

| RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Role of Parental Engagement in Enhancing Social-Emotional School Readiness of Early Childhood Learners in Public Schools

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| ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of parental engagement in enhancing the social-emotional school readiness of early childhood learners in a public school in Cebu. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, with 400 parent respondents selected using a purposive sampling technique during the school year 2025-2026. Data were gathered through validated questionnaires on parental engagement and social-emotional school readiness and analyzed using weighted means, standard deviations, and Pearson r correlation. Findings revealed that parents demonstrated very high engagement across all dimensions, while learners were perceived as extremely ready in all social-emotional domains. Results further indicated a significant positive relationship between parental engagement and social-emotional readiness, affirming that parental involvement contributes to children's preparedness for formal schooling. Thus, parental engagement is a critical factor in fostering emotional and social competencies essential for school success. It recommends strengthening family-school partnerships through structured programs, parent education initiatives, and home-based learning strategies to sustain and enhance readiness outcomes.

| KEYWORDS

Early Childhood Education, Parental Engagement, Social Emotional School Readiness, Descriptive-correlational Design, Cebu, Philippines

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Early childhood education is widely recognized as a vital and integral part of education systems across the globe (Shaughnessy & Kleyn, 2012; Zhou, 2024). The right to education begins at birth, and the early years, from birth to around eight years old, represent a critical period for brain development and learning. During this stage, children are exceptionally responsive to experiences that shape their cognitive, social, and emotional growth (UNICEF, 2024). Because human development builds progressively over time, early investments in educational programs, particularly from birth to age 6, are now widely acknowledged as essential foundations for lifelong learning, skill development, and overall well-being (Mishra, 2012). In addition, early childhood education plays an important role in reducing socioeconomic disparities by promoting more equitable developmental outcomes and helping ensure that all children begin their educational journey with the skills needed for future academic success (Gennetian et al., 2019).

As children enter early childhood education, school readiness becomes a key factor in ensuring a smooth and successful transition to formal education. School readiness is a multidimensional concept commonly explored in educational research and practice, encompassing children's physical and motor skills, social and emotional competencies, approaches to learning, language development, and cognitive abilities (Curby et al., 2018; Kagan et al., 1995). This transition is not a single

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event, but a gradual process shaped by children's early home environments and prior learning experiences, both of which are strongly associated with later academic achievement and adjustment to school life (Lin & Faldowski, 2023). During early childhood, children undergo rapid cognitive and social development that prepares them to meet classroom expectations, such as following rules, cooperating with peers, and engaging in structured learning activities (Bierman et al., 2023). As a result, educators, researchers, and policymakers have increasingly emphasized early school readiness as a critical predictor of long-term academic success and social-emotional well-being (Mann et al., 2017; Skinner, 2018).

Parental engagement has consistently been identified as a key factor in supporting children's school readiness, particularly in the social and emotional domains. Numerous studies indicate that positive parental involvement is associated with stronger social-emotional development, better behavioral adjustment, and improved learning outcomes among young children (Sheridan et al., 2010; Kingston et al., 2013). When parents engage in supportive practices—such as showing affection, reinforcing positive behaviors, and providing appropriate structure—children are more likely to develop self-regulation, effective communication skills, and positive social interactions. Moreover, parental engagement with schools helps families become familiar with educational expectations and policies, enabling them better to prepare their children for the demands of formal schooling. Parenting approaches that are sensitive to children's developmental needs and that encourage autonomy and curiosity further support social assertiveness, independent learning, cognitive growth, and healthy peer relationships (Sheridan et al., 2011).

Despite the recognized benefits of parental engagement, considerable differences remain in children's levels of social and emotional school readiness. Many children struggle to adjust to the academic and behavioral expectations of school, with these challenges often linked to variations in family circumstances, developmental conditions, and environmental contexts (Sheridan et al., 2010; Kokkalia et al., 2019). In the Philippine context, teachers have observed that some learners enter school with limited social-emotional readiness, a pattern especially evident among children from low-income families. Financial hardship can place significant cognitive and emotional demands on parents, reducing their ability to remain consistently engaged in their children's education (Gennetian et al., 2019; Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013). Paradoxically, the families who stand to benefit most from early childhood interventions are often those who face the most significant obstacles to sustained participation.

Given the critical role of parents in early development, it is essential to assess parental engagement alongside children's social-emotional school readiness. Parents serve as children's primary source of real-world learning and emotional support, and their involvement plays a central role in shaping early social-emotional competencies. Strengthening partnerships between families and schools, therefore, holds significant potential for enhancing children's readiness for school across multiple developmental domains.

In light of these considerations, this study examines parental engagement and its influence on the social-emotional school readiness of early childhood learners in public schools in the Philippines during the 2025–2026 school year. The findings will serve as the basis for a proposed action plan to strengthen parental involvement and support learners' social and emotional development, in line with the Department of Education's (DepEd) commitment to delivering high-quality education and ensuring that all Filipino children enter school prepared to succeed.

2. Purpose of the Study

This research assessed the role of parental engagement in enhancing the social-emotional school readiness of early childhood learners in an elementary school in Cebu during the school year 2025–2026 as the basis for an action plan. Specifically, the study examined parents' levels of engagement in knowledge and expectations, trust and communication, and home-based engagement, as well as learners' levels of social-emotional school readiness in self-regulation, self-awareness, social relationships, and coping skills. It also sought to determine whether a significant relationship exists between parental engagement and learners' social-emotional school readiness.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Instruments. This study used two standardized, adopted survey instruments to collect data from parent respondents. The first instrument measured parental engagement and was adapted from the Parent Engagement in Early Childhood Education (PEECE) Survey developed by Gross et al. (2022). The questionnaire consists of 25 items organized into three validated dimensions: Knowledge/Expectations, Trust/Communication, and Home-based Engagement. These dimensions reflect parents' awareness of their child's learning, the quality of parent–school communication and trust, and parental support for learning at home. Factor analysis conducted by the original authors confirmed the construct validity of the instrument, with good internal consistency reported for Knowledge/Expectations and Trust/Communication ($GLB = 0.81–0.85$), and acceptable reliability for

Home-based Engagement (GLB = 0.63). Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The second instrument assessed learners' social-emotional school readiness and was adopted from the Brief Universal School Readiness Scale (BUSSE-SR) developed by Bustin (2007). The BUSSE-SR consists of 28 items measuring four domains: self-regulation, self-awareness, social relationships, and coping skills. Exploratory principal component analysis supported the scale's multidimensional structure, with factor extraction guided by Eigenvalues greater than 1 and the Scree test. Content validity was established through expert review involving psychologists, early childhood educators, Grade One teachers, and parents. Predictive validity was demonstrated through longitudinal follow-up of learners into Grade One. Reliability analysis yielded a high overall internal consistency (Cronbach's α = 0.889), indicating strong measurement reliability.

3.2 Data Collection Procedure. Data collection was conducted in three phases. First, institutional approval was obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent and school administrators to ensure ethical compliance and administrative support. Second, parent-respondents were oriented regarding the study's purpose and procedures, after which informed consent was secured. Questionnaires were then administered to parents, who were given adequate time to complete the instruments independently. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly observed. Finally, completed questionnaires were retrieved, checked for completeness, and prepared for statistical analysis in accordance with ethical data-handling standards.

3.3 Data Analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed to address the research objectives. Frequency counts and percentages were used to describe respondent characteristics. Weighted means and standard deviations were computed to determine the levels of parental engagement and learners' social-emotional school readiness. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to examine the strength and significance of the relationship between parental engagement and social-emotional school readiness. Statistical analyses were conducted with the assistance of a statistician to ensure accuracy and methodological rigor.

3.4 Scoring and Interpretation. Mean scores were interpreted using predefined descriptive ranges to categorize levels of parental engagement (from *Not Engaged* to *Very Highly Engaged*) and learners' social-emotional school readiness (from *Not Ready* to *Extremely Ready*). These interpretation schemes provided a systematic basis for analyzing and reporting the findings.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Level of Respondents' School Engagement

The parents' perception of their level of engagement in terms of knowledge/expectations, trust/communication, and home engagement is presented in the following tables.

Table 1. Level of parents' engagement in terms of knowledge/expectations

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	I know how my child is doing in school.	4.97	0.17	Very Highly Engaged
2	Through the things I say and do, I let my child know that their education is important.	5.00	0.00	Very Highly Engaged
3	I know what makes my child want to learn (for example, what gets their attention).	5.00	0.00	Very Highly Engaged
4	I know what my child is learning in school.	4.98	0.13	Very Highly Engaged
5	I talk with my child about what they want to be when they grow up.	5.00	0.00	Very Highly Engaged
6	I know what is expected of my child in school.	5.00	0.00	Very Highly Engaged
7	I set clear expectations for how my child acts at school.	4.99	0.11	Very Highly Engaged
8	I ask the teacher how they are preparing my child for the next grade.	4.26	0.53	Very Highly Engaged
9	I make sure my child attends school every day, unless they are sick.	5.00	0.00	Very Highly Engaged
Aggregate Weighted Mean		4.91		
Aggregate Standard Deviation			0.11	Very Highly Engaged

Legend: 4.21-5.00-Very Highly Engaged; 3.41-4.20-Highly Engaged; 2.61-3.40-Moderately Engaged; 1.81-2.60- Less Engaged; 1.00-1.80-Not Engaged

Table 1 illustrates that parents exhibited a very high level of engagement regarding knowledge and expectations, with an aggregate weighted mean of 4.91 (SD = 0.11), indicating strong consensus among respondents. Most items achieved perfect scores (M = 5.00, SD = 0.00), reflecting consistent parental emphasis on the importance of education, awareness of children's learning styles, discussion of future aspirations, understanding school expectations, and ensuring regular attendance. The lowest-rated item, frequency of consulting teachers about preparation for the next grade, remained high (M = 4.26, SD = 0.53).

These findings highlight parents' strong awareness of their roles in early childhood education and their prioritization of early learning within the family context. This aligns with research on the influence of parental expectations in shaping children's learning attitudes (Lehrl et al., 2024; Miller & Kehl, 2019) and supports the notion that parents actively contribute to educational development through monitoring, mentoring, and motivation (Barone, 2023). The slightly lower emphasis on grade-level preparation suggests a focus on present learning experiences and holistic development over immediate academic advancement (Kim, 2024; Peixoto et al., 2024). In general, parents perceive early schooling as a foundational, experiential phase rather than a performance-driven stage.

Table 2. Level of parents' engagement in terms of trust/communication

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	I feel like the teacher and I work together as a team to support my child's learning.	4.91	0.30	Very Highly Engaged
2	My child's teacher and I know the best way to communicate with one another about my child.	4.93	0.28	Very Highly Engaged
3	If I didn't understand an assignment my child was given, I'd feel comfortable asking the teacher for help.	4.94	0.25	Very Highly Engaged
4	If I contact my child's teacher, I know they will respond soon.	4.99	0.09	Very Highly Engaged
5	It is clear to me that this school values parents.	4.99	0.12	Very Highly Engaged
6	If my child was having problems at home, I would feel comfortable letting the school know about it.	4.99	0.11	Very Highly Engaged
7	My child's teacher and I communicate with each other at least twice a month (in person or by notes, text, email, phone, etc.).	4.93	0.28	Very Highly Engaged
8	The school is a pleasant and welcoming place.	5.00	0.00	Very Highly Engaged
9	I trust my child's teacher.	5.00	0.00	Very Highly Engaged
10	My child's teacher lets me know if my child needs help in school.	5.00	0.00	Very Highly Engaged
11	The staff at my child's school care about the students.	5.00	0.07	Very Highly Engaged
Aggregate Weighted Mean		4.97		Very Highly Engaged
Aggregate Standard Deviation			0.14	

Table 2 presents the level of parental engagement in terms of trust and communication. The component exhibited a high aggregate weighted mean of 4.97 with a standard deviation of 0.14, indicating very high engagement among parents in collaborating with teachers to monitor their child's development. Items 8, 9, 10, and 11 achieved the maximum scores (M = 5.00, SD = 0.00), reflecting that parents perceive the school as a welcoming environment and place full trust in teachers regarding the care and communication of their child. Although overall engagement was very high, Item 1, which measures parents' perception of working with teachers as a team to support their child's learning, scored slightly lower (M = 4.91, SD = 0.30), indicating that some parents may not fully engage in collaborative learning support despite high trust and communication.

The findings highlight that parents value a conducive school environment and prioritize awareness of their child's well-being (Murray et al., 2025). Consistent with Koskela (2021), parents seek to be informed about classroom practices and collaborate with teachers to enhance their child's development. However, some parents consider monitoring classroom behavior primarily the responsibility of teachers, which aligns with Houri et al. (2019) emphasizing the importance of active parental participation in communication regarding the child's progress. Overall, the results emphasize that trust and communication between parents and teachers are crucial for early childhood education. Effective engagement requires shared responsibility, with both parents and teachers contributing to the holistic growth and well-being of learners.

Table 3. Level of parents' engagement in terms of home-based engagement

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	I help my child learn in everyday places, like naming colors or counting things in the store.	5.00	0.05	Very Highly Engaged
2	I encourage my child to keep trying even when they get frustrated.	5.00	0.00	Very Highly Engaged
3	I ask my child how their day went at school every day or nearly every day.	5.00	0.00	Very Highly Engaged
4	I limit the amount of screen time my child can have (including TV, video games, tablets, smartphones).	5.00	0.00	Very Highly Engaged
5	I (or another adult in the home) read(s) with my child every day or nearly every day.	4.89	0.36	Very Highly Engaged
Aggregate Weighted Mean		4.98		
Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.08		Very Highly Engaged

Table 3 presents the level of parental engagement in terms of home-based activities, with an aggregate weighted mean of 4.98 ($SD = 0.08$), indicating very high engagement. Four items achieved the maximum score ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 0.00$), showing that parents consistently help their children learn in everyday settings, encourage persistence, ask about their day, and limit screen time. These findings suggest that Early Childhood Education learners also benefit from guided learning outside school premises. Item 5, which measures reading stories with the child, had a slightly lower mean ($M = 4.89$, $SD = 0.36$), indicating that parents do not read with their child daily, likely due to busy schedules or competing priorities. Overall, parents provide significant support for their children's learning at home, ensuring completion of school-related tasks and projects.

The results point out that home-based parental engagement plays a critical role in children's early learning, serving as an extension of classroom instruction. Parents act as first teachers, fostering foundational skills, values, and curiosity within the home environment (Trivedi, 2023). However, not all parents can consistently provide attention for activities such as reading due to time constraints, resource limitations, or differing beliefs (Kalil & Ryan, 2020). Despite these challenges, parents make deliberate efforts to support their child's learning at home. This involvement is crucial for motivating learners and reinforcing academic and socio-emotional development in Early Childhood Education.

4.2 Level of School Readiness of the Learners as Perceived by the Parent Respondents

This section presents an analysis of parental perceptions regarding the school readiness of Early Childhood Education learners. The assessment evaluates the extent to which learners are prepared to engage in formal education. School readiness is examined through key domains, including self-regulation, self-awareness, social relationships, and coping skills, which collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of learners' preparedness for the academic and social demands of the early schooling environment.

Table 4. Level of social-emotional school readiness of the learners in terms of self-regulation

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	Is able to wait his/her turn to speak in a group.	4.89	0.36	Extremely Ready
2	Is able to listen to others without interrupting.	4.98	0.16	Extremely Ready
3	Is able to control his/her excitement so that he/she does not disrupt others.	4.98	0.17	Extremely Ready
4	Asks permission to play with a toy when it is being used by another.	4.97	0.20	Extremely Ready
5	Is able to stop him/herself from becoming involved when other children do something they are not allowed to do.	4.86	0.41	Extremely Ready
6	Complies with the rules of the school.	5.00	0.00	Extremely Ready
7	Listens when I talk.	5.00	0.00	Extremely Ready
Aggregate Weighted Mean		4.95		
Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.19		Extremely Ready

Legend: 4.21-5.00-Extremely Ready; 3.41-4.20- Ready; 2.61-3.40-Moderately Ready; 1.81-2.60-Slightly Ready; 1.00-1.80- Not Ready

Table 4 presents the level of social-emotional school readiness of Early Childhood Education learners in terms of self-regulation. Parents perceived their children as highly prepared to engage in formal education, demonstrating appropriate behavior and emotion management, with an aggregate weighted mean of 4.95 (SD = 0.19). Items 6 and 7, which relate to adherence to rules and appropriate interaction with others, received the highest possible scores (M = 5.00, SD = 0.00). Conversely, Item 5, which measures self-control in situations that may prompt disobedient behavior, received the lowest score (M = 4.86, SD = 0.41), indicating that some learners occasionally struggle with self-regulation despite overall readiness.

These findings suggest that parents actively support their children in developing appropriate behaviors outside the home, particularly by instilling values and reinforcing rules (Elizarov et al., 2024). Consistent with Reese et al. (2002), parents' guidance in teaching the distinction between right and wrong is critical for shaping children's conduct. Nonetheless, learners may still exhibit occasional disobedience or misbehavior under peer influence, highlighting the ongoing challenge of self-regulation in early childhood (Jiang, 2023; Kim et al., 2024). Problematic behaviors, such as disruptive emotional expression, noisemaking, and off-task activities, can interfere not only with individual learning but also with classroom instruction as a whole, reducing instructional time and affecting peers' engagement (Frimpong & Gyapong, 2021). This insight stressed the importance of continued parental involvement and structured guidance to foster social-emotional competencies essential for school readiness.

Table 5. Level of social-emotional school readiness of the learners in terms of self-awareness

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	Is able to tell others what he/she wants to do.	4.98	0.13	Extremely Ready
2	Helps others when he/she sees they need it.	4.98	0.15	Extremely Ready
3	Express affection physically with hugs, kisses, strokes or words.	4.95	0.27	Extremely Ready
4	Enjoys it when others show him/her affection.	5.00	0.00	Extremely Ready
5	Is proud of what he/she does [Lego, drawing].	5.00	0.00	Extremely Ready
6	Comforts others when they are hurt or upset.	4.98	0.15	Extremely Ready
7	Shows us what he/she can do [drawings and physical activities].	5.00	0.00	Extremely Ready
Aggregate Weighted Mean		4.98		
Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.10		Extremely Ready

Table 5 presents the level of social-emotional school readiness of Early Childhood Education learners in terms of self-awareness, as perceived by parents. The learners were rated as extremely ready, with an aggregate weighted mean of 4.98 (SD = 0.10). Items 4, 5, and 7, which measure learners' enjoyment of positive feedback and recognition from others, achieved the maximum score (M = 5.00, SD = 0.00). In contrast, Item 3, which reflects the expression of affection through physical touch or

verbal communication, received a slightly lower score ($M = 4.95$, $SD = 0.27$), indicating that not all learners demonstrate their emotions outwardly despite experiencing positive feedback.

These findings highlight that self-awareness is a critical component of social-emotional school readiness, with positive feedback serving as a significant motivator for learners' engagement and academic performance. Consistent with Angelopoulou et al. (2022), self-awareness contributes to alleviating psychological distress, supporting overall well-being, and positively influencing daily behaviors. However, learners do not always express their emotions physically or verbally, which aligns with findings by Wilkinson and Kao (2019) emphasizing that children may internalize positive experiences and express emotions selectively. Encouraging socially appropriate emotional expression remains essential for fostering comprehensive social-emotional development in Early Childhood Education learners.

Table 6. Level of social emotional school readiness of the learners in terms of social relationships

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	Is happy when he/she says goodbye and comes to school.	5.00	0.00	Extremely Ready
2	Is well accepted by his/her peers.	5.00	0.00	Extremely Ready
3	Is able to maintain friendship over time.	5.00	0.00	Extremely Ready
4	Is able to adjust to changes in our daily routine.	4.98	0.13	Extremely Ready
5	Is able to get over being hurt quite quickly if he/she is not seriously hurt.	5.00	0.00	Extremely Ready
6	Comes to school willingly.	4.99	0.09	Extremely Ready
7	Can approach his/her friends when he/she wants to play with them.	5.00	0.05	Extremely Ready
Aggregate Weighted Mean		5.00		Extremely Ready
Aggregate Standard Deviation			0.04	

Table 6 presents the level of social-emotional school readiness of Early Childhood Education learners in terms of social relationships. Learners demonstrated an overall high level of readiness, with an aggregate weighted mean of 5.00 ($SD = 0.04$), indicating consistent performance across all indicators. Items 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7 achieved the highest scores ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 0.00$), reflecting strong emotional regulation, peer acceptance, and social initiative. Item 4, which measures adaptability in social situations, received the lowest mean ($M = 4.98$, $SD = 0.13$), though still within the "extremely ready" range, suggesting minor variability in learners' adaptability.

The findings suggest that learners are emotionally secure, socially competent, and capable of establishing positive interactions with peers and teachers. Active participation in conversations and group activities supports the development of emotional bonds and social competencies, consistent with Li et al. (2023). However, the slightly lower score in adaptability indicates that some learners may require additional strategies to navigate changing social contexts effectively. Liu et al. (2022) emphasize that children's flexibility can be enhanced through consistent routines, preparatory guidance, and open communication, which can further strengthen social relationships and overall social-emotional readiness.

Table 7. Level of social emotional school readiness of the learners in terms of coping

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	Is able to play on his/her own without adults.	5.00	0.00	Extremely Ready
2	Is able to feed him/herself at mealtimes.	4.87	0.39	Extremely Ready
3	Is able to go to the toilet alone.	4.90	0.32	Extremely Ready
4	Is able to dress him/herself.	4.87	0.37	Extremely Ready
5	Takes care of his/her own belongings, like toys or clothes.	4.25	0.58	Extremely Ready
6	Is able to decide if I give him/her two things to choose from.	4.86	0.42	Extremely Ready
7	Can unpack his/her school bag without help.	4.99	0.12	Extremely Ready

Aggregate Weighted Mean	4.82	Extremely Ready
Aggregate Standard Deviation	0.31	

Table 7 presents the level of social-emotional school readiness of Early Childhood Education learners in terms of coping. Compared to other components, coping received the lowest aggregate weighted mean of 4.82 ($SD = 0.31$), indicating that learners are still extremely ready but slightly less consistent in this domain. Item 1, measuring independence during play, scored a perfect mean of 5.00 ($SD = 0.00$), reflecting unanimous parental agreement on learners' autonomy. Conversely, Item 5, which evaluates self-care behaviors and responsibility for belongings, received the lowest score ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.58$), suggesting occasional lapses in self-management.

The findings indicate that coping, as a component of social-emotional readiness, is essential for children's autonomy and adaptive behavior in school. Learners demonstrate strong self-management skills during play, supporting executive functioning and emotional regulation (Cocco et al., 2022; Kirchhoff & Keller, 2021). However, lower scores in self-care and responsibility suggest that environmental factors and limited guidance at home or school can affect the development of ownership and accountability (Zhu et al., 2022). Overall, the high aggregate readiness across all social-emotional domains reflects a solid foundation for early learners, supporting their ability to navigate academic and social demands effectively. This illustrates the importance of fostering self-regulation, self-awareness, social relationships, and coping skills to ensure a successful transition to formal education.

Table 8. Summary on the level of social emotional school readiness of the learners

Components	WM	SD	Verbal Description
Self-regulation	4.95	0.19	Extremely Ready
Self-awareness	4.98	0.10	Extremely Ready
Social relationships	5.00	0.04	Extremely Ready
Coping	4.82	0.31	Extremely Ready
Grand Mean	4.94		
Grand Standard Deviation		0.16	Extremely Ready

Table 8 presents the overall social-emotional school readiness of Early Childhood Education learners. The learners were rated as extremely ready, with a grand weighted mean of 4.94 ($SD = 0.16$), reflecting a strong foundation across the core domains of self-regulation, self-awareness, social relationships, and coping. Among these components, social relationships received the highest mean ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 0.04$), indicating that learners are well-prepared to engage in positive interactions with peers and adults, fostering cooperation, empathy, and conflict resolution. Coping received the lowest mean ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 0.31$), suggesting occasional variability in adaptive responses under stress or unfamiliar situations. Self-regulation and self-awareness were rated highly, with means of 4.95 and 4.98, respectively, highlighting learners' capacity to manage emotions, recognize personal strengths and weaknesses, and make responsible decisions.

The findings underscore the importance of social-emotional competencies as a foundation for successful school transitions. High performance in social relationships suggests that learners can establish positive peer and adult interactions, consistent with the development of empathy and cooperative skills. The relatively lower scores in coping indicate that adaptive behaviors may depend on environmental influences and the availability of emotional support, aligning with Webster et al. (2025).

Parental involvement plays a significant role in enhancing social-emotional readiness. Engagement from parents supports the development of self-regulation and self-awareness, enabling children to navigate emotional and social challenges effectively (Martinez-Yarza et al., 2024). Early interventions that strengthen social-emotional learning can reduce behavioral concerns and increase classroom engagement (Hosokawa et al., 2024). Overall, while learners demonstrate high social-emotional readiness, continued support through parental involvement and parent-school collaboration remains essential for reinforcing these competencies.

4.3 Test of Relationship Between the Parental Engagement and Social Emotional School Readiness of the Learners

This study hypothesized that there was no significant relationship between parental engagement and social-emotional and school readiness of the learners.

Table 9. Test of the relationship between parental engagement and social-emotional school readiness of the learners

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Remarks
Parental Engagement and Social Emotional School Readiness	0.333*	Weak Positive	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant

*significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed)

Table 9 presents the correlation between parental engagement and social-emotional school readiness of Early Childhood Education learners. The analysis revealed a statistically significant but weak positive correlation ($r = 0.333$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that higher parental engagement is associated with greater learner readiness. This result leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, suggesting that parental involvement contributes to the development of social-emotional competencies among learners in public schools.

The findings emphasized the pivotal role of parental engagement in nurturing social-emotional school readiness. Consistent with Martinez-Yarza et al. (2024), collaboration between parents and teachers enhances learners' emotional and social development. Similar studies highlight that structured parental involvement programs positively influence coping skills, self-regulation, and social interactions (Polat & Bayındır, 2022; Zitzmann et al., 2024; Sujarwo & Herwin, 2023). Even though the correlation observed is weak, it remains significant, reflecting measurable improvements in learners' readiness attributable to parental participation.

The relatively low correlation may be influenced by contextual factors such as cultural norms, resource availability, and socioeconomic conditions, which can limit parental involvement (Guo & Zhao, 2025; Vogel et al., 2023).

Theoretically, the findings align with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which emphasizes the role of interacting systems—particularly family and school—in child development (Rahman, 2025). Proximal processes within the microsystem, where families actively engage in school-related activities and provide emotional support, create environments conducive to social-emotional growth (Christensen et al., 2022). Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence Theory further reinforces the importance of shared responsibilities among families, schools, and communities in fostering holistic development (Epstein, 2018; Tran, 2014). Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, particularly the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), underscores the significance of adult mediation in supporting children's learning and emotional development (Chen, 2025; Mondi et al., 2021).

From a practical perspective, these results highlight the need for schools and policymakers to implement initiatives that actively involve parents, such as parent-teacher partnerships, family workshops, and home-based learning activities. Such programs create a supportive ecosystem that strengthens social-emotional competencies and promotes holistic school readiness among learners.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that parental engagement plays a pivotal role in enhancing the social-emotional readiness of learners in Early Childhood Education in public schools. Active involvement through awareness of expectations, collaboration with teachers, and home-based support contributes to learners' preparedness across key domains, including self-regulation, self-awareness, social relationships, and coping. High levels of parental participation foster trust, emotional capacity, and motivation, supporting children's ability to navigate social interactions and classroom environments. While learners show exceptional readiness, areas such as self-care and adaptive behaviors indicate the need for targeted reinforcement. Overall, consistent home-school collaboration strengthens foundational competencies essential for formal education and learner well-being.

6. Recommendations

Schools should institutionalize structured programs to promote and sustain parental engagement. Strategies may include regular parent-teacher dialogues, home-based learning initiatives, and community workshops that equip parents to support children's social and emotional development. Educational stakeholders should address potential barriers, such as time

constraints, resource limitations, and differing parental awareness, through flexible and culturally responsive approaches. By fostering a collaborative ecosystem of shared responsibility and trust, schools can enhance learners' social-emotional readiness and ensure a smoother transition to formal education.

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Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest among the corresponding author, the lead researcher, and her co-authors.

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