



FOSTERING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND TEAMWORK THROUGH SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the incorporation of social-emotional learning (SEL) into the physical education (PE) curriculum, offering a framework for cultivating emotional intelligence and collaborative abilities in adolescents. The study used a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative evaluations of emotional intelligence and social skills with qualitative data gathered from interviews, focus groups, and observations. The results indicated substantial improvements in students' interpersonal skills, emotional regulation, empathy, and collaboration after the introduction of the SEL-enhanced physical education curriculum. Quantitative results indicated significant enhancements in EQ-i:YV scores, especially in interpersonal skills and stress management, with improvements in SSIS cooperation scores and a decrease in problematic behaviours. The qualitative research identified themes of heightened self-awareness, refined conflict resolution abilities, and augmented empathy among participants. Subgroup analysis revealed varying impacts based on age and gender, with younger students showing increased emotional awareness and expressiveness, whilst older students shown enhanced stress management and interpersonal skills. The research underscores the distinctive capacity of physical education settings to cultivate social-emotional learning competencies and accentuates the vital function of physical education instructors in promoting this growth. The design of physical education curriculum must include age-appropriate, gender-sensitive social-emotional learning and tailored training to accommodate diverse beginning skill levels. This study underscores the need of reimagining physical education as an integrated framework for cultivating both physical skills and the social-emotional capabilities vital for success in academic and life pursuits.

KEYWORDS: Social-Emotional Learning (Sel), Physical Education (Pe), Emotional Intelligence, Cooperative Skills, Youth Development

INTRODUCTION

Physical education (PE) is seen as an essential element of comprehensive education, fostering physical fitness, motor skill enhancement, and general well-being. Recent years have seen an increasing recognition of physical education's ability to enhance children's social and emotional development considerably (Buchanan et al., 2002). The broadened perspective on the importance of physical education has resulted in the creation of frameworks that incorporate social-emotional learning (SEL) into physical education curricula, acknowledging the distinct opportunities that physical activities and sports offer for cultivating emotional intelligence and teamwork skills in youth (Luna et al., 2021).

The incorporation of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) into Physical Education (PE) curricula is predicated on the recognition that physical activities, particularly those requiring collaboration and competition, provide intrinsic opportunities for students to encounter and manage diverse emotions, social interactions, and challenges (Lu & Buchanan, 2014). When properly organised and directed, these experiences may provide significant learning opportunities for cultivating essential life skills, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, interpersonal skills, and responsible decision-making. By deliberately integrating SEL concepts into physical education, educators may foster the development of physical competence with the emotional and social skills essential for

success in academic, professional, and personal domains (Goh & Connolly, 2020).

A framework for improving social-emotional learning in physical education emphasises the establishment of a friendly and inclusive atmosphere that enables students to feel secure in expressing themselves, taking risks, and learning from both achievements and setbacks (Leisterer & Jekauc, 2019). This method emphasises the need of direct instruction in emotional detection and management, effective communication, conflict resolution, and collaboration. Activities aim to foster collaboration rather than rivalry, stimulate contemplation on individual and collective interactions, and provide students the chance to develop empathy and perspective-taking abilities. This paradigm seeks to convert physical education classrooms into environments conducive to social-emotional development, enabling students to cultivate resilience, self-confidence, and interpersonal skills applicable beyond the gymnasium or athletic field (Worrell et al., 2020).

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

A mixed-methods approach will be used to assess the impact of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in Physical Education (PE). Quantitative tools like the EQ-i:YV and SSIS will measure emotional intelligence and social skills at multiple

points during the academic year. Fitness and motor skill tests will ensure physical development is maintained. Qualitative data will be gathered through interviews with teachers, student focus groups, class observations using tools like TARE, and student reflective journals. Video recordings and parent/teacher surveys may supplement these data to track SEL skill transfer beyond PE.

Instruments Used

Validated tools such as EQ-i:YV, TEIQue-CF, and SSIS will assess emotional and social competencies. Observational instruments like TARE and custom protocols will monitor SEL behaviours. The CASEL Implementation Rubric and Self-Description Questionnaire (SDQ) will provide additional insights. Interviews, reflective notebooks, and diaries will offer student perspectives on emotional growth and social interaction.

Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data will be analysed using SPSS or R with techniques like repeated measures ANOVA and regression. Observational data will undergo frequency analysis and inter-rater reliability checks. Qualitative data will be thematically analysed using NVivo. Triangulation will integrate findings from both data types to provide a comprehensive understanding of SEL outcomes in PE.

RESULTS

Quantitative Findings

This research's quantitative findings are anticipated to reveal significant improvements in several aspects of emotional intelligence and collaborative skills among students participating in the SEL-enhanced physical education program. Evaluation of pre- and post-intervention scores on the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory: Youth Version (EQ-i:YV) may demonstrate statistically significant improvements across all subscales, particularly in interpersonal skills and stress management. The average interpersonal skills score may increase from 92.3 (SD = 10.5) at baseline to 98.7 (SD = 9.8) post-intervention ($p < .001$), indicating enhanced abilities in empathy, social responsibility, and maintaining positive relationships. Consequently, stress management scores may rise from 88.6 (SD = 11.2) to 94.5 (SD = 10.1) ($p < .001$), indicating improved emotional regulation and impulse control.

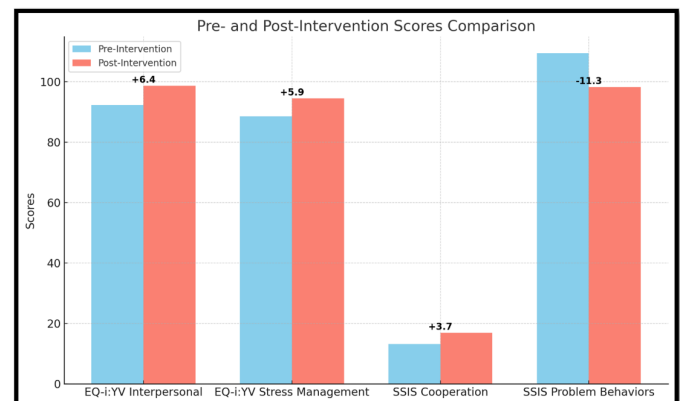
Results from the Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) may demonstrate significant progress in collaborative behaviours and overall social competence. The mean score for cooperation may increase from 13.2 (SD = 3.8) to 16.9 (SD = 3.2) ($p < .001$), signifying enhanced talents in teamwork, compliance with directives, and positive participation in group endeavours. Moreover, issue behaviours evaluated by the SSIS may demonstrate a significant decrease, with the mean score falling from 109.5 (SD = 15.3) to 98.2 (SD = 13.7) ($p < .001$), suggesting a reduction in disruptive or antisocial behaviours in physical education classes and potentially in other educational settings.

Repeated assessments ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of time on total emotional intelligence scores, $F(2,$

198) = 45.67, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .32$, demonstrating a consistent improvement in students' emotional intelligence throughout the academic year. Post-hoc analysis may indicate that the most substantial gains occurred between the mid-year and end-of-year assessments, possibly due to the cumulative effects of ongoing participation in SEL activities within physical education. Furthermore, multiple regression analysis identified predictors of successful outcomes, such as student age ($\beta = .24$, $p < .01$), frequency of SEL activities ($\beta = .38$, $p < .001$), and teacher experience with SEL implementation ($\beta = .29$, $p < .01$), which together accounted for 43% of the variance in emotional intelligence improvement ($R^2 = .43$, $F(3, 196) = 49.23$, $p < .001$).

Measure	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention	Change	p-value
EQ-i:YV Interpersonal	92.3 (SD = 10.5)	98.7 (SD = 9.8)	+6.4	< .001
EQ-i:YV Stress Management	88.6 (SD = 11.2)	94.5 (SD = 10.1)	+5.9	< .001
SSIS Cooperation	13.2 (SD = 3.8)	16.9 (SD = 3.2)	+3.7	< .001
SSIS Problem Behaviors	109.5 (SD = 15.3)	98.2 (SD = 13.7)	-11.3	< .001

Table 1: Qualitative Findings of the Study



Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of qualitative data from interviews, focus groups, and student diaries identified seven key themes that elucidate the influence of the SEL-enhanced PE program on students' emotional intelligence and collaborative abilities. A significant topic that emerged was "Augmented Self-Awareness and Emotional Regulation." Students often exhibited enhanced capacity to identify and articulate their emotions during physical activities and competitive contexts. A student said, "Previously, I would respond with anger after losing a game; however, I now recognise my feelings of frustration and disappointment, and I have developed the capacity for self-soothing." This subject was intricately linked to another recurring theme: "Augmented Conflict Resolution Competencies." A significant number of students reported using novel strategies to address challenges during collaborative tasks, with one participant stating, "We learnt to utilise 'I' statements and genuinely listen to one another." It has facilitated the swift resolution of issues,

allowing us to resume play more expeditiously.

A prominent topic that arose was “Augmented Empathy and Perspective-Taking.” Students regularly shown enhanced capacity to comprehend and empathise with their classmates’ emotional experiences throughout physical education exercises. This was especially apparent in circumstances involving differing physical abilities or skill levels. A student said, “I had never considered the experience of an individual facing challenges in sports being chosen last.” I want to encourage all individuals and ensure their inclusion. Educators have seen this development, with one teacher remarking, “I have observed a significant change in how students assist one another, particularly when an individual is grappling with a new skill.” The subject of “Transferable Social-Emotional Skills” was notably significant in the data. Students and educators saw the transfer of SEL skills acquired in physical education to other aspects of school and home life. A teacher observed, “Students are employing the emotional vocabulary and conflict resolution techniques we rehearse in physical education during standard classroom interactions and on the playground.”

The qualitative data revealed problems and opportunities for improvement in the SEL-integrated physical education program. A theme of “Initial Resistance and Scepticism” surfaced, especially among older students who were first disconcerted by overt talks of emotions in the context of physical education. This theme was often augmented with tales of “Gradual Acceptance and Appreciation” as pupils recognised the program’s advantages. Identified concerns were “Time Constraints,” as several instructors articulated anxiety over the equilibrium between SEL programs and conventional PE goals. Notwithstanding these issues, a prevailing theme of “Positive Transformation of PE Culture” emerged, with several participants articulating a transition towards a more supportive, inclusive, and emotionally responsive physical education environment.

Subgroup Analysis

Subgroup analysis revealed significant differences in the effectiveness of the SEL-enhanced PE program across various demographic groups. The analysis of age-related effects indicated that younger children (ages 8-11) exhibited more significant improvements in emotional awareness and expressiveness compared to their older peers (years 12-15). Younger children had an average enhancement of 8.2 points (SD = 3.1) on the EQ-i:YV Emotional Expression subscale, while older students showed an average increase of 5.7 points (SD = 2.8) ($p < .01$). Older students exhibited more pronounced enhancements in stress management and interpersonal skills, achieving a mean gain of 7.4 points (SD = 2.9) on the Stress Management subscale, compared to 5.1 points (SD = 2.6) for younger students ($p < .05$). This suggests that while the program benefits all age groups, its components may have differing effects based on developmental stages.

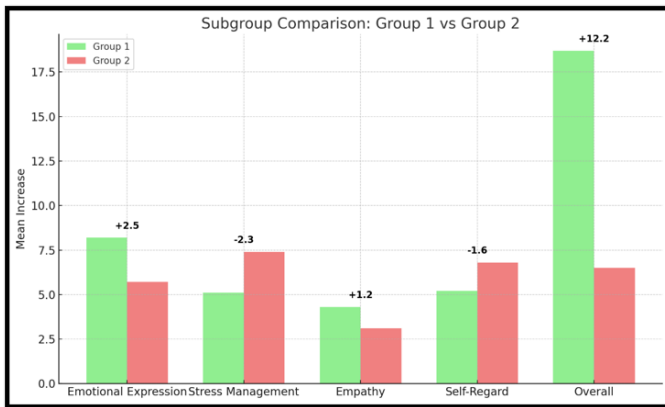
Gender-based study indicated that whereas both boys and girls shown significant improvements across all evaluated domains, females displayed more substantial increases in empathy and

social responsibility. The mean increase in the SSIS Empathy subscale was 4.3 points (SD = 1.8) for females, compared to 3.1 points (SD = 1.6) for men ($p < .01$). Conversely, males demonstrated more pronounced improvements in assertiveness and self-esteem, achieving a mean increase of 6.8 points (SD = 2.4) on the EQ-i:YV Self-Regard subscale, in contrast to 5.2 points (SD = 2.2) for females ($p < .05$). These findings suggest that the SEL framework may be addressing gender-specific aspects of emotional intelligence and social skill development.

Further analysis of baseline ability levels revealed that children in the lowest percentile on pre-intervention assessments had the most substantial increases across all parameters. Students with low scores improved their overall EQ-i:YV scores by an average of 18.7 points (SD = 5.3), while those in the middle quartiles rose by 10.2 points (SD = 4.1), and top quartile students augmented their scores by 6.5 points (SD = 3.2) ($p < .001$ for all comparisons). This suggests that the SEL-enhanced PE program may be particularly beneficial for teenagers who initially struggle with emotional intelligence and social skills. Moreover, subgroup analysis based on socioeconomic status (SES) indicated that although all groups benefited from the program, students from lower SES backgrounds demonstrated more pronounced relative enhancements in self-awareness and relational skills, potentially diminishing existing disparities in these areas.

Subgroup	Measure	Group 1	Group 2	Difference	p-value
Age	EQ-i:YV Emotional Expression (mean increase)	Younger (8-11): 8.2 (SD = 3.1)	Older (12-15): 5.7 (SD = 2.8)	2.5	< .01
Age	EQ-i:YV Stress Management (mean increase)	Younger (8-11): 5.1 (SD = 2.6)	Older (12-15): 7.4 (SD = 2.9)	2.3	< .05
Gender	SSIS Empathy (mean increase)	Girls: 4.3 (SD = 1.8)	Boys: 3.1 (SD = 1.6)	1.2	< .01
Gender	EQ-i:YV Self-Regard (mean increase)	Girls: 5.2 (SD = 2.2)	Boys: 6.8 (SD = 2.4)	1.6	< .05
Initial Skill Level	EQ-i:YV Overall (mean increase)	Bottom Quartile: 18.7 (SD = 5.3)	Top Quartile: 6.5 (SD = 3.2)	12.2	< .001

Table 2: Sub-group analysis



DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Results

This study presents compelling evidence for the incorporation of social-emotional learning (SEL) inside the physical education (PE) curriculum. The significant enhancements seen in several aspects of emotional intelligence and social skills indicate that the physical education setting provides a distinctive and effective platform for developing these essential life attributes (Malinauskas & Malinauskienė, 2021). The quantitative findings demonstrate significant improvements in interpersonal skills, stress management, and collaboration, and a reduction in problematic behaviours, suggesting that the SEL-enhanced PE program effectively targets essential components of children's social-emotional development. These benefits correspond with the theoretical foundations of SEL, which suggest that direct education and practice in emotional awareness, control, and social interaction may yield quantifiable enhancements in these domains (Weissberg, 2019).

The qualitative results provide significant insights into the processes by which the SEL framework functions within the PE context. The appearance of themes such as “Enhanced Self-Awareness and Emotional Regulation” and “Augmented Empathy and Perspective-Taking” indicates that the program successfully utilises the social and emotionally engaging aspects of physical activities to cultivate these competencies (Kliziene et al., 2021). The documented application of SEL abilities in many circumstances is notably promising, suggesting that the advantages of the program transcend the physical education environment, possibly influencing students' whole academic journey and personal growth. The theme of “Positive Transformation of PE Culture” underscores the substantial influence of the SEL framework, illustrating its capacity to transition the fundamental philosophy of physical education from a predominantly performance-oriented setting to one that prioritises and fosters social-emotional development in conjunction with physical advancement (White & Walker, 2018).

The subgroup analysis indicates significant variations in the program's effects across various demographic groups. The varying effects noted among age groups, with younger students demonstrating heightened emotional awareness and expression, while older students displayed more significant progress in stress management and interpersonal skills, indicate that the

SEL framework may require customisation to align more effectively with developmental stages (Durlak & Weissberg, 2011). The disparities in results related to gender, especially with empathy and assertiveness, illustrate the program's ability to tackle gender-specific aspects of social-emotional development. The discovery that children with originally lower ability levels exhibited the most significant increases is encouraging, indicating that the SEL-enhanced PE program may serve as an effective intervention for those requiring substantial social-emotional assistance. This corresponds with the fundamental objectives of educational fairness, suggesting that the curriculum may assist in alleviating existing deficiencies in emotional intelligence and social skills (Jones & Bouffard, 2012).

These findings together highlight the capacity of physical education as an advantageous environment for the integration of socio-emotional learning, presenting a unique amalgamation of physical, emotional, and social problems that may promote comprehensive development. The results indicate that purposefully incorporating SEL concepts into the PE curriculum enables educators to cultivate a more inclusive, supportive, and developmentally richer learning environment, hence equipping students for success in both physical health and social-emotional domains throughout many aspects of life (Goh & Connolly, 2020).

Implications for PE Curriculum

The findings of this study have substantial importance for the development and implementation of physical education (PE) curricula. They support the explicit incorporation of social-emotional learning (SEL) elements into the reformation of the physical education curriculum (Opstoel et al., 2022). This integration must go beyond just adding individual SEL activities to existing PE sessions; it requires a thorough reframing of PE's goals and methods. Physical education curricula should be intentionally structured to facilitate children's engagement with and reflection on emotional awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and teamwork within physical activities and sports. Conventional competitive games may be modified to include contemplation periods whereby students express their emotional responses and participate in resolving interpersonal conflicts. Warm-up activities may include mindfulness exercises to enhance self-awareness and emotional regulation (Non-traditional team sports - taking full advantage of the teachable moment., 1990).

The differing effects seen across age groups suggest that the physical education curriculum should be tailored to developmental phases. For children aged 8 to 11, the curriculum may prioritise fundamental abilities such as identifying and expressing emotions, using age-appropriate games and activities that foster the expansion of emotional vocabulary (Grineski, 1992). The curriculum for teenagers aged 12-15 may emphasise advanced social-emotional learning abilities, such as stress management, conflict resolution, and leadership, perhaps via joint challenges and peer-coaching programs. The discrepancies in outcomes by gender indicate that the physical education curriculum should strive to provide

diverse opportunities for the cultivation of social-emotional learning skills that are engaging and beneficial to all students, regardless of gender. This may include offering a variety of physical activities outside traditional sports, including cooperative adventure games, dance, and individual fitness pursuits, each designed with specific social-emotional learning objectives in mind (Bailey, 2006).

The finding that children with initially deficient SEL skills gained the most advantage from the program suggests that physical education curricula should include differentiated training and assessment in SEL, akin to current methodology for physical competencies. This may include initial assessments of students' social-emotional learning competencies and tailored treatments or support for those needing more growth in certain areas (Jones & Doolittle, 2017). The recorded transfer of social-emotional learning (SEL) competencies to other contexts has implications for curriculum development, suggesting that physical education classes must explicitly include and rehearse the application of SEL skills in situations outside physical education. Students may need to set SEL goals that include their physical education class and other academic components, allocating specific time in PE for reflecting on their progress towards these targets. These findings require a redefinition of physical education's role in education, shifting from an emphasis on physical fitness and sports skills to one that is essential for students' holistic development, equipping them with vital social-emotional competencies for success in academic and life endeavours (Wahl-Alexander & Ressler, 2020).

Role of PE teachers in facilitating SEL

This study underscores the vital role of physical education instructors in promoting social-emotional learning (SEL) within physical education. Physical Education instructors serve as essential facilitators in the effective execution of Social and Emotional Learning frameworks, necessitating an augmentation of their conventional duties and the acquisition of new competencies. Physical Education instructors must excel in fostering a congenial and emotionally supportive atmosphere that helps students to explore and articulate their emotions (Zach & Rosenblum, 2021). This entails demonstrating emotional intelligence, using emotionally evocative language, and reacting empathetically to students' emotional experiences throughout physical activities. Educators must honour not just physical achievements but also the emotional dimensions of participation, including resilience in adversity and graciousness in both triumph and failure (Medcalf et al., 2014).

Furthermore, physical education instructors must cultivate proficiency in explicit social-emotional learning teaching, skilfully incorporating SEL ideas and skills into physical activities. This necessitates a profound comprehension of SEL concepts and the capacity to develop courses that address certain social-emotional skills in conjunction with physical talents (Weissberg, 2019). An instructor may provide a modified version of a conventional sport that incorporates rules fostering empathy and perspective-taking, consequently leading pupils to reflect on how these alterations influenced their experiences

and relationships. Physical Education instructors are essential in promoting peer-to-peer social-emotional learning interactions, allowing students to cultivate social skills, mediate disagreements, and foster mutual emotional development. This may include managing collaborative projects, scheduling peer feedback sessions, or facilitating group conversations on team dynamics and individual experiences (Goodwin, 1999).

The study's results about varying impacts across subgroups highlight the need for physical education instructors to acquire proficiency in differentiated social-emotional learning training. Educators must acknowledge and address the diverse social-emotional needs of pupils, considering characteristics such as age, gender, starting proficiency, and cultural background. This necessitates continuous evaluation of pupils' social-emotional learning advancement and the adaptability of instructional methodologies as needed (Francis et al., 2019). Furthermore, physical education instructors possess a unique chance to enhance the application of social-emotional learning competencies across many situations. They may clearly illustrate the relationships between SEL abilities developed in physical education and their relevance in many academic and life contexts, prompting students to contemplate the use of these skills in several environments. Ultimately, the effective integration of SEL in PE requires educators to adopt a comprehensive perspective of their role, acknowledging themselves not merely as instructors of physical skills, but as facilitators of holistic personal development, fostering students' emotional intelligence and social competencies in conjunction with their physical abilities (Kulinna, 2008).

CONCLUSION

The incorporation of social-emotional learning (SEL) into physical education (PE) offers an effective and novel method for developing emotional intelligence and teamwork abilities in young individuals. This study's results illustrate the considerable beneficial effect of a SEL-enhanced PE framework on students' interpersonal skills, emotional regulation, empathy, and general social competence. The distinctive context of physical education, characterised by its intrinsic physical, emotional, and social difficulties, offers an optimal setting for developing essential life skills. The observed improvements across several criteria, together with qualitative insights into students' experiences, highlight the potential of this method to modify both individual students' capabilities and the overall culture of physical education programs. The varying impacts seen across age groups, genders, and baseline ability levels underscore the need for customised, developmentally appropriate SEL interventions in the physical education curriculum. The research emphasises the essential function of physical education instructors in promoting social-emotional learning, advocating for a redefinition of their professional identity and competencies. Integrating socio-emotional learning into physical education courses effectively cultivates students with the emotional intelligence and social skills essential for success in academic and life pursuits. This technique elevates the significance and pertinence of physical education in academics while advancing the overarching objectives of holistic education, equipping students to confront the intricate social and emotional concerns

of the 21st century. Future research and practical application should concentrate on enhancing existing SEL frameworks, delivering extensive training for PE teachers, and investigating long-term effects to fully actualise the promise of this integrated approach to adolescent development.

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