

## Research Article

# Beyond the classroom: Understanding primary school students' social-emotional skills through parental eyes

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This study aims to examine parents' views on the social-emotional skills of primary school students. Sixty-one parents, whose children study at the primary school, participated in the study. A phenomenological research design, one of the qualitative research designs, was employed in this study. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview form and analyzed through content analysis. The results revealed that most parents are familiar with the concept of social-emotional learning [SEL]. Additionally, the results draw attention to parents emphasizing the interrelatedness of these skills when discussing SEL. While the majority of parents stated that their children have SEL skills in some dimensions, they also mentioned that they generally meet their children's needs regarding SEL through communicating with them. Moreover, most parents emphasized their satisfaction with the practices carried out by classroom teachers to meet these needs.

Keywords: Social-emotional learning; Social-emotional development; Parents' perspectives; Primary school; Primary students

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## 1. Introduction

For individuals of all ages, SEL promotes personal and academic flourishing, positive interpersonal relationships, a commitment to lifelong learning, and contributions to a more caring and just world (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2023). The literature reveals that different researchers define SEL in various ways. Many researchers describe SEL as a lifelong process in which individuals acquire the ability to establish and develop healthy relationships (CASEL, 2022; Cefai & Cavioni, 2014; Kuyulu, 2015; Payton et al., 2008; Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013). In order to effectively internalize SEL skills, individuals need to acquire them at an early age. The family plays a crucial role in helping children develop SEL skills since the first social interactions and emotional experiences are acquired in the family (CASEL, 2023).

Starting in primary school, children are exposed to the concept of academic success (Şahin Taşkın, 2021). Previous research emphasizes that social-emotional skills contribute to students' academic development (Poortvliet et al., 2019). As well as improving primary school students'

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academic achievement, SEL is known to support their social relationships, contribute to the creation of a positive classroom environment, and promote harmonious behaviors at school (Durlak et al., 2011). According to Obalar (2009), as the social-emotional adjustment levels of first-grade primary school students increased, so did their literacy skills. Additionally, Payton et al. (2008) found that SEL skills contribute to primary school students' problem-solving skills. Furthermore, supporting students' social-emotional skills contributes to a positive classroom setting. Williams (2018) points out that the development of social-emotional skills among primary school students helps teachers to create a positive learning environment. Therefore, considering the impact of social-emotional skills on academic achievement at the primary level, the extent to which families support their children's social-emotional skills will contribute to both children's academic achievement and their social-emotional skills.

The child-rearing approaches of parents play an important role in the development of children's social-emotional skills (Aktaş Özkafacı, 2012; Yılmaz, 2014). Children exhibit fewer problematic behaviors when parents adopt a sensitive and consistent approach appropriate for their development (Stern et al., 2015; Scaramella & Leve, 2004). A democratic environment fosters self-confidence and social skills in children (Kulaksızoğlu, 2013). Similarly, children who have parents who embrace a democratic approach tend to have more advanced problem-solving skills and academic achievement (Kaya et al., 2012).

Children's social-emotional skills are negatively affected by parents' over-controlling attitudes. It has been found that children whose mothers use excessive psychological control are more likely to engage in introverted and aggressive behaviors (Aunola & Nurmi, 2005). In addition, it has been demonstrated that parents' behaviors such as violence and rejection cause children to experience behavior problems, such as anger and lack of emotional control, in relationships with other people (Sanchez et al., 2008). In order to identify students' social-emotional learning needs and effectively address them, it is crucial to explore parents' perspectives on social-emotional skills of primary school students.

In the literature, family-school collaboration has been found to have significant impacts on students' social-emotional development. According to Fredericks et al. (2005), school and family cooperation enhances students' academic and social-emotional development. Effective parent-teacher communication plays a crucial role in preventing undesirable student behaviors in the classroom (Çayak & Ergi, 2015) and addressing the challenges faced by students (Kılıç, 2019). Moreover, classrooms that foster parent-teacher cooperation create a safer learning environment. Consequently, children become more motivated to complete their homework and projects if they are treated positively at school (Epstein & Salinas, 1993). To support their children's social-emotional development, it is essential to assess the opinions of parents whose children are in primary school regarding their communication with teachers. Furthermore, examining parents' perspectives on their expectations from teachers in this regard will provide valuable insights into the effective development of students' social-emotional skills.

In the literature, research on SEL focuses primarily on pre-primary school (e.g. Wolf et al., 2021), primary school (Esen Aygün & Şahin Taşkın, 2017a), middle school (Guo et al., 2023; Merter, 2013; Totan, 2011; Yılmaz, 2014), and high school students (Oliverira et al., 2023; İşeri, 2016). There are also studies that focus on scale development (e.g. Aydın, 2023; Baydan, 2010; Esen Aygün & Şahin Taşkın, 2017b; Shi et al., 2022). Furthermore, some other studies have explored the perspectives of classroom teachers (Esen Aygün & Şahin Taşkın, 2017b). The number of studies on parents, however, is quite limited (e.g. van de Sande et al., 2024). From the perspective of Türkiye, in particular, it is apparent that parents' perspectives on the SEL skills of primary school students have not been thoroughly investigated. Therefore, gaining insights into parents' views on the SEL skills of primary school students will be crucial in addressing the existing gap in this area. To fill the current gap in this area, this study aims to explore parents' perspectives on primary students' SEL skills. Accordingly, the sub-objectives of the study are as follows:

- To explore parents' views on SEL skills.

- To explore parents' views on the needs of primary students in terms of SEL skills.
- To explore parents' practices in developing SEL skills for their children in the age of primary school.
- To explore parents' expectations from primary teachers regarding the development of their children's SEL skills.
- To explore parents' views about improving/developing SEL skills of primary school students.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Research Design

In this study, a phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research methods, was employed. Phenomenological design involves examining the experiences of all individuals involved in research related to a phenomenon, event or concept in order to comprehend its meaning (Güler et al., 2013). In phenomenology, a systematic and in-depth analysis is carried out of how individuals perceive and comprehend phenomena (Patton, 2002). This study focused on the phenomenon of SEL skills of primary school students. On the basis of their experiences, parents' views on their children's SEL skills were analyzed. This study therefore uses a phenomenological design.

### 2.2. Participants

In this study, criterion sampling was used as a method of purposeful sampling. The purpose of criterion sampling is to examine situations that meet predetermined criteria (Patton, 2002). Parents of children enrolled at the primary school level were identified as the criteria for participant selection in this study. Participants were selected voluntarily from among parents whose children attend primary school. Participants in the study included parents of students attending primary schools in the central district of Canakkale province. The study involved 61 parents, 57 of whom were female and 4 of whom were male. The majority of participants are housewives. Other professions represented include teachers, civil servants, child development specialists, health workers, and laborers. In order of majority, the partners of the parents participated as laborers, teachers, civil servants, tradesmen, military personnel, engineers, health professionals, and other occupations. Table 1 shows the distribution of parents and their spouses based on their level of education.

Table 1

*Parents' Educational Level*

	<i>Primary School</i>	<i>Secondary School</i>	<i>High School</i>	<i>Associate's Degree</i>	<i>Bachelor's Degree</i>	<i>Master's Degree</i>	<i>PhD</i>
Mother's Level of Education	2	1	18	10	28	2	-
Father's Level of Education	1	4	20	6	25	4	1

### 2.3. Data Collection Tool

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect the data. This approach is recognized as the most appropriate approach to comprehensively capture participants' intentions, experiences, thoughts, comments, attitudes, mental perceptions, and reactions (Patton, 2002). Brinkmann (2014) proposes that semi-structured interviews provide the interviewer with the opportunity to actively contribute to knowledge production by exploring significant aspects of the data. Semi-structured interviews are well suited to this research due to their flexibility, allowing researchers to prepare pre-interview questions and address unexpected issues during interviews.

We crafted the interview questions based on relevant literature and sought feedback from three experts with expertise in social-emotional learning and primary education. We reorganized and finalized the questions based on this feedback. Interviews were conducted using open-ended questions. Research questions have been designed to align with research objectives and address

the main aspects of the research. For example, "How would you describe your child in terms of social-emotional aspects?" was tailored to elicit parents' perspectives on the social-emotional needs of primary students. Similarly the question "What are your expectations from your child's teacher to meet his/her social-emotional?" has been formulated to fulfill the research aim of exploring parents' expectations from primary teachers concerning the enhancement of their children's SEL skills. A final interview form was completed, permissions were obtained, and data collection began. Prior to the interviews, participants were informed that their participation in the research was completely voluntary, and they were free to terminate the interview or withdraw from the study at any time. All participants were assured that their identity information would remain confidential, and that the collected data would only be used for research purposes. The article referred to each parent by their number to protect their confidentiality. To facilitate effective data collection, interviews were recorded on a voice recorder.

#### **2.4. Data Analysis**

Data from the study were analyzed using content analysis, a method commonly used for examining textual materials such as interview transcripts, diaries, or documents (Patton, 2002). First, the data obtained from the interviews were transcribed. To ensure clarity for the reader, similar data was meticulously organized and interpreted within the framework of specific concepts and themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Content analysis typically involves four stages: coding, theme identification, organization of codes and themes, and interpretation of findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Based on conceptual meanings, the data is initially divided into meaningful sections, labelled, and coded. Overarching themes emerge after commonalities among codes are identified, facilitating a comprehensive analysis of the data. Following this, codes and themes are structured and presented coherently, considering pertinent details. Finally, data interpretation reveals relationships that enable detailed descriptions and presentations of the findings. Consequently, the findings were systematically examined and categorized during the initial stage of analysis. The conceptual meaning of each section was determined, named, and coded.

In the phase of identifying themes, commonalities among the codes were identified, which led to the identification of overarching themes elucidating the data at a general level and effectively categorizing the codes. The codes and themes were then organized, and the data were elucidated and presented in a reader-friendly manner, taking into consideration specific nuances. This stage examines the significance of the data and explains how the findings relate to each other. For the presentation of the data, direct quotations are used. Excerpts that clearly support the interpretation and findings in the analysis are selected. Furthermore, incorporating quotes into the report was a deliberate process designed to guide readers' attention to the significance of each one. It was ensured that written material presenting my interpretation or understanding of each quote would precede and follow each one. This strategy was implemented to enhance clarity and reinforce the researchers' perspective within the narrative of the manuscript. To protect the confidentiality of the participating parents, the information was coded numerically. By using this approach, we were able to gain a better understanding of how often participants were coded within the study.

Ethical precautions have also been taken into consideration in this study. Prior to the interviews, participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, and they could terminate the interview or withdraw from the research at any time. The participants were also assured that their identities would remain confidential, and that the information collected would only be used for research purposes. In order to provide validity, interview data are recorded. In contrast to relying solely on researcher notes, audio or video recording devices enable a thorough examination of unfiltered data (Gray, 2018). Data-driven generalizations are supported by the findings. In order to enhance reliability, expert consultation was integrated into the interview questions. Furthermore, the methodology and research stages are elaborated on extensively to

ensure transparency and enhance reliability. The results obtained from the study are meticulously aligned with the presented data, further solidifying their reliability.

### 3. Findings and Comments

The research findings in this section are presented into three categories: Parents' views on SEL, social-emotional skill levels of primary school students, and supporting social-emotional skills of primary school students.

#### 3.1. Parents' views on SEL

This category encompasses findings related to how parents define SEL. The results indicate that over half of the participants were already familiar with the concept of SEL. In this sense, P29 stated that "I heard about it in the guidance service activities at school." Similarly P32 asserted that "Yes, I heard, we are informed by our school's guidance counselor about this issue".

According to the results, P29 and P32 were first introduced to SEL through meetings held by their guidance teacher at school. Additionally, some parents mentioned that they were introduced to SEL through education-related training sessions. According to P11, "Yes, I have heard of it since I am also involved, I have received training on this subject as I am a child development specialist". Additionally, P38 indicated that, "Yes, I have heard of the concept of social-emotional learning, I had pedagogical courses, I remember hearing it at that time."

According to the explanations above, P11 is a child development specialist who is already familiar with SEL. As part of her formative training to become a teacher, P38 encountered the concept of SEL. As a result of the findings, it appears that parents who are teachers or have received education in fields such as child development are familiar with the concept of SEL. Parents with prior exposure to the concept of SEL provided the following definitions. For instance, P14 and P28 respectively highlighted that:

...when we say social-emotional, it means being able to navigate one's emotions in a social setting, act through emotions, learning through emotions, to be angry, like resentment, anger, hatred, learning these in social environment, and developing behaviors in response to them, that's how they taught us, I am also a student. (P14)

Children may experience emotional changes throughout their lives, such as childhood, adolescence, exam concerns, exam stress, the ability to manage them, the ability to cope with physical and emotional changes without any problems, the ability to solve problems in a healthy way in their relationships with their friends, in certain relationships, with their teachers. (P28)

As shown in the explanations above, P14 conceptualized SEL as the ability of individuals to navigate social environments with their emotions. P14 emphasizes self-management skills when dealing with emotions such as anger, resentment, and hatred as part of SEL. However, the definition of P14 did not incorporate other aspects of SEL, such as self-awareness and responsibility. Informal talks with P14 revealed that she had undergraduate education to become a teacher, suggesting she is familiar with SEL through her training. P28, on the other hand, described SEL as children's ability to handle emotional changes and solve problems during their developmental process. P28 emphasized the self-management aspect of SEL by relating emotional management to coping with emotional changes. Furthermore, P28 highlighted that SEL involves a child's ability to solve problems within healthy relationships with friends and teachers, indicative of relationship skills (CASEL, 2023).

#### 3.2. Social-emotional Skill Levels of Primary School Students

This section explores parents' perspectives on their primary school children's social-emotional skills. Findings are explained within the frame of the dimensions of SEL, namely self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, self-management skills, and decision-making skills.

### 3.2.1. Self-awareness skills

We analyzed parents' views regarding their children's self-awareness skills within this subcategory. Over half of the parents believe their children are aware of their own feelings and thoughts. Accordingly, P5 stated, "I definitely think so, she is well aware of it, she constantly expresses herself, she doesn't accept everything we say, she questions." Similarly, P15 asserted that:

Yes, I think he is aware, in our conversations, he is aware of certain events both in the school environment and outside when he goes to the course. He examines the cause-effect relationships of these events a lot, he researches a lot, and he asks me, how should I behave as a mother, what should I do in some situations, which is the right thing to do, etc. He is involved in some research.

P14 believes her child has self-awareness, based on the statements from her parents. According to her, her child questions events at school or outside, examines cause-and-effect relationships, and asks thoughtful questions. Similarly, P5 expressed that her child is aware of her own feelings and thoughts, since the child questions information rather than accepting everything at face value. Individuals who are self-aware are conscious of their feelings, thoughts, and values, and are able to interpret their feelings and establish connections between them and their thoughts and behaviors (Zins & Elias, 2007). As indicated by these accounts, the parents associated their children's self-awareness skills with an inquisitive nature. Further, P14's explanation indicates that she perceives her child's self-awareness as a result of cause-and-effect relationships. It is essential to develop the ability to reason about events and situations in order to establish cause-and-effect relationships. According to existing literature, reasoning skills are associated with responsible decision-making skills (Le Buffe et al., 2009). As a result, P14 associates her child's self-awareness with responsible decision-making.

Several parents believe that their children's self-awareness skills contribute to their self-confidence. P40, for example, stated that "I hear statements from outside that he is a confident child, and I think he is better at solving problems, since he can express himself, and I think he knows what he wants." Additionally, P11 asserted that:

I think it provides self-confidence, in the family, for example, she does not abstain herself because she thinks my mother will be angry, She says "no matter what I say is good or bad I can accept it", she can come and apologize when she makes a mistake, for example, when we argue, she can say "mom I'm sorry, I didn't mean to offend you.

According to P11, her child's self-awareness of feelings and thoughts allows her to confidently express her thoughts without hesitation. In a similar vein, P40 stated that her child's self-confidence comes from his awareness of his own feelings and thoughts. The statements reflect the belief of parents that their children's awareness of their own feelings and thoughts contributes to their self-confidence. However, some parents attribute self-awareness skills to self-centered behaviors in their children. P37 and P10, respectively, highlighted the following points:

He is a free-spirited child who expresses his feelings well, so there is no reaction of whether he will be angry with me or whether he thinks differently about me. He is able to express everything clearly, and he is able to share everything very easily with his family, friends, and teachers. (P37)

She acts according to her own will, even though I don't want her to be completely like that, a little too much of her own will, as she is in the self-centered period. She is following her own desires, not yours. (P10)

P37 stated that her child's ability to understand his own feelings and thoughts impacts his behavior, allowing him to communicate confidently with others. In addition, P37 noted that her child remains unaffected by others' anger or reactions. In the literature, understanding another's emotions and being able to perceive their perspective are correlated with social awareness skills (Elias & Mocerri, 2012). Thus, P37's explanation suggests she associates social awareness with self-awareness in her child. According to P10, her child is aware of his own feelings and thoughts, so he acts according to his own wishes without regard to others'. Literature emphasizes that children aged 7-11, within the concrete operations period of Piaget's developmental characteristics, begin to

move away from self-centeredness during this phase (Cherry, 2021; Senemoğlu, 2018). Based on the explanations provided by P37 and P10, primary school students may still exhibit egocentric behavior.

### 3.2.2. Social awareness skills

In this subcategory, insights were gained about parents' perspectives on their children's social awareness. The results show that most parents believe their children are socially aware. There have been a few parents who have linked their children's social awareness skills with emotional literacy skills. For example, P51 and P38 respectively expressed that:

...the people around her, that is, when one of her friends pouts or even my face falls at home, she asks mom, why are you feeling down? or your face falls? or my friend is crying, mom, should we take a look at them? She pays close attention to the emotions and thoughts of those around her.. (P51)

I definitely think he is aware of the thoughts of others, for example, he cares a lot about people's facial expressions, like how my teacher looked, how my father looked, how angry my father looked, so even the expression of other people's emotions has a great impact on him, so he can also identify their thoughts and emotions. (P38)

According to the explanations above, P51's child is able to recognize when she is in a bad mood and offers support to her friend when upset or crying. Specifically, P51 emphasizes that her child is sensitive to others' feelings and thoughts, particularly based on their facial expressions. This indicates that P51's child is emotionally literate. Similarly, P38 states that her child understands the facial expressions of others in order to understand their feelings and thoughts. In these parents' statements, it is evident that social awareness skills are interconnected with emotional literacy skills. Due to their possession of emotional literacy skills, these parents are able to recognize their children's social awareness skills. Furthermore, some parents reported that their children demonstrated social awareness skills exclusively towards those close to them. In this vein, P14 and P36 respectively stated that:

He is definitely aware of the ones he loves very much in the family, if he loves the joyful times very much, if there are things they shared together, yes, he is aware of it, but people he doesn't know or don't know very well, he only makes comments like "this has happened, it doesn't matter, it will pass. (P14)

Sometimes she can immediately recognize emotions of the people she likes, but if the people she doesn't spend much time with, she can be a little more, you know, should I say cruel? Let me not say cruel, but she can have a little different thoughts about them, and if she is talking to me, if she tells me about it, which we are most likely talking, I do it that way, I explain, I explain that she should empathize with them, I tell her why their friend behaves that way, you know, they can do something in that way. (P36)

P14 mentioned that her child is considerate of the feelings and thoughts of family members whom he loves, but exhibits less attention and indifference towards those he doesn't know. Likewise, P36 noted that her child displays empathy and care towards loved ones, but acts more cruelly and insensitively towards strangers. In response, P36 acknowledged her efforts to address her child's behavior and foster empathy. The parental accounts indicate that children demonstrate social awareness primarily toward familiar individuals during their primary school years, understanding and responding to their feelings and thoughts. However, there are observed limitations in extending these skills to unfamiliar people, resulting in insensitivity to their feelings and thoughts. As a result, the findings indicate that primary school children's social awareness vary.

### 3.2.3. Relationship skills

In this subcategory, we provide insights into what parents think about their children's relationships. According to the results, more than half of parents believe their children can easily form friendships. In this vein, P1 stated that, "She makes friends very easily, yes, she is good with

her friends in general." Similarly P39 asserted that, "Yes, he does make friends, he does it with his peers, but he is a little shy with adults." In another example, P20 expressed that:

...as far as I can see, she doesn't have much difficulty, but she can easily make friends with older children and children who are at least like her, how should I put it, she can easily make friends with children who have such companions.

According to P1, her child effortlessly makes friends and maintains good communication with them. The statements from P20 and P39 indicate that parents' perceptions of their children's social interactions are affected by the age of potential friends. In particular, P20 expressed that, despite his child's ease in making friends, he prefers spending time with older peers or individuals who share common interests. Meanwhile, P39 indicated that his child exhibits shyness towards older children, but establishes better connections with peers his own age. Further, some parents indicated that their children face challenges in forming friendships. For example, P4 stated that, "No, she is very selective, she needs to feel close to him or her, she can get along with them, but not as friends." Similarly, P24 asserted that, "No, she can't because she's a little picky about making friends, who match his mentality."

As noted by P4, her child finds it difficult to make friends, exercising selective relationships, and only connecting with those with whom she feels close. Similarly, P24 noted that her child selects friends based on shared mindsets, displaying a discerning approach in friendship selection and experiencing challenges in forming connections. As a result of these findings, it appears that children form friendships with those who share similar ways of thinking, a characteristic that necessitates a high level of self-awareness. Selective friendship choices may be influenced by parents' heightened self-awareness.

#### 3.2.4. *Self-management skills*

This subcategory examined parents' perspectives on their children's self-management skills. Nearly half of the parents expressed their emotions through crying when their children experienced problems. For instance, P22 stated that "I mean he usually choose to cry, but this is very rare ...he cries a lot, they get upset, you know, typical child, I have never seen a very extreme anger." In a similar manner, P28 expressed that "usually when she cries or she is very upset, I understand from her attitude and behavior that she wants to get away from that environment". P22 explained that her child cries when faced with problems to express her emotions. She explained that this behavior is typical for children, explaining that, like any child, hers cries and becomes upset without displaying anger. According to P28, her child typically expresses feelings through tears and withdraws when upset. Developing self-management skills is associated with demonstrating self-control, self-confidence, and adaptability during challenging times (Maboçoğlu, 2006). The statements suggest that children may lack self-management skills.

Additionally, nearly half of the parents reported that their children communicate their emotions verbally. For example, P14 and P58 respectively asserted that:

By talking, he just talks, he comes and says "mom, mom, what you told me is wrong", or goes to his father and says "dad, you are wrong here". He sits and talks, he explains ...he doesn't pout, he doesn't do anything else. (P14)

First, he listens, then he attempts to comprehend in his mind, then he responds based on what he understands, that is, he does not have the habit of crying, he does not cry, he tries to talk and deal with it logically in his own way, he doesn't get angry or cry, he does not have any characteristics. (P58)

According to P14, her child often engages in conversation with others when he faces a problem instead of showing reactive behaviors like pouting. According to P58, on the other hand, her child tries to understand the other person's point of view before responding violently.



### 3.2.5. Responsible decision-making

In this subcategory, parents' perceptions of their children's responsible decision-making skills were explored. According to the results, nearly half of the parents believe their children make sound decisions based on the information and facts they have. In this sense, P4 explained that "Because she can explain why the event happened, such as I shouldn't have done that, this happened because of that, I think she makes the right decisions as a result of the arguments she had with her friends." In a similar vein, P58 asserted that:

... When we sit down and talk, for example, she shouldn't have done this to my friend, or yes, that friend of mine may have done this for a reason, but when we sit down and talk about it, when it makes sense to her, when the idea suits her, she can make the right decisions.

P4 stated that her child makes sound decisions due to her ability to analyze the causes of events, understand consequences, and learn from her experiences. Conversely, P51 noted that she was able to assess the veracity of events through conversations with her child. It is evident from P51's statements that she acknowledges her child may require support in making decisions. Another parent, P32, explained that her child seeks parental guidance in making decisions by asserting "I don't think he is knowledgeable about everything, he usually gets help and consults us, his teacher, that is, except for things related to himself, that is, he consults his elders on matters that are beyond him". P32's explanation reinforced her belief that her child, not knowing all the facts, seeks adults' guidance when faced with situations he doesn't understand. In literature, seeking support from others when necessary is regarded as a valuable aspect of relationship skills (CASEL, 2023). P32's statements indicate that she believes relationship skills contribute to responsible decision-making.

### 3.3. Supporting Social-emotional Skills of Primary School Students

Three subcategories emerged in this theme: Practices implemented by parents, expectations from the teacher, and other practices.

#### 3.3.1. Practices implemented by parents

This subcategory of research focused on how parents address their children's social-emotional needs. In order to meet their children's social-emotional needs, nearly half of the parents communicate verbally with them. For example, P12 and P56 respectively stated that:

We have a chat time, usually I try to get him talking by asking more specific questions, such as did a friend make you laugh today, did something funny happen in the class, we have a family meeting about this. (P12)

First of all, I am a good listener, a good speaker, and so he is, so we listen to each other, first in turn, we try to understand, then we try to communicate mutually, which means I listen first, then I look at what needs to be done. (P56)

Findings indicate that P12 organizes dedicated chat time with her child, making a deliberate effort to engage in meaningful conversations. Based on P12's explanations, it appears that she encourages her child to express himself more freely. In a similar manner, P58 shared that she actively listens and talks to her child to understand the needs of the child. The importance of communication in addressing their children's social-emotional needs is underscored by these insights. P58 also highlights her proactive approach to understanding her child's needs and then meeting them. Parents also mentioned that they engage their children in enjoyable activities to address their children's social-emotional needs. For example, P5 stated, "I try to do the things she likes, I try to take her to the places she likes, it happens more on weekends, socially, as I said, we try to do the things she wants." Similarly, P14 asserted, "We go for a walk, ride bicycles, do activities, read books, speak English, read stories, he has cats and dogs, he spends a lot of time with them."

P5 demonstrated a conscious effort to fulfill her child's social-emotional needs by engaging in activities aligned with her child's preferences. P14, on the other hand, outlined how she supports

her child's social-emotional well-being by walking, cycling, reading, and spending time with their pets. The parents' explanations revealed their commitment to fostering their children's social-emotional development through active participation in diverse activities. Another parent, P45, described their efforts to enhance their own social skills as a means of meeting their child's social-emotional needs by stating "I read books on how I should approach her, I seek out education from my friends or from my elders, I observe, I observe my surroundings, I strive to achieve this." As part of her proactive approach to self-improvement, P45 dedicates time to reading books about effective communication and child-rearing strategies. Clearly, parents use a variety of methods to address their children's social-emotional needs. Their approaches include maintaining regular communication with their children, organizing activities tailored to their interests, and actively guiding them towards enriching activities.

### 3.3.2. Expectations from teachers

Parents' expectations of teachers in meeting their children's social-emotional needs were explored within this subcategory. The findings emphasized that the majority of the parents expressed satisfaction with the strategies employed by teachers to meet these needs. For example, P29 and P60 stated that, respectively:

We don't have any expectations from our teacher, since he takes care of the students very well, we have never had that problem, he immediately notices any emotional changes in the children and communicates with their parents, so he is always supportive, always fully supportive to the family. (P29)

We have found the greatest teacher we have ever seen, so we have a very good communication, and he already keeps our child's abilities at an equal level. Moreover, he observes and guides us, so we can share whatever is necessary for their mutual development, we are in constant communication, there is nothing between the teacher and the parent, there are, of course, formalities, but let's say we had a good dialogue, we have a good relationship, we are very satisfied with the teacher. (P60)

According to P29, her child's classroom teacher identified the child's emotional changes, promptly communicated with the parents, and provided guidance, thus meeting the parents' expectations in meeting the child's social-emotional needs. Similarly, P60 described effective communication between her child's classroom teacher and the parents, with the teacher offering guidance through student observations. In addition to these explanations, some parents noted instances where their children did not meet teacher expectations. For instance, the views of P2 and P61 are as follow:

teachers need to spend a little more time at school and with children, so that they can observe them one-on-one, unless this is done, all of this will probably remain in the air, the concepts will not be reconcile... the lesson needs to be named, maybe this will be carried out in this lesson, maybe then I think it will be carried out more properly... I mean, I think they can teach these things through drama activities ... different situations can be put forward through drama activities and children can be guided in this way. (P2)

Lessons can be created so that they can learn other things socially rather than being more lesson-oriented, there can be activities such as chess, dance, folk dances, activities that can be done in interaction with their friends, there were swimming activities that were done before, these can be continued, in other words, it can be focused not only on lessons and learning at school, but also on social cohesion. (P61)

Based on the aforementioned statements, it is apparent that P2 believes that teachers should devote time to their students outside of formal lessons. P2 asserts that teachers' efforts to foster social-emotional development of children would be insufficient without this. Furthermore, P2 suggests adding SEL courses to the curriculum. P2 recommends using drama to teach coping skills in these courses. Moreover, P61 expresses the opinion that social-emotional lessons should not be restricted to purely academic settings but should also be incorporated into the program as a whole. P61 emphasizes the importance of supporting students' social activities.

### 3.3.3. Other practices

Based on the findings, parents believe social activities are essential for supporting the social-emotional needs of their children. In this sense, P14 and P52 respectively asserted that:

Social activities need to be increased, I mean, the more he spends time with his peers, the more I think it increase ... I mean, it is very important for me if he is social, there are courses for this, he attends a basketball course, he attends a piano course, there is already a completely different social environment at school, so I would like him to meet a lot of people, frankly. (P14)

I think children should be directed towards activities, in the field of sports, then in different things, children are happier, not only with lessons, but activities always make children happier, I think like that, what kind of activities can be ...in sports, then in different things, what can I say, music, dance. (P52)

According to the explanations above, P14 advocates for increased social activities, emphasizing the importance of spending time with friends. Furthermore, P52 emphasizes that students shouldn't solely focus on academic achievements; they should also engage in social interactions, have fun, and participate in different types of activities. One of the parents, P34, emphasizes the importance of raising awareness among parents about the social-emotional needs of their children by stating "Courses can be organized for parents and children, only for parents, courses can also be organized for children and their friends, activities can be carried out."

In line with the preceding explanation, P34 requested courses designed to teach parents how to raise their children effectively. A further recommendation was to implement courses designed to enhance children's social-emotional skills.

## 4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined the social-emotional development needs of primary school students and explored parental perspectives on actions required to address these needs. Results reveal that a majority of parents had heard of the concept of SEL but struggled to provide a comprehensive definition. Some parents had acquired awareness of SEL through school guidance units or by being educators themselves. However, it is noteworthy that most classroom teachers, as indicated in the literature, were not familiar with this concept (Esen-Aygün & Şahin-Taşkın, 2017b). Even though SEL is challenging to define comprehensively, the study indicates that a significant number of parents are aware of the concept. Parents often intertwine skills related to one dimension with skills related to other dimensions when discussing SEL skills for primary school students. This interconnectedness underscores the complexity and interdependence of SEL skills. Furthermore, most parents believe their children possess self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills. Besides, parents explain their children's social-emotional skills in accordance with the developmental characteristics of their current stage. Social-emotional skill development should take developmental characteristics into account when cultivating students' skills.

The parents described various ways to address their children's social-emotional needs, including regular communication, family time, planning activities, and guiding them toward various interests. Research supports the idea that children with positive relationships with their parents tend to exhibit improved problem-solving, communication skills, and stress coping mechanisms (Bilir & Dabanlı, 1981). Therefore, parents actively engaging in communication and planning activities to fulfill social-emotional needs contribute to creating a warm and sincere environment for skill development. Furthermore, most parents expressed satisfaction with teachers' practices in meeting their children's social-emotional needs. Parents praised teachers for knowing their students well, understanding the parents, and maintaining consistent communication. According to literature, families play a significant role in children's development (Amodia-Bidakowska et al., 2020; Jeon et al., 2020; Rey-Guerra et al., 2022), and teachers' communication with parents can support social-emotional skill development by suggesting home activities (Schock & Jeon, 2023).

In response to parents who felt teachers failed to meet their social-emotional needs, teachers were expected to interact with students outside of lessons and to provide additional support for social-emotional skills. While Türkiye lacks a separate curriculum for social-emotional skills, the 2020 Classroom Guidance Program for primary school students incorporates outcomes for SEL skill development alongside academic and career areas (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2020). To meet social-emotional needs of students, parents expect schools to support social activities for their children and facilitate opportunities for students to spend time together outside of school hours.

In light of the results, we suggest some implications for education and future research. First, providing parents with comprehensive information on social-emotional learning can empower them to facilitate their children's development. Second, parental support can enhance children's self-awareness and mindfulness through activities such as diary writing. Third, parents can foster children's empathy and understanding of diverse perspectives by engaging them in interactive games and cooperative endeavors. Fourth, students' communication skills must be enhanced by establishing robust family communication channels. Fifth, proactive parental support can significantly enhance children's ability to build relationships through their participation in social activities. Finally, parent education programs can enhance support for students' social-emotional needs by providing parents with the knowledge and skills they need to nurture their children effectively.

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