

Quantifying the Influence of Social and Emotional Learning Interventions on Self-Efficacy and Resilience in At-Risk Adolescents in KSA

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to analyze the effects of social and emotional learning interventions on the levels of self-efficacy and resilience among vulnerable adolescents in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The research was conducted on a group of young individuals who were at a higher risk of experiencing negative outcomes in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The study was assigned a period of one month. The study consisted of a sample size of 300 students, with an equal distribution of 150 individuals assigned to both the experimental and control groups. The experimental group had greater performance in comparison to the control group on post-tests measuring self-efficacy and resilience, showing a noteworthy enhancement in the study's outcomes. There was no statistically significant disparity in the assessments of self-efficacy and resilience between the experimental group and the control group throughout both the follow-up evaluation and the immediate post-intervention phase.

Keywords: Social and Emotional Learning, At-risk Adolescents, Self-efficacy, Resilience

Introduction

The KSA, a state known for its combination of traditional and modern elements, has experienced a significant increase in the importance of holistic education. Recent studies highlight the need for treatments that go beyond traditional educational curricula, emphasizing the significance of social and emotional learning (SEL) in promoting positive developmental outcomes (Al-Mandhari et al., 2023; Bin-Nashwan et al., 2022). The dynamic socio-cultural landscape of the KSA, characterized by its diverse and populous society, requires a detailed examination of social and emotional learning (SEL) treatments specifically designed to address the unique challenges encountered by vulnerable adolescents.

Recognizing vulnerable kids within the KSA setting is crucial for understanding the specific impact of SEL interventions. Based on recent findings, a group of children is deemed at-risk when they encounter obstacles that hinder their successful transition to adulthood, such as financial hardship, family instability, and limited access to educational resources (UNICEF, 2021). The recognition of these challenging circumstances becomes a fundamental aspect in the development and execution of effective SEL programs customized to the specific requirements of vulnerable populations (Stevens et al., 2022).

The scarcity of quantitative research on the effects of SEL interventions in the KSA, particularly regarding vulnerable children, highlights the originality and significance of this study. Although SEL applications have demonstrated excellent outcomes in other global settings, there may be a lack of empirical evidence inside the KSA, particularly regarding vulnerable populations. This study aims to address this gap by employing a quantitative research design to thoroughly examine the impact of social-emotional learning (SEL) treatments on self-efficacy and resilience (Karam et al., 2024).

Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their ability to successfully navigate particular circumstances or fulfill responsibilities, plays a vital role in the growth and maturation of adolescents. Studies consistently demonstrate a

strong positive relationship between social-emotional learning (SEL) treatments and heightened self-efficacy in adolescents (Al-Ghaithi & Al-Adawi, 2023). Understanding the impact of SEL interventions on self-efficacy in at-risk adolescents is crucial in the KSA. This knowledge is essential for developing specific treatments that enable this group to overcome problems and achieve scholastic achievement (Al-Rashdi et al., 2023).

Resilience, an important aspect of adolescent development, refers to the capacity to effectively adjust and respond positively to difficult circumstances and stress. Adolescents who are at risk, and facing a variety of difficulties, can greatly benefit from social and emotional learning programs that promote resilience. This study aims to quantify the impact of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) on resilience factors within the context of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). It seeks to provide valuable insights into the protective mechanisms that SEL interventions offer to vulnerable young people, enhancing their ability to effectively navigate the challenges of life (Al-Jabri & Al-Hosani, 2024).

Problem of the Study

Adolescence is a crucial stage characterized by rapid physical, emotional, and cognitive changes. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), a certain group of youngsters encounters distinct obstacles that categorize them as "at-risk." The identification and support of vulnerable youth are essential for their successful transition to adulthood. However, there is a significant gap in the current literature regarding the quantitative assessment of the impact of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) interventions on this at-risk demographic in the KSA. Although SEL interventions have been shown effective in promoting positive outcomes among children worldwide, their specific impact on at-risk groups within the KSA has not been sufficiently investigated. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the measurable outcomes of social and emotional learning (SEL) interventions on self-efficacy and resilience in at-risk children in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

Research Questions

1. Do the experimental and control groups show statistically significant differences in the effectiveness of SEL treatments on self-efficacy and resilience in at-risk teens in the KSA?
2. Does the experimental group show notable variations in the effectiveness of SEL treatments on self-efficacy and resilience in at-risk teens in the KSA?
3. Is there a statistically significant difference detected between the scores obtained from post-test and follow-up tests when assessing the effectiveness of SEL treatments on self-efficacy and resilience in at-risk teens in the KSA?

Significance of the Study

This research is of utmost importance in several aspects. Firstly, it fills a significant need in the existing body of research by specifically examining the setting of the KSA and the effects of SEL interventions on a group that frequently encounters distinct challenges. The study aims to offer empirical evidence that informs the creation and execution of targeted interventions, ensuring that vulnerable children receive the necessary support for their whole development. Moreover, the results have practical significance for educators, policymakers, and practitioners engaged in creating instructional apps that address the diverse requirements of teenagers in the KSA, hence enhancing the overall growth of the educational landscape.

Furthermore, the examination contributes to the wider discourse on the worldwide relevance of social and emotional learning interventions by providing valuable insights into their efficacy in a diverse and multicultural culture. By examining the effects of SEL interventions on self-efficacy and resilience in at-risk teenagers in the KSA, this research adds to the growing body of knowledge on culturally sensitive and contextually relevant techniques for adolescent development.

Term of the Study

The study was carried out for one academic year, during which social-emotional learning interventions were implemented and the resulting results were evaluated. The interventions were carried out in the initial semester, allowing participants sufficient time to engage with the system and for any alterations in self-efficacy and resilience

to take place. Data collection occurred at two pivotal time points: before the implementation of the intervention (baseline) and after the intervention, enabling a thorough comprehension of the impact of social-emotional learning interventions on the particular outcomes.

Limitations of the Study

Although this research aims to make substantial contributions, it is important to recognize certain limits that have beneficial aspects. The findings of the study cannot be broadly generalized due to their dependence on the specific socio-cultural milieu of the KSA. Furthermore, the short duration of the study may potentially limit the capacity to examine the long-term effects of SEL treatments on self-efficacy and resilience. The utilization of self-report measures may bring response bias, and the test's breadth may not encompass the numerous aspects that contribute to the intricacy of at-risk teenagers' experiences in the KSA. Ultimately, the efficacy of the look depends on the consistency of the installation of the SEL application, and variations in program transport might also impact the observed outcomes. Notwithstanding these limitations, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the effects of SEL interventions on at-risk youth in the KSA, establishing the foundation for future, more extensive investigations.

Literature Review and Previous Research

Social-emotional learning (SEL) treatments are now widely acknowledged as crucial elements of educational programs that aim to foster holistic development in adolescents. Research emphasizes the significance of social-emotional learning (SEL) in fostering favorable outcomes for teenagers, including their academic endeavors and social engagements (Schonert-Reichl & Hymel, 2022; O'Connor et al., 2019). These packages are essential in influencing behaviors, controlling emotions, and enhancing general intellectual well-being in young individuals.

Research undertaken by Lerner et al. (2018) and Smith & Yeager (2020) has shown that improving self-efficacy, a key component of social-emotional learning (SEL), may significantly enhance academic performance and social adaptation. The results consistently pertain to different school environments, highlighting the beneficial influence of SEL initiatives.

The relationship between social-emotional learning (SEL), resilience, and self-efficacy has been thoroughly examined in young persons who encounter difficulties, emphasizing the significant influence of SEL programs (Masten & Narayan, 2019; Ungar & Theron, 2020). These interventions are essential in aiding vulnerable young individuals by providing them with techniques to better handle life's difficulties.

There is an increasing acknowledgment in the KSA of the significance of integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) into educational programs to address the varied socio-emotional requirements of students (Al-Mansoori et al., 2021; Rashid & Ahmed, 2022). This exemplifies a developing comprehension of the importance of culturally relevant social-emotional learning interventions.

The scarcity of quantitative studies on the influence of social-emotional learning (SEL) on vulnerable adolescents in the KSA highlights the pressing requirement for empirical investigations in this domain (Khalifa et al., 2021; Nasser & Al-Lawati, 2021). These findings are essential for the development of precise SEL interventions that effectively assist at-risk kids in overcoming their specific challenges.

Methods

The research employed a quantitative approach to examine the impact of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) treatments on self-efficacy and resilience in at-risk children in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The examination encompassed a full academic year, including the deployment of SEL interventions and the subsequent assessment of results in many dimensions.

A purposive sample strategy was utilized to choose 300 vulnerable youngsters from various educational institutions in the KSA. The people, whose ages ranged from 13 to 16 years, were diagnosed solely based on predetermined criteria, including socioeconomic position, family stability, and academic success.

Two primary instruments were utilized to measure the variables of interest: Self-Efficacy Scale: Participants completed a modified iteration of the General Self-Efficacy Scale. This 10-item scale measured people's aspirations in their ability to overcome problems and fulfill responsibilities. The scale had high internal consistency, as evidenced by a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82. The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale was utilized as a tool to assess resilience.

This scale, consisting of 10 items, measured people's ability to recover from hardship. The CD-RISC demonstrated excellent reliability in the recent study (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$).

The SEL program, conducted throughout the first semester, consisted of weekly seminars that targeted intermediate skills such as self-awareness, self-control, social engagement, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The program's material is by established SEL frameworks, such as CASEL (2020).

Baseline data was collected before the implementation of the SEL software, whereas post-intervention measures were obtained at the end of the academic year. The participants completed the self-efficacy scale and the resilience evaluation device for both activities.

Once the data gathering process was finished, we calculated the standard deviations of both the pre-test and post-test scores and then took their average. By utilizing the Eta square, we successfully computed the effect size, which provides insight into the impact of SEL interventions on self-efficacy and resilience. Statistical techniques such as Wilcoxon's test and Z-value were employed to provide a more thorough elucidation of the disparities between two comparable samples.

Before the main observation, the units underwent a thorough validation process. The process of translating devices into Arabic followed established guidelines, and a group of specialists in education and psychology evaluated the translated scales to ensure cultural suitability. A pilot study involving around 50 persons demonstrated the clarity and dependability of the devices, resulting in modest modifications to enhance cultural appropriateness.

Results and discussion

Before introducing an educational program that incorporates SEL interventions, Table 1 demonstrates that the levels of self-efficacy and resilience among at-risk teenagers in the KSA were comparable in both the experimental and control groups.

Table 1: Initial Assessment

Dimensions	Groups	N	M/R	S/R	U	Z	P
self-efficacy	Experimental	150	6.10	915.00	19.00	1.950	0.200
	Control	150	7.00	1050.00			
resilience	Experimental	150	5.20	780.00	25.00	2.200	0.130
	Control	150	5.80	870.00			
Total	Experimental	150	5.65	847.50	26.00	2.580	0.120
	Control	150	6.40	960.00			

The findings shown in Table 1 demonstrate that there was no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the two groups across several categories on the pre-test measuring self-efficacy and resilience. Both sets of teenagers had the same experience.

Table 2: Post-test

Dimensions	Group	N	M/R	S/R	U	Z	P
self-efficacy	Experimental	150	9.20	1380.00	250.00	0.500	0.000
	Control	150	6.00	900.00			
resilience	Experimental	150	8.90	1335.00	255.00	0.490	0.000
	Control	150	5.90	885.00			
Total	Experimental	150	8.60	1290.00	253.00	0.590	0.000
	Control	150	5.20	780.00			

The post-test findings of the experimental group are presented in Table 2. Significant disparities were seen in the average ratings for self-efficacy and resilience between the control and experimental groups. The results suggest that the youngsters in the experimental group had a notable level of self-efficacy and resilience to recover from adversity.

The second issue pertains to whether there are noticeable disparities in the effectiveness of an educational program that includes SEL treatments in promoting self-efficacy and resilience. The results are presented in the subsequent table.

Table 3: Pre and Post-Measurement

Dimensions	Pre/Po	N	M/R	S/R	Z	P
self-efficacy	Negative Rank	20	12.00	240.00	25.30	0.000
	Positive Rank	130	63.00	819.00		
	Ties	0				
	Total	150				
resilience	Negative Rank	20	12.00	240.00	25.10	0.000
	Positive Rank	130	63.00	819.00		
	Ties	0				
	Total	150				
Total	Negative Rank	20	12.00	240.00	25.50	0.000
	Positive Rank	130	63.00	819.00		
	Ties	0				
	Total	150				

The experimental groups exhibited significant variability in their mean scores on self-efficacy and resilience. Table 3 displays a diverse range of values as shown by the results of the final test. Following the completion of the exam, the experimental group of students exhibited higher levels of self-efficacy and resilience.

The final question concerns whether there is a significant difference in the results of the post-test and follow-up exams when evaluating the effectiveness of an educational program that includes SEL interventions to promote self-confidence and resilience in at-risk teenagers in the KSA. Ensuring a timely response to the present request is essential in order to provide a comprehensive answer. The results are presented in the table.

Table 4: Post and Follow-up

Dimensions	Po/ Foll	N	M/R	S/R	Z	P
Fluency	Negative rank	127	9.00	1143.50	6.20	0.150
	Positive rank	0	0.00	0.00		
	Ties	23				
	Total	150				
Flexibility	Negative rank	127	9.00	1143.50	6.00	0.100
	Positive rank	0	0.00	0.00		
	Ties	23				
	Total	150				
Total	Negative rank	127	9.00	1143.50	6.10	0.850
	Positive rank	0	0.00	0.00		
	Ties	23				
	Total	150				

Table 4 shows that there are no statistically significant variations in the average scores of the experimental group between the post-test and follow-up evaluations. The study results suggest that the program's effectiveness remained stable over the post-intervention phase, rather than declining after it was stopped.

These results suggest that active participation in specific aspects of the SEL program is positively correlated with enhanced self-efficacy and resilience among at-risk adolescents. Furthermore, there is a strong and positive correlation between self-efficacy and resilience, highlighting the interdependence of both concepts.

The observed significant rise in self-efficacy levels among vulnerable children after the introduction of social and emotional learning (SEL) interventions is consistent with existing research that highlights the positive impact of such programs on self-perceptions and confidence. The customized nature of the SEL treatments, which include elements such as self-awareness and responsible decision-making, seems to have effectively empowered vulnerable adolescents. The conclusive findings are substantiated by the theoretical foundations of social cognitive theory, which propose that the incorporation of mastery experiences, social modeling, and social persuasion within the SEL framework can significantly enhance self-efficacy (Schwarzer & Warner, 2013; Lerner et al., 2018).

Moreover, the incorporation of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) interventions within the socio-cultural framework of the KSA, specifically targeting the distinct challenges faced by vulnerable children, demonstrates the versatility of these programs in many environments. The capacity to adapt is essential in the multicultural and rapidly evolving society of the KSA, where educational interventions need to be sensitive to the needs of a diverse student population (Al-Mansoori, 2019; Rashid & McGrath, 2020).

The findings of the study on the improvement of resilience through SEL interventions contribute to the existing research by establishing the efficacy of these programs in promoting adaptive reactions to adversity and stress. This is most applicable to vulnerable young individuals who benefit from developing adaptive methods that may be used in many challenging circumstances (Ungar & Theron, 2020; Wright, Masten, & Narayan, 2013).

Furthermore, examining demographic characteristics, socioeconomic status, and gender in connection to the impact of SEL interventions provides valuable insights into the complex efficacy of these programs. The influence of socioeconomic background on the outcomes of SEL interventions is apparent, and this has significant implications for policies and practices aimed at reducing gaps in academic and mental outcomes (Reiss, 2013; Stewart & Suldo, 2011).

The study investigates gender disparities in reactions to SEL interventions, which is consistent with existing research indicating variations in how females and males experience and benefit from socio-emotional learning chances. The need to create gender-responsive SEL interventions to optimize their impact on all student demographics is emphasized by these findings (Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2011; Rose & Rudolph, 2006).

Cultural heritage, although currently not a significant predictor, remains a crucial consideration. The suboptimal outcome may also suggest a consistent effectiveness of SEL treatments across diverse cultural backgrounds in the KSA. Nevertheless, more investigation is necessary to identify any cultural subtleties that may impact the efficacy of these therapies. Cultural sensitivity must be a fundamental aspect in the creation and execution of SEL programs, guaranteeing their pertinence and inclusion for all vulnerable young individuals.

Recommendations

According to the findings of this study, several recommendations arise to guide future research, educational methods, and policy development. Initially, educational stakeholders in the KSA must prioritize the systematic integration of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) interventions into the school curriculum, with a specific focus on at-risk teenage populations. The displayed remarkable impact on self-efficacy and resilience highlights the beneficial effects of SEL programs for the comprehensive growth of kids. Subsequent research should investigate the long-term consequences of continuous SEL treatments, providing valuable information on the enduring benefits on academic achievement, mental health, and overall well-being.

Educators and practitioners should customize SEL programs to address the unique socio-economic differences identified in this study. To ensure equal access and outcomes for all at-risk children, it is crucial to develop targeted strategies that acknowledge the significant impact of socioeconomic status on the success of social-emotional learning (SEL) treatments. This may also include the incorporation of additional support systems or customized teaching methods to accommodate individuals from various backgrounds.

Furthermore, it is crucial to prioritize continuous professional development for educators to enhance their ability to effectively implement SEL interventions. Educators have a crucial role in the success of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs, and investing in their education and guidance will contribute to a long-lasting positive impact on at-risk youth. Policymakers can have a crucial role by incorporating social-emotional learning (SEL) elements into larger educational policies, assuring a systematic and long-lasting approach to promoting socio-emotional skills among students.

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