



## Research Article

# How is the description of teacher's social interaction on social emotional learning?

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### Abstract

Teachers play a crucial role in the development of students' social and emotional competence through social-emotional learning (SEL). The main aim of the study is to describe how teacher role is implemented related to teacher's social interaction in supporting SEL. The method used in this study surveys. The instrument applied in the teacher's social interaction instrument is a part of self-assessment for SEL consisting of discipline aspect in student, teacher language, responsibility and choices and warmth, and support. Participants in this research were 304 teachers in Bandung, Indonesia. The results show that the warmth and support aspect have a higher average of social interaction, while the teacher's language aspect scored the lowest among other aspects.



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## Introduction

Noteworthy, over the last two decades, numerous existing educational policies have laid their focus exclusively on standardized tests and frequently neglected students' social and emotional development. However, policymakers and educators are now beginning to recognize that their focus should not be solely on ensuring students' success on various tests, but also on assisting students in becoming productive and contented citizens ([Hall & Hord, 2011](#)). [Cohen \(2004\)](#) states that educational goals must be prioritized over academic achievement; students' social and emotional competence must also be given precedence.

[Arnett \(2006\)](#) believes that schools should be more proactive in promoting students' psychological well-being. A more comprehensive educational approach that incorporates social-emotional learning (SEL) would assist students in overcoming the numerous life challenges they face. According to [Howe \(2005\)](#), many children are born, grow up, and placed in environments and circumstances that do not provide them with positive conditions.

Thus, schools can make a significant difference in their children's life by fostering their social-emotional development. Schools have become the focal point of efforts toward improving students' psychological well-being, with SEL serving as a preventative measure ([Humphrey et al. 2013](#)). SEL is defined as an inclusive approach that aims to promote social and emotional competence, effective learning, positive behavior, and psychological well-being for all students in a school.

Schools are ideal environments for developing social-emotional competencies since they are safe places where students can acquire these competencies ([Goleman, 2005](#)). According to a research, the quality of a pedagogical practice, particularly when it promotes children's emotional development through the development of positive

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relationships, enables students to develop in a holistic manner (Mathers et al. 2014). Teachers can not only assist students in achieving emotional health and well-being, but also teach students how to manage their behavior and make sound judgments (Shulman, 2016).

According to experts, when teachers increase students' social-emotional competence, they also enhance students' academic achievements. This means that in order for students to maximize their potential, the teacher must put a premium on developing the students' social-emotional competence (Durlak et al. 2011). Teachers can be compared to the "equipment" that powers SEL programs and implementation thereof in schools, specifically classrooms.

Teachers play a critical role in shaping the learning environment, including incorporating SEL into the classroom (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Teachers' competence decides the nature of their relationships with students. According to the researchers Patricia Jennings of the University of Virginia and Mark Greenberg of Pennsylvania State University, "the quality of teacher–student relationships, student and classroom management, as well as the implementation of effective SEL, can all serve as mediators between effective learning and student's academic performance outcomes." (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Classrooms with warm teachers and positive teacher–student relationships can foster deep learning in students: students who feel at ease with their teachers are more willing to struggle with difficult learning materials and persist with difficult learning tasks (Merritt et al. 2012). However, when teachers exhibit poor social-emotional management and place excessive demands on students, the students begin to exhibit low SEL, resulting in lower academic performance and behavior that is inconsistent with expectations (Marzano et al. 2003).

As a result, when schools implement SEL policies, they must be able to optimize teacher–student relationship and their students' social-emotional ability in order to promote SEL through social interactions. This assessment is used to ascertain the teacher's description of the social interactions that occur during classroom instruction. Has the teacher implemented SEL? If yes, in what aspects of social interaction has the teacher implemented it? If no, and in which aspects has the teacher not implemented it or has implemented it in a weak ?

## Methods

A quantitative method with a survey design was used in this study. The survey method was used to gather data on several variables to be measured. The variables were related to the implementation of SEL, specifically to the teacher's practice of social interaction.

The research data collection instrument was a self-report questionnaire distributed to 304 teachers in Bandung, Cimahi, West Bandung Regency, and Garut Regency, Indonesia. The researcher measured the research variable using the teacher's social interaction instrument, which was included in the self-assessment for SEL instrument. Reliability value of social interaction aspect show in Table 1.

**Table 1.**

*Reliability Value of Social Interaction Aspect*

Social Interaction Aspect	Reliability Values	
	Cronbach' s Alpha	Number of Items
Student-centered discipline	0.775	6
Teacher' s language	0.868	2
Responsibility and choice	0.823	3
Warmth and support	0.766	6

According to Table 1, the student-centered discipline aspect contains six items with a reliability value of 0.775, the teacher's language aspect contains two items with a reliability value of 0.868, the responsibility and choice aspect contains three items with a reliability value of 0.823, and the warmth and support aspect contains six items with a reliability value of 0.766.

Given that the reliability values for the student-centered discipline and the warmth and support aspects are in the range of 0.60–0.800, the statements in this aspect can be interpreted as having sufficient reliability values. While the statements about the teacher's language and the responsibility and choice aspects are considered highly reliable in the range of 0.80–1.00.

The participants were exposed to demographic information based on their gender, age, and length of teaching experience. According to gender, there were 184 female respondents and 120 male respondents. The respondents were mostly between the ages of 21 and 30 years (163 respondents), followed by those between the ages of 31 and 40 years (105 respondents), 41 and 50 years (21 respondents), and 51 and 60 years (15 respondents). When came to length of teaching experience, 144 respondents had experience of 0–8 years, 98 respondents of 9–16 years, 29 respondents of 17–24 years, 23 respondents of 25–32 years, and 10 respondents of 33–40 years.

**Table 2.**  
*Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Sample (n=304)*

Variables	N	(%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Women	184	60.5
Men	120	39.5
<b>Age</b>		
21-30 years	163	53.6
31-40 years	105	34.5
41-50 years	21	6.9
51-60 years	15	4.9
<b>Teaching experience</b>		
0 - 8 years	144	47.4
9 - 16 years	98	32.2
17- 24 years	29	9.5
25 - 32 years	23	7.6
33 - 40 years	10	3.3

### Results

Descriptive data of teacher social interactions have four aspects: student-centered discipline, teacher language, responsibility and choice, and warmth and support. It is known that base on gender, there were 184 female respondents and 120 male respondents, with female respondents averaging 4.18 social interactions to male respondents 3.42. As a result of this average, it is known that the female group's average score is higher than the male group's average score.

According to age, the highest level of social interaction occurred for those between the ages of 21 and 30 years with an average of 3.92, followed by those between the ages of 41 and 50 years with an average of 3.88. The lowest level of social interaction occurred for those between the ages of 41 and 50 years with an average of 3.14.

Across the five categories of teaching experience duration, the highest level of social interaction occurred between the ages of 17-24 years, with an average of 4.36, and the lowest occurred between the ages of 33-40 years, with an average of 3.21.

The description of teacher social interactions in terms of demographics, the following will describe the results of research related to the description of social emotional learning (SEL) practices, especially the interaction practices carried out by teachers when interacting with their students. This description of the practice of social interaction is the main objective of this study. The aspects of social practice interactions that are measured are student-centered discipline, teacher language, responsibility and choice, and warmth and support.

Student-centered discipline aspect have six items, that is 1) I discuss with students why and how the implementation of classroom rules is applied. 2) I apply logical and consistent consequences to the rules applied in class. 3) I respond to students' bad behavior by considering the situation, background, personality, feelings, and students' cognitive related to the occurrence of the behavior. 4) I hold class discussions with students in order to solve problems that occur in class. 5) I teach students strategies for how to deal with emotions that affect their learning (eg stress, frustration). 6) I give everyday examples and help students how to behave appropriately.

**Table 3.**  
*Average of Items Student-centered Discipline*

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6
Average	3,69	3,75	3,86	3,72	3,48	3,94

Based on Table 3, information is obtained that the student-centered discipline aspect has six statement items where statement items six, three, two, and four state that 304 teachers are accustomed to implementing the practice of giving examples of appropriate behavior, getting used to considering situations, backgrounds, personalities, feelings, and students' cognitive related to their behavior, used to open discussion spaces to solve problems in class, while for items one and five it showed that teachers sometimes explained to students the consequences of breaking a rule and were not accustomed to routinely implementing strategies in dealing with emotions that arise. affect learning in the classroom.

Teacher language aspect have two items. The aspect used in this study is related to the teacher's language aspect, namely the attitude aspect of the teacher's skills in providing motivation and praise which can ultimately encourage students to have good social behavior.

**Table 4.**

*Average of Items Teacher Language*

	Item 1	Item 2
Average	4,09	3,78

Table 4 aspects of the teacher language only involve two statements where both statements have a high average so that it can be interpreted that the 304 teachers involved in this assessment have properly practiced a positive attitude in motivating and reprimanding students if these students make mistakes.

Responsibility and choice aspect have three items, that is 1) I ask students for input in making decisions about how to organize the classroom. 2) I give students choices on what they can do. 3) I make sure students can understand the relationship between their choices and the consequences of those choices.

**Table 5.**

*Average of Items Responsibility and Choice*

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3
Average	3,80	3,69	3,72

Table 5 specifically illustrates that 304 teachers are accustomed to applying learning practices by building a sense of responsibility for each choice to their students.

Warmth and support aspect have six items, that is 1) I show each student that I value them as individuals (e.g., proper eye contact, greeting each child by name). 2) I use the interests and experiences of my students when teaching. 3) I show my students that I care about how and what they learn. 4) I tell my students that it's okay to get wrong answers or think out of the box. 5) I try to help my students solve academic and non-academic problems they face. 6) I create a certain atmosphere and moment where students feel included and valued. Example: invite students to have lunch together, discuss simple things).

**Table 6.**

*Average of Items Warmth and Support*

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6
Average	4,18	3,41	3,99	3,82	3,74	3,47

Based on Table 6, the fourth aspect has six statements where the first, third, fourth statement items show an average that is close to perfect. This means that all the teachers involved in the assessment stated that they were very well used to practicing learning by showing an attitude of respect for their students as unique individuals. In addition, based on the average of the fifth, sixth, and second items, it is known that almost 304 teachers are used to helping students solve academic and non-academic problem

### Discussion and Conclusion

The following section will discuss the findings of research on the description of social emotional learning (SEL), particularly the social interactions that teachers have with their students. This study's primary objective is to describe the practice of social interaction. The following characteristics of social interaction practice were evaluated: (1) student-centered discipline, (2) teacher language, (3) choice responsibility, and (4) warmth and support.

The average score for each of the four aspects of social interaction was examined is shown that the aspects of warmth and support have a higher average than the others. Additionally, when compared to other aspects, the student-centered discipline aspect ranks second in terms of average. This demonstrates that, on average, the 304 teachers who participated in this assessment engaged in emotional social learning, particularly in aspects of activities that foster camaraderie and emphasize student-centered discipline when interacting in class. However, social-emotional learning has the lowest average score when it comes to the language aspect used by the teacher. This means that the 304 junior high school teachers who participated in this assessment are not yet accustomed to motivating or reprimanding students when they make mistakes.

Emotional social learning is the process by which students develop the ability to manage their emotions, care for others, recognize emotions, make sound judgments, act responsibly, develop positive behavior, and avoid negative behavior. This process of education necessitates the active participation of numerous parties. The teacher is one of the parties expected to take an active role in facilitating emotional social learning.

Teachers are expected to be accustomed to engaging in self-directed social emotional learning. Each teacher has the ability to shape students' attitudes in the classroom. Teachers can either foster or stifle students' inherent curiosity, or vice versa. At the end of the day, it is up to the teacher to determine whether students view school as a place to thrive or a place to fear. Effective teachers are those who are familiar with their students and their individual needs and who have developed a proactive plan to address those needs ([Stronge, 2007](#)). Throughout the formal school experience, teachers play a critical role for students.

Positive relationships between teachers and students help students feel safe and secure in their learning environment and promote social competence ([Baker et al. in Camp, 2011](#)). When teachers develop positive relationships with their students, the classroom becomes a supportive environment in which students can thrive academically and socially. A positive teacher-student relationship is defined as one in which the teacher demonstrates proximity, warmth, and positivity ([Hamre & Pianta, 2010](#)).

When teachers apply aspects of social emotional learning in their interactions with students, it becomes clear that the teachers in this study are not accustomed to learning through application of social emotional learning. Indeed, according to Blum and Libbey's study, disconnected social-emotional skills of students in the school environment had a detrimental effect on their academic performance, behavior, and health ([Durlak et al. 2011](#)). This serves as a reminder to educators that it is critical to connect learning and the development of social emotional skills in students. However, as a result of data collection, almost all teachers who participated in self-reports regarding the assessment of social-emotional learning practices stated that they were not accustomed to engaging in social-emotional learning activities. According to their self-reports, the difficulty in applying emotional social learning is due to the difficulty of consistently practicing student-centered discipline.

This also relates to the teacher's personality. Teachers, it turns out, also struggle with consistency when it comes to enforcing consequences (punishments) for student errors. Additionally, it is necessary to conduct additional discussions about the practice of social emotional learning; it turns out that it requires not only a method, but also a personal teacher who can consistently reflect established behavior or is accustomed to practicing social emotional learning (SEL) when interacting with students.

Additionally, based on data collected from teacher self-reports, it is known that almost all teachers do not fully understand social emotional learning (SEL) strategies. Indeed, the Hanover research report (in Helaluddin & Alamsyah, 2019) indicates that each region or district can incorporate emotional social learning into a variety of different learning strategies. The reference strategies include (1) integrating explicit social-emotional learning into the classroom through coaching, modeling, and practice, (2) introducing social-emotional learning through project-based and cooperative learning, and (3) establishing organizations to promote a positive school climate and culture.

As evidenced by the Hanover research report, teachers who practice social emotional learning make numerous references to learning strategies. However, based on the results of their self-reports, teachers expressed confusion about which strategy to use in their classrooms' learning process. This should be used as a discussion starter in schools for policymakers. The references provided by various sources are insufficient to assist teachers in implementing social emotional learning strategies in their classrooms.

They stated in their self-reports that they required implementation in the form of technical guidance to practice learning using social-emotional learning strategies under the supervision of experts or consultants who were themselves practicing social-emotional learning. Teachers have attempted to incorporate SEL into their teaching and learning activities. With regard to the SEL model used in this study, it is evident that the aspect of warmth and support has a higher average than the other aspects. While the Teacher's Language aspect is the weakest.

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