



Benefits and Challenges of Implementing Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in Education: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

This study investigates two research questions: (1) What are the benefits of implementing Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in educational settings? and (2) What challenges are faced in implementing SEL within educational contexts? A systematic literature review was conducted by analyzing peer-reviewed articles published between 2019 and 2024 across databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, ScienceDirect, and Garuda. The research design follows Tóth et al. (2023), applying the PICOC criteria (Population, Intervention, Comparator, Outcome, Context) and thematic analysis from international and Indonesian journals. Addressing the first research question, four key benefits of SEL emerged: (1) enhanced self-awareness and emotional regulation among Generation Z; (2) improved communication and intercultural collaboration in language learning; (3) academic gains through increased motivation, engagement, and critical thinking; and (4) promotion of equity through inclusive environments. In response to the second question, five significant challenges were identified: (1) limited teacher competence in SEL; (2) misaligned curriculum and assessment systems; (3) cultural and contextual barriers; (4) digital adaptation issues among Generation Z; and (5) rigid policies emphasizing narrow academic metrics. This review provides valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers to support effective SEL integration in educational contexts by offering a balanced synthesis of advantages and obstacles.

INTRODUCTION

The digital era and globalization have significantly transformed the educational landscape, introducing new student challenges and expectations. These changes demand not only academic proficiency but also the development of social-emotional competencies (Helaluddin & Alamsyah, 2019; Mahoney et al., 2020). In response to this need, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) emerges as a pedagogical approach that bridges the gap between cognitive development and emotional growth, aiming to nurture the whole learner.

Defined as a structured process, SEL supports the cultivation of skills such as self-regulation, emotional awareness, and interpersonal relationship-building, which are essential for making responsible decisions (CASEL, 2020). The theoretical foundation of SEL is rooted in developmental psychology, particularly in evidence highlighting that social, emotional, and cognitive development are interrelated processes that evolve within relational and contextual environments, ultimately shaping identity and emotional well-being (Jones, McGarrah, & Kahn, 2019). Complementing this, recent research on emotional intelligence builds upon Goleman's foundational work by emphasizing the critical role of understanding and managing emotions for personal and professional success (Mayer & Salovey, 2016; Petrides & Furnham, 2017). These contemporary theories collectively underline the significance of emotional and social capabilities in fostering holistic human development (Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2018).

In Indonesia, the implementation of SEL is gaining attention, as highlighted by recent studies published in *Jurnal Dimensi Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran*. For instance, Oktaviani Gulo et al. (2025) research demonstrates how literacy media interventions can improve students' motivation and emotional engagement in learning, reflecting core SEL principles. Similarly, studies on educational media and motivation in Indonesian contexts emphasize integrating emotional and social skills to enhance learning outcomes (Gulo et al., 2025; Rosdiani et al., 2022).

In practical terms, SEL equips students with five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making that prepare them to navigate modern life's complexities (CASEL, 2020; Weissberg et al., 2015). For instance, self-awareness involves recognizing one's emotions, thoughts, and values and understanding how they influence behavior. Meanwhile, self-management refers to the ability to regulate one's responses, set and work toward personal goals, and maintain motivation, even under stress, as discussed in recent studies (Panadero, 2017; Wolters & Brady, 2020).

The urgency of promoting these competencies becomes more apparent considering various stressors students face today, such as academic pressure, social isolation, and increased reliance on digital technology (Jones et al., 2021; Shugufta Naseem et al., 2024). These challenges were further intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, disrupting learning and limiting social interaction (Kuhfeld et al., 2020). Consequently, educational approaches must shift toward holistic development that considers students' emotional and social needs alongside academic ones.

In Indonesia, the implementation of SEL is still in its early stages, with recent inclusion in national curriculum frameworks (Fitratullah, 2023). However, a more comprehensive understanding is required, particularly regarding how SEL can be applied effectively in language teaching contexts. This study addresses this gap by exploring the integration of SEL in English language teaching, examining its benefits and practical challenges. In doing so, it aims to offer insights into how SEL can enrich students' language skills and overall personal growth.

This paper focuses on two central research questions: (1) What are the benefits of implementing Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in educational settings? Moreover, (2) What challenges are faced in implementing SEL within educational contexts? By answering these

questions, this study aims to uncover the dual nature of SEL, highlighting its potential to enhance student engagement and well-being and the practical constraints that may hinder its success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) has emerged as a significant area of educational research over the past decade, with studies examining its theoretical foundations, implementation strategies, and outcomes across various educational contexts. This review analyzes and synthesizes key literature from the past ten years (2014-2024) to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of SEL research, highlighting both advances and limitations in the field. Recent meta-analyses and systematic reviews have shown positive outcomes from SEL implementation. Building on foundational research like the meta-analysis by Taylor et al. (2017), evidence continues to highlight SEL's benefits on social-emotional skills and academic achievement. For instance, Mahoney et al. (2020) conducted a follow-up analysis confirming that SEL programs consistently positively affect students' social-emotional development, academic performance, and long-term well-being. Their research highlighted how these benefits persist across diverse student populations and educational settings.

In the Indonesian context, Helaluddin and Alamsyah (2019) contributed significantly by developing a conceptual framework for SEL integration in higher education settings. Their research emphasized the importance of culturally responsive approaches to SEL implementation but stopped short of investigating the practical challenges educators might face when applying these frameworks. This limitation points to a common trend in the literature: a focus on theoretical models without adequate attention to implementation barriers. The application of SEL in language learning contexts has gained particular attention in recent years. Fitratullah (2023) examined how SEL competencies could enhance English language acquisition among Indonesian students, demonstrating positive correlations between emotional regulation skills and language proficiency. However, this research overlooked systemic barriers that might impede effective SEL integration within curriculum structures.

Generation-specific approaches to SEL have also emerged as an important research direction. Chaq and Mahmudin (2024) explored the urgency of character education for Generation Z in Era 5.0 from an Islamic perspective, highlighting how digital natives require tailored approaches to developing moral values and character in increasingly technology-mediated environments. Their research emphasized the importance of character education in helping Generation Z navigate digital challenges while maintaining ethical principles grounded in religious values. While providing valuable insights into character formation strategies such as exemplary role modeling, guidance-based education, and supervision approaches, their study did not fully address the operational challenges in implementing these specialized approaches within existing educational systems. This need for contextual adaptation is also supported by earlier research by Hadi Cahyono (2015), conducted at State Elementary School 1 Polorejo, which emphasized the importance of aligning character education programs with local cultural contexts and technological conditions to foster effective moral and social development in primary school students.

The COVID-19 pandemic stimulated new research on SEL, focusing on how remote learning affects social-emotional development. Jones et al. (2021) reported increased student stress during school closures, while Kuhfeld et al. (2020) showed these disruptions widened achievement gaps. More recently, Shugufta Naseem et al. (2024) studied post-pandemic SEL interventions but did not explore barriers to effective SEL. Complementing these findings,

Hadiprayogo (2023) highlighted challenges like motivation and adapting to new learning methods, which impacted students' social-emotional well-being during remote learning. Despite the growing body of research on SEL, a critical gap remains: a balanced analysis that synthesizes both the advantages and obstacles in implementing SEL within education, particularly in language teaching contexts. No comprehensive meta-analysis has updated the findings since Taylor et al. (2017), leaving a void in current, evidence-based insights on implementation effectiveness. Additionally, most studies focus either on benefits or challenges in isolation, failing to provide the integrated perspective needed for sustainable program design.

This study addresses these limitations through a systematic review of contemporary literature on SEL's benefits and challenges, with particular attention to language education contexts. By synthesizing findings from the past decade, it aims to contribute to more informed, sustainable integration of SEL in education through an up-to-date and balanced understanding of its implementation realities.

METHODS

This research used a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology that examines and assesses the literature pertinent to the research issue while also methodically structuring the problem and synthesizing the research outcomes. This methodology facilitates the identification of research deficiencies and the systematic development of future models, methodologies, and strategies (Sudirman et al., 2024). The SLR design model in this study adopted the approach of Tóth et al. (2023), which consists of two main stages

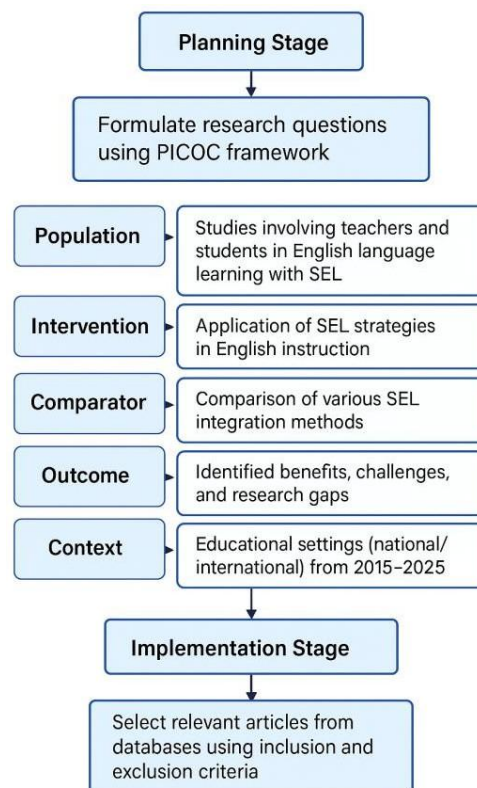


Figure 1. The SLR Design Model Adopted from Tóth et al. (2023)

The first stage is planning, which involves drawing conclusions from the selected literature and developing research questions designed to address specific needs, ensuring the questions follow the PICOC framework that includes five basic elements: population, intervention, comparator, outcome, and context (Mengist et al., 2020). The second stage was implementation, where literature selection was conducted through careful analysis according to predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, focusing on the relevance of the material to the research context and problem.

The research site encompasses multiple electronic databases where academic literature is archived and accessed, including Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, ERIC, and Garuda (Indonesian journal portal). These platforms were chosen due to their comprehensive collection of educational publications, international scope, and accessibility, allowing for examination of international and Indonesian-specific research. The search was limited to English and Indonesian-language journal articles to ensure the quality and validity of the findings (Sudirman et al., 2024).

Table 1. List of Selected Studies

No	Research Title	Author(s)	Year	Database Source
1	A Conceptual Study of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in Language Learning	Helaluddin, H., & Alamsyah, A.	2019	Garuda
2	The Implementation of Social-Emotional Competencies in English Language Learning.	Fitratullah, F.	2023	Garuda
3	The Urgency of Instilling Character Education Values for Generation Z in the Era of Society 5.0: A Qur'anic Perspective	Chaq, A. N., & Mahmudin, A. S.	2024	Garuda
4	Analyzing the relationship between social-emotional competencies and academic achievement: A cross-sectional study	Shugufta, N., Ahmad, R., & Kumar, P.	2024	Science Direct
5	Transformative social and emotional learning (SEL): Toward SEL in service of educational equity and excellence	Jagers, R. J., Rivas-Drake, D., & Williams, B.	2019	ERIC

The selected studies in Table 1 represent diverse perspectives on social-emotional learning (SEL), covering theoretical and practical dimensions across different educational contexts. Indonesian-based articles primarily emphasize the integration of SEL within character education and language learning. At the same time, international sources contribute broader insights on SEL's role in promoting equity, academic achievement, and systemic transformation. This combination ensures a balanced understanding of SEL from local and global viewpoints, essential for contextualizing its implementation in educational settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of this systematic literature review respond directly to the purpose of studying the implementation of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in various educational contexts. Based on a thorough analysis of selected literature published between 2019 and 2024, the findings are organized and presented through two main themes: the benefits and the challenges of SEL

implementation in education. These themes provide a comprehensive understanding of how SEL programs impact students and educators and the obstacles faced during their integration into educational settings.

Table 2. Benefits of Implementing Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in Education

No	Research Title	Author	Benefits of SEL Implementation
1	A Conceptual Study of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in Language Learning.	Helaluddin, H., & Alamsyah, A. (2019)	This research shows that using SEL in language learning helps students understand themselves better and manage their emotions. Students who learned with the SEL approach showed improvement in building positive relationships and making responsible decisions. The learning environment became more collaborative and supportive, making language learning more effective.
2	The Implementation of Social-Emotional Competencies in English Language Learning.	Fitratullah, F. (2023)	This study found that using social-emotional skills in English language learning significantly increased students' intrinsic motivation. The SEL approach helped students improve their communication skills and class participation. Students better understood different cultures and strong collaboration skills, which are crucial in studying foreign languages.
3	The Urgency of Instilling Character Education Values for Generation Z in the Era of Society 5.0: A Qur'anic Perspective.	Chaq, A. N., & Mahmudin, A. S. (2024)	This study reveals that SEL strategies, including exemplary role modeling, guidance-based education, supervision, and digital-era education approaches, significantly contribute to character formation among young learners. The researchers found that SEL helps Generation Z develop moral awareness, responsibility, honesty, and social virtues essential for navigating the complexities of the digital age. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that character education grounded in religious values enables students to maintain ethical principles while adapting to technological advancements, fostering social harmony, and creating resilient individuals capable of balancing technological engagement with meaningful human interaction.
4	Analyzing the relationship between social-emotional competencies and academic achievement: A cross-sectional study	Shugufta, N., Ahmad, R., & Kumar, P. (2024)	Studies link students' social and emotional skills to academic success. Students who have SEL skills are better at problem-solving and critical thinking. They also improved their time management and learning organization. Disruptive behavior in class significantly decreased, creating a more conducive learning environment.

No	Research Title	Author	Benefits of SEL Implementation
5	Transformative social and emotional learning (SEL): Toward SEL in service of educational equity and excellence	Jagers, R. J., Rivas-Drake, D., & Williams, B. (2019)	This research shows how SEL helps create a more equal and just education system. Transformative SEL has been shown to reduce educational disparities between social groups and develop better cultural awareness. When schools implement SEL, it gives students the power to make a positive social impact. It also creates learning communities where all students feel accepted and supported.

The results of these five studies (Helaluddin & Alamsyah, Chaq et al., Fitriatullah, Shuguftha et al., and Jagers et al.) show clear proof that SEL has many benefits. The analysis of Table 1 reveals that SEL implementation positively impacts four primary areas of student development. First, it enhances students' self-understanding and emotional regulation capacity, particularly helping Generation Z students manage stress and anxiety in the increasingly complex digital era. Second, SEL fosters improved communication skills, classroom participation, and cross-cultural understanding, essential competencies for language learning and broader educational success across diverse contexts. Third, a clear correlation exists between social-emotional competencies and academic achievement, with notable improvements in problem-solving abilities, critical thinking skills, and overall classroom behavior that creates more conducive learning environments. Fourth, transformative SEL approaches contribute significantly to creating more equitable educational systems by reducing disparities between social groups, developing cultural awareness, and fostering inclusive learning communities where all students feel accepted and supported. These findings collectively demonstrate the importance of integrating the SEL approach in education systems to prepare students for the multidimensional challenges of the 21st century by equipping them with skills that enhance their thinking, emotional regulation, social interactions, and academic performance.

Table 3. Challenges in Implementing Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in Education

No	Research Title	Author	Challenges in SEL Implementation
1	A Conceptual Study of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in Language Learning.	Helaluddin, H., & Alamsyah, A. (2019)	This research identifies challenges, such as teachers' lack of deep understanding of SEL concepts and implementation in language learning. Another challenge is adding SEL to an already full curriculum. Traditional assessment systems focus more on cognitive aspects (like memory and thinking) than social-emotional development. This makes it hard to measure how well SEL is being implemented.
2	The Implementation of Social-Emotional Competencies in English Language Learning.	Fitriatullah, F. (2023)	This study found it hard to adapt English language learning materials to include SEL components. Many teachers find it hard to create learning activities that help students develop language skills and social-emotional competencies at the same time. There are also challenges in effectively implementing SEL in English language learning because of

No	Research Title	Author	Challenges in SEL Implementation
			limited learning time and available resources.
3	The Urgency of Instilling Character Education Values for Generation Z in the Era of Society 5.0: A Qur'anic Perspective.	Chaq, A. N., & Mahmudin, A. S. (2024)	This research identifies several challenges in implementing SEL for Generation Z, including readiness in accessing and mastering technology, risks associated with new technological developments, and adaptation to digital education systems. The research emphasizes that character education, which incorporates SEL principles, is vital in countering moral degradation issues among Generation Z students, such as bullying, hate speech, and other destructive behaviors prevalent in the digital era.
4	Analyzing the relationship between social-emotional competencies and academic achievement: A cross-sectional study	Shugufta, N., Ahmad, R., & Kumar, P. (2024)	Research results show that objectively measuring and evaluating the development of social-emotional competencies is difficult. This study also found challenges related to students' different social and economic backgrounds that affect how well SEL interventions work. Pressure to improve grades often makes people forget how important it is to develop social and emotional skills when it comes to learning.
5	Transformative social and emotional learning (SEL): Toward SEL in service of educational equity and excellence	Jagers, R. J., Rivas-Drake, D., & Williams, B. (2019)	This research shows the problems in creating SEL approaches relevant to different cultures and contexts. However, it can be hard to implement these because of how schools are set up. Teacher training that does not include social justice and equity perspectives is a big problem. This makes it hard to see the full potential of SEL.

After examining the five studies in Table 2, we can identify several significant challenges in implementing Social Emotional Learning in educational contexts. The literature review reveals that SEL implementation faces complex obstacles at multiple levels of the educational system. Teachers often demonstrate limited understanding of SEL concepts and implementation strategies, particularly in specialized subjects like language learning, which hampers practical classroom application. The challenge of integrating SEL into already dense curricula is compounded by traditional assessment systems that emphasize cognitive development over social-emotional growth, making comprehensive evaluation difficult. Additionally, creating culturally relevant SEL approaches that effectively respond to diverse student backgrounds presents significant challenges, as highlighted by Jagers et al. (2019) and Shugufta et al. (2024). Chaq & Mahmudin (2024) identify several challenges for Generation Z students, including readiness to access and master technology, risks associated with new technological developments, and adaptation to digital education systems. Their research emphasizes that character education, which incorporates SEL principles, is vital in countering moral degradation issues among Generation Z students, such as bullying, hate speech, and other destructive behaviors prevalent in

the digital era. At the systemic level, unsupportive institutional structures and the pervasive pressure to focus on academic scores often marginalized social-emotional skill development. Research by Helaluddin & Alamsyah, Jagers et al., Fitratullah, Shuguftha et al., and Chaq & Mahmudin demonstrates that these challenges are not merely technical but deeply structural, cultural, and institutional, requiring comprehensive and coordinated efforts to overcome effectively.

Discussion

This systematic literature review from 2019 to 2024 provides comprehensive insights into the benefits and challenges of implementing Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in educational contexts. Our systematic review reveals the profound transformative impact of social-emotional learning (SEL) across multiple dimensions of educational development. By fostering self-awareness and emotional regulation, SEL provides Generation Z learners with vital psychological tools to navigate the distinctive challenges of the digital era, including social media pressures, information overload, and pandemic-related disruptions (Chaq & Mahmudin, 2024). These competencies serve as protective factors against rising rates of anxiety and depression among youth and create more psychologically safe learning environments.

Developing sophisticated communication skills and intercultural understanding through structured SEL implementation yields tangible benefits in classroom dynamics. Students in SEL-enriched environments demonstrate markedly improved conflict resolution abilities, more effective peer collaboration, and greater appreciation for diverse perspectives, all critical competencies for success in an increasingly globalized world (Fitratullah, 2023). These interpersonal gains directly translate to an improved classroom climate and reduced disciplinary incidents.

Empirical evidence challenges the traditional dichotomy between education's cognitive and affective domains. For example, Shuguftha et al. (2024) found strong correlations between social-emotional competencies and standardized test performance. Arsana et al. (2020) also showed that motivational factors, core elements of SEL frameworks, significantly predict academic achievement outcomes. Through meta-analysis, Dzikrulloh et al. (2024) further confirmed that motivational approaches substantially impact critical thinking development. These findings reveal that SEL is not a distraction from academic priorities but a catalyst for enhanced cognitive engagement and intellectual development. Most significantly, Jagers et al. (2019) documented the equity-promoting dimensions of transformative SEL approaches, which extend beyond individual outcomes to address systemic educational inequalities. Contemporary SEL implementations have evolved from supporting personal emotional regulation to actively cultivating inclusive learning environments where historically marginalized students experience greater belonging and academic self-efficacy. This positions SEL as a powerful mechanism for educational justice.

However, these benefits are significantly constrained by multiple implementation challenges at different educational levels. Teacher competency limitations represent a fundamental barrier, as effective SEL implementation requires deep conceptual understanding and specialized pedagogical skills that many educators lack. Curriculum and assessment challenges stem from dense academic schedules and evaluation systems prioritizing cognitive outcomes over social-emotional development. These systemic constraints underscore the need for

targeted professional development, curriculum alignment, and policy reforms to create supportive conditions for sustainable SEL integration.

In addition to structural and instructional barriers, cultural and generational factors also pose significant challenges. The cultural relevance challenge identified by Jagers et al. (2019) indicates that SEL approaches must be contextually adapted rather than universally applied to be effective. Generation Z's distinctive characteristics and challenges in the digital era, as identified by Chaq & Mahmudin (2024), create unique obstacles for traditional SEL pedagogies. Their research highlights that Generation Z students face specific challenges related to technology readiness, risks associated with new technological developments, and adaptation to digital education systems. Most fundamentally, institutional structures and policies often discourage comprehensive SEL implementation by maintaining a narrow academic focus and providing inadequate resources for holistic educational approaches.

The interplay between these benefits and challenges reveals several important insights about SEL implementation. First, the complementary relationship between emotional development and academic achievement challenges the false dichotomy often presented in educational discourse. Shugufta et al. (2024) demonstrated that social-emotional competencies are foundations for academic success rather than competing priorities. Second, digital transformation simultaneously creates both opportunities and obstacles for SEL implementation. Chaq & Mahmudin's (2024) research suggests that effective SEL strategies must evolve alongside technological advancements rather than resist them. Their study emphasizes that character education grounded in religious values is vital for Generation Z students, helping them develop moral awareness, responsibility, honesty, and social virtues essential for navigating the digital era while countering moral degradation issues such as bullying, hate speech, and other destructive behaviors prevalent in digital environments. Third, the systemic nature of implementation barriers indicates that piecemeal approaches to SEL are unlikely to succeed; comprehensive reform addressing teacher preparation, curriculum design, assessment practices, and institutional policies simultaneously is necessary. Fourth, cultural responsiveness emerges as a fundamental requirement for effective SEL implementation rather than an optional enhancement.

These findings align with broader educational psychology research, extending previous understanding by highlighting SEL's specific relevance for digital-native learners and diverse cultural contexts. The challenges identified reflect consistent patterns observed in educational reform literature, particularly regarding the difficulty of implementing holistic changes in traditionally compartmentalized systems. The emphasis on culturally responsive approaches in recent literature represents an important evolution from earlier SEL frameworks that assumed greater universality in social-emotional development.

The practical implications of these findings are significant for educational stakeholders. Effective SEL implementation requires comprehensive teacher development that addresses both conceptual understanding and practical application. Curriculum design should integrate SEL organically within subject content rather than treating it as a separate component. Educational institutions must develop culturally responsive SEL frameworks that explicitly account for student diversity. Innovative technology-enhanced strategies are needed to address the unique characteristics of digital-native learners. Finally, educational policies, particularly around assessment and accountability, require recalibration to value social-emotional development alongside traditional academic metrics.

In conclusion, while SEL offers profound benefits for student development and educational equity, realizing these benefits requires addressing multiple interconnected

challenges through comprehensive, coordinated approaches. The potential rewards of effective SEL implementation extend beyond individual student outcomes to broader goals of educational transformation and social cohesion, making it a compelling focus for continued research and policy attention.

CONCLUSION

This systematic review examined SEL implementation in educational settings through literature analysis from 2019 to 2024, revealing significant benefits alongside persistent implementation challenges. However, several limitations must be acknowledged. The five-year timeframe provides a contemporary snapshot but may miss important longitudinal trends and foundational research. The limited sample size and geographical concentration of studies restrict global applicability, particularly for different cultural and economic contexts. Additionally, the predominance of qualitative studies offers rich insights but provides limited quantitative evidence for statistical validation across diverse populations.

Future research should prioritize longitudinal studies tracking SEL implementation over multiple academic years to understand sustained impacts on student development. Cross-cultural comparative research examining SEL effectiveness across different educational systems and cultural frameworks would enhance understanding of contextual success factors. From an English language teaching perspective, research should specifically investigate how SEL integration affects second language acquisition processes, particularly for ESL/EFL learners navigating both linguistic and cultural adaptation. Studies examining literature-based SEL activities, collaborative writing projects, and discussion-based learning that simultaneously develop language proficiency and emotional intelligence are critically needed. Additionally, more rigorous experimental designs with control groups and standardized measurement tools are essential to establish stronger causal relationships between SEL interventions and student outcomes.

This review makes important contributions to educational research by providing the first comprehensive synthesis of recent SEL literature that addresses benefits and challenges within a unified analytical framework. Identifying four key benefit areas and systematically analyzing multi-level implementation challenges offer educators and policymakers a structured roadmap for successful SEL integration. For English language education specifically, this review establishes the foundation for understanding how language learning contexts can serve as natural platforms for SEL development, contributing to both applied linguistics and educational psychology fields.

Moreover, the emphasis on Generation Z's unique digital-era characteristics advances the understanding of how SEL must evolve for contemporary learners. The findings also contribute to the discourse on educational equity by demonstrating how transformative SEL approaches can address systemic inequalities. Ultimately, this systematic review provides an evidence-based foundation for future research and offers practical guidance for implementing comprehensive social-emotional learning programs that are culturally responsive, academically integrated, and relevant to 21st-century educational needs.

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