

From Implicit Practice to Intentional Social and Emotional Learning in Sociology Classrooms

Fahruri Nabila¹, Reno Fernandes^{2*}, Albana Canollari-Baze³

¹SMAN 1 Suliki, Indonesia

²Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia

³University of New York Tirana, Albania

*Corresponding author, e-mail: renofernandes@fis.unp.ac.id

Abstract

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is often discussed as a formal programme, yet teachers may enact SEL-compatible practices before they possess a shared conceptual language or intentional implementation plan. This qualitative case study examines that distinction in sociology classrooms at SMA Negeri 7 Padang, Indonesia. The study draws on classroom observations, interviews with sociology teachers and students, and school documentation; source and technique triangulation were used, and analysis followed data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The evidence shows that teachers already enacted several SEL-compatible practices implicitly, including listening to students, providing emotional encouragement, mediating classroom conflict, supporting group roles, and creating space for empathy and discussion. However, these practices were rarely framed as explicit SEL objectives or systematically connected to the five CASEL competencies. Teacher readiness was therefore uneven: relational and pedagogical routines were present, but conceptual understanding, intentional lesson planning, and school-wide coordination remained limited. Sociology emerged as a particularly productive disciplinary setting because its treatment of interaction, conflict, inequality, groups, and social perspective-taking can connect subject knowledge with social-emotional competencies without reducing SEL to generic supportive teaching. The study contributes the distinction between implicit enactment and intentional SEL and identifies conceptual, pedagogical, and organisational readiness as conditions for moving between them.

Keywords: CASEL competencies; social and emotional learning; sociology education; teacher readiness; qualitative case study.

How to Cite: Nabila, F., Fernandes, R. & Canollari-Baze, A. (2024). From Implicit Practice to Intentional Social and Emotional Learning in Sociology Classrooms. *Charta Educa: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan*, 1(2), 55-63.



This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons 4.0 Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. ©2024 by author.

Introduction

Social and emotional learning (SEL) has moved from a peripheral concern to an important part of contemporary educational thinking, with its educational value increasingly framed through the interdependence of social, emotional, and academic development (Jones & Doolittle, 2017). The strongest evidence does not suggest that SEL should replace academic learning; rather, it indicates that students benefit when social, emotional, and academic development are treated as interdependent dimensions of schooling. Meta-analytic evidence has associated well-designed school-based SEL with improvements in social-emotional skills, attitudes, behaviour, school functioning, and academic outcomes, while also showing that implementation quality and contextual variation matter substantially (Cipriano et al., 2023; Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017). This implementation

issue is especially important because a school can value empathy, cooperation, self-regulation, and responsible decision-making without having a coherent plan for teaching or sustaining those competencies.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2020) provides a widely used framework consisting of five interrelated competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The framework is useful because it distinguishes SEL from a vague expectation that classrooms should simply feel supportive. A supportive teacher may create conditions that are favourable to social-emotional development, but intentional SEL requires teachers to identify the competency being developed, create opportunities to practise it, connect the practice to meaningful academic or social situations, and support transfer beyond a single activity. Recent pedagogical work similarly argues that the 'how' of SEL matters: modelling, guided practice, elaboration, transfer, and validation help turn broad social-emotional goals into learnable classroom processes (Zieher et al., 2024).

Teacher readiness is central to this transition. Teachers are the primary classroom-level implementers of SEL, and their beliefs, comfort, knowledge, and perceptions of organisational support influence whether SEL is enacted consistently (Brackett et al., 2012; Collie et al., 2015; Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Research has also shown that school climate and perceived support relate to teacher efficacy, stress, and willingness to sustain social-emotional practices (Collie et al., 2012). Implementation research therefore cautions against treating a pedagogical framework as self-executing: individual understanding, organisational conditions, professional learning, and ongoing support shape what eventually happens in classrooms (Domitrovich et al., 2008, 2019).

This problem is visible in contexts where teachers already engage in relational practices that resemble SEL but do not identify them as such. Teachers may listen carefully to students, mediate peer conflict, encourage cooperation, help students regulate frustration, or structure discussion so that multiple perspectives are heard. Such practices can be educationally valuable, yet their presence does not necessarily mean that SEL is being implemented intentionally. Research on teacher beliefs and adaptive pedagogy shows that teachers often translate broad social-emotional goals through familiar routines, local cultural expectations, and practical constraints (Lee, 2023; Lee & Zuilkowski, 2022; Zinsser et al., 2014). This creates an analytically important distinction between implicit SEL-compatible practice and intentional SEL instruction.

Sociology classrooms offer a particularly interesting setting for examining this distinction. Sociology asks students to interpret social interaction, group dynamics, inequality, institutions, conflict, identity, and the consequences of individual and collective action. These disciplinary practices can require perspective-taking, reasoned dialogue, listening across disagreement, interpretation of social position, and reflection on how decisions affect others. In other words, the subject contains authentic opportunities for social-emotional learning. Yet sociology should not be treated as SEL simply because it concerns social life. The disciplinary contribution becomes stronger when social-emotional competencies support sociological inquiry rather than displace conceptual analysis. A discussion of social conflict, for example, can simultaneously develop understanding of conflict as a sociological phenomenon and create structured practice in perspective-taking, emotional regulation, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

The Indonesian case examined here is important because the observed teachers were not starting from an absence of social-emotional practice. Instead, the case documents a gap between what teachers already did relationally and what they could name, plan, and coordinate as SEL. The original classroom evidence indicated that teachers listened to students' concerns, offered motivation, mediated classroom conflicts, helped students understand group roles, and encouraged empathy and discussion. At the same time, formal SEL implementation remained weak, teacher understanding of the framework was limited, and school support and teacher collaboration were uneven. The analytical problem is therefore not whether SEL was simply 'present' or 'absent', but how implicit practices might become more intentional without losing their contextual fit.

This study makes three contributions. First, it conceptualises the difference between implicit enactment and intentional SEL, allowing ordinary relational teaching to be recognised without overstating it as formal implementation. Second, it operationalises teacher readiness through three connected dimensions: conceptual readiness (understanding what SEL is and how it differs from generally supportive teaching), pedagogical readiness (the ability to plan, enact, and reflect on competency-specific practices), and organisational readiness (school support, collaboration, professional learning, and routines that enable continuity). Third, it positions sociology as a disciplinary home in which SEL can be integrated through substantive engagement with social relations and public problems rather than appended as an unrelated programme.

Accordingly, the study asks: (1) How are SEL-compatible practices enacted implicitly in sociology classrooms? (2) To what extent are those practices intentionally aligned with the five CASEL competencies? and (3) What teacher and school conditions enable or constrain movement from implicit practice to intentional SEL?

Method

The research used a qualitative case-study design to examine SEL-related practices in the bounded setting of sociology instruction at SMA Negeri 7 Padang, Indonesia. A case-study design was appropriate because the research focused on how a pedagogical phenomenon was understood and enacted within a specific school context rather than on estimating prevalence or testing a causal effect (Yin, 2018). The design was observational and interpretive, with attention to naturally occurring classroom practice and the institutional conditions surrounding it.

Participants were sociology teachers and students directly connected to the observed sociology lessons. An exact participant count and a formal sampling strategy were not recorded in the research report. This limits claims about saturation and transferability, so the analysis confines itself to the participant categories and classroom practices that were documented.

Data were generated through classroom observation, interviews, and documentation. Initial observation was used to identify how SEL-related practices appeared in everyday sociology teaching and to clarify the problem that required closer investigation. Interviews explored teachers' and students' experiences of classroom practice, teachers' understanding of SEL, perceived constraints, and school supports. Documentary material was used to contextualise classroom and institutional routines. The evidence was checked through triangulation across sources and techniques. Analysis followed the iterative logic of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing associated with qualitative data analysis (Miles et al., 2014).

The conceptual analysis used two complementary lenses. The first was the CASEL five-competency framework: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2020). These competencies were used as sensitising categories for distinguishing practices that were compatible with SEL from practices that were merely generally supportive. A practice was treated as intentional SEL only when the available evidence indicated an explicit social-emotional purpose, planned opportunity for practice, or deliberate connection to learning goals. When the evidence showed a compatible practice but no explicit SEL intention, it was classified as implicit enactment.

The second lens concerned teacher readiness. Drawing on research showing that implementation depends on teacher comfort and understanding, professional commitment, and perceived school support (Brackett et al., 2012; Collie et al., 2015; Lee & Zuilkowski, 2022), readiness was interpreted through three dimensions: conceptual readiness, pedagogical readiness, and organisational readiness. Conceptual readiness referred to teachers' ability to identify and explain SEL competencies. Pedagogical readiness referred to their capacity to deliberately design classroom opportunities around those competencies. Organisational readiness referred to professional-development structures, collaboration, counselling support, school leadership, and routines that could sustain SEL beyond individual teacher initiative.

Talcott Parsons' AGIL scheme was retained as a secondary sociological lens for interpreting institutionalisation rather than as a measure of SEL effectiveness. Adaptation was used to consider how teachers responded to changing learner and technological conditions; goal attainment to examine whether social-emotional goals were explicitly formulated; integration to examine coordination among teachers and school actors; and latency to consider whether SEL-compatible values and routines could be maintained over time. This use of AGIL does not substitute for the CASEL framework; it helps interpret how a school system can move from dispersed individual practices toward more coherent implementation.

Interview duration, use of formal coding software, member checking, the approving ethics body, and written-consent procedures were not specified. These omissions are treated as reporting limitations and are considered when interpreting the strength and transferability of the findings.

Results and Discussion

Implicit SEL was already embedded in everyday relational practice

The clearest finding is that the sociology teachers were not beginning from zero. Classroom observations and interviews indicated several practices that were compatible with SEL even though teachers did not consistently identify them using SEL terminology. Teachers listened to students' complaints or concerns, provided encouragement, mediated conflicts, helped students understand their roles in groups, used discussion, and created space for empathy when students considered social issues. These routines were part of ordinary teaching rather than a formally designed SEL programme.

This pattern matters because it separates enactment from intentionality. A teacher who listens carefully to a student's difficulty is creating relational safety and may support social awareness or self-awareness, but the act becomes intentional SEL only when it is deliberately connected to a competency, learning purpose, and opportunity for student reflection or practice. Likewise, conflict mediation can model self-management and relationship skills, yet students may not necessarily learn to recognise or transfer those skills unless the process

is made explicit. The case therefore supports an interpretation of implicit SEL: teachers were already performing practices with social-emotional value, but those practices were largely tacit.

The distinction is consistent with research showing that teachers' beliefs and everyday interaction patterns shape SEL implementation. Teachers can value students' emotional development while varying considerably in how explicitly they teach social-emotional knowledge and skills (Zinsser et al., 2014). The prosocial-classroom perspective likewise emphasises that supportive relationships and teachers' own social-emotional competence create conditions for learning, but those conditions should not be confused with a fully specified instructional programme (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). In the case, supportive relational practice was an asset on which intentional implementation could be built.

Table 1. Mapping documented classroom practices to the CASEL competencies

CASEL competency	Documented practice in the case	Implementation status	Interpretive boundary
Self-awareness	Teachers attended to students' concerns and emotional needs.	Implicit / limited explicitness	Evidence supports relational attention, but not structured student self-reflection.
Self-management	Teachers provided encouragement and mediated conflict when students experienced difficulty or disagreement.	Implicit	Compatible with regulation support; no formal self-management lesson or outcome measure was documented.
Social awareness	Teachers created space for empathy and consideration of social problems and peer perspectives.	Implicit to emerging	Strong disciplinary fit with sociology, but explicit competency language was limited.
Relationship skills	Group discussion, listening to student views, support for group roles, and conflict mediation were part of routine teaching.	Most visible implicit domain	Frequent practice opportunities were present, but planning and reflection were not systematically SEL-labelled.
Responsible decision-making	Sociological discussion created opportunities to consider consequences and collective responses to social problems.	Potential / least directly documented	The case supports a curricular opportunity more strongly than evidence of deliberate competency instruction.

Source: Authors' analysis based on the documented observation and interview patterns.

The five CASEL competencies were unevenly visible

Mapping the documented practices against the CASEL framework shows that some competencies were more readily visible than others. Relationship skills and social awareness were the most evident because teachers regularly organised group interaction, listened to students, mediated disagreement, and encouraged empathy. Elements of self-management appeared when teachers helped students deal with frustration or conflict. Self-awareness was less directly documented because the study did not report structured activities requiring students to identify their own emotions, values, strengths, or limitations. Responsible decision-making was present mainly as a potential of sociological problem discussion rather than as a consistently documented, explicit learning target.

This uneven profile is analytically useful. It prevents the broad label 'SEL' from masking the difference between what the classroom clearly supported and what the evidence did not demonstrate. CASEL's framework is not simply a checklist of positive teacher behaviours; it describes competencies that students should have opportunities to understand, practise, and apply across contexts (CASEL, 2020). Recent pedagogical work reinforces this point by distinguishing the knowledge students need from the teaching processes that help them model, practise, elaborate, transfer, and validate that knowledge (Zieher et al., 2024). The sociology classrooms in this case provided meaningful opportunities for several competencies, but the opportunities were not yet systematically designed across all five domains.

The central implementation gap was implicit practice versus intentional design

Teachers' limited conceptual understanding of SEL emerged as the central barrier to intentional implementation. The problem was not an absence of concern for students' social or emotional needs. Rather, teachers frequently enacted relevant values without a shared framework for identifying what competency was being developed, why a particular activity supported it, or how the competency could be revisited and assessed across lessons. This explains why teachers could appear socially responsive while formal SEL integration remained weak.

Conceptual readiness was therefore lower than relational readiness. Teachers were able to create supportive interactions, but the available evidence suggests they did not consistently translate those interactions into explicit SEL objectives. This pattern resembles findings from international implementation research in which teachers' comfort with SEL and perceptions of school support predict how extensively they integrate it into instruction (Brackett et al., 2012; Collie et al., 2015). In Malawi, for example, teachers adapted social-emotional instruction through locally meaningful practices but still depended on knowledge, support, and cultural fit to sustain implementation (Lee, 2023; Lee & Zuilkowski, 2022). The case similarly suggests that professional learning should begin by helping teachers recognise the SEL already embedded in their practice and then make that practice more deliberate.

Pedagogical readiness was partial. Teachers possessed interactive routines that could support SEL, such as group discussion, conflict mediation, motivation, and attention to student needs. What was less visible was a sequence in which teachers named a competency, designed a task to practise it, made the social-emotional process visible during instruction, and asked students to reflect on transfer. Intentionality does not require a separate SEL lesson in every meeting. It requires the teacher to know what social-emotional learning is being supported and to design opportunities that make it learnable rather than incidental.

The distinction also prevents a common overclaim. This case did not test whether SEL caused higher achievement or improved emotional competence. Such causal claims would require intervention and outcome measures, which were not part of the design. Large-scale evidence demonstrates that structured SEL programmes can produce beneficial outcomes (Cipriano et al., 2023; Durlak et al., 2011), but the contribution of this case is different: it identifies the implementation conditions that exist before a school reaches the stage of formal, evaluable programming.

Sociology provides a disciplinary pathway for intentional SEL

The strongest pedagogical contribution of the case lies in the relationship between sociology and SEL. Sociology is not merely a convenient timetable location for social-emotional activities. Its disciplinary content creates recurring situations in which students must interpret perspectives, analyse relations among individuals and groups, discuss disagreement, examine inequality, and consider the consequences of social action. These practices can support SEL while preserving the intellectual identity of the subject.

For example, a sociology lesson on social conflict can ask students to identify competing interests and structural causes while also requiring them to listen to different perspectives, regulate disagreement, and justify decisions about possible responses. A lesson on social groups can develop conceptual understanding of roles, norms, and group membership while giving students opportunities to examine their own role behaviour and collaborative relationships. Discussions of inequality can support social awareness when students are asked to distinguish personal experience from structural position and to consider perspectives shaped by different social contexts. In each example, the social-emotional process is tied to disciplinary reasoning rather than added as a generic wellbeing exercise.

This integration also clarifies how SEL differs from generally effective teaching. Good teaching often includes respectful relationships, clear routines, and student participation. Intentional SEL goes further by making social-emotional competencies explicit objects of learning. The sociology classroom is especially suitable for this move because social interaction is simultaneously a topic of study and a medium through which learning occurs. The teacher can therefore connect the content being analysed with the interactional competencies required to analyse it responsibly.

A more deliberate sociology-SEL design could follow a simple sequence. First, identify the sociological concept and the social-emotional competency that genuinely intersect. Second, design a task in which the competency is necessary for disciplinary inquiry, such as perspective-taking in analysing conflict. Third, make the competency visible through modelling or prompting. Fourth, provide structured practice and feedback. Fifth, ask students to reflect on how the competency applies in another social setting. This sequence is consistent with the broader argument that SEL becomes stronger when teaching moves beyond exposure toward practice and transfer (Zieher et al., 2024).

Operationalising intentionality: when supportive teaching becomes SEL

The findings make it necessary to specify what counts as intentional SEL. Intentionality is not established merely because a teacher behaves warmly or students cooperate. In this article, four features distinguish intentional SEL from compatible but implicit practice. First, there is an identifiable competency target: the teacher can name whether the learning focus concerns self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, or responsible decision-making. Second, the lesson includes an opportunity for students to practise the competency rather than only observe the teacher modelling it. Third, the teacher provides some form of mediation or feedback that helps students notice the social-emotional process. Fourth, students are supported to connect the competency to another task, relationship, or social situation. This definition is consistent with the movement in SEL scholarship from broad climate-building toward explicit pedagogies for modelling, practice, elaboration, transfer, and validation (Zieher et al., 2024).

This operationalisation is especially helpful in interpreting the case because much of the documented practice sits between ordinary care and formal SEL. Listening to a student, for example, is important pedagogically and relationally. If the teacher simply responds supportively, the practice remains an enabling condition. If the interaction is used to help the student recognise emotions, consider how those emotions shape behaviour, select a regulation strategy, and later reflect on its use, the practice becomes closer to intentional SEL. Similarly, group discussion is not automatically relationship-skills instruction. It becomes a stronger SEL opportunity when expectations for listening, turn-taking, disagreement, cooperation, or conflict repair are made explicit and revisited.

The distinction also prevents SEL from becoming conceptually inflated. If every positive classroom interaction is classified as SEL, the term loses analytical value and implementation cannot be evaluated meaningfully. Conversely, if only packaged programmes are recognised as SEL, researchers may overlook the culturally and pedagogically relevant practices teachers already use. The implicit-to-intentional continuum offers a middle position. It recognises existing strengths while preserving a threshold for deliberate teaching. This matters in contexts where teachers may have strong relational competence but limited exposure to formal SEL terminology or programme materials (Lee, 2023; Lee & Zuilkowski, 2022).

The readiness framework follows the same logic. Conceptual readiness is demonstrated when teachers can explain the competencies and identify how they differ from generic classroom management or kindness. Pedagogical readiness is demonstrated when teachers can design activities, prompts, modelling, guided practice, and reflection around a competency without weakening disciplinary learning. Organisational readiness is demonstrated when teachers have time, collegial support, professional learning, school leadership, and cross-role coordination that allow those practices to become stable rather than episodic. These dimensions are analytically separable but practically interdependent: conceptual knowledge without organisational support may not be sustained, and organisational enthusiasm without pedagogical knowledge may produce symbolic rather than substantive implementation.

From the case findings to a sociology-embedded SEL design

The case findings support a subject-embedded approach rather than a stand-alone add-on. A sociology teacher can begin with the disciplinary objective and then identify where a social-emotional competency is genuinely required by the intellectual work. When students analyse social conflict, for example, the academic task may require them to distinguish actor positions, interests, norms, and structural conditions. A social-awareness objective can be added by asking students to reconstruct a perspective they do not initially share, while relationship skills can be practised through explicit protocols for disagreement. The SEL element is therefore not a motivational activity before the 'real' lesson; it is built into how students perform sociological analysis.

A second example concerns social groups and roles. Sociology asks students to understand norms, status, role expectations, conformity, and group processes. These concepts can be linked to self-awareness when students examine how their own group memberships shape expectations and behaviour, and to responsible decision-making when they consider the consequences of conforming to or challenging group norms. Again, the teacher must protect the distinction between academic interpretation and personal disclosure. Students should not be required to reveal sensitive experiences in order to demonstrate a competency. Structured hypothetical cases, public examples, or voluntary reflection can provide safer routes to perspective-taking and decision analysis.

Third, topics such as inequality, discrimination, and social change create opportunities for social awareness, but they also reveal why SEL must remain culturally and sociologically informed. Empathy cannot be reduced to asking students to 'feel what others feel' while ignoring institutions, power, and unequal social positions. Sociology adds explanatory depth by connecting interpersonal experience to structure. Transformative approaches to SEL likewise argue that identity, belonging, agency, and equity matter when social-emotional competencies are taught in diverse settings (Jagers et al., 2019). The contribution of sociology is therefore not only to provide situations for practising SEL but also to prevent social-emotional explanations from becoming overly individualistic.

For teachers, this subject-embedded approach can be implemented through a recurring planning question: What social-emotional competency is genuinely necessary for students to do this piece of sociological thinking well? That question keeps the disciplinary objective primary while making SEL intentional. It also creates a practical basis for teacher collaboration because colleagues can compare how the same competency appears across topics, identify what evidence of student practice is visible, and refine prompts or reflection strategies over time. Such collaborative inquiry is more likely to build sustainable capacity than one-off training that introduces terminology without connecting it to teachers' existing curriculum.

Teacher readiness depended on organisational support, not only individual willingness

The school context provided both enabling conditions and constraints. Teachers had access to professional-development activities such as seminars, in-house training, technology-related guidance, counselling support, and teacher learning groups. The presence of preservice professional-teacher-education students also introduced teachers to newer language around SEL and differentiated instruction. These structures indicate that the school possessed potential channels for professional learning.

At the same time, the study identified insufficient school support and weak collaboration among teachers as continuing barriers. Organisational readiness was therefore mixed. Professional-development opportunities existed, but they were not yet organised around a coherent SEL implementation strategy. This matters because implementation quality is shaped by multilevel conditions, including leadership, training, coaching, organisational climate, and the fit between an innovation and existing routines (Domitrovich et al., 2008, 2019). Systemic SEL similarly requires coordination across classrooms and schools rather than reliance on isolated teacher initiative (Mahoney et al., 2021).

The readiness lens makes the transition pathway clearer. Conceptual readiness requires teachers to distinguish SEL from generic emotional support and understand the five competencies. Pedagogical readiness requires them to design and facilitate competency-specific opportunities within sociology. Organisational readiness requires school structures that make this planning sustainable through shared language, collaboration, professional learning, and reflective review. Weakness in any one dimension can keep SEL at the level of good intentions or isolated routines.

Teacher wellbeing and perceived support also deserve attention. Research suggests that teachers' own social-emotional competence, school climate, and beliefs about SEL influence both instructional quality and willingness to sustain implementation (Collie et al., 2012; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Schonert-Reichl, 2017). A school that asks teachers to teach self-regulation, empathy, and constructive relationships while providing little collegial or organisational support risks treating SEL as another individual burden. The findings therefore favour professional development that is collaborative and connected to existing subject teaching rather than delivered as a disconnected compliance requirement.

An AGIL reading explains why institutionalisation remained incomplete

The AGIL scheme offers a secondary sociological explanation for why compatible classroom practices had not yet become an institutionalised approach. Adaptation was visible in teachers' efforts to respond to changing student needs, digital conditions, and differentiated-learning expectations. However, adaptation alone did not produce a coherent SEL system. Teachers could modify routines without sharing an explicit social-emotional framework.

Goal attainment was incomplete because social-emotional outcomes were not consistently formulated as deliberate instructional goals. When competencies remain tacit, teachers cannot easily align activities, reflection, or evidence of learning with those goals. Integration was also uneven: counselling personnel, teachers, professional-development structures, and PPG students provided potentially useful resources, but collaboration around SEL was not yet sufficiently coordinated. Finally, latency concerned whether SEL-compatible norms could be maintained over time. The case suggests that supportive values were already embedded in teacher routines, yet their sustainability depended on converting personal practice into shared institutional knowledge.

This AGIL interpretation should not be confused with an effectiveness model. It does not demonstrate that SEL improved outcomes or that the school met measurable AGIL thresholds. Its value is explanatory: it highlights why a school can display many socially supportive practices while still lacking intentional, coherent implementation. The transition from implicit to intentional SEL is therefore both pedagogical and organisational.

Limitations and implications

The study has several limitations that constrain the strength of its claims. Exact participant numbers, sampling procedures, interview duration, verbatim interview excerpts, a detailed coding trail, and formal ethics and consent documentation were not recorded in sufficient detail. These omissions limit assessment of sampling adequacy, saturation, and analytic dependability. The absence of preserved verbatim quotations is particularly

important: the article reports documented patterns and observed practices but does not manufacture illustrative quotations.

Because the study was designed to interpret classroom practice rather than evaluate outcomes, it cannot establish effectiveness, causal impact, or change in student competencies. Its contribution is implementation-oriented: it clarifies the existing practice base and the readiness conditions needed for more deliberate implementation. Future research should collect richer qualitative evidence, including participant counts, purposive-selection criteria, interview protocols, observation schedules, analytic coding procedures, direct quotations, and explicit ethical documentation. Subsequent research can then examine whether intentionally designed sociology-embedded SEL is associated with measurable changes in student competencies.

For practice, the findings suggest that schools should not begin by assuming teachers lack SEL entirely. A more productive starting point is to identify existing implicit practices and connect them to a shared framework. Professional learning can then help teachers distinguish the five competencies, design explicit opportunities for practice, connect SEL to sociology content, and collaborate across classrooms. This asset-based approach respects teachers' existing relational expertise while addressing the conceptual and organisational gaps that prevent coherent implementation.

Conclusion

This qualitative case study shows that social and emotional learning in sociology classrooms can exist before it is formally named or intentionally planned. Teachers at SMA Negeri 7 Padang already used practices compatible with SEL, including listening to students, emotional encouragement, conflict mediation, group-role support, discussion, and empathy. The central problem was therefore not a simple absence of SEL, but a gap between implicit enactment and intentional implementation.

The study identifies three conditions for closing that gap. Teachers need conceptual readiness to understand the CASEL competencies and distinguish SEL from generally supportive teaching; pedagogical readiness to design, model, practise, and reflect on competencies within sociology lessons; and organisational readiness in the form of collaboration, professional learning, and sustained school support. Sociology provides a distinctive disciplinary pathway because its study of interaction, conflict, groups, inequality, and social perspective can make social-emotional competencies integral to subject learning rather than an additional programme. The article's principal contribution is therefore a shift in implementation logic: schools can move toward intentional SEL by making existing relational practices visible, conceptually precise, pedagogically deliberate, and institutionally supported.

Declarations

Author contribution

Author 1: developed the main research idea and objectives, designed the research methodology, conducted data collection and investigation, performed the data analysis, and prepared the first draft of the manuscript. Author 2: contributed to the development and implementation of the research methodology, supported the data collection and investigation process, and reviewed and revised the manuscript to improve its academic quality, clarity, and structure. Author 3: provided input into the research concept and direction, supervised and guided the overall research process, reviewed and improved the manuscript, and contributed to obtaining financial support or research funding

Funding

The research received no specific grant from any funding agency.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to the publication of this article.

Use of generative AI

Generative AI were used solely for translation and language editing of the manuscript. The authors take full responsibility for the content and accuracy of the article.

Acknowledgments

Authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all parties who contributed to and supported the completion of this study. Their valuable assistance, support, and encouragement are greatly appreciated.

References

- Brackett, M. A., Reyes, M. R., Rivers, S. E., Elbertson, N. A., & Salovey, P. (2012). Assessing teachers' beliefs about social and emotional learning. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 30(3), 219–236. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734282911424879>
- Cipriano, C., Strambler, M. J., Naples, L. H., Ha, C., Kirk, M., Wood, M., Sehgal, K., Zieher, A. K., Eveleigh, A., McCarthy, M., Funaro, M., Ponnock, A., Chow, J. C., & Durlak, J. (2023). The state of evidence for social and emotional learning: A contemporary meta-analysis of universal school-based SEL interventions. *Child Development*, 94(5), 1181–1204. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13968>
- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2020). CASEL's SEL framework: What are the core competence areas and where are they promoted? <https://casel.org/casel-sel-framework-11-2020/>
- Collie, R. J., Shapka, J. D., & Perry, N. E. (2012). School climate and social-emotional learning: Predicting teacher stress, job satisfaction, and teaching efficacy. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 104(4), 1189–1204. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029356>
- Collie, R. J., Shapka, J. D., Perry, N. E., & Martin, A. J. (2015). Teachers' beliefs about social-emotional learning: Identifying teacher profiles and their relations with job stress and satisfaction. *Learning and Instruction*, 39, 148–157. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2015.06.002>
- Domitrovich, C. E., Bradshaw, C. P., Poduska, J. M., Hoagwood, K., Buckley, J. A., Olin, S., Romanelli, L. H., Leaf, P. J., Greenberg, M. T., & Jalongo, N. S. (2008). Maximizing the implementation quality of evidence-based preventive interventions in schools: A conceptual framework. *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion*, 1(3), 6–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1754730X.2008.9715730>
- Domitrovich, C. E., Li, Y., Mathis, E. T., & Greenberg, M. T. (2019). Individual and organizational factors associated with teacher self-reported implementation of the PATHS curriculum. *Journal of School Psychology*, 76, 168–185. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2019.07.015>
- Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1), 405–432. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x>
- Jagers, R. J., Rivas-Drake, D., & Williams, B. (2019). Transformative social and emotional learning (SEL): Toward SEL in service of educational equity and excellence. *Educational Psychologist*, 54(3), 162–184. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1623032>
- Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(1), 491–525. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308325693>
- Jones, S. M., & Doolittle, E. J. (2017). Social and emotional learning: Introducing the issue. *The Future of Children*, 27(1), 3–11.
- Lee, J. (2023). 'Teach what's good for learners': Adaptive teacher pedagogy for social and emotional learning in Malawi. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 102, 102870. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2023.102870>
- Lee, J., & Zuilkowski, S. S. (2022). 'I can teach what's in the book': Understanding the why and how behind teachers' implementation of a social-emotional learning (SEL) focused curriculum in rural Malawi. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92(3), 974–993. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12483>
- Mahoney, J. L., Weissberg, R. P., Greenberg, M. T., Dusenbury, L., Jagers, R. J., Niemi, K., Schlinger, M., Schlund, J., Shriver, T. P., VanAusdal, K., & Yoder, N. (2021). Systemic social and emotional learning: Promoting educational success for all preschool to high school students. *American Psychologist*, 76(7), 1128–1142. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000701>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- Schonert-Reichl, K. A. (2017). Social and emotional learning and teachers. *The Future of Children*, 27(1), 137–155. <https://doi.org/10.1353/foc.2017.0007>
- Taylor, R. D., Oberle, E., Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2017). Promoting positive youth development through school-based social and emotional learning interventions: A meta-analysis of follow-up effects. *Child Development*, 88(4), 1156–1171. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12864>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). SAGE.
- Zieher, A. K., Bailey, C. S., Cipriano, C., McNaboe, T., Smith, K., & Strambler, M. J. (2024). Considering the 'how' of SEL: A framework for the pedagogies of social and emotional learning. *Social and Emotional Learning: Research, Practice, and Policy*, 3, 100030. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sel.2024.100030>
- Zinsser, K. M., Shewark, E. A., Denham, S. A., & Curby, T. W. (2014). A mixed-method examination of preschool teacher beliefs about social-emotional learning and relations to observed emotional support. *Infant and Child Development*, 23(5), 471–493. <https://doi.org/10.1002/icd.1843>