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## Developing Personal and Social Skills and Their Impact on Reducing Students with Learning Disabilities' Negative Attitudes Towards Their Learning Environment

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**Abstract.** Personal and social skills for students affect their attitudes towards their learning environment. The study aimed to examine the effectiveness of a training programme for developing personal and social skills using a quasi-experimental design. The study applied instruments prepared by the researchers: the Emotional and Social Skills Scale, Attitudes Towards the Learning Environment Scale, and Diagnostic Assessment Scale for Reading Difficulties, to reduce negative attitudes towards the learning environment. The study's sample was 50 students divided into two groups: treatment and control. Each group comprised 13 male and 12 female students with learning disabilities at the primary stage; their ages ranged between 11.5 and 12.4 years. The results revealed that the training sessions and the activities of the training programme had a positive impact at the 0.05 level. The programme developed positive attitudes and reduced negative attitudes towards the learning environment for students with learning disabilities. Training programmes play a crucial role in enhancing and energising schools' awareness of learners' emotions. The study emphasised the importance of developing personal and social skills, such as self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills, and how these contribute to improving academic achievement and fostering a positive perception of the learning environment and its components.

**Keywords:** Attitude; Learning Disabilities; Personal; Social Skills; Students

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## 1. Introduction

Attitudes have a major role in determining a learner's behaviour towards their peers and their learning environment. Al-Amayra's (2014) study found that students with learning disabilities' (SLD) negative attitudes towards their learning environment are reflected in their violent behaviours in their relationships with others, owing to a lack of control over their unpleasant emotions. Attitudes have multiple functions: they determine learners' responses to things, subjects, or people; express learners' compliance with the communities' customs, values, and cultures; they affect the learners' interactions with their communities and with the groups to which they belong and how they see them and facilitate their decision making in the different situations they face (Qatami, 1998). Learners' attitudes directly affect their behaviour and work to direct and control their interactions with others.

Good personal and social skills are emotional components which have a place in building a normal and integrated personality for the learner (Saeed, 2006). Studies confirm that learners' future success cannot only be predicted by intelligence test results, but also by their personal and social skills (Pfeiffer & Steven, 2001). Mansi (2002) found that there is a correlation between an individual's personal and social skills and thinking. If SLDs lack personal and social skills, it negatively affects their attitudes towards their learning environment (Bedaiwy et al., 2021), making them more impulsive and aggressive, and decreasing their self-control skills, self-confidence and empathy (Henley & Nicholas, 1999). Learners with low personal and social skills are often self-centred, unable to form successful social relationships and regulate their emotions and have a sense of anxiety and frustration (Elias, 2004). Some studies have confirmed that SLDs' attitudes towards their learning environment are negative (Aldalbahi, 2019).

Goleman (2000) and Jadu (2005) indicate that learners with reading difficulties are often more aggressive than others in the academic environment, and their attitudes towards what they are studying are more negative. The American Psychological Association (APA) confirmed that more than three million cases of violence occur on school and university campuses in one year, equivalent to 16 000 cases of violence per day (American Psychological Association, 2003). Learners who possess good personal and social skills are more able to adapt socially; they are often academically superior and are less resistant to change and forming positive attitudes, allowing them to reach a level of psychological and self-realisation (Al-Khidr & Al-Fadli, 2007).

Hagarty and Gavin (2020) emphasise the need for and feasibility of programmes that develop personal and social skills, as the acquisition of these skills by SLD contributes to more positive attitudes, enabling them to adapt to life's developments. Training programmes benefit SLD in their academic and social lives, increasing their psychological self-esteem and positive perceptions of themselves, which enhances their motivation to learn and succeed in life (Henley & Nicholas, 1999). Nurhayati et al. (2024) highlight how online preschool programmes not only prepare children academically but also contribute to their social, emotional, and religious growth.

Some studies found that training programmes contribute to a high level of academic achievement among students, reduce common behavioural problems in schools, and improve the school atmosphere and social relationships between students (Aldalbahi, 2019; Gabaga, 2024). The researchers' observations have also ascertained the importance of training programmes in creating positive relationships between teachers and their students. The study's problem is how to develop the SLDs' personal and social skills and reduce negative attitudes towards their learning environments.

The importance of the current study lies in its focus on developing personal and social skills that contribute to reducing negative attitudes towards the learning environment for students with learning difficulties. The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of a training programme for developing personal and social skills for primary school students, using a quasi-experimental design. The results of this study will contribute to improving the personal and social skills of primary school students, increasing their positive attitudes towards school, and reducing the negative attitudes of SLDs towards the school environment. The contribution of this study lies in its ability to reduce educational waste and increase positive motivations towards education, especially for SLDs.

### **1.1 The Study Problem and Hypotheses**

The study's problem focused on the following question: What is the impact of an existing training programme on the development of personal and social skills among SLDs, and does it reduce their negative attitudes towards the learning environment? The study formulated the following hypotheses:

H1: There are statistically significant differences between the mean ranks of the control and treatment groups in the post administration of the social and personal skills in favour of treatment one.

H2: There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control and treatment groups in the post administration of the attitudes towards the learning environment in favour of treatment one.

H3: There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the treatment group in the pre-post administrations of the social and personal skills in favour of post one.

H4: There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the treatment group in the pre-post administrations of the attitudes towards the learning environment in favour of post one.

## **2. Literature Review**

Al-Samadouni (2007) studied personal skills, which are represented in self-awareness, feelings, emotions, and awareness of thoughts related to those feelings and emotions. He found that SLDs have weak abilities to perceive their emotions and the emotions of those around them, which affects their ability to motivate their learning drive. Khawaldeh (2004) studied self-motivation skills that provide

individuals with the energy needed to perform well and achieve their goals, as well as the importance of training programmes in enhancing self-motivation for education. Shapiro (2004) studied self-control skills represented by the learner's ability to withstand strong emotions, control them, and get rid of negative emotions and produced some recommendations to modify behaviour.

Jajiga (2018) found that dyslexia is a prevalent academic learning disability and is the main reason behind the academic failure of learners, and the negative impact on their self-concept and personal and social skills. Muhammad et al. (2021) identified the effectiveness of a programme in improving social skills among SLD between 9 and 12 years. The results indicated the effectiveness of the training programme in improving students' social skills. Bayoumi (2021) sought to reveal the effectiveness of training programmes to develop social skills among 12 female SLD students, using experimental models. The study found that diversifying training programmes contributes to improving the social skills of female students.

Abdel-Nabi (2021) aimed to reveal the effectiveness of a training programme based on Keegan's strategies for developing social skills for female SLD, aged between 9 and 12 years. The results indicated the effectiveness of the training programme in improving their social skills in schools. Li et al. (2023) found that understanding the components of students' cognitive, affective, and behavioural attitudes is useful for anticipating their behaviour and positively influencing their attitudes towards learning environments.

Gabaga (2024) studied the common behavioural problems among academically learning-disabled students in the primary stage from the perspective of their teachers and concluded that behavioural problems are more prevalent among males than females. The study recommended the necessity to develop therapeutic plans to reduce the level of academic learning difficulties among students to decrease behavioural problems at school.

Some studies have focused on various methods for developing learners' personal and social skills and have attempted to implement psychological programmes aimed at changing students' attitudes towards learning (Al-Khidr & Al-Fadli, 2007; Bedaiwy, 2016; Goleman et al., 2002; Ibrahim, 2015; Saeed, 2006). Modifying the attitudes of SLD towards the learning environment requires significant efforts, as attitude formation is complex, internal, and related to the individual's personality.

However, well-planned attitude modification programmes can yield positive results in increasing students' orientations towards the learning environment (Bedaiwy, 2016), such as changing the peer group to which the student belongs, altering emotional and social attitudes by using motivational words, and influencing learners through various media (Al-Rimawi, 2006).

Previous studies have demonstrated the importance of training programmes in developing personal and social skills and their impact on reducing negative attitudes among SLD towards their learning environment. The current study attempts to determine the effectiveness of a proposed programme in developing

the personal and social skills of SLD (males and females) and reducing their negative attitudes towards the school learning environment.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Study Participants

The study sample was chosen intentionally and included students with reading difficulties in [Alekaal Alkebly] primary school, [Albadari] Administration, Egypt. It consisted of 50 male and female students. Their ages ranged from 11.5 to 12.4 years, with an average of 121.80 months and a standard deviation of 3.64.

They were divided into two groups: a control group of 25 students and a treatment group of 25 students (13 male & 12 female) for each. It was verified through school records and the residential environment that there were no social, family, or health problems among the participants in the control and treatment groups and all their families were at similar social and economic levels. Strict standards of integrity and confidentiality were followed to maintain the privacy of student data. Tables 1, 2, and 3 show the variables of the two groups.

**Table 1: t-Value between Mean Ranks of Control and Treatment Groups in the Dimensions of the Social and Emotional Skills Scale (N=25)**

Variables	Group	Mean	Std.	t-value	Sig.
Self-Awareness	Control	26.56	4.71	1.677	Not
	Treatment	27.44	4.33		
Self-Control	Control	27.96	4.43	1.632	Not
	Treatment	29.96	4.52		
Self-Motivation	Control	29.40	5.90	1.920	Not
	Treatment	31.72	4.78		
Self-Acceptance	Control	29.04	5.69	1.814	Not
	Treatment	31.24	4.57		
Self-Integration with Others	Control	27.16	4.39	1.767	Not
	Treatment	28.12	4.08		
Total Score	Control	137.12	13.07	1.860	Not
	Treatment	139.48	11.41		

Table 1 shows that there are no differences between control and treatment groups in the dimensions of the Emotional and Social Skills Scale, including self-awareness, self-control, self-motivation, self-acceptance, self-integration with others and the total score for emotional and social skills. The t-values are in order between the two groups according to dimensions of the scale and their total score as follows: 1.677, 1.632, 1.920, 1.814, 1.767, and 1.860. All values are not statistically significant, and this confirms the congruence between control and treatment groups in the Emotional and Social Skills Scale and their sub-dimensions.

**Table 2: t-Value between Mean Ranks of Control and Treatment Groups in the Dimensions of Negative Attitudes Towards the Learning Environment Scale (N=25)**

Variables	Group	Mean	Std.	t-value	Sig.
Attitude towards peers and friends in the school	Control	26.12	4.19	1.176	Not
	Treatment	27.92	4.36		
Attitude towards teachers, administrators, and technicians in the school	Control	26.40	3.97	1.768	Not
	Treatment	27.40	4.22		
Attitude towards the classroom and school environment	Control	26.08	4.57	1.882	Not
	Treatment	28.92	3.74		
Total Score	Control	81.60	9.88	1.889	Not
	Treatment	82.08	9.88		

Table 2 shows that there are no differences between control and treatment groups in the dimensions of the Negative Attitudes Towards the Learning Environment Scale, including attitude towards peers and friends in the school, attitude towards teachers, administrators, and technicians in the school, attitude towards the classroom and school environment and the total score. The t-values are in order between the two groups according to dimensions of the scale and their total score as follows: 1.176, 1.768, 1.882, and 1.889. All values are not statistically significant, and this confirms the congruence between control and treatment groups on the Negative Attitudes Towards the Learning Environment Scale and its sub-dimensions.

**Table 3: t-Value between the Mean Ranks of Control and Treatment Groups in the Learning Reading Difficulties Scale and Age (N=25)**

Variables	Group	Mean	Std.	t-value	Sig.
Learning Reading Difficulties Scale	Control	39.64	6.61	1.695	Not
	Treatment	40.32	6.61		
Chronological Age	Control	126.44	2.55	1.998	Not
	Treatment	127.48	2.41		

Table 3 shows that there are no differences between the control and treatment groups in the Learning Reading Difficulties Scale and chronological age. The t-values are in the order between the two groups as follows: 1.695 and 1.998. All values are not statistically significant, and this confirms the congruence between control and treatment groups.

#### 4. Results

The study is based on emotional intelligence theory because it includes important ideas that relate to the goals of the intervention, such as self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These components align directly with the personal and social skills targeted in the training programme. Goleman's model provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding how emotional and social competencies contribute to positive behavioural and attitudinal change, particularly in educational settings. The study depended on the quasi-experimental design using parametric statistics and the following instruments.

#### **4.1 Emotional and Social Skills Scale (Bedaiwy, 2016)**

This consists of five dimensions with 15 items each: (1) self-awareness; (2) emotion management; (3) motivation; (4) empathy; and (5) social skills. Each dimension consists of 15 items. The scale relied on the four-way alternative: always, often, sometimes, and rarely. The scale is corrected by giving the response on the following alternatives, depending on the direction of the item: always = 4, often = 3, sometimes = 2, rarely = 1. The average time for the scale was calculated using a pilot study sample. The reliability of the scale was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which was 0.73, and the reliability coefficient of the scale dimensions (self-awareness, emotion management, motivation, empathy, and social skills) were respectively 0.82, 0.85, 0.83, 0.86, and 0.90 at the.01 level.

#### **4.2 Attitudes Towards the Learning Environment Scale (Bedaiwy, 2016)**

This scale consists of three dimensions: (1) attitude towards peers and friends in the school (10 items); (2) attitude towards teachers, administrators, and technicians in the school (10 items); and (3) attitude towards the classroom and school environment (13 items). The scale relied on the four-way alternative: always = 4, often = 3, sometimes = 2, rarely = 1. The average time for the scale was calculated using a pilot study sample. The reliability of the scale was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which was 0.69, and the reliability coefficient of the scale dimensions (attitude towards peers and friends in the school; attitude towards teachers, administrators, and technicians in the school; and attitude towards the classroom and school environment) were respectively 0.82, 0.74, and 0.85 at the.01 level.

#### **4.3 Diagnostic Assessment Scale for Reading Difficulties: (Al-Zayyat, 2007)**

This scale consists of 20 items on the five-point Likert scale: always = 4, often = 3, sometimes = 2, rarely = 1, and it does not apply = 0. The teacher chooses the grade that he finds most applicable to the student's difficulty in a maximum time of 15 minutes. To diagnose dyslexia among the sample participants, the raw score of the scale is as follows: 20 or less – does not have reading difficulties, 21-40 – has mild reading difficulties, 41-60 – has moderate learning difficulties, and more than 60 – has severe learning difficulties. The validity of the internal consistency of the scale was calculated as the correlation coefficients of the scale items, with the total score ranging from 0.67 to 0.83. The scale reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which was 0.71.

#### **4.4 The Social Emotional Affective Intelligence Skills Development Training Programme**

The researchers prepared a training programme to develop personal and social skills according to educational, psychological, and social basics based on the distribution of roles and considering individual differences among the beneficiaries. The programme consists of five components: self-awareness, self-control, self-motivation, self-acceptance, and integrating oneself with others, including fifteen training sessions. The duration of each session is 45 minutes. There are two sessions per week, including content, activities, exercises, techniques, and strategies for presenting and evaluating.

The programme used a set of techniques, reinforcement, role-playing, dialogue and discussion, motivation and encouragement, lectures, listening, co-operative learning, learning by discovery, decision-making, problem-solving, and probing questions. There were also application skills and training activities. The programme was judged by five faculty members specialised in learning difficulties at Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University and King Faisal University, in Saudi Arabia, and they accepted the programme and stated that it is enough and covers the personal and social skills of students with reading difficulties.

In addition, the appropriateness of the number of its training sessions and activities, the diversity of its objectives, strategies, and techniques for evaluating its sessions, the teaching aids used in it, and the appropriateness of the assessment were confirmed.

#### 4.4.1 Results of the first hypothesis

To test the first hypothesis, the significance of mean scores between the post administration of control and treatment groups was calculated.

**Table 4: t-Value and its Significance Between Control and Treatment Groups in Post Administration of the Social and Emotional Skills Scale and Total Score (N=25)**

Variables	Group	Mean	Std.	t-value
Self-Awareness	Control	30.58	30.53	3.65*
	Treatment	42.62	4.82	
Self-Control	Control	31.76	3.76	3.77*
	Treatment	43.88	5.24	
Self-Motivation	Control	32.66	3.23	3.98*
	Treatment	44.55	4.26	
Self-Acceptance	Control	31.88	3.88	3.68*
	Treatment	42.55	4.76	
Self-Integration with Others	Control	32.58	3.34	3.66*
	Treatment	42.79	4.68	
Total Score	Control	135.79	9.74	6.98**
	Treatment	155.78	10.21	

(\*\*) significant at (0.01) (\*) significant at (0.05)

Table 4 shows the differences between control and treatment groups in the Emotional and Social Skills Scale dimensions, including self-awareness, self-control, self-motivation, self-acceptance, and integrating oneself with others and the total score in post administration. The t-values are in order according to all scale dimensions and their total score: 3.65, 3.77, 3.98, 3.68, 3.66, and 6.98. All values are statistically significant at 0.01 and 0.05 in favour of the treatment group. Thus, the first hypothesis is confirmed.

#### 4.4.2 Result of the second hypothesis

To test this hypothesis, the significance of mean scores between the post administration of control and treatment groups was calculated.

**Table 5: t-Value and its Significance Between Control and Treatment Groups in Post Administration of the Attitudes Towards the Learning Environment Scale and Total Score (N=25)**

Variables	Group	Mean	Std.	t-value
Attitude towards peers and friends in the school	Control	27.53	4.25	3.98*
	Treatment	30.88	3.56	
Attitude towards teachers, administrators, and technicians in the school	Control	27.68	3.57	3.79*
	Treatment	31.89	4.31	
Attitude towards the classroom and school environment	Control	29.72	4.96	3.79*
	Treatment	32.64	4.87	
Total Score	Control	75.69	7.84	4.89**
	Treatment	80.87	7.69	

(\*\*) significant at (0.01) \*) significant at (0.05)

Table 5 shows the differences between control and treatment groups in the post administration of the Attitudes Towards the Learning Environment Scale with its three dimensions and the total score. The t-values are in the order according to the three dimensions of the scale: attitude towards peers and friends in the school, attitude towards teachers, administrators, and technicians in the school, and attitude towards the classroom and school environment and its total score as follows: 3.98, 3.79, 3.79, and 4.89 in favour of the treatment group. This confirms the second hypothesis.

#### 4.4.3 Result of the third hypothesis

To test that hypothesis, the significance of mean scores between the pre-post administrations of the treatment group was calculated.

**Table 6: t-Value and its Significance Between the Pre-Post Administrations of Treatment Group in Social and Emotional Skills Scale and Total Score (N=25)**

Variables	Treatment Group	Mean	Std.	t-value
Self-Awareness	Pre	27.66	4.21	5.84**
	Post	31.67	4.33	
Self-Control	Pre	28.88	5.36	4.98**
	Post	32.98	5.88	
Self-Motivation	Pre	29.67	5.22	5.88**
	Post	33.96	4.44	
Self-Acceptance	Pre	29.78	3.89	4.48**
	Post	33.77	4.45	
Self-Integration with Others	Pre	29.75	3.78	4.67**
	Post	33.67	4.33	
Total Score	Pre	136.87	10.67	7.88**
	Post	168.86	9.75	

(\*\*) significant at (0.01)

Table 6 shows the differences between the pre-post administrations of the treatment group in the Emotional and Social Skills Scale with its five dimensions and the total score. The t-values are in order according to all dimensions of the

scale and its total score: self-awareness, self-control, self-motivation, self-acceptance, and integrating oneself with others as follows: 5.84, 4.98, 5.88, 4.48, 4.67, and 7.88. All values are statistically significant at 0.01 in favour of the post administration.

#### 4.4.4 Result of the fourth hypothesis

To test that hypothesis, the significance of mean scores between the pre-post administrations of the treatment group was calculated.

**Table 7: t-Value and its Significance Between the Pre-Post Administrations of the Treatment Group in the Attitudes Towards the Learning Environment Scale and Total Score (N=25)**

Variables	Treatment Group	Mean	Std	t-value
Attitude towards peers and friends in the school	Pre	26.88	3.54	5.88**
	Post	29.68	4.23	
Attitude towards teachers, administrators, and technicians in the school	Pre	27.52	3.77	5.64**
	Post	33.45	3.58	
Attitude towards the classroom and school environment	Pre	29.80	3.78	5.79**
	Post	34.78	3.74	
Total Score	Pre	80.70	5.85	8.97**
	Post	87.85	7.33	

(\*\*) significant at (0.01)

Table 7 shows the differences between pre-post administrations of the treatment group in the Attitudes towards the Learning Environment Scale, with its three dimensions and the total score. The t-values are in order according to the three dimensions of the scale: attitude towards peers and friends in the school, attitude towards teachers, administrators, and technicians in the school, and attitude towards the classroom and school environment. Its total score is as follows: 5.88, 5.64, 5.79, and 8.97 in favour of the post administration. All values are significant at 0.01.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Interpretation of The First Hypothesis

The results of Table 4 showed that teaching students with reading difficulties personal and social skills and training them through purposeful activities helped them acquire these skills. These skills included self-awareness skills that made them more self-aware by recognising their personal emotions and their effects, and realising the link between their feelings, what they thought, said and did, awareness of their values and goals, and how their feelings affected their performance. They could also identify their strengths and weaknesses regarding their personalities because they were aware of them, and their sensitivity to others' views was reduced. They became more receptive to the criticism and instructions of others, more aware of what benefited them, and what had a positive impact on them. They gained the ability to introduce themselves with confidence and pride in front of others, to express their opinions and communicate with others, and defend themselves. In addition, they could make

decisions in the most difficult situations and under pressure. Students with reading difficulties learnt self-awareness skills through training sessions, which contributed positively and effectively to increasing their ability to be aware of their own emotions and those of others around them. This result is consistent with those of Muhammad et al. (2021), Bayoumi (2021), and Abdel-Nabi (2021), who found that programmes were effective in improving social skills among students with learning difficulties.

In addition to their regulation of these emotions and dealing with them, they were able to solve the problems they encountered without impulsiveness. All this contributed to helping them face pressures, adapt, and replace negative behaviours and attitudes with positive ones. This is consistent with the results in a study by Elias (2004). A significant improvement was identified in the self-efficacy level of the treatment group that was subjected to a training programme for emotional and social skills compared to the control group. Moreover, their aggressive behaviour decreased towards others, and their self-confidence increased. Ibrahim (2015) indicated the effectiveness of a training programme in improving the social-emotional skills of SLD, as it significantly improved their self-confidence.

Saeed (2006) indicated that programmes are effective in developing individuals' emotional and social skills as they increase their self-concept. Therefore, the emotional and social skills of SLD could be improved through training, especially their skill of self-awareness. A study by Goleman et al. (2002) showed a noticeable improvement among students in a treatment group who underwent a training programme to improve emotional intelligence skills, including self-awareness, compared to the control group – the programme contributed to their adaptation to life situations and their positive attitudes towards themselves. This confirms the logical relationship between training programmes that develop personal and social skills and the high level of students' concepts of their behaviour and their self-confidence (Al-Asar & Kafafi, 2000).

The outcomes of the training programme of the study contributed to achieving self-awareness and increasing SLDs' self-confidence. In turn, it contributed to raising the concept level of students with reading difficulties regarding their behavioural skills. The outcomes also improved the treatment group's self-control skills more than those of the control group, including the skill of self-control that enabled them to control their negative emotions and intentions. Thus, they could control their impulsiveness and feelings of distress and sadness.

In addition to their ability to think positively and clearly and concentrate even in stressful and difficult situations, the skill of integrity enabled them to maintain levels of honesty in dealing with themselves and others. They also built trust in others through their credibility, admitted their mistakes bravely, and faced the immoral behaviour of others with wisdom and good behaviour. The skill of conscience enabled them to take responsibility for personal performance, fulfil obligations and promises, show order and diligence in performing actions, and bear personal responsibility in reaching their purposes and goals.

The adaptive skills enabled them to be flexible in dealing with others, adapt to circumstances when arranging priorities and change reactions and plans. Students acquired self-control skills through training sessions and activities of the training programme, which contributed positively and effectively to developing their awareness of their feelings and emotions. Their negative emotions were damaging to them, and they tried to replace them or turn them into positive ones.

This, in turn, led to fewer negative behaviours and attitudes, being able to control and adjust their negative emotions, and postpone their immediate response so they had time to think about it and choose the correct positive response that fit the nature of the situation. This is consistent with the results of Bedaiwy (2016), which indicated that early intervention programmes, based on emotional and social skills in the learning environment, help students develop these skills and adapt to the pressures that they face.

These programmes contributed to helping them reduce aggressive behaviours, manage emotions, and redirect negative emotions into positive ones. Eddy (2000) confirmed the emergence of an obvious improvement among treatment group students who received intensive training in emotional and social skills, becoming more positive in their behaviour with their teachers and peers and having more self-control compared to control group students. Al-Khidr and Al-Fadli's (2007) study indicated that there are statistically significant correlations between happiness that leads to emotional stability and emotional intelligence skills.

The results of the study found that the commitment skill made students more inclined to commit to the goals of the group or the classroom, defending them, sacrificing for them, and seeking to achieve them. They make their goals their focus of attention, concentration, and feasibility. The initiative skill made them more willing to take advantage of opportunities, follow up to implement their goals, and have more influence on others through good ideas. The skill of optimism made them more determined to pursue the implementation of their goals despite obstacles and difficulties.

They are more persevering and have a hope of success that outweighs their fear of failure. The emergence and growth of these skills among the treatment group students were through sessions, applications, and activities of the training programme that made their emotional tendencies lead them towards achieving high goals. Thus, they can identify short-term and long-term goals and try to achieve them despite the difficulties they may encounter. This result is consistent with Goleman et al. (2002) and Bedaiwy (2011), who indicated that training programmes aimed at improving emotional and social skills, which have a role and effectiveness in helping their recipients to adapt socially and solve problems. Considering the study results, the researchers confirmed the effectiveness of the training programme's sessions and activities, which aimed to develop personal and social skills, including self-acceptance and integration with others. The self-acceptance skill clearly improved and was more evident among the treatment group students than the control group students. This is represented by acquiring

the skill of understanding others, helping students feel the emotions and experiences of others, paying attention to their concerns, and providing them with assistance according to their needs and circumstances. The treatment group's students demonstrated a noticeable improvement in their ability to acquire the skill of influence and leadership, allowing them to persuade and influence others.

In addition, they acquired the ability to comprehend people and some communication skills that made them more receptive to others. They could listen well and listen to others to reach a common understanding, and their acquisition of the skill of managing conflicts, which made them more able to communicate with others to resolve points of disagreement diplomatically.

The acquisition of the treatment group's students of self-awareness and self-integration skills through the training programme sessions and its purposeful activities contributed to developing relations among the students, increasing communication between them, developing a sense of their feelings and sympathy, reducing negative behaviours and attitudes, and developing social relationships based on respect, cooperation, and altruism. These skills helped them negotiate and resolve conflicts and understand their rights and duties towards the group.

This result is consistent with Saeed (2006) and Bedaiwy (2011). Therefore, we can say that training in personal and social skills has a significant role in improving students' self-awareness and understanding their feelings, controlling their emotions, dealing with others, and establishing good relationships with them.

#### *5.1.1 Interpretation of the second hypothesis*

Regarding Table 5, researchers explain that the training programme sessions and their purposeful activities had a significant and effective impact in reducing the students' negative attitudes towards the learning environment. The treatment group students acquired a set of personal and social skills that helped them reduce their negative attitudes towards the learning environment, including self-control skills. This growth in the emotional and social skills of the treatment group students had a positive impact on improving their school performance and educational achievements. They could handle school situations through good relations with peers and teachers. Their ability to deal with difficult learning situations improved the presence of clear goals, making it easier for them to develop positive attitudes towards school, which is consistent with Muhammad et al. (2021) and Bayoumi (2021).

The growth of personal and social skills helped to form positive attitudes towards school and reduce negative ones, in addition to improving achievement levels and school performance. Success in the learning environment is not only attributed to cognitive skills, but also to personal and social skills. Kamour's (2007) study indicated an improvement in learners' attitudes who had received training programmes that included personal and social skills towards the learning environment, an increase in their levels of ambition and self-awareness, and the richness of their social and emotional skills compared to others who did not receive such programmes.

As a result, we can say that the acquisition of the treatment group students' personal and social skills had a major role in increasing their self-awareness, enabling them to control and direct their emotions, increasing their motivation to learn and achieve goals despite the obstacles they faced. It also increased their sympathy for others, their sense of themselves, and their coexistence and cooperation with them. Their attitudes towards the learning environment changed, becoming more positive, and their negative view towards it, with all its components, decreased.

#### *5.1.2 Interpretation of the third hypothesis*

The result of Table 6 can be explained by the implementation of the programme sessions and their purposeful activities, which contributed to the high level of self-confidence among students. This was achieved through their acquisition of skills related to self-awareness, self-calmness and self-control in acute emotional situations. Those skills were acquired through managing their emotions. In addition, the skill of overcoming sorrows was acquired through self-motivation skills learnt in the programme session – they were able to manage the conflict within themselves and could respond and accept others. This was achieved through the skills of empathy and social skills. The result is consistent with the theory of emotional intelligence and its field applications, that emotionally intelligent people work well with others and are valued and respected because they employ these skills in their places of learning or work through their personal behaviour (Myers & Tucker, 2005).

The result is also consistent with Webster-Stratton and Reid (2003), in that meaningful emotional intelligence programmes make their participants more positive and less negative in their social interactions with others. They show behaviours filled with warmth and flattery, and their behavioural problems and negative attitudes are less compared to those of their peers who were not exposed to them. Furthermore, Shapiro (2004) confirms that teaching personal and social skills helps learners coexist with social situations and overcome the ordinary problems inherent in different stages of life.

It was also confirmed by Gannon and Ranzinjn (2005) that there is a positive correlation between personal and social skills and behaviour as a major dimension of personality. Helali (2023) found that teachers have an important role in fostering volunteering among SLD in primary school. Thus, training the treatment group on personal and social skills through meaningful sessions had a significant role in improving their awareness, their understanding of their feelings and control over them, their understanding of their emotions, and their positive interaction with others.

#### *5.1.3 Interpretation of the fourth hypothesis*

The results of Table 7 can be explained by the fact that the programme sessions and their purposeful activities had a significant and effective impact on reducing the negative attitudes of the treatment group towards the learning environment. They acquired a set of personal and social skills, represented by self-awareness,

self-control, and self-motivation. Self-motivation skills constitute personal skills, and self-acceptance and self-integration constitute social skills, helping them reduce their negative attitudes towards the learning environment.

The results are consistent with a study by Webster-Stratton and Reid (2003), which indicated the contributions of training programmes in reducing the level of aggressive behaviour and negative attitudes among student participants in the programme. Kamour (2007) indicated the effectiveness of a counselling programme in reducing students' aggressive behaviour and negative attitudes towards school among basic stage students. This is also consistent with the effective training practices that include emotional and social skills pursued by educational programmes and institutions in many places around the world. They seek, as part of their aims, to develop students' positive feelings towards school and stimulate their motivation to learn.

This is also consistent with Brearly (2001), who indicated the effectiveness of a training programme in developing positive attitudes towards school and Goleman et al. (2002), who indicated the effectiveness of a programme in increasing the student treatment group's positive attitudes towards their parents and adaptation to life situations. Thus, the researchers can state that the programme in this study helped SLD acquire personal and social skills, as it played a major role in raising the level of emotional and social skills of the treatment group students. This was reflected greatly in the change in their attitudes towards the learning environment, becoming more positive and reducing their negative view of the school and all its components.

## **6. Conclusion**

The study investigated a training programme that develops SLDs' personal and social skills and their impact on reducing negative attitudes towards the learning environment. It used a quasi-experimental design. The study examined four hypotheses. Regarding student social and personal skills, the training programme helped them develop greater self-awareness, emotional regulation, and social competence. These students learned to recognise and understand their emotions, thoughts, and behaviours; identify personal strengths and weaknesses; and become less sensitive to others' criticism. As a result, they became more confident, communicative, and receptive to guidance.

Regarding attitudes towards the learning environment, the training programme had a significant impact on reducing students' negative attitudes by developing their personal and social skills, particularly self-control. These improvements led to better school performance, stronger relationships with peers and teachers, and greater ability to handle difficult academic situations. As students developed clear goals and emotional awareness, their motivation and attitudes toward school became more positive. Regarding social and personal skills, the implementation of the training programme significantly boosted students' self-confidence by equipping them with emotional and social skills such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social interaction. These

skills enabled students to manage intense emotions, accept others, and handle internal conflicts more effectively.

Regarding attitudes towards the learning environment, the programme sessions and their purposeful activities effectively reduced the treatment group's negative attitudes toward the learning environment by fostering key personal and social skills, including self-awareness, self-control, self-motivation, self-acceptance, and social integration. These gains led to more positive perceptions of school and improved emotional and social functioning.

The results indicated the importance of training programmes in enriching and activating the role of the school by emphasising that its role is to provide learners with abstract knowledge, and its role should expand to include attention to and awareness of learners' feelings. Its role also includes managing the students' feelings positively and controlling them when they are pressured, motivating them to excel, and acquiring positive skills when communicating with others. As a result, it becomes a more attractive environment for students, and they have positive attitudes towards it. In addition, there should be training and rehabilitation programmes for teachers on personal and social skills, so that they can reflect them in their behaviour and actions with SLDs.

It is also important to educate parents and educators, guiding them on the importance of personal and social skills in developing a sense of trust, confidence, appreciation, independence and honest competition among children. This calls for the need to create a balanced and positive family environment that helps children develop sound emotional growth, while striving to provide awareness programmes through various media. These programmes show the importance of developing personal and social skills, which include self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills and their role in academic achievement and a positive view of the learning environment and its components.

This contributes to the formation of positive attitudes towards the learning environment with all its components. There is a need to conduct studies and research related to creating the learning environment climate, and to examine and test remedial training programmes that contribute to their development. The study recommended developing personal and social skills for students, such as self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills, to contribute to improving academic achievement and fostering a positive perception of the learning environment and its components. The study suggested further research on the role of personal and social skills for SLDs at other educational levels and in diverse educational settings.

## **7. Limitations**

This study focused on the development of personal and social skills and on reducing negative attitudes towards the learning environment among SLDs in a primary school. The participants were males and females studying at one of the primary schools in southern Egypt. Therefore, the results cannot necessarily be generalised to primary school students throughout Egypt or in other countries.

The study suggests that future research should investigate more programmes of personal and social skills in other geographical areas and benefit from the results of the current study. Despite these limitations, the study's results can be used to help decision makers in education departments understand the current situation and reduce the negative attitudes of primary school students towards their learning environment.

## 8. Recommendations

The study recommends conducting comparative studies between SLD in rural and urban areas. A follow-up study of SLD in middle, secondary and university education. Comparative studies could be conducted between training programmes for elementary and middle school students about the attitudes of SLDs towards the learning environment. Students' attitudes towards the learning environment change as they move from primary to intermediate school.

### 1. Ethics Statements

The Ethical Committee of the [Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University], Saudi Arabia, approved this study (Ref. No. IRB-2024-15-249).

### 2. Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

### 3. Acknowledgements

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