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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Social-Emotional Competence as Predictor of Student Outcomes in Public Middle Schools of Sibi, Balochistan

Abdul Ahad Roshan Saeed^a Warda Nadeem^b Misbah Safdar^c Musarat Qadir^d Ayesha Malik Aslam^e

Corresponding Author: Abdul Ahad Roshan Saeed; roshan@mckru.edu.pk



Abstract: Educators, leaders, and politicians consider “21st-century skills” with greater emphasis on social and emotional competence. There is a broad consensus that schools are responsible for the holistic development of the students by focus on academic as well as on Social and emotional competencies which are considered as a key driver of predicting various outcomes necessary to make them thrive in their academic and professional careers. The Current study revolved around a core purpose to find out the predictive relationship between the Social-Emotional competence and student outcomes including academic achievement, emotional well-being, and social behaviour among the public middle-school students in Sibi, Balochistan, Pakistan. The research design was quantitative, cross-sectional and descriptive-correlational. The CASEL framework was used for measuring social and emotional competence while academic achievement, emotional well-being and social behavior are measure through various questions extracted from literature which are suitable for the middle school students. Therefore, validity and reliability were carefully established through piloting by following criteria of consulting experts and statistical internal-consistency estimates. Descriptive and Inferential statistics were used for analysis. The SEC significantly predicted all three students’ outcomes academic achievement, social behavior and emotional well-being ($\beta = .65, p < .001$), ($\beta = .62, p < .001$) and ($\beta = .58, p < .001$) respectively indicating SE competence as primary, powerful engine for stated students’ outcomes in public middle schools. The recommendations were made accordingly.

Keywords: Social-Emotional Competence (SEC), Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), Students Outcomes, Public Middle Schools, Sibi, Balochistan, Pakistan

Introduction

Across the globe, youth are facing a multitude of challenges that impact their academic performance. The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are the most notable one, leading to a decline in learning and spurring chronic challenges among students at the global level (Ha et al., 2026). The present time demands a focus on the social, emotional, and cognitive development of the students, as the pandemic period affected these domains (Martinez & Gomez, 2024; Perrigo et al., 2025; Fields, 2026). The effectiveness of learning and academic outcomes of the students is intertwined with their social, emotional, and cognitive development (Immordino-Yang et al., 2019; Younas et al., 2025). Indeed, consensus has been growing regarding the role

^a Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Mir Chakar Khan Rind University (MCKRU), Sibi, Balochistan, Pakistan.

^b M.Phil. Education, Mir Chakar Khan Rind University (MCKRU), Sibi, Balochistan, Pakistan.

^c SST Science, Department of Education, Sibi, Balochistan, Pakistan.

^d Deputy District Officer Education Female, Lehri District, Sevi, Balochistan, Pakistan.

^e M.Phil. Education, Mir Chakar Khan Rind University (MCKRU), Sibi, Balochistan, Pakistan.

of schools in improving a range of student outcomes when focusing blatantly on social and emotional skills development along with academic skills (Durlak et al., 2022; Martinsone et al., 2025; Ha et al., 2026).

Schools are responsible for education, which should not only focus on transferring subject matter but also on the social, emotional, and interpersonal capacities that enable students to successfully participate in schools as well as society. It is worth noting that during middle school, students undergo major developmental changes that affect their own perceptions, regulating emotions, relations with peers, and engagement with learning (Cipriano et al., 2023). Subsequently, the school must pay attention to social and emotional dimensions alongside academic instruction (Durlak et al., 2011; Santos et al., 2023). SEL offers a framework for the development of students' SE capabilities to comprehend as well as manage their emotions, make positive relationships, show empathy, and become responsible decision-makers. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning framework (CASEL) embraces these competencies (Durlak et al., 2011). In this approach, classroom interactions, school climate, relationships, and consistent teaching practices support Social-emotional competencies (CASEL, 2020).

A systematic review of 46 studies published between 2000 and 2025 mapped the mounting evidence on socio-emotional learning, the relevant SE competencies, and highlighted the worthiness of students' and teachers' standpoints (Nanda et al., 2025). Recent meta-analytic work has continued to examine academic outcomes specifically, reinforcing the need to consider programme type, grade level, implementation, and the outcome being measured rather than assuming that all SEL approaches have identical effects (Ha et al., 2026; Zhao & Sang, 2025).

The evidence in current literature is not directly transferable to different localities. The differences in infrastructure, teacher preparation, language variety, cultural expectations, class size, and the extent to which SE competence is embedded in ordinary teaching may affect how competencies are expressed and supported. For schools in Sibi located in Balochistan, the evidence grounded in the local setup helps clarify whether students reported SE competence is associated with academic, emotional, and social outcomes. Such evidence is necessary because educational improvement requires attention to the conditions under which learners experience school, not only to examination performance.

Rationale of the study

Despite the bulk of international data supporting SEL programs leading to social-emotional competencies, a critical review of the literature reveals a significant empirical and geographical void in studying SE competence in particular. This study is specifically positioned to bridge the following three distinct gaps in the current body of knowledge:

Methodological Saturation in Terms of Interventions: Most of the research in this area was found to have its prime focus on experimental or intervention trials examining the established curriculum by external experts for developing SE competence (Bergin et al., 2026; Cipriano et al., 2023; Durlak et al., 2011). This leaves a blind spot about the natural interaction of Social-emotional competence in school routines.

Lack of Unmanipulated Data: The studies in this area often imposed commercialized interventions without initially knowing the baseline conditions that influence the natural classroom dynamics and lead to program failure (Wigelsworth et al., 2022). Studies are needed in this area due to its prime importance reflected in the literature. There is a need for a non-experimental study first for baseline data for diagnosis of students' current competencies in their natural settings.

Contextual Void: Most of the studies found in the literature were related to broader SEL and its impact belongs to high-income, and developed educational systems (OECD, 2024; Zhou & Ee, 2024). This neglects SEC, particularly in local settings. The studies in local setups also confirm that social-emotional abilities have a significant correlation with academic achievement across public sectors in Pakistan (Malik & Bibi, 2023;

Zeeshan et al., 2026), improving results (12.1% of the variance) related to student outcomes in rural schools (Naz et al., 2024). The studies conducted in local settings fail to address socio-environmental realities of severely marginalized regions like Balochistan. The extreme climatic conditions lead to stress alongside a 70% multi-dimensional province-based poverty (School Education Department, Balochistan, 2024). Moreover, student competencies get influenced by locality and system pressure (Siddiqui & Gorard, 2024). The current study fulfilled this geographical or contextual gap by collecting primary data from public sector middle school students in district Sibi of Balochistan.

Statement of the problem

Keeping in view the prime importance of social-emotional competence as 21st-century skills, this study focused on addressing few important gaps regarding the methodology of interventions, the lack of data from natural settings, and the contextual void. This study was intended to collect primary data from middle school students of District Sibi to know their existing level of social-emotional competence and their perceived outcomes to pave the way for further contextualized interventions on baseline data. Thus, the study was entitled: *“Social-Emotional Competencies as Predictors of Student Outcomes in Public Middle Schools of Sibi, Balochistan”*.

Research Objectives

Ro₁: To find out the levels of Social and Emotional Competence, Academic Performance, Emotional Well-Being and Social Behavior among the public middle school students in Sibi, Balochistan.

Ro₂: To find out the predictive relationship between Social and Emotional Competence and students' outcomes, including Academic Performance, Emotional Well-Being, and Social Behavior, among the public middle school students in Sibi, Balochistan.

Research Hypotheses

H₁₊₂₊₃: Social and Emotional Competence significantly predicts the students' outcomes, including Academic Performance, Emotional Well-Being, and Social Behavior, among the public middle school students in Sibi, Balochistan.

Significance of the study

This study holds significant value in regard to policy, practice, and context by shifting beyond theory-based frameworks to addressing the real-world operational challenges of public-school systems in developing regions. This study will be helpful for teachers, policymakers, budget authorities, curriculum developers, teacher training institutes, parents, and students themselves in terms of strategies to be used for emotionally struggling ones, allocating funds for infrastructure and human resources for holistic development, developing context-based modules and trainings to link classroom practices for enhancement of social and emotional competencies, and providing a safer environment to students for elevating their psychological resilience and academic endurance.

Literature Review

Concept of Social-Emotional Competence (SEC)

In the contemporary education system, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) has emerged as a critical framework intended to foster students' emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and successful academic life (Li & Liu, 2026). During middle school, when students experience accelerated cognitive, emotional, and social development, SE competence serves an essential role in transforming behavior, motivation, and academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011). SEC received significant attention in the educational domain due to its pivotal role in the holistic development of students.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework is one of the popular integrated models to comprehend SEC, emphasizing the development of five core students' abilities, including

self-awareness (understanding), self-management (managing), social awareness (empathy), relationship skills, and responsible decision-making in the context of school time because students experience many changes in the cognitive, emotional, and social domains (CASEL, 2025). Jones et al. (2021) and Mahoney et al. (2021) pinpointed that SEL leads to more effectiveness when it is incorporated in day-to-day instruction during classes. This approach exposed students to regular emotional experiences, leading to Positivity in behavior and social skills.

SEL is associated with several theoretical perspectives, including developmental psychology and social learning theory. According to Zins and Elias (2022), pupils learn through observation, modeling, and rewards received in schools, making SEL necessary for shaping positive behavior. Cipriano et al. (2023) linked SEL with positive youth development theory, which has the doctrine of enhancing strengths rather than the removal of undesirable behaviors only. This theory linked SEL's role in elevating resilience, competence, and long-term success.

SEL and SEC

According to Zhou & Ee (2012), Social Emotional Learning and Social-Emotional Competence are very close terms but are conceptually different. SEL is a developmental process intended to develop social-emotional skills, and it is a broader framework, while SEC refers to possessed qualities or competencies that an individual demonstrates. The role of SEL is focused on the production and enhancement of SEC, and that is where the overlap occurs. This study uses SEL as a broader framework and to understand SEC, which falls under the prime objective of the study.

Independent Variables (Socio-Emotional Competence)

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is the main competency of SEC. It can be defined as one's ability to know and comprehend his/her own emotions, strengths, and weaknesses. According to CASEL (2020), self-awareness encompasses recognition, confidence, and precise self-perception related to one's emotions. Research has claimed that students who possess the ability of self-awareness are better in academic engagement (Sun & Rueda, 2012) and have higher self-regulation of learning behavior (Morin, 2011). Moreover, self-awareness is strongly associated with reflection and better academic performance because such students can identify their own needs and emotional barriers in educational settings (Zins & Elias, 2007; Li & Liu, 2026).

Self-Management

Self-management can be understood as the individual's ability to control emotions, thoughts, and behave appropriately in various situations, especially at the time of stress (Li & Liu, 2026). According to Liu et al. (2024), self-management is linked to persistence, motivation, and performance in academics. Students with high self-management have efficiency, effectiveness, and circumvent impulsive behavior. Durlak et al. (2011) reported that SEL interventions significantly enhanced self-management and led to desirable achievements in terms of behavior and grades.

Social-Awareness

Social-Awareness means knowing and empathizing with others who have diverse backgrounds. According to CASEL (2020), empathy, respecting diversity, and understanding perspective fall under the umbrella of social-awareness. Research asserted that students with elevated social awareness have lower aggression and more cooperation (Jones et al., 2015). Empathy-based skills in social awareness lead to a lessening of bullying and a better classroom atmosphere (Gresham, 2016; Li & Liu, 2026).

Relationship Skills

Relationship skills can be defined as the individual ability to establish and maintain healthier interpersonal relationships through better communication, teamwork, and conflict management (Li & Liu, 2026).

Relationship skills are key for positive teacher-student and peer interactions (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Students with better relations show high engagement in group assignments and participation in class. Additionally, SEL programs advocated a significantly better ability to cooperate, communicate, and manage conflicts (Taylor et al., 2017).

Responsible Decision-Making

Responsible decision-making includes making decisions on an ethical, beneficial, and socially accepted basis and after judgment of consequences (Li & Liu, 2026). According to CASEL (2020), it includes consideration of ethical standards, safety measures, and societal norms before taking actions. Discipline and reduction in risky actions are positively associated with responsible decision-making (Greenberg et al., 2003).

Dependent Variables (Student Outcomes)

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement refers to different outcomes associated with students' academics involving grades, participation, and learning. Meta-analyses conducted by Durlak et al. (2011) confirm that SEL programs led to an average betterment (11–13 percentile) in student performance. Additionally, a longitudinal study conducted by Taylor et al. (2017) asserted that SEL and SEC (Liu et al., 2025) lead to sustainability in academic performance with the passage of time.

Emotional Well-being

Emotional well-being refers to students' stress management skills, maintaining stability in emotions, and experiencing positive mental health. According to Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015), SEL reduces stress and emotional instability. SEL programs promote resilience and coping strategies. Greenberg et al. (2003) found that SEL and SEC (Li et al., 2024) improve emotional regulation, causing lower behavioral as well as psychological problems.

Social Behavior

Social behavior is defined as the student's ability to interact with peers, teachers, and the school atmosphere. According to Jones et al. (2015), SEL leads to improvement in pro-social behaviors like cooperation, empathy, and respect while lessening aggression and bullying. Conducive social behavior improves the classroom environment and peer relations.

Social-Emotional Competence and Academic Achievement

SEC has a key role in elevating students' academic achievement by enhancing their abilities such as emotional control, self-management, learning-engagement, and traits to deal with academic challenges. Recent literature confirms that students' self-awareness and self-management are linked positively with better achievement not only in schools but also in HEIs (Carpendale et al., 2025; Zhao et al., 2026).

Social-Emotional Competence and Emotional Well-Being

Social-emotional competence (SEC) enables students to regulate their emotions, learn to cope with stress, establish healthy relationships, and proactively face challenges. Evidence from the literature supports that SEC has a significant positive correlation with psychological well-being and mental health (Chen et al., 2024; Thomas et al., 2026).

Social-Emotional Competence and Social Behavior

Social behavior of the students is shaped by SEC, through solidification of empathy, emotional regulation, cooperative attitude, and the traits needed to develop positive interpersonal relations. Research in this field depicts that students with higher SEC levels tend to demonstrate higher pro-social behaviors encompassing helping, sharing, and cooperating and have fewer behavioral problems (Collie & Ryan, 2025; Collie et al.,

2024). In addition, the study by Hung et al. (2026 also indirectly supports the SEC's strong positive relation with Social behavior.

Theoretical Frameworks Underpinning SEL

The research draws its theoretical stance on the CASEL framework as discussed earlier, along with social learning theory, emotional intelligence perspectives, as well as social constructivism, also informing the literature review. These perspectives support examination of SEL as a developmental process governed by individual abilities as well as environments.

Vygotsky’s Social Constructivism

Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of social constructivism focuses on social interaction for learning. SEL has alignment with this theory due to peer interaction and teachers’ support for learning emotional and social skills within the Zone of Proximal Development.

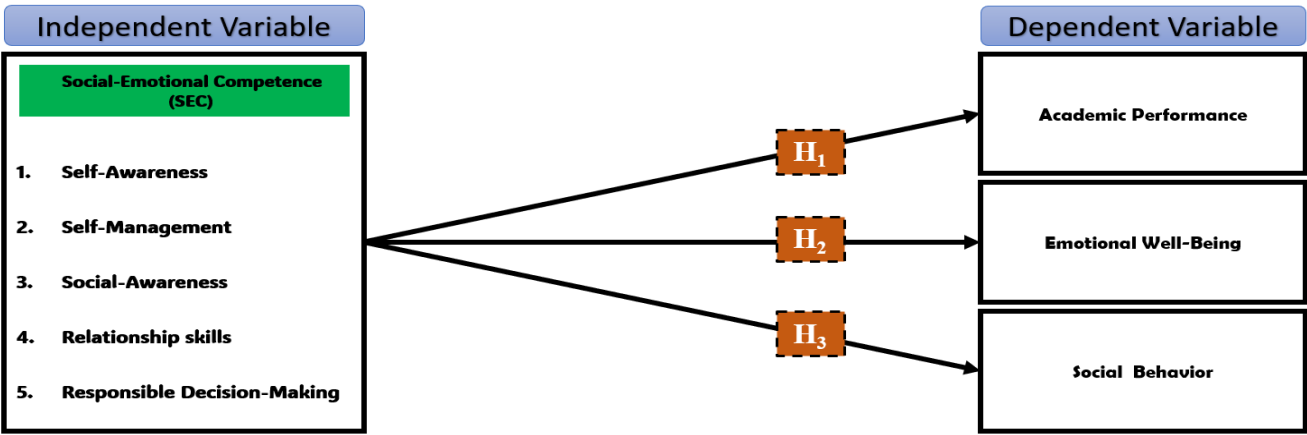
Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences

SEL has a close and direct link with two types of intelligence introduced by Gardner (1983), namely interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. Understanding the emotions and interacting with relevant people are considered essential forms of intelligence in this framework.

Bandura’s Social Learning Theory

Albert Bandura (1986) asserted that students learn different behaviors through observations and copying the behavior displayed by teachers and peers, and that’s where SEL is linked with this theory, as it focuses on making students learn emotional control and social behavior through observation.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework for this Study



Methodology

Research design and setting

A quantitative, descriptive-correlational design was used to achieve the objectives of this study. The urban schools of district Sibi were selected to collect the data within limited time and resources.

Population, Sampling, and Sample

The population of the study included all students from 6 schools, which were nearly N = 403, as received from the schools’ administration. The sample was decided based on the sample formula of (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970), which was approximately 196 for the mentioned population. The researcher used Stratified Random

Sampling to select the final sample, which was $n = 200$, as shown in the table. The students were selected from grades 6, 7 and 8.

Table 1
Population and Sample of the Study

Schools Name	Population	Sample
Boys Model High School, Sibi	50	25
Boys High School, Gharib Abad	70	35
Boys High School, Railway Colony	91	45
Boys High School, Khurd	80	40
Boys High School, Allah Abad	43	21
Boys High School Dehpal	69	34
Total	403	200

Instrument of the study

The instrument for the data collection of independent variables was based on the CASEL model presented by Zhou & Ee (2012). The recent study in the Pakistani context also used the same questionnaire, namely SECQ (Naseem et al., 2024). The details of the Questionnaire were presented in Table 5 below.

Table 2
Details of the Research Instrument

S. N	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable
1.	Self-awareness (5 items) <i>I can clearly understand my emotions in different situations.</i>	Academic Achievement (5 Items) • Grades perception • Class participation • Academic motivation
2.	Social awareness (5 items) <i>I can control my emotions when I feel angry or upset.</i>	<i>I perform well in my school exams.</i>
3.	Self-management (5 items) <i>I respect classmates who are different from me.</i>	Emotional Well-being (5 Items) • Stress levels • Emotional stability • Anxiety control
4.	Relationship skills (5 items) <i>I communicate well with my classmates.</i>	<i>I can handle academic stress effectively.</i>
5.	Responsible decision-making (5 items) <i>I think about consequences before making decisions.</i>	Social Behavior (5 Items) • Peer relationships • Cooperation • Classroom behavior <i>I help classmates when they need support</i>
5-point Likert Scale Items (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)		

Validity of the Instrument

Validity of the instrument was achieved following the basic rule of consulting experts and school teachers in middle school and piloting the instrument with students to make the instrument easier for data collection. The instrument was modified as suggested by experts and school teachers in terms of language, words, and particularly the dependent variables, which were measured purely through a self-made questionnaire for the convenience of the students, as suggested by teachers.

Reliability of the Instrument

After validity, reliability of the instrument was established through Cronbach's alpha and its acceptable range (Internal-consistency criterion $\alpha \geq .70$). The details are mentioned in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Reliability Details

S. N	Variables	α range
1.	SEL Competencies	0.79
2.	Outcome Variables (Academic Achievement + Emotional Well-Being + Social Behavior)	0.72

Data Collection

For the purpose of data collection, permission from gatekeepers (Principals) was obtained via a letter from the department head. The willingness of the students was asked, and no issues were raised by any stakeholder, including principals, teachers, or students. The researcher appreciated the cooperation by school personnel. The researcher personally collected data by helping students fill in the questionnaires. The researcher translated the questionnaire for some students and, with their consent, marked the intended option on the scale.

Statistical Analysis

To achieve the objective of the study, all the relevant statistical analyses were applied, including Descriptive and Inferential. Bonferroni Correction threshold ($p < .0167$) was also checked to avoid type I error when running 3 separate regression analyses for 3 DVs. The commonly used free version of SPSS was used. The data collected in the field were entered into the software for further analysis.

Results

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	n	Mean	SD
Self-awareness	200	3.81	0.71
Self-management	200	3.73	0.69
Social awareness	200	3.69	0.74
Relationship skills	200	3.79	0.70
Responsible decision-making	200	3.80	0.72
Overall SEC index	200	3.76	0.65
Academic achievement	200	3.60	0.78
Emotional well-being	200	3.55	0.80
Social behavior	200	3.59	0.76

Table 4 showed the descriptive statistics including the mean and standard deviation of the variables under investigation. The overall mean of SEC was found to be high ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.65$). Among the SE competencies, self-awareness had the highest mean ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.71$), while social awareness had the lowest mean among the other competencies ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.74$). The overall mean of SE Competence is moderately positive ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.65$). The results show the existence of SE competence among the middle school students in Sibi. The table also shows that Academic achievement as perceived by students has the highest mean, with social-behavior at the second-highest mean and emotional well-being as the lowest mean ($M = 3.60$, $M = 3.59$, $M = 3.55$), respectively. It shows that all outcomes are positive and the current level of IV and DVs was at the higher end.

Table 5
Inferential Statistics: Concise Correlation Values

Variable	SELC	Academic Achievement	Emotional well-being	Social-Behavior
SELC	1			
Academic achievement	.63**	1		
Emotional well-being	.56**	.48**	1	
Social behavior	.61**	.52**	.50**	1

n = 200
**Correlation (2-tailed) at 0.01 level.
*Correlation (2-tailed) at 0.05 level.

Table 5 showed the correlations. SE Competence had a moderate to highly significant correlation with Academic Achievement ($r = .63, p < .001$), Social Behavior ($r = .61, p < .001$), and Emotional Well-being ($r = .56, p < .001$). Additionally, the dependent variables exhibited moderate positive correlations among themselves, ranging from $r = .48$ to $r = .52$ ($p < .001$). This clearly shows that a high SE competence level leads to better students' outcomes.

Table 6
Inferential Statistics: Concise ANOVA values

Dependent Variable	Df	F	p	R ²
Academic Achievement	(1, 198)	144.83	< .001	.421
Emotional Well-being	(1, 198)	100.33	< .001	.333
Social Behavior	(1, 198)	123.61	< .001	.382

Table 6 showed the ANOVA test results. It showed that all three models were statistically significant at the $p < .001$ level. SE Competence achieved the highest explanatory power in the Academic Achievement model, uniquely accounting for 42.1% of its variance, $F(1, 198) = 144.83, p < .001$. The model also accounted for a substantial and highly significant proportion of variance in Social Behavior ($R^2 = .384, F(1, 198) = 123.61, p < .001$) and Emotional Well-being ($R^2 = .333, F(1, 198) = 100.33, p < .001$). The results indicated that SE competence leads to better student success.

Table 7
Inferential Statistics: Concise Regression Values

Dependent Variable	B	β	t	p
Academic Achievement	0.65	.65	12.04	< .001
Emotional Well-being	0.58	.58	10.02	< .001
Social Behavior	0.62	.62	11.12	< .001

Table 7 showed the results of Regression analysis. SE Competence predicted all the outcomes. Academic Achievement was strongly predicted ($\beta = .65, p < .001$), indicating that a one-unit increase in a student's social-emotional competence leads to a 0.65-unit increase in their academic output. Second, social behavior was strongly predicted ($\beta = .62, p < .001$), indicating that a one-unit increase in a student's social-emotional competence leads to a 0.62-unit increase in their social behavior. Thirdly, emotional Well-being was strongly predicted ($\beta = .58, p < .001$), indicating that a one-unit increase in a student's social-emotional competence leads to a 0.58-unit increase in their emotional well-being. The statistics clearly demonstrate that SE competence highly predicted the student-related outcomes.

Discussion
Academic Achievement

SE Competence emerged as a powerful direct predictor of Academic Achievement, uniquely accounting for 65% of the total variance. This substantial effect size directly matches the paradigm established by the

seminal meta-analysis from Durlak et al. (2011), which analyzed 213 universal school programs and discovered a definitive 11-percentile point gain in objective academic scores. This is reinforced by modern follow-ups (Ha et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2025) showing that skills like self-regulation optimize executive functioning and clear performance anxiety to unlock learning capability.

Social Behavior

Finally, the results indicate that a student's social-emotional baseline is an essential determinant of observed Social Behavior, capturing 62% of the variance in adaptive outcomes. This supports the conclusions of Bergin et al. (2025) and implementation insights from Rush et al. (2025), which demonstrate that institutionalizing SE competence promotes classroom prosocial behavior (empathy, collaboration) while systematically reducing behavioral disruptions and peer conflict.

Emotional Well-being

Beyond academic performance, the regression models proved that SE Competence provides a strong structural framework for protecting student Emotional Well-being, explaining 58% of the variance. This relationship reinforces recent work by Kim et al. (2024) and García-Martínez et al. (2026), which position intrapersonal SE competence (self-awareness and self-management) as critical psychological buffers that mitigate distress, prevent emotional exhaustion, and stabilize student mental health.

Conclusion

It was concluded that this study established strong contextual evidence regarding the predictive value of SE competence. SE competence serves as an important driver of students' academic outcomes, uniquely explaining Academic Achievement (65 % of the variance), Social Behavior (62 % of the variance), and Emotional Well-being (58% of the variance). The results showed that social-emotional competence is not a bunch of surplus qualities, but rather an essential element that enables students to think appropriately, manage their stress, and behave in a positive manner. Additionally, the results extracted from the study showed that perceived students' grades, mental health, and behaviors are well connected and improve together when social-emotional competence is strong. Ultimately, this study confirmed the literature claim of making and treating SE competence as a core part of education via SEL programs. When schools develop these competencies among the students, it will simultaneously boost academic grades, protect mental health, and create an environment that is loaded with cooperation.

Limitations

Despite the worth of this study, the study was limited in terms of the locality of Sibi and 6 middle schools, resulting in limited generalization. It's a cross-sectional descriptive and correlational design that prevents causal inference. Moreover, this study was conducted against the common way of doing research in this area with immense literature support due to financial and time constraints. Self-report questionnaires were used, which may be affected by social desirability and common-method bias. This study focused on SEC rather than SEL.

Educational Implications

The statistical results of this study offer various vital educational implications. In regard to academic achievement, schools should consider SEC as a core subject instead of anything different from the normal routine. It must be incorporated in daily classroom practices through SEL programs. For emotional well-being, schools should not only focus on tests or grades but also on tracking students' health scores to depict their burnout and provide support for their well-being at the earliest. Lastly, for social behavior, schools and teachers should view indiscipline and disruptions from the angle of an emotional skill gap rather than bad behavior. There is a need to avoid punishment and replace negative practices with proactive and positive strategies to control behavior and resolve conflicts.

Recommendations for Future Research

Further research must be conducted by focusing on demographic variables with increased sample size to understand the role of diversity in terms of gender, age, and socio-economic status on the results. A longitudinal design may also be considered to track the results over the years with increasing pressure of higher classes. Future studies should consider experimental designs to establish causal effects in local and developing areas. Future studies must focus on mixed methods to explore the phenomenon in-depth by addressing shortcomings of one method by the use of another method. Furthermore, mediators and moderators may also be studied for understanding the underlying mechanism leading to higher impact of SEC.

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