

RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES IN DEVELOPING LEARNERS' SOCIO-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of psychological perspectives in developing students' social emotional competence through a systematic review of literature published in the last five years. Findings indicate that psychology-based interventions such as emotion regulation training, empathy development, and prosocial behavior facilitation effectively enhance students' abilities to recognize and manage emotions adaptively. These programs also improve social skills, peer interactions, and reduce anxiety levels within educational settings. Overall, the study highlights the importance of integrating psychological principles into educational practices to promote students' well-being and sustainable social emotional growth.

Keywords: *Social-Emotional Competence, Psychological Perspective, Emotion Regulation, Empathy, Prosocial Behavior.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of students' social-emotional competence (SEC) is increasingly recognized as a key determinant of educational success in the 21st century. Social-emotional competence refers to the ability to understand and manage emotions, demonstrate empathy toward others, build positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Kim et al., 2024). Numerous studies have shown that social and emotional learning (SEL) programs contribute positively to students' psychological well-being, emotional regulation, and academic engagement (Hosokawa et al., 2024; Hassani et al., 2024). However, while the practical effectiveness of SEL programs has been widely explored, research that examines the *psychological mechanisms* underlying the development of SEC remains limited (Zhou, 2025).

A clear gap in the literature is the lack of studies emphasizing psychological perspectives involved in SEC development. Many investigations focus on program implementation and outcomes, yet they do not explain how psychological constructs—such as emotional competence perception, social self-efficacy, and intrinsic motivation—mediate

SEL outcomes (Shapira, 2025). In addition, discrepancies between students' self-perceptions and external assessments of SEC indicate the existence of psychological dynamics that remain insufficiently studied in formal educational settings. Furthermore, major psychological theories such as Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; adapted for education by Nanda, 2025) and Social-Cognitive Theory have not been fully integrated into SEL frameworks.

This topic has become increasingly urgent since SEC has been shown to act as a protective factor against academic stress and psychosocial risks among students. Globally, the OECD (2025) reports disparities in SEC development across educational systems and highlights the strategic role of school psychologists in integrating psychology-based approaches into curricula. The rapid rise of digital technology and social transformation also demands emotional resilience and strong social skills for students to adapt to complex environments (Nanda, 2025). Therefore, understanding psychological perspectives in SEC development is critical not only for student growth, but also for formulating educational policies that are humanistic and evidence-based.

This study aims to identify and synthesize recent empirical findings from the past five years that examine the relationship between psychological perspectives and the development of students' social-emotional competence. Using a systematic review approach, the study analyzes psychological mechanisms such as emotional competence perception, self-efficacy, and intrinsic motivation that contribute to SEC enhancement. Furthermore, this study develops an integrative conceptual framework linking psychological theory and educational practice to strengthen SEL program effectiveness in schools.

The main contribution of this study lies in offering the most up-to-date systematic review explicitly focusing on psychological perspectives in SEC development. It not only clarifies the internal mechanisms that mediate SEL outcomes, but also provides practical recommendations for educators and policymakers in designing interventions grounded in psychological processes. Based on theoretical synthesis and previous studies, three conceptual hypotheses are proposed: (1) psychological perspectives—such as emotional competence perception and social-emotional self-efficacy—have a positive relationship with SEC; (2) these psychological constructs mediate the link between SEL interventions and SEC improvement; and (3) the relationship is strengthened by additional psychological variables such as intrinsic motivation or perceived teacher support.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a systematic review design with a qualitative approach. A systematic review was selected to synthesize evidence from diverse empirical studies in a structured, transparent manner and to identify patterns, trends, and gaps in the existing literature. The qualitative approach enables a deeper examination of the psychological mechanisms underlying SEC development.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria:

- a) Studies published from 2020–2025
- b) Research examining the relationship between psychological perspectives (e.g., emotional competence perception, social self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation) and SEC.
- c) Articles available in English or Indonesian
- d) Qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods research

Exclusion criteria:

- a) Studies unrelated to SEC
- b) Articles that are not peer-reviewed or unavailable in full text
- c) Research that does not focus on psychological perspectives in formal educational settings

Search and Study Selection Procedure

Literature searches were conducted in leading academic databases: Google Scholar, PubMed, Scopus, and ERIC.

Keywords included: *social-emotional competence, psychological perspective, self-efficacy, emotional competence, student development, and systematic review.*

Selection followed two phases: (1) screening by title and abstract and (2) full-text evaluation.

Data Collection

Data collection included:

- a) Systematic literature search
- b) Screening based on inclusion and exclusion criteria
- c) Data extraction (author, year, aims, design, sample, variables, analysis methods, and key findings)

Data Analysis

A narrative synthesis technique was applied, including:

1. Thematic categorization
2. Comparative analysis across studies
3. Integrative synthesis to conceptualize the role of psychological perspectives in SEC development
- NVivo software assisted coding and visualization of thematic links.

Validity and Replication

Validity and reliability were ensured through:

- a) Dual screening and data extraction by two independent reviewers
- b) Use of PRISMA guidelines
- c) Development of an evidence matrix to summarize and compare findings

RESULTS

A total of 25 eligible studies published between 2020–2025 were analyzed.

Table 1. Meta-Analysis of Eligible Studies

Type of Intervention	Number of Studies	Percentage
Emotion regulation training	10	40%
Empathy development	7	28%
Prosocial programs	5	20%
Mindfulness approaches	3	12%
Total	25	100%

SEC Dimension	Studies Reporting Improvement	Percentage

Type of Intervention	Number of Studies	Percentage
Emotion regulation	15	60%
Self-awareness	12	48%
Social skills	13	52%
Empathy	10	40%
Prosocial behavior	8	32%

Educational Level	Number of Studies	Percentage
Early Childhood	6	24%
Primary School	10	40%
Secondary School	7	28%
Higher Education	2	8%
Total	25	100%

DISCUSSION

The findings show that psychological perspectives—particularly developmental and educational psychology—play a central role in strengthening students’ social-emotional competence. Psychological-based interventions such as emotional learning programs, self-regulation strategies, and empathy development significantly enhance students’ abilities to identify, manage, and express emotions adaptively (Denham et al., 2020). Thus, psychology not only supports academic performance, but also establishes a strong foundation for social and emotional functioning.

Emotion regulation and empathy training were the most frequently implemented interventions, and most studies reported improvements in SEC domains such as emotion management, self-awareness, and social skills. Primary education was the most common level of implementation, followed by secondary

education, demonstrating the emphasis on SEC development from early to middle childhood.

These trends are consistent with earlier studies by Jones et al. (2019) and Oberle & Schonert-Reichl (2020), which affirmed that psychological-based SEL interventions reduce social anxiety and increase prosocial behavior. However, previous studies generally focus on isolated populations, while the present review provides a broader and more comprehensive synthesis across educational contexts.

In response to rising emotional and social challenges in contemporary education—including digital pressure, shifting learning systems, and post-pandemic stress (Jones et al., 2022)—integrating psychology into curricula is increasingly relevant. This review highlights the need for sustained, holistic approaches that combine multiple psychological perspectives for long-term SEC development.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that psychological perspectives play a crucial role in enhancing students' social-emotional competence. Evidence from the analyzed studies demonstrates that interventions grounded in psychological principles—such as self-regulation training, empathy development, and prosocial skill-building—strengthen students' abilities to recognize, manage, and express emotions adaptively. SEC improvement contributes not only to academic achievement but also to long-term psychological well-being (Denham et al., 2020; Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2020).

The main contribution of this systematic review lies in mapping contemporary research that emphasizes psychology as a foundational component of SEC development. The findings address literature gaps and highlight the need for holistic, sustained, and evidence-based approaches aligned with current educational challenges (Jones et al., 2022).

Future research is encouraged to examine the effectiveness of psychological approaches across broader cultural and educational settings, as well as the integration of educational technology. In practice, teachers, counselors, and policymakers are encouraged to adopt

psychology-based frameworks in curriculum and intervention design to facilitate optimal academic and emotional development of students.

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