

TO DESIGN A FRAMEWORK FOR ENHANCING SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCIES OF TEACHERS

A Thesis

**Submitted In Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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DECLARATION

I, **Jasleen Kaur** hereby declare that the thesis entitled, **"TO DESIGN A FRAMEWORK FOR ENHANCING SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCIES OF TEACHERS"** submitted to Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology (Deemed to be University), Patiala, in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in Management**, is a record of the original work carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Anupam Sharma, Assistant Professor, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology. I also declare that this thesis, or any other part of it has not been submitted before for the award of any degree, diploma, title or recognition.

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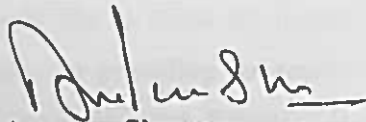
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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the thesis entitled, **"TO DESIGN A FRAMEWORK FOR ENHANCING SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCIES OF TEACHERS"** which is being submitted by Ms. Jasleen Kaur in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management, Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology (Deemed to be University), Patiala is a record of candidate's own work, carried out by her under supervision and guidance. The matter embodied in this thesis has not been submitted in part or full to any other University or Institute for award of any degree.



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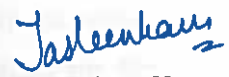
One of the joys of completion is to look over the past journey and remember and thank everyone who has in some way or the other motivated and guided me to achieve my goals.

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ABSTRACT

For the past decade, researchers and educationalists have called for the need to focus on the social-emotional aspects of teachers' professional development and student holistic development. Recent research has concluded that the preschool years are a crucial developmental period wherein the development of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is an important milestone for students. Regular exposure to SEL in classroom learning enhances social-emotional-cognitive skills, teacher-student relationships, and reduces impulsiveness in students. Preschool teachers are considered the engine that powers SEL practices in preschools. Therefore, teachers' SEL understanding is essential, especially in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) profession. Understanding SEL can help teachers recognize and manage their emotions and create and practice positive emotions to stimulate SEL in themselves and their students. The current study was done in 2 phases. In phase 1 of the research, the study examined the preschool teachers' understanding of SEL pre and post-training. The study evaluated the effectiveness of 12-hour (4 sessions) teachers' training on their understanding of SEL. The training module was developed to explain the concept of the competencies of SEL, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making as defined by CASEL. The study was based on the data collected from 100 teachers teaching in 19 preschools located in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India. The data was analyzed using paired sample t-test in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results suggested that training intervention was very useful for improving teachers' understanding of SEL. In phase 2 of the research, the study proposed and validated the SEL framework, titled "The ECCE Happiness Framework," designed to improve the emotional competence of preschool students. The designed framework constituted three happiness practices, including social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness. The study examined the impact of the SEL framework on the emotional competence of 486 students studying in the 19 preschools in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India. Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used for analyses and based on teachers' observations, the results were measured. The findings suggested that the framework has improved students' emotional competence. The study's findings direct the academicians and preschools in Punjab and India as a whole to develop and implement teaching philosophies, curriculums, and training interventions that focus on promoting teachers' SEL understanding and students' emotional competence.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Form
AIR	American Institute of Research
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CARE	Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education
CASEL	Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
CFA	Confirmatory factor analysis
CMB	Common Method Bias
CR	Composite Reliability
CTEE	Casual Talk in the context of emotional experience
DEO	District Education Officer
EC	Emotional competence
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
HTMT	Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
ISELF	Indian Social & Emotional Learning Framework
M	Mindfulness
NAESP	National Association of Elementary School Principals
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Square- Structural Equation Modelling
SAOQ	Self-Awareness Outcome Questionnaire
SC	Sharing and Caring
SCERT	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SE	Social Engagement
SEC	Social-emotional competence
SEL	Social Emotional Learning
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the research problem. The introduction is outlined in Section 1.1, including background and overview of the concept of Social-Emotional Learning and its importance in the lives of teachers and students. Sections 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6 cover the concept of Early Childhood Care and Education, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), and five competencies of SEL, the importance of preschool teachers' understanding of SEL, the impact of school-based SEL intervention on students, and importance of emotional competence for preschool students. Section 1.7 presents the rationale and objectives of the study. The organization of the thesis is presented in section 1.8.

1.1 Background of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Childhood is a critical developmental stage that serves as the basis for holistic development and psychological well-being (UNICEF, 2018). Numerous studies have found that the preschool years are a critical developmental stage in the lives of preschool students, wherein the development of SEL is a grave milestone (Denham et al., 2014). SEL is linked to students' academic-social-emotional-motor skills development, happiness, and school readiness (Oberle et al., 2014). According to Jones et al. (2017), SEL is "the process by which children and adults learn and apply a set of social, emotional, behavioral, and character skills required to succeed in school, workplace, relationships, and citizenship." Under the supervision of teachers, schools provide a platform for children to build eloquent social relationships, cultivate self-potential, and improve their SEL competencies (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Jones et al., 2013; López-Pérez & Fernández-Castilla, 2018). As a result, it is vital to develop SEL interventions and a framework for increasing students' emotional competence.

Taylor et al. (2017) state that preschool teachers play a significant role in a child's SEL and development. Preschool teachers are the engine that drives SEL interventions and practices in preschools and classrooms (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Given the pivotal role that teachers assume in shaping the SEL capacities of students from an early age, it becomes imperative to scrutinize their comprehension of these competencies to enhance instructional efficiency (Jones et al.,

2013; López-Pérez & Fernández-Castilla, 2018). SEL and understanding its competencies are critical for teachers, particularly in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) field. This knowledge is required to overcome the social and emotional challenges inherent in their profession (such as online teaching, low salaries, and limited opportunities for self and professional development), which result in high work-related pressures, poor mental health, and emotional exhaustion (Jones et al., 2017; McMullen et al., 2020; Thorpe et al., 2020). Preschool teachers' roles are complex and multifaceted, necessitating a commitment to continuous development, resilience, and emotional competence to address diverse challenges (Irvine et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2018; Beltman et al., 2020).

According to a recent study, socially and emotionally competent teachers play a crucial role in developing teacher-student solid connections in preschools (Jennings et al., 2017). Moreover, teachers who recognize their social-emotional well-being may successfully employ SEL strategies in their classrooms, thereby helping students enhance their SEL skills. Thus, understanding SEL is critical to teachers' occupational well-being and students' emotional competence development (Aldrup et al., 2020). Much research has been conducted to promote knowledge and understanding of SEL among teachers and students in advanced nations such as the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Hong Kong (Yoder, 2014). Nevertheless, in the context of India, scant research has been undertaken until recently to evaluate the comprehension of SEL competencies among preschool teachers, with the aim of advancing students' emotional competence. Thus, there is a need to examine the teachers' understanding of SEL vis-à-vis training intervention and to examine the impact of SEL intervention on students' emotional competence.

1.2 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

Education is the balanced growth of all parts of an individual, such as intellectual, socio-emotional, physical, linguistic, moral, imaginative thinking, and aesthetic, by giving the appropriate experiences and surroundings to bring out a child's intrinsic potential. As a result, providing an outstanding education not only develops the individual but also contributes to the country's overall well-being. Education is the most effective instrument for developing human resources. Recognizing the value of education, the government of India and several private colleges are providing formal education at various levels. It is stratified into levels because children have varied capacities to grasp particular things at distinct ages, and hence, learning

programs are designed to build particular abilities. In India, there are three levels of formal education: primary or elementary education catering to children aged 6 to 14, secondary education catering to teenagers aged 14 to 17, and higher education from graduation and above, also known as tertiary or third-level education (Khamrang, 2014). The essential foundational stage, outside this recognized system, is the Preprimary or Preschool stage, which serves the requirements of children aged 2.5 to 6/7 years. Preschool education denotes the informal learning experiences or educational activities offered to a child before formal schooling, intending to bring optimum development in all areas, such as language, socio-emotional, physical, and cognitive development through play-way methods, songs, story-telling, and drawing. Since learning experiences are offered to children during their early infancy, this stage is also known as ECCE (Khamrang, 2014).

ECCE includes programmes and services for children from infancy to six. It meets the requirements of all children in order to promote holistic development, including physical, motor, linguistic, cognitive, socio-emotional, creative, and aesthetic appreciation, as well as health and nutrition. This ECCE is also recognized by other names, such as Preschool, Kindergarten, Nursery, Montessori, Balwadi, Preprimary, Pre-basic, and Anganwadi. The variations in titles and functions stem from the distinct philosophical perspectives of notable teachers who have played a substantial role in formulating educational programmes. ECCE addressed developmental goals for every phase of the spectrum, such as early attention, care, and communication for children under the age of three, developmentally suitable preschool education for children aged three to six, and a more organized and scheduled school readiness element for children aged five to six. As this phase serves as a preparatory period, Preschool education facilitates a seamless transition for the child into primary school. ECCE encompasses child care in crèches, nutritional and health care at ICDS, and learning experiences in Montessori, Kindergarten, Nursery, and other public or private classroom settings. It is seen as the most critical time when rapid growth and the foundations for continuous lifetime learning and comprehensive human development start building.

1.3 Social-Emotional Learning and Five Competencies of Social-Emotional Learning

For the past decade, an increasing number of researchers and educators have called for the need to focus on the social and emotional aspects of students' development beyond academic mastery. According to Durlak et al. (2011), fostering the social and emotional well-being of in-

experienced and young people is broadly elucidated as SEL. SEL is "the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (CASEL, 2018).

SEL is an important determinant of their development, enabling them to achieve more constructive outcomes in school, work, and life. Therefore, there is a growing momentum among educators, policymakers, scholars, and administrators globally to elevate their focus on enhancing the SEL of students. As elaborated by Brackett et al. (2012), in order to improvise and shape students' social and emotional development, which is the fulcrum of holistic development, "teachers themselves need the social and emotional skills required to communicate with students and to handle stressful situations that can occur in the classroom." Henceforth, teachers and students must enhance their understanding about SEL competencies to enrich their social and emotional competence.

SEL in a preschool child refers to the way a child thinks of himself and others, the way he feels about his peers and of himself, and the way he experiences, regulates, and expresses his emotions and forms close and secure interpersonal relationships with people around him, all in the context of family, community, and culture.

The field of SEL emerged around 25 years ago with the publication of Goleman's work on Emotional Intelligence (1995), and Gardner's work on Multiple Intelligences (1993), forming a substantial body of theory, research, and practice that prompted practitioners to adopt SEL programs for pre-K-12 students in and out of schools. In 1994, Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) was founded as an international non-profit organization to establish evidence-based SEL as an essential part of preschool through to high school education. According to Elias et al. (1997), a core group of scholars at CASEL in 1997 presented a list of 39 guidelines published as "Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators" that informed four educational practices for supporting educators in implementing SEL. CASEL (2018) advocated its goals to advance the science of SEL, expand effective SEL practice, and improve federal and state policies that support the implementation of SEL programming.

The framework delineated by CASEL identified five core competencies for SEL, namely: a) self-awareness, b) self-management, c) social awareness, d) relationship management, and e)

responsible decision-making. These are essential for impacting the social, emotional, and academic behavior of students of prek-12 classes.

Competencies of SEL

To manage cognitive, social, and emotional behavior, educators need skills like social-emotional competencies. The CASEL has identified five core competencies of SEL that impact a child's behavior, as depicted in the figure 1.3.1 below:



Figure 1.3.1: Core Competencies of SEL as defined by CASEL (2018)

1.4 Importance of Preschool Teachers' Understanding about Social-Emotional Learning

It is deep-rooted that teachers' SEL is crucial for their effective working in the school- including their use of effective classroom management techniques, provision of student learning support, and creation of supportive learning settings for students (Kunter et al., 2013; McLean & Connor, 2015; Shen et al., 2015). However, there is a rising awareness that preschool teachers encounter challenging working conditions, which result in substantial amounts of workplace stress, emotional weariness, and employee turnover (McMullen et al., 2020). They frequently encounter negative emotions and battle maintaining positive connections with students who

violate rules, are boisterous, disrupt guidance, and are disengaged or inattentive (Aldrup et al., 2018). In addition to meeting the escalating demands and expectations inherent in their roles, preschool teachers encounter multiple obstacles, such as managing young and hyperactive students, prolonged hours of work, inadequate wages, a lack of status and recognition from society, and few possibilities for professional growth or career advancement. Teachers' feelings of rage or anxiousness, high levels of emotional fatigue, and inability to effectively engage with and connect with students are linked to their lower professional well-being in the long run (Collie, 2017).

Furthermore, emotionally exhausted teachers are less responsive and offer less emotional assistance in their interactions with students, resulting in diminished motivation and success among school students. As a result, preschool teachers' SEL is critical to successfully overcoming the social and emotional obstacles associated with their work and developing effective teacher-student connections (Eadie et al., 2021). Educationists have recently begun acknowledging the importance of teachers' social-emotional well-being (Jennings & Frank, 2015). Studies have reported the importance of developing teachers' understanding of SEL. Understanding SEL can help preschool teachers recognize and manage their emotions, create and practice positive emotions (such as joy and enthusiasm), and stimulate SEL in themselves and their students (Jennings, 2011). It can enhance their self-awareness by realistically understanding their proficiencies and identifying emotional strengths and weaknesses (Elias, 2009). Furthermore, social-emotional understanding can impact teachers' social awareness and relationship management. SEL knowledge can help teachers both in their personal and professional development.

Even previous researchers have concluded that teachers with a strong understanding of SEL can develop healthy relations with students, which positively impacts students' academic performance, achievements, social functioning, emotional competence, and school engagement (Murray & Zvoch, 2011; Spilt et al., 2011). Socially and emotionally competent preschool teachers can help students build positive interactions with their peers, display positive behaviors, recognize and label the emotion, learn with happiness, and manage conflicting behaviors starting from the early years (Gest & Rodkin, 2011). This strong teacher-student relationship can result in the child's successful adjustment and positive school outcomes (Baker et al., 2008). Therefore, to develop students' social-emotional competence, it is essential to understand SEL initially amongst teachers to teach more effectively. This understanding is

needed because SEL can improve teachers' emotional expressiveness while interacting with preschool children and colleagues and build supportive relationships through mutual understanding and cooperation (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). SEL in teachers can support them in making responsible decisions, exhibiting prosocial behavior, and managing their responses even when emotionally provoked by challenging circumstances (Goddard et al., 2004). Thus, SEL in preschool teachers is essential for promoting self-development, portraying positive attitudes toward teaching, improving relationships within and outside preschool, and promoting a supportive and caring classroom environment for preschool students (Weissberg et al., 2015; Domitrovich et al., 2016).

1.5 Impact of School-based SEL Intervention on Students

Schools are the platform for promoting SEL, as a child spends a significant portion of his time in school. Teaching SEL competencies in primary and secondary classes is beneficial because, in that stage of school life, a child has a minimal adulterated mind and can learn social, emotional, and behavioral values with the sincerest emotions and thoughtful acceptance. Also, previous research has revealed a link between well-implemented SEL programming in schools and positive social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes (Cantor et al., 2021). The research found that the incorporation of SEL in schools improved the academic performance, social-emotional skills, attitudes towards self and others, positive social behaviors, and reduced conduct problems and emotional distress of students who participated in the SEL program, in contrast to those who did not participate in the program (Durlak et al., 2011). Thus, it is suggested that SEL competencies help increase students' participation in the learning experience, which helps in enhancing students' capacity to learn. A study elaborated that SEL focuses on creating a safe and supportive learning environment that fosters safety, a supportive academic, disciplinary, and physical environment, and respectful, trusting, and caring relationships throughout the school community (Yoder, 2014).

Regular exposure to SEL competencies in classroom learning enhances social skills, teacher-student relationships, and academic performance, reducing students' impulsiveness (Zhai et al., 2015). SEL taught and nurtured in schools help students intensify their ability to assimilate thinking, emotions, and behavior in ways that result in positive school and life outcomes (Jones & Doolittle, 2017). The school-based SEL intervention has helped in students' positive social and emotional development in the long term. The SEL practices have promoted a positive

school climate, and relationships supported positive behavior, and used elective courses and extracurricular activities to improve student's behavior and attendance in the classroom by making classrooms' culture and climate more inclusive, more profound, and better (Taylor et al., 2017; Allbright et al., 2019). Dyson et al. (2016), and Cantor et al. (2021) explained the necessity for a SEL program to create a learning environment to meet the developmental aspirations of students, including feelings of belonging, empathy, safety, respect, and community. Henceforth, to achieve the broader educational agenda, school-based SEL programming needs to meet two standards: (1) boost the SEL of students across the curriculum, and (2) enhance the quality of the class environment in which academic, social, and emotional learning takes place (Zigler & Bishop-Josef, 2006). Nevertheless, studies have shown the need to implement SEL programs in today's teaching for better understanding, building teacher-student relationships, and fostering emotional stability in student behavior (Gunter et al., 2012; Zhai et al., 2015).

School-based interventions to foster social-emotional competence in preschool students have demonstrated improved sensory-motor skills, enhanced attention and concentration levels, better emotional expressiveness, an optimistic perspective of themselves and others, positive social behaviors, better relationships with peers, and reduction in conduct issues, and the emotional misery among them (Ashabi, 2000; Colwell & Hart, 2006; Durlak et al., 2011; Zhai et al., 2015). It has been reported that preschool students who lack socio-emotional competence have a high expectancy of facing transition issues during preschool years, poor relationships with peers, poor academic or developmental performance, and experiencing various social and behavioral issues and physical and mental health problems (Denham, 2006; Bornstein et al., 2010). Therefore, an increasing number of researchers and educators have called for an urgent focus on the social and emotional aspects of student development beyond academic mastery in the hope of preventing severe psychopathological challenges in the future that children might encounter in grade school (Bornstein et al., 2010).

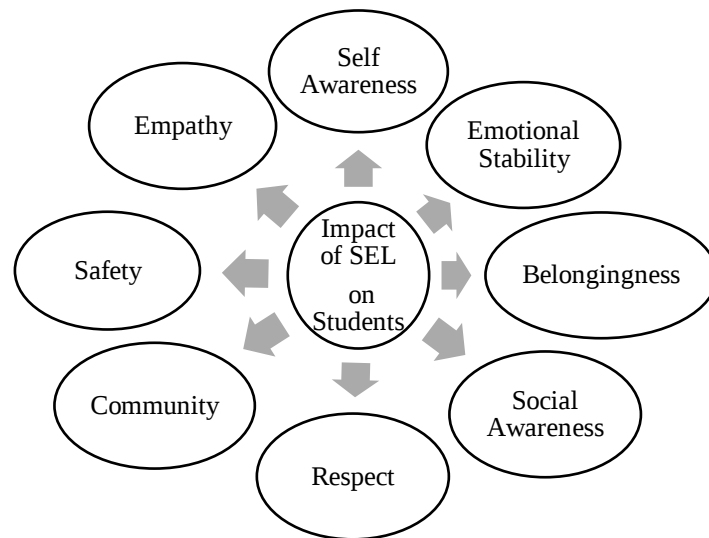


Figure 1.5.1: Impact of SEL on Students.

1.6 Importance of Emotional Competence for Preschool Students

Emotional competence is critical to a child's capacity to communicate and form constructive relationships with others (Parke, 1994). Emotional competence is an important developmental milestone for preschool students because it fosters positive developmental pathways in the personal, interpersonal, and intellectual realms, leading to improved academic and social-emotional competence development later in life (Adela et al., 2011). Emotional competence in preschool students refers to developing essential competencies that contribute to effective social interactions and shape a student's behavior, including the capacity to comprehend, control, express, and interpret emotions (Havighurst et al., 2004).

Personal and social development undergo rapid progress during early infancy, transitioning the infant from a state of detachment to an integrated member of society. The child who used to be self-absorbed and enjoyed playing solo now prefers to play with another child and eventually progresses to team play for a limited time. He stays more active and speaks more efficiently, subsequently, his opportunities for social involvement multiply. As the size of the team grows, so does the complexity of interactions among preschool students, for instance self-perception, discontent, aggression, self-awareness, management, empathy, partnership, friendship, and so on. Individual differences are noticed as an outcome of various contextual circumstances, including a drive to become self-sufficient and gender consciousness in perceiving the numerous appropriate sex-role stereotypes. Eventually, playing patterns differ, ranging from

simultaneous play (two students playing together) to interactive play (a bunch of students playing along), collaborative play (a team of students collaborating towards a common goal), and even socio-dramatic engagement. However, due to the lack of a secure and enjoyable environment, behavioral issues such as aggression, repression, insecurity, nervousness, and impulsiveness may occur.

Since preschool students lack an understanding of socially appropriate behavior, they have recurrent emotional outbursts during the preschool era. SEL intervention can assist students in learning to control intense emotional responses such as punching, throwing items, biting when angry, and hiding when terrified. Student's emotions are transitory, intense, and temporary, with varied intensities and expression methods that change with time and society. Prominent emotions at this phase include attachment, love, rage, fear, jealousy, aggression, concern, and joy. Excessive rage, introversion, bedwetting, and withdrawal from the public are all common symptoms of emotional problems. On the other hand, emotions are a crucial component of a person's existence, and when properly regulated, they help in the regular functioning of a student's life. As a result, preschool student's emotional competence development is crucial.

To foster confidence, social-emotional-psychological well-being, and successful learning in preschool students, a secure and happy environment is provided. In this environment, students experience a sense of belongingness, happiness, affection, value, reassurance, and acceptance. The SEL interventions in preschool can teach students strategies to recognize, label, manage, and regulate their emotions effectively via play, verbal communication, arts and crafts, dance, and music to improve their emotional competence.

1.7 Problem Statement

The study is conducted in two phases. In phase one of the study, the researchers examine the existing comprehension of SEL among preschool teachers in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India and compare changes in SEL understanding post-12-hours (4 sessions) training intervention. In phase two of the study, the researchers designed the SEL framework, titled "The ECCE Happiness Framework," for making students emotionally competent based on reviewed literature and the needs of the students. Then, finally, the researchers examined the impact of the SEL framework on the emotional competence of preschool students.

1.7.1 Research Objectives

The objectives of the current study are as follows:

O1: To examine the teachers' understanding about Social Emotional Learning pre and post-training.

O2: To examine the impact of Social Emotional Learning on student's emotional competence.

O3: To design a framework for teachers to make students emotionally competent.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The study's key takeaway revolves around examining the preschool teachers' understanding of SEL competencies pre and post-training and designing and implementing an SEL happiness framework for preschool students to make them emotionally competent. While extensive research has been conducted on making students more competitive by building their intelligence quotient, there is a notable scarcity of SEL studies in Punjab, India. Previous studies show that preschool teachers' training for promoting SEL understanding in Punjab, India, has not been clearly stated. Most research on SEL has been undertaken in developed nations for framing modules, training interventions, and frameworks for students and teachers, so, in India, there is much scope for research in the areas of SEL. While the importance of early years is appreciated, it has been witnessed that most of the ECCE frameworks are not developmentally appropriate for this age group of 3 to 6 years, and no such relevant SEL framework for preschool students has been implemented in the state of Punjab in India for promoting their emotional competence. This calls for designing and implementing a framework that promotes the emotional competence of preschool students. There is a pressing need to foster preschool teachers' understanding of SEL competencies to improve students' emotional competence.

1.8.1 Definition of Key Terms

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): SEL is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

Self-Awareness: Self-awareness refers to the ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions, feelings, interests, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior.

Self-Management: Self-management refers to the ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behavior to handle stress, control impulses, and motivate oneself in overcoming obstacles by setting and achieving goals.

Social Awareness: Social awareness refers to the ability to identify and understand the perspective of others and empathize with them; recognize and appreciate individual and group similarities and differences; identify and use family, school, and community resources.

Relationship Management: Relationship management refers to the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding cooperative relationships; resist unsuitable social pressure; check, manage, and resolve interpersonal engagement; seek assistance when needed.

Responsible Decision Making: Responsible decision making refers to the ability to make decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and probable consequences of various actions; apply decision-making skills to the well-being of oneself and others.

Emotional Competence: Emotional competence refers to developing critical skills that contribute to adaptive social interactions and impact a child's conduct, which includes the capability to recognize, regulate, and express emotions and comprehend their meaning.

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis embodies five chapters: Introduction, Review of Literature and Hypothesis Development, Research Design and Methodology, Data Analysis, and Conclusion.

Introduction: This chapter provides the Introduction and background of the study. It highlights the research problem and motivation for the study. This chapter introduces the concept of SEL, the five competencies of SEL, its importance for preschool teachers and students, and the concept of emotional competence in preschool students.

Review of Literature: This chapter includes reviews from the significant research work done in this field for further comprehending the need to study the concepts of the SEL, the importance of SEL for preschool teachers, the importance of SEL for preschool students, the role of

preschool teachers in students' development, and the importance of emotional competence for preschool students. The literature review provides a direction to the research work by supporting literature and gives us a framework for deeper conceptual learning.

Research Design and Methodology: This chapter discusses the research design and methods for achieving the research objectives. The chapter focuses on the research design, sampling technique, data collection sources, questionnaire details, reliability, and validity tests. The chapter indicates the research methods used to prove the study's hypotheses. The research model is also presented in this chapter.

Data Analysis and Interpretation: This chapter consists of the findings and the results of the research work. This chapter includes the interpretation of the responses to the questionnaire from the respondents. This chapter starts with the demographic analysis and the characteristics of the respondents. The objective-wise analysis is also presented in this chapter. The study uses Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to examine the preschool teachers' understanding of SEL pre and post-training. The study uses Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine the impact of the designed SEL framework titled "The ECCE Happiness Framework" on the emotional competence of preschool students. The findings are presented systematically in this chapter.

Conclusion: This chapter presents the conclusions of the study. It indicates how the objectives have been achieved and the acceptance or rejection of hypotheses. The study points out the limitations and implications of the study. It also underlines the scope for further studies.

Summing Up

Developing SEL is the key to success in school and one's social and personal life. Emotions prodigiously impact what we learn and how we implement those learnings in real life. If a child starts learning emotions like sharing and empathy, that will inculcate the habit of caring relationships and provide the foundation for lasting learning and emotional stability. Hence, this will result in less stressed children and healthy, happy youth. This can be achieved if SEL can be introduced at the foundation levels of education.

Further, preschool teachers are the engine that powers SEL interventions and practices in preschools and classrooms. Since teachers play an essential role in developing students' SEL

competencies, exploring their understanding of SEL competencies is necessary to teach more effectively. This chapter briefly introduces the concept of SEL, its associated five competencies, the importance of SEL for teachers and students, and the importance of emotional competence for preschool students. The next chapter is devoted to reviewing literature that helps provide a theoretical foundation for the research objectives and the development of the hypotheses.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of literature about the study is a pre-requisite for research as it enables the researcher to have a proper perspective on the subject, give a brief background of the research work done in a particular field and avoid the pitfalls and difficulties experienced by predecessors. Thus, the planning and execution of any research study should be dependent upon a thorough review of literature in related fields since it:

1. Helps to familiarize with the work that has been done in that area.
2. Eliminates the possibility of unnecessary duplication of efforts.
3. Provides valuable information on research techniques.

The following sections have been developed to provide an in-depth review of the research work carried out under the following heads:

- Conceptualizing Social-emotional Learning (SEL) and its Competencies
- Importance of Preschool Teachers' Understanding about SEL
- Importance of School-based SEL Interventions for Preschool Students
- Conceptualizing Happiness and its Benefits for Preschool Students
- SEL and the Role of Preschool Teachers
- Importance of Developing Emotional Competence among Preschool Students

The concept of SEL has an extensive and diverse history. It is possible to draw information about the competencies and practices of SEL from the previous research. The major challenge is deciding how far to look into the literature review to explore and begin discussing the concept of SEL. The present study covers the research inputs from the beginning of this concept of SEL, considering the significant developments that have transpired over time, thereby influencing perspectives in theory, research, and practical applications. India is widely recognized as the hub of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) initiative, a prominent and longstanding public-sector endeavour aimed at fostering early childhood development on a global scale. Significant programmes, approaches, regulations, and

frameworks have been established, including the National Education Policy of India (2019). This policy accentuates the importance of early childhood education and proposes a guiding principle for ensuring high-quality pre-primary education in preschools across India.

The National Policy on ECCE envisions the nurturing and advancement of comprehensive development and active learning for all children under six. It can be accomplished by promoting free, all-inclusive, equitable, happy, and contextually relevant opportunities. Also, it will contribute to laying the foundation for the comprehensive growth of the child and achieving their maximum capabilities. Hence, it is widely seen as imperative to prioritize the enhancement of social and emotional competence among preschool-aged children. The attainment of the objective is contingent upon the crucial role that preschools and preschool teachers in India play in enhancing the emotional competence of students. Given the widely held belief that preschool teachers play a crucial role in fostering emotional competence among preschool-aged children, it becomes imperative to delve into and enhance the comprehension and understanding of SEL among teachers, particularly within the context of India. Henceforth, it is imperative to implement a training intervention in India to enhance teachers' understanding of SEL and equip them with tools to enhance students' emotional competence.

Therefore, the present study has investigated the level of understanding among preschool teachers regarding SEL before and after participating in the training sessions in Punjab, India. Additionally, the research has developed a SEL paradigm explicitly tailored for preschool students with an initial focus on their emotional competence and subjective well-being. The present study has investigated the effects of the SEL framework on the emotional competence of preschool students in India.

2.1 Conceptualizing Social-emotional learning and its Competencies

SEL interventions of a universal nature are administered inside the school or classroom context and are progressively used by primary school teachers. According to Odom et al. (2008) and Denham et al. (2014), the preschool years are a critical stage of development during which the acquisition of SEL abilities is seen as a significant milestone in the developmental journey of preschool students. SEL encompasses a range of cognitive and affective attributes that contribute to students' academic achievement, career advancement, and overall well-being. At its essence, SEL focuses on students' fundamental requirements, namely motivation, social

connectivity, and self-regulation, which are considered essential preconditions for learning. Teachers may also utilize other terminologies such as "non-cognitive skills," "soft skills," "21st-century skills," "character strengths," and "whole child development" when referring to SEL. SEL constitutes a crucial component within a comprehensive educational framework. The field of SEL emerged approximately 25 years ago following the release of Goleman's seminal work, "Emotional Intelligence" (1995), and Gardner's influential publication, "Multiple Intelligences" (1993). Since then, a substantial body of literature, research, and practical applications has been developed, urging educators to incorporate SEL curricula for students in pre-K-12 settings, both within and beyond traditional school environments. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning was founded in 1994 as a global non-profit organization to integrate evidence-based SEL into the core of educational systems. According to the Mittal (2019), SEL in preschool-aged students encompasses their self-perception, perception of others, emotional experiences, emotional regulation, emotional expression, and the development of close interpersonal relationships and a sense of security within the familial, societal, and cultural contexts. CASEL (2018) defined SEL as "the cognitive and behavioral process by which individuals, including both infants and adults, acquire the ability to comprehend and regulate their emotions, develop and attain constructive objectives, demonstrate empathy towards others, cultivate and sustain healthy interpersonal connections, and exercise sound judgement in decision-making." Zins and Elias (2007) posit that Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Social-Emotional Competence (SEC) are interconnected and multifaceted constructs encompassing various dimensions. These dimensions encompass the capacity to recognize and comprehend emotions in oneself and others, the ability to regulate emotions appropriately, the establishment of positive interactions with teachers and peers, and the effective resolution of problems. According to CASEL (2018), five fundamental social and emotional competencies are crucial for SEL. These competencies include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The competencies discussed in table 2.1.1 collectively provide the personal abilities required for individuals to establish connections with others and effectively navigate the various obstacles encountered in life.

Table 2.1.1: SEL Competencies

S No.	Competency	Meaning	SEL Skills Related to Each Competency
1.	Self-Awareness	The ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions, feelings, interests, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior.	-Identifying emotions -Accurate self-perception -Recognizing strengths -Self-confidence -Self-efficacy
2.	Self-Management	The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behavior to handle stress, control impulses, and motivate oneself in overcoming obstacles by setting and achieving goals.	-Impulse Control -Stress management -Self-discipline -Self-motivation -Goal-setting -Organizational skills
3.	Social-Awareness	The ability to identify and understand the perspective of others and empathize with them; recognize and appreciate individual and group similarities and differences; identify and use family, school, and community resources.	-Perspective-taking -Empathy -Appreciating diversity -Respect for others
4.	Relationship Management	The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding cooperative relationships; resist unsuitable social pressure; check, manage, and resolve interpersonal engagement; seek assistance when needed.	-Communication -Social engagement -Leadership -Relationship-building -Teamwork

5.	Responsible Decision Making	The ability to make decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and probable consequences of various actions; apply decision-making skills to the well-being of oneself and others.	-Identifying problems -Analyzing situations -Solving problems -Evaluating -Reflecting -Ethical responsibility
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(Source: <https://casel.org/core-competencies/> and Brackett & Rivers, 2014)

According to a study conducted by the CASEL (2018), there is an increasing recognition of the importance of SEL in the lives of preschool students and teachers. The effectiveness of school-based interventions aimed at promoting SEL in preschool students has been extensively supported by a substantial body of evidence from studies conducted by Ashiabi (2000), Colwell & Hart (2006), and Durlak et al. (2011). These studies have consistently demonstrated various positive outcomes, including improved sensory-motor skills, enhanced focus and concentration levels, increased emotional expressiveness, a positive self-perception and perception of others, the development of beneficial social behaviors, improved peer interactions, and decreased conduct issues and emotional distress among preschool students. Studies conducted by Denham (2006) and Bornstein et al. (2010) have indicated that preschool students who exhibit deficits in socio-emotional competence are at an increased risk of encountering challenges during their preschool. These challenges may manifest as difficulties establishing positive peer relationships, subpar academic or developmental achievement, and social and behavioral issues.

Additionally, these students may also be more susceptible to experiencing adverse physical and mental health outcomes. Hence, Taylor et al. (2017) have agreed that a growing body of scholars and educators are advocating for a pressing emphasis on the social and emotional dimensions of student development, extending beyond mere academic proficiency. It is done to mitigate potential psychological disorders that students may face during their elementary school years. According to a meta-analysis conducted by CASEL (2018), allocating resources

toward SEL has enhanced classroom conduct, improved stress management, and a notable increase of 13 percent in academic performance.

As per the findings of Domitrovich et al. (2016), while the existing empirical evidence on SEL predominantly centers on results at the child level, it is crucial to acknowledge the significant role that teachers play in implementing universal SEL interventions. Hence, according to the perspectives of Oberle et al. (2016) and Schonert-Reichl (2017), there exists a limited understanding of the impact of SEL interventions on teachers' school experiences and classroom dynamics. The study conducted by Morris et al. (2013) examines the effects of student-centered SEL programs on teachers, highlighting the potential of teachers' implementation of these interventions to enhance their instructional practices and facilitate meaningful interactions with students.

According to Jeon et al. (2019), early childhood teaching is well recognized as including significant emotional labor and social engagement. However, there is a scarcity of research examining the understanding and awareness of teachers regarding their individual social and emotional well-being. According to the studies conducted by Jennings and Greenberg (2009), Collie et al. (2012), and Jennings and Frank (2015), the examination of teachers' understanding of SEL is a crucial aspect that contributes to their personal growth in the social-emotional domain, professional advancement, and the establishment of a secure and nurturing classroom atmosphere. Furthermore, it plays a significant role in fostering positive social interactions, promoting social involvement, and enhancing the overall social-emotional well-being of teachers. Research on SEL by Ryan et al. (2015) and Wang et al. (2015) have indicated that self-awareness can be observed among preschool teachers. This self-awareness is reflected in their comprehension of the knowledge, skills, and competencies they possess or should develop their perception of their effectiveness in teaching and their positive outlook on their students' abilities and potential growth. Outside of the educational setting, this phenomenon is evident in teachers' optimistic mindset when engaging with their colleagues and their students' parents. In a similar vein, Collie and Martin (2016) assert that the demonstration of self-management competency can be observed through teachers' adeptness in regulating their emotions during interactions with students and colleagues in preschool settings, their proficiency in coping with challenges, their motivation and active involvement in the classroom, as well as their capacity to establish explicit and compelling objectives. According to Weissberg et al. (2015), the social

awareness of preschool teachers can be observed through their active recognition and empathy toward the perspectives of students, their families, and colleagues.

Additionally, it can be observed through their display of care towards these individuals and their understanding of the social norms governing their interactions within the school community. Collie et al. (2016) examined the manifestation of relationship management in preschool settings, highlighting the teachers' abilities to engage with kids and colleagues compassionately, demonstrate appropriate conflict resolution strategies, and provide or seek support when necessary. According to the findings of Weissberg et al. (2015) and CASEL (2018), responsible decision-making, which is the final competency of SEL, can be observed in teachers' decision-making processes in the classroom, their assessments of students' behavior, and their problem-solving abilities.

A growing body of work supports the necessity and significance of SEL concerning the well-being of teachers and the good academic, social, and emotional outcomes of preschool students in preschool settings. In their study, Walton and Hibbard (2019) examined the correlation between emotional intelligence in teachers and their understanding of student's SEC. The study's findings demonstrated a notable and favorable correlation between emotional intelligence and understanding students' SEC across all individuals included in the research. There was no significant correlation between childcare workers' degree of schooling and their understanding of student's SEC. However, there is a significant negative relationship between the time spent working in child care and the knowledge of students' SEC among these professionals. Emotional intelligence training has been identified as a potential method to enhance early childhood educators' effectiveness in promoting students' emotional development. Hence, authorities increasingly recognize the significance of SEL comprehension among early educators since they are pivotal in implementing effective SEL interventions within preschools and classrooms. The objective of this study was to investigate the issue by analyzing the understanding of SEL among preschool teachers after receiving training and assessing its influence on emotional competence in preschool students.

2.2 Importance of Preschool Teachers' Understanding about Social-Emotional Learning

The psychological health and social-emotional well-being of preschool teachers are crucial for their happiness and quality of life. It is linked to their instructional practices, interactions with

students, and student performance. According to Collie (2017) and Sandilos et al. (2020), preschool teachers frequently express experiences of loneliness, a battle to meet the expectations of their profession, an uphill struggle for sustaining beneficial teacher-student relationships, a sense of unworthiness, a sense of invincibility, dissatisfaction despair, professional exhaustion, and emotional weariness. As a result, McMullen et al. (2020) stated that all the challenges mentioned above result in a lack of status and recognition from society and fewer opportunities for skill growth or professional progress, leaving preschool teachers emotionally worn out. Lopez-Perez et al. (2016) indicated that preschool teachers play an essential role in establishing preschool students' SEL, consequently, to teach more effectively, they must concentrate on training them to increase their understanding of SEL.

Ramayah et al. (2013) emphasised teachers' training for propelling knowledge sharing amongst teachers' themselves in order to improve their sense of self-worth and attitude towards others. Understanding of SEL gained via training sessions may aid preschool teachers in identifying and controlling their emotions and generating and exercising positive emotions (such as joy and enthusiasm) to support SEL in themselves and their students. Furthermore, Elias (2009) suggested that SEL understanding may help teachers become more self-aware by honestly assessing their talents and acknowledging their emotional strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, socio-emotional understanding can impact teachers' social awareness and relationship management. As a result, SEL training and faculty development programs may help teachers improve personally and professionally (Luthra et al., 2023).

Lang et al. (2020) investigated sixty-three preschool teachers' stress knowledge, stress management, emotional regulation, and social-emotional response to students. The findings illustrated that the training intervention increased their understanding and implementation of SEL practices in school for themselves and their students. Buettner et al. (2016) discovered correlational associations between preschool teachers' social-emotional understanding and professional dedication and responsiveness to students' negative emotions in the United States. Results recommended the need for preschool teachers' psychological difficulties, social-emotional development, and stress-coping strategies to be addressed through training and professional development initiatives. Mains (2018) described a pre-service teacher education course incorporating emotional and social abilities into course design and evaluation expectations. An examination of 218 teachers' responses to their primary evaluation assignment revealed that 39% of teachers had an expanding understanding of SEL competencies and, in

particular, recognized the significance of focusing on developing students' SEL to promote academic success throughout a wide range of curriculum areas. According to Jennings et al. (2017), when compared to a control group, 224 teachers in 36 urban primary and elementary schools who received CARE (Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education) training displayed higher levels of improvement in responsive emotion regulation and mindfulness, as well as substantial decreases in mental health issues and time urgency (a sense of time pressure and anticipating to rush through everyday assignment). Furthermore, the study found that levels of emotional support in CARE-trained teachers' classes remained stable throughout the school year, but in control group classrooms, emotional support decreased as the year progressed.

Poulou (2017) researched 98 preschool teachers' comprehension of SEL in Greek public schools and found that teachers who believed themselves to be emotionally intelligent and competent enough to integrate SEL in the classroom had a more pleasant teacher-student connection. This teacher's perspective of the teacher-student connection significantly aids them in instructing students how to regulate their emotions and deal with social interactions successfully. Even India's New Education Policy, announced in 2020, emphasized the need to view education more broadly, ensuring that students become cognitively, socially, and emotionally competent. Dobia et al. (2020) reported that strengthening educators' 'will and skill' through SEL training has been identified as a vital aspect of SEL implementation in schools to attain this aim (Dobia et al., 2020). Therefore, Schonert-Reichl (2017) discussed that teachers play an essential role in creating a healthy classroom atmosphere with solid teacher-student relationships that promote deep learning and constructive social-emotional growth in students. He further explained that when teachers fail to address the social and emotional needs of the classroom, students' academic progress and emotional behavior suffer. As a result, it was proposed that teachers fully understand their SEL before realizing how teachers affect students' SEL and how to progress SEL in the classroom.

2.3 Importance of School-based SEL Interventions for Preschool Students

Life skills are often recognized as the aptitudes and proficiencies that facilitate individuals in cultivating constructive and adaptable behaviors, helping them to navigate the demands of everyday circumstances effectively. Students are at a crossroads due to increased societal pressure, complexity, and variety. SEL adds a new layer to education by emphasizing cooperation, communication, and decision-making. SEL provides a framework for developing

emotional intelligence, which is essential for long-term enjoyment, successful jobs, and good relationships. According to Payton et al. (2008), SEL in preschool students is frequently described as a single unit by SEL programmes that targets skills such as emotion recognition and management, goal setting, establishing and maintaining healthy relationships, and good decision making, primarily in interpersonal situations.

According to Oztug and Dervise (2016), preschool is a crucial stage in a child's development, during which they learn fundamental knowledge, skills, and behaviors. Purdon (2016) asserts that preschool experiences play a substantial role in shaping a child's personality and facilitating their socialization processes. The global significance and influence of preschool education on young children's social-emotional development is increasingly evident. The research conducted by Osher et al. (2021) demonstrated the significance of SEL in student's holistic development and well-being. The study highlighted the essential role of SEL in fostering ethical growth, promoting engagement in education, and motivating individuals to achieve health promotion objectives. Furthermore, SEL was crucial in preventing problem behaviors and enhancing student engagement in the learning process.

Pre-primary educational institutions serve as the initial educational setting for children, with preschool teachers playing a crucial role in shaping the child's overall development. Teachers have a pivotal role in shaping students' social-emotional development and overall well-being through their significant impact and influence. According to Barnett (2003), the primary factor influencing the educational process in preschool settings is the teacher. The quality of preschool education is believed to be closely correlated with the competence and effectiveness of the teacher. From 0 to 6, the child undergoes a crucial developmental phase whereby a first spiritual framework is established. This framework is the basis for the child's subsequent personality development. According to a study by Cantor et al. (2021), SEL interventions implemented in developed countries within school settings have yielded positive outcomes for preschool-aged children. These outcomes include enhanced sensory-motor-social-emotional skills, increased levels of concentration, improved peer relationships, heightened expression of positive emotions, and decreased emotional and behavioral difficulties among children. Therefore, integrating SEL curriculum into preschool educational settings can potentially mitigate emotional and behavioral difficulties. In their study, Gunter et al. (2012) evaluated the impact of a SEL programme called Strong Start Pre-K on the social and emotional competence of a sample of 52 preschool kids. The researchers employed a quasi-experimental design with

a non-equivalent control group to assess the impacts of the curriculum. The study's findings revealed a statistically significant reduction in internalizing behaviors and a more remarkable improvement in the student-teacher interaction within the treatment circumstances. The study conducted by Poulou (2017) examined the correlation between teachers' perspectives on emotional intelligence and SEL concerning teacher-student relationships. A total of 170 preschool students, ranging in age from 5 to 6 years, were subjected to interviews utilizing the Young Children's Appraisal of Teacher Support Instrument. The regression analysis findings indicated that teachers and students placed significant importance on the influence of teachers' opinions of SEL in fostering solid teacher-student interactions. According to the findings of John et al. (2008), SEL programmes have shown promising effects on several aspects of students' development. These programmes enhanced students' social-emotional abilities, attitudes towards themselves and others, sense of belonging to the school community, display of positive social behavior, and academic achievement. Additionally, implementing SEL programmes was associated with a decrease in students' conduct issues and emotional distress.

In their study, Kramer et al. (2010) investigated the impact of Strong Start on the SEC of 67 kindergarten kids. The researchers employed a time-series approach to analyze the impacts of this intervention. The study's findings revealed improvements in kids' prosocial behaviors and reductions in internalizing behaviors, as assessed by both teachers and parents. The programme demonstrated high levels of implementation integrity and received positive ratings from instructors about its social validity. These findings indicate that the programme is both feasibly and potentially efficacious in real-world classroom environments. In their research, Thinley and Kumar (2019) examined the impact of ECCE on children's social-emotional development in Bhutan. Specifically, they investigated the differences in the development between children who attended ECCE and those who did not, considering factors such as gender and locality. A sample size of 158 preschool-aged children was chosen for this study. Of these, 81 children participated in the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) programme, while 77 did not. The age of all children in the study was six years. The study has determined a notable disparity in the social development of preschool-aged children who have received ECCE compared to those who have not received ECCE. The study showed no statistically significant disparity in the social development of preschool-aged children who participated in ECCE when factors such as gender and geographical location were considered.

Early infancy is characterized by socio-emotional, physiologic, and cognitive advancements, signifying a crucial age of growth and development. The progression in these domains establishes the trajectory for ongoing advancement throughout middle childhood, adolescence, and subsequent stages of adulthood. According to Payton et al. (2008), SEL encompasses the acquisition of a range of interconnected abilities that facilitate proficiency in the management and expression of emotions and effectiveness in social contexts. Numerous studies have established a correlation between SEL and several significant outcomes, particularly in academic ability. The preschool era is a favorable opportunity for implementing SEL, and early childhood educators employ diverse strategies within the classroom setting to accomplish this objective.

2.4 Conceptualizing Happiness and its Benefits for Preschool Students

Happiness is a subject of global interest, but what does happiness mean to preschool students? It is a strong feeling characterized by positive emotional states that include enthusiasm, hopefulness, efficient reasoning, excitement, and a sense of self-worth (Diener, 2000; Veenhoven, 2010). According to Diener et al. (1999), happiness is a theory of subjective well-being that influences a child's development. Lewis (2008) and Izzaty (2018) advocated that happiness in preschool students can be explained as a blend of pleasant emotions (such as happiness, enthusiasm, cheerfulness, excitement, and joy), expression of emotions (such as giggles and smiles), and the absence of unpleasant emotions (such as sorrow, crying, and resentment) as shown in figure 2.4.1. De Haan et al. (1998) revealed that preschool students' facial expressions express and comprehend emotions. Paulus & Moore (2012) revealed that for some students, happiness can be a feeling of joy that they experience while connecting with their classmates), whereas for others, happiness can be experienced after being complimented by a teacher for sharing their toys with fellow students or showing affection and concern for others.

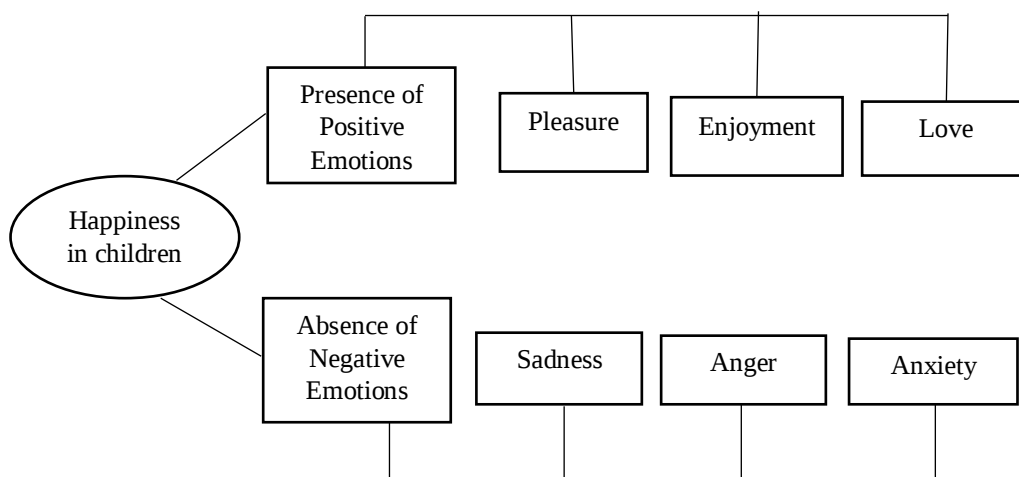


Figure 2.4.1: Meaning of Happiness in Preschool Students

Alwaely et al. (2021) suggested that happiness in the life of a preschool student plays a vital role in developing an understanding of their feelings, supporting them in describing their feelings and communicating their emotions with others, and also helping them to acquire social-emotional abilities from an early age. Preschool students benefit from happiness experienced via play-based learning activities in various ways. As per the studies of Goldstein (2012), Singer (2013), and Whitebread et al. (2012) happiness experienced via play-based learning generates positive emotions, expends excess energy, optimizes neurological growth, refines creativity and imagination, reinforces compassion and kindness towards others in the classroom, and strengthens cognitive-social-emotional-motor skills, mental health, and whole-child growth beginning in early childhood. Izzaty (2018) suggested that classroom activities such as studying, playing, dancing, recreational activities, reading comic books, games, and sketching play a vital role in making students happy while learning. Husted (2017) found a strong link between school-related happiness and social-emotional connections. The findings from these studies have highlighted happiness as one of the variables influencing student's psychological well-being, which influences their imagination, motor abilities, social and emotional competence, and development.

Holder and Klassen (2010) concluded that happiness is seen as one of the most critical developmental goals in the lives of young ones, as it aids in improving their relationships with themselves and their peers, making them more socially engaged, less timid, and emotionally competent. Schultz et al. (2004) also advocated that concentrating on students' happiness from

early infancy is a critical issue of research since their research found that happy children are more alert in recognizing and effectively using their emotions in diverse social contexts.

For these reasons, Kim (2013) and Hong et al. (2015) have recognized preschools as one of the critical spaces that foster happiness among students by involving them in their favourite game or activity with other students, thereby promoting healthy social connections and an emotional state of feeling happy, excited, and appreciated in the educational setting. The reports of The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) Foundation Task Force on Early Learning (2011) and Mittal (2019) claimed that teachers in advanced economies have recognized the importance of social and emotional development vis-à-vis happiness promotion for effective preschool student outcomes. Many advanced nations have created frameworks and practices to improve student's happiness and social and emotional competence. CASEL, for example, has offered a systematic framework for measuring the efficacy of classroom-based SEL curriculums across the United States in its "CASEL Guide—Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs—Preschool and Elementary School Edition" (2013). Similarly, Yoder (2014) discussed that the American Institute of Research (AIR) created a module for children in grades K-12 titled "Teaching the Whole Child—Instructional Practices that Support Social and Emotional Learning," that focused on improving happiness, social-emotional skills of students across the nation. Frydenberg et al. (2017) designed another training program, "Social and Emotional Learning in Australia and the Asia Pacific—Perspectives, Programs, and Approaches," highlighting cross-country collaboration, providing an effective and sustainable basis for social and emotional competence. However, these frameworks and practices have been intended to meet students' psychological and social-emotional needs in those countries, highlighting the need for a framework that considers the geographical, psychological, social, and emotional needs of students living in the state of Punjab in India.

2.5 Social-Emotional Learning and Role of Preschool Teachers

Rightly said by Robert Meehan (2017), "A well-prepared and engaging teacher is a catalyst. A spark that creates the desire to learn in our students and help them find important things they have lost every day. Sometimes it is a paper, backpack or jacket... other times it is courage, confidence or a smile."

Parents are the first and foremost teachers in the lives of children. Harkness and Super (2002) suggested that parents introduce children to the social world, where they further understand themselves and their place and value in society. Further, Denham et al. (2012) and Schonert-Reichl (2017) concluded that after parents comes the role of preschool teachers, who are regarded as the essential caregivers for preschool students. Jones et al. (2013) examined the role of preschool teachers and found that implementing any happiness intervention in a preschool brings into light the exemplary role of a preschool teacher because students in their foundational age of 3 to 6 years tend to copy their teachers. Previous research by McLaughlin and Talbert (2006) has documented the significance of the teacher's contribution in addressing reform issues and efficacious school-based innovative progressions. Furthermore, it has been observed that the success of a new framework depends on what teachers feel about it because they are the ones who usually execute it in the classroom.

The teacher-student relationship also plays an imperative role in the implementation process, as the teacher's behavior toward the child creates their impression in the eyes of other students, which will indirectly affect their relationship with their classmates. Therefore, to build a secure relationship with students, preschool teachers must grant particular time to each student, irrespective of how big the group is, and try to understand their perspective with complete patience, care, empathy, love, and respect. Corso (2007) proposed that teachers should try to maintain consistency in their attitude while dealing with students, pay attention while listening to them, maintain eye contact, and respond to them accordingly. Gest & Rodkin (2011) discussed that preschool teachers could play an essential role in developing social and emotional competence in preschool students by encouraging interaction with their peers and with those who display positive behaviors, and Farmer et al. (2011) added that teachers could offer assistance to preschool children to handle their strong feelings and manage conflicting behaviors that can lead to anger and bullying. Therefore, preschool and preschool teachers are important socializers in the lives of preschool students, which together can promote SEC in students.

Research by Khamrang (2014) has documented the importance of teachers' input in addressing reform issues and fruitful school-based innovative processes. The results from the new schemes depend on what teachers think and do about it since they are the ones who usually apply and implement them. According to Jones et al. (2013), the teachers' role is particularly relevant when implementing SEL programs: teachers teach, model, and make it possible for students to

practice their social and emotional competencies in the classroom. Martínez (2016) and Schonert-Reichl (2017) have revealed that teachers with solid social-emotional capabilities can positively inspire their students and create a classroom with convivial teacher-student relationships that support deep learning and social and emotional development among students. Merritt et al. (2012) concluded that teachers who create an environment where students feel comfortable and secure with teachers and peers can grapple with challenges more willingly and confidently. Even the Indian Social & Emotional Learning Framework (ISELF), a research-based educational platform developed in 2002 by The Teacher Foundation, aims to nurture the social and emotional development of Indian children from 6 to 18 years of age. It provides intensive training and support programmes for teachers, management, parents, and students to build sustained and effective student learning outcomes. Thus, the role of a teacher is indispensable in inculcating competencies such as positive interdependence, respect, care, sharing, listening, trust, empathy, empowerment, self-management, self-awareness, and emotional competence in the students.

2.6 Importance of Developing Emotional Competence among Preschool Students

The article "Should emotional learning in schools be made mandatory?" published in the Times of India on September 13, 2017, initiated a discourse concerning the expansion and advancement of emotional dimensions at the primary level. Based on the information presented in the paper, it is evident that only a quarter of students exhibiting behavioral issues are provided with appropriate intervention. The identified behavioral problems include bullying, violent conduct, and a deficiency in empathetic behaviors. Shashi Banerjee, the head of Shiv Nadar School in Noida, raised concerns over the efficacy of the educational materials employed for such pedagogical purposes. The speaker emphasized the need to facilitate group conversations wherein students and counselors may engage in a reciprocal exchange of perspectives.

Hence, as posited by Parke (1994) and Saarni (2008), the development of emotional competence plays a pivotal role in facilitating the ability of preschool students to engage in social interactions and establish interpersonal connections. Emotional competence has garnered significant interest since its initial articulation by Mayer and Salovey (1993). Emotional competence is defined as the capacity to recognize, employ, and regulate emotions within oneself and others. According to Mayer et al. (2004), individuals with high emotional

competence are anticipated to possess a more remarkable ability to comprehend emotional situations than individuals who lack sensitivity toward others' feelings. The notion of emotional competence was brought to public attention by Daniel Goleman in 1995. This led to several applications of emotional competence, including strategies for enhancing interpersonal efficacy in teacher-child relationships. The development of emotional competence is crucial for the enhancement of social competence in students in preschool, and conversely, the acquisition of social competence also contributes to the development of emotional competence. However, it is essential to consider the influence of numerous variables in this relationship. Denham et al. (2003) believe that a student's SEC encompasses three key components: emotional expressiveness, emotional knowledge, and emotional regulation.

In the study conducted by Ashiabi (2000), emotional expressiveness was identified as a fundamental component of emotional competence in preschool-aged students. The author characterized emotional expressiveness as a skill preschool students possess, enabling them to effectively convey their feelings in a socially appropriate manner during interactions with their classmates and teachers within the educational setting. A study by Denham et al. (2003) assessed a sample of 143 preschool students. The findings indicated that children who exhibit a greater prevalence of positive emotions and those who experience more positive emotions than negative emotions tend to receive higher ratings from teachers in areas such as friendliness and assertiveness. Conversely, these students receive lower ratings for aggressiveness and sadness.

Additionally, these students exhibit a greater propensity to display prosocial behavior in response to the emotions of their peers, therefore garnering higher levels of peer likability. Furthermore, emotional knowledge is the second fundamental element of emotional competence in preschool students. In his study, Ashiabi (2000) examined emotional knowledge, which refers to students' capacity to identify, articulate, understand, and acknowledge emotions inside themselves and others. It includes the ability to empathize with the sentiments of others, thereby enhancing their interpersonal relationships. According to Denham et al. (2003), those who possess the ability to recognize facial expressions and understand the emotional responses evoked by typical social scenarios have a higher propensity to engage in prosocial behavior when confronted with their peers' emotional expressions. Acquiring emotional knowledge enables preschool students to respond suitably to others, thus enhancing their interpersonal connections. Finally, emotion regulation constitutes the third

essential component of emotional competence. Ashiabi (2000) explained that emotional regulation among preschool students involves their ability to recognize and adjust their emotions following the given circumstances, ensuring appropriate expression of emotions. Harvey et al. (2012) proposed that preschool students should be allowed to experience and articulate their feelings across all facets of emotional proficiency. It entails cultivating positive emotions while aiding students in expressing and managing negative emotions in a socially appropriate manner. Preschools and their teachers play a vital role in fostering the development of emotional competence in preschool students. They employ a practical framework to strengthen these abilities throughout time.

Jones et al. (2015) examined the potential benefits of the SEL intervention for preschool students. The researchers found that this intervention facilitated the acquisition of self-regulation strategies, such as using hugs, attention shifting, and smiling, to express emotions in a more uninhibited manner. Additionally, the intervention helped students distinguish between socially acceptable and unacceptable behaviors while fostering endurance and perseverance development from an early stage of their educational journey. Williford et al. (2013) found a significant relationship between students' involvement with teachers and their compliance with classroom organization, as well as their executive functioning abilities. The researchers also discovered a significant correlation between students' behavioral involvement with classroom learning activities and their ability to regulate emotions. According to Calkins and Hills (2007), there exists a proposition that emotional regulation and executive performance have common neurobiological foundations inside the prefrontal cortex brain regions. In a longitudinal investigation conducted by Ferrier et al. (2014), it was discovered that a predictive relationship exists between executive functioning and emotional regulation, indicating a significant association between these two cognitive processes. In a study conducted by Cole et al. (2009), the researchers investigated the cognitive development of 3 and 4-year-old children regarding their comprehension and utilization of emotional regulation methods. Specifically, the study aimed to assess the children's capacity to identify and employ strategies for effectively controlling emotions related to anger and sorrow. This examination was carried out through the use of puppet scenarios. Significant relationships were identified between the use and identification of techniques for anger; however, no such correlations were observed for sorrow. It implies that preschool-aged children may employ disparate approaches in managing unique emotional states. The findings of the study indicate that 4-year-old children exhibited a higher capacity for developing strategies in response to angry scenarios compared to 3-year-

old children. However, both age groups showed similar levels of strategy generation when it came to dealing with grief. This observation implies that the development of emotional regulation is influenced by age and that the acquisition of techniques for regulating certain emotions occurs at varying speeds. According to the authors, there is a proposition that the period encompassing ages 3 to 5 has considerable importance in the advancement of student's ability to comprehend their methods. This period also coincides with the emergence of other cognitive milestones, including executive functioning and theory of mind. Torres et al. (2015) conducted a study that examined the link between preschool students' comprehension of their emotional regulation mechanisms and their academic achievements in preschool. The researchers discovered that the quality of preschool interpersonal interactions with teachers and classmates significantly predicted academic performance in preschool. Furthermore, this association was influenced by the development of emotional knowledge among the students. The discovery mentioned above aligns with the outcomes of Trentacosta and Fine's (2010) study, which established a connection between emotional understanding and social competence. In a study conducted by Denham et al. (2012), it was shown that emotional knowledge had a significant ability to forecast both academic achievement and school adaptation. The researchers observed a positive correlation between sophisticated emotional understanding in preschool students and better evaluations of self-regulation. In a distinct investigation, Denham et al. (2014) discovered that the ability to comprehend and manage emotions, together with the capacity for cognitive control, were significant predictors of academic achievements. Furthermore, the researchers observed that these associations were influenced by social-emotional behavior, which encompassed a wider range of factors than the specific aspect of emotional regulation. In conclusion, the management of emotions is strongly linked to executive functioning and serves as a predictor of both school engagement and school adjustment. The development of students' comprehension of their emotional regulation tactics occurs gradually, potentially varies depending on the individual emotion being regulated, and includes ineffectual strategies. The predictive link between students' emotional knowledge and their academic performance is well-established. The mediating role of interpersonal relationships further influences this relationship, as emotional knowledge mediates between these relationships and academic results. Additionally, the prediction of school outcomes through emotional knowledge is further mediated by social-emotional behaviors. Collectively, these studies provide evidence of the association between emotional intelligence and various school-related outcomes, encompassing both academic performance and school adaptability.

A reciprocal association exists between emotional knowledge and regulation since deficiencies in emotional labeling and inadequate comprehension of emotions might have adverse consequences for the development of emotional intelligence. In preschool education, it is imperative to recognize the significance of emotional knowledge and emotional control as fundamental components of a comprehensive SEL program. In their study, Lopes and Mestre et al. (2012) examined students' proficiency in recognizing emotionally demanding situations and emphasized the significance of possessing knowledge and competence in discerning efficacious resolutions. In order to investigate the correlation between emotional regulation abilities and indicators of social adaption, the researchers administered a situational judgment test. The findings of the study indicate that essential elements of social and emotional development can be acquired through the acquisition of information and skills related to emotion control.

In their study, Durlak et al. (2011) examined 213 school-based, universal SEL programmes, encompassing 270,034 students ranging from preschool to high school. Compared to the control group, individuals engaged in SEL exhibited notable enhancements in their social and emotional competencies, attitudes, conduct, and academic outcomes, which manifested as an increase of 11 percentile points in their success levels. Preschool teachers assume a vital role in enhancing the emotional competence of students in the preschool setting. According to the findings of Zinsser et al. (2015), it was determined that teachers who believe in the significance of emotions and actively display an interest in the emotional well-being of students can establish classroom settings that facilitate the development and enhancement of student's emotional competencies. Hence, Morris et al. (2013) posited that teachers contribute to the teacher-student connection by exhibiting emotional competence through demonstrating emotions, providing supportive or punishing responses to student's emotional manifestations, and delivering explicit education on emotional experiences. The emotional atmosphere within a preschool setting, primarily established by the teacher, significantly impacts students' emotional comprehension and conduct. Consequently, Harvey et al. (2016) propose that acquiring emotional competence skills is a gradual process, with each student exhibiting a distinct trajectory. However, there exist fundamental approaches that parents and teachers can employ to facilitate student's emotional competence development.

Summing Up

The studies and literature reviewed in this chapter have contributed to investigating SEL, the significance of SEL understanding among preschool teachers, and the importance of emotional competence for preschool students in India. The existing body of literature has encompassed research on SEL concerning teachers and students. However, there is a paucity of studies that specifically investigate the effects of SEL on preschool teachers and preschool students aged 3 to 6 years in India. There exists a substantial body of work that investigates and enhances SEL among college students and adolescents in advanced nations. However, it is essential to note that there is a dearth of research conducted in the Indian setting on enhancing SEL understanding among preschool teachers and developing emotional competence among preschool students. Moreover, there is a limited body of research that has investigated the effects of SEL training programmes on enhancing the understanding of SEL among preschool educators. Additionally, there is a scarcity of studies focusing on developing a SEL framework to enhance the emotional competence of preschool students in India.

Hence, the current study pertains to the contemporary understanding of SEL and its five competencies among preschool teachers in the state of Punjab in India. The study holds crucial importance because acquiring SEL understanding among teachers will enable them to identify and effectively regulate emotions that may influence their individual development. Furthermore, the comprehension of SEL among preschool teachers will serve as a driving force for them to enhance their instructional practices in order to effectively address the social and emotional complexities that are inherent in their profession. Additionally, this understanding will enable them to develop healthy connections with their students. This study also focuses on developing a happiness intervention framework to enhance the emotional competence of preschool students in India. The results of this study will provide valuable insights for educational professionals, school administrators, and policy-makers on the level of SEL understanding among preschool teachers and a framework for improving the emotional competence of preschool students in India.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The term "research" refers to the pursuit of knowledge. Research is a scientific and methodical search for new information, actuality, cause and effect relationships, impartial evaluation, and the documentation of controlled observations that could culminate in the development of generalizations and their verifications, principles, or concepts that result in predictions and possibly ultimate control over events and solutions to issues. Research Methodology is one of the essential aspects of a research work. A suitable research methodology is required to conduct research more methodically and well-planned. It will guide the researchers in the right direction for resolving the problem.

Section 3.1 discusses the need and the relevance of the study; section 3.2 discusses the scope of the study; section 3.3 presents the objectives of the research; section 3.4 includes the survey instrument and research methods covering the sampling design; section 3.5 covers the data collection and the pilot survey, section 3.6 discusses the validity and the reliability of the questionnaire and section 3.7 presents the research methods and techniques and the last section 3.8 includes the conceptual research model followed by concluding remarks.

3.1 Need and the Relevance of the Study

Current research focuses mainly on examining the understanding of preschool teachers about SEL and developing a framework for teachers to improve the emotional competence of preschool students in Punjab, India. Ample research has been done on making students more competitive by building their intelligence quotient (IQ), but few studies have been done or are undergoing in SEL. Research by Singh et al. (2014) has concluded that IQ is no longer the only factor required to measure the success of a students; rather, emotional competence and social competence are also considered important for the holistic development of a student. Most research has been undertaken on promoting teachers' understanding of SEL and the emotional competence of preschool students in developed nations, including the United Nations, the United States, Australia, and Hong Kong. However, in the context of India, there is much scope

for research in the area of SEL. Also, the literature supports a need to examine the impact of SEL intervention on student's emotional competence. ECCE is regarded as key to achieving Sustainable Development Goals, but it has been negatively impacted by several adversities such as domestic violence, abuse, depression, and parental illness (Tyrka et al., 2013). At least 8% to 10% of children under five are reported to have clinically significant and damaging mental health issues, including emotional, behavioral, and social relationship complications (Egger & Angold, 2006). The continued subjection to such stressors results in prolonged emotional and social distress, drastically hindering a child's long-term growth (Garner et al., 2012). Even the Good Childhood Report (The Children's Society, 2015) showed that nearly 25% of the students investigated were unhappy in their school, which impacted their academic, social, and emotional development. The hour needs to address all these issues from the grass-roots level, where early learning begins for children. Therefore, the reason for choosing this specific age group (3 to 6 years) is the expeditious growth in the initial six years of a child's life more than in any other stage of development, as confirmed by neuroscience (Nelson et al., 2013; National Council of Educational Research and Training [NCERT], 2015).

Also, the current picture of the early education system in Punjab in India, specifically in the rural and economically disadvantaged areas, seems out of focus. The challenges in the school system in Punjab have gone way beyond low learning paradigms, social-emotional problems, and poor academic grades (State Council of Educational Research and Training and Directorate of Education, 2019). A considerable number of preschool students are registered in preschool. However, these preschools do not prioritize early childhood social-emotional development due to the poor quality of the frameworks and curricula being implemented. Due to the scarcity of resources and skills required to foster happiness and social and emotional proficiencies, children enrolled in preschools are not being prepared for their upcoming grade schools (Jha & Parvati, 2020). While the importance of early years is appreciated, it has been observed that most of the ECCE frameworks are not developmentally appropriate for this age group. The lack of ECCE quality and happiness framework has resulted in either a low-quality program or making Early Childhood Education (ECE) a downward extension of the primary stage curriculum (NCERT, 2015). Therefore, on pedagogy, a reframing of courses and practices is immediately required for the 3 to 6 year group, inclusive of all preschools, regardless of whether government organizations or private interventions take part.

The study is done in 2 phases. In phase 1 of the study, the researchers analyze preschool teachers' current understanding about SEL in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab and compare changes in SEL understanding post-12-hours (4 sessions) training intervention. In phase 2 of the study, the researchers designed a conceptual SEL framework, titled "The ECCE Happiness Framework," for making preschool students emotionally competent based on reviewed literature and the needs of the students. Then, finally, the researchers examined the impact of the SEL framework on the emotional competence of preschool students. This chapter conveys a detailed description of the study's design, variables, and procedure, the research method used, sampling techniques, the sample of the study, and tools and techniques used for data collection and analysis.

3.2 Scope of the Study

The present research intends to examine and improve the preschool teachers' understanding of SEL post-training in Punjab, India. The need to channel the training being provided according to the needs and levels of teachers in the education sector is of utmost importance to derive maximum benefits and improve preschool teachers' emotional well-being and overall performance. The research will help improve the SEL understanding of preschool teachers as a whole. However, it will also help them manage their emotions, understand their students' and fellow educators' feelings, develop healthy connections, make ethical choices, overcome work-related stress, and deal with challenging circumstances in and out of the classroom.

The study also intends to propose and validate the SEL framework, "The ECCE Happiness Framework," designed to improve the emotional competence of preschool students in Punjab, India. To achieve this objective, the study has considered the preschool teachers' perspective on preschool students' emotional competence. The ECCE happiness framework intends to investigate the influence of three happiness practices, namely social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness, on the emotional competence of preschool students in the districts of Ludhiana and Patiala in the Indian state of Punjab. The research will help improve preschool students' emotional expressiveness, knowledge, and management.

The study's findings will direct the Ministry of Education, academicians, and preschools in Punjab and India as a whole to develop teaching philosophies, strategies, curriculums, training programs, and interventions that focus on developing a positive, safe, and inclusive learning

environment, for teachers and students. Further, the study will promote teachers' SEL understanding and preschool students' emotional competence.

3.3 Objectives of the Study

The present study is based on the following objectives:

O1: To examine the teachers' understanding about Social Emotional Learning pre and post-training.

O2: To examine the impact of Social Emotional Learning on student's emotional competence.

O3: To design a framework for teachers to make students emotionally competent.

3.4 Research Design and Research Methods

The study examines the preschool teachers' understanding of SEL pre and post-training. Further, the aim is to gauge whether or not the training intervention has improved or brought in any change in the teachers' understanding of SEL. Additionally, the aim is to design an SEL framework for teachers to improve the emotional competence of preschool students and measure its impact on them.

The study utilizes the descriptive research design to examine the preschool teachers' understanding of SEL competencies pre and post-training. Further, the study utilizes exploratory research design to design an SEL framework for preschool teachers to enhance the emotional competence of preschool students. The study will use both primary and secondary data. Primary data will be collected through a structured questionnaire, observations, and planned workshops with a predetermined module implemented in schools. Further, the secondary data will be used to understand SEL competencies and teacher roles.

Consequently, the study has two phases and employs a mixed-method research design involving qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis approaches.

The initial phase was designed to fulfill the first objective of examining preschool teachers' understanding of SEL pre and post-training. The investigators have utilized a descriptive survey method to study the level of understanding of five competencies of SEL among preschool teachers pre and post-training in Punjab, India. The first step included designing a

self-reported questionnaire for teachers, and preschool teachers' responses were collected, compared and analyzed using SPSS. The investigators have designed the "Social and Emotional Learning questionnaire for teachers" based on various existing questionnaires. The second step included preparing and designing a toolkit as training material for the teachers who participated in the session. In the third step, preschool teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire about their understanding of SEL before training. After the completion of each training session, teachers are required to complete a post-training questionnaire. Finally, the results were analyzed and compared using SPSS software.

The second phase of the study dealt with designing the SEL framework for preschool students and measuring the impact of the framework on students' emotional competence. The first step included designing an SEL framework for teachers, named "The ECCE happiness framework," that can be used for preschool students based on reviewed literature and students' needs. The second step includes using a descriptive survey approach to investigate the impact of implementing the ECCE happiness framework on the emotional competence of preschool students in Punjab, India. The third step included designing a self-reported observation form for teachers teaching students to observe and report changes in the emotional competence of preschool students. The last step included analyzing results using PLS-SEM software. The design of the study has been outlined in figure 3.4.1.

Outline of the Design of the Study

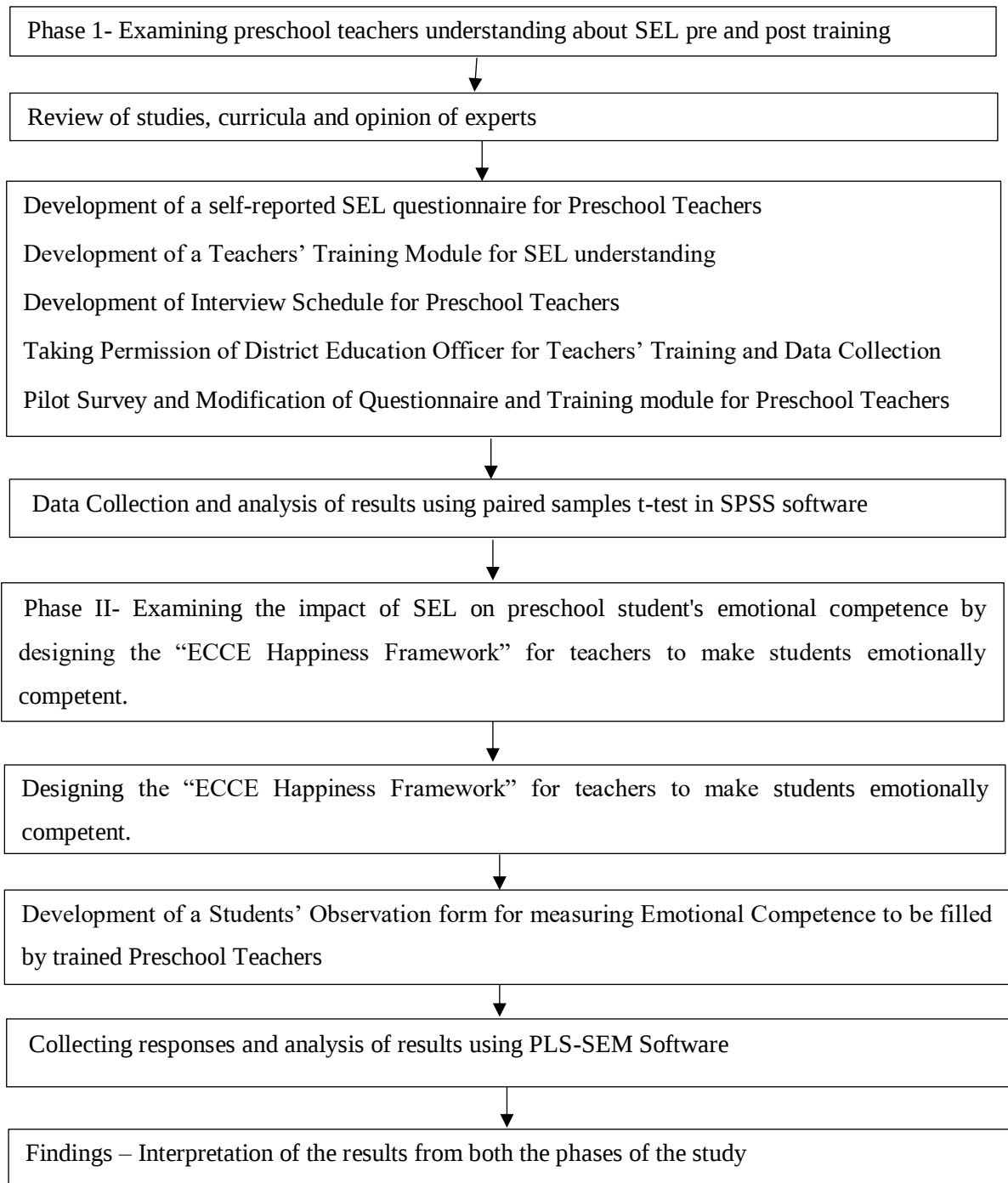


Figure 3.4.1: Outline of the Design of the Study

The study has two phases: examining preschool teachers' understanding of SEL pre and post-training and examining the impact of the designed SEL framework titled "The ECCE Happiness Framework" on the emotional competence of preschool students from teachers' point of view, the particulars are given in detail separately.

3.5 Phase 1- Examining the preschool teachers' understanding about SEL pre and post-training in Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India

The present section covers the research methods, sampling design, procedures, pilot survey, questionnaire details, and the validity and reliability of the data collected.

3.5.1 Variables of the Study

Independent Variables

1. Self-Awareness- This competency is concerned with developing one's ability to identify feelings, fortes, self-assurance, and self-efficacy.
2. Self-Management- This competency is reflected in the ability to control feelings, cope with stress, control impulses, impede gratification, and persuade oneself to accomplish goals.
3. Social Awareness- This competency relates to understanding other peoples' perspectives, empathizing with them, appreciating group differences, and respecting others.
4. Relationship Management- This competency encompasses communicating, listening, collaborating with others, seeking help, building positive relations, and negotiating conflict.
5. Responsible Decision Making- This competency is the capability to make productive and ethical selections about individual conduct, calculate the after-effects of actions rationally, and contemplate the well-being of self and others.

Dependent Variable

1. SEL understanding- SEL understanding of the preschool teachers teaching students aged 3 to 6 years in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab.

3.5.2 Research Method

Research methods are of three types, viz. historical method, descriptive method, and experimental methods. The nature of the problem is the criteria used behind selecting the

research method. The current study has adopted a descriptive survey research method to examine the preschool teachers' understanding of SEL, including five competencies defined by CASEL. The descriptive method was ideal as it is a method of investigation study aimed to describe and interpret characteristics, behaviors, and relationships of the sample population under study. This method obtains relevant and exact information on the present phenomena and, wherever feasible, draws valid general inferences from the facts acquired. It concerns existing situations, connections, practices, viewpoints, and attitudes. A descriptive survey method is a descriptive research approach that blends qualitative and quantitative data to provide relevant information. This method consists of creating questionnaires and collecting answers from the respondents who know it.

3.5.3 Survey Instrument

The study covers the data to examine the preschool teachers' understanding of SEL pre and post-training. A self-structured questionnaire consisting of two sections was developed, with section A including the respondents' demographic details and their characteristics. Section B covers the five competencies of SEL, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making. Various self-reported questionnaires examine teachers' and adults' emotional control, social awareness, and relationship management abilities. The survey tools listed below were adapted and modified, and a questionnaire was created to examine the preschool teachers' understanding of SEL through its five competencies pre and post-training.

1. Self-Awareness Outcome Questionnaire (SAOQ) by Sutton (2016).
2. Measurement of Teachers' Social-Emotional Competence-Development of the Social-Emotional Competence Teacher Rating Scale by Tom (2012).
3. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Knowledge Scale for Preservice Teachers by Buchanan et al. (2009).
4. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Beliefs Scale for Preservice Teachers by Brackett et al. (2012).
5. The CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL by CASEL (2018)

The researcher developed a questionnaire titled "Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Scale for teachers" to examine teachers' understanding of SEL based on previous and current knowledge (refer to Appendix 1). The constructs were measured on the 5-point likert scales ranging from 1 to 5 with 1 being the strongly disagree and 5 assigned as the strongly agree.

3.5.4 Sampling & Sample Size Determination

Several challenges in systematic research cannot be resolved without sampling techniques. As most of the school-related phenomena comprise an extensive number of elements, an investigator cannot constantly interview, test, or observe every one of them; thereby, sampling techniques address this issue by assisting a researcher in selecting representative samples from which he can collect data that allows him to conclude the characteristics of the entire population. Sampling preserves time and resources and provides a technique for delving into problems too significant to be dealt with by the traditional method. Given the limited scope of the assessment analysis, a sampling technique was employed to select the sample to provide a high level of representativeness.

Convenience sampling was used to collect data from the two selected districts of Ludhiana and Patiala for the study. This non-probability sampling involves the selection of samples that are easiest for the researcher to access. Then, stratified random sampling was employed to take the sample for the current study. Stratified random sampling is a method that divides the whole population into smaller groups or strata to complete the sampling process. The strata are constructed using certain common traits found in demographic data. This sampling method was chosen to focus on the defined strata of preschool teachers (teaching students aged 3 to 6 years) from two specific districts of Ludhiana and Patiala of Punjab in India.

The present study covered a sample of 100 preschool teachers from nineteen preschools in two districts (Ludhiana and Patiala) in Punjab, India. An official mail was sent to the district's District Education Officer (DEO) asking for permission to conduct teachers' training sessions and surveys at the preschools (both government and private preschools) in the rural and urban areas of Ludhiana and Patiala. The authorization was granted for nineteen preschools in the form of written consent. The research involved 100 preschool teachers teaching students aged three to six years. The study sample comprised a representative random sample of 100

preschool teachers (which included 50 preschool teachers from Ludhiana and 50 preschool teachers from Patiala).

3.5.5 Sources of Data

a) Primary Data

The primary data was collected through a self-structured questionnaire based on the likert scale. The sample was collected from preschool teachers teaching students aged 3 to 6 years in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India. The teachers belonged to both public and private preschools in urban and rural areas of Punjab. There were overall 100 samples collected.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures and Pilot Survey

Participants comprised 100 preschool teachers from nineteen preschools in two districts (Ludhiana and Patiala) in Punjab, India. A cross-sectional survey technique was utilized to investigate the research questions. A self-reported questionnaire was designed to gauge the teachers' understanding of SEL competencies pre and post-training. The toolkit was designed to serve as training material for the teachers who attended the training session. Power-Point presentations on the five SEL competencies were prepared. An awareness session was conducted for a pilot survey where participants were provided information about the study and an online consent form. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed that their information would be confidentially and securely stored. All participants provided informed consent. Based on the pilot survey, the questionnaire and module were modified, finalized, and validated by the experts in the department, and the consistency was checked by reliability index.

A sample of 20 preschool teachers was collected initially to validate the questionnaire, and the study was taken forward when the pilot survey results were significant. The suggestions and items that were a little challenging to comprehend were simplified and incorporated again, and items were deleted after getting inputs from the preschool teachers and the academicians. The pilot group's response was overall favorable.

Further, an interactive training session was conducted with preschool teachers in Punjab. Several interactive activities were carried out to offer SEL understanding to teachers participating in the intervention. The training course included 12-hours (4 sessions) of training for teachers. The teachers received four days of training on SEL understanding and how it can be used with students. The training was given on all the five competencies of SEL, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management and responsible decision making as defined by CASEL. Before every session, the teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire on their understanding of SEL competency before training. After completing sessions, teachers were given a post-training questionnaire to fill out. Various learning techniques and SEL promoting practices were discussed in the sessions to provide teachers with an understanding of building emotional competence, relationship building, and decision-making (refer to Appendix II). Furthermore, multiple teaching strategies were discussed to improve preschool students' SEL emotional competence and create a happy classroom environment.

3.6.1 Reliability

For assessing the reliability and validity of the questionnaire and survey, both face validity (respondents' views on questions) and content validity (views of experts were considered, and the questionnaire was modified accordingly) were examined. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was calculated in SPSS to estimate the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The r value was significant at the 0.01 level, and the values of five subscales were given in table 3.6.1.

Table 3.6.1: Questionnaire- Description Table

S.No.	Parameters of the study	Reliability
1	Self-Awareness	0.816
2	Self-Management	0.767
3	Social Awareness	0.741
4	Relationship Management	0.805
5	Responsible Decision Making	0.846
	Total	0.991

Source: Self Constructed

As shown in the table above, the r-value of validity can range between 0 and 1. The values were close to 1, indicating a more significant validity coefficient and more confidence in predictions made from the test scores. The overall reliability of the test is 0.991, indicating more substantial internal stability and consistency of the SEL questionnaire. Thus, the questionnaire fulfilled the criteria of reliability and validity.

3.6.2 Tools and Techniques

The study utilized Statistical Package for Social Sciences to examine the preschool teachers' understanding of SEL pre and post-training.

3.6.3 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics offer a summary of the sample and the observations made. Mean and standard deviations have been calculated and depicted through tables and figures for different constructs.

3.6.4 Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)

SPSS is a software program researcher's use for quantitative analysis of complex data. SPSS offers a fast-visual modeling environment that ranges from the smallest to the most complex models. The data obtained from SPSS is used for surveys, data mining, and market research. The study utilizes SPSS to examine the preschool teachers' understanding of SEL pre and post-training. Furthermore, the paired samples t-test was conducted in SPSS to measure and compare preschool teachers' understanding of SEL before and after training and teaching in Ludhiana and Patiala in the state of Punjab. The paired-sample t-test was used because this statistical technique compares the mean of two variables for a single group. The process determines the differences between the values of the two variables for every instance and whether the average differs from zero. The approach also computes the t-test effect size automatically. Therefore, for examining the teachers' understanding of the five competencies of SEL, paired samples t-test was considered an ideal technique for SPSS software.

3.7 Phase II- Examining the impact of SEL on preschool students' emotional competence by designing a framework for teachers to make students emotionally competent.

The present section covers the research methods, sampling design, procedures, pilot survey, questionnaire details, and the validity and reliability of the data collected.

3.7.1 Conceptual ECCE Happiness Intervention Framework for Preschool

Philosophy & Goals of Framework- The ECCE Happiness framework was designed considering the behavioral and social-emotional needs of preschool students in Punjab, India. The happiness framework is intended to establish and strengthen emotional competence and social abilities in students beginning from infancy through happiness intervention. It aims to make preschool students happy while learning in the classroom, to reassess teachers' teaching practices, and to transform the preschool into a joyful environment for students.

Theoretical Foundation- The designed framework is based on A. Nagraj's (1999) 'The Triad for Happiness' model of happiness for school students. The model considers four aspects of human life as an amalgamated form of the material, behavioral, intellectual, and experiential elements. These dimensions connect to our thoughts, emotions, learning, and consciousness, which result in happiness, tranquillity, and contentment, as seen in the figure 3.7.1 below.

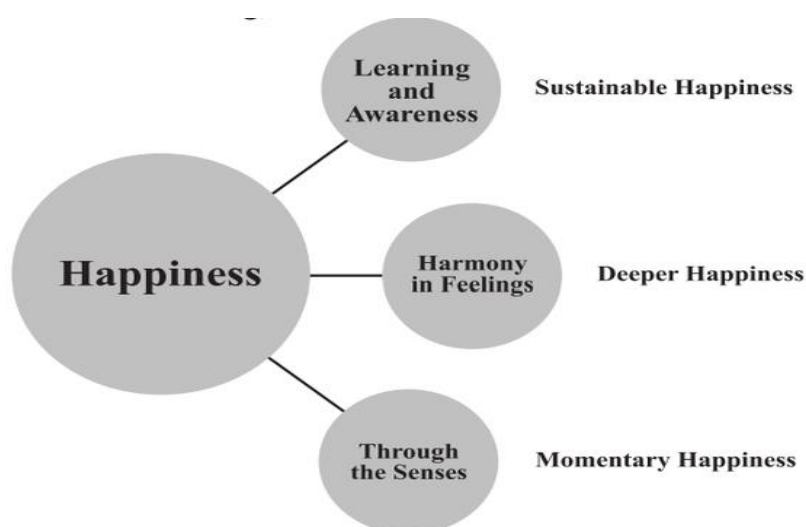


Figure 3.7.1: The Triad of Happiness by Nagraj, 1999

1. Through the senses: The inputs from the five senses of vision, hearing, touch, smell, and taste aid in the experience of pleasure. Preschool students can feel happiness through their senses by eating nutritious meals, viewing a cartoon movie, or listening to a soothing tune that is exceptionally delightful but brief in duration. As a result, this type of happiness is known as Momentary happiness.

2. Harmony in feelings: Students from 3 to 6 years of age crave affection, attention, praise, and admiration from all their relationships, whether they are friends, family, or preschool teachers. These sensations and emotions give a relationship its worth, and one hopes to attain harmony in these feelings. Once attained, one feels happier over a more extended period than transitory happiness. As a result, it is known as Deeper Happiness.

3. Learning (changing behavior based on constructive understanding) and awareness: This happiness results from being mindful of one's emotions, being attentive to one's behaviors, and being free of internal disputes. A preschool student feels this happiness through breathing exercises, learning something new, and grasping a concept or lesson that he will retain for a long time, which is why this sort of happiness is called Sustainable Happiness.

Students experience high levels of sensory happiness in numerous forms, which seems to have become their primary aim in life (Mittal, 2019). However, the critical aspects of emotional balance and relationship understanding receive little attention in India's educational system. The present emphasis is, therefore, insufficient, emphasizing just cognitive growth while entirely ignoring components of relationships and learning. Happiness, one of the most vital components of SEL, is missing in preschool students. As a result, there is an urgent need to create a framework for encouraging happiness that can be sustained while keeping in mind the psychological, social, and emotional requirements of preschool students studying in urban, rural, and socioeconomically deprived regions of Punjab. Based on the existing literature reviewed and the Happiness Triad Model given by A. Nagraj (1999), the ECCE happiness framework has been designed to create happiness in preschools.

The main goal of the ECCE Happiness Framework is to support preschool students in their journey of happiness towards improving social and emotional competence. As a result, the suggested independent variable is happiness intervention, which includes three significant practices: social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness, and the two dependent variables in the study are emotional competence and social competence. The present study measures the impact of three significant happiness intervention practices (social engagement,

sharing and caring, and mindfulness) on only one dependent variable, i.e., emotional competence.

Executive Procedure of the Framework- The formation of a dedicated group in school to execute the framework, the development of a happiness curriculum in combination with their current syllabus focusing on promoting social and emotional competence of preschool students, the role of the preschool teacher as a facilitator for the framework's implementation, the use of innovative teaching strategies in the classroom, the creation of a happy learning environment where students are empowered to express their emotions and maintain social relationships.

3.7.2 Using Innovative Teaching Practices for Implementation of Conceptual ECCE Happiness Framework in Preschools

During their 12-hour teacher training session, preschool teachers were taught how to employ adaptive, multifaceted, game-based, inquiry-based, and activity-oriented instructional methods to implement the ECCE happiness framework in preschools. Table 3.7.2 discusses some innovative instructional practices that teachers might employ to execute the ECCE happiness framework in preschools located in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab.

Table 3.7.2: Various Innovative Teaching Practices, Tools, and Techniques for Preschool Students

Teaching Tools and Techniques	Meaning	Objectives	References
Play-based Learning	Tools employed to facilitate interaction between school practice and the student's motivation orientation. It includes voluntary, quick, and inherently motivating activities that provide preschool	-Play has been identified as 'the leading tool of development in the preschool years' that promotes social-emotional development.	Rhoades et al., 2011; Gray, 2013; Hedegaard, 2016; Vygotsky, 2016; Kirk & Jay, 2018

	students happiness and a feeling of belongingness. It includes riddle-solving, coloring, emotional identification, and role-playing.	-To encourage students in social engagement and positive learning. -To assist students in learning the social conventions, learning to make their own decisions, manage their emotions and impulses, negotiate disputes with others, and make friends.	
Audio-Visual Aids	Tools that can display images and produce sounds, such as videos, sound slides, television, and films.	-To engage students and make their learning stimulating and effective. -To improve the teacher-student interaction.	Yazar & Arifoglu, 2012; Purdon, 2016
Physiological Regulation Techniques	It comprises internal and external influences including breathing exercises, meditation, family photos, squishy balls, tone, and volume to assist in calm emotions.	-To assist students calm and regulate their bodies when facing intense emotions. -To learn various methods of relaxation. -To redirect any physical reaction or action toward peers.	Burke, 2010; Rempel, 2012; Zenner et al., 2014
Casual Talk in the context of emotional	The strategy used by teachers when experiencing extreme emotions while a	-To improve communication about emotions.	Semple et al., 2005; Murray et al., 2019

experience (CTEE)	student is amid emotional arousal assists in comprehending and managing emotions and social responses to a situation.	-To improve emotional regulation. -To assist students in understanding one's and other's emotions.	
Peace Corner	A tool that provides students with repeated opportunities to build and improve their social and emotional learning skills.	-To assist students in identifying and distinguishing emotions. -To encourage students to express their emotions and problems. -To listen and comprehend the feelings of peers. -To consider alternatives and select the best alternative to a problem.	Housman, 2017; Murray et al., 2019
Emotion Chart/book	The book and chart are designed to represent emotions and support children in identifying and addressing the cause and effect of their emotional experience and response.	-To assist students learn to name their emotions. -To have a better grasp of the relationship between the cause (social situation) and effect (emotional response).	Murray et al., 2019

		-Match facial expressions to different emotions.	
Mood Mirror	A multisensory strategy to teach preschool students about the different types of emotions.	-To assist in developing self-awareness. -To assist students to identify and label their emotions.	Housman, 2017; Murray et al., 2019
Activity-based learning	A process whereby students are actively engaged in the learning process rather than just sitting and listening to the lessons.	-To involve learning by doing. -To hone team-building abilities. -To foster friendships and create a happy learning environment. -To enhance the social and emotional well-being of students.	Oche, 2012; Festus, 2013

Source: Self Constructed

3.8 Variables of the Study

Independent Variables

1. Social Engagement- It refers to the preschool students' involvement in the activities of a social circle in the classroom.
2. Sharing & Charing- It relates to caring for and supporting others in the class, school, or community.
3. Mindfulness- It entails an integrated process that fosters happiness in children's hearts, minds, and connections.

Dependent Variable

1. Emotional Competence- Emotional competence in preschool students refers to developing critical skills that contribute to adaptive social interactions and impact a child's conduct, which includes the capability to recognize, regulate, and express emotions and comprehend their meaning

3.8.1 Research Method

The current study utilized a descriptive survey research method for designing an SEL framework for preschool teachers, titled "the ECCE Happiness Framework," to enhance the emotional competence of preschool students and to examine the impact of SEL on preschool students' emotional competence. The descriptive research method was ideal for investigation as it seeks to correctly and methodically characterize a population, situation, or phenomenon. It can answer the questions concerning what, where, when, and how rather than why. This method can explore one or more variables using various research methods.

3.8.2 Survey Instrument

To examine the emotional competence of preschool students, a self-reported observation form titled 'Teacher-Rated Child Emotional Behavior' was adopted from the Ages & Stages Questionnaire: Child-Monitoring System for Social-Emotional Behaviors developed by Squires et al., 2002 and NCERT, 2015. In addition, the survey questionnaire was modified to suit instructors' requirements to report on preschool students' emotional competence (refer to Appendix III). The constructs were based on the Likert Scales ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 being the strongly disagree and 5 assigned as the strongly agree. This scale covered three subscales: social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness. The impact of these independent variables was observed on the dependent variable of emotional competence.

3.8.3 Sampling and Sample Size Determination

Convenience sampling was used for the selection of two districts of Ludhiana and Patiala for conducting the study. Stratified random sampling was employed to take the sample for the

current study. Stratified random sampling is a method that divides the whole population into smaller groups or strata to complete the sampling process. This sampling method was chosen to focus on the defined strata of preschool students (aged 3 to 6 years) taught by preschool teachers from two specific districts of Ludhiana and Patiala of Punjab in India.

The ratio of observations to estimated parameters (N:q) was taken as a guide for choosing the sample size for the study. Specifically, Kline (2017) has recommended that the N:q ratio should be 20 to 1, implying 20 participants for each estimated parameter in the model. Other researchers have suggested that the N:q ratio can be as low as 10 to 1 (Schreiber et al., 2006) or 5 to 1 (Bentler & Chou, 1987). The study included a random sample of 486 preschool students aged 3 to 6 years (292 students from Ludhiana and 194 students from Patiala). Although the sample was devoid of the researcher's prejudice, it may not have been representative of the overall sample.

3.8.4 Sources of Data

a) Primary Data

The primary data was collected through a self-structured questionnaire based on the Likert scale. The sample was collected from preschool teachers teaching 486 preschool students aged 3 to 6 years in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab, India. The student's belonged to both public and private preschools in urban and rural areas of Punjab. There were overall 486 samples collected.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures and Pilot Survey

This study comprised 100 preschool teachers who taught children aged 3 to 6 in nineteen preschools in urban and rural regions of the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India. 486 preschool students enrolled in Punjab preschools participated in the study. Before choosing the preschools for the survey, the consent of the DEO was acquired. The preschool teachers in the current study were formerly instructed on the relevance of SEL for preschool students. A 12-hour training session was conducted with the preschool teachers to improve their understanding of SEL and its competencies. Preschool teachers under study who used the ECCE Happiness framework in the classroom used a variety of multi-dimensional, game-

based, inquisitive-learning instructional methods, such as identifying facial expressions, color combinations, patterns, games, physical exercise, interactions with peers, group problem-solving, and drawing and painting.

Furthermore, these teachers were asked to observe students' emotional behavior and complete a 'Teacher-Rated Child Emotional Behavior' observation form which was derived from Squires et al. (2002) and NCERT (2015) and modified further. The tool was intended to assess the impact of SEL on preschool students' emotional competence. If they consented to take part, participants were notified that their inputs would be kept personal and securely maintained. Everyone who took part completed an informed consent sheet. A sample of 50 was collected initially to validate the questionnaire, and the study was taken forward when the pilot survey results were significant. The pilot group's response was overall favorable.

Since this study uses survey participants' responses, it is vital that the common method bias problem should not be reflected in the results. Common method bias (CMB) happens when variations in responses are caused by the instrument rather than the actual pre-dispositions of the respondents that the instrument attempts to uncover. Thus, the outcome may be an inflated variation. Harman's single-factor score advocates loading all items (measuring latent variables) into one common factor. We used this, and the results indicate that the total variance for a single factor was less than 50% (38.98%), suggesting that CMB does not influence the data (Podsakoff et al., 2012). The occurrence of a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) > 3.3 is advised as an indication of obsessive collinearity and an indication of CMB's prevalence. We also checked whether all VIFs resulting from a full collinearity test were not greater than 3.3, thus indicating an absence of CMB. The target respondents were paid personal visits, and the questionnaire's implications and confidentiality were ensured. The data was also collected through email requests.

3.9.1 Reliability

For assessing the reliability and validity of the questionnaire and survey, both face validity (respondents' views on questions) and content validity (views of expert teachers and head of the department) were considered, and the questionnaire was modified) were examined. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was calculated to estimate the reliability and validity of the

questionnaire. The r value was significant at 0.01 level, and the values of the three subscales were given in the table below.

Table 3.9.1: Questionnaire- Description Table

S.No.	Parameters of the study	Reliability
1	Social Engagement	0.867
2	Sharing & Caring	0.716
3	Mindfulness	0.841
	Total	0.901

Source: Self Constructed

As shown in the table above, the r -value of validity can range between 0 and 1. The values were close to 1, indicating a more significant validity coefficient and more confidence in predictions made from the test scores. The overall reliability of the test is 0.901, indicating more substantial internal stability and consistency of the SEL questionnaire. Thus, the questionnaire fulfilled the criteria of reliability and validity.

3.9.2 Tools and Techniques

The present study calculated the suggested measurement and structural model via the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) model.

3.9.3 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics offer a summary of the sample and the observations made. Mean and Standard deviation have been calculated and depicted through tables and figures for different constructs.

3.9.4 Structural Equation Modeling

Smart-partial least square was applied to determine the projected research model. PLS-SEM is a covariance-based alternative to SEM-AMOS (Ringle et al., 2015). SEM has become a mainstream method in many fields of business research. SEM is a statistical method for testing

hypotheses concerning the links between observed and unobserved variables (construct or latent). It broadens the scope of data needed for describing relationships (Hair et al., 2013; Ringle et al., 2020). It examines the structure of relationships expressed in a sequence of equations, comparable to a series of multiple regression equations, to explain the interactions among various variables. It is based on both factor analysis and multiple regression analysis. Applying PLS-SEM aids in evaluating the numerous connected, dependent connections between variables and the use of the construct measurement (Ittner et al., 1997). SEM has three fundamental characteristics:

1. Calculation of complex and interconnected dependence relationships.
2. The ability to express notions not seen in these relationships.
3. Creating a model that outlines through path modelling utilizing the partial least squares (PLS) technique of SEM.

It is beneficial for examining descriptive and predictive links with a sample having a limited understanding of the latent variables (Ringle et al., 2015). Also, when the primary goal is theory creation and the study is exploratory, PLS-SEM is preferable (Henseler et al., 2014; Lowry & Gaskin, 2014; Hair et al., 2021). It is a casual predictive approach used for small sample sizes and non-normal distribution of the data. The use of the PLS approach is acceptable since the current study seeks to examine the results of the practical implementation of the ECCE Happiness Framework to improve emotional competence in preschool students in Punjab. Also, considering the small sample size, extensive usage, and complete acceptance of PLS-SEM, it was valid to employ PLS-SEM to gauge improvement in the emotional competence of preschool students via the ECCE Happiness Framework. Consequently, PLS-SEM was employed in the current research to analyze the influence of social engagement, sharing, caring, and mindfulness practices on preschool students' emotional competence, as illustrated in figure 3.9.4. Following that, the findings are shared and analyzed.

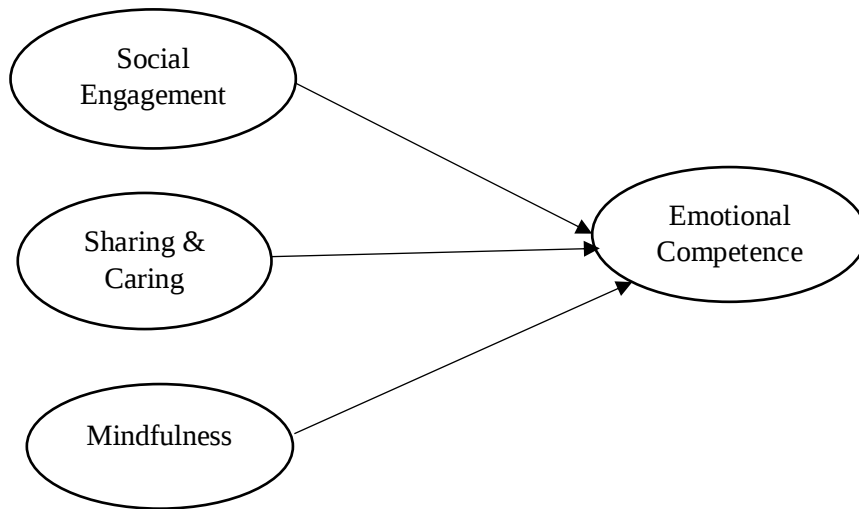


Figure 3.9.4: The ECCE Happiness Framework model for increasing emotional competency in preschool students- through social interaction, sharing and caring, and mindfulness practices.

Summing Up:

This chapter explains the details of data collection from preschool teachers and preschool students in preschools in Punjab. This chapter portrays the details of the research design and methodology. This chapter includes the sample size, questionnaire design, constructs, and data collection techniques. This chapter presents the conceptual ECCE Happiness framework and the conceptual model to highlight the steps and stages of research. This chapter also includes the tools and techniques utilized to test the hypotheses. The next chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

One of the most significant components of the research process is data analysis and interpretation, which are carried out in this chapter. Analysis of data involves examining the tabulated information in order to find out underlying facts or meanings. It entails breaking down existing complicated elements into smaller bits and arranging the parts in novel ways for interpretation. The interpretation of the results is what they indicate, what they signify, and what relevance they have.

The present study is based on the following objectives:

- 1) To examine the teachers' understanding about Social Emotional Learning pre and post-training.
- 2) To examine the impact of Social Emotional Learning on student's emotional competence.
- 3) To design a framework for teachers to make students emotionally competent.

Based on the demands of the objectives of the study, two sets of questionnaires were framed-

1. Social and Emotional Learning Questionnaire for Teachers to measure preschool teachers' understanding about SEL pre and post-training.
2. Preschool students' observation forms are to be filled out by preschool teachers to measure the impact of SEL on preschool students' emotional competence.

Also, the teachers' SEL Training module was prepared to impart training to preschool teachers to examine their understanding of SEL pre- and post-training.

Data was collected from the preschools located in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts in the state of Punjab in India. A total of 19 preschools comprising public and private schools, 100 preschool teachers, and 486 preschool students participated in the study. An official mail was sent to all the government and private preschools in Ludhiana and Patiala's rural and urban areas. Out of all, nineteen preschools offered written consent. The permission of the DEO was obtained to provide training sessions and conduct the survey at the preschools. A cross-sectional survey design was employed to investigate the research questions. Data have been analyzed and interpreted based on the objectives mentioned above.

4.1 Objective 1: To Examine the Teachers' Understanding about Social-Emotional Learning Pre and Post-training

4.1 Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

This research is a perception-based study, collecting data from 100 preschool teachers from public and private preschools in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India. Table 4.1 covers the demographic characteristics undertaken in the present study. The table below shows the first section of the SEL questionnaire for teachers, which includes five questions regarding the respondents' demographic profile. This section determines the frequency and percentage of answers for each component.

Table 4.1.1: Demographic Variables

No.	Variables	Type	Frequency (100)	Percentage (in %)
1.	District in which preschool is located	Ludhiana (10 schools)	50	50
		Patiala (9 schools)	50	50
2.	Type of Preschool Educators	Private (11 schools)	63	63
		Public (8 schools)	37	37
3.	Gender	Female	85	85
		Male	15	15
4.	Location of Preschool	Urban (11 schools)	37	37
		Rural (8 schools)	63	63
5.	Years of Professional Teaching Experience (in years)	0-10	37	37
		11-20	57	57
		>20	06	06
5.	Education Qualification of Educators	Graduation	5	05
		Masters	38	38
		Master with special degree	53	53
		Doctorate	4	4

Source: Self Constructed

4.1.1 Segregation Based on Location of Preschool Teachers

Figure 4.1.1 depicts the number of preschool teachers from the two districts of Punjab. The respondents comprised 100 preschool teachers teaching preschool students aged 3 to 6 years in the districts of Ludhiana and Patiala in Punjab, India. A total of nineteen preschools participated in the survey and training intervention. 50% of teachers belong to 10 preschools from Ludhiana, and 50% teach in 9 preschools from Patiala district of Punjab, India.

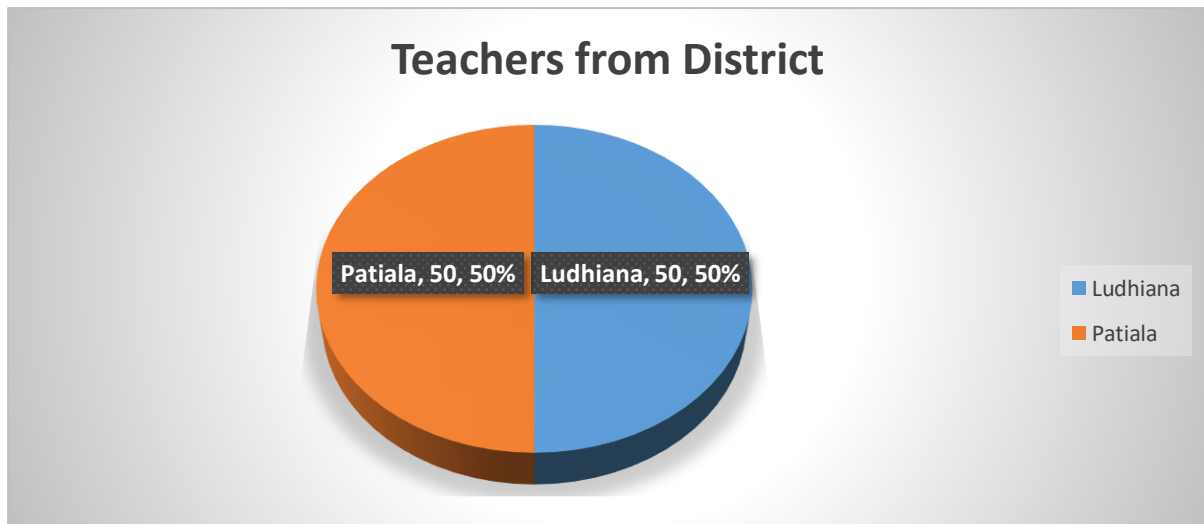


Figure 4.1.1: Number of Preschool Teachers from each District of Punjab

4.1.2 Segregation of Respondents based on the School Type

Preschool teachers were classified based on public and private preschool. As shown in figure 4.1.2, 63% of teachers belonged to the eleven private preschools in the state's urban region, while the remaining 37% worked in the eight public preschools in the rural and disadvantaged regions of the state.

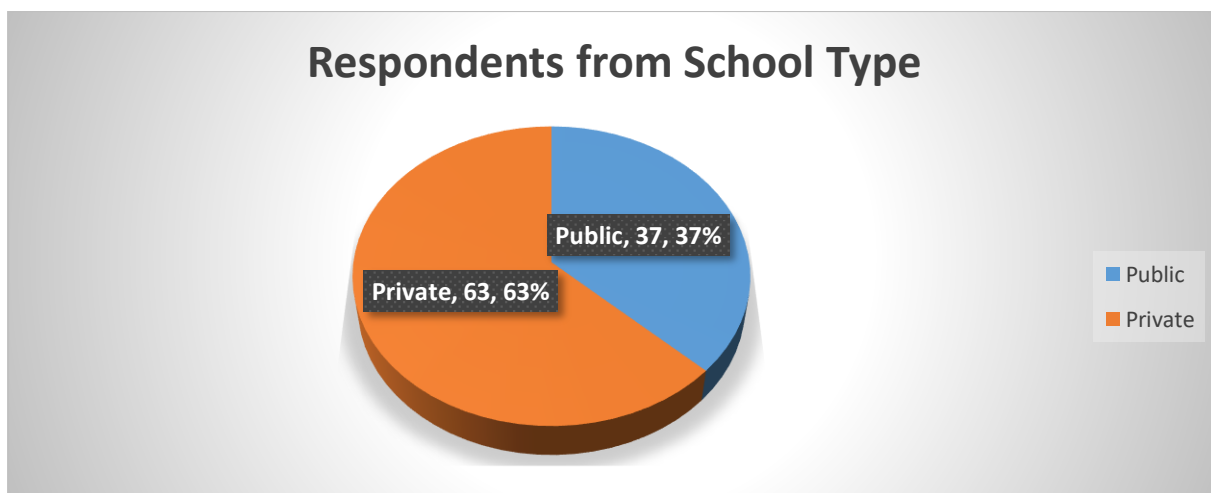


Figure 4.1.2: Status of Preschool Teachers based on Type of Preschool

4.1.3 Gender of Respondents

The females dominated the sample. Gender-wise analysis is shown in figure 4.1.3, which indicates that 85% of respondents were female teachers and 15% were male teachers.

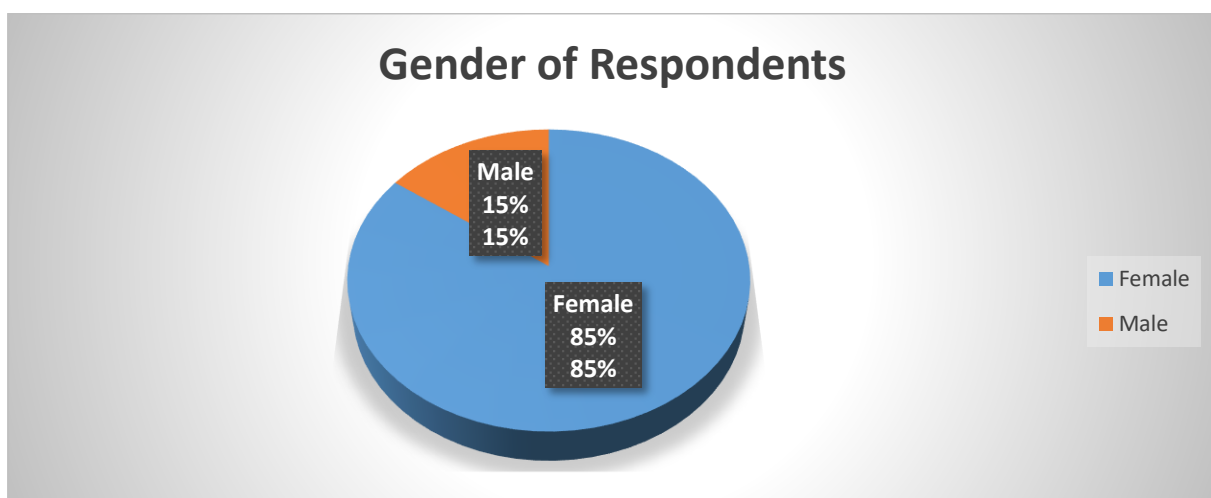


Figure 4.1.3: Gender-wise Analysis

4.1.4 Segregation Based on Location of Preschool

Figure 4.1.4 depicts the number of preschool teachers teaching in urban and rural areas of Punjab. Out of 100 teachers, 37% belonged to 11 preschools located in the urban region of

Punjab, and the remaining 63% teachers belonged to 8 preschools located in rural and socio-economically backward regions of Punjab.

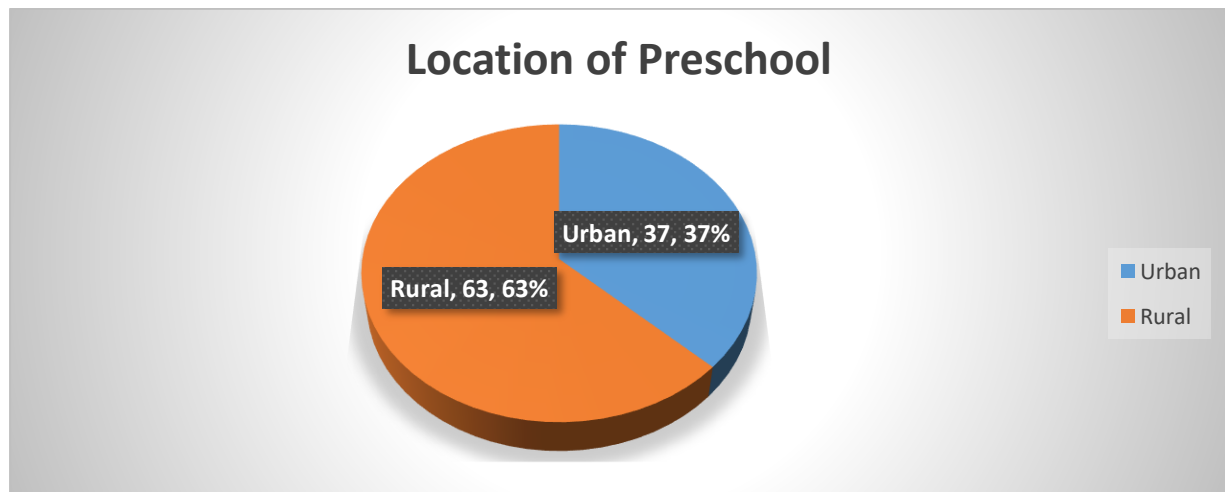


Figure 4.1.4: Number of Teachers based on the Location of Preschool

4.1.5 Professional Experience

Figure 4.1.5 indicates the professional experience of teaching preschool students. 37% of respondents have been educating for 0 to 10 years, 57% of teachers have been educating for 11 to 20 years, and 6% have been educating students for over 20 years.



Figure 4.1.5: Professional Teaching Experience of Respondents

4.1.6 Educational Qualification

Figure 4.1.6 depicts the educational qualifications of the preschool teachers. 5% of respondents have a graduation degree, 38% of respondents have a master's degree, 53% of teachers have master's degrees with specialization, and 4% have a doctorate.

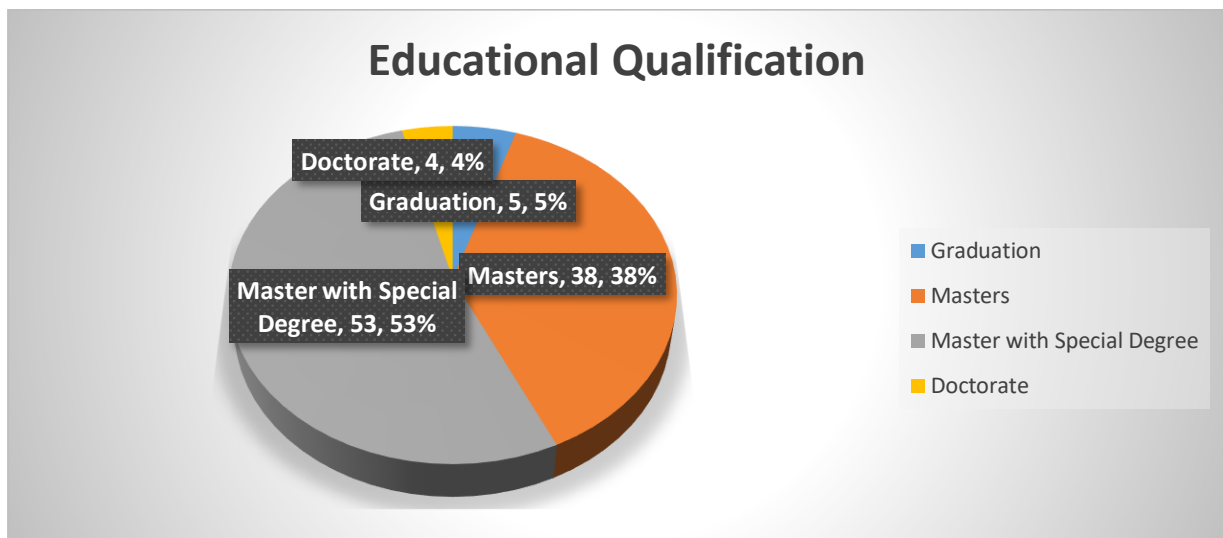


Figure 4.1.6: Educational Qualification of Preschool Teachers

4.1.7 Training Programs Attended

Figure 4.1.7 depicts the total number of preschool teachers who attended any SEL training program in the past 12 months. There are only 12 teachers who attended the training program, and the remaining 88 teachers have not attended any SEL training program and had no or minimal understanding of SEL.

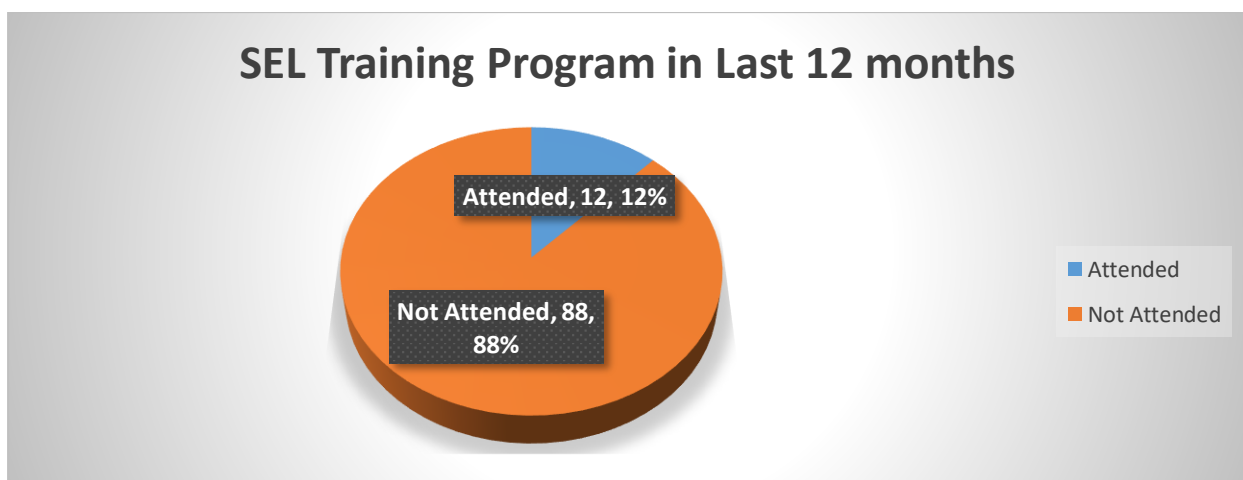


Figure 4.1.7: Status of Training Programs Attended

4.2 Analysis of the Preschool Teachers' Understanding about Social-Emotional Learning Pre and Post-training.

In order to examine preschool teachers' understanding of SEL pre and post-training in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India, the investigator employed a descriptive survey approach. A self-reported questionnaire was designed and considered for the study, and the responses from the teachers were collected, compared, and analyzed using SPSS. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first section of the questionnaire included questions relating to the socio-demographic profile of the participants. The second section included all the questions related to the five competencies of SEL (refer to Appendix I). Also, the teachers' SEL training module was prepared to provide training, and a 12-hour training session was conducted to impart SEL understanding to teachers. The training sessions included a Power-Point presentation, various reflective activities, discussion exercises, tools, games, and reflective writing activities for making SEL understanding in preschool teachers easy, interactive, and exciting (refer to Appendix II).

SPSS was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used on the socio-demographic questions. The paired samples t-test was also used in SPSS to evaluate and analyze early childhood teachers' understanding of SEL pre and post-training in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab. The findings are then presented and discussed.

Table 4.2.1: Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Understanding of SEL Competencies Pre and Post-Training

Variables	Number of Respondent	Standard Deviation	Mean	Minimum Statistics	Maximum Statistics	Skewness	Kurtosis
Self-Awareness Pre	100	9.55	108.76	70	130	-0.94	2.50
Self-Awareness Post	100	10.99	130.99	86	144	-1.64	2.88
Self-Management Pre	100	9.97	76.80	49	99	-0.27	-0.61

Self-Management Post	100	8.22	97.03	54	109	-1.66	6.24
Social Awareness Pre	100	6.59	61.08	41	73	-0.81	0.86
Social Awareness Post	100	5.62	78.33	54	85	-1.50	2.77
Relationship Management Pre	100	14.99	86.16	42	116	-0.82	0.12
Relationship Management Post	100	17.51	106.98	60	129	-0.87	-0.04
Responsible Decision Making Pre	100	5.63	68.35	41	79	-1.19	4.43
Responsible Decision Making Post	100	5.71	82.65	59	89	-1.47	2.55

Source: Self Constructed

The descriptive data is shown in table 4.2.1. The table shows the number of respondents, mean values, standard deviation, Skewness, and Kurtosis values in the pre and post-test training intervention. The Skewness value for all five SEL competencies before and post-training is within the permitted range of -2 to +2, while the Kurtosis value is between -7 and +7. As a result, the data seems to be normally distributed (Bryne, 2013). Furthermore, the results show that the mean values of all five SEL competencies after training are higher than the mean values of competencies before training, indicating an increase in preschool teachers' understanding of SEL competencies. As a result, the positive mean values in the table show that preschool teachers in the districts of Ludhiana and Patiala in the Punjab, India understand SEL effectively. The findings indicate a significant improvement in teachers' understanding of SEL following the training intervention. The results illustrate that preschool teachers must be aware

of SEL since it leads to improved social interactions in preschool, stronger relationships with preschool students, and enhanced self-emotional competence and self-confidence.

Table 4.2.2: Paired Samples t-test to Compare Means of SEL Competencies Pre and Post-Training

Variables	Paired Mean Difference	Standard Error	t-test value	Decision
Self-Awareness Post-Self-Awareness Pre	22.23	0.74	29.73	Supported
Self-Management Post-Self-Management Pre	20.23	0.59	34.12	Supported
Social Awareness Post- Social Awareness Pre	17.25	0.53	32.24	Supported
Relationship Management Post- Relationship Management Pre	20.82	0.88	23.54	Supported
Responsible Decision Making Post -Responsible Decision Making Pre	14.33	0.36	38.92	Supported

Source: Self Constructed

Table 4.2.2 summarises the results of the paired sample t-test performed in the study to compare the means of the five SEL competencies before and after training. SPSS was used to analyze and assess the teacher's comprehension of the five SEL skills. The table demonstrates that the paired mean difference between pre and post-training for the first SEL competency, i.e., self-awareness, is 22.23, indicating that teachers' pre-training self-awareness is lower than post-training. The teachers' understanding of self-awareness competency of SEL pre and post-training has a "t" value of 29.73. It leads to the conclusion that there is a significant difference in SEL understanding of self-awareness competency before and after training. As a result, preschool teachers in Punjab, India have benefited from the training and learned about one's identity, feelings, emotions, strengths, and shortcomings (CASEL, 2018). The training module strengthened teachers' understanding of self-awareness skills such as recognizing feelings, having exact self-perception, identifying strengths, and being confident. The paired mean difference between pre and post-training for the second SEL competency, i.e., self-management, is 20.23, demonstrating that teachers' understanding of self-management has improved after training. The "t" stats value is 34.12. It reveals a significant change in teachers'

understanding of self-management competency after training. As a result, SEL training initiative has educated preschool teachers on how to manage unpleasant situations, control desires, encourage themselves in all teaching scenarios, and achieve goals. As a result, the training was helpful for preschool teachers in Punjab, India.

The paired mean difference for the third SEL competency, i.e., social awareness, is 17.25, indicating that teachers' understanding of social awareness is less developed in pre-training than post-training. The teachers' understanding of the social awareness competency of SEL pre and post-training has a "t" value of 32.24. It implies a significant difference in teachers' understanding of the social awareness competency of SEL before and after training. The findings show that the training session helped teachers broaden their understanding of social awareness regarding perspective-taking skills, acknowledging diversity, embracing similarities and differences, and empathizing with preschool students and co-workers. Relationship management is the fourth SEL competency. The paired mean difference for relationship management is 20.82, indicating that teachers' grasp of relationship management in pre-training is less robust than in post-training. The "t" value for SEL's relationship management competency is 23.54. It leads to the conclusion that there is a significant improvement in SEL's understanding of relationship management competency following training. Thus, preschool teachers teaching in Punjab have benefited from the training sessions and learned about developing healthy, cooperative, and engaging connections with colleagues and preschool students.

The paired mean difference between pre and post-training for the fifth SEL competency, i.e., responsible decision-making, is 14.33, indicating that teachers' understanding of responsible decision-making has improved after training. The teachers' understanding of responsible decision-making competency of SEL pre and post-training has a "t" value of 38.92. It leads to the conclusion that there is a significant improvement in teachers' understanding of responsible decision-making skills following training. This SEL training intervention has improved teachers' understanding of problem identification, analysis, and resolution, as well as making ethical judgments in and out of the classroom. As a result, SEL training for preschool teachers is critical for supporting self-improvement, illustrating positive school behavior, nurturing connections in the preschool, and promoting an inclusive and attentive classroom environment for preschool students (Domitrovich et al., 2016).

In light of the findings, the study indicates a substantial change in preschool teachers' understanding of SEL before and after training in the districts of Ludhiana and Patiala in Punjab, India. The training intervention has improved the teachers' understanding of SEL.

4.3 Objective 2: To Examine the Impact of Social-Emotional Learning on Student's Emotional Competence.

4.3 Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

This research is a perception-based study, collecting data from 100 teachers based on their observation of 486 preschool students from public and private preschools located in Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India. Table 4.3.1 covers the demographic characteristics undertaken in the present study. This section determined the frequency and percentage of answers for each segment.

Table 4.3.1: Demographic Variables

No.	Variables	Type	Frequency (486)	Percentage (in %)
1.	Gender	Female	296	61.0
		Male	190	39.0
2.	Location of Pre-school	Ludhiana (10 schools)	292	60.0
		Patiala (9 schools)	194	40.0
3.	Age of Preschool Children	3-4 years	181	37.2
		4-5 years	138	28.4
		5-6 years	167	34.4
4.	Number of Pre-school Children from school type	Private (11 schools)	186	38.3
		Public (8 schools)	300	61.7

Source: Self Constructed

4.3.1 Gender of Respondents

The females dominated the sample. The gender-wise analysis is shown in figure 4.3.1, which indicates that 61% of respondents were female preschool students and 39% were male preschool students.

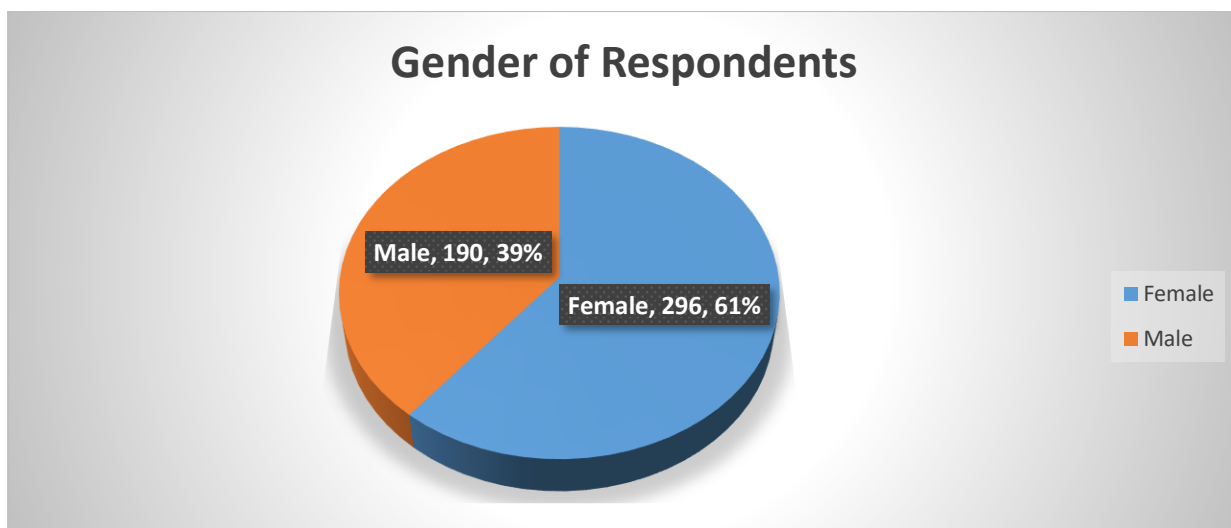
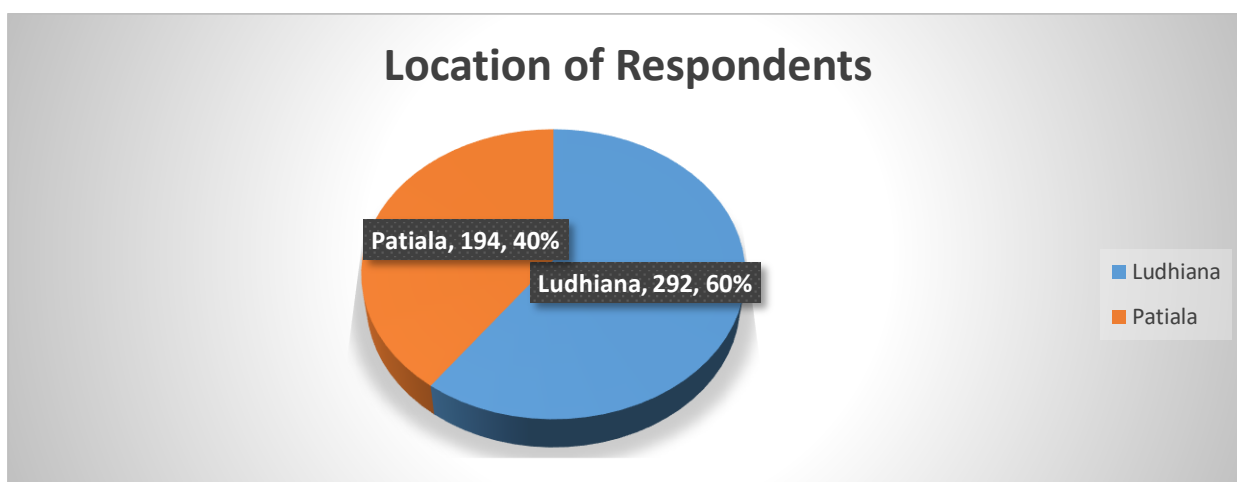


Figure 4.3.1: Gender-wise Analysis

4.3.2 Segregation Based on Location of Preschool Students

Figure 4.3.2 depicts the number of preschool students from the two districts of Punjab. The respondents comprised 486 preschool students aged 3 to 6 years studying in the districts of Ludhiana and Patiala in Punjab, India. A total of nineteen preschools participated in the survey. 60% of students belonged to 10 preschools from Ludhiana, and 40% were students in 9 preschools from Patiala district of Punjab, India.



4.3.2: Segregation Based on Location of Preschool Students

4.3.3 Age of Respondents

Figure 4.3.3 depicts the classification of preschool students based on their age. Out of the total respondents, 37% of preschool students belonged to the age group of 3 to 4 years, 29% belonged to the age group of 4 to 5 years, and 34% belonged to the age group of 5 to 6 years.

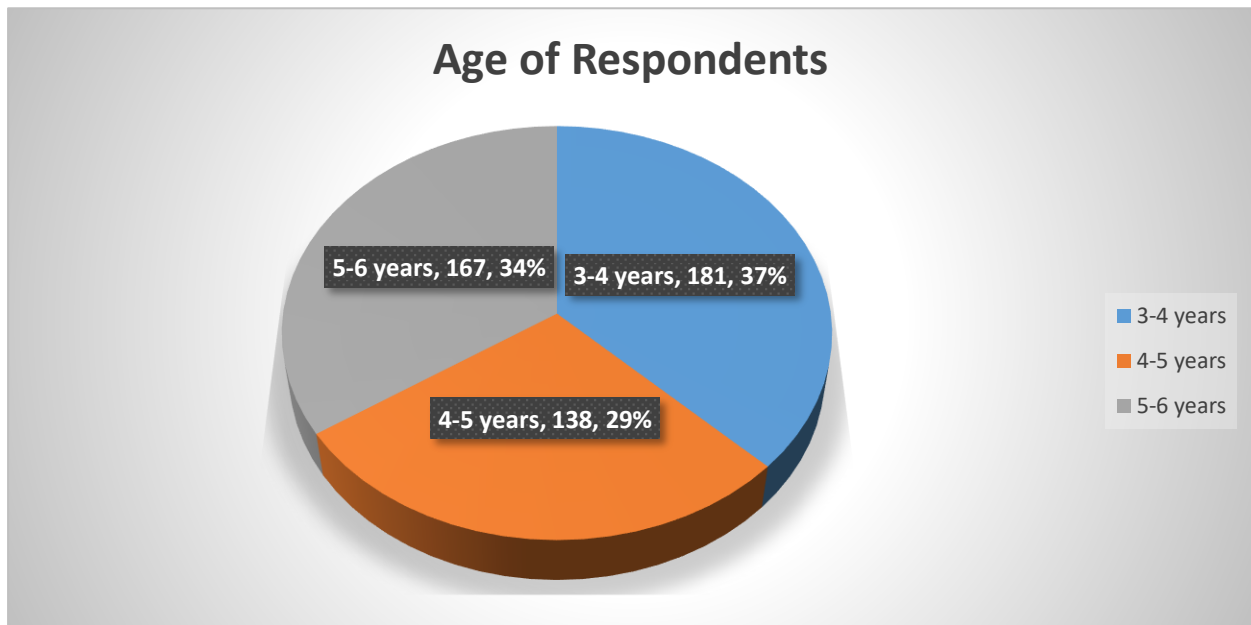


Figure 4.3.3: Age of Respondents

Figure 4.3.4 Segregation of Respondents Based on the School Type

Preschool students were classified based on public and private preschool. As shown in figure 4.3.4, 62% of students belong to the eleven private preschools in the state's urban region, while the remaining 38% of preschool students study in the eight public preschools in the rural and disadvantaged regions of the state.

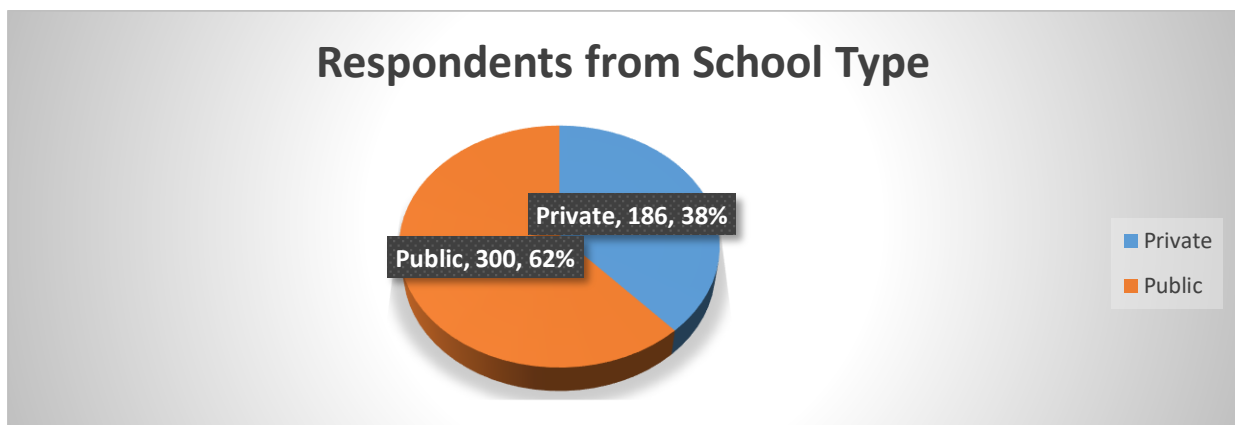


Figure 4.3.4: Segregation of Respondents Based on the School Type

4.4 Analysis of the Impact of Social-Emotional Learning on Student's Emotional Competence.

To examine the impact of SEL on preschool students' emotional competence, the investigators have designed and proposed an SEL framework titled "The ECCE Happiness Framework" for preschool students. This SEL framework consisted of three practices: social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness. The impact of the three chosen practices was observed on the emotional competence of 486 preschool students studying in the preschools located in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab, India.

The study utilized a descriptive survey method, and teachers were asked to practice various interactive and emotional competence-building activities along with their regular teaching curriculum. Then, preschool teachers were asked to observe students' emotional behavior and fill out a self-reported observation form (Appendix III). The results were analyzed using PLS-SEM, and the findings are presented and discussed.

PLS-SEM describes the relationship between two variables, namely latent and observed/measured variables. The study includes both measurement model and structural model. The measurement model determines how exogenous variables measure the latent variables' constructs, and the structural component models the relationship between latent variables' constructs. Both parts of the model are combined to design a holistic model that comprehensively describes the relationship between the variables. The estimation of the structural model follows the estimation of the confirmatory measurement model (Sharma & Kaur, 2016; Kumar et al., 2022).

The measurement model represents confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), which is employed to test the hypothesis that there is some relationship between the observed variables and their underlying latent construct. The measurement model only deals with validating the model. The model was specified and tested based on sample data. Sample data comprised all observed variables (Ramayah et al., 2018).

Section 3.9 of the Research Methodology chapter has already considered the content validity. The convergent validity was checked using composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). Composite Reliability is defined as the degree to which measurements are free from error and, therefore, yield consistent results. $CR > 0.70$.

$CR = (\text{square of summed standardized loadings}) / (\text{square of summed standardized loadings} + \text{sum of measurement error variance})$

Convergent Validity is established when each measured item correlates strongly with its assumed theoretical construct. For the convergent validity, the factor loadings and the AVE should be greater than 0.5. The formula for calculating AVE using the formula suggested by Hair et al. (2013) is given below:

$AVE = (\text{sum of squared standardized loadings}) / (\text{Sum of squared standardized loadings} + \text{sum of measurement error variance})$

Discriminant validity is considered when the Square root of AVE is greater than inter-construct correlations. The SEM-PLS model was used to achieve the second objective of the study.

The study aimed to answer the following three research hypotheses:

H1: Social engagement has a positive influence on the emotional competence of preschool students.

H2: Sharing and caring have a positive influence on the emotional competence of preschool students and

H3: Mindfulness has a positive influence on the emotional competence of preschool students.

Measurement Model

Table 4.4.1 presents the reliability and validity of all the constructs used in the present study. All the constructs, viz. emotional competence, mindfulness, sharing and caring, and social engagement had Cronbach Alpha greater than 0.70, hence these variables were in an acceptable range. The questionnaire demonstrates convergent validity as AVE is more than 0.50 for all sub-scales. The results also confirmed the composite reliability of constructs, as the value was more than 0.70 for all variables.

Table 4.4.1: Construct Reliability & Validity

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	rho A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Emotional Competence	0.839	0.844	0.886	0.609
Mindfulness	0.783	0.787	0.852	0.535
Sharing & Caring	0.760	0.779	0.844	0.576
Social Engagement	0.719	0.722	0.825	0.542

Source: Self Constructed

CFA is employed to test the hypothesis that there is some relationship between the observed variables and their underlying latent construct. Fornell and Larcker (1981) proposed that factor loadings and AVE demonstrate convergent validity of constructs. In the current investigation, the factor loadings remained more than 0.50. Table 4.4.1 (refer to Appendix III) shows that the AVE is above the threshold value of 0.50. Nunnally (1978) suggested that CR scores should be greater than 0.70. The resultant composite reliability is better than .825, and Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.719, indicating the model has strong construct validity and reliability.

Table 4.4.2: Correlation and Discriminant Validity (Square Root of AVE across Diagonal)

Statements (Items)	Emotional Competence	Mindfulness	Sharing & Caring	Social Engagement
A student uses words to describe her feelings and the feelings of others, such as, 'I am happy,' 'I do not like that,' or 'She is sad.'	0.835	0.662	0.490	0.591
The student tries to manage his emotions.	0.797	0.508	0.444	0.623
The student is able to recognize common emotional states, e.g., happy and sad.	0.744	0.482	0.316	0.479
The student use words to tell you what he wants or needs.	0.705	0.518	0.524	0.559

The student enjoys and remains happy studying in your class.	0.815	0.593	0.439	0.570
The student is able to feel competent to do things independently.	0.498	0.720	0.461	0.493
The student moves from one activity to the next with little difficulties, such as from playtime to mealtime.	0.434	0.692	0.504	0.463
The student does not hurt himself or destroy or damage things on purpose.	0.533	0.748	0.531	0.466
The student enjoys simple humor and breathing exercises.	0.549	0.742	0.495	0.459
Can your student name a friend?	0.578	0.752	0.475	0.477
The student washes their hands before and after the meal.	0.354	0.556	0.696	0.385
The student eats properly.	0.400	0.442	0.757	0.455
The student puts garbage in the dustbin.	0.340	0.454	0.818	0.441
The student follows routine directions. For example, when asked, does she come to the table or helps clean up her toys?	0.566	0.561	0.759	0.601
The student gets along easily with peers in the classroom.	0.572	0.598	0.528	0.723
The student comes to the preschool regularly.	0.512	0.490	0.549	0.788
The student is able to take the initiative.	0.585	0.496	0.418	0.739

The student checks to ensure you are near when exploring new places, such as a park.	0.452	0.271	0.392	0.692
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Source: Self Constructed

Furthermore, in tables 4.4.2 and 4.4.3, discriminant validity was assessed via a comparison of the values of the square root of AVE. Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criteria confirmed that the value of the square root of AVE should be greater than the inter-construct correlations, hence establishing discriminant validity. Likewise, all indicator loadings in bold were greater than their corresponding cross-loadings, making them acceptable and giving additional evidence for discriminant validity.

Table 4.4.3: Correlation and Discriminant Validity (Square Root of AVE across Diagonal)

Variables	Emotional Competence	Mindfulness	Sharing & Caring	Social Engagement
Emotional Competence	0.864			
Mindfulness	0.756	0.789		
Sharing & Caring	0.744	0.707	0.772	
Social Engagement	0.738	0.703	0.748	0.826

(Source: Self Constructed) [AVE = average variance extracted]

The presence of collinearity is reflected through VIF values, which should be > 3 (Hair et al., 2012). As shown in table 4.4.4, both outer and inner VIF values are less than the acceptable value 3, and no indicator was eliminated.

Table 4.4.4 Variance Inflation Factor

Variables	Outer VIF Values		Inner VIF Values	Emotional Competence	Mindfulness	Sharing & Caring	Social Engagement
Emotional Competence	1.522		Emotional Competence				
Mindfulness	1.306		Mindfulness	2.312			
Sharing & Caring	1.482		Sharing & Caring	2.656			
Social Engagement	1.863		Social Engagement	2.632			

Source: Self Constructed

Structural Model

After examining the measurement model, we proceed to assess the structural model. The results of the structural model are highlighted in figure 4.4.1 and table 4.4.5.

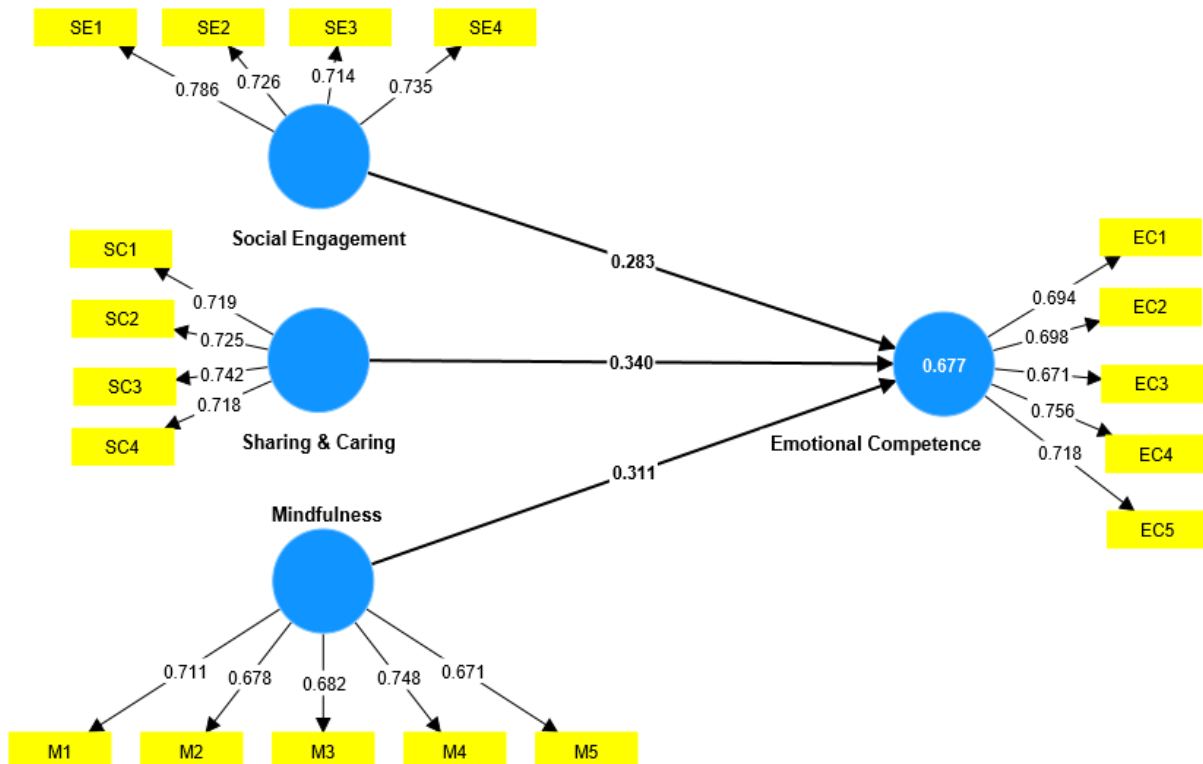


Figure 4.4.1: Path model using PLS-SEM

Table 4.4.5: Path Coefficients

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Testing	Original Sample (O)	Standard Error (STERR)	T Statistics (O/STERR)	p-values	Decision
H1	Mindfulness -> Emotional Competence	0.311	0.045	7.025***	0.000***	Supported
H2	Sharing & Caring -> Emotional Competence	0.340	0.042	8.112***	0.000***	Supported
H3	Social Engagement -> Emotional Competence	0.283	0.049	5.788***	0.000***	Supported

(Source: Self Constructed) [*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001]

The structural model findings must be examined after evaluating the accuracy and validity of the constructs. Figure 4.4.1 and table 4.4.5 demonstrate that the beta value of social engagement is 0.283, the value of sharing and caring is 0.340, and mindfulness value is 0.311 and $p \leq .01$, indicating that three practices have an impact on the emotional competence of preschool students in Punjab in India. The path coefficients were calculated using a nonparametric bootstrapping approach using 358 examples and 5000 samples (Vinzi et al., 2010).

The first hypothesis was *H1: Social engagement has a positive influence on the emotional competence of preschool students*. As can be seen, the β -value for the social engagement practice is 0.283 (T: 5.788 and $p \leq .001$). The results support that social engagement is directly related to emotional competence. The outcome supports that the practice of social engagement in the classroom with preschool students positively impacts their emotional competence. The outcomes support the acceptance of the hypothesis.

The following hypothesis is *H2: Sharing and caring have a positive influence on the emotional competence of preschool students*. The beta value for Sharing & Caring → Emotional Competence is 0.340 (T: 8.112 and $p \leq .001$). The results support that the practice of sharing and caring directly impacts the emotional competence of preschool students. The outcomes support the acceptance of hypothesis H2. Thus, sharing and caring are essential in developing preschool students' emotional competence.

The last hypothesis was *H3: Mindfulness has a positive influence on the emotional competence of preschool students*. As can be seen, the β -value for mindfulness practice is 0.311 (T: 7.025 and $p \leq .001$). The results support that mindfulness is directly related to emotional competence. The outcome supports that practicing mindfulness in a classroom with preschool students positively impacts their emotional competence. The outcomes support the acceptance of the hypothesis.

The overall results of bootstrapping are shown in figure 4.4.2. As displayed in the model, all loadings are significant. In case of path coefficients, all three practices of the ECCE happiness framework have a positive impact on the emotional competence of preschool students and are, thus, significant. Preschool teachers should focus on their students' SEL and happiness through three practices: social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness because it has a significant influence on their emotional competence; thus, Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 were validated. Overall, the R square value is 0.677, and the adjusted R square value is 0.675, indicating that the stated PLS-SEM model explains 67.5% of the variation, indicating that three practices significantly positively impact preschool students' emotional competence.

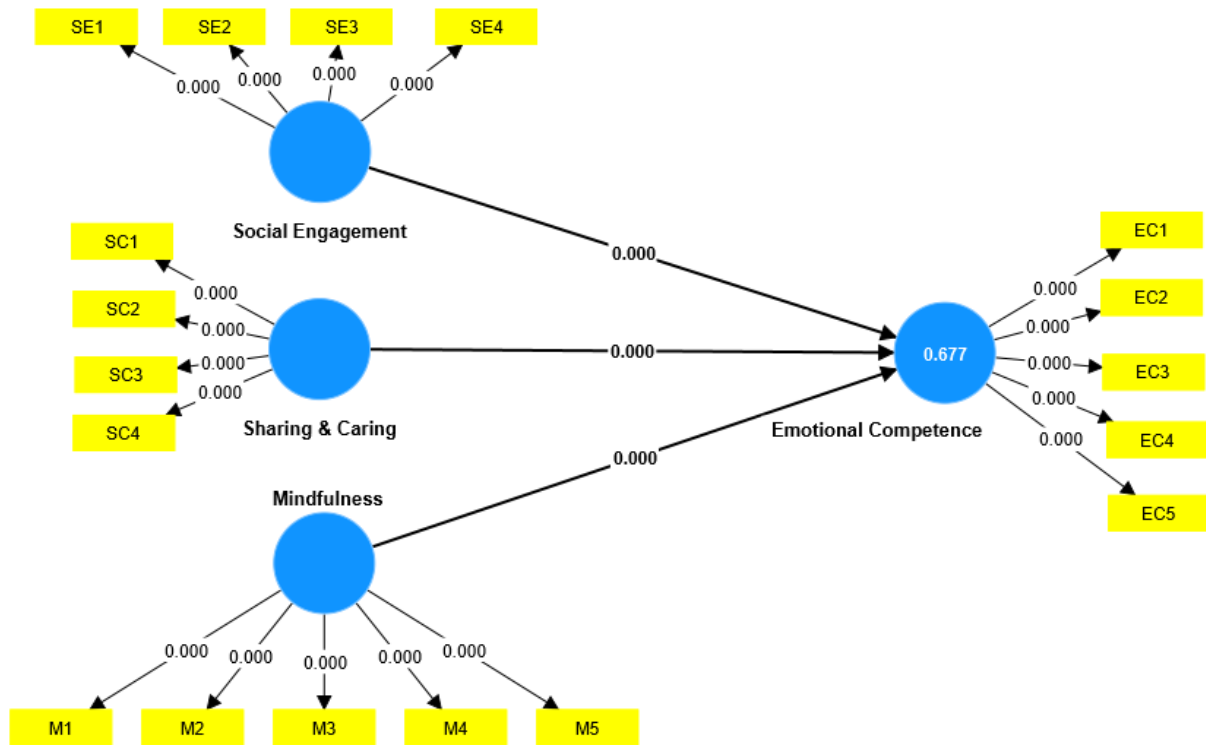


Figure 4.4.2: SEM-PLS Bootstrapping Model

The research focuses on the relevance of the ECCE happiness framework in supporting preschool students in understanding and managing their emotions and establishing a positive mind-set to become emotionally competent. The findings may motivate preschools and teachers to prioritize three SEL practices of social engagement, sharing, and caring, as well as pleasant mindfulness practices, in order to boost preschool students' emotional competence. As a result, the present investigation addresses the research hypotheses listed below.

H1: Social engagement has positively influenced the emotional competence of preschool students.

H2: Sharing and caring have positively influenced the emotional competence of preschool students.

H3: Mindfulness has positively influenced the emotional competence of preschool students.

4.5 Objective 3: To Design a Framework for Teachers to make Students Emotionally Competent.

To achieve the third objective of designing a framework for teachers to make preschool students emotionally competent, the investigator has designed and proposed an SEL framework titled "The ECCE Happiness Framework" for preschool students. The happiness framework is the SEL framework intended to develop and strengthen emotional competence and social abilities in students beginning from childhood through happiness intervention.

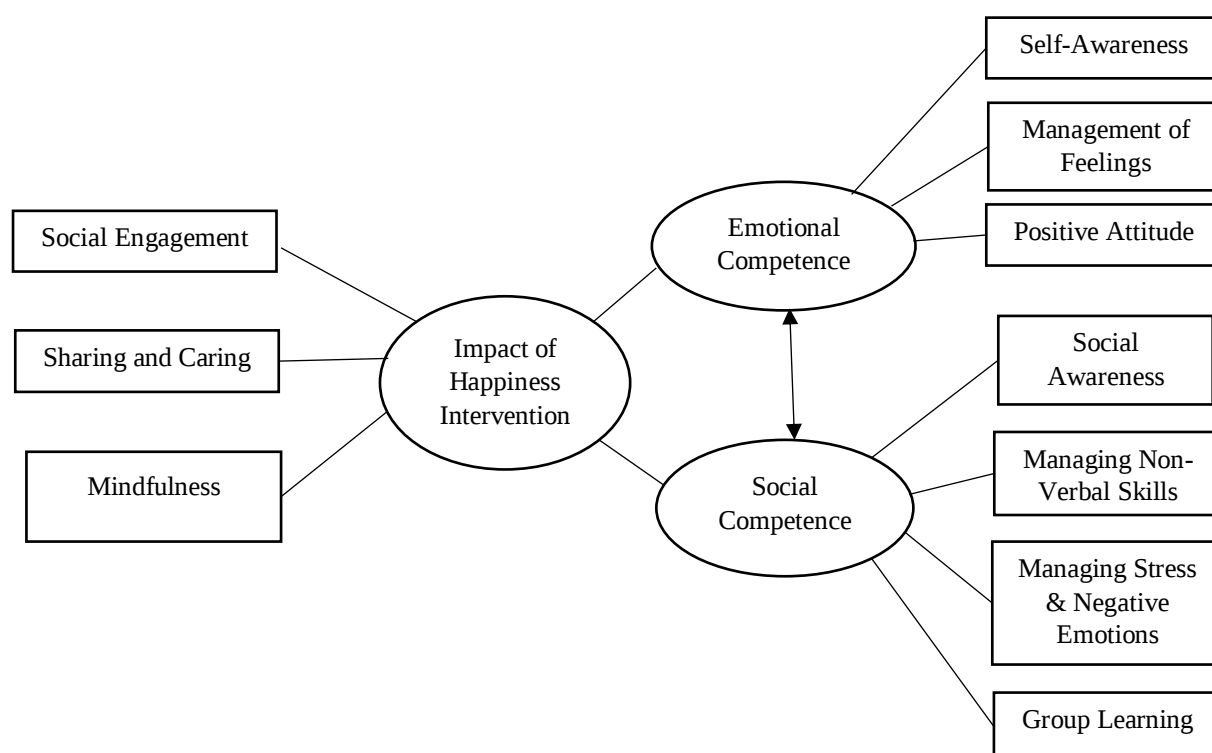


Figure 4.5.1: Conceptual ECCE Happiness Framework for Preschool Students

The ECCE happiness framework proposes to develop a happiness intervention program in preschools that focuses on three SEL practices: social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness in its daily activities in the classroom. The three practices are explained below:

1. **Social Engagement:** Social engagement is "the degree to which a student gets involved in the classroom, group, or society" (Collie et al., 2016). This practice can assist preschool students in experiencing happiness via their senses through active classroom engagement (Momentary Happiness as per The Triad of Happiness Model by Nagraj, 1999). Happiness intervention in schools can offer preschool students social

engagement opportunities by providing a stage to learn to respond to compliments, ask for help, negotiate play roles, help, cooperate, make eye contact, solve conflicts, ask and answer questions, and more. Social intervention can also assist students in overcoming social behavior issues (Hall, 2020). Preschool teachers can encourage healthy social engagement among preschool students by focusing on their social and emotional abilities (for instance, displaying delight while playing with peers, receiving a peer's close attention, sharing things, expressing something pleasant to a friend, exhibiting affection towards peers, requesting peers to share toys, and suggesting a play concept to a friend) during their regular classes, playtime, circle time, and storytelling sessions (Sendil & Erden, 2012). The outcome of this practice may be noticed in preschool student's levels of concentration, devotion, contentment, emotional reaction, and endurance in the classroom (Schlechty, 2011).

2. **Sharing and Caring:** Developing the skills of sharing and caring among preschool students is another vital practice in happiness intervention. This practice can assist preschool students in experiencing happiness in relationships via feelings (referred to as Deeper Happiness in Nagraj's The Triad of Happiness Model, 1999). Students can be provided opportunities to interact with their teachers and learn how to offer, work together with their peers, and be accountable to them (Aknin et al., 2012; Frey et al., 2014). This recommended practice can be carried out in the classroom through group learning and sharing activities. Teachers may help students develop sharing and caring skills by observing and appreciating actions, strengthening impartiality, sharing knowledge, and asking students to collectively paint a picture with limited crayons (Brackett & Rivers, 2014). A teacher can assist preschool students who are having difficulty learning by encouraging them so that they do not fail to share, by appreciating their most minor sharing efforts, and by asking them to imagine how they would feel if somebody took away their favorite toy, prevented them from engaging in play, or refused to allow them to have their turn so that they can understand everything from other people's perspectives. As a result, this practice can assist students in developing social and emotional competence from beginning to end (Ostrosky & Maedan, 2010).

3. Mindfulness: Mindfulness is "a series of practices emphasizing the significance of meditation to live in the moment, refrain from judgment, and encourage a non-reactive mindful state that can alter automatic conduct in the long term" (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). This practice can help preschool students experience happiness through learning and awareness (considered Sustainable Happiness as per The Triad of Happiness by Nagraj, 1999). Mindfulness improves preschool students' attention management (Lim & Qu, 2017) and favors their social and emotional skills (Flook et al., 2015). Preschool teachers can provide opportunities for practicing mindfulness in their everyday classroom via activities such as breathing, awareness of one's body, body scan technique observing, seeing, movement, slow walking, music, games, artistic endeavors, sensory-motor consciousness activities, and concentrated listening lessons, which support social and emotional competency, happiness, and an optimistic mindset (Burke, 2010; Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010; Rempel, 2012; Zenner et al., 2014). According to research, mindfulness-based practices appeal to students since they are self-management practices that are essential for their growth and development (Semple et al., 2005). Mindfulness-based practices aid in the reduction of anxiety symptoms in students (Semple et al., 2010), the enhancement of emotional self-control, and the instillation of emotional understanding and empathy (Nauriyal et al., 2006; Broderick & Jennings, 2012; Felver et al., 2013; Bakosh et al., 2016). This recommended practice can be carried out in schools through meditation and exercises.

Given the vital role of social engagement, sharing and caring habits, and mindfulness practices for fostering happiness in the lives of preschool students, the researchers have assembled a list of goals and areas to focus on while implementing the ECCE happiness framework in preschool in Punjab, India.

Table 4.5.1: Goals and Focus Areas in the Conceptual ECCE Happiness Framework for Preschool Students.

S No.	Happiness Intervention Practice	Goals	Focus Area
1	Social Engagement	-To hone friendship and communication abilities.	-How to make acquaintances and be sociable. -To communicate easily

		-To start comprehending and using fundamental problem-solving abilities.	-Value self-worth -Take initiatives -Comprehend the views of friends -Improve listening abilities -Label emotions of self and others
2	Sharing and Caring	-To keep friendship. -To learn the importance of caring, impartiality, negotiation, assistance, and empathy.	-How to ask classmates to participate in group activities -Learn about and practice sharing and caring -Value togetherness
3	Mindfulness	-To comprehend and express emotions. -To understand basic norms and regulations.	-How to stay calm and regulate negative emotions -How to do things feeling competent and independent -How to enjoy classes and regulate emotions -Become emotionally competent

Source: Self Constructed

The happiness framework's primary practices have been chosen to influence preschool students' social and emotional competence specifically. It is due to the fact that academic accomplishment in students lacking social and emotional competence may provide transient assistance but fails to yield a lasting impact (Blair, 2002; Katz, 2015).

Emotional Competence: A preschool student can improve his emotional competency with the help of his preschool teacher. A student can gain the skill of self-awareness, which can be observed in their ability to comprehend their emotions, opinions, feelings (such as happiness, sorrow, love, enthusiasm, guilt, interest, dissatisfaction, sorrow, and optimism), and self-management, which is displayed in their ability to manage their feelings and regulate their emotions, and perspective-taking reflected in the capability to empathize and relate with others (Colwell & Hart, 2006). Three essential practices in the suggested conceptual ECCE happiness framework are anticipated to affect preschool students' emotional competence. In the suggested paradigm, emotional competence is the dependent variable. The first practice of social engagement intends to foster a consciousness of emotions among students regarding their

friends, managing their reactions to them, taking the viewpoint of peers, demonstrating a positive mind-set, and empathizing with other students in the classroom, thereby influencing student's emotional competence (Schlechty, 2011; Test & Cornelius-White, 2013). The second practice of sharing and caring attempts to teach preschool students how to make and maintain friends, cooperate, and recognize and control their own and others' emotions, concentrating on self-awareness and self-management components of emotional competence (Ostrosky & Maedan, 2010). Finally, the third mindfulness practice is intended to improve preschool students' consciousness, concentration, self-focus, self-control, and self-regulation skills, thereby influencing their emotional competence (Lim & Qu, 2017).

Social Competence: Besides emotional competence, the suggested framework of happiness intervention attempts to build preschool students' social competence. The essential practice of social engagement seeks to promote understanding among preschool students with other students while engaging in cooperative learning activities, building and sustaining influential friendships, and focusing on the social competence development of preschool students (Test & Cornelius-White, 2013). The second practice of sharing and caring seeks to improve social skills such as collaboration, affection, consideration, negotiation, fairness, and oneness in preschool students (Aknin et al., 2012; Frey et al., 2014). Also, the third practice of mindfulness focuses on self-management abilities such as self-control, tranquility, focus, and concentration among preschool students to promote care and respect for other people (Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010; Black & Fernando, 2014; Lim & Qu, 2017). Table 4.5.2 below depicts the probable impact of the ECCE Happiness Framework's three practices on students' emotional and social competence.

Table 4.5.2: Possible Impact of the ECCE Happiness Framework practices on Social and Emotional Competence of Students.

Variables	Meaning	Impact of the ECCE Happiness Framework practices on Social and Emotional Competence of Students.
Emotional Competence	Emotional competence is the ability of a preschool child to recognize and understand their feelings,	Social Engagement intends to foster a consciousness of emotions among students regarding their friends, managing their reactions, taking the viewpoint of peers,

	gradually add verbal labels to those feelings, manage their feelings, learn to realize that others have feelings, too, and begin to take others' perspectives and empathize with them.	demonstrating a positive mindset, and empathizing with others.
		Sharing and Caring attempts to teach preschool students how to make and maintain friends, cooperate, and recognize and control their own and others' emotions, concentrating on self-awareness and self-management components of emotional competence.
		Mindfulness is intended to improve preschool students' consciousness, concentration, self-focus, self-control, and self-regulation skills.
Social Competence	Social competence is the ability of preschool students to understand the emotions of their friends and peers, deal with nonverbal skills, stress, and negative emotions, get along with peers and grownups, and nurture positive associations in the classroom.	Social Engagement seeks to promote understanding among preschool students with other students while engaging in cooperative learning activities and building and sustaining influential friendships.
		Sharing and Caring seeks to improve social skills such as collaboration, affection, consideration, negotiation, fairness, and oneness in preschool students.
		Mindfulness focuses on self-management abilities such as self-control, tranquility, focus, and concentration among preschool students to promote care and respect for others.

Source: Self Constructed

As a result, the suggested conceptual ECCE framework of the happiness intervention in preschools is an endeavor to establish the groundwork for students' SEL in their early years. This framework attempts to direct preschool students' focus toward investigating, feeling, and expressing happiness in more profound and lasting ways. In the context of Indian preschools, the framework is an endeavor that would assist preschool students in comprehending happiness within self, connections, and society. It is an attempt to bring about a paradigm shift in which

preschool students shift from seeking happiness outside to developing the capacity to experience it internally, inside oneself, via learning and awareness, which may ensure continuity of values beginning in early life.

Summing Up:

The present study contributes to the research on SEL among preschool teachers and students in India. The study has measured preschool teachers' understanding of SEL competencies pre and post-training. The training intervention of a 12-hour interactive session has resulted in improved SEL understanding amongst preschool teachers in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India. Further, the study has contributed by designing an SEL framework titled "the ECCE Happiness Framework" for improving preschool students' happiness and social and emotional competence. For the current study, the results from the practical implementation of the framework have been measured on the emotional competence of the preschool students in Punjab. The SEL-trained preschool teachers have observed the emotional behavior of their students, and the results have shown a significant improvement in the emotional competence of preschool students studying in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab, India.

Therefore, based on the study's results, it can be inferred that SEL understanding is a prerequisite for preschool teachers' self-development and for improving the emotional competence of preschool students in the classroom. SEL understanding can help preschool teachers manage their emotions, understand the emotions of preschool students and colleagues, develop positive relationships, make ethical decisions, overcome occupational stress, and face challenging situations in and out of preschools. School-based interventions, awareness sessions, and training workshops to foster SEL in preschool teachers and preschool students, in general, can influence their emotional well-being, self-perception, interpersonal relationships, educational outcomes, fine motor skills, and overall development (Zinsser & Curby, 2014; Ashraf et al., 2017).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE

After analyzing the related research questions in Chapter 4, this chapter throws light on the significant findings of the research. The findings of this study will help teachers, parents, and policymakers like the government, child specialists, and educationists initiate SEL training programs to improve SEL understanding among teachers. Further findings will guide teachers and educationalists to change, modify, and implement the ECCE Happiness Framework to improve preschool students' emotional competence and happiness, which will again help the child further develop and open new research areas. The present findings are discussed by the study's objectives, as shown below. Section 5.1 covers a discussion of the results. Section 5.2 depicts the complete view of the research work. The study's implications are covered in section 5.3, and the next section, 5.4, covers limitations and future scope.

5.1 Discussion of Results

The current research has examined the impact of training intervention on the SEL understanding among 100 preschool teachers pre and post-training in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab, India. The study also aimed to design an SEL framework titled "the ECCE Happiness Framework" for improving preschool students' social and emotional competence. The framework included three happiness-promoting SEL practices for students: social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness. The research also included measuring the impact of designing the SEL framework on the emotional competence of 486 preschool students studying in the nineteen preschools from the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India. A formalized module was developed for teachers' training on improving their SEL understanding. 12-hour formalized training was planned and conducted to improve teachers' understanding of SEL. Two sets of questionnaires were developed. One questionnaire was developed to measure teachers' understanding of SEL pre and post-training. Another questionnaire was developed for teachers to observe and evaluate the SEL framework's impact on preschool students' emotional competence.

5.1.1 Results of the SPSS to Examine the Preschool Teachers' Understanding about Social-Emotional Learning Pre and Post-training.

The current study measured the level of SEL understanding of 100 private and public preschool teacher's pre and post-training in nineteen preschools in the districts of Ludhiana and Patiala. The results highlight that the 12-hour (4 sessions) school-based teachers' SEL training program to improve preschool teachers' understanding of SEL and associated competencies yielded good outcomes. The findings infer that there is a significant difference in the 100 preschool teachers' understanding of SEL competencies pre and post-training in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India. Results highlight that SEL training intervention of 12 hours has improved teachers' understanding of SEL post-training. The training emphasized preschool educators' capability to identify and handle their social-emotional concerns to exemplify, exhibit, and support SEL competency with preschool students. Five competencies of SEL (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making) are the independent variables, and preschool teachers' SEL understanding is the dependent variable.

- I. The Skewness value for all five SEL competencies pre and post-training were within the permitted range of -2 to +2, while the Kurtosis value was between -7 and +7. As a result, the data seemed to be normally distributed.
- II. The results showed that the mean values of all five SEL competencies after training were higher than those of competencies before training, indicating improvement in the preschool teachers' understanding of SEL.
- III. The study used the paired sample t-test in SPSS to examine and compare the means of the five SEL competencies pre and post-training. The results indicated a significant difference in the teachers' understanding of five SEL competencies pre and post-training.
- IV. The SEL training has improved the self-awareness of preschool teachers in Ludhiana and Patiala. The training has strengthened teachers' self-awareness skills, such as recognizing feelings, self-perception, identifying strengths, and being confident.
- V. The SEL training has further improved their self-management skills by educating preschool teachers on managing unpleasant situations, controlling desires, encouraging themselves in all teaching scenarios, and achieving goals.

- VI. The findings showed that the training session had helped teachers broaden their understanding of social awareness regarding perspective-taking skills, acknowledging diversity, embracing similarities and differences, and empathizing with preschool students and co-workers.
- VII. The findings have highlighted that preschool teachers teaching in Punjab, India have benefited from the training sessions and learned about relationship management competency by developing healthy, cooperative, and engaging connections with colleagues and preschool students.
- VIII. The SEL training intervention has improved teachers' understanding of responsible decision-making competency by helping them identify, analyze, and resolve problems and make ethical judgments in and out of the classroom.
- IX. Overall, the study indicates a substantial change in 100 preschool teachers' understanding of SEL before and after training in the districts of Ludhiana and Patiala in Punjab, India. The training intervention has improved the teachers' understanding of SEL.

5.1.2 Results of PLS-SEM Model for Evaluating the Impact of Social-Emotional Learning on Preschool Students' Emotional Competence

The current study has examined the impact of SEL on the emotional competence of 486 preschool students studying in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India from the perspectives of their teachers. Childhood is an essential stage of development that forms the base of holistic growth and social-emotional-psychological well-being. Preschools and their teachers are the primary platforms that aid young students in learning social and emotional abilities to live happily (Lopez-Perez & Fernandez-Castilla, 2018). Therefore, the relevance of emotional competence concerning happiness promotion for effective preschool student performance has emphasized their need to prioritize SEL (Ashraf et al., 2017; Eadie et al., 2021).

The study has designed and proposed an SEL framework titled "The ECCE Happiness Framework" for preschool students. This SEL framework consisted of three practices: social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness. The impact of the three chosen practices

was seen on the emotional competence of 486 preschool students studying in the preschools of Punjab, India. The results highlighted improvement in the emotional competence of preschool students who were observed and taught in the current study. Social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness are the independent variables, and the preschool students' emotional competence is the dependent variable.

- I. The study used descriptive statistics for demographic output and the PLS-SEM path modeling to test the hypothesis using Smart PLS software (Ringle et al., 2020). The results demonstrated a significant relationship between the framework's three happiness practices (social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness) and the emotional competence of preschool students.
- II. Cronbach's Alpha has been computed for all the constructs to check the reliability and validity. The Cronbach's Alpha values were in the acceptable range for all constructs. (Nunnally, 1997 Hair et al., 2013).
- III. CFA is employed to test the hypothesis that there is some relationship between the observed variables and their underlying latent construct. Fornell and Larcker (1981) proposed that factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE) demonstrated convergent validity of constructs. The factor loadings remained more than 0.50. Moreover, the AVE was above the threshold value of 0.50.
- IV. Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the values of the square root of AVE. Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criteria confirmed that the value of the square root of AVE was greater than the inter-construct correlations, showing discriminant validity.
- V. The presence of collinearity is reflected through Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, which should be > 3 (Hair et al., 2012). Both outer and inner VIF values were less than the acceptable range, and no indicator was eliminated.
- VI. The structural model demonstrated beta values of social engagement is 0.283, the value of sharing and caring is 0.340, and the value of mindfulness is 0.311 and $p \leq .01$, indicating that three practices have an impact on the emotional competence of students in Punjab preschools located in India.
- VII. The findings indicated that social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness have positively influenced the emotional competence of preschool students.

- VIII. The current study highlighted the relevance of the ECCE happiness framework in supporting preschool students in understanding and managing their emotions and establishing a positive mind-set to become emotionally competent.
- IX. From the preschool teacher's perspective, implementing the ECCE Happiness framework has improved preschool students' emotional expressiveness, knowledge, and management. The preschool students could recognize and express their emotions (happiness and sadness, likeness and dislike), manage their feelings, and use words to express demands.
- X. The SEL interventions helped students get along with peers, take the initiative, adhere to rules, learn hygiene manners, and enjoy simple humor and breathing exercises in the classroom.
- XI. The impact of social engagement practice on the emotional competence of preschool students was maximum, followed by mindfulness and sharing and caring practices of the ECCE happiness framework in the study.
- XII. The findings direct and motivate preschools and teachers to prioritize three SEL practices: social engagement, sharing, and caring, as well as pleasant mindfulness practice, in order to boost preschool students' emotional competence.

5.1.3 Status of Hypotheses

The primary purpose of this study was to design an SEL framework titled “the ECCE happiness framework” for preschool students in Punjab. The framework comprised three primary happiness practices: social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness. The impact of these three SEL practices was seen in the emotional competence of 486 preschool students studying under 100 preschool teachers in Punjab. The results highlighted that the three practices have a positive association with the emotional competence of preschool students. The designed model shows that the SEL framework (social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness) explained 67.5% of the preschool students’ emotional competence. The related hypotheses are presented in table 5.1.3.

Table 5.1.3: Hypotheses testing for evaluation of the SEL framework (social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness) and emotional competence of Preschool students in Punjab

S No	Statement	Status
H1	Social engagement has a positive influence on the emotional competence of preschool students.	Accepted
H2	Sharing and caring have a positive influence on the emotional competence of preschool students.	Accepted
H3	Mindfulness has a positive influence on the emotional competence of preschool students.	Accepted

Source: Self Constructed

5.1.4 Examples of Teaching Practices that can be used for Practical Implementation of the ECCE Happiness Framework in Preschools

Happiness is a positive emotional state associated with a student's socio-emotional competence (Holder & Klassen, 2010). The study has proposed a conceptual ECCE happiness framework for preschool students in Punjab, India based on local needs. This framework, rooted in SEL, aimed to enhance students' SEC through a happiness intervention consisting of three essential practices: social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness. The framework was designed to foster positive peer interactions, facilitate the development of interpersonal relationships and lasting friendships, and promote students' integration into social groups, thereby enhancing their social competence. Additionally, the framework seeks to support students in understanding and managing their emotions and cultivating a positive attitude, thereby fostering emotional competence.

During their 12-hour teacher training session, preschool teachers were taught how to employ adaptive, multifaceted, game-based, inquiry-based, and activity-oriented instructional methods to implement the ECCE happiness framework in preschools. Teachers were advised to use practices such as recognizing facial expressions, colors, shapes, indoor and outdoor games, physical activity, peer interactions, group problem-solving, circle-times, drawing, painting, as well as pictorial art, craft, dance and music, drama, and puppetry (Caselman & Self, 2008; NCERT, 2015; Jha & Parvati, 2020). Table 5.1.4 provides an example of teaching strategies

that may be employed for the real-world implementation of the suggested ECCE happiness framework for increasing preschool student's social and emotional competence.

Table 5.1.4: Example of Teaching Practices that can be used for Practical Implementation of Conceptual ECCE Happiness Framework in Preschools

Happiness Intervention Practices	Characteristics of social and emotional competence in preschool students	How teachers can promote social and emotional competence	Teaching strategies, techniques, and tools to implement the framework	Possible Outcomes of strategies implemented	References
Social Engagement	<i>3 to 4 year old-</i> -Engages in interpersonal communication with their fellow student. -Engages in collaborative endeavors within a small group setting. -Initiates a dramatic act involving the portrayal of an animal, so engaging in a theatrical play. <i>4 to 5 yearold-</i>	-Teaching rules and re-directing to manage and regulate behavior in class. -Facilitate learning opportunities with play-based activities. -Guide and coach using words to convey feelings and recognize solutions to uncomplicated problems.	Physical Activity Play-based Learning Teacher-student relationship Casual talk in the context of emotional experience (CTEE)	-Enhance emotional regulation in students. -Improve labeling of feelings. -Acknowledge one's own and other's feelings. -Manage and control one's behavior. -Build a sense of association	NCERT, 2015; Kirk & Jay, 2018

	-Participates happily in small group activities. -Addresses conflicts with peers. -Discusses emotional states and personal encounters. <i>5 to 6 year old-</i> -Exhibit enhanced sociability and makes friends more easily. -Understand and manage feelings better. -Engages in competitive games.			or connectedness. -Promote group learning. -Promote affirmative behavior.	
Sharing and Caring	<i>3 to 4 year old-</i> -Share toys and things. -Demonstrates care and concern for friends. -Takes and keeps toys back at designated places.	-Exemplify effective sharing and taking turns in a classroom setting. -Engage with warmth and care with a student so that they observe	Elaborating about sharing Roleplay Use 'The Sharing Chart'	-Enhances social-awareness. -Forming positive associations. -Recognize and label the	NCERT, 2015 Ferreira et al., 2016

	-Resolves conflict with friends. <i>4 to 5 year old-</i> -Provide support and assistance to fellow students. <i>5 to 6 year old-</i> -Shares possessions and belongings. -Takes care of siblings -Participates in cooperative play with predetermined rules and roles.	and emulate similar behavior with peers. -Re-assure and compose student when distressed by removing the student from triggering situations. -Give the students plenty of appreciation and attention when sharing their possessions or concern for someone. -Play interactive games that involve sharing and caring.	Appreciate sharing and caring. Practice giving, not just offering Teach the golden rule- 'Behave with others as you want others to behave with you.' Emotion charts/books	emotional state of self and others. -Endorses a sense of responsibility. -Build social skills.	
Mindfulness	<i>3 to 4 year old-</i> -Relishes simple humor and breathing movements. -Becomes more independent.	-Exemplify self-calming tactics -Establish a gratitude practice.	Mindful breathing exercise Physical exercises and	-Supports self-awareness. -Stimulates self-regulation.	Burke, 2010; Hoffmann & Holzhter, 2011; NCERT, 2015; Council, 2018

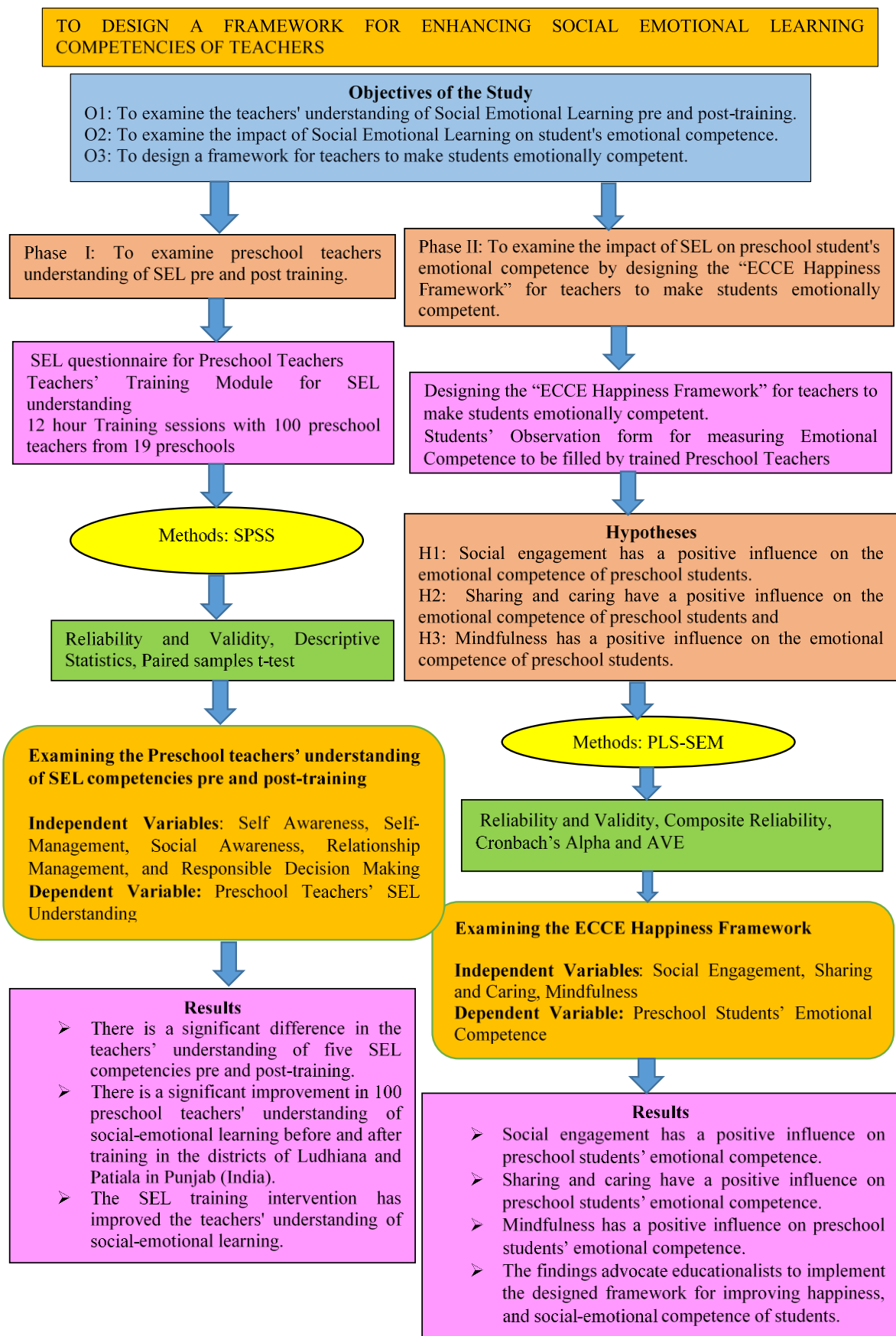
	-Plays ‘mother’ or ‘father.’ <i>4 to 5 year old-</i> -Differentiates imaginary from reality. -Upholds friendship and meaningful associations. -Displays more independence. <i>5 to 6 year old-</i> -Manages problematic feelings. -Has self-confidence and control. -Becomes more empathetic. -Participates in independent work.	-Exercise mindful eating with students during the break.	balancing activities Peace table Physiologic al regulation techniques	-Initiates management of emotions. -Supports in handling stress and deleterious emotions.	
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Source: Self Constructed

Teachers may utilize fun-based happy activities for preschool students to make learning more accessible and enjoyable. The ECCE happiness framework is an initiative to accentuate the part of preschool teachers in implementing the framework for fostering happiness and SEC amongst preschool students in Punjab.

5.2 Complete Overview of Research

The holistic view of the study has been presented in figure 5.2.1. These are the significant results concerning SEL training being provided to preschool teachers and the impact of the designed SEL framework on the emotional competence of preschool students in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India.



5.3 Implications of the Study

5.3.1 Theoretical Implication

This study adds a distinct and meaningful contribution to the body of literature on SEL. By looking at a lesser-studied population of preschool students and teachers, this study gives a unique insight into the effects of SEL understanding and development across a broader population spectrum. This study explored the changes in the 100 preschool teachers' understanding of SEL pre and post-training in nineteen preschools in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India. The study highlighted the importance of SEL understanding among preschool teachers. The study further pointed toward the need and relevance of SEL training interventions for improving SEL understanding among preschool teachers. The critical finding was the improved SEL understanding amongst preschool teachers after a 12 hours SEL training session dedicated to improving their self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making. Preschools and educationalists can use the designed teachers' training module to offer special training programs along with orientation and other interventions offered by schools. The lack of adequately trained teachers is a serious challenge that needs dire attention from policymakers. The study endorsed the role of teachers' SEL understanding via specialized and regular training sessions for enhancing their social-emotional well-being and their students' social and emotional competence in the classroom.

Additionally, the importance of happiness, social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness practices were noted, with skills such as emotion labeling, self-regulation, and emotional expression for preschool students being valuable for developing the emotional competence of young students. Happiness in preschool students is regarded as a powerful emotion focused on improving their emotional competence. Therefore, this study aims to propose and design the conceptual ECCE happiness framework focused on promoting preschool students' social and emotional competence based on happiness intervention, which includes three essential practices: social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness. This SEL framework is an initiative to help preschool students understand and manage their emotions and enhance a positive attitude, making them emotionally competent. This study sought to explore the impact of SEL intervention on the emotional competence of preschool students, which is not a lens frequently taken in the extant literature and typically able to be examined in students at such a young age. This research indicates robust emotional competence

development among preschool students exposed to formalized SEL framework implementation. This study does not attempt to generalize results for all. However, this study focused on developing an understanding of SEL amongst preschool teachers via training, designing, and implementing the SEL framework to improve the emotional competence of preschool students in Punjab, India.

5.3.2 Practical Implications

Some critical practical implications result from this research. The findings of this study have implications for the Punjab Ministry of Education, early childhood settings, policymakers, and educationalists. The study will be a starting point for further exploration into the current situation of SEL understanding and its impact on preschool teachers and students in Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India. Training programs are a must for supporting teachers in gaining SEL knowledge and learning strategies and techniques to enhance their repertoire of SEL abilities. Many SEL training programs, modules, and interventions have focused on improving teachers' knowledge, understanding, mindfulness, and SEL skills in developed nations such as the United States, Australia, Germany, and the United Nations. The outcomes revealed that teachers who taught in educational environments implementing SEL training interventions felt more confident about their SEL skills, were more assertive in handling challenging situations, and experienced higher job satisfaction (Ruchika, 2017; Lang et al., 2020). According to India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, socially and emotionally competent teachers are the cornerstone for students' holistic development. Therefore, there is a dire need to address this issue and implement training programs regarding SEL for teacher's at all educational levels. SEL training will help teachers improve their understanding of SEL, enhance their SEL skills, and improve their students' social-emotional skills in educational settings. Consequently, this study suggests the successful implementation of the ECCE Happiness framework for preschool students in correspondence to their regular academic curriculum in the preschools of Punjab. As a result, there is a need to implement the ECCE Happiness framework at all levels in schools and colleges to make students socially and emotionally competent at every level of education.

5.4 Limitations and Future Scope

Like any other study, the present study also has a few limitations. Firstly, the data can be enhanced, and more regions could be covered for better results. However, the present study's sample consisted of 100 preschool teachers and 486 preschool students aged 3 to 6 years studying in 19 preschools in Ludhiana and Patiala in Punjab, India. The study is restricted to one province and two districts rather than the nation. Future researchers can expand this study to cover more preschools, teachers, and students in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India.

Further, the sample was predominantly made up of female preschool teachers. It might suggest a limitation in generalizing results among male teachers, students, and all grades. This limitation also highlights that preschools comprise more female than male staff. It might be because females have more patience and better emotional competence in handling young and energetic preschool students than male teachers (Khamrang, 2014).

Another limitation is that this study solely used self-report instruments (SEL Questionnaire for Teachers, Teachers' Training Module, and Observation Form), which may have skewed the outcomes.

Further, the study intentionally focused entirely on emotional competence in preschool students as the outcome variable (dependent construct). Lastly, the current study relies on preschool teachers evaluating their students' social engagement, sharing and caring, mindfulness, and emotional competence, which may contain difficult-to-control biases.

Future research should overcome these constraints and investigate teachers' SEL and how it contributes to healthy teacher-student connections at all levels of education in India. Furthermore, future studies should focus on approaches to improve preschool students' social-emotional learning abilities. To ensure fairness, future studies should include cross-checking techniques such as parental influences and children's experiences in sampling households. Also, researchers can expand this study to cover more preschools and pre-schoolers in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India. In addition, future studies should evaluate the framework in various learning contexts such as homes, childcare facilities, and all school levels in India, which is anticipated to provide significant insights to caregivers and teachers for improving preschool students' emotional competence.

5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study has contributed in developing training modules for teachers, the SEL training program, the ECCE Happiness framework for students, and tools and techniques that are most appropriate to derive positive results. The tools and techniques may also be supplemented according to the SEL development needs and incorporated into future research. This research embeds the foundation for future researchers to contribute to further enhancing the SEL understanding of teachers via development programs and improving the emotional competence of students via the SEL framework at all levels in the educational setting.

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APPENDIX-I

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) SCALE FOR TEACHERS

Dear Participant

Thanks in advance for your participation in completing this academic survey that aims to examine your understanding of Social Emotional Learning pre-training. Kindly take a few minutes to fill up this questionnaire.

If you have any queries, please feel free to contact me anytime either through email jaasleen@yahoo.com or phone 6283404730.

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Please read the following definition:

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) refers to the process by which individuals acquire knowledge and skills to help navigate through life's challenges. It refers to the development of skills related to recognizing and managing emotions, developing care and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively.

Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) identifies five competencies essential in cultivating cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills in students. These competencies include self-awareness (ability to identify emotions, thoughts, and behaviors), self-management (ability to build upon identification and regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviors), social awareness (ability to take the perspectives of others), relationship skills (ability to establish and maintain positive relationships), and responsible decision-making (ability to make ethical personal choices).

With this definition in mind, please read the following statements and think about how true each is for **YOU**. Rate the extent to which you **agree** or **disagree** with each statement.

(1) stands for strongly disagree

(2) stands for disagree

- (3) stands for neutral
(4) stands for agree and
(5) stands for strongly agree

YOUR RESPONSES TO THIS SURVEY ARE CONFIDENTIAL

Tick in the box that corresponds with your response.

Part I:

Basic Demographic Information of Respondent

Consent for Participation

☐ I agree to consent

1. Name of the respondent _____
 2. Email of the respondent _____
 3. Name of the institution where you are employed _____
 4. Please indicate your gender: Male ☐ Female ☐ Others ☐
 5. Years of professional school experience
0-10 years ☐ 10-20 years ☐ 20 years and above ☐
 6. Indicate your education qualification
Haven't graduated from high school ☐ Graduated ☐ Masters ☐
Masters with Specialist Degree ☐ Doctorate ☐
 7. Please indicate your city
Ludhiana ☐ Patiala ☐
 8. Mark only one that applies to your school
Urban ☐ Rural ☐
-

Part II:

Below are some questions relating to '**Prior Knowledge of SEL in teachers**' in school. Using the multiple choices below, identify the answer that best represents your on-the-spot belief about each statement or question. Please answer the following questions by placing a tick mark

in the relevant column where **(1) stands for strongly unknowledgeable (or strongly disagree) and (5) stands for strongly knowledgeable (or strongly agree)**. Place each statement within your school context. Please respond to all questions.

S No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	You have knowledge of the term “Social-Emotional Learning (SEL).					
2	You know the meaning of SEL.					
3	You have knowledge of SEL competencies.					
4	You have attended SEL training in last 12 months.					
5	You have used/ using SEL competencies in your teaching career.					
6	You would like to attend a workshop/ training to develop your own understanding about SEL.					
7	You have school culture that supports the development of teacher’s SEL.					
8	Your principal supports the teacher’s training for enhancing their SEL.					

Below are some questions relating to ‘**Knowledge about 5 competencies of Social-Emotional Learning in teachers**’ within your school context while teaching. Using the multiple choices below, identify the answer that best represents your on-the-spot belief about each statement or question. Please answer the following questions by placing a checkmark in the relevant column where **(1) stands for strongly disagree and (5) stands for strongly agree**. Place each statement within your school context. Please respond to all questions.

SELF-AWARENESS- Self-awareness refers to the ability of an individual to recognize and understand one’s own emotions, feelings, interests, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior.

S No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5

1	You have a good sense of why you have certain feelings most of the time.					
2	You feel a sense of pride in doing your job.					
3	You enjoy teaching.					
4	You "observe" yourself while teaching in classroom.					
5	You are committed for your self-development.					
6	It's easy for you to describe your feelings.					
7	You are fairly cheerful person.					
8	You are able to identify, recognize, and name your emotions in the moment most of the time.					
9	You recognize the relationship between your feelings and your reactions towards students in classroom.					
10	You recognize the relationship between your feelings and your reactions towards colleagues in the school.					
11	You know and are realistic about your strengths and weaknesses.					
12	You accept others feedback about your work in school.					
13	You know how your own needs, biases, and values affect the decisions you make in classroom while teaching.					
14	You believe you have ability to influence and lead your students effectively.					
15	You feel confident that you can handle situations with self-assurance and a calm mind.					
16	You believe that your teaching experiences help you to learn and grow.					

17	You feel positive even in negative situations.					
18	You feel satisfied with your teaching in the classroom.					
19	You analyze how your personality fits with your teaching profession.					
20	You feel easy to make changes and adapt to new practices while teaching.					
21	You feel guilty for criticizing students.					
22	You find it easy to try innovative teaching practices in classroom.					
23	You can recognize the situations that trigger your emotions.					
24	You have a good understanding of what are your values and your goals.					
25	You have a good sense of humour.					
26	You have a positive perspective about your personality.					
27	You are not defensive in receiving criticism about yourself.					
28	You speak out for a course of action you believe in, even when others disagree.					
29	You consider yourself an effective person, capable of taking on challenges and master new tasks.					

Self-Management- Self-Management refers to the ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behavior to handle stress, control impulses, and motivate oneself to overcome obstacles by setting and achieving goals.

S No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
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1	You find ways to manage your emotions and channel them in useful ways without harming anyone.					
2	You stay calm, composed, and clear-headed under high stress and during a crisis in school.					
3	You have high personal standards that motivate you to seek performance improvements for yourself and those you lead.					
4	You are practical, setting measurable, challenging, and attainable goals.					
5	You accept new challenges in your teaching profession and adjust to changes.					
6	When you encounter a challenging problem, you try to solve it by yourself.					
7	You modify your thinking in the face of new information and realities.					
8	You can manage multiple demands of students without losing focus or energy in classroom.					
9	You keep a balance between your work life and personal renewal time.					
10	You always set goal for yourself and then try your best to achieve them.					
11	You are a self-motivated person.					
12	It's generally easy for you to make changes in your daily life.					
13	It's easy for you to face unpleasant situations.					
14	You are optimistic about most things you do.					

15	You generally expect things will turn out all right, despite setbacks from time to time.					
16	Your impulsiveness creates problem in school.					
17	You keep patience while teaching in class.					
18	You have strong impulses that are hard to control.					
19	You tend to control your anger easily.					
20	You know how to deal with upsetting problems.					
21	You manage stress caused within school.					
22	You know how to keep calm in difficult situations.					
23	You are open to candid feedback, new perspectives, continuous learning, and self-development.					

Social Awareness- Social Awareness refers to the ability to identify and understand the perspective of others and empathize with them; recognize and appreciate individual and group similarities and differences; identify and use family, school, and community resources.

S No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	You listen actively to another person's perspective.					
2	You can grasp another person's feelings from both verbal and nonverbal cues.					
3	You believe that, in general, people are doing their best, and you expect the best of them.					
4	You appreciate and get along with people of diverse backgrounds and cultures in your school.					
5	You utilize involving practices to ensure all student's voices are represented in classroom.					

6	You are insightful in organizational situations and are able to identify crucial social networks.					
7	You understand the organizational forces at work, guiding values, and unspoken rules that operate among people.					
8	You can understand your student's emotions from their behavior.					
9	You are a good observer of colleague's emotions.					
10	You are sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others.					
11	You feel like "part of the family" at your school.					
12	You feel "emotionally attached" to this school.					
13	You feel a strong sense of belonging with your students.					
14	You look at why students act the way they do.					
15	You have compassion and acceptance for others.					
16	You think about how colleagues or students interact with each other.					
17	You are good at understanding the way other people behave.					

Relationship Skills- Relationship skills refer to the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding cooperative relationships; resist inappropriate social pressure; prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflict; seek help when needed.

S No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
-------	------------	---	---	---	---	---

1	You foster an emotionally nurturing and safe environment for students.					
2	You are open and authentic with others about your values and beliefs, goals, and guiding principles.					
3	You communicate with and encourage interaction with students.					
4	You can articulate ideas that are important to you in ways that motivate students to become involved.					
5	You have a genuine interest in cultivating student's growth and developing their SEL skills.					
6	You are able to openly admit your mistakes and shortcomings to yourself and others.					
7	You try to understand the perspective and experiences of others before you offer suggestions.					
8	You give timely and constructive feedback as a guide and mentor.					
9	You are comfortable dealing with conflict, listening to feelings from all parties and helping them understand different perspectives.					
10	You guide students to resolve their conflicts.					
11	You like helping students.					
12	You like helping colleagues.					
13	You are good at teamwork and generate a shared atmosphere that inspires students.					
14	You build relationships with students of diverse groups.					
15	You involve students in important decision-making tasks to ensure to make a wise choice.					

16	You express teamwork in your leadership style and personal behaviors as a role model to students.					
17	You recognize individual and group similarities and differences.					
18	You use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.					
19	You demonstrate an ability to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.					
20	It's easy for you to share your deep feelings with others.					
21	It's easy for you to make friends.					
22	You care what happens to other people.					
23	You have good relations with students.					
24	You have good relations with colleagues.					
25	You regularly interact with students.					
26	You keep in touch with colleagues.					

Responsible Decision Making- Responsible decision making refers to the ability to make decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and probable consequences of various actions; apply decision-making skills to the well-being of oneself and others.

S No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	You are able to define the core of the problem and identify the solution options.					
2	You recognize the need for change, to challenge the status quo, and to encourage new thinking in your classroom.					

3	You conduct a need analysis and involve your colleagues to identify problems before starting a new initiative.					
4	You involve your colleagues while decision making.					
5	You find ethical ways to overcome barriers when it comes to making decisions while teaching.					
6	You use more than one measure to assess progress toward social, emotional, and academic goals.					
7	You usually set personal goals and monitor progress toward these goals.					
8	You provide opportunities for self-reflection and group reflection on progress toward goals used while teaching.					
9	You treat your colleagues in the same way you want to be treated.					
10	You are sensitive to the feelings of others while making decisions.					
11	You contribute to the well-being of your school.					
12	It's easy for you to decide on the best solution when it comes to solve problems.					
13	Your approach in overcoming difficulties is to move step by step.					
14	When faced with a difficult situation, you like to collect all information about it that you can.					
15	You try to get an overview of a problem before trying to solve it.					

16	You would stop and help a crying child, find his or her parents, even if you are required to be somewhere else at the same time.					
17	You encourage community service activities for students and staff.					
18	You consider ethical, safety, and societal factors in making decisions.					

APPENDIX-II

DESIGN OF THE TEACHERS' SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

TRAINING MODULE

Section 1- Overview of the SEL Training and about SEL (2 hours)

Purpose- This section presents a summary of the training, including the trainer's introduction, the participants' introductions, the program's purpose, and instructions for learning and practicing.

Facilitation note: Welcome the participants formally. Introduce yourself and the other facilitators. Discuss your relevant prior experiences to increase participant trust in your abilities.	
Introduction: Request participants to introduce themselves so we know who is in the room - Name of the teacher, place of joining, one fun fact about you, and current feelings of the teacher.	HELLO! - Request you all to rename yourself on Zoom with your name - Introduce yourself- - Your Name - Which School are you affiliated with? - One fun-fact about you. - How are you feeling right now? 
Set Guidelines for Learning and Practicing: Set the rules and guidelines for the participants in the room to ensure that they are in a safe space and that all the information will be kept confidential.	* Guidelines for Learning & Practicing 1. Help Create a Safe Space- One that is Open and Trusting - Confidentiality - Trust and Openness - Speak for 'I' - Don't Give Advice 2. We will strive for "Progress, Not Perfection" 3. Take What You Like, Leave What You Don't 4. Regularity and Keeping an Open Mind 5. Rules for Effective Listening - Be totally present for the other person - Try not to ask questions - Try not to give advice - Keep everything in total confidence 
Questionnaire Filling: Request participants to fill out the questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of social-emotional learning and self-awareness pre-training.	Kindly fill the Pre-training Questionnaire
Explain: Concept of Social-Emotional Learning- meaning, the emergence of SEL, about CASEL, and the importance of SEL.	What is Social-Emotional Learning? Social and emotional learning (SEL) provides the structure and process for adults and students to develop fundamental emotional and social competencies and experiences to: - understand and manage emotions, - set and achieve positive goals, - feel and share empathy for others, - establish and maintain positive relationships and - make responsible decisions. The field emerged some 25 years ago with the publication of Goleman's Emotional Intelligence (1995) and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (1993). CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) was founded in 1994 by Daniel Goleman, the author of Emotional Intelligence, and educator Eileen Rockefeller Growald. It is an international nonprofit organization for educators and researchers based at the University of Illinois at Chicago that promotes school based SEL. It is the leading body working on SEL. 

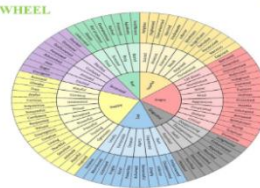
Five competencies of Social-Emotional Learning



Skills related to the Five competencies of Social-Emotional learning.



- ▶ This journey of Covid-19 and the lockdown had been a roller coaster ride for everyone. Staying at home, being a parent, also being a teacher, teaching from home, online teaching experience and managing personal and professional life have been an overwhelming situation for each one of us.
- ▶ Write down the emotions you have experienced during the lockdown.
- ▶ Categorize your emotions into POSITIVE EMOTIONS AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS



- To understand the role of emotions and feelings
- To be able to identify and label emotions
- To broaden your emotional vocabulary
- To consider the intensity of emotions being felt during a situation
- To understand the importance of writing down the emotions



Reflective Exercise 2:

Explain the exercise and give participants 5 minutes to draw their portrait.

Now, in groups of 2-2, ask participants to share their portrait (5 minutes for each participant)

Reflective Exercise 2

► Take 5 minutes and make your own portrait. Pen down the following

Dimensions	Description
Physical	Appearance, Health, Strength
Social	Social Interactions (what people think about you-good and bad things)
Temperamental	Emotional awareness, Likes, Dislikes, Qualities, Hobbies
Educational	Experiences, Interactions, Qualification, Future goals
Moral	Values, Codes, Principles
Intellectual	Problem solving, Critical thinking

Aim of the Reflective Exercise

- To understand the importance of
- 1. Self-concept
- 2. Self-perception
- 3. Self-confidence



Strategies to improve Self Awareness:

Explain the ways to improve self-awareness

1. Mindfulness Meditation

Mindfulness is a self-awareness skill that dramatically decreases anxiety and psychological stress. It is the capacity to concentrate on what is currently happening and understand one's situation. To introduce mindfulness in class, play an audio meditation CD or recite one loudly to the students. Encourage them to put their emotions and feelings aside and concentrate as much as possible on the meditation.

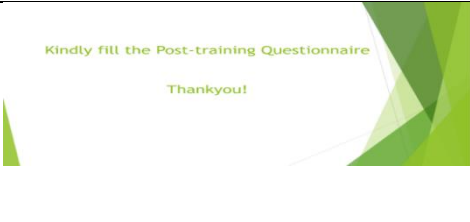
2. Reflective Writing

Reflective writing promotes self-awareness, empathy, and compassion in pupils. Allow children five to ten minutes each day to write about a prompt, fostering self-reflection. Reflective writing practice on a daily basis can assist pupils in learning to evaluate their thoughts and feelings in a self-aware manner.

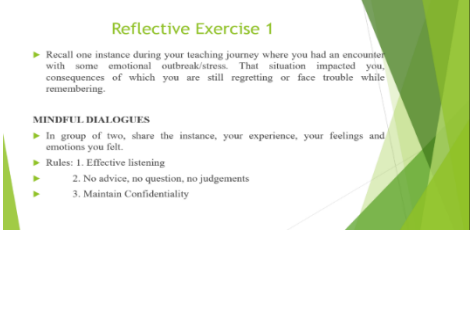
Not sure what questions to ask your students? Here are a few prompts to help in self-analysis:

- When was your happiest moment in life? Why was it so cheerful?
- Who is your best buddy and why?
- What do you appreciate and hate about yourself?



3. Emotional Vocabulary Lists Self-awareness activities are a great way to help students understand emotional cues. Include several words that describe emotions in your class vocabulary lists, like “joyful” or “scared.” Discuss what it means when introducing a new emotional vocabulary word and how students can recognize this feeling in themselves and others.	
Conclusion Statements: Ask everyone how they are feeling after the session.	
Questionnaire Filling: Request participants to fill out the questionnaire to examine teachers’ understanding of self-awareness post-training.	

Section 3- Understanding the Competency of Self-Management (2 hours)

Questionnaire Filling: Request participants to complete the questionnaire to examine teachers’ understanding of self-management pre-training.	
Introduce: Concept of Self-Management Ask participants their point of view on what self-management is. Then, explain the meaning of self-management.	
Reflective Exercise 1: Explain to participants the reflective exercise. Send participants to breakout rooms of 2-2 teachers. Give them 5 minutes each to share their instance and emotions being felt. One participant will speak, and the other will listen quietly. Tell them the rules.	

After 10 minutes of this mindful dialogue, ask participants to do reflective writing of the questions for the next 5 minutes.

After reflective writing, ask each participant to share how they are feeling right now.

- Write down what first comes to your mind relating to your story (Keep answers to self)
- 1. When the instance happened, what were your emotions?
- 2. If a similar instance happens now, will you react the same way or not?
- 3. When you recall the instance today, do you think it happened because of you or some other factor?
- 4. Do you think/realize that your reaction could have been avoided or modified?
- 5. Body sensations- How was your body reacting?

Body sensation	disturbed	good
Heartbeat	faster	slower/normal
Muscle Movement	tensed	relaxed
Head	heavy	light
Breathing	fast	Slow/normal
Thoughts	normal	Overflowing
Feet	cold	warmth
Hands	normal	sweaty

Reflective Exercise 2:

After exercise 1, explain reflective exercise 2 of Blind Drawing to all participants. Give them 3 minutes and play soft music.

After the reflective exercise, ask each participant to show their drawing masterpieces and share their feelings.

Tell participants about the importance of recognizing emotions and then managing them.

Reflective Exercise 2

BLIND DRAWING

- Now wherever you are sitting, just have a look of the things around you in the room. Take A4 size sheet and a pen/colour. Without picking up the pen, draw whatever you saw in the room with the closed eyes for next 3 minutes.
- Material Required- Pen/Colour, A4 size sheet

Aim of the Reflective Exercise

- How are your feeling now?

Aim-

- To realize the feelings and emotions felt during the instance.
- To recognize the sensations and movement felt by our body.
- To manage self

Strategies that can be used for Self-Management:

Explain various practices/strategies/activities that can be used for self-management.

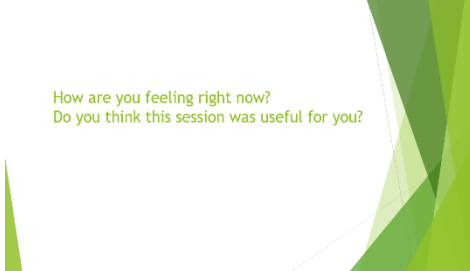
1. Tracking-The practice of noticing sensations in the body is called “tracking.” Usually, we tend to use feeling and emotion words to describe what state we are in. For instance, when someone asks us, “How are you today?” we might say, “I am feeling fine,” or “I am feeling low.” Rarely do we spend time acknowledging the physical sensations associated with “feeling good” or “feeling sad.” We can learn to do so, however, and developing this skill is enormously helpful in allowing us to know what state our body is in. Recognizing a warm sensation in the chest radiating out, butterflies in one’s stomach, or

Practices helpful for Self Management



the tightening or loosening of muscles gives us information about the body. As we learn about our bodies, we develop “body literacy.” Tracking, therefore, is the act of noticing the physical sensations that are occurring within the body in the present moment. It also involves recognizing if they are pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.

2. **Resourcing-** One effective way to move into or stay within the resilient zone is to develop an external, internal, or imagined resource that brings about a state of greater well-being, safety, and security. External resources can be a memory, place, or person that makes you feel better or an activity such as jogging, biking, or swimming that gives you a sense of greater well-being while engaging. Internal resources can be a part of oneself, like a characteristic (such as a sense of humor) or a part of one’s body that is strong or healthy. Resources can be unique to each of us, and we can have multiple resources. To practice resourcing, one brings the resource to mind as vividly as possible. The more detail that can be attributed to the resource, the stronger its effect. Recalling smells, sounds, tastes, physical sensations, and colors will allow the resource to grow and strengthen. Once the resource is vivid, keep it in mind and engage in tracking — that is, notice what is happening inside the body in the present moment. Often, people mistakenly think resourcing involves thinking about how you felt when the event in your

memory took place. However, this practice involves noticing what is happening in one's body at the very moment that one is thinking of the resource. 3. Grounding- When someone is emotionally overloaded, grounding methods are a stress management practice designed to orient them in the present. Grounding strategies can educate pupils to calm down and regulate their moods when they are agitated by concentrating on their senses rather than their ideas or feelings. Teach grounding skills as a class and assist students in practicing them when they are anxious. Few grounding techniques to try out with your students: • Name six different things you can see around the room • Take ten deep breaths • Eat a piece of chocolate and select two words that define its taste.	
Conclusion Statements: This session was about- We have issues in our day-to-day life- we need to stop and take time to address them- pause to give the mind space to calm itself using various self-management practices that suit self and then start again. We must live on the quote- IT IS OK TO BE NOT OK. Instead of suppressing our emotions, we must address them mindfully because our behavior will automatically impact students' emotional behavior.	 How are you feeling right now? Do you think this session was useful for you?

Questionnaire Filling:

Request participants to complete the questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of self-management post-training.

Kindly fill the Post-training Questionnaire

Thankyou!

Section 4- Understanding the Competency of Social Awareness (2 hours)**Questionnaire Filling:**

Request participants to complete the questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of social awareness pre-training.

Kindly fill the Pre-training Questionnaire

Introduce:

Concept of Social Awareness

Ask participants their point of view on what social awareness is.

Then, explain the meaning of social awareness.

Social Awareness refers to the ability to identify and understand the perspective of others and empathize with them; recognize and appreciate individual and group similarities and differences; identify and use family, school, and community resources.

**Reflective Exercise 1:**

Based on the number of respondents, make groups and ask the group to choose a picture. Ask them to write a build-up story. Give them 5 minutes. Then, ask each group to share their story for 2 minutes each group.

Ask, in general, how they felt in this overall process.

Then, tell the aim of the reflective exercise.

Reflective Exercise 1

- Choose the picture. In a group of 2-4 participants, build up a story of what you see in the picture, background of person in the picture, emotions of the person, reason behind particular emotions as per your perspective. Discuss the picture in your group for 5 minutes.
- After the mindful dialogue, any one member of the group can share their story with all other participants (2 minutes to each group).
- Reflective question- How was the process of story building and sharing for you?

**Aim of the Reflective Exercise**

1. To value the importance of diversity story telling and listening circles.
2. To learn the importance of
 - Perspective-taking
 - Being empathetic
 - To appreciate diversity
 - To respect emotions, views, values, cultures of others.



Skills related to Social Awareness:

Explain

1. Perspective-taking
2. Empathy
3. Appreciating diversity
4. Respect for others

Skills Related to Social Awareness

EMPATHY. Empathy refers to the ability to understand and feel what someone else is feeling, or see the situation from their point of view.



Empathy is...
seeing with the eyes of another,
listening with the ears of another,
and feeling with the heart of another.

PERSPECTIVE TAKING. It refers to the process by which an individual views a situation from another's point-of-view. It is defined as **taking on** another's point-of-view through the lens of our own personal goals and intentions.

APPRECIATING DIVERSITY. People all around need to understand and learn to **appreciate** other cultures, and this is one way to accomplish that. Through each other's **diversity**, we become more aware of our own. ... Understanding people and their backgrounds is crucial to personal and community growth. Because **diversity** makes the world go round!

RESPECT FOR OTHERS. **Respect** means that you accept somebody for who they are, even when they're different from you or you don't agree with them. **Respect** in your relationships builds feelings of trust, safety, and wellbeing.



**Treat others
YOU
Treated**

Strategies that can be used for Social Awareness:

Explain:

Classroom Service Projects

Service projects are an enjoyable and meaningful means to connect your students to their surroundings. A class service project can help students build compassion by assisting others. Some service project ideas for your class to help make your neighborhood a better place:

- Hold a clothes, medicines, or canned food drive for a local shelter
- Visit an old-age home as a class
- Clean up garbage in a nearby park

Listening Circles

Divide your class into teams of three to five students to start this active listening practice. Allow students to respond to a get-to-know-you inquiry in turn. If any student interrupts the speaker, remind them that everyone has a chance to share their response.

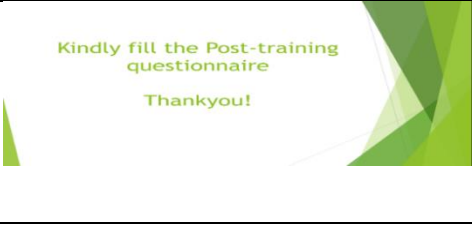
Here are some examples of questions:

Strategies to Improve Social Awareness

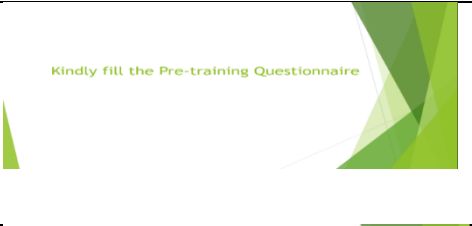
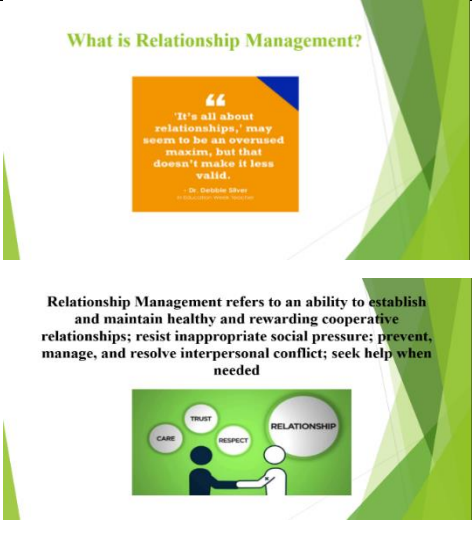
- ▶ Give importance to listening.
- ▶ Make it a practice to repeat what is said.
- ▶ Pay attention to the tone.
- ▶ Keep an eye on the body language.
- ▶ Place yourself in other's shoes.
- ▶ Identify your own emotions.
- ▶ Reflect back.

7 Important Social Skills for Kids



• Suppose you could go anyplace in the world; where would you go? • What makes you the most happy? • Who do you admire the most, and why? Come together as a class at the end of the exercise to discuss what they learned in their groups. Try partnering students together and having them share one item about their companion after the exercise to ensure that every student feels involved.	
Questionnaire Filling: Request participants to complete the questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of social awareness post-training.	

Section 5- Understanding the Competency of Relationship Management (2 hours)

Questionnaire Filling: Request participants to complete the questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of relationship management pre-training.	
Introduce: Concept of Relationship Management Ask participants their point of view on what relationship management is. Then, explain the meaning of relationship management.	 Relationship Management refers to an ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding cooperative relationships; resist inappropriate social pressure; prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflict; seek help when needed

Explain:

Meaning of Forgiveness.

Difference between forgiveness and reconciliation

Importance of forgiveness in relationship management.

Forgiveness

- What is Forgiveness?
- Is Reconciliation and Forgiveness same for you?



- Forgiveness is a conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you, regardless of whether they actually deserve your **forgiveness**.
- Reconciliation is to make people become friends again after an argument. It means to let go or console.
- Forgiveness is a gift we give to ourselves, because it opens the door for inner freedom and happiness. Without it, we can remain chained to past events and other people, causing continued suffering to ourselves and others

Explain:

Case Study Relating to the Importance of Forgiveness

Case Study

A wonderful exemplar of forgiveness is Richard Moore, who serves as a Fellow of the Center of Compassion, Integrity, and Secular Ethics at Life University.

Richard was shot by a British soldier with a rubber bullet in Northern Ireland in 1972 at the age of ten while walking home from school. The bullet knocked one of his eyes out, blinded him in the other and damaged his skull. Although the rubber bullet did not kill him, he has been completely blind from that moment forward. When he found out he was going to be blind for life, instead of reacting with anger, he simply accepted it. He realized that there was no point in harboring resentment toward the British in general or to the man who shot him.

Later, when the Dalai Lama met Richard Moore and heard of his story, he started calling Richard his personal hero, something he continues to do, because of Richard's amazing practice of forgiveness.

More than thirty years after being shot, Richard managed to locate the soldier who shot him and sent him a letter to express his forgiveness and his desire to meet.

The soldier and Richard met shortly thereafter and are now friends. Richard now gives talks on forgiveness and likes to say that "holding anger and resentment is like drinking poison and expecting other people to be hurt, and they are not."

Richard went on to found the charity Children in Crossfire, which has brought life-saving aid to tens of thousands of children in Tanzania, Ethiopia and elsewhere. He says he would not have been nearly as successful, or nearly as happy, if he had not practiced forgiveness.

Reflective Exercise 1:

Ask each participant to do mindful dialogue in pairs relating to questions in the slide. Give each participant 5 minutes to speak. Tell them the rules of active listening, non-judgement, confidentiality, and no questioning while listening.

After exercise, tell them to share their feelings and the importance of relationships.

Reflective Exercise 1

Start with bringing to mind a resource or focus on the contact of your body with a surface, object or another body part, and allow yourself to notice any neutral or pleasant sensations that arise in your body.

- 1. Describe a time in your life when someone forgave you.
- 2. What was it like to be forgiven?
- 3. Were there benefits to being forgiven by this person? If so, what?
- 4. Would your life be any different had this person not forgiven you? If so, how?

OR

- 1. Can you describe a time in your life when you forgave someone?
- 2. Were there benefits to you from forgiving this person? If so, what?
- 3. How might your life be different had you not forgiven this person?

Explain:

Meaning of Gratitude

Gratitude

- Gratitude is recognizing the benefits one has received from others, where the other may be one or more people, other aspects of nature or a supernatural being or force.
- Like forgiveness, gratitude is also an act of self-compassion, because it increases our happiness and well-being powerfully at no cost to ourselves whatsoever.

grat-i-tude: 

the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

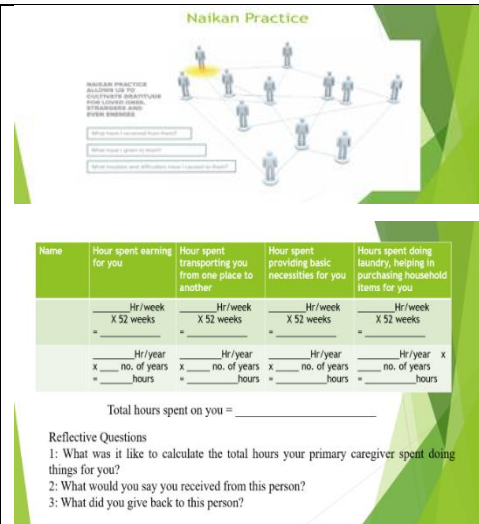
Reflective Exercise 2:

Explain Naikan practice.

Ask participants to do Naikan exercises for 10 minutes.

Then, ask participants to reflect on questions and share the number of hours.

The Japanese term Naikan means "looking inside." It is a form of systematic self-reflection that assists us in better understanding ourselves, our connections with others, and the fundamental principles of human life. Ishin Yoshimoto, a devoted Buddhist of the Pure Land sect (Jodo Shinshu), invented Naikan in Japan in the 1940s.



Naikan Practice

NAIKAN PRACTICE
FOCUSES ON THE
CULTIVATION OF
SELF-REFLECTION,
GRATITUDE AND
GROWTH

What have I received from you?
What have I given to you?
What mistakes have I committed to you?

Name	Hour spent earning for you	Hour spent transporting you from one place to another	Hour spent providing basic necessities for you	Hours spent doing laundry, helping in purchasing household items for you
	Hr/week X 52 weeks =	Hr/week X 52 weeks =	Hr/week X 52 weeks =	Hr/week X 52 weeks =
	Hr/year X no. of years = hours	Hr/year X no. of years = hours	Hr/year X no. of years = hours	Hr/year X no. of years = hours
Total hours spent on you =				

Reflective Questions
1: What was it like to calculate the total hours your primary caregiver spent doing things for you?
2: What would you say you received from this person?
3: What did you give back to this person?

Strategies to Improve Relationship Management Skills:

Explain various ways of cultivating forgiveness and gratitude.

**Questionnaire Filling:**

Request participants to complete the questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of relationship management post-training.

Kindly fill the Post-training Questionnaire

Thankyou!

Section 6- Understanding the Competency of Responsible Decision Making (2 hours)

Questionnaire Filling:

Request participants to complete the questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of responsible decision-making pre-training.

Kindly fill the Pre-training Questionnaire

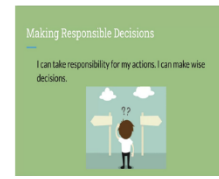
Introduce:

Concept of Responsible Decision Making

Ask participants their point of view on what responsible Decision making is.

Then explain the meaning of Responsible Decision Making.

The ability to make decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and probable consequences of various actions; apply decision-making skills to the well-being of oneself and others.



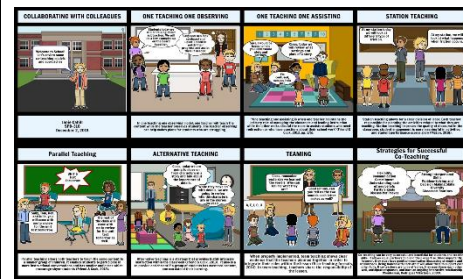
Explain:

Explain the steps of responsible decision making.



Explain:

Discuss in detail various teaching strategies for making responsible decisions through examples.



Discuss:

Discuss PAUSE and REACT tools for building educator-student solid relationships.

Pause & React

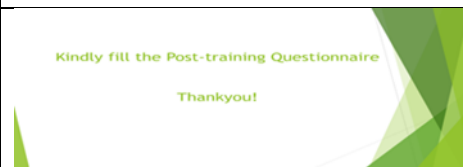
A tool for cultivating strong teacher-student relationships

- Pay Attention**
Look for changes in disposition, behaviors, or moods.
- Ask Questions**
Uncover the specifics behind why this change is occurring. (I noticed...and I'm wondering...)
- Use Your Expertise**
Determine if other adults should be involved. (School psychologist, principal, parent, etc.)
- Show Genuine Interest**
Show the student that their well-being is important to you.
- Evaluate The Circumstances**
Review all of the evidence to determine a plan of action.
- Reach Out**
Create a team of support for the student. (Siblings, coaches, counselors, etc.)
- Extend A Helping Hand**
Provide direct support to the student.
- Assume The Best**
Presume positive intentions.
- Create Opportunities**
Connect the student to opportunities within and outside of the classroom.
- Tap Into Their Greatness**
Set the student up for success by building on their interests and strengths.

International Center for Leadership in Education
From Neaguman 1976a Handbook

Questionnaire Filling:

Request participants to complete the questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of responsible decision-making post-training.



The SEL training session to be concluded after 12 hours of dedicated training and review from educators to be taken.

APPENDIX- III
OBSERVATION FORM

OBSERVATION FORM

Dear Participant

Thanks in advance for your participation in completing this academic survey that aims to examine the impact of social-emotional learning on student's emotional behavior. Kindly take a few minutes to fill out this observation form.

If you have any queries, please feel free to contact me anytime either through email jaasleen@yahoo.com or phone 6283404730.

Jasleen Kaur

Research Scholar (Junior Research Fellow)

School of Humanities & Social Sciences

Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, Patiala, India 147001

YOUR RESPONSES TO THIS SURVEY ARE CONFIDENTIAL

Please provide the following information.

Child's Name: _____

Child's Age: _____

Today's Date: _____

Observing Teacher's Name: _____

School Name: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Please read each statement carefully and answer them in relation to your observation about the student's behavior in the school context. Please respond to the following assertions by inserting a checkmark in the appropriate column, where (1) denotes strongly disagree and (5) denotes strongly agree.

S No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	A student uses words to describe her feelings and the feelings of others, such as, 'I am happy,' 'I do not like that,' or 'She is sad.'					
2	The student tries to manage his emotions.					
3	The student is able to recognize common emotional states, e.g., happy and sad.					
4	The student use words to tell you what he wants or needs.					
5	The student enjoys and remains happy studying in your class.					
6	The student is able to feel competent to do things independently.					
7	The student moves from one activity to the next with little difficulties, such as from playtime to mealtime.					
8	The student does not hurt himself or destroy or damage things on purpose.					
9	The student enjoys simple humor and breathing exercises.					
10	Can your student name a friend?					
11	The student washes their hands before and after the meal.					
12	The student eats properly.					
13	The student puts garbage in the dustbin.					
14	The student follows routine directions. For example, when asked, does she come to the table or helps clean up her toys?					
15	The student gets along easily with peers in the classroom.					
16	The student comes to the preschool regularly.					
17	The student is able to take the initiative.					
18	The student checks to ensure you are near when exploring new places, such as a park.					

APPENDIX-IV

List of Publications

Please find the list of published papers in SSCI Journal below:-

S No.	Name of the Journal	Title of the Paper	Status of Publication	Journal Coverage
1.	Sage Open	Conceptual ECCE Happiness Framework for Preschools: To Introduce Importance of Happiness to Promote Social and Emotional Competence in Preschool Children.	Available online. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211031873	*SSCI Impact Factor: 2.0 ; 5-Year Impact Factor: 2.2
2.	Sage Open	What Do I Know About Social-Emotional Learning: A Comparative Analysis Between Public and Private Preschool Teachers in Punjab.	Available online. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221091254	*SSCI Impact Factor: 2.0 ; 5-Year Impact Factor: 2.2
3.	Current Psychology	Measuring early childhood educators' knowledge of social-emotional learning pre and post training.	Available online. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-05176-x	*SSCI Impact Factor: 2.8 ; 5-Year Impact Factor: 2.8
4.	Journal of Applied Social Sciences	Establishing Early Foundations to Promote Emotional Competence in Preschool Children.	Available online. https://doi.org/10.1177/19367244211054381	SCOPUS

*Details of these are attached along with full papers.

Conceptual ECCE Happiness Framework for Preschools: To Introduce Importance of Happiness to Promote Social and Emotional Competence in Preschool Children

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Abstract

The primary objective of this article is to create a conceptual Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) happiness framework for preschool children in India. Although happiness is regarded as one of the key elements that influence early childhood development, an effective happiness framework does not exist for preschools in rural and socio-economically disadvantaged areas in the state of Punjab in India. Therefore, based on research gaps and existing literature, a conceptual framework has been developed to promote social and emotional competence among preschool children through the happiness intervention. The article also discusses (a) the concepts of happiness, and social and emotional competence; (b) the importance of happiness in preschool; (c) the association between happiness and social-emotional competence of preschool children; and (d) the role of preschool teachers in implementing the framework. Future implementation of this framework in the preschools of India will help overcome the limitation that exists in regard to its validation.

Keywords

happiness, social and emotional competence, preschool children, preschool, conceptual framework

Introduction

Every child is born and raised in different circumstances (Allen et al., 2015). Raising happy children and making their lives blissful and content is the earnest wish of all parents (Diener & Lucas, 2004). Childhood is a crucial stage of development that forms the foundation of holistic development and psychological well-being (UNICEF, 2018). Children should grow up feeling good about themselves and their surroundings. They should enjoy their lives and live in high spirits (Sylva et al., 2010). Happiness is one of the factors that affect a child's creativity, cognitive development, and the development of a child's social and emotional skills (Anand, 2016; Holder, 2012; Husted, 2017; Izzaty, 2018).

However, not all children experience happiness throughout their development due to increased emotional distress, abuse, neglect, violence, and instability in the current scenario (Luking et al., 2011; Sandstrom & Huerta, 2013; Tyrka et al., 2013). With these fast-changing, social-emotional, well-being dynamics, it has become difficult to visualize the sort of world wherein the children of tomorrow will live, grow, and survive. To help solve this issue, schools play an

indispensable role in a child's social and emotional competence development (Taylor et al., 2017). Schools are the vital platforms that aid children in learning various subjects, developing meaningful social connections, improving personal potential, and enhancing their social and emotional competencies under the guidance of teachers (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Jones & Bouffard, 2012; López-Pérez & Fernández-Castilla, 2018). A happy classroom environment in preschools can affect all the developmental aspects of a child's life. Through the stages of Early Child Development (ECD), they can be taught motor, socio-emotional, cognitive, and language skills to become successful in elementary school (State Council of Educational Research and Training & Directorate of Education, 2019; UNICEF, 2018). Several developed nations including the United States, the United

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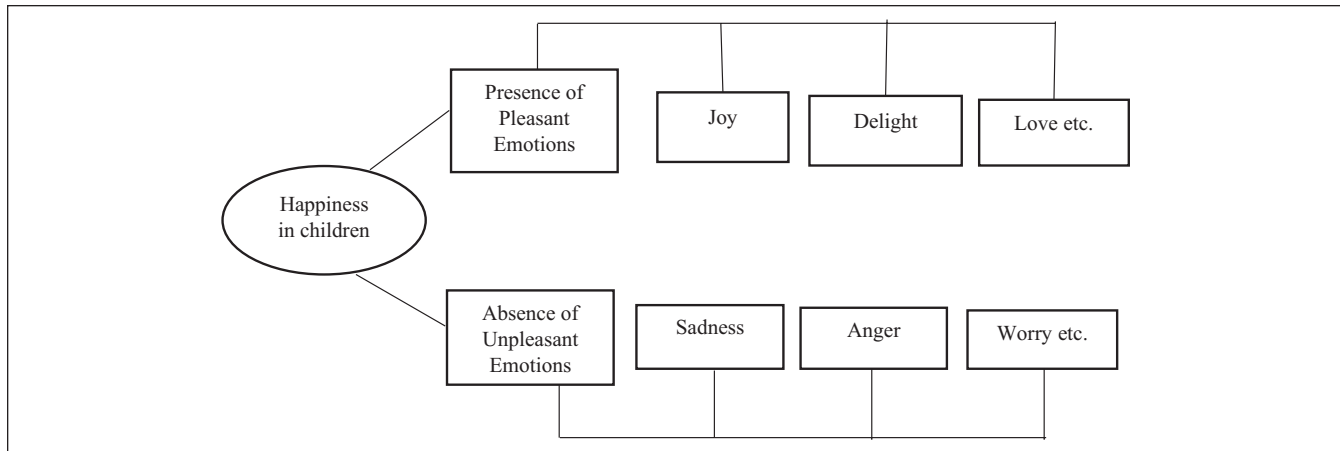


Figure 1. Meaning of happiness in preschool children.

Source. Author's compilation.

Kingdom, Hong Kong, and Australia have designed and implemented frameworks that promote happiness, and social and emotional competence in children through their K-12 school days (Yoder, 2014). Indian educationalists have also acknowledged the significance of social and emotional competence in the holistic development of preschool children in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of India by stating that the education system needs to direct its focus to “develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy” (Jha & Parvati, 2020). However, there is no clear happiness framework to initiate and promote social and emotional competence of 3- to 6-year-old children in the preschools of India, specifically those located in the rural and socio-economically disadvantaged areas in the state of Punjab.

Therefore, this study focused on the following objectives: (a) to conceptualize happiness and social-emotional competence, (b) to discuss the importance of happiness in preschool settings for preschool children, (c) to present the association between happiness and social-emotional competence among preschool children, (d) to present a conceptual Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) happiness framework for promoting social and emotional competence among children studying in preschools located in rural and socio-economically disadvantaged areas in the state of Punjab in India through a happiness intervention, and (e) to highlight the role of preschool teachers in implementing a conceptual ECCE happiness framework in preschools.

Literature Review

Conceptualizing Happiness

Happiness is a topic of universal interest, but what exactly is the concept of happiness among preschool children? It is seen as a powerful emotion represented by positive emotional states such as excitement, hopefulness, effective

reasoning, joy, and the perception of one's own well-being (Diener, 2000; Veenhoven, 2010). It is defined as a theory of subjective well-being (Diener et al., 1999; Musikanski et al., 2017; Uchida & Oishi, 2016). Operationally, happiness is one of the elements that impact a child's development, however, no universally recognized meaning of happiness for children has been defined (Anand, 2016; Holder, 2012; Husted, 2017; Sheldon, Turner-Vorbeck, 2019). Based on the understanding of preschool children aged 3 to 6 years, happiness is regarded as the combination of positive emotions (such as happiness, excitement, cheerfulness, delight, joy), expression of feelings (such as laughter and smile), and the absence of negative feelings (such as sadness, crying, and anger; Izzaty, 2018; Lewis, 2008). In children, emotions are displayed and understood via facial expressions (De Haan et al., 1998). It has been reported that for some preschool children, happiness can be a state of joy that they experience while interacting with friends (Paulus & Moore, 2012), while for others, happiness can be felt on being praised by a teacher upon sharing a toy with peers or showing care and love for others (Broek, 2011; Brogle et al., 2013). See Figure 1.

Happiness is believed to be the state of psychological well-being of a child influenced by various classroom activities such as learning, playing, dancing, entertainment, reading comic books, sports, drawing, and so forth (Izzaty, 2018; Ogunyemi & Ragpot, 2015; Sharif, 2014). Thus, focusing on the happiness of children from early childhood is considered a crucial topic of research because a study has shown that happy children are expected to be more vigilant in recognizing and using their emotions in multifaceted social environments efficiently (Schultz et al., 2004).

Benefits of Happiness for Preschool Children

Benefits of happiness for preschool children include the development of consistent behavior and optimism (Talebzadeh & Samkan, 2011). The studies by Holder (2012),

Husted (2017), and Izzaty (2018) have shown a compelling association between school-related happiness and social relationships. These studies have accentuated happiness as one of the factors that influence the psychological well-being of children, which further affects their creativity, motor skills, social and emotional competence, and maturity (Holder, 2012; Husted, 2017; Izzaty, 2018). Happiness in the life of preschool children plays a prominent role in their developing an understanding of their emotions, helping them in labeling their emotions and expressing their feelings with others, and also assisting them in developing friendship skills from early childhood (Alwaely et al., 2020). Happiness experienced through play-based learning activities in preschool provides multiple benefits to preschool children. It produces positive emotions, releases excess energy, optimizes brain growth, sharpens imagination and creativity, strengthens empathy and tolerance toward others in the class, and improves their cognitive, social-emotional, motor, mental health, and holistic development beginning from early childhood (Bell et al., 2010; Gleave & Cole-Hamilton, 2012; Goldstein, 2012; Singer, 2013; Whitebread et al., 2012). Therefore, happiness is considered to be one of the essential developmental aims in the life of children, which helps in improving their relationship with self and with their friends, making them socially active, less shy, and emotionally competent (Holder & Klassen, 2010).

Conceptualizing Social and Emotional Competence and Its Importance for Preschool Children

The preschool years are an essential developmental period wherein the growth of social and emotional competence is considered an important milestone in the lives of preschool children (Denham et al., 2014; Odom et al., 2008; Rose-Krasnor & Denham, 2009). Social and emotional competence in a preschool child refers to the way they feel and think of themselves and others, and the way they experience, regulate, and express their emotions and develop close interpersonal relationships and security with those around them, all pertaining to family, society, and culture (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2005). Research has shown the growing awareness about the significance of socio-emotional competence in the lives of preschool children (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2018; Oberle et al., 2016). School-based interventions to foster social-emotional competence in preschool children have demonstrated improved sensory-motor skills, enhanced attention and concentration levels, better emotional expressiveness, positive perspective of themselves and others, constructive social behaviors, better relationships with peers, and reduction in conduct issues and the emotional misery among them (Ashiabi, 2000; Colwell & Hart, 2006; Durlak et al., 2011; Zhai et al., 2015). It has been reported that preschool children who lack socio-emotional competence have a high

expectancy of facing transition issues during preschool years, poor relationships with peers, poor academic or developmental performance, and experiencing various social and behavioral issues and physical and mental health problems (Bornstein et al., 2010; Denham, 2006; Lancaster et al., 2004). Therefore, an increasing number of researchers and educators have called for an urgent focus on the social and emotional aspects of student development beyond academic mastery, in the hope of preventing serious psychopathological challenges in the future that children might encounter in grade school (Bornstein et al., 2010; Rose-Krasnor & Denham, 2009).

The Association Between Happiness and Social Competence in Children

Social competence in preschool children is one of the essential milestones during preschool age. It is documented as the child's ability to understand the emotions of their friends and peers, deal with nonverbal skills, stress, and negative emotions, get along with peers and grownups, and nurture positive associations in the classroom (Ashiabi, 2007; Veiga et al., 2017). The terms *social skills*, *social stability*, and *social competence* are often used interchangeably, but social competence has been theorized as a broader aspect that includes not only the social skills, but also the neurological, temperamental, behavioral, and environmental features that together support and hinder a child's growth (Kennedy, 2018; Odom et al., 2008; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Prior literature has highlighted the strong association between happiness and social competence by emphasizing the positive association of social support, social trust, and safe social relations with the happiness of children (Helliwell et al., 2013). Various studies have concluded that happiness in preschool children stimulates social competence, which allows children to interact openly with their friends, sustain positive relations with their peers and teachers, and resolve interpersonal conflicts (Backman, 2016; Kennedy, 2018). This association between happiness and social competence provides preschool children with greater opportunities to enjoy educational achievement, feel emotionally competent, and build safe and stable social relationships (Jones et al., 2015). Therefore, a happiness intervention can help to refine the ability of preschool children to establish positive interactions with peers, participate in interpersonal relationships, develop long-lasting friendships, and become associates of social groups (Kennedy, 2018; Lobo & Winsler, 2006).

The Association Between Happiness and Emotional Competence in Children

Emotional competence is documented as an ability of a preschool child to recognize and understand their feelings, gradually adding verbal labels to those feelings, managing their

feelings by shaking off nervousness, sorrow, or frustration, learning to realize that others have feelings, too, and beginning to take others' perspectives and empathizing with them (Goleman, 1995; McClelland et al., 2017; Rossouw, 2011; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Building emotional competence in preschool children involves blending the competencies such as emotion awareness (the ability to precisely identify and name emotions), emotion regulation (manage emotions and control how and when they are expressed), perspective-taking (understanding the emotions of others), and empathy (Izard et al., 2001). Preschool children start to establish emotional connections outside the family during friendships developed in preschool (Hemmeter et al., 2006). They learn to distinguish between socially appropriate and inappropriate behavior and acquire important skills such as persistence, endurance, and the ability to solve social problems individually (Jones et al., 2015). Prior literature highlights the strong association between happiness and emotional competence, with the emphasis on attaining greater emotional stability through happiness (Bajaj et al., 2019; Chamorro-Premuzic et al., 2007; Hills & Argyle, 2001; Niramisa Sutta: Unworldly, 2010). Happiness and social-emotional competence are closely inter-related (Denham et al., 2003). For instance, during a dancing recreation class, a preschool child may feel happy and use emotional skills such as smiles and laughter to express their happiness, and social skills to support their friend in the dance. Furthermore, child development consultants from various disciplines (e.g., education, medicine, child welfare) have recognized the vital role of happiness and socio-emotional competence in the holistic development of a child (Darling-Churchill & Lippman, 2016; Greenwood et al., 2021; Isakson et al., 2009). For best results, it is believed that the preschool teacher can create a classroom setting where children can feel relaxed, happy, and secure with peers and can grapple with challenges more confidently, thus boosting their social and emotional competence (Merritt et al., 2012).

Happiness at Preschool

Preschool is regarded as one of the key spaces that promote happiness among preschool children by engaging them in their favorite play or activity, with their friends and peers, thus promoting positive social relationships and an emotional state of feeling glad, excited, and loved in a classroom (Chaplin, 2009; Hong et al., 2015; Kim, 2013). These are the vital platforms that focus on making children comfortable physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally (Hong et al., 2016). Past research has shown that a happy school environment is very helpful for boosting students' energy, improving their learning experience, and empowering their talents (Al-e-Yasin, 2001). The advantages of happiness at preschool for children from 3 to 6 years old are not limited to the initial years of school (Gilliam, 2005). Besides influencing their academic performance, motor skills, and school adjustment, it also defines their social and emotional competence in later years (Gleave & Cole-Hamilton, 2012; Haney & Bissonnette,

2011; López-Pérez & Fernández-Castilla, 2018; Singer, 2013; Veitch et al., 2010; Whitebread et al., 2012).

Educators in developed nations have realized the relevance of social and emotional development vis-à-vis happiness promotion for successful child performance in preschool (Camilli et al., 2010; Denham & Weissberg, 2004; The NAESP Foundation Task Force on Early Learning, 2011; National Research Council, 2012). Many developed nations have designed frameworks and practices for boosting the happiness and social and emotional competence of children. For instance, CASEL, in its "CASEL Guide—Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs—Preschool and Elementary School Edition" (2013), has provided a systematic framework for assessing the quality of classroom-based social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculums across the United States. Similarly, the American Institute of Research, in 2014, designed a module named "Teaching the Whole Child—Instructional Practices that Support Social and Emotional Learning" for children during the K-12 school experience (Yoder, 2014). Another development program "Social and Emotional Learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific—Perspectives, Programs and Approaches" has outlined cross-country collaboration, facilitating a productive and promising foundation for social and emotional competence (Frydenberg et al., 2017). However, these frameworks and practices have been designed according to the psychological and social-emotional needs of children in those nations, which brings into light the need for a framework considering the geographical, psychological, social, and emotional needs of children living in the state of Punjab in India.

The above literature review reflects the bent of research, which is predominantly toward the happiness and development of social and emotional competence of preschool children in developed nations only. In the context of India, limited research has been done in regard to promoting the social and emotional competence of preschool children through happiness. As per the best knowledge of the author, the literature review, in terms of preschools known as *Anganwadi* and *Balvatika* in the Indian context, which are especially located in rural and socio-economically disadvantaged areas in the state of Punjab, shows that no such ECCE happiness framework has been designed and implemented for promoting social and emotional competence of preschool children through happiness intervention. Therefore, this study is an initiative toward filling that gap in the existing literature by proposing a conceptual ECCE happiness framework for preschool children studying in the preschools of Punjab (India).

Reasons Behind Developing Conceptual ECCE Happiness Framework

ECCE is regarded as key to achieving Sustainable Development Goals, but it has been negatively impacted by several adversities such as domestic violence, abuse,

depression, and parental illness (Luking et al., 2011; Tyrka et al., 2013). At least 8% to 10% of children under the age of 5 are reported to have clinically significant and damaging mental health issues, including emotional, behavioral, and social relationship complications (Egger & Angold, 2006). The continued subjection to such stressors results in prolonged emotional and social distress, which drastically impedes a child's long-term growth (Garner et al., 2012; Phillips & Shonkoff, 2000). Even the Good Childhood Report (The Children's Society, 2015) showed that nearly 25% of the students investigated were unhappy in their school, and this unhappiness impacted their academic, social, and emotional development. The report highlighted that the major concern for children was to become happy at school. This reflects that one of the issues in the learning arrangement is the absence of happiness in schools (Guilherme & De Freitas, 2017; Salavera et al., 2017), which rings the alarm bell for educationalists to make dire efforts to bring about happiness in preschools where students begin to learn with keen interest (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2016). The need of the hour is to address all these issues from the grass-roots level, where early learning begins for children. Therefore, the reason for choosing this specific age group (3 to 6 years) is the expeditious growth in the initial 6 years of a child's life more than in any other stage of development, as confirmed by neuroscience (National Council of Educational Research and Training [NCERT], 2015; Nelson et al., 2013). The age band from 3 to 6 years is regarded as a significant period for both understanding and educating, which must include the development of social and emotional competence as a foundation for the holistic well-being of the child (Nelson et al., 2013).

India is regarded as the home for the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program, which is one of the biggest and oldest public-sector projects for early childhood development worldwide. Many important plans, strategies, guidelines, and frameworks, including the National Education Policy (2019), which highlights the prominence of early childhood education and suggests a guiding principle for delivering quality pre-primary education in Indian preschools, have been developed (Jha & Parvati, 2020). However, the quality of delivery of early childhood schooling services in rural India remains a major stressor. Not much evidence is available on the record concerning whether preschool children are being assisted by preschools to gain the social-emotional competence that is fundamental to subsequent accomplishment in school and beyond (Minde et al., 2010). The current picture of the early education system in the state of Punjab in India, specifically in the rural and economically disadvantaged areas, seems to be out of focus. The challenges in the school system in Punjab (India) have gone way beyond low learning paradigms, social-emotional problems, and poor academic grades (State Council of Educational Research and

Training [SCERT] Report by Sisodia et al., 2019). However, the ECCE policy of the state of Punjab in India has the vision to achieve holistic development, including social and emotional development of all children aged 3 to 6 years, through a multipronged approach. The approach aims to lay down norms and quality standards, develop a curriculum framework using appropriate and adequate play material, and conduct continuous assessments (Punjab State ECCE policy report). However, the gap between strategy and implementation within the preschools is clearly evident. The preschools (also known as *Anganwadis*) in the state of Punjab in India can be perceived as occupying a "see-saw." A huge number of preschool children are registered in preschool. But these preschools do not give priority to early childhood social-emotional development due to the poor quality of the frameworks and curricula that are being implemented. Due to the scarcity of resources and skills required to foster happiness and social and emotional proficiencies, children enrolled in preschools located in rural and socio-economically disadvantaged areas are not being prepared for their upcoming grade schools (Jha & Parvati, 2020). While the importance of early years is appreciated, it has been witnessed that most of the ECCE frameworks are not developmentally appropriate for this age group (NCERT, 2015). Lack of a quality ECCE and happiness framework has resulted in either a low-quality program or making Early Childhood Education (ECE) a downward extension of the primary stage curriculum (NCERT, 2015). Therefore, on pedagogy, a reframing of course and practices is immediately required for the 3- to 6-years group, inclusive of all preschools, regardless of whether government organizations or private interventions take part.

Also, studies have affirmed that investment in social and emotional competence during the initial periods of child development is crucial as these early competencies develop progressively (Im et al., 2019). Children who have a higher level of social and emotional competence in early years are likely to have superior cognitive skills in the future (Denham & Brown, 2010; Jha & Parvati, 2020). However, when the developmental goals of social and emotional competence are not effectively addressed, preschool children are at threat of psychopathology, unhappiness, social-emotional problems, and academic failure, both now and in the future (Leerkes et al., 2008; Sroufe, 2005). The scarcities in the happiness and socio-emotional competence spheres are reported to be challenging for preschool children. For instance, preschool children who are bullied by peers, or are violent, have additional difficulty in managing their emotions, in attuning to routines and the school environment, and are at threat of a potential cascade of teething troubles, comprising academic complications, misbehavior, and substance abuse in future (Nagin & Tremblay, 2001; Raver, 2003; Tremblay, 2002). Considering all the developmental and mental well-being issues in preschool children, there has been a strong call for new mind-sets to promote children's social and emotional

health, happiness, and well-being in the face of everyday difficulty (Shonkoff et al., 2009).

All the issues related to happiness and social and emotional competence have compelled the policy makers to rethink the purpose behind educating preschool children, which should be more than merely improving their academic results. Policy makers have framed school and learning systems for children. However, how happy and emotionally competent are students within these systems? What do preschool children believe would make them merrier? Do these decisions relate to the preschool education? These questions necessitate policy makers to rethink the fundamental relationship between happiness and the current teaching practices in our education system (UNESCO, 2016). The above-highlighted gaps in the educational practices have paved a path for the preschools in India to develop and implement such a framework. The framework should be intended to support happiness, social competence, and emotional competence in preschool children, which is one of the aims of the National Education Policy 2020 of India (Jha & Parvati, 2020). Therefore, in response to the above reasons, challenges, and research gaps, the authors have proposed a conceptual ECCE happiness framework for preschool children aged 3 to 6 years in the state of Punjab in India, specifically focusing on those preschools that are located in rural and socio-economically disadvantaged areas of Punjab where children's happiness and social-emotional competence are not taken into consideration.

Conceptual ECCE Happiness Intervention Framework for Preschool

Philosophy and Goals of Framework

The conceptual ECCE Happiness framework has been developed keeping in mind the psychological and social-emotional needs of preschool children in Punjab (India). The happiness framework is designed to root and uplift emotional competence and social skills in children from early childhood via happiness intervention. It focuses on making preschool children happy while learning in the classroom, reconsiders the teaching strategies used by teachers, and changes the preschool into a happy space for children.

Theoretical Foundation

The proposed framework for school children has been designed using the model known as "The Triad for Happiness," proposed by A. Nagraj (1999). The model addresses four dimensions of human life as an assimilated form of the material, behavioral, logical, and pragmatic facets. These dimensions relate to our mind, emotions, learning, and consciousness, which result in happiness, peace, and

satisfaction that together represent "human happiness," as shown in Figure 2.

1. Through the senses: The inputs via five senses of vision, hearing, touch, smell, and taste help one to feel pleasure. Preschool children can experience happiness through their senses by eating delectable foods, watching cartoon movies, or listening to pleasant music, which is considered to be highly enjoyable but shorter in terms of duration. Hence, this kind of happiness is described as Momentary Happiness.
2. Harmony in feelings: Children aged 3 to 6 years yearn for feelings like affection, attention, appreciation, and admiration in all their connections, regardless of whether they are friends, relatives, or preschool teachers. These feelings and emotions create the worth of a relationship, and one expects to achieve harmony in these feelings. Once achieved, one feels happy for a longer time compared with momentary happiness. Therefore, it is called Deeper Happiness.
3. Learning (changing behavior according to constructive understanding) and Awareness: This type of happiness arises from awareness of one's thoughts, attention to one's own actions, and freedom from internal conflict. A preschool child experiences this happiness through breathing exercises, learning something new, and understanding a concept or some meaning that they will remember for a long time, which is why this type of happiness is called Sustainable Happiness.

Nowadays, children experience a high level of sensory happiness of various kinds, which appears to have become their main goal in life (State Council of Educational Research and Training & Directorate of Education, 2019). However, the essential facets of harmony in feelings, and understanding in relationships are mainly overlooked in the existing education system in India. The current focus is thus partial, which emphasizes cognitive development only, neglecting the aspects of relationships and learning completely. The consequential happiness also tends to be incomplete and momentary. Therefore, the need to design a framework for promoting happiness that can be sustained, keeping in view the psychological, social, and emotional needs of preschool children studying in the rural and socio-economically disadvantaged areas of Punjab, is apparent. Based on the literature review and the Happiness Triad model given by A. Nagraj (1999), the conceptual ECCE happiness framework can be used for the creation of a happiness model in preschools.

Conceptual ECCE Happiness Framework

The overall aim of the conceptual ECCE framework is to assist preschool children in their journey toward happiness

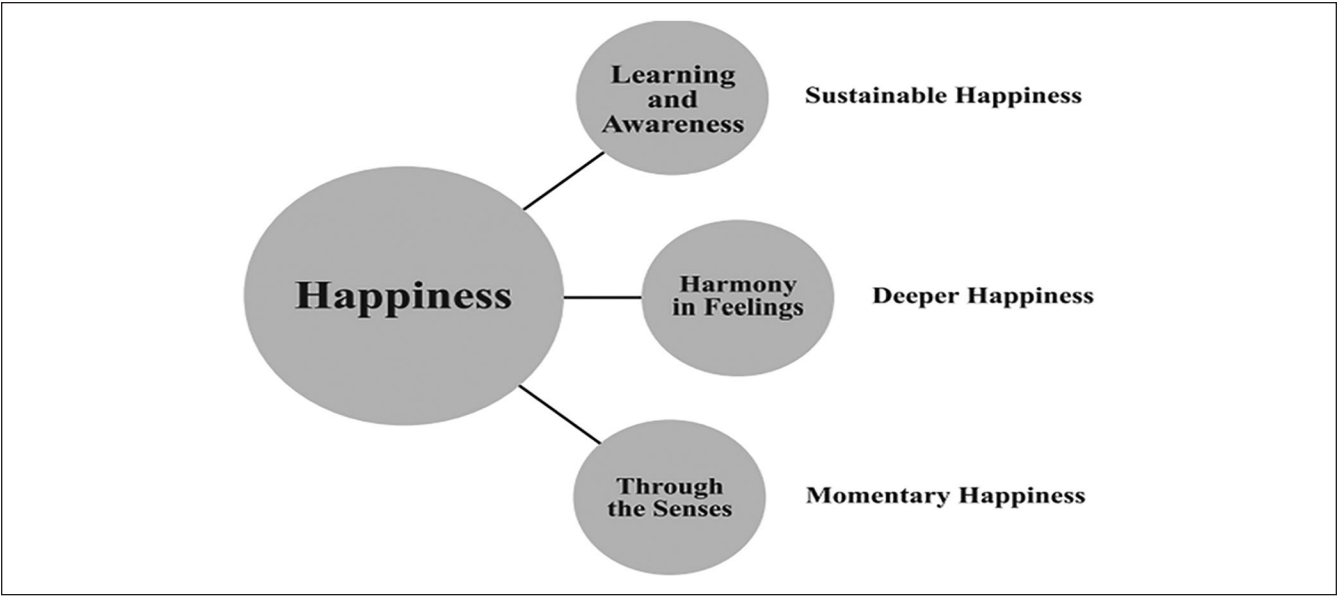


Figure 2. The Triad for Happiness by Nagraj, 1999.

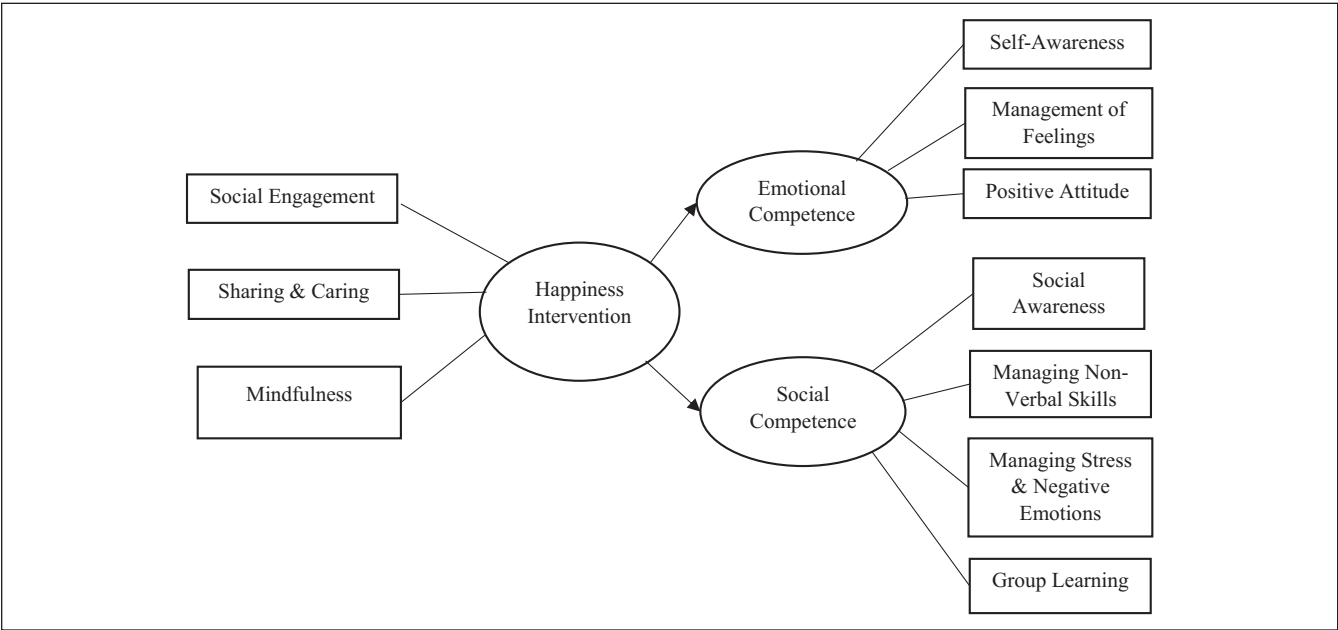


Figure 3. Conceptual ECCE happiness framework for preschool children.

Source. Author's compilation.

Note. ECCE = Early Childhood Care and Education.

and attaining social and emotional competence, as shown in Figure 3. Therefore, happiness intervention is the proposed independent variable, and emotional competence and social competence are two dependent variables in the study.

Key Practices and Proposed Outcomes of Happiness Intervention

The framework proposes to initiate a happiness intervention program in preschools that focuses on three practices: social

engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness in its curriculum. These practices have been chosen to allow preschool children to experience happiness through active participation, feeling, and learning in the classroom (Flook et al., 2010; Frey et al., 2014; Hall, 2020; NCERT, 2015).

Social engagement. Social engagement, also known as social involvement, social interaction, or social participation, is defined as “the degree to which a student participates in the classroom, community or society” (Berk, 2009). This practice

can support preschool children to experience happiness through their senses via active participation in the classroom (Momentary Happiness in the Triad of Happiness by Nagraj, 1999). Happiness intervention in preschools can provide preschool children with numerous opportunities for social engagement. It can offer them a stage for learning: how to respond to praises by smiling, request assistance, work out play roles, help, work together, make eye contact, resolve conflicts, ask and reply to questions, and much more. Teachers can initiate positive social interactions among preschool children during their daily classroom activities, playtime, circle time, and story time, by targeting their social and emotional skills (such as expressing happiness while playing with friends, getting a friend's attention, sharing objects, saying something nice to a friend, showing care for peers, asking peers to share toys, and providing a play idea to a peer; Sendil & Erden, 2012). The result of this practice can be seen in the level of attention, commitment, happiness, emotional response, and resilience among preschool children in the classroom (Schlechty, 2011). It can also help children in overcoming their social and emotional behavioral problems (Hall, 2020).

Sharing and caring. Another key practice in happiness intervention can be developing the social skills of sharing and caring among preschool children. This practice can help them to experience happiness in relationships through feelings (Deeper Happiness in the Triad of Happiness by Nagraj, 1999). Preschool children need to learn to share and take care to make and keep friends, play collectively, take turns, and negotiate and deal with disagreements and disappointments (Broadhead, 2004; Brogle et al., 2013). Research has revealed that many preschool children aged 3 to 6 years begin to understand sharing and caring skills, which help them in learning the value of fairness, compromise, and togetherness (Linke, 2011). This practice for children is a key part of getting along with others, in and out of the classroom, which impacts their happiness and their behavior with others around them (Ferreira et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2013). Preschool teachers' part is essential, as they can build sharing and caring skills in children by providing them with opportunities to cooperate with their classmates and showing responsibility toward their classmates, starting from early childhood (Aknin et al., 2012; Frey et al., 2014; Lane et al., 2007). This proposed practice can be worked through role-playing, group-learning, playful activities, and sharing activities in the classroom (Ladd, 1999; Vaughn et al., 2003). For instance, teachers can build sharing and caring competencies by watching for and applauding actions, boosting impartiality, elaborating on sharing, sketching a picture together while sharing crayons, and choosing dress-ups together (Brogle et al., 2013; Ostrosky et al., 2007). For preschool children who face trouble in learning, a teacher can help them by motivating, so that they do not fail to share, by acknowledging their slightest sharing effort, by asking them how it would

make them feel to have someone take their toys away, not invite them to play, or not allow them to have a turn, so that they can contemplate things from another's viewpoint. Therefore, this practice can help in building social and emotional competence among children from the grass-roots level (Bovey & Strain, 2003; Ostrosky & Meadan, 2010).

Mindfulness. Mindfulness is defined as "an integrative process that promotes well-being in body, mind, and relationships" (Siegel, 2007). This practice can assist preschool children in experiencing happiness through learning and awareness (Sustainable Happiness in the Triad of Happiness by Nagraj, 1999). Preschool teachers can provide opportunities for practicing mindfulness in the daily classroom through activities, such as breathing, body awareness, body scan, listening, seeing, movement, slow walking, music, games, art forms, sensory-motor awareness activities, and focused listening classes, which support social and emotional competence, happiness, and positive attitude (Burke, 2010; Nieminen & Sajaniemi, 2016; Rempel, 2012; Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010; Zenner et al., 2014). Research has shown that mindfulness-based activities fascinate children, as these are self-management practices that play a fundamental role in their progress and development (Semple et al., 2005). Mindfulness yields increased attention, concentration, calmness, and self-control in preschool children (Lim & Qu, 2017; Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010). Furthermore, it promotes care and respect for others (Black & Fernando, 2014) and has an affirmative influence on the social and emotional competence of preschool children (Flook et al., 2010). Also, mindfulness-based practices help in dissipating the symptoms of disruptive behaviors, such as attention-deficit, anxiety, and anger in preschool children (Klatt et al., 2013; Semple et al., 2005), allowing them to manage undesirable emotional states, destructive thinking, and acknowledging self and others (Nieminen & Sajaniemi, 2016), thus enhancing their emotional self-control and instilling the understanding of emotions and empathy (Bakosh et al., 2016; Broderick & Jennings, 2012; Felver et al., 2013; Weare, 2013).

Seeing the prominence of social engagement, sharing and caring habits, and mindfulness practices in promoting happiness in the life of preschool children, in Table 1, the present authors have compiled goals and areas to be focused on while implementing the conceptual ECCE happiness framework in preschool in the state of Punjab (India).

The key practices of the happiness framework are chosen to impact the social and emotional competence of preschool children specifically. This is because the academic success of children without social and emotional competence could benefit them in the short run but will not provide effective results in the long run (Blair, 2002; Katz, 2015).

Emotional competence. A preschool child, under the guidance of their teacher, can refine their emotional competence. A child can learn self-awareness reflected in the ability to

Table 1. Goals and Focus Areas Related to Key Practices in Conceptual ECCE Happiness Framework for Preschool Children.

S No.	Happiness intervention practice	Goals	Focus area
1	Social Engagement	To develop friendship skills To begin to understand and use basic problem-solving skills	How to be friendly and make friends Value self-worth Understand perspectives of friends Increase listening skills Label emotions of self and others Introduce problem-solving steps
2	Sharing and Caring	To maintain friendship To learn the value of care, fairness, compromise, negotiation, help, and compassion	How to invite peers in group activities Learn about and practice sharing and caring Value togetherness
3	Mindfulness	To understand and express feelings To develop the understanding of rules and regulations	How to remain calm and control frustration How to manage emotions Become emotionally stable

Source. Author's compilation.

Note. ECCE = Early Childhood Care and Education.

understand their feelings, thoughts, and emotions (such as happiness, sadness, love, pride, shame, curiosity, frustration, sadness, optimism); self-management reflected in the ability to regulate their feelings and controlling their emotions; and perspective-taking reflected in the capability to understand others and empathize with them (Colwell & Hart, 2006; Kostelnik et al., 2009). Three key practices in the proposed conceptual ECCE happiness framework are likely to impact the emotional competence of preschool children. Therefore, emotional competence is the dependent variable in the proposed framework. The first practice of social engagement aims at developing an understanding of emotions in children concerning their friends, managing their response toward them, taking the perspective of peers, showing a positive attitude, and empathizing with others in the classroom, thus impacting the emotional competence of children (Schlechty, 2011; Test & Cornelius-White, 2013). The second practice of sharing and caring aims to enable preschool children to make and keep friends, learn cooperation, and realize and regulate emotions of self and others, thus focusing on self-awareness and self-management aspects of emotional competence (Ostrosky & Meadan, 2010). Finally, the third practice of mindfulness is designed to focus on developing awareness, concentration, self-attention, self-control, and self-regulation abilities in preschool children, thus impacting their emotional competence (Lim & Qu, 2017).

Social competence. Apart from emotional competence, the proposed framework of happiness intervention aims to develop the social competence of preschool children. The key practice of social engagement aims at developing an understanding among preschool children with their peers. Participating in group learning activities, and creating and maintaining successful peer relationships, develops preschool children's social competence (Test & Cornelius-White, 2013). The second practice of sharing and caring aims to enhance social skills such as cooperation, care,

respect, negotiation, fairness, and togetherness among preschool children (Aknin et al., 2012; Frey et al., 2014). Also, the third practice of mindfulness aims to focus on self-management skills such as self-control, calmness, concentration, and attention among preschool children, which aim to promote care and respect for others (Black & Fernando, 2014; Lim & Qu, 2017; Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010).

Therefore, the proposed conceptual ECCE framework of the happiness intervention in preschools is an initiative to lay down the foundation for emotional competence and social competence in the initial years of the life of children. This framework is an endeavor to channel the awareness of preschool children toward discovering, feeling, and articulating happiness, not just in a transitory way, but also in a deeper and more sustainable way. The framework, in the context of Indian preschools, is an initiative that will allow preschool children to understand happiness within their own selves, in relationships, and in society. It is an initiative to bring about a paradigm shift in which a preschool child evolves from finding happiness externally to being able to experience it internally, within themselves, through learning and awareness, which may guarantee endurance of ethics starting from early childhood itself.

Executive Procedure of the Framework

The preschool teacher will facilitate the execution of the framework. They will create a special committee in the school for implementing the framework. They will prepare a happiness curriculum to develop social and emotional competence among preschool children. Using innovative teaching strategies in the classroom, they will create a happy classroom atmosphere where children feel free to express their emotions and maintain social relationships. For the practical implementation of the framework, they will need to modify their teaching practices based on feedback and performance, with continuous evaluation according to new findings.

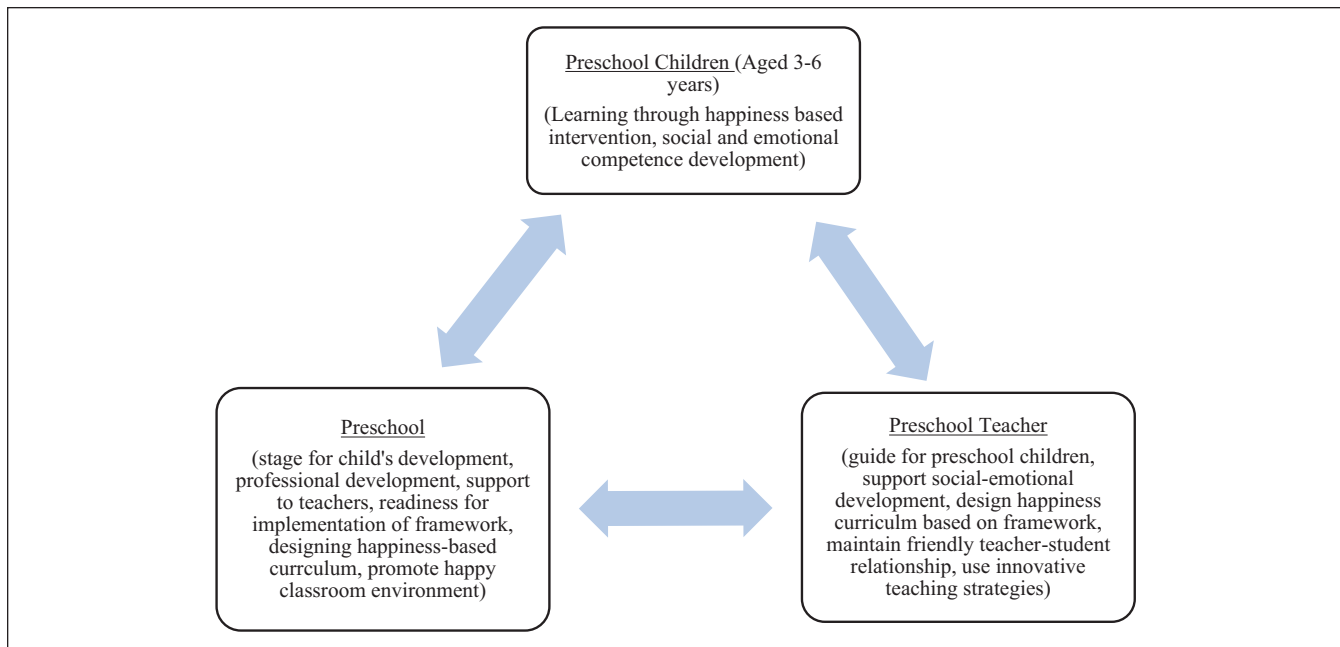


Figure 4. The role of preschool teacher and preschool in the development of preschool children.

Source. Author's compilation.

Role of Preschool Teachers in Implementing the Conceptual ECCE Happiness Framework

Parents are the first and foremost teachers in the lives of children. Parents introduce them to the social world, where they further develop an understanding of themselves and their place and value in society (Harkness & Super, 2002). After parents comes the role of preschool teachers, who are regarded as one of the essential caregivers for preschool children (Denham et al., 2012; Schonert-Reichl, 2017). The thought of implementing any happiness intervention in a preschool brings into light the exemplary role of a preschool teacher because children in their foundational age of 3 to 6 years tend to copy their teachers (Jones et al., 2013). Previous research has documented the significance of the teacher's contribution in addressing reform issues and efficacious school-based innovative progressions (Lieberman, 1986; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). Furthermore, it has been observed that the success of a new framework depends on what teachers feel about it, because they are the ones who normally execute it in the classroom (Jones et al., 2013). When it comes to the execution of the proposed conceptual ECCE happiness framework for preschool children, it is particularly pertinent that teachers educate, train, demonstrate, and empower children to practice their social and emotional skills in the class. The teacher-student relationship also plays an imperative role in the implementation process, as the behavior of the teacher toward the child creates their impression in the eyes of other students, which

will indirectly affect their relationship with their classmates. Therefore, to build a secure relationship with children, the preschool teachers must grant special time to each child, irrespective of how big the group is, and try to understand their perspective with complete patience, care, empathy, love, and respect. Teachers should try to maintain consistency in their attitude while dealing with children, pay attention while listening to them, maintain eye contact, and then respond to them accordingly (Corso, 2007). The preschool teachers can play an important role in developing social and emotional competence in preschool children by encouraging interaction with their peers, and with those who display positive behaviors (Gest & Rodkin, 2011), and by offering assistance to preschool children to handle their strong feelings (Denham et al., 2012) and manage conflicting behaviors that can lead to anger and bullying (Farmer et al., 2011). Therefore, preschool and preschool teachers are important socializers in the lives of preschool children, which together can promote social and emotional competence in children via happiness intervention as shown in Figure 4.

Using Innovative Teaching Practices for Implementation of Conceptual ECCE Happiness Framework in Preschools

Innovation is generally understood as “. . . the *successful* introduction and implementation of a new thing or method” (Brewer & Tierney, 2010). Innovation in teaching practices is seen as a necessary tool for positive change (Hoffman &

Table 2. Example of Teaching Practices That Can Be Used for Practical Implementation of Conceptual ECCE Happiness Framework in Preschools.

Happiness intervention practices	Characteristics of social and emotional competence in preschool children	How teacher can promote social and emotional competence	Teaching strategies, techniques, and tools to implement the framework	Possible outcomes of strategies implemented	References
Social Engagement	<i>3- to 4-year-old:</i> Initiates social interaction with another child. Participates in small group activities. Begins dramatic play such as pretending to be an animal. <i>4- to 5-year-old:</i> Participates happily in small groups. Resolves problems with peers. Talks about feelings and experiences. <i>5 to 6-year-old:</i> Becomes very social and makes friends more easily. Understands and manages emotions better. Plays competitive games.	Teach rules and re-directing to manage and regulate behavior in class. Provide learning opportunities with play activities. Instruct and coach on the use of words to express emotions and identify solutions to simple problems.	Physical activity Play-based Learning Teacher-student relationship Casual talk in context of emotional experience (CTEE)	Increase emotional regulation in children Increase labeling of emotions Understand one's own and other's emotions Manage one's behavior Create a sense of belonging or connectedness Promote group learning Promote positive behavior	Berk (2009), NCERT (2015), Kirk & Jay (2018)
Sharing and Caring	<i>3 to 4-year-old:</i> Shares toys and materials. Takes care of friends. Takes and keeps materials back at appropriate places. Solves conflicts with friends. <i>4 to 5-year-old:</i> Supports and assists other children. <i>5 to 6-year-old:</i> Shares belongings. Takes care of siblings Engages in cooperative play with assigned rules and roles.	Model good sharing and taking turns in class. Interact with warmth and care with a child so that they observe and act in the same way with peers. Reassure and calm child when upset by removing the child from situations. Give the child plenty of praise and attention when they share their belongings or care for someone. Play games that involve sharing and caring.	Talking about sharing Role-play Use "The Sharing Chart" Acknowledge sharing and caring Practice giving, not just offering Teach the golden rule: "Behave with others as you want others to behave with you" Emotion charts/books	Promotes social-awareness Forming positive relationships Identify and label feelings of self and others Promotes a sense of responsibility Build social skills	Berk (2009), Brogle et al. (2013), NCERT (2015), Ferreira et al. (2016)
Mindfulness	<i>3 to 4-year-old:</i> Enjoys simple humor and breathing exercises. Becomes more independent. Plays "mother" or "father." <i>4 to 5-year-old:</i> Distinguishes fantasy from reality. Maintains friendship and meaningful relationships. Shows more independence. <i>5 to 6-year-old:</i> Manages difficult emotions. Has poise and control. Becomes more compassionate. Participates in independent work.	Model self-calming strategies. Establish a gratitude practice. Practice mindful eating with children during break.	Mindful breathing exercise Physical exercises and balancing activities Peace table Physiological regulation techniques	Promotes self-awareness Promotes self-regulation Initiates management of feelings Helps in managing stress and negative emotions	Berk (2009), Burke (2010), Hoffmann et al. (2010), NCERT (2015), Bergstrom (2017), Counselor Keri (2018)

Source. Author's compilation.

Note. ECCE = Early Childhood Care and Education.

Holzhtuter, 2012). Preschool teachers can use adaptable, multifaceted, game-based, inquiry-based, activity-based learning strategies, which may comprise facial-expression recognition, colors, shapes, indoor and outdoor games, physical activity, peer-interactions, problem-solving in groups,

circle-times, sketching, painting and other pictorial art, craft, music and movement, and drama and puppetry, for implementing the framework in the classroom (Caselman & Self, 2008; Jha & Parvati, 2020; NCERT, 2015). Table 2 is an example of teaching strategies that can be used for the

Table 3. Various Innovative Teaching Practices, Tools, and Techniques for Preschool Children.

Teaching tools and techniques	Meaning	Objectives	References
Play-based Learning	Tools used for interaction between school practice and the children's motive orientation. They include voluntary, spontaneous, and intrinsically motivated engaging activities that provide preschool children happiness and a sense of belongingness. These include puzzle-solving, coloring, emotional identification, role-play, and so on	Play is observed as "the leading line of development in the preschool years," which supports social-emotional development To support children in social engagement and positive learning To help children learn the social norms, learn to make their own decisions, control their emotions and impulses, negotiate differences with others, and make friends	Rhoades et al. (2011), Gray (2013), Morrison (2015), Hedegaard (2016), Vygotsky (2016), Kirk & Jay (2018)
Audio-Visual Aids	Tools that can display images and make sounds such as videos, sound slides, television, and films.	To engage children and make their learning interesting and effective To strengthen the teacher-student relationship	Yazar & Arifoglu (2012), Purdon (2016)
Physiological Regulation Techniques	They include internal and external influences such as breathing exercises, meditation, family pictures, squishy balls, tone, and volume used to help calm emotions.	To help children calm and regulate their bodies when experiencing intense emotions To learn different ways to relax To redirect any physical response or action toward peers	Burke (2010), Rempel (2012), Zenner et al. (2014)
Casual Talk in the context of emotional experience (CTEE)	The approach used by teachers during the heat of a moment, while a child is amid emotional arousal to help understand and regulate emotions and social response to a situation.	To increase communication about emotions To increase emotional regulation To help children understand their own and other's emotions	Semple et al. (2005), Murray et al. (2016)
Peace Corner	A tool that provides children with repeated experiences to develop and strengthen their social and emotional management skills.	To help children identify and discern emotions To support children to share their emotions and problems To listen and understand the emotions of peers To think of alternatives and choose the best solution to a problem	Murray et al. (2016), Housman (2017)
Emotion Chart/Book	Book and chart designed to represent emotions and support children to identify and address cause and effect of their emotional experience and response.	To help children learn to label their emotions To increase understanding of the cause (social situation) and effect (emotional response) Match facial expressions to different emotions	Murray et al. (2016)
Mood Mirror	A multisensory approach to teach preschool children about the different types of emotions.	To help develop self-awareness To help children identify and label their emotions	Murray et al. (2016), Housman (2017)
Activity-based learning	A process whereby students are actively engaged in the learning process rather than just sitting and listening to the lessons.	To involve learning by doing To develop team-building skills To strengthen friendships and create an enjoyable learning environment To promote the social and emotional well-being of children	Kathleen (1996), Oche (2012), Festus (2013)

Source. Author's compilation.

practical implementation of the proposed conceptual ECCE happiness framework for promoting the social and emotional competence of preschool children.

For preschool children, teachers can use fun-based joyful activities for making their learning process easy and interesting. A few such innovative teaching practices that can be used by teachers for the implementation of the conceptual

ECCE happiness framework in the preschools, located in rural areas of Punjab, are discussed in Table 3.

Thus, teachers can make whole-hearted efforts to help implement the conceptual ECCE happiness framework by using innovative teaching practices in the classroom, which would promote children's happiness and social and emotional competence.

Conclusion

Happiness is a positive emotional state that is correlated to children's socio-emotional competence (Holder & Klassen, 2010). The core subject of this study was the significance of happiness in preschools. This article has discussed the concept and meaning of happiness and social and emotional competence in the life of preschool children, and the relationship between happiness and social and emotional competence. Furthermore, this article has shown the rationale behind the focus on happiness and social and emotional competence of children at the elementary level in the preschool, which motivates the design of a conceptual ECCE happiness framework. The article proceeded to propose a conceptual ECCE happiness framework for preschool children of Punjab (India) based on local needs. The framework focused precisely on promoting the social and emotional competence of children, based on happiness intervention, which includes three key practices: social engagement, sharing and caring, and mindfulness. This happiness intervention has been designed in a way that develops the capability of preschool students to establish positive interactions with peers, participate in interpersonal relationships, develop long-lasting friendships, and become members of social groups, thus making them socially competent (Kennedy, 2018; Lobo & Winsler, 2006). Simultaneously, this happiness intervention is an initiative to help the children in understanding and managing their emotions and enhancing a positive attitude in them, making them emotionally competent (Bajaj et al., 2019; Chamorro-Premuzic et al., 2007; Hills & Argyle, 2001). Finally, this article discussed the role of preschool teachers in implementing the framework using play-based innovative teaching practices. This study does not attempt to generalize results for all. But this study focused upon the significance of happiness, and social and emotional competence among school children from very basic levels, especially in the rural and socio-economically disadvantaged areas in the state of Punjab in India.

Contributions

The present study is an attempt to propose a new conceptual ECCE happiness framework for generating happiness, as a goal for children to stay happy and positive from early on in their childhood. This article is a piece of original research in the areas of happiness and social and emotional competence in the context of Indian preschools, specifically for schools in backward and socio-economically disadvantaged areas in the state of Punjab. The article brings to light the need to focus on children's happiness, and their social and emotional competence starting from early childhood, that is, preschool children aged 3 to 6 years. Finally, the article is an initiative to accentuate the part of preschool teachers in implementing this conceptual framework, using play-based teaching practices in the classroom.

Limitations

There are constraints to this study that warrant consideration. First, the proposed conceptual ECCE happiness framework has been developed specifically in the Indian context. The article focused on enhancing the social and emotional competence of preschool children in the state of Punjab in India, specifically in the rural and socio-economically backward areas of Punjab through a happiness intervention. Second, the article has been designed specifically for preschool children aged 3 to 6 years. Third, the article focused purposely on the social and emotional competence of preschool children as the outcome variable (dependent variables) only. Fourth, the article gives only a conceptual framework that needs to be implemented in the preschools of Punjab (India) for better practical outcomes.

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What Do I Know About Social-Emotional Learning: A Comparative Analysis Between Public and Private Preschool Teachers in Punjab

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Abstract

The primary objective is to compare the difference in preschool teachers' understanding of the five competencies of social-emotional learning (SEL) in India. The purpose is to assist teachers in reflecting on their emotions and knowledge about SEL, which is important for their personal and professional development. However, the research on preschool teachers' own SEL is very limited in the state of Punjab in India. Therefore, this study examined 90 teachers' understanding of SEL via a survey and a self-reported questionnaire. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and parametric *t*-test in SPSS. The results revealed that private preschool teachers of the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab have better knowledge about the competencies of SEL than public preschool teachers. The findings highlight the need to improve the SEL of both public and private preschool teachers, focusing on public preschool teachers through continuous and effective training interventions.

Keywords

preschools, preschool teachers, self-reported questionnaire, social-emotional learning, SPSS, teachers' understanding

Introduction

Childhood is a crucial stage of development that forms the foundation of holistic development and psychological well-being (UNICEF, 2018). A growing body of research has shown that it is essential to develop students' social-emotional learning (SEL) competencies (Oberle et al., 2016). The studies have concluded that preschool years are the crucial developmental period wherein the development of social-emotional learning is a crucial milestone in the lives of preschool children (Denham et al., 2014; Odom et al., 2008). Social-emotional learning is associated with a child's academic-social-emotional-motor skills development and school readiness (Bierman et al., 2008; Oberle et al., 2014; Trentacosta & Izard, 2007). Social-emotional Learning (SEL) is defined as "the process through which children and adults learn and apply a set of social, emotional, behavioral, and character skills required to succeed in schooling, workplace, relationships, and citizenship" (Jones et al., 2017). Schools are the platforms that support children in developing eloquent social connections, cultivating self-potential, and enhancing their social and emotional learning competencies under the supervision of teachers (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Jones & Bouffard,

2012; López-Pérez & Fernández-Castilla, 2018). Thus, teachers play a requisite role in a child's social-emotional learning and development (Taylor et al., 2017).

Preschool teachers are the engine that powers SEL interventions and practices in preschools and classrooms (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Since early childhood teachers play an essential role in developing students' social-emotional learning competencies, it is necessary to explore their understanding of social-emotional learning competencies to teach more effectively (Jones & Bouffard, 2012; López-Pérez & Fernández-Castilla, 2018). Teachers' social-emotional learning and knowledge about SEL competencies are essential, especially in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) profession. This knowledge is essential in order to master the social and emotional obstacles inherent in their profession (including online teaching, low salaries, and limited opportunities for self and professional development) that

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result in high work-related pressures, poor mental health, and emotional enervation among them (Jones et al., 2017; McMullen et al., 2020; Thorpe et al., 2020). The role of preschool teachers is intricate and multifaceted, demanding an obligation to continuous development, resilience, and emotional competence to take on numerous challenges (Beltman et al., 2020; Irvine et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2018).

Recent advances in research have suggested that socially and emotionally competent teachers play a fundamental role in building solid and positive teacher-student relationships in preschools (Jennings et al., 2017; Zinsser & Curby, 2014). Moreover, teachers who can recognize their social-emotional wellbeing can successfully implement SEL interventions in their classrooms (Hen & Goroshit, 2016). To develop and to promote students' social and emotional learning, which is the fulcrum of their holistic development, "teachers themselves need the social and emotional skills required to communicate with students and to handle stressful situations that can occur in the classroom" (Brackett et al., 2012). Thus, SEL is key to teachers' occupational well-being and positive student development (Aldrup et al., 2020; Cumming, 2017). Ample research has been done on promoting the understanding and knowledge of SEL among teachers in developed nations, including the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Hong Kong (Yoder, 2014). Until recently, however, in India's context, limited studies have been conducted on preschool teachers to gauge their understanding and knowledge about SEL and its competencies.

The present study is about preschool teachers' current knowledge of SEL and its five competencies in the state of Punjab in India. The study is critical because of two significant reasons. Firstly, the SEL understanding in teachers will help them recognize and manage emotions impacting their personal growth. Secondly, the understanding of SEL in preschool teachers will motivate them to improve their teaching to face the social and emotional challenges inherent in their teaching profession and build positive teacher-student relationships (Aldrup et al., 2020; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Furthermore, it is necessary to compare teachers' understanding in different settings. For this reason, the purpose of this study is to compare the difference in preschool teachers' understanding of the competencies of SEL in regards to the private and public preschools in India. Comparing the two different school types is important because it aims to provide the public and private preschool teachers with an opportunity to reflect on their SEL and teaching philosophy. The comparison will help to know whether or not there is any basic understanding of SEL among preschool teachers. Also, the findings will allow the educationalists, school administrations, and policy-makers to know which school type has more socially and emotionally knowledgeable teachers and which school type requires immediate attention through training interventions.

Moreover, the motive behind this study is to know where the education and training system is lacking in the personal

and professional development of preschool teachers in India. The present study aims to address the areas that require immediate improvements in areas of SEL development. Further, the purpose of the current study is to assist preschool teachers in explicitly monitoring themselves and their knowledge about SEL competencies so that they can manifest SEL into themselves and teach these skills to students. The teachers' understanding of SEL competencies will reflect on their emotions, feelings, thoughts, and social skills. The results will direct preschool teachers' attention to the importance of SEL and work on SEL areas and competencies that require improvement and professional development. Therefore, this study aims to conceptualize social-emotional learning and its competencies in the literature review. Additionally, the study discusses the relevance of basic understanding of social-emotional learning and its competencies among preschool teachers.

Therefore, this study focused on the following objectives:

1. To measure preschool teachers' basic understanding of social-emotional learning and its competencies.
2. To compare teachers' understanding of social-emotional learning between the private and public preschools located in two districts, namely Ludhiana and Patiala of the state of Punjab in India.

The present study attempts to answer the following two questions:

- (1) Is there any basic understanding about social-emotional learning and its five competencies among preschool teachers? and
- (2) Is there any difference between public and private preschool teachers' understanding of social-emotional learning and its five competencies?

Literature Review

Conceptualizing Social-Emotional Learning and Its Competencies

Early childhood teaching is customarily indicated to require a high degree of emotional work and social interaction (Jeon et al., 2016). Nevertheless, limited studies explore the teachers' understanding and knowledge of their own social and emotional wellbeing. The consideration of teachers' SEL is an essential domain for teachers' personal social-emotional growth, professional development, and for promoting a safe and supportive classroom environment, positive social involvements, and their social-emotional wellbeing (Collie et al., 2012; Jennings & Frank, 2015; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Klusmann et al., 2008). The field of SEL developed some 25 years ago with the publication of Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence* (1995) and Gardner's *Multiple Intelligences* (1993), creating an extensive body of philosophy, research, and

practice that encouraged practitioners to implement SEL curriculums for pre-K-12 students in and out of schools. In 1994, Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) was established as an international non-profit society to form evidence-based SEL as an indispensable part of school education. CASEL (2018) described SEL as “the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” Social-emotional learning (SEL) and Social-emotional competence (SEC) are interrelated and multivariate construct which includes one’s ability to identify emotions in themselves and others, being able to manage their emotions appropriately, having positive interactions with teachers and students, and solving problems effectively (Zins & Elias, 2007). Five core teachable social and emotional competencies essential to SEL are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (CASEL, 2003). Together, this suite of competencies forms the personal skills necessary for individuals to connect with others and meet the challenges of life, as explained in Table 1 below.

Even the previous research on SEL has shown that among preschool teachers, self-awareness may be evident from their understanding of the knowledge, abilities, and capabilities they have or need to cultivate, their sagacity of self-efficacy in their teaching, and their optimistic mindset about their students and their existing skills and future progress. Beyond the classroom, this can be seen in teachers’ buoyancy and affirmative state of mind while interacting with colleagues and parents of students (Ryan et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2015). Similarly, the competency of self-management can be apparent from the teachers’ ability to regulate their emotions while engaging with students and colleagues in preschool, their coping skills, motivation, and engagement in the classroom, and their capability to set clear and compelling goals (Collie & Martin, 2016; Martin et al., 2012; Mattern & Bauer, 2014). Social awareness in the preschool teachers’ can be visible from their efforts exerted while recognizing and empathizing with the perceptions of students, student’s families, and colleagues; from their sense of care toward them; and from their awareness of social norms of proper conduct in their dealings with the school community (Domitrovich et al., 2016; Perry et al., 2015; Weissberg et al., 2015). In the preschool, relationship management may manifest as the teachers’ skills to interact with students and colleagues in compassionate ways, develop and model suitable conflict-solving ways, and seek or offer assistance to students and colleagues as needed (Collie et al., 2016; Zinsser et al., 2014). Finally, the last competency of SEL, that is, responsible decision making, can be seen through teachers’ actions while making decisions in the classroom, making judgments about students’ behavior and from their problem-solving skills (CASEL, 2018; Weissberg et al., 2015). The evidence in literature is mounting on the need

and importance of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) for teachers’ well-being and students’ positive academic-social-emotional-mental outcomes in preschool (Banerjee et al., 2014; Humphrey et al., 2020). Therefore, the policymakers are beginning to realize the prominence of SEL for early educators as they are the engines for driving successful SEL interventions in preschools and classrooms.

Relevance of Basic Understanding About Social-Emotional Learning and Its Five Competencies Among Teachers

It is deep-rooted that teachers’ social-emotional learning is crucial to their effective working in the school—including their use of effective classroom management techniques, provision of student learning support, and creation of supportive learning settings for students (Kunter et al., 2013; McLean & Connor, 2015; Shen et al., 2015). More recently, educationists have begun to acknowledge the importance of teachers’ social-emotional wellbeing (Jennings & Frank, 2015). Studies have reported the importance of developing teachers’ understanding of SEL. Understanding SEL can help preschool teachers recognize and manage their emotions and create and practice positive emotions (such as joy and enthusiasm) to stimulate SEL in themselves and their students (Jennings, 2011). It can enhance their self-awareness by developing a realistic understanding of their proficiencies and identifying their emotional strengths and weaknesses (Elias, 2009). Furthermore, social-emotional understanding can impact teachers’ social awareness and relationship management. SEL knowledge can help teachers, both in their personal and professional development.

Even previous research has concluded that teachers with strong understanding of SEL can develop healthy relations with students, which positively impacts students’ academic performance, achievements, social functioning, emotional competence, and school engagement (Murray & Zvoch, 2011; Spilt et al., 2011). Socially and emotionally competent preschool teachers can help students build positive interactions with their peers, display positive behaviors, learn with happiness, and manage conflicting behaviors starting from the early years (Gest & Rodkin, 2011; Kaur & Sharma, 2021b). This strong teacher-student relationship can result in the child’s successful school adjustment and positive school outcomes (Baker et al., 2008).

Therefore, to develop students’ social-emotional competence, it is essential to develop an understanding of SEL amongst teachers first to teach more effectively. This understanding is needed because SEL can improve teachers’ emotional expressiveness while interacting with preschool children and colleagues, and build supportive relationships through mutual understanding and cooperation (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). SEL in teachers can support them in making responsible decisions, exhibit

Table 1. Teacher Social-emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies.

S. No.	Competency	Meaning	SEL skills related to each competency
1.	Self-awareness	The ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions, feelings, interests, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior.	Identifying emotions Accurate self-perception Recognizing strengths Self-confidence Self-efficacy
2.	Self-management	The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behavior and to handle stress, control impulses, and motivate oneself in overcoming obstacles by setting and achieving goals.	Impulse Control Stress management Self-discipline Self-motivation Goal-setting Organizational skills
3.	Social-awareness	The ability to identify and understand the perspective of others and empathize with them; recognize and appreciate individual and group similarities and differences; identify and use family, school, and community resources.	Perspective-taking Empathy Appreciating diversity Respect for others
4.	Relationship management	The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding cooperative relationships; resist unsuitable social pressure; check, manage, and resolve interpersonal engagement; seek assistance when needed.	Communication Social engagement Leadership Relationship-building Teamwork
5.	Responsible decision making	The ability to make decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and probable consequences of various actions; apply decision-making skills to the well-being of oneself and others	Identifying problems Analyzing situations Solving problems Evaluating Reflecting Ethical responsibility

Source. <https://casel.org/core-competencies/> and Brackett & Rivers, 2014.

prosocial behavior, and manage their responses even when emotionally provoked by challenging circumstances (Goddard et al., 2004). Thus, SEL in preschool teachers is essential for promoting self-development, portraying positive attitudes toward teaching, improving relationships within and outside preschool, and promoting a supportive and caring classroom environment for preschool students (Domitrovich et al., 2016; Weissberg et al., 2015).

However, limited studies have been conducted on preschool teachers and their understanding of SEL in India. Also, it is necessary to compare teachers' understanding in different settings and demographic variables. For this reason, this study has specifically tried to compare the current understanding of SEL based on public and private preschools. A study done in the Faridabad district of Haryana in India found a significant difference in emotional competence between private and public school teachers. The results showed that teachers in private schools were more emotionally intelligent than their public school counterparts (Garg & Kapri, 2016). Further, studies have concluded that the quality of "teaching and learning" was the main reason for choosing private schools over public schools in India (Von Stumm & Plomin, 2021; Young Lives, 2017).

Therefore, the present study attempts to study the level of preschool teachers' understanding of SEL in the Punjab state of India. Though India is considered the hub of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) services, the current picture of the early education system in the state of Punjab in India, specifically in the rural and economically disadvantaged areas, seems to be nerve-racking (Kaur & Sharma, 2021a). The concerns in the school system in Punjab (India) have reached beyond poor quality of ECCE frameworks, social-emotional complications, and poor academic grades (State Council of Educational Research and Training [SCERT] Report by Sisodia et al., 2019). The efforts to improve the quality of teaching has increased pressure on teachers, including demands for higher qualifications (Cumming et al., 2015), long working hours and low pay-scale (Thorpe et al., 2020), increased teachers' feelings of anger, insensitivity, frustration, and anxiety (Aldrup et al., 2020; Dicke et al., 2015), and depleted emotional and mental health (Eadie et al., 2021; Irvine et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2017). Therefore, understanding social and emotional learning in preschool teachers is inextricably linked to their social-emotional wellbeing, mental health, student learning, and developmental outcomes (King et al., 2016; Smith &

Lawrence, 2019). In the current study, the authors have conveniently opted to survey the teachers in the two districts, Patiala and Ludhiana, in Punjab. Though Punjab has both public and private preschools with modern teaching equipment (Singh, 2015; Singh & Mukherjee, 2017), the study's primary aim was to check if there exists any difference in the SEL understanding among preschool teachers.

Methodology

Study Context

The study aims to reflect on the preschool teachers' current understanding of their SEL and its five competencies. Secondly, this study aims to assess whether or not there is any significant difference in the understanding level about SEL between private and public preschool teachers teaching in Punjab state of India. The comparison is to access the gap in social-emotional learning competencies between private and public preschool teachers in Punjab (India). The analyses will allow preschool teachers to reflect on their social-emotional learning competencies. Furthermore, the findings will direct policymakers and educationalists to rethink teachers' professional and personal development in our current education system (UNESCO, 2016).

Design of the Study

The current study utilized a descriptive survey method to study the level of understanding of five competencies of SEL among preschool teachers in Punjab (India). To solve the need, a self-reported survey instrument was designed, and the responses of preschool teachers were analyzed using SPSS.

Tools

Several self-report questionnaires are available to gauge emotion regulation, social awareness, and relationship management skills in teachers and adults. The below-given survey instruments were adapted, and a questionnaire for examining teachers' understanding of SEL via its five competencies was prepared.

1. Self-Awareness Outcome Questionnaire (SAOQ) by Sutton (2016).
2. Measurement of Teachers' Social-Emotional Competence-Development of the Social-Emotional Competence Teacher Rating Scale by Tom (2012).
3. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Knowledge Scale for Preservice Teachers by Buchanan et al. (2009).
4. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Beliefs Scale for Preservice Teachers by Brackett et al. (2012).
5. The CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL (2019) by CASEL (2018).

The researcher constructed Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Scale for teachers (refer to Appendix) to examine their understanding of SEL based on their prior and current knowledge. This scale consisted of 113 items with 5-point Likert scale covering five subscales: (a) self-awareness with the reliability of .816, (b) self-management with the reliability of .767, (c) social awareness with the reliability of .741, (d) relationship management with the reliability of .805, and (e) responsible decision making with the reliability of .846. The total reliability of the test is .991, which indicated greater internal consistency of the items in the SEL scale.

Participants and Procedures of the Study

This study is based on a stratified random sampling of 90 preschool teachers selected from two districts, namely, Patiala and Ludhiana of Punjab in India. This sampling method was chosen because of its intention to focus on the defined strata of preschool teachers from two specific districts of Punjab in India. The sample was free from the researcher's bias but may have missed the complete representation of the sample. The permission of the District Education Officer (DEO) was taken to select the schools for conducting the survey. Ninety preschool teachers teaching the age-group 3 to 6 years were recruited for the study. The preschools selected belonged to both rural and urban areas of Punjab. Out of 90 teachers selected for this study, 45 teachers belonged to two private preschools (one from Ludhiana and one from Patiala) and 45 belonged to three public preschools (one from Ludhiana and two from Patiala) located in Punjab (India). A cross-sectional survey design was employed to investigate the research questions. Before conducting the survey, an awareness session was conducted where participants were provided with information about the study and an online consent form. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed that their information would be confidential and securely stored. All participants provided informed consent. The survey took teachers approximately 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire for measuring the level of understanding about SEL in them.

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

In the SEL scale for teachers, the first part of the scale included five questions relating to the demographic profile of the respondents as given in Table 2 below. In this section, the frequency and percent of the responses were calculated for each of these sections.

The above Table 2 shows that respondents included 90 preschool teachers from private and public preschool, teaching children within the age group of 3 to 6 years. Out of 90 respondents, 45 teachers belonged to two preschools (one private and one public) located in urban areas of Punjab, and 45 teachers belonged to three preschools (one private and two public) located in rural areas of Punjab. Total respondents were 90, 75 were female, and 15 were males. Talking about the years of

Table 2. Profile of the Respondents.

S. No.	Variables	Type	Frequency (90)	Percentage
1.	Type of preschool teachers	Private	45	50
		Public	45	50
2.	Gender	Female	75	83.3
		Male	15	16.7
3.	Location of preschool	Urban (2 schools)	45	50
		Rural (3 schools)	45	50
4.	Years of professional teaching experience at preschool (in years)	0–10	37	41.1
		11–20	47	52.2
		>20	06	66.7
5.	Education qualification of teachers	Graduation	5	5.6
		Masters	38	42.2
		Master with special degree	43	47.8
		Doctorate	4	4.4

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Teachers' Understanding About SEL in Preschools of Punjab.

Dimension	N	M	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
Teachers' understanding about SEL	90	426.60	433.00	68.304	273	559	−0.292	−0.352

professional teaching experience, 37 preschool teachers have been teaching for 0 to 10 years, 47 teachers have been teaching for 11 to 20 years, and 6 have been teaching for over 20 years in preschools. In the profile of education qualification, 38 out of 90 preschool teachers have done masters, 43 teachers have done masters with specialization degree, and 6 teachers were doctorates. Teachers reported that the total student population size of the five preschools was approximately 650. This indicates that the number of children per classroom, headed by two teachers, ranged from 10 to 15. All the participants belonged to the districts of Ludhiana and Patiala in the state of Punjab in India.

Statistical Techniques Used

Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) is used in this study. Furthermore, Cohen's *D* is measured to report effect size, representing how large an effect is, and the parametric *t*-test is applied in SPSS to determine whether the difference exists in the level of understanding of five competencies of SEL between private and public preschool teachers, teaching in preschools of Ludhiana and Patiala districts of the Punjab state in India. Then, the results are reported and discussed.

Results

Findings of the Teachers' Understanding About Social-Emotional Learning and Its Five Competencies

This section answers the research question on the basic understanding of social-emotional learning and its five

competencies among preschool teachers. According to Table 3, the mean results reveal that the value of preschool teachers' understanding of SEL is 426.60, and the median is 433.00. The Skewness is −0.292 (within the range of −1 and +1), and Kurtosis is −0.352 (between −3 and +3). According to the results, it can be concluded that the data is normally distributed, and the positive mean value signifies that most of the preschool teachers in this study have a good understanding of social-emotional learning (Singh, 2015). The findings revealed that yes, the preschool teachers in Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab state in India have good basic understanding about social-emotional learning.

Further, the teachers' understanding of the five competencies of SEL, namely self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making, was examined and reported in Table 4. The mean value of understanding relationship management competency was highest in preschool teachers, followed by social awareness, self-awareness, responsible decision making, and self-management. Also, the Skewness and Kurtosis lie within their acceptable range. The findings signify that most preschool teachers in this study have a good understanding of the five competencies of social-emotional learning. The results show that knowledge of the SEL and its five competencies is essential for preschool teachers, regardless of the difference in the type of schools they are working in (Zinsser et al., 2014).

To answer the second question, if there is any difference in the preschool teachers' understanding of social-emotional learning and its five competencies between public and private preschool teachers. It is evident from the above Table 5

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of Teachers' Understanding about Five Competencies of SEL.

Competencies of SEL	N	M	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
Self-awareness	90	3.79	3.86	0.660	1	5	-0.725	1.330
Self-management	90	3.64	3.74	0.710	1	5	-0.494	0.695
Social-awareness	90	3.82	3.88	0.600	2	5	-0.449	0.539
Relationship management	90	3.86	3.88	0.698	1	5	-0.760	1.975
Responsible decision making	90	3.76	3.83	0.681	1	5	-0.608	1.004

that the mean value and standard deviation of teachers in private preschools are higher than the mean value and standard deviation of teachers in public preschools located in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab (India). The results reveal that yes, there exists a significant difference between public and private preschool teachers' understanding about social-emotional learning in Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab state in India. The findings highlight that the preschool teachers' understanding of SEL in private schools is better than teachers' understanding in public preschools. Also, to accompany reporting the results, effect sizes are calculated using Cohen's *D* to measure how large is the difference in preschool teachers' understanding of SEL in Punjab (India) in below-given Table 6.

The effect size value of Cohen *D* is 0.998, which is more than 0.8 (large effect size limit). The result represents a large effect, indicating that the two means are likely different. This concludes that there is a large effect and a major difference in the understanding level of SEL between public and private preschool teachers in Punjab. The teachers in private preschools in Punjab (India) have a better understanding of SEL than teachers in public preschools. The findings highlight the dire need to improve the SEL of teachers teaching in public preschools in Punjab (India). To investigate the details, the mean and standard deviation of all five competencies of SEL was measured separately. The data is in the ordinal scale (Likert scale), normally distributed and within the acceptable ranges of Skewness and Kurtosis. Further, to answer the research question and test the difference in the level of understanding of each competency of social-emotional learning between private and public preschool teachers in-depth, an independent *t*-test was applied in SPSS, as shown in Table 7.

There are five competencies of social-emotional learning. As an answer to the research question, all five competencies of SEL were analyzed separately to compare the difference in private and public preschool teachers' reflections about SEL. It is clear from Table 7 that for self-awareness competency, the mean score of private preschool teachers (4.06) is higher than public preschool teachers (3.52). The value of "*t*" for the mean scores of the two groups is 4.24, which is more than the table value at 0.05 level (1.98) and 0.01 level (2.63). It indicates that there is a significant difference that exists in the understanding level of self-awareness between the private and public school teachers. The primary skills of this

Table 5. Mean Comparison of Teachers' Understanding About SEL by School Type.

School type	N	M	Median	SD
Private	45	457.22	471.00	72.85
Public	45	395.98	410.00	47.03
Total	90	426.60	433.00	68.30

Table 6. Calculation of Cohen's *D*.

$$\text{Cohen's } D = (\text{Mean}_2 - \text{Mean}_1) / SD_{\text{pooled}}$$

$$\text{Where } SD_{\text{pooled}} = \sqrt{((SD_1^2 + SD_2^2) / 2)}$$

$$\text{Cohen's } D = 395.98 - 457.22 / 61.31 = 0.998$$

Note. Cohen's *D* is one of the most common ways to measure effect size, representing how large an effect is. Cohen's *D* is used to indicate the standardized difference between the two means used to compare. This can be used to accompany reporting of *t*-test. The result of Cohen's *D* means use the general "rule of thumb" guidelines where: Small effect = 0.2; Medium effect = 0.5; and Large effect = 0.8.

competency are identifying the feelings and thoughts in the form of words in self, seeing one's strengths and weaknesses, having accurate self-perception, and differentiating between real and unreal emotional expression (CASEL, 2013). The knowledge of self-awareness among private preschool teachers in Punjab is comparatively more than public preschool teachers. The findings indicate a need for public preschool teachers in Punjab in India to recognize and reflect on their own emotions, feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. The second competency of SEL is self-management, which is the ability to regulate one's emotions, control impulses and stress, and motivate oneself in setting and achieving goals. The results reveal that the mean scores of private preschool teachers (3.91) are higher than public preschool teachers (3.36). The value of "*t*" is 3.94, which is slightly more than the table value at 0.05 level (1.98) and 0.01 level (2.63). It shows that there is little difference between private and public preschool teachers in the level of understanding of self-management competency in the study. The results reflect that both private and public preschool teachers can manage their emotions, thoughts, stress, impulses, and behavior.

The third competency of social awareness refers to the ability to understand the perspective of others and empathize with them. The results highlight that the understanding of

Table 7. Independent Sample *t*-test to Compare Means of Five Competencies of SEL by School Type.

Competencies of SEL	School type	N	M	SD	t-test	Decision
Self-awareness	Private	45	4.06	0.736	4.24**	Supported
	Public	45	3.52	0.435		
Self-management	Private	45	3.91	0.766	3.94**	Supported
	Public	45	3.36	0.529		
Social-awareness	Private	45	4.06	0.682	4.14**	Supported
	Public	45	3.58	0.380		
Relationship management	Private	45	4.17	0.789	4.69**	Supported
	Public	45	3.55	0.406		
Responsible decision making	Private	45	4.00	0.789	3.57**	Supported
	Public	45	3.52	0.444		

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.**Table 8.** Calculation of Cohen's *D* for Five Competencies of SEL.

S. No.	Competency of SEL	Cohen's $D = (\text{Mean}_2 - \text{Mean}_1) / SD_{\text{pooled}}$ Where $SD_{\text{pooled}} = \sqrt{((SD_1^2 + SD_2^2) / 2)}$	Effect size
1.	Self-awareness	0.89	Large effect
2.	Self-management	0.84	Large effect
3.	Social awareness	0.87	Large effect
4.	Relationship management	0.99	Large effect
5.	Responsible decision making	0.80	Large effect

social awareness among private preschool teachers (mean scores = 4.06) is higher than those in public preschools (mean scores = 3.58). The value of "*t*" for the mean scores of the two groups is 4.14, which is more than the table value at 0.05 level (1.98) and 0.01 level (2.63). It shows that there is a significant difference that exists between private and public preschool teachers. The findings highlight the need to address perspective-taking skills, appreciating diversity, and empathizing with others among public preschool teachers in Punjab (India). The fourth competency of SEL is relationship management. It refers to creating and sustaining healthy, cooperative, and communicative relationships with people around. The results indicate that the mean score of private preschool teachers (4.17) is much higher than public preschool teachers (3.55). Also, the "*t*" value is 4.69, which is more than the table value at 0.05 level (1.98) and 0.01 level (2.63). It indicates a significant difference in the understanding level of relationship management between the private and public school teachers in the present study. Lastly, it is clear from the table for responsible decision-making competency that the mean score of private school teachers (4.00) is higher than public preschool teachers (3.52). The value of "*t*" for the mean scores of the two groups is 3.57, which is more than the table value at 0.05 level (1.98) and 0.01 level (2.63). It indicates a significant difference in the knowledge about the responsible decision-making competency between the private and public preschool teachers in the state of Punjab in India.

Furthermore, to accompany reporting of the *t*-test results, effect sizes of all five competencies are calculated using Cohen *D* in Table 8.

The results from above Table 8 indicate a large effect, indicating that the two means are likely different in all the five competencies of SEL, calculated separately. This concludes that there is a large effect and a major difference in the understanding level of all five competencies of SEL between public and private preschool teachers. The findings emphasize on the need to improve the SEL of both public and private preschool teachers, focusing on public preschool teachers through continuous and effective training interventions in Punjab (India).

Therefore, based on the results, the study answers the research questions. It can be reported that:

1. Yes, the preschool teachers teaching in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India have basic knowledge and understanding of social-emotional learning and its five competencies.
2. Yes, there is difference between public and private preschool teachers' understanding of social-emotional learning and its five competencies. The level of understanding and knowledge of all five social-emotional learning competencies in private preschool teachers is higher than public preschool teachers in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab in India. Thus, the findings highlight the need to improve the

public preschool teachers' understanding of SEL and its competencies in Punjab (India). This understanding and reflection of SEL will result in teachers' personal and professional development and supplement their teaching of SEL to students.

Discussion

The importance of Early Childhood (EC) teachers' wellbeing has brought into the light the need to focus on social-emotional learning (SEL) among them (Ashraf et al., 2017; Eadie et al., 2021). The core subject of this study was the significance of SEL among preschool teachers. This article has discussed the concept and meaning of social-emotional learning and the five competencies, as defined by CASEL. Furthermore, this article has shown the rationale behind the focus on social-emotional learning of preschool teachers. The article has discussed the importance of teachers' understanding of SEL teaching in preschools. Ample research has been done on promoting the understanding and knowledge of SEL among teachers in developed nations. Recently, Indian educationalists have also acknowledged the significance of social and emotional learning in the holistic development of preschool teachers and students in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of India. NEP of India states that the education system needs to focus on "developing good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy" (Jha & Parvati, 2020). However, there is no empirical research done to examine the preschool teachers' understanding of SEL in private and public preschools located in the state of Punjab in India.

The present study has examined the level of preschool teachers' understanding of social-emotional learning concerning the private and public preschools located in two districts, namely Ludhiana and Patiala in the state of Punjab in India. The aim behind comparing the two different school types was to facilitate the private and public preschool teachers to reflect on their own social and emotional learning and development. Moreover, if any difference in understanding of SEL arises in findings, policymakers and educational authorities can think to develop and implement interventions for teachers' SEL development. The results revealed that the preschool teachers in Punjab have a good understanding of SEL and its five competencies. However, in the awareness session, the authors found out that both private and public preschool teachers are lacking in the knowledge and understanding of SEL and its competencies. But, while comparing, there exists a significant difference in the level of teachers' understanding of SEL and its five competencies, namely, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making between private and public preschool teachers. The findings revealed that private preschool teachers have better knowledge about SEL and its competencies than public preschool teachers. This difference in the level of understanding can be

because of the lack of Early Childhood teachers' training interventions for public preschool teachers that focuses on promoting their social-emotional learning and holistic wellbeing in India. The need of the hour is to design and implement continuous and effective SEL training programs for private and public preschool teachers to improve their understanding of SEL in the preschool of Punjab (India). The study's findings direct that the Ministry of Education and preschools in Punjab should develop teaching philosophies, strategies, curriculums, training programs, and interventions that focus on developing a positive, safe, and inclusive learning environment, especially for the public preschool teachers. These initiatives will promote teachers' social-emotional learning and competence. Teachers' professional and personal development will support inclusive teaching of SEL skills to preschool students and promote trust-building with students at school (Humphries et al., 2018; Schonert-Reichl, 2017). This is because a socially and emotionally competent teacher will help preschool students' happiness, academic, social, and emotional wellbeing by creating a supportive classroom environment (Kaur & Sharma 2021b; Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

Moreover, SEL knowledge will help preschool teachers to manage their emotions, understand the emotions of preschoolers and colleagues, develop positive relationships, make ethical decisions, overcome occupational stress, and face challenging situations in and out of preschools (Hen & Goroshit, 2016; Jennings et al., 2017). School-based interventions, awareness sessions, and training workshops to foster SEL in preschool teachers, in general, can influence their emotional wellbeing, self-perception, teaching quality, commitment to professional ethics, and social competence (Ashraf et al., 2017; Zinsser & Curby, 2014). This study does not attempt to generalize results for all. However, this study has focused on examining the level of social-emotional learning among preschool teachers teaching in private and public preschools located in Punjab in India.

Conclusion

The present study is important for readers, policymakers, and educational authorities. It attempts to compare the differences in understanding social-emotional learning and its five competencies between private and public preschool teachers teaching in preschools of Punjab (India). This article is a piece of original empirical research in social-emotional learning in the context of Indian preschools, especially for private and public preschools located in the Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab (India). The article is an initiative to accentuate the importance of social-emotional learning among preschool teachers. Finally, this article highlights the need to focus on preschool teachers' social and emotional competence as a foundation for the holistic development of teachers themselves and preschool children's holistic well-being.

Nevertheless, there are constraints to this study that warrant consideration. First, the data collection and testing have been done specifically with the Indian preschool teachers, teaching in Ludhiana and Patiala districts of Punjab state in India only. Second, the article has focussed only on examining the teachers' understanding of social-emotional learning. Third, the limitations of this study concern mostly the sample and the self-reported dimensions. The sample was primarily composed of female preschool teachers who teach in preschools. This recommends limiting the generalization of results across male preschool teachers and all school levels. In addition, this article employed only self-report questionnaires, which may bias the results. Therefore, future studies should address the above limitations and examine the understanding of teachers' social-emotional learning at all school levels in India. Additional research should focus on designing a training

module and implementing a training intervention in preschools to enhance the social-emotional competence of preschool teachers. Finally, future research should emphasize ways to enhance teachers' SEL and how they contribute to enhancing the social-emotional competence of preschool children.

Appendix

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Scale for Teachers

Dear Participant

Thanks in advance for your participation in completing this academic survey that aims to examine your understanding of Social Emotional Learning pre-training. Kindly take few minutes to fill up this questionnaire.

Please read the following definition:

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) refers to the process by which individuals acquire knowledge and skills to help navigate through life's challenges. It refers to the development of skills related to recognizing and managing emotions, developing care and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) identifies five competencies essential in cultivating cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills in students. These competencies include self-awareness (ability to identify emotions, thoughts, and behaviors), self-management (ability to build upon identification and regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviors), social awareness (ability to take the perspectives of others), relationship skills (ability to establish and maintain positive relationships), and responsible decision-making (ability to make ethical personal choices)

With this definition in mind, please read the following statements and think about how true each is for *YOU*. Rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

stands for strongly disagree

stands for disagree

stands for neutral

stands for agree and

stands for strongly agree

YOUR RESPONSES TO THIS SURVEY ARE CONFIDENTIAL

Tick in the box that corresponds with your response.

Basic Demographic Information of Respondent

Consent for Participation ☐ I agree to consent

1. Name of the respondent _____
2. Email of the respondent _____
3. Name of the institution where you are employed _____
4. Please indicate your gender: Male ☐ Female ☐ Others ☐
5. Years of professional school experience _____
6. 0 to 10 years ☐ 10 to 20 years ☐ 20 years and above ☐
7. Indicate your education qualification _____
8. Haven't graduated from high school ☐ Graduated ☐ Masters ☐
9. Masters with Specialist Degree ☐ Doctorate ☐
10. Please indicate your city _____
11. Ludhiana ☐ Patiala ☐
12. Mark only one that applies to your school _____
13. Urban ☐ Rural ☐

Below are some questions relating to "*Prior Knowledge of SEL in teachers*" in school. Using the multiple choices below, identify the answer that best represents your on-the-spot belief about each statement or question. Please answer the following questions by placing a tick mark in the relevant column where (1) *stands for strongly unknowledgeable (or strongly disagree)* and (5) *stands for strongly knowledgeable (or strongly agree)*. Place each statement within your school context. Please respond to all questions.

Below are some questions relating to "*Knowledge about 5 competencies of Social-Emotional Learning in teachers*" within your school context while teaching. Using the multiple choices below, identify the answer that best represents your on-the-spot belief about each statement or question. Please answer the following questions by placing a checkmark in the relevant column where (1) *stands for strongly disagree* and (5) *stands for strongly agree*. Place each statement within your school context. Please respond to all questions.

S. No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	You have knowledge of the term “Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)”					
2	You know the meaning of SEL.					
3	You have knowledge of SEL competencies.					
4	You have attended SEL training in the last 12 months.					
5	You have used/using SEL competencies in your teaching career.					
6	You would like to attend a workshop/training to develop your understanding of SEL.					
7	You have a school culture that supports the development of teachers’ SEL.					
8	Your principal supports the teacher’s training for enhancing their SEL.					

Self-awareness. Self-awareness refers to the ability of an individual to recognize and understand one’s own emotions, feelings, interests, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior.

Self-management. Self-Management refers to the ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behavior to handle stress, control impulses, and motivate oneself in overcoming obstacles by setting and achieving goals.

S. No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	You have a good sense of why you have certain feelings most of the time.					
2	You feel a sense of pride in doing your job.					
3	You enjoy teaching.					
4	You “observe” yourself while teaching in the classroom.					
5	You are committed to your self-development.					
6	It’s easy for you to describe your feelings.					
7	You are a fairly cheerful person.					
8	You can identify, recognize, and name your emotions at the moment most of the time.					
9	You recognize the relationship between your feelings and your reactions toward students in the classroom.					
10	You recognize the relationship between your feelings and your reactions toward colleagues in the school.					
11	You know and are realistic about your strengths and weaknesses.					
12	You accept others’ feedback about your work in school.					
13	You know how your own needs, biases, and values affect the decisions you make in the classroom while teaching.					
14	You believe you have the ability to influence and lead your students effectively.					
15	You feel confident that you can handle situations with self-assurance and a calm mind.					
16	You believe that your teaching experiences help you to learn and grow.					
17	You feel positive even in negative situations.					
18	You feel satisfied with your teaching in the classroom.					
19	You analyze how your personality fits with your teaching profession.					
20	You feel easy to make changes and adapt to new practices while teaching.					
21	You feel guilty for criticizing students.					
22	You find it easy to try innovative teaching practices in the classroom.					
23	You can recognize the situations that trigger your emotions.					
24	You have a good understanding of what are your values and your goals.					
25	You have a good sense of humor.					
26	You have a positive perspective about your personality.					
27	You are not defensive in receiving criticism about yourself.					
28	You speak out for a course of action you believe in, even when others disagree.					
29	You consider yourself an effective person, capable of taking on challenges and master new tasks.					

S. No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	You find ways to manage your emotions and channel them in useful ways without harming anyone.					
2	You stay calm, composed, and clear-headed under high stress and during a school crisis.					
3	You have high personal standards that motivate you to seek performance improvements for yourself and those you lead.					
4	You are practical, setting measurable, challenging, and attainable goals.					
5	You accept new challenges in your teaching profession and adjust to changes.					
6	When you encounter a challenging problem, you try to solve it by yourself.					
7	You modify your thinking in the face of new information and realities.					
8	You can manage multiple demands of students without losing focus or energy in the classroom.					
9	You keep a balance between your work life and personal renewal time.					
10	You always set a goal for yourself and then try your best to achieve them.					
11	You are a self-motivated person.					
12	It's generally easy for you to make changes in your daily life.					
13	It's easy for you to face unpleasant situations.					
14	You are optimistic about most things you do.					
15	You generally expect things will turn out all right, despite setbacks from time to time.					
16	Your impulsiveness creates problems in school.					
17	You keep patience while teaching in class.					
18	You have strong impulses that are hard to control.					
19	You tend to control your anger easily.					
20	You know how to deal with upsetting problems.					
21	You manage stress caused within the school.					
22	You know how to keep calm in difficult situations.					
23	You are open to candid feedback, new perspectives, continuous learning, and self-development.					

Social awareness. Social Awareness refers to the ability to identify and understand the perspective of others and empathize with them; recognize and appreciate individual and

group similarities and differences; identify and use family, school, and community resources.

S. No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	You listen actively to another person's perspective.					
2	You can grasp another person's feelings from both verbal and nonverbal cues.					
3	You believe that, in general, people are doing their best, and you expect the best of them.					
4	You appreciate and get along with people of diverse backgrounds and cultures in your school.					
5	You utilize involving practices to ensure all student's voices are represented in the classroom.					
6	You are insightful in organizational situations and can identify crucial social networks.					
7	You understand the organizational forces at work, guiding values, and unspoken rules that operate among people.					
8	You can understand your student's emotions from their behavior.					
9	You are a good observer of colleagues' emotions.					
10	You are sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others.					
11	You feel like "part of the family" at your school.					
12	You feel "emotionally attached" to this school.					
13	You feel a strong sense of belonging with your students.					
14	You look at why students act the way they do.					
15	You have compassion and acceptance for others.					
16	You think about how colleagues or students interact with each other.					
17	You are good at understanding the way other people behave.					

Relationship skills. Relationship skills refer to the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding cooperative relationships; resist inappropriate social pressure; prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflict; seek help when needed.

Responsible decision making. Responsible decision making refers to the ability to make decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and probable consequences of various actions; apply decision-making skills to the well-being of oneself and others.

S. No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	You foster an emotionally nurturing and safe environment for students.					
2	You are open and authentic with others about your values and beliefs, goals, and guiding principles.					
3	You communicate with and encourage interaction with students.					
4	You can articulate ideas that are important to you in ways that motivate students to become involved.					
5	You have a genuine interest in cultivating students' growth and developing their SEL skills.					
6	You can openly admit your mistakes and shortcomings to yourself and others.					
7	You try to understand the perspective and experiences of others before you offer suggestions.					
8	You give timely and constructive feedback as a guide and mentor.					
9	You are comfortable dealing with conflict, listening to feelings from all parties, and helping them understand different perspectives.					
10	You guide students to resolve their conflicts.					
11	You like helping students.					
12	You like helping colleagues.					
13	You are good at teamwork and generate a shared atmosphere that inspires students.					
14	You build relationships with students of diverse groups.					
15	You involve students in important decision-making tasks to ensure to make a wise choice.					
16	You express teamwork in your leadership style and personal behaviors as a role model to students.					
17	You recognize individual and group similarities and differences.					
18	You use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.					
19	You demonstrate an ability to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.					
20	It's easy for you to share your deep feelings with others.					
21	It's easy for you to make friends.					
22	You care what happens to other people.					
23	You have good relations with students.					
24	You have good relations with colleagues.					
25	You regularly interact with students.					
26	You keep in touch with colleagues.					

S. No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	You can define the core of the problem and identify the solution options.					
2	You recognize the need for change, challenge the status quo, and encourage new thinking in your classroom.					
3	You conduct a need analysis and involve your colleagues to identify problems before starting a new initiative.					
4	You involve your colleagues while decision-making.					
5	You find ethical ways to overcome barriers when it comes to making decisions while teaching.					
6	You use more than one measure to assess progress toward social, emotional, and academic goals.					
7	You usually set personal goals and monitor progress toward these goals.					
8	You provide opportunities for self-reflection and group reflection on progress toward goals used while teaching.					
9	You treat your colleagues in the same way you want to be treated.					
10	You are sensitive to the feelings of others while making decisions.					
11	You contribute to the well-being of your school.					
12	It's easy for you to decide on the best solution when it comes to solving problems.					
13	Your approach in overcoming difficulties is to move step by step.					
14	When faced with a difficult situation, you like to collect all information about it that you can.					
15	You try to get an overview of a problem before trying to solve it.					
16	You would stop and help a crying child, find his or her parents, even if you are required to be somewhere else at the same time.					
17	You encourage community service activities for students and staff.					
18	You consider ethical, safety, and societal factors in making decisions.					

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Measuring early childhood educators' knowledge of social-emotional learning pre and post training

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Abstract

The primary goal of this study is to measure the improvement in early childhood educators' knowledge of the five social-emotional learning (SEL) competencies post-training in India. Furthermore, the aim is to evaluate the effectiveness of educators' training modules on the SEL knowledge of preschool educators. In addition, the aim is to support educators in contemplating their feelings and knowledge of SEL since it is vital for individual and career growth. However, studies concerning early childhood educators' SEL knowledge in Punjab, India, are scarce. As a result, this study investigated 100 preschool educators' knowledge of SEL competencies using a survey, a training session, and a self-reported questionnaire. The data were analyzed in SPSS, and pre and post-training results were compared using the paired samples t-test. The findings revealed a significant difference in educators' knowledge of SEL after training in the Ludhiana and Patiala cities of Punjab. The outcomes emphasize the importance of continuously and effectively training early childhood educators to develop their knowledge of SEL skills for self-growth and preschool students' holistic development.

Keywords Early childhood educators · Educators' knowledge · Social-emotional Learning · SPSS · Training

Introduction

Early childhood educators' mental health and social-emotional learning have received a growing spotlight nationally and globally for their practical work in preschool. Social-emotional learning (SEL) refers to acquiring, developing, and using information, skills, and attitudes fundamental to developing a positive sense of mental wellness. Improving educators' knowledge of their SEL competencies can aid in developing social-emotional wellness and mental health (McMullen et al. 2020). Education is the most effective instrument for developing human resources. Recognizing the value of education, the government of India and several private colleges are providing formal education at various levels. It is separated into levels because children have varied capacities to grasp particular things at distinct ages, and hence learning programs are

designed to build specific abilities. In India, there are three levels of formal education: primary or elementary catering to children aged 6 to 14, secondary catering to teenagers aged 14 to 17, and higher education from graduation and above, also known as tertiary or third-level education. The essential foundational stage, albeit outside of the recognized system, is the Preprimary or Preschool stage, which serves the requirements of children aged 2.5–6 years. Preschool education is the informal experiences of learning or education provided to a child before he begins formal schooling intending to bring optimum development in all areas such as language, socio-emotional, physical, cognitive development, and so on through play-way methods, songs, story-telling, and drawing. Because learning experiences are offered to children during their early infancy period, this stage is also known as Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). This ECCE is also known by other names such as Preschool, Kindergarten, Nursery, Montessori, Balwadi, Preprimary, Pre-basic, and Anganwadi in India. Although educating preschool students can be enriching and satisfying, preschool educators often express feelings of loneliness, an inability to fulfil the demands of their job, a sense of inadequacy, a sense of invincibility, frustration, despair, professional exhaustion,

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and emotional strain (Buettner et al. 2016); Sandilos et al., 2020). All these stressors emphasize the need to focus on the SEL of preschool educators' teaching. Early childhood educators have an essential role in developing preschool students' SEL; thus, to teach more efficiently, they must focus on their knowledge of SEL (López-Pérez et al. 2016). Knowledge about SEL competencies can be taught and learnt purposefully and unintentionally from peers and educators, who teach these abilities and serve as exemplars by demonstrating how to apply them in action (Liu et al. 2023). Knowledge of SEL abilities is critical for educators, particularly in the ECCE field. Preschool educator responsibilities are complex and multidimensional, necessitating a commitment to ongoing development, perseverance, and emotional competence to confront various obstacles (Beltman et al. 2020).

Knowledge of SEL and working towards enhancing self-SEL abilities have been shown to protect educators against the consequences of work-related stress and are associated with improved mental health (Lu and Chen 2023). Previous research shows that educators with higher SEL have more favourable student-educator relationships and positive classroom environments (Jennings 2017). Furthermore, socially and emotionally competent educators can instruct and enhance preschool students' SEL and support children experiencing emotional difficulties. Several psychological wellness promotion initiatives have been devised to improve educator SEL, happiness, self-care and well-being to enhance students' achievement, educational efficacy, emotional competence and social relationships in and outside the preschool (Hwang et al. 2017).

Much research has been conducted to investigate and promote knowledge of SEL among educators in advanced nations such as the US, Australia, and the UK. However, little research on early childhood educators in India has taken place lately to assess their comprehension and knowledge of SEL and related competencies. The present research focuses on measuring preschool educators' knowledge of SEL pre and post-training in two cities of Punjab in India. The study investigated the educators' knowledge of SEL competencies before providing them with training sessions and then measured their understanding after the training to find out the difference and future scope. The current study is crucial for three important reasons. Firstly, knowledge of SEL can assist educators in recognizing and managing emotions that affect their personal and professional growth. Secondly, the improved SEL knowledge in early childhood educators will drive them to strengthen their instructional and SEL abilities to tackle preschool students' social and emotional obstacles and establish strong educator-student connections (Aldrup et al. 2018). Thirdly, the study will evaluate the effectiveness

of the preschool educators' SEL training initiative in Punjab (India). Also, the comparison will reveal how much knowledge of SEL in preschool educators has improved.

Furthermore, the research's results will enable educators, educational administrators, and lawmakers to determine the level of educators' SEL in Punjab (India) and take steps to improve educators' SEL knowledge through immediate attention and training interventions. Consequently, the present research aims to conceptualize SEL and associated competencies by reviewing the literature. In addition, the research also considers the importance of early childhood educators' knowledge of SEL and its five competencies. Therefore, the objectives of this study are as follows:

To evaluate the effectiveness of the early childhood educators' knowledge of social-emotional learning post-training in the preschools located in two cities, namely Ludhiana and Patiala in the state of Punjab in India.

Literature review

What is social-emotional learning?

Researchers across several national settings increasingly realize the links between early childhood educators' social-emotional learning (SEL) and their ability to provide adequate childcare and education (Shen et al. 2015). Several studies emphasize the importance of SEL for handling emotions, obtaining success, making responsible decisions, establishing and attaining positive goals, and developing and showing empathy towards others, a process that benefits the atmosphere of the school and the role of educators in the process. Therefore, what is SEL? According to Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), SEL is "the process by which children and adults effectively acquire and apply knowledge, behaviours and abilities needed to comprehend and handle feelings, set and attain constructive goals, experience and display empathy for others, establish and uphold positive relations and make responsible decisions" (Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013).

SEL refers to the knowledge, abilities, and enthusiasm needed to deal with social and emotional circumstances in everyday life (Elias et al., 1997). Different theoretical viewpoints, including emotional intelligence, social-emotional learning, and social competence research, are relevant in describing the necessary components that allow educators to thrive in social and emotional circumstances (Nangle et al., 2010). SEL has been classified into five interconnected sets of competencies that span an individual's intellectual, emotional, and behavioural domains (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making).

Self-awareness is concerned with developing one's ability to identify feelings, fortes, self-assurance, and self-efficacy. Self-management is reflected in the ability to control feelings, cope with stress, control impulses, impede gratification, and persuade oneself to accomplish goals. Social awareness is understanding others' perspectives, empathizing with them, appreciating group differences and respecting others. Relationship management encompasses communicating, listening, collaborating with others, seeking help, building positive relations and negotiating conflict. Responsible decision-making is the capability to make productive and ethical selections about individual conduct, calculate the after-effects of actions rationally and contemplate the well-being of self and others. This set of skills, when combined, creates the individual abilities required to interact with others and face the challenges of everyday life.

Early childhood educators have the potential to be incredible nurturers of preschool students' social-emotional development (Kaur & Sharma, 2022b). Therefore, it is also critical to call educators to look deeper at their SEL knowledge and routinely examine these abilities through an emotionally intelligent "lens." Nonetheless, few studies have been conducted to investigate educators' knowledge of their own SEL in India. However, educators' SEL knowledge is a solid domain for their growth in social and emotional intelligence, career advancement, and providing a secure and nurturing classroom climate, good social involvement, and social-emotional wellness (Jennings & Frank, 2015). A comparative study conducted in Punjab (India) examining 90 preschool educators' understanding of SEL revealed that private preschool educators had better SEL understanding than public preschool educators (Kaur & Sharma, 2022b). Another study done in Haryana (India) revealed that the emotional intelligence of private school educators was higher than that of public school educators. The study concluded that SEL knowledge in educators is critical for improving their emotional intelligence and the quality of schooling (Garg & Kapri, 2016). Well-developed SEL knowledge may assist educators in adapting to change and being flexible, being more productive, finding innovative and novel solutions to challenges, and reading and applying the required social cues to show reverence and collaborate effectively with others (Durlak et al., 2011). Since preschool, educators have established the spirit of the classroom by nurturing connections with and among students, offering clear standards for conduct and learning goals, promoting constructive behaviour, and exemplifying civil and positive interaction (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Hence, the knowledge of SEL educators is crucial to providing a secure and positive learning atmosphere.

Early childhood educators' social and emotional learning

Educators' and students' social interactions and the level of their connection are critical for students' intellectual, interpersonal, and emotive-motivational amelioration (Kunter et al., 2013). However, there is a rising awareness that early childhood educators encounter difficult working circumstances, which result in substantial amounts of workplace stress, emotional weariness, and employee turnover (McMullen et al., 2020). They frequently encounter negative emotions, battle maintaining positive connections with young students, violate rules, disrupt guidance, and are inattentive (Aldrup et al., 2018). Along with fulfilling their position's growing requirements and expectations, EC educators encounter multiple obstacles, such as prolonged work hours, inadequate wages, a lack of stature and acknowledgement from society, and few chances for skills improvement or professional advancement, making them emotionally exhausted (Collie, 2017).

Furthermore, emotionally exhausted educators are less responsive and emotionally apathetic while interacting with students, and their students have lower enthusiasm and success in school. As a result, educators' social-emotional learning is critical to successfully overcoming the social and emotional obstacles associated with their work and developing effective educator-student connections (Eadie et al., 2021). Knowledge of SEL through training sessions may assist early education educators in recognizing and managing their sentiments and creating and practising good sentiments (for instance, pleasure and excitement) to encourage SEL in themselves and their learners (Kaur & Sharma, 2022a). In addition, it can help them become more self-aware by giving them a genuine view of their abilities and recognizing their emotive assets and shortcomings (Elias, 2009). In addition, educators' social awareness and relationship management can be influenced by social-emotional understanding. Therefore, SEL training can benefit educators in their personal and professional growth.

Studies have reported that socially and emotionally competent educators can foster healthy relationships with their students, which benefits their motor skills, accomplishments, interpersonal skills, emotional competence, and school involvement (Spilt et al., 2011). Beginning in the preschool years, emotionally and socially skilled preschool educators may assist students in developing solid relationships with classmates, demonstrating good behaviour, engaging in the classroom with happiness, and dealing with competing impulses. (Kaur & Sharma, 2021). This positive educator-student affiliation can lead to effective student adjustment and a favourable classroom environment. However, to build students' social-emotional competence, educators must know their SEL to teach more successfully. Thus, SEL knowledge

in early childhood educators is critical because it fosters individual growth and improves interpersonal connections within and outside early childhood education (Domitrovich et al., 2016). However, limited research has been undertaken in India to increase early childhood educators' knowledge about SEL through training. It is also critical to gauge the effectiveness of SEL training vis-a-vis improvement seen in educators' knowledge of SEL post-training is crucial.

For this reason, the present study has focused explicitly on measuring early childhood educators' knowledge of SEL pre and post-training in the Ludhiana and Patiala cities of Punjab in India. Even the New Education Policy announced in India in 2020 has emphasized the need to envision education more comprehensively, guaranteeing that children become intellectually, socially, and emotionally competent. To achieve this goal, improving educators' 'will and skill' through SEL training has been identified as a critical factor in SEL implementation in schools (Dobia et al., 2020). Therefore, promoting the psychological health and social-emotional well-being of educators at preschools in Punjab is critical.

Methods

Context of the study

The study evaluates early childhood educators' prior and post-training knowledge of their SEL and its five associated competencies. Second, the present research seeks to determine the extent to which early childhood educators' knowledge about SEL improved following training in the state of Punjab (India). Thirdly, this research evaluates the effect of educators' training modules on SEL competencies among preschool educators in Punjab (India). The findings will enable educators to delve deeper into their knowledge of SEL abilities. Furthermore, the results will encourage educators and policymakers to reconsider, focus, and improve their professional and personal development SEL competencies.

Study design

The present research has employed a descriptive survey approach to measure the early childhood educators' knowledge of social-emotional learning before and after training in the preschools of Punjab (India). A self-reported questionnaire designed by Kaur and Sharma (2022b) was considered for the study, and the responses from the educators were collected, compared and analyzed using SPSS. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first section of the questionnaire included questions relating to the socio-demographic profile of the participants. The second section included all the questions related to the five competencies of SEL. The

questionnaire enabled educators to think deeper about their knowledge of SEL competencies (refer to Appendix 1).

Various questionnaires were chosen and modified for preparing the questionnaire to assess educators' knowledge of SEL through its associated competencies. The questionnaires included Sutton (2016)'s Self-Awareness Outcome Questionnaire (SAOQ), Tom (2012)'s Social-Emotional Competence Teacher Rating Scale to assess educators' social-emotional capability, Buchanan et al. (2009)'s SEL Knowledge Scale for Preservice Educators, and Brackett et al. (2012)'s SEL Beliefs Scale for Preservice Educators. Based on these questionnaires, the researchers have utilized a SEL Questionnaire for educators (refer to Appendix 1) to study their knowledge of SEL pre and post-training based on their former and present knowledge. The questionnaire had 113 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). For assessing the reliability and validity of the questionnaire and survey, both face validity (respondents' views were taken on questions) and content validity (views of experts were considered, and the questionnaire was modified) were considered. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was calculated in SPSS to estimate the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The r value was significant at 0.01 level, and the values of five subscales were as follow: (a) self-awareness ($r=0.816$), (b) self-management ($r=0.767$), (c) social awareness ($r=0.741$), (d) relationship management ($r=0.805$), and (e) responsible decision making ($r=0.846$). The r value of validity can range between 0 to 1. The values were close to 1, indicating a more significant validity coefficient and more confidence in predictions made from the test scores. The overall reliability of the test is 0.991, indicating more substantial internal stability and consistency of the SEL questionnaire. Thus, the questionnaire fulfilled the criteria of reliability and validity. The module was designed and used for training purposes to study educators' knowledge about SEL competencies. The educators' SEL training module included deeper insights into SEL, which was discussed through a PowerPoint presentation, various reflective activities, discussion exercises, tools, games, and reflective writing activities for making SEL understanding in preschool educators easy, interactive and exciting (refer to Appendix 2).

Participants and procedures

Early childhood educators ($N=100$) served as participants at seven preschools in two cities (Ludhiana and Patiala) in Punjab, India. The study used a stratified random sampling method to emphasize the specified stratum of early childhood educators from two distinct cities of Punjab in, India. For participation, an official mail was sent to all the government and private preschools explicitly located in Ludhiana and Patiala's rural and urban areas. Out of all, seven

preschools offered written consent. The District Education Officer (DEO) granted authorization to provide training sessions and conduct the survey at the preschools. The study included 100 early childhood educators who taught children aged 3 to 6. To study the research questions, a cross-sectional survey approach was used.

The toolkit was designed as training material for the educators who took part in the session. The power-point presentations were prepared on all five competencies of SEL. Various interactive activities were conducted to provide knowledge about SEL to educators in the intervention. The training provided for educators in the session was 12 h. The four-day training was given to educators about SEL and its competencies. Educators were asked to complete a questionnaire about their understanding of SEL before training. After the completion of sessions, a post-training questionnaire is to be completed by educators. Various learning methods and SEL-promoting strategies were shared in the sessions to enrich educators with knowledge of emotional regulation, relationship building and decision-making (refer to Appendix 2). Additionally, multiple teaching strategies were discussed to improve preschool students' SEL and create a supportive social environment at the preschool.

Socio-demographic profile of the participants

The first section of the SEL questionnaire for educators contained six questions about the respondents' demographic profile, as shown in Table 1 below. The frequency and percentage of answers for each of these parts were determined in this section.

According to Table 1 in appendices section of the study, respondents comprised 100 early childhood educators teaching preschool students aged 3–6 years in the cities of Ludhiana and Patiala in the state of Punjab (India). A total of seven preschools participated in the survey and training intervention. 37 educators belonged to the two private preschools in the state's urban region, while the remaining 63 educators worked in the five public preschools in the rural and disadvantaged regions of the state. Out of 100 responses, 85 were female educators, and 15 were male. In terms of academic teaching years, 37 early childhood educators have been educating for 0–10 years, 57 educators have been educating for 11–20 years, and 6 have been educating students for over 20 years. According to the education qualification profile, 38 of the 100 early childhood educators have a master's degree, 53 educators have master's degrees with specialization, and 6 educators have doctorates. All the respondents were from Ludhiana and Patiala cities in the Indian state of Punjab.

Data analysis

Data were analyzed with SPSS. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were utilized on the demographic items. Furthermore, the paired samples t-test was conducted in SPSS to measure and compare early childhood educators' understanding of SEL before and after training, teaching in Ludhiana and Patiala in the Indian state of Punjab. Following that, the findings are presented and addressed.

Table 2 in the appendices section of the study describes the descriptive statistics. The table represents the number of respondents, mean values, standard deviation, Skewness and

Table 1 Profile of the respondents

No.	Variables	Type	Frequency (100)	Percentage (in %)
1.	District in which preschool is located	Ludhiana (3 schools)	50	50
		Patiala (4 schools)	50	50
2.	Type of Preschool Educators	Private (2 schools)	37	37
		Public (5 schools)	63	63
3.	Gender	Female	85	85
		Male	15	15
4.	Location of Preschool	Urban (2 schools)	37	37
		Rural (5 schools)	63	63
5.	Years of Professional Teaching Experience at Preschool (in years)	0–10	37	37
		11–20	57	57
		> 20	06	06
5.	Education Qualification of Educators	Graduation	5	05
		Masters	38	38
		Master with special degree	53	47.8
		Doctorate	4	4.4

Source: Authors' Compilation

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of educators' knowledge of SEL competencies pre and post training

Variables	Number of Respondent	Standard Deviation	Mean	Minimum Statistics	Maximum Statistics	Skewness	Kurtosis
Self-Awareness Pre	100	9.55	108.76	70	130	-0.94	2.50
Self-Awareness Post	100	10.99	130.99	86	144	-1.64	2.88
Self-Management Pre	100	9.97	76.80	49	99	-0.27	-0.61
Self-Management Post	100	8.22	97.03	54	109	-1.66	6.24
Social Awareness Pre	100	6.59	61.08	41	73	-0.81	0.86
Social Awareness Post	100	5.62	78.33	54	85	-1.50	2.77
Relationship Management Pre	100	14.99	86.16	42	116	-0.82	0.12
Relationship Management Post	100	17.51	106.98	60	129	-0.87	-0.04
Responsible Decision Making Pre	100	5.63	68.35	41	79	-1.19	4.43
Responsible Decision Making Post	100	5.71	82.65	59	89	-1.47	2.55

Source: Computed

Kurtosis values in the pre-and post-test training intervention. The value of Skewness for all the five competencies of SEL pre and post-training is within the acceptable range of -2 to +2, and the Kurtosis is between -7 to +7. Thus, the data is reflected to be normally distributed (Byrne, 2016). In addition, the outcome reveals that the mean values of all the five competencies of SEL post-training are higher than the mean values of competencies before training, revealing an improvement in the knowledge about SEL competencies amongst preschool educators. Therefore, the positive mean values in the table depict that early childhood educators understand SEL well in the Ludhiana and Patiala cities of Punjab (India). The results signify a substantial improvement in the educators' understanding of SEL after the training intervention. The results show that awareness about SEL is critical for early childhood educators, as it results in better social relations in school, better connections with students, and improved self-emotional competence and self-efficacy.

Table 3 in the appendices section of the study presents the findings of the paired sample t-test used for comparing the means of the five competencies of SEL pre and post-training in the study. SPSS was used to analyze and evaluate educators' responses on comprehending all five SEL competencies. The table shows that for the first SEL

competency, i.e., self-awareness, the paired mean difference between pre and post-training is -22.23, meaning that educators' pre- and post-training self-awareness is lower than that in post-training. The "t" value of the educators' understanding of self-awareness competency of SEL pre and post-training is -29.73. This concludes that there is a noteworthy difference in the knowledge of self-awareness competency of SEL before and after training. Thus, early childhood educators in preschools in Punjab (India) have benefitted from the training and gained knowledge about one's identity, feelings, emotions, strengths, and weaknesses (Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013). The training module has improved educators' understanding of the skills associated with self-awareness, including the importance of recognizing feelings, having precise self-perception, identifying strengths, and becoming confident. For the second SEL competency, i.e., self-management, the paired mean difference of pre and post-training is -20.23, indicating that educators' understanding of self-management has improved after training. The value of "t" stats is -34.12. This demonstrates a considerable change in the knowledge of self-management competency of SEL pre and post-training. Thus, this SEL training initiative has taught early childhood educators to regulate their feelings, manage negative situations, control urges,

Table 3 Paired samples t-test to compare means of SEL competencies pre and post training

Variables	Paired Mean Difference	Standard Error	t-test value	Decision
Self-Awareness Pre-Self-Awareness Post	-22.23	0.74	-29.73	Supported
Self-Management Pre-Self-Management Post	-20.23	0.59	-34.12	Supported
Social Awareness Pre-Social Awareness Post	-17.25	0.53	-32.24	Supported
Relationship Management Pre- Relationship Management Post	-20.82	0.88	-23.54	Supported
Responsible Decision Making Pre -Responsible Decision Making Post	-14.33	0.36	-38.92	Supported

Source: Computed

motivate themselves in all teaching situations, and achieve goals. Thus, the training has been practical for preschool educators in Punjab (India).

The paired mean difference for the third competency of SEL, i.e., social awareness, is -17.25 showing that the educators' social awareness in pre-training is lower than in post-training. The "t" value of the educators' understanding of social awareness competency of SEL pre and post-training is -32.24. This infers a substantial change in the knowledge of social awareness competency of SEL amongst educators before and after training. The findings highlight that the training session has proved beneficial for the educators as it has improved social awareness of educators' vis-à-vis perspective-taking abilities, appreciating diversity, accepting similarities and differences, and empathizing with preschool students and co-workers in the playschool. The fourth SEL competency is relationship management. The relationship management's paired mean difference is -20.82 showing that the educators' understanding of relationship management in pre-training is lower than in post-training. The "t" value of the educators' understanding of relationship management competency of SEL before and after training is -23.54. This concludes that there is a noteworthy improvement in the knowledge of the relationship management competency of SEL after training. Thus, early childhood educators educating in the preschools of Punjab (India) have benefitted from the training sessions and gained knowledge about building healthy, cooperative, and interactive connections with their co-workers and students in the preschool.

For the fifth SEL competency, i.e., responsible decision-making, the paired mean difference of pre and post-training is -14.33, indicating that educators' understanding of responsible decision-making has improved after training. The "t" value of the educators' understanding of responsible decision-making competency of SEL pre and post-training is -38.92. This concludes that there is a substantial improvement in the awareness of responsible decision-making skills of SEL after training. This SEL training intervention has enhanced educators' understanding of identifying, analyzing and solving problems and making ethical decisions in and out of the classroom. Therefore, the training of SEL in early childhood educators is crucial for supporting self-improvement, showing constructive behaviour toward schooling, cultivating connections in the preschool, and encouraging a compassionate and attentive classroom setting for young students (Domitrovich et al., 2016; Kaur & Sharma, 2021).

Therefore, based on the findings, the study accepts a substantial change in the early childhood educators' knowledge of social-emotional learning before and after training in the Ludhiana and Patiala cities of Punjab (India). Educators' knowledge about SEL and its associated competencies has improved after the training phase. The training module designed and implemented by the authors has effectively

improved early childhood educators' knowledge of SEL and associated competencies in the preschools of the Ludhiana and Patiala cities of Punjab (India). This study reflects that early childhood educators' individual and professional development in areas of SEL is essential to supplement their teaching and overall lives.

Discussions and conclusion

Early childhood educators drive successful social-emotional learning (SEL) programs in preschools and classrooms (Humphrey et al., 2020). An educator needs to have a good understanding and knowledge of SEL to support and promote SEL in the classroom. The present research investigated the SEL knowledge among early childhood educators in Ludhiana and Patiala cities of Punjab (India) through SEL training intervention. This research aimed to examine if there is a significant improvement in early childhood educators' knowledge of SEL and its five associated competencies post-training.

Previous studies have revealed that educators with SEL knowledge can improve educator well-being and positively impact students' trauma-affected behavior (Kim et al., 2021; Schonert-Reichl, 2019). Training programs are a must for supporting less competent educators to gain SEL knowledge and learn strategies and techniques to enhance their repertoire of SEL abilities (Schonert-Reichl, 2019). Many SEL training programs have focused on improving educators' knowledge, understanding, mindfulness, and social-emotional learning abilities in developed nations such as the United States, Australia, Germany, and the United Nations. The outcomes have revealed that educators who taught in educational environments that implemented SEL training interventions felt more confident in their SEL skills, were more assertive in handling challenging situations, and experienced higher job satisfaction (Berg et al., 2021; de Carvalho et al., 2017). Even though India is renowned as the centre of ECCE amenities, the present situation of the early care and education structure appears to be concerning, particularly in the Indian state of Punjab (Kaur & Sharma, 2021). According to India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, socially and emotionally competent educators are the foundation for students' overall development. Therefore, the current study measures educators' current SEL knowledge and trains them about SEL in India.

The current study measured the level of SEL knowledge of 100 private and public preschool educators before and after training in seven preschools in the cities of Ludhiana and Patiala. The study found that a 12-h (4-session) school-based educators' SEL training program to improve preschool educators' knowledge about SEL and associated competencies yielded good outcomes. The training emphasized preschool educators' capability

to identify and handle their social-emotional concerns to exemplify, exhibit, and support SEL competency with preschool students. The study used paired t-tests in SPSS for analysis of the data collected. The findings highlighted a significant improvement in educators' knowledge about all five competencies of SEL, revealing that the SEL training intervention significantly improved educators' knowledge about SEL. Thus, the training regarding SEL understanding proved to be very effective for all the early childhood educators in Punjab. Furthermore, SEL knowledge has assisted preschool educators in managing their emotions, understanding the feelings of their students and fellow educators, developing healthy connections, making ethical choices, overcoming work-related stress, and dealing with challenging circumstances in and out of the classroom.

The findings need the Punjab Ministry of Education and early childhood settings to implement parallel training sessions with all Punjab preschools to increase educators' SEL knowledge. These interventions will assist educators' personal and professional SEL development and create pleasant, safe, and inclusive learning environments for preschool students in Punjab. Early childhood educators' emotional wellness, self-perception, the effectiveness of instruction, dedication to professional ethics, and interpersonal skills can all be influenced by educational programs, mindfulness training, conferences, and workshops to enhance SEL (Ashraf et al., 2017; Blewitt et al., 2020). Although no causation was shown in the present

pilot research, the data imply that SEL training is practical and possible to apply in a preschool context, and it is a valuable tool for educators' SEL knowledge. The conclusions of this study are not intended to be generalized. However, the research aimed to measure and improve the SEL knowledge level among preschool educators teaching in Punjab, India.

Limitations and future scope

The study's shortcomings are mostly related to the study's population and self-reported aspects. This study's sample consisted solely of early childhood educators teaching pre-schoolers aged 3–6 years in the cities of Ludhiana and Patiala in the state of Punjab in India. The study has only examined 100 educators' knowledge of SEL before and after training. Furthermore, the sample was predominantly made up of female preschool teachers. This might suggest a limitation in generalizing results among male educators and all grades. Furthermore, this study solely used self-report instruments, which may have skewed the outcomes. Future research should overcome these constraints and investigate educators' SEL and how it contributes to healthy educator-student connections at all levels of education in India. Furthermore, future studies should focus on approaches to improve pre-schoolers' social-emotional learning abilities.

Appendix 1 Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) questionnaire for educators

Part 1: Demographic profile of respondent

1. Please indicate your gender: Male ☐ Female ☐
2. Teaching experience
0-10 years ☐ 10-20 years ☐ more than 20 years ☐
3. Indicate your education qualification
Haven't graduated from high school ☐ Graduated ☐ Masters ☐
Masters with Specialist Degree ☐ Doctorate ☐
4. District in which preschool is located
Ludhiana ☐ Patiala ☐
5. Type of Preschool
Public ☐ Private ☐
6. Location of Preschool
Urban ☐ Rural ☐

Part 2: Answer the multiple choice questions by placing a checkmark in the relevant column relating to "Knowledge about 5 SEL competencies in educator"

S.No.	Statements	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Neutral)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)
A	SELF-AWARENESS					
1	You have a good sense of why you have certain feelings most of the time					
2	You like your work and take pride in it					
3	You enjoy teaching					
4	You "observe" yourself while teaching in the classroom					
5	You are committed to your self-development					
6	You can easily express your emotions					
7	. You have a pleasant personality					
8	. Most of the time, you can identify, recognize, and name your feelings in the moment					
9	You recognize the relationship between your feelings and your reactions towards students in the classroom					
10	You recognize the relationship between your feelings and your reactions towards colleagues in the school					
11	You know and are realistic about your strengths and weaknesses					
12	You accept others' feedback about your work in school					
13	You are aware of how your personal wants, prejudices, and beliefs influence your decisions in the classroom when teaching					
14	You believe you have the ability to influence and lead your students effectively					
15	You are confident in your ability to handle events with self-assurance and calmness					
16	You believe that your teaching experiences help you to learn and grow					

S.No.	Statements	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Neutral)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)
17	You feel positive even in negative situations					
18	You feel satisfied with your teaching in the classroom					
19	You analyze how your personality fits with your teaching profession					
20	You feel easy to make changes and adapt to new practices while teaching					
21	You feel guilty for criticizing students					
22	You find it easy to try innovative teaching practices in the classroom					
23	You are aware of the events that elicit your emotions					
24	You have an excellent knowledge of your values and objectives					
25	You have a good sense of humor					
26	You have a positive perspective about your personality					
27	You are not defensive in receiving criticism about yourself					
28	You advocate for a course of action in which you believe, even if others disagree					
29	You regard yourself as a capable individual capable of taking on new challenges and mastering new responsibilities					
B	SELF-MANAGEMENT					
1	You figure out how to regulate your emotions and channel them in productive ways without hurting others					
2	You remain cool, controlled, and clear-headed in the face of severe stress and a school crisis					
3	You have high personal standards that drive you to strive for better performance for yourself and others you lead					
4	You are realistic in that you make objectives that are quantifiable, hard, and reachable					

S.No.	Statements	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Neutral)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)
5	You embrace new difficulties in your teaching career and adapt to changes					
6	When you confront a difficult situation, you attempt to solve it on your own					
7	You adjust your thinking in response to new knowledge and facts					
8	You can manage many student needs without losing concentration or enthusiasm in class					
9	You keep a balance between your work life and personal renewal time					
10	You always set a goal for yourself and then try your best to achieve them					
11	You are a self-motivated person					
12	You normally find it simple to make adjustments in your daily life					
13	You are prone to encountering unfavorable events					
14	You are optimistic about most things you do					
15	Despite occasional hiccups, you typically expect everything to work out OK					
16	Your impulsiveness creates problems in school					
17	You keep patience while teaching in class					
18	You have powerful urges that are difficult to control					
19	You tend to control your anger easily					
20	You know how to deal with upsetting problems					
21	You manage stress caused within the school					
22	You know how to remain cool in stressful times					
23	You welcome genuine critique, fresh viewpoints, lifelong learning, and self-improvement					
C	SOCIAL AWARENESS					
1	You listen actively to another person's perspective					

S.No.	Statements	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Neutral)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)
2	You may infer another person's emotions through both verbal and nonverbal signs					
3	You feel that others are generally trying their best, and you expect the same from them					
4	You value and get along with students from many origins and cultures at your school					
5	You use engaging practices to guarantee that all students' views are heard in the classroom					
6	You are perceptive in organizational conditions and can recognize critical social networks					
7	You are aware of the organizational forces at work, guiding principles, and tacit norms that govern human interactions					
8	You may deduce your student's emotions based on their behavior					
9	You are an excellent observer of your co-workers' emotions					
10	You are sensitive to other people's feelings and emotions					
11	You feel like "part of the family" at your school					
12	You feel "emotionally attached" to this school					
13	You feel a strong sense of belonging with your students					
14	You investigate why students behave the way they do					
15	You are kind and accepting of others					
16	You consider how colleagues or students communicate with one another					
17	You have a solid awareness of how other people act					
D	RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT					
1	You provide students with an emotionally caring and safe atmosphere					

S.No.	Statements	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Neutral)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)
2	You are open and honest with others about your values and views, as well as your ambitions and guiding principles					
3	You speak with pupils and foster contact with them					
4	You can express concepts that are important to you in ways that encourage students to participate					
5	You genuinely care about kids' progress and the development of their SEL skills					
6	You may freely recognize your flaws and failures to yourself and others					
7	Before making recommendations, you strive to learn the perspectives and experiences of others					
8	As a guide and mentor, you provide timely and constructive criticism					
9	You are at ease dealing with dispute, listening to the sentiments of all sides, and assisting them in understanding alternative points of view					
10	You guide students to resolve their conflicts					
11	You like helping students					
12	You like helping colleagues					
13	You are good at teamwork and generate a shared atmosphere that inspires students					
14	You build relationships with students of diverse groups					
15	You involve students in important decision-making tasks to ensure to make a wise choice					
16	You express teamwork in your leadership style and personal behaviors as a role model to students					
17	You recognize individual and group similarities and differences					
18	You use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others					
19	It is simple for you to create buddies					

S.No.	Statements	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Neutral)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)
20	You exhibit the capacity to constructively prevent, manage, and resolve inter-personal disputes					
21	It's natural for you to express your heartfelt emotions to others					
22	You care what happens to other people					
23	You have good relations with students					
24	You have good relations with colleagues					
25	You regularly interact with students					
26	You keep in touch with colleagues					
E	RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING					
1	You may characterize the problem's core and suggest potential solutions					
2	In your classroom, you see the need for change, challenge the existing quo, and promote new ideas					
3	Before beginning a new venture, you undertake a need analysis and consult with your colleagues to identify concerns					
4	You consult with your co-workers before making a choice					
5	When it comes to making decisions when teaching, you discover ethical solutions to overcome obstacles					
6	You analyze progress towards social, emotional, and intellectual goals using many measures					
7	You normally create personal goals and track your progress towards them					
8	You offer chances for self-reflection and group reflection on progress towards teaching goals					
9	You treat your co-workers the way you want to be treated					
10	You are sensitive to the feelings of others while making decisions					
11	You contribute to the well-being of your school					

S.No.	Statements	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Neutral)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)
12	When it comes to issue solving, you can quickly choose the ideal option					
13	Your approach to resolving obstacles is to take it one step at a time					
14	When confronted with a terrible issue, you want to learn everything you can about it					
15	Before attempting to solve an issue, you attempt to get an understanding of it					
16	Even if you are supposed to be someplace else at the same moment, you would stop and help a weeping youngster find his or her parents					
17	You promote community service initiatives for students and faculty					
18	When making judgements, you consider ethical, safety, and societal issues					

Appendix 2 Design of the educators' SEL training module

Section 1- Overview of the SEL Training and about SEL (2 h)

Purpose- This section presents a summary of the training, including the trainer's introduction, the participants' introductions, the program's purpose, and instructions for learning and practicing.

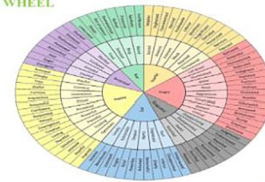
Facilitation note: Welcome the participants formally. Introduce yourself and the other facilitators. Discuss your relevant prior experiences to increase participant trust in your abilities.	
Introduction: Request participants to introduce themselves so we know who is in the room - Name of the teacher, place of joining, one fun fact about you, and current feelings of the teacher.	HELLO! - Request you all to rename yourself on Zoom with your name. - Introduce yourself: - Your Name - Which School are you affiliated with? - One fun fact about you. - How are you feeling right now? 
Set Guidelines for Learning and Practicing: Set the rules and guidelines for the participants in the room to ensure that they are in a safe space and that all the information will be kept confidential.	* Guidelines for Learning & Practicing 1. Help Create a Safe Space: One that is Open and Trusting - Confidentiality - Trust and Openness - Speak for 'I' - Don't Give Advice 2. We will strive for "Progress, Not Perfection" 3. Take What You Like, Leave What You Don't 4. Regularity and Keeping an Open Mind 5. Rules for Effective Learning - Be totally present for the other person - Try not to ask questions - Try not to give advice - Keep everything in total confidence 
Questionnaire Filling: Request participants to fill out the questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of social-emotional learning and self-awareness pre-training.	Kindly fill the Pre-training Questionnaire
Explain: Concept of Social-Emotional Learning- meaning, the emergence of SEL, about CASEL, and the importance of SEL.	What is Social-Emotional Learning? Social and emotional learning (SEL) provides the structure and process for adults and students to develop fundamental emotional and social competencies and experiences to: - understand and manage emotions, - set and achieve positive goals, - feel and show empathy for others, - establish and maintain positive relationships and - make responsible decisions. The field emerged some 25 years ago with the publication of Goleman's Emotional Intelligence (1995) and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (1993). CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) was founded in 1994 by Daniel Goleman, the author of Emotional Intelligence, and educator Edwina Rockwell-Groenwald. It is an international nonprofit organization for educators and researchers based at the University of Illinois at Chicago that promotes school-based SEL. It is the leading body working on SEL. 
Explain: Five competencies of Social-Emotional Learning	Core Competencies of SEL  Source: Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) SE Core Competencies, 2017
Explain: Skills related to the Five competencies of Social-Emotional learning.	Skills Associated with 5 Competencies of SEL 

Then explain the meaning of self-awareness.

[illegible]

Ask all participants to tell those emotions. Categorize them as good and bad emotions. Then tell the importance of identifying emotions.

EMOTIONS WHEEL



- To understand the role of emotions and feelings
- To be able to identify and label emotions
- To broaden your emotional vocabulary
- To consider the intensity of emotions being felt during a situation
- To understand the importance of writing down the emotions



Now in groups of 2-2, ask participants to share their portrait (5 minutes for each participant)

► Take 5 minutes and make your own portrait. Pen down the following

Dimensions	Description
Physical	Appearance, Health, Strength
Social	Social Interactions (what people think about you good and bad things)
Temperamental	Emotional awareness, Likes, Dislikes, Qualities, Hobbies
Educational	Experiences, Interactions, Qualification, Future goals Achievements
Moral	Values, Codes, Principles
Intellectual	Problem solving, Critical thinking

	Aim of the Reflective Exercise ► To understand the importance of ► 1. Self-concept ► 2. Self-perception ► 3. Self-confidence 
Strategies to improve Self Awareness: Explain the ways to improve self-awareness 1. Mindfulness Meditation Mindfulness is a self-awareness skill that dramatically decreases anxiety and psychological stress. It is the capacity to concentrate on what is currently happening and understand one's situation. To introduce mindfulness in class, play an audio meditation CD or recite one loudly to the students. Encourage them to put their emotions and feelings aside and concentrate as much as possible on the meditation. 2. Reflective Writing Reflective writing promotes self-awareness, empathy, and compassion in pupils. Allow children five to ten minutes each day to write about a prompt, fostering self-reflection. Reflective writing practise on a daily basis can assist pupils learn to evaluate their thoughts and feelings in a self-aware manner. Not sure what questions to ask your students? Here are a few prompts to help in self-analysis: • When was your happiest moment in life? Why was it so cheerful? • Who is your best buddy and why? • What do you appreciate and hate about yourself? 3. Emotional Vocabulary Lists Self-awareness activities are a great way to help students understand emotional cues. Include several words that describe emotions in your class vocabulary lists, like “joyful” or “scared.” Discuss what it means when introducing a new emotional vocabulary word and how students can recognize this feeling in themselves and others. Conclusion Statements: Ask everyone how they are feeling after the session.	
Questionnaire Filling: Request participants to fill the questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding about self-awareness post-training.	Kindly fill the Post-training Questionnaire Thankyou!

Section 3- Understanding the competency of self-management (2 h)

Questionnaire Filling:

Request participants to complete the questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of self-management pre-training.

Kindly fill the Pre-training Questionnaire

Introduce:

Concept of Self-Management

Ask participants their point of view on what self-management is.

Then explain the meaning of self-management.

The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts and behavior to handle stress, control impulses, and motivate oneself in overcoming obstacles by setting and achieving goals



Reflective Exercise 1:

Explain to participants the reflective exercise. Send participants to breakout rooms of 2-2 teachers. Give them 5 minutes each to share their instance and emotions being felt. One participant will speak, and the other will listen quietly. Tell them the rules.

After 10 minutes of this mindful dialogue, ask participants to do reflective writing of the questions for the next 5 minutes.

After reflective writing, ask each participant to share how they are feeling right now.

Reflective Exercise 1

- Recall one instance during your teaching journey where you had an encounter with some emotional outbreak/stress. That situation impacted you, consequences of which you are still regretting or face trouble while remembering.

MINDFUL DIALOGUES

- In group of two, share the instance, your experience, your feelings and emotions you felt.
- Rules: 1. Effective listening
- 2. No advice, no question, no judgements
- 3. Maintain Confidentiality

- Write down what first comes to your mind relating to your story (Keep answers to self)

1. When the instance happened, what were your emotions?
2. If a similar instance happens now, will you react the same way or not?
3. When you recall the instance today, do you think it happened because of you or some other factor?
4. Do you think/realize that your reaction could have been avoided or modified?
5. Body sensations- How was your body reacting?

Body sensation	disturbed	good
Heartbeat	faster	slower / normal
Muscle Movement	tensed	relaxed
Head	heavy	light
Breathing	fast	Slow / normal
Thoughts	normal	Overflowing
Feet	cold	warmth
Hands	normal	sweaty

Reflective Exercise 2:

After exercise 1, explain reflective exercise 2 of Blind Drawing to all participants. Give them 3 minutes and play soft music.

After the reflective exercise, ask each participant to show their drawing masterpieces and share their feelings.

Tell participants about the importance of recognizing emotions and then managing them.

Reflective Exercise 2**BLIND DRAWING**

- Now wherever you are sitting, just have a look of the things around you in the room. Take A4 size sheet and a pen/colour. Without picking up the pen, draw whatever you saw in the room with the closed eyes for next 3 minutes.
- Material Required- Pen/Colour, A4 size sheet

Aim of the Reflective Exercise

- How are your feeling now?

Aim-

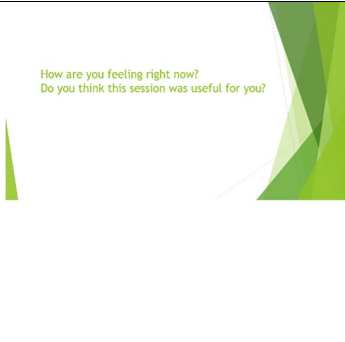
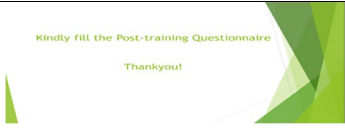
- To realize the feelings and emotions felt during the instance.
- To recognize the sensations and movement felt by our body.
- To manage self

Strategies that can be used for Self-Management:

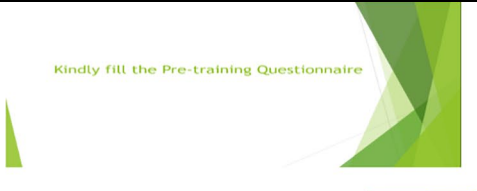
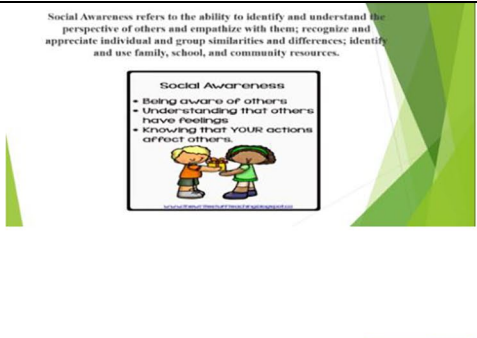
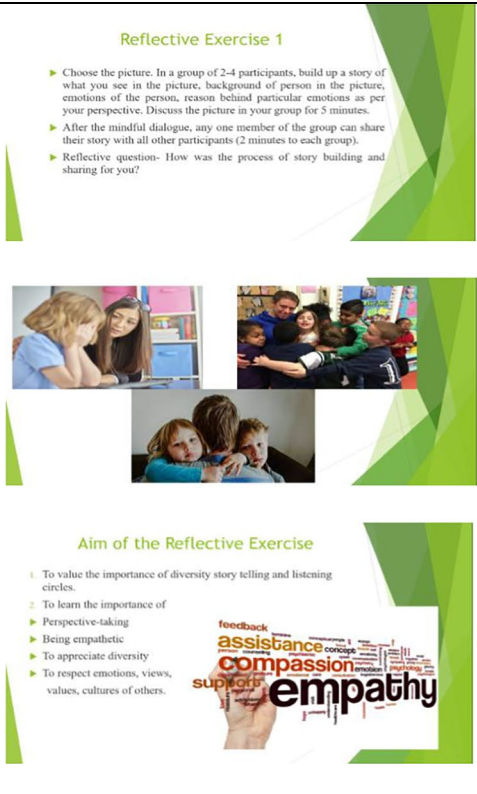
Explain various practices/strategies/activities that can be used for self-management.

1. **Tracking**-The practice of noticing sensations in the body is called “tracking.” Usually, we tend to use feeling and emotion words to describe what state we are in. For instance, when someone asks us, “How are you today?” we might say, “I am feeling fine,” or “I am feeling low.” Rarely do we spend time acknowledging the physical sensations associated with “feeling good” or “feeling sad.” We can learn to do so, however, and developing this skill is enormously helpful in allowing us to know what state our body is in. Recognizing a warm sensation in the chest radiating out, butterflies in one’s stomach, or the tightening or loosening of muscles gives us information about the body. As we learn about our bodies, we develop “body literacy.” Tracking, therefore, is the act of noticing the physical sensations that are occurring within the body in the present moment. It also involves recognizing if they are pleasant, unpleasant or neutral.
2. **Resourcing**- One effective way to move into or stay within the resilient zone is to develop an external, internal or imagined resource that brings about a state of greater well-being, safety or security. External resources can be a memory, place or person that makes you feel better or an activity such as jogging, biking or swimming that gives you a sense of greater well-being

Practices helpful for Self Management

while engaging. Internal resources can be a part of oneself, like a characteristic (such as a sense of humour) or a part of one's body that is strong or healthy. Resources can be unique to each of us, and we can have multiple resources. To practice resourcing, one brings the resource to mind as vividly as possible. The more detail that can be attributed to the resource, the stronger its effect. Recalling smells, sounds, tastes, physical sensations, and colours will allow the resource to grow and strengthen. Once the resource is vivid, keep it in mind and engage in tracking — that is, notice what is happening inside the body in the present moment. Often, people mistakenly think resourcing involves thinking about how you felt when the event in your memory took place. However, actually, this practice involves noticing what is happening in one's body at the very moment that one is thinking of the resource. 3. Grounding- When someone is emotionally overloaded, grounding methods are a stress management practise designed to orient them in the present. Grounding strategies can educate pupils to calm down and regulate their moods when they are agitated by concentrating on their senses rather than their ideas or feelings. Teach grounding skills as a class and assist students in practising them when they are anxious. Few grounding techniques to try out with your students: • Name six different things you can see around the room • Take ten deep breaths • Eat a piece of chocolate and select two words that define its taste.	
Conclusion Statements: This session was about- We have issues in our day-to-day life- we need to stop and take time to address them- pause to give the mind space to calm itself using various self-management practices that suit self and then start again. We must live on the quote- IT is OK TO BE NOT OK. Instead of suppressing our emotions, we must address them mindfully because our behavior will automatically impact students' emotional behavior.	 How are you feeling right now? Do you think this session was useful for you?
Questionnaire Filling: Request participants to complete the questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of self-management post-training.	 Kindly fill the Post-training Questionnaire Thankyou!

Section 4- Understanding the competency of social awareness (2 h)

Questionnaire Filling: Request participants to complete the questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of social awareness pre-training.	Kindly fill the Pre-training Questionnaire 
Introduce: Concept of Social Awareness Ask participants their point of view on what social awareness is. Then explain the meaning of social awareness.	Social Awareness refers to the ability to identify and understand the perspective of others and empathize with them; recognize and appreciate individual and group similarities and differences; identify and use family, school, and community resources. Social Awareness • Being aware of others • Understanding that others have feelings • Knowing that YOUR actions affect others  
Reflective Exercise 1: Based on the number of respondents, make groups and ask the group to choose a picture. Ask them to write a build-up story. Give them 5 minutes. Then ask each group to share their story for 2 minutes each group. Ask, in general, how they felt in this overall process. Then tell the aim of the reflective exercise.	Reflective Exercise 1 ► Choose the picture. In a group of 2-4 participants, build up a story of what you see in the picture, background of person in the picture, emotions of the person, reason behind particular emotions as per your perspective. Discuss the picture in your group for 5 minutes. ► After the mindful dialogue, any one member of the group can share their story with all other participants (2 minutes to each group). ► Reflective question- How was the process of story building and sharing for you?  Aim of the Reflective Exercise 1. To value the importance of diversity story telling and listening circles. 2. To learn the importance of ► Perspective-taking ► Being empathetic ► To appreciate diversity ► To respect emotions, views, values, cultures of others.  

Skills related to Social Awareness: Explain 1. Perspective-taking 2. Empathy 3. Appreciating diversity 4. Respect for others	Skills Related to Social Awareness EMPATHY: Empathy refers to the ability to understand and feel what someone else is feeling, or see the situation from their point of view. What is Empathy? Empathy is... Having the heart of another. Seeing with the eyes of another. Listening with the ears of another. And feeling with the heart of another. PERSPECTIVE TAKING: It refers to the process by which an individual views a situation from another's point of view. It is defined as taking on another's point-of-view through the lens of one's own personal goals and emotions. APPRECIATING DIVERSITY: People all around need to understand and learn to appreciate other cultures, and this is one way to accomplish that. Through each other's diversity, we become more aware of one another. Understanding people and their backgrounds is crucial to personal and community growth. Because diversity makes the world go around. RESPECT FOR OTHERS: Respect means that you accept somebody for who they are, even when they're different from you or you don't agree with them. Respect in your relationships builds feelings of trust, safety, and wellbeing. Treat others YOU Treated
Strategies that can be used for Social Awareness: Explain: Classroom Service Projects Service projects are an enjoyable and meaningful means to connect your students to their surroundings. A class service project can help students build compassion by assisting others. Some service project ideas for your class to help make your neighbourhood a better place: • Hold a clothes, medicines, or canned food drive for a local shelter • Visit an old-age home as a class • Clean up garbage in a nearby park Listening Circles Divide your class into teams of three to five students to start this active listening practise. Allow students to respond to a get-to-know-you inquiry in turn. If any student interrupts the speaker, remind them that everyone has a chance to share their response. Here are some examples of questions: • Suppose you could go anyplace in the world, where would you go? • What makes you the most happy? • Who do you admire the most, and why? Come together as a class at the end of the exercise to discuss what they learnt in their groups. Try partnering students together and having them share one item about their companion after the exercise to ensure that every student feels involved.	Strategies to Improve Social Awareness ► Give importance to listening. ► Make it a practice to repeat what is said. ► Pay attention to the tone. ► Keep an eye on the body language. ► Place yourself in other's shoes. ► Identify your own emotions. ► Reflect back. 7 Important Social Skills for Kids 1. Sharing 2. Cooperating 3. Listening 4. Following directions 5. Respecting personal space 6. Making eye contact 7. Using manners
Questionnaire Filling: Request participants to complete the questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of social awareness post-training.	Kindly fill the Post-training questionnaire Thankyou!

Section 5- Understanding the competency of relationship management (2 h)

Questionnaire Filling: Request participants to complete the questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of relationship management pre-training.	Kindly fill the Pre-training Questionnaire 
Introduce: Concept of Relationship Management Ask participants their point of view on what relationship management is. Then explain the meaning of relationship management.	What is Relationship Management? “It's all about relationships; may seem to be an overused maxim, but that doesn't make it less valid.” — Dr. Joshua Sider Relationship Management refers to an ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding cooperative relationships; resist inappropriate social pressure; prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflict; seek help when needed 
Explain: Meaning of Forgiveness. Difference between forgiveness and reconciliation Importance of forgiveness in relationship management	Forgiveness ► What is Forgiveness? ► Is Reconciliation and Forgiveness same for you? 

	 ► Forgiveness is a conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you, regardless of whether they actually deserve your forgiveness. ► Reconciliation is to make people become friends again after an argument. It means to let go or console. ► Forgiveness is a gift we give to ourselves, because it opens the door for inner freedom and happiness. Without it, we can remain chained to past events and other people, causing continued suffering to ourselves and others
Explain: Case Study Relating to the Importance of Forgiveness	Case Study A wonderful exemplar of forgiveness is Richard Moore, who serves as a Fellow of the Center of Compassion, Integrity, and Secular Ethics at Life University. Richard was shot by a British soldier with a rubber bullet in Northern Ireland in 1972 at the age of ten while walking home from school. The bullet knocked one of his eyes out, blinded him in the other and damaged his skull. Although the rubber bullet did not kill him, he has been completely blind from that moment forward. When he found out he was going to be blind for life, instead of reacting with anger, he simply accepted it. He realized that there was no point in harboring resentment toward the British in general or to the man who shot him. Later, when the Dalai Lama met Richard Moore and heard of his story, he started calling Richard his personal hero, something he continues to do, because of Richard's amazing practice of forgiveness. More than thirty years after being shot, Richard managed to locate the soldier who shot him and sent him a letter to express his forgiveness and his desire to meet. The soldier and Richard met shortly thereafter and are now friends. Richard now gives talks on forgiveness and likes to say that "holding anger and resentment is like drinking poison and expecting other people to be hurt, and they are not." Richard went on to found the charity Children in Crossfire, which has brought life-saving aid to tens of thousands of children in Tanzania, Ethiopia and elsewhere. He says he would not have been nearly as successful, or nearly as happy, if he had not practiced forgiveness.
Reflective Exercise 1: Ask each participant to do mindful dialogue in pairs relating to questions in the slide. Give each participant 5 minutes to speak. Tell them the rules of active listening, non-judgement, confidentiality, and no questioning while listening. After exercise, tell them to share their feelings and the importance of relationships.	Reflective Exercise 1 Start with bringing to mind a resource or focus on the contact of your body with a surface, object or another body part, and allow yourself to notice any neutral or pleasant sensations that arise in your body. ► 1. Describe a time in your life when someone forgave you. ► 2. What was it like to be forgiven? ► 3. Were there benefits to being forgiven by this person? If so, what? ► 4. Would your life be any different had this person not forgiven you? If so, how? OR ► 1. Can you describe a time in your life when you forgave someone? ► 2. Were there benefits to you from forgiving this person? If so, what? ► 3. How might your life be different had you not forgiven this person?
Explain: Meaning of Gratitude	Gratitude ► Gratitude is recognizing the benefits one has received from others, where the other may be one or more people, other aspects of nature or a supernatural being or force. ► Like forgiveness, gratitude is also an act of self-compassion, because it increases one's happiness and well-being powerfully at no cost to ourselves whatsoever. grat-i-tude:  the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.
Reflective Exercise 2: Explain Naikan practice. Ask participants to do Naikan exercises for 10 minutes. Then ask participants to reflect on questions and share the number of hours. The Japanese term Naikan means "looking inside." It is a form of systematic self-reflection that assists us in better understanding	Naikan Practice  Naikan is a powerful method for self-reflection and gratitude. It involves reflecting on the kindness and support of others, particularly those who have helped you in the past. The practice is structured around three main themes: 1. Reflecting on the kindness of others, 2. Reflecting on the kindness of nature, and 3. Reflecting on the kindness of the universe. The diagram illustrates a person at the center, surrounded by others, with arrows indicating the flow of reflection and gratitude.

ourselves, our connections with others, and the fundamental principles of human life. Ishin Yoshimoto, a devoted Buddhist of the Pure Land sect (Jodo Shinshu), invented Naikan in Japan in the 1940s.

Name	Hour spent earning for you	Hour spent transporting you from one place to another	Hour spent providing basic necessities for you	Hours spent doing laundry, helping in purchasing household items for you
	Hr/week X 52 weeks =	Hr/week X 52 weeks =	Hr/week X 52 weeks =	Hr/week X 52 weeks =
	Hr/year X no. of years = hours	Hr/year X no. of years = hours	Hr/year X no. of years = hours	Hr/year X no. of years = hours

Total hours spent on you = _____

Reflective Questions

- 1: What was it like to calculate the total hours your primary caregiver spent doing things for you?
- 2: What would you say you received from this person?
- 3: What did you give back to this person?

Strategies to Improve Relationship Management skills:

Explain various ways of cultivating forgiveness and gratitude



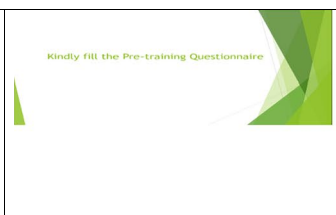
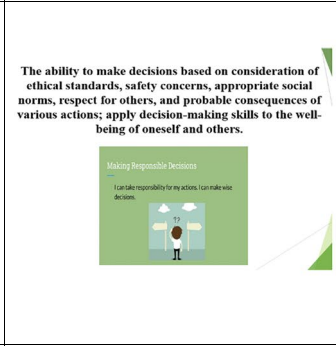
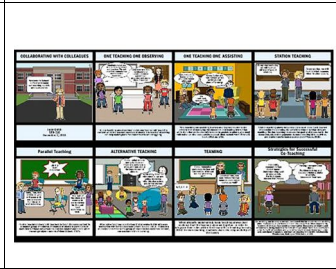
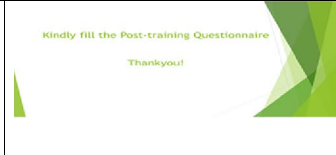
Questionnaire Filling:

Request participants to complete the questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of relationship management post-training.

Kindly fill the Post-training Questionnaire

Thankyou!

Section 6- Understanding the competency of responsible decision making (2 h)

Questionnaire Filling: Request participants to complete the questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of responsible decision-making pre-training.	
Introduce: Concept of Responsible Decision Making Ask participants their point of view on what is Responsible Decision Making. Then explain the meaning of Responsible Decision Making.	The ability to make decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and probable consequences of various actions; apply decision-making skills to the well-being of oneself and others. 
Explain: Explain the steps about responsible decision making.	
Explain: Discuss in detail various teaching strategies for making responsible decision through examples.	
Discuss: Discuss PAUSE and REACT tools for building educator-student solid relationships.	Pause & React A tool for cultivating strong teacher-student relationships 
Questionnaire Filling: Request participants to complete the questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of responsible decision-making post-training.	
The SEL training session to be concluded after 12 hours of dedicated training and review from educators to be taken.	Thankyou!

Authors' Compilation

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Data availability This published paper comprise all data produced or analysed during this investigation.

Declarations

Ethics The manuscript complies with publication ethics of Springer. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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