The Cultural Adaptation of a Social and Emotional Learning Program for an Intervention in Saudi Arabia's Preschools

By

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Abstract

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is globally recognised as a pivotal element in early childhood education, contributing significantly to holistic student development. Despite this, its integration into early education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) remains to be fully realised. Currently, the main focus of KSA educational policy predominantly revolves around academic learning, often neglecting essential aspects of students' social interaction and emotional development. To address this crucial gap, this study sought to explore the potential of SEL in Islamic preschool settings by developing and implementing PATHS for Islamic contexts SEL (PATHS- IC) Program. This culturally adaptive SEL program was specifically tailored to align with the cultural ethos of the KSA preschool education system. The primary aim of this research was to evaluate the PATHS- IC Program's effectiveness in enhancing the social and emotional development of preschoolers in KSA.

Drawing from the researcher's cultural and practical experience in the KSA, the study methodology incorporated a sequential mixed-methods approach. This encompassed conducting in-depth interviews with 8 teachers and 8 mothers of preschoolers, whose valuable perspectives significantly influenced the development of the PATHS- IC program. Subsequently, 120 5-year-old preschoolers participated in an experimental research study to assess the efficacy of the PATHS- IC program, which was administered by the researcher. Measures used to test the effectiveness of the PATHS- IC program included the Behaviour Assessment System for Children Teacher Report-Preschool (BASC-3 BESS) and the Teacher's Rating Scale of Child's Actual Behaviour (TRS-CAB). Pre- and post-intervention measures were undertaken comparing the Control and Experimental Groups using T-tests.

The results highlighted the positive impact of PATHS- IC in significantly improving preschool children's social, emotional and behavioural conduct. The PATHS- IC program

intervention led to substantial advancements in preschoolers adaptive and attention behaviours, with the Experimental Group showing significant changes post-intervention. Following the PATHS- IC program, children's social competencies were enhanced, while internalising and externalising behaviours were reduced, and scholastic conduct was improved. Notably, the Control Group, which attended preschool but did not receive the PATHS- IC intervention, showed progress in some aspects of SEL, although not to the same degree as the Experimental Group. The findings suggest that preschool attendance can promote adaptive behaviour, attention behaviours, social competence, and behavioural conduct in children, indicating a preschool effect.

Findings not only support the integration of culturally appropriate SEL programs, such as PATHS- IC, into the Islamic KSA preschool context but also highlight the intrinsic value of preschool attendance (currently at 17% in KSA), which seems to benefit young children before they enter formal schooling. The effectiveness of such culturally sensitive SEL programs, such as PATHS- IC, is enhanced when combined with the developmental advantages of preschool, enriching the early education process. This research points towards a holistic, culturally attuned educational approach in KSA, underlining the vital role of preschool and programs like PATHS- IC in shaping children's behavioural conduct and future learning paths.

Keywords: Social-emotional learning, preschool, intervention, PATHS Islamic Context SEL (PATHS- IC) Program, behaviour

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university, and the research within will not be submitted for any other future degree or diploma without the permission of Flinders University, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed:

Malak Alqaydhi

Date:

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List of Abbreviations

BASC	Behaviour Assessment System for Children Teacher Report-Preschool
BESS	Behavioural and Emotional Screening System
BSCT	Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory
CASEL	Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EU	Emotional Understanding
ESD	Exploratory Sequential Design
KMEC	KidsMatter Early Childhood
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
PATHS-IC	**PATHS** Islamic **Context** SEL Program
MoE	Ministry of Education
PATHS	Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies
PDST	Piaget's Developmental Stage Theory
RA	Research Assistant
SBREC	Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
SELS	Saudi Early Learning Standards
TCM	Transformative Classroom Management
TRS	Teacher-Rating Scale
TRS-CAB	Teacher's Rating Scale of Child's Actual Behaviour Measure
VSCT	Vygotsky's Social-Cultural Theory

Chapter 1: Introduction

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is widely recognised as a critical aspect of children's education, particularly during the formative preschool years (Gunter et al., 2012). For example, a comprehensive meta-analysis of 48 studies involving 15,498 preschool students demonstrated that universal SEL interventions have beneficial effects on developing social and emotional skills and reducing problem behaviours, with positive outcomes observed across the board. Targeted interventions for at-risk students were found to be even more effective in these areas. This analysis underscores that preschool children benefit greatly from SEL interventions, and highlights the need for different best practices for SEL in preschool compared to K–12 settings (Murano et al., 2020). Research has shown that implementing classroom-wide SEL interventions significantly improves social and emotional competence in preschool children, while also reducing challenging behaviors (Luo et al., 2022).These programs not only support children's development but can also enhance teaching quality. In particular, SEL strengthens teacher-child interactions by fostering more responsive and nurturing environments, as well as improving classroom management practices (Blewitt, 2020).

There exists a large body of research and published reports that advocate for the explicit teaching of social and emotional skills in all stages of children's education, with certain studies emphasising its particular importance at the preschool level (Mahoney et al., 2021; Murano et al., 2020). These reports suggest that integrating SEL into preschool education can provide a strong foundation for emotional and social competency. Such competency, as established in the early stages of education, can significantly influence a child's trajectory in the education system and throughout their lives (Martinsone et al., 2022; Nakamichi et al., 2021).

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In recent years, early childhood education has emerged as a major priority in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). This shift is largely attributed to the Ministry of Education's (MoE) focus on boosting educational standards and improving student outcomes (MoE, 2020). However, despite this focus, the MoE has not yet fully incorporated SEL into its educational strategies. Consequently, despite SEL's global recognition as a promising and effective approach to early education, its implementation in KSA remains limited.

Al-Shanawani (2023) highlighted the existing deficiency in SEL inclusion within the early childhood education system in KSA. Although certain lessons and activities do exist, a lack of dedicated lessons or a structured SEL syllabus has been noted by researchers (Al-Shanawani, 2023; Kaifi, 2023). Consequently, there is a need for more research to comprehensively explore and address the gaps in SEL implementation within the preschool educational framework of KSA (Khomais & Gahwaji, 2019). This study aimed to contribute to this crucial gap by investigating the effectiveness of an SEL program specifically designed for preschools in KSA. The focus of the research was on the development and implementation of a new SEL program, titled the PATHS Islamic Context SEL Program (PATHS- IC). This program was tailored to be culturally suitable for the KSA preschool education system and assessed for its effectiveness in improving children's social and emotional skills.

1.1 Background

During the preschool years, children undergo rapid social and emotional development, making this period particularly influential for SEL (Blewitt et al., 2018). This is due to the malleability of children's behavioural tendencies during this stage of development. Domitrovich et al. (2017a) indicated that stronger social-emotional competence in preschoolers is linked to reduced behavioural and emotional issues. Children in this age

group who exhibit enhanced behaviour management and self-regulation skills, tend to exhibit greater engagement in various preschool activities (Bohlmann & Downer, 2016).

There is also substantial evidence associating limited social-emotional competence with the emergence of problematic behaviours, emotional challenges, and difficulties in establishing meaningful relationships (Martinsone et al., 2022). Preschoolers who display aggressive and oppositional behaviour are influenced by a combination of inadequate self-regulation and broader contextual factors. This behaviour is often linked to emotional instability, difficulties in forming social relationships, and challenges in academic performance, all of which can result in decreased engagement in the learning process (Laurent et al., 2020). However, recent research has expanded beyond purely behaviourist perspectives, incorporating humanistic and ecological views that consider the child's development within social, familial, and environmental contexts. Additionally, the association between hyperactivity and behavioural problems in preschool-aged children, especially within the school environment, highlights the multifaceted nature of social-emotional development. This underscores the need for SEL programs that address these complex dynamics (Curby et al., 2015). Luo et al. (2022) reviewed the effectiveness of classroom-wide social-emotional interventions for preschool children. The study, based on a meta-analysis of 39 studies with 10,646 participants, found that such interventions improved children's social and emotional competence while reducing challenging behaviours. Interventions that included a family component showed larger positive effects, and those led by classroom teachers had smaller but still significant impacts. Overall, the findings support the use of comprehensive social-emotional interventions in preschool settings to enhance children's development and reduce behavioural issues This further underscores the critical importance of fostering these competencies in early childhood, particularly in the context of SEL, as these skills are foundational to both mental health and academic success.

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1.2　Social and Emotional Learning

1.2.1　SEL Definition

SEL is a framework developed and popularised by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), which plays a pivotal role in defining and promoting SEL globally. CASEL is recognised as the leading authority on SEL, with a mission to help integrate SEL into education systems to enhance students' overall development, well-being, and academic performance. CASEL provides a comprehensive model of SEL that emphasises the development of key skills in self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2020b).

Durlak et al. (2015) defined SEL, which may also be referred to by educators with terms such as "non-cognitive skills," "interpersonal skills," "soft skills," "21st-century skills," "character strengths," and "whole child development", as a dynamic process by which children and adolescents gain essential knowledge, attitudes, and abilities to navigate their emotions effectively. These acquired skills empower them to establish and accomplish objectives, exhibit empathy, make prudent choices, as well as cultivate positive interpersonal connections.

CASEL (2020h) recognises that integrating SEL into pedagogy helps students cultivate essential life skills, including self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. SEL's focus is on fostering relationship-building competency and enhancing responsible decision-making. In a 2020 update, CASEL further defined SEL as an integral component of both education and human development. It involves acquiring and applying knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for cultivating healthy identities, managing

emotions, demonstrating empathy, establishing supportive relationships, and making responsible, compassionate decisions.

At its core, SEL addresses the fundamental requirements of students for motivation, social connectivity, and self-regulation as foundational elements for effective learning and overall success in school, careers, and life (CASEL, 2020b). According to CASEL (2020g), SEL encompasses five essential competencies as shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1

Key SEL Competencies according to CASEL
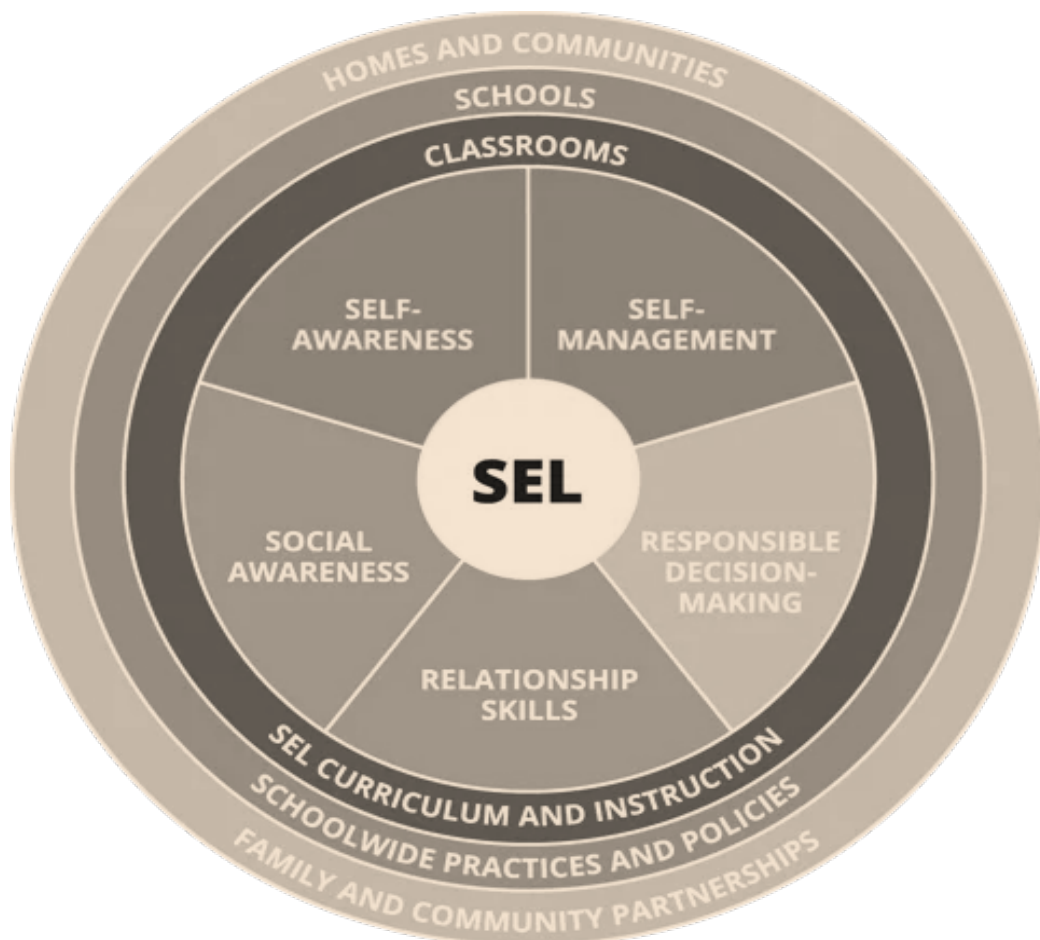
Self-awareness encapsulates the ability to recognise and categorise one's own emotions and thoughts, understand their origins and outcomes, and use this understanding to guide actions effectively. This level of introspection is critical in self-management, helping individuals control emotions, thoughts, and behaviours, thereby managing stress, and impulses, deferring immediate rewards, and persevering through challenges.

Apart from managing self-awareness and self-management, other pivotal components that should be acknowledged under the CASEL framework include social awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills. Each of these CASEL components collectively construct a comprehensive understanding of emotional intelligence, which is pivotal in forming behaviours, attitudes, and the overall development of individuals.

Social awareness emphasises understanding different perspectives, empathy across cultures, and discerning social and ethical norms. It encourages us to understand and share others' feelings, see from their perspectives, understand their emotions, and respond compassionately.

Relationship skills are vital for establishing and maintaining positive relationships. These skills include effective communication, the ability to cooperate and problem-solve collaboratively and to provide leadership when needed. These behaviours lead to constructive interactions in a diverse range of settings.

The SEL framework culminates in responsible decision-making. This involves making ethical, safe, and constructive choices across wide-ranging personal and social interactions, with a strong focus on personal, social, and collective well-being. It involves evaluating potential outcomes, assessing alternatives, deciding favourably, and taking responsibility for these well-informed judgments.

Cultivating these five abilities plays a vital role in fostering collaborative behaviour and effective problem-solving, as well as inculcating self-discipline, impulse management, and emotional regulation (Portela-Pino et al., 2021). The development of an appropriate SEL program for preschool children in KSA therefore becomes an important endeavour.

SEL is regarded as a critical factor in mitigating the risk of negative outcomes, such as violence, crime, substance abuse, and poverty, that may shape children's futures (Fang et al., 2022; Malcolm, 2018; Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013). By equipping children with the necessary skills to navigate their emotions and relationships, SEL can help prevent various societal challenges that may arise later in life (Nagaraj & Rajaraman, 2021). In particular, SEL may assist preschoolers in understanding and managing their emotions, forming friendships, developing their feelings of empathy and making responsible decisions (Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

1.2.2 SEL Implementation in Schools

The implementation of SEL has been shown to decrease problem behaviour and enhance students' problem-solving skills and peer interactions (Wong et al., 2014). Immordino-Yang et al. (2019) showed that integrating social-emotional teaching facilitated the establishment of positive relationships among students and between teachers and students. This suggested that SEL can act as a catalyst for nurturing harmonious classroom relations. Importantly, these benefits potentially extend beyond the classroom, shaping students' social interactions and relationships in various facets of their lives, thus forming a crucial aspect of their lifelong learning and personal development. Substantial evidence supports the implementation of SEL programs in school environments, highlighting its impact on both academic and behavioural outcomes. For instance, a study by Taylor et al. (2017) indicated that SEL interventions improved students' emotional regulation and relationships, contributing to long-term benefits such as reduced mental health issues and higher academic

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achievement. Such findings underscore the effectiveness of SEL in school settings and provide a robust evidence base for its critical role in fostering positive student development. By establishing this foundation, it becomes clear that the lessons learned from school contexts can inform and support SEL implementation in early childhood education.

Frydenberg et al. (2017a) and Djamnezhad et al. (2021) highlighted that the preschool years are crucial for the social and emotional development of children. The increasing appetite for SEL programs within early childhood education and care stems from their potential to optimise children's health and educational outcomes (Blewitt et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2019). Such competencies, such as effective anger management, the ability to build friendships, conflict resolution, and the capability to make secure and ethical decisions, are not just beneficial skills; they form the foundation for successful and meaningful interpersonal interactions (Aliasghari & Farhadi, 2023; Domitrovich et al., 2017b). Crucially, these abilities significantly shape a child's early development and inform their future social behaviour and decision-making capabilities (Matson, 2017a). Hence, they constitute key arguments for why SEL deserves a central place in children's early education.

In the context of school environments, the effectiveness of SEL programs has indeed been extensively researched and documented. However, it is important to note that while the effectiveness of SEL programs has been demonstrated in various school contexts, research specifically focusing on preschool settings is relatively lacking. Smith and Low (2013) highlighted the positive impact of SEL programs in reducing bullying and substance abuse within school environments. These programs have been integral components of comprehensive bullying prevention interventions, leading to improved student skills, decreased harmful behaviour, and enhanced academic achievement. Nonetheless, further research specifically examining the efficacy of SEL programs in preschool settings is

warranted to fully understand their potential benefits and limitations in early childhood education.

The pivotal role of SEL programs was underscored in lowering bullying incidents, emphasising the critical role of teachers in actively supporting the adoption of such skills (Smith & Low, 2013). Bagner et al. (2012) have demonstrated how early indications of these mental health disturbances such as anxiety disorders and behavioural problems, are frequently observed in early childhood and, consequently, emphasised the importance of identifying, assessing, and addressing the causative issues as early as possible.

Mann et al. (2017) found that social-emotional issues significantly impact young children's development and school readiness. Children must possess adequate social-emotional skills to thrive in both the classroom and adulthood. Maguire et al. (2015) asserted that neglecting children's social and emotional needs, including cultivating these skills, heightens their risk of delinquency and mental health challenges. While it can be argued that incorporating SEL into the preschool curriculum could have profound, beneficial implications on an individual and societal level, transforming schools into thriving learning environments and students into successful, responsible contributors to society, few studies have investigated the effectiveness of SEL programs in early childhood settings (Mondi et al., 2021).

1.2.3   SEL in Preschool

Research suggests that implementing programs in preschool settings can yield significant benefits for children's development and long-term outcomes (Mahoney et al., 2021; Murano et al., 2020). For instance, research by Jones et al. (2015) highlighted the enduring advantages of SEL during early childhood. Through a longitudinal study, they demonstrated a significant association between SEL experiences in early childhood and

favourable outcomes in adulthood across numerous dimensions. These dimensions included mental health, wellbeing, interpersonal relationships, professional paths, and a reduced likelihood of engaging in delinquent and criminal behaviours.

Gabard-Durnam and McLaughlin (2020) emphasised the importance of early intervention and the provision of SEL opportunities during the preschool phase. Emphasising the rapid pace of child development within the initial five years, their work underscores how experiences and interventions in this crucial period profoundly impact children's brain development, personality, and future life outcomes. The impact of such interventions can have long-lasting effects on a child's overall development and future achievements (Murano et al., 2020).

While Gunter et al. (2012) emphasised the importance of incorporating SEL into early childhood education, it is essential to scrutinize the basis of their argument. Gunter and colleagues presented this view as a theoretical proposition rather than a finding grounded in rigorous empirical research. Their claims, while logical and supported by broader SEL literature, lack direct evidence from experimental studies or longitudinal data that could conclusively demonstrate the impact of SEL in early childhood settings. Similarly, Djambazova et al. (2016) suggested that SEL prepares children for formal schooling, yet her conclusions are largely derived from correlational studies rather than experimental designs. As such, it is crucial to interpret these findings cautiously, acknowledging that while there is strong theoretical support for the role of SEL, the existing research still requires more robust experimental validation, particularly in early childhood contexts. A more critical engagement with the methodologies employed in these studies reveals a gap in experimental research, underscoring the need for further empirical investigations to substantiate these claims.

Supporting emotional intelligence in early childhood education assists children in coping with difficulties, respecting differences, and adopting a social perspective, which

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benefits both children and educators (Ulutaş et al., 2021). By fostering emotional intelligence in preschool, children become better equipped to navigate challenges and interact with others in a respectful and empathetic manner, thereby creating a positive learning environment for all. SEL content in preschool curriculums plays a significant role in preventing emotional and behavioural problems and preparing children for future academic and social challenges (Shuttlesworth & Shannon, 2015).

In conclusion, SEL in early childhood has a discernible impact on long-term outcomes. By supporting children's social and emotional development during the preschool years, we can aid them in navigating their emotions, building strong relationships, and establishing a foundation for success in various facets of life. Therefore, the inclusion of SEL modules is crucial in enhancing pupils' social and emotional competencies, fostering academic improvement, facilitating positive behaviour change, and serving as instructional resources.

1.3   Theories Supporting the Effectiveness of SEL in Preschoolers

Social-emotional development plays a vital role in a child's lifelong journey (Frey et al., 2019). Childhood development and learning theorists, such as Albert Bandura, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky, underscored the significance of social-emotional development as a driving force in learning and growth (Rumjaun & Narod, 2020; Sharkins et al., 2017). Both Piaget and Vygotsky advocated for socially interactive classrooms to foster social-emotional development in children, often achieved through activities like group games, decision-making, negotiation, interaction, voting, and the establishment of classroom rules (Sharkins et al., 2017).

1.3.1 Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (BSCT)

Bandura et al. (2003), emphasised the dynamics of social interaction in their social cognitive theory. They posited that children acquire knowledge by observing the actions of others, emphasising the need for granting children choices and autonomy in their learning. This autonomy, according to Bandura et al., fosters self-efficacy and independence. Kim and Baylor (2006) noted that social experiences significantly influence these capabilities. In the context of SEL, these attributes can positively influence emotional regulation, interpersonal interactions, and overall wellbeing (Frydenberg et al., 2017c).

Autonomy allows individuals to negotiate social situations with confidence, leading to the development of emotional intelligence and self-awareness (Diego & Beverly-Anne, 2014). Social interactions can improve empathy, emotional intelligence, and effective communication (Suciu et al., 2021). Social experiences teach people how to manage a range of emotions, comprehend diverse viewpoints, and build interpersonal skills all essential elements of SEL. SEL programs can be tailored to bolster cognitive skill development in alignment with BSCT (Oberle et al., 2016). Engaging activities promoting collaboration and problem-solving, for instance, contribute to the enhancement of logical thinking and reasoning skills in children.

Both BSCT and SEL underscore the significance of social interaction and collaboration in the learning and developmental process. By cultivating environments that nurture both cognitive and social-emotional growth, the comprehensive development of children can be promoted (Graczyk et al., 2000). In essence, although BSCT and SEL are distinct theories, their interconnections are noteworthy, portraying them as complementary approaches to understanding and promoting learning and development. Through the integration of cognitive and social-emotional learning, a more holistic educational approach

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can be established, fostering the well-rounded development of every child (Rybska & Błaszak, 2020).

1.3.2 Vygotsky's Social-Cultural Theory (VSCT)

Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky proposed a Socio-Cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1962) that is primarily concentrated on child development through social interactions. He posited that collaboration, as well as conceptual training, are essential for children's development. This notion resonates with the goals of SEL, which aim to develop students' social and emotional skills through interactions with others. By engaging in collaborative activities and receiving guidance from teachers or mentors, students have the opportunity to practice and develop skills such as communication, empathy, cooperation, and problem-solving, all of which are crucial components of SEL.

Vygotsky emphasised that learning is inherently a social process, where children develop their cognitive abilities through interactions with others, especially more knowledgeable individuals such as teachers, mentors, and peers. He introduced the concept of the "zone of proximal development," which highlights the gap between what a child can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance. Rather than promoting isolated or independent development, Vygotsky stressed the importance of collaborative learning environments where children can engage in shared activities that encourage active participation and communication. The teacher's role is to scaffold this process, helping learners absorb and apply new knowledge, thereby enhancing their overall development and performance (Vygotsky, 1962).

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is a concept introduced by Vygotsky that refers to the range of tasks that a learner can perform with the help of a more knowledgeable person, such as a teacher, mentor, or peer, but which they cannot yet do independently. In

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other words, the ZPD is the gap between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with assistance (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Vygotsky emphasised that learning should occur within this zone, as it allows for optimal cognitive development. It is a dynamic area that evolves as the learner's abilities progress. The more knowledgeable person provides scaffolding support and guidance tailored to the learner's current level of understanding. Over time, as the learner's skills improve, the ZPD shifts, expanding their potential for independent learning and problem-solving.

Vygotsky emphasised the importance of social interaction and collaboration in the ZPD (Balakrishnan & Claiborne, 2012). He posited that through interactions with more knowledgeable individuals, learners can internalise new information, strategies, and ways of thinking (Vygotsky, 1962). The guidance provided within the ZPD should be tailored to the learner's specific needs, building on their existing knowledge and abilities while challenging them to reach higher levels of understanding and competence (Kantar et al., 2020). Scaffolding within the ZPD involves tailoring guidance and support to the learner's specific needs, building upon their existing knowledge and abilities while challenging them to reach higher levels of understanding and competence. When it comes to SEL, this means providing students with the necessary tools, strategies, and feedback to enhance their emotional regulation, social skills, self-awareness, and responsible decision-making (Fernández et al., 2015).

Vygotsky's (1962) sociocultural theory and social-emotional theory converge in recognising the pivotal role of social interaction and environment in human development. Despite their focus on distinct developmental aspects (cognitive versus emotional), an intriguing connection between them unveils a more comprehensive perspective. Vygotsky's ZPD, where optimal learning occurs with support, can be seamlessly applied to social-emotional development. Interactions with caregivers and peers, marked by support, serve as

scaffolding for acquiring skills such as emotional regulation, self-awareness, and empathy (Levykh, 2008).

According to Vygotsky, knowledge and skills are acquired through social interaction and subsequently internalised. Similarly, social-emotional skills are cultivated through observation and interaction with others. Emotional responses, coping mechanisms, and social comprehension become internalised patterns shaping an individual's emotional landscape. Vygotsky's recognition of language as a crucial tool for thought and learning aligns with the role of language in expressing and understanding emotions (Fernyhough, 2008). Social-emotional development entails learning to effectively label and communicate emotions, relying on language proficiency. The above arguments underscore the influence of social and cultural contexts on development.

Cultural norms and expectations mould emotional expression, coping strategies, and the perception of emotions, while an individual's experience and management of emotions are shaped by their social environment (Bebko et al., 2019; Li, 2023) . Combining these perspectives unveils the interconnection of cognitive and social-emotional development. Supportive social interactions within culturally specific contexts serve as scaffolding for both cognitive and social-emotional skills, fostering well-rounded individuals who are adept at critical thinking and navigating social relationships with emotional intelligence (Hayashi et al., 2022). Designing SEL programs in schools based on Vygotskian principles, incorporating scaffolding through peer interaction and adult guidance, becomes a practical application of these ideas (Vadeboncoeur & Collie, 2013). Recognising cultural influences on emotions aids educators and caregivers in navigating cultural differences, and supporting children's social-emotional development in a culturally sensitive manner (Morcom, 2014).

1.3.3 Piaget's Developmental Stage Theory (PDST)

Piaget (1976) underscored developmental fluctuations in the mental and intelligence levels of children, emphasising that as they grow, socio-cognitive development becomes paramount for cognitive growth. The Developmental Stage Theory postulated by Piaget further elucidates that by prioritising social development, cognitive development naturally flourishes. Piaget specifically linked the development of moral understanding to a child's growing ability to engage in peer relationships (DeVries et al., 2000).

Emphasising the crucial role of social experiences, Piaget (1976) highlighted that interactions with both adults and peers significantly contribute to shaping a child's cognitive development. The primary objective of these interactions is to foster a child's autonomy and self-regulation (Blake, 2015). In adult and child relationships, fostering respect, trust, and cooperation and promoting empathy and mutual affection are essential. Piaget contended that cultivating such relationships strengthens a child's social skills.

Piaget's developmental stages offer a valuable framework for comprehending the evolution of SEL skills (Ghazi et al., 2014). During the preoperational stage ages 2-7, children acquire the capacity to comprehend and respond to others' emotions, a pivotal aspect of social awareness. This understanding can be integrated into SEL programs, where activities promoting collaboration, problem-solving, and emotional understanding can enhance children's cognitive skills.

1.3.4 Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-determination theory targets the beneficial internal drivers of personal motivation along with a development attitude and keen desire for diverse accomplishments in human beings (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Ryan and Deci (2000) highlighted that this theory emphasises nurturing children's intrinsic motivation, and engagement in the classroom can be achieved

by supporting children's innate needs for relatedness, competence, and autonomy. This theory is associated with the autonomous motivation for the learning process in learners and the depiction of advanced-level creativity. In order to effectively manage and lead an organisation, it is crucial to have a comprehensive understanding of human behaviours and motivational factors. SDT and SEL are intertwined frameworks delving into human motivation and development within the contexts of learning and wellbeing (Shelton-Strong, 2022). Despite their distinct focuses, they share a strong interconnection, serving as valuable perspectives to mutually comprehend one another.

SDT asserts that humans possess three inherent needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Meeting these needs nurtures intrinsic motivation, wellbeing, and optimal growth (Cerasoli et al., 2016). Emphasising the social environment's impact on motivation, SDT highlights how need-supportive settings promote autonomy, choice, mastery, and positive relationships. Conversely, controlling environments thwart these needs, fostering extrinsic motivation and reducing wellbeing. In contrast, SEL concentrates on cultivating skills to manage emotions, forge connections, and make responsible choices. These abilities empower individuals to satisfy their fundamental psychological needs across various contexts.

When informed by SDT principles, SEL programs may establish environments conducive to needs fulfillment, where autonomy, competence, and connection can potentially thrive. This, in turn, might nurture intrinsic motivation to learn social and emotional skills, which could result in enduring enhancements to wellbeing and development (Joussemet et al., 2008). SDT could play a significant role in SEL for learners, particularly in primary schools (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Motivation may progress to higher levels of competence in students, and further group projects might enhance their capabilities. Kurdi et al. (2021) explored the application of SDT theory along with fundamental SEL needs, finding that motivation levels,

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goal setting, advanced learning, and various other attributes could be improved when instructors adhere to SDT guidelines.

SDT clarifies the significance of meeting basic psychological needs for intrinsic motivation and optimal development, underscoring the essentiality not just desirability of SEL skills for flourishing (Ryan & Deci, 2019). SEL equips individuals with specific tools to navigate emotions, foster relationships, and tackle challenges, ultimately fulfilling their needs and fostering personal growth (Oberle et al., 2016). SDT offers guidance for effective SEL implementation by recommending the creation of need-supportive environments in schools, workplaces, and families. This maximises the SEL program's impact, facilitating enduring changes. SDT and SEL are not interchangeable; instead, they complement each other. SDT serves as the theoretical bedrock elucidating why developing social and emotional skills is crucial, while SEL provides practical tools for individuals to meet their basic needs and thrive across various life domains (Oberle et al., 2016).

1.4   SEL in KSA

Numerous countries have acknowledged the significance of children's SEL, incorporating it as a fundamental element within their national educational frameworks. SEL has emerged as a central theme and has been quickly and widely integrated into schools and classrooms worldwide. For instance, countries like Australia, the United States, Portugal, and China have embedded SEL into their educational programs (Bowles et al., 2017; Frydenberg et al., 2017b). The pervasiveness of these implementations validates the globally recognised influence that SEL can exert on children's all-encompassing development and wellbeing. In Australia, SEL is a fundamental component of the Australian Curriculum, focusing on personal and social capability (Bowles et al., 2017). This integration spans across all subjects and year levels, promoting skills in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Collie et al., 2017). Similarly, in the United States, SEL has been

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embedded through frameworks like CASEL, with many states and districts adopting SEL standards and programs such as Second Step and Responsive Classroom (Bowles et al., 2017). Portugal has incorporated SEL into its national curriculum through Citizenship Education, emphasising emotional intelligence and social skills through collaborative activities and projects (Cristóvão et al., 2023) . Understanding these diverse approaches provides valuable insights for integrating SEL into the curriculum and policy of the KSA. By examining how SEL has been embedded in various educational systems, KSA can adapt these strategies to align with its cultural and educational context, considering local values and existing curricula to effectively incorporate SEL into its educational framework.

Contrastingly, in KSA, SEL has received rather limited focus. This observation is evidenced by Al-Shanawani (2019), who pointed out the existing deficiency in the inclusion of SEL within the KSA educational system. Despite international interest in SEL as a relatively new and successful pedagogical approach in early education, the concept has yet to gain traction in KSA.

In 2018, the Saudi Early Learning Standards (SELS) introduced the internationally recognised structured framework, offering a comprehensive outline of the knowledge and skills that children aged three to six should acquire (MoE, 2018). The SELS identify seven learning domains to learning, including language and early literacy development, patriotism and social studies, social-emotional development, cognition and general knowledge, and Islamic education. Together, these areas form the framework for more specific strands and indicators of learning and development. Each standard facilitates children's overall growth, catering to their uniqueness, curiosity, development rates, and other distinct aspects. These standards illustrate a significant leap forward in the approach to early learning in KSA. The standards, designed by an international collaboration of early learning experts, offer a much-needed framework for the comprehensive development of young children in the nation. SELS

take into account children's developmental needs, learning rates, and cultural backgrounds, arguing for a more inclusive and effective early education system.

One strong argument in favour of SELS is its focus on SEL. It highlights the need to teach children how to identify and process their emotions effectively (MoE, 2024). This is paramount in light of increasing stressors in the modern world for children and the rise in mental health concerns (Reiss et al., 2019). Additionally, the standards are not just about academic learning. They present a holistic view of a child's growth, focusing on cognitive, social, emotional and moral development. They acknowledge that every child's learning pattern is unique, and one-size-fits-all teaching methods are not effective. By valuing individual differences, the SELS encourages a more personalised approach to learning, which could drastically improve the quality of early learning experiences.

The PATHS- IC program operates within the SELS framework, as social-emotional development is identified as one of the key learning domains. By incorporating SEL principles into its curriculum, the PATHS- IC program would enhance the SELS's focus on promoting children's emotional health and resilience. Regardless of the level of teacher training, obstacles persist due to the current state of the KSA curriculum, which often devotes insufficient attention to SEL. To successfully adopt SEL, comprehensive changes extending into systemic levels of the educational paradigm are needed. Such changes extend beyond merely adding SEL components to the curriculum; they require restructuring policies, practices, and priorities to prioritise SEL alongside academic subjects. This includes integrating SEL principles across various subjects, providing teachers with ongoing training and support, considering cultural sensitivities, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. By addressing these systemic levels of the educational paradigm, KSA can create an environment that nurtures the social-emotional development of all students. This

further underscores the importance of tailored training initiatives that address these areas (Vernadakis et al., 2012).

Several countries provide valuable examples of such comprehensive change. In Singapore, for instance, a project by Yang et al. (2021) focused on facilitating toddler conflict resolution, as part of successful innovation in early childhood curriculum practices. It demonstrated how integrating a child-focused approach into the current curriculum could enhance children's conflict resolution skills and self-regulation, underscoring the role of teacher research in shaping everyday practices in early childhood settings. This focus on context-relevant approaches ties in well with the KSA's unique cultural sensitivities, suggesting the need for similar, locally tailored research endeavours to guide the integration of SEL in teacher training and practice. Meanwhile, in the European context, Do et al. (2022) highlighted how social emotional education has evolved from SEL to become a core curriculum element across the region. The proactive involvement of the European Union EU in uniting and strengthening the social-emotional education concept among its member states is worth noting. Such examples illuminate potential routes for the KSA to follow in the comprehensive incorporation of SEL into educational policies and practices, ensuring it sits alongside academic subjects in the curriculum and is presented in a culturally sensitive manner.

A particularly unique feature of the SELS is its integration of Islamic principles into the curriculum. Religion plays a big part in KSA culture and identity, and it is essential to imbue children's religious values from an early stage in a way that respects their individual learning rates and curiosity(Alghamdi, 2023). This balance between religion and modern pedagogy can help shape not only young minds but also the broader community. Furthermore, the SELS acknowledges the vital role of families as active partners in early learning. This focus on parental engagement in early education has been proven to have a

profoundly positive impact on a child's educational outcomes (Ma et al., 2016). By ensuring a strong connection between home and school, children's learning experiences become more meaningful and continuous. KSA has shown a commendable dedication to enhancing the accessibility and excellence of early learning. The Saudi Vision 2030 highlights key goals for the nation, with a particular emphasis on innovative approaches to bolstering a robust future. PATHS- IC is a comprehensive program designed to facilitate the teaching, development, observation, and measurement of SEL behaviours and competencies in KSA preschoolers.

In KSA, cultural and religious contexts often place mothers in a primary role when it comes to raising children (Alzahrani, 2023). Mothers are typically seen as the main caregivers and nurturers, significantly influencing a child's development in both the emotional and social aspects (Abahussain, 2023). Fathers, while also involved, may not participate in child-rearing to the same extent as seen in many Western countries due to these socio-cultural norms (Novianti et al., 2023). That being said, the father's role remains valuable and significant within the framework of familial responsibilities and in accordance with cultural perspectives (Abalkhail, 2017; Aldayel et al., 2020).

Given these factors and the mothers' central role in child upbringing, this study included only mothers to gain a more focused and culturally relevant insight into the SEL promotion in KSA. According to Al Sadaawi (2010), KSA is one of the most conservative and traditional cultures in the Middle East. Almoslamani (2022) indicated that education in KSA has historically prioritised academic success, underscored by a significant emphasis on standardised testing. A school's performance is frequently assessed according to its students' test results. Consequently, teaching has primarily revolved around imparting subject-specific knowledge, with comparatively less regard for nurturing students' SEL, as highlighted by Algraini and McIntyre-Mills (2019). Traditional pedagogical methods frequently employed in KSA preschools have been identified as contributing to students' academic underachievement

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(Al-Shanawani, 2019). This emphasis on academic-focused teaching often overshadows the development of social and emotional intelligence, which has been neglected as a psychological factor influencing KSA students' lives (Alharbi & Smith, 2018). By concentrating predominantly on academic achievement, the importance of SEL has been minimized, potentially exacerbating academic challenges and limiting students' overall development.

Furthermore, Kaifi (2023) pointed out that certain cultural norms in KSA might hinder the emphasis on SEL in children's education. For instance, discussing emotions is not a common practice among children, and mental health issues carry a stigma (Alluhaibi & Awadalla, 2022). This situation poses challenges for educators aiming to broach SEL subjects with students and cultivate a secure and encouraging setting for them to explore their feelings. KSA's cultural landscape diverges from other nations where SEL research has been extensively explored. KSA's culture strongly emphasises collectivism, prioritising group objectives and harmony over individual needs and aspirations (Alasmrai, 2016). This distinction poses challenges to introducing SEL programs that primarily concentrate on personal growth and self-expression.

Additionally, language barriers compound the issue of adapting SEL programs developed in other countries. Many existing SEL initiatives and interventions have been formulated in English, a language foreign to most Saudi Arabians. Consequently, translating and adapting these programs for the KSA context becomes intricate. A deficiency in awareness of the importance of SEL also compounds the challenge of SEL implementation. Educators and policymakers in KSA often lack awareness regarding the significance of SEL (Alkadi, 2020). This dearth of understanding complicates the process of garnering support for SEL programs and interventions.

Despite the growing recognition of SEL's importance, the curriculum in KSA does not explicitly incorporate SEL as a standalone subject or a core component of existing subjects. The lack of emphasis on SEL in the KSA curriculum creates a research gap that needs to be addressed to ensure the holistic development of young students. Integrating SEL effectively into KSA's educational framework will require culturally adapted strategies, teacher training, and community involvement to overcome existing challenges and promote students' overall wellbeing and academic success.

1.5   SEL and the KSA Islamic Religion

Integrating SEL into the KSA educational system is complex due to the prominent role of Islamic values. KSA society is deeply rooted in Islamic culture, and educational practices are heavily influenced by religious beliefs (Aljabreen & Lash, 2016). While the Islamic religious education in preschools primarily focuses on basic concepts such as God, prayer, and simple religious stories, it does not explicitly address social and emotional development (Alharbi, 2018; Ameel et al., 2009). This limited scope means that while preschoolers are introduced to fundamental religious teachings, there is minimal emphasis on developing social and emotional skills directly through religious instruction (Khomais & Gahwaji, 2019).

However, Islamic values are integral to KSA's norms and cultural traditions (Abdel-Khalek, 2009; Alghamdi, 2023), and they play a significant role in shaping societal behaviour. This raises the question of how SEL, which is often perceived as rooted in individualistic Western pedagogies, aligns with or contrasts against these values. A key aspect of adapting SEL to KSA's context involves examining how SEL principles align with Islamic values and identifying areas where they can complement each other. Islamic teachings emphasise values such as empathy, community support, and moral behaviour, which can overlap with SEL objectives like self-awareness, empathy, and effective

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communication. By exploring these alignments, it is possible to integrate SEL in a way that respects and enhances the existing religious and cultural framework. For example, Islamic principles of compassion and communal harmony can support SEL's focus on interpersonal skills and emotional regulation. Furthermore, a relevant study by Khilmiyaha & Suudb (2020) examined the integration of Islamic religious education with an SEL approach, revealing that combining SEL principles with Islamic values can significantly enhance student character development. This study highlighted the importance of fostering social-emotional competencies such as empathy, self-awareness, and responsible decision-making within an Islamic framework. The integration of SEL with Islamic teachings not only promoted these competencies but also emphasized virtues such as compassion, honesty, and justice, essential to shaping a well-rounded character in KSA's educational context. The findings underscore the potential for Islamic religious education to provide the foundation for SEL principles, bridging gaps in social-emotional development while maintaining religious integrity.

Critics argue that the current educational system may lack sufficient attention to SEL, potentially leading to gaps in essential life skills (Alharbi, 2015). To address this, it is crucial to develop a balanced curriculum that incorporates both Islamic values and SEL principles. This approach would ensure that children benefit from religious education while also acquiring crucial social and emotional skills. Incorporating SEL into the KSA preschool curriculum, in a manner that respects and integrates Islamic values, can support holistic development and better prepare children for their future social interactions.

Western pedagogies, including SEL, often need to be adapted to fit cultural and religious contexts (Rajab & Wright, 2018). In KSA, this means modifying SEL practices to align with collectivist ideals and Islamic values, focusing on aspects such as community and cooperation, rather than individual self-management alone. Adapting SEL to fit KSA's

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unique socio-cultural and religious environment involves understanding both the alignment and potential areas of conflict between SEL principles and Islamic teachings (Alothman, 2017).

This process of adaptation can be likened to acculturation, where educational practices evolve through interaction between cultural groups Berry (2015). Research on integrating Western pedagogies with traditional KSA educational methods highlights the importance of this adaptation (Elyas et al., 2021; Reimers, 2020). By explicitly identifying and leveraging the points of alignment between SEL and Islamic values, KSA can create a curriculum that supports both the cultural and developmental needs of its students.

1.6   Preschool Education and SEL in the KSA Context

Preschool education in KSA is increasingly recognised for its importance, but it currently lacks a comprehensive SEL curriculum, a gap highlighted by various researchers and indicative of broader educational challenges (Al-Shanawani, 2023; Alharbi, 2018; Aljabreen & Lash, 2016). The cultural context of KSA emphasises the value of SEL, as it is crucial for developing socio-emotional competencies in early childhood. However, the low rate of preschool enrolment is only 17% MoE (2020) exposes a significant challenge in addressing this need.

The connection between low preschool engagement and the absence of an SEL curriculum lies in the fact that without widespread access to quality early childhood education, including SEL, many children miss out on essential socio-emotional learning opportunities. Increasing preschool enrollment is a key goal of the MoE to improve early childhood education and ensure that more children benefit from a holistic developmental approach (Rabaah et al., 2016). Factors contributing to low enrollment include financial constraints, a lack of preschools in rural areas, and cultural attitudes towards early education.

Additionally, the geographic diversity within KSA, from urban centres like Riyadh and Jeddah to rural areas, creates disparities in access to education. While urban areas may have more resources to implement SEL programs, rural regions face greater challenges, further widening the gap in socio-emotional learning.

Despite these efforts, KSA's education system faces fundamental challenges such as outdated curricula and ineffective teaching methods, which undermine the country's Vision 2030 goals of economic growth and a skilled workforce (Soud Alotaibi, 2021). The MoE's focus on enhancing children's physical, social, emotional, and mental development underscores the need for a curriculum that addresses these areas comprehensively (MoE, 2020). Research indicates that early childhood is a critical period for developing socio-emotional skills (Aljabreen & Lash, 2016). While some researchers in KSA have expressed concerns about the lack of SEL opportunities leading to students lagging in socio-emotional competencies (Al-Asmary et al., 2004; Alharbi, 2018; Aljabreen & Lash, 2016), it is important to note that SEL alone is not a panacea. The argument that SEL can prevent emotional disturbances such as anxiety, depression, and disruptive behaviours must be approached with caution. In Western contexts, where SEL is implemented, these issues remain prevalent, suggesting that SEL programs alone may not fully address or prevent emotional challenges (Vadeboncoeur & Collie, 2013; Williams, 2015; Wilson et al., 2012). It is crucial to rely on rigorous empirical studies to evaluate the effectiveness of SEL programs in reducing emotional disturbances. High-quality SEL programs have shown benefits in promoting socio-emotional development, but the impact on long-term emotional issues requires careful consideration and evidence.

In summary, while integrating SEL into KSA's preschool curriculum is important and aligns with the need for a more comprehensive approach to early childhood education, it is essential to ensure that SEL programs are tailored to the cultural and educational context of

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KSA. This approach will help address the socio-emotional needs of children while considering the broader educational and cultural landscape.

1.7   Statement of the Problem

Recent research (Al-Shanawani, 2019; Alharbi, 2018; Aljabreen & Lash, 2016) has shown that the lack of curriculum-based SEL teaching practices in the KSA education system is a serious problem. According to these researchers, the problem of poor social and emotional competency in children begins to emerge in preschoolers and becomes increasingly embedded in the behaviour of KSA students as they progress through their academic studies. Alharbi (2018) found a notable link between low emotional intelligence and poor academic performance among primary school students in KSA. Consequently, Al-Shanawani (2019) identified that a lack of focus on SEL was a problem contributing to emotional and behavioural dysfunction in students, which is not being resolved within the KSA education system.

The MoE of KSA has identified a number of problem areas in early childhood education (MoE, 2020). They have acknowledged a shortage of high-quality programs and services for students. The educational environment was deemed not strong enough to support the students' development, which was an obstacle to creativity and innovation (Khomais & Gahwaji, 2019; Lewis-Atwell et al., 2021; Maajeeny, 2019).

Additionally, there has often been a disconnect between government policy, curriculum development, and the implementation of programs in schools where teachers are prone to fall back on customary practices such as relying on traditional teaching methods rather than applying new practices (Ameel et al., 2009). These problems form obstacles and challenges to reforming education in the country and achieving policy outcomes for the government. The teachers and parents of children in KSA also face challenges because, as

Alharbi (2018) noted, effective strategies to enhance the social and emotional functioning of children are lacking. Although the KSA government is continually improving the school curriculum more broadly, preschool classrooms have not received the same attention, support or recognition of their importance in preparing children socially and emotionally to participate successfully in the education system (Maajeeny, 2019).

1.8   Research Rationale

The KSA government's perceived commitment to enhancing preschool education represents a positive stride towards ensuring equal opportunities for all children in KSA to realise their maximum potential. While the MoE (2020) has stated that it is concerned with the emotional and behavioural growth of preschool children, there are as yet no country-specific SEL programs that have been adopted or implemented in the KSA education system to meet this need (Maajeeny, 2019; Rajab & Wright, 2018). There is an abundance of research in other countries on SEL, and an undeniable international trend towards the implementation of SEL, either as a universal program or as a targeted intervention (Cramer & Castro-Olivo, 2016). However, these SEL practices do not exist in KSA. It could be of benefit to implement SEL programs in KSA preschools. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate how that could be done.

Drawing from the research by Almutairi (2018) it is highly likely that many preschool teachers in KSA lack formal training in early childhood education. This deficiency negatively affects teaching quality and young learners' educational encounters (Barenthien & Dunekacke, 2022). Furthermore, there is a noticeable scarcity of proficient SEL educators, particularly in rural settings (Dyson et al., 2023). Al Shanawani (2023) further emphasised the need for new training programs and the enhancement of existing ones to ensure that early childhood education (ECE) teachers are equipped to provide high-quality learning experiences. As such, it is essential that KSA increase access to high-quality ECE programs,

enhance teacher qualifications and training, and strengthen governance and regulation in order to address these challenges. As a result, KSA can create an environment that fosters optimum early learning experiences for children (Al Shanawani, 2023). This study sought to contribute to this imperative. Besides religious teachings, offering children explicit social and emotional guidance is crucial. This aids in their skill development for effectively tackling life's hurdles. Parents, educators, and other grown-ups have a part to play by engaging children in discussions about their emotions, aiding conflict resolution, and imparting coping mechanisms for challenging circumstances (Martinsone et al., 2022).

1.9   Study Aims and Objectives

The primary goal of this research was to develop a SEL program tailored to KSA's preschool children, given that there was a noticeable gap in this area. The program would account for the unique cultural and religious context. To achieve this aim, a multistage approach was adopted.

The first step involved a comprehensive review of the existing literature to understand the theoretical framework of SEL, the impact of socio-cultural contexts on SEL development and implementation, and the potential role of parents and teachers within this framework.

It was not known how KSA parents and teachers would receive a preschool SEL. One approach that would assist in identifying the specific means of ensuring that SEL practices in preschools can co-exist in harmony with Arab and Islamic values and beliefs would be by gaining the insights and perspectives of teachers and parents about SEL in the preschool. Therefore, the next step in this study was to obtain an understanding of the teachers' and parents' knowledge and perceptions of SEL. Through interviews conducted with teachers and mothers, valuable insights and perspectives were gathered regarding their understanding and beliefs about SEL in the KSA preschool context.

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Furthermore, comparing and contrasting Western world SEL programs with the sociocultural facets of KSA was a significant part of my approach. This comparison allowed me to understand what components might translate effectively into KSA preschool settings, and how these could be adapted to better fit our context while respecting the Islamic values and principles. The insights gathered from the literature review, engagement with teachers and mothers and analysis of successful Western programs were intended to inform the design of a culturally sensitive and effective SEL program for KSA's preschool children. This process was iterative and dynamic, ensuring the new program would reflect the unique cultural and educational environment.

Having gained this understanding, the next step then was to design and implement a suitable SEL program for the KSA preschool context. The development of the PATHS- IC program took into consideration cultural and religious sensitivities, as well as current pedagogical practices in the classroom. By conducting interviews with teachers and parents and designing a program based on their input and insights, this study aimed to address the importance of SEL in early childhood education in KSA.

Throughout this study, descriptions of each research phase are provided demonstrating how they collectively have supported the ultimate research aim. This study sought to establish a directly relevant and effective SEL program to support KSA preschool children's socio-emotional development, given the existing gap in this crucial aspect. The objective was to design, implement, and evaluate a program that adheres to KSA's distinct cultural attributes, enhancing its potential for success in promoting the socio-emotional competence of preschool children. The subsequent chapters provide an in-depth examination of the entire research process.

1.10   Research Questions

This study, detailed in subsequent chapters, comprised three phases (see Figure 1.2) addressing the following research questions:

1.10.1 Phase 1: Qualitative Research

In the initial phase of the study, the emphasis was on qualitative research, diving deeper into the understandings and perspectives of the teachers and mothers in KSA about SEL. Detailed in Chapter 4, this phase sought answers to the following research questions:

1- What were the perspectives and understandings of SEL of KSA preschool teachers? What did preschool teachers in KSA do in class to practise teaching SEL principles and strategies to their students?

2- What were the perspectives and understandings of SEL of KSA preschool children's mothers? What did preschool mothers in KSA do at home to practice teaching SEL principles and strategies to their children?

3- How should an intervention for SEL in KSA have been conducted?

1.10.2 Phase 2: Selecting and Designing a SEL Program

The research questions posed in this phase, which are further elaborated in Chapter 5, sought to determine the most suitable SEL program for adaptation in KSA and to define the contents of a new, suitable SEL program developed specifically for KSA.

4 - Which SEL program was most suitable for adaptation in KSA?

5 - What did the content of a new, suitable SEL program for KSA consist of?

1.10.3 Phase 3: Implementation and Evaluation of a SEL Program in KSA

Moving to the third phase of the study, the focus was on the actual implementation and Evaluation of the PATHS- IC program within the KSA context.

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This final phase of the study involved evaluating the implementation of the PATHS-IC program intervention as detailed in Chapter 6. The questions addressed in this phase included:

6 - How well did the PATHS- IC program fit the SEL needs of preschool students in KSA?

    a. To what extent did the PATHS- IC program make a significant difference in children's social and emotional behaviours as compared to their pre-test scores?

    b. To what extent did the Experimental Group, compared to the Control Group, differ in their social and emotional behaviours?

However, before embarking on the data collection process, the first step in the research process involved a review of the literature, including whether it was important to begin SEL early, supporting the need for KSA to introduce SEL in preschool.

Figure 1.2

Phases of the research process

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
•Interviews with Pre-school Teachers and Mothers	•Development of PATHS- IC program	•Evaluation of PATHS-IC Implementation
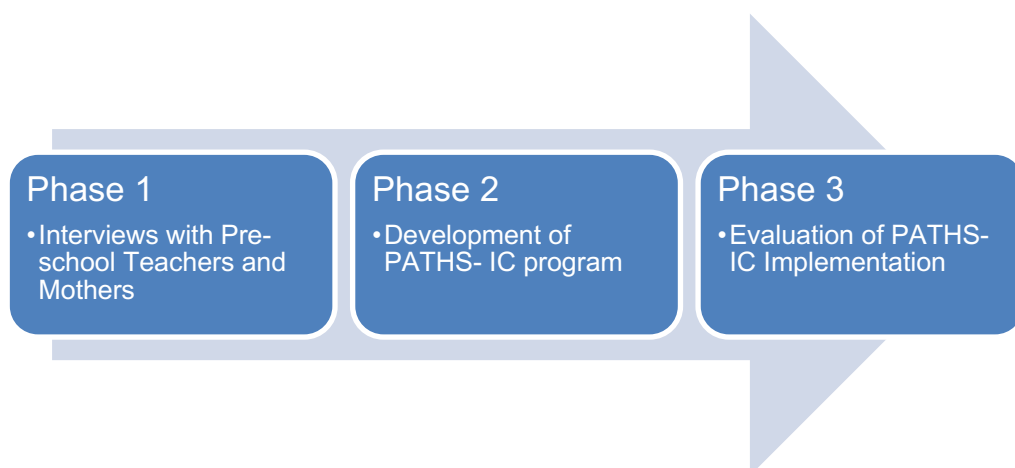
1.11   Summary

This chapter laid the foundation for my study on SEL in the context of early childhood education in KSA. While SEL is seen as crucial for emotional, social, and

academic development, its introduction faces unique challenges due to socio-cultural differences and a heavy focus on Islamic values in KSA. These observations paved the way for the proposition of a culturally tailored SEL program, the PATHS- IC, for KSA preschool education. This program sought to fill the identified gap by emphasising the development of children's social and emotional skills while remaining aligned with core Islamic teachings. Moving forward, the subsequent chapter delved into a comprehensive literature review to examine the most effective SEL programs available. This literature helped refine the PATHS-IC model, ensuring it would incorporate proven strategies that could be adapted to the KSA socio-cultural context. Ultimately, the goal was to enhance the overall wellbeing and development of KSA preschoolers through a balanced and culturally appropriate educational approach.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review was two-fold. One aim was to obtain information that would guide an investigation of parents' and teachers' views of SEL in the preschool context in KSA. This would reveal information about the relationships between the perceptions and understandings of SEL in education and the roles of teachers and parents in guiding culturally appropriate approaches to selecting, adapting, and implementing SEL in KSA preschools. The other aim of the literature review was to identify a suitable SEL program for adaptation in the KSA context, which could then be implemented and tested for suitability in the KSA preschool setting.

2.1 Teachers' and Parents' Views of SEL

Research has shown that acceptance of SEL among teachers and parents and recognition of its benefits are crucial to the success of programs in schools (Al-Shanawani, 2019; Corcoran et al., 2018). Ulla and Poom-Valickis (2023) proposed that factors associated with teachers and parents could significantly influence the quality and success of SEL program implementation. Understanding how teachers and parents view SEL would help in culturally adapting any SEL program that could be implemented to ensure it would be admissible in religious and social interpretations, feasible for teachers within the structure of their activities, and able to be effectively delivered in the KSA preschool classroom.

2.1.1 SEL Attitudes and Beliefs of Teachers

Schonert-Reichl (2017) emphasised that teachers' positive attitudes and motivations toward SEL significantly impact its integration into classrooms. Teachers serve as the foundation for SEL, fostering an environment of acceptance and understanding, and providing opportunities for students to develop self-awareness, self-regulation, and social awareness skills (Gimbert et al., 2023). Therefore, teachers' positive attitudes and motivation

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are essential for successful SEL implementation (Martinez, 2016). Expanding on this notion, teachers actively shape and drive SEL efforts by utilising their expertise, skills, and dedication. They serve as the catalysts for fostering a supportive and inclusive environment that promotes social-emotional development among students (Rakap et al., 2018). Teachers not only deliver SEL instruction but also adapt and customise strategies to address the unique needs and circumstances of their students (Ibarra, 2022). They facilitate meaningful discussions, guide reflective activities, and provide opportunities for practising essential SEL skills (Matson, 2017a). Moreover, teachers model and reinforce positive behaviours, attitudes, and values, cultivating a warm and nurturing classroom culture that promotes SEL competencies (Cross Francis et al., 2019). Buchanan et al. (2009) underlined the importance of SEL in students' academic performance and life success, with 79% of teachers viewing SEL as a solution for addressing student misconduct (Bridges et al., 2012).

However, the integration of SEL is not without its own set of challenges. Some teachers expressed reservations about dedicating sufficient time to SEL due to concerns about increased workload. Additionally, some did not perceive SEL as a necessary part of teaching, assuming that it is the parent's responsibility. Research by Bolden (2024) highlighted that such beliefs can hinder the effective implementation of SEL programs in schools. Teachers who perceive SEL as a parental responsibility may be less inclined to invest time and effort into integrating it into their classrooms. Teachers are concerned that implementing SEL adds to their workload, contributing to stress and burnout, especially when adequate training and resources are lacking (Greenberg et al., 2017).Many believe that parents, rather than schools, should be primarily responsible for developing children's social and emotional skills (Brackett et al., 2012). This reflects a broader debate about the division of responsibilities between educators and families (Greenberg et al., 2017).While teachers acknowledge SEL's importance, they need more support to implement it without feeling overburdened.

Schiepe-Tiska et al. (2021) stated that SEL can be effectively integrated into an existing school curriculum, reducing workload while providing students with essential skills. According to these researchers, teachers' attitudes and beliefs about SEL, their comfort in teaching it, and their perceived school culture are critical for successful SEL program implementation. Previously, Schultz et al. (2010) had highlighted the importance of teachers perceiving SEL as essential in order to achieve an effective implementation. They concluded that educators who view SEL as part of their responsibility were more likely to implement it with conviction. To enhance enthusiasm and implementation, providing teachers with the necessary resources and support is therefore crucial. Sharing experiences among teachers can build a sense of community and collective ownership of SEL (Sorbet & Notar, 2022).

Teacher beliefs extend beyond the practical implications of SEL in the classroom. Sing Chai et al. (2009) emphasised that teachers' perceptions and beliefs influenced their enthusiasm for teaching and guided their overall philosophy and practices. Moreover, student-teacher interactions influence the effectiveness of SEL infusion in classrooms (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Therefore, teachers must have a positive attitude toward SEL and be willing to invest time and effort. Openness to feedback and willingness to adjust practices are also essential. Highlighting teachers as principal agents of SEL programming Schonert-Reichl (2017), stressed that teacher attitudes significantly influence the adoption, longevity, and efficacy of SEL programs. More recently, Dignath et al. (2022) highlighted the critical role of teacher beliefs in shaping instructional methods. Teachers are essential components of any effective SEL program, and their attitudes, beliefs, and actions must be considered to maximise the success of such initiatives. However, in the context of KSA, research suggests that teachers often feel constrained in their roles related to SEL, due to factors such as limited training, cultural expectations, and the structure of the education

system (Al-Ghathami, 2022). These limitations indicate a need for more targeted professional development and clearer support frameworks for teachers implementing SEL in KSA.

The centralised educational system in KSA, under the MoE, often sidelines teachers' voices, especially concerning decisions on curriculum content and pedagogical methods (Alnefaie, 2016; Prokop, 2003). The system typically follows a top-down curriculum development approach (Alnefaie, 2016), where teachers are given specific instructions from the MoE and are expected to implement them without opportunities for active involvement or discussion. This limits their role across various areas of education. However, this limitation is particularly significant in SEL programs, which rely heavily on teachers' engagement, flexibility, and ability to tailor lessons to students' needs (Quamar, 2020). In contrast to other subjects, where the focus may be more on content delivery, SEL requires ongoing teacher involvement to foster students' social-emotional growth, making their restricted role in KSA's centralised system especially impactful for these programs.

In addition to the centralised nature of KSA's educational system, the top-down approach to curriculum development further marginalises teachers and devalues their input. Alamri (2015) intimated that teachers across primary and secondary levels of education are not enabled or empowered by the MoE to contribute to the curriculum. Al Musaiteer (2020) stated that this lack of involvement in decision-making in education policy has disempowered, demoralised, and frustrated KSA teachers, resulting in rising attrition rates in the teaching profession. According to Alsubaie (2016), schools tend to excel when teachers collaborate on curriculum planning, fostering a stronger sense of connection and participation among educators in the educational process ultimately enhancing the quality of education. Excluding teachers from curriculum planning hinders the quality of education.

Preschool teachers who deliver classroom lessons also have no contact with curriculum developers in the KSA Ministry of Education or input into the curriculum

(Mullick et al., 2013). Iqbal (2011) noted that the lack of emphasis on nurturing creativity within the KSA education system has resulted in a generation of young individuals who are inadequately prepared to meet the problem-solving and innovation demands expected in a modern workforce.

Gender bias further exacerbates the disconnect between educators and curriculum developers. An additional reason for this lack of discourse, according to Mullick et al. (2013), and therefore the disconnect between preschool teachers and KSA curriculum developers, is that the preschool teachers are female, while the ministry staff are male. Saudi women face gender bias on personal and professional fronts, hindering their empowerment. Gawarir et al. (2022) showed that Saudi women leaders felt disempowered due to the pervasive influence of gender bias within KSA culture and in their workplaces, affecting their personal and professional lives.

Aljughaiman and Grigorenko (2013) asserted that students, parents, teachers, and local administrators do not have any impact on what is taught in KSA schools and how it is taught. Moreover, Mullick et al. (2013) claimed that the lack of teacher voice (and the voices of others) in the education system arises from issues of power and oppression, culture, and ideology in KSA, which also serves to prevent reform of the curriculum and adoption of new programs, such as SEL. Yet, research has shown that schools and students perform better when teachers participate in curriculum development (Al-Sadan, 2000; Alqahtani, 2020).

In educational contexts, teachers' voices are intrinsically linked to their social and institutional contexts (Leat et al., 2015; Paulmann & Weinstein, 2023). While they may not necessarily hold policymaking roles, they grapple with issues foundational to the field of education daily. Teachers forge deep connections to students' intellectual, emotional, educational, and physical wellbeing within their communities of practice. Hence, their perspectives are only natural to be valued and acknowledged. The power of voice lies in its

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potential to amplify the voices of marginalised people, offering a platform for their concerns and suggestions (Gibson & Hughes-Hassell, 2017). Consequently, this amplification can catalyse transformations in students' lives and the broader social and political systems that have historically excluded them (Welton et al., 2022).

According to McKay (2010), voice assumes a central role in a critical theory of education, representing a critical and politically charged manifestation of language use that recognises the inherent struggle to be heard. Therefore, one aim of this research was to enable teachers to express their views on an SEL preschool curriculum. KSA teachers' voices should also be heard and appreciated to understand their points of view and to identify any obstacles to conducting any SEL programs (Khomais & Gahwaji, 2019). Teachers in KSA know their students well and are familiar with the type of approaches that suit students' abilities and needs (Aljabreen & Lash, 2016; Rabaah et al., 2016).

Hollingsworth and Winter (2013) and Talvio et al. (2015) conducted relevant research in this field. Their studies revealed valuable insights into the untapped knowledge, perceptions, and beliefs of teachers concerning SEL, as well as the relationship between classroom management and SEL. These findings consider the teachers' understanding of their classroom dynamics and their students. Consequently, these researchers' findings provide a foundation for examining the communication of KSA teachers regarding their beliefs and attitudes towards SEL.

Hollingsworth and Winter (2013) provided valuable insights into teachers' understanding of SEL dynamics, highlighting that teachers prioritise social-emotional skills over early math and literacy skills, and actively employ strategies to cultivate prosocial behaviours, engage in pretend play scenarios, and promote friendship development in the classroom. Their findings illuminated the nuanced ways in which teachers perceive and

incorporate SEL into their daily practices, considering both the challenges and opportunities presented by this approach.

Similarly, Talvio et al. (2015) illustrated how teachers navigate the complexities of classroom management and SEL by enhancing their social interaction skills. For instance, the study showed that teachers who participated in social interaction skills training used significantly more active listening skills and constructive communication methods, demonstrating an effective strategy for handling classroom behaviour while promoting SEL. These insights from Hollingsworth and Winter (2013) and Talvio et al. (2015) studies served as a foundation for examining Saudi teachers' understanding of SEL by providing key findings on the importance of SEL skills over academic skills and the effectiveness of teacher training on social skills.

2.1.2   SEL Attitudes and Beliefs of Parents

In the preschool education system of KSA, parental perspectives are often overlooked. Similar to the situation faced by teachers, parents have limited direct communication with curriculum designers (Aljabreen & Lash, 2016). Additionally, parents often face constraints in time and opportunity, which limits their interaction with their children's teachers (Bang, 2018).

When these barriers are considered, it becomes even more crucial to engage parents in their children's education actively. Occurrences of engaged parental involvement, such as volunteering, collaboration, and attending stakeholder meetings with school authorities, are often sparse (Albaiz & Ernest, 2021). However, the influential role of parental support and understanding in a child's academic journey cannot be overstated, especially during the formative early years. This engagement significantly shapes a child's lifelong learning foundation (Ceka & Murati, 2016; El Nokali et al., 2010). The role of parents is therefore pivotal, fundamental in setting the tone for a child's lifelong learning curve (Edwards et al., 2010). Consequently, it is essential to bring parents on board, partnering with them in their children's educational journey, both at school and at home (Miller & Venketsamy, 2022).

Parents and families play a critical role in moulding a child's emotional and social skills as they are the child's first educator from birth (Roy & Giraldo-García, 2017). The role of the family goes beyond caregiving to shape a child's worldview, mould their character, and fuel their development. The importance of this foundational role parents fulfil cannot be overstated, as it largely determines the child's future interactions and relationships with others (Berger & Font, 2015). The views of parents regarding the feelings of children have a significant effect on the developmental progress of children (Sheridan et al., 2010). Miller et al. (2017) suggested that developing healthy, well-informed parental and teacher attitudes toward SEL has been crucial to the success of SEL intervention programs at their children's

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schools. Thus, engaging with parents and teachers and discussing SEL with them may work in several ways to inform and enable a successful approach and implementation of an SEL program in the KSA context.

An extensive search of the research literature revealed that no studies have examined the perceptions of teachers and parents about the concept of SEL initiatives in preschools or the impact on KSA preschool children in terms of their socio-emotional competence. Therefore, a study to identify the perceptions of teachers and parents about the concept of SEL in KSA preschools was required to provide valuable insight into methods for identifying barriers and facilitators to effectively implementing SEL in the KSA curriculum. Recognising the equally vital role of parents' attitudes in influencing children's academic success and social development, fostering parent-teacher collaboration is crucial. However, given the limited opportunities for parental involvement in school programs in KSA, it was imperative that teachers' and parents' perceptions of SEL in KSA preschools were explored. The aim of the first phase of this research was to uncover barriers and facilitators for effective implementation.

2.2   SEL Program Selection

In this part of the literature review, the focus was on selecting an existing SEL program that could be suitably adapted for the KSA preschool context. To achieve this aim, it was first necessary to determine what elements could be used as a basis for selection. The criteria for selecting a program that was suitable for preschool students in KSA were based on certain factors. Suitability factors included evidence-based research in other studies, as recommended by (CASEL, 2021a). Therefore, the SEL program selected for this research had to be derived from a research-based framework and be well-designed to suit classroom-based teaching and learning. It needed to provide many opportunities for the practice of social and emotional competence applications for preschool learners. To measure the

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progress in preschoolers' social and emotional development over time, the program should include a monitoring or evaluation system (Campbell et al., 2016). An appropriate SEL program was required to be an evidence-based study with at least one carefully executed evaluation comparison group. Furthermore, a prerequisite for the evaluation of preschoolers' performance was the inclusion of both pre- and post-research assessments to demonstrate a positive impact on other essential student behaviours. Evaluating the efficacy of interventions ensures a comprehensive understanding of the program's influence on preschoolers' overall behavioural development (Taylor et al., 2017). The selection of the program was made after conducting interviews and gathering valuable suggestions from teachers and mothers. Their insights played a crucial role in shaping the development of the PATHS- IC program, ensuring that it was aligned with the needs and expectations of the participants.

The program also needed to have implementation support for the facilitator or teacher on an ongoing basis to ensure a high level of integrity in its conduction (Cramer et al., 2021). This is important to ensure that the program is being implemented effectively and that the facilitator or teacher is able to address any questions or issues that arise (Oliveira et al., 2021). This included providing technical assistance, guidance, and advice. It should also have included regular feedback on the progress of the program as well as ongoing support for any necessary changes. Additionally, the selected program would need to provide the teacher and facilitator with repeated opportunities for real-life application and practice within the classroom. The SEL program needed to be well-designed and classroom-based, addressing the 5 CASEL competencies of social awareness, self-awareness, relationship skills, self-management, and decision-making skills (CASEL, 2020h).

The instructions of the chosen program needed to be clear and explicit, with sufficient time spent on the social and emotional skill development of the preschooler (Murano et al., 2020). This implied that the program should delineate precise strategies, resources, and

methodologies needed to engender social and emotional growth among preschoolers. For instance, a well-structured outline of lesson plans, a readily available list of required materials, and a clear set of objectives linked to each competency should be part of the program (Aksoy, 2019). Moreover, sufficient time should be allocated to ensure the effective development of social and emotional skills in preschoolers in KSA. This meant that the program should be flexible yet comprehensive, allowing facilitators to adapt it to their learning schedule while ensuring that all aspects of social and emotional development are adequately covered (Caires et al., 2023). For instance, specific periods during the week could be dedicated to the program, while other times could be set for revisiting the concepts or reinforcing the skills learnt. The cultural appropriateness of the selected SEL program needed to align with the culture, religious views and understandings, and belief systems of the community within KSA. Therefore, the selected SEL program needed to be designed specifically for use in KSA.

2.3   Review of Preschool SEL Programs

Numerous programs have been implemented globally in preschool settings to promote SEL. These programs vary in their approaches but share the common goal of fostering essential social and emotional skills among young children. For instance, the PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) program, developed by CASEL, has been implemented in diverse locations including the United States, Canada, and parts of Europe, demonstrating its adaptability across different educational contexts (CASEL, 2020f). Similarly, the Second Step program has been widely adopted in early childhood settings in countries such as Australia and New Zealand, reflecting its global reach and effectiveness (Durlak et al., 2011).

The CASEL organisation, a prominent leader in SEL, has introduced several programs like PATHS, Second Step, and Al's Pals, each designed to address various dimensions of SEL. PATHS, for example, focuses on emotional literacy, self-regulation, and interpersonal skills, and has been successfully integrated into early childhood curricula in diverse settings (CASEL, 2020f). Second Step, another CASEL program, is noted for its emphasis on empathy, problem-solving, and self-control, and has been implemented in various countries, including the UK and Japan, showcasing its versatility and global impact (Gordon, 2016). Al's Pals, targeting younger children, has seen successful application in regions such as South Africa, emphasising the program's broad applicability (Zins et al., 2007).

These programs, by offering a wide range of strategies and resources, provide educators with a comprehensive toolkit to support the social and emotional development of preschoolers. They cater to diverse educational environments and needs, empowering educators to implement targeted interventions and create inclusive learning atmospheres. The availability of these programs has proven influential in nurturing preschoolers' abilities to understand and manage emotions, build positive relationships, and make responsible decisions, laying a solid foundation for their lifelong well-being (Djamnezhad et al., 2021).

By incorporating SEL into early education, these programs can contribute to laying the foundation for lifelong social and emotional wellbeing for young learners. They can provide valuable opportunities for children to develop the skills and competencies necessary for navigating social interactions and managing their emotions effectively (Jones et al., 2019). Furthermore, these programs promote a positive and inclusive classroom environment that fosters empathy, cooperation, and respectful communication among preschoolers (CASEL, 2020f). The PATHS- IC program was selected to avoid a "culturally blind" approach, as described by (Castro et al., 2010). The selection of this program was based on its

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flexibility, allowing it to be tailored to the specific sociocultural landscape of KSA. The PATHS- IC program was designed to be comprehensive, incorporating strategies that promote the development of social and emotional competencies in KSA preschoolers. In addition to addressing behavioural issues, the program was also adapted to embrace the unique cultural and religious norms of KSA, ensuring that all activities and curriculum content were culturally relevant and valuable within this context.

In Western cultures, notably exemplified by the United States and Western European nations, SEL programs underscore the cultivation of emotional self-awareness, open expression of feelings, and the development of interpersonal skills (Berg et al., 2021; Bowles et al., 2017; Keefer et al., 2018b). These initiatives promote individualistic values, encouraging students to articulate and manage their emotions effectively. SEL programs also foster assertive communication, conflict resolution, and the building of positive relationships, attributes valued within these societies (Mondi et al., 2021).

In contrast, in collectivist cultures, such as Japan and South Korea in East Asia, SEL programs prioritise group harmony, deference to authority, and self-regulation (Yong et al., 2023). The emphasis in these programs is on emotional management in a manner that sustains societal concord and preserves interpersonal relationships (Dukes et al., 2022). Moreover, these programs tend to accentuate values like empathy, filial piety, and reverence for elders, which are integral to the societal fabric (Keefer et al., 2018b; Yong et al., 2023). Indigenous cultures offer another unique context for SEL programs. These communities, including Native American and Aboriginal Australian groups, frequently infuse their cultural wisdom and traditions into SEL curriculum (Hayashi et al., 2022; White, 2019).

Indigenous SEL initiatives emphasise the significance of connections to ancestral lands, spirituality, and communal bonds as sources of emotional wellbeing and resilience (Sun et al., 2022). Storytelling, traditional knowledge, and community-based approaches are

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often integrated to impart emotional and social skills (Cai, 2023; Tremblay et al., 2013). In African cultures, particularly sub-Saharan regions, SEL programs draw inspiration from communal values, with ubuntu being a notable example, underscoring interconnectedness and mutual respect (Leal Filho et al., 2021). These programs address the emotional impact of historical and social factors and offer coping strategies and resilience-building techniques that are culturally pertinent (Hayashi et al., 2022). Latin American cultures, such as those found in Mexico and Brazil, embrace SEL programs that prioritise emotional expression within the context of close-knit family structures (Furlong et al., 2021; Waldemar et al., 2016).

These initiatives often integrate cultural elements like storytelling to teach emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills. Within each of these broad cultural categories, regional variations and diversity exist. Successful SEL programs, therefore, necessitate a nuanced understanding of local cultural dynamics, values, and beliefs. This cultural sensitivity ensures that SEL initiatives are effectively tailored to meet the specific emotional and social challenges faced by individuals within their cultural contexts, ultimately promoting emotional wellbeing and positive social interactions across diverse cultures. I examined each of the CASEL programs referred to above, to assess their suitability for adaptation into the KSA context.

2.3.1 *The Incredible Years Series*

The Incredible Years program, developed in the US is widely implemented in countries like the UK, New Zealand, Norway, and Canada. Its adaptability allows it to meet diverse social-emotional needs across cultural contexts. It is a comprehensive series of three curricula designed for children, teachers, and parents. This program is designed for children aged three to eight years old and is known as the Dinosaur Curriculum. The Dinosaur Curriculum includes activities like role-playing scenarios to practice sharing and conflict resolution, puppet storytelling to help children identify emotions, and using emotion cards to

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express feelings. This program develops essential skills such as understanding and recognising emotions, problem-solving, managing anger, and fostering friendships (Webster-Stratton et al., 2008). It emphasises cultivating positive relationships with students and teaching social skills and problem-solving techniques within the classroom. The program consists of approximately 60 lessons that can be tailored based on implementation needs. The lessons incorporate various activities to reinforce concepts learned and provide opportunities for skill practice (CASEL, 2020c). Regular communication with parents is emphasised throughout the program. Additionally, the training for teachers aims to enhance classroom management skills and proactive teaching strategies. It is important to note that the initial training for the Incredible Years Child Training Program, lasting about 21 hours (three days), is not mandatory but highly recommended.

Several studies have shown that the Incredible Years program is effective with preschoolers across various contexts. For example, Webster-Stratton et al. (2008). conducted a randomised controlled trial involving 153 preschool-aged children from low-income families, which found significant improvements in social competence, emotional self-regulation, and reductions in conduct problems. Similarly, a more recent study by Baker-Henningham et al. (2012) used a randomised controlled trial with a sample of 225 children in high-poverty areas, demonstrating that the program reduced aggressive behaviour and increased prosocial behaviours. These studies employed data collection tools such as structured teacher reports, direct behavioural observations, and standardised emotional competence assessments, ensuring robust evaluation of the program's impact. The effectiveness of the Incredible Years program has been widely supported by both qualitative and quantitative data, further reinforcing its suitability for diverse early childhood settings.

The program has also been found to reduce problem behaviours and enhance children's emotional knowledge, social problem-solving, and prosocial behaviours

(Dababnah & Parish, 2016). Additionally, the CASEL (2020c) Guide endorsed the program's effectiveness in promoting positive social behaviour and reducing conduct problems in diverse populations. However, the program was dismissed in this review for lacking the comprehensiveness and coverage of a broader range of behaviours and skills desired by the PATHS- IC program. Specifically, the review noted that the program did not address additional behaviours and skills such as advanced social problem-solving techniques and a broader spectrum of emotional and behavioural competencies. Furthermore, while the review primarily relied on the CASEL website and one other reference, it is important to consider the extensive literature available on the Incredible Years program, including studies on its effectiveness across different cultural contexts. A thorough examination of its applicability and adaptability in non-Western contexts would provide a more comprehensive assessment of its potential fit for the PATHS- IC program.

2.3.2   *Al's Pals*

"Al's Pals" is a program designed to promote resilience and social-emotional development in children aged three to eight years old. The program teaches children important skills such as getting along with others, social competence, problem-solving and making healthy choices. It also integrates SEL concepts into academic content areas like numeracy, literacy, and the scientific method. It consists of 46 core lessons and 9 booster lessons that incorporate explicit instruction to develop social competence, autonomy, and problem-solving skills (CASEL, 2020a). Each lesson lasts approximately 10-15 minutes, with two lessons implemented per week. Al's Pals provides suggestions for generalising and practising skills beyond the lessons, as well as offering letters to parents to reinforce new skills. Teachers and parents must undergo training, which can be done in person (two days) or online (seven two-hour sessions). Lynch et al. (2004) conducted a study evaluating the effectiveness of Al's Pals over multiple years and states. The findings indicated that the

program strengthened children's social-emotional competence, improved coping skills, and reduced the development of antisocial behaviour. However, while Al's Pals was suitable in its broad principles, its focus was limited to specific areas of social competence, autonomy, and problem-solving. The program did not address a wider range of behaviours and skills that may be beneficial for preschool children. Additionally, the review did not extensively engage with the literature on Al's Pals or consider its adaptability and implementation in diverse contexts. A more comprehensive evaluation, including a review of the program's effectiveness across different cultural settings and its adaptability to various contexts, would provide a clearer understanding of its potential benefits and limitations.

2.3.3   *Tools of the Mind*

The "Tools of the Mind" program, provided by CASEL for preschool-aged children, is an educational approach that prioritises the development of self-regulation, executive functioning skills, and socio-emotional growth (CASEL, 2020e). An important principle of the program is the belief that play-based learning can be a powerful tool for children to develop cognitively, socially, and emotionally (Bodrova & Leong, 2018). Drawing inspiration from the theories of Lev Vygotsky, the program incorporates Vygotskian principles such as scaffolding and the zone of proximal development to support children's learning (Bodrova & Leong, 2018). The Tools of the Mind program, implemented in kindergarten, improves academic performance, reduces bullying, and increases teacher enthusiasm, fostering play, self-regulation, and teamwork (Diamond et al., 2019).

Children engage in imaginative scenarios that foster self-regulation, problem-solving, and language skills through pretend play in the Tools of the Mind program. The program also includes activities that target executive functioning skills, such as working memory, cognitive flexibility, and inhibitory Control. A structured and organised classroom environment, with clear routines and consistent schedules, is emphasised to provide children with a sense of

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predictability and security. Further, teachers receive comprehensive professional development to implement program strategies and principles effectively. Aras (2015) found the program was effective in promoting children's self-regulation through developmentally appropriate activities. However, while the Tools of the Mind program shows potential due to its focus on self-regulation, executive function skills, and socio-emotional growth, it was not considered a perfect match for the specific needs of the PATHS- IC program. The review did not sufficiently engage with the extensive literature on the program or explore its adaptability and effectiveness in diverse cultural contexts. A more thorough examination of how the program performs across various settings and its potential adaptability to different cultural environments would provide a more comprehensive assessment of its suitability.

2.3.4   *Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)*

"PATHS" is a comprehensive curriculum designed for preschoolers to enhance social and emotional competencies in young children while also preventing or reducing behavioural and emotional problems (Domitrovich et al., 2007). The term comprehensive here refers not only to the breadth of the skills it targets but also to the integrated and holistic approach the program takes. The PATHS curriculum covers a wide range of social-emotional domains, addressing control, emotional understanding, self-concept, relationships, and interpersonal problem-solving. By encompassing these five conceptual domains, PATHS is distinct from other programs that may focus on only one or two specific areas of social-emotional learning.

Additionally, the program acknowledges that children's adaptation depends on their skill level as well as the social environment they are in (CASEL, 2020d). This flexibility in addressing both individual development and contextual factors is part of what makes PATHS a comprehensive intervention. The curriculum is also adaptable, offering teachers the ability to tailor lessons to the specific needs of their classes, ensuring that the social-emotional development of each child is supported in a personalised manner (Greenberg et al., 1995). In

this way, the comprehensive nature of PATHS is reflected not only in its broad conceptual scope but also in its adaptability to various educational and cultural contexts, which increases its applicability across diverse settings.

In a randomised trial of PATHS, Domitrovich et al. (2007) discovered that preschoolers who participated in the program exhibited higher emotional knowledge skills. Additionally, they were rated by both parents and teachers as more socially competent compared to a control group. Furthermore, teachers rated these children as less socially withdrawn by the end of the school year. The PATHS curriculum consists of thematic units and weekly lessons that cover various topics such as friendship skills, emotional awareness and communication, self-control strategies, and coping skills for challenging situations (Hughes & Cline, 2015). The lessons entail activities like modelling stories, emotional coaching, puppets, role-play, games, and discussions.

Overall, the research and evidence suggest that comprehensive SEL programs like PATHS can have positive outcomes in terms of improving social-emotional competence, reducing behavioural problems, and fostering resilience in young children aged 5 years and younger (Hughes & Cline, 2015). Given its comprehensive coverage of five essential components, the PATHS program emerged as the most suitable choice considering the requirements of the PATHS- IC program needs. While the success of the PATHS program in Turkey (Bilir Seyhan et al., 2019) and Pakistan (Inam et al., 2015) has been noted, further exploration of the studies undertaken in these regions is crucial to understanding the program's impact in Muslim-majority countries. The research in Turkey involved a quasi-experimental design focusing on urban schools, with the PATHS program being adapted to align with local language and cultural contexts, particularly in terms of teacher training and curriculum delivery. The adaptations included modifying examples in the program to better fit Turkish societal norms, while still maintaining the core components of the SEL framework

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(Bilir Seyhan et al., 2019). Similarly, the study in Pakistan utilised a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data from schools in urban areas. The Pakistani study highlighted the need for specific adaptations, particularly around examples and scenarios used in the curriculum to better resonate with local cultural practices and family structures (Inam et al., 2015).

The adaptation of the PATHS program in both countries involved a careful alignment with Islamic values, such as empathy, compassion, and respect, which are emphasized in the local contexts. For instance, modifications were made to ensure that the program reflected culturally appropriate interactions and behaviours, particularly in teacher-student relationships and peer interactions. Islamic principles that promote social harmony and emotional regulation were emphasized, making the program more culturally relevant.

Furthermore, while outcomes in both Turkey and Pakistan reflected positive changes in social-emotional competence and reductions in behavioural issues, there were some culturally specific nuances. For example, teachers in Pakistan noted that the emphasis on emotional self-regulation aligned with cultural expectations around respect for elders and maintaining family harmony. However, unlike Western countries, where individualism may be more prominent, the collective nature of these societies emphasized group cohesion and interpersonal responsibility. This distinction in cultural outcomes suggests that while the core components of PATHS are transferable, the social context plays a significant role in shaping the program's success.

By comparing the outcomes in Muslim countries to those in Western contexts, it becomes clear that while the foundational principles of the program remain effective, the cultural lens through which these skills are taught and understood can lead to differences in how they manifest. These insights highlight the importance of cultural adaptation when

implementing SEL programs like PATHS in diverse regions, which is particularly relevant to the PATHS- IC program, ensuring it meets the needs of the local context.

In summary, after an extensive review of various SEL programs, PATHS emerged as the most suitable choice. For implementing an initiative like PATHS- IC, it would be beneficial to incorporate program content similar to PATHS, which promotes all-encompassing development. It was crucial to adopt an inclusive approach that respected and supplemented the religious and cultural fabric of the KSA community. Adaptation of the PATHS program could involve tailoring curriculums to cover topics such as empathy, self-regulation, cooperation, relationships, and conflict resolution, in a manner that complements Islamic values and principles.

2.4   Adaptation of an SEL Program for Preschoolers in KSA

The PATHS SEL program was carefully selected for the purpose of developing an intervention. It was paramount to ensure that this SEL intervention would be inclusive, highlighting the shared values between Islamic principles and SEL. Foremost in the design was the necessity to be mindful of the cultural context of KSA. Religious teachings are vital in KSA preschools but may not provide explicit social and emotional guidance. KSA preschool education lacks specific standards for SEL, making it crucial to adapt Western pedagogies, like SEL, to align with KSA culture and values. Strategies to harmonise SEL with KSA culture include emphasising community values, infusing Islamic teachings, using culturally relevant materials, and ensuring gender inclusivity. The program was chosen following interviews and the collection of valuable input from both teachers and mothers. Their feedback was instrumental in guiding the development of the PATHS- IC program, ensuring it met the needs and expectations of the participants.

While the program adaptation emphasises aligning SEL principles with Islamic teachings, community values, and cultural relevance, it is important to acknowledge the unique gender norms present in KSA. Gender inclusivity in this context refers to the careful consideration of the cultural expectations regarding gender roles in KSA. Rather than contradicting the reality of gender separation, the adaptation ensures that SEL materials are sensitive to these norms, promoting equal development of social-emotional skills for both boys and girls within the framework that respects the cultural and religious expectations around gender. Therefore, the adaptation strategy includes using culturally relevant materials, infusing Islamic teachings, and fostering social-emotional learning that is accessible to both genders within their respective educational environments. This ensures that SEL practices remain culturally appropriate while supporting the holistic development of children in KSA preschools.

Adapting SEL in this way can create a more effective educational experience for KSA children. Interventions without cultural resonance might pose a challenge to the successful rollout of the SEL program. With Islam being a religion that significantly impacts all elements of daily life, as indicated by Esposito (2003), the introduction of an SEL program in KSA is pertinent. It aims to equip five-year-old children with methods and strategies to better comprehend their own selves, thus facilitating an improved understanding of God. The main objective of Islamic education in KSA is to enable children to understand Islam correctly and in full, which involves including Islamic values in the teaching and learning process (Alghamdi, 2023).

While many SEL-related values, such as empathy, patience, and community responsibility, are embedded in religious education, the Islamic context must be explicitly considered when the SEL program is being implemented. As part of the inculcation process of educating a child in KSA, teaching SEL strategies needs to go hand in hand with the

practices and virtues of Islam, because education is a key instrument for perpetuating a devout Islamic society (Waterbury, 2013). The religious aspects in the KSA curriculum for preschool education are indeed significant. The curriculum for kindergarten in KSA is based on the Islamic faith, where children learn about the Quran, the Prophet Muhammad, and Islamic values (Aljabreen & Lash, 2016). Moreover, the Islamic perspective is considered vital in education and is set as a general framework for the National Curriculum framework in KSA (Alghamdi, 2023).

In the process of adapting the PATHS program, considerations were made regarding the best potential alignment of SEL content with Islamic values and teachings. There are several notable overlaps between Islamic values and SEL. Both frameworks place a strong emphasis on respect for all individuals, regardless of their social, racial, or cultural differences. As evidenced by several studies, Islamic values and SEL are interconnected in various ways. For instance, a study on the role of Islamic educational values in developing emotional intelligence skills found that "religious beliefs" play a significant role in emotional intelligence (Alghamdi, 2006). Emotional awareness and regulation, another core SEL component, is also highlighted in Islam, where followers are taught to exercise control over their anger and exhibit patience (Khilmiyaha & Suudb, 2020). Furthermore, the importance of establishing positive and healthy relationships with neighbours, friends, and the broader community is a recurring message in Islamic teachings, paralleling the relationship-building skills targeted in SEL (Ali, 2023). Islam encourages responsible decision-making based on ethical and moral considerations a notion echoed in SEL's promotion of making conscientious choices.

Another study by (Khilmiyaha & Suudb, 2020) that examined the innovation of Islamic Religious Education learning with an SEL approach to improve character, highlighted the importance of integrating SEL into Islamic education to shape student character. This

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integration involves fostering social-emotional competencies such as empathy, self-awareness, and responsible decision-making, while also emphasising Islamic values and virtues such as compassion, honesty, and justice. By incorporating SEL into Islamic education, students are provided with opportunities to develop their moral character, strengthen their ethical behaviour, and cultivate a sense of spirituality aligned with Islamic teachings (Zubairi & Nurdin, 2022). This holistic approach aims to develop well-rounded individuals who not only possess social-emotional skills but also embody the values and principles of their faith, ultimately contributing to their personal growth and positive engagement with the broader community (Rangkuti & Arjuna, 2020).

Furthermore, engaging students in service-learning projects that are aligned with Islamic values and promoting social-emotional skills can be an effective method (Kholidah, 2022). Students participate in community service activities, help others, and develop a sense of social responsibility and empathy(Gordon et al., 2022). Moreover, research on the influence of religiosity and emotional intelligence on learning achievement among Muslim students has revealed that religiosity and emotional intelligence can positively impact learning achievement, with learning motivation mediating this relationship (Farhan & Rofi'ulmuiz, 2021). Furthermore, the study conducted by Kamal and Ghani (2014) on emotional intelligence and the manners of virtuous behaviour among Muslim adolescents in an Islamic school in Malaysia emphasised the dimensions of emotional intelligence, including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

The Islamic emphasis on peace, harmony, and resolving conflict through dialogue and negotiation aligns perfectly with SEL's aim to teach children these essential life skills (Alghamdi, 2006). In Islam, peace is of high regard, and resolving conflict is promoted through open dialogue and negotiation based on respect and understanding, rather than force or violence (Manj et al., 2022). Verses in the Quran and Hadiths (sayings of the Prophet

Muhammad) emphasise patience, tolerance, forgiveness, and dialogue in resolving conflicts. The principles of forgiveness, apology, investigation, and reconciliation are used to teach conflict resolution skills and promote patience, tolerance, and understanding (Huda, 2010). Lastly, both Islamic principles and SEL advocate for an inclusive community where diversity is not only respected but celebrated (Ali, 2023). In an inclusive community, both Islamic teachings and SEL endorse diversity and mutual respect (Yusri et al., 2020). With the implementation of SEL programs, these Islamic principles get embedded effectively in children, fostering harmonious social interactions.

By integrating these Islamic values with SEL methodologies, educators can effectively cultivate children's social and emotional skills within a cultural context that is both relevant and respectful. SEL programs are essential in preschool because they provide a structured and standardised method to teach Islamic principles in the early stages (Khilmiyaha & Suudb, 2020). Without a specific curriculum, such as an SEL program, these values may not be explicitly taught in a systematic way, which could lead to inconsistencies in a child's early socio-emotional development.

2.5   Development of the PATHS- IC Program

The adaptation of PATHS by aligning it with Islamic values and teachings led to the creation of the PATHS- IC program. The aim of the PATHS- IC program was to promote social and emotional competencies as well as reduce externalising and internalising behaviours, foster adaptive behaviour, social competence, and attention behaviour, and enhance scholastic and behavioural conduct in preschoolers in KSA.

As discussed below, I determined that various SEL competencies are associated with particular behaviours (as shown in Table 2.1). For example, it is noteworthy that certain skills, such as positive relationships, promote adaptive behaviour and reduce externalising,

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while self-control is associated with externalising behaviour, attention behaviour and positive

behavioural conduct. This realisation provided a basis for PATHS- IC development and

evaluation.

Table 2.1

Association between SEL Competencies and Specific Behaviours

SEL Skill	Promoted Behaviours
Emotional regulation	Reduced Externalising behaviour
Conflict resolution	
Interpersonal communication	
Relationship skills	
Responsible decision making	
Self-management	
Self-Control	
Self-awareness	Reduced Internalising Behaviour
Social awareness	
Emotional awareness	
Self-concept	
Relationship skills	Adaptive Behaviour
Problem-solving	
Responsible decision making	
Responsible decision making	Attention Behaviour
Self-management	
Relationship skills	
Self-Control	
Task completion	Scholastic Behaviour
Self-management	
Relationship skills/working with others	
Problem solving	
Relationship skills	Social Competence
Social awareness	
Problem solving	
Conflict resolution	
Relationship skills	Positive Behavioural Conduct
Responsible decision making	
Self-Control	
Problem solving	

2.5.1 Externalising Behaviours

Self-management and responsible decision-making skills have been linked to externalising behaviours, such as aggression or self-control (Perry et al., 2018; Siu, 2009). Schindler et al. (2015) showed that SEL programs that typically focus on the development of emotional regulation skills, conflict resolution strategies, and enhanced interpersonal communication, are effective in reducing externalising behaviours. The acquisition of skills to regulate and manage emotions, control impulses, and make responsible choices constitutes crucial elements of self-management and responsible decision-making (Bornstein et al., 2010). Externalising behaviours, which encompass actions such as aggression, conduct disorders, and disruptive conduct, often present significant challenges in both educational and social contexts. SEL programs such as emotional regulation, relationship skills, and self-management have emerged as promising approaches for addressing and mitigating externalising behaviours among individuals, particularly children and adolescents (Blewitt et al., 2021).

By fostering empathy, active listening, and conflict resolution techniques, the emotional support component of SEL teaches individuals how to express themselves in non-aggressive ways and work through conflicts with others (Paolini, 2019). These skills are invaluable in reducing aggressive and disruptive conduct, as they enable individuals to manage social challenges and disagreements more constructively. One key aspect of SEL's impact on externalising behaviours is emotional regulation. Emotional regulation refers to the ability to monitor, evaluate, and modify emotional reactions in a manner that enables goal-directed behaviour (Hoeksma et al., 2004). According to Miller-Slough and Dunsmore (2019) diverse sources can provide emotional regulation. The child's family, which is regarded as the initial stage of socialisation, is the first significant source. A mother is a child's primary source of inspiration and invests a great deal of emotional support in them.

Individuals who struggle with externalising behaviours may have difficulty managing their anger, frustration, or impulsivity (Sprafkin, 2016). This is particularly true for young boys from low-income families, as socioeconomic disadvantage can exacerbate stress and lead to increased externalising behaviours such as aggression and impulsivity (Evans & Kim, 2013). Moreover, growing up in poverty is associated with chronic stress, which can compromise self-regulation, making interventions that teach emotional regulation particularly critical for low-income children (Miller et al., 2011). Asking questions to gain understanding and diverting their attention to something else are two useful techniques. Their growth and development are also influenced by their mother's strong and positive influence and the wise counsel they receive. Children who can effectively regulate their emotions are less likely to exhibit impulsive or aggressive behaviours (Orkibi et al., 2018). Children who communicate more effectively are better able to articulate their thoughts and feelings, which helps reduce misunderstandings and frustration that can lead to externalising behaviours (van den Bedem et al., 2020). This illustrates when children have the ability to address themselves in front of others, it can possibly reduce their frustration level and make children more self-engaged and with self-control.

Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of emotional support, communication skills, interpersonal skills, self-control and self-management, and SEL interventions in schools and communities in reducing externalising behaviours (Bradshaw et al., 2014; Daunic et al., 2021). These interventions usually incorporate activities like role-playing, social problem-solving exercises, and conflict mediation, allowing individuals to practice and refine their interpersonal and emotional regulation skills (Mueser et al., 2013). As a result, students exposed to emotional support from the family tend to exhibit fewer instances of aggression, conduct disorders, and disruptive behaviour.

2.5.2 *Internalising Behaviours*

Self-awareness and social awareness skills have been linked to internalising behaviours, such as stress or worry (MacFarlane, 2023; McIntosh et al., 2014). The comprehension and regulation of one's emotions, along with the recognition and empathy towards the emotions of others, constitute essential elements of both self-awareness and social awareness (Burlaka et al., 2015). Internalising behaviours, which include issues such as withdrawal, anxiety, and depression, can have a profound impact on an individual's emotional wellbeing and overall functioning. Self-awareness has been recognised as a valuable tool for addressing and reducing internalising behaviours by enhancing emotional intelligence (Colomeischi et al., 2022). Knowing oneself in terms of ideas, emotions, and actions makes it easier for people to identify and deal with internal conflicts, which lowers the risk that they may internalise behaviours (Böckler et al., 2017). When someone is self-aware, they can recognise and deal with the unpleasant feelings, pressures, and cognitive patterns that might lead to internalising behaviours like depression or anxiety.

Being perceptive of other people's emotions and social cues fosters empathy and understanding, which lessens feelings of loneliness and isolation (Greenman & Johnson, 2022). Social awareness fosters a sense of connection and support that might lessen internalising behaviours by letting people know they are not alone in their challenges. It is possible to lessen the severity of negative emotions like depression and anxiety and promote emotional wellbeing by being aware of and comprehending both one's own feelings and those of others (Levy-Gigi & Shamay-Tsoory, 2017). People with emotional awareness are better able to manage and control their emotions, which keeps them away from becoming overwhelmed and engaging in internalising activities. This emotional awareness forms the foundation for emotional regulation, a crucial component of SEL (Housman, 2017). By acquiring these skills, individuals become better equipped to cope with stress, anxiety, and

negative emotions, thereby reducing the likelihood of internalising issues. Moreover, emotional awareness fosters the establishment of empathetic relationships and support networks. For individuals grappling with internalising behaviours, the presence of a supportive community can be instrumental in overcoming challenges such as anxiety or depression (Merrell, 2008). Social awareness and emotional awareness programs typically promote the development of interpersonal skills, which include empathy, active listening, and effective communication (Nagaraj & Rajaraman, 2021). These skills enhance an individual's ability to connect with others, seek help, and receive emotional support, all of which are vital in addressing internalising behaviours.

Research by Kramer et al. (2014), has consistently demonstrated that self-awareness and social awareness interventions have a positive impact on emotional wellbeing and the reduction of internalising behaviours. By providing individuals with the tools to recognise and manage their emotions, these programs empower individuals to navigate emotional challenges more effectively and seek assistance when needed. Additionally, the development of interpersonal competencies contributes to the creation of a supportive environment in schools and communities, reducing the isolation often associated with internalising behaviours (Aspelin & Jonsson, 2019). Research has shown that the integration of emotional awareness-seeking practices in classrooms has a positive impact on students' ability to concentrate on tasks (De la Fuente et al., 2018). Through activities like mindfulness exercises, problem-solving scenarios, and emotional regulation techniques, students become more aware of their emotional states and are better equipped to manage stress and anxiety, factors that can impede focus (De la Fuente et al., 2018). As a result, they are better prepared to engage in learning and academic activities with increased attention and cognitive control.

2.5.3   *Adaptive Behaviours*

Self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making are integral to adaptive behaviours, which encompass problem-solving, social skills, and decision-making (Denham et al., 2014; Tassé, 2021). Developing adaptive behaviours supports individuals in effectively navigating challenges and making responsible choices (Janssen et al., 2014). Reynolds and Kamphaus (2004) defined adaptive skills as the capability to operate effectively within diverse social contexts, including home, school, peer interaction, and community engagement. These skills encompass the child's competence in effectively expressing and managing their emotions, performing daily living activities, communicating with others, and establishing meaningful relationships.

Healthy relationships require effective communication to be established and maintained (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2023). Positive connections are fostered by the ability to listen intently, explain oneself clearly, and comprehend the perspectives of others (Batanova & Loukas, 2014). The foundation of strong and meaningful interpersonal bonds is laid by people who actively practice these communication skills. The ability to express oneself clearly, listen intently, and respect the opinions of others are all necessary for positive connections to be made and maintained. According to Viglas and Perlman (2018), the implementation of mindfulness based SEL programs such as self-awareness and social awareness has noteworthy improvements in adaptive behaviours among kindergarten students. Specifically, students who underwent the intervention demonstrated enhanced sharing behaviours, exemplified by a greater willingness to distribute resources and collaborate with peers (Greenberg et al., 2017). Additionally, caring behaviours were evident, as students exhibited increased compassion and responsibility towards the wellbeing of others. These outcomes underscore the positive influence of SEL, particularly programs like Mindful, in cultivating fundamental adaptive behaviours such as sharing and caring in early

childhood education (Kim et al., 2021). The Mindful program focuses on teaching mindfulness practices to children, helping them develop self-awareness, emotional regulation, and prosocial behaviours. Through techniques such as breathing exercises, mindful movement, and guided reflections, children learn to manage their emotions and interact more positively with others.

Relationship skills emphasise the cultivation of empathy, encouraging behaviours such as sharing, where individuals learn to consider the needs of others and willingly distribute resources or assistance (Singer & Klimecki, 2014). Additionally, relationship skills promote caring behaviours, fostering a sense of compassion and responsibility towards the wellbeing of others (Richardson et al., 2015). These adaptive behaviours not only contribute to a supportive social environment but also lay the groundwork for individuals to thrive in various personal and interpersonal contexts (Fredricks et al., 2019). Relationship skills, responsible decision-making problem-solving skills equip individuals with the emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills necessary for resolving conflicts in a constructive and non-violent manner. By fostering empathy, active listening, and effective communication, interpersonal skills enable individuals to navigate disagreements and challenges while preserving positive relationships (Valente, 2016). This is particularly relevant in educational settings, where students must interact with peers and teachers on a daily basis.

Problem-solving is another adaptive behaviour that SEL promotes. The ability to identify and address challenges and make informed decisions is essential for personal and academic growth. This skill often includes activities and scenarios that encourage students to think critically, collaborate with others, and develop practical problem-solving skills (Frey et al., 2019). By learning to approach problems with emotional awareness and effective communication, students are better prepared to tackle real-world issues. Responsible decision-making, a core component of SEL, plays a pivotal role in adaptive behaviours. it

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teaches individuals to evaluate the consequences of their actions, consider ethical considerations, and make choices that align with their values (Jagers et al., 2019). Whether it is choosing the most appropriate response to a challenging social situation or deciding on a course of action in an academic or professional context, responsible decision-making skills developed through SEL programs have a direct impact on adaptive behaviours. In essence, all of these interventions provide individuals with a robust toolkit for adapting to various social contexts and making responsible choices that lead to positive outcomes (Osher et al., 2016). By cultivating adaptive behaviours, the above SEL interventions equip individuals to face the complex challenges of daily life and thrive in academic, personal, and professional settings.

2.5.4   Attention Behaviours

A person's capacity to focus, control their behaviour, and navigate social interactions constructively and positively are all supported by a variety of skills, including relationship skills, self-Control, self-management, and responsible decision-making. Self-management is closely linked to attention behaviours, involving focus, sustained attention, and managing distractions (Daunic et al., 2021). The ability to regulate attention and focus contributes to effective self-management and academic success (Sala et al., 2014). Attention and focus are essential cognitive skills that have a profound impact on an individual's academic and professional performance (Lawlor, 2016). The ability to pay attention and maintain focus is a critical thinking skill that can have a significant impact on one's performance in both academic and professional settings (Langner & Eickhoff, 2013). These skills can be thought of as tools that help one succeed in both academic and professional settings because they improve comprehension and facilitate more efficient work.

The relationship between responsible decision-making, self-management, relationship skills, self-control and attention are multifaceted. These interventions often incorporate elements of mindfulness and self-awareness, which are designed to enhance an individual's ability to focus on the present moment. By cultivating emotional regulation which encompasses self-control, a heightened awareness of one's emotions, and other developmental skills students can better manage distractions and impulses, ultimately improving their attention span (Duckworth et al., 2019). Moreover, self-management promotes the development of executive function skills, which are crucial for maintaining attention and focus (Gilboa & Helmer, 2020). This skill encompasses processes like working memory, cognitive flexibility, and inhibitory control, all of which are honed. As individuals become more proficient in regulating their emotions and responding effectively to stress, their cognitive resources are freed up for tasks that require sustained attention (Thomson et

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al., 2015). Strong relationship skills and self-control skills create a foundation for improved attention behaviour. Positive social connections and effective self-control contribute to a supportive environment that minimises distractions, reduces stress, and promotes sustained attention (Duckworth et al., 2019; Konishi & Wong, 2018). These skills are essential not only for individual wellbeing but also for creating a conducive context for optimal attention and cognitive performance in various aspects of life.

2.5.5   *Scholastic Behaviours*

Scholastic behaviour is the conduct and behaviours that people exhibit in an academic or educational environment. It includes a variety of behaviours that are associated with studying, learning, and taking part in educational activities (Sharma et al., 2018). Scholastic behaviour encompasses various elements, including being alert during class, participating in coursework, adhering to academic integrity, working with peers, and being fully committed to the learning process. Qualities that are associated with positive scholastic behaviour include diligence, curiosity, active participation, and a sincere desire to learn(Peterson, 2020). Scholastic behaviour is a reflection of how people approach and contribute to their educational experiences (Obermeier et al., 2022).

Self-management and relationship skills are connected to scholastic behaviours, encompassing engagement, task completion, and following instructions (Bahoo et al., 2020; Raimundo et al., 2013). Being able to manage time, set goals, and work collaboratively with others are important aspects of self-management and relationship skills (Lawson et al., 2019). Academic achievement and student engagement are directly impacted by task completion, which is crucial in forming scholastic behaviour (Umarji et al., 2021). Higher grades are not the only benefits of finishing assignments successfully; a sense of accomplishment grows intrinsic motivation and a positive attitude toward learning; consistent task completion cultivates effective time management, organisation, and planning; task completion also

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strengthens accountability for one's learning, fostering a sense of responsibility and beyond the classroom, timely task completion lowers stress levels, improving students' emotional wellbeing; finally, the skills developed through task completion, such as critical thinking and problem-solving, prepare students for future challenges in both their academic and professional pursuits (Sokhanvar et al., 2021).

Self-management includes the ability to track one's development (Reinecke et al., 2018). People who evaluate their academic performance regularly can pinpoint areas for growth and modify their approaches accordingly (Packer et al., 2018). This introspective part of self-management supports lifelong learning and growth in the classroom (Groen et al., 2020). Taking care of yourself in school means paying attention to how you are doing and figuring out what you can do better (Ray et al., 2020). It is like keeping an eye on your schoolwork and thinking about what you are good at and where you can improve. When you regularly check how you are doing in your classes, you can see what is going well and what needs a bit more effort (Deslauriers et al., 2019). This helps you learn and get better over time because you can change the way you do things to do even better in your school activities. It is a way of always trying to improve and be the best student you can be.

The relationship between SEL and scholastic behaviour is intricate and mutually reinforcing. It often places a strong emphasis on self-motivation and goal setting (Zins et al., 2007). By developing students' self-awareness and encouraging them to identify their strengths, interests, and aspirations, self-management fosters a sense of purpose and motivation (DeMink-Carthew et al., 2020). This, in turn, results in increased engagement with academic tasks and a more positive attitude toward learning. When students feel a personal connection to their education and perceive it as relevant to their lives, they are more likely to exhibit constructive scholastic behaviour (Lujan & DiCarlo, 2017).

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Self-management equips individuals with emotional regulation skills, helping them manage stress, anxiety, and frustration common emotional barriers to effective learning (Moohr et al., 2021). When students can regulate their emotions, they are better equipped to concentrate, process information, and maintain their attention, leading to improved scholastic behaviour. This has a direct impact on academic achievement and performance (Valiente et al., 2012). These competencies are indispensable for scholastic behaviour, particularly when students encounter challenging academic tasks or navigate complex decisions about their education (Denham et al., 2012). Students who have undergone these competencies are more capable of breaking down complex problems, making informed choices, and persisting through academic challenges (Greiff et al., 2013). Relationship skills place a strong emphasis on fostering positive interpersonal relationships, both with peers and teachers (Collie et al., 2016). A positive and supportive learning environment encourages constructive scholastic behaviour (Kiuru et al., 2020). When students feel connected, respected, and safe within their school community, they are more likely to engage in the learning process, participate actively in classroom activities, and seek help when needed (Fredricks et al., 2019). In a scholastic context, students often engage in group work and collaborative projects. The ability to work harmoniously with peers, understand diverse perspectives, and communicate effectively is essential for achieving positive outcomes in such settings (Turner & Cameron, 2016). While many aspects of scholastic behaviour discussed in this section are more relevant to older students, preschoolers also demonstrate foundational scholastic behaviours. These behaviours include engaging in group activities, following simple instructions, participating in structured learning experiences, and developing early self-management skills such as task completion and time management. Preschoolers begin to cultivate emotional regulation, self-awareness, and relationship skills through interactions with peers and teachers, setting the groundwork for more complex scholastic behaviours in later years.

2.5.6 Social Competence

Relationship building and social awareness are closely related to social competence, which includes effective communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution (Camras & Halberstadt, 2017). Developing social competence involves building positive relationships, effectively communicating and collaborating with others, and constructively resolving conflicts (Bornstein et al., 2010). Social competence refers to an individual's ability to interact effectively with others, build positive relationships, and navigate social situations (Huber et al., 2019). Self-confidence and social awareness empower individuals to express themselves assertively while respecting the opinions of others (Cowell, 2023). This balance is crucial for social competence, as it allows individuals to advocate for their needs, express their thoughts, and establish healthy boundaries within relationships (Jackson & Wilton, 2017). Emotional awareness enhances one's ability to recognise, understand, and manage emotions both their own and those of others (Nagaraj & Rajaraman, 2021). This awareness is the cornerstone of social competence as it enables individuals to respond appropriately to social cues and navigate social interactions with empathy and insight (Camras & Halberstadt, 2017).

On the other hand, relationship skills place a strong emphasis on empathy, encouraging individuals to consider the feelings and perspectives of others. Developing empathy is vital for social competence as it promotes understanding, kindness, and effective communication (Kinman & Grant, 2011). It allows individuals to connect with others on a deeper level, leading to more meaningful and harmonious relationships. Effective communication is a key component of social competence (Puscas et al., 2021). It fosters to creation of good relations between people and focuses on developing communication skills, including active listening, clear expression, and conflict resolution (Reith-Hall & Montgomery, 2023). These skills enable individuals to convey their thoughts and feelings

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accurately and respectfully, reducing misunderstandings and conflicts in social interactions (Gershon & Pellitteri, 2018).

Social competence is the ability to form and maintain positive connections with others (Puscas et al., 2021); conflict resolution is a critical component of resolving disagreements and upholding harmonious relationships (Pieng & Okamoto, 2020). Resolving conflicts successfully helps to build and strengthen relationships (Bao et al., 2016). Solving conflicts is a crucial component of social competence because it helps us resolve disputes and maintain happy, peaceful relationships (Lee et al., 2022). Therefore, solving problems with friends, family, or classmates not only improves our ability to get along with one another but also strengthens and improves our relationships overall. Social competence often requires the ability to solve interpersonal problems and conflicts (McKown, 2017). Teaching conflict resolution and problem-solving techniques leads to more effective and harmonious social interactions (Mungania & Kihoro, 2017; Valente et al., 2022).

2.5.7 *Behavioural Conduct*

Responsible decision-making and relationship skills are closely tied to behavioural conduct, which refers to acting in the right way, doing the right thing, and following the rules (Abdullah & Rahman, 2020). Understanding and following rules, treating others with respect, and taking responsibility for one's behaviour are integral aspects of responsible decision-making and relationship skills (Williford & Shelton, 2014). Behavioural conduct encompasses an individual's actions, reactions, and behaviours in various settings. SEL has a significant influence on behavioural conduct by promoting self-regulation, responsible decision-making, and interpersonal skills (Trach et al., 2018). Self-control is essential for behavioural conduct, as it helps individuals avoid impulsive, disruptive, or aggressive behaviours that may result from uncontrolled emotions (Frey et al., 2019). In addition, people with strong self-control are more likely to be resilient in the face of adversity and make

decisions that result in positive outcomes. Self-control serves as a compass for behavioural conduct, encouraging actions that are consistent with one's values and serving as a means of fostering a more flexible and socially acceptable way of interacting with the outside world (Manuel Sofia & Cruz, 2015).

Responsible decision-making encourages individuals to make responsible and ethical choices (Huynh et al., 2023). This aspect of SEL is directly linked to behavioural conduct, as it equips individuals with the ability to think through the consequences of their actions and make decisions that align with their values and social norms. Responsible decision-making is acting morally and ethically; it is like having a manual for proper behaviour (Vriens & Achterbergh, 2015). Relationship skills enhance interpersonal skills, including empathy, active listening, and effective communication (Selimović et al., 2018). These skills contribute to more positive behavioural conduct by promoting respectful and constructive interactions with others (Zahra & Saleem, 2022). Problem-solving skills reduce conflicts and misunderstandings, leading to more harmonious social environments (Guerin, 2014). It also teaches conflict resolution techniques that are crucial for maintaining positive behavioural conduct (Jordan & Troth, 2004). Providing individuals with strategies to resolve disputes and disagreements peacefully, reduces disruptive or aggressive behaviours that may arise from unresolved conflicts (Adekunle et al., 2019). Social awareness promotes and creates an understanding of diverse perspectives and social norms(Hirsh & Kang, 2016). Good problem-solving abilities support adaptive behavioural conduct by encouraging a proactive and solution-focused approach (Ashkzari et al., 2016). People possessing these abilities are more likely to resolve conflicts amicably, looking for solutions rather than intensifying tensions(Hopkins & Yonker, 2015). Finally, good problem-solving abilities support decision-making, allowing people to make choices that are consistent with their values and objectives (Lehto et al., 2021). These above interventions seem instrumental in guiding appropriate

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behavioural conduct in different social contexts, as individuals become more attuned to the expectations and cultural norms of their environments (Jagers et al., 2019).

2.6   Gender Differences in SEL

Differences between males and females were another consideration in developing the PATHS- IC program. Research literature has indicated a noticeable connection between SEL programs and gender differences in preschool stages. Studies have shown that, in general, girls are more emotionally expressive and socially skilled than boys at this age (McTaggart et al., 2022). They tend to engage more readily with SEL programs, adapting more easily to the socio-emotional demands of school and displaying higher levels of empathy, shared play, and prosocial behaviour (Veijalainen et al., 2021). Conversely, boys are often shown to have higher rates of behavioural problems (Chaplin & Aldao, 2013). As a result, SEL programs, which are designed to reduce such issues and enhance interpersonal skills, frequently concentrate on further developing these areas in boys (Khan & Avan, 2020).

It is important to understand that boys and girls have individual learning styles and develop at their own pace. For instance, boys tend to be more active and restless, suggesting that SEL programs incorporating physical activity can better engage them (Veijalainen et al., 2021). Although all children can benefit from SEL programs, research suggests that the effectiveness of SEL programs varies across genders (Maguire et al., 2016). Typically, girls respond more positively to interventions focusing on emotions and relationships, while problem-solving and self-control interventions seem to yield better results for boys (Chaplin & Aldao, 2013). Additionally, cultural norms and expectations significantly influence what is deemed typical behaviour for boys and girls, which is an important aspect to consider when discussing gender differences (LaFreniere et al., 2002). In KSA preschool girls and boys, societal expectations and prevailing cultural norms strongly influence emotional and social challenges for boys and girls. Boys, typically encouraged to display resilience and hide

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emotional expression, may face hurdles engaging with SEL programs, unlike girls, nurtured

to be empathetic and emotionally open. These differences necessitate a culturally responsive

SEL program, customised to effectively address and meet the unique developmental needs of

KSA's young boys and girls. The understanding of these gender differences was essential in

the adaptation of the PATHS program to meet the specific needs of preschool-aged boys and

girls in KSA.

2.7   Summary

From the literature review, valuable insights were gained into the competencies that promote beneficial behaviours in preschool children. These insights became fundamental in moulding the design of the PATHS- IC program. The program was then tailored to integrate strategies that encourage adaptive behaviour and social competence, while simultaneously curbing externalising and internalising behaviours.

It is important to acknowledge that young children are in the early stages of their developmental journey in SEL. Any preschool program, including the PATHS- IC program, serves to lay the foundation for future development, rather than achieving all the qualities and behaviours discussed in this chapter. The PATHS- IC program focuses on cultivating the initial building blocks of SEL, preparing preschoolers for more advanced competencies as they grow.

Specifically, the PATHS- IC program was designed with the primary aim of diminishing externalising and internalising behaviours, promoting adaptive behaviour, social competence, and attention behaviour, and enhancing scholastic and behavioural conduct among preschoolers in KSA. A detailed discussion about the PATHS- IC program's content development, based on findings from the literature review and interviews with preschool teachers and mothers, can be found in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3: Method

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the methodology employed in the development and evaluation of the PATHS- IC program, designed for preschool children in KSA. The study adopted an Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) to gather both qualitative and quantitative data, allowing for a holistic examination of the program's impact sequenced across three stages, as shown in Figure 3.1, was the method used in this research. The mixed methods approach combines the depth and insight gained from qualitative data with the breadth and generalisability of quantitative data (Creswell, 2015; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

The research began with a phase of qualitative data collection using semi-structured interviews with preschoolers' parents and teachers (see Chapter 4). Creswell and Poth (2016) have explained qualitative research is a method that provides more opportunities to develop a greater understanding of a phenomenon through an exploration of the perspectives of numerous participants. As such, qualitative research provides a wider perspective for the interpretation of a phenomenon (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Then, based on the literature and analysis of the qualitative data, the next phase of the study involved the development of the PATHS- IC program that was appropriate to the KSA context (see Chapter 5). Following this, the PATHS- IC program was implemented and evaluated at a preschool in KSA (detailed in Chapter 6). This sequential approach ensured that the program was grounded in the real-world experiences of its stakeholders, while the mixed methods design ensured a robust evaluation of its outcomes. The following sections outline the details of each methodological step, including data collection, program development, and evaluation procedures.

Figure 3.1

Phases of the Methodology

Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3
• Interviews with teachers and mothers of preschoolers (see Chapter 4 -Qualitative Results)	→	• Designed and Developed PATHS- IC program (see Chapter 5)	→	• Evcaluation of the Implementation of PATHS-IC program (see Chapter 6)
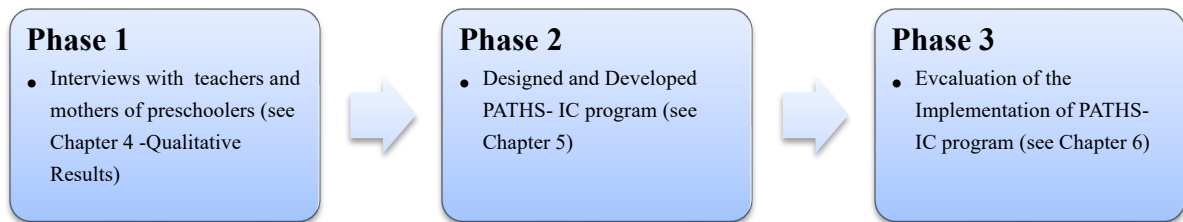
3.1 Philosophical Foundations of the Research

The research process is heavily influenced by philosophical assumptions regarding human knowledge and the essence of reality, thereby impacting comprehension of research questions, selection of methods and interpretation of findings. The practical approach (Morgan, 2007) was the driving force behind this study.

Les (2021), navigating the intricate labyrinth of educational research often mandated anchoring studies on a firm philosophical foundation that deciphers, comprehends, and applies empirical findings. Creswell et al. (2003) contended that pragmatism stands as the paramount philosophical underpinning for mixed methods research. Pragmatism chosen over positivism and constructivism, allows multiple approaches and methods for research (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009). It can be achieved by addressing pertinent inquiries such as 'what', 'why' and 'how', guided by established literature.

The cornerstone of these philosophical underpinnings is the ontological and epistemological approaches, steering the interpretation and trajectory of research (Nursalim, 2017). Ontology grapples with the concept of "reality," while epistemology delineates "how we acquire knowledge" (Wuppuluri & Doria, 2018). Examining these philosophies using Bartholdsson et al. (2014) an approach through the context of the current study on SEL within the KSA preschool system offers an embedded framework for interpreting results and methods of data collection. By understanding and applying these philosophical principles, it was possible to present a faithful representation of the participants' viewpoints and to develop culturally sensitive SEL resources.

3.1.1 The Ontological Approach

Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality and the assumptions that researchers have about the way in which the world operates. Two aspects of ontology are accepted as

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producing knowledge (Morin et al., 2021). Objectivism represents the position that social entities are external to social actors, meaning that the researcher is detached from the research context by using numerical and statistical data (Joshi, 2015). Subjectivism, on the other hand, refers to the meaning imposed by individuals on their experiences and perceptions, highlighting the role of personal interpretation in shaping reality (Bryman, 2014). Constructivism, while encompassing subjectivism, goes further by focusing on the interaction between individuals and the social world, suggesting that reality is co-constructed through social processes and interactions (Bryman, 2014). Therefore, while one can adopt a subjectivist stance without subscribing to constructivism, being a constructivist inherently includes a subjectivist perspective. The Ontological perspective pertains to the nature of reality, what is deemed as knowable, and what it implies for something to possess existence (Guizzardi & Halpin, 2008). This research ascribed to a realistic ontological stance, premising that a multitude of perceptions and interpretations of SEL exist amongst preschool educators and mothers in KSA, each one independent and distinct. It acknowledged each individual's unique comprehension and experiential knowledge about their world, shaped by their values, practices, and socio-religious roots. Thus, in the context of KSA preschooling, the concept of SEL assumed a multifaceted and subjective reality, shaped by the unique experiences and perspectives of individuals (Reicher, 2010). Recognising this differential perception facilitated an exploration of the layers and complexity surrounding SEL and provided a more comprehensive representation of the understanding and perceptions of teachers and parents with respect to SEL, within an Islamic context.

3.1.2 The Epistemological Approach

Epistemology is concerned with determining what qualifies as acceptable knowledge in a particular field of study. Various epistemologies exist to explain how we engage with the realities of the world. One such epistemology is positivism, which involves applying natural

sciences to study social realities (Bryman, 2014). Epistemology reflects the nature of knowledge, especially concerning its methodology, authenticity, and breadth (Hill, 2018). The epistemological stance adopted in this research resonates with interpretivism (Vandamme, 2021). An interpretive approach infers that to understand social patterns, one needs to appreciate the subjective and frequently contrasting views of participating individuals in this context, preschool educators, and mothers.

Interpretivism vouches for the importance of understanding the differentiation between humans in their roles as social actors (Voyer, 2017). This study acknowledged the premise that knowledge and interpretation of SEL in KSA are dynamic constructs, shaped through interpersonal interactions and socio-religious frameworks. It, therefore, deployed interviews for data collection, which allowed the effective gathering of rich, subjective data, fostering a thorough comprehension of participants' interpretations and perceptions of SEL in an Islamic ambience.

The design and implementation of the PATHS- IC program were not confined to the researcher's perspective. Instead, the PATHS- IC program was constructed on the nuanced understandings and insights noted by preschool educators and mothers to ensure cultural and religious appropriateness, thereby ensuring an appropriate fit. Through this ontological and epistemological approach, this research aimed to delve deep into the understanding of SEL knowledge, perspectives, and applicability within the Islamic domain. This study, thereby, may contribute to future creations and validations of a suitable, context specific SEL program for preschoolers in KSA, enriching their emotional and social growth prospects.

3.2   Ethics Approval

After this research project had been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (SBREC), the Ministry of Education Department in

Aljouf City, KSA was contacted via telephone to obtain permission to conduct the research. The initial contact included the following: (a) introducing the researcher, academic supervisor, and the research project; (b) explaining the objectives and the procedures of the research; and (c) requesting their assistance. Upon receiving approval for the research project, detailed documents (Letter of Introduction, Information Sheet, and Consent Form (see Appendix A) were sent to the Education Department via email. In an official way, the educational administrator notified the school after gaining ethics approval. There was no formal requirement for ethics approval within the KSA preschool system; therefore, the Flinders University Ethical Procedures Policy were followed. Official letters were sent to preschool principals by the educational guidance department detailing the study's aim and process. Preschool principals were asked whether they wanted to participate in this study, as approval was also required from the school.

After gaining school approval, the researcher contacted the school administrator, and the research process was explained in detail; Information Sheets and Consent Forms were attached to the emails as well. In the qualitative part (phase one) of the study, the school administrators recruited teachers and mothers, with whom they were in frequent contact both formally and informally in the course of caring for the children. Afterwards, when they agreed to join this study, the administrator liaised with the researcher to contact and arrange meetings with teachers and mothers.

There was no conflict of interest between the researcher and the participants. Since the researcher works at a separate institution, the researcher had no influence over or involvement with any of the participants. After all the approvals had been sought and gained, the written consent of the educational administrator and the preschool was sent to SBREC for archival purposes.

In the PATHS- IC implementation part (phase three) of the study, the school administrators initially invited the teachers and mothers they frequently interact with. Upon their agreement to participate, meetings were arranged with the help of the administrator and researcher. During these meetings, teachers signed the consent form allowing them to complete the pre-and post-test scales associated with the study. The next step was to obtain consent from the parents. This was crucial to allow their children to participate in the study. With assistance from the preschool principal, the parents were contacted for their approval. Once parental consent was granted, the researcher directly asked each child for their verbal consent to participate. The following verbal script was used to explain the study to the children and obtain their consent:

Verbal script

Hello (insert the name of the child here). How are you? My name is Malak Alqaydhi and I am a researcher. Do you know what research means? Research is the process of solving problems and finding facts in an organized way. So, I will be with you for one month during class hours and I was hoping you could join me in this research I am conducting. During this time, I will be giving you lessons, and I will also ask you some questions related to the lesson. So, is it ok with you to participate with us?

Is it ok with you to record your voice when you say yes to participate in this research?

Thanks

3.3   Study Context

The location for the study was Aljouf City, KSA, which is situated in the northern region of the country near the border with Jordan. Aljouf City was chosen because of convenience; the researcher is currently employed at Aljouf University, which is located in that city, but is on leave while completing a PhD in Australia.

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All preschool teachers in KSA are female, though the children in preschool classrooms are mixed gender. The researcher, who is a female academic, is not permitted to interview males because of restrictions in KSA's culture and religion. For these reasons, the samples for both teachers and mothers (parents) included only females.

The number of children in each preschool class is between 25 to 30 and there are two teachers in each class. The classroom environment is not very highly controlled in KSA; however, it follows a structure guided by the curriculum. On any given day at preschool, the classroom routine begins with a rollcall. This is immediately followed by Islamic studies, and then by academic studies in literacy and numeracy. Following these formal lessons, there are opportunities for children to select and explore any of several learning corners, which include, a play area, an area to draw, and a reading and writing corner. Thereafter, there is a time allocated for a lunch break and then the day is concluded with a story or engaging in the last activity for the day.

The methods and procedures employed for the three phases of this research are explained in detail below.

3.4   Phase One: Qualitative Study Method

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample (n = 16) of preschool teachers (n = 8) and mothers (n = 8) to investigate teachers' and mothers' perceptions and thoughts about some questions related to the SEL of preschool students. The data gained from the interviewing process informed the creation and design of the PATHS- IC program to fit the cultural needs of preschool students in KSA. A series of interview questions were developed and tested through a pilot study prior to conducting the interviews with preschool mothers and teachers.

3.4.1 Interview Questions

The interview questions were designed to explore the participants' experiences and perspectives about SEL. After reading several studies, the interview questions were derived from relevant literature. For example, questions about teaching children to understand their emotions and uncovering student's social and emotional needs within the classroom were inspired by the work of Dinallo (2016) and Dunsmore et al. (2009). Both studies emphasised the importance of family involvement in SEL and highlighted the role of emotional understanding in effective learning and development in children. The questioning strategies employed to gain insights into how teachers handle disruption and manage behavioural issues were greatly influenced by Poulou et al. (2018). These authors showcased how teachers' perceptions of emotional intelligence could impact children's behavioural tendencies, thereby underpinning the significance of such questions in this research.

Inquiries regarding the amount of social and emotional development information in the current curriculum, as well as evaluating its incorporation of cultural and Islamic values, owe their inception to the research by Loinaz (2019). His cross-cultural study revealed significant variance in teachers' perceptions of emotional and social education. Questions concerning the communication between teachers and parents, and the collaborative nature of addressing students' emotional and social needs, were inspired by the insights shared by Sánchez-Núñez et al. (2013). Their research underscored the intricate relationships between family members in relation to the perception of emotional intelligence, hence providing a useful context for examining these dynamics within a school setting.

Additionally, questions probing teachers' perceptions of an ideal SEL program and their preferences on its implementation were derived from Schultz et al. (2010) who investigated teacher-perceived support for SEL and corresponding attitudes. Their

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exploration became seminal in prompting further inquiry into how teachers view SEL programs and what they believe would make them most effective.

Overall, these sources helped shape the direction of the interview questions, ensuring they were both theoretically grounded and practically relevant to exploring SEL within the context under study. To ensure the rigour and quality of the research, the questions were reviewed by my supervisors, who generally agreed that the interview protocol aligned with the research objective and found the interview questions unambiguous and understandable. The interview questions were then pilot tested with two participants to ensure they were appropriate and understandable.

3.4.2   Pilot Study

A pilot study was undertaken prior to the interviews with one preschool teacher and one preschool mother. The purpose of the pilot study was to enable the researcher to practise and build interviewing skills and approaches, as well as develop the capacity to manage time during interviews as suggested by previous research (Charlesworth et al., 2020; Hassan et al., 2006; Malmqvist et al., 2019). In addition, this pilot study aimed to acquire feedback from participants on the questions, especially in terms of whether there were any questions that were redundant, irrelevant, or not clear in wording. The feedback from the participants was used to evaluate the suitability of the proposed interview items and questions posed to teachers and mothers and to guide the process of making improvements, additions, or amendments for the qualitative stage in the research.

The two participants recruited for the pilot study were both living in KSA. Both participants were known associates of the researcher and therefore willingly agreed to be interviewed. Purposive sampling of the two associates was convenient and it provided assurance that the pilot study would produce useful feedback.

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Prior to the pilot study interviews, the aim, and details of the study, together with ethical considerations and a consent form, were provided to the participants via email. The two interviews were carried out separately in Arabic since it is the participant's native language. The interviews were conducted online, and the researcher used meeting software (Microsoft Teams, 2021) based on the participants' preferences with consideration of their privacy and protection. The duration of each interview was about 35 to 45 minutes, and the interviews were audio-recorded with the participant's consent.

3.4.2.1 Pilot Study Questions. Most of the interview questions were confirmed to be well-designed and easily understood by the teacher and mother. In considering their answers, however, it was apparent that they had little prior knowledge about SEL. Subsequently, it was apparent that interview questions involving SEL would require simplification in order to be more easily understood by interviewees. Some questions were changed with this in mind. For example, the question, "What do you think your students' social and emotional needs would be?" was simplified to, "Do you think that your students have emotional and social learning needs in class? Could you please share with me what you think those needs are?"

The pilot study provided an opportunity to note some probing questions that were being used during the interviews. A common probing question was "Please share an example with me". This was used to probe closed-ended questions such as "Do you think this is an effective method of teaching your students how to manage their feelings? Please share an example with me." Moreover, several questions, which had different wording but similar meanings, resulted in the same answer being given by the respondent. These questions seemed to be redundant, duplicating the same request and the same response. Therefore, the duplicate questions were replaced with alternative, more revealing questions.

The researcher began the interview by asking the participants several icebreaker questions, which served to calm and relax both the teacher and the mother and to create

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rapport with the researcher. During the interviews, the mother and the teacher were both chatty and happy to share their ideas and thoughts on the questions asked, which was helpful in gaining insight and the most useful information about the suitability of interview questions. An interesting discovery was that the teacher and the mother both had ideas about what they wanted for the SEL development of their student or child, but they had not formally heard of SEL.

The pilot study was useful in identifying the necessary changes, which are detailed in the table in (Appendix B) and led to the addition of some supplementary questions revealing more in-depth information. For example, the concept of SEL needed to be rephrased or explained in simpler terms, as did the wording of strategy, which was unfamiliar to the participants. Several questions were deemed to be redundant and were subsequently deleted. For example, "What would you like to see in such a program for your preschool students?" was similar to another question and provided the same answer. The results of the pilot test were further discussed with my supervisors and changes were made to the interview questions accordingly. The interview questions were then finalised and used for the main study (see Table 3.1)

Table 3.1

Semi-structured Interview Questions

Teachers of Preschooler	Mothers of Preschooler
What do you think about teaching children about their emotions? What makes you think that?	What would you say is the best quality time you spend with your children? And why? How often do you spend chatting to your children in a week? Do you have a routine of talking to your children? What would you talk about with them?
How do your students get along with each other in class?	
What strategy (plan things) do you use for disruptive student behaviour when you are teaching?	How do your children behave in the home? Give examples. Could you please share with me how do you manage this behaviour with your child?
How do you teach them that their response is a good behaviour to be used again in the future?	When your child indicates that they would like to talk to you, while you are busy, what is your response? Following an example: When did it happen? What were you discussing about?
What is your understanding of your student's 'social and emotional needs'? How do you know that? Where did you get that knowledge from?"	
Do you think that your students' have emotional and social needs in class? Could you please share with me what you think those needs are?	What is your understanding of your child's 'social and emotional needs'? How do you know that? Where did you get that knowledge from?"
If your students approach you with their emotional and social needs for example if they are sad, angry, worried, happy, jealous, how do you deal with it? Do you think this is an effective method of teaching your student how to manage their feelings?" Please share an example with me.	How do you deal with your child when they show negative emotions and behaviour when they are with you? How about when they show positive emotions and behaviour? Do you believe the way you deal with your child is helpful? How?
Is there enough information provided for you about social/ emotional development in the curriculum? What are your thoughts about that?	I'm interested to know what you think about teaching your child about their feelings and emotions. When do you think that children should be educated about their emotions and feelings? Why?
Do you think the preschool teacher is mainly responsible for teaching children about their social interactions and emotional development? What makes you think that?	When your child returns from school, what do you chat with them about in terms of their social groups and experiences in school? How often do you communicate with your child when he or she returns home from school?
Some people think that this is the parents' responsibility. Would you agree? What makes you think that? Some people think that these things should be taught in school and at home concurrently, with teacher and parent working collaboratively. What do you think about that idea?	Has your child's classroom teacher contacted/ communicated with you since your child has been in preschool? How do you communicate with the teacher (e.g., by phone, email, face to face meetings)? What do you talk about?
Do you get in touch with your students' parents? Do you think that it is important that parents and teachers communicate frequently? Why do you think so? How you feel about having scheduled appointment times with your students' parents? What do you do with a problem that you have with your student which needs their parents to be put in contact with you?	Do you think that it is important that parents and teachers communicate frequently? Why do you think so?
	Can you please share with me what you think is important about social development for children? Can you please share with me what you think is important about emotional development for children?
What do you think would be important to consider from a teaching or facilitator's point of view, on a program that can teach children how to manage their emotions and social behaviours?	Do you think the parents are mainly responsible for teaching children about their social interactions and emotional development? Or would this be the teacher responsibility? Why?
Tell me what you think would be ideal topics to be included in a program, in your experience, to teach	

Teachers of Preschooler	Mothers of Preschooler
children about their emotions and social interactions (e.g., self-regulation, empathy, sharing)?	What do you think would be important to consider, if there is a program that can teach children how to manage their emotions and social behaviours?
I would like to invite you to share with me your thoughts on this: When a child is taught how to understand themselves through learning of their emotions and interactions with others, is it important to connect Islamic values with each lesson?	Tell me what you think would be ideal topics to be included in a program, in your experience, to teach children about their emotions and social interactions (e.g., self-regulation, empathy, sharing)?
Can you please share with me, how important it is for you, that the program suits our culture and incorporates our values?	I would like to invite you to share with me your thoughts on this question: When a child is taught how to understand themselves through learning of their emotions and interactions with others, is it important to connect Islamic values with each lesson? Why do you think Islamic values are/are not important?"
	Can you please share with me, how important it is for you, that the program suits our culture and is adapted to incorporate our values?
	How do you feel about having a program that would teach the children how to understand themselves and their feelings, emotions and behaviours with others around them?
	Are there any other skills that you would like to have your students acquire/gain from coming to preschool? Could you please share what you have in mind?

3.4.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

The researcher contacted the preschool administrator and shared all relevant research information. A preschool administrator invited teachers and mothers of preschool students to consider participating in the study via email. Eight teachers and eight mothers of preschoolers volunteered to participate. They were asked to provide informed written consent after which the preschool administrator coordinated with the researcher to contact and arrange meetings with teachers and mothers via email. Arrangements were made regarding convenient times for the interviews to take place. The interviews lasted 45-60 minutes.

The interviews were conducted in Arabic, the native language of the participants, and implemented online via Microsoft Teams (2021); please refer to Appendix C for further details. This approach was taken in accordance with the participants' preferences and with

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respect to their privacy and protection. The decision to audio-record the interviews, which was done with the participants' consent, aimed at promoting greater focus during the discussion and ensured the accuracy of the collected data while also protecting participants from any potential misrepresentation (Simons, 2009). Following each interview, the researcher meticulously documented and transcribed the interviews to maintain the integrity of the data.

3.5   Phase Two – PATHS- IC development

The development of the PATHS- IC program was initiated in Australia, incorporating qualitative findings from interviews and a detailed literature review. The mixture of insights from these sources, along with original ideas that emerged from the research process, informed the program's design. The literature review provided crucial knowledge about effective SEL programs and helped to identify specific tactics, concepts, and components that have proven positively impactful for preschool children's social-emotional development. In addition to the literature review, data derived from the interviews with preschool teachers and parents was seamlessly integrated into the PATHS- IC program. The design and development were also informed through careful consideration of the social and cultural context of the intervention in a KSA preschool. This design development approach enabled the researcher to creatively tailor the intervention to fit the cultural setting of KSA. Detailed information on this process and its outcomes can be found in Chapter 5.

3.5.1   PATHS- IC Review

During this stage of the research, feedback about PATHS- IC was sought from 3 mothers and 3 teachers who had been interviewed in phase one of the study. Participants in the initial interview phase had agreed to follow up on PATHS- IC. Given their agreement and continued willingness, these participants were re-engaged during the review stage to gather

their insights and feedback on the designed PATHS- IC program. The participants were interviewed individually online using Teams software for approximately 30 minutes each. The interviews were recorded with the explicit consent of each participant to ensure accuracy in interpreting and analysing their feedback. Each interview began with a brief explanation of all 15 PATHS- IC lesson themes and a description of what was to be included in the sessions with students. Semi-structured questioning related to each theme was then used to stimulate the participants' thinking and promote their responses (see Chapter 5).

3.6 Phase Three – PATHS- IC Implementation and Evaluation

3.6.1 PATHS- IC Implementation

The PATHS- IC intervention experimental phase was conducted in two government-funded public preschools in Aljouf city, KSA. The same schools from which parents and teachers were recruited for interviews were used for the intervention. Both schools were centrally located within the city's central business district and included formal classrooms, a playground, and an indoor eating area.

The researcher discussed the study with each school principal, who provided a list of 5-year-old students meeting the research criteria. Instead of random assignment, the principals designated one class in each school as the Experimental Group and the other as the Control Group. This approach was chosen to comply with the principals' instructions.

The decision to include 5-year-olds, rather than 4-year-olds, was based on their more advanced development and structured curriculum, which facilitated the PATHS- IC Program intervention. Each preschool had five mixed-gender classrooms for children aged 4 to 5 years, with two classes specifically for 5-year-olds. Each classroom, staffed by two female teachers, typically housed 30 students, the standard class size in KSA preschools. Thus, each

preschool had a total of 60 students, with one class assigned to the Experimental Group and the other to the Control Group.

By using the same preschools for both groups, the study aimed to maintain consistent environmental and social conditions, as well as uniform school policies and practices. Overall, four classes participated in the study (two Experimental and two Control), with 60 children in each group. All students were Saudi nationals, born in KSA, and residing near the schools. The relatively small group size allowed for close observation of individual behaviour during and after the PATHS- IC program intervention.

Government-funded preschools, including the sample in this study, provide education services free of charge and attract children from the same age group, nationality, and similar socio-economic backgrounds (Rabaah et al., 2016). Consequently, the sample not only aligned with the wider population of preschool students but also reflected the diversity found within MoE government-funded preschools in terms of family and community settings. As part of the study exclusion criteria, there were no students in the study group who were identified as having a learning disability or special educational needs or for whom there were significant language or other barriers to their learning. There have been recent initiatives to include children with disabilities in general KSA classrooms including preschools. However, currently, neurologically atypical students are educated in separate, self-contained schools or institutes (Alharbi & Madhesh, 2018; Gibbs & Bozaid, 2022; Kadasah, 2017). As such, the sample group of students involved in the study were similar to the broader population of preschool students elsewhere in KSA.

Within each classroom setting, there were various education and activity zones. There was a reading corner, a home corner where there was kitchen equipment and objects found within a house, a painting corner, and a discovery corner where interaction between students and objects took place. Lastly, there was a zone where students used building blocks to stack

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and have interactive fun. Classroom observations of both the Experimental and Control Groups were conducted both before and after the implementation of the PATHS- IC program. These observations served as a valuable means of gathering data and monitoring the children's progress throughout the implementation of the PATHS- IC program.

In the context of implementing the PATHS- IC program in this study, the three primary factors of dosage, fidelity, and quality, as illuminated by Lendrum et al. (2016), were carefully considered and analysed.

Fidelity, which refers to how well a program retains its original ideals during implementation (Keller-Margulis, 2012), was maintained by adapting the core principles of the original PATHS program in the redesign of the PATHS- IC program. This adaptation ensured that the effectiveness and integrity of the original PATHS principles were preserved while tailoring the program to better meet the needs of the new context. Thierry et al. (2022) support the importance of maintaining these core principles to uphold the program's integrity throughout the adaptation process.

The concept of dosage, as described by Gonzales et al. (2016), was also factored into the PATHS- IC program's implementation. Dosage involves deciding the frequency and duration of program delivery, as well as the degree of participant engagement with the program content. In the execution of the PATHS- IC program, consistent delivery and active engagement of participants were systematically monitored and maintained.

As for the quality of delivery in the PATHS- IC program, the primary emphasis was placed on the inherent skills and capabilities in effective delivery. This was as per the pointers highlighted by Dowling and Barry (2020). The implementation of the PATHS- IC program was carried out by the researcher, ensuring that the program was delivered proficiently, thus providing optimal instruction to all participants. This approach aligns with

Humphrey, Barlow, et al. (2018) the standpoint, reemphasising the importance of effectively disseminating program content to maximise the benefits for students within the scope of the PATHS- IC program.

In summary, adherence to these core facets of dosage, fidelity, and quality was integral in ensuring the successful implementation of the PATHS- IC program within this study's context.

3.6.2 *Hypotheses*

1. Internalising Behaviour: It was hypothesised that, following the PATHS- IC intervention, the Experimental Group would demonstrate a significant reduction in internalising behaviours compared to the Control Group. The Control Group, which did not receive the intervention, was expected to show minimal or no change in internalising behaviours due to maturation and preschool attendance.

2. Externalising Behaviour: It was hypothesised that the PATHS- IC intervention would lead to a significant reduction in externalising behaviours in the Experimental Group compared to the Control Group. The Control Group was anticipated to show stable externalising behaviours, with any changes attributed to natural developmental progress.

3. Adaptive Behaviour: It was hypothesised that the Experimental Group would show a significant improvement in adaptive behaviours as a result of the PATHS- IC intervention. The Control Group was expected to demonstrate improvements in adaptive behaviours as well, but these changes were hypothesised to be less pronounced compared to the Experimental Group.

4. Attention Behaviours: It was hypothesised that the Experimental Group would experience a significant enhancement in attention behaviours following the PATHS- IC

intervention, compared to the Control Group. Improvements in the Control Group were expected to be due to developmental changes rather than the intervention.

5. Poor Scholastic Conduct: It was hypothesised that the Experimental Group would show a significant improvement in scholastic conduct post-intervention, in contrast to the Control Group. The Control Group was expected to remain stable or show minimal changes in scholastic conduct.

6. Social Competence: It was hypothesised that the PATHS- IC intervention would lead to a significant increase in social competence in the Experimental Group. The Control Group was expected to show improvements as well, but these changes were hypothesised to be less substantial compared to those in the Experimental Group.

7. Behavioural Conduct: It was hypothesised that the Experimental Group would exhibit significant improvements in behavioural conduct following the PATHS- IC intervention. The Control Group was anticipated to show some improvement due to maturation, but not to the same extent as the Experimental Group.

3.6.3 PATHS- IC Evaluation

The quantitative stage of the study sought to evaluate the effectiveness of the PATHS-IC program. This phase of the research involved two pre- and post-implementation stages. As shown in Figure 3.2, stage 1 involved classroom pre-implementation observations followed by a pre-implementation assessment of participants (stage 2), which was repeated following PATHS- IC implementation. This phase employed an experimental research design during which data were collected through a pre-and post-intervention setting using an Assessment Questionnaire. The assessors in this phase were the researcher and a research assistant (see details below).

Figure 3.2

PATHS- IC Implementation and Data Collection Process
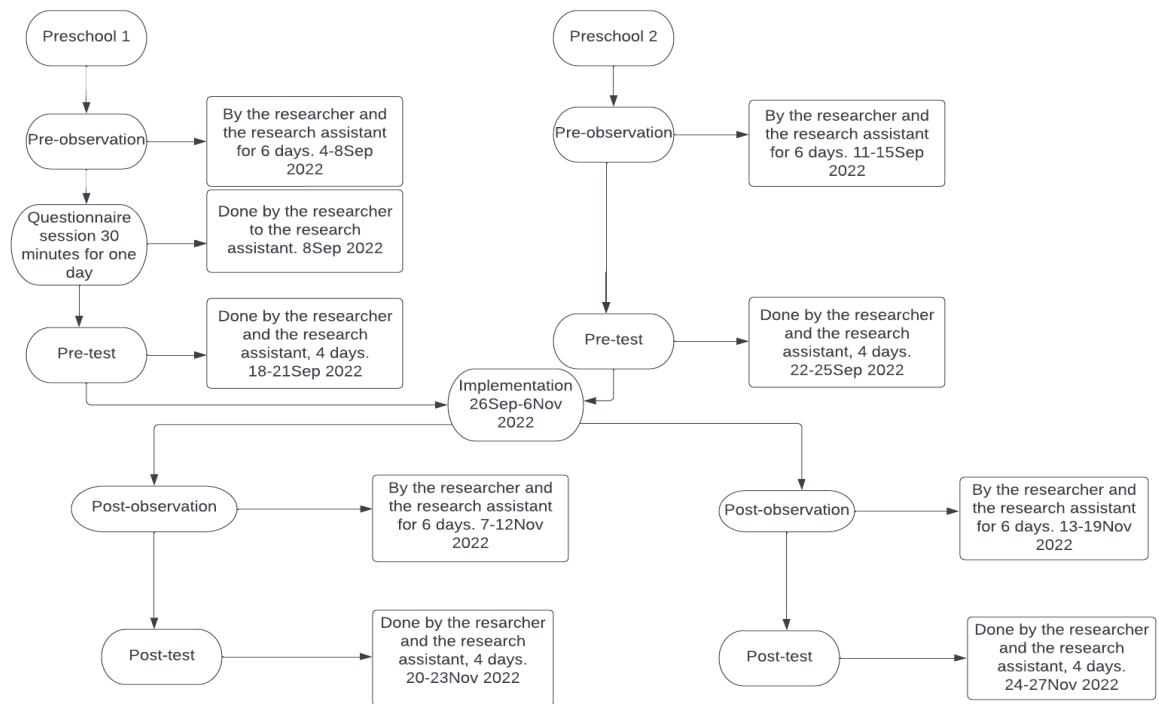
3.6.4   Research Assistant (RA)

Considering the dynamic nature of the preschool classroom environment and the

requirement for multiple, simultaneous observations of preschool children, the study

employed a research assistant to provide support during data collection. This approach aligns

with the methodology recommended by Strahan and Poteat (2020), who underline the

importance of assistance in observational studies for comprehensive data recording. The role

of an RA in a qualitative study can include a range of important functions and their

participation has implications for the quality and outcomes of the research (Stevano & Deane,

2017). Accordingly, during the data collection stage of this study, an RA who was considered

a suitable candidate to be involved was invited via email to participate in the study. The RA

was a willing volunteer and was not paid for her services. Additionally, she was a Saudi

national and Arabic speaker. This person had experience working with children in an

educational context. The RA had a bachelor's degree in special needs, with a focus on learning difficulties, and had prior experience working at a centre for students with learning difficulties. The researcher was familiar with the RA due to her extensive experience and involvement in the education field, which earned her recognition in academic circles.

During the observation phase, the RA was instrumental in helping the researcher accurately record and document the behaviours of the children in the classroom and participated with the researcher in reflecting on and analysing observations. The RA's support, under the supervision and guidance of the researcher, contributed to a better understanding of the context of the study and the nuances of the children's behaviours by keeping written observations and consulting frequently with the researcher. Additionally, the RA was tasked with assessing the children by completing the pre- and post-tests assessments (see instruments below), which ensured that the data collection was as complete and accurate as possible. The RA and the researcher assessed the children separately at different times to ensure objectivity in data collection.

Prior to beginning her role as an RA, the researcher provided her with a detailed briefing on the study's objectives, methodology, and expectations. This briefing included an overview of the study's focus on evaluating the behaviour and learning outcomes of students in a classroom setting, as well as the role that the RA would play in the data collection process. The RA was also briefed on the ethical considerations of the study, including the need to maintain confidentiality and the importance of obtaining informed consent from the participants. To ensure that the RA was fully prepared for her role, the researcher provided a brief session to explain all the survey questions for the pre- and post-tests. The researcher was also available to answer any questions or concerns that the RA had during the data collection process. Overall, the training provided to the RA was extensive and designed to ensure that she was fully equipped to carry out her role effectively and efficiently.

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3.6.5 *Assessment Instruments*

To assess the PATHS- IC program's effectiveness, the study utilised specific assessment instruments to discern the changes in preschoolers' SEL before and after the intervention. The intent was not merely to measure the acquisition of basic SEL skills, but more importantly, to observe the potential behavioural improvements related to these gained skills. For example, instead of directly assessing self-awareness and self-control, for instance, the focus was on evaluating whether these SEL skills may have influenced the development of externalising and internalising behaviours. The chosen instruments were designed to measure these behaviours and assess whether fostering preschoolers' adaptive behaviour, social competence, scholastic, behavioural and attention behaviour through the PATHS- IC program was effective. Hence, the instruments were used to assess internalising behaviours like stress or worry, externalising behaviours such as aggression or self-control, and adaptive behaviours including problem-solving and relationship skills. To summarise, these instruments served as a measure of effectiveness by indicating not just competency in SEL skills acquisition, but more importantly, the subsequent positive shifts in behaviour and conduct among the preschool students. The instruments mentioned below were consequently used in this study and are discussed in detail below.

3.6.4.1 BASC-3 BESS Measure. The Behaviour Assessment System for Children Teacher Report-Preschool (BASC) (Reynolds et al., 2015) is a teacher-rating scale (TRS-P) comprising a comprehensive set of rating scales and forms. Together, these tools help a researcher to investigate and understand the behaviours and emotions of children and adolescents. The BASC-3 BESS (Behavioural and Emotional Screening System) is an instrument used to assess externalising, internalising, and adaptive behaviours. It is a multi-method system including two rating scales, one for teachers (TRS), and one for parents (PRS), each of which is divided into child age-appropriate forms. The BASC-3 BESS is

deemed highly reliable and valid in the psycho-educational professional field (Reynolds et al., 2021; Reynolds et al., 2015). The BASC3–TRS forms include a total of 20 questions and can be completed in approximately 5-10 minutes.

The BASC-3 BESS is a widely used tool in studies such as (Canivez et al., 2021; Earnest, 2021) demonstrating its established acceptance. This study utilised the BASC-3 BESS due to its consistent results across different research contexts (Eklund et al., 2022; Naser & Dever, 2020). The tool was critical in the method, given its robust evaluations of children and adolescent's behavioural and emotional states. Utilising such a validated and reliable tool, as confirmed by Dever and Gaier (2021) and Greer et al. (2015), promoted the accuracy of the study's results, thus strengthening the overall rigour of the research. The BASC-3 BESS scales encompass externalising, internalising, adaptive, and attention behaviours. Items are measured using a 4-point scale which ranges from "never" to "almost always".

Externalising Problems composite scale is comprised of the hyperactivity and aggression clinical scales that are used to assess the externalising behaviour of each child. For example: "Disrupt the play of other children" and "Annoy others on purpose".

Internalising Problems composite scale is comprised of anxiety, depression, and somatisation clinical scales (Gierk et al., 2014), which are used to assess the internalising behaviour of each child. For example: "Worries" and "Is negative about things".

Adaptive Skills composite scale is comprised of the adaptability, social skills, and functional communication clinical scales, which are used to assess the adaptive skills of each child. For example: "Shares toys or possessions with other children" and "Gets along well with others".

Attention Behaviours composite scale evaluates a child's ability to focus and follow directions, assessing their attentiveness and responsiveness in various contexts. For example: "Pays attention" and "Listens to directions".

3.6.6 Teacher's Rating Scale of Child's Actual Behaviour measure (TRS-CAB)

This scale gives comprehensive insights into how teachers perceive children's self-conduct across various dimensions (Harter, 2012). Developed with age-appropriate language and concepts, the scale comprises several items that collectively measure a child's self-perception as assessed by their teacher.

The main scale question items consist of five specific domains, which are 1. Scholastic Competence 2. Social Competence 3. Athletic Competence 4. Physical Appearance and 5. Behavioural Conduct. These domains are explained as follows:

Scholastic Competence items refer specifically to the perceived cognitive competence of the child, as applied to schoolwork. Thus, items make reference to doing well at schoolwork, being able to figure out the answers, finishing one's schoolwork quickly, etc. For example: "This child often forgets what (s)he learns".

Social Competence items refer to knowing how to make friends, having the skills to get others to like oneself, knowing what to do to have others like or accept you, understanding what it takes to become popular, etc. For example: "This child finds it hard to make friends".

Athletic Competence items primarily refer to one's ability to do well at sports, including outdoor games, demonstrating one's athletic prowess. For example: "This child does really well at all kinds of sports".

Physical Appearance items tap the extent to which the teacher feels the child is good-looking, happy with one's looks, body, face, hair, etc. For example: "This child is good looking".

Behavioural Conduct subscale taps into the degree to which the child behaves, does the right thing, acts the way one is supposed to act, and avoids getting into trouble. For example: "This child usually acts appropriately".

To ensure that all relevant information was captured, some of the questions from the original TRS-CAB scale were retained, while others that were not relevant to the intervention were deleted and new questions that were specific to the content of the PATHS- IC program were added. Questions from only three domains (i.e., Scholastic Competence, Social Competence and Behavioural Conduct) were considered relevant for assessing children in this study and were included in the assessment questionnaire. The remaining two domains, Athletic Competence and Physical Appearance were excluded as they were regarded as unrelated to the study participants and PATHS- IC program objectives, due to these domains not having direct relevance regarding the SEL of 5-year-olds. The questions that were removed from the (TRSCB) Scale, were items such as "This child is good looking," "This child has a nice physical appearance," and "This child is not very good looking" for assessing physical appearance, and "This child does really well at all kinds of sports," "This child is better than others his/her age at sports," and "This child does not do well at new outdoor games" for evaluating athletic competence.

The new Assessment Questionnaire, which comprised 20 questions, enabled a more comprehensive evaluation of the outcomes of the intervention program. Questions that were formed in the new Assessment Questionnaire were developed based on a literature review and sought to address constructs that were not fully captured by the original scale. These

additional questions were created by the researcher after reflection on aspects of the scale that were missing and developed in discussion with the supervisory team.

Each new question was carefully crafted to measure a specific aspect of student behaviour that was deemed important for the success of the program. These questions were developed from a review of the literature from studies (Alwaely et al., 2021; Alzahrani et al., 2019; Bergold et al., 2019; Tobia & Marzocchi, 2018) that had specifically examined the effectiveness of questionnaire items designed to reveal aspects of children's strengths and difficulties in the domains of SEL and behaviour. The 11 questions that were added to the measurement scale were derived from the relevant literature on SEL programs for children. Research studies have identified self-Control as one of the essential components of SEL programs that have been identified by various studies in the literature (Arslan, 2018; Jones & Doolittle, 2017; Rademacher & Koglin, 2018). Therefore, questions "This child thinks carefully before acting", and "This child can Control his/her anger" were added to measure self-Control, which is the ability to manage one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviour in different situations.

Emotional understanding is another important construct of SEL programs that has been identified in the literature (Gershon & Pellitteri, 2018; Poulou et al., 2018; Rivers et al., 2020). It involves the ability to recognise, understand, and regulate a person's emotions and those of others. Therefore, questions "This child is able to talk about his/her feelings", and "The child is able to identify the feelings of others" were added to measure emotional understanding. The inclusion of these questions was necessary to ensure that this critical construct was appropriately captured in the modified scale.

Problem-solving skills are also an essential component of SEL programs (Ahmady & Shahbazi, 2020; Alzahrani et al., 2019; Merrill et al., 2017) that were included in the PATHS-IC program. Problem-solving skills involves identifying problems, generating solutions, and

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implementing them. Accordingly, the question "This child is able to think through a problem to find a solution" was added to measure problem-solving skills.

Building positive relationships with peers and adults is another key component of SEL programs that promote social competence and reduce behavioural problems (Domitrovich et al., 2017b; Grahek, 2019; Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2017) and was a domain in the PATHS- IC program. Therefore, new questions, "This child is a good friend to others", "This child helps his/her friends in the class", and "This child shares toys or food with other children" were added to measure building relationships. Finally, self-concept, which refers to a person's beliefs and attitudes about themself, is also an essential component of SEL programs (Cho & Lee, 2017; Herrera et al., 2020; Verschueren, 2020) included in the PATHS- IC program. It promotes self-esteem and positive self-regard. Therefore, questions "This child accepts not being first at a game or activity", "This child likes to try new things", and "This child apologises to others when he/she makes a mistake" were added to measure self-concept. Table 3.3 shows the questions that were changed from the original *Teacher's Rating Scale for Child Behaviour* (TRSCB) scale (Harter, 2012) as well as those that were omitted and retained.

Table 3.2

Assessment Questionnaire Items

Measure	Question retained from (TRSCB) scale	Question added.
Self-concept	This child is really good at his/her schoolwork	This child likes to try new things.
		This child accepts not being first at game or activity.
Building relationships	This child finds it hard to make friends.	This child is a good friend to others.
	This child has social skills to make friends.	This child shares toys or food with other children.
	This child knows how to become popular.	This child helps his/her friends in the class.
Self-Control	This child is usually well-behaved	This child thinks carefully before acting.
	This child usually acts appropriately.	This child can Control his/her anger.
	This child often gets in trouble because of things (s)he does.	
Problem-solving	This child often forgets what (s)he learns.	This child apologises to others when he/she makes a mistake.
	This child has trouble figuring out the answers in school.	This child is able to think through a problem to find a solution.
Emotional understanding		This child is able to talk about her or his feelings.
		The child is able to identify the feelings of others.

The response scale of the TRS-CAB (Harter, 2012) used in this study was modified from the 2-point "Not True" / "Really True" scale to a 6-point Likert rating scale because the original scale had only two possible responses as shown in Table 3.4. By changing it to a 6-point Likert scale, a greater range of responses was able to be captured, which led to more nuanced and detailed data, particularly for pre- and post-intervention comparisons. Additionally, the use of a 6-point Likert scale, that ranged from "very strongly disagree" to "very strongly agree", reduced the likelihood of response bias, as assessors were guided in

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making a choice along a continuum, rather than a simple, two-choice dichotomy (Krosnick, 2018; Leung, 2011).

The reason for not including a neutral or central point in the Likert scale was to avoid participants selecting the neutral option as a default or easy choice, rather than thoughtfully considering and selecting a response that accurately reflects their attitude or opinion (Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011; Krosnick, 2018). Providing respondents with no neutral option forces them to reflect on their true position on the issue, which can lead to better and more accurate data (Dykema et al., 2020). Also, sometimes neutral points are ambiguous, and it is unclear what level of agreement or disagreement they represent. Thus, the decision was made to not include a neutral option to encourage participants to provide thoughtful and accurate responses.

Table 3.3

TRS- CAB Measure Items

1-	This child is really good at his/her school work
2-	This child finds it hard to make friends
3-	This child is a good friend to others
4-	This child is usually well- behaved
5-	This child often forgets what (s)he learns
6-	This child has social skills to make friends
7-	This child usually acts appropriately
8-	This child has trouble figuring out the answers in school
9-	This child knows how to become popular
10-	This child often gets in trouble because of things (s)he does
11-	This child thinks carefully before acting
12-	This child can Control his/her anger
13-	This child able to talk about her or his feelings
14-	The child able to identify the feelings of others
15-	This child able to think through a problem to find a solution
16-	This child helps her or his friends in the class
17-	This child shared toys or food with other children
18-	This child accepts not being first at game or activity
19-	This child likes to try new things
20-	This child apologizes to others when he/she makes a mistake

3.6.7   Assessment Questionnaire Translation

As Arabic was the primary language of the participants, the researcher translated the

BASC-3 BESS and TRS-CAB questionnaires from English to Arabic. To ensure the accuracy

of the translation, the researcher enlisted the assistance of a PhD student at Flinders

University. Both the researcher and the PhD student are bilingual in Arabic and English. The

researcher was also aided by two educators in the relevant field, who were proficient in both

Arabic and English, in reviewing the Arabic form of the questionnaire. They compared it

with the English version and scrutinised each item for clarity, with no significant differences

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being found between the two versions. This was done to ensure that the meaning of the scales in the questionnaire was conveyed accurately.

Furthermore, to confirm that the intended meaning of the content was not lost in translation, the final draft of the Arabic version was back translated by Watad Translation (https://www.watadtranslation.com/), which is a certified Saudi translation service accredited by the Australian National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (https://www.naati.com.au/).

Back translation, as suggested by Brislin (1970) and Chapman and Carter (1979), encompasses the translation from the target language (English) back to the source language (Arabic) to assess the equivalence of both versions. It is vital that the back translator possesses a comprehensive understanding of both languages and familiarity with the subject matter under investigation, as emphasised by (Bracken & Barona, 1991).

In this instance, Watad was chosen to do a back translation to ensure that the translation was accurate. The outcome of the back translation conducted by Watad Translation confirmed that the translation of the BASC-3 and TRS-CAB questionnaires from English to Arabic was accurate and effectively conveyed the intended meaning of the content.

3.7   Data Translation

The interviews for this research were conducted in Arabic, following which they were faithfully transcribed and translated into English by the researcher to enable analysis in the English language. The PATHS- IC program, initially in English, was also translated into Arabic to align with the primary language of the participants, ensuring cultural and linguistic appropriateness for the study's context.

The translation process was approached with careful consideration. Three key factors were taken into account: the selection of a competent translator, cultural sensitivity, and the

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utilization of back translation, as recommended by Chen and Boore (2010). A bilingual PhD student at Flinders University, proficient in both Arabic and English, was recruited to ensure precision in translation. Additionally, the Arabic interviews were reviewed by two academics proficient in Arabic and English. A meticulous comparison was made between the Arabic and English versions to ensure clarity and consistency in meaning. Through this process, no major differences were identified.

To further ensure translation accuracy, a back-translation of the final Arabic version was conducted by WATAD Translation. This process required translating the English version back into Arabic. The bilingual proficiency of the translator, along with their familiarity with the subject matter, contributed significantly to the accurate representation of the participants' responses.

3.8   Pre- and Post-Intervention Observations

3.8.1   Pre-Intervention Classroom Observations

Prior to the intervention unstructured observations of the classrooms of preschool students were conducted. Observations were mainly of classroom routines, teacher performance, teacher-student rapport, teaching styles, and general classroom management. Observations were conducted for six days before and six days after the intervention in each class during which time the researcher observed classroom activities, took field notes and identified various practices, orientations, and strategies that teachers used with the children. Observations were made from 8:00 am. until the end of the day's session at 11:00 am. The total amount of observation comprised approximately 72 hours. A field note was taken for each child to ensure that the questions in the questionnaire were carefully considered and all relevant observations were accurately documented. Both the RA and the researcher occasionally conducted observations together; however, they more frequently carried them

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out separately. The RA and researcher averaged the observations to give a clearer picture of the student's behaviour. The scoring method was not altered; the results were simply combined without trying to agree on them.

On each day, 1.5 hours were devoted to observing each class, which meant 1.5 hours observing Experimental Group class 1, 1.5 hours in Experimental Group Class 2, 1.5 hours in Control Group class1 and 1.5 hours in Control Group class 2. As an example, on Day 1, observations were made at Preschool 1. The Experimental Group class 1 was observed for an hour and a half and the Control Group class1 for an hour and a half. The following day, observations were made at Preschool 2, wherein the Experimental Group class 2 and the Control Group class 2 were each observed for an hour and a half.

In each classroom, the researcher was positioned in a place where both the teachers and the students could be observed. The researcher did not involve herself in the classroom lessons, and she did not interact or talk with children or provide them with instructions. Observations were recorded by hand in a folder, while simultaneously voice-recording what was observed in the classroom using an audio recorder. Recordings were then transcribed afterwards. Observations were then combined to produce a more comprehensive and representative record. Photographs of the classrooms and materials, which helped describe the materials in the notes were taken. However, photographing the teachers' or the children's faces, or anything about them that was identifiable, was avoided in order to preserve confidentiality in line with ethical considerations.

3.8.1.1 Framework for Classroom Observations

In order to guide the observations and minimise observer bias, a systematic framework was employed. The observational process followed the protocol set forth in Dyer's (1995) Non-Participant Observation: A Checklist of Design Tasks, ensuring a

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comprehensive approach to data collection. This framework was crucial in structuring the observations and provided clarity on the behaviours to be observed, the observational system, and the observational process. Specifically, this framework included:

3.8.1.1.1 Observational System

A data collection sheet was developed, focusing on the following categories of behaviour observed among the children:

Externalising behaviours: such as aggressive actions, and self-regulation.

Internalising behaviours: including anxiety, and sadness.

Adaptive behaviour: students' ability to adapt to classroom routines and expectations.

Attention behaviours: focusing on how students maintained or lost attention during classroom activities.

Poor scholastic conduct: such as disinterest in academic activities, failure to follow instructions, or non-compliance with schoolwork.

Social competence: including how well children interacted with their peers and teachers in a positive, respectful, and cooperative manner.

Behavioural conduct: general behaviour that indicated compliance with classroom rules, respectful behaviour toward teachers.

3.8.1.1.2 Observational Process

The observations were conducted in appropriate locations (the classrooms), with data sampling decisions made to ensure a balanced and representative collection of information. Both experimental and control groups were observed using non-participatory

methods to avoid influencing the classroom dynamics. The use of audio recording and field notes allowed for thorough documentation and subsequent transcription, with any potential observer bias minimised by adhering to the established observation categories.

3.8.1.1.3 Observation Protocol

In addition to the Dyer (1995) checklist, the specific data collection sheet developed for this study incorporated behaviours that were key to the investigation of emotional and social development, including externalising and internalising behaviours, as well as the following:

Adaptive behaviour: Are students adjusting to classroom rules and routines smoothly?

Attention behaviours: Are students able to focus during activities, or are they easily distracted?

Poor scholastic conduct: How frequently do students show disinterest or fail to comply with academic tasks?

Social competence: How well do students interact and collaborate with their peers and teachers?

Behavioural conduct: Are students following classroom rules, demonstrating self-control, and behaving respectfully?

3.9   Pre- and Post-Intervention Assessment of Participants

The questions were conducted in Arabic, and for more details, please see Appendix D. Additionally, a pre-and post-test was conducted for both the Experimental Group, which received the PATHS- IC program, and the Control Group, which received no SEL program, within one week prior and within a week after the intervention. The researcher and research assistant filled out the behaviour rating scale for each of the children pre- and post-

intervention using the Assessment Questionnaires, specifically the BASC-3 BESS measure (Reynolds et al., 2015) and the TRS-CAB measure (Harter, 2012).

The research assistant was asked to select the responses that described how often the child had recently, within the past few weeks, behaved in a particular way according to the categories in both scales. Following the completion of the pre-observation, the researcher and research assistant administered the pre-test. On completion of the intervention program, the researcher and research assistant conducted a post-observation of the children in the classroom, and the following week, they immediately administered the post-test. During the post-test, the research assistant was asked to select the responses that described how often the child had behaved in a particular way according to the categories in both scales. The research assistant was requested to respond to all items on the form to ensure her recordings were not invalidated by missing data.

During the three-month period of this study from 1st Sep to 27th Nov 2022, in each of the pre-and post-tests, the researcher and the researcher assistant spent approximately 15-20 minutes completing the scales for each child. The BASC-3 questionnaires required a total of six hours to complete for each class by each assessor, with the process taking three days to complete for each class. Additionally, post-tests were completed within a week following the implementation of the intervention, with each class requiring a total of six hours and nearly one week to complete the tests at the preschool. The researcher and researcher assistant completed the questionnaire using the Qualtrics software link. A link to the Arabic version of the questionnaire was electronically sent to the research assistant by the researcher via WhatsApp, which was the method she preferred. Figure 3.2 illustrates this entire data collection process.

To minimise potential bias, rigorous protocols were adhered to during the research process. The research assistant, responsible for assessing the children's behaviour, was

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unaware of the specific group assignment (Experimental or Control) of each class, thereby maintaining blinding procedures. This delicate task of group stewardship was exclusively known to the researcher, who was also an integral part of the assessment process. In this process, it was vital that the research assistant, while carrying out her role in behaviour assessment, was kept unaware of which class constituted the Experimental Group and which represented the Control Group. This lack of knowledge served to ensure her impartiality throughout the evaluation process, thus largely eliminating any assessment bias linked to group allocation knowledge. This blinding procedure aimed to reduce the risk of bias in the assessment of children's behaviour and to enhance the validity of the study results. Only the researcher knew which class was in the Experimental Group and which class was in the Control Group. Both classes were taught for the same duration, with one group receiving instruction in PATHS- IC and the Control Group receiving non-SEL teaching and materials.

3.10   Data Analysis

3.10.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected were analysed using a qualitative thematic framework (Goldsmith, 2021; Nowell et al., 2017) to explore teacher and parent perceptions about SEL. A thematic analysis provides a useful method for investigating participants' perspectives, as well as for guiding researchers in managing data and generating rich and clear results (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). In the context of this research, the responses were scrutinised through the lens of a thematic network. This approach allowed for an authentic and credible representation and utilisation of the participants' views, thereby maintaining the genuineness of the study (Nowell et al., 2017). Nvivo 12 Pro, a program designed to assist qualitative data analysis, was used to load all the transcriptions of the data. This allowed for organising and managing the large volume of interview data efficiently. In Nvivo, a

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systematic approach was utilized to analyse and code the interviews, identifying patterns and themes that emerged from the data.

In order to ensure the accuracy of this qualitative research study, the researcher carefully read and reviewed the transcripts multiple times. As defined by Patton et al. (2002), Creswell and Miller (2000), and Altheide and Johnson (1994), qualitative analysis involves revisiting the data to verify the accuracy of constructs, categories, explanations, and interpretations. Through the process of coding, a reflexive and iterative analysis of the interview transcripts was engaged. Consequently, a better understanding of the participants' perspectives on SEL was gained. As the coding process progressed, the data-identified themes that emerged were reviewed and related codes were grouped together into broader themes. These themes represented recurring patterns and topics that were discussed across multiple interviews. Through this thematic analysis, a deeper level of interpretation and exploration of the complexities of the data was attained. The main aim of this part of the study was to guide the design of a culturally appropriate SEL program in KSA. Understandings and perspectives obtained through the interviewing process were used to bridge the cultural context and SEL gaps arising from the difference in culture between KSA and the Western approaches to teaching SEL (see Chapter 4).

3.10.2 Evaluation of PATHS- IC Effectiveness

Several steps were undertaken using SPSS to analyse the data. In the first round, average scores for all the questions were calculated for both the Researcher and the RA. A series of t-tests were used to analyse pre-test data from the experimental and Control Groups. Both Experimental and Control Groups were then examined separately for changes post-intervention. For the Experimental Group, a paired t-test was conducted on the changes in the group from pre- to post-intervention and how they changed after the intervention. Similarly, a paired t-test was employed for the Control Group to determine their changes from pre- to

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post-intervention. Moreover, the post-intervention scores were compared between the experimental and Control Groups to determine the difference.

In the second round of analysis, factor scores such as internalising behaviours, attention behaviours, externalising behaviours, adaptive behaviours, scholastic conduct, social competence, and behavioural conduct were calculated. To obtain a pre-score for each factor, the variables within that factor were summed. Similarly, a post-score was obtained by summing the variables within each factor. The pre- and post-scores for the factors were analysed using t-tests. In addition to these analyses, Hedge's g was employed as a measure of effect size.

Hedge's g represents the difference in means between two groups, divided by the pooled standard deviation, thereby allowing for an estimate of effect size (Hedges, 1981). It can exceed 1, indicating that the difference in means is greater than one standard deviation. This measure provides an understanding of the effect size and is particularly useful in elucidating the magnitude of differences observed between the groups (Hedges, 1981).

Considering the multiple statistical tests conducted, the Bonferroni correction was introduced to address the issue that arises as the number of tests increases specifically, the higher the likelihood of making a type I error. A type I error involves incorrectly concluding that a significant difference exists when, in reality, there is none. For instance, if a null hypothesis (Ho) is true and a significance level of $p \leq 0.05$ is applied to all tests, there is a one in 20 chance of observing a significant difference by random chance (Armstrong, 2014). Named after the Italian statistician Carlo Bonferroni (1892–1960), the Bonferroni correction is a commonly used procedure to adjust probability (p) values in the context of multiple statistical tests. It is applied to mitigate "experiment-wise" error rates associated with conducting numerous independent tests using basic statistical methods like "t-tests" or Pearson's correlation coefficient ("r"). In experiment-wise error correction, all the conducted

tests are taken into account to ensure a more reliable interpretation of the overall findings (Armstrong, 2014).

It is important to highlight that through the data analysis process for this assessment, there were no missing data. The researcher and RA took meticulous care to record and account for all data pertaining to the children. The reliability of the scales in the Assessment Questionnaire was also determined using Cronbach's alpha, with values ≥ 0.70 suggesting that a factor is reliable (Bland & Altman, 1997).

3.11   Study Rigor

3.11.1 Qualitative Data Inter-Rater Reliability

A meticulous approach was taken to ensure the inter-rater reliability of the qualitative data coding process. By coding the interviews consistently, the study's findings were enhanced in credibility and trustworthiness. The process involved collaboration between the researcher and her supervisors. After independently coding a subset of interviews, the researcher and supervisors convened to review and compare their respective coding decisions. This collaborative review found that the coding decisions made by both the researcher and her supervisors were entirely consistent and agreeable. This agreement confirmed the dependability of the coding process and the thoroughness and accuracy of the interview coding process used in this study.

3.11.2 Inter-Rater Reliability of Subjective Assessments

The assessment scales involved subjective assessments based on observations made by both the researcher and the RA. Therefore, an inter-rater reliability assessment was conducted to determine the consistency and reliability of the pre-and post-assessments of students across the domains included in the Assessment Questionnaire. The researcher and RA independently assessed children's behaviour based on specific criteria in the Assessment

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Questionnaire related to their behaviour. To determine the inter-rater reliability of the two assessors, 30 students were randomly selected from the assessment database and the assessments made by the researcher and RA were compared to see how well they matched. (see Chapter 6).

3.11.3 Cronbach's Alpha (α)

Cronbach's Alpha (α) was employed to assess the reliability of each scale and sub-scale. All scales demonstrated high reliability, with Cronbach Alpha values exceeding 0.70. However, one item on the TRS-CAB scale, "This child often gets in trouble because of things (s)he does," presented ambiguity to the assessor. Although it was categorised under "behavioural conduct" within the TRS-CAB Scale, it primarily reflected "externalising behaviour." Consequently, its removal from subsequent analyses ensured the scale's reliability. As a result, the Behavioural Conduct scale comprised nine, instead of ten, items.

3.11.4 Member-Checking

A member-checking technique (Creswell, 2013) was used as transcripts were returned to the participants, to ensure the accuracy of understanding and to clarify any misunderstandings. This technique entailed returning the data to the participating individuals for review and verification and also provided an opportunity to clarify any potential misconceptions or misinterpretations. All participants willingly agreed to participate in this process and confirmed the accuracy of the presented data. By integrating member checking, the research ensured that the data's trustworthiness and dependability were fortified.

3.11.5 Qualitative Researcher Reflexivity

Reflexivity, as a concept, is integral to qualitative research as it involves the researcher's self-understanding of their values, biases, and experiences that could influence the research process (Dodgson, 2019; Palaganas et al., 2017). In qualitative research,

reflexivity is regarded as a necessary and ongoing process throughout the investigation (Creswell & Race, 1999; Franz et al., 2002; Probst, 2015) that is not limited to a specific time or section but is practised from formulating the research question to drawing conclusions (Berger, 2015). The researcher is required to explicitly state their position and engagement with reflexivity (Ide & Beddoe, 2023).

During the data collection phase, my prior knowledge of the research context provided valuable insights into participants' perspectives, enabling meaningful questioning and understanding of nonverbal cues. As a researcher, it was noteworthy that I followed the same religious affiliation as the participants, which was Islam. This common religious background between myself and the participants facilitated a comfortable environment for open discussions. Being part of the same religious community as the participants created a sense of familiarity, understanding, and trust. Participants felt more at ease knowing that I shared their Islamic faith, as they perceived a shared set of values, cultural norms, and religious practices.

Furthermore, my shared Islamic faith allowed me to have a nuanced understanding of the religious and cultural aspects that shaped participants' views on SEL. This understanding enabled me to approach the research process with sensitivity, respect, and cultural competency, ensuring that participants' perspectives were accurately captured and represented in the findings. However, it was essential to maintain a reflexive stance and be mindful of any potential biases that may have arisen due to the shared religious affiliation. As a researcher, I reflected on my positionality and strove to separate my personal beliefs from the data analysis and interpretation. This ensured that the findings remained objective and unbiased. While I made efforts to maintain objectivity, I recognise that qualitative research is inherently subjective. As a researcher, my interpretations and interactions with participants are shaped by our shared experiences, values, and perspectives. This co-construction of

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narratives between myself and the participants reflects the subjective nature of research, which is integral to understanding the complexities of SEL within the cultural context. Therefore, rather than seeking complete objectivity, I aimed to embrace and reflect on this subjectivity throughout the research process, ensuring transparency and depth in the findings. In my study, I enhanced reflexivity by reflecting on each interview, adding layers of co-constructed experience, and enriching my understanding of mothers' and teachers' perspectives on SEL. I considered their input, feedback, and nonverbal cues, recognising the significance of their perspectives in shaping the overall understanding of SEL. In this case, being an insider with knowledge of the local religion and culture proved advantageous.

I made an effort in my study to enhance reflexivity by reflecting on each interview and considering any biases that may have influenced my interpretation of the data. While I do acknowledge the importance of SEL, I took precautions to avoid allowing my personal beliefs to bias my findings. Throughout the research process, I was aware of my familiarity with the significance of SEL and its positive impact. To mitigate potential bias, I approached the data analysis with an open mind, striving to remain objective and allowing the perspectives of the participants to shape my understanding. I carefully considered their input, feedback, and nonverbal cues, recognising the value of their insights in shaping the overall understanding of SEL. Moreover, the use of a shared language between myself and the participants reduced language barriers, eliminating the need for a data transcriber or translation of responses. This allowed for a more nuanced understanding of participants' chosen words and enhanced accuracy in data collection. Additionally, being an insider made me sensitive to KSA cultural issues related to ethnicity, politics, gender, and social and cultural matters that an outsider may not have been aware of. The utility of this sensitivity was crucial in circumventing situations that might otherwise hinder data gathering, as mentioned by Bonner and Tolhurst (2002).

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3.11.6 *Quantitative Researcher Reflexivity*

As a researcher from a teaching background, I recognised the importance of adopting an objective viewpoint when studying the attitudes and behaviours of other practitioners in student education. This approach was suggested by Greene (2014) and required careful management of bias, along with strict avoidance of preconceived ideas or assumptions about my colleagues in the field of education. Positionality, as discussed by Jacobson and Mustafa (2019), provided significant advantages in terms of my knowledge base, nuanced perspective on teaching, and professional alignment with other educators. However, the risk of compromised researcher objectivity, highlighted by Afdal (2019), presented a potential disadvantage. Accordingly, frequent monitoring and personal reflection on my study methods, along with self-reflexive praxis as described by Holmes (2020), assisted me in maintaining objectivity. Self-reflexive praxis encouraged critical reflection on my assumptions and biases, leading to a more balanced and objective analysis of my research findings. While I engaged in critical reflection throughout the research process to minimise bias and maintain objectivity, I recognise that complete objectivity is not entirely achievable in research. As Yoon and Uliassi (2022) suggest, critical reflection can help researchers become more aware of their positionality, but the inherent subjectivity in research means that some level of bias is inevitable. Thus, my goal was to reduce bias as much as possible by using methods such as triangulation of data, participant feedback, and careful interpretation of results. Rather than claiming absolute objectivity, I embraced the complexities of my positionality to offer a nuanced and culturally informed analysis of SEL instruction. Managing bias in the methodology, as suggested by Elliott (1988), involved incorporating participant feedback, careful interpretation and evaluation of data, and triangulation of data. Understanding the complexities of my layered identity in relation to the study's topic and its participants, as emphasised by Yoon and Uliassi (2022), was crucial.

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In addition, I acknowledged the privilege of being given access to observe teachers, students, and real-time classroom activities. Thus, I had an obligation not only to maintain the highest standards of ethical and unbiased research but also to show courtesy, sensitivity, and respect to my peers and the organisations involved. Moreover, I recognised and understood the unique culture and values of the education communities under study, conducting observations and appraisals fairly and impartially. Therefore, where I silently challenged current approaches to teaching and proposed improved methods, this was done with the knowledge and support of evidence-based, highly effective teaching strategies aimed at achieving best-practice learning outcomes for students. Consequently, I considered it important that my research offer an unbiased perspective, present compelling arguments for enhancing culturally appropriate SEL instruction, and leverage my personal positionality and expertise in this field to maximise the research's quality and value.

Chapter 4: Qualitative Findings and Discussion (Phase One)

From the interviews conducted, valuable insights about SEL provided by preschool teachers and the mothers of preschool children were gained regarding the design of the PATHS- IC program. Both teachers and parents provided useful suggestions about the program's structure, predominantly focusing on the topic content and duration. These recommendations offered a more comprehensive understanding of how to effectively shape the program to meet the preschoolers' needs and expectations, thus fostering success and relevance to SEL in the preschool context. This chapter highlights the results generated from the thematic analysis of interviews, which were similar between teachers and mothers. These themes emerged as recurring topics and ideas that both groups discussed, indicating a convergence of perspectives between them.

4.1   Participants

Sixteen semi-structured interviews were conducted online from August to October 2021, involving eight female preschool teachers and eight mothers of preschoolers. The teachers' years of experience ranged from 4 to 30 years, as shown in Table 4.1. It should be noted that two of these teachers, who participated in the interviews, were part of the same preschool where the PATHS- IC program was implemented. Additionally, the mothers participating in the study had varying family sizes, with the number of children ranging from 2 to 5, as indicated by the Mother Code and Number of Children.

Table 4.1 provides an overview of the participants' designation in the study. To ensure confidentiality, teachers were assigned labels T1-T8, and mothers were given labels M1-M8 throughout the study. Additionally, to further protect their identities, the actual names of teachers were replaced with pseudonyms during data analysis and reporting.

Table 4.1

Participant details

Teacher Pseudonym (Code)	Years of Teaching Experience
Fawzah (T1)	5
Khloud (T2)	5
Maha (T3)	30
Atheer (T4)	7
Reem (T5)	14
Amal (T6)	30
Fajr (T7)	16
Ghada (T8)	4
Mother Pseudonym (Code)	**Number of children**
Eidah (M1)	5
Fawziyah (M2)	4
Fayzah(M3)	3
Anfal (M4)	2
Hadil (M5)	3
Amira (M6)	3
Bashayer (M7)	3
Hala (M8)	4

Participants reported feeling comfortable and eager to share their perspectives. Interviews were undertaken with all volunteers, although a saturation point, wherein no new information was discovered (Saunders et al., 2018) was noted by the last two interviews with each group. The responses from the participants indicated that the information obtained from these interviews was comprehensive. The teachers' and mothers' responses were distilled into several key themes that encapsulate their perspectives and insights into SEL and its relevance to their instructional approaches, as illustrated in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1

Emergent Themes from Interviews with Teachers and Mothers
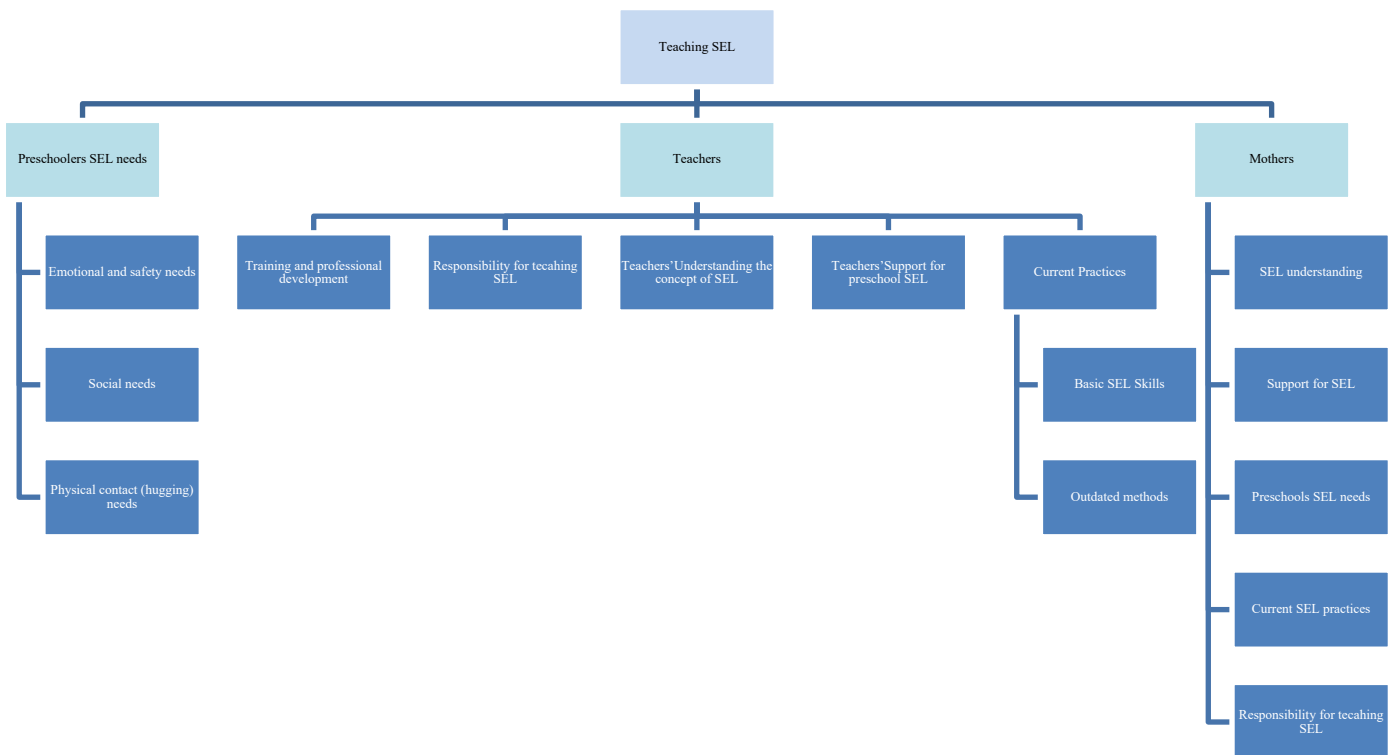
4.2 Teachers' Views on SEL

Many of the teachers involved in this interview series exhibited a rudimentary and somewhat limited grasp of SEL, despite their enthusiastic endorsement of SEL integration in their classrooms. Despite some variations, a notable consensus emerged in their responses. Their feedback consistently conveyed a positive outlook on SEL and underscored their strong convictions regarding its significance in preschool education programs.

4.2.1 Teachers' Understanding of the Concept of SEL

The importance of teachers' awareness and understanding of SEL, directly impacts their ability to promote holistic child development (Soutter, 2023). Participants generally acknowledged that they had a role to play in developing children's SEL skills, but their

understanding of this role was narrow. They recognised their role in nurturing teacher-student relationships and extending this to involve parents. As one participant, Fawzah noted:

> *The teacher plays a pivotal role because the child spends a significant amount of time in kindergarten, and the teacher serves as the primary foundation for the child's education. (T1)*

Similarly, another teacher, Maha, emphasised,

> *Because the teacher is only a guide, the biggest cooperation must be from the parents. (T3)*

Other teachers articulated SEL as

> *forming relationships with friends, looking after their belongings, preserving them, and ensuring the child feels loved. (T3)*

> *I believe being a teacher is about fostering strong relationships with my students, being an influential aspect of their educational journey. The parents also play an essential role, for a child's development extends far beyond the classroom. (T8)*

Another insight from Ghada reflected her understanding of SEL:

> *For me, SEL involves nurturing not only academic capacities but also their social and emotional abilities, it is about teaching the child to build relationships, to care for themselves and their belongings, and to make sure that each child feels secure and loved in my class. (T8)*

While participants generally acknowledged SEL, their responses often lacked depth when asked to elaborate on the concept. For instance, Fawzah described addressing students' social needs as

building relationships and not being introverted (T1),

while tending to their emotional needs meant

emotionally connecting with parents at home and noting the amount and

quality of attention that the child receives from their parents at home. (T1)

Participants' comments demonstrated that they recognised the importance of the home environment in shaping their students' relationships, safety, and emotional wellbeing, all of which play a pivotal role in their SEL within the classroom and school setting. Teachers' understanding further revolved around concepts like "safety," "containment," "attention," and "love from parents", with an emphasis on connecting emotionally with parents at home, as these statements show:

Emotionally connect with parents at home and pay attention. (T1)

Safety, containment, attention, and love from parents. Talking about anything

that annoys the child means expressing their feelings. (T5)

However, deficiencies in their knowledge of SEL were evident in the descriptions offered by teachers regarding the social needs of preschool children. One teacher, Amal, for instance, defined these needs as

containment, safety, cuddling, expressing love (T6),

while others mentioned social needs as

family bonding, establishing relationships with others, making friends, and

avoiding family conflicts (T4),

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collaborating and forming relationships with each other. (T7)

building relationships, making friends, playing, sharing, family bonding,

effective interaction with others, and educating the child about stranger safety.

(T5)

Furthermore, teachers' responses demonstrated a limited grasp of emotional needs, primarily centred on expressions of affection and safety, as evidenced by statements such as,

Safety, suffusion of parental and sibling love, and the expression of feelings in

all circumstances. (T4)

I express love to my students and hug them to make them feel important to me.

(T7)

When describing their approach to SEL, the teachers often fell short of demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the subject and the methods for teaching it. For instance, Maha mentioned,

Sometimes if I was teaching, I would shut up and stare at them, so they

understood that they did something wrong and kept quiet. (T3)

It was apparent that these educators had a restricted understanding of the intricate and multifaceted nature of children's SEL needs. SEL encompasses a much broader and more intricate process than the one portrayed by the teachers. The teachers predominantly emphasised fundamental emotional and social elements like safety, affection, and relationships, overlooking the broader dimensions of SEL. SEL involves nurturing a child's acquisition and application of a comprehensive set of skills encompassing social, emotional, behavioural, and character development (Haymovitz et al., 2018). This lack of a deeper understanding of SEL and how to effectively teach it highlighted a significant gap in the preschool teachers' knowledge regarding how to advance students' comprehension of SEL

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from its basic principles to a more advanced level. Although the teachers recognised the importance of SEL, it was evident that their foundational knowledge required further development and support to help them grasp the concept more comprehensively and incorporate it effectively into their classroom practices.

Responses provided by the teachers about SEL showed a lack of process flow towards nurturing the building of social-emotional needs and skills in the child - skills that enable children to understand their emotions and engage effectively in problem-solving, conflict resolution, and persevering through challenges (Alzahrani et al., 2019). Studies by Oberle and Schonert-Reichl (2017) have indicated that SEL enhances both academic performance and fosters prosocial behaviour, including kindness, sharing, and empathy. Furthermore, it positively impacts students' attitudes toward school while also mitigating depression and stress levels among them (Durlak et al., 2011).

Most of the teachers' responses indicated that they believed SEL primarily takes place within isolated incidents involving individual students rather than being integrated into everyday classroom instruction. Maha explained,

It does not exist explicitly and sufficiently, but we have a lesson about companions and promoting the concept of friendship in children. I honestly hope it will be developed and updated. (T3)

The participants' limited comprehension of SEL could impede their ability to promote and support holistic child development effectively. Jeon et al. (2019) highlighted the substantial influence of early learning experiences on children's long-term competencies. Therefore, the actions taken by teachers to nurture children's social and emotional development carry significant weight. From an extended attachment perspective, sensitive

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teachers can serve as a stable foundation, empowering children to confidently navigate the school environment and actively engage in their learning experiences (Roorda et al., 2011).

4.2.2 Teachers' Support for Preschool SEL

Participants were unanimous in their view that teaching SEL to preschool children is crucial. Teachers' enthusiastic support for SEL instruction illustrates their commitment to fostering social and emotional development among students. This theme delves into their perspectives and highlights their recognition of the developmental stage of preschoolers, emphasising the significance of introducing SEL to help children effectively communicate and express their emotions. All participants shared a consensus regarding the importance of teaching SEL to preschool children. Their responses supporting SEL in preschool resounded with enthusiasm, as evidenced by statements like:

Excellent and I encourage it (T1)

I consider it an important and essential thing to teach in class as some children express their feelings in a way that is not positive and could be understood as them externalising their feelings. (T3)

I am very strongly supportive of teaching children about their emotions. (T4)

Very good and important for knowing the personality of the child. (T5)

Furthermore, the teachers' responses consistently underscored their commitment to fostering social and emotional skills within students during class time, as apprehended by this statement:

This is the most important thing for me; I want children to have the ability to express their feelings to me with everything they feel. (T5)

It is clear from these endorsements that the teachers are committed to helping their students develop emotional and social competence.

Teachers' comments also demonstrated their awareness of the developmental stage of preschoolers, recognising that they are in the process of learning how to communicate and express their emotions and feelings effectively. This understanding accentuates the importance of introducing SEL to these young learners. According to Fawzah,

> *Some children have difficulty expressing their feelings, and I believe that the teaching of SEL would be useful in enhancing the ability of students to engage with and show their feelings. (T1)*

This acknowledgment of children's struggles with emotional expression highlights the teachers' commitment to addressing these challenges through SEL education, as Maha explained:

> *There are some children, if they are upset, they always hit others to unload what is inside them, and after I contact their mothers, I discover that they were upset about something or afraid of something and suffered from problems at home and they do not speak about it directly. I think it is important that the child must learn to express what is inside them without fear. (T3)*

Teachers were convinced that SEL could empower children with important skills for healthy psychological development.

Overall, teachers strongly endorsed incorporating SEL into preschool education. Their enthusiastic endorsements, coupled with their acute awareness of the developmental needs of preschoolers, demonstrated a strong commitment to nurturing emotional intelligence and social competence among young learners. Incorporating SEL into the preschool curriculum is strengthened by the teachers' recognition of its practical benefits. It provides a solid

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foundation for subsequent discussions and conclusions related to the role of SEL in early childhood education.

4.2.3 Preschoolers' SEL Needs

4.2.3.1 Emotional and Safety Needs of Preschoolers. Preschoolers, in their formative years, have a spectrum of emotional requirements essential for their wellbeing (Bierman et al., 2018). It is crucial for their social and emotional development to understand and address these needs. According to participants, many children experience familial neglect of their emotions and may struggle to express themselves, as the following teachers explained:

> *Many children have their feelings ignored by their families. There are some*
> *children who have difficulty expressing their feelings. (T1)*

> *Preschoolers may not receive adequate attention and containment due to their*
> *parents' hectic schedules, leading these children to seek more communication*
> *and crave additional quality time with their parents. (T5)*

This observation underscores the significance of addressing emotional needs early on in a child's development. Similarly, the significance of children understanding and expressing their feelings facilitates communication and shapes their relationships with peers, as one teacher, Reem, explained:

> *A child who does not express their feelings is considered very vague and*
> *difficult to communicate with. But a child who is aware of their feelings is*
> *easy to reach and understand. We will be able to understand the child's life;*
> *as well as if we teach the child about emotions and feelings, it will be*
> *important for them in forming their relationships with their friends. (T5)*

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This recognition emphasises the pivotal role that emotional awareness plays in a child's social development. Teachers discussed these needs from various perspectives, as illustrated by the following quotes:

The importance of preschoolers forming emotional connections with their parents and receiving affection and attention, fosters a sense of security and strengthens the parent-child bond. (T1)

Preschoolers need to experience love, care, and safety, along with the importance of feeling supported by others to nurture their sense of worth and overall emotional wellbeing. (T2)

The significance of fostering a sense of love and creating a safe space for preschoolers to openly express their emotions, including frustrations and upsets. (T3)

These insights demonstrate the multiple facets of emotional wellbeing in preschoolers and the importance of creating an environment that supports it. Children require attention, containment, and an avenue to articulate their feelings while receiving affection from their parents (Cooke et al., 2019). This aids in the formation of a robust emotional foundation and cultivates a sense of security and the role that emotional awareness plays in a child's social development.

Preschoolers can enhance their interpersonal skills by becoming more self-aware. Teachers consistently emphasise the significance of providing a nurturing environment that includes containment, safety, cuddling, and the expression of love and emotions, and where students are afforded opportunities to build their SEL skills. As Reem pointed out:

Not all children have the opportunity to engage in positive interactions with

their peers in the classroom, underscoring the importance of learning

appropriate behaviours. (T5)

Safety was often noted as an important aspect of positive emotional development, and comments similar to the following comment by Atheer were common:

Encouraging children's forgiveness, establishing a sense of safety, and

providing reassurance are all pivotal components of addressing their

emotional needs. (T4)

The importance of safety resonates with the fundamental principle of the CASEL core competency of self-management (Jean-Jacques, 2021). This competency revolves around the skill of effectively regulating one's sense of safety, consequently facilitating adept emotional management (CASEL, 2020g). The sense of feeling safe is associated with the student's level of connection to self and others and relates directly to their sense of belonging (Porter et al., 2021). However, participant responses suggested a basic understanding of it as an important requirement for preschoolers, both in the classroom and in the home. A full comprehension of the complexity of safety as it relates to an SEL classroom, for example, the features of the education setting including its culture and climate (Brackett et al., 2012), was not evident beyond the point of teachers mentioning that safety was important.

Teachers showed an awareness that the preschool classroom plays a vital role in nurturing a child's emotional wellbeing and cultivating a sense of security, as the following comments show:

By fostering an environment that prioritises love and affection, it also

reinforces a child's sense of belonging and significance. (T7)

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Preschoolers necessitate love, affection, and respect for themselves and others. (T8)

These positive emotional connections and experiences are instrumental in fostering children's self-esteem and enabling them to build healthy relationships with others (Alzahrani et al., 2019). As teachers, participants acknowledged the crucial role of SEL in nurturing emotional resilience and fostering a secure environment, and their endorsement of its implementation underscored the alignment between their insights and established SEL principles. In the SEL classroom, both physical safety and emotional safety are key objectives that are accomplished by allowing the child to make mistakes and take risks in learning without feeling a sense of failure, being belittled or suffering humiliation (Hirsh, 2004). In their study, Davis and Warner (2018) specifically highlighted the significant impact of feelings of safety within the school environment as a pivotal dimension of climate influencing academic achievement.

Creating positive learning environments motivates students and ensures their psychological and physical wellbeing (Martinsone et al., 2023). Such environments foster strong connections among students, teachers, and the school community, encouraging the adoption of prosocial and pro-academic behaviours advocated by these influential figures and settings (Asiyai, 2014). Consequently, students in such settings exhibit improved academic performance and attendance and significantly reduced emotional distress, violence, delinquency, substance abuse, and sexual activity (Johnston et al., 2019). Furthermore, in a SEL classroom, a child's worth will not be measured against their peers nor will they be intimidated or marginalised in a competitive environment, which contributes to their sense of safety (Roffey, 2017). Hassan et al. (2017) mentioned that children must experience a sense of belonging and social significance within the classroom alongside their peers.

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Research has confirmed that learning is a social process (Xie & Derakhshan, 2021). Throughout history, from the days of Plato and Socrates, scholars have devoted considerable attention to studying the interaction between educators and learners (Violanti et al., 2018). These connections, often described as vital and meaningful emotional and interpersonal bonds, can develop due to ongoing and enduring interactions between learners and their educators (Longobardi et al., 2016; Wang & Guan, 2020). By recognising and addressing the students' emotional needs, teachers can promote the emotional wellbeing and positive relationships of preschoolers (Fitzgerald et al., 2022). In conclusion, meeting the emotional needs of preschoolers is crucial for their overall wellbeing and development (Hernandez, 2010). Teachers play a vital role in creating a nurturing environment that emphasises emotional connection, love, care, safety, and the expression of feelings (Zheng, 2022).

4.2.3.2 Social Needs of Preschoolers. While teachers' perspectives on the social needs of preschool children varied, a common theme emerged from their insights. With regard to the social needs of preschoolers, most teachers emphasised the importance of fostering stable relationship bonds and encouraging collaboration among students, their family members, and their peers. The following quotes reveal how teachers felt the social needs of preschoolers could be addressed: Fawzah stressed the significance of:

Building relationships and making friendships. (T1)

while Khloud highlighted the importance of

Communicating with others, being confident, and forming relationships. (T2)

Maha further expanded on this theme, emphasising that children should:

Form relationships with friends, take care of them, interact with society, and

practice self-awareness while accepting others and refraining from bullying.

(T3)

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Other teachers identified social needs as

Family bonding, forming relationships with others, having friends, and

avoiding family problems. (T4)

The value of building relationships, making friends, playing, sharing, family

bonding, and educating children about not talking to strangers. (T5)

Dialogue, discussion, collaboration, and building relationships. (T6)

Collaborate and build relationships with each other. (T7)

Cooperation, participation, and awareness. (T8)

The research literature (Dobbins et al., 2023; Guo et al., 2018) supports the importance of the social needs of preschoolers in building relationships and social skills, which involve having communication processes in place, good social engagement with peers, and working together with others.

The Pro-social behaviour of children is associated with healthy relationship skills and socially adept students who are more likely to get along with others (Kusumaningrum, 2019; Mathews et al., 2013). The development of social-emotional skills helps preschool children feel more confident in building friendships, resolving conflicts, persisting when faced with challenges, coping with frustrations, and managing emotions (Moore et al., 2015). Children with deficient social skills experience loneliness, which, in turn, contributes to mental and behavioural issues, strained relationships with parents, teachers, and peers, and difficulties adapting to school (Lodder et al., 2016).

Participants acknowledged the importance of appropriate social behaviours and the skills that enable children to relate well with others, but it is essential to consider what

specific aspects or strategies may have been overlooked or that require further emphasis in addressing preschool children's social needs.

While teachers recognised the importance of children's social relationships, they lacked clear strategies for fostering these skills. This underscores the need for the development of practical strategies and tools for teachers in KSA. By offering teachers specific tools and techniques for promoting pro-social behaviours, conflict resolution, emotional regulation, and friendship building, we can enhance their ability to support children in developing strong social skills. Providing teachers with such strategies can ultimately contribute to creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment, where children feel empowered to build meaningful connections and navigate social interactions with confidence.

4.2.3.3 Physical Contact (Hugging) Needs of Preschoolers. The majority of teachers' responses indicated their appreciation for core SEL values, particularly emphasising the significance of fostering healthy interpersonal relationships among children, including physical interactions like "hugging." Fawzah, for example, asserted,

Hugging is an effective way to manage a child's feelings, whether positive or negative and also to show them love and support. (T1)

Likewise, Fajr emphasised,

I always discuss with the children, talk and hug them to show children how much I care about them and to help them feel safe. (T7)

Teachers regarded physical interaction, such as hugging, as a crucial form of emotional support to comfort and reassure their students, setting a positive tone before engaging in any discussions. As articulated by Fawzah,

When I hug and listen to them, their moods and behaviour improve in a

positive way (T1).

Hugging represents a form of social interaction that reinforces pro-social behaviour, fostering social relationships and awareness (Guo et al., 2018). Teachers that role-model social interaction by hugging reinforce the development of empathy and appreciation of others, which decreases the chances of the student having externalising behaviour (Cigala et al., 2015).

Enhancing social skills in this way can have a significant positive impact on children as well as the classroom environment and therefore can increase the ability of students to achieve and maintain healthy relationships later in life (Sancassiani et al., 2015). Moreover, Holt-Lunstad et al. (2008) indicated that nonsexual, caring, physical contact, such as hugging or hand-holding, can have emotional and physiological benefits, and is an important means of conveying empathy, caring, and reassurance, which can have a "buffering" effect on emotional tensions that children feel. Numerous research findings confirm that children who receive gentle displays of affection and gratitude, such as hugging, tend to exhibit elevated emotional intelligence and a positive outlook on life (Jin & Wang, 2019). Engaging in tactile sensory experiences during early childhood plays a crucial role in fostering healthier brain development in youngsters (Ardiel & Rankin, 2010)

Forsell and Åström (2012) pointed out that hugging serves as a potent means of communication that not only soothes children but also contributes to their emotional regulation. Participants' comments, for example, Fawzah, and Fajr who commented on "hugging" as a form of reassurance for children, suggested they were aware of how physical expression of emotion was helpful for the children's own sense of comfort and wellbeing, however, they were just focusing on comforting the children by hugging them rather than teaching them SEL. Infusing SEL while comforting children can provide them with a better

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handle on their emotions. It assists them in developing empathy and building strong relationships, which are critical life skills (Mondi et al., 2021). Hence, moving beyond the mere act of hugging to a more balanced mix of comfort and structured emotional learning should be seen as essential in nurturing a child's emotional wellbeing.

4.2.4 *Training and Professional Development Needs of Preschool Teachers*

Some teachers stated that they had not been provided with detailed information to help them understand the meaning of the concept of SEL and the SEL practices that are useful in the classroom. Statements indicated that although they had heard of the concept when they attended some workshops, teachers could not fully explain the SEL needs of preschoolers in detail. This was evident from their responses when asked where they had learned about the concept of SEL. As stated by Maha,

> *From life experiences and situations. I also like to read books, watch, and*
> *search for information about children. (T3)*

Similarly, Reem stated that

> *Through my experiences in dealing with children. Also, I read books, search,*
> *and watch videos. (T5)*

Other similar comments provided by participants suggested that teachers had gained their basic knowledge of SEL from personal development books, although some stated that they were made aware of SEL concepts from tertiary studies. For instance, Ghada stated that,

> *I heard about this concept through my undergraduate studies. (T8)*

Some teachers stated that there was insufficient incorporation of SEL in the current curriculum, commenting that:

Unfortunately, our curricula are not considered sufficient in terms of social,

and emotional development. There are no strategies to teach the child how to

manage and deal with their feelings, and the curriculum lacks such lessons.

(T7)

Fawzah aptly mentioned,

In addition to insufficient information, activities and lessons are insufficient

for the child's emotional and social development. The curriculum is outdated,

but the teacher has to play a role in updating activities for students. (T1)

From these interview responses, it can be seen that the teachers lacked the preservice or professional development support and training pertaining to teaching pedagogies and strategies that would further develop their understanding and utilisation of SEL. This is similar to a finding by Fixsen et al. (2010) over a decade ago, who argued at the time that providing support and training for early childhood educators could create opportunities for behavioural support leading to a combination of effective SEL interventions and implementation practices, which would result in positive experiences for classroom teachers and their students.

Oberle and Schonert-Reichl (2016) mentioned that the wellbeing of teachers and their ability to address the diverse needs of students can significantly impact teacher-student relationships. It is undeniable that the wellbeing of teachers is closely intertwined with the wellbeing of students. When teachers possess the capacity to comprehend their students' emotional expressions and respective evaluations, they are more likely to feel valued in their roles by their students. This, in turn, enables them to draw closer to their students' unique circumstances, gain a deeper understanding of their needs, and identify the most effective ways to assist students in overcoming their daily challenges, whether they are physical or

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psychological. Consequently, teachers evolve into dependable and highly effective sources of support for their students (Roffey, 2017). It became evident from the interviews that preschool teachers' pre-service education did not include SEL as a separate course or that they had been provided with specific course content that would have given them a firmer foundation in SEL theory and practice. Though none of the participants had received any formal pre-service training or education in SEL, most of them said that they had heard about this concept.

Recent research by Corcoran and O'Flaherty (2022) has demonstrated the importance of SEL training for pre-service teachers to enhance their future in-service classroom skills as well as their own social-emotional competence and psychological wellbeing as they enter a career in teaching. Indeed, the literature emphasises the necessity of incorporating SEL training into pre-service teacher education (Goegan et al., 2017; Weissblueth & Nissim, 2018). By implementing SEL practices effectively in the classroom, educators gain the knowledge and skills they need. SEL training enables teachers to gain a deeper understanding of the theoretical foundations of SEL, evidence-based practices, and strategies for creating a positive and inclusive classroom environment (Poulou, 2017). Furthermore, this training develops their ability to establish healthy relationships with students and effectively address their emotional and social needs (Frey et al., 2019; Matson, 2017a).

In the context of KSA, the need for comprehensive SEL training is particularly pronounced. With the recognition of the importance of social-emotional development in children's overall wellbeing and the growing emphasis on holistic education, integrating SEL training into the education of future educators in KSA can significantly contribute to improved student outcomes. The shared understanding in KSA society that teachers and parents play a collaborative role in a child's education means SEL training can help educators and parents bridge knowledge or understanding gaps (Alhashim, 2022). As a result of this

training, KSA teachers would be able to communicate and collaborate more effectively with parents, ultimately enhancing the implementation of consistent SEL strategies in the classroom and at home. By obtaining this training, teachers can develop healthy relationships with their students, support their growth in social and emotional areas, and address their social and emotional needs (Zheng, 2022).

4.2.5   Teachers' Current Practices for Teaching SEL

The teachers' responses demonstrated that some strategies and teaching approaches they used in classes aligned with SEL values; however, some other responses suggested that there was a misunderstanding in their approach towards teaching SEL in the class. For instance, teachers' responses to teaching strategies they used to overcome disruptive classroom behaviours deviated from core SEL approaches. These can be seen as methods that the teachers used as techniques developed within the school or through long-held traditions not connected with SEL. For example, teachers used contrived, imaginary narratives or false threats to distract children from misbehaviour patterns rather than employing positive interactions based on building the children's own self-regulation skills.

In relation to classroom management strategies, several teachers mentioned that they used a "trick" (a form of story creation) to distract the students when there was misbehaviour they wanted to curtail. They described how they would pretend to hear a voice outside the classroom and would go out to check. Amal described her version of this method:

> *I trick the children and go outside the classroom and say, just one moment, I*
> *heard something (I pretend that I heard a sound). Meanwhile, the children are*
> *all listening for the sound and wonder about its source and say, 'what is it,*
> *what is it?'. This method makes the children turn their attention to the source*
> *of this mystery voice and change their behaviour. (T6)*

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Teachers explained that this helped them to redirect children's attention to the lesson when they returned to the class. By that time, the children had forgotten whatever it was that caused them to misbehave, and the class returned to the teacher's Control. Maha explained that

> *I would leave the class of students if they were disruptive - a method I use to regain Control. Upon my leaving, the children would become upset and promise that they would be better behaved if I was to come back to the class. (T3)*

Other teachers reminded the children about classroom rules by using a "chant" if, for example, a child interrupted them while they were teaching. Then, if that child interrupted again whilst the teacher was teaching, she would use hand signals from the "chant" to remind all of the children that her lesson should not be interrupted and that it was not the right time to talk or to share anything. Reem described how she regained control of misbehaviour by distracting the child from whatever was causing the problem and if the child was nervous, she would give them something they loved to play with so that the child's negative energy could be dissipated, as indicated by her statement,

> *Make them play and build a corner of cubes and also make them draw. If you see that the child has returned to normal and the anger has disappeared, do not ask them, because they have returned to their normal state. And if the nervousness continues, I talk with them, and if they do not tell me anything, I call their mother and ask her about the reason for the anger of the child, and if there is something bothering them at home. As for the child, if they are happy, I am happy with them and ask them why they are happy and interact with them. (T5)*

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In a similar approach to managing classroom disorder, Atheer stated:

> *I use the method of keeping the child busy with something they are doing so that they forget the disruptive behaviour they are doing. Regarding the feelings of the child, if they are sad or anxious, I ask them, is there something that hurts you? Are you tired of something? I mean, ask them if they feel visible pain. Also, ask they do you need to sleep? Are you upset about something? And according to their response, I then take them to the toys they love, to enjoy, and if they do not respond to me, I call their mother and she comes and takes them. (T4)*

Descriptions of these methods of gaining control of disruptive classroom behaviour were interesting and unexpected results from the interviews, details of which the teachers shared willingly, even proudly, to illustrate their cleverness in overcoming the problem. However, while such "tricks" could work well in the short term and in a practical way, they may not address the underlying problem of why the child is interrupting or why there is misbehaviour in the classroom.

These actions could be described as traditional techniques, that teachers use instead of approaching the problem using SEL methods that focus on more effective approaches. Furthermore, using these "tricks" may cause children to feel abandoned or punished, rather than supported and reassured in a social and emotional manner. Therefore, unlike evidence based SEL practices, the methods being used by the teachers may not serve to resolve underlying causative factors of misbehaviour or contribute to the students' ongoing development of emotional and social skills and self-regulation of their emotions.

A further point these teacher narratives illustrated was that while they acknowledged the importance of SEL, they did not have concrete strategies to teach or use in the classroom.

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Another strategy used by teachers to manage disruptive children was hugging. As described by Fawzah,

> *Hugging can be an effective way for teachers to manage a child's feelings,*
>
> *whether they are positive or negative. Additionally, hugging can also serve as*
>
> *a means to show love and support to students. (T1)*

In her statement, Fawzah inadvertently echoed the findings of a study conducted by Jennings and Greenberg (2009). Fawzah stated that she regularly hugged her misbehaving preschoolers. This practice helped to calm them down and provided them with an opportunity to regain their composure. By offering a comforting embrace, Fawzah was able to address the emotional needs of her students, helping them to feel secure and valued.

Teachers indicated that by embracing the children they sought to fulfil their emotional needs. This underscored the lack of comprehensive understanding among teachers regarding children's SEL needs. The educators, even unintentionally, were able to apply effective strategies due to instinct or experience rather than a grounded understanding of the theoretical foundations of SEL. This emphasises the urgency of equipping educators with in-depth knowledge about SEL, its significance, and how to effectively implement its strategies.

4.2.6   Basic SEL Teaching Skills

Teachers actively and empathetically assessed students' emotions through practical means. They frequently inquired about the children's emotional state and whether they were experiencing happiness or distress. For instance, Fajr shared,

> *I always discuss with them, talk, and hug them. If a child is crying, I go to*
>
> *them and go down to their level, speak calmly and see what they feel. As for*
>
> *the one who is angry, I ask them about the reason and have a dialogue with*

them, and if they are happy, I will be happy with them and ask them about the

reason. (T7)

Furthermore, Fajr mentioned that her approach to engaging with students' emotional states involved inquiring about the cause behind their happiness or sadness, by

Ask the child what made them feel this way. (T1)

Similarly, Maha shared a nurturing approach, suggesting that:

When a child is joyful, the teacher should share that joy and ask for the reason

behind it; conversely, when a child is upset, they should offer comfort, express

affection, and have a heartfelt conversation to understand the source of their

distress. (T3)

These responses indicate that the teachers extended their care beyond typical instructional duties, assuming a parental role in supporting the children through their emotional fluctuations. Khloud's strategy for addressing negative emotions involved gentle questioning to uncover the underlying issues, followed by encouraging social interaction with friends. Khloud stated,

For negative feelings such as anxiety and anger, ask them why and then I try

to let them play with their friends. If they do not agree to talk and they tell me

they want to go home, I talk to their mother and I tell her to come and take

them. As for positive feelings such as happiness, be happy with them and ask

them why, encourage them and promote them. (T2)

Overall, the teachers revealed that they had considerable engagement with their students in the social and emotional support area. However, some of the teachers' responses about these activities suggested that they were faced with a lack of time in class to provide adequate individual attention because class sizes were too large. This is an issue for SEL

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since an effective SEL program requires a significant level of individual time and attention devoted to each student (CASEL, 2020f). Moreover, the literature on SEL goes beyond the notion that SEL is solely about noticing and responding to someone showing their feelings. It highlights that SEL involves a comprehensive approach to developing a range of social-emotional competencies in individuals. These competencies include self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and building positive relationships (CASEL, 2020g) . The five CASEL competencies encompass intrapersonal and interpersonal domains (Pellegrino, 2012). Self-awareness and self-management pertain to the intrapersonal realm, while social awareness and relationship skills are focused on the interpersonal domain. On the other hand, responsible decision-making straddles both individual and social spheres, creating an overlap between these domains (CASEL, 2020g).

Furthermore, SEL employs a student-centric methodology that fosters active student engagement in the learning process and the cultivation of analytical communication and collaborative skills (Durlak et al., 2015). To effectively navigate emotions, manage conflicts, and make sound decisions in different social contexts, SEL programs must include clear instruction, practice, and reinforcement of these skills. SEL is a comprehensive process that extends beyond simply recognising and reacting to emotions, emphasising the development and application of broader socio-emotional competencies (Bear, 2020). Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to undergo professional development in SEL, which not only builds on their natural empathy but also provides them with the necessary tools to create a nurturing learning environment and effectively advance students' social and emotional skills.

4.2.7 *Outdated Methods of Teaching*

Teachers articulated their awareness that their teaching methods could be outdated. Several teachers made comments about how the curriculum and pedagogy would benefit from updating and improvement. Examples of this problem emerged in the interviews with

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several teachers who were outspoken in their criticism of the outdated curriculum. For example: Fajr claimed that:

> *As a teacher of preschoolers, I would like to see changes to the curriculum since we use the same thing each year without any changes. (T7)*

While Reem stated that:

> *A curriculum has to be developed and cover all needs of the child, including life and social skills. (T5)*

Furthermore, Fajr, who had 16 years of teaching experience, complained,

> *I wish there was some development in the curriculum because it has been the same thing every year since I was appointed and became a preschool teacher, without any update. (T7)*

Other teachers expressed similar sentiments that there was not enough information about SEL to follow in the curriculum. It was pointed out that in a year, there was only one lesson taught about emotions and it was about expressing emotions, such as joy, sadness, anger and differentiating between these emotions. In KSA teachers used a module on feelings that consisted of showing children different facial expressions and asking them what expression best describes their condition, thus allowing students to understand their own emotions as well as those of others.

Curriculum shortcomings were also explained by Atheer who said:

> *In the curriculum, there is only one lesson in which we introduce the children to facial features, such as sad, scared, happy and angry faces. But there is no detailed explanation in the curriculum about, for example, what causes this feeling or how to control yourself when you are in different feelings or how to*

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express them. There is no explicit and clear information about the

development of the child in this regard. I hope there will be more development

in the curriculum. (T4)

Some teachers voiced concerns about the curriculum being outdated, noting their uncertainty about including certain lessons in the syllabus due to insufficient detailed explanations. This lack of clarity is linked to varying teaching methods among educators, which affects how lessons are applied and information is communicated to the children. As Reem observed:

The curriculum has units and lessons that are useless, such as the sand unit,

which does not have many benefits, and the curriculum is considered old and

undeveloped. The curriculum must be developed and cover all the needs of the

child, such as social skills. (T5)

However, some of the teachers shared their view that not all preschool teachers wanted to change their approach to teaching or incorporate new methods of teaching, including SEL, in their classrooms. They described how permission is generally given from the principal for teachers to expand on specific lesson plans.

Some teachers wanted to develop and teach more topics relating to SEL, but many feared they would face resistance and a lack of cooperation from their colleagues whom they felt would not be prepared to develop and use these new strategies. Reem explained:

The lack of support from peers …, the director gave us the powers to develop

the activities, but no one is helping to develop the activities, most of the

teachers do not like to cooperate, discuss, and develop, and they always say

we do not care about anything except that we teach what is in the curriculum.

I like to develop, and if I suggest new ideas and strategies for the teachers,

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they say there is no need, and some of them want to take ready-made ideas. I

like to develop, but I cannot always do it because of the lack of time, and I

need help from others. (T5)

Aligned with these sentiments, Atheer said:

In the curriculum, there is only one lesson in which we introduce the children

to facial features, such as sad, scared, happy and angry faces. But there is no

detailed explanation in the curriculum about, for example, what causes this

feeling or how to control yourself when you are in different feelings or how to

express them. There is no explicit and clear information about the

development of the child in this regard. I hope there will be more development

in the curriculum. (T4)

Including SEL in the curriculum can significantly help overcome these perceived

shortcomings (Blewitt et al., 2018). This is because SEL assists children in understanding and

managing emotions, set and achieving positive goals, feeling and showing empathy for

others, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and making responsible decisions

(Nagaraj & Rajaraman, 2021). By integrating such lessons into the curriculum, children will

learn to not only recognise various facial expressions but also understand the emotions

behind them.

Moreover, professional development opportunities focusing on SEL will offer

teachers an in-depth understanding and strategies to facilitate SEL topics effectively and

would overcome these shortfalls (Gimbert et al., 2023). This holistic approach would equip

students with skills to handle their feelings, thus fostering a more comprehensive

development of the child in terms of emotional literacy and self-regulation. Furthermore, it

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would empower teachers to better guide students through the complex terrain of emotions, ensuring a fuller and more nuanced social and emotional education.

4.3 Mothers' Views on SEL

The series of interviews conducted with the mothers of preschool children unveiled a collective enthusiasm for incorporating SEL into their children's development. However, it was noted that their comprehension of the SEL concept could be considered basic and demonstrated significant variations. Regardless of these differences, a common consensus emerged, consistently reflecting a positive viewpoint on SEL, and underlining a strong agreement regarding its significance for their child's personal and early educational growth.

4.3.1 Understanding the Concept of SEL

The interviews with preschoolers' mothers provided valuable insights into their perceptions of SEL. The mothers demonstrated varying levels of understanding, yet a common thread of awareness and commitment to their children's social and emotional well-being was apparent. Their descriptions of social and emotional needs often revolved around fostering positive relationships, providing emotional stability, and ensuring their children feel secure. For instance, some mothers characterised social and emotional needs as:

> *Social needs include mixing with people and making friendly dialogue and discussion with those around them, while defining emotional needs include safety and tenderness (M2).*

> *Social needs include discussion and debate, and emotional needs include cuddling and attention. (M3)*

> *Form relationships, integrate with children and play with them. Mixing with others until their psyche changes for the better and talking to others. (M5)*

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These statements reflect a thoughtful, albeit varied, understanding of children's social and emotional needs. Rather than being limited or deficient, the mothers' views demonstrate a foundational grasp of essential concepts related to SEL, such as emotional safety, affection, and social integration. Some mothers placed particular emphasis on the importance of creating a nurturing environment, as illustrated by the following quotes:

Show love and attention to the child. Also, safety, psychological comfort and stability in the family ensure the child's sense of security, a sense of caring for the child and not intimidating them. This encourages their feeling for others and takes into account their feelings. (M5)

Interacting with people, forming relationships, and being aware of what is right and what is wrong. Respect others and not interrupt them while speaking ... Cuddling, expressing feelings, containment, and safety. (M6)

To address the concern of insufficient understanding of SEL in mothers, it is essential to provide mothers with resources, guidance, and training in SEL. By enhancing their knowledge and competence in fostering their child's emotional and social development, mothers can create a supportive environment both at home and in their child's interactions with peers and educators (Castro et al., 2018).

The importance of holistic support was perceived by multiple mothers, such as Anfal, who expressed her child's social needs as the ability to handle situations and solve problems, quoted as:

How he faces situations and solves problems. (M4)

And emotional needs as requiring:

Attention, respect, appreciation, safety, hugs, and kisses. (M4)

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Similar sentiments were echoed by other mothers:

Mixing with others and having the courage to discuss and deal with others satiating the child with tenderness and cultivating self-confidence. (M7)

Mingling with others, getting to know each other ... Love, cuddling, caring, exchanging feelings. (M8)

These varied responses demonstrate a strong and practical understanding of children's social and emotional needs. The mothers' focus on affection, safety, and social integration reflects their intuitive grasp of SEL principles, even though their expressions may not align with formal pedagogical language. The diversity in their perspectives underscores their awareness of the emotional and social dimensions crucial to their children's development. Rather than signaling a lack of comprehension, the data reveals that mothers are already engaging with core SEL ideas in meaningful ways. While additional resources could offer opportunities to further refine their understanding of more formal SEL frameworks, their current insights provide a solid foundation. This points to a potential for enhancing, rather than replacing, their existing knowledge, thereby supporting them in fostering their children's social and emotional well-being in a more informed and holistic manner. The interviews conducted with mothers of preschoolers revealed a range of perspectives on social and emotional needs, reflecting a mix of notions that encompass interpersonal interactions, safety, communication, self-confidence, and emotional wellbeing. In some instances, descriptions of social and emotional needs did not encompass the comprehensive framework that SEL entails, demonstrating that mothers need to improve their understanding of SEL. This was especially evident when Fawziyah commented that:

I train my children to only express joy to others and to conceal their true feelings. (M2)

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This indicates that the expectation is on the child to internalise. From this, the preschool teacher then will not know the feelings that this child has internalised and is hesitant to share.

SEL is associated with providing children with the skills and knowledge necessary to establish and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships, regulate their emotions, and improve their overall wellbeing (Ferreira et al., 2021). SEL fosters educational equity and excellence by nurturing genuine school-family-community partnerships. These partnerships cultivate learning environments marked by trust and collaboration, enriched by challenging and purposeful curriculum and instruction, and continually assessed for improvement. SEL serves as a catalyst for addressing inequities and empowers young individuals and adults to collaborate in shaping vibrant schools and nurturing safe, healthy, and equitable communities (CASEL, 2022).

Variations in responses illustrate how vital it is to enhance mothers' understanding of SEL as it plays an important role in developing children's social and emotional skills. Mothers would benefit from comprehensive support and education in order to equip them with a deeper understanding of SEL principles and their application in nurturing their children's holistic social and emotional development. As mothers play a pivotal role in shaping their children's early experiences (Elliott et al., 2022), strengthening their grasp of SEL concepts would empower them to create an environment that fosters emotional intelligence, resilience, and positive social behaviours in their children.

Recent research suggests that active parental engagement during a child's school years not only enhances their academic potential but also fosters self-confidence through their accomplishments. According to Melhuish et al. (2008), a stronger home learning environment correlates with increased levels of cooperation, conformity, peer social skills, self-assurance, and high cognitive development scores. In their study Melhuish et al. delved into a more comprehensive exploration of parental involvement, having gone beyond conventional

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aspects as they examined the subtleties of parent-child interactions and their influence on academic success and peer social skills as indicators of social and emotional development.

The KSA mothers' statements and insights implied an unarticulated connection between social and emotional needs and SEL. The mothers acknowledged the significance of fulfilling their children's social and emotional needs for their comprehensive development and comprehended the necessity of creating nurturing environments that facilitate positive social interactions and emotional wellbeing, although they were unclear how this could be achieved through SEL.

SEL as an educational approach, is designed to enhance students' social and emotional skills, enabling them to effectively navigate social scenarios, cultivate wholesome relationships, and regulate their emotions (Keefer et al., 2018b). The SEL framework encompasses various dimensions, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). The mothers indicated that they were aware of certain aspects of social and emotional needs, such as interacting with others, establishing relationships, communicating effectively, and feeling confident. However, their descriptions also exposed the fragmented nature of their understanding of SEL. It is essential to offer mothers comprehensive resources, guidance, and training in SEL to augment their knowledge and aptitude in fostering their child's social and emotional development as generally advocated by (Roy & Giraldo-García, 2018). By providing them with extensive support, they would be able to promote a nurturing environment at home that encourages positive interactions between their children, peers, and educators.

It is crucial for mothers to gain a deep understanding of SEL principles and their role in enhancing their children's social and emotional development. Research has consistently shown that early parental involvement in education positively influences children's attitudes

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and behaviours toward learning, which are important aspects of SEL (Waters, 2014). For example, studies indicate that active parental engagement in children's educational activities can significantly impact their academic success and intrinsic motivation (Giraldo-Garcia, 2014). By integrating SEL practices into their support, mothers can more effectively contribute to their children's social-emotional growth and overall well-being. The mothers' insights and statements reinforce the importance of addressing social and emotional needs through SEL, highlighting their pivotal role in fostering a nurturing environment for their children's development.

4.3.2 Support for Preschool SEL

Most of the mothers indicated that teaching children about their emotions is very important for them to have a good life and to improve their social-emotional development. As the following series of quotations illustrate, mothers generally expressed their support for the SEL of children. For instance, Eidah highlighted that:

> *The feelings of a child come spontaneously from birth, for example, if someone*
>
> *hits them, they shout. If the child relaxes, they will rejoice and be happy. But it*
>
> *is very important that it is necessary to give them advice on how to deal with*
>
> *others, especially when making a mistake with someone. (M1)*

Moving forward, Fayzah underscored the importance of encouraging a child to express their emotions and understanding the motives behind their behaviour, aiming to foster better understanding between parent and child as she stated:

> *I encourage and reinforce it, and I hope that my daughter speaks and*
>
> *expresses how she feels. I want to know about the reasons for her behaviour. I*
>
> *want to understand my daughter more. (M3)*

Similarly, Anfal voiced a desire for her child to openly communicate her feelings, yearning for improved channels of expression and connection as she said:

I love this kind of education and I wish there was one dedicated to this topic. I wish if my child was upset, she would come and tell me and complain but she does not tell me. (M4)

Other mothers reinforced the significance of emotional expression and self-control, explaining:

I am with this thing and support it being taught to the child. As a mother, I want my child to speak and express what is inside them. He cries if he is upset and sad, and he is happy and expresses his feelings if he is happy. I always make sure to express my feelings towards my children. I like that my children control themselves if they are angry and control their feelings. (M5)

It is very important that the child expresses feelings and that will help improve her child's personality. This emphasises the positive impact of emotional expression on a child's personality development. (M6)

4.3.3 Social Needs of Preschoolers

The interviews with mothers about preschoolers' social needs revealed a noticeable gap in their comprehension. While some awareness was apparent, none of the mothers exhibited a complete or holistic understanding of their children's social requirements. While these responses indicated some recognition of specific social needs, they collectively underscored a significant absence of a comprehensive understanding that encompasses all aspects of children's social needs. In their responses, mothers placed significance on various aspects of social development, as the following quotes demonstrate:

Respect for others and avoiding mistakes in interactions. (M1)

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Forming relationships with others and demonstrating respect for parents and those around the child. (M3)

Social needs encompass activities like interacting with others, forming friendships, and engaging in dialogue and discussions with those in their vicinity. (M2)

Self-awareness, the ability to socialise, and discerning right from wrong. (M4)

However, these insights are contrasted by responses that highlight a somewhat limited perspective on the social requirements of children and only partially cover the spectrum of these needs. Another participant, Hadil, briefly mentioned concepts like:

Defending oneself, growing up in a nurturing environment, and assuming responsibility. (M5)

This indicated an awareness of safety and autonomy, albeit not in comprehensive detail. These notions are further complemented by Amira's response, which emphasised:

Interaction with the surroundings and heightened awareness. (M6)

This insight captures a facet of social needs but does not encompass the full breadth of children's social development. Similarly, Bashayer, touched on elements such as:

Self-awareness, honesty, cooperation, and dialogue. (M7)

Yet these components represent fragments rather than a comprehensive understanding of social needs. Lastly, Hala, pointed to values like:

Sharing, self-awareness, and respect", hinting at an appreciation for cooperation and social interaction. (M8)

In sum, while these responses provide glimpses into the recognition of certain social needs, they collectively illuminate the need for a more holistic understanding. These findings underscore the significance of comprehensive education and support for mothers to deepen their grasp of children's social needs, thereby enabling them to foster a more enriched and supportive environment for their children's social development.

Other insightful comments provided by the mothers included:

Because I know the child well and I know what is going on inside them it is important for them to learn how to be thankful and how to complain if they are upset or tired. (M7)

It is a good thing because it gives the child an opportunity to express feelings that they do not know their names. It is considered very important because it teaches the child the things and feelings that they are going through and do not understand. (M8)

These quotes reveal several key themes. First of all, the mothers emphasised the importance of guiding children through their emotions, particularly when it comes to handling conflict and making mistakes. This highlights the mothers' recognition of the role they play in equipping their children with the necessary tools for emotional regulation and conflict resolution.

Secondly, the mothers expressed a strong desire for their children to communicate and articulate their emotions. This highlights their belief that open communication and self-expression are vital for understanding and addressing their children's needs. The mothers also expressed a desire for their children to understand and identify different emotions, illustrating a desire for emotional literacy and intelligence.

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Mothers' quotes illustrate how crucial it is to teach children about feelings and nurture their social-emotional development by teaching them about emotions. These findings align with research highlighting the role of parents in fostering SEL skills in children (Miller et al., 2017). It underscores the crucial role that parents play in shaping children's emotional wellbeing. Including parents in SEL programs may support efforts in schools to build the social and emotional competencies of children (CASEL, 2021b).

4.3.4 Emotional Needs of Preschoolers

The responses provided by the mothers demonstrate their awareness of the paramount importance of addressing the emotional needs of preschoolers. The mothers acknowledged the significance of not only expressing love towards their children but also nurturing other crucial aspects such as empathy and emotional expression. Quotes that illustrate this point include:

Emotional needs are crucial for saturating a child with love and attention. (M1)

Love, especially learning to love his family and brothers and express his feelings for his family and respect. (M2)

Taking care of the feelings of my children, accepting and respecting them, and taking care of their psyche. Providing safety and being calm for them and not shouting during the discussion. (M4)

Safety and expressing feelings of love for the child and that the child is important to his parents. (M5)

Cuddling and kissing a child and a sense of safety. (M6)

Love, expressing it, and sharing feelings with others, as well as feelings for

them. (M7)

In their comments, the mothers demonstrated their deep understanding of the need to cultivate a nurturing environment that facilitates emotional growth and development for their children. This understanding is reflected in their desire to listen to their children, care for their feelings, and provide a sense of calm during discussions. Mothers not only wanted their children to feel loved but also encouraged them to develop empathy and emotional intelligence by expressing their feelings and building positive relationships.

These responses shed light on the mothers' understanding of emotional needs, which extends beyond expressing love. They emphasised the importance of creating a safe and secure environment where children can feel understood and accepted. This aligns with existing research, which underscores the importance of love, empathy, and nurturing emotional expression in children's emotional development (Rees, 2010; Scrimin et al., 2018).

The quotes highlight a range of emotional needs that mothers strived to meet in order to address their children's emotional well-being. They emphasised creating a safe and secure environment for their children, where they can feel understood and accepted. The mothers demonstrated awareness of fostering empathy and emotional intelligence, encouraging their children to express feelings and build positive relationships.

4.3.5   *Mothers' Practices for SEL*

The responses provided by the mothers revealed certain practices related to the SEL of their children that deviated from SEL values and demonstrated a misunderstanding regarding the implementation of SEL principles at home. For instance, Fawziyah, expressed reluctance for her children to display their emotions when they were sad, as she did not want people to pity them. She stated:

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I believe it is good, but I do not like it when my children show their emotions when they are sad. I always tell them not to show it to people, to hide it. (M2)

This exemplifies a departure from SEL principles, as emotional expression is an important aspect of SEL and helps children develop skills for emotional awareness and regulation.

Another example was found in the responses regarding teaching strategies to address disruptive behaviours at home. As Fawziyah explained,

I adopt different methods to manage my daughter's behaviour when she misbehaves, depending on my emotional state. Sometimes, I yell at her, sometimes I hit her, and sometimes I speak to her calmly. If she is feeling sad or angry, I talk to her and try to understand why she feels that way. Then, I explained to her that she should not be upset about everything because it will affect her in the future. (M2)

This approach demonstrates a departure from SEL core principles, as physical punishment and fluctuating responses may hinder the development of effective communication and positive behaviour reinforcement (Heilmann et al., 2021).

In contrast, other mothers discussed strategies that foster open communication, active listening, and empathy, which better align with SEL values. For example, Anfal stated,

Whenever my daughter feels angry, I ask her why she feels that way, and I listen attentively. Sometimes, I raise my voice at her, but I never resort to physical punishment. If she displays any positive behaviour, I reinforce it and praise her, and I also take her to the supermarket to get whatever she desires. (M4)

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Furthermore, Amira stated that:

If my daughter feels any negative feelings, I hold her and let her sit next to me and I do not ask her what happened at that time, so I wait until she calms down, then ask her, why are you sad, in a calm tone, why are you crying, do not cry, you are strong. Whenever she shows positive feelings and behaviours, I praise her and tell her "You are the best girl" and smile at her. (M6)

This approach promotes emotional awareness and regulation, as well as positive behaviour reinforcement. Overall, the mothers' practices for teaching SEL at home reflected a mixture of approaches, some aligning with SEL values, and others departing from them. The interviews shed light on the complexity of translating theoretical understanding into practical implementation, often resulting in misunderstandings and variations in how SEL is put into practice within the family context. Some mothers may inadvertently discourage the expression of emotions such as sadness in their children, believing it to be a way of protecting them from pity. Such practices, although well-intentioned, might hinder the development of healthy emotional expression and regulation. In contrast, other mothers discussed strategies that promote open communication, active listening, and empathy, fostering more constructive approaches to managing disruptive behaviours.

The interviews underscore the importance of enhancing mothers' awareness and understanding of SEL principles, equipping them with effective strategies that align with the core values of emotional awareness, empathy, and positive behaviour reinforcement. Justicia-Arraez et al. (2021) and Blewitt et al. (2018) stated that SEL is becoming an increasingly valuable aspect of child development as mothers gain the knowledge and skills to create an emotionally nurturing and supportive environment for their children. The findings suggest that it is imperative to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application so that KSA mothers are well-equipped to teach emotional regulation, positive behaviour, and

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effective communication in the family. By addressing these gaps and promoting consistent SEL practices, mothers can play a crucial role in preparing their children for success in both the personal and social aspects of life.

4.3.6   *Responsibility for Teaching SEL*

Teachers held varying opinions on the primary person responsible for fostering children's social and emotional development. This stresses the importance of understanding the dynamics between teachers and parents in shaping children's SEL development within the cultural and social context. There were differing opinions among the teachers regarding the extent of responsibility each party should assume. Some teachers believe that the main emphasis should be on the parents, as they are seen as the primary caregivers and the ones who have the most direct influence on their children's social-emotional development. While they acknowledged their vital role in guiding children's growth, most teachers asserted that mothers should bear the primary responsibility for their children's emotional wellbeing.

Several reasons supported this viewpoint, with the most prominent being that mother, in contrast to teachers, typically have more quality one-on-one time with their children at home, enabling them to devote more attention to their emotional development in a family setting. For instance, as one teacher, Fajr, articulated,

Teachers can play a role in teaching children social and emotional

development, but mothers play the biggest role. Because the mothers spend

more time with their children than teachers because they accompany them

more often. (T7)

Although mothers held varying perspectives on the responsibility for their children's SEL skills development, some mothers also believed that parents, especially mothers, are responsible for their children's SEL development. They saw teachers as complementary to

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parental awareness and felt that as mothers, they were fundamentally accountable for raising and guiding their children in the right way. For instance, one mother, Eidah, emphasised parental accountability, asserting:

> This is primarily the parent's responsibility. The teacher is considered a complement to the awareness of parents. Because I am the child's mother, I am responsible for raising and guiding them in the right way. (M1)

Other mothers supported the same view that parents should be the primary instigators with parental involvement taking precedence over the teacher's role of SEL, as the following quotes show:

> Parents are primarily responsible, not the teacher; the teacher can be an assistant in the mentoring process. Because parents are the basis for raising a child. (M3)

> The primary responsibility for teaching these skills lies with parents, as some teachers may not effectively address children's behaviour or offer suitable guidance. (M5)

> Parents are primarily responsible because we, as parents, build the character of our children, not the school. (M6)

> Both parents contribute to their child's social-emotional learning, though it acknowledges a distinction in responsibilities. (M7)

> The responsibility of the mother and father is considered primarily first, and then the teacher. Because he is my child and I am his mother, considered responsible for them. (M7)

From a different standpoint, both teachers and mothers recognised the importance of encouraging collaboration between educators and mothers in promoting children's SEL. For example, one mother, Fawziyah, called attention to the shared responsibility of parents and teachers in imparting SEL skills, emphasising their complementary roles.

> *I believe it is a joint effort between mothers and teachers. Because there are children who understand more from the teacher and allow their teacher's advice. I see this thing with my daughter she listens and follows the teacher's advice more than my advice. (M2)*

Given their substantial time together during preschool, it also underscored the significance of teachers' familiarity with the child. The following views held by both mothers and teachers, recognise the value of both in nurturing social-emotional skills:

> *Teachers and parents because they complement each other. Because as a mother, I would like to know more about my child, as my child's behaviour at home is different from that at school. In school, the teacher is the one who knows my child best because he spends half of his day in kindergarten. (M4)*

> *In my opinion, the teacher is responsible, but besides that, the cooperation of families in teaching children SEL is necessary. (T4)*

Generally, teachers acknowledged the necessity of a collaborative approach involving effective communication between teachers and mothers. However, opinions varied concerning who should take the *lead* in this collaboration. While some teachers advocated for joint efforts, with both teachers and mothers sharing responsibility, others placed the primary burden on parents. Common statements on this issue included those that placed the responsibility on parents, such as:

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Cooperation for teaching SEL must be by both teachers and mothers, because the teacher is only a guide, but the biggest cooperation must be from the parents. (T1)

parents bear the most significant responsibility. (T7)

Contrary to both these stances, however, was the view held by some teachers that

Teachers are the responsible ones for teaching these aspects to the child. In preschool, the teacher takes full responsibility for the child's education in all aspects. (T2)

The main role is of the teacher. Because the child spends most of their time in preschool and the teacher is the first and basic pillar of the child's education. (T3)

In KSA, similar to other countries, children spend a considerable amount of time at preschool, typically around four hours a day, during which they interact extensively with their teachers and peers (Allen & Kelly, 2015). This means that preschool teachers play a crucial role in fostering social-emotional skills in young children (Brackett et al., 2012; Heo et al., 2014). However, the idea that preschool teachers play a crucial role in fostering social-emotional skills in young children may not fully align with the KSA context.

Within KSA society, there is a shared understanding that a child's education and development stem from a collaborative effort between teachers and parents. Alzahrani et al. (2019) found that Saudi Arabian teachers strongly believe that SEL development is enhanced by cooperation and open communication between parents and teachers. Such strong beliefs concerning family involvement are crucial for determining the quality of relationships between family members and education professionals (Clough & Nutbrown, 2019; Simpson & Envy, 2015).

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While preschool teachers in KSA certainly contribute significantly to children's education and social-emotional development, parents' involvement with the preschool is also highly valued and viewed as essential. Subsequently, while preschool teachers play an important role in fostering social-emotional skills in young children, their perspective emphasises that teachers and parents share responsibility for SEL within the cultural and social context.

Despite differences of opinion about responsibility for SEL, the interviews indicated that teachers were devoted and prepared to meet the individual needs of their students. Moreover, to demonstrate the willingness of teachers to extend their supportive role when it is needed, Fajr mentioned that

> *If the mother makes contact and informs the teacher that her child needs more*
>
> *help in school with any SEL skills, the teacher will give that student more time*
>
> *and priority. (T7)*

However, if the mother or family has not highlighted any needs for their child then the teacher would assume that no more attention is needed by her other than the usual duty of care. As Fajr explained:

> *When the mother contacts me with regards to her child and informs me that*
>
> *she is busy and would like me to help the child, in that case, I will try to give*
>
> *them more time. (T7)*

Some teachers expressed that teaching SEL would be challenging. They expressed concerns about the significant hurdles they face due to the large class sizes they encounter. These concerns are particularly evident in their struggle to provide adequate individual attention and control over their students' behaviour. As pointed out by one teacher, Atheer:

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Having so many students in this class sometimes makes it difficult for teachers to control them individually. (T4)

This underscores the challenges teachers encounter as they navigate the dynamics of a crowded classroom. With roughly 30-35 students in each class, it becomes increasingly demanding for teachers to strike a balance between addressing students' emotional challenges, facilitating peer interactions, and delivering essential education effectively. Consequently, teachers feel overwhelmed by the weight of managing educational outcomes, which appears to be exacerbated by the issue of excessively large class sizes. This imbalance in responsibilities can strain their ability to create a secure and supportive environment for learning. To relieve these challenges, solutions that promote smaller class sizes, and enable teachers to provide the necessary individualised attention that fosters a conducive learning environment and enhances student outcomes would be imperative.

The perspectives of teachers and mothers regarding the responsibility of teaching SEL skills reflect a combination of cooperation, partnership, and differing opinions. While teachers acknowledge their pivotal role in guiding children's emotional and social development, there is also a shared belief in the importance of parental involvement. The consensus that emerged from the interviews highlights the need for a collaborative approach, where teachers and mothers work together to create a holistic learning environment that supports children's SEL growth. It is evident that the partnership between teachers and mothers is essential for the successful implementation of SEL initiatives. There is no doubt that both parties have unique strengths. Teachers contribute their expertise in fostering social-emotional skills in a structured educational environment, while mothers provide consistent one-on-one interaction within the home. This collaboration would allow for a comprehensive approach that addresses children's SEL needs both at school and at home.

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Despite differing views on the extent of responsibility, the shared goal of nurturing children's social and emotional wellbeing was paramount. Both teachers' and mothers' commitment to meeting student needs demonstrated a mutual dedication to creating an environment that is supportive and enriching for young learners. In essence, the interviews highlighted the interconnectedness of teachers and mothers in shaping children's SEL development. A successful SEL approach would require open communication, understanding, and a shared commitment to providing children with the tools they need to navigate emotions, relationships, and challenges effectively. Working together, teachers and mothers could build a foundation that empowers children to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally, preparing them for a lifetime of success.

Numerous studies emphasise the positive outcomes of teacher and parent collaboration in fostering SEL skills (Bipath & Oosthuizen, 2023; Lang et al., 2020). Promoting a continuous connection between home and school fosters stronger bonds among young individuals, their parents, teachers, siblings, and peers (Eugene, 2021). This harmonious integration contributes to an enriched learning environment, with children refining vital SEL skills, including self-awareness, self-management, self-regulation, social awareness, empathy, communication, and problem-solving (Corcoran & O'Flaherty, 2022). By collaborating, SEL can be implemented consistently and systematically across different environments in order to ensure that children receive consistent messages and reinforcement. This consistency aids in reinforcing SEL skills and encourages their transferability between home and school settings (Calkins, 2019).

A collaborative relationship between teachers and parents can also facilitate a mutual exchange of information about a child's psychological and social wellbeing (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017). Sharing observations, concerns, and strategies allows teachers and parents to gain a more comprehensive understanding of each child's unique needs, facilitating

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targeted support and interventions when necessary. This collaborative approach fosters a strong support system that addresses the whole child, enhancing their overall SEL development (Calkins, 2019).

4.4   Program Criteria Suggested by Teachers and Mothers

The interviews with teachers and mothers revealed some criteria for SEL programs. They both suggested including videos and activities related to SEL and linking the lessons to Islamic values. They also mentioned that the program should be interactive and engaging. Topics suggested by them included self-control, building relationships, self-awareness, sharing and respecting others, and expressing feelings. It was also important, they suggested, to keep the program short and brief, as long programs may not be as effective for children.

4.4.1   SEL Program Content

Teachers' recommendations for the SEL program's content were centred on making SEL educational, and effective, and providing positive outcomes for the children. Fawzah noted,

Using videos and activities can help kids understand SEL skills better. (T1)

Similarly, Amal proposed that

Videos and engaging activities are a fun way to achieve SEL goals with kids.
(T6)

Both these recommendations emphasised the importance of introducing engaging tools like videos and activities in relation to SEL learning for achieving these aims.

For mothers, the emphasis was generally on making the lessons interactive, enjoyable, and effective for the children, as the quotes below show. Some mothers stated that suspenseful and interactive lessons were essential for children and teachers, and they

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suggested that the SEL program should provide a variety of activities, as these would engage children and make lessons interesting. As articulated by Anfal,

> *As a mother, I firmly believe in the power of engaging, suspenseful, and interactive lessons. I feel that it is essential for both children and teachers. I would suggest that the SEL program incorporate a diverse range of activities to truly engage our children. This would not only hold their interest but indeed make lessons more enjoyable and meaningful for them. (M4)*

Flexibility in delivering lessons and incorporating different activities, such as storytelling, that were fun and interesting were also recommended, as Amira recommended:

> *It would be beneficial to include stories and enjoyable activities in lessons. I have observed that my child is particularly happy when stories are shared. Integrating such engaging elements can positively impact the overall learning experience for children. (M6)*

In the process of designing the SEL program, I carefully incorporated the recommendations from both teachers and mothers to create content that is not only educational but also highly engaging. Featuring a variety of tools including activity papers and videos, the PATHS- IC program aligns perfectly with CASEL program principles and caters to different styles of learning (see Chapter 5). By emphasising interactive and suspenseful lessons, achieved through storytelling and other hands-on activities, the PATHS-IC program aimed to make learning fun and interesting, in order to foster a positive outcome for the children's SEL.

4.4.2 *Lesson Duration*

The PATHS-IC program comprises 15 lessons, each lasting 20-25 minutes, and is conducted twice to three times a week. Teachers had different opinions on how long SEL

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lessons should last. Some suggested that one hour per day would be enough, as the following quotes show:

Fawzah stated,

To me, it seems appropriate and beneficial if we could dedicate an entire hour each day. (T1)

On the other hand, other teachers argued for shorter durations, providing different justifications for their points of view: Khloud shared her perspective, expressing,

In my opinion, keeping lessons shorter generally works better. I feel that when they extend for longer than an hour, it becomes too much to handle, and the lesson might lose its effectiveness. (T2)

Maha concurred with Khloud's point of view, stating,

When it comes to lessons, I believe that shorter and more focused ones tend to deliver the best results. In contrast, drawn-out lessons can end up being tiring and less productive. (T3)

Amal also leaned towards shorter lessons,

In my view, limiting the duration of lessons to 15 to 30 minutes is a sound strategy. This addresses the students' attention span and ensures the session retains its appeal throughout. (T6)

Ghada highlighted her professional experience, affirming,

In my professional experience, I have found that a 30-minute lesson is just right. It strikes a balance by providing enough teaching content and does not tire out the students. (T8)

In contrast to teachers, mothers generally suggested lessons that were short in length. According to the mothers, lessons should last from 20 minutes to 30-40 minutes, as the following quotes show. Eidah expressed her opinion, stating,

> *I believe the lessons should ideally last between 20 to 30 minutes for effective learning and engagement. (M1)*

By contrast, another mother, Fayzah argued for a more extended duration, suggesting,

> *In my opinion, a comprehensive lesson should extend up to 40 minutes, allowing for a more in-depth exploration of social and emotional topics. (M3)*

On the other hand, Anfal emphasised brevity, recommending,

> *I suggest keeping the lessons concise, with an optimal duration of 15 to 20 minutes, ensuring that students remain focused and actively participate in the program. (M4)*

Additionally, Bashayer suggested that the program should be applied two to three times a week:

> *I think using the program two or three times a week is a good idea. This way, it is not overwhelming, but it is often enough they get to learn. (M7)*

Based on the feedback from both teachers and mothers, the duration of SEL lessons appears to be a key factor for effective delivery and student engagement. While teachers' views varied, with suggestions ranging from 15 to 60 minutes, there was an overall trend towards keeping lessons brief, within the 20 to 45-minute range. Likewise, mothers advocated for short, engaging lessons spanning 20-40 minutes, with a suggestion to conduct them two to three times per week. In Designing the PATHS- IC program's duration, I factored in recommendations from teachers, mothers, and CASEL guidelines, along with the

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KSA curriculum's standard 45-minute lesson structure. Striving for a balance between thorough SEL learning and sustained student interest, I concluded that PATHS- IC sessions should optimally be 20-25 minutes (see Chapter 5). Scheduling these sessions two to three times per week would ensure regular student exposure to SEL content. This approach respected shared viewpoints and aimed for both depth of learning and consistency of content delivery, key for an effective SEL program.

4.4.3   Lesson Topics

Teachers and mothers provided important input on proposed lesson topics, covering a gamut of SEL areas. Teachers, as per the following quotes, suggested lessons on discerning between positive and negative behaviour, self-control, self-awareness, self-confidence, sharing, communication, empathy, problem-solving skills, and respect for others. For instance, Fawzah stated,

> *The focus should be on self-regulation, empathy, conflict resolution, sharing*
>
> *and respect building to better handle relations with parents and other*
>
> *individuals. (T1)*

From another perspective, Atheer recommended lessons on how to solve problems, self-defence and self-awareness, particularly in situations when someone assaults or harasses the child. As she stated:

> *Lessons should focus on how to solve problems, self-defence and increasing*
>
> *self-awareness, particularly in challenging situations. (T4)*

Fajr and Ghada highlighted lessons about knowing types of feelings, forming friendships, self-regulation, and being kind with others.

Other Mothers also provided similar insights as the following quotes show:

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I would like the program to contain lessons about self-awareness for children to manage their behaviour and how a child expresses their emotions and talks with those around him with confidence. Also, how to be good a child and help and cooperate with others. (M1)

There should be lessons related to self-awareness so that the child can control himself when he is angry and does not hit the children. A lesson about cooperation with others and that the child knows how to deal with people and how to solve his problems as well as being less aggressive. (M3)

Teach children to make decisions and be responsible for them. It is important to teach them self-awareness in forming social relationships and being good friends as well as controlling emotions in various situations. (M4)

It would be best if you included topics about how children accept themselves, love themselves, explain their emotions, feel empathy for others, respect adults, do not hit others, think, and solve problems. (M7)

In conclusion, the designing of the PATHS- IC program was a holistic process that thoroughly considered and incorporated some of the suggested lesson topics from teachers and mothers. Mothers uniquely added the need for lessons on peaceful self-defence and anger management techniques. This comprehensive integration aligns with the components of CASEL and is expected to foster an effective PATHS- IC program that promotes the holistic development of students. The PATHS- IC program thereby was shaped to include lessons in emotional understanding, self-regulation, self-concept, building relationships and problem-solving.

4.4.4   *Islamic Values*

The incorporation of Islamic values into the SEL program was of utmost importance to teachers and mothers. They collectively emphasised the necessity of embedding Islamic values in the SEL lessons to create a comprehensive educational experience for the children. Teachers supported the integration of Islamic values within each lesson, as the following quotes show:

> *It is very important, and I apply it every time in my lessons because preschool is considered a foundational stage, and children should learn Islamic values at this stage because this is our religion, and they must have a background in it. (T1)*

> *Combining SEL with Islamic education is a great way to shape character. (T5)*

> *It is very important. Because religion is the essence of life and is linked to it, and we must adhere to it in all aspects of our lives and behaviours in dealing with others (T6),*

> *The behaviours of our lives are based on religion and child rearing must be based on Islamic values. (T4)*

In addition, mothers emphasised the need to align the program's content with Islamic values and cultural norms. For instance, Fawziyah said,

> *It is very important and links it to Islamic values. And link it to the Prophet Mohammed's dealings with people, especially respecting the opinions of others and talking with them in a respectful manner and how to be kind to others. (M2)*

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Similarly, another mother, Hadil, asserted,

It is very important. Because Islamic values are the basis of dealing with others and the basis of sophistication. I want my child to link his behaviour with those that are compatible with religion. (M5)

However, a balanced perspective was presented by Amira, a mother who suggested

Islamic values are crucial, but they do not need to be included in every lesson because linking everything to religion can make children feel that religion is complicated. It is more effective when lessons are presented smoothly and flexibly. (M6)

In concurrence, Anfal explained,

The child must be brought up on these values, and it is possible to link them to some lessons, not all of them; it depends on the lesson content. (M4)

Moreover, this sentiment was mirrored by both Eidah and Bashayer:

It is important and necessary because our lives are threaded upon religion, and all our interactions within society stem from Islamic values. (M1)

Indeed, our lives are governed by religion. Therefore, all our societal dealings must mirror these Islamic values. (M7)

From these insights, both teachers and mothers have shown unanimous agreement on the need to incorporate Islamic values into the SEL program. Recognising this, and as a practising Muslim, I took care to incorporate these values into certain lessons in the PATHS-IC program where I felt they would be most beneficial and relevant (see Chapter 5). For instance, during the self-regulation strategy focused on managing anger, I suggested

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techniques like taking deep breaths and counting to ten, with the addition of Islamic practices like prayer, seeking God's help, and reading the Quran for further solace.

This integration of Islamic values would aid in enhancing the PATHS- IC program's effectiveness and acceptance within the Muslim community. Throughout the process, I aimed to strike a balance, smoothly intertwining these values within teachings, without overwhelming or complicating the PATHS- IC program's lessons.

4.5   Summary of Findings

From the statements provided, the teachers understood the importance of the social needs of their students and suggested that SEL was important for children in expressing their emotions. Additionally, some emphasised the importance of social and emotional needs for children in the classroom, such as improving relationships, whereas others showed only a basic understanding of SEL and thought children only needed to feel safe and loved. Furthermore, teachers pointed to the lack of pre-service and in-service training in SEL that had prevented them from developing greater awareness and knowledge of how to implement SEL programs in their classrooms. Most notably, most teachers lacked any formal training or experience in teaching SEL. This has shown that they were unable to make the necessary connections to the teaching of SEL and indicated that either pre-service teacher training or in-service teacher training needs to occur in KSA. Teacher perspectives on teaching methodologies were useful for revealing how the outdated curriculum was stifling motivation and progress toward a more SEL-oriented approach to preschool education that would benefit the emotional development of KSA children while also emphasising professional development for the teaching faculty.

In the interviews conducted with the mothers of preschoolers, mothers' understanding of their children's social and emotional needs provided clues for what should be in a SEL program. They seemed to have more insight than the teachers, who seemed to embrace more of a supportive role rather than being teachers of SEL. There was evidence that some mothers lacked the knowledge of what SEL is and therefore the children's need for SEL in their development. This finding suggests that mothers require support to teach their children SEL at home and to make connections and have a collaborative approach with the preschool for the betterment of their child's growth and development.

A common theme emerging from the interviews was that both the teachers and mothers acquired their ideas, knowledge, and concepts of SEL from their life experiences and from reading articles, books, or discussions with other parents. Therefore, there exists a clear need for a more comprehensive and structured approach to educating both mothers and teachers about the fundamental principles and benefits of SEL. This could involve targeted training programs that provide accurate and evidence-based information about SEL concepts, their relevance in early childhood development, and practical strategies for their implementation. By equipping mothers and teachers with a deeper understanding of SEL, they can play a more active role in fostering a supportive and enriching environment for children's social and emotional growth.

The findings highlighted the importance of forming strong partnerships between preschools and parents. Through collaborative efforts, SEL practices can be reinforced at home and at school in a way that reinforces children's learning and development. Creating channels for open communication and mutual understanding can address concerns raised by some mothers regarding overburdening teachers. Through fostering a sense of shared responsibility, teachers and mothers can create a nurturing environment that supports children's holistic development. It appears that for some mothers, more targeted efforts are needed to help them recognise the importance of allowing children to express their emotions authentically. Educating children about emotions and providing a safe space for them to express their feelings can contribute to their emotional development. Teachers can respond more effectively to children's needs when this understanding is gained since they can better understand how children's emotions are internalised.

The interviews with mothers of preschoolers shed light on the gaps in knowledge and understanding of SEL, both among mothers and teachers. As a result of these findings, mothers and teachers should be equipped with the necessary tools to support the social and

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emotional development of their children through structured education and collaboration. Creating an environment that promotes accurate information, fosters collaborative partnerships, and encourages children to express their emotions can facilitate their wellbeing and prepare them for success in the future.

4.6   Conclusion

In conclusion, both teachers and mothers shared important insights for designing the PATHS- IC program. They emphasised the need for lessons to focus on communication, empathy, problem-solving, and good behaviour. To make the program effective, they suggested using videos and interactive activities related to SEL. It was important they suggested, to keep the lessons short to hold children's attention and align the program with their cultural and religious values. The lessons should link to Islamic values and aim to boost children's self-confidence, and self-awareness and help them handle emotions better. These suggestions were considered in the next phase of the research, which involved the development of the PATHS- IC program for use in the Islamic KSA context.

Chapter 5: PATHS- IC Adapt and Development

The design of the PATHS- IC program was based on the PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) curriculum for SEL. When experts from the Australian "KidsMatter Early Childhood" (KMEC) mental health initiative (Slee et al., 2012) extensively examined various SEL programs they found that the PATHS curriculum stood out as a comprehensive program that covers all five core components of CASEL and was also suited for preschoolers. My examination of SEL programs (outlined in Chapter 2) led me to the same conclusion. In its alignment with the criteria set by CASEL, the PATHS curriculum effectively addresses emotional understanding, self-regulation, self-concept, problem-solving, and building relationships. By selecting the PATHS curriculum, I ensured that the PATHS- IC program encompassed a range of essential components that are crucial for fostering social-emotional development in preschool children.

Recommendations from KMEC focused on high-quality implementation and monitoring, provision of explicit support for service leaders, customisation of professional learning for diverse staff needs and extension of resources to children with diverse needs (see Slee et al., 2012). Slee et al. (2012) emphasised the need for careful implementation monitoring, as the impact of the program should be carefully monitored to assess its effects in relation to its objectives. This recommendation was readily incorporated into the PATHS- IC structure, setting a strong foundation for high-quality implementation and consistent monitoring by ensuring assessments were undertaken before, during after PATHS- IC implementation. In developing PATHS- IC, elements of the PATHS curriculum were retained, adapted, or newly introduced. For instance, while the core focus on emotional understanding and self-regulation was maintained, PATHS- IC incorporated Islamic teachings to enhance these components. Self-concept activities were adapted to reflect local

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cultural values, and problem-solving strategies were modified to suit the cultural context. Additionally, PATHS- IC introduced new lessons specifically designed to emphasise the importance of building relationships and fostering positive interactions among peers.

5.1   Background: PATHS

The PATHS program is a school-based SEL curriculum designed for young children that aims to develop children's protective factors and decrease the risk of behavioural and social problems (CASEL, 2020d). Developed by a team of clinical psychologists and child development practitioners, PATHS provides a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to childhood developmental education (CASEL, 2020d). The lesson-based PATHS program incorporates a series of social skills topics for use in prekindergarten through sixth grade and consists of separate volumes of lessons for each grade level (K-6) (Greenberg & Kusché, 1993). The PATHS curriculum is delivered in a whole class setting by regular classroom teachers who cover subjects ranging from identifying and labelling feelings to understanding other people's perspectives (Humphrey, Barlow, et al., 2018; Malti et al., 2011).

Through modelling, stories, puppets, songs, and role-play, children learn friendship skills, emotional understanding and expression skills, emotion regulation, control strategies, responsible decision-making, and problem-solving (Powell & Dunlap, 2009). The curriculum consists of 33 lessons delivered weekly on a flexible timeline. Lessons take, on average, 20 to 30 minutes to deliver, depending on the number and level of participation from students (Greenberg et al., 1995; Kusché & Greenberg, 2012). The PATHS program is designed to be taught two or more times per week and focuses on five major conceptual domains: (1) positive self-esteem; (2) emotional understanding; (3) self-control; (4) relationships and (5) interpersonal problem-solving skills. Preschool PATHS impacts both core emotional outcomes as well as more distally related social competencies (Domitrovich et al., 2007; Humphrey et al., 2016).

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The CASEL recognised the preschool PATHS program for its distinct positive impacts on preschool and elementary school students (Curtis & Norgate, 2007; Humphrey et al., 2016). Through the use of preschool PATHS, significant improvement was visible in areas like emotional knowledge, social competence, and academic behaviours, and a connected decrease in problem behaviours, emotional distress, and aggressive and hyper-disruptive behaviours (Arda & Ocak, 2012). The PATHS program proved particularly successful in reducing teacher-reported instances of anger, anxiousness and socially withdrawn behaviour while improving classroom climate (CASEL, 2020d).

The development and consolidation of the PATHS- IC program, designed to foster KSA children's social and emotional skills, emerged from an adaptation that considered the five domains of the PATHS program. This decision was influenced by the findings of Bilir Seyhan et al. (2019), who highlighted the effectiveness of the PATHS domains in promoting such skills in children. By including the five domains in the PATHS- IC program, it was expected that in accordance with research (Taumoepeau & Ruffman, 2008), the children's comprehension of their emotions and relationships with others would improve their interactions with their peers, teachers, parents, and members of the broader society where they will work and live as adults.

In adapting the PATHS program into the PATHS- IC program, some changes were made to align better with updated insights into SEL. My understanding of these insights underscores the elevated importance of self-regulation, as opposed to self-control, and the importance of self-concept over self-esteem. This understanding reflects current thinking in effective SEL practices. These insights prompted changes in the PATHS- IC program, with a higher focus on fostering self-regulation and nurturing self-concept. An explanation of the adaptation of PATHS and a comprehensive overview of each of the domains highlighting the importance of including them in the PATHS- IC program is provided below.

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5.2   PATHS- IC Program Domains

The PATHS- IC program is designed to encompass various domains that play significant roles in children's overall development. These domains consist of Self-Concept, Emotional Understanding, Self-Regulation, Relationship Skills, and Interpersonal Problem-Solving Skills. Detailed explanations of these domains are provided below:

5.2.1   Self-Concept

Self-concept and self-esteem are fundamental components of psychosocial functioning (Liu et al., 2015). While they are interconnected, they address different facets of an individual's self-perception. Self-concept refers to an individual's self-assessment of personal aspects, including their skills, abilities, and roles (Brown et al., 2009). It shapes one's understanding of their identity and individualism (Schütz & Baumeister, 2017). On the other hand, self-esteem addresses the individual's evaluative perception of themselves (Cameron & Granger, 2019). It reflects the emotional appraisal of self-worth and the quality of feelings an individual has towards themselves (Cvencek et al., 2016).

Self-esteem reflects how favourably or unfavourably someone feels about themselves (Ruvalcaba-Romero et al., 2017). The literature on self-esteem reveals that self-esteem primarily reflects individuals' affective judgments about their worthiness, value, and the satisfaction they derive from their self-concept (Mruk & Mruk, 2013). However, self-concept is a broader term encompassing cognitive self-descriptions, self-evaluations, and associated self-schema (Alsaker & Kroger, 2020). It provides a cognitive backbone to individuals assessing themselves and has a significantly substantial influence on self-esteem (Hassan et al., 2016). For instance, self-concept influences the feeling of confidence, satisfaction, and, importantly, self-esteem (Rahim et al., 2021). Where self-concept is a more comprehensive

cognitive construction of the self, self-esteem focuses more on the evaluative aspects of these cognitive structures (Habrat, 2018).

It can be argued that both self-concept and self-esteem are essential components of psychosocial functioning (Coelho et al., 2017). They are tied together in an influential loop, boosting one another. When a child develops a strong, positive self-concept, it significantly impacts their feelings of self-worth or self-esteem (Coelho & Romão, 2017). These heightened feelings of self-esteem then feedback into a richer, more positive self-concept (Arslan & Yukay, 2018). Having a positive self-concept strengthens a child's self-confidence, encourages creativity, independence, the ability to adapt behaviour positively, and achieve greater academic persistence (Ahmed & Zaman, 2019). In contrast, a low self-concept might lead to low academic performance, poor interpersonal relationships, asocial behaviour and poorer mental health (Augestad, 2017; Supple et al., 2013).

One of the PATHS domains is focused on self-esteem. However, in the PATHS- IC program, the emphasis was more closely associated with shaping self-concept, while still acknowledging the importance and influence of self-esteem. The choice was made to place more emphasis on self-concept rather than self-esteem in order to foster a broader understanding of oneself. As suggested by Lodi-Smith and DeMarree (2018) promoting a positive self-concept indirectly contributes to the development of positive self-esteem. It is anticipated that the emphasis on positive self-concept would cultivate a well-rounded and affirmative self-understanding, which serves as a fundamental basis for boosting self-esteem.

Activities tailored to magnify self-concept ultimately aim to create a ripple effect that boosts self-esteem naturally (Sticker et al., 2021). As Augestad (2017) pointed out, a distinctly positive self-concept can lead to healthy self-esteem. A positive self-concept indirectly improves self-esteem (Martín-Talavera et al., 2023). Unlike self-esteem, which can vary based on external feedback, developing a strong self-concept creates a stable base for

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self-appreciation (Chen et al., 2022). Therefore, prioritising self-concept has a wider, more positive impact on mental wellbeing, including improved self-esteem (Machin et al., 2019; Shemesh & Heiman, 2021).

Focusing on self-concept rather than self-esteem helps to create a more complete understanding of oneself, including one's skills, interests, and values (Swann et al., 2007). This approach increases self-awareness, which fosters personal growth and psychological health (Jankowski et al., 2022). People with a clear self-concept adapt better to life's challenges and are more flexible in their self-perception (Jhangiani et al., 2014). Improving an individual's self-concept is highly likely to improve self-esteem as well, suggesting that the relationship between self-concept and self-esteem is a critical consideration in SEL programming.

In emphasising the critical role of self-concept development, the PATHS- IC program sought to promote children's self-concept across three structured lessons. The lessons were designed to guide children through the process of identifying their unique qualities, fostering a positive outlook, and acknowledging personal and external differences.

The "What I like about me" lesson was the first in this series; it sought to engage children in appreciating their distinct qualities. It aimed to encourage children to identify and communicate their personal strengths and characteristics, and in doing so help them develop their self-concept and subsequently their self-esteem. Encouraging children to express what they like about themselves promotes individuality and instils a sense of self-respect, enhancing their overall self-concept (Marsh et al., 2018).

Next, the "Learning with an "I Can Do Anything 'Mindset" lesson focused on assisting children to maintain a positive attitude, especially when confronted with challenging tasks or learning new things. This lesson encouraged children to take on new challenges

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optimistically. An "I can do anything" mindset can facilitate resilience in children and act as a base for them to build confidence in their abilities, thus developing a healthy self-concept (Cunningham, 2022).

The third lesson, "I Am Special and You Are Special Too," was carefully designed to heighten the sense of individuality in each child. This lesson emphasises the unique qualities that every person carries, reinforcing the children's understanding of their own self-concept or individual identity. Furthermore, by promoting the appreciation of the uniqueness of others, children learn to respect personal differences, a notion that mirrors the expansive range of self-concepts in society (Putnick et al., 2020) . The process of understanding oneself and others cultivates empathy and an appreciation for diversity, which are integral values that lay the foundation for children to develop effective social interaction skills (Catmur et al., 2016). This lesson, therefore, plays a vital role in strengthening a child's self-concept while equipping them with essential interpersonal skills.

5.2.2 *Emotional Understanding (EU)*

Emotional understanding (EU) is the ability to identify and comprehend the meaning of emotions (Tan et al., 2022). It refers to knowledge of the nature of one's own and others' emotions, along with knowledge regarding the causes of the emotions and regulation processes (Camras & Halberstadt, 2017; Schlegel & Scherer, 2018). Establishing EU and developing emotional competence during early childhood may have important implications for reducing later aggressive or hostile behaviour (Ornaghi et al., 2017). Indeed, most existing prevention programs for preschool-age children focus on other community- and individual-level contributors to aggressive behaviour, including poverty, social cohesion, fear and distrust of others, and norms regarding violent behaviour (Laurent et al., 2020; Ştefan, 2018). Consequently, EU is the main domain for which intervention and prevention efforts are worked upon (Midgley et al., 2017).

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There is converging evidence that EU is associated with more optimal social functioning, both concurrently and longitudinally (Franco et al., 2017; Ros & Graziano, 2018). Social functioning refers to the degree to which an individual demonstrates adaptive behaviour in their social environment, encapsulating a wide range of constructs, including social competence, prosocial behaviours, peer acceptance, and reconciliation tendencies (Laurent et al., 2020). In children, the development of EU is a gradual process that begins during the first year of life, when infants are sensitive to emotional information portrayed in facial expressions they see and vocal tones they hear (Bigelow et al., 2022). The ability to understand emotion is an important prerequisite for social, psychological, and cognitive development (Wang et al., 2021). In addition, children's own EU can be protective against aggression, since children who are able to understand their own and others' emotions may be more likely to curb aggression and behave empathically toward others (Bardack & Widen, 2019; Laurent et al., 2020). EU skills provide important behavioural elements for individuals to initiate and maintain positive interactions with others (Gormley Jr et al., 2011).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the preschool period marks the developmental phase when children manifest a rapid development of their EU (Laurent et al., 2020; Martins et al., 2016). As a result, early childhood is regarded as a critical period for the development of children's emotional understanding and emotion regulation skills, value systems, self-confidence, and social abilities (Frydenberg et al., 2017a; Uslu, 2020). Difficulties with EU have been identified as a potential risk factor for the development of aggressive behaviour problems and, therefore, represent a prime target for prevention and intervention (Domitrovich et al., 2017a). Indeed, intervention programs focusing on EU have been developed for school-age children to reduce violence (Corcoran et al., 2018). However, there is a gap in the existence of similar programs during the preschool years and this may constitute a missed opportunity for intervening during such a critical developmental period (Murano et al., 2020).

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The emergent literature stresses the importance of emotions and their association with the development of social relationships (Koh et al., 2014). The information children share with others about their emotions, and the feedback that they gain from receiving emotional messages enhances their overall social-emotional understanding of themselves and others (Hernández et al., 2016). Children who are perceived as more socially competent by peers and teachers are emotionally positive, have appropriate reactions to emotional situations, and are considered to be well-adjusted in school (Arace et al., 2021). In comparison, children who are less socially competent may struggle emotionally and show compromised adjustment to school, particularly those expressing poorly regulated negative emotions (Matson, 2017b; Miller et al., 2006). The development of EU is related to the regulation of emotion, which can lead to diverse classroom outcomes (Martins et al., 2016; Morris et al., 2017). Thus, EU is important to social and academic competence. The PATHS program aims to shape the way children understand emotions, their causes, and consequences, and how they use this understanding to describe, predict, and regulate their own emotions and other people's emotions (Shi et al., 2022). EU has emerged as a leading predictor of psychological wellbeing, pro-social competencies, and academic achievement (Pons & Harris, 2019).

Recognising the essential role of EU, the PATHS- IC program incorporated this component into three key lessons. It is crucial to highlight the link between EU and emotional intelligence. EU, a primary facet of emotional intelligence, entails the capacity to comprehend one's own emotions and those of others, to discern between different feelings, and to use this information to guide thinking and behaviour (Serrat, 2017).

The "Knowing Your Feelings" first lesson sought to assist children in identifying and labelling their own and others' feelings using visual prompts. The aim of this introductory step was to equip children with important social skills and to set the foundation for emotional intelligence. Secondly, the "Understanding Body Gestures" lesson sought to build on the first

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lesson and extend EU further by helping children interpret the physical expressions often associated with emotional reactions. Lastly, the "Internal Body Reaction to Different Feelings" lesson delved into a more complex EU by guiding the children to recognise their internal physiological responses to their feelings. This lesson aimed to cultivate an essential self-awareness, promote mindful acknowledgment of these responses and foster self-regulation skills. This sequence of lessons, progressing from understanding emotions to recognising body language and then determining internal physiological responses, sought to enable preschoolers to develop a comprehensive insight of EU. The pedagogical approach in these lessons, which combined direct instruction with practical activities, was to ensure both cognitive understanding and behavioural change, both necessary for the children's emotional and overall development.

5.2.3   *Self-Regulation*

Self-regulation is one of the five domains of social and emotional functioning (Eisenberg et al., 2018). It has been linked to the concepts of self-management and self-control and is often understood as the general ability to focus, manage, and control behaviour (Hoyle, 2006). This self-regulation domain and associated behaviours are related to social and emotional functioning (Seçer & Karabulut, 2016).

The PATHS program includes self-control as one of its domains. Self-control has been associated with protection against the development of internalising and externalising behaviours (White et al., 2013). Self-control enables children to limit their intrusive thoughts which may lead to fear and anxiety as well as inhibit aggressive impulses which then reduce the likelihood of externalising behaviours (Hardaway et al., 2012). Research by Gagne (2017) demonstrated strong predictive relationships between childhood self-control and a wide range of consequential life outcomes including stability of relationships, resilience and adaptability, career advancement, and educational qualification attainment.

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In the PATHS program, the primary focus areas associated with teaching self-control include managing personal feelings and behaviours, utilising personalised strategies to achieve calmness, curtailing impulsive actions, concentrating on tasks, ignoring distractions, adopting pro-social behaviours, planning, thinking before acting, delaying gratification, and persevering in challenging situations (Conkbayir & Pascal, 2015). However, it is worth noting that while the PATHS program covers aspects of self-control, it does not encompass self-regulation as broadly as the PATHS- IC program does.

PATHS- IC views self-regulation as an umbrella concept that inherently includes self-control, among other components. Thus, while self-control is a theme in PATHS, the broader concept of self-regulation, as implemented in PATHS- IC, is not explicitly addressed. Interventions like PATHS can support the development of self-control across the life course of the preschooler (Murray et al., 2019) because the preschool years present an important opportunity to intentionally foster self-control growth.

Self-regulation, encompassing the initiation and management of emotions, relies on self-awareness, mindful awareness, cognitive reappraisal, and adaptability to effectively control and express emotions in an adaptive manner (Robson et al., 2020). Instead of an immediate reaction, the subconscious self-regulates the emotional action through situational attention and response (Blake et al., 2015; Housman, 2017). Therefore, self-regulation emerges as a central pillar with the introduction of SEL in the classroom. Self-regulation improves student learning and development through positive engagement with peers, social bonding, positive self-orientation, and an understanding of how to adapt and be flexible (Tolan et al., 2016). A child's ability to self-regulate is influenced by many external factors, including parents, families, peers, teachers, and their social environments, and also by internal factors including their gender, stage of life, health, and genetic mechanisms (Morawska et al., 2019; Pandey et al., 2017). These influences are generally recognised as

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beginning in children as early 1-2 years of age, developing further in early childhood from 3 to 5 years of age, and continuing through the middle childhood years 6 to 11, adolescence from 12 to 18 years, and into adulthood thereafter (Briggs-Gowan et al., 2006).

Additionally, environmental strategies affect regulation, e.g., approaching, avoiding, or modifying situations or environments based on their emotional impact, are also part of self-regulation (Korpela et al., 2018). The ability to take ownership of response systems enables a person to alter inner reactions to block patterns of behaviour that are undesirable, such as outbursts and tantrums in children, or aggressive and hostile responses in adults, which aids in promoting more socially effective behaviours (Price & Hooven, 2018; Woodward et al., 2017). Self-regulation is a core aspect of human functioning that helps facilitate the successful pursuit of personal goals (Inzlicht et al., 2021). Baumeister and Vonasch (2015) highlighted that self-regulation plays a pivotal role in managing addictive behaviours, including surmounting initial aversion and maintaining usage despite obstacles. This notion underscores the importance of self-regulation in balancing addictive behaviours and preventing relapse. In addition, greater self-regulation in early childhood correlates to lower criminal convictions, better academic performance, and higher income in adulthood (Robson et al., 2020).

However, there are some key differences between self-control and self-regulation. Self-regulation refers more specifically to the positive ability to reduce the frequency and intensity of strong impulses by managing stress load and recovery, whereas self-control is about inhibiting strongly negative impulses (Chester et al., 2016). Therefore, it can be said that self-regulation is the positive emotional function or ability that makes the active goal of self-control possible. Carter et al. (2015) have shown that self-control is a finite resource that can be overwhelmed when a person's self-regulation management of stress and recovery fails to cope with the circumstances. Self-regulation is important to enable children to read a

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situation, maintain their self-control, and to identify and proactively alter their reactions (Savina, 2021). Improvements in a child's self-regulatory capacity provide a framework for children to engage more effectively with teachers and peers in the early learning context, which in turn contributes to improved academic outcomes, fostering a virtuous cycle for continued improvement (Eisenberg et al., 2010; Williams & Berthelsen, 2017).

Self-regulation and self-control are also positively related to adaptive behaviours, including interpersonal relationships, better task performance, and psychological adjustment (Kidd et al., 2013). According to several authors (Morawska et al., 2019; Sanders & Mazzucchelli, 2013) high-quality parenting methods in the family environment, healthy peer relationships, and SEL programs in schools play important roles in early childhood to engender the foundational skills of self-regulation and self-control, coping mechanisms, and adaptation in children. Children who experience nurturing and supportive caregiving during their early infancy and through their childhood to adolescence tend not to require behavioural intervention (Hardaway et al., 2012). However, children who experience inappropriate or inadequate social interactions, neglect or abuse, disturbed family dynamics, or poor parenting practices may benefit from interventions to counteract the impact of these complex and intersecting factors in a child's development (Diamond & Lee, 2011). Without SEL intervention, self-regulation in these circumstances may not be stable from infancy into the preschool years and beyond, which may lead to undesirable outcomes in emotional and behavioural problems or even disorders in adulthood (Feldman, 2009; Kim & Kochanska, 2012). Several reviews have suggested that interventions can be effective in enhancing children's self-regulatory skills (Diamond & Lee, 2011; Piquero et al., 2016), Research suggests that when interventions do result in improvements in children's self-regulation, these improvements are associated with better adult outcomes (Pandey et al., 2018).

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Teaching self-regulation promotes stability in the life course of a preschooler. It is one of the most well-validated SEL interventions, with multiple randomised trials demonstrating positive effects (Humphrey, Hennessey, et al., 2018). The development of self-regulation begins in early childhood, changing from an initially externally controlled form to an internally controlled regulation (Cox et al., 2010). Especially during preschool, children's self-regulation abilities increase rapidly (Savina, 2021) and, therefore, preschool represents a crucial time for the development of adequate self-regulation abilities (Montroy et al., 2016).

In understanding the significant role of self-regulation in a child's development, the PATHS- IC program incorporated three fundamental lessons in this area. These lessons aimed to help children connect emotions to actions, learn emotional regulation techniques, and understand different "zones" of emotions.

The first lesson, "Emotions and Actions" begins by helping children grasp the link between their emotions and the actions that follow. It emphasises that while emotions are natural, immediate reactions can sometimes bring about unwanted results. It teaches children that they have the ability to manage and control their feelings.

The second lesson, "Regulating Emotions: Calming Down" sought to build on this base and introduce the concept of emotional management. Various strategies are presented during the lesson that are designed to help children regulate their feelings. This lesson also draws on Islamic teachings. It highlights the importance of prayer, resilience, and self-soothing techniques, like deep breathing and physical exercise, which serve as methods for children to channel their feelings in a productive manner, which aids in effectively managing and controlling emotions.

Finally, the "Zone of Regulation" lesson is a key part of the PATHS- IC program, and it helps the students understand their emotions better. In this lesson, emotions are grouped

into different "zones" to make it easier for children to recognise what they are feeling (Schaan et al., 2019). Each zone corresponds to different emotional states. For example, there could be a "Green Zone" for when children are feeling joyous or a "Blue Zone" for when they are feeling down. The aim is to help children easily identify what they are feeling and link those feelings to the zones. Once they know their zone, children can then apply strategies they have been taught to manage those feelings. These could be things like taking deep breaths, using positive self-talk, or engaging in some exercise. The goal of these strategies is to help them feel better or move to a happier zone. This lesson is part of the PATHS- IC program's step-by-step lessons to help children understand emotions, learn how to manage them, and eventually improve their overall self-regulation skills. By knowing how to deal with their feelings, children are better equipped to handle challenging situations, both in and out of the classroom.

5.2.4   Relationship Skills

Relationship skills are fundamental to healthy and positive interactions within society (Greenberg et al., 2017) and are a key component of SEL competencies, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2020g). The preschool years are particularly crucial for developing relationship skills, as these skills are essential for forming friendships and integrating well into the kindergarten classroom (Moore et al., 2015; Rhoad-Drogalis et al., 2018). Strong relationship skills are linked to increased classroom engagement and academic achievement (Paul, 2011; Yang et al., 2018). These skills encompass cooperation, seeking and providing help, and effective communication, which are all vital for maintaining healthy and productive interactions (Wattanawongwan et al., 2021).

During preschool, children experience their first social relationships with peers, and the skills learned in these interactions often generalise to other social contexts as they grow (Wu et al., 2022). Developing social skills during this period is critical for effective performance, adaptation, and overall quality of life (Hosokawa & Katsura, 2017b). Deficits in social skills can lead to a range of negative outcomes, including behavioural disorders, poor academic performance, and psychological issues (Hosokawa & Katsura, 2017a; Huber et al., 2019). Several factors can influence the development of social skills, including family income, parent education level (Hosokawa & Katsura, 2017b), parent age (Duncan et al., 2018), home and school environment, peer relationships, and sociocultural background (Hosokawa & Katsura, 2017b). These factors can shape the context in which children develop their social skills. For example, lower family income and lower parent education levels can impact access to resources and opportunities that support social skill development. Similarly, variations in home and school environments, peer interactions, and sociocultural influences can affect how children learn and practice these skills. It is important to recognise that these factors do not necessarily imply a lack of attention to a child's needs but rather highlight the complexity of the influences on social skill development.

Gender differences in social skill development during the preschool years have also been observed. Studies have shown varying levels of social skills between boys and girls, with some indicating higher social skills in girls (Abdi, 2010; Hajovsky et al., 2022), while others find no significant gender differences (Gouley et al., 2008). These differing results may reflect cultural contexts and societal expectations surrounding gender roles (Abdi, 2010).

Strong relationship skills contribute to preventing and reducing bullying and disruptive behaviour in classrooms (Mitrofan, 2018). Xerri et al. (2018) and Sointu et al. (2017) suggests that well-developed relationship skills enhance student productivity, willingness to engage in challenging tasks, and personal responsibility. Positive relationships

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are also linked to better academic adjustment and achievement in preschool (Bailey et al., 2016; Torres et al., 2015). Various social skills education programs have demonstrated positive outcomes for children. For instance, Warneken (2018) found that a social skills learning program effectively developed children's social skills. Gooding (2011) reported that family involvement in a social skills program positively impacted children's social skill development. Additionally, Lee et al. (2012) highlighted the effectiveness of social skills programs in enhancing peer relationships, while improvements in behaviour control and reduced aggression were noted as outcomes of these programs (Akgun & Araz, 2014; Webster-Stratton et al., 2012), Beelmann and Lösel (2021) also found that social skills training programs improved social skills and reduced problematic behaviours.

The PATHS program aims to increase children's understanding of emotions and develop interpersonal skills, leading to better peer relationships and conflict resolution abilities (Liew et al., 2018; Viana et al., 2016). Similarly, the PATHS- IC program emphasizes the importance of relationship skills through structured lessons. The program includes lessons on understanding the value of relationships, strategies for building positive connections, and the characteristics of good friendships. By focusing on these areas, the PATHS- IC program supports children in developing the empathy and skills necessary for maintaining strong and healthy relationships.

5.2.5 *Interpersonal Problem-Solving Skills*

Problem-solving skills, which are very important in supporting the social development of children, refer to the ability to identify, analyse, and devise effective solutions to challenges or issues (Diamond, 2018). Problem-solving skills contribute to conflict prevention in social situations. These skills involve devising strategies that can be useful for self-development and applying these strategies effectively (Dyah & Setiawati, 2019; Lile Diamond, 2018). Children with problem-solving skills are able to establish healthy

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relationships with their friends, understand the emotions of the people around them, and look at events from the perspective of others (Ulutas & Köksalan, 2017). Children deficient in social development skills often exhibit lower levels of self-confidence and self-discipline. They also tend to struggle with problem-solving and addressing issues effectively (Çiftci & Bildiren, 2020). Dereli-Iman (2013) found that children who did not have sufficient social skills had high problem behaviour levels and they were children who had poor problem-solving abilities. Dereli-Iman (2014) found a social skills training program had a positive effect on the social problem-solving skills of 6-year-old children, while Domitrovich et al. (2007) found that a social adaptation skills training program had a positive effect on children's social adaptation skills.

Evidence has shown that problem-solving skills in preschool are important because they predict classroom adjustment in kindergarten, and children with stronger problem-solving skills show less aggressive behaviour, a higher level of impulse control, and more prosocial behaviour (Denham et al., 2014; Shure & Aberson, 2013). In contrast, children with externalising behaviours tend to have deficits in problem-solving skills (Dereli-Iman, 2013; Fraser et al., 2011). Thus, instruction in problem-solving skills is important for preventing negative social-emotional and behavioural outcomes.

In the PATHS program, problem-solving combines all five of the SEL competencies presented by CASEL. For example, during problem-solving, self-awareness is used to identify emotions and forms of expression in a problem situation; social awareness and responsible decision-making are used when coming up with solutions for a social problem; self-management is used to control impulses and direct actions towards a goal (i.e., problem resolution); and relationship skills are used when enacting the chosen solution to the problem (Hosokawa & Katsura, 2017a). For instance, in the resolution of a shared toy conflict,

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relationship skills could be applied by effectively using communication and cooperation to uphold an agreed-upon solution, such as taking turns.

The PATHS- IC program emphasised the significance of problem-solving in children's development through a series of three lessons. These lessons aimed to help children define problems, identify various problem-solving strategies, and resolve conflicts efficiently.

The first lesson, "Problems and How to Solve Them," introduced children to the concept of problems and taught them how to identify them. It was clarified that while different types of problems can arise, they all have potential solutions. This lesson was part of broader teachings that presented children with an array of strategies for problem-solving, acknowledging that different situations may require different approaches for effective resolution.

In the second lesson, "Think, Plan Ideas and Do," children were taught to manage disagreements with peers and identify strategies to resolve conflict effectively. Children learned the process of thinking critically, generating solutions, and implementing their ideas. The use of group activities sought to enable children to conceptualise distinct methods to tackle their problems and enhance their problem-solving abilities.

The third lesson, "Conflict Resolution Strategies," educated students about conflict management. Presenting various conflict scenarios, encouraged the use of respectful communication and patience, aiming to substantially contribute to their interpersonal skills training.

In conclusion, the PATHS- IC program's series of engaging lessons on problem-solving sought to play a crucial role in children's cognitive and interpersonal development. From understanding the nature of problems to brainstorming solutions and resolving

conflicts, these teachings aim to equip children to tackle obstacles confidently and effectively.

5.3   The PATHS- IC Program Content

Lessons designed to incorporate all five CASEL domains and PATHS' foci were included in the PATHS- IC Program. These components guided the formation of the intervention lesson plans. The lesson plans were designed to incorporate elements of play and provide opportunities for children to develop a sense of agency. The lesson plans include interactive activities such as role-playing, group discussions, and story-making, which allow children to engage more actively and collaboratively. The PATHS- IC program was divided into five thematic units, comprising a total of 15 lessons on

1) Self-concept (3 lessons)

2) Emotional understanding/emotional competence (3 lessons)

3) Self-regulation (3 lessons)

4) Building relationships (3 lessons)

5) Problem-solving (3 lessons)

Activities within lessons included modelling stories, emotional coaching, role-plays, games and discussion. In addition, the lessons included group activities as well as independent activities. The PATHS- IC program intertwined Islamic values within key lessons, embracing elements like prayer, Islamic attire, and moral teachings in its framework, supporting educational goals within KSA cultural and religious contexts. The PATHS- IC content was designed to help teachers create and utilise a classroom environment that promoted children's learning of social-emotional skills, ultimately aimed at promoting social-emotional development and wellbeing among children in the KSA region. The PATHS- IC

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program spread the SEL domains across 15 lessons, whereby the preschool children were to learn within the classroom how to modulate and develop appropriate management skills that included all five SEL domains.

The 15 lessons were derived and whittled down from the initial 33 PATHS lessons for ease of teaching and learning. This was to keep this SEL intervention concise and to test whether this simplified version would be an effective approach for preschoolers and their teachers. Before implementing it in a KSA preschool, however, the PATHS- IC program was checked for context applicability. The PATHS- IC program content and design were shown to KSA preschool teachers and mothers for feedback and input.

5.3.1   PATHS- IC Program Review

After the development phase, the researcher pursued feedback about the PATHS- IC program from three mothers and three teachers, who had previously been interviewed during the initial phase of this study. Given the extensive nature of the program, as it consisted of 15 lessons, the researcher chose to present only one lesson from each component for detailed discussion. Initially, the researcher engaged in an overall discussion with the teachers and mothers about the broader objectives and structure of the PATHS- IC program. Following this, the focus shifted to a deeper discussion of one lesson from each of the five components. Their opinions on the suitability of the PATHS- IC program were crucial for the implementation of the intervention. Feedback from both mothers and teachers was used to make some adjustments to the PATHS- IC program before its final implementation at a KSA preschool.

5.3.2 PATHS- IC Overview by Preschool Teachers and Mothers

A summary of the themes, questions, and responses arising from the interviews are shown in Table 5.1 below. Overall, respondents agreed on both the quality of the lesson content and the positive impact of including Islamic values in the lesson plans.

Results of the interview responses showed that the teachers and mothers were strongly supportive of the content of the PATHS- IC program and did not have any suggestions for additional lessons or topics that were not covered. All interviewees expressed the view that the PATHS- IC program would be suitable to KSA culture and religion and the preschool education curriculum context as well.

The responses of the teachers and mothers were very similar. However, teachers placed more emphasis on the prominence of educational aspects of the lessons; for example, several remarked on the utility of pictures in these lessons and the importance of maintaining a simple, easily understandable approach to the lessons.

For instance, Maha opined on one of the lessons, "Internal Body reaction to different feelings," stating,

> *It is a good idea to teach children about it but provide pictures to show the different feelings that we feel inside the body to help students understand. (T3)*

Mothers also expressed appreciation for the lessons. Specifically, Fayzah commended the simplicity and relevance of lessons for children. With regard to lesson 6, she remarked:

> *The lesson is simple and good for children to learn, and they need to be aware of the different feelings inside their bodies. Including pictures would make the learning process more engaging and enjoyable for them. (M3)*

The feedback from both teachers and mothers was given due consideration. Their comments largely influenced the restructuring of PATHS- IC lessons. Key implementation changes included the inclusion of visual aids to facilitate a more comprehensible and stimulating learning atmosphere.

Both teachers and mothers were consistent in their opinions that religious values were important for the students in managing emotions and behaviour and resolving problems in their daily lives. Remarks by teachers and mothers consistently affirmed the relevance of the integration of Islamic values into lessons. For instance, for the "Emotions and Actions" lesson, Khloud suggested,

I think that this lesson is easy and simple, and it will benefit the children to

improve their behaviour. Also, remind them that God created for us a mind to

think and use before we do any action. (T2)

Suggestions to include religious teachings also extended to problem-solving, with Khloud further suggesting:

Explain to the children to pray to God when they encounter any problem or

are in need of conflict resolution. (T2)

The mothers echoed this sentiment, emphasising the importance of seeking Allah's help when faced with problems. For example, Eidah recommended:

Let children know to seek assistance from Allah if they have a problem. (M1)

Supporting this view, Fawziyah commented:

If they have problems, encourage them to seek Allah's help. (M2)

These feedback instances illustrate the common understanding among teachers and mothers about the fundamental role Islamic values can play in navigating life's challenges

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and their urging to include them in the PATHS- IC program. This significant feedback was acknowledged and integrated into one of the problem-solving lessons. This decision was supported by broader literature that attests to the power of religious belief in managing problems and conflicts (Newman & Pargament, 1990). Reliance on spiritual resources, such as prayer, can provide emotional relief and increase resilience in the face of adversity (Al-Husseini et al., 2020). Overall, interview responses suggested that the lesson program design was highly suitable in that the lessons provided a good basis for learning and acquisition of knowledge by students, while also integrating cultural and religious norms and values into lessons well.

Table 5.1

Typical responses by the participants commenting on PATHS- IC

SEL Domain	Example Questions Provided to Teachers and Mothers	Example Responses
Self-concept	*Lesson 1:* **What I like about me** What do you think about the activity provided in this lesson? Do you think that the students will be able to understand how to love themselves?	*I like this activity and it seems good, yes, I think students will appreciate themselves and feel more positive about themselves too. (T1)* *I really like this activity. I believe that the student will be excited by putting their photo in and sharing what they like in themselves with their peers. (T2)* *Yes, it seems very good, and it will develop a positive view about loving themselves. (T3)* *This is a nice activity that will help the children develop their self-concept. (M1)* *The activity promotes children's self-love and I really like it. (M2)* *The children will learn how important it is to love themselves through this activity, and I strongly support it. (M3)*
Emotional Understanding	*Lesson 4:* **Knowing Your Feelings** What do you think about this lesson and when the Islamic values are connected to the lesson for example: "Children should know that in happy moments we should praise God for his kindness and guidance. Likewise, in difficult moments when we feel uncomfortable, anxious, or worried we should seek Allah's advice. We should also thank and pray to God whenever we feel anything so that he will care and protect us."	*I really like the way this lesson connects to Islamic values. For me as a teacher I really focus on each lesson to promote Islamic values in every single lesson and remind them of the existence of God in very moment. (T1)* *Great connection to Islamic values and I highly suggest mentioning these Qur'anic verses in this lesson, which will be easily understood by children, Allah said "Do not be sad, Allah is with us and if you are thankful, I will surely give you more. (T2)* *Good connection to Islamic values but explain it in a simple way to help children understand. (T3)* *It is great to be connected like that. (M1)* *I think it is important to bring this up in this lesson and it is a good connection. (M2)* *It is good and important for the children to learn to praise and seek Allah at every moment. (M3)*
Self-regulation	*Lesson 7:* **Emotions and actions** What do you think about teaching our children about linking their emotions to their actions?	*It is good, and you could remind them before acting out anything to say that in the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful‹ Islamic value. (T1)* *I think that this lesson is easy and simple, and it will benefit the children to improve their behaviour. Also, remind them that God created for us a mind to think and use before we do any action. (T2)*

	Do you think that after the lesson, students would be able to think before they act?	*The lesson will encourage students to think carefully before taking action. (T3)*
		I think it is a good lesson and children should learn to think before doing anything no matter how good or bad it might be. (M1)
		I strongly support this lesson and I like its content; children need to learn to think before acting. (M2)
		The lesson is good and will promote children's ability to think before acting. (M3)
Building relationships	*Lesson 10:* **How do we build happy relationships?** "Making relationships with Allah is important, the closer we are to Allah, the happier we will be". What do you think about this as a connection to the Islamic values in this lesson?	*It is important to raise this with the children. It is really good. (T1)*
		It is very nice that children feel the presence of God and that he is with us everywhere. I like very much that you link it to this lesson. (T2)
		It is a good connection. Explain to the children that we make a good relationship with Allah by prayer and being thankful. (T3)
		The value you connect to this lesson is very significant. (M1)
		This is a very important Islamic value to teach the children. They should know that what they have is Allah's blessing, no matter how happy or how sad they feel. (M2)
		This connection is really important to teach children and I really like it. (M3)
Interpersonal Problem solving	*Lesson 13:* **Problems and how to solve them** Could these lessons plan be used to integrate Islamic values into the teaching process, if so, how? Do you have any suggestions?	*You could explain to the children whenever they face problems, regardless of how simple or difficult they are, that they should ask for the assistance of Allah by saying, there is no power nor might except with Allah. (T1)*
		I have some suggestions regarding this. Explain to the children to pray for the God when they face any problem or any conflict resolution with others. (T2)
		Overall, I think this lesson looks good, and I don't think you need to connect it to Islamic values. (T3)
		Let them know to seek assistance from Allah if they have a problem. (M1)
		If they have problems, encourage them to seek Allah's help. (M2)
		I think this lesson is fine, and I do not think Islamic values need to be incorporated. (M3)

5.3.3   *Islamic Content of PATHS- IC*

The design of the PATHS- IC program was underpinned by a deep respect for and integration of Islamic values within the KSA context, recognising Islam's significance to KSA society and culture. This perspective was further solidified by the interviews conducted, which emphasised the indispensable inclusion of Islamic values. It was clear that any SEL program risked failure if it dismissed or undermined such integral values, a principle that can equally be applied to Christian values within Western contexts (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009).

The decision to embed Islamic values into the PATHS- IC program arose not just from the critical need for cultural-contextual suitability, but also from potential gains documented in research. As suggested by McCullough and Willoughby (2009), religious commitments, in varying cultural contexts, have been shown to be associated with beneficial impacts such as longevity, academic success, and reduced youth delinquency. These observations also applied to improved self-control, which is a crucial goal in SEL. Notably, McCullough and Willoughby's findings were not exclusive to any specific religious affiliations, reinforcing the idea that religious context mattered, with observed benefits being applicable across Muslim populations as well.

Additionally, Greene (2019), highlighted that the cardinal virtues forming the foundation of SEL bore parallels to age-old moral and religious philosophies, sometimes offering similar frameworks, while Elias et al. (2008) underscored the importance of schools addressing the emotional and moral guidance of students alongside their academic accomplishments. According to Greene (2019), stripping SEL of its religious roots risked undermining its universal relevance. Hence, incorporating religious perspectives into the PATHS- IC program not only acknowledged the importance of the Islamic context in KSA but also followed a scholarly rationale suggesting that such inclusion could further bolster

SEL's effectiveness. This approach does not propagate religious fervour but seeks to underscore the merit of religious teachings when viewed from an academic standpoint. As a researcher, I see this as an opportunity to harmonise religious doctrines with SEL principles, thereby demonstrating the potential of religious teachings to contribute positively to the advancement of educational programs.

Integrating Islamic teachings into the PATHS- IC program had a two-fold benefit: it respected the values of the community where it was used and took advantage of the potential benefits of involving religion, as supported by broader research. Therefore, the creation of an SEL program needed to incorporate the religious values of its audience. This incorporation not only enhanced social and emotional learning but also promoted cultural understanding and respect.

In the development of the PATHS- IC program, an Islamic component was integrated to complement the core SEL objectives. This allowed for the addition of culturally relevant content without dominating or detracting from the fundamental teachings about the SEL components in the PATHS- IC program. This ensured that the PATHS- IC program did not deeply delve into Islamic teachings but rather, utilised them to enrich the SEL content in a culturally relevant manner. Hence, it should be noted that the teachings on self-concept, emotional understanding, self-regulation, building relationships and problem-solving in the PATHS- IC program extended beyond the Islamic component, with a comprehensive approach drawing from the core PATHS components and CASEL domains.

The PATHS- IC program represents a conscientious integration of Islamic values within its educational framework, thus providing a holistic curriculum for students in alignment with the cultural and religious norms of KSA. Fundamental concepts such as self-concept, emotional understanding, self-regulation, relationship-building, and problem-solving are deeply rooted in Islamic teachings. Religious values were explicitly integrated into seven

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specific lessons. The inclusion of Islamic teachings, aligned with KSA cultural context, is essential in the PATHS- IC program. Excluding these teachings may lead to a significant gap in the curriculum and potentially create internal conflicts for the preschoolers, as these teachings are an integral part of their everyday lives. Importantly, these religious teachings complement, not replace, the planned SEL components, ensuring the program is culturally relevant, respectful, and holistic. This approach encourages a deeper understanding of SEL in an Islamic context.

The first lesson of the self-concept domain: "What I like about me", incorporated Islamic values. It was mentioned that Allah had created everyone uniquely, both inside and out, which helped students grow in self-appreciation for their own unique traits. It was thought that this could bolster their self-confidence and identification of personal strengths. Teaching about kindness and doing good for others, which are core teachings of Islam, would help students understand the value of being thankful for Allah's blessings.

Emotional understanding, it was thought, would be further reinforced through the third lesson about "Knowing Your Feelings". This lesson took into account the cultural and religious norms of KSA. The researcher added images of women with covered hair by wearing hijab and men in traditional KSA dress. This inclusion aimed to better align the lesson with Islamic and KSA culture and provide images the children could relate to. It would also help students recognise and respect the cultural and religious norms in their community. Additionally, a key focus was on instilling simple but crucial Islamic values, such as expressing gratitude to God in happy times and seeking his guidance when confronted with difficulties. This approach was intended to form in children a positive perspective founded on gratitude. Within the lesson, children were prompted to connect their emotions with their faith by expressing gratitude through the Islamic expression "Alhamdulillah". This helped

them recognise different emotions to seek God's assistance when saddened and express gratitude by saying "Alhamdulillah" during happy times.

Incorporating Islamic principles into this lesson would support holistic growth to be aligned with the KSA Islamic context at an early age. Literature significantly supports the notion that regular expression of gratitude enhances wellbeing, leading to associated benefits such as reduced physical complaints, decreased levels of depression and stress, increased optimism, and improved overall life satisfaction. (Pasha-Zaidi et al., 2021). Cregg and Cheavens (2021) supported this by asserting that gratitude contributes to psychological wellbeing, reducing psychological distress and promoting better physical health. Mills et al. (2015) highlighted specific benefits of gratitude and spiritual wellbeing such as improved mood, better sleep, less fatigue, and increased self-efficacy, indicating gratitude's potential clinical value. In light of these studies, teaching children in the "Knowing Your Feelings" lesson to express gratitude by saying "Alhamdulillah" aligns perfectly with these findings. This approach supports the nurturance of resilience and overall wellbeing from an early age, while simultaneously respecting KSA's Islamic values.

In the first self-regulation lesson, "Emotions and Actions", students were reminded that God has gifted us with a mind to think and exert wisdom before any action. This "blessing of reasoning" is associated with individuals making more measured and considerate choices, particularly when feelings are intense. The second lesson, "Regulating Emotions: Calming Down", was infused with Islamic values, which emphasised that, as Muslims, they were to turn to prayer and reading the Quran when upset. The Prophet's teachings about Controlling anger, which outline the beneficial actions to take when angry, were highlighted. This included helpful strategies, such as sitting or lying down, to engender calm. In these lessons, the integration of Islamic teachings provided SEL with a religious accord that sought to facilitate preschoolers social and emotional development.

Regarding building relationships, Lesson 1 "The Importance of Relationships and What Kinds Are There?" seamlessly tied in with Islamic teachings. The inclusion of building a relationship with Allah was a significant aspect of this lesson. The students had been explicitly taught that they could establish meaningful relationships with everyone, even a spiritual bond with God through practices such as prayer, supplication, and studying the Quran. By maintaining honesty and upholding Islamic morals, they had learned to enhance this bond, deepening their respect and appreciation for Allah's blessings. In this way, the development of preschoolers relationship skills was extended beyond family, peers and their local community to contemplate a spiritual relationship with God.

Problem-solving Lesson 1 "Problems and how to solve them" in the PATHS- IC program integrated Islamic teachings as part of the learning process. When children encounter problems, they learn not only practical problem-solving strategies but also the spiritual aspect such as praying to Allah for help. However, it is important to note that prayer was introduced as a complimentary personal coping mechanism, not as the sole approach to problem-solving. The lesson also emphasised skills like critical thinking, communication, and exploring multiple solutions, thereby integrating SEL principles to cultivate a comprehensive problem-solving ability in the students, promoting their emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills alongside practical problem-solving strategies.

The main objective in Lesson 3 "Conflict Resolution Strategies" was directly linked to Islamic values. Islam encourages respect, controlling emotions like anger, and seeking forgiveness when one has been unkind, which aligns well with what the students were learning about conflict resolution. Strategies to handle conflict, such as staying calm, resolving disputes peacefully and maintaining harmony, reflected teachings from the Quran about resolving disputes and maintaining harmony. The essence of this lesson was encapsulated in the religious teachings, The Quran states: "So fear Allah and amend that

which is between you (Surah Al-Anfal1:177)" emphasising the importance of peacefully solving disagreements. Building on the insights from Divya and Keshavamurthy (2021), which underscore the importance of culturally responsive strategies, PATHS- IC crafted practical approaches guiding students in making informed choices even in emotionally driven situations. Specifically, lessons from Divya and Keshavamurthy's research were employed to ensure that these strategies were attuned to cultural familiarity and resonated with students' religious and social context, facilitating learning and practical application. As such, the program aligns with the principles espoused in Islamic teachings, fostering a culturally sensitive and supportive environment for SEL.

5.3.4   *The PATHS- IC Intervention Program Syllabus*

The PATHS- IC program represents an adapted version of the PATHS program, specifically tailored to the cultural context of the KSA. In response to feedback from teachers and mothers, this adaptation incorporated Islamic values without detracting from the fundamental SEL aspects of the PATHS program. The lessons within each component were conceived and designed by the researcher, lending a unique perspective to the PATHS- IC program. This unique PATHS- IC design was achieved through an extensive and critical review of relevant literature, ensuring the program was underpinned by proven theories and successful strategies in the field of SEL. Overall, the designing of the PATHS- IC program was a meticulous process of combining proven pedagogical strategies, comprehensive literature insights, personal creativity, and the integration of Islamic and cultural values to craft a relevant and impactful SEL curriculum.

Each lesson in the program followed the KUD (Know, Understand, Do) framework, which stands for assessing what students Know, Understand, and need to be able to do. The PATHS- IC program lessons were delivered three times a week by the researcher during the children's "circle-time" sessions. The researcher delivered these 15 lessons in a structured

program while monitoring and assessing the responses of the children. The implementation of the PATHS- IC program was the first time that the teachers and students were involved in a SEL intervention program in KSA.

The PATHS- IC program is a comprehensive curriculum, organised into five primary domains: Self-Concept, Emotional Understanding, Self-Regulation, Building Relationships, and Interpersonal Problem-solving Skills. These domains each encompass multiple lessons with clear objectives. Shown in Table 5.2 is the PATHS- IC program content outline. As shown, each lesson involved one particular message, with the KUDs identified.

Self-concept focuses on fostering appreciation for individual uniqueness, promoting a positive mindset, and acknowledging each person's distinct attributes. Emotional Understanding aims at honing the ability to identify and label feelings, understanding the reactions associated with emotions, and interpreting body language cues. The Self-regulation domain empowers students with the knowledge of managing emotions, linking feelings to actions, and practising mindfulness through zone regulation. Building Relationships emphasises understanding the importance of relationships, from interpersonal connections to a spiritual bond with Allah, exploring strategies for creating and maintaining rich ties with people around them. Finally, the interpersonal Problem-solving Skills domain imparts essential strategies to tackle conflicts, providing an Islamic perspective to seek divine assistance in the face of problems, and exploring practical problem-solving strategies, keeping in mind the importance of maintaining harmony.

Table 5.2

The PATHS- IC Program Domains and Lesson Objectives

Lesson	Objectives
Domain: Self-Concept	
Lesson 1: **What I like about me.**	Students would **Know:**
	That each individual possesses unique, positive qualities.
	Students would **Understand:**
	The process of identifying, describing, and appreciating their own character, abilities, and talents.
	How to love themselves as Allah loves them.
	Students would **Do:**
	Participate in discussions regarding their personal strengths, think positively of themselves, and develop a positive self-image
Lesson 2: **Learning with a "I Can Do Anything" Mindset.**	Students would **Know:**
	The role of positive thinking in facilitating the learning of new things.
	The importance of maintaining a cheerful and positive attitude when confronted with challenging tasks or when learning something new, encouraging children to always try.
	Students would **Understand:**
	How a positive mindset can assist in achieving their goals.
	Students would **Do:**
	Students will practice positive thinking by attempting new tasks and overcoming challenges.
Lesson 3: **I Am Special and You Are Special Too.**	Students would **Know:**
	Differences are what makes each person unique, set them apart from one another, and create diversity among people.
	Students would **Understand:**
	The concept of similarities and differences among people.
	The importance of valuing differences and acknowledging the benefits of living in a diverse community.
	Students would **Do:**
	Describe their strengths and achievements and those of others.
Domain: Emotional Understanding	
Lesson 4: **Knowing Your Feelings.**	Students would **Know**:
	How to identify and label their own feelings and those of others, including peers and adults, by interpreting (reading) visual signals they see in people's faces.
	Students would **Understand:**
	The connection between facial expressions and a person's positive or negative feelings.
	The impact of both positive feelings (e.g., love, happiness) and negative feelings (e.g., anger, sadness) on others.
	Students would **Do:**
	Role-play their feelings with peers to practice the skills they have learned

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Lesson	Objectives
	Demonstrate their learning during the last activity of matching faces with emotions/emojis.
Lesson 5: **Understanding body** **Gestures.**	Students would **Know**: Our facial expressions let other people know how we feel and what we want to say. There is an outer expression and body response associated with each emotion. Students would **Understand:** How to identify signs of body language and interpret the feelings of themselves and others. To praise and thank God in happy times and to seek God's help in difficult times. To express any feelings, they experience using the phrase "Alhamdulillah". Students would **Do:** Develop their abilities to recognise indicators of people's emotional responses through practice. Enhance their emotional awareness by completing individual activities.
Lesson 6: **Internal Body reaction to different feelings.**	Students would **Know:** How to spot different inner feelings like breathlessness, flushed cheeks, fast heartbeat, headaches, tiredness, feeling sick, butterflies in their stomach, or feeling too hot or cold. Students would **Understand:** That these feelings are normal reactions to different emotions. They will learn to understand their internal responses and their physical effects, such as a racing heart, stomachache, crying, stamping, shaking, and hiding. Students would **Do:** Learn how to pause and think or breathe when they notice these feelings happening within them.

Domain: Self- regulation

Lesson	Objectives
Lesson 7: **Emotions and actions.**	Students would **Know**: That they should think carefully before they act out their emotions. That feeling and acting should be considered and belong together. Students would **Understand:** That feelings are related to actions, but that they can manage and control their feelings to prevent undesirable actions. That God gave them a mind to think before they act. Students would **Do:** Practice linking emotions and actions.
Lesson 8: **Regulating Emotions. Calming down**	Students would **Know:** Their emotions can be controlled. Students would **Understand:** There are many different ways that they can help control their feelings, giving them lots of choices for handling different feelings or situations they might face.

Lesson	Objectives
	They can use their Islamic teachings to help handle their feelings. This includes things like praying, reading the Quran, or following Prophet Muhammad's advice to sit or lie down when they are upset.
	Students would **Do:**
	Students will use different strategies to regulate emotions.
Lesson 9: **Zone of regulation.**	Students would **Know:**
	The different zones of feelings.
	Students would **Understand:**
	How to deal with themselves when they are in any of the 4 zones.
	Students would **Do:**
	Practice managing their feelings with the correct strategy.

Domain: Building Relationships

Lesson	Objectives
Lesson 10: **The importance of relationships and what kinds are there?**	Students would **Know:**
	The benefits of having relationships in their lives.
	That relationships are the connections they have with others. like their parents, friends and others around them.
	It is important to have a good relationship with Allah. They can make this relationship stronger by doing things like praying, asking Allah for things they need, reading the Quran, being honest, and living by Islamic rules.
	Students would **Understand:**
	The importance of relationships in our lives is huge because they can influence our emotions, sometimes leading to happiness and other times causing sadness.
	Students would **Do:**
	They will determine what steps they can take to contribute positively to their relationships.
Lesson 11: How do we build happy relationships?	Students would **Know:**
	How having nice and friendly relationships can make them happy.
	Students would **Understand:**
	That to have good friends, they need to be a good friend too.
	Students would **Do:**
	Learn different strategies that can be used to build, grow, and maintain peer relationships.
Lesson 12: Characteristics of Being a good friend.	Students would **Know:**
	Good friendship involves things like trust, honesty, being kind, caring, and showing empathy.
	Students would **Understand:**
	Being kind to others can make their friendships better.
	Students would **Do:**
	They will practice being a good friend during a class activity, like sharing and working well with others.

Lesson	Objectives
Domain: Interpersonal problem-solving skills	
Lesson 13:	Students would **Know:**
Problems and how to solve them	That the meaning of the word "problem" and how to define and identify what is a problem.
	In alignment with their Islamic teachings, students will be reminded that when they face problems, they can pray to Allah for help and guidance to find solutions.
	Students would **Understand:**
	That when faced with problems, they can take actions to solve them.
	Students would **Do:**
	The students will list and think of possible simple ways to approach a problem and overcome the emotions associated with problem-solving.
Lesson 14:	Students would **Know:**
Think, Plan Ideas and Do	The process of assessing a problem.
	Students would **Understand:**
	There are various approaches to problem-solving.
	Students would **Do:**
	Students will use different ways and ideas to solve problems.
Lesson 15:	Students would **Know:**
Conflict Resolution strategies	How to solve conflict with others.
	To identify strategies to address conflict.
	Students would **Understand:**
	There are many ways to look at conflict and then solve it.
	Students would **Do:**
	Students will come up with suitable approaches to deal with conflict.

5.3.5   *PATHS- IC Lesson Plans*

Each lesson was carefully planned to use a lesson plan template that included essential components such as clear objectives, instructional materials, teaching methods, and activities to ensure comprehensive learning experiences. An example lesson plan is shown in Table 5.3 below. At the end of each lesson, the researcher reflected upon how well the lesson objectives were achieved. For more details about the PATHS- IC lessons, see Appendix E.

Table 5.3

PATHS- IC Lesson Plan Example

Self-concept: Lesson 1 - What I like about me.

Students would **Know**	*Materials*
That each individual possesses unique, positive qualities.	Colouring worksheet
Students would **Understand**	
The process of identifying, describing, and appreciating their own character, abilities, and talents.	
How to love themselves as Allah loves them.	
Students would **Do**	
Participate in discussions regarding their personal strengths, think positively of themselves, and develop a positive self-image	**Time:** 20 mins

Introduction: The teacher will explain to the students that each one of us is good at something in this life, for example, I am a good swimmer (ability) and, I am generous and like to help others (character) and make them smile.

Student Interaction: The teacher will ask the students what they like about themselves and what they are good at. Then the teacher explains to the children that we must remind ourselves how special, unique, and amazing we all are.

Islam: The teacher introduces to students that Allah made everyone in the best way possible on the inside and on the outside, so we can all love ourselves as Allah says, "We created the human being in the best design". The teacher will explain to students that since Allah made everyone and everything in the best way possible, there are good parts in everyone - what do the students like about themselves?

Activity: The teacher will get the students to share their answers and ask several students, "What made you realise that you like that about yourself?". Next, the teacher will ask students, what kinds of things do you do for others that make you feel good?

The lesson highlights that self-worth is intrinsic, and helping others is a meaningful way to express and enhance it, fostering both self-respect and positive feelings.

Development Activity

The teacher starts by asking the class one thing that they like about her. The teacher introduces a mirror to the class and the next activity is for each child to stand in front of the mirror and identify which things they like about themselves. The teacher will ask students to say one thing that is good about their friend who is seated next to them and let the whole class know about it.

Students' Independent Practice

The teacher will ask the students one day before the lesson to bring their photograph and bring it to this lesson. The teacher will provide a worksheet on self-love (a heart with hands) and students will know that loving themselves is very important. They will show they know this by sticking their photo in the middle and colouring the heart. The teacher will ask students to describe what they are good at, and the teacher will write a description of each student in their worksheet.

Evaluation and feedback

At the end of the lesson, the teacher will commend students for their active involvement. Then, a discussion will be initiated for students to share their opinions and learnings from the session. The teacher will also ask if they found the activities fun and informative. This feedback is invaluable in enhancing future lessons and ensuring that the targets for learning are being met effectively.

5.3.6   PATHS- IC Teaching Reflection

Upon reflecting on each individual lesson delivered through the PATHS- IC program, invaluable insights were gained. These reflections critically informed the evaluation of lessons and generated substantial ideas for the program's improvement. Reflection on the self-concept lessons underlined the importance of simplifying language for abstract concepts. To clarify the differences between "talents" and "abilities", activities such as drawing, simplifying the language used, or interactive storytelling could be employed. This adjustment would ensure concepts are clear and accessible for this age group.

The emotional understanding lessons underscored the benefits of using age-appropriate resources and engaging videos to clarify complex terms like "feelings" and demonstrate inner reactions to feelings. Activities, such as puppet shows or drama, could further underscore emotional literacy in a lively, relatable way for children. Simultaneously, these tools can generate a more nuanced understanding of different emotional responses, presented in a manner that aligns with their cognitive developmental stage. The self-regulation lessons emphasised the importance of incorporating supplementary educational videos to augment students' understanding regarding the influence of emotions on actions. Complementing these with practice-based activities such as games identifying emotions would reinforce this concept more practically.

Building Relationships lessons called attention to discussing online friendships, an increasingly relevant topic in today's digitally connected world. Even at a young age, children may interact with technology and begin to form friendships online. Thus, introducing activities that simulate online interactions could serve as controlled scenarios for teaching the nuances and etiquettes of online relationships, fostering a broader understanding of friendships within the digital context. Finally, evaluating the Interpersonal problem-solving skills lessons showcased the need for offering a more diversified range of problem-

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solving opportunities for preschoolers. Prolonging the lesson duration could facilitate deeper engagement and provide ample time for the children to navigate various problem-solving strategies. Incorporating playful activities such as role-plays with different problem scenarios or interactive group games can not only make the lessons more interesting but also provide an applied platform for these developing skills.

Overall, consideration should be given to elements of play, engaging visual aids, and age-appropriate content to create an interactive, enriching learning approach for five-year-olds. In general, the 20-minute duration of the lessons served their general purpose well. However, to facilitate more comprehensive activities and in-depth discussions, particularly among students' solution choices, a slightly longer lesson might be more effective. These reflections reinforced the need for adopting a dynamic teaching approach receptive to student feedback, continuously refining PATHS- IC for a richer student learning experience. For detailed insights into the reflection on each lesson and recommended improvements, please see Appendix F.

Chapter 6: PATHS- IC Implementation and Evaluation

6.1   Study Participants

Each Experimental Group experienced the same intervention for the PATHS- IC program. As shown in Table 6.1, the total number of participants included 52 females and 68 males. While in each intervention class, the Experimental Group comprised a roughly equal number of girls and boys, in Control Group C2 there were more boys (n = 21) than girls (n = 9).

Table 6.1

Intervention Group Composition

Group	Class	Males	Females	Age	Teachers
Experimental	C1	18	12	5	T1, T2
	C2	14	16	5	T3, T4
Control	C1	15	15	5	T5, T6
	C2	21	9	5	T7, T8

The majority of preschool students who participated in the PATHS- IC intervention were from middle-class backgrounds, while six of the students were from lower socio-economic backgrounds. All were of similar cultural, racial, and ethnic Arabic origins. The student participant demographic composition of the sample, encompassing socio-economic backgrounds, cultural affiliations, and ties to the Islamic community, closely mirrors the demographic characteristics of students in the MoE government-funded preschools, both regionally and nationally. This high level of sample consistency underscores the representativeness of the sample, enhancing the broad applicability of the findings within the public preschool context across KSA.

6.2 Observation of Teachers

Eight teachers were observed in four classrooms, each class being staffed by 2 teachers. Teachers were identified by number (e.g., T1, T2) to ensure anonymity, and their estimated ages and years of teaching experience were recorded. The researcher estimated the ages of some of the teachers since it is not considered polite for women in KSA culture to be asked about their ages. Additionally, the ages of some teachers were learned incidentally during conversations the researcher held with them (see Table 6.2).

The ages of teachers participating in this study were of interest and considered for correlational purposes during the classroom observations. Several research studies have observed potential relationships between a preschool teacher's age and various aspects of their teaching approaches, these relationships encompass elements such as management styles, self-regulation capacities, and other individual characteristics (Perels et al., 2009; Veldman et al., 2013; Wolde, 2021). However, it is important to acknowledge that a teacher's age should not be considered the sole factor that may influence their approach to interacting with students and the corresponding quality of the teacher-student relationship. In addition to age, a teacher's personal temperament, teaching style, and individual experience may also play significant roles in determining a teacher's attitude and interactions with their students, including the teacher's expressions of affection, enthusiasm, or negative responses toward student behaviour (Longobardi et al., 2024; Rebecca et al., 2011).

6.3 Observation of Teachers' Behaviours

This section aimed to provide a picture of the context of the study by exploring different teaching styles. I reflected on my own teaching style because I had to consider how the program was implemented in relation to it. Although I was not sure whether teaching style would significantly impact the effectiveness of the program, I felt it was important to

document it as part of the broader study. This reflection allowed me to capture any potential indirect influences on the program's outcomes.

Based on my observations in the Experimental Group class 1 led by teacher T2, the younger teacher exhibited a higher level of physical energy and enthusiasm when interacting with the children compared to the older teacher. This was especially evident during outdoor playtime, where T2 actively engaged in physical activities such as playing and jumping with the children. On the other hand, the older teacher appeared to have a lower energy level and took a more passive approach to interacting with the children. During outdoor playtime, the older teacher remained seated and mainly observed the students from a distance. While this approach may have its benefits, such as allowing the children to play and explore independently, it seemed to create a more distant relationship between the teacher and students. One potential explanation for the observed differences in teaching style between older and younger teachers may have been the level and type of formal education and training they received. Many of the teachers had graduated from their teaching programs 20 or more years ago and had not received additional professional development training. This lack of ongoing training could potentially impact their teaching methodologies and limit their ability to adapt to newer approaches and best practices applied in more recent teacher preparation and development courses.

Furthermore, educational methodologies and theories have evolved over the years, with newer methodologies being taught in universities that differ from those taught decades ago (Ibrahim & Barnawi, 2022). Teachers who have been in the system for many years and have not received any additional support may find it challenging to adapt their teaching style to reflect these changes, potentially resulting in a more traditional teaching approach. Therefore, while age may be a factor in a teacher's approach to interacting with students, it is essential to consider the broader context and individual factors that can influence their

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teaching style. Similarly, teaching experience can play a significant role in shaping how teachers manage their classrooms and engage with students, highlighting the importance of both experience and age in understanding their teaching methods. Nonetheless, my observations suggested that energy levels and level of physical activity could significantly impact the relationship between teachers and students, particularly in a preschool setting where play and physical activity are crucial components of the curriculum (Cheung, 2020).

Table 6.2

Age and Experience Details of Teachers in the Two Different Groups

Group	Teacher Code	Class	Age	Teaching Experience
Experimental Group	T1	C1	50-54	8 years
	T2	C1	30-34	6 years
	T3	C2	55-59	30 years
	T4	C2	50-54	15 years
Control Group	T5	C1	40-44	5 years
	T6	C1	35-39	8 years
	T7	C2	55-59	7 years
	T8	C2	55-59	9 years

As shown in Table 6.2, the teaching styles and student management practices differed from class to class and among the teacher participants, with variations also observed in teaching experience. Numerous teaching styles and definitions have been described and discussed in the literature (Gafoor & Babu, 2012; Grasha & Yangarber-Hicks, 2000). Based on Shindler (2009) four-style matrix of approaches taken by teachers in the classroom (see Figure 6.1), all four styles of teaching were observed in the preschool classrooms of this study.

Figure 6.1

Shindler's Four Quadrant Matrix of Management Style Orientation and Practice

(Shindler, 2009, p. 14)
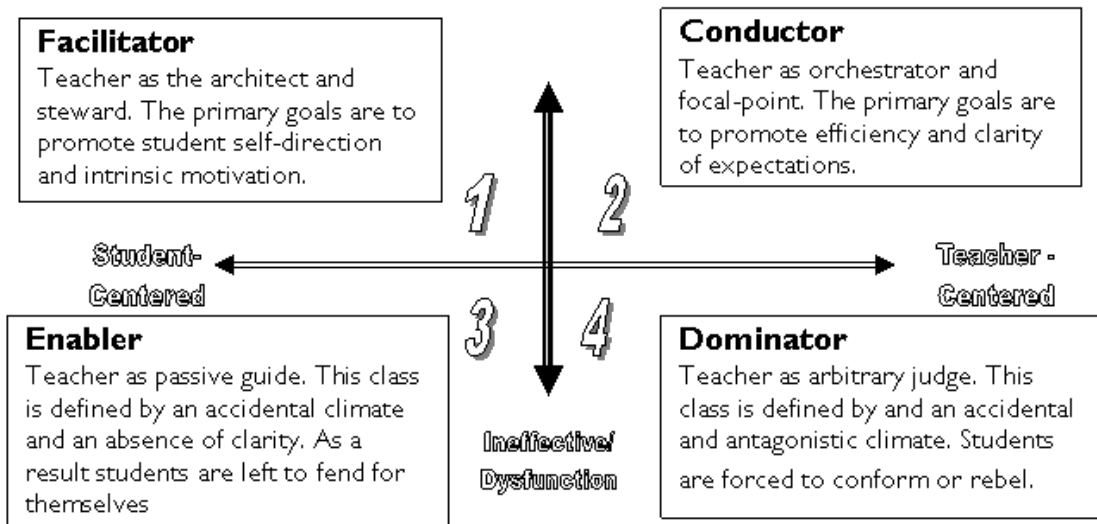
According to Shindler (2009), the two types of teachers that would be more effective in facilitating learning improvement are the facilitator and the conductor type of teachers as these teachers focus on the building of strong relationships with the students. Transformative SEL (CASEL, 2023) is a process that occurs when the teacher is able to act as a facilitator or conductor and by way of teaching SEL is able to forge strong, respectful, and therapeutic relationships with their students. The transformation process of the preschool student depends on the teacher and on the approach taken towards teaching SEL. Transformative SEL takes place when the teachers as facilitators or conductors work with students, families, and schools to bring about improvement in the preschool students' outcomes and objectives. Developmentally appropriate learning opportunities would be part of this process where students engage in this transformative learning process. Shindler (2009) asserted that Transformative Classroom Management (TCM) could assist in identifying a teacher's approach to their pedagogy and could lead to improvement of teaching methods, student

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behaviour, and student achievement by bringing out the positive feelings that naturally exist in the classroom. This concept offers strategies for teachers in creating a high-functioning class, developing a classroom social contract, overcoming problems with challenging students, promoting a "psychology of success", and creating a climate promoting high student responsibility and motivation. The four styles are described below.

Style 1-Facilitator Student-Centred is the most consistent, and stable, and involves providing clear instructions, that enable students to behave appropriately, be more self-directed, and remain calm during the learning process. This teaching style emphasises motivation rather than forcing students to conform to a standard. The Style 1 approach emphasises learning more than end products, as well as personal growth rather than the attainment of rewards or comparisons to other students.

Style 2-Conductor Teacher-Centred is an effective classroom management approach. This approach builds on consistency and clarity. The goals of this approach are productive learning, a quality environment, respectful and positive relationships, and accountability (Shindler, 2009).

Style 3-Enabler Student-Centred operates under the faulty assumption that if they are passive and make enough reasonable verbal appeals to students (rather than taking deliberate action and/or delivering meaningful consequences), at some point, the students will respond with functional behaviour. This approach has a destructive impact on overall classroom management, which ends up with students being disrespectful, disruptive, lacking attention, and doing various things that are unrelated to the lesson (Shindler, 2009). The fundamental problem is that the teacher using a Style 3 approach preaches self-direction and internal motivation yet does little to promote them.

Style 4-Dominator, Teacher-Centred orientations emphasise the teacher as the boss. The teacher who uses the Style 4 orientation feels the need to dominate by both overt and covert means. Often the mood of a teacher has a great deal to do with the climate in the classroom on any given day. The authoritarian display of the power of the Style 4 management practice may indicate that there is a high degree of intentionality, but closer examination shows a much less intentional attitude.

Table 6.3

Details of Different Teachers' Teaching Styles

Group	Class Number	Teacher Code	Teaching Style
Experimental Group	Class 1	T1	Style 4 – dominator (teacher-centred)
	Class 1	T2	Style 1 – facilitator (student-centred)
	Class 2	T3	Style 3 – enabler (student-centred)
	Class 2	T4	Style 3 – enabler (student-centred)
Control Group	Class 1	T5	Style 2 – conductor (teacher-centred
	Class 1	T6	Style 2 – conductor (teacher-centred)
	Class 2	T7	Style 3 – enabler (student-centred)
	Class 2	T8	Style 3 – enabler (student-centred)

As shown in Table 6.3, for instance, in Experimental Group class 1, each teacher had a different method of teaching than the other. The style of teacher 1(T1) showed behaviour that correlated with a Style 4-Dominator, whereas teacher 2's (T2) classroom management style aligned closely with a Style 1-Facilitator. The classroom climate of this class showed that the teachers made an extra effort to provide supportive, loving, and caring relationships for all the students. Teacher T2 used both positive reinforcement and praise on several occasions and the students responded well to that style. Praise was very effective in motivating the students.

In the Experimental Group class 2, the teaching styles of both teachers were of a Style 3-Enabler. In this class, the classroom environment was very messy and disorderly, and the

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children were always interrupting the lessons and going outside the classroom without permission. It was difficult for both teachers to manage a class effectively most of the time and they did not set clear limits with their students, so their students did not pay much attention to them or show respect.

For the Control Group class 1, both teachers were using the teaching Style 2-Conductor. The classroom climate was calm and orderly, and students always paid attention to the teacher. Teachers often reduced potential distractions by letting students who had difficulty maintaining attention focus near the source of instruction. Both teachers would position themselves near the student when giving instructions in order to help the student by reducing barriers and distractions between them and the lesson.

In Control Group class 2, both teachers adopted and used Style 3- the enabler, which allows the students to do as they please. The students were confused as the teaching style was without boundaries in terms of a classroom management approach. The classroom climate for this class consisted of clear, simple rules for children to follow and they were reminded every day of the rules before lessons began. Both teachers used frequent praise and positive comments to encourage and motivate students. These teachers worked together and yet their classroom ground rules were different from one another which resulted in confusion for the students. For example, when one of the students asked the first teacher to go out of the class to check his bag and bring chocolate, the teacher said no, but when the student asked another teacher, the teacher did allow him to go.

6.3.1 Researcher's Teaching Style

As the researcher teaching all classes, I employed a style resembling both a teacher-centred "Conductor" and a student-centred "Facilitator". I maintained a structured, orderly classroom much like a Conductor would, delivering clear instructions, and tailoring lesson

pace to the students' comprehension level. Similarly, in line with a Facilitator's approach, I endorsed student independence, promoted open expression of ideas, and facilitated active participation. This also involved acknowledging students' unique knowledge and experiences to construct a supportive learning environment. Since I did not have someone else observe my teaching style, I used self-reflection to assess how I delivered the program compared to others. I understand that self-assessment is not as thorough as being observed by someone else, but I felt it was important to reflect on how I taught the program. I know that relying on self-reflection can introduce some bias and may not be as reliable as an external evaluation, but in this situation, it was the best option to help understand how my teaching style might have influenced the program. Importantly, I taught all classes in the study adopting this same teaching style, which ensured that any differences in student outcomes across classes were attributable to the intervention, not variations in teaching styles. Using this standardised approach across all classes allowed me to control for teaching style influences effectively, as I was the common teaching figure in each. This strategy crucially contributed to reducing potential teacher-related variables, thereby enhancing the validity of the research results.

6.4   PATHS- IC Implementation

The PATHS- IC intervention experimental phase of this research was conducted in two classes. The total number of students involved in this study from each preschool was 60. In each preschool one of the two classes became the Experimental Group, while the other became the Control Group. For additional details about the implementation process for both the experimental and Control Groups and the reflections, please refer to Appendix F.

6.5 Inter-Rater Reliability of Subjective Assessments

The reliability of subjective assessments conducted by both the researcher and RA regarding students' behaviour across various domains outlined in the Assessment Questionnaire was examined. For the assessment of inter-rater reliability, a subset of 30 students was randomly chosen from the assessment database. The evaluations made by the researcher and RA were then compared. The resulting agreement between the two assessors was calculated to be 84.75%, indicating a substantial level of concordance in their subjective assessments. This high percentage underscores the robust consistency and reliability observed in their evaluations, lending credibility to the subjective assessment process. As shown in Table 6.4, the detailed inter-rater reliability agreement for each assessment question. For instance, the agreement for question set BASC-3 BESS ranged from 86.67% to 100%, while the agreement for question set TRS-CAB showed more variation, with percentages ranging from 36.67% to 96.67%. The overall average agreement was 84.75%, demonstrating strong reliability in the assessments conducted by both raters. For more details see Table 6.4. Additionally, Table 6.5 presented the inter-rater reliability for various behavioural assessment categories, organised by sub-domain. Each sub-domain includes the number of items assessed and the average agreement percentage between raters. For instance, in Internalising Behaviour, consisting of 6 items, the average agreement between raters was 95.00%.

Table 6.4

Inter-Rater Reliability Agreement for Assessment Questions

Question Set BASC-3 BESS	Sum of agreements	%	Question Set TRS-CAB	Sum of agreements	%
IRQ_01	30	100.00	IRQ_01	29	96.67
IRQ_02	28	93.33	IRQ_02	20	66.67
IRQ_03	29	96.67	IRQ_03	23	76.67
IRQ_04	28	93.33	IRQ_04	22	73.33
IRQ_05	27	90.00	IRQ_05	24	80.00
IRQ_06	29	96.67	IRQ_06	19	63.33
IRQ_07	30	100.00	IRQ_07	19	63.33
IRQ_08	28	93.33	IRQ_08	24	80.00
IRQ_09	27	90.00	IRQ_09	27	90.00
IRQ_10	27	90.00	IRQ_10	20	66.67
IRQ_11	26	86.67	IRQ_11	23	76.67
IRQ_12	30	100.00	IRQ_12	11	36.67
IRQ_13	29	96.67	IRQ_13	27	90.00
IRQ_14	29	96.67	IRQ_14	17	56.67
IRQ_15	27	90.00	IRQ_15	21	70.00
IRQ_16	28	93.33	IRQ_16	24	80.00
IRQ_17	29	96.67	IRQ_17	24	80.00
IRQ_18	30	100.00	IRQ_18	29	96.67
IRQ_19	27	90.00	IRQ_19	25	83.33
IRQ_20	29	96.67	IRQ_20	22	73.33
Overall Average Agreement		**84.75%**			

Table 6.5

Inter-rater Reliability for Behavioural Assessment Categories

Sub-Domain	Number of items	Average Agreement
Internalising Behaviour	6	95.00
Attention Behaviour	2	95.00
Externalising Behaviour	6	90.56
Adaptive Behaviour	6	97.78
Scholastic Conduct	3	85.56
Social Competence	7	73.33
Behavioural Conduct	9	73.00

6.6   Reliability of Scales

All scales were reliable with Cronbach Alpha values > 0.70. As shown in Table 6.6, for example, the Internalising Behaviour domain, which consists of 6 items, had a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.886, indicating high reliability. One item on the TRS-CAB scale, namely, "This child often gets in trouble because of things (s)he does" was problematic because it was included in the TRS-CAB Scale under "behavioural conduct", but it reflected "externalising behaviour" which made it ambiguous to the assessor. Removal of this item from the database in subsequent analyses ensured that this scale was reliable. Therefore, there were only 9, instead of 10 items that measured Behavioural Conduct.

Table 6.6

Reliability of Assessment Scales

Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Internalising Behaviour	6	0.886
Attention Behaviour	2	0.800
Externalising Behaviour	6	0.965
Adaptive Behaviour	6	0.891
Scholastic Conduct	3	0.835
Social Competence	7	0.824
Behavioural Conduct	9	0.813

6.7   Quantitative Results

The purpose of this phase of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the PATHS- IC program in fostering SEL competencies in preschool children in KSA.

As detailed below, prior to the intervention, there were differences in various domains between the Control and Experimental Groups. Initially, there were differences between the two groups in terms of internalising behaviours, externalising behaviours, adaptive behaviours, and scholastic behaviours, where the Experimental Group was worse than the

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Control Group. However, the Experimental Group consistently improved after participating in the PATHS- IC intervention. This improvement was evident in internalising behaviour, externalising behaviour, adaptive behaviour, and scholastic conduct.

The Control Group, without receiving the intervention, also demonstrated significant improvements in adaptive behaviour, attention behaviours and social competence. The Control Group remained relatively stable without intervention in externalising behaviour, scholastic and behavioural conduct. Conversely, the Control Group without intervention showed worse internalising behaviour. These findings highlight the effectiveness of the PATHS- IC intervention in promoting positive changes in the Experimental Group and suggest the presence of other factors contributing to improvements in the Control Group.

The study utilised Hedges'g to quantify effect sizes, with 0.2, 0.5, and 0.8 indicating small, medium, and large effects respectively. These effect sizes aid in understanding the extent of improvement or change in various behavioural dimensions as a result of the PATHS- IC intervention.

Statistical analysis comparing the EG and CG pre- and post-PATHS- IC intervention are detailed below. The results are reported according to specific statistical analyses:

The "*Baseline*": The specific analysis of an independent t-test was conducted for the baseline measure that involved comparing the levels of behaviour between the Control and Experimental Groups before the PATHS- IC intervention, allowing for the determination of any existing differences in behaviour between the two groups before the intervention.

Post-intervention: The specific analysis of an independent t-test was conducted for both the Experimental and Control Groups. This test aimed to determine whether there were statistically significant differences between the Experimental and Control Groups on all variables after the intervention.

Experimental Group: The specific analysis of a paired t-test was conducted and aimed to identify any significant changes in behaviour after the implementation of the PATHS- IC program. This involved comparing behaviour scores before and after the intervention within the Experimental Group to assess the effectiveness of the PATHS- IC program in behaviour.

Control Group: The specific analysis of a paired t-test was conducted and focused on determining if there were any significant changes in behaviour from pre- to post-intervention. This involved comparing behaviour scores before and after the intervention within the Control Group to assess any changes over time.

6.7.1   Internalising Behaviour Results

This section provides a detailed examination of the effectiveness of the PATHS- IC program in internalising behaviour among participants in the Experimental Group, contrasted with the outcomes observed within the Control Group.

Hypothesis: It was hypothesised that, following the PATHS- IC intervention, the Experimental Group would demonstrate a significant reduction in internalising behaviours compared to the Control Group.

Baseline: as shown in Table 6.7, pre-intervention the Control Group and Experimental Group differed in their internalisation levels ($t(112.3) = 4.33$, $p < .001$, ES (Hedges'g) = .785) with the Experimental Group (Mean = 8.94, $SD = 2.23$) showing significantly greater internalisation than the Control Group (Mean = 7.35, $SD = 1.77$).

Post-intervention: following the intervention there was no significant difference between the experimental and Control Groups in terms of internalisation ($t(118) = 1.57$, $p > .05$, ES (Hedges'g) = .286).

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Experimental Group: the Experimental Group showed significant improvement (t (59) = 6.6, *p* <.001, ES (Hedges'g) = .841) post-intervention as the mean decreased from 8.94 (*SD* = 2.23) pre-intervention to 7.38 (*SD* = 1.89) post-intervention. The effect size of 0.841 was moderately high.

Control Group: the Control Group fared significantly worse (t (59) = 3.69, *p* <.001, ES (Hedges'g) = .470) as the mean internalisation score increased from 7.35 (*SD* =1.78) pre-intervention to 8.00 (*SD* = 2.37) post-intervention. The effect size of 0.470, was moderate.

These findings suggest that the PATHS- IC program was effective in decreasing internalising behaviour.

6.7.2 Externalising Behaviour

This section examines the impact of the PATHS- IC program, examining changes in externalising behaviour among the participants of the Experimental Group and the Control Group.

Hypothesis: It was hypothesised that the PATHS- IC intervention would lead to a significant reduction in externalising behaviours in the Experimental Group compared to the Control Group.

Baseline: Table 6.7 shows that pre-intervention, there existed a disparity in externalisation between the Control Group and Experimental Group (t (92.6) =4.78, *p* <.001, ES (Hedges'g) = .868). The Experimental Group displayed significantly higher externalisation (Mean = 12.46, *SD* = 5.27) compared to the Control Group (Mean = 8.73, *SD* = 2.94).

Post-intervention: following the intervention, there was no significant difference in externalisation between the experimental and Control Groups (t (118) = .865, *p* > .05, ES (Hedges'g) = .157).

Experimental Group: the Experimental Group showed significant improvement post-intervention (t (59) = 5.83, *p* < .001, ES (Hedges'g) = .743), as the mean decreased from 12.46(*SD* = 5.27) pre-intervention to 9.53 (*SD* = 4.02) post-intervention.

Control Group: in contrast, the Control Group did not exhibit a significant change (t (59) = .954, p > .05, ES (Hedges'g) = .122), with the mean externalisation score remaining similar from 8.73 (*SD* = 2.94) pre-intervention to 8.98 (*SD* = 2.84) post-intervention, as the values before and after the intervention were close to each other.

These findings suggest that the PATHS- IC program was effective in decreasing externalising behaviour, as only the Experimental Group showed improvement.

6.7.3   Adaptive Behaviour

This section provides a thorough analysis of the changes in adaptive behaviour before and after the implementation of the PATHS- IC program in the Experimental Group, contrasting it with the Control Group, which did not receive the PATHS- IC intervention.

Hypothesis: It was hypothesised that the Experimental Group would show a significant improvement in adaptive behaviours as a result of the PATHS- IC intervention.

Baseline: as illustrated in Table 6.7, pre-intervention, the Control Group and Experimental Group exhibited contrasting levels of adaptive behaviour (t (87.7) =3.18, *p* <.001, ES (Hedges'g) = .577), with the Experimental Group (Mean = 13.82, *SD* = 2.93) displaying significantly higher mean scores compared to the Control Group (Mean = 12.47, *SD* = 1.49).

Post-intervention: after the intervention, there was no significant difference between the experimental and Control Groups in terms of adaptive behaviour. (t (118) = 1.57, *p* > .05, ES (Hedges'g) = .286).

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Experimental Group: notably, the Experimental Group demonstrated substantial improvement (t (59) = 11.29, *p* <.001, ES (Hedges'g) = 1.44), with the mean adaptive behaviour score increasing from 13.82 (*SD* = 2.93) pre-intervention to 16.88 (*SD* = 2.86) post-intervention.

Control Group: similarly, the Control Group also exhibited significant improvement (t (59) = 11.29, *p* <.001, ES (Hedges'g) = 1.47), with the mean adaptive behaviour score increasing from 12.47 (*SD* = 1.49) pre-intervention to 15.60 (*SD* =2.84) post-intervention.

While the Experimental Group showed considerable improvement, no conclusions can be reached about the effectiveness of the PATHS- IC program for adaptive behaviour, as the Control Group also improved in adaptation.

6.7.4 Attention Behaviours

This section presents a thorough review of changes in attention behaviours before and after the use of the PATHS- IC program in the Experimental Group, contrasting this with the Control Group that did not go through the PATHS- IC program.

Hypothesis: It was hypothesised that the Experimental Group would experience a significant enhancement in attention behaviours following the PATHS- IC intervention.

Baseline: As indicated in Table 6.7, prior to intervention, both the Control Group and Experimental Group had similar levels of attention behaviours (t (95.56) =.285, *p* >.05, ES (Hedges'g) = .052) with the Experimental Group (Mean = 4.35, *SD* = 1.37) showing no statistically significant difference compared to the Control Group (Mean = 4.41, *SD* = .81).

Post-intervention: after the intervention, the Experimental Group and Control Group had significantly different attention behaviours. (t (106) = 2.14, *p* < 0.05, ES (Hedges'g) = .389).

Experimental Group: there was a significant improvement in the Experimental Group (t (59) = 10.05, p <.001, ES (Hedges'g) = 1.28) post-intervention as the mean increased from 4.35(SD = 1.37) pre-intervention to 5.62 (SD = 1.39) post-intervention.

Control Group: similarly, the Control Group showed significant improvement (t (59) = 6.96, p <.001, ES (Hedges'g) = .888) as the mean attention score increased from 4.41 (SD = .81) pre-intervention to 5.14 (SD =.996) post-intervention.

The results indicate that the Experimental Group showed a greater improvement compared to the Control Group as the effect size was greater (i.e., Hedges'g was 1.28 for the Experimental Group compared to .888 for the Control Group). This indicates a specific impact of the intervention.

6.7.5   *Poor Scholastic Conduct*

This section delves into a detailed examination of the impact of the PATHS- IC program on scholastic conduct, particularly within the Experimental Group, while contrasting these outcomes with those observed within the Control Group that did not participate in the PATHS- IC program.

Hypothesis: It was hypothesised that the Experimental Group would show a significant improvement in scholastic conduct post-intervention, in contrast to the Control Group.

Baseline: Table 6.7 shows that prior to the intervention, there were statistically significant differences in poor scholastic conduct between the Control Group and Experimental Group (t (118) =2.089, $p < 0.05$, ES (Hedges'g) = .379). The Experimental Group (Mean = 9.31, SD = 3.03) exhibited poorer levels of scholastic conduct compared to the Control Group (Mean = 8.33 SD = 2.03).

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Post-intervention: following the intervention, no significant differences emerged between the two groups in terms of scholastic conduct. (t (118) = .565, $p > .05$, ES (Hedges'g) = .102)

Experimental Group: the Experimental Group demonstrated significant improvement (t (59) = 3.96, $p < .001$, ES (Hedges'g) = .505), with the mean improving from 9.31 ($SD = 3.03$) pre-intervention to 8.13 ($SD = 2.55$) post-intervention.

Control Group: in contrast, the Control Group showed no significant change (t (59) = 149, $p > .05$, ES (Hedges'g) = .019), with the mean scholastic conduct remaining similar from 8.33 ($SD = 2.03$) pre-intervention to 8.35 ($SD = 1.93$) post-intervention.

6.7.6 Social Competence

This section delves into the analysis of social competence changes observed in both the Experimental and Control Groups before and after the implementation of the PATHS- IC program.

Hypothesis: It was hypothesised that the Experimental Group would show a significant improvement in social competence as a result of the PATHS- IC intervention, compared to the Control Group.

Baseline: based on the data presented in Table 6.7, prior to the intervention, both the Control Group and Experimental Group demonstrated similar levels of social competence (t (108) = .974, $p > .05$, ES (Hedges'g) = .177). The Experimental Group had a mean social competence score of 23.80 ($SD = 3.95$), which was not significantly different from the Control Group mean score of 24.42 ($SD = 2.89$).

Post-intervention: following the intervention, there was a significant difference in social competence observed between the Experimental and Control Groups (t (118) = 1.84, $p < 0.05$, ES (Hedges'g) = .334). It appears that the Experimental Group showed a greater

improvement in social competence compared to the Control Group following the intervention.

Experimental Group: Specifically, the Experimental Group showed significant change in social competence post-intervention (t (59) = 8.03, *p* <.001, ES (Hedges'g) = 1.024), as the mean score increased from 23.80 (*SD* = 3.95) pre-intervention to 27.80 (*SD* = 2.53) post-intervention.

Control Group: similarly, the Control Group also exhibited significant change (t (59) = 6.549, *p* <.001, ES (Hedges'g) = .834), with the mean social competence score increasing from 24.42 (*SD* = 2.89) pre-intervention to 26.60 (*SD* = 2.56) post-intervention.

The results indicate that the Experimental Group showed a greater improvement compared to the Control Group as the effect size was greater (i.e., Hedges'g was 1.024 for the Experimental Group compared to 0.834 for the Control Group). This suggests that the participants in the Experimental Group, who underwent the intervention, improved more. On the other hand, the Control Group also showed improvement, The observed improvement in the Experimental Group was greater than that in the Control Group, indicating a specific impact of the intervention.

6.7.7   *Behavioural Conduct*

This section examines changes in behavioural conduct, particularly within the Experimental Group, and compares these results to those observed in the Control Group that did not participate in the PATHS- IC program.

Hypothesis: It was hypothesised that the Experimental Group would show a significant improvement in behavioural conduct as a result of the PATHS- IC intervention, compared to the Control Group.

Baseline: Table 6.7 shows that pre-Intervention the Control Group and Experimental Group exhibited similar levels of behavioural conduct (t (118) =.0.641, *p* >.05, ES (Hedges'g) = .116) with the Experimental Group (Mean = 35.03 *SD* = 5.09) showing no statistically significant difference compared to the Control Group (Mean =35.58, *SD*= 4.42).

Post-intervention: following the intervention there was no significant difference between the experimental and Control Groups in terms of behavioural conduct (t (118) = 0.204, *p* > 0.05, ES (Hedges'g) = .153). However, it is evident that the Experimental Group showed a more significant improvement in behavioural conduct compared to the Control Group following the intervention, according to the effect size as measured by Hedge's G, which was stronger for the Experimental Group.

Experimental Group: The Experimental Group showed significant improvement (t (59) = 5.75, *p* <.001, ES (Hedges'g) = .733) as the mean increased from 35.03 (*SD* =5.09) pre-intervention to 37.67 (*SD* = 4.96) post-intervention.

Control Group: similarly, the Control Group showed a significant difference (t (59) = 3.15, *p* = .001, ES (Hedges'g) = 0.402) as the mean behavioural conduct score increased from 35.58 (*SD* =4.42) pre-intervention to 36.91 (*SD* = 4.87) post-intervention.

6.8   Gender Differences

No statistically significant differences between males and females were found pre-intervention for participants in the Control as well as Experimental Groups following Bonferroni correction for family-wise error (see Chapter 3).

Following the PATHS- IC intervention, tests were conducted to determine if the results were different between males and females. The results revealed that there were no significant differences between males and females across any of the SEL domains. Therefore, gender did not have an impact on the observed outcomes and made no statistically significant difference.

6.9   Class Differences

As part of the analysis, tests were conducted to investigate the potential impact of teachers' teaching styles on the effectiveness of the PATHS- IC program. The results showed that there was no difference in the program's effectiveness based on the teachers' teaching styles. This pattern suggests that the preschool teachers' teaching styles did not significantly impact the PATHS- IC program outcomes when delivered by an external facilitator. Essentially, these findings underscore the effectiveness and versatility of the PATHS- IC program; it consistently performed well and yielded positive outcomes, irrespective of the teachers' unique teaching styles. Such results highlight the PATHS- IC program's potential to be universally applicable and beneficial when delivered by a trained facilitator, despite the diverse pedagogical styles in play. The analysis also explored whether teaching style might have an indirect effect on the SEL program's outcomes, even though teachers did not deliver the program. The idea was that the way teachers manage their classrooms, such as how they create a positive environment and handle behaviour, could still influence how children respond to the program. For example, a well-managed classroom might help children engage

better with the program. However, there was not enough evidence to show a strong connection between teaching style and the program's results. This suggests that other factors, like the program itself, were more important in shaping the outcomes.

6.10   Summary

The results of the study are summarised in Table 6.7 and illustrated in Figure 6.2. The table provides a comprehensive overview of the findings in terms of internalising behaviour, externalising behaviour, adaptive behaviour, attention behaviour, poor scholastic conduct, social competence, and behavioural conduct. The shaded area indicates significant changes in pre- and post-measures.

In summary of the findings, before the implementation of the PATHS- IC intervention, significant behavioural differences were noted between the Control and Experimental Groups. The Experimental Group demonstrated increased internalisation, externalising, and adaptive behaviour, while no notable differences were observed in attention, poor scholastic conduct, social competence, and behavioural conduct. However, following the intervention, significant improvements were evident in both groups across all behavioural categories. Notably, larger improvements were seen within the Experimental Group for internalising, externalising, attention, and social competence. Adaptive behaviour and behavioural conduct improved generally in both groups. Importantly, improvements in poor scholastic conduct were significantly evident within the Experimental Group.

Table 6.7

Summary of Quantitative Findings

		Pre-Score Mean	**Post- Score Mean**	**Difference**
Internalising Behaviour	*Experimental*	8.94 (SD = 2.23)	7.38 (SD = 1.89)	improved
	Control	7.35 (SD = 1.77)	8.00 (SD = 2.37)	deteriorated
	Control/ Experimental	Pre-Difference – Experimental worse - Hedges'g = .785	Post-Difference – Experimental and Control same - Hedges'g = .286	
Externalising Behaviour	*Experimental*	12.46 (SD = 5.27)	9.53 (SD = 4.02)	improved
	Control	8.73 (SD = 2.94)	8.98 (SD = 2.84)	No change
	Control/ Experimental	Pre-Difference – Experimental worse - Hedges'g = .868	Post-Difference – Experimental and Control same - Hedges'g = .157	
Adaptive Behaviour	*Experimental*	13.82 (SD = 2.93)	16.88 (SD = 2.86)	improved
	Control	12.47 (SD = 1.49)	15.60 (SD = 2.84)	improved
	Control/ Experimental	Pre-Difference – Experimental better - Hedges'g = .577	Post-Difference – Experimental much better - ES (Hedges'g) = .286	NO Suggested improvement from PATHS-IC
Attention Behaviours	*Experimental*	4.35 (SD = 1.37)	5.62 (SD = 1.39)	improved
	Control	4.41 (SD = .81)	5.14 (SD =.996)	improved
	Control/ Experimental	Pre-Difference – no significant difference - Hedges'g = .052	Post-Difference – Experimental much better - Hedges'g = .389	Suggested improvement from PATHS-IC
Poor Scholastic Conduct	*Experimental*	9.31 (SD =3.03)	8.13 (SD = 2.55)	Improved
	Control	8.33 (SD =2.03)	8.35 (SD = 1.93)	No change
	Control/ Experimental	Pre-Difference – Experimental worse - Hedges'g = .379	Post-Difference – Experimental and Control same - Hedges'g = .102	
Social Competence	*Experimental*	23.80 (SD = 3.95)	27.80 (SD = 2.53)	Improved
	Control	24.42 (SD = 2.89)	26.60 (SD = 2.56)	Improved
	Control/ Experimental	Pre-Difference – no significant difference - Hedges'g = .177	Post-Difference – Experimental much better- Hedges'g = .334	Suggested improvement from PATHS-IC
Behavioural Conduct	*Experimental*	35.03 (SD= 5.09)	37.67 (SD= 4.96)	Improved
	Control	35.58 (SD= 4.42)	36.91 (SD= 4.87)	Improved
	Control/ Experimental	Pre-Difference – no significant difference - Hedges'g = .116)	Post-Difference – no significant difference - Hedges'g = .153	Suggested improvement from PATHS-IC

Figure 6.2

Diagrammatic Representation of Program Intervention Findings
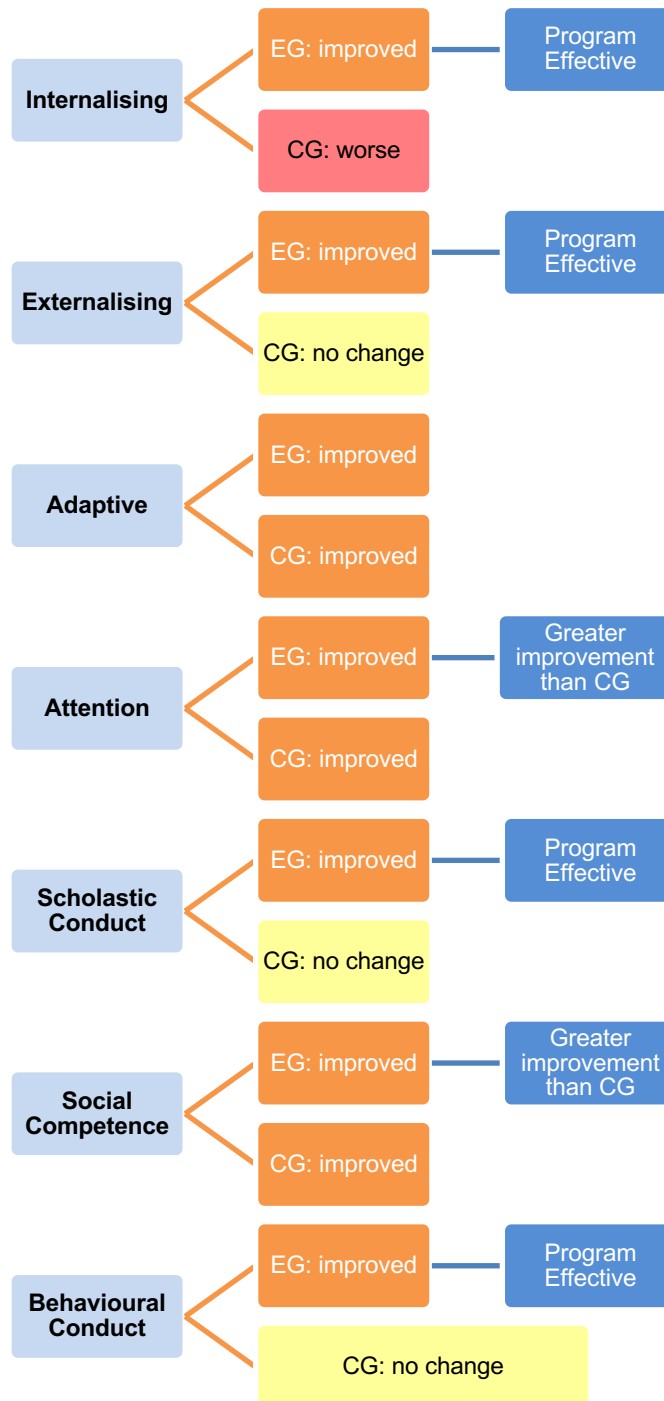
Chapter 7: Discussion

The study findings indicate that the PATHS- IC program was effective in reducing disruptive behaviour and improving the social-emotional skills of preschool children. The PATHS- IC program not only complemented preschool education but also provided a structured culturally appropriate framework for nurturing SEL competencies in young preschool KSA learners. The integration of SEL practices within preschool education, as evidenced by the positive outcomes of the PATHS- IC program, underscores the pivotal role of early childhood educators in building holistic development among young learners.

Post-intervention, the Experimental Group showed enhancements in their attention behaviour, adaptability, scholastic conduct, social competence, and overall behavioural conduct. Accompanying these improvements, significant reductions were observed in internalising behaviour and externalising behaviour. This suggests that progress in managing emotions internally can correlate with a decrease in external disruptive behaviour. Domitrovich et al. (2017b), have pointed out that advancements in these behavioural domains suggest an interconnectedness, providing evidence that enhancements in one area can precipitate improvements in other related behavioural domains. The changes observed here indeed affirm such interconnectedness and simultaneous progression in multiple behavioural aspects.

The multi-faceted development in SEL, as revealed through this study, stresses that children's social-emotional growth is far from being linear or compartmentalised. It is rather an intricate web of interconnected domains, where progress in one realm often reflects in others. This complexity aligns with the observations of Schonert-Reichl (2019), who

acknowledged that social and emotional competencies, poised within interconnected contexts, are critical for success and can be nurtured through education. This connection expounds a strong case for a comprehensive and holistic SEL program, like PATHS- IC, which caters to multiple facets of social-emotional development simultaneously. Leveraging this interconnected nature of development domains, as Blad (2017) also suggested, is central to creating comprehensive educational programs. Therefore, to accurately foster children's social-emotional health, it is pivotal for educators to acknowledge this overlap and strive towards the design and delivery of programs that cater to the multi-layered complexity of social-emotional development.

The PATHS- IC program was positioned to draw from established SEL practices while addressing the unique needs and cultural context of preschools in KSA. Aligning with the CASEL framework strengthened the program's theoretical foundation and enhanced its ability to support participants' social-emotional development and educational experience. Additionally, the observed decrease in disruptive behaviuor and improvement in social-emotional skills among preschoolers involved in the PATHS- IC program highlights the value of investing in SEL programs, benefiting both education and broader social-emotional development.

7.1   Preschool Effect

In addition to changes in SEL of preschoolers attained through participation in the PATHS- IC program, this study found SEL advances among preschoolers who did not participate in the intervention, providing evidence for a "preschool effect". This preschool effect is illustrated by the progress seen in the Control Group. This group demonstrated notable improvements in various domains that suggest the mere act of attending preschool can contribute to SEL development. The preschool effect signifies the inherent impact of preschool attendance, separate from any structured intervention program like PATHS- IC.

The typical preschool environment, filled with group activities, social interactions, and cooperative learning (Jones et al., 2019), thus spurring some aspects of SEL development. This underscores the importance of envisaging social-emotional growth holistically, considering both organic and intervention-led growth. Magnuson et al. (2007) revealed that preschool attendance boosts cognitive development and fosters better behavioural regulation in children. These inherent benefits, evident in the Control Group's progression in the present study, underline the impact of the preschool environment on the social and emotional growth of children.

Sahin and Dostoglu (2012) have highlighted the pivotal influence of experiences during the preschool years on an individual's subsequent accomplishments. The period from 0 to 6 years is especially crucial as it shapes large aspects of a child's development. Specifically designed for children aged 3 to 6, preschool education programs aim to provide children with a solid start in life. Likewise, Polat and Yavuz (2016) have stressed the significant role that preschool education has on a child's life in enhancing academic skills, social-emotional development, communication, and school readiness. Their research found that time spent in preschool positively impacted a child's self-concept and self-esteem.

The findings of this study revealed that children in the Control Group showed improvements in attention, social competence, adaptive behavior, and conduct simply by attending preschool. As outlined below, various aspects of the preschool environment offer children valuable opportunities to enhance and develop their SEL competencies

7.1.1 Attention Behaviour

Fostering attention behaviour, an essential component of children's academic and behavioural development is a key characteristic of the preschool learning environment. This

study further emphasises this notion, as it found tangible improvements in attention behaviour among the Control Group, which followed only the standard preschool curriculum.

Preschool settings, by their operational nature, inherently cultivate a child's attention regulation skills. Such environments consist of structured activities requiring children to focus on tasks, instructions, and group activities (Yen et al., 2004). Graziano et al. (2011) affirmed how these environmental organising factors drive the development of attention regulation. Additionally, as Poulou (2015) outlined, these contexts offer consistent opportunities for children to refine their attentional competence. Therefore, the performance of our Control Group resonates with these studies, evidencing the ability of preschool settings to foster these skills.

A longitudinal study by Rachel et al. (2012) substantiated the lasting benefits of developing attention behaviour in early education, by implying a connection between attention regulation at age 5 and academic and behavioural competence at age 9. Similarly, Andrade et al. (2009) showcased how the persistence of attention skills during preschool impacts school readiness and subsequent achievements.

Although both groups were in an environment that supported attention development, the Experimental Group, which received the PATHS- IC intervention, showed notably greater improvements in attention behaviour. This demonstrates that targeted interventions like PATHS- IC can significantly boost the development of attention regulation skills. Even the modest gains observed in the Experimental Group underscore the effectiveness of the PATHS- IC program in fostering attention regulation. The significance of these skills, including increased focus, efficient task completion, and effective information processing (Ros & Graziano, 2018), cannot be understated for children's progress.

Therefore, while preschool settings indeed cultivate attention skills, the potential of specialised interventions like PATHS- IC highlights the need for more robust initiatives. Tandon et al. (2011) recommended preschool-based intervention programs that provide tailored activities to refine these foundation skills. Evidence from this study shows that the PATHS- IC program, when combined with the natural nurturing potential of preschool education, intensified the enhancement of early childhood attention regulation skills.

7.1.2 Social Competence

The development of social competence in children, particularly in the context of the preschool environment, is an area of keen interest among researchers (Huber et al., 2019). Preschools serve as a vital platform where children begin to navigate their social world by interacting with their peers, learning to cooperate, and understanding how to manage conflicts (Golubović et al., 2022). Through these interactions, children cultivate essential social skills and behaviours that lay the groundwork for future interpersonal relationships.

Children in the Control Group also showed improvements in social competence, likely due to natural developmental progression and the supportive preschool environment. Even without targeted interventions, the structured social interactions and activities in preschool can play a key role in enhancing children's social skills. However, the Experimental Group exhibited significantly greater gains in social competence following the PATHS- IC intervention. While the Control Group saw some progress, the marked improvements in the Experimental Group highlight the added impact that programs like PATHS- IC can have on fostering social competence in preschoolers.

The development of social competence is of immense significance in a child's life as it plays a critical role in fostering effective relationships and social interactions (Matson, 2017b). Hence, neglect of this aspect can result in severe socio-emotional health issues and

future interpersonal relations challenges (Huber et al., 2019; Matson, 2017b; Moreno-Manso et al., 2016). The positive development of social competence observed in both the Control and Experimental Groups in this study implies that preschool settings naturally support some element of social skills growth. Nevertheless, the significant improvement in the Experimental Group points out the potential effectiveness of targeted interventions like PATHS- IC that can enhance this development from an early age. The improvements in social competence align with Vygotsky's Social-Cultural Theory, which emphasises the role of social interactions and guided support in fostering development. According to Vygotsky, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) represents the space where children, with the help of more knowledgeable others (teachers, peers), are able to acquire new skills. Within the preschool environment, interactions among children and structured activities can serve as a scaffold, supporting their emerging social competencies. SEL interventions like PATHS- IC provide targeted scaffolding, guiding children to further develop communication, empathy, and cooperative behaviours. This is consistent with Vygotsky's principle that learning is most effective when supported within the ZPD, which suggests that PATHS- IC's success may stem from its capacity to enhance social learning within this critical developmental space.

7.1.3 *Adaptive Behaviour*

The observable adaptive behaviours found in both the Experimental Group and the Control Group suggest a variety of contributing factors towards these behavioural enhancements. Beyond the targeted intervention of PATHS- IC, the broader preschool environment also plays a significant role.

The inherent challenges and adjustments associated with being in a preschool setting away from parents can catalyse improvements in adaptive behaviours among children (Correia & Marques-Pinto, 2016). Certainly, common preschool curriculums are designed to foster adaptive behaviours in children (Kepeš, 2021). These curriculums include activities

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that indirectly draw out children's adaptive responses. For instance, through group activities

or play times, children are encouraged to cooperate and share (Figueroa & An, 2017).

Structured tasks like snack time or nap time allow children to understand the concept of time

order and adjust to different routines. These experiences inherently facilitate the enhancement

of adaptive skills in a child's developmental journey.

However, even while preschool curriculums lay a solid foundational stage, they might

not comprehensively cover more complex facets of SEL. Elements such as emotional

regulation, conflict resolution, and relationship building often require a more detailed and

specific focus, which may not always be completely addressed in a standard preschool

curriculum.

This is where specialised interventions like the PATHS- IC program prove invaluable.

They move beyond the incidental, more basic adaptive learning occurring in a regular

preschool setting to target these intricate and more nuanced facets of SEL. These complex

SEL skills form an integral part of children's holistic development aiding them not only in

their forthcoming academic journey but also equipping them with necessary life skills,

emphasising the need for integrated interventions such as PATHS- IC in the preschool setup.

Vygotsky's Social-Cultural Theory further explains how structured interactions and activities

within the preschool environment foster the development of essential life skills. By operating

within the Zone of Proximal Development, educators and caregivers provide children with

the support they need to master new routines and behaviours, such as cooperation and self-

regulation. The tailored guidance and scaffolding that occur during PATHS- IC's structured

interventions allow children to practice adaptive behaviours more effectively than through

natural progression alone. Vygotsky's theory highlights the importance of this social

guidance, suggesting that the enhanced outcomes observed in the Experimental Group stem

from the more explicit support mechanisms provided by PATHS- IC, in line with his conceptualisation of how children's learning can be optimised.

7.1.4 *Behavioural Conduct*

Preschool education is a crucial stage for children's SEL, particularly related to behavioural conduct (Mahoney et al., 2021). Preschool experiences expose children to a communal setting for the first time, where they learn to share, cooperate, follow instructions, and manage interactions (Schmerse, 2020). These experiences essentially help children to understand acceptable behaviour, respect for rules, empathy for peers and self-control. Regular participation in such a structured and collaborative environment helps children modify their behaviour towards more socially acceptable conduct (Villardón-Gallego et al., 2018). This behavioural shift was noticed in the Control Group of this study, where preschoolers exhibited a modest behavioural improvement due to participation in their standard preschool curriculum.

Noteworthy the Experimental Group which received the PATHS- IC intervention, showed even greater improvement in their behavioural conduct compared to the Control Group. This distinct difference sheds light on the advantage of incorporating specialised programs like PATHS- IC with regular preschool curriculums. These intensive, directed interventions can facilitate more pronounced changes in behavioural regulation among preschool children, leveraging the foundational changes that preschool education naturally brings about.

If these behavioural issues are not addressed promptly, the fallout from neglecting them can manifest in more severe problems, including disciplinary complications, disruptions in learning environments, and potentially, a decrease in academic performance (Park & Ramirez, 2022; Tiwari et al., 2023). Early signs of behavioural issues often involve arguing,

aggression, or showing anger towards adults (Sukhodolsky et al., 2016). These characteristics are most common among children who struggle to develop social skills due to poor coordination or communication abilities (Ogundele, 2018). The implications of these behavioural problems are far-reaching, not only having an immediate disruptive effect on learning environments but also leading to a long-standing impact on a child's future academic achievement and socio-emotional health (Romano et al., 2015).

Consequently, when developing early education interventions, programs like PATHS-IC that specifically concentrate on behavioural regulation become an essential consideration in early childhood education. By addressing these issues at the foundational stage, educators can help mitigate future difficulties, ensuring a smoother, more conducive learning experience for all children. The findings from this study certainly lend support to this argument, as they clearly show that while basic preschool attendance can naturally enhance behavioural conduct to an extent, the introduction of the PATHS- IC program appeared to offer a significantly greater improvement. However, more in-depth investigation is needed to conclusively establish the cause of these enhancements and to pinpoint the most beneficial elements within the PATHS- IC program related to this development.

Remarkable enhancements have been observed in attention behaviour, social competence, adaptive behaviour, and behavioural conduct in preschool-aged children. These improvements can be attributed to standard preschool infrastructures. Further, a symbiotic relationship seems to exist between these advancements and the PATHS- IC program, suggesting that the two works in conjunction to produce these positive results.

Indeed, both the structured preschool environment and natural maturation processes serve as significant drivers of these observed developmental advancements.

7.1.5 *Maturation*

The influence of maturation on child development has been noted in various studies. Latipova and Latipov (2015) asserted that the natural growth and maturation of children in their preschool years significantly impact their neuro-cognitive development. This, in turn, drives improvements in attention behaviour, adaptability, and social competencies. Music (2017) and Schmerse (2020) further argued that the maturation of emotional intelligence, a process that naturally unfolds during the preschool years, is fundamental in shaping the behavioural conduct of children. As children mature emotionally, they become more capable of managing their emotions, thereby reducing instances of disruptive behaviour.

When assessing the effectiveness of interventions like PATHS- IC, it's important to account for the combined impact of preschool attendance and natural maturation. Distinguishing between developmental changes brought on by the intervention and those that occur due to maturation or preschool attendance is key. Future research using rigorous experimental designs, including groups of children not attending preschool and those in preschool with and without the PATHS- IC intervention, could help clarify these effects. This understanding would allow for more accurate evaluations of interventions and help optimise programs like PATHS- IC to better support children's overall development.

Therefore, by acknowledging the interplay between preschool attendance and maturation, interventions can be tailored to address the evolving needs of children at different developmental stages. Murano et al. (2020) emphasised that for maximising developmental outcomes in children, both the integrated influence of structured preschool environments and natural developmental progressions need to be examined. Both McCabe and Altamura (2011) and Magnuson et al. (2007) underscored the need for early intervention programs that enhance child development during preschool years.

7.2 Marked Improvement with PATHS- IC

The very essence of SEL revolves around growth and change. However, without focused interventions such as PATHS- IC, essential improvements in certain SEL domains, such as reducing externalising and internalising behaviours, might remain stagnant. This conclusion is brought to light through the steady state of the Control Group in this study. Despite being subjected to the conventional preschool curriculum, there was no observable amelioration in their externalising behaviours. This highlights the fundamental importance and effectiveness of PATHS- IC for enhancing developments in critical SEL domains.

7.2.1 Externalising Behaviour

Externalising behaviours, such as hostility, defiance, and oppositional actions, are relatively common among young children (Zilanawala et al., 2019). However, if neglected, these behaviours can lead to significant adversity. According to McKee et al. (2008), when not addressed, externalising behaviours can have impacts that last into adulthood, including substance use, unstable employment, and relational issues. Nye (2017) added that such behaviours have long-lasting effects leading to future mental health problems, increased criminality, relationship difficulties, poorer employment opportunities, and fewer educational qualifications. In light of this, the preschool stage presents an essential window to enhance abilities, setting up young children for successful social interactions and school life (Moore et al., 2015).

In this study, the marked decrease in externalising behaviours observed in the Experimental Group underscores the effectiveness of the PATHS- IC program. As Fekadu et al. (2006) and Poitras et al. (2022) have suggested, problematic behaviours such as impulsivity, hyperactivity, aggression, and defiance are common in preschoolers and pose a

challenge to their learning and social interaction. This lends credence to the normalisation of interventions like the PATHS- IC program, designed to measurably reduce these occurrences early in a child's life.

The maintained behavioural trends in the Control Group, compared to the reduction in the Experimental Group heightens the apparent need for regulatory interventions such as PATHS- IC. It was apparent that the current KSA preschool curriculum did not facilitate a reduction in externalising behaviour. The noted efficacy of PATHS- IC in addressing externalising behaviours and enhancing self-awareness strengthens the argument for integrating culturally appropriate SEL programs early in educational contexts.

Addressing the complexities of co-occurring externalising behaviours such as aggression, hyperactivity, and defiance requires a comprehensive, multifaceted approach. These behaviours, influenced by a mélange of biological, psychological, and environmental factors, evolve over time and across developmental stages (Caspi & Moffitt, 2018; Lahey et al., 2015). Essential then is an intervention that combines variable-centred approaches, which focus on common patterns of behaviour, and person-centred methodologies, considerate of individuals' unique needs and cultural context.

This stance aligns with a systematic review by Carneiro et al. (2016) that identified the onset and risk factors of externalising problems among children aged 3 to 6 often stemmed from a combination of environmental, parental, and child-specific factors. Their research highlights the multidimensionality of these behaviours and the numerous concurrent risks contributing to their emergence. This suggests the need for comprehensive, context-specific interventions like PATHS- IC, which can simultaneously address multiple co-occurring risk factors while aiding in the development of socio-emotional and self-regulation skills in an early educational setting.

To conclude, these findings as a whole advocate for the early integration of culturally specific SEL programs such as PATHS- IC in preschool settings. They not only effectively alleviate externalising behaviours but also act as preventative measures guiding children's SEL trajectories.

7.2.2 Poor Scholastic Conduct

Scholastic conduct, comprising behaviours and attitudes conducive to effective learning experiences, significantly aligns with elements within the scope of SEL. Poor scholastic performance has immediate and enduring impacts on a child's self-esteem and future development, with psychosocial factors being significant causative elements, often overlooked in underprivileged societies (Chadda & Patra, 2016). Such performance is associated with poor concentration, increasing dropout rates, and associated societal costs (Allotey et al., 2018).

Within the realm of this study, the Experimental Group demonstrated substantial improvements in their scholastic conduct post-intervention, despite their lower baseline comparison to the Control Group. The fundamental role played by appropriate scholastic conduct in preventing declining academic engagement and performance cannot be overstated. Failure to nurture these behaviours may lead to detrimental academic consequences, such as increased school dropouts, diminished opportunities for higher education, and restricted career prospects (Wong & Liem, 2022). González and Paoloni (2014) and Chadda and Patra (2016) affirmed that nurturing academic behaviours and promoting active student participation are vital for positive learning outcomes.

Several factors influence academic performance; they include student traits, parental involvement, learning skills, effective teaching, motivation, student coordination, and student career decisions (Cassen et al., 2009). Indeed, socio-economic conditions such as well-

distributed resources, accessible healthcare, quality education, and stable employment substantially influence academic performance (Sehgal et al., 2022). Such findings emphasise that scholastic success is not isolated, but deeply connected to a child's broader societal context. Enhancing these conditions not only uplifts individual academic performance but also fortifies the wider community, thereby benefiting society at large.

In conclusion, integrating programs such as PATHS- IC not only creates opportunities for acquiring essential SEL skills but also promotes behaviours conducive to academic success, particularly within an Islamic context.

7.3   Worsening Behaviour Without PATHS- IC

There is compelling evidence from the study suggesting that certain aspects of SEL among preschoolers in KSA would deteriorate in the absence of a targeted PATHS- IC program. This worsening is particularly seen in the realm of internalising behaviours, an area in which the PATHS- IC program showed notable efficacy.

7.3.1   *Internalising Behaviour*

Characterised by inward distress, internalising psychopathology is an established domain used to describe problematic behaviours during childhood and adolescence (Van Zalk, 2020). It forms part of a two-tier hierarchical factor model, including externalising issues, and might be further subdivided into constructs such as fear, stress, anxiety, and depression. Enhancing peer interactions, developing non-confrontational problem-solving skills, enriching the school experience, and nurturing teacher-student relationships can synergistically alleviate students' internalising issues (Denham & Zinsser, 2014; Pourghorban Goorabi et al., 2022). Children in the Experimental Group displayed a significant reduction in these behaviours compared to their counterparts in the Control Group, whose internalising behaviours worsened.

Walker and Rinaldi (2020) revealed that the prevalence of internalising behaviours such as anxiety, depression, and somatisation significantly vary across the early childhood period. Their study found an increasing trend in these behaviours across the year. According to Carneiro et al. (2016), a combination of environmental, parental, and child-specific factors contribute to the emergence of internalising problems, thereby underscoring the necessity for multifaceted interventions. This aligns with the study's findings, highlighting the need to refine and strengthen programs like PATHS- IC to tackle the complexities surrounding early childhood internalising behaviours and their long-term implications.

Hence, recognising the varying prevalence and dynamically evolving nature of internalising behaviours in early childhood is crucial. This amplifies the need for early detection and proactive interventions since escalating internalising behaviours could have potential long-term implications affecting academic, social, and personal outcomes in childhood and adolescence (Danzig et al., 2013).

The study's findings confirm the effectiveness of the PATHS- IC program in reducing internalising behaviours, while also highlighting opportunities for further improvement. By examining the specific program components that contributed to this reduction and identifying areas for enhancement, the PATHS- IC program's impact on addressing internalising behaviours can be strengthened. This process of ongoing refinement would lead to a more comprehensive program that supports holistic child development and psychological wellbeing.

7.3.2   PATHS- IC Intervention

While educational improvements were evident in the Control Group, significant enhancements in externalising and internalising behaviour and scholastic conduct were not present. This could potentially signal certain deficiencies in the KSA's existing standard

preschool curriculum. Thus, it becomes necessary to contemplate whether sole reliance on preschool education suffices to maximise developmental outcomes in KSA children. This standpoint is supported by Murano et al. (2020), who advocated for the integral role of structured SEL interventions alongside standard preschool education programs.

The preschool effect emphasises the significance of preschool education in promoting some social and emotional development. However, combining the inherent advantages of generalised preschool with structured, culturally astute interventions like PATHS- IC offers a more comprehensive path for early progression. While preschool attendance naturally supports some SEL, PATHS- IC's inclusion of all domains can amplify these foundational skills, making the program a strategically valuable contributor to a child's development.

A potential refinement for future versions of PATHS- IC could be the reallocation of its focus, aiming to enhance areas that require more intensive, specific intervention, and may not naturally develop within the regular preschool environment. This could result in a more balanced and comprehensive social-emotional development, specifically focusing on aspects like emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and positive relationship formation.

Future investigations should explore this notion, given its potential to transform current SEL development approaches. This could involve discerning how varied intensity and duration of interventions shape specific outcomes, understanding the role of individual differences among children, and acknowledging the impact of various contextual factors. By identifying how to best adapt these interventions to each child's unique needs, it becomes possible to nurture optimum social-emotional development.

7.4   PATHS- IC Islamic component

The integration of Islamic teachings within the PATHS- IC program emerged as a valuable aspect of this research; it demonstrated how religious tenets could be effectively

aligned with SEL's original objectives, creating an enriched learning framework. The PATHS- IC program's balanced approach, which integrated both SEL and Islamic religious teachings, formed a culturally appropriate educational model that encouraged KSA learners to embrace their individual cultural and religious contexts.

The PATHS- IC program acknowledged that respect for societal norms and cultural diversity was critical in today's global educational landscape, ultimately yielding a balanced approach that respected each learner's individual cultural and religious contexts. The careful and conscientious fusion of Islamic principles and SEL values within the PATHS- IC program should prompt educators and policymakers to reconsider their approaches to teaching SEL, particularly in culturally diverse settings. They should recognise the value of weaving traditional community-specific religious teachings into broader pedagogical practices, promoting a more diverse, inclusive, and effective educational environment.

The PATHS- IC program, at its core, highlighted the pivotal role of religion in KSA culture and identity, a sentiment in alignment with the observations made by Aljabreen and Lash (2016). It materialised this by consciously intertwining Islamic teachings within its framework, thereby not only respecting but also nurturing children's inherent connection to their Islamic faith from an early stage. This approach spoke to the individual learning rates and curiosity of young learners, thereby imbuing children's religious values in a balanced and respectful way.

In ignoring this cultural and religious facet, SEL programs risk being detached from the learners' cultural ethos, thus potentially rendering them less effective. Including Islamic principles in the PATHS- IC program ensured cultural compatibility and resonance with the inherent cultural and religious identity of boys and girls. Incorporating religion as a core element of childhood education can influence young minds and, in turn, positively affect the

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wider community. This approach offers a culturally aligned foundation for fostering in KSA, promoting both individual growth and societal harmony.

On its own, SEL indeed had much to offer, as it cultivated emotional intelligence, empathy, and interpersonal skills (Keefer et al., 2018a). However, when combined with the Islamic teachings as seen in the PATHS- IC program, the learning experience evolved into a more holistic one that nurtured not just social and emotional skills, but moral and ethical development from an Islamic standpoint as well.

While the current research provides evidence of the benefits of PATHS- IC for students, in KSA, the extent of its external validity is something that needs to be explored further. As KSA is dedicated to fostering the development of its students, further comprehensive research is necessary to assess the effectiveness and the universality of such educational programs in other Islamic contexts.

The PATHS- IC program's incorporation of Islamic values has merit as there is scholarly evidence of the beneficial impact of religious commitments across various domains, such as longevity, academic success, and reduction in youth delinquency (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009). These benefits have been universally recognised and are not restricted to a specific religion (Adamczyk, 2023; Jackson & Bergeman, 2011). This notion contributed to PATHS- IC's strategic inclusion of Islamic teachings in its curriculum, aligning key self-concept, emotional understanding, self-regulation, relationship-building, and problem-solving strategies with established SEL doctrines like PATHS and CASEL. Importantly, this integration can reassure KSA teachers and policymakers that the PATHS- IC program aligns with Islamic values, easing concerns about SEL potentially compromising religious teachings. By harmonizing religious and SEL instruction, PATHS- IC is likely to gain broader support, facilitating its successful implementation and acceptance within the Islamic educational community.

Most importantly, by integrating Islamic teachings, the PATHS- IC program respected KSA's cultural norms in addition to harnessing the benefits of religious teachings. As highlighted by Greene (2019), similar integrations have shown improved behavioural outcomes, thereby underscoring the importance of such a synergistic approach. Additionally, results from the PATHS- IC program mirror the findings of McCullough and Willoughby (2009), which underscored the benefits of religious teachings in educational settings. By including Islamic values in certain lessons where suitable, PATHS- IC effectively utilised religious principles, reinforcing its overall ethos and complementing the core educational elements. This approach offered a unique blend of conventional SEL techniques and faith-based principles, further substantiating the PATHS- IC program's innovative strategy.

The PATHS- IC program demonstrated that the inclusion of Islamic teachings complemented the core objectives of SEL, rather than posing any conflict. Notably, Khilmiyaha and Suudb (2020) had emphasised the potential benefits and respectful acknowledgement of societal norms through the incorporation of religious teachings into education. The balanced approach in PATHS- IC embraced each learner's cultural and religious contexts, emphasising the uniqueness and importance of their individual identities. As affirmed by Alameddine (2021), understanding of cultural nuances within the Muslim community could be enhanced by inclusive education. This integration not only fortified learning outcomes but also emphasised the significant role that inclusive education can play in academic development.

Simultaneously, infusing Islamic teachings into the SEL pedagogy went beyond the standard curriculum, deepening the educational significance. Ali (2023), has suggested that such an approach not only nurtures students' academic and social skills but also cultivates their sense of belonging and self-worth within the diverse Muslim backdrop. By weaving together faith-based practices with emotional learning strategies, PATHS- IC showcased its

innovative approach to integrated learning. Essentially, integrating Islamic teachings within the PATHS- IC program enhanced, not competed with, the vital objectives of SEL. This integration signified that key tenet of Islam, such as empathy, respect and kindness, reinforced SEL's primary goals such as emotional regulation and interpersonal skills. Thus, in the PATHS- IC program context, Islamic teachings and SEL coexisted and mutually strengthened each other, contributing to a comprehensive and balanced learning environment.

However, reflecting upon the performance of the Control Group as observed in the study, we saw that while Islamic teachings enriched the education process, they might not have been entirely sufficient alone. If they were, the Control Group, primarily taught with Islamic teachings without the supplement of SEL elements, would have likely shown comparable outcomes to that of the PATHS- IC group. This underscores the integral role of SEL in student development, echoing the need for a balanced educational approach. Thus, it is essential that the integration of Islamic teachings within educational programs operate in harmony with SEL principles and does not compromise their broader applicability. The aim of this study was to enhance the educational experience without creating an undue bias towards Islamic teachings, ensuring a rich and balanced learning environment.

Furthermore, as highlighted by Tezcan (2015), there was a necessity to strike a careful balance when including Islamic teachings as a supplementary component of the educational framework, including SEL. While incorporating Islamic teachings could enrich the educational experience, particularly in Muslim-majority and multicultural contexts as demonstrated by the PATHS- IC program, it was of paramount importance that this did not lead to an atmosphere of exclusivism or preferential bias, which could inadvertently foster social divisions instead of reducing them. Therefore, preserving balance was central.

While the inclusion of Islamic teachings could potentially contribute positively to an enriched educational experience, it had to be handled thoughtfully to prevent any suggestion

of discriminative bias. Striving for inclusive education meant integrating religious and cultural nuances while maintaining respect for diversity. The key point was that the integration of religious teachings like those of Islam should function as an overlay enhancing the inclusivity and diversity of the educational experience, rather than obscuring or supplanting the underlying core principles of universal SEL. This nuanced intertwining of religious teachings within inclusive educational strategies offers essential insight into the effective implementation of SEL in various socio-cultural contexts. This balance ensures an inclusive learning environment that respects cultural, religious, and educational diversity, expanding our understanding of integrating SEL in diverse settings.

In terms of future research, there might for instance be potential benefits in exploring how lessons about self-appreciation, possibly tied to concepts such as the unique differences in God's creation, could contribute to strategies that help students build a healthy self-concept and appreciation for their individual strengths. Further investigation would be needed to substantiate such an inference and to understand the implications in the PATHS- IC context more explicitly.

7.5   Teacher Professional Development

Classroom environments serve a nourishing role in introducing and practising SEL skills to children. An effectual implementation is achieved when teachers cultivate a culturally nuanced and comprehensive understanding of SEL principles (Esen-Aygun & Sahin-Taskin, 2017). This perspective is reflected in the interviews conducted with preschool teachers in KSA. Conversely, their understanding was found to be relatively basic, lacking depth and specificity. Having a basic understanding is helpful, yet a comprehensive comprehension is key to the effective culmination of SEL principles. With limited understanding, teachers may not fully realise the integrative efficiency of SEL, leading to its

underutilisation. This manifests the need to enhance educators' proficiency in SEL for an effective and comprehensive integration.

Teachers have a pivotal responsibility in meeting the social and behavioural needs of students, especially those with SEL deficiencies (Poulou, 2015). However, the systemic complexity of SEL often presents challenges. Kaifi (2023) spotlighted these challenges by demonstrating that, despite understanding the importance of SEL, KSA preschool teachers draw more on their personal experiences than on academically informed methods. This suggests a critical gap in the teacher preparation and training programs, with a particular absence of comprehensive programs focusing exclusively on SEL. This gap is particularly significant considering Kaifi (2023) findings that point towards a lack of formal SEL curriculum and a voiced demand for more targeted SEL training among teachers. Certainly, the interpretation of this situation indicates that the issue requires immediate attention.

Anticipating teachers to manage SEL responsibilities without equipping them with the necessary training, tools, and a structured curriculum compromises their potential effectiveness. Improved training initiatives for teachers could foster a comprehensive understanding of the multi-dimensional aspects of SEL, especially in critical areas such as emotional knowledge, problem-solving and conflict resolution (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). By boosting the understanding and application of SEL through well-designed training and guidance resources, we can enhance the social-emotional development landscape for KSA children, resulting in a more holistic and nurtured future generation.

Teaching is inherently an action of fostering growth, development, and societal integration among students. This has made it integral for educators to understand and apply SEL within their teaching paradigms. The effectiveness of SEL in academic environments tends to rely significantly on the nuanced comprehension of these principles by their frontline facilitators - the teachers (Esen-Aygun & Sahin-Taskin, 2017). Therefore, the need for

comprehensive professional development in this challenging yet rewarding field cannot be overstated. Gimbert et al. (2023) highlighted the imperative for heightened teacher training in SEL, echoing the emphasised role educators play in shaping a child's social-emotional development. The intertwined dimensions of SEL range from emotional maturity to developing conflict resolution skills and nurturing interpersonal relationships, and to leverage this to its full potential, teachers in KSA need robust training courses tailored to their unique cultural and educational context (Elmi, 2020).

Meijs et al. (2016) emphasised that teacher training initiatives that overlook cultural dynamics and societal nuances often risk being viewed as disjointed and irrelevant. To remedy this, educators are now moving towards workplace learning, where they can build their professional capital within the context of their specific teaching environment (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Nolan & Molla, 2017). This shift towards more context-specific learning aligns with the need for the development of culturally sensitive teaching practices in regions like the KSA. Enhancing the effectiveness of SEL involves not just understanding and respecting the local culture but incorporating its nuances into teaching practices.

The link between these two elements stresses the need for culturally sensitive, context-specific teacher training that is directly relevant to the teacher's professional practice. This lends itself not only to greater teacher engagement but also to the effective implementation of SEL strategies consistent with local socio-cultural norms. Given the vast scope of SEL, educators require thorough training to effectively implement supportive SEL programs in their classes (Frydenberg et al., 2017c). Schonert-Reichl (2017), has reinforced the notion that comprehensive staff training enhances student outcomes when SEL principles are integrated into nurturing everyday teaching practices. Evidently, most teachers have an affinity towards understanding the importance of SEL, as inferred from my study, yet they

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lack the formal training to integrate these principles effectively into their teaching methods -

a void that can be filled with tailored SEL training courses (Bawani & Mphahlele, 2021).

Moreover, the cultural adaptations inherent to the PATHS- IC program illustrate how

teaching practices can be tailored to the societal norms, traditions, and expectations of KSA.

This unique tailoring goes beyond merely incorporating culturally resonant examples.

Instead, it builds upon the foundational principles of PATHS- IC, championing progress

while simultaneously respecting traditional values and developing communication strategies

cognizant of societal norms.

The successful implementation of the PATHS- IC program highlights the importance

of providing teachers with a supportive and respectful training environment. This approach

allows educators to voice their concerns and develop strategies that align social and

emotional learning with KSA's cultural context. The cultural sensitivities embedded in

PATHS- IC also extend to classroom materials. Guided by the PATHS- IC framework,

teachers use examples, illustrations, and stories that reflect the students' cultural backgrounds.

Crucially, topics such as religion and family dynamics are addressed with the respect and

sensitivity they require.

Furthermore, integrating elements such as cultural celebrations or practices into SEL

lesson planning has proven beneficial. This approach represents students' cultural identities

positively, enhances the teacher-student relationship, and facilitates the effective

implementation of SEL programs like PATHS- IC, making it an integral part of the success

of the program in the KSA context. For pre-service teachers, an SEL emphasis within their

preparatory programs provides them with the necessary foundational knowledge and skills

before they even set foot in a classroom. SEL training in teacher education programs can help

build prospective teachers' understanding of the importance of social and emotional

competencies, both for their own teaching efficacy and their students' development

(Corcoran & O'Flaherty, 2022). This early intervention enables new teachers to be well-equipped with strategies and theoretical comprehension to integrate SEL approaches into their future teaching practices (Murano et al., 2019). Similarly, in-service teachers - those already actively engaged in the profession – stand to gain substantially from sustained professional development opportunities focused on SEL.

As teaching methodologies continually evolve, so do the comprehension and leading practices in SEL (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). It is important for experienced teachers to stay updated on the latest research and innovative practices in this rapidly evolving field (Egert et al., 2020). Attending workshops, training, or webinars about SEL, for example, can help in-service teachers refine their teaching strategies, better meet their students' needs, and foster more supportive and effective classroom environments (Kalinowski et al., 2020). Both pre-service and in-service SEL training aids in building a school culture where social-emotional development is prioritised and woven into the fabric of learning. Not only can this have an encouraging impact on students' academic accomplishment and social-emotional wellbeing, but it can also enhance teachers' job satisfaction and reduce burnout rates (Jennings et al., 2017).

There is a need for ongoing professional development rather than a one-time event rooted in the dynamism of education, child development, and, indeed, life itself, which all require flexibility and continuous learning (Cantor et al., 2021). In essence, the need for professional development to be ongoing rather than a one-time affair is rooted in the dynamism of education, child development, and, indeed, life itself, which all require adaptability, continuous learning and development (Brunsek et al., 2020).

Continuous professional development support is especially important within the KSA context, given the need for educators to understand SEL concepts thoroughly and apply them effectively in culturally nuanced ways. Teacher training should not be viewed as a one-time

activity but rather as a continual process of learning and growth (Matveieva, 2017). The complexities of child development and evolving theories of education also demand updates in knowledge in the area of SEL (Cipriano et al., 2023).

A single training session might introduce educators to the core principles of SEL, but it is through consistent training and professional development that they can explore these principles in-depth, test different strategies, reflect on their experiences, and refine their practices accordingly (Lozano-Peña et al., 2021). Regular refreshers and training sessions can allow educators to stay updated on the latest research findings, strategies, and best practices in SEL (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Additionally, they provide opportunities for educators to share their experiences, successes, and challenges in implementing SEL, fostering a collaborative learning environment.

Future research evaluating the PATHS- IC program could consider the impact of comprehensive teacher training on the program's implementation. Assessing program effectiveness in relation to levels of teacher preparedness could yield valuable insights (Domitrovich et al., 2016). Relating to this, a deeper exploration of the relationship between teacher preparedness in SEL and the success of the PATHS- IC program could significantly enrich our understanding of the program. It could also guide the optimisation of teacher training protocols within KSA, as (Hargreaves et al., 2018) suggest, particularly for SEL programs like PATHS- IC. By integrating ongoing professional development into SEL programs like PATHS- IC, educators can cultivate a more supportive classroom environment conducive to students' social-emotional growth.

7.6   Parental SEL Support

Mothers provided a unique caregiver's perspective of SEL. Detailed interviews with mothers of preschoolers revealed a prevalent knowledge gap concerning SEL concepts,

showing that children nuanced, internalised emotions and developmental needs may go undetected due to a lack of parental understanding, prompting the need for enhanced parental involvement. Mothers effectively identified their children's social and emotional needs and exhibited a lucid understanding of the importance of addressing these requirements. However, the application of their understanding into practical application within the broader SEL framework was less evident, signalling another key aspect that requires additional attention and enhancement. By boosting this practical integration of their understanding into a holistic SEL approach, it may potentially contribute to a richer and more enriching home learning environment, elevating children's social and emotional development even outside school settings. This would essentially bridge gaps between school based SEL initiatives and home practices, thereby enabling a more persistent and ubiquitous nurturing environment for children's SEL development.

Jennings and Greenberg (2009) have suggested that mothers could benefit from more comprehensive support in promoting SEL for their children at home. This could be achieved through tailored parental guidance programs or similar resources. Having parents' support for SEL initiatives in preschool settings offers numerous advantages that significantly contribute to children's overall development and wellbeing (Seaman & Giles, 2021). Their involvement can enhance children's social and emotional competence, improve their academic performance, and promote positive peer interactions (Martinsone et al., 2022). Additionally, parental support for SEL initiatives can lead to better communication between parents and children, creating a supportive family environment conducive to emotional growth and resilience (Kiley, 2021).

In the present study, it is evident that KSA mothers understood and appreciated the significance of SEL in their child's development. However, they often felt inadequately equipped to integrate these principles effectively due to a lack of necessary tools and training.

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To bridge this gap, there is a need for initiatives that provide parent-centric SEL training. These initiatives must be tailored to align with the cultural intricacies of KSA, ensuring both the content and delivery are culturally appropriate and sensitive (Bawani & Mphahlele, 2021). Involving parents in SEL would be indispensable, as it would not only raise awareness of the concepts in the home around the surrounding environment, but it would facilitate opportunities for children to practice and reinforce these skills (Cosso et al., 2022). Parents, acting as effective change agents, can set a good example by managing emotions constructively, resolving conflicts, and showing empathy, all of which greatly influence their children's social and emotional development (Hajal & Paley, 2020).

Informed parents, who have a solid comprehension of SEL principles and align their parenting styles with these principles, have a competitive advantage in fostering a nurturing environment for SEL at home (Karjalainen et al., 2019). Studies have consistently highlighted the positive impact of family involvement on children's social-emotional development (Saracostti et al., 2019; Sheridan et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2020), further validating the need for active parental engagement in SEL. However, in the context of KSA, parents face distinctive challenges, especially considering the inherent cultural and societal factors. Due to these factors, parents may not be adequately trained or aware of the importance of nurturing crucial SEL components like conflict resolution or emotion management in children's development (Sheridan et al., 2010).

The interviews with mothers highlighted a communal agreement for the early introduction of SEL education, with a substantial onset at or before the age of five. This is in line with assertions by Roy and Giraldo-García (2018), who have stressed the crucial familial role in nurturing children's SEL competencies, validating the need for active parental engagement. Miller et al. (2015) have also suggested that active parental participation often results in enhanced regulatory capacities and positive social behaviour in children. Given

KSA's unique cultural dynamics, bespoke parental training initiatives respectful of societal norms are essential. These programs should create a comfortable and empowering environment for parents to implement SEL practices at home while preserving cultural sensitivities. Initiating such strategies that nurture trusting relationships with parents could significantly boost the receptivity and utility of SEL principles in KSA.

One notable deficit in the current scenario is the lack of substantive parental involvement in decision-making, thus charting a promising direction for enhanced parental engagement (Cosso et al., 2022). Recognising and addressing this shortfall through proactive and culturally sensitive strategic initiatives could significantly bolster parental participation in SEL programs within the KSA educational landscape.

Considering KSA's context, Leach et al. (2019) suggested that father-focused recruitment strategies could significantly improve parental engagement in parenting programs. The conservative nature of society, with a prominent emphasis on gender roles, makes it especially important to consider distinct strategies for mothers and fathers. For instance, social norms and religious beliefs in KSA might influence the perception of parenting roles and responsibilities, and these need to be catered to when designing recruitment campaigns.

Additionally, societal structures like the prominence of extended family networks and the influence of elder family members may affect the decision-making process of potential participants. Thus, recruitment strategies should be broadened to involve these key family figures. Furthermore, local traditions such as community gatherings and religious events could serve as valuable platforms for promoting and recruiting participants for parenting programs.

Overall, the recognition and incorporation of these sociocultural nuances in recruitment strategies could significantly enhance parental involvement in KSA. By providing consistent support to parents in KSA, the gap between understanding SEL concepts and their seamless application could lessen, leading to improved parenting practices and better child outcomes. This aligns well with the potential effectiveness of involved parents in amplifying SEL growth, thereby adding value to programs like PATHS- IC.

Evaluating the impact of such comprehensive parent education on program adoption could pave the way for further customisation of parental training protocols, promoting a more holistic child development approach. In essence, both teachers' and parents' comprehension and application of SEL principles would benefit significantly from such an augmentation. The call to action serves as an important vanguard for enhancing educational and home environments in KSA.

7.7   PATHS- IC improvements

A thorough evaluation of the PATHS- IC program, including individual lessons and student engagement, highlights several areas for enhancement to boost its effectiveness in supporting SEL in KSA. Key improvements include simplifying language for clearer explanations, using age-appropriate resources to increase engagement, refining teaching methods for better comprehension, incorporating digital tools for a more immersive experience, and adding problem-solving activities for practical application. Extending lesson duration could also allow for more comprehensive coverage, giving students sufficient time to absorb and apply the skills learned. These changes aim to create a more enriching, interactive, and efficient learning environment, optimizing the overall impact of the PATHS- IC program.

7.7.1 Language Simplification

Particularly within the self-concept lessons, one area that was identified for enhancement was the language used to explain abstract concepts such as "talents" and "abilities". Implementing this approach of language simplification can enhance access and comprehension, thereby boosting overall student engagement. As a result, applying the strategy of language simplification represents a vital area for program development. For instance, this approach can be implemented when delivering instructional language to ensure understanding of tasks. It can be utilised in assessment feedback to clearly address students' areas of strength and need for improvement. Overall, language simplification can be a comprehensive tool to improve student engagement and understanding in various educational aspects, beyond the mere explanation of abstract concepts.

7.7.2 Enhancement of Student Engagement Using Age-Appropriate Resources

The emotional understanding lessons underscored the importance of engaging students and using age-appropriate resources. The addition of a wider variety of teaching methods such as using puppet shows or drama could potentially improve emotional literacy among students (Goldstein & Lerner, 2018; Iuga & Turda, 2022). For instance, crafting lessons that align with students' cognitive and emotional development stages can optimise learning. Teaching methods can also be tailored; hands-on activities might be more effective for younger students, whereas older students might benefit more from discussion-based or research-driven methods. Similarly, assessment tasks should match students' abilities, and the chosen digital resources should be suitable and safe for the student's age group.

7.7.3 Enhancement of Teaching Methodologies

The effectiveness of self-regulation lessons in the PATHS- IC program demonstrates potential areas for methodological enhancement. Using supplementary educational videos is

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an effective approach – providing digestible, visual examples of self-regulation scenarios boosts comprehension (Ljubojevic et al., 2014). Furthermore, practical activities allow students to apply theoretical knowledge in a supportive environment and promote their skills (Clark & Mayer, 2016). Incorporating these strategies into the PATHS- IC framework could bolster its efficacy in teaching self-regulation skills. Moreover, audio-visual materials or role-playing can enhance language acquisition and retention. Hence, methodological enhancements applied across the educational curriculum can improve overall learning efficacy and boost student engagement.

7.7.4   Incorporation of Digital Interactions

Given the growing prevalence of digital interactions, even preschoolers are now increasingly exposed to online environments (Barr, 2019). Therefore, early awareness and understanding of the dynamics of online relationships are crucial (Palaiologou, 2016). Incorporating simulated online interactions in lessons about relationship building could help foster this understanding. This might not only enhance students' comprehension of online etiquette but also introduce preschoolers to the necessary skills to establish and navigate healthy and safe online relationships.

7.7.5   Implementation of Simulated Problem-Solving

Interpersonal problem-solving lessons form a significant part of SEL (Cho, 2015), focusing on teaching students how to address conflicts that arise within relationships. Evidence suggests that allowing numerous opportunities for students to engage in simulated problem-solving activities, can deeply enrich their understanding and application of problem-solving strategies (Fosse et al., 2020). In practising different problem-solving techniques over varied situations, students can gain a better understanding of how these strategies function in real-life contexts.

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7.7.6   *Extension of Lesson Duration*

Extending lesson times allows for more profound discussion and exploration of SEL concepts, accommodating individual learning rates (Durlak, 2016). Overall, the current time duration of lessons served its purpose adequately, but an extension might have been beneficial to facilitate more thorough discussions and enhanced activities. This potential improvement, based on reflections on the lessons and observations of student interaction, underscored the need for a dynamic, receptive teaching approach that continually refined the PATHS- IC program. By extending lesson durations, educators can create space for more engaging and interactive activities, permitting students to delve deeper into the subject matter. It affords students more opportunities for reflection, discussion, and practical application - all of which are critical to consolidating learning (Zins et al., 2007).

A potential future endeavour could revolve around extending the PATHS- IC program lesson duration, taking into account student interaction during lessons and teacher feedback. This could foster a more dynamic and responsive approach to teaching. Future refinements to the PATHS- IC program, based on such feedback and interaction observations, could potentially enhance the promotion of SEL. Additionally, a longer intervention period may enable educators to address a wider range of social and emotional challenges faced by students, contributing to more significant and lasting improvements in their wellbeing. This could involve increasing the number of lessons and giving children more time to understand and apply emotional regulation and coping strategies effectively. An increase in the dosage of SEL lessons could aid children in better comprehending and managing their emotions, leading to improved outcomes. Furthermore, it is crucial to understand that these findings should not be taken as a definitive gauge for determining the length and intensity of SEL programs such as PATHS- IC. Applying these insights requires a conscientious consideration

of the context, particularly in the case of PATHS- IC where the age and attention spans of the children are crucial factors.

Changes were made to PATHS- IC's lessons to be shorter than originally suggested in the selected program, yet its efficacy was maintained, indicating that shorter lessons might also be effective and beneficial for students at this age. This revelation proposes an intriguing avenue for further research. It would be valuable to delve into the investigation of whether extended lessons provide an advantage or if brief, focused instructions are more beneficial in maintaining younger learners' engagement and ensuring their understanding of the material. Such studies would yield critical data to refine the planning of PATHS- IC's program duration and intensity strategically, harmonising comprehensive content delivery with the need to maintain pupils' interest and attentiveness.

7.7.7 Modifying the Number of Lessons

In determining the number of lessons in PATHS- IC, the challenge revolves around optimising the number of lessons required in the SEL domains. An overemphasis on areas showing substantial improvement might lead to an unnecessary allocation of resources. Therefore, a detailed discussion of how to best distribute educational effort in a structured PATHS- IC program might be needed. While the PATHS- IC program's 15-lesson format fostered a degree of SEL, it might not have provided enough depth for complex areas like self-regulation and emotional understanding. Lessons focused on skills application, such as interpersonal problem-solving, and understanding online relationships could potentially benefit from more time or additional lessons. The suggested enhancements, if implemented, should be tested to measure their impact on the PATHS- IC program's efficacy. These trials would help maintain an evidence-based approach toward the continuous improvement of the PATHS- IC program and ensure that every change contributes positively to its effectiveness.

Potential enrichment of the PATHS- IC program could comprise integrating activities to promote cooperative play and enhance effective communication.

7.8   SEL Gender Differences

Despite existing research suggesting notable differences between genders regarding SEL development, this study, conducted in the context of KSA, found no such disparities. Prior studies like those by Maguire et al. (2016) and Walker (2016) indicated gender variances in responses to social-emotional development programs. They observed that boys generally displayed more externalising behaviours such as aggression, while girls showed superior emotional understanding, empathy, and prosocial behaviours. But in this study's context, those gender distinctions were not evidenced.

One possible explanation could be the cultural norms and practices within KSA, which might overshadow typical gender-derived behaviour variations. For instance, the prevalence of gender segregation in both societal and educational contexts in KSA could potentially lessen gender disparities in SEL, as suggested by Barry (2019). Interestingly, despite traditional stereotypes, Barry (2019) also found that girls in KSA outperformed boys across numerous academic domains, including STEM. This could indicate that the socio-cultural environment in KSA enables a degree of academic parity, downplaying the typically observed gender-based differences in SEL.

Despite a significant body of research alluding to gender differences in SEL development, such disparities were not evident in the context of this study conducted in the KSA. A possible reason for this may lie in the KSA cultural norms. Specifically, in KSA, irrespective of their gender, children are perceived and treated uniformly up until puberty, a period typically marked by the emergence of explicit gender differences. This societal perspective of viewing and treating children more as "children" than as a specific gender may

contribute to the discernible absence of traditional gender differences in SEL during this early stage of childhood.

Drawing from the work of Maguire et al. (2016), implications arise regarding the potential influence of emotional understanding and externalising behaviour, which manifest differently across genders. The absence of gender differences in this study could be linked to how emotional understanding and expressions are nurtured and perceived across genders in the KSA due to its cultural specifics. Moreover, societal transformations like the Saudi Vision 2030 that promotes gender equality could further blur gender differences for this age group, leading to more balanced SEL outcomes (Alotaibi, 2021). KSA's community-oriented cultural values, promoting respect towards authority, could also suppress individual gendered emotional expressions, further reducing gender variations in SEL. Drawing from Dayanandan (2011) the study that viewed gender integration as significant for minimising inequalities, it could be inferred that this policy fosters more equal, non-gendered learning environments in KSA. This encourages early shared experiences between boys and girls, which could help minimise traditionally observed gender differences in SEL.

Recent changes in educational policy within KSA, such as extending gender integration until the end of the third grade, could also be aiding in fostering more equal learning environments, thus minimising traditionally observed gender differences. Shared learning experiences could contribute to synergy and negotiation between genders, promoting more uniform patterns of social-emotional development.

Another crucial factor worth considering is the efficacy of universally implemented interventions for both boys and girls aimed at mitigating typical gender disparities. Within the KSA education system, the PATHS- IC program was consciously designed to be gender-neutral, fostering similar skills across genders.

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This study's lack of observed gender differences lays vital groundwork for additional exploration in the KSA education system, given its recent policy modifications. It remains to be seen whether the absence of distinguished gender behavioural outcomes observed here persists as students transition from integrated to segregated learning environments, post the third grade (MoE, 2024). As such, this unexpected result pushes us, as researchers, to delve deeper into understanding the evolution of gender dynamics within the context of KSA's education system.

7.9 Future Research

Future research in the field of SEL interventions for preschoolers holds great promise for advancing our understanding and improving outcomes. Based on the findings of this study, several areas should be further explored to improve the PATHS- IC program's long-term effectiveness and benefit.

Future research should primarily focus on evaluating the long-term impact of PATHS- IC on children's behavioural conduct, as well as exploring the specific components of the program that lead to observable improvements. A deeper understanding of these factors could greatly contribute to the refinement of such interventions for future implementation. Ultimately, optimising such programs could prove essential in fostering an enhanced level of behavioural conduct in early academic environments, promoting a conducive and productive learning culture for all children. Future research could investigate the feasibility and effectiveness of implementing SEL interventions at an even younger age, such as 3 or 4 years old, to potentially enhance behavioural conduct and social-emotional development.

Longitudinal studies are essential for examining the long-term effects of early childhood SEL interventions. Over time, it will be possible to gain valuable insight into how these programs have impacted children's social and emotional development, academic

achievement, and overall wellbeing. While acknowledging the prospective benefits of the PATHS- IC Program in enhancing SEL, it is noteworthy to consider that assessing its long-term effects is an ongoing process. To fully comprehend the enduring impact of PATHS- IC, conducting future longitudinal studies is crucial. Such research would facilitate the tracking and exploration of the long-term influence of PATHS- IC on various aspects of children's development, encompassing both social-emotional and academic dimensions over time.

Future research should consider placing greater emphasis on empathy and kindness as part of SEL, as these skills provide young children with concrete moral, spiritual, and ethical foundations for understanding the importance of SEL. Additionally, SEL programs should be seen as starting points for lifelong learning and development, not isolated lessons, with a whole-school approach being more aligned with international best practices in early childhood education. By monitoring children's development over time through longitudinal studies, we will have the opportunity to observe whether and how social-emotional learning evolution, imparted through the PATHS- IC program, will impact children's behaviour, social interactions, and character development. This approach will provide vital insights into the sustainability of changes brought about by PATHS- IC, offering a long-term perspective on whether the positive effects garnered will continue to demonstrate their influence as the children mature. Future research should include long-term studies on the effects of the PATHS- IC program on children. Additionally, it would be valuable to explore whether the knowledge and strategies from PATHS- IC became part of the broader classroom culture, as classroom climate is crucial for embedding SEL practices. The thesis could also benefit from more critical self-reflection on the methods and research limitations, as well as lessons learned throughout the research journey. Incorporating multiple control groups, including one with activities closely resembling the experimental intervention and another with distinctly different activities, would also provide a more robust comparison and allow for a clearer

assessment of the intervention's effects. The thesis could further benefit from critical self-reflection on the methods and research challenges, as well as lessons learned throughout the research journey.

Furthermore, it is important for future studies to explore the preschool effect. This refers to tracking and understanding the development and improvements witnessed in preschool children, such as those in the Control Group of this study, even without any targeted intervention such as PATHS- IC. The results could provide a baseline of developmental progress based solely on preschool attendance, which would then serve as a reference point for assessing the impact and effectiveness of PATHS- IC or other SEL programs. Thus, understanding the preschool effect, in conjunction with the outcomes of targeted interventions, will offer a more comprehensive picture of children's overall development.

In appreciating the findings of this research, it is clear that future studies will serve a vital role in distinguishing the effects of PATHS- IC from natural developmental growth. Unravelling the complexity behind these driving factors could provide important directions for improving interventions concerning SEL. Future studies should consider variations in program duration and frequency to optimise SEL outcomes, supporting the need for continual improvement of the PATHS- IC program. Future studies could explore the effectiveness of an extended program duration or additional lessons to further enhance SEL outcomes.

Future research could investigate the impact of increased parental involvement on children's social-emotional development within the context of the PATHS- IC program. By conducting longitudinal studies or experimental interventions that systematically vary the level of parental engagement, researchers can assess how different degrees of parental involvement influence outcomes such as emotional regulation, interpersonal skills, and academic performance. Additionally, qualitative inquiries could explore the mechanisms

through which parental involvement enhances SEL outcomes, providing insights into effective strategies for promoting collaboration between parents and educators. Through comprehensive investigation, future research can inform practices that optimise parental involvement to support children's social-emotional growth in early childhood education for PATHS- IC.

Building on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, future research can explore more specific social dynamics within classrooms implementing PATHS- IC. In keeping with Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory, further studies can be directed at how teacher guidance impacts children's social-emotional development at different stages. Borrowing from Piaget's Developmental Stage Theory, upcoming research could examine how different stages of children's development influence the effectiveness of various PATHS- IC strategies. Lastly, Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory could guide investigations into how PATHS- IC helps fulfil students' innate needs, consequently fostering their intrinsic motivation. Together, these theoretical insights can shape targeted research questions for understanding PATHS- IC's impact more holistically.

Due to time constraints, the potential for a qualitative follow-up study involving teachers and parents could not be explored in the current research to check how they found the PATHS- IC program. Valuable insights could have been derived from this feedback concerning the actual implementation of the program, its effect in real-world settings, and potential areas warranting improvement. Thus, incorporating such a follow-up component in future studies could significantly contribute to the depth and holistic understanding of the PATHS- IC program's impact.

Finally, exploring the impact of cultural contexts and diversity on the effectiveness of the PATHS- IC program is critical for fostering inclusivity and equitable results. A deeper understanding of how cultural factors influence the implementation, and outcomes of the

PATHS- IC program will guide the creation of culturally responsive interventions that align with broader populations. Specifically, this process can help evolve PATHS- IC into a universally suitable framework, serving a variety of cultural contexts, particularly in other Islamic countries. This is while upholding its fundamental Islamic principles, ensuring that the program remains rooted in its core tenets as it continues to be evaluated and potentially implemented in diverse Islamic contexts around the globe.

7.10   Study Limitations

In this study, the study participants were not randomly assigned, which is a notable limitation that could be addressed in future research endeavours. The selection of children for this study and allocation of them to either the Experiment group or the Control Group was done by the teachers, who did not select participants randomly, as evidenced by pre-intervention differences between the Control and Experimental Groups. It is recognised as important to ensure that participants in different groups are randomly assigned in research to avoid any bias in the selection process (Kennedy et al., 2019). By randomly assigning students to either the Control or Experimental Group, a researcher can more confidently consider any observed differences in behaviour to the intervention and not to the pre-existing characteristics of the students (Becker et al., 2003).

A potential limitation of this study was the possibility of assessment bias. Knowing to which group (Experimental or Control) the children were assigned might have influenced the assessment results due to preconceived notions or unconscious biases. To effectively mitigate this challenge, measurements were collected by the RA who was unaware of the group assignments. The RA was blinded to which group each child belonged and assessed all the children uniformly, thereby maintaining comparable evaluation standards across both groups. This strategy considerably minimised any potential assessment bias, creating a fairer assessment environment and ultimately enhancing the trustworthiness of the study's findings.

By implementing such a blinding strategy, this study has laid a foundation for future research in this realm to adopt a similar approach to adequately control for and eliminate potential assessment bias. Another limitation of this study is the potential for recruitment bias, particularly in the qualitative interviews, where administrator gatekeeping may have influenced participant selection by excluding individuals with differing perspectives, despite efforts to ensure diverse representation. Moreover, I have addressed several other limitations of the study. Specifically, I have acknowledged the potential for bias due to the researcher's involvement in implementing the program, highlighting the need for future research to use independent evaluations to mitigate this issue. Furthermore, I have discussed the limitations related to sustainability, emphasising the importance of planning for long-term support to ensure the program's continued effectiveness beyond the initial trial phase. There are also the issue of possible reliability concerns due to the subjective nature of some measures. Although the research assistant and I assessed the children separately to maintain objectivity, this remains a common challenge in qualitative research.

Additionally, this research utilised two scales, one of which was the validated BASC-3 BESS. However, the other, the TRS-CAB measure is not considered to have been validated because it was adjusted for this research. Consequently, the results obtained from the TRS-CAB might have had a level of validity compromised. For future research, it would be advisable to engage validation methods or tools to ensure a robust and dependable analysis. Moreover, it is worth noting that while other measures were introduced that exhibit face validity, it is crucial to recognise that not all of these measures have undergone formal validation procedures. Indeed, one scale, the behavioural conduct scale, required the removal of one item to achieve reliability. In light of these limitations, it is important to consider potential avenues for further investigation. In addition, the sample did not include students with disabilities or special education needs; future research should include a broader range of

students to better understand the effectiveness of SEL programs across diverse populations. The inter-rater reliability across the assessment questions indicates an overall acceptable level of agreement between raters. However, certain items demonstrated lower levels of consistency, suggesting a need for further refinement of the assessment tool and additional training for raters to ensure more uniform evaluations in future implementations. Due to the potential conflict of interest and limited time spent with the children, having both the researcher and RA rate the children may have affected the accuracy of the scores; future studies should involve teachers or parents who know the children better to provide more accurate assessments. Despite the effort to blind the research assistant to the Experimental and Control classrooms, potential bias may have been introduced since the candidate and RA compared their assessments together. Additionally, in small early childhood settings, the RA might have guessed which classrooms were experimental based on comments from children or teachers. Since the RA and researcher were working colleagues, there was no power imbalance. Although the assessments were conducted separately, comparing responses afterward may have introduced some bias. A limitation of this study is the reliance on teacher assessments of children's self-perception, which may be subjective and could benefit from tools focusing on observable behaviours and direct input from children.

The study pivoted around the implementation of the PATHS- IC program, which has been specifically adapted for the Islamic culture prevalent within KSA. This cultural specificity inherently influences the study's outcomes, limiting their applicability on a broader, global scale. While the findings offer valuable insights within the target cultural and educational landscape, their generalisability is greatly hindered due to specific contextual and methodological limitations. Future research efforts should aim for greater diversity, methodological rigour, and cultural inclusiveness to make findings more universally applicable.

7.11   Recommendations

Drawing upon the findings of this study, several recommendations can be put forward.

1. Acknowledging the importance of early cognitive and social-emotional development, it is strongly advised that children should attend preschool. This step is crucial in building foundational skills and competencies.

2. The data from this study reemphasises the importance of incorporating a comprehensive SEL program within the preschool curriculum, and especially in the KSA, the PATHS- IC program.

3. Given the vital role of teachers in implementing these programs, it is fundamentally important to provide them with comprehensive training in SEL.

4. To ensure that time and resources invested in these important programs are used efficiently, it is recommended that research mechanisms are set in place parallel to the introduction of SEL programs into the curriculum. This continuous stream of research and monitoring will help assess the program's overall effectiveness in real-time, ensuring the maximum benefits for the students and providing valuable insights to refine and improve the program as required.

Implementing these recommendations will significantly improve the PATHS- IC pathway, fostering a robust platform for the social-emotional development of preschoolers in KSA.

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Chapter 8: Conclusion

The overall results of the PATHS- IC program intervention attest to its effectiveness in advancing children's social-emotional development. The foundational premise of the program, which was adapted to empower young preschoolers with crucial social-emotional skills, helped reduce disruptive behaviour while augmenting their SEL capabilities. PATHS-IC's distinct appeal lies in its tailored approach that accommodated the unique needs and cultural context of KSA's young learners, offering them a structured framework for growth.

Reflecting on the findings of the PATHS- IC program, emphasis is placed on the significance of tailoring SEL interventions to the specific needs and cultural context of learners. The study revealed that both teachers and parents are supportive of SEL programs at the preschool level in KSA, emphasising the importance of culturally specific initiatives. The development and successful implementation of PATHS- IC demonstrate the potential of such programs to effectively address the social-emotional needs of children in KSA preschools, serving as a promising starting point for future culturally tailored SEL interventions in similar settings.

Additionally, PATHS- IC's alignment with the globally recognised CASEL framework while maintaining its relevance to the cultural environment further enhanced the program's theoretical solidity. This alignment not only strengthened the program's theoretical foundation but also increased its potential to positively contribute to learners' social-emotional growth. By integrating best practices from the CASEL framework with cultural considerations, PATHS- IC exemplifies a model for developing culturally relevant SEL

programs that can effectively foster the social-emotional development of young learners worldwide.

The PATHS- IC program's influence presented a clearly interconnected landscape of behavioural domains within preschool education. This was illustrated among preschoolers who, following the PATHS- IC intervention, showed not only a considerable decrease in internalising behaviour but also a corresponding reduction in externalising behaviour. This implied that an enhanced ability to manage emotions internally could, in turn, lead to reduced external disruption, highlighting the co-dependency of these behavioural domains.

The findings revealed that the PATHS- IC program positively affected multiple behavioural domains, including attention and adaptability, scholastic conduct, social competence, and behavioural conduct, illustrating the program's holistic impact. This outlined the intricate interconnectedness of these behavioural domains, suggesting that comprehensive SEL programs needed to simultaneously address these multiple facets to promote well-rounded development in children.

The PATHS- IC program's specific strength lay in its potent effect on improving internalising behaviours, where regular preschool settings fell short. Thus, by intensifying this focus, PATHS- IC could further consolidate its effectiveness. Hence, the study highlighted the value of an integrated, customised approach in creating positive impacts on preschool children's SEL.

The study also revealed an interesting "preschool effect" - general improvements exhibited by the Control Group simply through regular preschool attendance. While these improvements should not be undervalued, PATHS- IC's noticeable impact on social and emotional development, including internalising behaviours, underscored its unique added value, setting it apart from the effects derived from standard preschool settings.

Collectively, these findings validated the effectiveness of PATHS- IC, supporting the case for further adoption and adaptation of such targeted SEL programs. These findings also reaffirmed the importance of an encompassing focus on various behavioural domains, driving home the need for interventions that mirrored this complexity in their design and implementation. By adopting a comprehensive and culturally sensitive approach to enhance the multifaceted aspects of social and emotional development in preschool children, the PATHS- IC program provided valuable SEL gains for preschool children.

Islamic teachings integral to the cultural fabric of KSA society were seamlessly merged within the SEL framework in the PATHS- IC program, a standout feature, presenting a unique paradigm of cultural integration in early education settings. This approach demonstrated how cultural diversity and respect for societal norms could be usefully integrated with SEL teaching to create a balanced, inclusive learning environment that acknowledged and respected each learner's unique cultural and religious background.

The careful integration of Islamic principles with broader SEL goals in the PATHS-IC program underscored the indelible role traditional, community specific religious teachings played in shaping a more diverse, inclusive, and effective educational sphere. This culturally tailored SEL program has thus established a crucial roadmap for others in the field. PATHS-IC's significance lays in demonstrating the delicate balance that exists and needs to be respected between mainstream educational initiatives and local cultural and religious leanings. It should encourage educators and policymakers globally to consider weaving traditional cultural teachings into broader pedagogical practices. Setting up parallel research mechanisms for continuous effectiveness monitoring and program optimisation of PATHS-IC is recommended. Implementing these steps could significantly bolster social-emotional development in preschool children in KSA.

This study and the success of PATHS- IC point to promising avenues for research and practical application of culturally sensitive SEL programs in early childhood educational settings worldwide. It provides a step forward towards a more comprehensive education system that respects and integrates cultural diversity, that may ultimately benefit future generations in a more globalised world. In essence, the PATHS- IC program has served as a vanguard in a preschool educational system, one that is culturally sensitive, carefully tailored, and effective in its results, making an impact on the lives of young KSA learners and shaping the preschool education sector for the better.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Letters

Ethic Approval and Flinders Letter

23 April 2021

Flinders
UNIVERSITY

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
APPROVAL NOTICE

Dear Miss Malak Alqaydhi,

The below proposed project has been **approved** on the basis of the information contained in the application and its attachments.

Project No:	4095
Project Title:	Exploring Cultural Adaptation of a Social and Emotional Learning Program for an Intervention in Saudi Arabia's Preschools
Primary Researcher:	Miss Malak Alqaydhi
Approval Date:	23/04/2021
Expiry Date:	22/12/2023

Please note: Due to the current COVID-19 situation, researchers are strongly advised to develop a research design that aligns with the University's COVID-19 research protocol involving human studies. Where possible, avoid face-to-face testing and consider rescheduling face-to-face testing or undertaking alternative distance/online data or interview collection means. For further information, please go to https://staff.flinders.edu.au/coronavirus-information/research-updates.

Please note: For all research projects wishing to recruit Flinders University students as participants, approval needs to be sought from Professor Clare Pollock in her capacity as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students). To seek approval, please provide a copy of the Ethics approval for the project and a copy of the project application to the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) via dvcsoffice@dl.flinders.edu.au.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESEARCHERS AND SUPERVISORS

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1. Participant Documentation

Please note that it is the responsibility of researchers and supervisors, in the case of student projects, to ensure that:

- all participant documents are checked for spelling, grammatical, numbering and formatting errors. The Committee does not accept any responsibility for the above mentioned errors.

- the Flinders University logo is included on all participant documentation (e.g., letters of Introduction, information Sheets, consent forms, debriefing information and questionnaires – with the exception of purchased research tools) and the current Flinders University letterhead is included in the header of all letters of introduction. The Flinders University international logo/letterhead should be used and documentation should contain international dialling codes for all telephone and fax numbers listed for all research to be conducted overseas.

- the HREC contact details, listed below, are included in the footer of all letters of introduction and information sheets.

This research project has been approved by Flinders University's Human Research Ethics Committee (Project ID 4095). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact Flinders University's Research Ethics & Compliance Office via telephone on 08 8201 2543 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au.

2. Annual Progress / Final Reports

In order to comply with the monitoring requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (updated 2018)* an annual progress report must be submitted each year on the anniversary of the approval date for the duration of the ethics approval using the HREC Annual/Final Report Form available online via the ResearchNow Ethics & Biosafety system.

Please note that no data collection can be undertaken after the ethics approval expiry date listed at the top of this notice. If data is collected after expiry, it will not be covered in terms of ethics. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that annual progress reports are submitted on time; and that no data is collected after ethics has expired.

Page 1 of 2

If the project is completed *before* ethics approval has expired please ensure a final report is submitted immediately. If ethics approval for your project expires please <u>either</u> submit (1) a final report; <u>or</u> (2) an extension of time request (using the HREC Modification Form). For <u>student projects</u>, the Low Risk Panel recommends that current ethics approval is maintained until a student's thesis has been submitted, assessed and finalised. This is to protect the student in the event that reviewers recommend that additional data be collected from participants.

3. Modifications to Project

Modifications to the project must not proceed until approval has been obtained from the Ethics Committee. Such proposed changes / modifications include:

- change of project title;
- change to research team (e.g., additions, removals, researchers and supervisors)
- changes to research objectives;
- changes to research protocol;
- changes to participant recruitment methods;
- changes / additions to source(s) of participants;
- changes of procedures used to seek informed consent;
- changes to participant remuneration;
- changes to information / documents to be given to potential participants;
- changes to research instruments (e.g., survey, interview questions etc);
- extensions of time (i.e. to extend the period of ethics approval past current expiry date).

To notify the Committee of any proposed modifications to the project please submit a Modification Request Form available online via the ResearchNow Ethics & Biosafety system. Please open the project, then select the 'Create Sub-Form' tile in the grey Action Menu, and then select the relevant Modification Request Form. Please note that extension of time requests should be submitted <u>prior</u> to the Ethics Approval Expiry Date listed on this notice.

4. Adverse Events and/or Complaints

Researchers should advise the Executive Officer of the Ethics Committee on 08 8201-3116 or human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au immediately if:

- any complaints regarding the research are received;
- a serious or unexpected adverse event occurs that effects participants;
- an unforeseen event occurs that may affect the ethical acceptability of the project.

Yours sincerely,

Hendryk Flaegel

on behalf of

Human Research Ethics Committee
Research Development and Support
human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

Flinders University
Sturt Road, Bedford Park, South Australia, 5042
GPO Box 2100, Adelaide, South Australia, 5001

http://www.flinders.edu.au/research/researcher-support/ebi/human-ethics/human-ethics_home.cfm

researchNow
Ethics & Biosafety

Flinders
Proactively supporting our Research

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Interview Teachers and Mothers

Title

The cultural adaptation of a social and emotional learning program for an intervention in Saudi Arabia's preschools

Chief Investigator

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Dr. Martyn Mills-Bayne
College of Education
University of South Australia

Description of the study

This research will explore the cultural design of a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) program for an intervention in a Saudi Arabia preschool. Prior to the intervention, the researcher will interview eight preschool teachers and mothers by listening to the voices and views of teachers and parents about SEL for their children. Based on the interviews and knowledge of Saudi Arabia's conservative, Islamic belief system, the researcher will then adapt an SEL program for cultural relevancy. The sample size of children will be 120, of which 60 will comprise the Experimental group, and the

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remaining 60 will comprise the Control group. The SEL program will be delivered to 60 preschool children (Experimental group) aged 5 years. The students will be divided into 2 sub-groups that will each experience the same intervention for SEL. The researcher and research assistant will conduct the SEL classroom interventions using recommended guidelines and content in 15 lessons with associated activities after each lesson. The pre- and post-test results will then be compared to identify and evaluate any changes in the children's behavioural functioning. These results will also be compared against the control group's results. This study will be supported by Flinders University, College of Education, Psychology and Social Work.

Purpose of the study

The first aim of this study is to explore the place of SEL in Saudi Arabia's education system by listening to the voices and views of teachers and parents about SEL for their children. Therefore, one of the first steps in the research will be to ask teachers and parents about their knowledge and views about SEL programs to help determine how a culturally designed SEL program should be conducted in KSA. A further purpose is to determine the most appropriate SEL intervention method to apply in the cultural context of the Saudi preschool classroom setting, which will clarify the international SEL programs that are suitable to implement and then how they may need to be designed to suit the cultural relevance of KSA. The final purpose is to evaluate the effectiveness of the trialed SEL program in the Saudi preschool classroom in fostering the 5 CASEL SEL competencies of self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, responsible decision making, and social awareness.

Benefits of the study

The benefits of this research stem from its potential contribution to knowledge about SEL in the Saudi preschool context and the opportunity to support initiatives for Saudi early childhood educators to consider implementing SEL programs from the basis of a culturally appropriate understanding. The findings from the study may be useful to inform the Saudi Ministry of Education policymakers and curriculum designers about social and emotional learning programs, which could be beneficial to trial in the Saudi preschool curriculum. Exploring teachers' and parents' perceptions and beliefs

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towards SEL programs through this research has the potential to inform and guide culturally acceptable and effective approaches that could be followed in implementing changes to programs in the Saudi government's preschool curriculum. Furthermore, the findings of the study may be more widely applicable and beneficial to inform the preschool education programs of a number of other countries in the Middle Eastern region, particularly Arab nations where cultural and religious teaching is embedded in the school curriculum.

Participant involvement and potential risks

If you agree to participate in the research study, you will be asked to:

- required to sign a consent form that will be attached with the information sheet which gives them a brief overview of the research and what they are required to do. Only the teachers and mothers who are willing to participate in the research will sign the consent form which will then allow them to participate.
- attend an online interview with a researcher that will be audio recorded and the interview will last up to an hour and participation is entirely voluntary.
- respond to questions regarding to your views about social emotional learning.

Potential risks

Risks that may associated with participants in this research is fatigue, inconvenience and maybe discomfort in sharing their experience. So, the researcher will provide safe environment to do the interview online by giving the participants different times to select based on their free time.

It is rarely expected that teachers and mothers will not have internet access to participate in the interview since all the teachers and mothers working with students from home. However, if they do not have access, they will be directed to the public library where is the free access Wi-Fi. The researchers do not expect the questions to cause any harm or discomfort to you. However, if you experience feelings of distress as a result of participation in this study, please let the research team know immediately. You can also contact the following service for support:

Mental health services support in Saudi Arabia: 920033360

Withdrawal Rights

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You may, without any penalty, decline to take part in this research study. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you may, without any penalty, withdraw at any time without providing an explanation. To withdraw, please contact the Chief Investigator or you may just refuse to answer any questions through the interview. Any data collected up to the point of your withdrawal will be securely destroyed.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Only researcher listed on this form have access to the individual information provided by you. Privacy and confidentiality will be assured at all times. The research outcomes may be presented at conferences, written up for publication or used for other research purposes as described in this information form. However, the privacy and confidentiality of individuals will be protected at all times. You will not be named, and your individual information will not be identifiable in any research products without your explicit consent. No data, including identifiable, non-identifiable and de-identified datasets, will be shared or used in future research projects without your explicit consent.

Data Storage

The information collected may be stored securely on a password protected computer and/or Flinders University server throughout the study. Any identifiable data will be de-identified for data storage purposes unless indicated otherwise. All data will be securely transferred to and stored at Flinders University for at least five years after publication of the results. Following the required data storage period, all data will be securely destroyed according to university protocols.

How will I receive feedback?

Upon completion of the project, a brief report of the findings will be made available to the preschool management via email. A request will be put across so that the information can also be distributed to the mothers who participated in the study via email.

Ethics Committee Approval

The project has been approved by Flinders University's Human Research Ethics Committee (4095)

Queries and Concerns

Queries or concerns regarding the research can be directed to the research team. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact

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the Flinders University's Research Ethics & Compliance Office team via telephone 08 8201 3116 or email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet which is yours to keep. If you accept our invitation to be involved, please sign the enclosed Consent Form.

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Interview Teachers and Mothers Consent Form (English and Arabic)

CONSENT FORM

Consent Statement

☐ I have read and understood the information about the research, and I understand I am being asked to provide informed consent to participate in this research study. I understand that I can contact the research team if I have further questions about this research study.

☐ I am not aware of any condition that would prevent my participation, and I agree to participate in this project.

☐ I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time during the study.

☐ I understand that I can contact Flinders University's Research Ethics & Compliance Office if I have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study.

☐ I understand that my involvement is confidential, and that the information collected may be published. I understand that I will not be identified in any research products.

I further consent to:
☐ participating in an interview
☐ having my information audio recorded

Signed:
Name:
Date:

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نموذج المعلومات الخاصة بالبحث

العنوان: التكيف الثقافي لبرنامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي لأطفال الروضة في السعودية

الباحثه:

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وصف الدراسة:
يسعى هذا البحث لاستكشاف التكيف الثقافي لبرنامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي في السعودية. قبل برنامج التدخل، ستجري الباحثة مقابلات مع ثمانية معلمات وأمهات في مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة لمعرفة آراء المعلمات والأمهات حول التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي وأهميته لأطفالهم. بناءً على نتائج المقابلات سوف تقوم الباحثة بتصميم برنامج متعلق بالتعليم من أجل الملاءمة الثقافية. سوف يكون حجم عينة الأطفال 120 طفل، سيشمل 60 منهم في المجموعة التجريبية، وسيشكل الـ 60 الاخرون المجموعة الضابطة تتراوح أعمار هم بين 5 سنوات. سوف يتم تطبيق برنامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي لـ60 طفل (المجموعة التجريبية) في مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة. سيتم تقسيم الطلاب في المجموعة التجريبية إلى مجموعتين ١٥ درسًا مع الأنشطة ومساعدة الباحثة بإجراء فرعيتين حيث يتم تطبيق نفس التدخل في كل مجموعة. سوف تقوم الباحثة المرتبطة بها بعد كل درس.

سيتم بعد ذلك مقارنة نتائج الاختبار قبل وبعد التدخل لتحديد وتقييم أي تغييرات في الأداء السلوكي للأطفال. سوف تتم مقارنة هذه النتائج أيضا بنتائج المجموعة الضابطة. ستدعم هذه الدراسة جامعة فليندرز، كلية التربية وعلم النفس والعمل الاجتماعي

الغرض من الدراسة:
الهدف الأول من هذه الدراسة هو استكشاف وجود التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي في المملكة العربية السعودية من خلال الاستماع إلى اراء المعلمات والأمهات حول التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي وأهميته لأطفالهم. لذلك، إحدى الخطوات الأولى في البحث هي

سؤال المعلمات والأمهات عن معرفتهم وآرائهم حول برامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي للمساعدة في تحديد كيفية إجراء برنامج مصمم ثقافيا مع المملكة العربية السعودية. الهدف الآخر هو تحديد انسب طريقة ثقافيا لإجراء التدخل على الأطفال. الهدف الأخير هو تقييم فعالية برنامج التدخل وأثره على الأطفال.

فوائد الدراسة:

يساهم هذا البحث في معرفة التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي في مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة. أيضا يعتبر فرصة لدعم المبادرات لمعلمات الروضة للنظر في تنفيذ برامج التعلم الاجتماعي بحيث تكون ملائمه ثقافيا للمملكة العربية السعودية. قد تكون نتائج الدراسة مفيدة لمصممي المناهج في وزارة التربية والتعليم لبرامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي والتي يمكن ان تكون مفيدة للتجربة في المناهج السعودية لمرحلة ما قبل المدرسة. إن استكشاف اراء المعلمات والأمهات ومعتقداتهم تجاه برامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي من خلال هذا البحث يساعد في معرفة الأساليب المقبولة ثقافيا والفعالة التي يمكن اتباعها في تنفيذ التغيرات على برامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي. قد تكون أيضا نتائج لها أهمية في تطبيق برامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي على نطاق أوسع في بلدان الدول العربية في الشرق الأوسط.

مشاركة المشاركين والمخاطر المحتملة:

إذا وافقت على المشاركة في الدراسة البحثية، فسيطلب منك:
التوقيع على نموذج الموافقة التي سوف تكون مرفقه لك مع ورقة المعلومات لتمنحك فكرة موجزة عن البحث وما هو مطلوب منك القيام به.
فقط اللاتي يرغبن في المشاركة في البحث يجب عليهن التوقيع على استمارة الموافقة التي ستسمح لهم بعد ذلك بالمشاركة. أيضا حضور مقابلة مع الباحثة وسوف يتم تسجيلها صوتيا وتستمر لمدة تصل إلى ساعة والمشاركة فيها تطوعيه. الإجابة على بعض الأسئلة عن رأيكم هو التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي.

المخاطر المحتملة:

تتمثل المخاطر التي قد ترتبط بالمشاركين في هذا البحث في التعب والإزعاج وربما عدم الراحة في مشاركة تجربتهم. لذلك، سيوفر الباحث بيئة آمنة لإجراء المقابلة عبر الإنترنت من خلال منح المشاركين أوقاتًا مختلفة للاختيار بناءً على وقت فراغهم.
أيضا نادرًا ما يُتوقع ألا يكون لدى المعلمين والأمهات إمكانية الوصول إلى الإنترنت للمشاركة في المقابلة لأن جميع المعلمات والأمهات يعملون مع الطلاب من المنزل. ومع ذلك، إذا لم يكن لديهم وصول للأنترنت، فسيتم توجيههم إلى المكتبة العامة حيث تتوفر خدمة الواي فاي المجانية.

حقوق الانسحاب:

يمكنك رفض مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة البحثية. إذا قررت المشاركة وغيرت رأيك لاحقًا، فيمكنك دون أي عقوبة، الانسحاب في أي وقت دون تقديم تبرير لذلك. للانسحاب، يرجى الاتصال بالباحث سيتم تدمير أي بيانات تم جمعها حتى نقطة السحب بشكل آمن.

السرية والخصوصية:

يمكن فقط للباحث المدرج في هذا البحث الوصول إلى المعلومات الفردية التي قدمتها. سيتم ضمان الخصوصية والسرية في جميع الأوقات. يمكن تقديم نتائج البحث في المؤتمرات أو كتابتها للنشر أو استخدامها لأغراض بحثية أخرى كما هو موضح في نموذج المعلومات هذا. ومع ذلك، ستتم حماية خصوصية وسرية الأفراد في جميع الأوقات. لن يتم ذكر اسمك ولن يتم التعرف على المعلومات الشخصية في أي منتجات بحثية دون موافقتك الصريحة.

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تخزين البيانات:

سوف يتم تخزين المعلومات التي تم جمعها بشكل آمن على جهاز الكمبيوتر محمي بكلمة مرور طوال فترة الدراسة. و سيتم نقل جميع البيانات وتخزينها في جامعة فليندرز لمدة خمس سنوات على الأقل بعد نشر النتائج. بعد فترة تخزين البيانات المطلوبة سوف يتم اتلاف جميع البيانات بشكل امن.

كيف يمكنني معرفة النتائج:

عند الانتهاء من المشروع، سيتم توفير تقرير موجز عن النتائج إلى إدارة ما قبل المدرسة عبر البريد الإلكتروني. سيتم تقديم طلب عبر الإنترنت بحيث يمكن أيضًا توزيع المعلومات للأمهات اللاتي تمت مشاركتهن في الدراسة عبر البريد الإلكتروني.

موافقة لجنة الأخلاقيات:

تمت الموافقة على المشروع من قبل لجنة أخلاقيات البحث البشري بجامعة فليندرز 4095

الاستفسارات والمخاوف:

يمكن توجيه الاستفسارات أو المخاوف المتعلقة بالبحث إلى فريق البحث. إذا كانت لديك أي شكاوى أو تحفظات حول السلوك الأخلاقي لهذه الدراسة، فيمكنك الاتصال بفريق مكتب الأخلاقيات البحثية في جامعة فليندرز عبر الهاتف 08 3116 8201

أو ارسال بريد الكتروني عن طريق:

human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au.

نشكرك على الوقت الذي قضيته في قراءة ورقة المعلومات هذه، وإذا قبلت دعوتنا بالمشاركة في الدراسة الرجاء التوقيع على نموذج الموافقة المرفق.

بيان الموافقة:

- لقد قرأت وفهمت جميع المعلومات المتعلقة بالبحث، وأدرك أنه طُلب مني تقديم موافقة للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية.

أدرك أنه يمكنني الاتصال بفريق البحث إذا كان لدي المزيد من الأسئلة حول هذه الدراسة البحثية.

- لست على علم بأي شرط من شأنه أن يمنع مشاركتي، وأوافق على المشاركة في هذا المشروع البحثي.

أدرك أنه يحق لي الانسحاب في أي وقت أثناء إجراء الدراسة البحثية.

أدرك أنه يمكنني الاتصال بمكتب الأخلاقيات البحثية بجامعة فليندرز إذا كان لدي أي شكاوى أو تحفظات حول السلوك الأخلاقي هذه الدراسة.

أدرك أن مشاركتي سوف تكون سرية، وأن المعلومات التي تم جمعها قد يتم نشرها. أدرك أيضا أنه لن يتم تحديد هويتي في أي منتجات بحثي.

أوافق كذلك على:

المشاركة في المقابلة ( )

تسجيل صوتي لمعلومات المقابلة ( )

التوقيع

الاسم

التاريخ

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PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Teacher pre-post intervention

Title:

The cultural adaptation of a social and emotional learning program for an intervention in Saudi Arabia's preschools

Chief Investigator

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Description of the study

This research will explore the cultural adaptation of a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) program for an intervention in a Saudi Arabia preschool. Prior to the intervention, the researcher will interview eight preschool teachers and mothers by listening to the voices and views of teachers and parents about SEL for their children. Based on the interviews and knowledge of Saudi Arabia's conservative, Islamic belief system, the researcher will then adapt an SEL program for cultural relevancy. The sample size of children will be 120, of which 60 will comprise the Experimental group, and the remaining 60 will comprise the Control group. The SEL program will be delivered to 60 preschool children (Experimental group) aged 5 years. The students will be divided into 2 sub-groups that will each experience the same intervention for SEL.

The researcher will conduct the SEL classroom interventions using recommended guidelines and content in lessons with associated activities after each lesson.

The preschool teacher of the children will participate in the performance of a pre-and post-test evaluation of the emotional and behavioural functioning of the children. The comprehensive assessment tool, BASC-3 Behavioural and Emotional Screening System (BASC-3 BESS), and Teacher's Rating Scale of Child's Actual Behaviour Measure. The pre- and post-test results will then be compared to identify and evaluate any changes in the children's behavioural functioning.

This study will be supported by Flinders University, College of Education, Psychology and Social Work.

Purpose of the study

The first aim of this study is to explore the place of SEL in Saudi Arabia's education system by listening to the voices and views of teachers and parents about SEL for their children. Therefore, one of the first steps in the research will be to ask teachers and parents about their knowledge and views about SEL programs to help determine how a culturally adapted SEL program should be conducted in KSA. A further purpose is to determine the most appropriate SEL intervention method to apply in the cultural context of the Saudi preschool classroom setting, which will clarify the international SEL programs that are suitable to implement and then how they may need to be adapted to suit the cultural relevance of KSA. The final purpose is to evaluate the effectiveness of the trialed SEL program in the Saudi preschool classroom in fostering the 5 CASEL SEL competencies of self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, responsible decision making, and social awareness.

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Benefits of the study

The benefits of this research stem from its potential contribution to knowledge about SEL in the Saudi preschool context and the opportunity to support initiatives for Saudi early childhood educators to consider implementing SEL programs from the basis of a culturally appropriate understanding. The findings from the study may be useful to inform the Saudi Ministry of Education policymakers and curriculum designers about social and emotional learning programs, which could be beneficial to trial in the Saudi preschool curriculum. Exploring teachers' and parents' perceptions and beliefs towards SEL programs through this research has the potential to inform and guide culturally acceptable and effective approaches that could be followed in implementing changes to programs in the Saudi government's preschool curriculum. Furthermore, the findings of the study may be more widely applicable and beneficial to inform the preschool education programs of a number of other countries in the Middle Eastern region, particularly Arab nations where cultural and religious teaching is embedded in the school curriculum.

Participant involvement and potential risks

If you agree to participate in the research study, you will be asked to:

At first, the preschool teachers will be required to sign a consent form that will be attached with the information sheet which gives them a brief overview of the research and what they are required to do. Only the teachers who are willing to participate in the research will sign the consent form which will then allow them to participate. The preschool teacher will be asked to fill out the behaviour rating scale on each of the children's pre- and post-intervention using a rating method known as Behavior Assessment System for Children Teacher Report-Preschool (BASC-3) and Teacher's Rating Scale of Child's Actual Behaviour Measure. These can be completed in approximately 5-10 minutes per child. So, the expected time for the teacher to complete the questionnaire pre-intervention will take 5 hours, and also the teacher will take 5 hours to complete the post-intervention.

potential risks

There is reduced or no possibility of risk in this study. In regards to teacher participation, the only risk involved is that participating in the study may be time consuming and might cut into possible teaching time. However, to mitigate this risk, the research will be conducted at a time suitable for all participants.

The researchers do not expect the questions to cause any harm or discomfort to you. However, if you experience feelings of distress as a result of participation in this study,

please let the research team know immediately. You can also contact the following service for support:

- Mental health services support in Saudi Arabia: 920033360

Withdrawal Rights

You may, without any penalty, decline to take part in this research study. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you may, without any penalty, withdraw at any time without providing an explanation. To withdraw, please contact the Chief Investigator. Any data collected up to the point of your withdrawal will be securely destroyed.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Only researchers listed on this form have access to the individual information provided by you. Privacy and confidentiality will be assured at all times. The research outcomes may be presented at conferences, written up for publication or used for other research purposes as described in this information form. However, the privacy and confidentiality of individuals will be protected at all times. You will not be named, and your individual information will not be identifiable in any research products without your explicit consent.

No data, including identifiable, non-identifiable and de-identified datasets, will be shared or used in future research projects without your explicit consent.

Data Storage

The information collected may be stored securely on a password protected computer and/or Flinders University server throughout the study. Any identifiable data will be de-identified for data storage purposes unless indicated otherwise. All data will be securely transferred to and stored at Flinders University for at least five years after publication of the results. Following the required data storage period, all data will be securely destroyed according to university protocols.

How will I receive feedback?

Upon completion of the project, a brief report of the findings will be made available to the preschool management via email. A request will be put across so that the information can also be distributed to the parents whose children participated in the study via email.

Ethics Committee Approval

The project has been approved by Flinders University's Human Research Ethics Committee (4095)

Queries and Concerns

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Queries or concerns regarding the research can be directed to the research team. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact the Flinders University's Research Ethics & Compliance Office team via telephone 08 8201 3116 or email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet which is yours to keep. If you accept our invitation to be involved, please sign the enclosed Consent Form.

Teacher Pre-Post Test Intervention Consent Form (English and Arabic)

Flinders
UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM

Consent Statement

☐ I have read and understood the information about the research, and I understand I am being asked to provide informed consent to participate in this research study. I understand that I can contact the research team if I have further questions about this research study.

☐ I am not aware of any condition that would prevent my participation, and I agree to participate in this project.

☐ I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time during the study.

☐ I understand that I can contact Flinders University's Research Ethics & Compliance Office if I have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study.

☐ I understand that my involvement is confidential, and that the information collected may be published. I understand that I will not be identified in any research products.

I further consent to:

☐ completing a questionnaire

Signed:

Name:

Date:

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نموذج المعلومات الخاصة بالبحث

العنوان: التكيف الثقافي لبرنامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي لأطفال الروضة في السعودية

الباحث:
الأستاذة ملاك القيضي
كلية التربية وعلم النفس والخدمة الاجتماعية
الجوال:0432132610

المشرفين:
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وصف الدراسة:

يسعى هذا البحث لاستكشاف التكيف الثقافي لبرنامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي في السعودية. قبل برنامج التدخل، ستجري الباحثة مقابلات مع ثمانية معلمات وأمهات في مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة لمعرفة آراء المعلمات والأمهات حول التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي وأهميته لأطفالهم. بناءً على نتائج المقابلات سوف تقوم الباحثة بتكييف برنامج متعلق بالتعليم من أجل الملاءمة الثقافية. سوف يكون حجم عينة الأطفال 120 طفل، سيشمل 60 منهم في المجموعة التجريبية، وسيشكل الـ 60 الاخرون المجموعة الضابطة تتراوح أعمار هم بين 5 سنوات. سوف يتم تطبيق برنامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي لـ60 طفل (المجموعة التجريبية) في مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة. سيتم تقسيم الطلاب في المجموعة التجريبية إلى مجموعتين فرعيتين حيث يتم تطبيق نفس التدخل في كل مجموعة. سوف تقوم الباحثة بإجراء ١٥ درسًا مع الأنشطة المرتبطة بها بعد كل درس.

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سوف تشارك معلمة ما قبل المدرسة للأطفال في أداء تقييم قبل وبعد الاختبار للأداء العاطفي والسلوكي للأطفال باستخدام أداة التقييم الشاملة ونموذج لتسجيل وقياس سلوكيات الأطفال الداخلية والخارجية ومهارات التكيف.

سيتم بعد ذلك مقارنة نتائج الاختبار قبل وبعد التدخل لتحديد وتقييم أي تغييرات في الأداء السلوكي للأطفال. سوف تتم مقارنة هذه النتائج أيضا بنتائج المجموعة الضابطة. ستدعم هذه الدراسة جامعة فليندرز، كلية التربية وعلم النفس والعمل الاجتماعي

الغرض من الدراسة:

الهدف الأول من هذه الدراسة هو استكشاف وجود التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي في المملكة العربية السعودية من خلال الاستماع إلى اراء المعلمات والأمهات حول التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي وأهميته لأطفالهم. لذلك، إحدى الخطوات الأولى في البحث هي

سؤال المعلمات والأمهات عن معرفتهم وآرائهم حول برامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي للمساعدة في تحديد كيفية إجراء برنامج يتكيف ثقافيا مع المملكة العربية السعودية. الهدف الآخر هو تحديد انسب طريقة ثقافيا لإجراء التدخل على الأطفال. الهدف الأخير هو تقييم فعالية برنامج التدخل وأثره على الأطفال.

فوائد الدراسة:

يساهم هذا البحث في معرفة التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي في مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة. أيضا يعتبر فرصة لدعم المبادرات لمعلمات الروضة للنظر في تنفيذ برامج التعلم الاجتماعي بحيث تكون ملائمه ثقافيا للملكة العربية السعودية. قد تكون نتائج الدراسة مفيدة لمصممي المناهج في وزارة التربية والتعليم لبرامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي والتي يمكن ان تكون مفيدة للتجربة في المناهج السعودية لمرحلة ما قبل المدرسة. إن استكشاف اراء المعلمات والأمهات ومعتقداتهم تجاه برامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي من خلال هذا البحث يساعد في معرفة الأساليب المقبولة ثقافيا والفعالة التي يمكن اتباعها في تنفيذ التغيرات على برامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي. قد تكون أيضا نتائج لها أهمية في تطبيق برامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي على نطاق أوسع في بلدان الدول العربية في الشرق الأوسط.

مشاركة المشاركين والمخاطر المحتملة:

إذا وافقت على المشاركة في الدراسة البحثية، فسيُطلب منك:

في البداية، سيطلب من المعلمات التوقيع على نموذج الموافقة التي سوف تكون مرفقه لهم مع ورقة المعلومات لتمنحهم فكرة موجزة عن البحث وما هو مطلوب منهم القيام به. فقط المعلمات اللاتي يرغبن في المشاركة في البحث يجب عليهن التوقيع على استمارة الموافقة التي ستسمح لهم بعد ذلك بالمشاركة. سوف يطلب من المعلمة تعبئة مقياس السلوك لتقييم مستوى الأطفال قبل وبعد التدخل ويمكن اكمال النماذج من ٥-١٠ دقائق. لذلك، سيستغرق الوقت حوالي خمس ساعات لإكمال الاستبيان قبل التدخل وخمس ساعات لإنهائه بعد التدخل.

المخاطر المحتملة:

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هناك انخفاض أو عدم وجود مخاطر محتملة في هذه الدراسة. فيما يتعلق بمشاركة المعلمة، فإن الخطر الوحيد الذي يحتمل ان يكون هو أن تطبيق الدراسة قد يستغرق وقتًا طويلاً وقد يقلل من وقت التدريس المحتمل. ومع ذلك، للتخفيف من هذه المخاطر، سيتم إجراء البحث في وقت مناسب لجميع المشاركين.

حقوق الانسحاب:

يمكنك رفض مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة البحثية. إذا قررت المشاركة وغيرت رأيك لاحقًا، فيمكنك دون أي عقوبة، الانسحاب في أي وقت دون تقديم تبرير لذلك. للانسحاب، يرجى الاتصال بالباحث سيتم تدمير أي بيانات تم جمعها حتى نقطة السحب بشكل آمن.

السرية والخصوصية:

يمكن فقط للباحث المدرج في هذا البحث الوصول إلى المعلومات الفردية التي قدمتها. سيتم ضمان الخصوصية والسرية في جميع الأوقات. يمكن تقديم نتائج البحث في المؤتمرات أو كتابتها للنشر أو استخدامها لأغراض بحثية أخرى كما هو موضح في نموذج المعلومات هذا. ومع ذلك، ستتم حماية خصوصية وسرية الأفراد في جميع الأوقات. لن يتم ذكر اسمك ولن يتم التعرف على المعلومات الشخصية في أي منتجات بحثية دون موافقتك الصريحة.

تخزين البيانات:

سوف يتم تخزين المعلومات التي تم جمعها بشكل آمن على جهاز الكمبيوتر محمي بكلمة مرور طوال فترة الدراسة. و سيتم نقل جميع البيانات وتخزينها في جامعة فليندرز لمدة خمس سنوات على الأقل بعد نشر النتائج. بعد فترة تخزين البيانات المطلوبة سوف يتم اتلاف جميع البيانات بشكل امن.

كيف يمكنني معرفة النتائج:

عند الانتهاء من المشروع، سيتم توفير تقرير موجز عن النتائج إلى إدارة ما قبل المدرسة عبر البريد الإلكتروني. سيتم تقديم طلب عبر الإنترنت بحيث يمكن أيضًا توزيع المعلومات على الوالدين الذين شارك أطفالهم في الدراسة عبر البريد الإلكتروني.

موافقة لجنة الأخلاقيات:

تمت الموافقة على المشروع من قبل لجنة أخلاقيات البحث البشري بجامعة فليندرز 4095

الاستفسارات والمخاوف:

يمكن توجيه الاستفسارات أو المخاوف المتعلقة بالبحث إلى فريق البحث. إذا كانت لديك أي شكاوى أو تحفظات حول السلوك الأخلاقي لهذه الدراسة، فيمكنك الاتصال بفريق مكتب الأخلاقيات البحثية في جامعة فليندرز عبر الهاتف 08 3116 8201

أو ارسال بريد الكتروني عن طريق:

human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au.

نشكرك على الوقت الذي قضيته في قراءة ورقة المعلومات هذه، وإذا قبلت دعوتنا بالمشاركة في الدراسة الرجاء التوقيع على نموذج الموافقة المرفق.

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بيان الموافقة:

- لقد قرأت وفهمت جميع المعلومات المتعلقة بالبحث، وأدرك أنه طُلب مني تقديم موافقة للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية. أدرك أنه يمكنني الاتصال بفريق البحث إذا كان لدي المزيد من الأسئلة حول هذه الدراسة البحثية.

- لست على علم بأي شرط من شأنه أن يمنع مشاركتي، وأوافق على المشاركة في هذا المشروع البحثي.

أدرك أنه يحق لي الانسحاب في أي وقت أثناء إجراء الدراسة البحثية.

أدرك أنه يمكنني الاتصال بمكتب الأخلاقيات البحثية بجامعة فليندرز إذا كان لدي أي شكاوى أو تحفظات حول السلوك الأخلاقي هذه الدراسة.

أدرك أن مشاركتي سوف تكون سرية، وأن المعلومات التي تم جمعها قد يتم نشرها. أدرك أيضًا أنه لن يتم تحديد هويتي في أي منتجات بحثي.

أوافق كذلك على:

استكمال الاستبيان ( )

التوقيع
الاسم
التاريخ

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Parental Form Information Sheet (English and Arabic)

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Parental form

Title:

The cultural adaptation of a social and emotional learning program for an intervention in Saudi Arabia's preschools

Chief Investigator
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College of Education
University of South Australia
Email: martyn.mills-bayne@unisa.edu.au

Description of the study

My study explores the cultural adaptation of a Social and Emotional Learning program for an intervention in a Saudi Arabia preschool. Social and emotional learning in school helps children understand how to respect and behave well with other children, how to control their emotions, and how to focus well on their academic learning.

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I am asking for your help in conducting my research. Prior to the intervention, I want to interview eight preschool teachers and mothers so that I may listen to the voices and views of teachers and mothers about this kind of learning for their children. Based on the interviews and knowledge gained about Saudi Arabia's conservative, Islamic belief system, I plan to adapt an SEL program for cultural relevancy. For my study, I want to establish a sample size of 120 children, of which 60 will be in an Experimental group, and the remaining 60 will be in a Control group. The SEL program will be given to 60 preschool children (Experimental group), all aged 5 years, which will be divided into 2 sub-groups that will each experience the same intervention for SEL. Together with the children's usual teacher, I want to conduct the SEL classroom interventions using recommended guidelines and content in 15 lessons with associated activities after each lesson.

The pre- and post-test results will then be compared to identify and evaluate any changes in the children's behavioural functioning. These results will also be compared against the control group's results. This study will be supported by Flinders University, College of Education, Psychology and Social Work.

Purpose of the study

I want to determine the most appropriate SEL intervention method to apply in the cultural context of the Saudi preschool classroom setting, which will help clarify which international SEL programs are suitable to use in KSA. I also want to evaluate the effectiveness of the SEL program in fostering the children's competencies of self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, responsible decision making, and social awareness.

Benefits of the study

I am hoping my research will add to knowledge about the value of SEL in the Saudi preschool and help early childhood educators understand about how to use SEL programs from the basis of Saudi Arabia's culture. I plan to share the results of my study with the Saudi Ministry of Education policymakers and curriculum designers so they may consider how social and emotional learning could be beneficial to trial in the Saudi preschool curriculum.

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Participant involvement and potential risks

If you agree to allow your child to participate in the research study, I ask you to sign a consent form that is attached with this information sheet. I will also ask the children verbally whether they want to participate in this study or not, and their consent will be recorded. If you both agree, your child will be involved into the pre- and post-test intervention of the emotional and behavioural functioning of the children which will be taken by their usual preschool teacher. In addition, your child will be involved into SEL intervention program which comprise of 15 lessons for a period of three days a week undertaken as a part of their usual attendance at preschool. This program will be conducted by the researcher in Arabic language.

The researcher does not expect the questions to cause any harm or discomfort. However, if you or your child experience any concerns, please contact the school administrator or a counsellor at the school, whose contact details you will be provided with. The possibility of risks for the children is fairly low, and I am managing risks by informed consent child assent and reporting any concerns immediately to the supervising teacher when conducting the research on-site. To manage the risk if a child participant gets upset during intervention lessons, the researcher will stop the lessons and contact a teacher or someone familiar to the child. Moreover, the researcher may get the teacher and refer the child to the school counsellor but parents will be contacted before referral to a counsellor. However, if you or your child do not want to participate in the study or assessments, your choice will be accepted. Also, if you change your mind, you may withdraw from the study at any time, and any information that has been gathered will be destroyed.

Withdrawal Rights

Your child may, without any penalty, decline to take part in this research study. If your child decides to take part and later change their mind, they may, without any penalty, withdraw at any time without providing an explanation. To withdraw, please contact the Chief Investigator or your child may just refuse to answer any questions through the intervention. Any data collected up to the point of your withdrawal will be securely destroyed.

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Confidentiality and Privacy

Only researcher listed on this form have access to the individual information provide for your child. Privacy and confidentiality will be assured at all times. The research outcomes may be presented at conferences, written up for publication or used for other research purposes as described in this information form. However, the privacy and confidentiality of individuals will be protected at all times. Your child will not be named, and individual information will not be identifiable in any research products without your explicit consent. No data, including identifiable, non-identifiable and de-identified datasets, will be shared or used in future research projects without your explicit consent.

Data Storage

The information collected may be stored securely on a password protected computer and/or Flinders University server throughout the study. Any identifiable data will be de-identified for data storage purposes unless indicated otherwise. All data will be securely transferred to and stored at Flinders University for at least five years after publication of the results. Following the required data storage period, all data will be securely destroyed according to university protocols.

How will I receive feedback?

Upon completion of the project, a brief report of the findings will be made available to the preschool management via email. A request will be put across so that the information can also be distributed to the parents whose children participated in the study via email.

Ethics Committee Approval

The project has been approved by Flinders University's Human Research Ethics Committee (4095)

Queries and Concerns

Queries or concerns regarding the research can be directed to the research team. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact the Flinders University's Research Ethics & Compliance Office team via telephone 08 8201 3116 or email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet which is yours to keep. If you accept our invitation to be involved, please sign the enclosed Consent Form.

Parental Form Consent Form (English and Arabic)

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

FOR CHILD PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

(by experiment)

The cultural adaptation of a social and emotional learning program for an intervention in Saudi Arabia's preschools

I …...

being over the age of 18 years, hereby consent to participate as requested in the focus

group for the research project with the title listed above.

1. I have read the information provided.
2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.
3. I agree to audio recording of my child's information and participation.
4. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.
5. I understand that:

   - My child may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
   - My child is free to withdraw from the project at any time and is free to decline to answer particular questions.
   - While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, my child will not be identified, and individual information will remain confidential
   - While no identifying information about my child will be published, anonymity cannot be guaranteed
   - Whether my child participates or not, or withdraws after participating, will have no effect on his/her progress in his/her course of study, or results gained
   - My child may ask that the recording/observation be stopped at any time, and he/she may withdraw at any time from the session or the research without disadvantage
   - My child assent will be recorded to participate in the program

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6. I understand that <u>only</u> the researchers on this project will have access to my child's research data and raw results; unless I explicitly provide consent for it to be shared with other parties. If the need to seek your consent to share your child's research data with other parties does arise, I will be contacted by the researchers via email

Parent / Guardian signature……………………….……………Date……….…………..

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

Researcher's name………….……………….…………………...................

Researcher's signature…………………….……………..Date.……………………

NB: *Two signed copies should be obtained (one for researcher; one for parent / guardian).*

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee in South Australia (Project number 4095 following approval). For queries regarding the <u>ethics approval</u> of this project please contact the Executive Officer of the Committee via telephone on +61 8 8201 3116 or email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

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العنوان: التكيف الثقافي لبرنامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي لأطفال الروضة في السعودية

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وصف الدراسة:

يسعى هذا البحث لاستكشاف التكيف الثقافي لبرنامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي في السعودية. قبل برنامج التدخل، ستجري الباحثة مقابلات مع ثمانية معلمات وأمهات في مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة لمعرفة آراء المعلمات والأمهات حول التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي وأهميته لأطفالهم. بناءً على نتائج المقابلات سوف تقوم الباحثة بتكييف برنامج متعلق بالتعليم من أجل الملاءمة الثقافية. سوف يكون حجم عينة الأطفال 120 طفل، سيشمل 60 منهم في المجموعة التجريبية، وسيشكل الـ 60 الاخرون المجموعة الضابطة تتراوح أعمار هم بين 5 سنوات. سوف يتم تطبيق برنامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي لـ60 طفل (المجموعة التجريبية) في مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة. سيتم تقسيم الطلاب في المجموعة التجريبية إلى مجموعتين فرعيتين حيث يتم تطبيق نفس التدخل في كل مجموعة. سوف تقوم الباحثة بإجراء ١٥ درسًا مع الأنشطة المرتبطة بها بعد كل درس.

سوف تشارك معلمة ما قبل المدرسة للأطفال في أداء تقييم قبل وبعد الاختبار للأداء العاطفي والسلوكي للأطفال BESS باستخدام أداة التقييم الشاملة ونموذج لتسجيل وقياس سلوكيات الأطفال الداخلية والخارجية ومهارات التكيف.

سيتم بعد ذلك مقارنة نتائج الاختبار قبل وبعد التدخل لتحديد وتقييم أي تغييرات في الأداء السلوكي للأطفال. سوف تتم مقارنة هذه النتائج أيضا بنتائج المجموعة الضابطة. ستدعم هذه الدراسة جامعة فليندرز، كلية التربية وعلم النفس والعمل الاجتماعي

الغرض من الدراسة:

الهدف الأول من هذه الدراسة هو استكشاف وجود التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي في المملكة العربية السعودية من خلال الاستماع إلى اراء المعلمات والأمهات حول التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي وأهميته لأطفالهم. لذلك، إحدى الخطوات الأولى في البحث هي

سؤال المعلمات والأمهات عن معرفتهم وآرائهم حول برامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي للمساعدة في تحديد كيفية إجراء برنامج يتكيف ثقافيا مع المملكة العربية السعودية. الهدف الأخر هو تحديد انسب طريقة ثقافيا لإجراء التدخل على الأطفال. الهدف الأخير هو تقييم فعالية برنامج التدخل وأثره على الأطفال.

فوائد الدراسة:

يساهم هذا البحث في معرفة التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي في مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة. أيضا يعتبر فرصة لدعم المبادرات لمعلمات الروضة للنظر في تنفيذ برامج التعلم الاجتماعي بحيث تكون ملائمه ثقافيا للمملكة العربية السعودية. قد تكون نتائج الدراسة مفيدة لمصممي المناهج في وزارة التربية والتعليم لبرامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي والتي يمكن ان تكون مفيدة للتجربة في المناهج السعودية لمرحلة ما قبل المدرسة. إن استكشاف اراء المعلمات والأمهات ومعتقداتهم تجاه برامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي من خلال هذا البحث يساعد في معرفة الأساليب المقبولة ثقافيا والفعالة التي يمكن اتباعها في تنفيذ التغيرات على برامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي. قد تكون أيضا نتائج لها أهمية في تطبيق برامج التعلم الاجتماعي والعاطفي على نطاق أوسع في بلدان الدول العربية في الشرق الأوسط.

مشاركة المشاركين والمخاطر المحتملة:

إذا وافقت على المشاركة في الدراسة البحثية، فسيطلب منك:

في البداية، سيطلب من الوالدين التوقيع على نموذج الموافقة التي سوف تكون مرفقه لهم مع ورقة المعلومات لتمنحهم فكرة موجزة عن البحث وما هو مطلوب منهم القيام به. فقط الآباء الذين يرغبون في مشاركة أطفالهم في البحث سوف يوقعون على استمارة الموافقة التي ستسمح لهم بعد ذلك بالمشاركة. سيسأل الأطفال لفظى عما إذا كانوا سيشاركون في هذه الدراسة أم لا وسيتم تسجيل موافقتهم.

سيتم إشراك طفلك في برنامج التدخل الذي يتألف من ١٥ درسًا لمدة ثلاثة أيام في الأسبوع كجزء من حضورهم المعتاد في مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة. يتم تنفيذ هذا البرنامج من قبل الباحث باللغة العربية. كجزء من هذه الدراسة، ستقوم معلمة الروضة بإجراء التدخل قبل وبعد الاختبار للأداء العاطفي والسلوكي للأطفال.

المخاطر المحتملة:

هناك انخفاض أو عدم وجود مخاطر محتملة في هذه الدراسة. ومع ذلك، إذا كان طفلك لا يرغب في المشاركة في برنامج التدخل، فسيتم تزويده بخبرات تعلم أخرى من خلال معلمة الصف العادي. سيعمل SELالتقييمات أو برنامج طفلك بجانب معلم الصف العادي إذا شارك، وسيبقى في واجب الرعاية.

حقوق الانسحاب:

يمكنك رفض مشاركة طفلك في هذه الدراسة البحثية. إذا قررت المشاركة وغيرت رأيك لاحقًا، فيمكنك دون أي عقوبة ، الانسحاب في أي وقت دون تقديم تبرير لذلك. للانسحاب، يرجى الاتصال بالباحثة أو يمكن لطفلك فقط رفض الإجابة على أي أسئلة من خلال برنامج التدخل. سيتم تدمير أي بيانات تم جمعها حتى نقطة السحب بشكل آمن.

السرية والخصوصية:

يمكن فقط للباحث المدرج في هذا البحث الوصول إلى المعلومات الفردية لطفلك. سيتم ضمان الخصوصية والسرية في جميع الأوقات. يمكن تقديم نتائج البحث في المؤتمرات أو كتابتها للنشر أو استخدامها لأغراض بحثية أخرى كما هو موضح في نموذج المعلومات هذا. ومع ذلك، ستتم حماية خصوصية وسرية الأفراد في جميع الأوقات. لن يتم ذكر اسم طفلك ولن يتم التعرف على معلوماته الشخصية في أي منتجات بحثية دون موافقتك الصريحة.

تخزين البيانات:

سوف يتم تخزين المعلومات التي تم جمعها بشكل آمن على جهاز الكمبيوتر محمي بكلمة مرور طوال فترة الدراسة سيتم نقل جميع البيانات وتخزينها في جامعة فليندرز لمدة خمس سنوات على الأقل بعد نشر النتائج. بعد فترة تخزين البيانات المطلوبة سوف يتم اتلاف جميع البيانات بشكل امن.

كيف يمكنني معرفة النتائج من مشاركة طفلي:

عند الانتهاء من المشروع، سيتم توفير تقرير موجز عن النتائج إلى إدارة ما قبل المدرسة عبر البريد الإلكتروني. سيتم تقديم طلب عبر الإنترنت بحيث يمكن أيضًا توزيع المعلومات على الوالدين الذين شارك أطفالهم في الدراسة عبر البريد الإلكتروني.

موافقة لجنة الأخلاقيات:

تمت الموافقة على المشروع من قبل لجنة أخلاقيات البحث البشري بجامعة فليندرز 4095

الاستفسارات والمخاوف:

يمكن توجيه الاستفسارات أو المخاوف المتعلقة بالبحث إلى فريق البحث. إذا كانت لديك أي شكاوى أو تحفظات حول السلوك الأخلاقي لهذه الدراسة، فيمكنك الاتصال بفريق مكتب الأخلاقيات البحثية في جامعة فليندرز عبر الهاتف 08 3116 8201

أو ارسال بريد الكتروني عن طريق:

human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au.

نشكرك على الوقت الذي قضيته في قراءة ورقة المعلومات هذه، وإذا قبلت دعوتنا بالمشاركة في الدراسة الرجاء التوقيع على نموذج الموافقة المرفق.

أنا .... أقر أني فوق سن ١٨ ، وبعد الاطلاع على خطاب المعلومات الخاص بالبحث أوافق على

طفلي.........................للمشاركة في هذا البحث.

١- لقد قرأت كافة المعلومات المقدمة.

٢- لقد تم شرح تفاصيل إجراءات البحث وأية مخاطر قد تحدث خلال المشاركة بهذا البحث.

٣- أوافق على التسجيل الصوتي لطفلي للمشاركة في البحث

٤- أنا أدرك أنني يجب أن احتفظ بنسخة من ورقة المعلومات ونموذج الموافقة الخاصة بالبحث للرجوع إليها في المستقبل.

٥- أنا أدرك انه:

- أن طفلي لا يحصل على فائدة مباشره من المشاركة في البحث

- أن طفلي حر في الانسحاب من المشروع في أي وقت، وأيضاً حر في رفض الإجابة على أي سؤال.

- في حين سيتم نشر المعلومات المكتسبة في هذه الدراسة كما هو موضح، لن يتم الكشف على هوية طفلي وسوف تبقى المعلومات

سريه.

- في حين لن يتم نشر المعلومات المكتسبة في هذه الدراسة، لن يمكن ضمان إخفاء الهوية لطفلي.

- سواء شارك طفلي في البحث أو لم يشارك، أو انسحب بعد المشاركة لن يكون هناك تأثير على نتيجته الدراسية.

- يمكن لطفلي الانسحاب من المشروع في أي وقت بدون أي مساوئ سلبيه.

– سوف يتم تسجيل موافقة طفلي.

٦- أدرك ان الباحث فقط في هذه الدراسة هو الذي يتمكن من الوصول الى معلومات طفلي والنتائج إلا إذا تمت موافقتي على مشاركتها

مع أطراف اخرى. إذا كانت هناك حاجة لموافقتك على مشاركة طفلك بيئنك مع أطراف اخر سوف يتم التواصل معك من قبل الباحث

على البريد الالكتروني.

توقيع ولي الأمر: .... التاريخ: ....

أتعهد أنني أوضحت الهدف من الدراسة للمشاركين والفائدة من مشاركتهم في الدراسة و أن لديهم مطلق الحرية في المشاركة.

اسم الباحث: ....

توقيع الباحث: .... التاريخ: ....

ملاحظة: يجب الحصول على نسختين موقعتين. النسخة المحتفظ بها من قبل الباحث يمكن استخدامها كتفويض لاستخدام غيرها من

النسخ.

توقيع ولي الأمر: .... التاريخ: ....

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Appendix B: Pilot Study for the Interview

Original Questions	Comment
Interviews with Teachers **Icebreaker question:** How long have you been teaching?	This question worked well as it directed the conversation and put the participant at ease talking about their teaching experience.
1) What do you think about teaching children about their emotions? What makes you think that?	These questions worked well and were easily answered by the teacher.
2) How do your students get along with each other in class?	The answer provided by the teacher related to an example of a good behaviour (e.g., my student's high-five or hug each other) Based on this answer, one question came to mind, and this has now been added to the interview questions "How do you teach them that their response is a good behaviour to be used again in the future?"
3) What strategy (plan things) do you use for disruptive student behaviour when you are teaching?	I found it necessary in this question, to explain the word strategy in a simple way such as explaining that it involves planning things). This was noted for future interviews.
4) What is your understanding of your students' 'social and emotional needs'?	If the teacher demonstrates that they know what SEL is by explaining the meaning well enough, then the following question is "How do you know that? Where did you get that knowledge from?"
5) What do you think your students' social and emotional learning needs would be?	In order to make it clearer, this question has been rephrased to: Do you think that your students' have emotional and social needs in class? Could you please share with me what you think those needs are? The next question is connected to this question.
6) When your students approach you with their emotional and social needs, how do you manage it with them?	This question was reworded because it has an assumption that the teacher would know what the social and emotional needs for the child are and that students would approach the teacher. Changed to "If your students approach you with their emotional and social needs for example if they are sad, angry, worried, happy, jealous, how do you deal with it?" Then the following question would be: "Do you think this is an effective method of teaching your student how to manage their feelings?" Please share an example with me.
7) How do you address students' social development in your classroom? 8) How do you address students' emotional development in your classroom?	This question was revised to "Do you address students' social/ emotional development in your classroom? How do you do it? The following question could be "Is there enough information provided for you about social/ emotional development in the curriculum? What are your thoughts about that?"

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9) Do you think the preschool teacher is mainly responsible for teaching children about their social interactions and emotional development? What makes you think that?

10) Some people think that this is the parents' responsibility. Would you agree? What makes you think that?

No change made. This question worked well in drawing out the teacher's views about the perceptions they held and their SEL responsibility towards the children.

An additional question will be asked as a follow up:

"Some people think that these things should be taught in school and at home concurrently, with teacher and parent working collaboratively. What do you think about that idea?"

11) How often do you get in touch with them? How do you communicate with parents (e.g., by phone, email, face to face meetings)? What do you talk about?

This question required rewording because it assumes that they do get in touch with parents.

Therefore, an additional question would be asked at the beginning:

"Do you get in touch with your students' parents?"

12) Do you think that it is important that parents and teachers communicate frequently? Why do you think so?

Supplementary questions would be asked of the teacher.

"How you feel about having scheduled appointment times with your students' parents?"

"What do you do with a problem that you have with your student which needs their parents to be put in contact with you?"

13) What do you think would be important to consider from a teaching or facilitator's point of view, on a program that can teach children how to manage their emotions and social behaviours?

This question worked well and offered detailed information regarding the program's essential considerations.

14) Tell me what you think would be ideal topics to be included in a program, in your experience, to teach children about their emotions and social interactions (e.g., self-regulation, empathy, sharing)?

This question worked perfectly. The teacher gave some ideas for what could be included in the program.

15) I would like to invite you to share with me your thoughts on this: When a child is taught how to understand themselves through learning of their emotions and interactions with others, is it important to connect Islamic values with each lesson?

A supplementary question would be added "Why do you think Islamic values are/are not important?"

16) Can you please share with me, how important it is for you, that the program suits our culture and incorporates our values?

This question worked really well and provided a great deal of information on the importance of adapting for cultural relevance.

17) How do you feel about having a program that would teach the children how to understand themselves and their feelings, emotions, and behaviours with others around them?

This question worked very well and the teacher expressed her enthusiastic about this program that would teach their children about SEL

18) What would you like to see in such a program for your preschool students?

This question required deletion because it is similar to Q13. To this question, the teacher responded that I had already asked this question

19) What skills would you like to have your students acquire/gain besides academic skills of literacy and numeracy?

This question required rewording because there is an underlying assumption that SEL skills must be taught to young children.

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This question was changed to:

"Are there any other skills that you would like to have your students acquire/gain from coming to preschool? Could you please share what you have in mind?"

Interviews with Mothers **Icebreaker question:** How many children do you have?	This question worked well as it directed the conversation and made the participant feel comfortable speaking.

1) What would you say is the best quality time you spend with your children? And why?

This question worked well, and no changes were needed, but the followed question has been added that can be asked after Q1

"How often do you spend chatting to your children in a week? Do you have a routine of talking to your children? What would you talk about with them?"

2) How do your children behave in the home? Give examples.

This was a probing question that worked well to encourage the participant to talk about their children's behaviour.

This question brought to my mind while I was asking the mother "Could you please share with me how do you manage this behaviour with your child?"

3) When your child indicates that they would like to talk to you, while you are busy, what is your response?

This was an effective prompt to remind the participant of occasions they could recall and describe.

The mother's response was that she always pays attention to her child's inquiries, the next question came to my mind was

"When did it happen? What were you discussing about?"

4) What is your understanding of your child's 'social and emotional needs'?

Another probing question to determine if the mother is familiar with the concept.

If the mother knows what SEL is, then the following question is" How do you know that? Where did you get that knowledge from?"

5) How do you deal with your child when they show negative emotions and behaviour when they are with you? How about when they show positive emotions and behaviour?

Another prompt that helped explore the mother-child relationship and revealed their parenting style. I added the supplementary question:

"Do you believe the way you deal with your child is helpful? How?"

6) I'm interested to know what you think about teaching your child about their feelings and emotions?

This was an effective probing question to reveal how they react to the idea of explicit teaching of SEL. I added supplementary questions:

"What makes you think that?

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7) When your child returns from school, what do you chat with them about in terms of their social groups and experiences in school

When do you think that children should be educated about their emotions and feelings? Why?"

This question worked well to get the participant talking about their interest level in their child's SEL experiences at school. I added a supplementary question:

"How often do you communicate with your child when he or she returns home from school?"

8) Has your child's classroom teacher contacted/ communicated with you since your child has been in preschool? How do you communicate with the teacher (e.g., by phone, email, face to face meetings)? What do you talk about?

These questions worked well in probing the relationship between the mother and the teacher to reveal how much and what type of interaction there is between them.

9) Do you think that it is important that parents and teachers communicate frequently? Why do you think so?

These questions followed on well to reveal attitudes toward teachers and the school to help explain responses in 8).

10) Can you please share with me what you think is important about social development for children? Can you please share with me what you think is important about emotional development for children?

Worked perfectly and provided an opportunity for the participant to think about and express their ideas about how their children should gain social skills and emotional competencies.

11) Do you think the parents are mainly responsible for teaching children about their social interactions and emotional development? Or would this be the teacher responsibility? Why?

These were good questions since they encouraged a lively discussion about who should be in charge of teaching children about social and emotional development.

12) What do you think would be important to consider, if there is a program that can teach children how to manage their emotions and social behaviours?

This question worked well and offered detailed information regarding the program's essential considerations.

13) Tell me what you think would be ideal topics to be included in a program, in your experience, to teach children about their emotions and social interactions (e.g., self-regulation, empathy, sharing)?

This question worked perfectly. The mother gave some useful suggestions for topics to be included in the program.

14) I would like to invite you to share with me your thoughts on this question: When a child is taught how to understand themselves through learning of their emotions and interactions with others, is it important to connect Islamic values with each lesson?

This was an explicit probing question that brought out attitudes on cultural and religious factors in society that influence learning. No changes were made, but I added the following question, if it is appropriate:

"Why do you think Islamic values are/are not important?"

15) Can you please share with me, how important it is for you, that the

This following-on question worked really well and gave a lot of information relating to how the

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program suits our culture and is adapted to incorporate our values?

16) What would you like to see in such a program for your preschool students?

17) How do you feel about having a program that would teach the children how to understand themselves and their feelings, emotions and behaviours with others around them?

18) What skills would you like to have your students acquire/gain besides academic skills of literacy and numeracy?

participant viewed the necessity for cultural adaptation.

This question required deletion because it is similar to Q13 and gave the same answer. Consequently, the participant responded that I had already asked her this question.

This question provided a positive response about the need for a preschool SEL program, but another participant might express negative reactions to the question which might need a supplementary question to identify reasoning.

This question required rephrasing, because the implication was that SEL skills must be taught to young children.

The question has now been rephrased as follows:

"Are there any other skills that you would like to have your students acquire/gain from coming to preschool? Could you please share what you have in mind?"

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Appendix C: Teachers and Mothers Interview Questions (English and Arabic)

Teachers' Interviews Questions
Icebreaker Questions

- How long have you been teaching in kindergarten?
- In your classroom, have you seen any fights between the children? What do you do when they fight or pull each other's hair? How do you stop the fight? Is there anything else that you might say or do to your students?[1]

Interview Questions

1. What do you think about teaching children about their emotions? What makes you think that?
   - When do you think it is necessary to educate the child about their emotions and feelings?
2. How do your students get along with each other in class? Give some examples, if possible.
   - How do you teach them that their response is a good behaviour to be used again in
3. What strategy (plan things) do you use for disruptive student behaviour when you are teaching?
4. What is your understanding of your students' 'social and emotional needs'?
   - How do you know that? Where did you get that knowledge from?
5. Do you think that your students have emotional and social needs in class? Could you please share with me what you think those needs are?
   - Are there needs other than the ones you mentioned that are social and emotional needs of the child?
   - Do you always have happy students every day? Why do you think they feel that way? Do you take the time to talk to students who do not seem happy? Or do you start your lesson along?
6. If your students approach you with their emotional and social needs for example if they are sad, angry, worried, happy, or jealous, how do you deal with it?
   - Do you think this is an effective method of teaching your student how to manage their feelings? Please share an example with me.
7. Do you address student's social/ emotional development in your classroom? How do you do it?
   - Do you encourage your students to share how they feel with each other? Do you encourage students to know each other or be friends?
8. Is there enough information provided for you about social/ emotional development in the curriculum? What are your thoughts about that?
9. Do you think the preschool teacher is mainly responsible for teaching children about their social interactions and emotional development? What makes you think that?
10. Some people think that this is the parents' responsibility. Would you agree? What makes you think that?

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[1] I realise that asking teachers about children fighting as an icebreaker may have led them to focus on negative emotions. For future research, I agree that a more neutral or positive icebreaker would be more suitable.

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- Some people think that these things should be taught in school and at home concurrently, with teachers and parents working collaboratively. What do you think about that idea?

11. Do you get in touch with your student's parents? How often do you get in touch with them? How do you communicate with parents (e.g., by phone, email, face-to-face meetings)? What do you talk about?

12. Do you think that it is important that parents and teachers communicate frequently? Why do you think so?
    - How do you feel about having scheduled appointment times with your student's parents?
    - What do you do with a problem that you have with your student which needs their parents to be put in contact with you?

13. What do you think would be important to consider from a teaching or facilitator's point of view, on a program that can teach children how to manage their emotions and social behaviours?

14. Tell me what you think would be ideal topics to be included in a program, in your experience, to teach children about their emotions and social interactions (e.g., self-regulation, empathy, sharing).

15. I would like to invite you to share with me your thoughts on this: When a child is taught how to understand themselves through learning their emotions and interactions with others, is it important to connect Islamic values with each lesson?
    - Why do you think Islamic values are/are not important?

16. Can you please share with me, how important it is for you, that the program suits our culture and incorporates our values?

17. How do you feel about having a program that would teach the children how to understand themselves and their feelings, emotions, and behaviours with others around them?

18. Are there any other skills that you would like to have your students acquire/gain from coming to preschool? Could you please share what you have in mind?

أسئلة الاستفتاح:

1) ما هي المدة التي قضيتها في تدريسك بالروضة؟

أسئلة المقابلة للمعلمات:

1) ما هو رأيك في تعليم الأطفال عن عواطفهم ومشاعرهم؟ ما الذي يجعلك تظن ذلك؟
- ومتى تعتقدين انه من الضرورة تثقيف الطفل عن عواطفهم ومشاعرهم؟

2) كيف يتعامل طلابك مع بعضهم في الفصل، مع ذكر بعض الأمثلة إن أمكن؟
- كيف تم تدريسهم أن ردودهم وتعاملهم هذه الطريقة هي سلوكيات جيده حتى يستخدمونها للمستقبل؟

3) ما الاستراتيجيات (الخطط أو الأشياء) التي تستخدمينها لسلوك الطلاب التخريبي أثناء تدريسك؟

4) ما هو مفهومك لاحتياجات الطلاب الاجتماعية والعاطفية؟
- كيف عرفتي معناه؟ من أين حصلتي على المعلومات؟

5) هل تعتقدين ان الطلاب والطالبات في الفصل لديهم احتياجات عاطفية واجتماعية؟ ممكن تشاركيني بعض الاحتياجات؟ هل هناك احتياجات / مشاعر أخرى غير تلك التي ذكرتها والتي تعتبر احتياجات اجتماعية وعاطفية للأطفال؟
- هل لديك دائما طلاب سعداء كل يوم؟ لماذا تعتقد أنهم يشعرون بهذه الطريقة؟ هل تأخذ وقتًا للتحدث مع الطلاب الذين لا يبدون سعداء؟ أم تبدأ درسك على طول؟

6) إذا اطفالك توجهوا لك داخل الفصل انهم بحاجه لاحتياجات اجتماعية وعاطفية على سبيل المثال: إذا كانوا حزينين، غاضبين، قلقين، سعداء أو غيورين، كيف تتعاملين معهم؟
- هل تعتقدين أن هذه الطريقة اللي تستخدمينها وتتعاملين معهم فيها هي فعالة لتعليمهم كيف يتم إدارة مشاعرهم؟ شاركيني بعض الأمثلة

7) هل انتِ معتمدة تطبيق أساليب تساعد في النمو الاجتماعي والعاطفي للأطفال داخل الفصل؟ وكيف تطبقينه؟ هل تشجع طلابك على مشاركة شعورهم مع بعضهم البعض؟ هل تشجع الطلاب على معرفة بعضهم البعض أو أن يكونوا أصدقاء؟

8) هل يوجد معلومات كافيه ومتوفرة حول التطور العاطفي والاجتماعي للأطفال في المناهج الدراسية؟ و ما رأيك فيها؟ هل هي كافيه؟

9) هل تعتقد أن معلمات الروضة مسؤولات بصورةٍ أساسية عن توعية الأطفال حول تعاملاتهم وتفاعلاتهم الاجتماعية ونموهم العاطفي؟ ولماذا؟

10) يعتقد البعض أن هذه المسؤولية تقع على الوالدين، هل توافقين هذا الرأي؟ ولماذا؟
- بعض الناس يعتقدون هذه الأشياء يجب أن تدرس في المدرسة وفي البيت بنفس الوقت، حيث إنه يكون فيه تعاون بين المعلمات والوالدين مع بعض، ما هو رأيك بكلامهم؟

11) هل تتواصلين مع أمهات الأطفال؟ وكم مره تتواصلين معهم؟ هل عن طريق (الجوال، وجه لوجه أو الإيميل) وعمّا تتحدثون؟

12) هل تعتقد أنه من المهم أن يتواصل أولياء الأمور والمعلمات مع بعضهم باستمرار؟ ولماذا؟
- ما هو شعورك لو يتم تحدي مواعيد محدده مع أمهات الأطفال بالنسبة للتواصل سواء مكالمات أو مقابلات أو غيره؟
- ماذا تفعلين لو حصلت مشكلة مع أحد اطفالك وأنتِ تحتاجين تتواصلين مع أهلهم؟

13) ماذا تعتقدين أنه من المهم مراعاة من وجهة نظرك كمعلمة في برنامج يمكنه لتوعية الأطفال وتعليمهم حول التحكم في عواطفهم وسلوكياتهم الاجتماعية؟

14) أخبرني بالأشياء التي ينبغي أن تتوفر في برنامج لتوعية الأطفال حول عواطفهم وتعاملاتهم الاجتماعية من وجهة نظرك وخلال خبرتك مثلا دروس تتعلق (التنظيم الذاتي، التعاطف، المشاركة)؟

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15) حابه انو تشاركيني رأيك وفكرك عما يتعلق بتعليم الطفل كيفية فهم نفسه من خلال توعيته بمشاعره وتعاملاته مع الأخرين من خلال الدروس اللي راح تكون في البرنامج المقترح، هل من المهم برأيك ربط القيم الإسلامية بكل درس؟

- لماذا تعتقدين انه من المهم ربط القيم الإسلامية بالدروس المقترحة؟
- لماذا تعتقدين انه من غير المهم ربط القيم الإسلامية بالدروس المقترحة؟

16) ممكن تشاركيني اجابتك بمدى أهمية إجراء التعديلات اللازمة للبرنامج ليتناسب مع ثقافتنا وله علاقة بالقيم الإسلامية والمبادئ؟

17) ما هو شعورك تجاه وجود برنامج لتوعية الأطفال حول كيفية فهم أنفسهم ومشاعرهم وعواطفهم وسلوكياتهم مع الأخرين من حولهم؟

18) هل يوجد مهارات ترغبين ان يكتسبها الطلاب من دخولهم للروضة؟ ممكن تشاركيني بعض الأجوبة؟

Mothers' Interview Questions
Icebreaker Questions

- How many kids do you have? And how old are they? What do you think about teaching your children through the Internet?
- What would you do for example if a child's teacher calls you to inform you that your child started a fight? How would you respond to being your child?[1]

Interview Questions

1. What would you say is the best quality time you spend with your children? And why?
   - How often do you spend chatting with your children in a week?
   - Do you have a routine of talking to your children? What would you talk about with them? What do you talk to them? What time of the day do you prefer to speak with them? How long do you speak with them?
2. How do your children behave in the home? Give examples.
   - Could you please share with me how do you manage this behaviour with your child?
3. When your child indicates that they would like to talk to you, while you are busy, what is your response?
   - When did it happen? What were you discussing about?
4. What is your understanding of your child's 'social and emotional needs'?
   - How do you know that? Where did you get that knowledge from?
5. How do you deal with your child when they show negative emotions and behaviour when they are with you? How about when they show positive emotions and behaviour?
   - Do you believe the way you deal with your child is helpful? How?
6. I am interested to know what you think about teaching your child about their feelings and emotions. What makes you think that?
   - When do you think that children should be educated about their emotions and feelings?
7. When your child returns from school, what do you chat with them about in terms of their friend and how their day was in school?
   - How often do you communicate with your child when he or she returns home from school? Once a week/every day. etc
8. Has your child's classroom teacher contacted/ communicated with you since your child has been in preschool? How do you communicate with the teacher (e.g., by phone, email, face to face meetings)? How often? What do you talk about?
9. Do you think that it is important that parents and teachers communicate frequently? Why do you think so?
   - How would you feel if a specific school appointment were made with mothers of children for communication, with their calls, interviews or otherwise?
10. Can you please share with me what you think is important about social development for children? Can you please share with me what you think is important about emotional development for children?

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[1] I realise that asking mothers about children fighting as an icebreaker may have led them to focus on negative emotions. For future research, I agree that a more neutral or positive icebreaker would be more suitable.

11. Do you think the parents are mainly responsible for teaching children about their social interactions and emotional development? Or would this be the teacher's responsibility? Why?

12. What do you think would be important to consider, if there is a program that can teach children how to manage their emotions and social behaviours?

13. Tell me what you think would be ideal topics to be included in a program, in your experience, to teach children about their emotions and social interactions (e.g., self-regulation, empathy, sharing).

14. I would like to invite you to share with me your thoughts on this question: When a child is taught how to understand themselves through learning their emotions and interactions with others, is it important to connect Islamic values with each lesson?
    - Why do you think Islamic values are/are not important?

15. Can you please share with me, how important it is for you, that the program suits our culture and is adapted to incorporate our values?

16. How do you feel about having a program that would teach the children how to understand themselves and their feelings, emotions and behaviours with others around them?

17. Are there any other skills that you would like to have your students acquire/gain from coming to preschool? Could you please share what you have in mind?

أسئلة الاستفتاح:
1) كم طفل عندك؟ وكم أعمارهم؟ وكيف تشوفين تدريس اطفالك عن طريق الاونلاين؟

أسئلة المقابلة للأمهات:
1) ما هو أفضل وقتٍ تقضينه مع طفلك؟ ولماذا؟
- كم مره تتحدثين مع طفلك (دردشة أو قعدة سوالف) في الأسبوع؟
- هل لديك روتين للتحدث مع طفلك؟ و عن ماذا تتكلمون؟ متى تتحدثين معه؟ في أي وقت من اليوم تفضلين التحدث معه؟ كم من الوقت تتحدثين معه؟
2) كيف يتصرف طفلك في المنزل بشكل عام؟ يُرجى ذكر أمثلة.
- ممكن تشاركيني كيف تتصرفين وتديرين سلوكيات مع طفلك؟
3) عندما يشير طفلك على انه يود الكلام معك وأنتِ مشغولة، ما هو ردك عليه؟
- متى كان ذلك؟ و عن ماذا تناقشتما؟
4) ما هو مفهومك لاحتياجات الاطفال الاجتماعية والعاطفية؟
- كيف عرفتي معناه؟ من أين حصلتي على المعلومات؟
5) كيف تتعاملين مع طفلك عندما يُظهر مشاعر وسلوكيات سلبية وماذا عن المشاعر والسلوكيات الإيجابية؟
- هل تعتقدين أن هذه الطريقة اللي تستخدمينها وتتعاملين مع طفلك هي فعالة؟ كيف؟
6) انا حابه اعرف عن رأيك حول تعليم الأطفال عن عواطفهم ومشاعرهم؟ ما الذي يجعلك تظن ذلك؟
- ومتى تعتقدين انه من الضرورة تثقيف الطفل عن عواطفهم ومشاعرهم؟
7) عن ايش تتحدثين مع طفلك عندما يعود من المدرسة فيما يخص علاقاته الاجتماعية يعني مع اصدقاءه ويومه بالمدرسة وماذا يحدث معه في المدرسة؟
- كم مره تتكلمين مع طفلك عندما يرجع من المدرسة؟ مره كل أسبوع/ كل يوم ... الخ
8) هل معلمة طفلك في الروضة تواصلت معك منذ انضمامه ودخوله إلى الروضة؟ كم مره تواصلت معك؟ كيف تم التواصل هل عن طريق (الجوال، وجه لوجه أو الإيميل)؟ وعمّا تحدثتم؟
9) هل تعتقد أنه من المهم أن يتواصل أولياء الأمور والمعلمات مع بعضهم باستمرار؟ ولماذا؟
ما هو شعورك لو يتم تحديد مواعيد محدده من المدرسة مع أمهات الأطفال بالنسبة للتواصل سواء مكالمات أو مقابلات أو غيره؟
10) هل يمكنك إخباري برأيك فيما هو مهم في كل من النمو الاجتماعي العاطفي للأطفال؟
11) هل تعتقدين أن الوالدين مسؤولان بصورةٍ أساسيةٍ عن توعية الأطفال حول تعاملاتهم الاجتماعية ونموهم العاطفي؟ أم أنها مسؤولية المعلم؟ ولماذا؟
12) لو كان هناك برنامج لتوعية الأطفال حول كيفية التحكم في عواطفهم وسلوكياتهم الاجتماعية، ما الأشياء التي تعتقدين أنه من المهم النظر فيها؟
13) أخبريني بالأشياء التي ينبغي أن تتوفر في برنامج لتوعية الأطفال حول عواطفهم وتعاملاتهم الاجتماعية من وجهة نظرك مثلا دروس تتعلق (التنظيم الذاتي، التعاطف، المشاركة)؟
14) هل ممكن تشاركين رأيك وفكرك عما يتعلق بتعليم الطفل كيفية فهم نفسه من خلال توعيته بمشاعره وتعاملاته مع الأخرين من خلال الدروس اللي راح تكون في البرنامج المقترح، هل من المهم برأيك ربط القيم الإسلامية بكل درس؟
- لماذا تعتقدين انه من المهم ربط القيم الإسلامية بالدروس المقترحة؟
- لماذا تعتقدين انه من غير المهم ربط القيم الإسلامية بالدروس المقترحة؟
15) ممكن تشاركيني اجابتك بمدى أهمية إجراء التعديلات اللازمة للبرنامج ليتناسب مع ثقافتنا وله علاقة بالقيم الإسلامية والمبادئ؟
16) ما هو شعورك تجاه وجود برنامج لتوعية الأطفال حول كيفية فهم أنفسهم ومشاعرهم وعواطفهم وسلوكياتهم مع الأخرين من حولهم؟
17) هل يوجد مهارات ترغبين ان يكتسبها الطلاب من دخولهم للروضة؟ ممكن تشاركيني بعض الأجوبة؟

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Appendix D: Pre-Post Test Questionnaire

Questionnaire 1 (BASC-3 BESS Measure)

Items have been removed due to copyright restriction

Questionnaire 2 (TRS-CAB)

	Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
1- This child is really good at his/her school work						
2- This child finds it hard to make friends						
3- This child is a good friend to others						
4- This child is usually well- behaved						
5- This child often forgets what (s)he learns						
6- This child has social skills to make friends						
7- This child usually acts appropriately						
8- This child has trouble figuring out the answers in school						
9- This child knows how to become popular						
10- This child often gets in trouble because of things (s)he does						
11- This child thinks carefully before acting						
12- This child can control his/her anger						
13- This child able to talk about her or his feelings						
14- The child able to identify the feelings of others						
15- This child able to think through a problem to find a solution						
16- This child helps her or his friends in the class						
17- This child shared toys or food with other children						
18- This child accepts not being first at game or activity						
19- This child likes to try new things						
20- This child apologizes to others when he/she makes a mistake						

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موافق بشده	موافق نوعًا ما	موافق	لا أوافق	لا أوافق نوعًا ما	لا أوافق بشده	
						١- يؤدي هذا الطفل واجباته المدرسية بشكل جيد
						٢-يجد هذا الطفل صعوبة في تكوين صداقات
						٣-يعتبر هذا الطفل صديق جيد لمن حوله
						٤-غالبا ما يكون هذا الطفل مهذبا في تصرفاته
						٥-غالبا ما ينسى هذا الطفل الأشياء الذي تعلمها
						٦-يمتلك هذا الطفل مهارات اجتماعية تمكنه من تكوين صداقات
						٧-عادة ما يتصرف هذا الطفل بطريقة مناسبة
						٨-يواجه هذا الطفل صعوبة في معرفة الإجابات في المدرسة
						٩-هذا الطفل يعرف كيف يصبح معروفا بين أقرانه
						١٠-غالبا ما يواجه هذا الطفل مشكلة بسبب الأشياء التي يفعلها
						١١- هذا الطفل يفكر بحذر قبل فعل أي تصرف
						١٢-يستطيع الطفل في التحكم بنفسه وقت الغضب
						١٣-هذا الطفل لديه قدرة في التحدث عن مشاعره
						١٤-هذا الطفل لديه القدرة في التعرف على مشاعر الآخرين من حوله
						١٥-هذا الطفل لديه القدرة على التفكير في المشكلة لإيجاد حلول
						١٦-هذا الطفل يساعد أصدقائه في الفصل
						١٧-هذا الطفل يشارك ألعابه أو طعامه مع الأطفال الآخرين
						١٨-هذا الطفل يتقبل عدم كونه في المركز الأول في الألعاب أو الأنشطة
						١٩-هذا الطفل يحب تجربة الأشياء الجديدة
						٢٠- هذا الطفل يعتذر للآخرين عندما يرتكب خطأ

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Appendix E: PATHS- IC Intervention Lessons

1- Self-concept

Lesson 1 - What I like about me.

Students will **Know** - That each individual possesses unique, positive qualities. Students will **Understand** - The process of identifying, describing, and appreciating their own character, abilities, and talents. - How to love themselves as Allah loves them, and to help them achieve and maintain healthy self-esteem. Students will **Do** - Participate in discussions regarding their personal strengths, think positively of themselves, and develop a positive self-image.	**Materials** Colouring worksheet **Time:** 20 mins

Introduction (5 minutes): The teacher will explain to the students that each one of us is good at something in this life, for example, I am good a swimmer (ability) and, I am generous and like to help others (character) and make them smile.

Islam: The teacher introduces to students that Allah made everyone in the best way possible on the inside and on the outside, so we can all love ourselves as Allah says, "We created the human being in the best design". The teacher will explain to students that since Allah made everyone and everything in the best way possible, there are good parts in everyone - what do the students like about themselves?

> The teacher will ask the students what they like about themselves and what they are good at? Then the teacher explains to the children that we must remind ourselves how special, unique, and amazing we all are.
> The teacher will get the students to share their answers and ask several students, "What made you realise that you like that about yourself?"
> Next, the teacher will ask students, what kinds of things do you do for others that make you feel good?

Development Activity (5 minutes):

The teacher starts by asking the class one thing that they like about her. The teacher introduces a mirror to the class and the next activity is for each child to stand in front of the mirror and identify which things they like about themselves.

The teacher will ask students to say one thing that is good about their friend who is seated next to them and let the whole class know about it.

Students' Independent Practice (5 minutes):

The teacher will ask the students one day before the lesson to bring their photograph and bring it to this lesson. The teacher will provide a worksheet on self-love (a heart with hands) and students will know that loving themselves is very important. They will show they know this by sticking their photo in the middle and colouring the heart. The teacher will ask students to describe what they are good at, and the teacher will write a description of each student in their worksheet.

Evaluation and feedback (5 minutes):

At the end of the lesson, the teacher will commend students for their active involvement. Then, a discussion will be initiated for students to share their opinions and

learnings from the session. The teacher will also ask if they found the activities fun and informative. This feedback is invaluable in enhancing future lessons and ensuring that the targets for learning are being met effectively.

Lesson 2: Learning with an "I Can Do Anything" Mindset

Students will **Know** - The role of positive thinking in facilitating the learning of new things. - The importance of maintaining a cheerful and positive attitude when confronted with challenging tasks or when learning something new, encouraging children to always try. Students will **Understand** - How a positive mindset can assist in achieving their goals. Students will **Do** - Students will practice positive thinking by attempting new tasks and overcoming challenges. **Review of the last lesson: (2 minutes)**	**Materials** Colouring worksheet **Time:** 20 mins

Introduction (5 minutes): The teacher starts the class by giving the learners a brief story about how she learned a new skill when he was young for example swimming, skating, or riding a bicycle. The teacher then explains to the learners the emotions that they feel when they learn a new skill. The emotions range from excitement to anxiety.

The teacher then asks learners What kinds of new tasks have you tried lately?

How did you start the new task (ask someone to show you, practice, or trial and error)?

The teacher will ask the students what they would do if they would like to learn something new like mopping the floor. Or learning a new activity or sport? how they felt after learning the skill?

Development Activity (5 minutes):

Tell a story here. Tommy would like to swim because his friends all go for swimming over the weekend. When he thinks about it, he is afraid as he doesn't attend swimming lessons.

What should Tommy do to learn how to swim, so he can join his friends? How should Tommy think about this challenge to learn to swim? Should he attend the swimming class or try swimming by himself?

The students might share that Tommy needs to think positively in order to learn something new and he should ask someone for help or talk to someone before going to register for classes on how to swim.

The teacher will remind them that swimming can be dangerous, especially for someone who is not a good swimmer, and that they should always swim with an adult to keep them safe.

Students' Independent Practice (5 minutes):

The teacher will give students a sheet with the words "I am amazing at ...." and then ask students to draw a picture of themselves in the middle of it with the things they are amazing at.

Evaluation and feedback (5 minutes):

At the end of the lesson, the teacher will commend students for their active involvement. Then, a discussion will be initiated for students to share their opinions and learnings from the session. The teacher will also ask if they found the activities fun and informative. This feedback is invaluable in enhancing future lessons and ensuring that the targets for learning are being met effectively.

Lesson 3: I Am Special and You Are Special Too

Students will **Know** - Differences are what make each person unique, set them apart from one another, and create diversity among people. Students will **Understand** - The concept of similarities and differences among people. - The importance of valuing differences and acknowledging the benefits of living in a diverse community. Students will **Do** - Describe their strengths and achievements and those of others.	**Materials** Activity worksheet Drawing supplies **Time:** 20 mins

Review of the last lesson (2 minutes)

Introduction (5 minutes): The teacher will give an example by showing pictures of a simple scenario to the students on what is the meaning of being special. For example, Tommy likes helping his mother and grandmother when they are carrying heavy things. Tommy is special because he always helps people who need his help. Can you think of what you have that makes you special?

The teacher will ask the class how they feel about themselves and what they think is special about them.

The teacher will explain that everyone is unique in their own way and that differences make people diverse.

Development Activity (5 minutes):

The teacher will ask the students to sit in a circle of 5 students. The teacher then asks each student to share what they believe is unique or special about their friends within the group. For instance, Tommy may express to Ava that he thinks, she is special because she is a good listener and always helps her friends.

Students' Independent Practice (5 minutes):

The teacher will ask the students to draw what they think makes them special.

Evaluation and feedback (5 minutes): At the end of the lesson, the teacher will commend students for their active involvement. Then, a discussion will be initiated for students to share their opinions and learnings from the session. The teacher will also ask if they found the activities fun and informative. This feedback is invaluable in enhancing future lessons

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and ensuring that the targets for learning are being met effectively.

2. Emotional Understanding

Lesson 1: Knowing Your Feelings

Students will **Know**
  - How to identify and label their own feelings and those of others, including peers and adults, by interpreting (reading) visual signals they see in people's faces
Students will **Understand**
  - The connection between facial expressions and a person's positive or negative feelings.
  - The impact of both positive feelings (e.g., love, happiness) and negative feelings (e.g., anger, sadness) on others.
Students will **Do**
  - Role-play their feelings with peers to practice the skills they have learned
   - Demonstrate their learning during the last activity of matching faces with emotions/emojis.
	Materials
	Flashcards of different emotions
	
	Time: 20 mins

Review of the last lesson (2 minutes)

Introduction (5 minutes): The teacher will ask students: Do you know what feelings are? Could please give me an example? The teacher shows a set of faces that matches the feelings that the students mention. The teacher shows students emoji faces with no labels and asks them what emotion they think each face is indicating, using the following list of possible choices:

- Happy
- Angry
- Sad
- Surprised
- Confused
- Excited
- Tired
- Shy

Once the students have tried to match emotions to faces, the teacher will show the correct labels for each face.

Teacher explains to class that these faces show the person's feelings. Teacher points out the 3 main visual clues, being the eyes, eyebrows, and mouth.

Development Activity (5 minutes):
The teacher will ask for a pair of 2 student volunteers to come forward and demonstrate to the class a mini role-play. Then, the teacher will ask one of them to select a different emotion and to act it. The teacher then discusses with them on their choice of selection. Teacher then explores both students' feelings and emotions when they are looking at the

other person's emotions and discusses how it impacts them. For example, how do you feel when your friend is looking at you angrily, sad, happy, or frightened?

The teacher extends the teaching beyond the classroom and connects this in class learning example to the lives of the students outside of school. This is done to highlight the importance of feelings and how others feel affects everyone.

Students' Independent Practice (5 minutes):

The teacher provides students with a selection of different emoji/pictures (used during introduction) for them to now match with human faces and with feelings (showing happiness, sadness/crying, anger, and fear) to consolidate their understanding of this lesson. Before the students do this activity on their own, the teacher will demonstrate to the class using two of the pictures to explain the "matching process". Then, the teacher will instruct students to do the same for the remaining pictures. The teacher will walk around the class while this activity is being done to sight that the children are forming the correct understanding of the matching process.

Evaluation and feedback (5 minutes): At the end of the lesson, the teacher will commend students for their active involvement. Then, a discussion will be initiated for students to share their opinions and learnings from the session. The teacher will also ask if they found the activities fun and informative. This feedback is invaluable in enhancing future lessons and ensuring that the targets for learning are being met effectively.

Lesson 2: Understanding body gestures.	
Students will **Know** - Our facial expressions let other people know how we feel and what we want to say. - There is an outer expression and body response associated with each emotion. Students will **Understand** - How to identify signs of body language and interpret the feelings of themselves and others. Students will **Do** - Develop their abilities to recognise indicators of people's emotional responses through practice. - Enhance their emotional awareness by completing individual activities. **Review of the last lesson (2 minutes)**	**Materials** - Flashcards of different body language - Activity worksheet **Time:** 20 mins

Introduction (5 minutes): The teacher will ask for student volunteers to act out each feeling and ask the class to observe what is the body language shown for each student.

Teacher highlights how the different parts of the body look like when feeling the emotions and shows the class different pictures. For example, happy is connected to eyes being bright and sparkly with a smiling face, sad is Mouth turned down, eyebrows lowered, eyes droopy, shoulders down, and body slumped. Afraid Eyes are wide, eyebrows very high, body trembling, mouth crooked. Angry is when the body is tight and hard, and the person moves a lot and has hand movements/gestures. Then, teacher discusses with class on the pictures shown and the body language that is associated to each picture.

The teacher will ask:
- Could you tell me 3 things that make you feel happy?
Example: (Seeing their mommy, eating ice cream, and Playing with a friend)
- What about things those make you sad? Who else has this problem and makes him

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sad?

    Examples: (When they fall down and hurt themselves, or when they don't have anyone to play with)

    -   Talk about how they can be made to feel better.

    Examples: Getting a hug from a friend or from mommy or asking for help from a friend if you are feeling sad and want company.

Islam: The teacher encourages children to link their feelings with their faith. For example, during happy moments, they are taught to express gratitude by saying "Alhamdulillah" (All praise be to Allah). During sad times, they are guided to ask for help from Allah, keeping faith intact. This learning helps children to acknowledge their emotions better, finding comfort in their faith regardless of the situation.

Development Activity (5 minutes):

The teacher will show cards that depict feelings and emotions with body language. For example, stamping of feet and arms folded show anger, hands on cheeks to show surprise etc.

The teacher will ask students what the name of the feeling is for each body language shown. Then, the teacher will ask the students to notice the various body languages for each emotion/feeling.

The teacher also will ask students, what makes you angry? What makes you happy? What makes you sad?

The teacher will elicit various responses from the students with regard to the various emotions/feelings. From this activity, the teacher will develop the student's understanding of what is the body language for each feeling.

Students' Independent Practice (5 minutes):

The teacher will provide two images of blank faces along with four options of facial features to choose from. The teacher will ask the students to make an angry and surprised face by cutting and pasting the matching facial expressions to the emotion shown

Evaluation and feedback (5 minutes): At the end of the lesson, the teacher will commend students for their active involvement. Then, a discussion will be initiated for students to share their opinions and learnings from the session. The teacher will also ask if they found the activities fun and informative. This feedback is invaluable in enhancing future lessons and ensuring that the targets for learning are being met effectively.

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Lesson 3: Internal Body reaction to different feelings. (The feeling you get inside)

Students will **Know** - How to spot different inner feelings like breathlessness, flushed cheeks, fast heartbeat, headaches, tiredness, feeling sick, butterflies in their stomach, or feeling too hot or cold. Students will **Understand** - That these feelings are normal reactions to different emotions. They will learn to understand their internal responses and their physical effects, such as a racing heart, stomachache, crying, stamping, shaking, and hiding. Students will **Do** - Learn how to pause and think or breathe when they notice these feelings happening within them.	**Materials** - A picture showing our internal body reaction to emotions. **Time:** 20 mins
Review of the last lesson (2 minutes)	

Introduction (5 minutes): The teacher will ask students what type of body reactions they have when they feel sick, excited, or angry. Students will share their answers that they might feel a stomach cramp, ears burning or flushed and hot cheeks. The teacher will explain that when you feel something happening in your body, it is a sign to stop and find a quiet place to think and then act to what you think you need to do. The teacher will show pictures of different internal sensations such as a heart beating quickly and about to pop out of the chest, and a pair of ears that look hot and red.
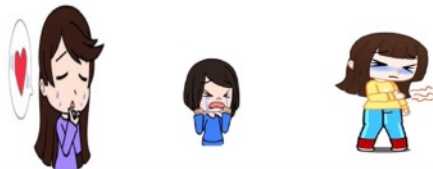
Development Activity (5 minutes):
The teacher will use pictures to show different feelings inside the body, such as a racing heart, stomach-ache, crying, stamping, shaking, and hiding. The teacher will give the students a different scenario for each flashcard, showing children in various situations like having a bad dream, winning a race, or having a stomach ache. The students will have to match the pictures to the scenario and discuss on how they might feel in each situation.

Students' Independent Practice (5 minutes):
The teacher will ask the class to draw individually a picture of what their individual bodily reaction is when the student is sad, afraid, or angry.

Evaluation and feedback (5 minutes):
At the end of the lesson, the teacher will commend students for their active involvement. Then, a discussion will be initiated for students to share their opinions and learnings from the session. The teacher will also ask if they found the activities fun and informative. This

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feedback is invaluable in enhancing future lessons and ensuring that the targets for learning are being met effectively.

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3 - Self-regulation

Lesson 1: Emotions and actions

Students will **Know**	**Materials**
- That they should think carefully before they act out their emotions. - That feeling and acting should be considered and Students will **Understand** - Those feelings are related to actions, but that they can manage and control their feelings to prevent undesirable actions. - That Allah gave them a mind to think before they act. Students will **Do** - Practice linking emotions and actions.	- Pictures showing the traffic lights. - Worksheet activity **Time:** 20 mins

Review of the last lesson (2 minutes)

Introduction (5 minutes): In the previous lesson, we have explored various feelings. Now everyone has feelings and those feelings are linked to actions.

For instance, when we feel sad, we may cry, or when we feel angry, we may want to eat something. Similarly, when we feel loved, we may express it by kissing someone, touching their hand, or giving them a hug. Interestingly, we do not always have to act out our feelings. For instance, even if we are angry, we do not have to hurt others out of anger. Thinking about the consequences before acting upon our feelings is crucial.

Islam: The teacher explains to the students, Allah has given us the power to think. This helps us make better choices, even when we have strong feelings.

The teacher will then initiate a discussion by asking several questions:

Q: What kind of feelings make you upset?

Possible Student Answer: Pain, crying, fighting, and screaming make me upset. Sometimes I hurt myself by falling down and scraping my knee. That makes me cry. I cry when I fight with my friends, even though I do not understand why I become angry with them.

Q: What do you do when you are in pain, or you are crying, fighting or you need to scream?

Possible Student Answer: Tell the teacher, tell mummy and daddy, hide under my blanket, I will scream. Later, I sometimes feel bad about what happened.

Q: What makes you happy?

Possible Student Answer: I like to play. That always makes me happy.

Q: What do you do when you are happy?

SA: I smile and laugh a lot.

Development Activity (5 minutes):

Red Light ... Green Light! Activity

This activity aims at teaching children to manage their responses, particularly when they are upset.

Initially, the teacher will show a picture of a traffic light, explaining to students what each colour signifies - Red stands for Stop, Yellow for Caution, and Green for Go. The teacher will underline the importance of these signals, highlighting their role in preventing

accidents on the road. Next, the teacher will introduce simpler, age-appropriate scenarios. For example, the teacher could ask, "What if a friend takes your toy without asking, how would you react?"

Possible answers might encompass feelings of anger, wanting to take the toy back, or saying something to the friend. The teacher will then relate these reactions to the traffic light – stop and think (red), decide (yellow), and then act (green). The teacher emphasises that all children can choose to control their emotions and be kind, even when bothered by others.

Role-playing these scenarios can be beneficial. It will allow the children to better understand and practice the process of stopping (red), thinking/caution (yellow), and then responding appropriately (green).

Students' Independent Practice (5 minutes):
The teacher will display pictures of a boy engaging in actions without considering the consequences first, asking the students to articulate what is happening in the pictures. The students will engage in an analysis of illustrated scenarios.
- A boy pushing someone into a swimming pool.
- Walking around the house with muddy shoes.

The teacher will then guide students to understand that if we act impulsively, without thinking through our actions, the results might be unpleasant. It's always important to pause (red light), think (yellow light), and then act (green light), echoing the main message from the "Red Light, Green Light" activity.

Evaluation and feedback (5 minutes): Then, a discussion will be initiated for students to share their opinions and learnings from the session. The teacher will also ask if they found the activities fun and informative. This feedback is invaluable in enhancing future lessons and ensuring that the targets for learning are being met effectively.

Lesson 2: Regulating Emotions: Calming down

Students will **Know** - Their emotions can be controlled Students will **Understand** - There are many different ways that they can help control their feelings, giving them lots of choices for handling different feelings or situations they might face. - They can use their Islamic teachings to help handle their feelings. This includes things like praying, reading the Quran, or following Prophet Muhammad's advice to sit or lie down when they're upset. Students will **Do** - Students will use different strategies to regulate emotions.	**Materials** - Activity worksheet - A Stress ball **Time:** 20 mins

Review of the last lesson (2 minutes)

Introduction (5minutes): First, the teacher will show the flashcards of anger situations, and ask them what is happening in these flashcards.

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1. What causes you to get/become angry?
2. What are the situations in which you get angry?
3. How do you control your anger? What will you do to be less angry?

After getting the expected answer from the students the teacher will introduce the topic and tell them today, we will study self-control and how we can calm ourselves in angry situations.

Self-control means controlling our behaviour and emotions. It is like a tool or break in the journey of life. It means saying no to something in order to say yes to something better everyone feels angry sometimes is normal.

Islam: as Muslims, we know that when we're upset, we can pray to Allah and read the Quran for comfort. We know that just as we ask our parents or teachers for help when we need it, we can always ask Allah to help us when we're feeling angry. The Prophet warned us twice, saying, "Do not get angry"[1]. This highlights how important it is to control our anger for our own good and the well-being of our relationships. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught us some very special ways to handle our anger. For example, he said, "If you are angry and standing, sit down. If that does not help, lie down." These simple actions can help.

Also, it is good to have some anger management techniques. Following are the ways to calm down in an angry situation. (Showing pictures)
1. Take deep breathes
2. Get some exercise
3. Play games
4. Count to 10-20
5. Talk to someone about why you are angry
6. Draw a picture
7. Use a stress ball

Development Activity (5 minutes):
This activity can easily be done in a whole-class demonstration in a classroom. Now teacher will show a video on a projector related to the topic to students. (A voice-over will be used and recorded over the video in Arabic)

     https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCcHE4HouVQ

At the end of the video, the teacher will ask questions about the video:
1. What do you think is the meaning of this story?
2. How can a friend help you to manage your anger?

Students' Independent Practice (5 minutes):
Worksheet 1
Name…………………
Date…………………
1. Colour the things that control your anger.

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[1] The phrase "Do not get angry" reflects the Islamic principle of controlling anger, which is emphasised in various religious texts. This teaching aims not to portray anger as inherently wrong but to guide children in managing and expressing their anger in a constructive manner that aligns with their cultural and religious values. This perspective may differ from Western views that often emphasise the acceptance of anger as a natural emotion. However, both approaches ultimately share the common goal of helping children learn to handle their emotions appropriately. In future revisions, it will be clarified that the focus is on managing anger effectively, rather than suppressing it completely, thereby ensuring the program respects and integrates the community's values.

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Evaluation and feedback (5 minutes): At the end of the lesson, the teacher will commend students for their active involvement. Then, a discussion will be initiated for students to share their opinions and learnings from the session. The teacher will also ask if they found the activities fun and informative. This feedback is invaluable in enhancing future lessons and ensuring that the targets for learning are being met effectively.

Lesson 3: Zone of regulation

Students will **Know**	**Materials**
- The different zones of feelings.	Different Emotion flashcards.
Students will **Understand**	Activity Worksheet.
- How to deal with themselves when they are in any of the 4 zones.	**Time:** 20 mins
Students will **Do**	
- Practice managing their feelings with the correct strategy.	
Review of the last lesson (2 minutes)	

Introduction (5 minutes): The teacher will start by showing a chart of the 'Zones of Regulation', which includes four colours: Red, Blue, Yellow, and Green. Each colour represents different feelings and states: Red stands for feelings like anger, Green for feelings of calm and readiness, Yellow for feelings of worry or frustration, and Blue for feelings of tiredness or sadness.

The teacher will explain these zones and the associated feelings to the students, for instance, the Red Zone covers feelings like anger, while in the Green Zone, we feel happy and calm. The goal is always to be in the Green Zone because that is when we make the best decisions.

The teacher will make sure the students understand that although we have these different zones of feelings, it is okay not to be in the Green Zone all the time. Everybody feels a bit Yellow, Blue, or even Red sometimes. But by recognizing which zone we are in, we can help ourselves get back to the Green Zone.

Development Activity (5 minutes):
The teacher will display four cards, each matching one of the zone's colours. While students are seated in a circle on the ground the teacher will be asked to identify which colour reflects their present feelings and to place their hands on the corresponding colour.
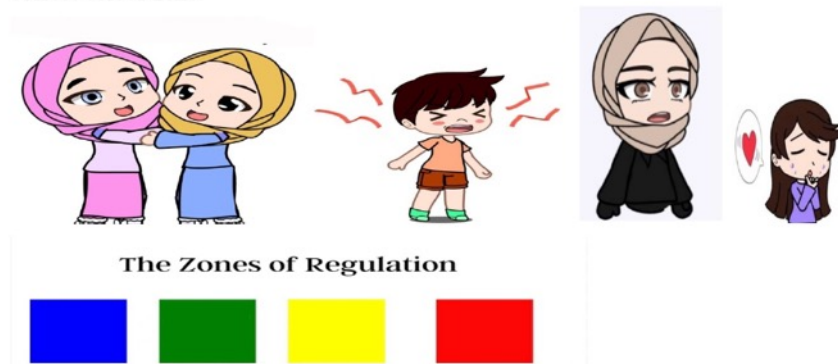The teacher will encourage students to share why they feel linked to the colour they chose and if any specific event led them to this feeling.
The teacher will engage with each student, initiating a discussion on strategies they could use to navigate towards the Green Zone if they identified themselves in the Yellow or Blue Zone.

Students' Independent Practice (5 minutes):
The teacher will hand out worksheets to the students. These worksheets will have four pictures, each showing a person feeling a different emotion, along with the four colour zones of regulation.
The teacher will then ask the students to figure out which colour zone matches the feeling of each person in the pictures. The task for the students is to connect each picture with the correct colour zone.

The Zones of Regulation

Evaluation and feedback (5 minutes): At the end of the lesson, the teacher will commend students for their active involvement. Then, a discussion will be initiated for students to share their opinions and learnings from the session. The teacher will also ask if they found the activities fun and informative. This feedback is invaluable in enhancing future lessons and ensuring that the targets for learning are being met effectively.

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4- Building relationships

Lesson 1: The importance of relationships and what kinds are there?	
Students will **Know**	**Materials**
- The benefits of having relationships in their lives. - Those relationships are the connections they have with others. Like their parents, friends and others around them. - It is important to have a good relationship with Allah. They can make this relationship stronger by doing things like praying, asking Allah for things they need, reading the Quran, being honest, and living by Islamic rules. **Students will Understand** - The importance of relationships in our lives is huge because they can influence our emotions, sometimes leading to happiness and other times causing sadness. **Students will Do** - They will determine what steps they can take to contribute positively to their relationships.	- Flashcards - Colouring sheet **Time:** 20 mins
Review of the last lesson (2 minutes)	

Introduction (5 minutes): The teacher will start by asking students to think about the different relationships they have in their lives and why each one is important. Then the teacher will ask which of these relationships make them feel happy and which ones sometimes make them feel sad. Building strong and healthy relationships is an important part of having a happy life.

Islam: building relationship is not just important in our relationships with other people, but also in our relationship with Allah. We can build a better relationship with Allah by praying, making du`aa' (supplication), studying the Quran, being honest, having good morals, and following the rules of Islam. The teacher will then talk with the students about their relationships with Allah, their family, and their friends. The importance of having good relationships with their classmates will also be discussed, showing how these friendships can help build strong social connections with other children.

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Development Activity (5 minutes):

The teacher will initiate a discussion by asking the class to brainstorm together about their relationships with others and how these relationships make them feel.

Next, the students will be grouped into teams of five. In these groups, each student will share their thoughts on what they consider their best relationship and why. They will discuss the feelings they associate with that relationship that make it special to them.

For instance, a student may share that their best relationship is with their sister because it makes them feel happy. The student might share that they feel loved when they spend time with their sister, maybe because she shares her sweets with them, or she comforts them when they're sad. This discussion will highlight feelings of love, respect, and care in relationships.

Students' Independent Practice (5 minutes):

The teacher will hand out blank worksheets and then ask the students to draw a picture of the person they feel they have the best relationship with. After they are done with their drawings, the teacher will ask each student to name the person in their drawing and explain why they think that relationship is the best one they have.

Evaluation and feedback (5 minutes):

At the end of the lesson, the teacher will commend students for their active involvement. Then, a discussion will be initiated for students to share their opinions and learnings from the session. The teacher will also ask if they found the activities fun and informative. This feedback is invaluable in enhancing future lessons and ensuring that the targets for learning are being met effectively.

Lesson 2: How do we build happy relationships?

Students will **Know** - How having nice and friendly relationships can make them happy. Students will **Understand** - That to have good friends, they need to be a good friend too. Students will **Do** - Learn different strategies that can be used to build, grow, and maintain peer relationships.	**Materials** Worksheet activity **Time:** 20 mins
Review of the last lesson: (2 minutes)	
Introduction (5 minutes): As we learned in the last lesson, having positive, happy	

relationships with our peers can make us feel good. In order to have positive peer relationships, we must first understand the basic characteristics of being a good friend. Can anyone give me an example of what a good friendship is made of, or what it means to be a good friend?

Examples: Sharing your belongings, being loving, and caring. Cooperation with others, working in a group with sharing values, respecting yourself and others.

The teacher will share examples of the best characteristics of being a good friend:

The giving and sharing, empathy for others, playing collaboratively, being loyal and trustworthy, being generous and keeping secrets in the relationship.

Development Activity (5 minutes):

The teacher would start by asking the students: If you wanted to be friends with a new student in your class, what would you do?

The teacher will then explain that when we meet new people, we often start by smiling and greeting them, saying "Assalamu alaikum" (peace be upon you), and introducing ourselves. We could then ask questions like "What is your name?" or "Where are you from?" and then possibly ask about their family or their interests, like what their hobby or sports they like.

The teacher will also bring up the importance of making eye contact when we talk to someone, asking students why they think this might be important. Does it show that we are open and interested in what they have to say? The teacher will emphasise the significance of careful listening when others are speaking, suggesting that not doing so might make it seem like we are not really interested in the conversation.

Students' Independent Practice (5 minutes):

The teacher will give out worksheets to the students with different pictures showing good and bad friendships. The students' task will be to circle the pictures that show good friendships. After that, the teacher will ask them to talk about why they think the friendships in the pictures they circled are good or bad. To get the most from this activity, the teacher will encourage both participation and active listening from the students.

Evaluation and feedback (5 minutes):

At the end of the lesson, the teacher will commend students for their active involvement. Then, a discussion will be initiated for students to share their opinions and learnings from the session. The teacher will also ask if they found the activities fun and informative. This feedback is invaluable in enhancing future lessons and ensuring that the targets for learning are being met effectively.

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Lesson 3: Characteristics of Being a good friend.

Students will **Know** - Good friendship involves things like trust, honesty, being kind, caring, and showing empathy. Students will **Understand** - Being kind to others can make their friendships better. Students will **Do** - They will practice being a good friend during a class activity, like sharing and working well with others.	**Materials** Paper and coloured crayons **Time:** 20 mins

Review of the last lesson (2 minutes)

Introduction (5 minutes): The teacher will start by asking students to list actions they appreciate in their friends. Examples could be playing together, listening without interrupting, sharing, and avoiding fighting or unkind behaviour. Next, the teacher will ask the students about the qualities that make friendships better, such as honesty, kindness, and caring. Afterwards, the teacher will discuss behaviours that can harm friendships, like fighting, lying, or excluding others from play.

To wrap up the introduction, the teacher will remind students that they should aim to treat their friends with the same kindness and respect that they want to receive, embodying the behaviours of a good friend.

Development Activity (5 minutes):

There will be two scenarios of positive relationships and two of negative relationships provided by the teacher.

Q1. Do you like these relationships? What is good about them and why?

Q2. What is bad about this relationship and why?

After this, the teacher will highlight how important it is to be nice to friends. They will explain that this kindness leads to better, happier friendships.

Students' Independent Practice (5 minutes):

The teacher will distribute worksheets to the students and direct them to select the pictures that depict good friendships. The teacher then will ask students to discuss the positive characteristics they observe in those selected pictures.

Evaluation and feedback (5 minutes): At the end of the lesson, the teacher will commend students for their active involvement. Then, a discussion will be initiated for students to share their opinions and learnings from the session. The teacher will also ask if they found the activities fun and informative. This feedback is invaluable in enhancing future lessons and ensuring that the targets for learning are being met effectively.

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5- Problem-solving

Lesson 1: Problems and how to solve them	
Students will **Know** - That the meaning of the word "problem" and how to define and identify what is a problem. - In alignment with their Islamic teachings, students will be reminded that when they face problems, they can pray to Allah for help and guidance to find solutions. Students will **Understand** - That when faced with problems, they can take actions to solve them. Students will **Do** - The students will list and think of possible simple ways to approach a problem and overcome the emotions associated with problem-solving.	**Materials** - Flashcards of the scenario of the problem **Time:** 20 mins
Review of the last lesson: (2 minutes)	

Introduction (5 minutes):

The teacher will ask students if anyone has ever faced problems this week

So then after asking the students if they faced any problems this week then some students might put up their hands and say yes, I faced a problem this week and the teacher will ask to share the problem.

OK so then the student will share a problem so then the teacher asks what that problem is?

Possible answer: the student will say maybe I fought with my best friend or my mother and I had an argument this morning.

Then the teacher will say what happened? What did you do? How do you solve it?

The student might say exactly what happened when they were in that problem correctly.

Islam: during this discussion, the teacher will weave in the value of turning to their Islamic faith in difficult times. The students could be reminded that, along with the actions they took, they can also pray to Allah, asking for guidance for solving problems in alignment with their Islamic teachings. This reinforces the idea that Islamic beliefs can guide them through life's challenges.

Next, the teacher then shows the class a sample problem "We only have 10 apples but there are 20 students. Then the teacher asks the class what is the problem. Let us think of some things that we can do to solve this problem

Possible answer: There are too many people and too few apples/ There are not enough apples for everyone.

Ways to solve the problem: Cut the apples to share, ask some students to wait and have their share of the apples on the next day or another day, and buy some apples to share.

Development Activity (5 minutes):

The teacher will propose a hypothetical situation: "Imagine you are on the playground and

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a large dog walks towards you through the school gate. What would you do?"

Possible Answers: Look for a teacher, run away, yell for help, tell a friend, cry.

Then, the teacher will ask how they would feel in this situation. The teacher will explain that problems can cause feelings like sadness, worry, anger, and frustration. They might make us want to cry, yell, act out in anger, have a tantrum, get physical symptoms like a headache or stomach-ache, bite our nails, or withdraw. Problems are not easy to handle. We can sometimes avoid them, but other times we need to face them and try to work them out.

Students' Independent Practice (5 minutes):

The teacher will present students with simple problems in picture form, for them to identify and suggest solutions.

Some examples of simple problems to solve:
- The homework book is ripped.
- Broken vase.
- Dirty clothes with ice cream stains.
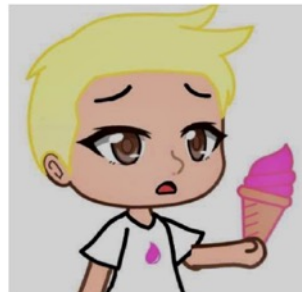
Evaluation and feedback (5 minutes): At the end of the lesson, the teacher will commend students for their active involvement. Then, a discussion will be initiated for students to share their opinions and learnings from the session. The teacher will also ask if they found the activities fun and informative. This feedback is invaluable in enhancing future lessons and ensuring that the targets for learning are being met effectively.

Lesson 2: Think, Plan Ideas and Do

Students will **Know**
 - The process of assessing a problem.
 Students will **Understand**
   - There are various approaches to problem-solving.
 Students will **Do**
   - Students will use different ways and ideas to solve problems.
	Materials
	   - Activity worksheet
	
	 Time: 20 mins

Review of the last lesson (2 minutes)	

Introduction (5 minutes): The teacher will start by asking the children if they know how to solve a problem. They will then take turns sharing their ideas.

Next, the teacher will talk about how to fix a problem. Just like when homework feels too hard, they have to first understand what is causing the problem, then think of fun and creative ways to make it easier, and finally, try to do those things to solve the problem. The teacher will explain these steps simply so the children can understand how to use them in

different situations.

Development Activity (5 minutes):

The teacher divides the class into small groups to sit in a circle.

The teacher to give each group a simple problem for example:

1. Someone was bitten by his sister
2. Your cousin snatched your new toy.

The teacher asks students in that small group to come up with simple solutions to solve the problem. The teacher will ask the students to share how they feel about this problem Does it makes them sad, or frustrated, or worried? Once students have shared how they feel about the problem then the teacher will ask them to list solutions to the problem. Lastly, once they have listed their choice of solutions, they will pick one of the best solutions to solve this problem.

Students' Independent Practice (5 minutes):

- Teacher will provide blank faces.
- Teacher asks students question on how they feel if someone took away their toy?
- Teacher asks students how they feel about the problem.
- Teacher tells them to draw on the blank face showing how they would feel (smiling or sad face or angry)
- Finally, students will be asked to share with the class their solutions to the problem.

Evaluation and feedback (5 minutes): At the end of the lesson, the teacher will commend students for their active involvement. Then, a discussion will be initiated for students to share their opinions and learnings from the session. The teacher will also ask if they found the activities fun and informative. This feedback is invaluable in enhancing future lessons and ensuring that the targets for learning are being met effectively.

Lesson 3: Conflict Resolution Strategies

Students will **Know** - How to solve conflict with others - To identify strategies to address conflict Students will **Understand** - There are many ways to look at conflict and then solve it Students will **Do** - Students will come up with suitable approaches to deal with conflict **Review of the last lesson (2 minutes)**	**Materials** - Flashcards **Time:** 20 mins

Introduction (5 minutes): The teacher will start the lesson by asking the students what they think are some good ways to solve disagreements. The teacher and students together will come up with a list of ways to do this, such as compromising or sharing, negotiating, respectful communication and tolerance, and asking for help.

Islam: The teacher will remind the students that Allah wants us to be respectful, control our emotions like anger, and ask for forgiveness if we have been meaning to others. As Allah said, "Amend that which is between you". This special saying from the Quran means that Allah wants us to solve our problems and not fight. It's just like what we are learning

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in this lesson about finding ways to stop disagreements and live happily.

Following this, the teacher will stress the importance of following these steps to solve conflicts:

- Stay calm
- Think about how you are feeling and how you should act
- Remember it is important to be respectful, maintain friendships, and have good relationships
- Be a good listener and communicate openly
- Pay attention to other's facial expressions and body language
- Be open to discussing and compromising
- Ask for help if you cannot solve the problem on your own

Then, the teacher will share different strategies students can use if they are having a problem with someone.

Development Activity (5 minutes):

The teacher will present a picture of a brother and sister fighting over a toy, posing the question to the students, "You and your sibling both want the same toy, what would be the best solution?"

one child snatching a toy away from another one

The teacher will prompt the students for strategies to rectify the problem depicted in the picture.

Lastly, the teacher will show a picture where the problem is solved; asking the students to look closely and describe what the children in the image did to play together happily.

Students' Independent Practice (5 minutes):

The teacher will provide students with an image depicting a conflict scenario (two siblings arguing over the TV remote). The students are then asked to pair it with the most appropriate solution. Options include a picture of the siblings fighting over the remote and a second image showing the siblings happily watching TV together, indicating they have resolved their disagreement.

The teacher will engage the students in a discussion, encouraging them to share if they or their siblings have experienced a similar conflict, and if so, how they resolved it.

Evaluation and feedback (5 minutes): At the end of the lesson, the teacher will commend students for their active involvement. Then, a discussion will be initiated for students to share their opinions and learnings from the session. The teacher will also ask if they found the activities fun and informative. This feedback is invaluable in enhancing future lessons and ensuring that the targets for learning are being met effectively.

Appendix F: Lessons Reflection

1- *Experimental Group*

Self-concept: Lesson 1 -What I like about me

Experimental Group Class 1

The students participated actively by asking questions and describing their feelings and thoughts to their peers. The students' activeness was evident because they joyfully discussed the good things about themselves and what they liked most about themselves and others. Most students were alert when I taught the importance of loving oneself, which showed they enjoyed the lesson. I asked them what part of the body they most liked about themselves. Some of the students said they liked their hair, and others said their faces or different parts of the body. I also asked them what they liked most about their friends. Some said they liked that they liked their smile and the way they shared their things with them. However, few students were disengaged as the class progressed. I captured their attention by letting them look at their image in the mirror and describe what part of the body they like most. After looking at themselves in the mirror, I asked them how we can remind them that we are unique. The learning went on as planned, with interactions, positive feedback, and active participation of the students in the class. Overall, the atmosphere in the class was excellent and positive. The lesson took 24 minutes, which was in the initial range of what I had planned. This meant there was enough time to explain and engage the students to fully realise the lesson objectives. In addition, I noticed that most of the students enjoyed this lesson's activities and were very excited as they were asked to bring a photo of themselves for the activities. The students understood that they have strengths like good abilities and talents to assist them in learning about themselves. All the students participated in the lesson, as following through was enjoyable and useful. In addition, the 22 minutes were efficient for the lesson, and every aspect was well structured to address the targeted objective. Some students were still learning how to communicate with one another, and this was a valuable session for them to gain skills to communicate well with their peers. I asked the students what they had learned at the end of the lesson, and every student was able to mention critical objectives of the lesson, like loving oneself and the importance of having good qualities. I faced some challenges when delivering this lesson. For instance, there were communication barriers that I noticed that affected three students who were from

Experimental Group Class 2

In this class, the lesson was well-paced and organized. This was because after explaining to the students how Allah made everyone in the best way possible, I asked the students to describe what they loved about themselves and others. I received overwhelming responses from all the students talking positively about themselves and their peers. This showed that the students were attentive and keenly listened to me. I also asked them to describe some of the things they were good at. Some said they were good at sports, swimming and others riding horses and painting. Furthermore, some students asked questions in some instances where they did not seem to understand. One of the students asked why some people seemed mean to others, yet Allah made them in the best way possible. I told her that we always had a choice to choose what was right and that everyone in the class should be good and kind to themselves and others. One of the students asked, "Is there a way I can identify my talent?" I told her that it would be easier if she first reflected on her interests before trying out different activities.

Towards the end of the lesson, I asked the students how they felt about themselves and others now. Some said they had developed confidence when talking in front of the class. Other students described how they would continue practising the positive characters they had learned. In conclusion, the lesson plan's objectives were achieved since the students successfully described themselves positively. I was faced with a challenge whereby some of the students seemed distracted. However, I was in Control of the class, and I managed to redirect the students by reminding them of the class rules and regulations, and we proceeded with the lesson. Most of the students enjoyed the lesson, with some encouraging the other learners to follow my instructions. Therefore, I spent 30 minutes executing the lesson plan and getting the students to settle. Despite this, some students were very engaged and had high levels of engagement and participation. The lesson delivery went well, but the timing was insufficient for the independent activity.

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rural areas of the city. The three students had difficulty expressing themselves confidently and properly due to their more traditional cultural backgrounds and limited opportunity to learn accepted communication and social rules in the school environment. This led to some behavioural problems in class, such as disruption and non-compliance with the lesson activities. I was concerned about them, and therefore I quietly explained the lesson's objectives and the rules that each student should follow. For example, I explained that everybody listens respectfully when someone else is speaking, and everyone gets a chance to speak. They understood and could effectively engage with their peers, contribute to the lessons, feel empowered as equal class members, and talk about themselves without being overly self-conscious. In this way, I found that even students with learning and intersocial behaviour difficulties would rapidly improve their capacity to listen attentively, self-regulate, participate, and work effectively in groups.

Lesson improvement: Several improvements can be considered to enhance the effectiveness of the lesson further. First, the language used for introducing complex concepts could be simplified for student understanding. For instance, the question, "What made you realize that you like that about yourself?" could be rephrased to "What do you like most about yourself, and how did you discover this?" to make it more digestible for the students. Second, the lesson could provide a clearer differentiation between 'talents' and 'abilities'. Dedicating more time to explaining these concepts, using straightforward examples, would help students better distinguish between their innate qualities (talents) and skills that can be developed (abilities).

Self-Concept: Lesson 2 - Learning with an "I Can Do Anything" Mindset

Experimental Group Class 1

I started the lesson by asking the learners about any task they had learned lately. One of the boys told me he had learned skating after being taught by his old brother. I connected with how the boy's positive thinking about skating enabled him to know about it. I then asked the students to discuss how they started the new tasks they had learned. They actively engaged in the discussion, asking each other questions and contributing their opinions. However, I noticed some learners were taking advantage of the discussion to make stories unrelated to the lesson, so I decided to tell them the story of Tommy. While telling the story, I could now see that the learners were connecting the story to the lesson objectives. After telling the story, I posed a few questions to them, and they were able to answer. I asked them if Tommy should consider this challenge to learn to swim. Most of the students were able to answer the question by saying that Tommy should have positive thinking, that he can be able to swim, and he should attend the swimming class. From their responses, I was satisfied that one of the lesson objectives, enabling them to learn that a positive mindset would help them achieve their aims, was established. When I distributed the sheets to the learners, they could draw positive things they were amazing at doing. From the few sheets I sampled, some girls had shown that they were amazing at

Experimental Group Class 2

The learners were well-engaged in this lesson. I started the class by asking learners to identify some new tasks they had learned recently and how they felt after learning the task. The purpose of the question was to enable them to comprehend the idea of positive thinking and its importance in learning new things. Most learners could identify the new tasks they had learned and how positive they were even though the task was challenging. One of the students said that he had learned how to bake a cake despite having the challenge of following the recipe correctly several times. I asked them what they could do when encountering something challenging. One of the students at the back answered that they could be optimistic about the difficulty and then try to learn it through practice and seeking assistance. The pupils responded favourably to the assignment of drawing a picture of themselves and what they are outstanding at doing. I went around the class looking at their sheets, and they were able to identify what they were exceptional at doing. Most showed that they were good at drawing, swimming, and singing. I narrated Tommy's story to enable them to connect to the lesson's objectives. I asked them whether Tommy should learn how to swim to join his friend. One of the learners answered that Tommy should be optimistic about the challenge and enrol in a

drawing, cooking, swimming, and dancing. The 22 minutes allocated for the class were efficient.

swimming class to learn how to swim and then join his friends. Twenty-two minutes were enough for the lesson.

Lesson improvement: One potential area for improvement might be to incorporate more opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding of maintaining a positive mindset in the face of challenges. For example, students could be asked to share personal experiences where having a positive mindset helped them overcome specific challenges. Sharing these experiences could serve as motivational examples for other students. In addition, strategies to remain focused and positive when confronting challenging tasks could be discussed more extensively in future lessons, benefiting all learners.

Self-concept: Lesson 3 - I Am Special, and You Are Special Too

Experimental Group Class 1

The lesson was lively as the learners were engaged and participated in the discussion. I delivered the lesson in 20 minutes, which was adequate time. I randomly selected learners and asked them to explain what made them special. Most of them could link their unique achievements with being special. One of the learners responded that he is special because he is the best in the swimming class and has won one medal. Most students identified that they had different strengths than their group members. I achieved the lesson's aim because the learners could identify what made them special and the differences in their strengths that made them unique. I asked the two members from one of the groups to identify their strengths and weaknesses. They said they had similarities: both were good at playing football and drawing. However, they also noticed their differences. For example, one was good at skating, while the other did not know how to skate and was not interested in learning. The pupils relished the activity and could recognize the parallels and differences they shared with their classmates. The learner was able to value diversity and understand the positive aspects of living in a diverse community. I asked them how they felt about the lesson and what they had learned. One of the learners responded that they had learned that we are all special and have different capabilities, which may not be the same as our friends.

Experimental Group Class 2

Overall, the lesson on uniqueness and diversity went well, with most students actively participating and grasping the concept. The grouping activity was also influential in assisting students in identifying similarities and differences among their peers and recognising the importance of diversity. They were able to identify their strengths and uniqueness. For example, peers from one group found out that they could sing well, but one was good at dancing while the other was good at swimming.

Additionally, it may be beneficial to incorporate more group activities or discussions to encourage more active participation and collaboration. The lesson was well-timed, with sufficient time for action and debate. Most students understood the concept of the lesson, which was to recognise and appreciate individuals' unique qualities and abilities. Some students struggled with staying on task during the activity, but this was addressed through redirection and support. Most students actively participated in the lesson and the group activity, though some needed more encouragement and guidance. The lesson was well-structured and effective in achieving the learning objectives. The twenty minutes allocated for the lesson were enough.

Lesson improvement: In review of this Lesson, it was pleasing to note that the lesson went well. Both classes actively participated and understood the concept of individual uniqueness and the value of diversity. The balance between discussing, sharing, and drawing activities helped engage students and reinforce the lesson's objectives at the same time. Therefore, as the lesson stands, no significant improvements are needed, demonstrating effective planning and execution of the lesson.

Emotional Understanding: Lesson 4 - Knowing Your Feelings

Experimental Group Class 1

During the lesson, the students were highly interested in and engaged with the lesson. The only thing that I noticed when I started this lesson by asking the students to mention some of the feelings they knew "Do you know what feelings are?" most of the students did not understand the "feeling" word, and they asked me "What do you mean by this word?" I

Experimental Group Class 2

The lesson's allocated time of 25 minutes was adequate, and there was enough time to finish all the exercises. The lesson was well-taught. When I asked the students "Do you know what feelings are?", only one girl responded by explaining what this word means and she gave an example. After that, most of the students told me that while they know different

tried to explain it to them in different ways but when I started showing students emoji faces with no labels and asked them what they think each face is indicating, they interacted and answered accordingly. The students were able to identify those flashcards that showed positive feelings and those that showed negative feelings. The learners were able to match the emotions represented by the faces. From the activity, students could identify their feelings and those of others. They were also able to differentiate between positive and negative feelings. In the next activity, I selected a pair of two voluntary students to demonstrate to the rest of the class a mini-role play. I asked one of the students to demonstrate the face of someone scared. The learner demonstrated it, and when I asked the other students how he felt, they said that he felt scared and concerned. I then gave them real-life examples that triggered our feelings to enable them to connect the content learned in class to the real-life experience. I gave them a scenario of how they could feel if their siblings destroyed their favourite toy. One responded that they could feel very sad and angry with their siblings. I then asked them how they could feel if they went home and found that their parents had bought them a gift. some of them said that they would be very happy and excited, and others said that they would be hugging their parents. The lesson was appropriate for the 25 minutes provided, and the classroom was effectively managed.

types of feelings, they did not know what those feelings are called. The learners matched the facial expressions with the feelings they presented. The students could match the emoji face without labels and identify what the faces indicated. The lesson objective was attained because the learners could label their feelings and those of others. They were also able to differentiate between positive and negative feelings. Some students had trouble naming emotions like confusion and enthusiasm, so I gave them more examples to help them comprehend these feelings. I used unlabeled emojis showing facial expressions and chose the learners randomly to identify the feelings expressed in the displayed flashcard. I then gave the learners real-life examples to connect the content learned in class to real life. I asked them how they would feel if their best friend felt sick. One student said he would feel sad and empathetic about their friend's situation. I asked them how they would feel if their best friends invited them to a birthday party. One of the girls said that she would feel pleased and excited. It was difficult to deliver the last activity because some students did not pay attention and talked to their friends, so I spent much time Controlling the students' behaviour.

Lesson improvement: A simple improvement could be in explaining the term 'feelings'. While students understood different emotions, they found 'feelings' a difficult term to grasp. This can be made easier by using age-suitable resources like a short video or offering a clear explanation. For instance, clarifying that 'feelings' are just names for our emotions such as happy, sad, or excited. By making this clearer, students can better understand what 'feelings' means, linking it to the emotions they already know.

Emotional Understanding: Lesson 5- Understanding body Gestures

Experimental Group Class 1

I started this class by asking the students to identify some of the positive and negative feelings learned in the previous class and try to express them facially. I then used the flashcards to test whether the learners remembered what was taught in the previous class. After selecting student volunteers to act out the feelings from the flashcards as the rest of the class observed, I highlighted how the various body parts looked when different emotions were demonstrated. Through these activities, the learners understood that facial expressions enable others to understand our feelings. I highlighted to the students what the different parts of the body look like when feeling emotions and showed the class different pictures, for example, happiness is connected to eyes being bright and sparkly with a smiling face. Then students started to role-play with happy faces and sad faces as well. it was discussed with the class the pictures showed and the body language that is associated with each picture. The students interacted were and were actively engaged with this lesson. The students also learned

Experimental Group Class 2

The pupils could recollect the feelings we learned about in the previous session as I reviewed them at the beginning of the lesson. After the recap, I selected two volunteer students to act out various feelings and then asked the class to identify the feelings demonstrated. The learners identified emotions ranging from sadness, happiness, fear, and confusion. I highlighted the main body parts that were used to determine the feelings. The body parts included the mouth, eyes, and eyebrows. I asked the learners what made them sad. I selected one of the boys who responded that he feels sad when he gets hurt or is home alone. Through these activities, the learners could communicate facial expressions and allow others to understand their feelings. They also understood that emotions have physical body expressions and responses. I encouraged the students to observe and recognise each body language by using flashcards to demonstrate the many body language patterns connected to each emotion. The students and I then talked about the feelings and

that each emotion could be expressed through a person's physical appearance and body response, thus achieving the lesson's objectives. I asked one learner to identify three things that make them happy. The learner said she feels happy whenever she sees her pet, sees her parents, and when in the company of friends. I reminded the learners to praise Allah and seek him during sad moments. I showed them flashcards expressing feelings and emotions with body language. I then selected the learners randomly to identify the feelings expressed. In the independent practice, the learners could make an angry and surprised face by cutting and pasting the matching facial expression to the emotion shown. I guided the two learners having challenges with the activity and then asked them to repeat it independently to see if they had understood. The 20-minute lesson was successful.

attitudes reflected in the shown body language. I showed one of the flashcards with a picture of a boy stamping off his feet, arms folded. One learner answered that the picture showed the boy was angry. That was correct. The learners independently practised cutting and pasting to match the facial expressions with the emotions portrayed. No one had a challenge with the independent practice. There was great success in the lesson, which was completed in 20 minutes. I then concluded the class by highlighting some of the Islamic principles learned from the lesson, for example, being grateful to Allah and Controlling negative emotions.

Lesson improvement: Given that the lesson objectives were fully met and active student engagement was evident, no improvements are necessary at this point. The lesson was essentially well-structured and efficient.

Emotional Understanding: Lesson 6 - Internal Body reaction to different feelings

Experimental Group Class 1

I started the lesson by posing a question to the learners, asking them if they had ever felt sick. One of the students responded that there was a time when he was ill, and he experienced a headache, fever, and his heartbeat was faster. I developed the lesson from the response by explaining why the student experienced those symptoms when he was sick. I explained that this is usually an internal body reaction that needs a reply. I then displayed flashcards showing feelings from inside the body. One of the cards had a crying emoji. I explained the scenario represented by each flashcard. For the crying face, I explained that it showed pain, but sometimes it could represent happiness. For the racing heart, I explained that it could indicate that one is in a panic or has been surprised by an occurrence. For example, when one wins a race, their heartbeat is usually faster. From these activities, the objectives of the lesson were achieved. The learners could identify various internal sensations and learn about the internal reactions and how their body feels during these reactions. In the independent activity, I asked the students to draw pictures to show internal body reactions when a person is sad, afraid, and angry. I sampled the activity, and one student was very creative. To express sadness, he drew a picture of red eyes. For fear, he drew a picture of wide eyes and a picture of a clenched jaw to express anger. The lesson was completed in 22 minutes, which was sufficient time.

Experiment Group Class 2

I started the lesson by asking the learners if they had experienced a faster heartbeat. Most of the students said they were familiar with having a fast heartbeat, especially if they were panicking or waiting for a surprise. I used the response to explain how our bodies express inner feelings in various ways. I put up flashcards of bodily feelings like a quivering body, a churning stomach, and others to let students further investigate internal biological sensations. I described the scenarios that each flashcard depicted. The learners could distinguish between several interior feelings through these activities, and they also discovered how the body responds to these sensations.

For the independent exercise, one pupil created drawings of a tight chest to symbolise sadness, sweaty palms to express fear, and clenched teeth to indicate anger. The class helped students recognise internal body sensations and how the body responds to various emotions. It allowed the students to actively engage in their learning and express their creativity via their drawings because the lesson exercise was entertaining and interactive.

Lesson improvement: A few changes could be beneficial in this lesson. Adding videos that explain these inner feelings might help. The lesson could be more interactive by asking students to notice their own body reactions, like feeling their heartbeat after running. Role-playing also might make it easier to understand these concepts. These changes could make it simpler for the students to understand how their bodies react to feelings.

Experimental Group Class 1

The objective of the 20-minute lesson was to enable learners to understand the relationship between their emotions and actions and to encourage them to think before acting out their emotions. I started the lesson by explaining that we all have feelings linked to actions. I gave an example that if I feel sad, I will cry. I emphasised to learners that they should not react to their feelings of sadness, upset, or anger without first considering if they may hurt others by their words or actions. I explained that self-control is important in maintaining social relationships with others. I asked learners questions to engage them in the lesson. One of the questions was: What kind of feeling upsets you? One learner answered that pain, crying, fighting, and screaming upset them. During the development activity, I involved the learners in a game called the Red light, Green Light activity. The Red Light, Green Light activity was effective in helping students learn to control their responses, especially when angry. The pictures of a boy doing things without thinking first were also helpful in showing the consequences of not thinking before acting. In the independent student activity, I showed pictures of a boy and asked the learners to explain the pictures. In one of the pictures, a learner explained that the boy was pushing someone in a swimming pool. We then discussed some of the consequences of the boy's actions. One of the actions identified that could occur was death. The lesson's objective was to enable the learners to understand that feelings are connected to emotions and that they should first think before acting.

Experimental Group Class 2

The lesson's objectives were to help students understand the connection between their feelings and behaviour and how to manage and control their emotions to avoid hurting others. To start the 20-minute lesson, I explained that our feelings are connected to our actions, and that thinking before acting out our emotions is important. I asked the learners to give examples of feelings that upset them, and one learner responded that feeling rejected and left out upset them. During the development activity, I engaged learners to play the Red Light, Green Light game to help them slow down their responses when angry. I also discussed the consequences of not controlling their emotions, such as hurting others or getting into trouble. I showed them pictures of a boy who does things without thinking first, and we discussed the consequences of his actions. One picture showed a boy walking in a house with dirty shoes, and the learners explained that it could make the house dirty and their parents angry. The only problem was that there were two learners at the back of the class who were less attentive, and I decided to change their sitting positions and brought them to the front desk. Learners gave feedback that they had enjoyed the lesson. The lesson successfully achieved its objective of teaching students about the relationship between their emotions and actions and how to manage their feelings to prevent undesirable actions. The activities were engaging and helped students apply their knowledge to real-life situations.

Lesson improvement: Incorporating educational videos related to the topic as a supplementary resource might further accentuate the students' comprehension of emotions' influence on actions. But overall, the clarity and the interactive activities of the lesson left no major changes needed.

Self-regulation: Lesson 8 - Regulating Emotions: Calming down

Experimental Group Class 1

The 20-minute lesson was about regulating emotions, specifically focusing on calming down when angry. The objective was for students to understand that emotions can be regulated and to learn different strategies to regulate their emotions. During the introduction, I used flashcards to prompt a discussion on what makes them angry and how they can control their anger. I started the discussion by asking the learners what made them angry, and each learner had their answers. Then, I introduced the topic of self-control and presented seven different strategies. The

Experimental Group Class 2

The objective of the 20-minute lesson was to enable the learners to understand that emotions can be regulated and to learn different strategies to regulate their emotions effectively. I ignited a discussion about what makes the students angry and how they can control it using flashcards. Each student responded, and hearing the various causes of their anger was interesting. I then taught the idea of self-control and provided seven visually appealing alternatives, such as using a stress ball with a picture of someone trying to use it. For the development of the lesson, we

strategies were illustrated with pictures, making it easy for students to understand and remember. The development of the lesson involved a video related to the topic. The video showed a story about a boy who could control his anger with the help of his friend. After the video, I asked questions to check for comprehension and promote critical thinking. For example, when I asked them what the meaning of the story was, a learner answered that the story showed us that through the help of our friends, we can always control our anger. For the independent practice activity, I gave students a worksheet where they had to colour the things that could help them control their anger. This activity was engaging and allowed them to reflect on the strategies presented earlier in the lesson. Some of the pictures the learners coloured included that of a girl listening to music and that of people reading. The lesson was well-structured and engaging, with a good mix of activities to cater to different learning styles.

watched a video related to the topic. The video showed a story about a boy who could control his anger with the help of his friend. After the video, I asked the learners questions to check for comprehension and promote critical thinking. I asked the students how a friend could help them manage their anger. A learner answered that a friend could help by listening and providing support. I gave the learners a worksheet where they had to colour the things that can help them control their anger. This activity was engaging and allowed the learners to reflect on the strategies presented earlier in the lesson. Some pictures the learners coloured included a girl listening to music, people reading, and a stress ball. It was interesting to see the different strategies that the learners found helpful. The lesson was well-structured and engaging, with a good mix of activities to cater to different learning styles.

Lesson improvement: The lesson appears comprehensive and requires no significant improvement.

Self-regulation: Lesson 9 - Zone of regulation

Experimental Group Class 1

The 20-minute lesson focused on the different zones of regulation and how to manage our feelings in each zone. The objective of the lesson was to help students understand and be able to deal with themselves when they are in any of the four zones. The lesson was well-structured and engaging, with various activities catering to different learning styles. During the introduction, I showed the zones of the regulation chart, including the four zones and their corresponding colours. I then asked the students to provide examples of feelings related to each zone and colour. The students linked the red colour with being angry and the yellow colour with frustration. The activity allowed the students to think critically and apply their knowledge of emotions to the different zones. I then held up four cards of the four zonal colours and asked students to pick a colour that showed their feelings. Most learners picked the green colour and explained that they were happy and focused on the lesson. This interactive lesson allowed me to gauge students' understanding of the different zones. The activity helped the students reflect on their emotions and think of ways to manage them effectively. For the independent activity, I gave the students a worksheet with three columns of feelings to match the zones of colours and the actions to get ready to be in green. The excellent lesson provided students with a better understanding of the different zones of regulation and how to manage their emotions effectively.

Experimental Group Class 2

The 20-minute lesson on the various zones of control successfully kept the students' attention and imparted knowledge. The objective was to teach the pupils how to recognise and effectively Control their emotions in each of the four zones. During the introduction, I displayed the zones of the regulation chart, and the students illustrated the emotions each colour evoked. The pupils were able to relate the various zones to the associated emotions. They related yellow with losing control and green with happiness and being calm. Also, it allowed the pupils to consider their feelings and express them to the class. I then asked the students to choose a colour representing their feelings while I held up four cards with the four zonal colours. Some learners chose the yellow zone. I questioned their feelings, and they said they felt worried because they had not completed their homework. I asked them to suggest some actions they may do to turn green, and their answer was to try new things, practise calming strategies and play. The pupils' ability to recognise techniques that would enable them to transition from the other zones to the green zone. The independent activity was a worksheet with three columns of feelings to match the zones of colours and the actions needed to get ready to be in green. The lesson successfully achieved its objective, and the students were better equipped to manage their emotions effectively.

Lesson improvement: The existing lesson is comprehensive, and clear and did not call for any significant improvements as it effectively achieves its teaching objectives.

Relationship: Lesson 10 - The importance of relationships and what kinds are there?

Experimental Group Class 1

Objectives of the lesson, which were to teach the students about the importance of building strong relationships, identifying different types of relationships, and discussing how to develop respectful and healthy relationships, were met. The students identified various types of relationships, including those with family and friends, and learned the importance of respectful behaviour in building solid relationships. The students also understood how building relationships align with Islamic teachings and the role of interpersonal skills in developing relationships. They could relate to how caring for others could lead to a good friendship. The class activity, which involved the students sharing their best relationships and drawing the person they felt they had the best relationship with, was influential in helping the learners reflect further on their relationships. Most students identified their relationships with their parents and siblings as their best, as they shared many common interests. All the students actively participated in the lesson and understood the concept/idea of the lesson. The lesson structure was well-planned, and classroom management was influential in ensuring that the learners remained focused throughout the session. The time allocated was also efficient in covering the lesson. The students learned a lot from the lesson, and they acquired the ability to develop respectful and healthy relationships. The lesson was well-structured, and the activities were engaging, which enabled the students to participate actively in the learning process. It was a successful learning experience for the learners.

Experimental Group Class 2

In this lesson, the objective was to help students understand the benefits of relationships and how they can play a role in building solid relationships. Based on the observation, the goals were met as the students identified different types of relationships and reflected on the importance of respectful relationships with family members and friends. The children were able to identify the relationship they had with their friends and family members. The students also demonstrated an understanding of the value of developing strong interpersonal skills, which is crucial for building relationships and achieving success in life and how they would make new friends by first introducing themselves. The activity helped the students reflect on their relationships and identify the feelings that make a relationship their best. However, one thing that could be better is incorporating more examples to cater to the diversity of the students' backgrounds and experiences. All the students participated actively in the lesson, which made it easier for me to assess their understanding of the concept, and I could draw the people they had the best relationships. Regarding timing, the 20-minute duration was well planned, allowing us to cover the lesson objectives and the activity. The fidelity of the concept was easy for the students to understand, and the lesson was well structured to help them achieve the learning objectives. I noticed that the students particularly enjoyed the activity. I believe the lesson was successful as the students demonstrated an understanding of the concept, actively participated in the activity, and reflected on their relationships.

Lesson improvement: Reflecting on my experience teaching this lesson, it is evident that students considered their online friendships formed through gaming as significant relationships in their lives. However, there was limited time to explore this aspect further during the lesson. Therefore, it would be beneficial to include a portion dedicated to discussing the implications of online relationships in the lesson. This could involve explaining the importance of setting boundaries, maintaining online safety, and understanding the nature of online friendships.

Relationship: Lesson 11 - How do we build happy relationships?

Experimental Group Class 1

The 20-minute lesson focused on teaching students how to develop positive, constructive connections with their peers. The lesson successfully met its objective, as the students were engaged and actively participated in the activities. They were also able to identify the photos that represented good friendships. The students demonstrated a good understanding of the importance of empathy and loyalty in building good friendships, and they could apply positive relationship traits to real-life situations. students learned different strategies for establishing, growing, and maintaining positive relationships with their peers. There was a good understanding of the concept

Experimental Group Class 2

The lesson successfully met its objectives, and the students understood the concept of problem-solving and applied it to real-life situations. With minor adjustments, such as providing more challenging problems for advanced students and offering more guidance for struggling students, the lesson can be improved to provide a more comprehensive learning experience—this difficulty. The lesson was well structured for learning the lesson objectives, with engaging activities, appropriate timing, and effective classroom management. Learners could explain how they would approach new classmates for friendship, for example, by first introducing themselves. In the

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after this lesson among the students. Also, when the teacher asked students what it means to be a good friend, many students responded by saying caring, cooperating with others, working in a team, and playing cooperatively. Each of them had a way of approaching a new classmate and establishing friendship. They explained that a friend should be caring and loving. The students' engagement in the activities was a highlight of the lesson. Some students found it challenging to identify the characteristics of good and bad relationships in the worksheet, so adjustments could be made to future lessons to address this difficulty. The study was well structured for learning the lesson objectives, with engaging activities, appropriate timing, and effective classroom management. The students enjoyed the activities and found the lesson helpful in developing positive relationships. Finding ways to become friends with a new classmate was particularly engaging, allowing them to practically apply the positive relationship traits they had learned. The overall engagement and understanding of the students suggest that the lesson effectively achieved its goals.

independent activity, most of the students also identified that pictures one, three, and four showed a good relationship. In contrast, pictures two and five indicated a bad one. The students enjoyed the activities and found the lesson helpful in developing positive relationships. Finding ways to become friends with a new classmate was particularly engaging, allowing them to practically apply the positive relationship traits they had learned. The overall engagement and understanding of the students suggest that the lesson effectively achieved its goals.

Lesson improvement: The current lesson is comprehensive and well-targeted to achieve its objectives.

Relationship: Lesson 12 - Characteristics of Being a good friend.

Experimental Group Class 1

The 20-minute lesson on what makes a good friend successfully met its objective, with the students being engaged and actively participating in the activities. The students could understand the importance of being a good friend and apply it to real-life situations. The discussion was particularly successful in engaging the students and helping them think critically about the qualities of a trustworthy, loyal, and empathic friend. They could identify characteristics of good friends, such as loving, caring and cooperative. It is also important to note that some students were shy and hesitant to participate in the debate, and providing more opportunities for them to contribute their thoughts and ideas could encourage participation.

Experimental Group Class 2

The objective of the 20-minute lesson was successfully met. The learners could identify the characteristics of being a good friend through various activities. During the review, students were engaged and excited to share their thoughts on what they would like their friends to do for them. This allowed them to interact with each other and build on their social skills. The learners could identify what makes a good or bad friend, with some sharing examples from their own experiences. Providing scenarios of positive and negative relationships was influential in helping the learners understand the importance of being kind to their friends. The independent practice activity was also successful, as the students could think about what they had learned in the class and apply it to their lives. . While the learners were engaged, they may have benefited from more opportunities to share their experiences and perspectives on what makes a good friend. Observations of the students during the lesson showed that they enjoyed the class and were eager to participate. Additionally, the learners liked selecting pictures that showed someone being a good friend, allowing them to express their creativity and apply what they had learned in the lesson.

Lesson improvement: Some students also found identifying the characteristics of good and bad relationships in the photos challenging, which could be addressed by providing more examples and discussion. To cater to different learning styles, incorporating more interactive activities, such as visual aids or group discussions, could be helpful. Furthermore, another area that could be improved is the timing of the lesson. The lesson could be extended to allow for more in-depth discussions and activities. Despite these areas for improvement, the lesson was well-structured and effective in achieving its objectives, with most students actively participating and demonstrating a good understanding of the concept.

Problem-solving: Lesson 13 - Problems and how to solve them.

Experimental Group Class 1

The lesson on problem-solving went well as planned because the objectives were met, and the learners could identify problems and solve them by the end of the lesson. The students were engaged and participated actively throughout the lesson. The lesson began by asking the students about a problem they encountered, which allowed them to relate to the lesson's objective. One of the girls was able to answer the question when asked if she had faced a problem that week. She said she had failed to complete English homework and had a problem with the teacher. The sample problem was easily understood, and the students could devise a solution quickly on how the 10 apples could be shared among 20 people. The students could also share their ideas, allowing for a creative exchange of solutions. The students could identify different types of problems, associated emotions, and how to solve them. The pictorial form of simple issues, such as dirty clothes and broken vases, helped the students understand the concept better. The students' participation and engagement were remarkable, indicating they understood the lesson clearly. One area where improvement could be made is providing more opportunities for students to practise solving different problems. Although the students were creative in their solutions, they could benefit from more practice. The students learned a lot from the lesson, as evidenced by their ability to identify different types of problems and emotions associated with them. The 20 minute period allocated for the lesson was appropriate, as the students could understand the lesson objectives and participate in the activity.

Experimental Group Class 2

The 20-minute lesson was about problems and how to solve them. The lesson was successful, and the objectives were met. The students were engaged and actively participated in all activities, sharing their thoughts and opinions. Problem-solving activity helped the students understand that various approaches can solve problems. In the scenario activity, the students identified different emotions associated with problems and how to deal with them. To start the lesson, I asked the students if they faced any problems this week, and some shared their experiences and how they came up with a solution. One of the learners shared his experience after breaking a glass at home and getting into trouble. The sample activity helped the students to understand that problems can be solved and there are various ways to approach them. The big dog scenario helped the students to identify different emotions associated with a problem and how to deal with them. Some said they would shout when approached by the dog, while others said they would run away. In the last activity, I gave the students some simple problems to solve, such as a ripped homework book, dirty clothes with an ice cream stain, and a broken vase. Each student had a solution to each of the problems. One area that could be improved is the time allocated for the lesson. The lesson lasted only 20 minutes, and the activities could have been more in-depth and detailed if more time had been available. However, the students could still understand the concept and meet the objectives. The students understood the idea of the lesson, and they were able to apply it to different scenarios. They understood that problems are a part of everyday life and can be solved using suitable approaches.

Lesson improvement: Some areas could see improvement. One such area involved providing more opportunities for students to practice solving various problems. Despite their evident creativity in crafting solutions, their skills and understanding of diverse problem scenarios could be further enriched by solving different problems that vary in complexity levels. This variation would widen their scope of problem-solving abilities and increase their adaptability to solving new problems. Additionally, the timing of the lesson was another aspect to consider. With the lesson duration limited to 20 minutes, it was challenging to incorporate more intricate and elaborate activities. Extending the time allocated for the lesson could allow a deeper exploration of problem-solving strategies, thereby enabling a more comprehensive understanding and application of the skills learned.

Problem-solving: Lesson 14 - Think, Plan Ideas and Do

Experimental Group Class 1

The lesson objectives were successfully met as the students could understand and apply the problem-solving steps to simple scenarios. They were able to explain how they would solve a problem. The students actively participated in the activities and discussions, offering their opinions and solutions to problems. When asked to devise a simple way to solve a problem, they suggested effective communication and looking for assistance from the elders as some of the ways. The activity where the students drew faces to show their feelings if someone took away their toy was particularly successful in helping them understand the importance of recognising and expressing their feelings when they are having a problem. The timing of the lesson was appropriate, and there was sufficient time to carry out all the activities. The lesson was structured well, with clear instructions and adequate classroom management. The students learned the concept of problem-solving and could apply it to real-life scenarios. The lesson was easy to understand and engaging, with active participation from all students. The students found the activities interesting, especially the group work, and they enjoyed sharing their solutions and ideas with their classmates. In terms of student understanding, some students struggled with the concept of planning creative ideas for solving a problem. These students required more guidance, and I provided additional examples and explanations to help them understand the process better. The lesson successfully met its objectives, and the students understood the concept of problem-solving and applied it to real-life situations. They could apply the steps of problem-solving, such as identifying the problem, planning creative ideas and executing them.

Experimental Group Class 2

The lesson objectives were met, as the students could think about problems and devise different ways to solve them. One aspect that went well was the small group discussion, which allowed students to share their ideas and perspectives on solving a problem. Using blank faces to illustrate their feelings helped the students better understand and express their emotions. Although the students could share their solutions with the class, there was not enough time for a more in-depth discussion on why they chose specific solutions over others. The students seemed to understand the concepts and ideas presented in the lesson. They could share their thoughts and ideas effectively during the small group discussions and were engaged in the activity. However, some struggled with expressing their emotions through drawing and needed more guidance in this aspect. All students actively participated in the lesson; some were enthusiastic about sharing their ideas and solutions with the class. The timing of the lesson was well-planned, as it allowed for both group discussion and independent practice. The lesson was structured well for learning the objectives, with a clear introduction, development, and separate practice section. The use of small group discussions and individual drawing activities also provided various ways for students to engage with the material.

Lesson improvement: An area for enhancement would be affording students increased opportunities to practice solving a diversity of problems. While students crafted creative solutions, an additional practice would be advantageous. Also, the lesson lasted only 20 minutes, and the activities could have been more in-depth and detailed if more time had been available.

Problem-solving: Lesson 15 - Conflict resolution strategies

Experimental Group Class 1

The lesson on conflict resolution strategies was successful in meeting its objectives. The students were engaged in the lesson and could share their thoughts and ideas effectively during the small group discussions. For instance, they brainstormed strategies the brother and sister would use to overcome the fight over the toy. Different activities helped keep the students interested and allowed them to develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. One of the things that went well was the emphasis on respectful communication and the importance of

Experimental Group Class 2

The lesson's objectives were to teach the students''conflict resolution strategies and help them understand the importance of resolving conflicts peacefully. The lesson was well-structured, and the students were engaged throughout the session. They identified ways to resolve conflicts, including looking for help from adults. The development activity was influential in helping the learners apply the strategies they had learned. They could suggest helpful ways to resolve conflicts. For example, the brother and sister agreed to take turns playing with the toy.

Controlling emotions when resolving conflicts. I reminded them that Allah teaches us to control our emotions. The students understood the role of these concepts in building positive relationships and solving problems effectively. More time needed to be allocated for independent practice, which would have allowed in-depth discussion on the solutions that the students chose. This area could be improved by allowing more time for reflection and debate. The students learned about the process of resolving conflicts and were able to apply this knowledge to different scenarios. They better understood their emotions and how to express them effectively and were able to match a picture of a conflict situation and devise the best solution. The lesson structure was well-planned and allowed for active participation from all students. The study on conflict resolution strategies successfully met its objectives and provided students with valuable skills for resolving interpersonal problems. The students were engaged, and the lesson structure allowed for active participation and various learning activities. Although the students seemed very happy and learned a lot during the class, one girl appeared tired and kept interrupting me while I was teaching, saying, "When are you going to finish?" I asked her why she felt that way, and she said that she did not get enough sleep yesterday. This led to a useful contextual discussion about how important it is for children to have enough sleep so they can stay healthy and pay attention in class.

Additionally, the independent activity enabled the students to think critically and match the images with a good solution, effectively reinforcing the lesson objectives. One aspect that could be improved was the allotted time for the lesson. Although the lesson was completed within the allotted time, it would have been better to have more time to discuss each strategy in more detail. All the students actively participated in the lesson, and most of them could understand the concept of the lesson. They understood that conflicts could be resolved by agreeing, looking for help from others, communicating respectfully, being tolerant, and asking for help, among other strategies. The learners enjoyed the development activity, which suggested ways to resolve a conflict between a brother and sister over a toy. They also found the independent activity challenging but helpful in reinforcing the lesson objectives. The lesson structure was well-planned, and the classroom management was influential in ensuring the learners remained focused throughout the session.

Lesson improvement: This lesson seemed thorough and highly effective, implying no significant revisions were required.

2- Control Group

Control Group Class 1	Control Group Class 2
Day 1: Mealtime: The mealtime was to take 25 minutes. I started by emphasising table manners and etiquette, linked to Islamic traditions and values as stated in the Saudi Arabian curriculum. I began by teaching the learners how to wash their hands before eating. I demonstrated to them how to wash their hands. This practice is based on Islamic hygiene laws and ensures that hands are clean and bacteria-free. I then taught them how to use the napkin and place it on their lap to avoid staining their clothes. I then led the learners to use the right hand for eating because it is considered cleaner than the left. I then instructed them that they should refrain from talking while eating. I encouraged them to engage in polite conversations. I also taught them always to wait for others to finish before leaving the table to avoid wasting food. During mealtime, I encouraged learners to recite Du'a (supplication) before and after eating. This Islamic tradition involves offering supplications to Allah for the blessings received, including food and drink. Some of the Du'a that I taught them to recite during mealtime include "Bismillah," "Alhamdulillah"," The mealtime lesson focused on instilling discipline in the learners and fostering a sense of community and social skills. Children's Meals were provided by children's families from home.	Mealtime: As a teacher, I think that educating children about table manners and etiquette is essential to helping them build their social skills and cultivate respect for themselves and others. In keeping with the Saudi Arabian curriculum, I began the 25-minute mealtime activities by highlighting how crucial washing your hands before eating is to preserve cleanliness. I ensured the students understood the importance of cleanliness and orderliness while eating by showing them how to use the napkin and lay it on their lap to prevent food stains on their clothes. I also stressed the importance of eating with the right hand and avoiding chatting aloud at the table. This encourages civil discourse and social interaction, promoting peace and respect for others. To prevent food waste, I also stressed the significance of waiting for everyone to finish before leaving the table—a crucial lesson in responsibility and thankfulness. I urged students to recite Du'a (supplication) before and after meals to express gratitude for the bounties of food and drink to promote Islamic traditions and teachings. Some of the Dua I told them they could recite "Bismillah" and "Alhamdulilah". They gain a deeper understanding of Islamic customs and principles, strengthening their sense of belonging and reverence for their faith. In conclusion, the mealtime lesson helped the students develop social skills, a sense of community, discipline, and respect. We are giving them essential life skills that will benefit them beyond the classroom by highlighting the value of manners and etiquette.
Day 2: The circle centre time: it was conducted for 25 minutes. The lesson focused on the family unit, a fundamental Islamic society and cultural aspect. I also guided the learners through the Arabic letters and numbers. We started with our usual morning routine, where I greeted each student and asked them about their morning. Also, I began the discussion by asking who God and our Prophet are as part of our daily questions. Additionally, students were asked what the name of our country is and what the capital city is, as well as the name of the city in which we live. I then transitioned to our lesson by introducing the family unit and discussing the family members. I used visual aids such as family trees and pictures to help students identify and understand the different family members. Next, I taught the Arabic letters and numbers. I started by introducing the Arabic alphabet and demonstrating the correct pronunciation of each letter. Learners then practiced writing the letters on their worksheets, and I went around looking if they were correct. For numbers, I used counting blocks and number charts to help students understand the concept of numbers and counting. I then let them	During the 25-minute circle center, I focused on teaching the learners about respecting elders in the Islamic culture and introducing the Arabic alphabet and numbers. The lesson started with our usual morning routine, where I greeted each student and inquired about their wellbeing. As part of the morning routine, students were also asked about their absences and attendance. To initiate our discussion, I posed questions about the importance of respect and how it ties into the Islamic faith. I then introduced the Arabic alphabet, demonstrating the correct pronunciation of each letter and explaining its significance in Islamic culture. The students then practiced writing the letters on their worksheets, and I provided individual feedback to each student. Next, I used counting blocks and number charts to teach the concept of numbers and counting. The students practiced writing numbers on their worksheets, and I provided guidance and support where necessary. Throughout the lesson, I asked the students questions about respecting elders, such as "What are some ways to show respect to elders in the Islamic culture?" and "Why is it important to respect

practice writing numbers on their worksheets. Throughout the lesson, I asked students questions related to the family unit, such as "Who is in your family?" and "What are the names of your family members? They were supposed to answer the questions in Arabic. To close the lesson, we recited some prayers, and including the Dua. I was impressed with the student's engagement and enthusiasm during the lesson. They were actively participating and seemed to be enjoying while learning.

elders?". The learners were actively engaged and enthusiastically participated in the lesson, demonstrating their eagerness to learn and grow in the Islamic faith.

Day 3: Group activity time 25 minutes, during 25-minute group activity session, the class included six corners for the children, including the Library, Discovery, House and Kitchen, Art, Reading Story, and Construction corners. As a teacher, I reminded the students of the classroom rules before starting the activity, which were students were asked to line in the queue students selecting the corner activity they like, not scream, if any child want to move to different corner activity, he had to ask the teacher permission. Once everyone had chosen their corner, the students dove into their activities. In the Library corner, some students spent their time reading books and exploring new stories. Meanwhile, in the Discovery corner, other students were experimenting with different science kits and exploring the world of nature. The House and Kitchen corner was a hit with some students who enjoyed playing with kitchen toys and pretending to cook. In the Art corner, some students spent time painting and drawing, while in the Reading Story corner, others listened to stories read aloud by their peers. Finally, some students-built structures using blocks and other building materials in the construction corner. Seeing the students engage in various activities and express their creativity differently was wonderful. As time passed, I observed some students change corners to try a different activity. It was great to see them exploring different areas and discovering new interests. The activity was a success; the students seemed to have much fun while learning and developing new skills.

students had a fun 25-minute session of group activities. Six corners were set up for the kids to choose from, including the Library, Exploration, Home and Kitchen, Art, Reading Story, and Construction corners. Before we began the activity, as a teacher, I requested the kids to form a line and reminded them of the classroom rules, which were that students would line up in a queue and choose the corner activity they liked, not scream, and if any child wanted to switch corners, they had to ask their teacher for permission. After everyone had selected an area, the pupils began participating in various activities. While others worked on puzzles, several pupils browsed new books on the library's site. Students engaged with different science kits while learning about their surroundings in the Discovery area. Some pupils loved the Home and Kitchen section, where they could play with kitchen gadgets and create imaginary meals like pasta and beef stew. Several pupils painted and drew in the art area, while others sculpted objects out of clay. While others made constructions out of blocks and other building supplies in the construction area, others read aloud stories to each other in the reading story corner. Seeing the youngsters having fun and being involved in their studies was beautiful. Seeing some youngsters move corners to try various activities throughout the session was excellent. It demonstrated their openness to learning new things and their curiosity. Seeing the youngsters learning and having fun simultaneously during the group exercise was amazing, which was a huge success.

Day 4: A circle-centre 23 minutes: The circle-centre activity focusing on Prophet Mohammed's family and teaching Arabic letters and numeric was a successful and engaging lesson for the students. I began by greeting the students and asking them about their morning, which helped to create a positive and welcoming atmosphere. Students were also asked about their absences and attendance. The lesson then focused on the Prophet Mohammed's family, and the teacher asked the students what they knew about his family's history. Some of the students talked about the name of Prophet Mohammed's daughters and sons. The session was interactive, and one of the learners was asked to explain what they knew about the Prophet Mohammed's family. The learner said the Prophet's mother, Amina, died when he was six.

During the 25-minute circle centre, I had the opportunity to guide my students through a lesson on the importance of the family unit in Islamic society and culture. We began our usual morning routine by greeting each student and asking them about their morning. I then asked the daily question, which focused on the role of God and the Prophet in our lives. To introduce the activity, I used visual aids such as family trees and pictures to help students identify and understand the different members of a family. We had an engaging discussion about the different roles of family members and how they support and care for one another. The lesson also incorporated language and numeracy skills as I taught the students the Arabic alphabet and numbers. Students were given worksheets to practice writing

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The students were eager to participate, learn, and share their knowledge and understanding of the subject. I then recapped the previous concept known as Arabic letters and numbers. The circle-centre activity focusing on Prophet Mohammed's family and teaching Arabic letters and numeric was a successful lesson.   I created a positive and engaging atmosphere, and the students actively participated in the discussion. Introducing Arabic letters and numeric was a unique and exciting experience for the students, and they could use what they learned in different activities. The successful lesson helped create a classroom culture of learning and curiosity.

Day 5: The class thoroughly enjoyed their free play outside of the play period. Bicycles, balls, basketballs, slides, swings, a sand pit with tools, and other outdoor playthings were available to them. The goal of each of these exercises was to assist the kids in developing their gross motor, social, and motor abilities in an age-appropriate manner. I noticed the children collaborating, sharing, taking turns, and utilizing their imaginations to develop new games and scenarios as they explored the many outdoor playgrounds. While others swung back and forth on the swings or went up and down the slides, other kids rode bicycles around the playground. While some kids constructed sandcastles in the sand pit, others played basketball with their friends. Seeing how each child engaged in different activities was terrific and showed their unique strengths and interests. Some children were very active and enjoyed running and jumping, while others preferred quieter activities like building sandcastles. It was also great to see how the children helped each other and worked together to create new games and activities. The unstructured outdoor play session was a great success, and the children had a lot of fun while developing their physical and social skills.

Day 6: I began the 25-minute circle activity by greeting the students and knowing how they were. I then introduced the lesson on human growth stages. In teaching this lesson on human growth stages in the context of the family unit, my goal was to help students understand the different stages of human development and how they relate to family life. To achieve this goal, I used a variety of teaching strategies, including direct instruction, visual aids, and class discussions. To begin the lesson, I introduced the topic of human growth stages and asked students to share what they already knew about the subject. Then, I provided an overview of the stages of human development, starting with infancy and progressing through childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. For each stage of development, I discussed the physical, cognitive, and social changes that occur and how these changes relate to family roles and responsibilities. For example, I explained

letters and numbers, and I provided feedback on their progress. Throughout the activity, I asked students questions related to the family unit, such as "Who is in your family?" and "What are the names of your family members?" Learners were to answer in Arabic so that I could see if they had understood. I was thrilled to see the students' engagement and enthusiasm during the lesson. They actively participated in the discussions and seemed to enjoy themselves while learning about the family unit, Arabic letters, and numbers. It was a successful activity that achieved its learning objectives while creating a positive and engaging learning environment.

Play time: the kids enjoyed exploring the various outdoor playgrounds during our unstructured outdoor play session. There were many age-appropriate things to do, like swings, slides, bicycles, balls, basketballs, and a sand pit with tools. The goal of each of these exercises was to help the kids improve their gross motor, social, and motor skills. I watched the kids play as they practised balance, climbing, and throwing. While some kids used the basketball hoops with their buddies, others used the sand pit's tools to make various shapes and designs. While some kids explored the many types of swings, others pedalled bicycles around the playground. The kids' openness to trying new things and taking chances was one of the things that caught my attention throughout this exercise. Some kids pushed themselves to improve as I watched them ride their bikes faster or climb higher. Watching the kids cooperate, take turns, and share the various tools and supplies was beautiful. The unstructured outdoor play session was a terrific success, as the kids learned and honed new skills while having a great time. There was a variety of outdoor free-play materials such as bicycles, balls, basketballs, slides, swings, a sand pit with tools, etc. All the activities were age-appropriate and designed to develop children's motor, gross and social skills.

The mealtime exercise aimed to instruct students about Islamic eating customs and table manners. As a teacher, I think it is crucial to teach kids these behaviours because it instils in them a sense of thankfulness and respect for the food they have. Also, it instils positive ideals that kids will carry with them throughout their lives. I explained to the children the idea of Islamic eating customs before we started the activity. I stressed to them the value of washing their hands before eating, eating with the right hand, reciting the Du'a before each meal, eating carefully, and refraining from conversing at the table. The pupils listened carefully, showed interest in the discussion, and appeared to comprehend the importance of each behaviour. The kids were reminded to uphold the practices taught to them throughout the meal. They ate leisurely, recited Du'a before each meal, and utilised their right hand. The pupils also showed good table manners by not

how infants and young children rely on their parents for care and protection while teenagers begin to develop their own identities and independence. I used visual aids, such as pictures to help students visualize the different stages of development and how they relate to family life. We discussed how different family members, such as parents and grandparents, play different roles at each stage of development. Finally, I concluded the lesson by summarising the main points we covered and encouraging students to reflect on how they can apply what they have learned to their families and lives.

Day 7: During mealtime, the students were reminded of the importance of table manners and Islamic eating habits learned in the previous mealtime activities. As a teacher, I believe that teaching children table manners is essential as it shows them how to behave appropriately during mealtime, a life skill they will use throughout their lives. Moreover, teaching Islamic eating habits is important as it reminds the students that eating is a blessing from Allah and that they should be grateful for their food. To begin the activity, I explained to the students the importance of washing their hands before eating, using the right hand to eat, saying Du'a before each meal, eating slowly, not talking loudly at the table, and not talking while eating. I provided a brief explanation for each habit, and the students seemed to understand the reasoning behind each habit. The students were then allowed to put their knowledge into practice. I observed that the students were trying to follow the Islamic eating habits taught to them. They were using their right hand to eat, saying Du'a before each meal, and eating slowly. Furthermore, the students were not talking loudly or while eating and exhibiting good table manners. The activity taught the students the importance of table manners and Islamic eating habits. I believe that the students will use these habits in their daily lives, and it will help them to become better individuals in the future.

Day 8: I created a stimulating environment during group activity time that encouraged the children to explore and learn. I reminded them of the classroom rules instructed them to line up in a queue, and then asked each child to choose a corner to sit in. The children could move to another corner, encouraging them to explore and learn from different areas. In the Art corner, the children could express their creativity through painting and drawing, while in the Discovery corner, they could learn about science and nature. The Reading Story corner was a favourite among many children who enjoyed reading and listening to stories. The House and Kitchen corner allowed the children to play and pretend to cook and clean, while the Construction corner was perfect for those who loved building and constructing. As the teacher, I

conversing aloud or while eating. After the dinner, we discussed the value of the taught habits, and I encouraged the kids to consider their feelings about the meal. The pupils expressed appreciation for the meal they received and their pleasure in eating politely. The activity taught the students the importance of table manners and Islamic eating habits. It was an excellent opportunity to teach the students about good values and morals, which they will use in their daily lives.

I began a 25-minute class by greeting the students and checking their progress. After this, I introduced the topic of human growth stages and how they relate to family life. My main objective was to help students understand the stages of human development and their relevance to family roles and responsibilities. I used various teaching techniques to achieve this goal, including visual aids, and class discussions. I started the lesson by asking students to share their knowledge of human growth stages. I then provided an overview of the various stages of human development, starting from infancy and progressing through childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. For each stage of development, I discussed the physical, cognitive, and social changes that occur and how these changes are related to family roles and responsibilities. For example, I explained how infants and young children depend on their parents for care and protection while teenagers begin to develop their own identities and independence. To enhance the student's understanding of the different stages of development and their relevance to family life, I used visual aids such as pictures and diagrams. We discussed how different family members, such as parents and grandparents, play different roles at each stage of development. Finally, I summarised the lesson's main points and encouraged students to reflect on how they can apply what they have learned to their own families and lives.

I developed a set during the group activity time where kids were encouraged to explore and learn via play. The many corners, such as the ones for the house, kitchen, and library, gave the kids chances to learn through practical application. Children could examine books and discover new subjects in the library corner. Children may learn about domestic chores like cooking and cleaning in the house and kitchen corner, where they could also practice essential life skills. Children could express their creativity in the art area while creating and constructing in the construction corner. As the teacher, I saw how much the kids were learning while having fun, which was a fantastic result of the group activity period. The kids were interested and inquiring, which made for a fun and instructive

was delighted to see how engaged and excited the children were throughout the activity. They were able to learn and have fun simultaneously, which is a testament to the effectiveness of this group activity time. Overall, it was a great experience, and I look forward to incorporating more activities that will encourage the children to explore and learn.

Day 9: It was a wonderful experience to facilitate the 25-minute outdoor play session, which allowed the children to engage in various physical activities while enjoying the fresh air and sunshine. The children were excited to explore the different areas of the playground, such as the climbing wall, the monkey bars, and the obstacle course. Seeing the children challenge themselves to overcome their fears and achieve their goals while developing their gross motor skills and coordination was inspiring. The sensory table was also a hit, as the children enjoyed playing with different textures, such as sand, water, and mud. The children had a lot of fun, and it was evident that they were happy, engaged, and stimulated throughout the activity.

Day 10: The 25-minute mealtime exercise, based on the Saudi Arabian curriculum and Islamic beliefs, provided a crucial chance to educate kids about the need to eat a balanced diet that includes fruits and water. I began the activity following the curriculum's instructions by washing my hands and reciting the Bismillah. The need to consume various food types, such as fruits and vegetables, for a healthy diet, was then covered. I discussed the advantages of drinking water for excellent health and well-being and eating fruits, which supply essential vitamins and minerals. I prompted the kids to talk about how consuming fruits and water has made them feel more energetic and healthier. I also talked about how to eat tidily and courteously according to Islamic custom. The lesson and exercise were successful, and the kids shared lunch while discussing significant lessons from the Saudi Arabian curriculum and Islamic principles.

Day 11: To begin the 25-minute circle-center time, I introduced the concept of food and its meaning. We discussed how food is essential for our survival and how it provides us with the energy we need to carry out our daily activities. We talked about the different foods available to us, such as fruits, vegetables, grains, and proteins, and how each type of food serves a unique purpose in our bodies. Next, we explored the importance of food to our bodies. We discussed how food provides us with essential nutrients, such as carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, and minerals, which help to build and repair our tissues, strengthen our immune system, and maintain our overall health. We also discussed the different consequences of not eating enough food, such as malnutrition, weakness, and illness. I

experience. As appropriate, I offered direction and encouragement, allowing the kids to understand many subjects better. The group activity period was successful, giving the kids an extraordinary chance to learn via play.

The 25-minute outdoor play session was an excellent opportunity for the children to connect with nature and develop their physical, social, and emotional skills. The children had a chance to explore the different outdoor spaces, such as the nature trail, the garden, and the open field. They enjoyed running, jumping, and playing games, which helped them to improve their endurance and balance. It was heart-warming to see the children collaborate and cooperate in their activities, whether building a fort, playing a game of tag, or picking flowers. The session also allowed the children to practice mindfulness and relaxation as they participated in a guided meditation and deep breathing exercise. Overall, the outdoor play session was a fantastic way for the children to learn, grow, and have fun in a natural and stimulating environment.

The 25-minute mealtime activity was based on the Saudi Arabia curriculum and Islamic teachings. It provided an excellent opportunity to teach children the importance of eating a balanced diet, including fruits and drinking water. Following the curriculum guidelines, I started the activity by emphasising the significance of washing hands before eating and reciting the Bismillah before starting the meal. I then discussed the importance of eating a balanced diet with fruits, vegetables, and other food groups. I discussed the benefits of eating fruits and drinking water for good health and wellbeing. The children were encouraged to share their experiences of eating fruits and drinking water and how it makes them feel. I also discussed the etiquette of eating cleanly and respectfully. The activity was a success; the children actively participated in the discussion and enjoyed the meal together.

Conducting the 25-minute outdoor play session was indeed a delightful experience, as the children could participate in a diverse range of physical activities while enjoying the benefits of fresh air and sunshine. The playground was a hub of excitement, with the children eagerly exploring different areas such as the climbing wall, monkey bars, and obstacle course. Witnessing the children push themselves beyond their comfort zones. Accomplishing their objectives was a joyous experience, and it was heartening to see them develop their gross motor skills and coordination. One of the session's highlights was the sensory table, an instant hit among the children. They experimented with various textures like sand, water, and mud. Their fascination with the sensory table demonstrated the importance of providing children

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used visual aids, such as pictures to help the students visualize the concepts we discussed. I also incorporated interactive activities, such as a food group sorting game, to engage the students and reinforce their understanding of the importance of eating a balanced diet. At the end of the lesson, I asked the students to reflect on what they had learned and how they could apply it to their lives. We discussed the importance of making healthy food choices and developing good eating habits, such as eating regularly and incorporating various food groups into our diets.

with hands-on learning opportunities that stimulate their senses and encourage them to engage with the world around them. The children's enthusiasm was palpable throughout the activity, as they were fully immersed in their play and relished the opportunity to engage in physical activity. It was evident that the outdoor play session positively impacted their well-being, as they were happy, engaged, and stimulated throughout the activity. The outdoor play session was a resounding success, and it was enriching to see the children enjoying themselves and making the most of the playground. It was a pleasure to facilitate the session, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have contributed to the children's growth and development.

Day 12: Circle-centre time 25 minutes: I began by greeting students and asking them about their morning, followed by the daily question, such as who God is and who is our prophet, each morning, students said some prayers as part of their morning routine. They were also asked about their absences and attendance. I focused on teaching the importance of milk and dairy products as a part of the food unit. My goal for this lesson was to help students understand how milk and dairy products contribute to our overall health and well-being. To begin the lesson, I started by introducing the topic of dairy products and asking students what they knew about them. Then, I explained the importance of milk and dairy products for our bodies, highlighting that they are rich in calcium, protein, and vitamins. Next, I brought up the Islamic perspective on milk and dairy products, discussing how they are mentioned in the Quran and Hadith as beneficial for our health and recommended for consumption. I used a variety of teaching strategies, such as visual aids, class discussions, and group activities. To make the lesson more engaging, I showed pictures of different types of dairy products and asked students to identify them and talk about their benefits. I also led a class discussion on how milk and dairy products can be incorporated into our daily diet. I encouraged students to reflect on how to incorporate more milk and dairy products into their diets and share this knowledge with their families and friends.

In the 25-minute circle-centre time, the lesson was about milk and dairy products. At the beginning of each morning, I greeted students and asked them about their morning, followed by daily questions, such as who God is and who our prophet is. Students also said prayers as part of their routine. They were also asked about their absences and attendance. The aim of this lesson was to teach the students about the importance of these products for our overall health and well-being. The students were asked what they knew about milk and dairy products. Then, I explained the nutrients in milk and dairy products, such as calcium, protein, and vitamins, and their role in maintaining health. In addition to the health benefits, I discussed the Islamic perspective on milk and dairy products. I talked about how they are recommended for consumption in the Quran and Hadith and are associated with purity and prophetic traditions. I used various teaching strategies to make the lesson more interactive, such as visual aids, class discussions, and group activities. I showed pictures of different types of dairy products and asked the students to identify them and talk about their benefits. I also led a class discussion on incorporating milk and dairy products into our daily diets and emphasised the importance of moderation and balance in our food choices. Throughout the lesson, I encouraged the students to reflect on how they can incorporate more milk and dairy products into their diets and how to make healthy choices that align with our Islamic values. I also encouraged them to share their newfound knowledge with their families and friends. Different teaching strategies made the lesson engaging and interactive, allowing the students to retain the information more effectively

Day 13: The students could select which corner they wanted to work in during the 25-minute group activity period and transfer between corners if desired. The students felt in Control of and ownership over their learning experience. Some pupils were observed reading books in the library area while others were conducting their studies. House and Kitchen corner was a hit with students

During the 25-minute circle time lesson on the importance of getting enough sleep following Islamic teaching, I aimed to help students understand the significance of sleep for their physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. To start the lesson, I began by asking students about their sleeping habits and how much sleep they usually get at night. Then, I explained the importance of sleep in the Islamic

who enjoyed role-playing and pretending to cook and clean. Some students were seen preparing imaginary meals, such as pasta, while others set the table or cleaned the pretend kitchen. In the Art corner, students expressed their creativity through drawing, painting, and sculpting. They drew different pictures, such as flowers. Some students worked on individual projects, while others collaborated on a group art piece. In the Reading Story corner, students were seen reading books and sharing their favourite stories. Some students practiced their reading skills, while others listened to stories being read aloud. In the Construction corner, students-built structures and experimented with different materials. Some students constructed towers, while others used blocks to create complex designs. I moved about the room, watching the pupils' participation and development. I helped and advised the students when necessary but mainly let them be in charge of their learning experience. I was impressed by the children's concentration, passion, and level of engagement in each of the many corners throughout the session. The lesson was successful, and the pupil's showed initiative and ingenuity. The freedom to select their learning environment encouraged a sense of agency and accountability in them that will be useful as they develop and learn more.

tradition, drawing on references from the Quran and Hadith that highlight the value of sleep and its positive impact on our lives. To make the lesson engaging and interactive, I used a variety of teaching strategies, such as direct instruction, visual aids, and class discussions. I used pictures to illustrate the different stages of sleep and their effects on our bodies and minds. We discussed the importance of following a consistent sleep routine and the benefits of avoiding electronic devices before bedtime. In addition, we talked about how sleep is connected to our spiritual health and how it can affect our ability to perform our daily religious duties. I emphasised the importance of getting enough sleep and maintaining a healthy sleep routine. I encouraged students to reflect on their sleeping habits and make positive changes. The lesson on the importance of getting enough sleep was a valuable opportunity to help students understand the benefits of sleep for their physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

Day 14: Per the Saudi Arabian Curriculum and Islamic teachings, 25-minute mealtime is essential to a learner's day. It is a time to nourish the body and practice etiquettes and manners that follow Islamic teachings. During mealtime, learners should exhibit good behaviour and manners while learning about the importance of healthy eating. As a teacher, I created a positive and respectful environment during mealtime. I encouraged learners to sit together, share food, and engage in conversation while emphasizing the importance of the blessings of food and the significance of saying Bismillah before eating. I also encouraged the learners to take turns serving the food and helping those needing assistance. During mealtime, learners also learned about healthy eating habits, including the importance of eating a balanced diet and limiting the intake of sugary and processed foods. I also used this time to teach them about food waste reduction and the significance of sharing food with those in need. The mealtime allowed learners to learn and practice Islamic manners and etiquette, develop social skills, and learn about healthy eating habits. I created a positive and respectful environment during mealtime, incorporating Islamic teachings and healthy eating habits into the learning process.

As an educator, I created a welcoming and polite atmosphere at mealtimes so that students could converse, share meals, and exhibit Islamic etiquette. I emphasised the value of good eating habits while encouraging pupils to say Bismillah before eating and to take turns serving food throughout meals. I instructed them to reduce their consumption of processed and sugary foods and to the advantages of a balanced diet. I also spoke on the significance of sharing food with those in need and reducing food waste. In addition to teaching and practicing Islamic manners and etiquette, mealtime allowed students to practice social skills and learn about good eating practices. I taught them the virtues of respect, kindness, and compassion, central to Islamic teachings, by cultivating a good and respectful environment. Mealtime is an integral part of a student's day, and it is my duty as an instructor to see to it that it is used to encourage Islamic values and healthy eating habits. I can support learners in developing critical abilities and values that will benefit them inside and beyond the classroom by providing a positive and courteous environment during meals.

Day 15: During the outdoor playground session, the children could choose their preferred activities. They eagerly participated in games promoting their social, motor, and gross skills. The sand pit was a hit among the children as they used different tools to build creative structures and worked collaboratively to

The children were free to choose their preferred activities during 25-minute outdoor playtime, and they eagerly participated in various games that improved their social, physical, and cognitive abilities. The kids enjoyed playing in the sandpit as they utilized various tools to build imaginative

construct larger ones. The slides and swings challenged the children's balance and gross motor skills as they attempted new and exciting tricks while learning to take turns and communicate effectively with their peers. Playing basketball on the court was another exciting activity that helped children develop hand-eye coordination and teamwork skills. I encouraged them to support and motivate each other, instilling a sense of community and cooperation. As the children played, I closely monitored their progress and offered guidance whenever necessary, ensuring they remained safe while having fun. The session's objectives, which were to provide a secure and stimulating environment for the children to explore and develop their skills, were achieved. The children were enthusiastic, engaged, and exhibited high levels of creativity, demonstrating the activity's success. Overall, the outdoor playground session was a fun and educational experience for the children, providing a platform to develop their social, motor, and gross skills.

buildings and cooperated to build more complicated ones. The slides and swings tested the kids'balance and gross motor abilities as they tried novel and thrilling techniques while mastering the art of sharing and cooperating with their peers. Another entertaining activity that helped children improve their coordination and collaboration abilities was playing football on the field. I pushed them to encourage and uplift one another, creating a sense of community and teamwork. I kept a careful eye on the kids'development while they played and offered assistance as needed to ensure they stayed safe while having fun. The session's objectives were to provide a safe and exciting setting for the kids to explore and develop their skills. The activity's success was attested to by the children's enthusiasm, engagement, and high levels of inventiveness.