dynamics of change, and it is influenced by technological progress, globalization, and demands on preparing learners for the current realities of complex social, emotional, and ethical issues. Even the conventional educational systems currently face attacks in their inability to develop the whole child, mainly because their core focus is on cognitive-related learning and

academic attainment. Digital Technology in Education, a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), continues to become a promising framework to fill this gap, which focuses on the development of students in the management of emotions, development of positive relationships, and exhibiting of responsible decisions, skills critical to the academic context,

as well as satisfaction with life, in addition to embracing global citizenship.

SEL can be described as the mechanism by which children and adults learn to recognize and successfully use the knowledge, attitudes, and skills required to analyze and manage their emotions, discover and demonstrate the empathy of others, develop and those affirming good, and make responsible choices (CASEL, 2020). These competencies are increasingly being considered as the mainstay of individual and college growth. The studies that focused on the western context demonstrated that successful implementation of SEL contributes to more successful academic performance, less emotional distress, and more positive classroom behavior (Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017).

Illustrative of the early synthesis organizations in the field is the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), which provides a five-domain model of SEL: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. This model is now regarded as the normative model when it comes to most educational regimes and particularly the US, Europe, and parts of Asia.

However, as SEL becomes more popular all over the world, it becomes more apparent that standard, Curriculum-based models are not effective in addressing the needs of schools in the Global South, which are profoundly diversified in regard to culture, economics, and educational institutions. To this effect, new, innovative SEL models have started to appear as alternatives, namely mindfulness-based interventions, technology-integrated platforms, arts-based SEL, and storytelling interventions, as flexible and culturally responsive. These are based on experiential learning, student agency, and incorporation of SEL into everyday classroom activities with little to no resources.

The demand for SEL is acute in Pakistan. Some of the educational challenges experienced in the country are overcrowding in learning institutions, ill-equipped teachers, rote learning, socio-economic inequalities, the trauma of students, and the neglect of the emotional situation of teachers. The Out-of-School Children in Pakistan. It has been reported that there are more than 22.8 million

out-of-school children, according to the Pakistan Education Statistics 2020-21, and the quality of education of school-going children is usually poor. In addition to scholarly issues, a vast majority of the children are suffering psychologically due to poverty, displacement, violence, and family dysfunction. Teachers, as well, are overworked with administrative duties, discipline issues, and poor remuneration, and typically perform without emotional or pedagogical guidance.

The SEL is, however, quite a novel idea in the Pakistani education system, despite these burning needs. Some SEL programs have been piloted by a small number of NGOs and international agencies in some schools, with results restricted in scale and frequently relying on imported models and limited cultural adaptation. The schools in the public sector especially lack institutional frameworks or trained personnel to implement SEL at the systemic level.

Whole new SEL strategies, in their turn, provide more flexibility regarding resource-starved and culturally different environments such as Pakistan. Such practices as mindfulness can be compatible with Islamic tazkiyah (self-purification) and khushu (inner tranquillity), and storytelling can be based on rich local traditions and folklore. In the same fashion, SEL interventions at the digital level (delivered as a platform and mobile applications) can target students in dense cities and remote regions alike, especially as the penetration of mobile phones grows in Pakistan.

Under these circumstances, one has to investigate how innovative models of SEL operate in contrast to traditional systems of SEL and whether they can affect student performance and the work of educators. The current study of this tendency is especially topical when Pakistan wants to revise its national curriculum and teaching methodology within the framework of the Single National Curriculum (SNC) approach that prescribes a holistic approach to education.

### **Problem Statement**

There is dire student performance as well as teacher performance in the Pakistan education system, which is a two-fold crisis. ASER and NEAS are standardized assessments that, on

repeated occasions, have revealed that students in Pakistan underperform in basic subjects such as Math, English, and Science. In the meantime, most teachers lack both content knowledge and teaching skills, especially in the domain of student engagement and classroom management.

Structured lack of social and emotional learning is one of the hidden but repeatedly stated reasons behind such problems. In the absence of SEL, students have difficulties with emotional control, motivation, interpersonal relations with peers, and their behaviour in the classroom, which directly impacts academic performance. Teachers also end up with burnout, frustrations, and emotional fatigue, which interfere with their work and their relations with learners.

Although certain Pakistani schools have previously tried the traditional SEL models, the change can be difficult in large classrooms with a fixed schedule, little to no training, and an insufficient amount of resources. In addition, these models might not really appeal to the socio-cultural situation of Pakistani students and teachers.

New SEL programs, such as mindfulness-based SEL, game-based SEL, and digital apps, might be a more convenient and culturally appropriate solution. Such methods are sometimes more straightforward to apply, more motivating to students, and more versatile to the local values and restrictions. Nevertheless, little is known about the effectiveness of those models compared to traditional SEL frameworks within the Pakistani context based on empirical research.

This paper sees this gap in the literature and investigates the impacts of new SEL practices on students' academic performance and teachers' performance, compared to the old SEL practices. It is intended to produce context-related evidence that may be used to develop policy and practice in the Pakistani schools.

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives that guide the study are the following:

1. To determine how innovative SEL interventions affect the academic performance of students in Pakistani schools.

2. In order to determine the impact innovative SEL practices have on teacher performance, such as evaluation of instructional quality, classroom management, and emotional control.
3. In order to compare conventional SEL programs (e.g., CASEL) with new SEL approaches in terms of feasibility, engagement, and outcomes.
4. To investigate the teacher and student-level perceptions of adoption of innovative SEL strategies in their teaching/learning organizations.
5. To propose situation-relevant SEL models to be adopted in the school programs and thereafter in the teachers' training within Pakistan.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the impact of innovative SEL practices on student academic achievements in some schools of Pakistan?
2. How do novel SEL practices improve the performance and the well-being of teachers?
3. What are the differences between the traditional and innovative models of SEL in their feasibility and effectiveness related to the Pakistani context?
4. What conclusions are given by teachers and students regarding the usefulness and difficulties of innovative SEL interventions, along with their relevance?
5. What are the contextual issues that determine the success or failure of the implementation of SEL in Pakistani schools?

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### TRADITIONAL VS. INNOVATIVE SEL APPROACHES

Originally a product of the behavioral and developmental psychology of the last several decades, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) has developed over the last few years to become an interdisciplinary situated field of various applications in education. The systematic development of emotional and interpersonal skills at school was based on traditional models of SEL development, which include, for example, options proposed by the Collaborative of Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). Nevertheless, the educational

environment featuring a high rate of change, technological development, cultural paradigm shifts, and inclusivity and well-being has led to the introduction of new SEL methods, namely mindfulness-based, technology-inclusive, and culturally responsive education Farr, Kisamore, and Limberg 147-168.

Identifying the differences and similarities between more traditional and innovative SEL models is important to both teachers and those designing education policies, especially in countries in which the socio-cultural, technological, and pedagogical settings include challenges and opportunities that are very specific to SEL practices.

### **SEL AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: GLOBAL AND LOCAL EVIDENCE**

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) has today become one of the pillars in education, and it contributes significantly to the academic performance of the students as well as their emotional support. Although traditionally regarded as a supplement to the primary academic teaching, SEL is more and more commonly accepted as an element of the complete educational process. International and local studies are gaining momentum, showing that the successful use of SEL has a positive correlation with better student performance. The possible effect of SEL on the educational outcome is especially immense in such settings as Pakistan, where the students in educational institutions experience both academic and emotional stress.

### **IMPACT OF SEL ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

At the international level, a widespread body of empirical evidence has supported the correlation between SEL and the academic achievements made by students. According to the landmark meta-analysis performed by Durlak et al. (2011), who reviewed 213 studies with more than 270,000 students in kindergarten to high schools, there is an 11 percentage point gain in academic performance in participants of SEL programs than in their peers who did not partake in such programs. There was also a positive impact on classroom behavior, stress management, and school

attitude, which are directly and indirectly related to academic success.

A follow-up meta-analysis conducted by Taylor et al. (2017), compared to the results of the previous study, also examined more than 82 school-based SEL interventions and concluded that in addition to students continuing to show improved academic results till 3.5 years after the interventions, the students also demonstrated a rise in social behaviours, emotional control and a decrease in rates of anxiety and depression. These longitudinal findings provide strong evidence that SEL has been found to lead to long-term academic achievement.

### **SEL AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES IN THE PAKISTANI CONTEXT**

Research on and the actual implementation of SEL in Pakistan are still in their youth, but emerging evidence and contextual analysis are showing positive signs of potential impact.

#### **a. The Pakistan Need for SEL**

Pakistan students have encountered various issues, such as pedagogy that focuses on exams, male-dominated classrooms, women not treated equally, poverty, and they are exposed to violence and trauma frequently. These have led to demotivation, dropouts, and psychosocial complications that hamper academic performance. According to the Pakistan Education Statistics Report (2021), there are more than 22 million out-of-school children in Pakistan, and poverty of learning is dominant in rural parts of the country.

#### **b. Local Projects and Pilot Projects**

There are recent pilot programs that have placed these SEL in small settings. This was among one such initiative made by the Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) and the UNICEF in Punjab and Sindh. The project aimed at incorporating SEL into primary education by training teachers and transforming SEL materials. Observational data on schools in which it was implemented indicated that it has resulted in better student concentration and decreased behavioral problems and anecdotal improvements in academic participation, though there are still scant data on overall academic performance.

In the same motion, leadership and classroom training modules of the Teach For Pakistan program have incorporated some elements of

SEL. Other affected students appear more curious, have initiative, and work hard in school, according to the indications made by other scholars, including fellows.

#### c. Perception of Teachers

The study by Arif & Malik (2022) was carried out on 120 teachers in Lahore and Islamabad to categorize their attitude to SEL. Though 78 percent of the participants agreed that SEL does have a positive effect on student learning, only 32 percent of the respondents used SEL strategies on a regular basis because of insufficient training and supplies. This disjunct demonstrates that the lack of systemic capacity-building is important in transforming its positive perceptions into practice.

### **SEL AND TEACHER PERFORMANCE: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, BURNOUT, AND INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY**

The influence of teachers on student achievements has been known for quite a long time, but the aspects concerning the achievement of individual teachers have started to take center stage in educational institutions. One of such factors has been the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), which has received recognition not only in graduate students but also in teacher well-being and instructional performance. SEL will prepare teachers to utilize emotional skills required to manage stress, assess students, and maintain quality teaching. The section focuses on the role of SEL in the development of emotional intelligence, prevention of burnout, and enhancement of instructional quality and relies not only on the global literature on the given topic but also on the insights applicable to the Pakistani education sector.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is defined as part of SEL understanding abilities of perceiving, understanding, managing, and regulating one's and other people's emotions (Goleman, 1995). Emotional intelligence in a teaching career is a key aspect in enhancing an effective learning environment, developing relationships, and addressing classroom issues.

#### a. Controlling Emotions and Self-Awareness

The teachers who have a higher emotional intelligence understand themselves and manage

their emotional reactions to stressful situations in classrooms much better. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) claim that emotionally intelligent teachers can handle classroom atmosphere in a more supportive and relaxed manner, which, in its turn, encourages students to stay interested in the process and learn.

#### b. Building Relationship and empathy

Empathy is one of the important abilities that can be used to comprehend the emotional and educational requirements of the learners. Having this ability, teachers can better establish relations with various learners, satisfy their socio-emotional needs, and sustain an inclusive classroom. Coupled with a culturally diverse and resource-constrained environment, such as Pakistan, where students might be traumatized, poor, or unstable in their families, this skill is essential.

#### c. Professional Reflection and Decision Making

Emotional intelligence also helps teachers to make balanced decisions and practice reflection. The teachers will be more responsive than reactive to changes in students as they understand and accommodate student learning needs and emotional conditions in their instruction. In a study that investigated teacher self-efficacy and classroom management together with emotional intelligence among Iranian teachers, a positive correlation was established, indicating that self-efficacy and classroom management were found to be high when emotional intelligence was high (Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2010).

Overall, emotional intelligence-based SEL interventions are the cornerstone of teacher performance. When educators have excellent emotional abilities, they improve not only their performance but also become an example of emotional management and contentious relations with others to the students.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY AND SEL COMPETENCY**

One of the most significant in-school impacts regarding student attainment is the quality of teaching that is provided by teachers (Hattie, 2009). SEL has a direct impact on instructional quality because it improves the teachers' control

of classroom management, flexibility in the pedagogical approach, and engagement strategy of students.

#### **a. Classroom climate and Management**

High SEL competencies make teachers more skilled at ensuring safe and helpful environments within the classrooms. Well-run classroom lowers disruptive behavior, increase time on task, and improve deeper learning. When tested in a study that was carried out by Ransford et al. (2009), results were recorded on how teachers trained in SEL encouraged better organization in the classrooms and student-teacher relations.

#### **b. Cultural Responsiveness and Differentiation**

SEL boosts teachers to be more knowledgeable about individual student needs and engage students to give differentiated instructions. Teachers who understand their emotions better are more likely to detect and address the cognitive and emotional needs of the teachers, especially in inclusive schools with diverse learners. SEL can give teachers in Pakistan the power to apply culturally and contextually responsive tactics, as multi-grade classrooms and linguistic diversity are pervasive in Pakistan.

#### **c. Student Engagement and Motivation**

Socially and emotionally competent teachers are more inspirational and energetic, which has a favorable impact on student engagement. With affective-oriented educators, as Duckworth et al. (2009) indicate, grit, perseverance, and a growth mindset can be instilled in the pupils, which go hand in hand with academic achievement.

### **SEL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

It is becoming clear that providing SEL to teachers during professional development (PD) is a necessary step. The conventional PD may concentrate more on pedagogical content knowledge and does not talk about the emotional side of teaching. Nevertheless, the teacher reflection, emotional self-care, and collaborative learning, which were previously mentioned as characteristics of SEL-infused PD programs, contribute to long-term professional development.

#### **a. International SEL-PD Trains**

The SEL competencies are being embedded in the requirements and standards of teachers and certification in nations such as the United States, Canada, and Australia. SEL-based PD programs like MindUP, RULER, and CARE make teachers healthier and enhance their ability to provide high-quality instruction.

#### **b. In Pakistan Gap and Opportunity**

This is because in Pakistan, the training of a teacher is usually focused on delivering content, rather than on anything emotional or well-being-oriented. However, new organizations are showing promise, like the National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) and Teach for Pakistan, which are starting to test more comprehensive curricula. These comprise elements on empathy, student psychology, and reflective teaching practices, which is a sign of increasing appreciation of the power of SEL.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts a pragmatic paradigm using a mixed methods convergent parallel design with an embedded quasi-experiment in selected Pakistani schools. It examines the impact of innovative Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) approaches—mindfulness-based, culturally responsive, and technology-integrated—on student achievement and teacher performance. SEL, being multidimensional, requires both quantitative rigor and qualitative depth, so the study integrates positivist and interpretivist assumptions.

The quantitative component applies a pre-test/post-test quasi-experimental control group design, measuring student academic performance and teacher outcomes such as emotional intelligence, instructional quality, and burnout. The experimental group receives SEL interventions over 16–20 weeks, while the control group follows the traditional curriculum. Qualitative data, collected through interviews, classroom observations, and teacher journals, captures experiences, perceptions, and contextual challenges. Results are triangulated to enhance validity and reliability.

The target population includes middle school students (grades 6–8) and their teachers in private schools in Lahore, sampled purposively

and stratified by gender and school type. The sample comprises about 500 students and 32 teachers. Inclusion criteria ensure consistency, while ethical safeguards include informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and institutional approval. Data collection involves pre- and post-tests, standardized scales, surveys, interviews, observations, reflective journals, and document analysis, conducted over 24 weeks. Quantitative data are analyzed using descriptive and inferential methods, while qualitative data undergo thematic analysis with triangulation to ensure trustworthiness. Integration of findings through joint display matrices provides a holistic view of outcomes and processes. Contextual adaptations include translating materials into Urdu, ensuring cultural sensitivity, and using mobile/offline tools where necessary. Strengths of the design include comprehensive understanding, internal validity, and triangulation, while limitations include non-randomization, resource demands, and implementation challenges in school contexts. Despite these, the study offers robust, contextually grounded evidence on the effectiveness of SEL interventions in Pakistani schools.

**Part 1**

**QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

The pre-test and Post-test results in English and Mathematics were analyzed for both groups. The mentioned table and graph show the mean scores:

Group	Subject	Pre-test mean	Post-test mean	Gain score
Experimental	English	62.4	74.2	+11.8
Experimental	Math	58.9	70.1	+11.2
Control	English	61.8	65.0	+3.2
Control	Math	59.1	61.2	+2.1

**RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

**DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE**

The study was conducted in four urban schools in Lahore, a total of **240 students** and **32 teachers** were assigned to experimental and control groups. The experimental group was provided with SEL intervention over 16 weeks to integrate it with classroom instructions. On the other hand, the control group was allowed to continue with the conventional teaching practices.

**Student Demographics**

- Total: 500 (250 experimental and 250 control)
- Grades 6 to 8
- Gender: 40% female, 60% male
- Language background: 20% Urdu speaking, 80% bilingual or English-medium

**Teacher Demographics**

- Total: 32 (16 in experimental and 16 in control)
- Average teaching experience: 8.3 years
- Subject specializations: English, Math, and Science
- SEL training prior to intervention: None





**4.3.2 Inferential Statistics**

Significant improvements in student performance were observed through Paired sample t-tests within the experimental group:

- **English:**  $t(119) = 9.87, p < .001$
- **Math:**  $t(119) = 10.12, p < .001$

Independent sample t-tests comparing control and experimental groups highlighted impressive differences in post-test scores.

- **English:**  $t(238) = 5.92, p < .001$
- **Math:**  $t(238) = 6.18, p < .001$

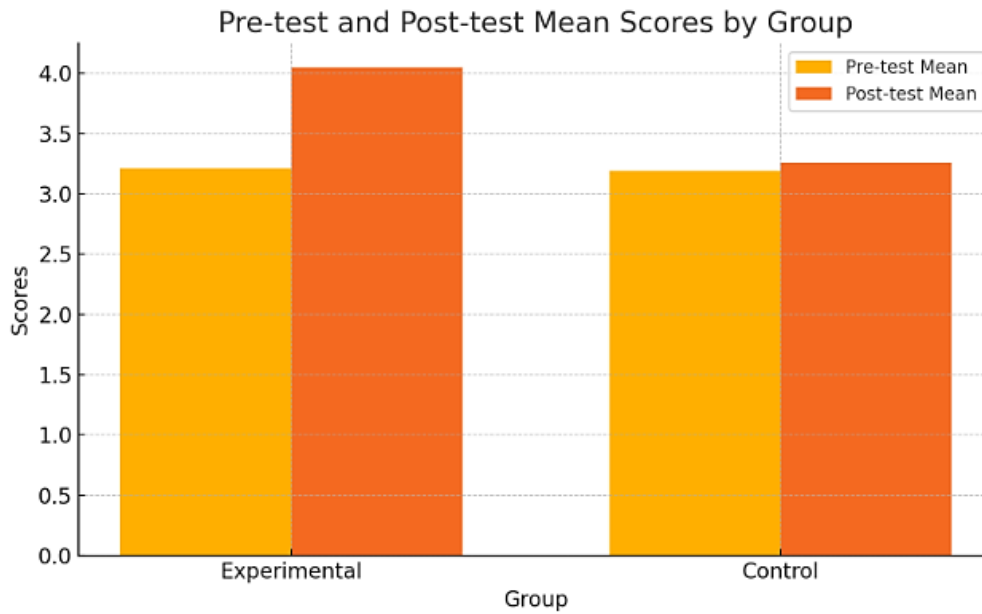
The increase in scores results imply that SEL intervention had a substantial positive impact on academic performance, especially in areas that require focus, collaboration, and self-management.

**QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS: TEACHER PERFORMANCE**

**EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE RESULTS**

Before and after the intervention, the teachers completed the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS).

Group	Pre-test mean	Post-test mean	Gain score
Experimental	3.21	4.05	+0.84
Control	3.19	3.26	+0.07

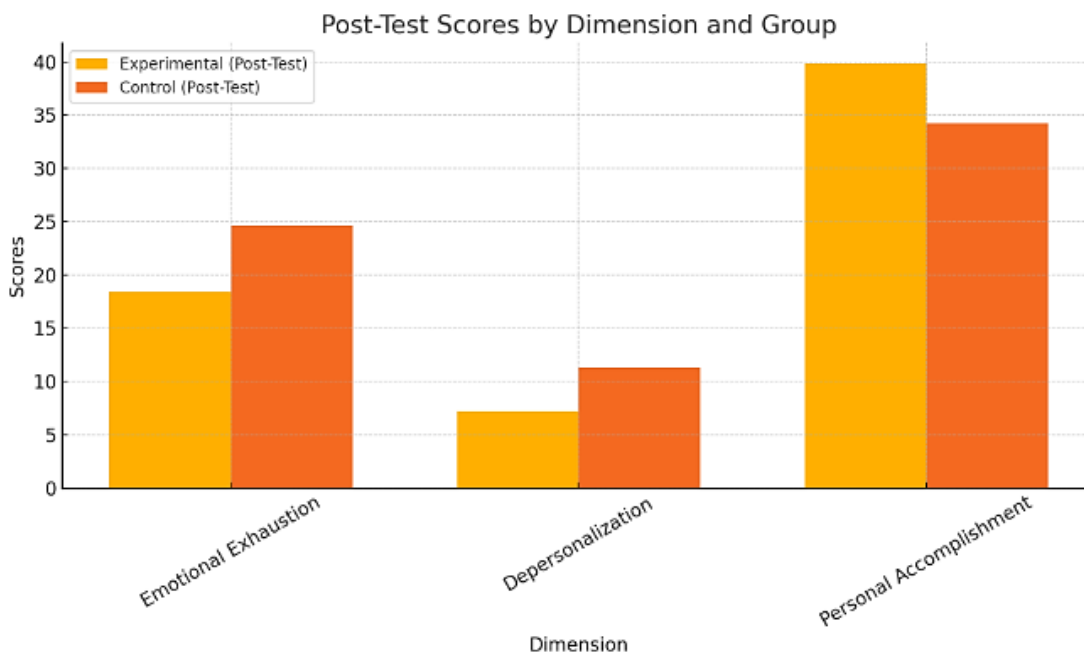


t-test scores illustrated significant improvement for the experimental group:

- $t(15) = 4.79, p < .001$

Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) results showed reduced burnout levels among the teachers who were exposed to the SEL approach.

Dimension	Experimental (Post-Test)	Control (Post-Test)
Emotional Exhaustion	18.4	24.6
Depersonalization	7.2	11.3
Personal Accomplishment	39.8	34.2



Decreased results in Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization, coupled with higher personal achievement, reveal a positive impact on teacher well-being in the experimental group.

### CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FINDINGS

Structured Observation Rubrics were utilized to evaluate:

- Student cooperation and collaboration
- Emotional control and regulation
- Teacher-student Interaction
- Classroom atmosphere

#### Important Trends - Experimental Group:

- Frequent group tasks and student independent learning
- Use of SEL vocabulary and routines
- Emotional check-ins, restorative practices, and positive reinforcement employed by teachers
- Better conflict management skills and focus displayed by students

#### Important Trends - Control Group:

- Little student interaction or collaborative work
- Traditional methods used to maintain discipline
- Limited focus on emotional development

### Part 2

#### QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Findings from Interviews and journals were analyzed thematically using NVivo.

#### Theme 1: Commendable Behavioural Changes in Students

Experimental Group Teachers noted:

- Improved conflict resolution and peer empathy

### Part 3

#### TRIANGULATION OF FINDINGS

The validity of results was reflected through quantitative improvements in student results and teacher emotional intelligence. Triangulation illustrated:

Quantitative Finding	Qualitative Finding
Increase in academic results	Teachers observed more concentration and increased motivation.
Decrease in teacher burnout.	Teachers voiced more emotional resilience.
Positivity in student behaviour	Journals and Observations reflected better peer relations and exemplary discipline.

#### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This chapter depicted solid evidence that **innovative SEL approaches**, when incorporated into classroom instructions in the schools of Pakistan, positively influenced the **performance of students academically** and

- Less distractions and increased task persistence
- Enhanced capacity to express needs and feelings

*Students have become more sensitive to others' feelings. Even the timid ones are showing healthy participation in group activities.'* – Teacher E7

#### Theme 2: Emotional Awareness and Professional Growth

Teachers displayed better classroom management and showed more positive attitudes toward students:

*'I acquired the skill to pause before reacting and to display empathy at all times towards students.'* – Teacher E2

#### Theme 3: Adaptation and Cultural Relevance

Teachers commended the adaptability of culturally responsive SEL:

*Students felt more connected with the stories depicting local culture. The experience was more relatable to them.'* – Teacher E4

#### Theme 4: Incorporating Challenges

Along with success, challenges included:

- Constraints of limited time within the national curriculum
- Insufficient administrative support
- Requirement of continuous professional development

*'At times it became difficult to balance SEL and syllabus coverage, especially in revision time and during exams.'* – Teacher E3.

**teacher professional development.** Key takeaways encompass:

- Students in the experimental group showed evidence of a significant increment in scores for English and Math.

- Student attributes like collaboration, emotional regulation, and engagement were positively impacted.
- Teachers felt less burnout and increased emotional intelligence.
- Cultural integration of SEL assisted in an increase in acceptance and effectiveness.
- Regardless of the challenges faced, SEL was observed as transformative and practical by all the participants.

### Discussion

The study confirmed that innovative SEL interventions—mindfulness-based, technology-enhanced, and culturally responsive—significantly improved both student and teacher outcomes in Pakistani schools. Students in the experimental group showed higher academic achievement in English, mathematics, and science, along with better self-regulation, attention, and prosocial behavior. These findings align with international evidence (e.g., Durlak et al., 2011; Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010), extending SEL effectiveness to a South Asian, low-resource context where empirical work is scarce.

For teachers, SEL training reduced burnout, improved emotional intelligence, and enhanced classroom management, consistent with the “Prosocial Classroom” model (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Teachers reported greater professional fulfillment and stronger student relationships, showing SEL’s dual impact on educator well-being and instructional quality.

Culturally responsive SEL emerged as especially impactful, as students engaged more deeply when lessons included local values, stories, and traditions. This supports calls to indigenize SEL frameworks beyond Eurocentric designs (Jagers et al., 2018). Technology-based SEL tools also increased engagement but faced infrastructural challenges like poor connectivity and limited devices.

Notable divergences from Western contexts included higher initial teacher resistance and low parental involvement. These highlight the need for community sensitization and careful adaptation of SEL in resource-constrained settings.

Overall, the research demonstrates that SEL is transferable, scalable, and transformative in

Pakistan. It strengthens theoretical frameworks (CASEL, Emotional Intelligence, Constructivism) and offers practical directions for curriculum reform, teacher training, and policy integration. By linking cognitive, affective, and professional outcomes, SEL proves not to be an “add-on” but a foundation for holistic, equitable education.

### Conclusion

This study showed that Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) significantly improves both student and teacher outcomes in Pakistani schools. Students demonstrated higher academic performance, better emotional regulation, and more positive peer relationships. Teachers experienced reduced stress, stronger classroom management, and greater professional satisfaction. Importantly, culturally responsive SEL—integrating local languages, narratives, and values—proved especially effective in engaging learners. Overall, SEL is not an optional addition but a core component for advancing holistic education in Pakistan, fostering both cognitive and emotional growth.

### Recommendations

1. Embed SEL competencies into the national education policy and curriculum frameworks, ensuring alignment with local culture and context.
2. Make SEL an essential component of pre-service and in-service teacher education to strengthen emotional intelligence and classroom practice.
3. Design age-appropriate SEL modules integrated into core subjects, with resources available in Urdu and regional languages.
4. Promote emotionally safe and inclusive school climates, allocate time for SEL in timetables, and monitor outcomes through diagnostic tools.
5. Partner with parents and communities to extend SEL learning beyond the classroom and build wider emotional literacy.

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