



The role of values education in fostering students' social and emotional learning in the Secondary Schools of Marcos

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ABSTRACT

This research examined the significance of value education in promoting social and emotional learning (SEL) within secondary schools in Marcos. The objective was to analyze how educators incorporate values education into their instructional methods and the challenges they encountered in this process. Employing a qualitative research approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with teachers from three secondary institutions in Marcos. Thematic analysis indicated that values such as empathy, respect, responsibility, and kindness play a crucial role in enhancing students' emotional regulation, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills. Nevertheless, educators reported various challenges in executing values education, including limited time, inadequate resources, and a lack of training in SEL techniques. Despite these challenges, teachers exhibited flexibility and dedication, discovering innovative methods to weave values education into their curricula. The results imply that while values education is essential for the emotional and social growth of students, schools must offer increased support, resources, and professional development to improve the efficacy of SEL initiatives. This research contributes to the expanding literature on SEL, highlighting its critical role in developing well-rounded students prepared to navigate the complexities of contemporary society.

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Introduction

Values education is fundamental in shaping the character of students by embedding moral principles and directing their decision-making processes. It lays the groundwork for ethical conduct, aiding students in cultivating respect, empathy, and integrity, which are vital for fostering positive social interactions (UNESCO, 2017) as the contemporary educational framework evolves towards holistic development, values education is increasingly associated with social and emotional learning (SEL), which

emphasize self-awareness, emotional regulation, and relationship skills (Weissberg et al., 2019). The amalgamation of these two educational methodologies promotes not only academic achievement but also emotional resilience and responsible citizenship. Social and emotional learning provides students with crucial life skills that enhance their well-being and future achievements.

Studies show that SEL programs significantly bolster students' capacity to manage their emotions, resolve conflicts, and establish meaningful relationships (Taylor et al., 2017). Educational institutions that integrate SEL with values education observe reduced instances of behavioral problems, bullying, and emotional distress, thereby fostering a more inclusive and supportive educational atmosphere (Mahney et al., 2018). This collaboration between SEL and values education enriches the overall character development of students, equipping them to tackle intricate social challenges.

In the current fast-evolving society, the integration of values education with social-emotional learning (SEL) is increasingly crucial. As students face a variety of social and emotional situations, providing them with robust moral and emotional intelligence enables them to cultivate resilience and adaptability (Durlak et al., 2022). Educational institutions play a significant role in reinforcing these skills by incorporating values education, and SEL equips students to become responsible, ethical, and emotionally intelligent individuals who make positive contributions to society.

While there is a growing body of research emphasizing the importance of both values education and social-emotional learning (SEL), there remains a notable gap in studies that explicitly examine their integrated implementation within school curricula. Most existing research tends to treat values education and SEL as separate domains, with limited exploration of how their combined approach can more effectively support students' holistic development—particularly in fostering moral reasoning alongside emotional intelligence. Additionally, while studies like Durlak et al. (2022) highlight the positive outcomes of SEL, fewer investigations have focused on how integrating core values (e.g., empathy, responsibility, integrity) within SEL programs may influence long-term behavioral and societal outcomes. This gap presents a critical opportunity for future research to explore not only the synergies between values education and SEL but also their practical integration in diverse educational settings and their measurable impact on student development.

It is with this context that this research aimed to examine the significance of values education and social-emotional learning (SEL) in the secondary schools of Marcos in promoting holistic student development. These schools actively integrate values and SEL into their curriculum, extracurricular activities, and classroom practices to nurture students' character and emotional intelligence. Through structured SEL initiatives, ethical discussions, and community engagement projects, students develop essential life skills such as empathy, respect, integrity, self-awareness, and responsibility. By emphasizing values education alongside academic achievement, the secondary schools in Marcos strive to cultivate well-rounded individuals who are equipped to contribute positively to their communities and navigate the complexities of the modern world.

Literature review

This section provides an overview of the literature and studies pertinent to the research. The review aimed to place the study within the current body of knowledge, emphasizing the significance of value education in enhancing students' social and emotional learning (SEL) in secondary schools, especially in the context of Marcos. By examining relevant literature, this section sought to investigate how to values awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation. The review also aimed to pinpoint challenges encountered by educators, including limited time and resources, along with the necessity for culturally relevant teaching approaches. Furthermore, it underscored the significance of values education in fostering positive social interactions and emotional resilience among students, thereby laying a foundation for effective teaching strategies, perspectives of scholars like Schonert-Reichl (2017) and Lovat et al. (2011), who highlighted the critical role of SEL in the comprehensive development of students.

Challenges in implementing values education for social and emotional learning (SEL)

The integration of values education alongside social-emotional learning (SEL) in secondary schools faces numerous systematic, instructional, and cultural challenges. A primary concern is the limited time designated within the school curriculum. Educators often feel pressure to meet standardized academic objectives, leaving insufficient time for the meaningful, reflective incorporation of SEL activities. As a result, values education may be perceived as secondary to core subjects, leading to missed opportunities for increased student engagement (OECD, 2021).

Another significant obstacle is the lack of available resources. Schools situated in marginalized areas, such as Marcos, Ilocos Norte, frequently operate with constrained funding, which impedes their capacity to obtain culturally relevant SEL materials or to provide ongoing professional development for educators. (UNESCO, 2021). Without customized instructional resources of localized examples, teachers lack the essential tools to deliver impactful lessons that resonate with students' lived experiences. Moreover, the cultural dissonance between standardized SEL curricula and the values of local communities can further impede the effectiveness of these programs. Students from indigenous or rural backgrounds may find it challenging to relate to generic SEL frameworks that do not recognize specific traditions, languages, and social structures. This disconnect can lead to reduced student interest and the perception that values student development, SEL programs must be culturally responsive and reflective of the local context (CAEL, 2020).

Struggles faced by educators and students

Educators frequently express concerns about inadequate training in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) instruction. Numerous educators feel ill-equipped to manage emotional or behavioral issues in the classroom due to a deficiency in formal education or ongoing professional development in this area. Lacking sufficient skills, teachers may default to traditional disciplinary approaches rather than supportive interventions, which can hinder students' emotional growth (Jennings, 2018).

Simultaneously, students are facing a rise in mental health challenges. Adolescents often grapple with stress, anxiety, social isolation, and peer conflicts, all of which directly impact their academic performance and emotional well-being (Weissberg et al., 20216). SEL aims to address these issues; however, without consistent application throughout the school, its benefits are limited. In disadvantaged regions, students may lack access to counseling or peer support systems, worsening their emotional struggle (UNESCO, 2021).

Furthermore, resistance to change from educators, administrators, and even parents can obstruct the implementation of SEL. Some stakeholders may perceive values education as irrelevant to academic success or at odds with cultural or religious beliefs. This skepticism can delay essential reforms and result in inconsistent application of SEL strategies across classrooms and schools (OECD, 2021).

Strategies to enhance values education and SEL

One effective approach to address time constraints is to integrate values education into existing subject areas. This interdisciplinary approach allows educators to highlight SEL themes such as empathy, integrity, and responsibility within academic lessons spanning language, social studies, and even science. Incorporating SEL into the curriculum fosters stronger connections between academic content and real-world applications (CASEL, 2020).

Enhancing professional development is also vital. Educators benefit from training that improves their skills and confidence in delivering SEL content through culturally relevant teaching methods. Ongoing workshops, reflective learning groups, and mentoring programs can support teachers in adapting SEL strategies to fit their classrooms (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019)

Fostering a supportive school environment is another essential strategy. Offering opportunities for student leadership, peer mentorship, and restorative practices cultivates a sense of safety and belonging. These methods encourage prosocial behavior and provide students with authentic contexts to practice values such as respect, cooperation, and emotional regulation (Mahfud et al., 2020).

Finally, support from school leadership and policy is crucial. When school leaders prioritize SEL in planning, teacher evaluations, and community involvement, it clearly conveys that emotional development is integral to educational success. A comprehensive school-wide strategy helps align vision, resources, and practices, ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of SEL initiatives (OECD, 2021).

Statement of the problems

This study explored the role of values education in fostering students' Social and emotional learning in the secondary schools of Marcos. It specifically sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the roles of values education in fostering social and emotional learning in students and challenges faced by teachers in integrating values education into the classroom?

Research methodology

This research utilized a qualitative research design to investigate the significance of values education in promoting students' social and emotional learning (SEL) within secondary schools in Marcos. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and via a Google form with teachers chosen through purposive sampling, concentrating on their experiences. Analysis was employed to interpret the data, with ethical considerations including throughout the research process.

Research design

A descriptive phenomenological approach was employed, as it facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences, challenges, and coping strategies of teachers in incorporating values education into their classrooms. This methodology was especially effective in capturing the subjective realities of educators and in identifying recurring themes associated with their experiences in teaching values and addressing the emotional and social needs of students.

Locale of the study

The research was carried out in three secondary schools located in Marcos, which offered a pertinent context for investigating the implementation of values education in local educational environments. These institutions were selected due to their distinct demographic and educational traits, providing a chance to analyze how educators incorporated values education into the wider context of social and emotional learning.

Population and sampling

The research concentrated on secondary school educators in Marcos, who were chosen using purposive sampling. This method guaranteed that the participants possessed firsthand experience in delivering values education and promoting social-emotional learning (SEL) within their classrooms. The sample size aligned with qualitative research principles, focusing on gaining an in-depth look into the unique experiences of individual teachers instead of generalizing the results. Participants were selected based on their involvement in incorporating values education into their instructional methods.

Data gathering instruments

Data were gathered via online and in-person interviews, enabling participants to articulate their experience and challenges in their own terms. The open-ended questions concentrated on educators' experiences with values education, the obstacles they encountered, and the methods they employed to address them.

Data analysis tools

Thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), was employed to examine the interview data. This process included transcribing the interviews, recognizing recurring patterns, and organizing responses into themes. The researcher made use of qualitative data analysis software (such as NVivo) to facilitate the coding process, thereby ensuring the rigor and transparency of the analysis. The themes were further refined through member checking, peer debriefing, and triangulation to improve the validity of the findings.

Ethical standards

Ethical considerations were rigorously followed during the entire study. Participants were made aware of the study's objectives and gave their written consent before participating in the interviews. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing the data, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any moment without any repercussions. The data were securely stored, with only the researcher having access to raw data, thus safeguarding the privacy and rights of the participants.

Results and discussions

Values education fundamentally supports students' social and emotional learning by cultivating emotional intelligence, empathy, self-awareness, self-regulation, and interpersonal skills. According to Cambridge's *World of Better Learning* blog (2023), emotional development—including recognizing and managing one's own and others' emotions, building empathy, and fostering resilience—is deeply connected to exploring and understanding values like kindness, cooperation, and caring for others and the environment. Similarly, preschool educators emphasize that values education (VE) fosters virtues such as empathy, fairness, and self-discipline, enabling moral understanding and personal growth beyond mere moral instruction (Halstead & Taylor, 2010, as cited in *Educ. Sci.*, 2025). Together, these underline that values education provides a foundation for students to navigate social complexities and enhance vital SEL competencies such as self-awareness, relationship-building, and ethical decision-making.

Embedding values in education yields lasting benefits for students' emotional well-being, societal engagement, and academic success. A wide-ranging meta-analysis of school-based prevention and SEL programs found significant and positive effects across domains like emotional skills, pro-social behavior, reduced conduct problems, emotional distress, and academics. Furthermore, a systematic review in 2025 stressed that SEL interventions increase self-awareness, emotional regulation, interpersonal skills, resilience, and overall learning outcomes—and highlighted the significant role teachers and school culture play in their effectiveness. These findings suggest that when values education is intentionally integrated into school culture and pedagogy—especially via supportive teacher modeling and systematic implementation—it not only nurtures students' social-emotional development but also fosters long-term character strengths, academic engagement, and civic-mindedness.

Values education is vital in promoting Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) by assisting students in cultivating key emotional competencies such as empathy, respect, and emotional awareness, which serve as the foundation for constructive social interactions and personal development (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2020)

The following statements by the participants are their answers regarding the roles of values education in fostering social and emotional learning (SEL):

Design tasks that require students to demonstrate emotional awareness, such as group projects, presentations, or community service activities. Assess their ability to work collaboratively, show empathy, and manage stress.” (P5)

“When students practiced respect and kindness, it helped them build better relationships with their peers and manage their emotions more effectively.” (P11)

“I can assess whether students are developing emotional awareness through values education through observing their actions in certain circumstances.” (P1)

“During group projects or difficult circumstances, teachers can observe how students behave with others, handle conflict, and control their emotions.” (P9)

Integrating values education into the curriculum is vital for fostering students’ social and emotional skills, as emphasized by recent studies that highlight its significance in improving emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills (Jones & Bouffard, 2019). Through encouraging respect, kindness, and emotional awareness, students are more equipped to navigate interpersonal challenges and manage their emotions effectively (Durlak et al., 2016).

Problem: What are the roles of values education in fostering social and emotional learning in students and challenges faced by teachers in integrating values education into the classroom?

Table 1: The roles of values education in fostering social and emotional learning in students and challenges faced by teachers in integrating values education into the classroom

Theme	Categories	Number of Respondents
Theme 1: Emotional development	Empathy and compassion	5
	Emotional regulation and stress management	3
	Responsibility and accountability	4
Theme 2: Behavioral impact	Respect and empathy reduce disruptive behavior	4
	Development of honesty, integrity, kindness, and self-discipline	5
	Positive peer support and conflict resolution	3
Theme 3: Implementation challenges	Time constraint in integrating values education	3
	Lack of training/professional development	6
	Student disinterested or differing value systems	3

Source: Social–emotional learning (2025); The Values of Honesty and Discipline in Character Education for Early Childhood, International Journal of Innovation and Education Research, August 1, 2023; Marey E. Cezar (2018; accessed context 2025), Importance of Values Education in Classroom Management

Theme 1: Emotional development

Emotional development refers to the process through which individuals learn to understand, express, and manage their emotions over time. It begins in early childhood and continues throughout life, shaping how people interact with others, handle stress, and make decisions. Key aspects of emotional development include recognizing one's own emotions, developing empathy, forming healthy

relationships, and learning appropriate emotional responses. This growth is influenced by a combination of biological factors, personal experiences, and social interactions.

Under Emotional Development are **core components or themes of social-emotional learning (SEL)** and **values education**. More specifically, they are empathy and compassion; emotional regulation and stress management; and responsibility and accountability.

Empathy and compassion involve understanding and sharing the feelings of others (empathy) and showing kindness and concern for their well-being (compassion). In Emotional Regulation and Stress Management, these refer to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's emotions and stress levels in healthy ways. Likewise, in Responsibility and Accountability, responsibility is taking ownership of one's actions and duties, while accountability involves being answerable for one's behavior and decisions. Both are crucial for personal integrity and social trust.

The following statements by the participants illustrate the emotional development in implementing values education:

“Empathy and compassion are profoundly cultivated through values education. Our students acquire the ability to comprehend and share the emotions of their peers, particularly those who are experiencing poverty or familial difficulties. This fosters a robust sense of “panagsisinnaranay” -an Ilocano principle that signifies “helping one another.” (P2)

“Many face peer conflicts or academic pressures, and through lessons focused on self-awareness, respect, and emotional control, they learn to navigate feelings such as anger, stress, and anxiety. Rather than responding impulsively, they become more reflective and deliberate in their reactions, thereby fostering harmony both in school and at home.” (P10)

“There is a marked enhancement in students' sense of responsibility and accountability. When values like honesty, diligence, and respect are consistently emphasized, students start to internalize these ideals. I frequently observe students who are willing to acknowledge their errors, extend genuine apologies, and accept responsibility for their interactions with their families and communities.” (P6)

The emotional growth of students is backed by comprehensive research on social and emotional learning (SEL) conducted by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). CASEL's framework highlights essential competencies such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, responsible decision-making, and resilience, all of which are evident in the responses that illustrate how values education nurtures empathy through “panagsisinnaranay”, assists students in managing their emotions amidst peer and academic pressures, encourages accountability, and fosters perseverance in the face of economic difficulties. These SEL competencies have been demonstrated to enhance students' emotional well-being, social interactions, and academic success, thereby affirming that the educational strategy described in Marcos effectively promotes students' emotional development.

Moreover, insights gained from observations during group activities provide educators with essential information to assess students' progress in social and emotional learning, ultimately supporting their development into empathetic, resilient, and socially responsible individuals (Payton et al., 2018). The integration of values education with SEL creates a synergy to address complex social issues (UNESCO, 2017; Weissberg et al., 2019).

The thematic analysis revealed that educators from all three secondary schools in Marcos believed that values education was essential for fostering social and emotional learning (SEL) among their students. They noted that those values, such as empathy, respect, responsibility, and kindness, played a significant role in enhancing students' emotional regulation, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills. These findings were consistent with research demonstrating how values education promotes the development of social and emotional competencies (Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

Theme 2: Behavioral impact

Behavioral impact refers to the effect that various internal and external factors have on an individual's actions, reactions, and overall conduct. These influences can include emotional states, environmental conditions, social interactions, cultural norms, and learned experiences. Understanding behavioral impact is essential in fields like psychology, education, and public health, as it helps explain why people behave the way they do and how behavior can be guided or changed. By studying behavioral impact, we can develop strategies to promote positive behaviors and reduce harmful or undesirable ones.

Under behavioral impact are respect and empathy, reducing disruptive behavior; development of honesty, integrity, kindness, and self-discipline; and positive peer support and conflict resolution, which represent outcomes or benefits of effective values education and social-emotional learning (SEL). They describe the behavioral, emotional, and social improvements that can result from teaching core values and SEL competencies.

Respect and empathy, reducing disruptive behavior is a way of promoting respect and empathy that helps create a more inclusive and understanding classroom environment. This leads to fewer conflicts and reduces disruptive behavior, as students become more aware of how their actions affect others. Likewise, in the development of honesty, integrity, kindness, and self-discipline describe these as foundational character traits that are cultivated through values education. They contribute to ethical behavior, personal responsibility, and positive social interactions. And lastly, self-discipline, positive peer support, and conflict resolution, students learn to support one another and resolve conflicts constructively rather than through aggression or avoidance. These skills strengthen peer relationships and enhance the overall learning environment.

“Students who used to be disruptive have learned respect and empathy, leading to better classroom behavior.” (P6)

“They now listen attentively, support classmates, and resolve conflicts calmly.” (P3)

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“I’ve seen students show genuine compassion, like standing up for a peer who was being excluded.”
(P7)

In educational environments, students who often displayed disruptive behavior learned lessons in respect and empathy through values education, leading to significant improvements in their behavior and social interactions (Taylor et al., 2017). As time went on, these students began to listen more carefully, support their classmates, and handle conflicts in a calm manner, which enhanced their relationships and created a more positive classroom environment. As they matured, students increasingly embraced values such as honesty, integrity, kindness, and self-discipline, demonstrating substantial behavioral growth despite earlier challenges in emotional regulation. Instances of empathy became evident—such as when a student stood up for a peer who was being excluded, showing genuine compassion.

Theme 3: Implementation challenges

Integrating values education into the classroom was not considered a problem by most teachers; in fact, they reported using it in nearly every class. They believed it was essential to incorporate values education frequently, as many students needed it the most. However, time remained a major issue. Finding ways to fit values education naturally into academic lessons proved to be challenging.

Challenges in integrating values education

Time constraint in integrating values education

One of the primary challenges in implementing values education is the limited time available within the school curriculum. With an already packed schedule focused on academic subjects and performance standards, teachers often struggle to find room to incorporate values-based lessons in a meaningful way. This constraint can result in values education being treated as a secondary priority, rather than being seamlessly integrated across subjects and daily classroom activities. Without dedicated time, students may miss opportunities to reflect on and practice ethical decision-making and character development.

“Time constraints are a major issue. Our curriculum is already packed with core subjects like math, science, and language arts, and there’s very little room left to add values education without sacrificing something else. Finding meaningful ways to integrate these lessons into daily teaching is a constant struggle, and sometimes it feels like values education gets pushed to the side.” (P3)

A study on “Teachers’ Time Poverty” describes how educators frequently feel inundated by tasks and responsibilities, leading to what’s termed as “subjective time poverty”—the sensation of having too many obligations but insufficient time to fulfill them. This condition undermines teachers’ ability to plan and deliver additional content like values education, as their work time is stretched thin across competing demands. The research emphasizes that reducing this time scarcity is critical to improving teaching quality and teacher well-being (Liu et al., 2023).

An OECD report highlights a broader challenge: curriculum overload. As educational systems attempt to cover an expanding breadth of subject matter—including 21st-century skills and values—the allotted instructional time becomes insufficient. Without careful design choices and prioritization, the addition

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of values-based content can exacerbate instructional overload, making it more difficult to meaningfully include values education alongside core academic requirements (OECD, 2020).

Both studies reinforce the notion that **time scarcity**—both as a subjective psychological experience and as a systemic structural issue—poses a real obstacle to embedding values education into an already compressed curriculum. If you'd like, I can help locate additional studies, possibly with a local or regional focus, or research on specific subject areas.

Lack of training/Professional development

Many educators feel unprepared to effectively teach values education due to a lack of specialized training or professional development. Teaching values involves more than delivering content—it requires skills in facilitating discussions, handling sensitive topics, and modeling ethical behavior. When teachers are not equipped with the right tools and understanding, the delivery of values education can become inconsistent or superficial. Ongoing training and support are essential to empower educators to approach values education confidently and competently.

“There’s a clear lack of training and professional development. Many of us haven’t had formal preparation on how to teach values like empathy, respect, or ethical decision-making. These topics can be sensitive, especially when they touch on students’ personal or cultural beliefs, and without proper guidance, it’s hard to feel confident facilitating those discussions effectively.” (P1)

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According to Breaux (2023) in his study revealed that Elementary general education teachers reported that dyslexia training failed to cover the five core competencies of social-emotional learning (SEL). Teachers said they had to rely on what they'd learned in other professional development to meet their students' SEL needs. They explicitly stated that the existing dyslexia training "needs to be revamped.

This supports the notion that when training lacks depth—especially regarding sensitive, value-related content like SEL—teachers feel unprepared to facilitate it effectively, underscoring the need for focused and supported professional development.

Student disinterest or differing value systems

Another significant challenge is addressing student disinterest or the presence of differing value systems within a diverse classroom. Students come from various cultural, social, and familial backgrounds, which influence their personal values and perspectives. When values education conflicts with a student’s existing beliefs or feels irrelevant to their daily lives, engagement can drop. Educators must create an inclusive environment where open dialogue is encouraged, allowing students to explore different viewpoints while promoting respect, empathy, and critical thinking.

“Some students see values education as irrelevant or boring, especially if the lessons don’t connect to their real-life experiences. Additionally, students come from diverse backgrounds with different value systems, which can sometimes lead to confusion or pushback when discussing certain topics.” (P5)

According to the research of Hill, et al (2024) (Implied within broader scoping review of values in science education), it highlights that when students’ personal values conflict with those emphasized by their teacher or classroom environment, it leads to negative reactions like frustration, anxiety, or disinterest—clear indicators of disengagement. Conversely, when classroom practices align with students’ values—through teaching methods, curriculum, or classroom interactions—students report greater **enjoyment, connectedness, meaning**, and resilience in the face of challenges.

Teachers from the three schools also recognized various obstacles in successfully incorporating values education into their classrooms. These challenges correspond with earlier studies that emphasize the difficulty of reconciling academic requirements with social-emotional learning (SEL) initiatives. Lovat et al., 2011. Despite these challenges, the importance of values education in nurturing well-rounded and emotionally intelligent learners remains widely recognized.

Additionally, cultural differences between standardized SEL programs and the values of local communities can hinder student engagement and relevance. Teachers may also experience pushback from various stakeholders who question the significance of values education in relation to academic performance or express concerns about cultural compatibility. These challenges highlight the need for schools to provide adequate support, culturally appropriate materials, and ongoing professional development to effectively incorporate value education into their teaching methodologies (OECD, 2021; Mahfud et al., 2020).

Although the research revealed that teachers faced numerous challenges, it also aligned with broader literature emphasizing the need for enhanced professional development in value education. Recent studies (Loyal et al., 2017) have demonstrated that educators must be equipped with the necessary tools and strategies to effectively implement SEL in their classrooms. The findings of this study further highlighted the importance of a supportive school environment that encourages teachers to integrate SEL more effectively, thereby promoting long-term benefits for students’ emotional and social well-being.

Conclusion

Values education plays a vital role in fostering social and emotional learning (SEL) among students, particularly in secondary school settings. Through integrating core values such as empathy, respect, responsibility, and kindness, it helps students develop emotional regulation, self-awareness, and positive interpersonal skills—key components of holistic development. These values empower students to better understand and manage their emotions, build meaningful relationships, and contribute to a supportive, inclusive school environment.

The findings of this study focused on the roles of values education in fostering social and emotional learning in students and the challenges faced by teachers in integrating values education into the classroom. In terms of the roles, it stressed two themes first is emotional development, which includes empathy and compassion; emotional regulation and stress management; and responsibility and accountability. The second is behavioral impact, which includes respect and empathy, reducing disruptive behavior; development of honesty, integrity, kindness, and self-discipline; and Positive peer support and conflict resolution.

Regarding the challenges, the study highlighted the implementation challenges, which include time constraints in integrating values education and a lack of training/professional development. Other teachers identified several barriers and challenges, including a limited ability to cover both academic subjects and values education, a shortage of adequate resources, and the need for further training in effectively teaching SEL.

The integration of values education into the secondary school curriculum was seen as a vital strategy for nurturing emotional resilience and fostering positive social interactions. Teachers play a crucial role in this process by modeling and teaching values that help students navigate both personal and social challenges. Addressing the challenges related to time, training, and resources is essential to fully realize the potential of values education in enhancing students' social and emotional learning.

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