

The Level of Socio-emotional Skills of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties and their Relationship to Forms of Family Interaction

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Abstract

This article aims to explore the relationship between socio-emotional skills and forms of family interaction on the part of students with specific learning difficulties from the viewpoints of their teachers and parents. A descriptive correlational approach was adopted, and three questionnaires were implemented with the help of 59 teachers and 112 parents. The results showed that all students have an average level of socio-emotional skills, with the exception of collaborative skills and teamwork, building and developing peer relationships, and emotional expression, all of which were highly rated. There were differences between the perceptions of teachers and parents alike with regard to the level of building and developing relationships with peers, teamwork, and emotional expression on the part of students with specific learning difficulties. There was also a non-statistically significant negative correlation (at a significance level of (0.05) between the level of socio-emotional skills and the forms of family interaction. The results confirms the unpredictability of the level of socio-emotional skills in terms of the forms of family interaction on the part of students with specific learning difficulties.

Keywords: *Socio-emotional; skills; interactions; family; specific learning difficulties.*

1. Introduction

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is no longer merely an extra benefit offered to students or an additional service provided to them. Instead, it has turned into a necessity, in that there is an urgent need to train students to handle life's obstacles and be equipped to fulfil society's future expectations. There has been an increase in the interest of some educational systems with regard to provide SEL as an educational approach to prepare learners for the future by developing their human qualities, enhancing their emotions and responses to situations, and equipping them with the skills they need to successfully and efficiently manage life's tasks and responsibilities as they grow. In the UK, Donnelly et al. (2020) – in a report published by Nesta - investigate the role education plays in fostering socio-emotional skills (SES) in children and adolescents in the UK home nations. This was accomplished by examining the SES-related educational policies in the UK, in addition to providing evidence as to how schools understand and implement these policies. The finding of this report showed that policies in the UK give priority to certain SES that are widely viewed as individual competencies, such as relationship building and management, teamwork, leadership, flexibility and resilience. Schools in the UK have implemented these policies by teaching SES both inside and outside of the classroom as

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part of extracurricular and curriculum activities. The American Institutes for Research (Air) is a non-profit organization in the USA that provides a variety of different services such as supporting SEL at school and district level based on the expertise of its team. Some of the main roles of the Air team are to help schools to develop a shared understanding of SEL and to assist in integrating SEL with other programs such as academic instruction and disciplinary procedures. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is another major non-profit organization in the USA which was established executively to promote evidence-based SEL to all students through its research and projects. Saudi Arabia is another example of a middle eastern country which has displayed recent interest in enhancing SES among students in response to the requirements of the Vision 2030 program by establishing the Human Capacity Development Program (HCDP). This program aims to prepare global competitor citizens within a three dimensional framework:

- Values and behavior which are the principles that guide human behavior, such as tolerance, moderation, perseverance and determination.
- Essential skills which are the foundation when it comes to gaining future knowledge and skills, such as reading, math and basic digital skills.
- Future skills which are necessary to be prepared for future careers, such as SES, higher thinking skills and physical and practical skills.

Studies have shown that students with specific learning disabilities (SpLD) had lower SES than their classmates without SpLD (Heiman and Olenik-Shemesh, 2020) and has reported a number of social and emotional problems among students with SpLD, such as loneliness, lower levels of self-concept, higher levels of feelings of unpopularity (Zelege, 2004), anxious behavior and depression (Boyes et al., 2016; Livingston, Siegel, and Ribary, 2018). According to DSM5 (2013), in addition to the negative functional consequences of SpLD on academic performance, SpLD can have a negative impact on students' lives, such as significant degrees of mental illness, frustration, and psychological anguish. Individual differences are widely seen in the field of SpLD as students tend to face various challenges due to the scope of the difficulties they encounter (e.g., reading, writing, math, attention, memory, etc.); hence, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of these students would be difficult without understanding the patterns of interaction between students' characteristics and educational tasks within a social environment (Polat, Adiguzel, and Akgun, 2012).

Parents can have a significant impact on their children's development, as the family is considered a miniature social unit that shapes the attitudes, values, and skills of the child, which are then gradually transferred to the school, university, and other institutions of socialization. Therefore, the family is considered an important source for building the child's personality who learns behavioral skills from observing their parents. Studies have demonstrated the benefits of collaboration between educators and parents in addressing children' emotional and social issues (Harpaz and Grinshtain, 2020). In addition, family interaction characterized by warmth, consistency, and stability may help mitigate social and emotional disturbances in children with disabilities (Bhide et al., 2019). Research on the relationship between the level of SES among students with SpLD and family forms of interactions is lacking, nevertheless. In order to close this gap, the present study attempts to address the following questions:

- What is the level of SES of students with SpLD from teachers' and parents' points of view?
- Does the level of SES of students with SpLD vary according to teachers' and parents' perspectives?

- Is there a statistically significant relationship between the level of SES and the forms of family interaction of students with SpLD from teachers' and parents' points of view?
- Can some SES of students with SpLD be predicted through some forms of family interaction?

2. SES and Students with SpLD

SES are different from academic skills such as, numeracy, writing, and reading because they place greater emphasis on how students interact with others in and outside the classroom, regulate their behavior, understand their feelings, and control their emotions, than with how well such students can handle information. Despite its importance, providing quality education is not limited only to the academic aspect. Rather, it but also involves teaching life skills including SES. Despite the lack of agreement among researchers on the definition of SES (Humphrey et al., 2011; Wood, 2015) and the various categories of these skills (Gresham, Sugai and Horner, 2001; Feuerborn and Tyre, 2009; Parhomenko, 2014), it is defined in this study as a group of knowledge and capabilities that regulate students' thinking, emotions and behaviors with others in society, and which are useful for expressing feelings, positions, perspectives and for interacting with others. These skills are building and developing relationships with peers, collaboration and teamwork, problem-solving skills, emotional knowledge, emotional expression, and sympathy.

In addition to academic challenges, research in the field of special education has shown that some students with SpLD have a range of socio-emotional and psychological challenges, including poor self-esteem, anxiety, depression, lack of confidence, social isolation, and issues with peer interactions (Livingston, Siegel, and Ribary, 2018; Bonifacci et al., 2020; Heiman and Olenik-Shemesh, 2020; Narvez-Olmedo, Sala-Roca and Urrea-Monclus, 2020; Marks et al., 2023). Along with low motor skills and limited use of expressive language, which can have a negative impact on social skills, children with learning disabilities are more likely to exhibit a lack of social skills that prevents them from learning and applying academic skills like reading, writing, and math (Most and Greenbank, 2000). SpLD are related to problems with regard to paying attention, perceiving and processing, and to remembering information obtained through auditory and visual sensory input. These problems create challenges for students when it comes to choosing and focusing on relevant environmental stimuli during social interactions (Most and Greenbank, 2000; Daradkeh and Khazaleh, 2018). Furthermore, students with learning disabilities tend to generate less effective solutions to social problems comparing with average and low achieving peers (Tur-Kaspa and Bryan, 1993). This may be influenced by their unique ways of perceiving and interpreting their social environment (Bryan, Burstein and Ergul, 2004). The literature showed that dyslexia, which is one type of SpLD, can negatively affect the emotional well-being of individuals and cause difficulties such as low-self-concept, anxiety, and feelings of withdrawal (Long, MacBlain and MacBlain, 2007; Eissa, 2010). These emotional difficulties can be associated with negative attitudes on the part of teachers, peer abuse and, more importantly, students' underestimating their abilities as a result of being assessed with dyslexia (Doikou-Avlidou, 2015). Children with SpLD have high levels of rumination - defined as continuous thinking of negative ideas and emotions - especially when they have to manage social settings (Bonifacci et al., 2020). This suggests that rumination is one of the risk factors that should be taken into account when providing special educational services for such children. A four-year research that examined how dyslexia affected several students' socially and emotionally, how they studied in mainstream schools and received special educational services in reading schools/classes, has found

that these students need to be supported socially and emotionally to maximise their learning experiences (Casserly, 2013).

Poor SES among some students with SpLD has been justified differently by researchers. It can be argued that the deficit in SES may be due to impairment in language and communication skills, and difficulty in perceiving and understanding the emotions of others, in addition to academic problems, which can lead to low self-concept (Khazalah, 2007). The inability to process cognitively, and the difficulty to solve problems, all play an important role in the weakness with regard to SES among people with learning disabilities (Elksnin and Elksnin, 2005). Repeating and accumulating academic failure experiences in school may lead to low self-esteem, and thus prevent students from attempting to try new things, participate in activities, or make any commitments to others in order to protect themselves from failure, which consequently does not help the students to develop their SES (Casserly, 2013). Neurological dysfunction in the brain of students with SpLD may be one of the main reasons behind the emergence of social and emotional problems and poor skills on the part of such students. According to the DSM-5, SpLD is a neurodevelopmental condition that impairs information processing cognitively and may have detrimental functional outcomes, including suicidality, poor mental health, and comparatively elevated degrees of psychological discomfort (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Individuals with SpLD can also have mental illnesses including anxiety and depression, as well as other neurodevelopmental diseases, most often Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). When associated with other disorders, SpLD could have a profound impact on the socio-emotional aspects of an individual's life, and cause several difficulties including behavioral problems, peer rejection and aggression (Karande et al., 2007; Sahoo, Biswas and Padhy, 2015).

The lack of SES can not only cause loneliness, but can also adversely affect academic achievement among students. The findings of Yazdi-Ugav, Zach, and Zeev's (2020) study, which examined the relationship between social skills and academic achievement in students with and without learning disabilities, lend support to this. The study revealed that the students without learning disabilities had lower academic achievement and fewer social skills according to their teachers. These results can be supported by the view that social skills include various competencies that are highly associated with accomplishing academic tasks successfully, such as teamwork, sharing, problem-solving and cooperation (Feitosa, Del Prette and Del Prette, 2012). Although some studies (e.g. Claessens, Duncan and Engel, 2006) show that social skills are not particularly predictive of academic success, others (e.g. Montroy et al., 2014; Gustavsen, 2017) found that these skills are critical in supporting academic development among students. Hence, SES interventions are essential for students, particularly those with learning disabilities, who need to be taught directly on how to improve their SES. These interventions should contain observing good models of SES, opportunities to practice these skills through various activities, as well as receiving immediate feedback (Steadly et al., 2008).

3. Family Interactions and Socio-emotional skills

School and families are widely believed to have the biggest impact on childhood development, given that families are a vitally important system as they are the first source of information from birth, and since children often spend the majority of their formative years with their family (Wood, 2015). In addition to being a major source of information for their children when required during adolescence and youth, parents may have a significant impact on how their children behave, learn, and establish their ideas. This is especially true in the early childhood years. Parents are seen as important social agents in their children's development (Bugental and Goodnow, 1998). Social learning theories explain this by highlighting the fact that learning happens in a social environment through

interactions with others. As a result, parents may serve as role models for their children and provide them with ample opportunities to practice different skills. The importance of the parental role in raising children can also be explained by behaviorist theories which emphasize the impact of stimuli, direct instruction, reinforcement and feedback on individual's behavior. In this regard, parents can adopt a coaching role by providing their children with immediate and constructive feedback, as well as reinforcing positive behaviors. They can also teach their children appropriate behavior by task analysis in which difficult tasks can be divided into smaller steps that can be taught through direct instruction.

Family involvement in education has been widely discussed by educators in terms of supporting their children's academic needs, helping them with their homework, being involved in school events, and interacting with instructors (Machen et al., 2005). Numerous studies in the literature have demonstrated the significant impact parents may have on their children's academic development, particularly in the areas of literacy and math (e.g. Huntsinger, 2000; Guberman, 2004; Zhan, 2006; Vandermaas-Peeler and Loving, 2011). In contrast, fewer research have been done just to look at how family engagement affects children's development of SES (Van Voorhis et al., 2013). yet, the positive effects of educational interventions aimed at reducing social difficulties in children might be maximized when parents participate in them (DeRosier and Gilliom, 2007; El Nokali, Bachman and Votruba-Drzal, 2010). Spence, Donovan, and Brechman-Toussaint (2000) provided evidence for this theory by randomly assigning children with social phobia, aged seven to fourteen, into three groups. Cognitive-behavioral therapy was given to the first group; parental participation was added to the second group's therapy regimen; and no treatment was given to the third group, which was the control group. The study's findings showed that, in comparison to the first group, the first and second groups both exhibited decreased levels of social anxiety. However, there was no statistically significant difference between the first and second groups. Parental involvement appeared to have a greater impact on treatment outcomes in terms of the number of children who didn't show any symptoms of social phobia at the end of the therapy (Spence, Donovan and Brechman-Toussaint, 2000).

One of the most important variables in shaping a child's abilities, attitudes, and conduct is family interaction, which has an impact on them from an early age and continues to be beneficial for the rest of their life. Thus, it has been suggested that, in order to investigate how the family environment affects children, it is essential to address the patterns of family interactions and how they contribute to the growth of the different aspects of children's personality (Mona, Jebriil and Abdelkader, 2018). Due to the various studies that presented different models of family interaction, it is difficult to find one classification of such interactions that researchers agree upon, (Crowell and Feldman, 1988; Mahoney and Wheeden, 1997; Keogh et al., 2000; McManusa and Poehlmann, 2012). Moreover, there is an overlap between the concepts of "family interaction" and "parenting styles", which are sometimes used to refer to the same thing (Gauvain and Huard, 1999; Spera, 2005; Simons and Conger, 2007). The forms and characteristics of parental interaction could differ from the viewpoint of the children compared with the viewpoint of their parents, as children explain their parent's interactions with them through their expression of the type of experience which they received from their parents, which represents the opinion that the children hold in their mind and their own feelings about the way their parents treat them. However, according to Baumrind (1978), family interactions can be classified based on two main criteria: commitment, and maintaining a balance between responsiveness and demanding. Therefore, four main categories can be identified: authoritarian, authoritative, indulgent, and uninvolved (Baumrind, 1978). Authoritarian indicates that parents are directive and highly demanding as they have a strict and unnegotiable set of rules for their children (Baumrind, 1991). Authoritative means that parents are committed to their families and act responsibly. They can be demanding to some extent, but they would rather talk to their kids about the restrictions

and give them an explanation (Baumrind, 1991). Indulgent indicates that parents are very responsive and less demanding, and allow their children to self-regulate, with no or very few rules (Baumrind, 1991). Uninvolved means that parents are less demanding and responsive comparing with the previous forms of parental involvement, and it can be considered to be a sort of neglect (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). Other researchers have different typologies of family interaction, in the form of cooperation, competition, conflict, and alignment (Jebril and Jad, 2020). Hence, in order to fulfill the objectives of this study and to tackle the primary family relationships that earlier researchers proposed, this study adopted five forms of family interaction. First, cooperation. This is the association of family members with each other, and feelings of intimacy, interdependence, cooperation and mutual assistance motivated by common benefit. Second, competition. This is a social process that aims to achieve positive competition that focuses on personal achievements and competition with regard to useful things. It is a process that aims to develop the child's independence and self-reliance. Third, conflict. This occurs in family situations in which the family member uses his energy to destroy and harm other members of the family, as the family member falls under the weight of motives and tendencies that conflict with the goals of others in the family. Fourth, harmonization. This occurs in family situations in which the member feels satisfied with his relationship with the rest of the members within the family, and in which he is committed to family duties and responsibilities, and treats others in a way that achieves their goals and the good of all, and accepts compromise solutions that satisfy all members of the family. Fifth, neglect. This occurs in family situations in which the member feels discouraged from engaging in desirable behavior, or is held accountable for unwanted behavior, where a lack of direction prevails in the family, and its members lack access to adequate care.

In the field of special education, despite the gaps in the literature about the links between the level of SES and various kinds of family interaction, previous studies have indicated that authoritative parents were better than authoritarian parents in predicting their children's adjustment to primary school and indicating potential problems the school could encounter (Kaufmann et al., 2000). Another study which examined the relationship between parenting style and interactions on kindergarten children's academic and social skills found that the father's authoritative parenting style had a positive impact on his child's social behavior, while the mother's authoritarian parenting style had a negative impact (Roopnarine et al., 2006). Similarly, an investigation into the relationship between parenting styles and emotional regulation revealed that, although authoritative parenting style was positively correlated with children's increased emotional regulation, authoritarian parenting style was negatively correlated with children's emotional regulation levels (Boediman and Desnawati, 2019).

4. Research Process

4.1 Research methodology

This research followed a descriptive correlational approach that shows whether or not there is a relationship between two or more variables, while illustrating the degree and strength of such a relationship. The correlative descriptive approach is concerned with data collection and analysis, and helps test the phenomenon or hypothesis underlying the research, using tools such as interviews, observations, or questioning (Williams, 2007; Creswell, 2012). For the aim of the current study, the correlative descriptive approach was used in order to examine, from the perspectives of teachers and parents, the relationship between the SES level and the forms of family interactions of students with SpLD.

4.2 Research sample

A total of 59 primary school teachers with sufficient knowledge and expertise about the level of SES of their students with SpLD made up the first research sample employed in this study. 112 parents of children with SpLD made up the second sample, which was used to look at the forms of family interactions that occur within each family as well as the level of SES of their child. The sample distribution is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of the study sample (teachers - parents) in terms of certain variables

Variables in the study sample		Frequencies	Percentage	Total
Parental relationship	Father	42	37.5%	112
	Mother	70	62.0%	
Parents' level of education	Secondary school (High school)	67	59.8%	112
	Bachelor	36	32.1%	
	Master	9	8.1 %	
	PhD	0	0	
Teachers	Male	29	49.2%	59
	Female	30	50.8%	

4.3 Research tools

To achieve the study's objectives, the researchers developed three questionnaires. These are as follows:

4.3.1 First questionnaire

This questionnaire was intended for a sample of special education needs (SEN) teachers who are sufficiently knowledgeable and experienced to assess the level of SES of their SpLD students. The questionnaire consisted of six SES as follows: building and developing relationships with peers, cooperation and teamwork, problem-solving skills, emotional knowledge, emotional expression, and empathy. There are a number of questions with regard to each skill by which the level of SES among students with SpLD can be measured from the teachers' perspective. They were asked to select only one answer from a three-point Likert scale as follows: applies strongly, applies somewhat, does not apply.

4.3.2 Second questionnaire

This questionnaire targeted a sample of parents of children with SpLD, and relates to the same SES as in the first questionnaire, together with the same number of questions with regard to each skill, in order to measure the level of SES among students with SpLD from the parents' perspectives as shown in Table 2. The same three-point Likert scale was applied in this questionnaire. However, modifications were made to the formulation of the questions to suit the nature of parental experience with their children.

Table 2. Distribution of questions in the first and second questionnaires (for teachers and parents) with regard to dimensions (SES) and the number of questions relating to each dimension

N	Dimensions (SES)	Total number of questions relating to each dimension	Question numbers
1	Building and developing relationships with peers	8	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8

2	Cooperation and teamwork	8	Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16
3	Problem-solving skills	8	Q17, Q18, Q19, Q20, Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24
4	Emotional knowledge	8	Q25, Q26, Q27, Q28, Q29, Q30, Q31, Q32
5	Emotional expression	7	Q33, Q34, Q35, Q36, Q37, Q38, Q39
6	Empathy	6	Q40, Q41, Q42, Q43, Q44, Q45
Total		45	

4.3.3 Third questionnaire

This questionnaire targeted the parents of children with SpLD and consisted of five dimensions, each of which represents a form of family interaction as follows: cooperation, competition, conflict, harmonization, and neglect. Each dimension includes a number of questions as shown in Table 3, by which the form of family interaction can be identified from the parents' perspectives, who were asked to select only one answer from a three-point Likert scale as follows: applies strongly, applies somewhat, does not apply.

Table 3. Distribution of questions in the third questionnaire (for parents only) relating to each dimension (forms of family interactions) and the number of questions in each dimension

N	Dimension (form of family interaction)	Total number of questions in each dimension	Question numbers
1	Cooperation	9	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9
2	Competition	8	Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17
3	Conflict	9	Q18, Q19, Q20, Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25, Q26
4	Harmonization	8	Q27, Q28, Q29, Q30, Q31, Q32, Q33, Q34
5	Neglect	10	Q35, Q36, Q37, Q38, Q39, Q40, Q41, Q42, Q43, Q44
Total		44	

4.3.4 Statistical methods

To obtain the study results, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) - IBM SPSS v. 24 - was used. The following statistical methods were applied:

- Reliability statistics were calculated for the three questionnaires using Cronbach's Alpha and the Split-Half Coefficient.
- Bivariate Correlation was calculated and analysed using Spearman's correlation coefficient to calculate the correlation coefficient between variables and dimensions.
- Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test and Shapiro Test were used to check the degree of normal distribution and the normality of the data (Test for Normality).

- Descriptive statistics were used including the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, standard error, order, frequencies, and the average weighted percentage of the responses of the study sample, and for the variables and results of the study.
- A one-way ANOVA analysis of variance was used, and the value of F and its statistical significance were calculated at the level $\alpha < 0.05$ to find differences between the average responses of teachers and parents for each variable of the study (the level of SES of children from the point of view of teachers and parents - the most common form of family interaction).

4.3.5 Psychometric properties of the research tools

The following steps were carried out by the researchers to ensure the trustworthiness of the study results:

4.3.5.1 First and Second Questionnaires. To determine the degree of validity in terms of which the questionnaires measure what they were intended to measure, the researchers ensured the validity of the questionnaires by presenting them in their initial form to eight experts in special education in order to get their feedback about the questionnaire's phrases clarity, their suitability for what was they were set to measure, and the appropriateness of the phrases with regard to the dimension to which they belonged. Based on the experts' comments, modifications were made to the questionnaires by altering some of the questionnaire phrases, deleting some phrases that did not measure what the research aimed to measure, and adding some new phrases. Internal validity was calculated based on a pilot study consisting of an exploratory sample of 12 teachers and 25 parents, using the Spearman-Brown Formula correlation coefficient to determine the extent to which each dimension of the questionnaires related to the overall degree of the questionnaire items, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Spearman's correlation coefficient between each item of each dimension and the total score of its dimension

N	Dimension of the questionnaire	Correlation coefficient	Interpretation of the degree of correlation
1	Building and developing relationships with peers	.922**	Very strong moral expulsion link at a significance level **(0.01)
2	Cooperation and teamwork	.845**	Very strong moral expulsion link at a significance level **(0.01)
3	Problem-solving skills	.818**	Very strong moral expulsion link at a significance level **(0.01)
4	Emotional knowledge	.911**	Very strong moral expulsion link at a significance level **(0.01)
5	Emotional expression	.845**	Very strong moral expulsion link at a significance level **(0.01)
6	Empathy	.818**	Very strong moral expulsion link at a significance level **(0.01)

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

According to Table 4, it is clear that the values of the correlation coefficient for the dimensions ranged between 0.922 and 0.818, which means that the value of the correlation is very high at the 0.01 level of significance, which confirms the existence of a strong correlation between each of the dimensions and the questionnaires as a whole. Hence, it can be said that all dimensions of the questionnaires are valid for what they were designed for. Moreover, split-half and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient were used to determine the questionnaires' overall reliability; the findings are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha and split-half) for the first and second questionnaires

N	Dimension of the questionnaire	Number of phrases	Cronbach's Alpha	Split-Half Coefficient
1	Building and developing relationships with peers	8	0.868	0.948
2	Cooperation and teamwork	8	0.976	0.936
3	Problem-solving skills	8	0.933	0.943
4	Emotional knowledge	8	0.858	0.976
5	Emotional expression	7	0.913	0.998
6	Empathy	6	0.956	0.965
Total stabilization factor for resolution		45	0.964	0.984

The high rate of correlation and internal consistency of the items of the questionnaires on the Cronbach scale (0.964) and internal consistency using split-half at a score of 0.984 is clear from Table 5. This confirms the reliability of the questionnaire items.

4.3.5.2 Third questionnaire. To find out the degree of validity with regard to which the third questionnaire measures what it was intended to measure, the researchers presented it in its initial form to six experts in special education to get their feedback about the questionnaire's phrases clarity, their suitability for what they intended to measure, and the appropriateness of the questionnaire phrases for the dimension to which they belong. Based on the experts' comments, modifications were made to the questionnaires by modifying some of the phrases, deleting some phrases that did not measure what the research aimed to measure, and adding some new phrases. The internal validity was calculated based on a pilot study which consisted of an exploratory sample of 12 teachers and 25 parents using the Spearman-Brown Formula correlation coefficient to determine the extent to which each dimension of the questionnaire was related to the total score of the questionnaire items as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Spearman's correlation coefficient between each item of each dimension and the total score of its dimension

N	Dimension of the questionnaire	Correlation coefficient	Interpretation of the degree of correlation
1	Cooperation	.913**	Very strong moral expulsion link at a significance level** (0.01)
2	Competition	.865**	Very strong moral expulsion link at a significance level** (0.01)
3	Conflict	.820**	Very strong moral expulsion link at a significance level** (0.01)
4	Harmonization	.811**	Very strong moral expulsion link at a significance level** (0.01)
5	Neglecton	.887**	Very strong moral expulsion link at a significance level** (0.01)
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level			

According to Table 6, it is clear that the values of the correlation coefficient for the dimensions ranged between 0.811 and 0.91. This means that the value of the correlation is very high at the level of significance of 0.01. This confirms the existence of a strong correlation between each of the dimensions and the questionnaires as a whole. Hence, it can be said that all dimensions of the questionnaires are valid in terms of what they were designed for. In addition, split-half and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient were used to determine the questionnaires' overall reliability; the findings are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7. Reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha and split-half) for the third questionnaire

N	Dimension of the questionnaire	Number of phrases	Cronbach's Alpha	Split-Half Coefficient
1	Cooperation	9	0.844	0.910
2	Competition	8	0.988	0.923
3	Conflict	9	0.832	0.903
4	Harmonization	8	0.865	0.956
5	Neglection	10	0.939	0.934
Total stabilization factor for resolution		44	0.964	0.924

The high rate of correlation and internal consistency of the items of the questionnaire on the Cronbach scale (0.993) and internal consistency using split-half at a score of 0.984 is clear from Table 7. This confirms the reliability of the questionnaire items.

4.3.6 Analysis

The researchers verified the standard distribution of the SES scores of students with SpLD through the Shapiro-Wilk test due to the small size of the research sample as shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Shapiro-Wilk test results to verify the standard distribution of social and emotional skills scores in students with SpLD (n = 59)

N	SES	Shapiro-Wilk test		
		statistics	df	Sig
1	Building and developing relationships with peers	0.978	59	0.403
2	Cooperation and teamwork	0.967	59	0.126
3	Problem-solving skills	0.976	56	0.429
4	Emotional knowledge	0.976	56	0.334
5	Emotional expression	0.965	56	0.102
6	Empathy	0.941	56	0.019
SES as a whole		0.933	56	0.060

According to Table 8, the Shapiro-Wilk test results indicate a moderate distribution of SES grades in students with SpLD, meaning that parametric statistical methods are appropriate to verify the research assumptions.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Research question 1

What is the level of SES of students with SpLD from teachers' and parents' point of view?

In order to answer the first research question, the weighted average was calculated for the level of SES among students with SpLD and analysed according to the following levels as shown in Table 9:

- From 1.00 up to less than 1.67 indicates a low level.
- From 1.67 up to less than 2.34 indicates an average level.
- From 2.34 up to less than 3.00 indicates a high level.

Table 9. The weighted average of the level of SES among students with SpLD from both teachers' and parents' points of view (Teachers = 59, Parents = 112)

SES	Mean	Number of phrases	Weighted average	Verification level
Building and developing relationships with peers	18.304	8	2.586	high
Cooperation and teamwork	19.313	8	2.414	high
Problem-solving skills	16.902	8	2.113	average
Emotional knowledge	16.245	8	2.031	average
Emotional expression	16.357	7	2.526	high
Empathy	11.884	6	1.981	average
SES as a whole	99.304	45	2.207	average

Table 9 demonstrates that, according to teachers and parents, students with SpLD have an average level of SES, with the exception of the skills of cooperation and teamwork, building and developing relationships with peers, and emotional expression which were high with regard to the students. These results contrast with the findings of other studies (eg. Most and Greenbank, 2000; Heiman and Olenik-Shemesh, 2020; Narváez-Olmedo, Sala-Roca and Urrea-Monclús, 2020; Marks et al., 2023) which found that students with SpLD lack sufficient social skills to enable them to acquire and implement academic skills such as reading, writing, and mathematics, in addition to limited use of expressive language, an aspect which negatively affects their social skills. However, the high level of some SES among students with SpLD could be due to the special education services that students receive in schools by SEN teachers in collaboration with mainstream teachers. This is supported by Al-qawaqneh (2020) who found that an improvement in expressive language skills, receptiveness, and collective interaction has been achieved as a result of the development of a program in which the emphasis was placed on expressive language and reception as one of the SES that can improve students with learning disabilities' self-confidence and self-esteem. This was also supported by Elias (2004) who focused on the role of both mainstream and SEN teachers in developing students' abilities by preparing the learning environment and creating opportunities in which students can practice those skills which allow them to improve. Due to the fact that students with SpLD are receiving

special education services in inclusive schools, teachers can arrange classroom climate to foster communication and teamwork with peers (Yuen, Westwood and Wong, 2005). The results also shed light on the other SES that can be developed more among SpLD students, such as problem-solving skills, emotional knowledge and empathy. Acquiring higher levels of problem-solving skills can support the social and the psychological development of students with SEN. Educators can develop interventions that aim to develop problem-solving skills to enhance students' abilities to manage anger, resolve conflict and exercise self-control (DuPaul and Weyandt, 2006).

5.2 Research Question 2

Does the level of SES of students with SpLD vary according to teachers' and parents' perspectives?

Teachers' and parents' perceptions of the SES of students with SpLD were compared with their grade averages using the Independent Samples T-Test, which was utilized for two independent groups. The results are shown in Table 10.

Table 10. The results of the Independent Samples T-Test with regard to the difference between teachers' and parents' grade averages in terms of their perceptions of the SES of students with SpLD (Teachers = 59, Parents = 112)

N	SES	Viewpoint	Mean	Standard deviation	T	Sig
1	Building and developing relationships with peers	Teacher	17.750	2.298	2.263	Sig * 0.026
		Parent	18.875	2.850		
2	Cooperation and teamwork	Teacher	19.179	2.587	0.528	Sig **0.012
		Parent	21.246	2.783		
3	Problem-solving skills	Teacher	16.893	2.520	0.036	Non-significant' 0.971
		Parent	16.911	2.712		
4	Emotional knowledge	Teacher	16.143	2.049	1.752	Non-significant' 0.083
		Parent	16.946	2.752		
5	Emotional expression	Teacher	16.571	2.247	0.979	Sig *0.030
		Parent	18.123	2.425		
6	Empathy	Teacher	11.929	0.931	0.393	Non-significant' 0.695
		Parent	11.839	1.424		
SES as a whole		Teacher	98.464	8.436	0.903	Non-significant' 0.370
		Parent	100.143	11.090		
*. Correlation is significant at the (0.05) level						
**. Correlation is significant at the (0.01) level						

Table 10 makes it quite evident that parent and teacher viewpoints diverge with regard to the skill of building and developing relationships with peers among students with SpLD at an indicative level of 0.05 with an average of 18.875 and a standard deviation of 2.85 for or the benefit parents. There are also differences between the perspectives in terms of

average scores of both parents and teachers on emotional expression among students with SpLD at an indicative level of 0.05 with an average of 18.123 and a standard deviation of 2.425 for the benefit of parents. As for cooperation and teamwork, there are statistically significant differences between the perspectives of both parents and teachers at a level of 0.01 with an average arithmetic mean of 21.246 and a standard deviation of 2.783 for the benefit of parents. These results indicate that parents perceived their children as having higher levels of some SES compared to the perceptions of the teachers. This may have to do with how parents and their children interact with each other as they are expected to spend more time with them which therefore allows them to examine their child's skills when it comes to making friends and working with others including their siblings or relatives. Children can feel more relaxed to express their emotions and moods orally or through body language to their parents because of their close relationship compared to that with their teachers, which allows parents to have a broader understanding with regard to the level of these skills among their children.

Although students could be provided with opportunities to practice these skills in schools through SEN services with the support of both mainstream and SEN teachers, it could be argued that all teachers need to observe the development of these skills among students accurately through direct observation and interviews. This can be achieved by introducing SES in schools as an educational approach aimed at preparing learners for the future by developing their human qualities and enhancing their emotions and responses to the attitudes of others, and to equip them with the skills they need to successfully and efficiently manage the tasks and responsibilities of life (Donnelly et al., 2020). This was supported by Alzahrani and Alghamdi (2022) who emphasized the importance of providing training programs for SEN teachers to be able to train SpLD students on these skills, and consequently to be able to identify how these training initiatives affect the students.

5.3 Research question 3

Is there a statistically significant relationship between the level of SES and the forms of family interaction of students with SpLD from teachers' and parents' point of view?

The Pearson's correlation factor between SES and family interactions among students with SpLD has been calculated to answer this question. The results are as shown in Table 11 and Table 12:

Table 11. Pearson's correlation factor between SES and family interactions among students with SpLD (Parents = 112)

Form of family interaction \ SES	Cooperation	Competition	Conflict	Harmonization	Neglect
Building and developing relationships with peers	0.015	-0.011	-0.143	0.015	-0.173
Cooperation and teamwork	-0.021	-0.029	-0.120	-0.009	-0.135
Problem-solving skills	-0.077	-0.057	-0.125	-0.046	-0.129
Emotional knowledge	-0.047	-0.076	-0.104	-0.057	-0.107

Emotional expression	-0.198	-0.182	-0.123	-0.173	-0.086
Empathy	-0.149	-0.171	-0.253	-0.157	-0.244
SES as a whole	-0.105	-0.119	-0.205	-0.090	-0.209
*. Correlation is significant at the (0.05) level					

Table 12. Pearson's correlation factor between SES and family interactions among students with SpLD (Teachers =n 59)

Form of family interaction \ SES	Cooperation	Competition	Conflict	Harmonization	Neglection
Building and developing relationships with peers	0.020	-0.016	-0.154	0.018	-0.193
Cooperation and teamwork	-0.039	-0.028	-0.164	-0.019	-0.175
Problem-solving skills	-0.067	-0.085	-0.135	-0.049	-0.159
Emotional knowledge	-0.087	-0.057	-0.110	-0.017	-0.127
Emotional expression	-0.188	-0.189	-0.133	-0.193	-0.076
Empathy	-0.151	-0.181	-0.273	-0.167	-0.254
SES as a whole	-0.115	-0.129	-0.210	-0.070	-0.229
*. Correlation is significant at the (0.05) level					

Table 11 and Table 12 indicate that there is a negative non-statistically significant correlation at a significance level of 0.05 between the levels of SES and the forms of family interaction among students with SpLD, meaning that negative family interactions can adversely affect students' development. This shows that if the forms of family interaction are negative, this leads to a decrease in SES from the parents' point of view. This finding is consistent with a research by Boediman and Desnawati (2019), which found a negative relationship between children's emotional organization and an authoritarian parenting style. Another study has also indicated that authoritative parents outperformed authoritarian parents in predicting their children's adaptability in elementary school and identifying potential issues (Kaufmann et al., 2000). This negative relationship also shows that students with academic difficulties might also suffer from emotional and social difficulties as a result of family interactions and parental practices in child-rearing. This finding aligns with previous research (DeRosier & Gilliom, 2007; Bhide et al., 2019), which highlighted the significance of the parental role in fostering beneficial forms of relationship with their children, encouraging them to compete, and cooperate jointly to achieve their aspirations, satisfy their desires and enhance their social

skills. Moreover, a report by Van Voorhis et al. (2013) which included 95 studies of family involvement with regard to their childrens' education showed that families have a beneficial social and emotional influence on their children in addition to being essential in helping them develop academically in math and literacy. This was also supported in a study conducted by Jebril and Jad (2020) who asserted that positive competition and cooperation as family interaction forms have a statistically significant positive relationship with self-efficacy (a measure of a person's confidence in his or her capacity to establish and maintain social relationships).

5.4 Research question 4

Can some SES of students with SpLD be predicted through some forms of family interaction?

Multiple regression analysis was used to investigate the predictability of SES through the forms of family interactions in students with SpLD. The results are as shown in Table 13:

Table 13. The results of multiple regression analysis for SES (as a subordinate variable) and forms of family interaction (as separate variables) (n = 59)

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Average squares	F	Sig.	The corrected square of the correlation coefficient
between groups	196.728	4	49.182	1.910	0.411	0.001
within groups	2482.611	51	48.679			
Total variance	2679.339	55				
*. Correlation is significant at the (0.05) level						
**. Correlation is significant at the (0.01) level						

At a significance threshold of 0.05, the F value is determined to be not statistically significant, as indicated by the data in Table 13. This demonstrates how unpredictable it is to measure the level of SES based on the various forms that children with SpLD interact with their families. The proportion of disparities explained by the change in SES resulting from the types of family interaction was 00.1% which indicates that there is no causal relationship. This results contrasts with those of other studies (e.g. Merlo, Bowman and Barnett, 2007; Chazan-Cohen et al., 2009) which found that parental warmth, sensitivity, responsiveness, and support for a child's developing self-control and autonomy were significant predictors of children's socio-emotional, communicative, and cognitive growth and competence. Pomerantz, Moorman, and Litwack (2007) state that when parents support their child's autonomous problem-solving in a developmentally appropriate manner, it improves the child's socio-emotional and cognitive development. Fostering the child's assertiveness, self-direction, and peer communication helps achieve this. Nevertheless, a study by Kaufmann et al. (2000) revealed that parents who were close to their children were better able to predict their children's ability to adapt in elementary school and were better able to indicate the problems they might have than were authoritarian parents. This suggests that family interaction is one of the most influential factors in determining children's SES, attitudes, and behavior in special education from an early age. This is despite the gap in the literature on the relationship between the types of family interaction and the level of SES in the field of special education. Thus, family interaction patterns and how these patterns contribute to the development of various

components of a child's personality must be addressed in order to research the effects of the family environment on children.

6. Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the level of SES among students with SpLD from the viewpoints of their parents and teachers, and to examine whether or not there is a difference between their perspectives with regards to the level of SES. It also sought to look into how different family interaction forms and SES levels relate to one another, and whether the level of SES can be predicted from the type of family interaction. The main results indicate that most SES were perceived by both teachers and parents to be on an average level with the exception of three skills: cooperation and teamwork, building and developing relationships with peers, and emotional expression. Additionally, they demonstrated a non-statistically significant negative correlation between SES and family interaction types, indicating the need to address family interaction types as they influence the development of SES in children with SpLD. The study recommends the introduction of SES in SEN educational plans at schools as they are necessary to help students become more independent, improve their emotions and reactions to various circumstances, and acquire the skills necessary to effectively and efficiently handle the obligations and tasks of daily life.

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