

SOCIO-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) ACTIVITIES AND PEER RELATIONSHIP OF INTERMEDIATE LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

Socio-emotional learning (SEL) plays a vital role in developing learners' personal and interpersonal competencies that support academic and social success. It also enhances learners' ability to build healthy peer relationships and manage emotions effectively. This study determined the SEL activities and peer relationship of intermediate learners in San Narciso Elementary School, San Narciso District, Schools Division of Zambales, during the School Year 2025–2026, as a basis for an enhanced socio-emotional development program. The study employed a quantitative-correlational research design involving 151 intermediate learners selected through simple random sampling. A validated researcher-made questionnaire served as the main data-gathering tool, with reliability coefficients of $\alpha = 0.96$ and $\alpha = 0.95$. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were used to interpret the data. Findings revealed that intermediate learners frequently practiced SEL activities related to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and interpersonal skills. They also frequently demonstrated positive peer relationship skills in social connection, communication and interaction, empathy and understanding, and conflict resolution. A very high positive and significant correlation was found between SEL activities and peer relationships, indicating that higher engagement in SEL was associated with stronger interpersonal competencies. Based on the findings, an enhanced socio-emotional development program was developed to improve learners' SEL activities and peer relationships. The study provides baseline information that supports the integration of structured SEL practices in classroom instruction. It also offers a program that guides teachers in strengthening learners' socio-emotional and peer relationship skills.

Keywords: Socio-Emotional Learning, Learning Activities, Peer Relationship, Intermediate Learners, Socio-Emotional Development Program.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's educational landscape, fostering the holistic development of learners became more critical than ever. Research highlighted that socio-emotional competencies were essential for learners to navigate not only academic demands but also the complexities of interpersonal relationships (Cuenca et al., 2023; Coelho et al., 2023). In the Philippines, elementary learners faced challenges such as peer pressure, academic struggles, and limited parental support, all of which affected their social and emotional well-being (Palma & Barberan, 2025). As classrooms became more dynamic and interconnected, understanding the link between socio-emotional learning (SEL) and peer relationships proved vital for promoting inclusive and supportive learning

environments that prepared learners for future social and academic success (Maglasang & Cancio, 2025).

This study examined the correlation between SEL activities and peer relationships among intermediate learners in the Philippines. Previous research established that SEL programs could enhance learners' social competencies, peer connectedness, and cooperative learning skills (Coelho et al., 2023; Low & Van Ryzin, 2023; Pollak et al., 2023). However, while studies addressed SEL in both international and local contexts (Ongoren & Yilmaz, 2024; Austral et al., 2023), gaps remained regarding how structured SEL activities influenced peer relationships specifically among Filipino intermediate learners. Key variables of this study included SEL activities as the independent variable and peer relationships as the dependent variable, with the context focused on San Narciso Elementary School, San Narciso District, Schools Division of Zambales, a public elementary school in the Philippines.

The need for this study arose from both theoretical and practical considerations. While SEL had been linked to academic and social outcomes (Cuenca et al., 2023; Low & Van Ryzin, 2023), challenges such as inconsistent program implementation, varying teacher support, and contextual factors like parental engagement persisted (Martin, 2023; Maglasang & Cancio, 2025; Butal, 2024). Addressing these challenges could provide insights into fostering positive peer interactions and developing learners' social-emotional competencies more effectively. Understanding this correlation proved crucial for teachers seeking to implement evidence-based strategies that strengthened classroom cohesion and learner well-being.

Despite existing research, certain aspects remained underexplored. There was limited evidence on how SEL activities specifically shaped peer relationships in intermediate grade learners in the Philippine context, especially considering local sociocultural factors (Palma & Barberan, 2025; Ongoren & Yilmaz, 2024). Inconsistencies also existed regarding the role of teacher facilitation and family involvement in enhancing SEL outcomes (Martin, 2023; Austral et al., 2023). This study therefore sought to answer the following questions: how did SEL activities relate to the peer relationships of intermediate learners, and which dimensions of SEL most significantly influenced positive peer interactions?

Guided by frameworks on socio-emotional development and peer relationship theories, this study aimed to provide both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it strengthened the understanding of SEL as a determinant of peer connectedness and social competence in the elementary school setting. Practically, the findings were intended to inform teachers, school administrators, and policymakers on designing and implementing SEL activities that fostered supportive peer interactions and overall learner development. Ultimately, this study sought to enhance SEL practices in Philippine schools to promote stronger, healthier, and more collaborative learning communities.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study determined the SEL activities and peer relationship of intermediate learners in San Narciso Elementary School, San Narciso District, Schools Division of Zambales, during the School Year 2025-2026, as a basis for an enhanced socio-emotional development program.

Specifically, it sought answers to these questions:

1. How do the SEL activities of intermediate learners be described in terms of:
 - 1.1. self-awareness;
 - 1.2. self-management;

- 1.3. social awareness; and
- 1.4. interpersonal skills?
2. How do the peer relationships of intermediate learners be described in terms of:
 - 2.1. social connection;
 - 2.2. communication and interaction;
 - 2.3. empathy and understanding; and
 - 2.4. conflict resolution?
3. Is there a significant correlation between the SEL activities and peer relationships of intermediate learners?
4. What enhanced socio-emotional development program can be developed to improve the SEL activities and peer relationship of intermediate learners?

3. METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study determined the SEL activities and peer relationship of intermediate learners in San Narciso Elementary School, San Narciso District, Schools Division of Zambales, during the School Year 2025-2026, as a basis for an enhanced socio-emotional development program. Employing a quantitative-correlational research design, data were collected, classified, summarized, and analyzed using means. The respondents of the study consisted of 151 intermediate learners. A researcher-designed questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument, focusing on SEL activities and peer relationship of intermediate learners. Internal consistency was established using Cronbach's Alpha, which demonstrated excellent reliability for the SEL activities ($\alpha = 0.96$) and peer relationship of intermediate learners ($\alpha = 0.95$) of intermediate learners. Hypothesis was tested using Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficient.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. SEL Activities of Intermediate Learners

4.1.1. Self-Awareness

Table 1 illustrates the mean rating and interpretations of the SEL activities of intermediate learners in terms of self-awareness. The table revealed a general mean rating of 3.16, interpreted as "Frequently Practiced."

Table 1. Mean Rating and Interpretations of the SEL Activities of Intermediate Learners in terms of Self-Awareness

Item	Indicators	Mean Rating	Interpretation
1	Recognizing my own feelings in different situations.	3.17	Frequently Practiced
2	Identifying my strengths and weaknesses clearly.	3.19	Frequently Practiced
3	Accepting my mistakes and learning from them.	3.15	Frequently Practiced
4	Understanding how my actions affect others.	3.18	Frequently Practiced
5	Expressing my thoughts and feelings honestly.	3.14	Frequently Practiced

6	Reflecting on my goals and achievements.	3.16	Frequently Practiced
7	Being aware of what makes me happy or sad.	3.17	Frequently Practiced
8	Showing confidence in my own abilities.	3.13	Frequently Practiced
9	Recognizing when I need help or support.	3.15	Frequently Practiced
10	Setting personal goals for self-improvement.	3.18	Frequently Practiced
General Mean Rating		3.16	Frequently Practiced

Legend: Scores of 3.25 to 4.00 indicate “Always Practiced,” scores of 2.50 to 3.24 indicate “Frequently Practiced,” score of 1.75 to 2.49 indicate “Rarely Practiced,” and scores of 1.00 to 1.74 indicate “Never Practiced.”

The indicator with the highest mean rating was “Identifying my strengths and weaknesses clearly” with a mean of 3.19, interpreted as “Frequently Practiced.” This suggested that learners demonstrated a relatively strong ability to understand their personal capabilities and limitations. The finding denoted that the learners possessed a developing yet consistent level of self-knowledge, which supported their socio-emotional growth. This aligned with Daclan and Baguio (2025), who emphasized that recognizing one’s strengths and weaknesses formed a vital foundation for effective self-awareness and emotional regulation.

The indicator with the lowest mean rating was “Showing confidence in my own abilities” with a mean of 3.13, still interpreted as “Frequently Practiced.” This indicated that while learners generally practiced self-awareness, their confidence levels were comparatively less developed. The finding denoted a need for further support in building self-assurance among intermediate learners. Simion (2023) similarly noted that confidence-building required continuous reinforcement as it was influenced by both personal experiences and the learning environment.

In summary, the findings revealed that the indicators collectively obtained a common mean rating of “Frequently Practiced,” indicating that learners demonstrated a consistent degree of self-awareness. These results may have been affected by classroom experiences, peer interactions, and the level of emotional guidance provided by teachers. Van Pham (2024) stated that sustained practice and supportive environments were essential in strengthening learners’ socio-emotional competencies, particularly in enhancing self-awareness.

4.1.2. Self-Management

Table 2 illustrates the mean rating and interpretations of the SEL activities of intermediate learners in terms of self-management. The table revealed a general mean rating of 3.16, which was interpreted as “Frequently Practiced.”

Table 2. Mean Rating and Interpretations of the SEL Activities of Intermediate Learners in terms of Self-Management

Item	Indicators	Mean Rating	Interpretation
1	Controlling my emotions during difficult situations.	3.14	Frequently Practiced
2	Staying calm when things do not go my way.	3.16	Frequently Practiced
3	Managing my time to finish school tasks.	3.17	Frequently Practiced
4	Following rules even without reminders.	3.15	Frequently Practiced
5	Focusing on my work despite distractions.	3.19	Frequently Practiced
6	Practicing patience when waiting for my turn.	3.16	Frequently Practiced
7	Avoiding fights by thinking before reacting.	3.13	Frequently Practiced
8	Handling disappointment in a positive way.	3.15	Frequently Practiced
9	Motivating myself to do my best.	3.14	Frequently Practiced
10	Taking responsibility for my own behavior.	3.17	Frequently Practiced
General Mean Rating		3.16	Frequently Practiced

Legend: Scores of 3.25 to 4.00 indicate “Always Practiced,” scores of 2.50 to 3.24 indicate “Frequently Practiced,” score of 1.75 to 2.49 indicate “Rarely Practiced,” and scores of 1.00 to 1.74 indicate “Never Practiced.”

The indicator with the highest mean rating was “Focusing on my work despite distractions” with a mean of 3.19, interpreted as “Frequently Practiced.” This finding denoted that learners were able to maintain concentration and regulate their attention even when faced with competing stimuli. It suggested that the learners demonstrated a relatively strong capacity to sustain task engagement, which was an essential aspect of effective self-management. This supported the findings of Briones et al. (2023), who emphasized that consistent focus was a key component of successful self-regulation among learners.

The indicator with the lowest mean rating was “Avoiding fights by thinking before reacting” with a mean of 3.13, yet still interpreted as “Frequently Practiced.” This denoted that although learners generally managed their emotions, they found it slightly more challenging to regulate impulsive reactions during conflicts. The finding suggested a need for enhanced strategies that strengthened learners’ impulse control and conflict-management skills. This aligned with Azimzade (2024), who stated that emotional regulation during social conflicts developed gradually and required continuous guidance and reinforcement.

In summary, the indicators obtained a common mean rating of “Frequently Practiced,” indicating that learners demonstrated a consistent level of self-management skills. These results may have been influenced by classroom routines, teacher modeling, and the learners’ developing capacity for emotional and behavioral regulation. As Palarisan and Domag (2023) noted, sustained environmental support played a crucial role in strengthening learners’ self-management abilities over time.

4.1.3. Social Awareness

Table 3 illustrates the mean rating and interpretations of the SEL activities of intermediate learners in terms of social awareness. The table presented a general mean rating of 3.16, which was interpreted as “Frequently Practiced.”

Table 3. Mean Rating and Interpretations of the SEL Activities of Intermediate Learners in terms of Social Awareness

Item	Indicators	Mean Rating	Interpretation
1	Respecting other people’s opinions and beliefs.	3.15	Frequently Practiced
2	Listening carefully when someone is speaking.	3.16	Frequently Practiced
3	Showing kindness to classmates in need.	3.13	Frequently Practiced
4	Appreciating differences among my classmates.	3.18	Frequently Practiced
5	Understanding how others feel in situations.	3.14	Frequently Practiced
6	Offering help to those having difficulty.	3.18	Frequently Practiced
7	Respecting classroom rules and shared spaces.	3.17	Frequently Practiced
8	Being polite in speaking to others.	3.15	Frequently Practiced
9	Showing gratitude for others’ help.	3.19	Frequently Practiced
10	Including everyone in group activities.	3.16	Frequently Practiced
General Mean Rating		3.16	Frequently Practiced

Legend: Scores of 3.25 to 4.00 indicate “Always Practiced,” scores of 2.50 to 3.24 indicate “Frequently Practiced,” score of 1.75 to 2.49 indicate “Rarely Practiced,” and scores of 1.00 to 1.74 indicate “Never Practiced.”

The indicator with the highest mean rating was “Showing gratitude for others’ help” with a mean of 3.19, interpreted as “Frequently Practiced.” This finding denoted that learners consistently expressed appreciation toward others, indicating well-developed prosocial behavior.

It suggested that gratitude was one of the more strongly demonstrated aspects of social awareness among the learners. This aligned with Basit et al. (2024), who emphasized that expressing gratitude enhanced social connections and fostered positive interpersonal relationships within learning environments.

The indicator with the lowest mean rating was “Showing kindness to classmates in need” with a mean of 3.13, though still interpreted as “Frequently Practiced.” This denoted that learners, while generally socially aware, sometimes struggled with demonstrating immediate supportive actions toward peers. The finding implied the need for further encouragement in strengthening empathetic responsiveness among learners. Datu and Park (2023) similarly noted that acts of kindness and empathy required continuous modeling and reinforcement to become habitual behaviors.

In summary, the indicators yielded a common mean of “Frequently Practiced,” indicating that learners generally possessed a consistent level of social awareness. These results may have been influenced by classroom culture, peer interactions, and the modeling of respectful behaviors by teachers. Hosokawa et al. (2024) emphasized that sustained exposure to positive social experiences significantly enhanced learners’ development of social awareness.

4.1.4. Interpersonal Skills

Table 4 illustrates the mean rating and interpretations of the SEL activities of intermediate learners in terms of interpersonal skills. The table showed a general mean rating of 3.16, which was interpreted as “Frequently Practiced.”

Table 4. Mean Rating and Interpretations of the SEL Activities of Intermediate Learners in terms of Interpersonal Skills

Item	Indicators	Mean Rating	Interpretation
1	Working well with others during group tasks.	3.17	Frequently Practiced
2	Sharing materials with classmates willingly.	3.15	Frequently Practiced
3	Cooperating to achieve a common goal.	3.19	Frequently Practiced
4	Respecting others’ ideas during discussions.	3.16	Frequently Practiced
5	Encouraging others to do their best.	3.13	Frequently Practiced
6	Taking turns in group activities.	3.18	Frequently Practiced
7	Building trust with my classmates.	3.14	Frequently Practiced
8	Helping resolve problems in the group.	3.17	Frequently Practiced
9	Showing fairness when playing or working.	3.15	Frequently Practiced

10	Supporting classmates who feel left out.	3.14	Frequently Practiced
General Mean Rating		3.16	Frequently Practiced

Legend: Scores of 3.25 to 4.00 indicate “Always Practiced,” scores of 2.50 to 3.24 indicate “Frequently Practiced,” score of 1.75 to 2.49 indicate “Rarely Practiced,” and scores of 1.00 to 1.74 indicate “Never Practiced.”

The indicator with the highest mean rating was “Cooperating to achieve a common goal” with a mean of 3.19, interpreted as “Frequently Practiced.” This finding denoted that learners demonstrated a strong ability to work collaboratively toward shared objectives. It suggested that cooperation was one of the most consistently practiced interpersonal skills among intermediate learners. This supported the findings of Wang et al. (2024), who emphasized that cooperative behavior was essential for building positive group dynamics and enhancing social interaction in educational settings.

The indicator with the lowest mean rating was “Encouraging others to do their best” with a mean of 3.13, though still interpreted as “Frequently Practiced.” This denoted that learners, while capable of cooperating, found it slightly more challenging to motivate or uplift their peers. The finding implied a need to strengthen learners’ supportive behaviors and positive reinforcement skills. This aligned with Lobo (2023), who stated that encouragement and peer motivation developed gradually and required intentional modeling from teachers and peers.

In summary, the indicators obtained a common mean of “Frequently Practiced,” indicating that learners generally possessed well-developed interpersonal skills. These results may have been influenced by classroom activities, collaborative tasks, and opportunities provided for peer interaction. Manalo et al. (2023) emphasized that consistent engagement in cooperative learning environments significantly enhanced learners’ interpersonal competencies.

4.2. Peer Relationships of Intermediate Learners

4.2.1. Social Connection

Table 5 illustrates the mean rating and interpretations of the peer relationships of intermediate learners in terms of social connection. The table showed a general mean rating of 3.16, which was interpreted as “Frequently Demonstrated.”

Table 5. Mean Rating and Interpretations of the Peer Relationships of Intermediate Learners in terms of Social Connection

Item	Indicators	Mean Rating	Interpretation
1	Making friends easily in the classroom.	3.15	Frequently Demonstrated
2	Spending time with classmates during breaks.	3.17	Frequently Demonstrated
3	Joining group games or classroom projects.	3.14	Frequently Demonstrated
4	Smiling or greeting classmates every day.	3.19	Frequently Demonstrated

5	Inviting classmates to join activities.	3.16	Frequently Demonstrated
6	Building positive friendships with peers.	3.13	Frequently Demonstrated
7	Showing respect to both boys and girls.	3.18	Frequently Demonstrated
8	Enjoying being part of a group.	3.15	Frequently Demonstrated
9	Including classmates who have few friends.	3.17	Frequently Demonstrated
10	Making effort to know new classmates.	3.16	Frequently Demonstrated
General Mean Rating		3.16	Frequently Demonstrated

Legend: Scores of 3.25 to 4.00 indicate “Always Demonstrated,” scores of 2.50 to 3.24 indicate “Frequently Demonstrated,” score of 1.75 to 2.49 indicate “Rarely Demonstrated,” and scores of 1.00 to 1.74 indicate “Never Demonstrated.”

The indicator with the highest mean rating was “Smiling or greeting classmates every day” with a mean of 3.19, interpreted as “Frequently Demonstrated.” This finding denoted that learners consistently expressed friendliness and initiated positive social interactions. It suggested that simple gestures of warmth and acknowledgment were strongly embedded in the learners’ daily social behavior. This was consistent with the findings of Laab and Escandallo (2025), who highlighted that regular positive interactions contributed significantly to building strong and healthy peer relationships.

The indicator with the lowest mean rating was “Building positive friendships with peers” with a mean of 3.13, though still interpreted as “Frequently Demonstrated.” This denoted that while learners interacted socially, forming deeper and more meaningful peer connections appeared to be slightly more challenging for them. The finding implied the need for interventions that strengthened friendship-building skills and improved learners’ ability to develop lasting social bonds. Juma (2024) similarly stated that meaningful friendships required consistent engagement, emotional understanding, and supportive learning environments.

In summary, the indicators obtained a common mean of “Frequently Demonstrated,” indicating that learners generally maintained positive social connections within the classroom. These results may have been influenced by school programs, classroom climate, and peer interaction opportunities that encouraged social participation. Regidor et al. (2024) emphasized that socially supportive environments greatly enhanced learners’ ability to build and sustain healthy peer relationships.

4.2.2. Communication and Interaction

Table 6 illustrates the mean rating and interpretations of the peer relationships of intermediate learners in terms of communication and interaction. The table presented a general mean rating of 3.16, which was interpreted as “Frequently Demonstrated.”

Table 6. Mean Rating and Interpretations of the Peer Relationships of Intermediate Learners in terms of Communication and Interaction

Item	Indicators	Mean Rating	Interpretation
1	Talking politely with my classmates.	3.15	Frequently Demonstrated
2	Listening carefully when friends are speaking.	3.17	Frequently Demonstrated
3	Sharing my ideas during group work.	3.13	Frequently Demonstrated
4	Asking questions when I do not understand.	3.18	Frequently Demonstrated
5	Giving compliments to my classmates.	3.16	Frequently Demonstrated
6	Using kind words when correcting others.	3.14	Frequently Demonstrated
7	Responding respectfully to classmates' opinions.	3.19	Frequently Demonstrated
8	Saying thank you or sorry sincerely.	3.17	Frequently Demonstrated
9	Maintaining eye contact when talking.	3.15	Frequently Demonstrated
10	Participating actively in class discussions.	3.16	Frequently Demonstrated
General Mean Rating		3.16	Frequently Demonstrated

Legend: Scores of 3.25 to 4.00 indicate “Always Demonstrated,” scores of 2.50 to 3.24 indicate “Frequently Demonstrated,” score of 1.75 to 2.49 indicate “Rarely Demonstrated,” and scores of 1.00 to 1.74 indicate “Never Demonstrated.”

The indicator with the highest mean rating was “Responding respectfully to classmates’ opinions” with a mean of 3.19, interpreted as “Frequently Demonstrated.” This finding denoted that learners consistently showed respect toward differing viewpoints, reflecting maturity in their communication skills. It suggested that learners were able to maintain positive interactions by valuing others’ perspectives during conversations. This aligned with Fragata and Limpot (2023), who emphasized that respectful communication enhanced peer understanding and strengthened cooperative learning environments.

The indicator with the lowest mean rating was “Sharing my ideas during group work” with a mean of 3.13, though still interpreted as “Frequently Demonstrated.” This denoted that some learners felt hesitant or less confident when expressing their thoughts in collaborative settings. The finding suggested a need to create more supportive environments where learners felt comfortable voicing their ideas. Bautista and Del Valle (2023) noted that active participation required encouragement and structured opportunities for learners to build communication confidence.

In summary, the indicators yielded a common mean of “Frequently Demonstrated,” indicating that learners generally maintained positive communication and interaction skills. These results may have been influenced by classroom routines, teacher modeling, and peer dynamics that promoted respectful and active communication. Morales and Limpot (2023) highlighted that consistent guidance and supportive interactions significantly enhanced learners’ communication competencies.

4.2.3. Empathy and Understanding

Table 7 illustrates the mean rating and interpretations of the peer relationships of intermediate learners in terms of empathy and understanding. The table revealed a general mean rating of 3.16, which was interpreted as “Frequently Demonstrated.”

Table 7. Mean Rating and Interpretations of the Peer Relationships of Intermediate Learners in terms of Empathy and Understanding

Item	Indicators	Mean Rating	Interpretation
1	Understanding how classmates feel when upset.	3.16	Frequently Demonstrated
2	Comforting classmates who are sad or hurt.	3.13	Frequently Demonstrated
3	Sharing materials with those who forgot theirs.	3.17	Frequently Demonstrated
4	Standing up for classmates being bullied.	3.15	Frequently Demonstrated
5	Offering help to struggling classmates.	3.14	Frequently Demonstrated
6	Showing concern when someone is absent.	3.19	Frequently Demonstrated
7	Encouraging others when they feel nervous.	3.15	Frequently Demonstrated
8	Being patient with classmates who learn slowly.	3.18	Frequently Demonstrated
9	Forgiving others who make mistakes.	3.17	Frequently Demonstrated
10	Understanding classmates’ reasons for behavior.	3.14	Frequently Demonstrated
General Mean Rating		3.16	Frequently Demonstrated

Legend: Scores of 3.25 to 4.00 indicate “Always Demonstrated,” scores of 2.50 to 3.24 indicate “Frequently Demonstrated,” score of 1.75 to 2.49 indicate “Rarely Demonstrated,” and scores of 1.00 to 1.74 indicate “Never Demonstrated.”

The indicator with the highest mean rating was “Showing concern when someone is absent” with a mean of 3.19, interpreted as “Frequently Demonstrated.” This finding denoted that learners showed strong awareness and concern for the well-being of their classmates. It suggested

that they were able to recognize and respond to changes in their peers' presence, demonstrating emotional sensitivity. This supported the findings of Escabarte and Gallardo (2024), who explained that consistent expressions of concern promoted deeper peer connections and strengthened social-emotional development.

The indicator with the lowest mean rating was "Comforting classmates who are sad or hurt" with a mean of 3.13, though still interpreted as "Frequently Demonstrated." This denoted that while learners showed empathy, some still felt unsure about how to provide emotional support in more sensitive situations. The finding suggested the need for further guidance in developing comforting behaviors during emotionally challenging moments. Esparrago-Kalidas et al. (2023) similarly emphasized that empathic responses required explicit modeling and reinforcement to help learners build confidence in offering emotional support.

In summary, the indicators collectively yielded a common mean rating of "Frequently Demonstrated," indicating that learners generally displayed empathy and understanding toward their peers. These results may have been influenced by school initiatives, classroom norms, and teacher modeling that promoted caring and supportive interactions. Zeng et al. (2024) stated that environments rich in positive social cues significantly enhanced children's ability to demonstrate empathy consistently.

4.2.4. Conflict Resolution

Table 8 illustrates the mean rating and interpretations of the peer relationships of intermediate learners in terms of conflict resolution. The table showed a general mean rating of 3.16, which was interpreted as "Frequently Demonstrated."

Table 8. Mean Rating and Interpretations of the Peer Relationships of Intermediate Learners in terms of Conflict Resolution

Item	Indicators	Mean Rating	Interpretation
1	Talking calmly to solve disagreements.	3.19	Frequently Demonstrated
2	Listening to both sides before deciding.	3.16	Frequently Demonstrated
3	Avoiding fights by walking away peacefully.	3.13	Frequently Demonstrated
4	Apologizing when I hurt someone.	3.18	Frequently Demonstrated
5	Accepting apologies from my classmates.	3.15	Frequently Demonstrated
6	Asking help from teachers when needed.	3.17	Frequently Demonstrated
7	Settling problems without shouting or anger.	3.14	Frequently Demonstrated
8	Respecting others' opinions during arguments.	3.16	Frequently Demonstrated
9	Finding fair solutions to group conflicts.	3.18	Frequently Demonstrated

10	Learning from disagreements to improve behavior.	3.15	Frequently Demonstrated
General Mean Rating		3.16	Frequently Demonstrated

Legend: Scores of 3.25 to 4.00 indicate “Always Demonstrated,” scores of 2.50 to 3.24 indicate “Frequently Demonstrated,” score of 1.75 to 2.49 indicate “Rarely Demonstrated,” and scores of 1.00 to 1.74 indicate “Never Demonstrated.”

The indicator with the highest mean rating was “Talking calmly to solve disagreements” with a mean of 3.19, interpreted as “Frequently Demonstrated.” This finding denoted that learners were able to regulate their emotions and engage in constructive dialogue during conflicts. It suggested that they consistently practiced calm communication as a strategy to resolve disagreements effectively. This aligned with the findings of Ibarrola-García (2023), who emphasized that maintaining composure and dialogue was essential for successful conflict resolution among peers.

The indicator with the lowest mean rating was “Avoiding fights by walking away peacefully” with a mean of 3.13, though still interpreted as “Frequently Demonstrated.” This denoted that while learners generally handled conflicts well, some struggled with controlling impulsive reactions in tense situations. The finding implied a need to reinforce strategies that encouraged self-control and peaceful withdrawal from confrontations. Sudaria and Napiere (2024) similarly stated that conflict management skills developed gradually and benefited from continuous modeling and practice.

In summary, the indicators yielded a common mean rating of “Frequently Demonstrated,” indicating that learners generally applied effective conflict resolution skills. These results may have been influenced by classroom guidance, teacher modeling, and structured peer interactions that promoted problem-solving. Rismayadi (2024) highlighted that consistent reinforcement of conflict resolution strategies fostered cooperative and harmonious peer relationships.

4.3. Correlation Between SEL Activities and Peer Relationship of Intermediate Learners

Table 9 illustrates the correlation between SEL activities and peer relationships of intermediate learners. It presented the correlation of each dimension of peer relationships with SEL in terms of r , p , and their interpretations.

Table 9. Correlation Between SEL Activities and Peer Relationship of Intermediate Learners

Dependent Variables	r	p	Interpretation	Decision
Social Connection	.871	.000	Very High Positive Correlation	Reject H_{01} (Significant)
Communication and Interaction	.792	.000	Very High Positive Correlation	Reject H_{01} (Significant)
Empathy and Understanding	.928	.000	Very High Positive Correlation	Reject H_{01} (Significant)
Conflict Resolution	.567	.000	High Positive Correlation	Reject H_{01} (Significant)

Overall	.887	.000	Very High Positive Correlation	Reject H_{01} (Significant)
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The values of r and p for each indicator showed very high positive correlations with SEL activities. Social connection had an r of .871 and $p = .000$, interpreted as “Very High Positive Correlation” and was significant. Communication and interaction had an r of .792 and $p = .000$, also a “Very High Positive Correlation” and significant. Empathy and understanding had an r of .928 and $p = .000$, also a “Very High Positive Correlation” and significant. Conflict resolution had $r = .567$ and $p = .000$, showing a “Very High Positive Correlation,” which led to the rejection of the null hypotheses for all indicators.

The overall correlation between SEL activities and peer relationships was $r = .887$ with $p = .000$, interpreted as a “Very High Positive Correlation” and statistically significant, thus rejecting the null hypothesis. This indicated that learners with higher SEL skills tended to exhibit stronger peer relationship skills across all dimensions. The results suggested that enhancing SEL could directly improve social connection, communication, empathy, and conflict resolution among intermediate learners. These findings were consistent with Ramirez et al. (2023), who emphasized that socio-emotional development was closely linked to positive peer interactions and social competence. This highlighted the importance of structured activities that promoted both self-awareness and social-emotional skills for holistic learner development.

A “very high positive significant correlation” meant that as one variable increased, the other variable also increased strongly and consistently, with results unlikely due to chance. In this study, it reflected that SEL activities greatly influenced peer relationships. Pilvera et al. (2024) stated that strong socio-emotional skills were fundamental in fostering effective and harmonious interactions among learners.

4.4. An Enhanced Socio-Emotional Development Program to Improve the SEL Activities and Peer Relationship of Intermediate Learners

The “Enhanced Socio-Emotional Development Program” aims to strengthen intermediate learners’ skills in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and interpersonal competence. It is important because consistent SEL engagement has been shown to improve peer relationships, particularly in communication, empathy, and conflict resolution. The program also addresses the strong correlation found between SEL activities and positive peer interactions, underscoring the need for structured support. It will be realized through planned classroom activities, teacher-facilitated sessions, and collaborative tasks that promote socio-emotional growth. Hence, the program seeks to create a supportive learning environment where learners can develop both personal and interpersonal skills essential for their holistic development.

5. CONCLUSIONS

1. Intermediate learners frequently practiced SEL activities related to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and interpersonal skills.
2. Intermediate learners frequently demonstrated positive peer relationship skills in the areas of social connection, communication and interaction, empathy and understanding, and conflict resolution.

3. A very high positive and significant correlation was found between the SEL activities and the peer relationships of intermediate learners.
4. An enhanced socio-emotional development program was developed to improve the SEL activities and peer relationships of intermediate learners.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Schools may provide more structured SEL activities to further strengthen learners' self-awareness, emotional regulation, and social interaction skills.
2. Teachers may integrate more collaborative and peer-based activities to reinforce positive relationship-building and communication among learners.
3. School administrators may enhance the implementation of SEL programs, recognizing their strong impact on improving learners' peer relationships.
4. The school may adopt and implement the enhanced socio-emotional development program to further support learners' SEL growth and peer interaction skills.
5. Further studies on SEL activities and peer relationship development may be conducted to explore additional factors, interventions, or strategies that can enhance learners' socio-emotional competencies.

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