

PRIVATE ENGLISH MEDIUM SCHOOL TEACHERS’
PERCEPTION ON SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL), ITS
CLASSROOM PRACTICES, AND IMPLEMENTATION
CHALLENGES FOR GRADE 3–4 CHILDREN IN DHAKA,
BANGLADESH

By

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A thesis submitted to the BRAC Institute of Educational Development in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education in Educational Leadership & School Improvement

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Ethics Statement

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the MEd Research Ethics Committee of BRAC IED. Prior to data collection, permission was secured from each participating school. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their voluntary participation was ensured. Written or verbal consent was obtained as appropriate, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process.

Abstract

This study explores how teachers in private English medium schools in Dhaka perceive and implement Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in Grade 3–4 classrooms. It focuses on teachers' understanding of SEL, their classroom practices, and the challenges they face in the absence of formal SEL policies or structured training. Using a qualitative approach, the study draws on in-depth interviews with five teachers and classroom observations from two schools following international curricula. Findings indicate that teachers value SEL and integrate it informally through emotional support, relationship-building, and classroom management to promote student well-being. However, these practices are largely intuition-driven rather than guided by structured frameworks, resulting in variation across classrooms. The consistent implementation of SEL is further constrained by time limitations, academic pressure, limited professional training, and uneven institutional support. The study highlights the need for clearer guidance, capacity-building, and contextually relevant SEL strategies to strengthen socio-emotional learning in private English medium school settings.

Keywords: Social-Emotional Learning; Private English Medium Schools; Teacher Perceptions; Classroom Practices; Implementation Challenges

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Minara Begum and Abul Kalam Azad, and to my brother, Shamim Ahmed, whose love and unwavering support have always been my foundation.

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List of Acronyms

BRAC IED	BRAC Institute of Educational Development
CASEL	Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
EMS	English Medium School
SEL	Social Emotional Learning
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund

Chapter 1

Introduction and Background

This chapter introduces the study by outlining the importance of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in fostering children's holistic development and highlighting its limited presence in Bangladesh's education system, particularly in private English medium schools. It sets the context, identifies the research problem, presents the purpose and significance of the study, and outlines the key research questions that guide the investigation.

1.1 Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, there is a growing emphasis on not only academic learning but also on students' emotional and social development. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) has emerged as a widely recognized framework to support the development of competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making among children (CASEL, 2020; Durlak et al., 2011). These skills are increasingly seen as essential for students' success both inside and beyond the school, contributing to academic achievement as well as long-term social and emotional well-being (Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017).

This thesis explores the perspectives and practices of private English medium school teachers in Dhaka, Bangladesh, regarding SEL and the challenges of implementing it in Grade 3 and 4 classrooms. Focusing on these specific grades allows for an in-depth understanding of SEL integration during a critical period of children's social and emotional development (Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

Despite the global recognition of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), its integration within Bangladesh's education system remains limited and uneven, particularly in private English

medium schools that operate independently of the national curriculum and follow international boards such as Cambridge International (CIE) or Pearson Edexcel. These schools are not formally required to adopt structured SEL programmes, and the emphasis placed on socio-emotional development varies considerably across institutions (UNESCO, 2020; Ahmed & Rahaman, 2021).

Although teachers may receive training related to classroom management or student behaviour, structured professional development specifically focused on SEL competencies remains inconsistent and largely absent within the broader education system (Ahmed & Rahaman, 2021).

Through in-depth interviews and classroom observations, this research understands whether and how SEL is being applied in daily classroom interactions and identifies the challenges that teachers face in implementing it. The study aims to understand how SEL is interpreted and practiced by teachers and to what extent these practices align with recognized SEL frameworks like CASEL. Aligning with the CASEL framework provides a structured approach to evaluating SEL competencies and supports consistency in assessing SEL practices (CASEL, 2020).

While the Bangladeshi National Curriculum incorporates values-based education, including moral and ethical development (Tasnim, 2024; Ahsan et al., 2024), Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as a structured, evidence-based, and competency-driven framework is largely absent from curriculum policies for both government and private institutions (Himel, 2023; Obaydullah & Jahan, 2020; Barua et al., 2024; UNFPA Bangladesh, 2025; UNICEF, 2019). Private English-medium schools in Bangladesh operate with greater autonomy and often face limited government oversight, with many running without registration or consistent regulation (Mousumi & Kusakabe, 2017; Salman, 2023; Kamol, 2020) which offer a unique

setting to explore how teachers perceive and implement SEL in the absence of formal policy mandates.

Although some local research has explored SEL in Bangladesh, most have focused on government schools. One notable example is an unpublished master's thesis by Md. Ar Rafi Himel (2023), titled *Government Teachers' Perception and Policy Provision on SEL – A Study in Selected Government Primary Schools in Bangladesh*. His study examined how SEL is understood and supported in public schools, focusing on policy-level gaps. However, little is known about how teachers in private English medium schools conceptualize and practice SEL. These schools operate with greater autonomy, often face limited government oversight, and follow international curricula such as CIE and Pearson Edexcel, which distinguish them from the national curriculum system (Mousumi & Kusakabe, 2017; Salman, 2023). Understanding SEL in this context is therefore essential, as it sheds light on how socio-emotional competencies are fostered in institutions that cater to different socio-economic groups and adopt globalized learning frameworks. This thesis addresses that gap by focusing on two private English medium schools in Dhaka that follow Cambridge Assessment International Education (CIE) and Pearson Edexcel curricula.

The rationale of the study is rooted in the need to better understand the practical realities of SEL implementation in classrooms, from the teacher's perspective, in environments where formal policy or curricular guidance may be lacking. This understanding is crucial for developing contextually appropriate strategies for improving SEL delivery in schools that cater to diverse student populations and operate with significant curricular flexibility.

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the research topic, including the problem statement, purpose of the study, and research questions. Chapter 2 presents a detailed review of the literature on SEL, focusing on its definitions, competencies, and global

implementation strategies. Chapter 3 presents the research methodology, describing the research approach, site and participants, sampling procedure, data collection methods, the role of the researcher, data analysis process, ethical issues, measures to ensure credibility and rigor, and the limitations of the study. Chapter 4 presents the findings from the data analysis, comparing the results from in-depth interviews and classroom observations. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the implications of the findings, offering recommendations for improving SEL implementation in Bangladesh's private schools and concluding the study.

1.2 Research Topic

Topic: Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Title: Private English Medium School Teachers' Perception on Social Emotional Learning (SEL), its practices and implementation challenges in the classroom for Grade 3-4 children in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is a critical educational framework that focuses on the development of students' emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and self-regulation abilities (CASEL, 2020). It plays a significant role in shaping not only academic success but also students' overall well-being. According to Durlak et al. (2015), SEL is designed to equip students with the skills necessary for managing emotions, establishing positive relationships, and making responsible decisions, all of which contribute to improved academic performance and social behavior.

This study investigates SEL from the perspective of teachers in private English medium schools in Dhaka, Bangladesh, focusing on their understanding of SEL concepts, its application in the classroom, and the challenges they face during its implementation. Jones and Doolittle (2017) emphasize that while SEL programs have the potential to significantly

enhance students' educational experiences, their successful implementation often faces obstacles such as limited training, resources, and time constraints.

The research seeks to explore if and/or how SEL practices are being incorporated into everyday teaching for grade 3 and 4 students. It will also identify barriers to successful implementation that may hinder teachers' ability to fully integrate SEL in their classrooms. By addressing these factors, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how SEL is perceived and practiced by teachers and offer recommendations for improving its integration into teaching strategies.

This research will contribute to understanding how private English Medium school teachers in Dhaka navigate these challenges and adapt SEL strategies to fit their specific classroom needs.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing recognition of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) as essential for students' holistic development, its implementation in classrooms in Bangladesh, particularly in private English Medium Schools (EMSs), remains under-researched and inconsistent. Private EMSs in Bangladesh operate with greater autonomy and often limited government oversight, which can result in variability in teaching practices and curriculum implementation (Mousumi & Kusakabe, 2017; Salman, 2023). SEL helps children develop emotional regulation, social awareness, and interpersonal skills, which are foundational for academic success and mental well-being (CASEL, 2020; Durlak et al., 2011; Payton et al., 2000). However, the integration of SEL practices into classroom instruction is often hindered by systemic, institutional, and pedagogical barriers, including lack of teacher training, limited policy support, and insufficient resources (Himel, 2023; Shapiro & Breslauer, 2021). Therefore, there is a need to explore how teachers in private EMSs conceptualize, practice,

and overcome challenges in implementing SEL. In Dhaka, the emotional and behavioral challenges of children have been well documented. A study by Jahan et al. (2019) found that over 20% of school-aged children exhibited emotional or behavioral problems, while 41.8% were identified as borderline cases. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these issues, leading to increased emotional distress and academic disruptions among students (Egan et al., 2021). These challenges highlight the need for schools to play a more proactive role in supporting students' social and emotional development.

Teachers are pivotal in modeling and fostering SEL skills within classrooms. Greenberg (2023) notes that while schools have the potential to promote SEL, successful implementation is frequently undermined by limited training, lack of administrative support, time constraints, and insufficient attention to teachers' own social-emotional needs. In Bangladesh, although national education policies such as the National Education Policy 2010 have emphasized student well-being, practical SEL initiatives remain largely absent in mainstream education (Himel, 2023). BRAC NGO schools have reported similar barriers, including lack of contextualized curricula, minimal parental involvement, and inadequate teacher capacity (Afroze et al., 2012).

English Medium Schools (EMSs) have expanded rapidly over the past two decades, offering international curricula and attracting families seeking high-quality education (Mousumi & Kusakabe, 2017). According to the Bangladesh Annual Education Survey (2021), 137 EMSs operate in the country with over 75,000 students enrolled in primary grades (Prodhan, 2016). Yet, there is a notable gap in understanding how SEL is perceived or practiced in these schools. While EMSs provide more flexibility in curriculum design and pedagogy, there is little empirical research exploring how teachers approach SEL, particularly for children in grades 3 and 4 who are at a critical stage of social and emotional development.

This study seeks to fill that gap by understanding EMS teachers' perceptions of SEL, the strategies they employ, and the barriers they face in implementation. By focusing on private EMSs in Dhaka, this research will contribute to understanding the systemic and classroom-level factors that support or hinder SEL practices. This knowledge is essential for improving teacher training, supporting policy development, and ultimately enhancing students' social-emotional growth in Bangladesh's evolving education landscape.

1.4 Research Questions

This study explores the perceptions and practices of private English medium school teachers in Dhaka regarding Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), and investigates the challenges they face while implementing SEL in classrooms for grade 3–4 children.

Key Question 1:

What do private English medium school teachers in Dhaka know about Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)?

Sub-questions:

- a) What are teachers' general understandings and knowledge of SEL concepts?
- b) How do teachers perceive the importance of SEL in students' development?
- c) What resources and training, if any, do teachers receive related to SEL?

Key Question 2:

How do teachers practice and integrate SEL in their classroom and teaching processes?

Sub-questions:

- a) What specific SEL activities or strategies do teachers use in their classrooms?

b) How do teachers integrate or adapt general teaching practices to support the socio-emotional needs of grade 3–4 students?

Key Question 3:

What challenges do teachers face in implementing SEL, and how do they address these challenges?

Sub-questions:

- a) What are the primary barriers to effectively implementing SEL in the classroom?
- b) What strategies do teachers use to overcome these challenges, and what support do they require to enhance SEL practices?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore how private English medium school teachers in Dhaka, Bangladesh, perceive and implement Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) in classrooms for grade 3–4 students. The study focuses on understanding teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and classroom practices related to SEL, as well as the challenges they encounter while attempting to incorporate SEL into their teaching.

By gaining insights into how teachers understand and experience SEL in their specific school contexts, the study seeks to highlight how SEL is interpreted and what factors teachers perceive as influencing its integration. The findings aim to inform future efforts by school leaders, education practitioners, and policymakers to support the development of more context-sensitive approaches to SEL in English medium schools. Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader understanding of SEL in Bangladesh's private education sector and its implications for student development.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study addresses a gap in understanding how Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is perceived and implemented in private English medium primary classrooms in Dhaka. While global research highlights SEL's positive impact on student development (Durlak et al., 2011; Oberle et al., 2016), its role in Bangladesh's private English medium schools remains underexplored (Ahmed et al., 2021; Himel, 2022).

Focusing on Grades 3–4, a key developmental stage for emotional and social growth (CASEL, n.d.), this study offers insights in three areas:

- Practice: Supports school leaders and teacher educators by highlighting teachers' SEL practices and professional development needs.
- Research: Fills a local knowledge gap about SEL in private English medium education.
- Policy dialogue: Contributes to broader discussions on inclusive, child-centered approaches in private schooling, even if not aimed directly at policy change.

Chapter 1 introduces the study on Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in private English medium schools in Dhaka, focusing on Grade 3–4 classrooms. It highlights SEL as essential for children's holistic growth through skills like self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. While SEL is globally recognized, its integration in Bangladesh remains limited and inconsistent, particularly in English medium schools that operate with autonomy, follow international curricula, and face minimal government oversight. Unlike the national curriculum, which emphasizes moral and values-based education, structured SEL policies and teacher training are largely absent. This study addresses that gap by exploring teachers' perceptions, practices, and challenges in implementing SEL. Guided by research questions on teachers' understanding, classroom

practices, and barriers, the study aims to provide insights into how SEL is interpreted and applied in flexible curricular contexts, contributing to improved practice, research, and policy dialogue in Bangladesh's private education sector.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of the literature relevant to my study on private English medium school teachers' perceptions of socio-emotional learning (SEL), its practices, and implementation challenges in Grades 3–4 classrooms in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The literature is organized under several themes: (1) the concept and definitions of SEL; (2) the key SEL competencies according to the CASEL framework; (3) SEL implementation strategies in school settings; (4) the role of teachers in implementing SEL and their perceptions; and (5) the local context of SEL in Bangladesh, particularly in private English medium schools. The chapter concludes with a conceptual framework that synthesizes key ideas from the reviewed literature to guide the study's analytical lens.

2.2 Understanding Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social emotional learning (SEL) refers to the process through which individuals acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary 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 (CASEL, 2020). SEL encompasses both intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of learning and development and is widely recognized as a foundational element of quality education (Elias et al., 1997; Oberle et al., 2016).

While SEL has gained increasing global attention in recent decades, its interpretation and application vary across cultural and institutional contexts. According to Schonert-Reichl (2019), SEL should be viewed as an integral part of a child's holistic development and not

merely as an add-on to academic learning. Scholars emphasize that SEL fosters essential life skills, such as emotional regulation, resilience, empathy, communication, and collaborative problem-solving, which are vital for student well-being and academic success (Jones & Kahn, 2017; Durlak et al., 2011). These skills contribute to long-term outcomes including higher academic achievement, improved mental health, and positive social behavior (Taylor et al., 2017).

2.3 The CASEL Framework: Five Core SEL Competencies

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has played a pivotal role in conceptualizing and promoting Social Emotional Learning (SEL) globally. Its widely recognized framework identifies five interrelated competencies—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making—that provide a structured foundation for embedding SEL into curricula, pedagogy, and school culture (CASEL, 2020). These competencies are interconnected and support children in developing the emotional and social tools necessary for academic success, personal growth, and lifelong well-being (Durlak et al., 2011; Mahoney et al., 2018).

Self-awareness refers to the ability to recognize one’s emotions, thoughts, and values and to understand how they influence behavior. This competency includes accurately assessing one’s strengths and limitations, maintaining self-confidence, and cultivating a sense of purpose. For example, children demonstrate self-awareness when they identify feelings of frustration during a task and reflect on strategies to overcome it (CASEL, 2020). Research highlights that self-awareness fosters resilience and a positive sense of identity, particularly during middle childhood (Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

Self-management involves regulating emotions, controlling impulses, managing stress, and setting and working toward goals. It emphasizes both emotional regulation and perseverance

in the face of challenges. For students, this could mean using stress-reduction strategies during exams, practicing delayed gratification, or managing anger constructively in peer conflicts. Effective self-management is strongly linked to academic achievement, as students who can regulate emotions and stay motivated tend to perform better academically (Duckworth & Gross, 2014).

Social awareness encompasses empathy, perspective-taking, and understanding broader social norms and cultural contexts. This competency allows students to appreciate diversity and recognize the needs and feelings of others. In classrooms, it may be expressed when students support peers who are struggling or demonstrate sensitivity to cultural differences in group work. Developing social awareness contributes to a stronger sense of belonging, reducing instances of exclusion or discrimination (Oberle et al., 2016).

Relationship skills involve building and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships through skills such as communication, active listening, cooperation, conflict resolution, and seeking or offering help. For instance, students demonstrate relationship skills when they collaborate on group projects, negotiate disagreements respectfully, or provide peer support. Evidence shows that strong relationship skills not only improve classroom climate but also strengthen social bonds and community connectedness (Wentzel, 2017).

Responsible decision-making refers to making ethical, constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions. It includes considering safety, evaluating the consequences of actions, and balancing personal and collective well-being. For children, responsible decision-making may involve resisting peer pressure, acknowledging the impact of their actions on others, or choosing prosocial behaviors. Studies indicate that this competency plays a critical role in reducing risky behavior and fostering civic responsibility (Payton et al., 2008).

Collectively, the five competencies are mutually reinforcing. For example, strong self-awareness supports responsible decision-making, while effective self-management enhances relationship skills. Schools that intentionally integrate the CASEL framework into teaching, school policies, and teacher training report improved academic performance, reduced behavioral issues, and better social-emotional health among students (Durlak et al., 2011; Mahoney et al., 2018). These outcomes underscore the framework's value as a comprehensive and adaptable model for fostering holistic development in diverse educational contexts.

2.4 Strategies for SEL Implementation in the Classroom

Implementing SEL in the classroom requires intentional planning, teacher commitment, and systemic support. Various strategies have been developed for effective SEL implementation, including direct instruction, integration with academic content, school-wide climate initiatives, and community engagement (Jones et al., 2013; Elias et al., 1997). For example, Oberle et al. (2016) argue that SEL should be woven into daily classroom interactions, routines, and teaching methods, rather than treated as a separate subject.

Teachers play a crucial role in modeling SEL skills and fostering a supportive classroom environment. Creating safe spaces for expression, encouraging reflective thinking, and establishing routines that build emotional vocabulary are all part of SEL practices. Furthermore, CASEL (2020) promotes an ecological approach, encouraging schools to develop a coordinated SEL plan that involves leadership support, staff development, family partnerships, and community involvement.

Barriers to implementation include lack of training, time constraints, competing academic priorities, and the absence of culturally responsive SEL resources (McClelland et al., 2017). To address these challenges, professional development and whole-school frameworks that

align with SEL goals are essential (Jennings & Frank, 2015). In contexts like Bangladesh, local adaptation and cultural sensitivity are especially important for effective implementation (Ahmed et al., 2020; UNESCO, 2020; Himel, 2023).

2.5 Teachers’ Perceptions and Roles in SEL

Teachers’ understanding and beliefs about SEL significantly influence how SEL is practiced in classrooms. According to McDonald (2019), teachers’ perceptions shape both their willingness to engage with SEL and the strategies they choose to employ. Positive attitudes toward SEL are linked to greater consistency in its application, while confusion or resistance can lead to fragmented practices.

Moreover, teachers’ own emotional competence is an important factor. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) propose that teachers with strong social-emotional skills are better able to create emotionally safe classrooms, manage stress, and model healthy behaviors. In contrast, when teachers are overwhelmed or underprepared, they may struggle to facilitate SEL meaningfully.

Research also shows that teachers need adequate training and institutional support to effectively implement SEL (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Lack of clarity about what SEL entails, uncertainty about their roles, and limited resources can hinder practice (Rauf, 2021). Hence, continuous professional learning, access to contextually relevant materials, and collaborative peer support are necessary to strengthen teacher capacity in SEL.

2.6 SEL in the Context of Bangladesh and Private English Medium Schools

Social-emotional learning (SEL) has gained greater attention in Bangladesh since the COVID-19 pandemic, as educators and policymakers have become more aware of children’s mental-health and wellbeing needs (Ahmed et al., 2020; BRAC, 2023). National and international agencies—including UNESCO and UNICEF—have urged South Asian

education systems to integrate SEL or wellbeing components into curricula and teacher preparation to address learning loss and heightened psychosocial needs (UNESCO, 2020; UNICEF, 2021). In Bangladesh, several studies and policy reviews note growing recognition of emotional wellbeing as part of learning outcomes, but they also highlight that systematic, evidence-based SEL programming is still at an early stage (Ahmed et al., 2020; Himel, 2023).

Most documented SEL efforts in Bangladesh to date have been concentrated within government initiatives, NGO programmes, or targeted pilot projects (BRAC, 2023; Himel, 2023). National curriculum documents and education reviews tend to emphasize values-based or moral education (e.g., empathy, civic responsibility), yet these are frequently presented as broad dispositions rather than a competency-driven SEL framework with clear learning progressions, teacher standards, or monitoring systems (Himel, 2023; Ahmed et al., 2020). International reviews also note that, without deliberate policy instruments and teacher preparation, wellbeing objectives remain difficult to translate into routine classroom practice (UNESCO, 2020).

Private English medium schools (EMSs) occupy a distinct and growing space in Bangladesh's schooling landscape. Research shows EMSs have expanded rapidly in response to parental demand for English-medium and internationally benchmarked education; they typically follow external curricula (e.g., Cambridge, Pearson/Edexcel) and operate with considerable administrative autonomy compared with many government schools (Mousumi & Kusakabe, 2017; BANBEIS, 2021). Because EMSs are administratively separate and often governed by school-level policy rather than a single national mandate, formal, system-wide SEL policies are seldom evident across the sector; instead, socio-emotional support and wellbeing practices in these schools tend to be uneven and frequently driven by individual teachers, school leaders, or ad-hoc initiatives (Himel, 2023; Mousumi & Kusakabe, 2017).

Taken together, these findings suggest two important points for this thesis. First, while SEL is increasingly recognized as important in Bangladesh, it is not yet embedded as a consistent, competency-based policy and practice across national and private systems (Ahmed et al., 2020; Himel, 2023; UNESCO, 2020). Second, private English medium schools—because of their curricular flexibility, institutional autonomy, and rapid growth—are a useful and under-researched context for examining how teachers perceive, adapt, and (informally) implement SEL when there is no single, formal policy mandate to guide them. This study therefore focuses on private EMS classrooms in Dhaka to explore how teacher understanding, classroom routines, and school contexts shape SEL practice in the absence of uniform policy direction.

In summary, the reviewed literature highlights the growing global importance of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), the competencies outlined by the CASEL framework, and the role of teachers in implementing SEL practices. Studies also point to the barriers faced in different contexts, particularly the lack of training, resources, and policy support. However, while SEL has been examined in government and NGO schools in Bangladesh, research on its application within private English medium schools remains scarce.

Significant gaps persist in understanding how EMS teachers in Dhaka perceive SEL concepts, integrate them into their daily teaching, and navigate challenges such as workload, stress, and curriculum demands (Ahmed et al., 2020; Himel, 2023; Mousumi & Kusakabe, 2017; UNESCO, 2020; UNICEF, 2021). Furthermore, little is known about EMS teachers' preparedness, emotional well-being, or the institutional supports necessary to enhance SEL practices (Rauf, 2021). This study seeks to address these gaps by focusing directly on EMS teachers' perceptions, practices, and implementation challenges in Grades 3–4 classrooms in Dhaka.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is grounded in the understanding that teachers' perceptions of SEL are shaped by both their knowledge of SEL and by broader personal and contextual influences. Drawing from the CASEL framework, which emphasizes five core competencies—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making—this study views SEL as a multidimensional construct embedded not only in curriculum but also in everyday classroom interactions, teacher-student relationships, and the wider school culture (CASEL, 2020; Durlak et al., 2011).

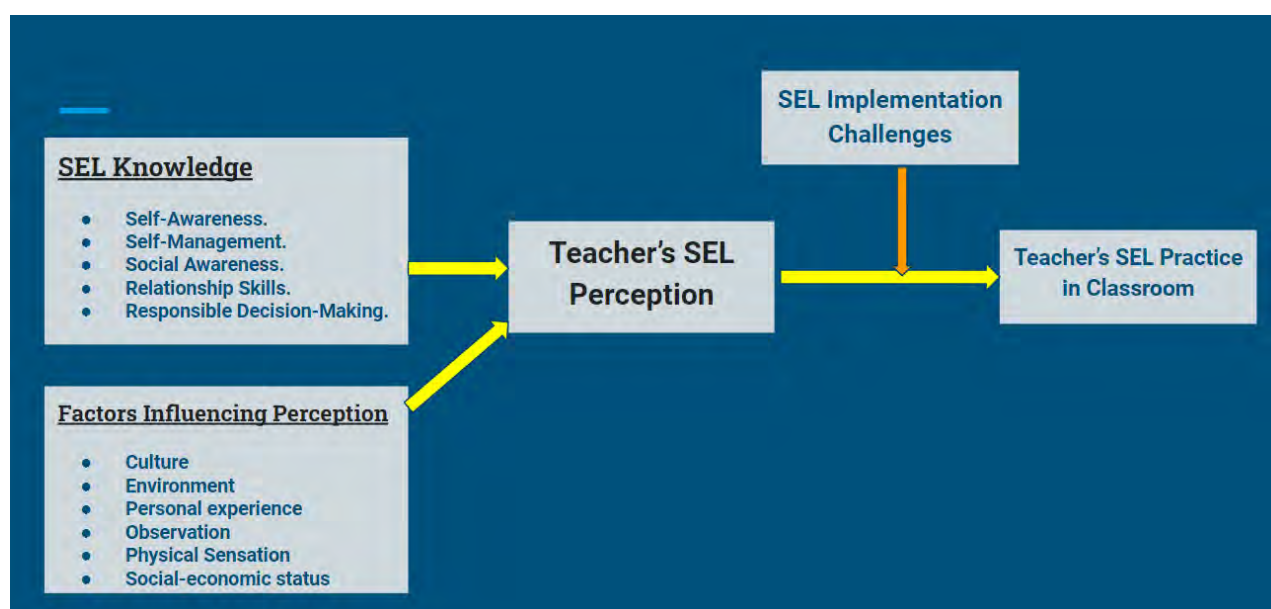
Building on insights from the literature review, the framework integrates four interconnected domains:

- Teachers' SEL Knowledge – including their understanding of the five CASEL competencies.
- Factors Influencing Perception – such as culture, environment, personal experience, observation, physical sensations, and socio-economic background, which shape how teachers interpret and value SEL (McDonald, 2011; Markus & Kitayama, 1991).
- Teacher's SEL Perception – which acts as a mediator, linking knowledge and contextual influences to classroom practices.
- Implementation Challenges – including limited training, time constraints, lack of resources, and institutional barriers that moderate how teachers can put SEL into practice (Greenberg, 2023; Rauf, 2021).

These domains interact to shape teachers' SEL practices in the classroom, which form the dependent outcome of this study. By recognizing both the internal (knowledge, perceptions) and external (contextual challenges) factors, the framework provides a comprehensive lens

for analyzing how SEL is understood, enacted, and constrained in private English medium schools in Dhaka.

In short, the conceptual framework builds directly on the reviewed literature, linking theories of SEL competencies (CASEL, 2020; Durlak et al., 2011), cultural and social influences on perception (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; McDonald, 2011), and documented challenges in implementation (Greenberg, 2023; Rauf, 2021). This integrated structure allows the study to examine teachers' perceptions, practices, and challenges holistically, and sets the stage for the empirical analysis in the following chapters.(See figure below).



Chapter 2 reviewed the existing literature on Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), highlighting its definitions, key competencies as outlined in the CASEL framework, global strategies for implementation, and the crucial role of teachers' perceptions and practices. It also examined the current state of SEL in Bangladesh, where structured, competency-based approaches are still emerging, and emphasized the limited research on private English medium schools. The literature revealed that while SEL is recognized as essential for children's holistic development, teachers often face barriers such as lack of training, resources, and policy support. Building on these insights, the conceptual framework for this study was developed,

illustrating how teachers' SEL knowledge, contextual influences, perceptions, and implementation challenges intersect to shape their classroom practices. This framework provides the analytical lens for investigating how private English medium school teachers in Dhaka understand, implement, and navigate challenges related to SEL in Grades 3–4.

Overall, the chapter shows that while SEL is considered important globally and nationally, its effective practice depends greatly on teacher understanding, school context, and available support. This gap, especially in private English medium schools, justifies the need for the present study.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, which is particularly well-suited to exploring teachers' perceptions, meanings, and classroom practices related to Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in the under-researched context of private English medium schools in Dhaka. Situated within an interpretivist paradigm, the study assumes that reality is socially constructed and that teachers' subjective experiences and interpretations provide valuable insights into how SEL is understood and practiced in their classrooms (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Unlike quantitative approaches, which prioritize measurement and generalization, qualitative inquiry enables the exploration of how teachers conceptualize SEL in ways that may differ from standardized frameworks such as CASEL. For example, while SEL literature often defines self-awareness in terms of emotional recognition, teachers may interpret it in culturally specific ways, such as linking it to moral or safety concerns. Capturing these locally situated understandings requires a method that prioritizes depth, nuance, and context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

To achieve this, the study employed two qualitative methods: in-depth interviews with five Grade 3–4 teachers and classroom observations of their teaching. Interviews allowed teachers to narrate their perceptions, motivations, and challenges in their own words, while classroom observations provided opportunities to compare stated beliefs with actual practices, thereby uncovering possible gaps or alignments (Patton, 2015). This dual-method design strengthens the validity of the findings and offers a more holistic account of SEL in practice.

Qualitative research is also particularly appropriate given the limited body of scholarship on SEL in English medium schools in Bangladesh. With these schools operating outside the national curriculum and under varied regulatory oversight, teachers' practices are often shaped more by personal interpretation, institutional culture, and parent–school dynamics than by formal policy. A qualitative approach therefore allows this study to capture context-specific factors that might otherwise be overlooked in large-scale surveys or experimental designs (Islam & Aldaihani, 2022).

In short, qualitative research provides the flexibility and depth necessary to uncover how teachers perceive and practice SEL, why they do so in particular ways, and what challenges they encounter in their unique institutional settings. This makes it the most appropriate methodological choice for answering the study's research questions.

3.2 Research Site

The research was conducted in two private English medium schools located in Dhaka city, specifically in Mirpur and Gulshan. Dhaka, as the capital of Bangladesh, is a hub for English medium schools due to its diverse socio-economic population and concentrated urbanization. According to Islam et al. (2021), Dhaka hosts the majority of English medium schools in the country, catering to various socio-economic strata.

The first school is located in Gulshan, one of the most affluent areas in Dhaka, where a vast majority of residents live above the poverty line. This school follows the Cambridge International Curriculum (CIE) and operates as a single-shift institution from 8:00 AM to 1:40 PM, serving students from Playgroup to A Levels. The school has a relatively small student body of around 200 students, with a favorable student-teacher ratio ranging between 8:1 and 20:1.

The second school is situated in Mirpur, a middle-income residential area characterized by socio-economic diversity, including lower-middle, middle-class, and some high-income families (Rahman, 2021). This school has been operating since 2003 and follows the Pearson Edexcel IGCSE curriculum, one of the most widely implemented international curricula in Bangladesh. Classes also range from Playgroup to A Levels, with an average student-teacher ratio of 30:1.

These research sites were chosen to capture the diverse contexts in which SEL is implemented within English medium schools in Dhaka. While both schools follow international curricula under the same city governance, they differ in student demographics, classroom settings, and resource availability—factors which may influence how teachers understand and implement SEL. However, this study does not aim to compare socio-economic contexts directly, but rather focuses on teacher perspectives and practices within their unique institutional settings

Interviews were conducted face-to-face within the school premises during teachers' break periods, and classroom observations were also carried out to complement the interview data. These methods allowed for a holistic understanding of the teachers' perspectives and the classroom dynamics related to SEL.

These factors are intricately tied to SEL as they influence students' social interactions, emotional regulation, and overall well-being (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The selection of these two schools thus allowed for the exploration of similarities and differences in SEL practices within a shared urban context yet distinct socio-economic settings.

3.3 Research Participants

The study involved five teachers from two private English medium schools in Dhaka, referred to as *School A* (Gulshan, Cambridge curriculum) and *School B* (Mirpur, Pearson

Edexcel IGCSE). Three teachers were from School A and two from School B. All participants were female, reflecting the broader gender trend in Bangladesh’s private school teaching profession (Islam & Sarker, 2021). They taught Grades 3 and 4 across a variety of subjects, including English, Bangla, mathematics, art, and English literature. Pseudonyms are used to maintain confidentiality.

Table 3.1: Background of Research Participants

Pseudonym	School & Curriculum	Subjects Taught	Teaching Experience (Years)	Educational Background
Tarannum Ahmed	School A (Gulshan, Cambridge)	Art & Craft (Grades 3 & 4)	13 (5 at current school)	BFA & MFA, University of Dhaka
Fahmida Akter	School A (Gulshan, Cambridge)	Mathematics (Grades 3 & 4)	6	BDS, Sapporo Dental College; Master’s in Peace & Global Governance
Urmi Hassan	School A (Gulshan, Cambridge)	English (Grades 3–6)	5+	BBA in Marketing, NSU
Emily De Costa	School B (Mirpur, Edexcel IGCSE)	Bangla	13+ (since 2012)	Honors & Master’s in Psychology

Akhi Islam	School B (Mirpur, Edexcel IGCSE)	English Literature & Language	15	BA & MA in English Literature, Southeast University
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The teachers were selected based on their availability and current teaching roles in Grades 3 and 4. While the purpose of the study was not to compare schools directly, including participants from both middle-income and more affluent neighborhoods allowed for capturing a range of contexts in which SEL practices may emerge.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

The target population for this research comprised teachers from private English medium schools in Dhaka, Bangladesh, teaching grades 3 and 4. The sampling procedure employed in this study was purposeful sampling, a widely used technique in qualitative research that involves selecting participants based on the researcher's judgment and their potential to provide rich, in-depth insights into the research topic (Palinkas et al., 2015). This approach was chosen as it allows for the deliberate selection of participants who meet specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, making the process both purposeful and efficient for addressing the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A total of five teachers were selected using this approach, slightly exceeding the initial plan of four due to expanded access during data collection.

Participants were chosen based on the following inclusion criteria:

- They must be teachers of grades 3 and 4 in private English medium schools.
- They must have at least five years of teaching experience to ensure they had substantial professional insights.

Exclusion criteria were also applied to maintain the focus and integrity of the study. Teachers who did not consent to participate voluntarily or who failed to meet the inclusion criteria were excluded.

The use of purposeful sampling ensured that the participants were well-suited to provide meaningful data on the implementation and challenges of socio-emotional learning (SEL) in their classrooms. This non-random sampling method aligns with the goals of qualitative research, which prioritize depth and context-specific understanding over generalizability.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

To collect data for this study, two primary qualitative methods were employed: In-depth Interviews (IDIs) and Classroom Observations. These complementary methods were chosen to gain a comprehensive understanding of teachers' perspectives and classroom practices related to Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in Grades 3 and 4. While interviews offered in-depth personal reflections, classroom observations provided real-time insights into teaching practices, enabling data triangulation and validation.

3.5.1 In-Depth Interview (IDI)

The IDI method was selected because it allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives, experiences, and practices. In-depth interviews are widely recognized as one of the most effective qualitative tools for exploring teachers' perceptions, beliefs, and classroom experiences in depth (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). They provide a platform for participants to share nuanced, context-specific insights that may not surface in surveys or quantitative tools (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Since the focus of this study was to understand teachers' subjective interpretations of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) within private English medium classrooms, the IDI method was particularly appropriate. It enabled the researcher to probe teachers' meanings, motivations,

and contextual challenges while maintaining flexibility to follow up on emerging themes (Patton, 2015). This approach aligns with qualitative inquiry's interpretivist stance, emphasizing the co-construction of meaning through dialogue and allowing participants' voices to shape the understanding of SEL practices in their real-world settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with five teachers from private English medium schools. Prior to data collection, permission was sought by contacting school authorities through email and phone, after which appointments were scheduled. Upon arrival, the researcher was directed by administrative staff to designated spaces—such as empty classrooms, teachers' rooms, or quiet corners of the school premises—where the interviews were conducted.

At the beginning of each session, participants were informed about the purpose of the research, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw. Informed verbal consent were obtained before proceeding. Rapport was built through informal conversation, after which the structured interview guide was followed (see Appendix B1). While the guide ensured consistency across participants, the sequence and phrasing of questions were kept flexible to allow for follow-up and clarification.

Each interview lasted between 30–50 minutes. To ensure accuracy, data were recorded in three ways: (1) audio recordings via mobile phone, (2) recordings through Zoom or Google Meet where applicable, and (3) written notes taken on a laptop. This triangulated approach minimized the risk of data loss and allowed for cross-checking during transcription.

3.5.2 Interview Guide/Tools

A semi-structured interview guide was designed to align closely with the research objectives and questions of this study. The guide ensured consistency across all in-depth interviews

while allowing flexibility for follow-up questions to probe participants’ unique perspectives. The questions were organized around three key areas: teachers’ knowledge and perceptions of SEL, their practices and strategies in the classroom, and the challenges they face in implementation.

The interview guide was pilot-tested informally with 2 English Medium school teachers in Dhaka to check clarity and flow, and then refined before fieldwork. While the guide provided structure, participants were encouraged to elaborate freely, and probes were used where needed to explore underlying meanings. Interviews were conducted in both English and Bangla depending on participants’ preference. The full version of the interview guide is provided in **Appendix B1**.

Table 3.2: Alignment of Interview Guide with Research Questions

IDI Question Set	Aligned Research Question(s)
Introductory questions (background, experience, training, how they learned about SEL)	RQ1a, RQ1c – Teachers’ knowledge & exposure to SEL; training received.
Understanding SEL (“What is your thought of SEL?” examples, how learned)	RQ1a – General understanding and conceptual knowledge of SEL.
Self-awareness section (student emotions, teacher response, talking about emotions, challenges)	RQ1a & RQ2b – Understanding SEL concepts; how teachers support socio-emotional needs during lessons.
Self-management section (how students respond to stress, how teachers intervene, preventing chaos)	RQ2a & RQ2b – Classroom practices, strategies, adaptations to support SEL.

Social awareness & relationship skills section (empathy, interactions across backgrounds, teaching steps, challenges)	RQ2a/b & RQ3a – SEL strategies in practice; challenges related to social awareness and relationship-building.
Responsible decision-making section (examples of student decisions, consequences, guiding poor decisions)	RQ2a/b – SEL practices, guidance strategies.
Implicit challenge questions (“What challenges do you face?” within each competency section)	RQ3a – Barriers to SEL implementation (time, resources, behavioral issues).
Implicit coping/strategy questions (how teachers guide, intervene, manage classroom issues)	RQ3b – How teachers address challenges and what support they need.

3.5.3 Classroom Observation

Alongside interviews, classroom observations were conducted to capture teachers’ real-time classroom practices and to complement data obtained through the interviews. Classroom observation was selected as a complementary qualitative tool to gain direct insights into how teachers’ stated perceptions of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) translated into their actual classroom practices. Observation enables researchers to capture authentic, naturally occurring behaviors and interactions that may not be fully articulated through interviews (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) note, observation allows the researcher to experience the research setting firsthand and to identify patterns of behavior, communication, and teaching dynamics that reflect participants’ implicit beliefs and

practices. This method is particularly suitable for educational research because it bridges the gap between what teachers say they do and what they actually do in the classroom (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Moreover, Patton (2015) emphasizes that observational data add contextual depth and help triangulate findings from interviews, thereby strengthening the overall validity and credibility of qualitative studies. In this study, classroom observations provided a rich and grounded understanding of teachers' real-time SEL implementation strategies, interactions with students, and the socio-emotional climate of English medium classrooms.

Each of the five teachers was observed over two separate class periods, providing a broader understanding of their teaching practices. Each session lasted approximately 35–45 minutes, consistent with the schools' standard period length.

A structured classroom observation guide (Appendix C1) was prepared to focus on specific dimensions. In practice, the researcher often took rough notes during the sessions to remain unobtrusive and later organized them systematically using the observation guide. During observations, the researcher sat discreetly at the back of the classroom, taking notes on a laptop and avoiding direct interaction with students to minimize disruption. Teachers were informed in advance and encouraged to conduct lessons naturally.

Permission for classroom observation was obtained from both school administrations and individual teachers.

3.5.4 Classroom Observation Guide

The structured classroom observation checklist ensured systematic documentation of teachers' practices, classroom interactions, and student behaviors related to socio-emotional learning (SEL). It focused on five main domains:

- Teacher–student interactions (e.g., emotional support, communication, responsiveness)
- Peer interactions (e.g., collaboration, conflict, empathy)
- Classroom setup and environment (e.g., seating arrangement, displays, overall climate)
- Classroom management strategies (e.g., handling disruptions, promoting positive behavior)
- SEL-related practices (e.g., explicit or implicit references to self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, social awareness, responsible decision-making)

This checklist was used as a guiding tool during each observation, though flexibility was maintained to capture unexpected behaviors or events. Rough field notes were later organized according to the structured categories in the checklist. The full version of the checklist is provided in **Appendix C.1**.

Table 3.3: Alignment of Classroom Observation Checklist with Research Questions

Observation Focus (Checklist Sections)	Aligned Research Question(s)
Teacher–student interactions (emotional tone, responsiveness, support, communication)	RQ2a/b – SEL practices and how teachers adapt interactions to support socio-emotional needs.
Peer interactions (collaboration, empathy, conflict resolution)	RQ2b – How socio-emotional needs emerge in class; how teachers respond to peer-level SEL needs.
Classroom setup & environment	RQ2b – Environmental adaptations that support

(displays, routines, seating, climate)	SEL integration.
Classroom management strategies (handling disruptions, promoting positive behavior, preventive strategies)	RQ3a/b – Challenges (behavior, time constraints) and strategies used to manage them.
SEL-related practices (explicit or implicit references to competencies)	RQ1a (knowledge in action) – What teachers understand as SEL based on observable practice; RQ2a – Strategies used to integrate SEL.

3.5.5 Explanation of Tool Alignment with Research Questions

The two data collection tools—In-depth Interviews (IDIs) and Classroom Observations—collectively provide a complete and triangulated response to the three research questions. The IDIs primarily address RQ1 and RQ3 by eliciting teachers’ conceptual understanding of SEL, their beliefs about its importance, their exposure to training, and the challenges they experience in implementation. Each competency section in the IDI guide (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making) includes prompts that naturally lead teachers to describe both their practices and the barriers they face, thereby covering RQ2 and RQ3 even without being framed as explicit “challenge” questions. Meanwhile, classroom observations directly address RQ2 by capturing real-time teaching practices, teacher–student interactions, peer dynamics, and classroom management strategies that reflect how SEL is enacted in Grades 3–4 classrooms. Observations also provide insight into implementation challenges (e.g., behavioral issues, time pressure, environmental constraints), thus complementing RQ3. Importantly, both tools together address RQ1—with interviews revealing teachers’ stated SEL knowledge, and observations showing how this knowledge translates into practice. This complementary design strengthens

the credibility of the findings and ensures that all research questions are addressed through methodological triangulation.

3.6 Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher functions as the primary instrument for both data collection and analysis, engaging closely with participants and contexts while interpreting meanings from lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This study therefore acknowledged the centrality of the researcher's role and positioned reflexivity as essential in ensuring credibility and trustworthiness.

The researcher's background as a former English medium school student and prior familiarity with socio-emotional learning (SEL) created both opportunities and challenges. Insider knowledge enabled a deeper understanding of classroom dynamics and teacher perspectives; however, it also carried the risk of bias. To address this, the researcher maintained a reflexive journal throughout the study, documenting personal thoughts, emotions, and assumptions after each interview and classroom observation. For example, after observing a teacher who appeared frustrated while managing a student's emotions, the researcher noted feelings of empathy in the reflexive journal and later revisited the raw notes to ensure interpretations focused on observable behaviors rather than personal judgments (Berger, 2015; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

However, the researcher's social identity as an external professional from another institute also created a slight hierarchical distance. Some participants initially perceived the researcher as a representative of a reputed organization, which influenced their level of openness during early interactions. To minimize this, deliberate efforts were made to foster rapport and reduce hierarchical distance by adopting a conversational tone, showing respect for teachers' perspectives, and emphasizing that the study's purpose was purely academic. Such practices

align with established qualitative guidance that emphasizes trust-building and non-hierarchical researcher–participant relationships (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

During classroom observations, the researcher adopted a non-intrusive role by sitting quietly at the back of classrooms and refraining from unnecessary interaction, consistent with Patton’s (2015) recommendations for naturalistic observation.

Despite these measures, qualitative research inherently involves subjectivity. To mitigate this, triangulation was applied by comparing information gathered from interviews, classroom observations, and field notes. These data sources were systematically compared to identify recurring themes and verify whether insights emerging from interviews were also reflected in classroom interactions and observation notes. Such cross-checking enhanced credibility and ensured that findings remained grounded in participants lived experiences rather than the researcher’s preconceptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.7 Data Analysis

This study employed the six-phase thematic analysis framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis was chosen because it provides a systematic yet flexible approach for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns within qualitative data, and it is widely applied in educational and social science research.

Data Preparation and Familiarization

The process began with careful organization and preparation of the data. All audio-recorded interviews (via Zoom and mobile devices) were transcribed using the clean verbatim method, ensuring accuracy while removing filler words and repetitions. The researcher cross-checked transcriptions against field notes and recordings to resolve any discrepancies and ensure completeness. Similarly, classroom observation notes were first captured in rough form during the sessions and then refined immediately afterward to improve clarity and coherence.

These notes were aligned with the classroom observation checklist, ensuring consistency across all cases. The interview transcripts and observation records were then compiled in a single dataset for systematic analysis.

Familiarization was achieved through repeated reading of the transcripts and notes, listening to recordings, and annotating key segments. Initial reflections, such as “time constraints,” “students struggling with emotions,” and “teachers using positive reinforcement,” were noted in the margins as early analytic impressions.

Coding Process

Following familiarization, the data were coded systematically to capture meaningful features. Coding was completed manually. Descriptive codes (Saldaña, 2021) were first applied to highlight surface-level meanings (e.g., “discipline issues,” “student support,” “use of training”). In subsequent rounds, interpretive codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldaña, 2021) were generated to capture deeper patterns relevant to Social Emotional Learning (SEL), such as “institutional barriers,” “teacher adaptation,” or “emotional safety.”

To maintain rigor, codes were consistently compared across transcripts and observation records. The process moved iteratively between data and codes to ensure alignment with the study objectives. An illustrative example of the initial coding process is shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4. Illustrative Data Excerpt and Initial Coding

Data Excerpt (Interview/Observation)	Initial Code
“We don’t have enough time to cover SEL in class.” (Fahmida Akter)	Time constraints
“I always try to console them when they cry in class.” (Urmi)	Teacher emotional

Hassan)	support
Observation note: Teacher pairs strong and weak students together.	Peer collaboration
“Parents pressure their children to get full marks.” (Asma Akhtar)	Parental academic pressure

From Codes to Categories

Once coding was complete, related codes were grouped into categories. This step helped organize the large number of individual codes into more manageable clusters of meaning. For example, the codes “time constraints,” and “exam pressure,” were grouped under the category *Barriers to SEL Implementation*. Similarly, codes such as “teacher emotional support,” “peer collaboration,” and “positive reinforcement” were grouped under *Teacher Strategies for SEL*.

An example of this grouping process is presented in Table 3.5

Table 3.5 Examples of Code-to-Category Development

Codes	Category
Time constraints; exam pressure;	Barriers to SEL Implementation
Teacher emotional support; peer collaboration; positive reinforcement	Teacher Strategies for SEL
Lack of training; limited resources; reliance on in-house	Professional Development

workshops	Gaps
Discipline issues; bullying; conflict among peers	Classroom Behavioral Challenges

Developing Themes

In the next phase, categories were synthesized into broader themes, representing patterned meanings across the dataset. Themes were reviewed against the original transcripts and observation notes to ensure they were coherent and distinct. This process involved refining the boundaries of each theme and confirming their relevance to the research questions.

For example, categories such as *Barriers to SEL Implementation* and *Professional Development Gaps* were integrated under the broader theme *Challenges in SEL Implementation*. Similarly, *Teacher Strategies for SEL* and *Classroom Behavioral Challenges* contributed to the theme *Teacher Adaptation and Classroom Practices*. Table 3.6 illustrates this step.

Table 3.6 Development of Themes from Categories

Theme	Categories Included (Example)
Challenges in SEL Implementation	Barriers to SEL Implementation; Professional Development Gaps
Teacher Adaptation and Classroom Practices	Teacher Strategies for SEL; Classroom Behavioral Challenges
Understanding and Awareness of	Teachers' conceptualizations of SEL; Differing

SEL	levels of awareness
Social Relationships and Emotional Support	Peer collaboration; Teacher–student rapport;

3.8 Ethical Issues and Concerns

Before beginning this study, I submitted a detailed research proposal to the BRAC Institution of Educational Development (BRAC IED) and obtained approval from Thesis committee. Data collection commenced only after receiving this approval and securing formal permission from the school authority. Permission was sought by sending an official email, clearly outlining the research requirements, including classroom observation and teacher interviews. Participants were selected by the school authority based on the criteria I provided. Prior to conducting interviews or observations, I ensured that informed consent was obtained from all participants. This included explaining the purpose of the research, its scope, and how the data would be used. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw at any time without any repercussions.

Confidentiality was a key priority throughout this study. To protect participants' identities, pseudonyms were used in the documentation and reporting of findings. All data collected has been stored securely, and no modifications or alterations were made to the statements provided by participants. Additionally, I ensured that participants were comfortable during interviews, maintaining a neutral and respectful stance to allow them to share their thoughts freely.

I remained mindful of several ethical principles during this research. I approached all participants with honesty, fairness, and respect, being careful to honor their dignity and

professional boundaries. No pressure was placed on participants to respond in any particular way, nor was any coercion applied to encourage participation. I took care to avoid fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism of any kind. Diversity and non-discrimination were also central to my approach, and I ensured that no biases based on religion, language, or other differences influenced the data collection or interpretation process.

Finally, I was prepared to address any unanticipated consequences that might arise during the research. While no such incidents occurred, I had planned to take immediate steps to mitigate any harm, including terminating the study if necessary. By following these ethical guidelines and maintaining transparency, I have ensured that this study aligns with the highest standards of ethical research practice.

3.9 Credibility and Rigor

In qualitative research, ensuring rigor involves demonstrating the trustworthiness of the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four key criteria: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, which serve as benchmarks for evaluating the quality of qualitative inquiry. These principles were adopted in the present study, with specific strategies implemented at each stage of the research process.

Credibility refers to the accuracy and truthfulness of the findings (Nowell et al., 2017). To ensure credibility, multiple steps were taken. First, the in-depth interview (IDI) guide was piloted and refined to align with the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) framework, which improved clarity and relevance of the questions. Second, prolonged engagement in the field was achieved through both classroom observations and semi-structured interviews, enabling a nuanced understanding of teachers' practices. Third, triangulation was employed by comparing findings from two sources—interviews and classroom observations—thereby cross-validating emerging themes. Finally, member checks were conducted informally during

and after interviews by paraphrasing participants' responses to ensure accurate interpretation of meaning.

Dependability relates to the consistency and reliability of the research process (Shenton, 2004). To establish dependability, a transparent and systematic process was followed in data collection and analysis. All interview recordings, transcripts, and observation notes were carefully organized in digital folders, with clear labeling to maintain an audit trail. The thematic analysis process was documented step by step, including coding, categorization, and theme development, making it possible for others to trace how findings were derived.

Confirmability emphasizes neutrality and minimizing researcher bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher maintained reflexive awareness throughout the study, acknowledging prior professional experience with SEL that could influence interpretation. To address this, data were allowed to "speak for themselves," with direct quotations from teachers and detailed observation notes supporting the findings. Additionally, codes and themes were cross-checked against raw data to ensure that interpretations were grounded in participants' perspectives rather than researcher assumptions.

Transferability refers to the extent to which findings can be applied to other contexts (Nowell et al., 2017). While the study focused on a small number of teachers in English-medium schools, thick descriptions were provided of the research setting, participant backgrounds, and classroom dynamics. By presenting detailed contextual information, readers are enabled to determine the applicability of the findings to similar educational contexts.

In summary, by adopting these strategies—piloting tools, triangulating data sources, maintaining an audit trail, practicing reflexivity, and providing rich contextual description—the study adhered to established standards of trustworthiness. These measures enhanced the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the research findings.

3.10 Limitations of the study

This study encountered several limitations that influenced the research process and outcomes. Initially, the plan was to focus on playgroup students; however, after consulting with colleagues and considering feedback from schools, I realized that visible SEL aspects would be difficult to observe in these grades. Consequently, the research focus was shifted to grade 3 and 4 students, and the title was adjusted accordingly. Gaining access to private English medium schools was more challenging than anticipated, particularly as many schools were conducting midterm or final exams during the data collection period. This limited my ability to expand the sample size and adhere to the original plan of observing classrooms for two consecutive days. Instead, I conducted observations for two periods per teacher across two days, totaling 10 class observations from five teachers.

Another limitation was the timing of the classroom observations, which coincided with revision sessions for upcoming exams rather than regular classes. This restricted the opportunity to observe typical teaching-learning practices. Additionally, due to exam-related pressures, some teachers were unavailable for in-depth interviews (IDIs), delaying data collection. One participant had to be replaced because she left the school, and the administration did not permit further contact. While IDIs were conducted face-to-face and recorded with the participants' consent, some technical issues resulted in partial data loss, complicating the transcription process. Furthermore, I was unable to include focus group discussions (FGDs) as part of a triangulation strategy due to time and access constraints. These limitations, while challenging, were addressed as best as possible to maintain the integrity of the research.

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and organises the findings generated from the in-depth interviews and classroom observations, highlighting the key patterns that emerged from the data. The discussion in this chapter aims to critically understand how English medium school teachers in Dhaka perceive, implement, and experience Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) within their classrooms. Drawing on the four themes identified—teachers’ understanding of SEL, barriers to implementation, adaptive classroom practices, and the role of social relationships and emotional support—this chapter explores the interplay between teachers’ beliefs, institutional contexts, and classroom realities. It highlights how teachers’ intuitive and relational approaches to SEL align with, yet also diverge from, established theoretical frameworks such as CASEL. The chapter further reflects on the implications of these findings for teacher development, school policy, and broader educational reform in Bangladesh, while identifying potential areas for future research.

4.2 Theme 1: Teachers’ Understanding of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Across the five participants, teachers described Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) largely as everyday acts of emotional support, interpersonal care, and relationship-building that emerge naturally in classroom life. Rather than viewing SEL as a formal, competency-based programme, teachers understood it as a set of values and practices embedded in their daily teaching—expressing care, guiding students’ emotions, managing behaviour, and fostering cooperation. Their explanations drew heavily on personal experiences, intuition, and in-house

training rather than structured SEL frameworks. While all teachers agreed that SEL is essential for students' emotional and social development, their interpretations varied in depth and emphasis, and none explicitly referenced CASEL or similar models. The following subthemes illustrate how teachers conceptualised SEL.

4.2.1 SEL as Practical Emotional Support and Expression

Teachers primarily described SEL through concrete, everyday classroom moments in which students expressed feelings, shared experiences, or sought emotional comfort. They saw SEL as fundamentally connected to empathy, communication, and emotional expression rather than as a formal curriculum.

Tarannum Ahmed, the art teacher, provided the most detailed explanation, emphasizing the expressive nature of art and its connection to emotional learning. Her description was rich and aligned closely with SEL principles:

When I give them art topics like 'draw your village' or 'draw your family,' they use their observations to create their work. I always encourage them to add their personal touch—whatever they like or feel—into the drawing. Through this, they enjoy the process and learn to express themselves creatively. Drawing is a great way for them to express their thoughts and feelings. Their mental condition, their happiness or sadness—it all comes out in their work.

Observation data from Tarannum's class supported this interpretation. Students drew different aspects of their family and home life, explaining their drawings enthusiastically, while the teacher validated their feelings and encouraged personal choice.

Emily De Costa expressed a similar, experience-based view of SEL, emphasizing interpersonal care and social responsibility:

Social-Emotional Learning is all about helping and supporting each other. We live in a society, and we need to help each other based on the kind of help that's needed... I don't specifically recall formal training on SEL or the term being used, but I believe its core principles are reflected in everyday interactions, such as understanding the needs of others and offering assistance in different situations.

Fahmida Akter and Akhi Islam also understood SEL as emotional connection and moral development. Fahmida linked SEL to empathy and care, explaining that children learn many things by observing behaviour around them, while Akhi expressed that teaching itself is connected with emotion, stating that emotional bonding with students makes both teaching and learning meaningful.

Overall, participants viewed SEL not as specialised instruction but as acts of emotional guidance, empathy, and expression woven into everyday classroom interactions.

4.2.2 SEL Learned Informally — Experience and In-House Training

Rather than Formal Programs

None of the five teachers reported receiving formal, structured training on SEL. Instead, their understanding developed informally through: general behavioural management sessions, classroom experience, peer learning, personal intuition and school-organised in-house training.

Emily explained this most clearly:

I don't specifically recall formal training on SEL or even the term being used, but the ideas were always there in how we manage and communicate with children.

Similarly, Fahmida recalled that SEL-related ideas surfaced occasionally:

During some training sessions related to teaching methods, there was a topic on social-emotional learning.

Urmi Hassan and Akhi Islam indicated that much of their SEL understanding evolved from long-term experience working with children rather than from formal frameworks. Urmi explained that understanding children's emotions develops gradually, over months, whereas Akhi described SEL as inseparable from emotional involvement in teaching.

Observation notes across schools corroborated these claims: teacher training certificates displayed in staffrooms focused on pedagogy, assessment, and discipline—not structured SEL content.

This pattern suggests that SEL knowledge is context-driven and inconsistent across teachers due to the absence of formal school-wide SEL guidance.

4.2.3 Variation in Explicit SEL Strategies and Reliance on Pragmatic Classroom Management

Although all teachers emphasized the importance of socio-emotional support, they differed significantly in how they enacted SEL practices.

Urmi Hassan described a relational, trust-building approach:

It takes a minimum of six months for students to understand me, to live with me, and to trust me enough to share their emotions.

Her approach reflected patience, emotional availability, and interpersonal sensitivity.

By contrast, Emily De Costa often used disciplinary strategies to manage behaviour, which she justified as necessary in her classroom context:

“If you talk again, I will cut your marks.”

This approach—observed during class—demonstrated the tension between maintaining order and supporting emotional needs.

Fahmida Akter exhibited a more adaptive strategy, using classroom roles to promote responsibility:

“I make the naughtiest boy the monitor; they tend to do it very nicely.”

Her tactic demonstrated an intuitive understanding of children’s emotional and behavioural motivations.

Akhi Islam, meanwhile, used motivational language to regulate emotions and build confidence. In one observed lesson, she encouraged a hesitant student by saying, “Let’s see your magic—you can finish it,” which resulted in the student re-engaging with the task.

These differences illustrate that SEL practices were personalised and improvised, shaped more by teachers’ individual styles and experiences than by consistent school-wide expectations.

4.2.4 Summary

Overall, teachers’ understanding of SEL was grounded in intuitive and experience-based practices rather than structured frameworks. The interviews and observations collectively show that teachers consistently addressed students’ emotional and social needs through embedded routines—art activities, reflective discussions, praise, classroom roles, and interpersonal warmth. However, these practices varied across teachers due to the absence of formal SEL guidance, leading to uneven depth and implementation. Teachers’ interpretations of SEL were influenced by personal beliefs and professional experiences, resulting in approaches that were supportive but largely unstructured and context-dependent.

4.3 Theme 2: Social Relationships and Emotional Support

Teachers consistently underscored the importance of emotional connection and positive social relationships as the heart of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL). Across interviews and classroom observations, teacher–student bonds, peer collaboration, and empathy-driven classroom climates were evident, though each teacher navigated emotional labor and relational challenges differently. The findings reveal that relationships served both as the foundation for SEL and as the site where its challenges most often surfaced.

4.3.1 Teacher–Student Relationships as Emotional Anchors

Strong teacher–student relationships emerged as the central mechanism through which SEL was practiced and sustained. Teachers believed that trust and familiarity allowed students to express emotions more freely, seek guidance, and engage meaningfully in learning.

Urmi emphasised that emotional trust develops gradually as students become comfortable with their teacher’s presence and teaching style. She explained:

It takes a minimum of six months for students to understand me, to live with me, and to trust me enough to share their emotions. At the same time, I believe they need more space, and we, as teachers, also need to give them that space to help them share their emotions freely.

Observation notes supported her perspective. In both the Class 3 and Class 4 English sessions, students interacted comfortably with her—asking questions, sharing opinions, and seeking clarification without hesitation. Her gentle prompts during dictation, patient repetition of difficult words, and calm mediation of the bullying-related conflict in Class 4 demonstrated how her presence fostered emotional safety and stability (Observation notes, Urmi Hassan’s classes, 30 October 2024 & 15 January 2025).

Similarly, Emily viewed emotional connection as central to her role. While her teaching style was structured and disciplined, her interview revealed a deep attentiveness to students' emotional experiences. She described how students frequently confide in her and how she intentionally creates space for them to express distress, confusion, or personal challenges:

If they are feeling bad, mentally upset, or uncomfortable, they express it... For example, if a student has family problems or comes from a broken family, they often feel upset and share it with us. We, as teachers, try to help them. Whenever a student is feeling down, we talk to them and also reach out to their parents to address any concerns.

These insights were reflected in classroom observations where Emily moved between students, provided individual explanations, gently corrected mistakes, and offered comfort to anxious or struggling learners. Her soft gestures—such as patting a student on the shoulder—reinforced her role as an emotional anchor despite her otherwise formal instructional style (Classroom Observation, 5 November 2024).

Other teachers echoed similar sentiments. Tarannum, drawing on her experiences as an art teacher, emphasized the importance of attending to students' feelings through their creative expression. She noted that children often reveal their emotional states through their drawings and personal choices, motivating her to respond with patience and encouragement (Tarannum Ahmed, personal communication, 30 October 2024). Classroom observations supported this, as students in her art class frequently approached her with their drawings and engaged in informal conversation, relying on her feedback and emotional presence.

Fahmida and Akhi also highlighted the relational dimension of teaching, but through different lenses. Fahmida focused on gentle humor, reassurance, and individualized attention—seen in her efforts to assist struggling students and maintain a warm, approachable demeanor during

lessons (Observation notes, 30 October 2024). Akhi stressed the emotional labor involved in teaching, explaining how she manages personal stress to remain emotionally available for her students:

When I enter my professional life, I always keep my personal life away from it... Sometimes I might not be in the mood. But when I get into my class and see the faces of my students—their smiling faces—I forget everything. This is my inspiration, and I think their smiles make my day.

Together, these perspectives demonstrate that teacher–student relationships functioned as the core mechanism supporting SEL in these English-medium classrooms. Teachers built emotional connections not through explicit SEL programming, but through daily interactions marked by care, responsiveness, patience, and mutual respect. The relational climate that teachers cultivated—intentionally or intuitively—created the emotional safety that enabled children to participate, express themselves, and navigate both academic and personal challenges.

4.3.2 Peer Interactions and Social Sensitivity

Peer interactions played an important role in shaping students’ emotional experiences in the classroom. Across interviews and observations, teachers described moments of empathy, conflict, misunderstanding, and spontaneous support that influenced the overall emotional climate. They viewed these interactions as opportunities to guide children toward greater social awareness and sensitivity.

Emily provided the clearest example of how peers often notice each other’s emotional states before the teacher does. She explained that students frequently alert her when a classmate is upset:

If someone sitting beside them is in a bad situation, they will call us and say, ‘Miss, he is feeling bad,’ or ‘She is crying.’.

Her interview also recounted a striking incident in which a child became distressed after hearing upsetting comments at home, and a peer immediately informed her:

That morning, her grandmother told her something upsetting. The child was very upset and cried in class. A classmate called me and said she wanted to talk. I went to her, hugged her like a mother, and calmed her down.

These examples showed that, in Emily’s classroom, peer awareness played a significant role in identifying emotional needs and prompting teacher intervention.

Tarannum’s interview reflected a different aspect of peer dynamics—one marked by sensitivity but also frequent misunderstandings. She observed that children often reacted emotionally when a friend said something hurtful or when disagreements occurred. At times, students struggled to understand one another’s feelings, leading to crying, complaints, or minor conflicts. During classroom observations, these tendencies appeared in the form of teasing about drawings, disagreements over materials, and moments of social exclusion. Tarannum consistently intervened with calm reminders to respect each other’s work and feelings, redirecting students toward more positive peer interactions.

Fahmida’s classroom observations revealed students helping one another with tasks, particularly during math activities. Although she did not explicitly describe peer support in her interview, observational notes showed children quietly guiding classmates who struggled with calculations, sharing materials, and offering small gestures of reassurance. These spontaneous acts demonstrated emerging empathy and collaboration, which Fahmida reinforced by encouraging a supportive learning environment.

Urmi also contributed insights relevant to peer emotions, even though she did not speak directly about peer collaboration. In her interview, she emphasized that young children often become upset when conflicts arise with friends, especially when someone says something unkind or misunderstandings occur. She explained that she prefers addressing such issues privately with each child, helping them express what happened and guiding them toward calmer communication. Her approach highlighted the importance of understanding emotions within peer relationships and using gentle conversation to rebuild harmony.

Together, these accounts illustrate that peer interactions in the classroom are dynamic and emotionally charged. Children demonstrate empathy, offer support, and also struggle with misunderstandings. Teachers play a central role in mediating these interactions—redirecting unkind behavior, encouraging cooperation, and helping students recognize one another’s feelings—thereby strengthening social sensitivity and relational skills within the classroom community.

4.3.3 Teacher Empathy and Emotional Strain

While teachers demonstrated high levels of empathy toward students, they also carried significant emotional responsibilities that could become draining over time. Interviews and observations showed that teachers invested deeply in students’ emotional lives, often setting aside their own stress to remain calm, attentive, and reassuring in the classroom.

Akhi’s reflections most clearly captured this emotional balancing act. She described teaching as inseparable from her own emotions and emphasized that meaningful instruction required emotional involvement with students:

It also depends on the emotion of their activities and their learning. As a teacher, I would say it’s not only my profession—it’s my passion, which is related to my emotions too. When I go to my class, yes, it’s my duty to teach the students. But if I

don't involve myself with them emotionally, I think it could be a little bit tough for a teacher. Emotional connection, social learning—it's all related to the students and especially to the new generation.

In the same interview, she explained that even when she felt upset or distressed in her personal life, she consciously separated that from her professional role so that students continued to experience her as emotionally available and stable (Akhi Islam, personal communication, 5 November 2024).

Emily also described responding to emotionally distressed students by offering comfort and coordinating support. She recalled a child from a broken family who came to school crying after hearing something hurtful at home. A peer alerted her, and she hugged the child, calmed her down, and then informed other teachers and the supervisor so the issue could be followed up at home (Emily De Costa, personal communication, 5 November 2024).

Tarannum's account highlighted students who struggle emotionally due to difficulties at home:

There are some students, for example, who face problems at home. They don't have good bonding in their family. Most of the time, these children stay upset. When they come to school, they don't interact with others much. They don't focus on their studies, and even during class, they seem distracted, thinking about something else.

Her description shows the emotional labor required to support students whose stress originates outside the classroom.

Fahmida, on the other hand, highlighted strain arising from behavior-related challenges. She explained that some children are "very chaotic in behavior" and require teachers to frequently correct, redirect, and guide them—efforts that can be difficult to sustain throughout the day

(Fahmida Akter, personal communication, 30 October 2024). Her account reflects emotional strain tied to behavior management rather than family-related bonding.

Urmi added that she often acted as a listener and mediator when students struggled to express their feelings at home. She explained that teachers come “after parents,” especially for children from small or busy families who may not have anyone else to listen to them. She emphasized that she responds “in a good way or a positive way” to prevent children from feeling overwhelmed or entering “any kind of disaster” emotionally (Urmi Hassan, personal communication, 30 October 2024).

Across cases, teachers’ empathy was essential in maintaining emotional safety and supporting students’ social relationships. However, the continuous requirement to regulate their own emotions, respond sensitively to students’ distress, and manage complex behavior or family-related issues—often without institutional support—meant that SEL-related emotional labor risked becoming exhausting over time.

4.3.4 Summary

Findings under this theme highlight that social relationships and emotional support form the core of SEL implementation in private English medium schools. Teacher–student relationships were the primary mechanism through which SEL occurred, with trust, familiarity, and emotional connection enabling students to express themselves, seek help, and engage more confidently in learning. Classroom observations showed that students gravitated toward teachers who were patient, attentive, and emotionally responsive, reinforcing the centrality of relational safety in everyday classroom life.

Peer relationships also played a significant role in shaping the social climate. Students frequently noticed each other’s distress before the teacher did, offered spontaneous help during academic tasks, or alerted teachers when a classmate was upset. These interactions

reflected early forms of empathy and social awareness, but also revealed moments of conflict, teasing, and misunderstanding. Teachers' mediation—whether through calm redirection, private conversations, or structured group arrangements—was crucial for helping students navigate these dynamics and cultivate more positive peer connections.

At the same time, the emotional burden on teachers was substantial. All five teachers described forms of emotional labor that extended beyond academic responsibilities. Akhi discussed the need to regulate her own emotions and remain emotionally present for students even when personally distressed. Emily spoke about comforting children dealing with family-related hardship. Tarannum highlighted the challenges of supporting students who lacked strong emotional bonding at home, while Fahmida described the strain of repeatedly managing “very chaotic” behaviour. Urmi emphasised her role as a listener and mediator for children who had no one else to share their feelings with. These responsibilities—though carried out with dedication—required significant emotional regulation and personal resilience, often without institutional systems for teacher well-being.

Collectively, the results demonstrate that SEL in these classrooms operated mainly through relational practices rather than formal frameworks. Teachers provided emotional support intuitively, drawing on personal care, experience, and individual judgment. However, the sustainability of these practices depended largely on teachers' ability to manage their own emotional load rather than on systemic structures or policies. Without institutional mechanisms such as reflective supervision, SEL-focused professional development, and formal support for teacher emotional health, the effectiveness of SEL rests heavily on individual effort. This reliance on personal resilience poses risks of emotional strain and underscores the need for school-wide strategies that recognise, support, and strengthen the relational and emotional work at the heart of SEL.

4.4 Theme 3: Teacher Adaptation and Classroom Practices

Teachers across both schools demonstrated a range of adaptive practices through which they integrated Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) into everyday teaching. Their adaptation was largely intuitive and situational rather than guided by formal SEL training or structured frameworks. The five participants described and enacted SEL through everyday routines, moment-to-moment adjustments, and the balancing of emotional needs with academic expectations. Their interview responses and classroom observations reveal three dominant patterns: (1) integrating SEL through daily classroom routines and teacher–student interactions; (2) adapting instructional strategies to respond to students’ emotional cues, motivation levels, and behavioral challenges; and (3) negotiating the tension between curriculum demands and attending to the socio-emotional needs of students.

4.4.1 Integrating SEL through Routine Practices

All five teachers indicated that SEL is woven into their day-to-day classroom activities rather than implemented as a separate program. Their practices included tone adjustments, check-ins, reassurance, and responses to students’ emotional states. While these actions varied across subjects, teachers commonly emphasized building an environment where students felt comfortable and supported.

Tarannum Ahmed, the art teacher, emphasized emotional expression as central to her classroom routine. When discussing how students express themselves through drawing, she highlighted how children’s emotional states emerge through creative work:

Children always observe their surroundings—their environment. They learn a lot from what they see around them. For example, when I give them art topics like ‘draw your village’ or ‘draw your family,’ they use their observations to create their work. I always encourage them to add their personal touch—whatever they like or feel—into

the drawing. Through this, they enjoy the process and learn to express themselves creatively. For children, art is not just about creativity—it's about expressing their emotions. Their mental condition, their happiness or sadness—it all comes out in their work.

In her observed lessons, this emphasis on emotional expression appeared in how she allowed students to work flexibly, share their drawings, and discuss their experiences, even as she balanced this with reminders about materials and time.

Fahmida Akter, the mathematics teacher, demonstrated SEL through warmth and encouragement during her Class 3 Math session. Although not explicitly framed as SEL by her, she frequently reassured students, used humor, and offered individualized support. For instance, when a student made an error, she responded with a friendly tone—paraphrased from observation—prompting the student to try again without embarrassment. Her classroom interactions showed how routine lesson delivery became a platform for fostering confidence and resilience.

Urmi Hassan, the English teacher, also used routine interactions to engage students' emotions, though often indirectly. Classroom observations showed she repeated instructions patiently, provided one-to-one clarification for struggling students, and maintained an approachable demeanor. These small gestures served as emotional scaffolding for students who required reassurance during tasks such as dictation or revision.

Emily De Costa, the Bangla teacher, relied on strict routines but still incorporated SEL-relevant moves through monitoring, individual help, and praise. In both of her observed classes, she maintained structure and order while responding to students' difficulties, using corrective feedback alongside positive reinforcement ("Very good!"). Her consistent use of

individual checking demonstrated an attentiveness to student needs, even within a discipline-focused style.

Akhi Islam, the English Language & Literature teacher, articulated the emotional responsibilities embedded in routine classroom presence. She explained how teachers model emotional and social behavior through their everyday actions:

“Responsible decision-making is extremely important for a teacher. As a teacher, you are a role model for your students. When I enter the classroom, all eyes are on me. The students are observing everything—from how I speak, how I present myself, to what I teach. A teacher should have a presence that makes students look up to them and think, ‘This teacher is my ideal, and I want to be like them.’ That is why a teacher must always act responsibly and be mindful of their behavior.”

Across teachers, SEL within routine practices emerged as a blend of warmth, structure, and relational awareness that shaped classroom tone and student comfort.

4.4.2 Adaptive Strategies for Student Engagement

Participants described—and were observed—adapting their lesson delivery, tone, and pacing to suit students’ emotional readiness, behavior, and engagement levels. These adaptations were intuitive and differed from teacher to teacher.

Fahmida Akter adjusted her strategies depending on students’ needs. In Class 3 Math, she used playful activities (such as “Inki Pinki Ponki” to pick names), real-life examples (amounts in taka), and gentle humor. Observation notes show she tapped a student’s back while encouraging them, a moment that reassured the child and restored engagement. These actions demonstrated her flexible approach, where student confidence and comfort influenced her instructional pacing.

Urmi Hassan adapted her approach when students struggled academically or emotionally. In her Class 3 observation, she repeated words multiple times for a student during dictation, adjusted her tone when needed, and provided individualized assistance. Although her style was mostly instructional, she responded to emotional cues—such as confusion, nervousness, or disengagement—by slowing down or offering personal attention.

Emily De Costa demonstrated adaptive strategies that balanced strictness with small SEL-oriented gestures. In her Class 3 Bangla session, she noticed when a student appeared tired or disengaged and offered individual clarification or physical reassurance (a soft pat on the shoulder). When noise levels rose, she redirected students firmly but resumed supportive engagement once they returned to task. Her adaptations aimed to restore focus while maintaining accountability.

Akhi Islam described how she adapts instruction for students who lack confidence or who are slow to participate:

There are also slow learners. I wouldn't call them bad learners—just slow learners. They don't want to give answers. When I notice this, I make them my target. I sort them out first, and I always try to ask them questions to encourage them to give an answer.

This illustrates her technique of strategically engaging quieter students, using targeted questioning to build courage and participation.

Tarannum Ahmed adapted through the emotional content of her lessons. While her teaching involved reminders and occasional frustration, she responded sensitively when students shared personal elements in their artwork. Even during moments of classroom noise or distraction, she briefly engaged with students' feelings ("Why did you draw this?" "What does this mean to you?"), aligning academic tasks with emotional meaning.

Together, these examples show that teacher adaptation emerged from the interplay between instructional goals, emotional sensitivity, and real-time classroom demands.

4.4.3 Balancing Academic Goals and Emotional Support

Across the interviews and classroom observations, all five teachers described or demonstrated the challenge of balancing academic demands with the need to attend to students' emotions. Although they recognised the importance of socio-emotional support, they repeatedly indicated that limited class time, the pressure to complete lessons, and performance expectations often restricted deeper SEL-focused engagement.

Akhi Islam articulated this tension most directly in her interview, explaining how personal stress and professional responsibilities intersect with the emotional needs of students:

First of all, I am a human. I have a personal life and a professional life. But when I enter my professional life, I always keep my personal life away from it... Sometimes I feel like this—I might be upset or distressed. But when I get into my class and see the faces of my students—their smiling faces—I forget everything. This is my inspiration, and I think their smiles make my day.

She also highlighted the limited flexibility of class periods, which restricts opportunities for deeper emotional engagement:

In a typical 40-minute class, I am expected to complete the syllabus and teach the academic lessons. It's difficult to dedicate time to fostering social awareness or teaching relationship skills within this short timeframe.”

These two quotations together demonstrate the emotional and structural strain teachers face when trying to support students' feelings while meeting academic expectations.

Tarannum Ahmed did not explicitly mention syllabus pressure in her interview, but classroom observations show that her art lessons often required her to move students quickly through tasks, redirect off-task behaviour, and remind them to complete unfinished work at home due to time constraints. This illustrates how even emotion-rich subjects like art are shaped by practical instructional pacing.

Fahmida Akter did not provide a direct quote about syllabus pressure in her interview; however, observations show that her mathematics lessons involved alternating between firm correction and supportive encouragement, all while maintaining a brisk instructional pace. Her classroom interactions demonstrated emotional support within the boundaries of a tightly timed academic lesson—attending to errors, reassuring students, and moving swiftly through required content.

Urmi Hassan, during the Grade 4 English observation, attempted to mediate a conflict between two students by encouraging reconciliation and supporting the student who felt emotionally distressed. Despite this, she eventually returned to the scheduled revision task to maintain lesson timing. Her actions reflected the need to balance emotional interruptions with curricular responsibilities.

Emily De Costa maintained a structured, academically focused lesson flow during both grammar and revision classes. While she provided individual clarification when students struggled, her priority remained completion of the planned content within the class period. This created only brief windows for emotional or relational engagement.

Across teachers, the data show that academic demands—lesson pacing, revision requirements, and examination alignment—often limit extended emotional discussions or reflective SEL activities. However, teachers still attempted micro-adaptations such as quick

reassurances, short check-ins, and brief individual support, enabling SEL to occur within the constraints of their instructional responsibilities.

4.4.4 Summary

The data show that teachers' adaptive practices are central to sustaining SEL in the absence of formal frameworks. Across subjects and classrooms, teachers relied on interpersonal warmth, attentive responses, and flexible instructional choices to support students' socio-emotional development. Their adaptations were shaped by subject demands, behavioral dynamics, and institutional expectations, resulting in a spectrum of SEL expression—from emotionally rich creative engagement in art to structured, reassurance-based support in mathematics and language lessons.

However, the findings also highlight an important limitation: SEL adaptation remains inconsistent and dependent on individual teacher style rather than institutional policy. While teachers demonstrated genuine commitment to students' emotional well-being, their ability to implement SEL was constrained by syllabus pressure, time limits, and the absence of formal training. These constraints led teachers to integrate SEL in short, improvised ways rather than through structured or competency-based approaches. Overall, the theme underscores that teacher adaptability sustains SEL practices, but systemic support is necessary for consistent and equitable implementation across classrooms.

4.5 Theme 4: Barriers to SEL Implementation

Teachers across both English medium schools identified multiple barriers that limited the consistent integration of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in classrooms. These barriers included academic and time pressures, limited parental and institutional support, classroom management challenges, and emotional burnout. While all five participants expressed positive attitudes toward SEL and recognised its importance for students' holistic growth,

structural constraints and contextual limitations often restricted their ability to practice SEL in a sustained and systematic manner.

4.5.1 Time Constraints and Academic Pressure

One of the most frequently cited challenges was the pressure to complete syllabus content within tight academic schedules. Teachers emphasised that the focus on examinations and measurable outcomes often left little room for extended emotional or social discussions during lessons. In practice, their descriptions suggested that academic tasks and assessment preparation frequently took precedence over SEL-related conversations.

Tarannum described this tension clearly when explaining why emotional conversations are difficult to sustain throughout the day:

Honestly, we don't always have that much time to spend talking about emotions in depth. However, when I notice that a student is heading in the wrong direction or facing a lesson-related issue, I try to address it. For example, some students don't like Bangla at all. They say they don't enjoy the subject, but I remind them that Bangla is our mother language and it's important for them to learn it. When problems like this come up, I try to sort them out as they arise. It's not always easy, especially in a multicultural context like ours, but I make the effort to guide them back on track.

Her account shows how emotional support is often woven into academic explanations rather than given separate, dedicated time.

Akhi highlighted how tightly structured lesson periods shape what is possible in class, linking self-management directly to time and task completion:

Of course, self-management is very important for a teacher. If I am not prepared before going to my class, then the class will be messy. So, every day, for my self-

management, I prepare for the class. The topic I am going to teach my students—I go through it beforehand. Then, I enter the class. I also manage the time in the class. I always manage the time because, within forty minutes, I have to finish all my tasks. In that way, self-management is very important.

For Urmi, the pressure of tests and varied learning speeds meant that she often had to re-explain topics and spend time individually with students who were anxious or confused, especially when they used terms like “bully” without fully understanding them. She explained that she sometimes needed to talk to students personally after class so they could share issues they were hesitant to admit in front of peers (Urmi Hassan, personal communication, 30 October 2024).

Fahmida described how she had to balance coverage of the syllabus with the needs of children who were struggling academically, explaining that when a child was weak in one subject (for example, mathematics), she coordinated with parents and other subject teachers to provide extra support, often outside of regular lesson time (Fahmida Akter, personal communication, 30 October 2024).

Observation data supported these accounts. During Emily’s Bangla revision session, she reminded students that the work would count towards their half-yearly exam and repeatedly urged them to “finish” and “control” themselves while moving briskly through exercises, even when signs of fatigue and restlessness were visible (Observation notes, Emily’s classroom, 5 November 2024). Although Emily’s formal interview emphasised that she had not faced major “emotional challenges” because supervisors were supportive, the observation showed that exam preparation and time-bound tasks frequently dominated her lesson pace (Emily De Costa, personal communication, 5 November 2024; Observation notes, Emily’s classroom, 5 November 2024).

Taken together, these accounts illustrate how syllabus completion, exam preparation, and lesson timing shape teachers' daily decisions, often limiting how much time they can dedicate to explicit emotional conversations, even when they recognise their importance.

4.5.2 Limited Parental and Institutional Support

Teachers also identified limited parental and administrative engagement as a significant challenge to implementing SEL effectively. They reported that parents and school authorities often prioritised academic performance over socio-emotional well-being, leaving teachers with minimal institutional backing for SEL-related activities.

Akhi from School B shared a striking incident in which a child disclosed being physically punished at home for not achieving full marks:

Then, I asked them, 'At home, does your mom only scold you, or does she also punish you?' They replied, 'Yes, sometimes she punishes us.' I asked, 'Can you share what kind of punishment?' One student said, 'My mom beats me with sticks or brooms.' I was shocked. I asked, 'Why? Did you do something wrong?' The student said, 'No, Miss. I got nine out of ten on a test, and that's why my mom beat me—because I didn't get full marks.' ... But nowadays, parents are very competitive. They want their children to be in the first position at any cost, and that puts a lot of pressure on the students.

This example demonstrates how parental expectations around academic achievement can directly undermine children's emotional safety and increase stress.

Tarannum also highlighted the impact of digital exposure and inconsistent discipline at home:

Another issue is that many parents give their children mobile phones but don't control what they're watching or learning. Often, they watch things that are not appropriate

for their age. Some kids get excited and share these things with their friends, and that child ends up learning inappropriate things. Sometimes, they react positively by sharing things with teachers. But there are also times when they share negative things, and it becomes embarrassing for us as teachers. Some children even continue these behaviors at home, which creates fear or anxiety for them. When these situations arise, we try to address them. Sometimes, we talk to the parents to see if the issue can be solved at home. If the parents aren't able to address it, then, as a school, we take action. However, there are parents who don't maintain discipline or prioritise proper education, and their children reflect that.

Urmi pointed to a growing “buzzword” culture around bullying, explaining that some parents “blindly believe whatever their child says” and quickly rush to school to complain, instead of supporting children to navigate minor peer conflicts more calmly. She noted that this made it harder to help students build resilience and realistic expectations about social interactions (Urmi Hassan, personal communication, 30 October 2024).

Fahmida described how some parents came to her with concerns about their child's weakness in a particular subject and expected rapid improvement, even when the child needed emotional reassurance and step-by-step guidance. She frequently had to mediate between parental expectations and students' self-confidence, using additional time to help children feel less anxious about their learning (Fahmida Akter, personal communication, 30 October 2024).

Emily, meanwhile, emphasised that while she felt supported by her supervisor in handling emotional cases—stating that “in the 12 years I've been teaching, I haven't faced any emotional challenges” because her supervisor helps her—there was still no explicit, school-

wide SEL programme that guided teachers' work beyond general behaviour and classroom management training (Emily De Costa, personal communication, 5 November 2024).

Across both schools, teachers mentioned attending multiple in-house trainings on classroom management, discipline, lesson planning, assessment, and parent behaviour, but none reported formal, structured SEL training or institutional guidelines specifically focused on socio-emotional competencies (Tarannum Ahmed & Emily De Costa, personal communication, 30 October & 5 November 2024). This pattern suggests that while academic and behavioural expectations are clearly defined, SEL remains underemphasised and depends largely on individual teachers' initiative rather than systematic parental or institutional support.

4.5.3 Classroom Management and Student Behavior

Managing classroom behaviour was described as one of the most persistent difficulties that limited teachers' ability to apply SEL consistently. Disruptions, teasing, and students' shifting attention often interrupted learning and pushed teachers towards directive or disciplinary approaches rather than reflective emotional guidance.

Emily's approach to classroom management leaned strongly on clear rules and consequences. When asked how she manages chaotic situations, she explained:

At that time, I just say, 'Stand up or sit down. Put your head down. If you talk again, I will cut your marks.' Cutting marks is the main thing for them—medicine for them, from my side.

Observation notes from her Bangla lessons showed similar patterns: she frequently used firm instructions such as "Finish your writing" and "Control yourself," while also praising correct answers ("Very good") and occasionally patting students on the shoulder when they

performed well (Observation notes, Emily's classroom, 5 November 2024). Her practice balanced control with warmth but left limited room for explicit emotional dialogue.

In School A, Fahmida described a serious behavioural incident in which a group of boys planned to make another student drink Coke mixed with sedatives. She recalled how the situation required urgent coordination with both parents and school authorities:

It was a very tough situation to handle, but we managed it. Situations like this can be very challenging, but with the help of parents, we try to handle them effectively.

At the same time, she used more constructive strategies by pairing stronger and weaker students or “naughty” and calmer students so that peer influence could be used positively in group work and classroom routines (Fahmida Akter, personal communication, 30 October 2024).

Urmi emphasised that children in Grades 3 and 4 are often sensitive and may cry or complain when conflicts occur, especially when they use terms like “bully” without fully grasping their meaning. She explained that she prefers to talk to students individually, away from the whole class, to understand what happened and guide them on appropriate behaviour, rather than embarrassing them publicly (Urmi Hassan, personal communication, 30 October 2024).

Akhi described how her physical presence at the classroom door and consistent routines helped to minimise chaos:

When I stand at the door and they see me, they immediately become quiet. I don't have to shout or do anything extra. I simply stand there and say, 'Good morning' in a louder voice. Then, everyone becomes quiet, and they attend my class very attentively.

She also mentioned how she targets slow learners or stressed students and motivates them with encouraging challenges such as,

You're a very good boy. I know you can finish this within ten minutes. Do you want to see the magic? Let's do the challenge!" to bring them back into the task

Observation data from a Class 3 English session revealed more complex classroom dynamics. In one lesson, peers openly labelled a boy as “crazy” and said he “disturbs the whole class” and that no one wanted to sit with him, reflecting social exclusion and stigma rather than empathy. At the same time, the teacher set clear boundaries—stating that no one should make a sound until she left the class—and encouraged self-correction by asking students to “check again” when they made mistakes instead of simply providing the answer (Observation notes, Class 3 English classroom, 2024).

For Tarannum, classroom management challenges were particularly visible in upper primary classes, where students sometimes ignored teacher instructions, engaged in side conversations, or brought inappropriate content and behaviours from outside school. She noted that teachers could be seen as “backdated” and not fully understood by students, which complicated efforts to maintain both rapport and discipline (Tarannum Ahmed, personal communication, 30 October 2024).

Overall, while all five teachers used a mix of strict instructions, positive reinforcement, and occasional individual counselling, the absence of explicit SEL frameworks meant that behaviour management typically relied on traditional disciplinary strategies, with emotional learning addressed only incidentally.

4.5.4 Emotional Burnout and Role Strain

Teachers across both schools also described forms of emotional fatigue that acted as barriers to sustained SEL engagement. Balancing academic responsibilities, emotional support,

behaviour management, and communication with parents often led to stress and a sense of being stretched beyond their formal role.

Tarannum explicitly acknowledged how emotionally draining it can be to manage students' behaviours and negotiate with parents over sensitive issues:

We face a lot of challenges when trying to explain these things to students and parents. It's not easy. Sometimes, it's exhausting for us as teachers. If parents cooperated more, it would make things easier for us.

Fahmida described how children from homes with poor bonding or inconsistent discipline often arrived at school upset, quiet, or disengaged. She had to spend extra time talking to them, liaising with parents, and trying to understand issues that went beyond academics, which added to her emotional workload (Fahmida Akter, personal communication, 30 October 2024).

Urmi discussed the emotional labour involved in responding to students who shared personal or painful experiences, such as missing grandparents or feeling excluded. She explained that she sometimes needed to “divert their thoughts in a positive way” so they could cope, and that demotivating children or dismissing their feelings would be “one of the worst things a teacher can do” (Urmi Hassan, personal communication, 30 October 2024). Her reflections suggest that she carries a strong sense of responsibility for students' emotional welfare, even without formal training in counselling.

For Akhi, emotional strain appeared in the constant need to be prepared, manage time within forty-minute periods, and remain alert to students' stress or reluctance to participate. She described deliberately “targeting” slow learners and stressed students for extra encouragement, which requires sustained emotional energy in every class (Akhi Islam, personal communication, 5 November 2024).

Emily, in contrast, stated that she had not personally faced emotional challenges with students because her supervisor usually intervened in serious cases:

In the 12 years I've been teaching, I haven't faced any emotional challenges. Our supervisor always helps us.

However, classroom observations showed her managing noisy behaviour, exam stress, and individual performance pressure through strict rules and mark-based consequences (Observation notes, Emily's classroom, 5 November 2024). This suggests that, even when emotional strain is not explicitly named as "burnout," teachers still engage in extensive emotional labour that may go unrecognised at the institutional level.

Across both schools, there was little mention of formal support for teachers' own well-being, such as counselling, debriefing, or workload adjustments. The emotional burden appeared to be understood as part of the job, rather than a shared responsibility of the institution.

4.5.5 Summary

Overall, the data highlight that teachers' capacity to implement SEL is heavily influenced by structural and contextual constraints. Academic pressure and rigid curricula restrict time for emotional engagement, while limited parental and institutional backing further marginalise SEL initiatives. All five teachers described having to navigate exam-oriented expectations, behavioural incidents, and parental pressures that often placed marks and discipline above students' emotional growth.

Teachers face ongoing behavioural challenges without formal SEL training, leading to reactive rather than proactive management. Emily's reliance on mark-cutting, Akhi's careful time-bound planning, Fahmida's handling of serious peer incidents, and Tarannum and Urmi's repeated counselling of students and parents illustrate how classroom control and crisis response frequently take precedence over structured socio-emotional instruction (Emily

De Costa, Akhi Islam, Fahmida Akter, Tarannum Ahmed & Urmi Hassan, personal communication, 30 October & 5 November 2024; Observation notes, classrooms, October–November 2024).

The emotional burden of multitasking—simultaneously acting as teacher, informal counsellor, behaviour manager, and liaison with parents—contributes to fatigue and decreases the sustainability of SEL efforts. Yet despite these barriers, teachers continue to integrate elements of SEL through empathy, encouragement, and relational care whenever possible. They motivate stressed or reluctant students, comfort those facing difficulties at home, quietly address peer conflicts, and model respect and kindness in everyday interactions.

However, the absence of systemic support—through policy, explicit SEL training, and institutional culture—prevents these individual efforts from becoming consistent, structured practices across schools. The findings from this theme suggest that, while teachers are willing and intuitively capable of supporting students’ social and emotional development, meaningful and sustained SEL implementation will require coordinated changes beyond the classroom, including school-wide SEL frameworks, recognition of teachers’ emotional labour, and better alignment between parental expectations, school priorities, and SEL goals.

4.6 Summary

This chapter presented the findings derived from in-depth interviews and classroom observations conducted with five teachers from two private English medium schools in Dhaka. The analysis was organized around four interconnected themes that collectively explored teachers’ understanding, practices, and challenges related to Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). The results revealed that while all teachers recognized the importance of nurturing students’ emotional well-being, empathy, and social relationships, SEL in practice

largely remained informal and experience-based rather than structured or systematically planned.

Teachers demonstrated an intuitive understanding of SEL as a process of supporting students emotionally and socially through everyday interactions. However, their conceptualizations were shaped by personal experience and in-house professional exposure rather than formal SEL frameworks or competency-based training. Despite this, many teachers integrated SEL principles into routine classroom practices—through creative tasks, positive reinforcement, moral discussions, and group work—demonstrating practical adaptations to student needs.

Significant barriers to SEL implementation were also evident, including time constraints due to heavy academic demands, limited parental involvement, inconsistent institutional support, and the emotional strain of managing diverse student behaviors. Teachers compensated for these limitations by adapting strategies that balanced academic instruction with emotional engagement, often prioritizing relationship-building as a foundation for learning.

Social relationships—particularly teacher–student trust and peer collaboration—emerged as the core of SEL practice. Teachers acted as emotional anchors, modeling empathy, care, and respect, while guiding students to develop social sensitivity and responsible decision-making. However, these emotionally demanding roles often led to teacher fatigue, underscoring the need for systemic support and structured professional development in SEL.

Overall, the findings highlight that SEL within private English medium schools in Dhaka is present but primarily implicit—embedded within relational, behavioral, and pedagogical practices rather than formal curricula. Teachers’ commitment and empathy drive much of the SEL work observed, yet institutional frameworks, targeted training, and collaborative supports remain essential for achieving consistent and sustainable SEL integration across classrooms.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) has increasingly become recognized as an essential component of education worldwide because of its influence on students' emotional development, social skills, and overall wellbeing. Ideally, SEL would be integrated systematically into school systems so that students are provided with structured opportunities to understand and regulate their emotions, build positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Effective SEL implementation strengthens academic achievement while supporting mental health and resilience—concerns that have been emphasized in global education discourse and noted in Bangladesh, particularly in the post-pandemic period.

This study explored how teachers in private English medium schools in Dhaka understand SEL, how they incorporate it into their teaching practices, and what challenges they face while doing so. Through in-depth interviews and classroom observations, the research revealed a mixture of intuitive practices and structural gaps. While teachers show strong personal commitment to their students' emotional needs, SEL in these settings remains informal and inconsistent due to the absence of formal frameworks, dedicated training, and institutional support. This chapter discusses these findings in light of the literature and conceptual framework presented earlier, draws conclusions about the state of SEL implementation in the studied context, and proposes recommendations for improving SEL practices in private English medium schools in Dhaka.

5.1 Discussion

This discussion interprets the findings of the study in relation to the existing literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and through the analytical lens of the conceptual framework developed for this research. The purpose of this section is not to restate the results presented in Chapter

4, but to deepen understanding by explaining why the findings appear as they do, how they align with or diverge from existing scholarship, and how they can be understood through the interaction between teachers' SEL knowledge, perceptions, contextual influences, and implementation challenges.

5.1.1 Teachers' Intuitive Understanding Of SEL and Alignment with Literature

A key finding of this study is that teachers in private English medium schools in Dhaka demonstrate a strong intuitive understanding of Social-Emotional Learning, despite having limited exposure to formal SEL frameworks such as CASEL. This finding aligns closely with international research suggesting that teachers often enact SEL implicitly through daily interactions, emotional responsiveness, and relational practices, even when they are unfamiliar with technical terminology or structured models (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Rather than conceptualizing SEL as a distinct programme, participants in this study described it as emotional care, empathy, moral guidance, and relationship-building embedded in routine teaching.

From the perspective of the conceptual framework, this pattern reflects the interaction between teachers' SEL knowledge and factors influencing perception. Teachers' knowledge was largely experiential and practice-based, shaped by years of classroom engagement, cultural norms around care and authority, and in-house professional learning focused on behaviour management. These influences shaped teachers' perceptions of SEL as something inseparable from "good teaching," rather than as a structured set of competencies. Similar interpretations have been documented in studies where educators associate SEL with values education or moral development rather than with explicit skill-building frameworks (McDonald, 2019; Oberle et al., 2016).

At the same time, classroom observations confirmed that many teacher practices aligned substantively with the CASEL competencies, particularly self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills (CASEL, 2020). For example, teachers' efforts to validate students' emotions, encourage peer cooperation, manage behavioural challenges calmly, and build trust-based relationships mirror core SEL principles identified in the literature (Durlak et al., 2011; Mahoney et al., 2018). Responsible decision-making was also present, though often indirectly, through teachers' guidance on behaviour, fairness, and consequences rather than through explicit discussion of ethical choices. This supports prior research indicating that SEL competencies can be enacted implicitly through pedagogy and classroom culture even in the absence of formal labels (Oberle et al., 2016).

5.1.2 Variability in Practice and the Role of Perception

Although all teachers valued SEL, the study found considerable variation in how socio-emotional support was enacted across classrooms. This variability can be explained through the mediating role of teachers' perceptions, as highlighted in the conceptual framework. Teachers' individual beliefs about children, discipline, emotional expression, and learning shaped the specific strategies they used. For example, some teachers emphasized patience, emotional availability, and encouragement, while others relied more heavily on discipline-oriented strategies such as mark-based consequences.

This finding resonates with McDonald's (2019) argument that teachers' perceptions strongly influence both the form and consistency of SEL practices. When perceptions are shaped primarily by personal experience rather than shared institutional understanding, practices tend to become individualized and uneven. International literature similarly notes that teacher commitment alone, without shared frameworks or professional consensus, often leads to fragmented SEL implementation (Jennings & Frank, 2015; Rauf, 2021). The findings of this

study therefore reinforce the importance of perception as a bridge between knowledge and practice, while also highlighting its limitations in the absence of systemic alignment.

5.1.3 Teacher Adaptation and Informal Integration of SEL

Findings related to teacher adaptation and classroom practices further illustrate how SEL is integrated informally into everyday teaching. Teachers frequently adjusted tone, pacing, instructional strategies, and interaction styles in response to students' emotional cues, motivation levels, and behavioural challenges. This aligns with literature emphasizing that effective SEL often occurs through responsive teaching and emotionally attuned classroom management rather than through isolated lessons (Elias et al., 1997; Oberle et al., 2016).

Through the lens of the conceptual framework, these adaptations reflect how *implementation challenges* moderate classroom practice. Teachers were not resisting SEL; rather, they were attempting to sustain it within tight academic schedules, exam-oriented curricula, and time-limited lessons. As a result, SEL was often enacted through brief moments of reassurance, encouragement, conflict mediation, or role assignment rather than through extended reflection or structured activities. This pattern echoes global findings that, in exam-driven systems, SEL is frequently compressed into micro-practices unless institutional support creates space for deeper engagement (Mahoney et al., 2018; UNESCO, 2020).

5.1.4 Social Relationships, Emotional Labour, and Sustainability

The study also highlights the central role of social relationships in sustaining SEL practices. Teacher–student relationships functioned as emotional anchors, enabling trust, emotional safety, and student engagement. Peer interactions, conflict mediation, and teachers' emotional responsiveness further contributed to supportive classroom climates. These findings are consistent with research emphasizing relationships as the foundation of SEL and student wellbeing (Wentzel, 2017; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

However, the findings also reveal the emotional labour involved in maintaining these relationships, particularly in the absence of institutional support. Teachers described managing behavioural issues, responding to students' personal difficulties, mediating conflicts, and communicating with parents—all while meeting academic expectations. From the conceptual framework's perspective, this reflects how implementation challenges extend beyond logistics to include emotional strain and role overload. Greenberg (2023) similarly notes that when SEL is not institutionally recognized, it often becomes an invisible addition to teachers' workloads, increasing the risk of burnout and limiting sustainability.

5.1.5 Contextual Constraints and Alignment with Bangladeshi Literature

Consistent with studies conducted in Bangladesh, this research confirms that systemic constraints—such as limited training, lack of structured SEL policy, parental emphasis on academic outcomes, and exam-oriented school cultures—significantly restrict sustained SEL implementation (Ahmed & Rahaman, 2021; Himel, 2023; UNESCO, 2020). These constraints help explain why SEL in private English medium schools remains informal and teacher-dependent despite growing recognition of children's mental health and wellbeing needs.

Importantly, the findings do not suggest an absence of SEL, but rather a mismatch between teachers' willingness and the structural conditions required for consistent practice. This aligns with the conceptual framework's emphasis on contextual influences as a moderating force between perception and practice. Similar patterns have been observed in other low- and middle-income contexts, where teachers' relational strengths are undermined by limited institutional capacity (UNESCO, 2020).

5.1.6 Synthesis

Overall, this discussion demonstrates that the findings of the study are strongly supported by existing literature and coherently explained through the conceptual framework. Teachers' intuitive, relational SEL practices reflect both global research on emotionally competent teaching and local realities of schooling in Bangladesh. However, without shared frameworks, training, and institutional recognition, these practices remain uneven, informal, and heavily dependent on individual teachers. The discussion thus reinforces the argument that strengthening SEL in private English medium schools requires not only teacher commitment, which is already evident, but also systemic alignment that connects knowledge, perception, and practice in sustainable ways.

5.2 Conclusion

This study set out to investigate teachers' perceptions of Social Emotional Learning (SEL), their classroom practices related to SEL, and the challenges they encounter in private English medium schools in Dhaka. The findings reveal that teachers recognize the importance of SEL and already incorporate aspects of it into their classrooms, particularly through interpersonal interactions, emotional encouragement, and adaptive strategies that respond to students' needs. These practices contribute positively to classroom climate and student wellbeing, demonstrating teachers' genuine commitment to supporting holistic development.

However, the study also highlights that SEL implementation remains inconsistent and largely unstructured. Teachers' understanding of SEL varies widely, and their practices are shaped more by personal intuition and experience than by formal SEL frameworks. This reflects the broader national context, where SEL has gained attention but has not yet evolved into a structured, competency-based component of mainstream education.

Despite the challenges identified—such as lack of training, insufficient resources, and competing academic demands—the study concludes that there is strong potential for strengthening SEL within private English medium schools. Teachers’ willingness and intrinsic motivation form an important foundation upon which more systematic approaches can be built. With appropriate training, institutional support, and alignment with cultural and contextual realities, SEL can become a meaningful and sustainable part of educational practice in Bangladesh.

The research achieved its intended purpose by documenting teachers’ perceptions, exploring real classroom practices, and identifying critical barriers and opportunities for SEL implementation. Conducting this study also offered personal insight into the complexities teachers navigate when balancing emotional and academic responsibilities, deepening appreciation for the role educators play in children’s overall development.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations emerge for improving the implementation of SEL in private English medium schools in Dhaka, as well as for future research and policy development. These recommendations build directly on the challenges and opportunities identified in Chapters 3 and 4 and reflect the SEL literature discussed in Chapter 2.

- **Teachers Training:** First, there is a clear need for structured and ongoing teacher training focused on SEL competencies. Since teachers in this study demonstrated intuitive practices but lacked formal knowledge, targeted training would deepen their understanding of the CASEL framework, help them use consistent strategies, and increase their confidence in integrating SEL into daily lessons. Training should

include practical examples, culturally relevant scenarios, and opportunities for reflective practice.

- **Curriculum Integration:** Second, schools should integrate SEL into curriculum planning, rather than relying solely on incidental implementation. This could involve embedding SEL competencies within subject lessons, establishing dedicated class routines for emotional check-ins, or developing short SEL-focused activities appropriate for Grades 3–4. A structured approach would help teachers allocate time for SEL without feeling that it competes with academic content.
- **Parental Involvement:** Third, greater parental involvement is essential for reinforcing SEL outside the classroom. Many teachers noted inconsistent emotional support from home, suggesting that workshops or orientation sessions for parents could help bridge understanding. When parents are aware of SEL concepts and strategies, they can reinforce these skills at home, creating continuity between school and family environments.
- **Resource Allocation:** Fourth, schools must allocate adequate resources—including materials, counseling personnel, and time—to support SEL initiatives. Teachers in the study often lacked access to SEL-oriented tools or designated spaces for addressing emotional concerns. Institutional investment signals commitment and enables teachers to carry out SEL practices more effectively.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Fifth, ongoing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms would help schools assess the effectiveness of SEL practices and make necessary improvements. Regular feedback from teachers, students, and parents can guide adjustments and ensure that SEL initiatives remain responsive to students' needs.

- **Future Research:** Finally, future research should explore SEL implementation in a broader range of school settings, including longitudinal studies that examine how SEL impacts students over time. Research on culturally grounded SEL models specific to the Bangladeshi context would also be valuable, as it would help ensure that SEL practices resonate with local values and classroom realities.

Collectively, these recommendations emphasize that SEL cannot rely on individual teacher initiative alone. Strengthening SEL in private English medium schools will require coordinated efforts from teachers, school administrators, parents, and policymakers. With the appropriate structures and supports, SEL has the potential to significantly enhance students' emotional, social, and academic development within the Bangladeshi education system.

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Appendices

Appendix A.1. Consent Letter

Consent Letter

Dear Participant,

My name is **Sultana Chadni**, a Master of Education (M.Ed.) student at the **BRAC Institute of Educational Development (BRAC IED), BRAC University**. As part of the requirements for completing my thesis, I am conducting a research study titled:

“Private English Medium School Teachers’ Perceptions of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), Its Practices, and Implementation Challenges in Grades 3–4 Classrooms in Dhaka, Bangladesh.”

The purpose of this study is to explore how teachers understand SEL, how they integrate it into their classroom practices, and what challenges they face in doing so. I am inviting you to participate because your insights and experiences as a teacher are valuable to this research.

Your participation will include:

- A semi-structured interview lasting approximately 40–45 minutes
- (If applicable) permission for me to observe a classroom session for the same duration

Please note the following:

- Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without any consequences.
- Your identity will remain confidential. A pseudonym will be used in all reports and publications.
- With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to ensure accuracy.
- If you choose to withdraw, all information you have provided will be deleted from the study.
- The information collected will be used solely for academic purposes.

If you have any questions before or during the study, please feel free to ask.

By signing below, you are indicating that you have read this letter, understand the study and your rights as a participant, and voluntarily agree to take part in the research.

Participant's Name:

Signature:

Appendix A.2. Email for Permission

Email for Permission

Email Subject: Permission to conduct research at your school (teacher interview and classroom observation)

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Sultana Chadni.

I am a student of a Master program in Education (MEd) in Educational Leadership & School Improvement in the BRAC Institute of Educational Development. I am seeking permission to do research at your school as part of my Masters thesis program.

I am conducting research on **Private English Medium School Teachers' Perception on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), and its Practices and Implementation Challenges in Classroom for Children in Grade 3-4**. For the given topic I need to conduct research in English Medium school and your school fits with the required criteria.

In the research I will conduct a one-on-one interview with two/three above mentioned class teachers of your school and observe their classes. The interview with each teacher will be of 1 hour each. The interview can be conducted at the school or afterschool time and at the teacher's convenient time and modality (online or offline) so that the class is not interrupted

and only after they have consented to participate in the study. The interview session will be recorded for data analysis (if offline then audio record, if online then zoom session record). Classroom observation will be for 2/3 days (not whole day only some classes) of each teacher class. I will be the only one present in the class for the observation and I will not interrupt in the regular class conduction in any way.

Teachers who will participate will be asked to give their written or verbal consent before the research begins. Their responses will be treated confidentially, and identities (their names and the name of the institution) will be anonymous unless otherwise expressly indicated.

Individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

I therefore request permission in writing to conduct my research at your school.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as it is convenient. And if feasible I would like to start the research as soon as possible if that is convenient for your institution and your teachers.

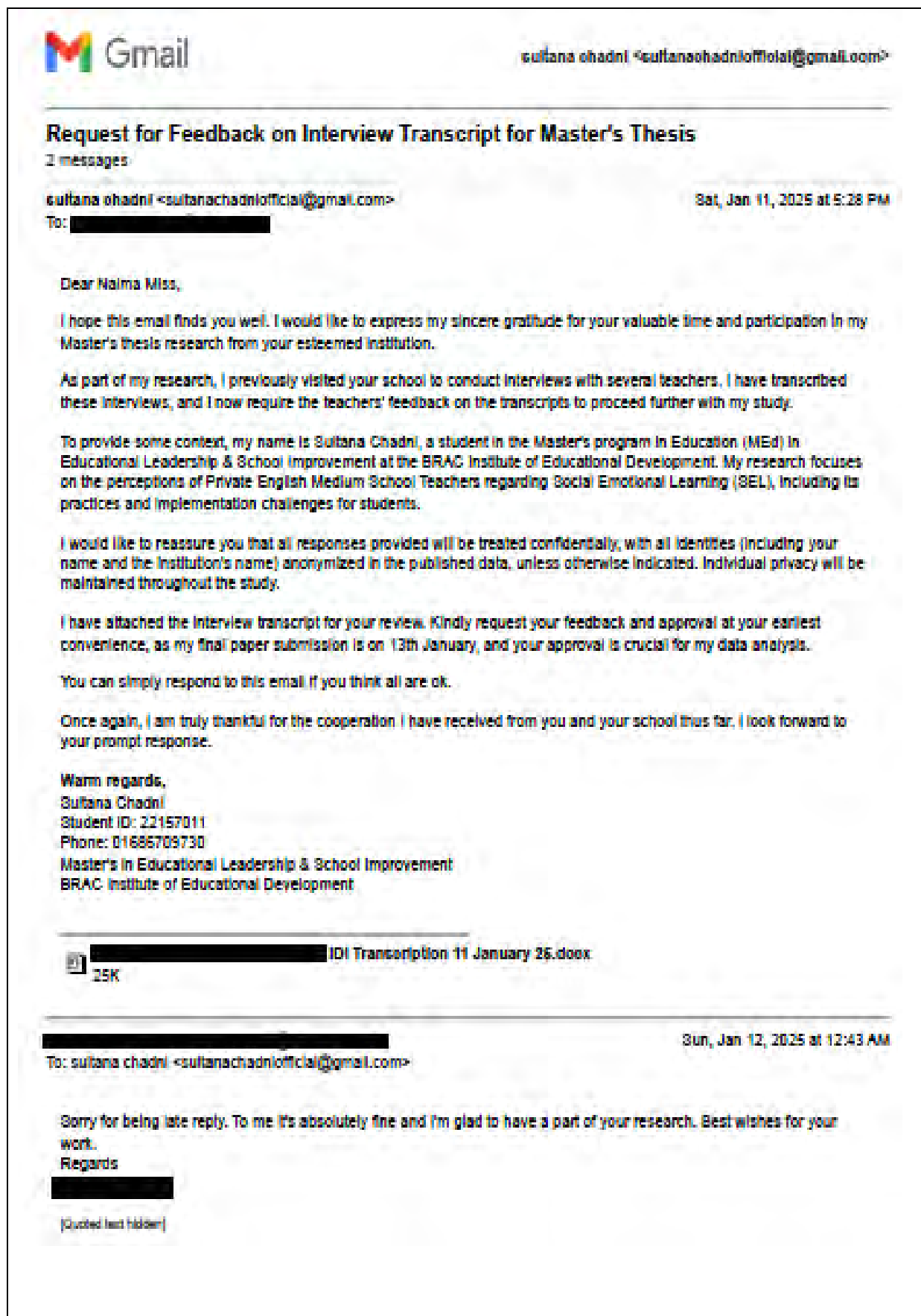
Yours sincerely,

Sultana Chadni (Researcher)

01686709730

sultanachadniofficial@gmail.com

Appendix A.3. Email for Interview Transcript Approval



Appendix B1. In-depth Interview (IDI) Guidelines

Personal Interview

This interview will be conducted in English. In this interview I would like to ask a few questions about your perception and understanding on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) as applicable in your context of teaching, learning, English Medium school, etc. It is respectfully requested that you respond to the questions posed in your capacity as a teacher and offer your honest thoughts and viewpoints. Since this conversation will be kept completely confidential, please feel free to be honest in your response.

Interviewer Name	Date:	
Interviewee Name	Age:	Gender:
Interview Start Time:		
Interview End Time:		

Questions

Introductory Questions:

- Tell me about yourself (educational background, teaching experience, why choose this profession, subject taught, training you took, etc.)
- What is your thought of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)? Can you provide examples of where and/how you learned about it?

Self-Awareness:

- What does 'self-awareness' mean to you?
- How do your students show their emotions in class?
- How do you respond to them?
- Do you talk about emotions with your students, and what challenges do you face?
- Please share examples.

Self-Management:

- What does 'self-management' mean to you?

- How do your students react to stressful or difficult situations? (individually also collectively)? (e.g. issue at home, sick, conflict, test, public speaking, group projects, bullying or peer pressure, discipline issues, adjusting to change, performance anxiety, etc.)
- How much do students manage their tasks independently, and when do you need to intervene?
- How do you manage or prevent chaotic situations in the classroom?
- Please provide examples.

Social Awareness & Relationship Skills

- What does 'social awareness' and 'relationship skills' mean to you?
- Do your students understand and respond to how others (students, teachers, staff) feel and think?
- How do they interact with people from different backgrounds or abilities?
- What steps do you take to teach social awareness and relationship skills to them, and what challenges do you face?
- Please provide examples.

Responsible Decision Making

- What do you think 'Responsible Decision-Making' means?
- Can you provide examples of when students made decisions on their own and whether they considered the consequences for themselves and others?
- How do you guide them in their decision-making process and address poor decisions, like disrupting the class?

Appendix B2 In-depth Interview (IDI) Tarannum Ahmed (Sample)

In-depth Interview (IDI) Guidelines

Personal Interview

This interview will be conducted in English. In this interview I would like to ask a few questions about your perception and understanding on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) as applicable in your context of teaching, learning, English Medium school, etc. It is respectfully requested that you respond to the questions posed in your capacity as a teacher and offer your honest thoughts and viewpoints. Since this conversation will be kept completely confidential, please feel free to be honest in your response.

Interviewer Name : Sultana Chadni

Date: 30 Oct 2024

Interviewee Name: Tarannum Ahmed

Age: 35

Gender: Female

Interview Start Time: 8:28am

Interview End Time: 9:12 am

Questions

Introductory Questions:

- 1. Tell me about yourself (educational background, teaching experience, why choose this profession, subject taught, training you took, etc.)**

Interviewer:

So, firstly, can you please tell me a little bit about yourself? Like, you know, your educational

background, your teaching experience, why you chose this profession, or the subjects you teach? And any kind of training you have taken?

Interviewee:

Okay, so my name is Tarannum Ahmed. I am an art teacher here at this institution. I completed my honors and master's from the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Dhaka. I've been here for five years and four months now. I am the only art teacher at this school.

But overall, I have been working with children for more than 13 years. I started teaching art and craft in 2010, actually running my own art school back then. Teaching art has always been my passion, and I enjoy it very much. I think the students like me too because they are naturally interested in art and craft.

I work with grades three and four now, and the students here are very nice and polite. They are always eager to learn and show enthusiasm during class. I enjoy teaching them because I am also learning continuously through this process.

Interviewer:

That's wonderful. Have you attended any professional training sessions during your career?

Interviewee:

Yes, after joining this school, I attended multiple training sessions. These were organized by the school itself. We were trained on how to manage a class, maintain discipline, prepare lesson plans, organize syllabus requirements, and effectively divide class time.

Interviewer:

So the school organized these sessions?

Interviewee:

Yes, they organized them. Sometimes guest trainers came to conduct these sessions, which made them very informative.

Interviewer:

Could you share a bit more about the training sessions?

Interviewee:

Sure. We learned a lot, like how to manage a class effectively, how to make lesson plans that work, how to divide the class time properly to deliver lessons, and how to complete the syllabus within the allocated time.

One of the things I found most valuable was observing how others work. Every teacher has some unique strengths, and we learned from each other. For example, how they maintain discipline, organize lessons, or engage students. It was very inspiring and helped me improve.

We even received certificates for attending these sessions, which was motivating. It was a great experience because I got to learn new things and apply them in my teaching.

Interviewer:

That sounds very comprehensive. Thank you for sharing.

Interviewee:

You're welcome.

2. What is your thought of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)? Can you provide examples of where and/how you learned about it?

Interviewee:

As an art teacher, I think social-emotional learning is very important—for both students and teachers. It is something we can connect with art as well.

Children always observe their surroundings—their environment. They learn a lot from what they see around them. While we can teach them from books, they often learn better from observing and experiencing.

For example, when I give them art topics like "draw your village" or "draw your family," they use their observations to create their work. I always encourage them to add their personal touch—whatever they like or feel—into the drawing. Through this, they enjoy the process and learn to express themselves creatively.

Sometimes, the younger children draw their favorite toys, cartoons, or something about their family. They bring what they observe in their daily life into their artwork. It's fascinating because children absorb so much from their surroundings, whether it's good or bad.

When I ask them to draw, I encourage them to focus on positive things. Drawing is a great way for them to express their thoughts and feelings. For children, art is not just about creativity—it's about expressing their emotions. Their mental condition, their happiness or sadness—it all comes out in their work.

I also think other mediums, like poems or drama, are great ways to promote creativity and emotional expression. But I strongly believe art is one of the best ways for children to develop their creativity and express their emotions.

Interviewer:

Thank you for sharing that.

Self-Awareness

Interviewer:

What does self-awareness mean to you? What comes to your mind when you hear the term self-awareness?

Interviewee:

Self-awareness is very important. It is about understanding yourself and being aware of your surroundings. For students, it's crucial to teach them self-awareness.

For example, teaching them about good touch and bad touch is essential. They need to know how to recognize situations and how to keep themselves safe. It's not just about knowing yourself but also understanding how to handle situations around you.

Interviewer:

Thank you. How do your students show their emotions in class?

Interviewee:

For students in grades 3, 4, and 5, it's a sensitive age. At this time, they may not express everything openly. Many of them are quite sensitive and emotional.

For example, if one friend says something to another, it might lead to misunderstandings, and one of them might start crying. Sometimes, they complain about others, saying, "He's lying," or similar things. Especially with the girls, they are often hesitant to explain their emotions clearly.

In this age group, boys tend to interact more with boys, and girls with girls. However, in the classroom, we see interaction happening between them, especially in grades 3 and 4. By grades 5 and 6, students become more distracted, and managing their emotions becomes tougher. But in grades 3 and 4, they are still manageable.

Interviewer:

So you were saying they behave in a particular way, right? How do you respond to them, especially for different age groups?

Interviewee:

Especially for grades 3 and 4, if I notice a student learning or doing something wrong, I prefer not to address it in front of the whole class. Instead, I take the student aside and speak to them individually. I try to sort out why they're feeling upset or why they're arguing with their friends.

In most cases, around 70 to 80 percent of the students are honest when explaining what happened, but there's always a small percentage who might lie about the situation.

I emphasize the importance of good behavior and good manners. I tell them, "You should behave well with everyone." Then, in general, I guide them on what they should do and what they should avoid. This way, they understand how to improve their behavior and interactions.

Interviewer:

Do you talk about emotions with your students, and what challenges do you face?

Interviewee:

Honestly, we don't always have that much time to spend talking about emotions in depth. However, when I notice that a student is heading in the wrong direction or facing a lesson-related issue, I try to address it.

For example, some students don't like Bangla at all. They say they don't enjoy the subject, but I remind them that Bangla is our mother language and it's important for them to learn it.

When problems like this come up, I try to sort them out as they arise. It's not always easy, especially in a multicultural context like ours, but I make the effort to guide them back on track.

Self-Management:

Interviewer:

Moving on to the next question, self-management. What does self-management mean to you?

Interviewee:

Self-management, as a teacher, I can say it's about my responsibility. Firstly, I can say my responsibility—what is my responsibility? I have to do that properly.

When my service is good, then I can say that the entire school is doing well. If I try my best, the parents will be happy, and the students will be happy too. Everyone benefits when I fulfill my responsibilities properly.

Also, maintaining a good relationship with my colleagues is very important. That is something I always focus on.

Interviewer:

Thank you.

Interviewer:

How do your students react to stressful or difficult situations? For example, situations like issues at home, being sick, conflicts, tests, public speaking, group projects, bullying or peer pressure, discipline issues, adjusting to change, or performance anxiety—how do they react?

Interviewee:

There are some students, for example, who face problems at home. They don't have good bonding in their family. Most of the time, these children stay upset. When they come to school, they don't interact with others much. They don't focus on their studies, and even during class, they seem distracted, thinking about something else.

We can understand that something is wrong because they remain quiet, don't mingle with their friends, and don't show interest in participating in class.

Sometimes, during exams, if they don't perform well, some children become very hyper.

Another issue is that many parents give their children mobile phones but don't control what they're watching or learning. Often, they watch things that are not appropriate for their age.

Some kids get excited and share these things with their friends, and that child ends up learning inappropriate things.

Sometimes, they react positively by sharing things with teachers. But there are also times when they share negative things, and it becomes embarrassing for us as teachers. Some children even continue these behaviors at home, which creates fear or anxiety for them.

When these situations arise, we try to address them. Sometimes, we talk to the parents to see if the issue can be solved at home. If the parents aren't able to address it, then, as a school, we take action. Recently, we faced a situation like this, but the problem has now been resolved because the child's mother is taking more control.

However, there are parents who don't maintain discipline or prioritize proper education, and their children reflect that. On the other hand, parents who are serious about their children's behavior and education tend to see better outcomes.

Interviewer:

How much do students manage their tasks independently, and when do you need to intervene?

Interviewee:

As an art teacher, I can say that whenever I give them any topic to work on, it depends on the type of topic. Usually, if it's a common topic, then they can do it properly on their own.

But if it's a new topic, then I have to draw on the board first and explain to them. For example, I might say, "Now you draw and then add something of your own." This way, I guide them initially, and then they can proceed independently.

In other subjects, I have noticed that the first lesson is usually explained thoroughly, and after sorting out any confusion, tasks are assigned. That way, the students understand the task better and can handle it more independently.

Interviewer:

How do you manage or prevent chaotic situations in the classroom? Can you share some examples?

Interviewee:

A common problem we face is when students get distracted or noisy. To handle that, I try to engage them through some activity to get their attention. For example, I might clap or do something to make them focus again. If they still don't listen, I scold them a little—just to make them stop. Then, once they quiet down, I bring them back to normal and continue with the class.

Social Awareness & Relationship Skills

Interviewer:

What does 'social awareness' and 'relationship skills' mean to you?

Interviewee:

Social awareness is very important. The first thing we can teach is how to build relationships among themselves. Students should learn to respect everyone, including parents. They should also learn to help others—like helping a friend if they are hurt—and make sure they don't harm anyone because of their actions.

Social awareness also includes things we can teach both in school and outside, like keeping the school clean, keeping the surroundings clean, how to walk on the road, and following traffic rules. These are all part of social awareness, and everyone should learn them.

As for relationship skills, I believe they are connected to social awareness. Relationships build up naturally, but they need to be nurtured from a young age. Students should learn how to understand others, play together, share their toys, and even share their food.

These skills help them understand how to live in harmony with everyone. We also teach them how to maintain good relationships with parents and teachers, which is very important.

Interviewer:

Do your students understand and respond to how others (students, teachers, staff) feel and think?

Interviewee:

At this age, most of the students don't really try to understand others. They give priority to what they want and what they think is important. Very few of them actually try to understand how others feel.

For example, sometimes their friends might get hurt, but they don't seem to care much. I've noticed this behavior more in boys than in girls. Girls tend to notice and understand emotions more. For instance, if a child sees another student crying, they often don't know what to do. Sometimes they don't even want to talk about it.

Nowadays, with the increasing use of social media like WhatsApp groups and messenger groups, some issues arise. For example, one friend might get into a fight with another, and then the group removes that friend. When the conversation continues, the removed friend feels bad. They don't know how to handle it.

We try to guide them, telling them not to do these things in groups and advising them to behave respectfully with one another.

Interviewer:

How do they interact with people from different backgrounds or abilities?

Interviewee:

It's a very common thing, but not everyone behaves the same way. Sometimes, there are incidents. For example, one child might say to another, "I went to their house, and they are very poor—they don't even have a sofa." It's a funny thing for them, but the other child might feel hurt.

Often, the child who hears this shares it with their parents, and then the parents come to the school to talk about it. Situations like these sometimes lead to misunderstandings between parents. After discussions, such comments are stopped in the classroom.

As for children with different abilities, we do have one or two students who are special. Sometimes, other children don't want to interact with them. For example, they might say, "That special child is different—they behave in a strange way." But when we notice this, we step in and tell them, "Why won't you play with them? They are also good students and good people." We encourage them to mix and understand these differences.

Interviewer:

What steps do you take to teach social awareness and relationship skills to them, and what challenges do you face?

Interviewee:

These problems are common, especially in classes 5 and 6. Students often don't want to listen to teachers. In the middle of the class, they do things they shouldn't be doing. We try to explain to them that this behavior isn't right. But sometimes, they think teachers are backdated, like we don't understand their world. I tell them, "We've been through your age; we know what's right and what's wrong."

For teaching relationship skills, we try to use technology positively. But sometimes, it's difficult. Parents also have a role to play. We tell them, "Your child is doing this or that. Please keep an eye on them—who they are spending time with, what activities they're doing." Some students are even making videos or engaging in activities they shouldn't.

We face a lot of challenges when trying to explain these things to students and parents. It's not easy. Sometimes, it's exhausting for us as teachers. If parents cooperated more, it would make things easier for us.

Responsible Decision Making

Interviewer:

What do you think 'Responsible Decision-Making' means?

Interviewee:

Responsible decision-making is extremely important for a teacher. As a teacher, you are a role model for your students. When I enter the classroom, all eyes are on me. The students are observing everything from how I speak, how I present myself, to what I teach. In this situation, teachers must have the right kind of dignity and personality to inspire students.

A teacher should have a presence that makes students look up to them, thinking, "This teacher is my ideal, and I want to be like them." This is why a teacher must always act responsibly and be mindful of their behavior. Teachers should avoid actions or words that

could lead to gossip or negative judgment from students or parents. Maintaining professionalism and responsibility in all interactions is crucial for setting a positive example.

Interviewer:

Can you provide examples of when students made decisions on their own and whether they considered the consequences for themselves and others?

Interviewee:

At this age, they usually don't think much about consequences. What I've noticed is that they like to do things they enjoy, without thinking about the negative sides or outcomes.

Some students are smarter, though. They know if they do certain things, others might get upset or angry. They'll even try to hide what they're doing to avoid trouble. For example, if they know something is not allowed, they might still try it secretly but will ensure that it doesn't become obvious.

But generally, they don't consider the consequences much at this stage.

Interviewer:

How do you guide them in their decision-making process and address poor decisions, like disrupting the class?

Interviewee:

Sometimes, they don't want to follow instructions—they want to do things their own way. They prefer doing something else instead of what's expected of them.

What I do is first focus on how much of the syllabus we've completed. I make sure the main tasks are covered. Then, I create time for relaxation. I tell them, "Now you can play or do what you want."

If there's no time left for that, I let them know we'll have time later. It helps them understand the importance of balancing responsibilities with their own interests.

Appendix C1. Classroom Observation Checklist

School Name:

Class Teacher Name:

Grade:

Number of Students:

Date and Time:

Teacher's SEL Practices

Sub-theme	Notes

Classroom Environment

Sub-theme	Notes

Student Engagement

Sub-theme	Notes

Challenges Observed

Sub-theme	Notes

Support and Adaptation

Sub-theme	Notes

Appendix C2. Classroom Observation (Sample) (Akhi Islam)

Classroom Observation Checklist for Akhi Islam (separate for each section)

School: B (Mirpur)

Class Teacher Name: Akhi Islam

Grade: Class 3 (Autumn Section)

Number of Students: 32 (28 present, 4 absent)

Date and Time: November 5, 2024

Teacher's SEL Practices

Sub-theme	Notes
Demonstrates SEL Concepts	Encouraged inclusivity by addressing all students equally and ensuring they participated actively.
Explicit Teaching of SEL Skills	Motivated hesitant students to engage by smiling and gently reminding them of the importance of focus and effort.
Integration of SEL into Lessons	Subtly embedded SEL by fostering peer collaboration and positive interactions during classwork.
Positive Reinforcement	Provided verbal praise ("Correct answer") and smiled to reinforce participation and effort.

Classroom Environment

Sub-theme	Notes

Displays Promote SEL	Motivational messages, such as “Sharing is caring,” visible on the classroom walls.
Comfort in Expressing Emotions	Students openly engaged with peers and teacher; excitement and enthusiasm were evident during class participation.
Student Interactions Reflect SEL	Peer interactions reflected a mix of support and distraction, including helping with answers and playing with objects.
Classroom Layout	Mixed seating arrangement allowed collaboration but occasionally resulted in students losing focus.

Student Engagement

Sub-theme	Notes
Active Participation in SEL	Students were eager to answer questions and applauded peers’ correct responses.
Understanding of SEL Concepts	Students displayed some degree of peer support and collaboration during class activities.
Conflict Resolution Strategies	Teacher reacted calmly to disruptive behaviors but did not consistently implement conflict resolution strategies.
Task Focus and Self-	Students were engaged during structured activities but became

Regulation	easily distracted after completing tasks.
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Challenges Observed

Sub-theme	Notes
Teacher's Struggles	Struggled to address off-task behaviors such as students playing with objects or talking during instruction.
Cultural or Parental Influences	No direct evidence of cultural or parental influences, though distractions might suggest a broader lack of external reinforcement.

Support and Adaptation

Sub-theme	Notes
Adaptations for Diverse Learners	Provided additional time for struggling students to complete tasks and offered verbal cues for focus.
Engaging Community in SEL	No explicit engagement of parents or community in classroom SEL practices was observed.
Teacher's Self-Awareness	Maintained a calm and understanding demeanor, balancing instruction with behavior management.

Classroom Observation Checklist for Akhi Islam session 2

School B: Mirpur

Class Teacher Name: Akhi Islam

Grade: Class 4 (Roman Section)

Number of Students: 32 (28 present, 4 absent)

Date and Time: November 5, 2024

Teacher's SEL Practices

Sub-theme	Notes
Demonstrates SEL Concepts	Actively supported students by encouraging effort and participation, ensuring students felt valued.
Explicit Teaching of SEL Skills	Encouraged cooperation and kindness by reinforcing positive behavior ("Sharing is caring").
Integration of SEL into Lessons	Promoted inclusivity and engagement through interactive questioning and positive peer feedback.
Positive Reinforcement	Consistently acknowledged correct answers with clapping and verbal praise.

Classroom Environment

Sub-theme	Notes

Displays Promote SEL	Inspirational quotes such as “Success is a journey, not a destination” prominently displayed.
Comfort in Expressing Emotions	Students expressed enthusiasm, clapping for peers and confidently volunteering answers.
Student Interactions Reflect SEL	Mostly positive interactions were observed, with occasional disruptions from chatting and off-task behavior.
Classroom Layout	Mixed seating arrangements encouraged interactions, though some noise and distractions occurred.

Student Engagement

Sub-theme	Notes
Active Participation in SEL	Students enthusiastically participated in discussions and activities, including answering questions on the board.
Understanding of SEL Concepts	Students displayed collaborative behaviors, such as supporting struggling peers in tasks.
Conflict Resolution Strategies	Addressed noise and minor conflicts calmly but did not implement structured conflict resolution strategies.
Task Focus and Self-	Maintained engagement during structured activities but showed

Regulation	decreased focus during less directed moments.
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Challenges Observed

Sub-theme	Notes
Teacher's Struggles	Struggled to manage noise levels after activities; some students remained off-task.
Cultural or Parental Influences	Limited evidence of cultural or parental influences, though classroom dynamics suggest possible external factors.

Support and Adaptation

Sub-theme	Notes
Adaptations for Diverse Learners	Adjusted teaching pace and classroom environment (e.g., dimmed lights for better board visibility).
Engaging Community in SEL	No visible parental or community involvement in SEL practices.
Teacher's Self-Awareness	Displayed awareness of classroom dynamics, maintaining a calm demeanor while addressing disruptions.

