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A Quantitative Examination of Teachers' Perception of Children's Socio-Emotional Development in Reggio Emilia and Alberta Flight Framework-Driven Early Childhood Education and Care Centers

Emmanuel Adegboyega Adewusi
Bethel University

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by

Emmanuel Adewusi

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Approved by:

Advisor: Dr. Krista Soria

Reader: Dr. Mary Lindell

Reader: Dr. Jennifer Hill

Abstract

This quantitative cross-sectional study examines teachers' perceptions of children's socio-emotional development in Reggio Emilia and Alberta Flight framework-driven Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) centers. Two research questions guide the investigation: Are there significant differences in teachers' perceptions of socio-emotional development between children attending Reggio Emilia and Alberta Flight centers? Is there a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the socioeconomic status of children in these centers? The study gathered teachers' perceptions of children's socio-emotional development and explored differences between curricular frameworks. Responses were received from 47 Alberta Flight schools and 26 Reggio Emilia schools. Data analysis, including *t*-tests and principal component analysis, revealed two factors. Results indicate no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of children's socio-emotional development between curricular frameworks, including Prosocial Competence and Attention Competence. Additionally, no significant differences in socioeconomic factors among children were found. These findings suggest that while curricular frameworks vary in philosophy and approach, there is no statistically significant difference in children's socio-emotional development, as perceived by teachers. The study has implications for theory and practice in early childhood education, challenging existing theories, and highlighting the importance of evidence-based practices. Practitioners should prioritize strategies that foster positive social interactions and emotional regulation, while policymakers should consider equity and access in policy design. Future research should explore longitudinal effects and qualitative insights into teachers' perceptions and practices.

Keywords: ECEC quality, socioemotional development, early childhood education, early

childhood curriculum, Reggio Emilia, Alberta Flight, BITSEA.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The early childhood period is critical in setting the trajectory of an individual's life. In fact, children's first years can determine their future prosperity and the prosperity of the community to which they belong (Santos et al., 2016). High-quality early childhood education plays a crucial role in children's brain development and emotional development (Baustad & Bjørnestad, 2020). Quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) can be defined in various ways. ECEC quality can be referred to as a combination of environmental constructs and experiential factors that, when coupled together, lead to children's development (Layzer & Goodson, 2006). ECEC quality is popularly known to be a combination of structural quality (e.g., staff-child ratio, group size, staff's education, ECEC space, materials/toys) and process quality (e.g., staff-child interactions as captured in the curriculum; Slot, 2018; Vandell & Wolfe, 2000). In an attempt to improve the quality of their early childhood education offering, many governments pay attention to structural and process quality measures.

Over the years, many scholars have attempted to identify the most critical components that drive ECEC quality. For example, Burns (2018) argued that the quality of the practitioners or teachers is the main determinant of ECEC quality. Baustad and Bjørnestad (2020) further asserted that ECEC staff's relational skills and their ability to create a suitable environment for learning is important for ECEC quality. It is important to have a consensus on how to measure ECEC quality, especially for use by policymakers.

One common ECEC policy tool often utilized by policymakers worldwide is an early childhood education framework, a document containing the principles, policies, and practice guidelines to be adopted within that jurisdiction. Developing an early childhood framework has

become an arms race of sorts, as most federal, state, or municipal jurisdictions responsible for early childhood have already developed, are in the process of developing, or plan to develop an early childhood framework (Baustad & Bjørnestad, 2020; Drange & Rønning, 2020; Pinto et al., 2019; Santos, 2016). However, the effect of different early childhood education frameworks on children's emotional development is not clearly known (Murano et al., 2020).

The criticality of children's socio-emotional development has been well-researched and documented (Tayler et al., 2016). Emotional development in children can be measured and tracked (Boggs et al., 2019; Darling-Churchill & Lippman, 2016; Halle & Darling-Churchill, 2016; Jones et al., 2016). The ability to compare the emotional development in children with the early childhood framework presented the opportunity to measure the efficacy of the early childhood education framework implemented. As governments throughout the world implement early childhood education frameworks, the potency of such frameworks in facilitating the emotional development of children must be thoroughly examined.

Statement of the Problem

High-quality ECEC is essential for the all-around development of children, especially children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2013). The increasing availability of high-quality ECEC has also increased women's labor force participation (OECD, 2013). The Conference Board of Canada also reiterated the importance of high-quality ECEC, especially in boosting the Canadian economy by ensuring that children are educated to meet the needs of the workforce (Alexander et al., 2017). Children are heavily impacted in later years by the quality of ECEC they receive (Merry et al., 2020). Practically every aspect of children's lives is impacted by the quality of ECEC they receive starting in their early years. High-quality ECEC not only prepares children

for success in school—but it also contributes to the success of the economy as a whole (Merry et al., 2020). Despite the importance of high-quality early childhood education to children, families, and the economy, the quality of ECEC offered in Canadian provinces is inconsistent (Varmuza et al., 2019). Varmuza et al. (2019) discovered that children from low-income families are likely to attend low-quality ECEC centers. Despite the quality measures put in place by provincial governments, there is still a significant disparity in the quality of ECEC centers across Canada (Varmuza et al., 2019). According to McCuaig (2018), there is a shortfall in high-quality ECEC, which affects children, families, and the province of Alberta because children who have access to high-quality early learning and childcare do better into adulthood.

ECEC quality is made up of structural and process quality. Most governments focus attention on structural quality in their early childhood education quality framework and regulations since it is easily quantified, measured, and enforced (Bowne et al., 2017). The structural quality aspects of program design impact children indirectly, by promoting or impeding safe and positive care environments. Despite the structural quality measures established by provincial bodies responsible for early childhood education and care regulation, there is still a huge disparity in ECEC quality in Canada (Varmuza et al., 2019). One key aspect of structural quality is the curriculum or framework that the ECEC center adheres to, ensuring that it is evidence-based (Chaudry & Sandstrom, 2020). A curriculum is a set of instructions that governs the nature and extent of interactions between adult caregivers and children (Chaudry & Sandstrom, 2020). According to Pinto et al. (2019), children's developmental process is highly impacted by the socio-emotional interactions among themselves and with adult caregivers, which is largely influenced by the curriculum in use.

Zachrisson et al. (2021) alluded to the contribution of high-quality ECEC on the socio-

emotional growth and development of children who are enrolled at the appropriate ages. The author also acknowledged the impact of continuous and extensive care on the children's socio-emotional development. There is a difference in the socio-emotional development of children, depending on the quantity and quality of socio-emotional components involved in the ECEC (Broekhuizen et al., 2018).

Researchers have a consensus that socio-emotional development is critical to children's future success and development (Trommsdorff & Cole, 2011; Waldemar et al., 2016). This consensus is evidenced by the drastic increase in the number of programs geared toward improving children's socio-emotional development (Savina & Wan, 2017). Socio-emotional learning (SEL) can foster emotional maturity, reduce behavioral issues and improve adolescent academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011). Social competency is best cultivated within a child's early relationships, as it provides a safe environment for development (Kragh-Muller & Gloeckler, 2010).

Young children will learn various emotional regulation strategies like trusting, emotional regulation, empathy, and problem-solving based on the relationships forged with their caregivers (Erikson, 1994). Young children with secure relationships with their caregivers will also typically have healthy relationships with their peers and fare better overall than their peers with unhealthy relationships (Kragh-Muller & Gloeckler, 2010). Children normally learn socio-emotional behavior based on the nature of their relationship with parents and teachers, and as a result, policymakers should ensure those relationships are healthy to secure a child's emotional development. While there is an upward trend in the general adoption of SEL in ECEC, its incorporation in ECEC curriculums should also be investigated.

A research study comparing the SEL efforts of different European and North American

countries in ECEC shows the scattered approach towards ensuring that children's socio-emotional development is prioritized (Koltcheva & Coelho, 2022). According to the study, some countries have etched good socio-emotional development practices in their ECEC framework, while others have left it up to the individual ECEC centers to determine. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) developed the SEL framework based on a synthesis of past research on socio-emotional development (Newman & Dusunbury, 2015). This framework has since been adopted for use by policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders in determining, measuring, and improving SEL standards at different political levels. Even though curricular intervention has been proven to be effective in stimulating SEL (Shea, 2022), the OECD judged that Canada is still behind in integrating socio-emotional good practices into its ECEC framework (Doherty et al., 2003). Since the damning OECD report, Canada has taken significant steps in improving its ECEC framework, but unfortunately, it is not clear that those efforts have translated to improved socio-emotional development in children (Thomas, 2020).

A critical factor determining the quality of an ECEC center is the framework that underpins its practices on how children are educated (Chaudry & Sandstrom, 2020). Thomas (2020) further opined that curriculum frameworks could shift ECEC practitioners' views about learning, which will impact the children. In 2014, the Alberta Government released a theoretical framework for ECEC called *Flight*. The Flight framework was developed to guide ECEC educators in Alberta in making curriculum decisions instead of mandating curriculum decisions (Makovichuk et al., 2014). Since Canada does not currently have a national quality framework (Amjad, 2014), other means must be employed to measure the effectiveness of the new Alberta ECEC framework.

Researchers have measured the quality of an ECEC framework by comparing it to

another ECEC framework (Arias de Sanchez et al., 2012; Cleveland & Colley, 2013). Reggio Emilia is an example of an internationally recognized innovative ECEC approach that can be juxtaposed with the Alberta Flight framework to determine the quality of the Flight framework. The Reggio Emilia approach emerged in the Italian city of Reggio Emilia, the birthplace of many innovative infant-toddler and preschool ECEC ideas (Thomas, 2020). In a Reggio Emilia setting, a child has rights, is seen as a researcher, actively participates in knowledge creation, and is a social entity (Hewett, 2001). Additionally, the teacher in a Reggio Emilia setting collaborates with and guides the child in learning instead of taking over the learning process. A review of the Alberta Flight framework shows that it contains core principles from most emerging ECEC philosophies, especially the emphasis on play-based learning (Makovichuk et al., 2014). However, a more in-depth comparative analysis is warranted, given the significance of the Alberta Flight framework within Alberta's ECEC community.

Statement of Purpose

This study examined whether there are significant differences in teachers' perceptions of children's socio-emotional development based on whether they have enrolled in Reggio Emilia-based ECEC centers or in centers that strictly follow Alberta's Flight framework. The researcher also gathered information about the socioeconomic status differences the teachers noticed in the children.

The kind of curricula that guides the teaching practices in ECECs can determine the level of quality present in those ECECs (Ishimine & Tayler, 2014). There are many metrics for determining ECEC quality, depending on the outcomes the researcher seeks (Ishimine et al., 2010). As there is a clamor for more affordable ECEC centers in Canada, it is important to understand which types of ECEC centers will lead to more favorable SEL outcomes for children.

Research Questions

This study investigated the following research questions:

RQ1 Are there significant differences in teachers' perceptions of the socio-emotional development of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework?

RQ2 Is there a significant difference in the socioeconomic status of children who attend Reggio Emilia-based centers and Alberta Flight framework-based centers?

Hypothesis

H1o - There is no difference in the competence total score of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework.

H1a - There is a significant difference in the competence total score of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework.

H2o - There is no significant difference in the socioeconomic factors of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework.

H2a - There is a significant difference in the socioeconomic factors of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework.

Significance of the Study

Curriculum-based direct, explicit instruction in socio-emotional learning affects children's socio-emotional growth (Gormley et al., 2011). Ashdown and Bernard (2012) discovered that the You Can Do It! (YCDI) early childhood education program elicited

emotional growth in preparatory and grade one students and reduced behavioral issues in the same grade one students. Tier one social and emotional learning interventions in ECEC can have positive effects on a child's socio-emotional development, while tier two programs are not yet known to be effective with preschoolers (Blewitt et al., 2019).

The Reggio Emilia framework can significantly increase socio-emotional outcomes in preschool children (Biroli et al., 2018; Arseven, 2014). In the Reggio Emilia approach, the curriculum is emergent, which means there is no preset curriculum in a Reggio Emilia setting (Gandini, 1993). The teachers and the students form the curriculum as they work on each project and activity (Gandini, 1993). Even though one of Alberta's Flight framework co-authors visited Reggio Emilia and was inspired by it, there are still significant differences between both educational frameworks (Whitty, 2018).

The researcher anticipates that this dissertation will help education policymakers and educators in policymaking and practice (Haslip & Gullo, 2018). Haslip and Gullo (2018) highlighted the power governments have over education policy, especially because it is tied to funding. A research study like this can aid decision-making on early childhood education policy. Policymakers can see more reasons to update the Alberta Early Childcare Framework to include more widely accepted good practices in ECEC. The output from this research should help inform the decision-making of ECEC directors, ECEC staff, and parents in determining which early childhood pedagogy is ideal for the children. The goal was to examine teachers' perceptions of children attending ECEC centers utilizing each early education framework to report which framework is more effective in developing a child socio-emotionally.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were referred to in this study and are defined as follows:

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) quality: For the purpose of this study, ECEC quality is defined as the combination of structural and process quality characteristics evident in an ECEC center (Bowne et al., 2017).

Early childhood education framework: The combination of rules, regulations, policies, and good practices that are expected of every ECEC within a jurisdiction (Chaudry & Sandstrom, 2020).

Curriculum: A curriculum can be defined as a structured set of instructions that guides and regulates the nature and scope of interactions between adult caregivers and children. This includes the design, implementation, and evaluation of educational activities, as well as the selection of appropriate instructional materials, assessment methods, and learning outcomes (Chaudry & Sandstrom, 2020).

Emotional competency score: This score is calculated using responses from parents or childcare providers using the Brief Infant-Toddler Social and Emotional Assessment (BITSEA). The emotional competency score measures socio-emotional abilities in children (Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families, 2011).

Emotional problem score: This score is calculated using responses from parents or childcare providers using the BITSEA tool. The problem score measures areas of concern in a child's behavior (Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families, 2011).

Socioeconomic status: For the purpose of this study, these factors include the effect that income, level of education, place of residence, and the occupational status and prestige of a family has on the socio-emotional development of a child (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Teachers were asked in the survey, "Does this child qualify for early childhood education subsidy?" and

were provided with two answer options, yes and no.

Socio-emotional learning (SEL): This is the learning process of adopting cognitive, emotional, and behavioral competencies to achieve growth and development. According to Collaborative for Social & Emotional Learning (CASEL), SEL comprises five core competency areas: (a) self-awareness, (b) self-management, (c) social awareness, (d) relationship skills, and (e) responsible decision-making (Newman & Dusunbury, 2015).

Summary

In this chapter, the criticality of early childhood education was established. An individual's future success can be determined by their early childhood experiences. A child with access to high-quality ECEC has better chances of brain and emotional development than those who did not have access to high-quality ECEC (Baustad & Bjørnestad, 2020). Attempts were also made to define the critical components of high-quality ECEC and how important a well-formulated ECEC curriculum framework is in stimulating ECEC quality.

A high-quality ECEC framework should make provision for the socio-emotional development of children. Of all the well-researched ECEC frameworks like Head Start, Montessori, and YCDI, this study focused on the Reggio Emilia and Alberta Flight frameworks, respectively. The Reggio Emilia and Alberta Flight frameworks are commonly used here in Edmonton, Alberta, but their effectiveness in stimulating socio-emotional development is yet to be thoroughly studied. This study examined the effect, if any, of the Reggio Emilia and Flight framework on the socio-emotional development of preschool-aged children. This study also examined the effect of socioeconomic factors on the socio-emotional development of preschool children depending on whether their school uses the Reggio Emilia or Alberta Flight framework.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter 1 focused on the introduction, problem statement, and the significance of early childhood education curriculum in the context of children's emotional development. This investigation examined teachers' perceptions of the Reggio Emilia and Alberta Flight frameworks and their effectiveness in developing children socio-emotionally. Chapter 2 includes assessments of the structural and process quality of early childhood education in Canada. Curriculum frameworks, specifically Reggio Emilia and Alberta Flight, were examined for their emphasis on play and child development. Theoretical frameworks, including Erikson's and Freud's theories, were explored in relation to socio-emotional development. The BITSEA tool was introduced for measuring problems and competency scores in preschoolers, laying the groundwork for the study's approach in the following section. Chapter 3 is dedicated to outlining the methodological design, research questions, hypotheses, and instruments utilized in the investigation. Chapter 3 delved into the sample characteristics, details the data collection procedures, and elucidates the data analysis methods employed. Additionally, this chapter addresses the limitations of the methodology and ethical considerations inherent in the study. Chapter 4 outlines the results of the study from the principal component analysis on the 11 BITSEA/C items using oblique rotation (promax). Chapter 5 focuses on the research and implications for future research. The study's findings enhance our understanding of factors impacting children's socio-emotional development in early education. Acknowledging the significance of nurturing socio-emotional skills and addressing equity in early childhood settings can foster collaboration among practitioners, policymakers, and researchers.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Understanding the purpose and significance of this study requires a brief summary of previous research literature that frames the topical areas of early childhood education quality, curriculum frameworks, and socio-emotional development in children. The discussion on socio-emotional development in children included a synthesis of significant and fundamental socio-emotional development theories.

This literature review was conducted using searches on the online Bethel University library. The search terms used were "early childhood education and care," "ECEC," "ECEC quality," "ECEC curriculum," "Canada," "Alberta Flight Framework," "Reggio Emilia," "socio-emotional learning," and "SEL Priority" was given to peer-reviewed journals published from 2010 until 2022. The typical journals explored were *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, Journal of Early Childhood Research, Early Childhood Education Journal,* and *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*. The researcher also reviewed the references section of relevant peer-reviewed journals to locate other relevant articles. Because socio-emotional learning and development have a long history, most relevant materials were published in the early 20th century.

Early Childhood Education Care (ECEC) Quality

The importance of high-quality ECEC in students' development and outcomes has been well-documented across the years (Ishimine, 2011; Ishimine & Tayler, 2014; Ishimine et al., 2010; Krieg et al., 2015; Kuger et al., 2016; Logan, 2017; Mizikaci, 2006; Rentzou, 2017; Tonge et al., 2019). However, there is a shortfall in high-quality ECEC, and it affects children and families. Many possible factors are contributing to the shortfall in high-quality ECEC centers,

among which are the availability of well-trained early learning educators, lack of clear quality benchmarks, and the profitability of high-quality early childhood centers (Bowne et al., 2017).

Children with access to high-quality early learning and childcare do better in school and adulthood (McCuaig, 2018). An expanding body of research demonstrates that high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) programs generate positive outcomes for children (White et al., 2015). There is mounting evidence, in the United States, Canada and Europe, that high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) can be advantageous for the cognitive and emotional development of children, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Duncan & Sojourner 2013; Keys et al. 2013; Sibley et al., 2015). For children from low-income families, high-quality childcare is linked to better socio-emotional outcomes (Votruba-Drzal et al. 2004) and enhanced language skills (Burchinal et al., 2000). Access to affordable and high-quality early education can enable mothers to get back into the workforce, boosting economic productivity (Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta, 2020). High-quality early childhood education and care are essential for every child to have a fair chance at success in life (Human Services, 2013).

ECEC quality has captured the attention of policymakers, parents, and researchers for a few decades now (Cheeseman & Torr, 2009). In particular, ECEC availability, affordability, and, most importantly, quality are at the forefront of ECEC policy discussions (Cloney et al., 2015; Ishimine et al., 2010; Logan, 2017). This heightened interest in ECEC quality could result from increased use of ECEC centers, with parents seeking more information for decision-making. Also, due to the increased use of ECEC, more parents are challenging the government to take steps to improve ECEC quality (Taguma et al., 2012). As government funding for ECEC grows exponentially (Friendly et al., 2021), there is an increasing clamor to measure the effectiveness

of government funding in ECEC (Bowne et al., 2017). For policymakers to effectively make ECEC policy, they must have at their disposal thorough and unbiased findings that will inform their policymaking (Siraj et al., 2019).

The quality of ECEC has been defined in various ways in different countries and stakeholder groups (Pinto et al., 2019). In many cases, the belief system, values, and faith foundation have played an important role in formulating high-quality ECEC. To assist policy-makers, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defined ECEC quality "in terms of structural quality and process quality and sets out child development or child outcome as quality targets" (Taguma et al., 2012, p. 9). Researchers have come to agree that ECEC quality can be both structural quality and process quality (Ishimine, 2011; Ishimine & Tayler, 2014; Ishimine et al., 2010; Krieg et al., 2015; Kuger et al., 2016; Logan, 2017; Mizikaci, 2006; Rentzou, 2017; Tonge et al., 2019).

Structural quality is made up of factors that can be easily governed and controlled by government policy, while process quality is not as easy to measure and control. Structural quality includes teacher-child ratios, ECEC center resources, qualification of ECEC staff, and other factors (Ishimine, 2011; Ishimine & Tayler, 2014; Krieg et al., 2015). According to Litjens and Taguma (2010), structural quality consists of variables that will aid policymakers in regulation. Process quality, on the other hand, has to do with the interactions between the teachers and children, communication within the ECEC center, interactions between the teachers and parents, etc. (Ishimine et al., 2010; Krieg et al., 2015; Kuger et al., 2016; Logan, 2017; Mizikaci, 2006). Process quality consists of interactions and children's experiences within an ECEC setting (Litjens & Taguma, 2010). ECEC frameworks and pedagogical approaches are designed to cover both structural and process quality.

Reggio Emilia ECEC Pedagogy

There are different pedagogical approaches adopted across different nations of the world. Many frameworks have been adopted with recorded degrees of success (Halle & Darling-Churchill, 2016). The Reggio Emilia approach is one of such ECEC pedagogies that has been demonstrated to bring about positive results in children (Kelly, 2014). The Reggio Emilia approach was developed by Loris Malaguzzi, who hailed from a small city in northern Italy called Reggio Emilia. The city of Reggio Emilia built a robust ECEC system where families and the entire community are actively involved in the education of children. The Reggio approach, as it is fondly called, emphasizes the role of the teacher, the environment, the school, and the child in facilitating bias-free discovery and problem-solving (Edwards et al., 1998).

The image of a child as a capable human agent is recognized among early childhood researchers as critical (King, 2007; Malaguzzi, 1994; Woodrow, 1999). According to Malaguzzi (1994), the founder of the Reggio Emilia approach, the image we hold in our minds of the child will determine the extent to which we will interact with the child. We will engage with the child productively if we see a child as someone who can understand and reason. Malaguzzi (1994) postulated that for effective learning to occur in a child, both the child and the adult must be active and important enough to participate.

The Reggio approach recommends that the role of the adult should be one of facilitating learning rather than transmitting information to the child (Malaguzzi, 1994). A genuine desire for learning will be developed in a child when the adult masterfully creates a curriculum that taps into the creativity and curiosity of a child. To successfully teach a child, an adult must first listen to the child and all the perspectives the child brings to the school (Rinaldi, 2011). A child's perspective includes the family, past experiences, socioeconomic status, and everything else that

represents the child's identity.

A teacher demonstrates listening skills in the Reggio approach by utilizing an emerging curriculum (Arseven, 2014; Gandini, 1993). In a Reggio classroom, the curriculum takes shape as the teacher listens to the child, and the child listens to the teacher. This emergent curriculum evolves as themes are expressed through short and long-term projects (Gandini, 1993). Because the Reggio approach was born out of an infusion of the uniquely Italian culture fused with novel early childhood education and care ideas, each devotee should implement the Reggio approach with their unique culture in mind (Hewett, 2001). In essence, the Reggio approach comprises early childhood education and care philosophies with a fluid curriculum tailored to each child and their cultural context. Some ECEC frameworks, however, are more rigid, and their practitioners are expected to follow their content judiciously. One such ECEC framework is the Alberta Flight Framework.

Alberta Flight Framework

The Alberta Flight framework is the government's response to the need to improve ECEC quality in Alberta, Canada. The Flight framework incorporates different perspectives for how ECEC educators can make curriculum decisions to be implemented in learning environments. The Flight framework's vision is to build well-grounded children in Alberta while keeping the rights of those children and their diverse families in mind (Makovichuk et al., 2014). The framework incorporates play and contains the perspectives of multiple ECEC professionals. This Flight framework is a combination of pedagogical ideas from other ECEC pedagogies and is geared toward strategies for helping children learn and explore their surroundings, as well as helping the teachers to facilitate learning (Thomas, 2020). According to Makovichuk et al. (2014), the Flight framework contains several aspects of the Reggio Emilia approach, like the

role of the environment and the emphasis on the right image of a child. A good ECEC framework can lead to a child's socio-emotional development when properly implemented.

A high-quality ECEC environment must provide safety, predictability, and opportunity for the children to be nurtured. A child's early years are the best time to shape the brain into what is needed for a successful future, as opposed to the current approach of expending public resources during the later years on mental health or substance abuse programs (Keys et al. 2013; Perry, 2005; Slot, 2018). A child's socio-emotional development can be measured by the level of "attachment, self-regulation, affiliation, attunement, tolerance, and respect" (Perry, 2005, p. 4). The Alberta Flight framework claims to facilitate children's socio-emotional growth and development when properly implemented. Although the Alberta Flight framework shows potential, its impact on the quality of early childhood education and care (ECEC) and its influence on student outcomes, including socio-emotional development, are yet to be fully comprehended by researchers. This may be attributed to the fact that the framework was only established in 2012. This study enabled ECEC stakeholders and policymakers to assess the Flight Framework's effectiveness in children's socio-emotional development vis-a-vis the world-renowned Reggio Emilia Framework.

Measurement of Socio-emotional Development in ECEC

There are four purposes for assessment in ECEC: (a) determining the child's development, (b) determining a need for intervention and the nature of instruction, (c) assessing curriculum and program performance, and (d) increasing the knowledge base of child development information (National Research Council, 2008). Some researchers have argued that existing measurement tools for determining the socio-emotional development of children are not effective, while others believe the existing tools are effective (Darling-Churchill & Lippman,

2016). The challenges researchers encounter while measuring children's socio-emotional development cover a range of domains. The social and emotional development domain must be separated from other domains, like cognitive development (Jones et al., 2016).

Researchers face additional questions in socio-emotional growth measurement (Borghans et al., 2008; Darling-Churchill, & Lippman, 2016; Duckworth et al., 2012; Reeves et al., 2014). Who measures the child's development, and what academic qualification is needed to answer the assessment questions effectively? Can we rely on parents and teachers for reporting on measures? How many times can a child be assessed without negatively impacting the child? When should consent be sought from the parents or guardians of the children? What purpose will the assessment achieve, and will it benefit the child? Can we arrive at a universally accepted definition of socio-emotional development as it varies on the child's background? Researchers have attempted to answer these and other questions in an attempt to enhance the identification, measurement, and development of children's socio-emotional lives.

One challenge researchers face in the socio-emotional domain that is worth delving deeper into is the definition of "self-control." Self-control has been deemed a critical determinant of a child's success later in life (Moffitt et al., 2011). As most socio-emotional assessment tools are based on the reports of teachers and parents, how they define self-control can skew a child's socio-emotional development assessment. Self-control has been defined as a combination of several interdisciplinary concepts that demonstrate a child's ability to control several aspects of themselves, for example, will, thoughts, emotions, bodies, and speech (Moffitt et al., 2011). All the concepts in Moffitt et al.'s (2011) construct of self-control have bodies of knowledge and taxonomies that complicate efforts at arriving at a cohesive understanding of self-control and how to measure it.

On the other hand, Diamond (2013) asserted that self-control is within the domain of self-regulation and executive function. The importance of executive function in a child has garnered lots of attention lately for good reason, as it has been touted to lead to a child's future success (Blair & Razza, 2007; Carlson & Wang, 2007). In essence, one of the ways to show high executive function is the presence of self-control. Even within Diamond's (2013) definition of self-control, the difference between the regulation and expression of emotions or regulation and aggression of behavior is not clearly defined (Jones et al., 2016). McClelland and Cameron (2012) and Blair and Razza generically defined self-regulation as a child's ability to control behavior, regulate emotions, and remain focused.

For the purpose of my research, the definition of socio-emotional development provided by the Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) was used. According to CSEFEL, socio-emotional development can be defined as

> the developing capacity of the child from birth through five years of age to form close and secure adult and peer relationships; experience, regulate, and express emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways; and explore the environment and learn—all in the context of family, community, and culture. (Yates et al., 2010, p. 2)

Halle and Darling-Churchill (2016) reviewed 75 tools available for assessing a child's growth and development that covers the four domains of socio-emotional development, social competence, emotional competence, behavior problems, and self-regulation. Of the total measures reviewed, only six measures were rated as ideal for their psychometric properties, administration, and effectiveness within a diverse population. Those six shortlisted measures are:

- The Infant Toddler Social Emotional Assessment (ITSEA) which covers children from age 0-3 (Carter et al., 2003)

- Behavior Assessment System for Children, Second Edition (BASC-2), which covers children from age 0-5 (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 2002)
- Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) which covers children from age 0-5 (Achenbach, 1991; Achenbach & McConaughy, 1992)
- Devereux Early Childhood Assessment Clinical Form (DECA-C) which covers children from age 0-5 (LeBuffe & Naglieri, 2003)
- Preschool Learning Behaviors Scale (PLBS) which covers children from age 0-5 (McDermott et al., 2002)
- Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) which covers children from age 0-5 (Gresham & Elliott, 1993)

Of the six measures, only the ITSEA and the DECA-C cover all four socio-emotional subdomains (Halle & Darling-Churchill, 2016). While the ITSEA and DECA-C receive glowing reviews from Halle and Darling-Churchill, they are not curriculum-based assessment tools. A curriculum-based assessment that was not reviewed by Halle and Darling-Churchill yet is commonly used is the Social-Emotional Assessment Measure (SEAM) Parent-Toddler Interval (Magee, 2012). SEAM additionally covers children from ages 2-64 months and captures the parent-child relationship, which is critical in building socio-emotional competencies in children (Magee, 2012).

A key advantage of SEAM over other socio-emotional development assessment tools is that it can also capture the parents' strengths and deficiencies. The SEAM Family Profile can identify which areas parents need support to improve a child's socio-emotional development opportunities. The assistance that SEAM can provide will improve child and family outcomes (Magee, 2012). Although all socio-emotional development assessment measures show

compelling strengths, Pontoppidan et al. (2017) concluded that the brief version of the ITSEA (BITSEA) is one of the most comprehensive and psychometrically sound tools. In this research paper, I used the competence measure of the BITSEA to assess the quality of the Alberta Flight framework compared to the Reggio Emilia philosophy.

Theoretical Framework

The socio-emotional development of children has been studied over the years, resulting in the formulation of many well-known theories. Examples include Erikson's (1994) theory of psychosocial development, Freud's (1953) psychoanalytic theory, Skinner's (1976) behaviorism theory, cognitive constructivism theory (Perry, 1999; Piaget, 1968), and Vygotsky's (1980) social constructivism.

The theory of psychosocial development extends and deepens the works of Freud (1953) in the domain of psychosexual development by drawing references to the influence of social factors all the way into adulthood (Erikson, 1994; Orenstein & Lewis, 2021). Erikson was well known for his ideas on identity and the lifecycle of human beings (Stevens, 2008). Erikson's theory of psychosocial development adopts a biopsychosocial approach and suggests that human development comprises eight sequential stages. Individuals at each stage are prone to positive or negative psychosocial tendencies. The eight stages of psychosocial development are:

- Stage 1 - Infancy period: In this stage, the child will develop trust or distrust depending on the child's experiences, which will lead to either the positive virtue of hope or a negative trait of withdrawal.
- Stage 2 - Early childhood period: In this stage, the child will develop autonomy or shame and doubt depending on the child's experiences, which will lead to either the positive virtue of a healthy strong will or compulsion.

- Stage 3 - Play age period: In this stage, the child will develop the ability to take initiative or become guilty, which will lead to either the positive virtue of a clear purpose or the negative trait of inhibition.
- Stage 4 - School age period: In this stage, the child will develop competence or begin to feel inferior, which will lead to either a feeling of approval from society or disapproval, which will lead to passivity.
- Stage 5 - Adolescence period: In this stage, the individual will develop a clear picture of their identity or become confused about who they are, which will lead to a positive virtue of loyalty or a negative trait of rejection.
- Stage 6 - Young adulthood period: In this stage, the individual will become intimate with other individuals or become isolated from others, which will lead to forming close relationships or distancing themselves from others.
- Stage 7 - Adulthood period: In this stage, the individual will become preoccupied with the idea of pouring into others or the next generation or will become isolated and self-absorbed, which will lead to receiving and giving care or rejecting care.
- Stage 8 - Old age period: In this final stage, the individual will feel accomplished and fulfilled or a feeling of despair from lack of accomplishment, which will lead to the synthesis of wisdom or disregard for lived experiences. (Orenstein & Lewis, 2021)

Another very popular behavioral theory is Freud's (1953) psychoanalytic theory. Freud posited that critical aspects of behavior are determined by unconscious aspects of the individual (Rapaport, 1960). Freud postulated that the internal conflicts within an individual determine their overall psychological experience (Haggard et al., 2008). According to Freud, the human mind comprises the id, ego, and superego. The human levels of consciousness are consciousness,

preconsciousness, and unconsciousness, while the psychosexual stages of development are oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital (Knapp, 2020).

Behaviorism theories focus on how students assimilate information. Education practitioners have widely used three behaviorism theories for many years. These theories have influenced early childhood curriculums and frameworks over the years. They are behaviorism, cognitive constructivism, and social constructivism. As leading behaviorists, Watson (1927) and Skinner (1976) declined introspective ideas of behaviorism as too subjective and instead opted for more objective and quantifiable behavioral patterns. In behaviorism, it is believed that behaviors are mainly influenced by external stimuli, not necessarily internal factors. Skinner argued that the main measure of behavior should be based on the subject's observable response to external stimuli. In behaviorism, positive and negative reinforcement and repetition are important pieces in their motivation toolbox (Ferster & Skinner, 1957).

Leading proponents of cognitive constructivism, Piaget (1968) and Perry (1999), espoused the idea that cognitivist theories help students enhance their ability to receive new information by adjusting their existing cognitive structures. Practitioners of cognitivism believe teachers should consider the learner's level of cognition while building their learning approach. To a cognitivist, knowledge comprises key cognitive representations like pictures and mental concepts for making connections between ideas (Zhao et al., 2014). It is the role of the educator to assess the learner's current knowledge. Hence, learning can only be optimal when the learner is guided on incorporating the new information into their mental map. Another major difference between a behaviorist and a cognitivist is that a cognitivist believes that motivation for learning is internal, whereas a behaviorist believes that motivation for learning is external (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The cognitive approach in ECEC is seen in the emphasis on involving the child in

determining their curriculum.

The leading proponent of social constructivism is Vygotsky (1978). The social constructivist approach promotes the effectiveness of group participation in learning. According to Vygotsky, language, culture, and tradition play an important part in the learning process (Rogoff, 1990). Social constructivists believe that the group can determine what is important to learn and provide motivation for learning. To a social constructivist, motivation for learning is both intrinsic and extrinsic (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky's ideas are incorporated into the push for play-based learning in ECEC. All these learning theories are acclaimed, but their effect on the socio-emotional development of children ought to be objectively assessed. This research used the BITSEA/C tool to assess children's socio-emotional development.

BITSEA Socio-Emotional Problem and Competencies

The Brief Infant-Toddler Social Emotional Assessment (BITSEA) is a rating scale that captures problem and competency scores for 1- to 3-year-old children in a developmentally appropriate way (Briggs-Gowan & Carter, 2006). The BITSEA is used as a screening tool for identifying social and emotional problems in infants and toddlers aged 12 to 36 months. This BITSEA tool consists of a 42-item report questionnaire that assesses various domains of social and emotional development, including internalizing problems, externalizing problems, dysregulation, and competence. The BITSEA provides cutoff scores that classify a child's risk as low, moderate, or high, based on their scores on these domains.

The BITSEA can be completed by either the teacher or the parents (Briggs-Gowan & Carter, 2006). The BITSEA rating scale can be divided into the problem measures (BITSEA/P) and competence (BITSEA/C) measures (Briggs-Gowan & Carter, 2006). The 31 items on the BITSEA/P cover internalizing problems, externalizing problems, dysregulation problems, and

atypical and maladaptive behaviors. The BITSEA/C includes 11 items that measure socio-emotional traits about attention, focus, mastery, empathy, sociableness, agreeableness, and other social-emotional competencies for identifying socio-emotional development. The BITSEA/C, the competence measure section of the BITSEA was the survey instrument used in this research study. Responses were summed up and a low score on the BITSEA/C was deemed less favorable (Briggs-Gowan & Carter, 2002).

Even though some of the behavioral problems detailed in the BITSEA/P are typical in children, the degree to which they are displayed varies as they age and can be a pointer to the level of emotional development. Some behaviors captured can only be problematic when displayed more than the typical frequency or intensity (Briggs-Gowan & Carter, 2007). On the other hand, if children do not display typical competency behaviors, that could indicate socio-emotional developmental delays. The other behavioral problem indicators captured by the BITSEA/P are never appropriate and should only be seen in children with atypical development.

The competence measures in the BITSEA/C refer to the assessment of a child's positive social and emotional development. Specifically, the BITSEA/C assesses competence in four areas: compliance, communication, empathy, and prosocial behavior (Briggs-Gowan et al., 2004).

Compliance refers to the child's ability to follow rules, routines, and directions. Children who score high in compliance are typically cooperative, obedient, and able to follow instructions (Carter et al., 2003). Communication refers to the child's ability to communicate effectively with others. Children who score high in communication are typically good at expressing themselves, using language to solve problems, and engaging in social interactions with others (Carter et al., 2003). Empathy refers to the child's ability to recognize and understand the emotions of others.

Children who score high in empathy are typically able to show concern for others, comfort them when they are upset, and share their feelings with others (Carter et al., 2003). Finally, prosocial behavior refers to the child's ability to engage in positive behaviors towards others, such as sharing, helping, and cooperating. Children who score high in prosocial behavior are typically kind, considerate, and helpful to others (Carter et al., 2003).

The competence measures in the BITSEA/C provide valuable information about a child's strengths and areas of need in their social and emotional development (Briggs-Gowan & Carter, 2002). High scores on these measures are generally associated with positive outcomes in later development, such as better academic achievement, stronger social relationships, and better mental health (Carter et al., 2004). Conversely, low scores on these measures may suggest that the child may need additional support or intervention to improve their social and emotional skills (Carter et al., 2004).

Summary

In this literature review section, more light was shed on the quality of early childhood education. Research evidence was presented to indicate that there is a shortage of high-quality ECEC centers in Canada. From prior research, we can see that ECEC quality can be divided into structural and process quality. Most regulatory bodies pay more attention to structural quality characteristics because they are easier to measure than process quality (Vandell et al., 2010). One example of structural quality is the curriculum framework that is in use. The Reggio Emilia and Alberta Flight frameworks were reviewed in more detail to provide context for their selection and analysis. Both curriculum frameworks emphasize the importance of play in the cognitive, physical, and emotional development of children. The Reggio Emilia framework, however, places more emphasis on the role of the teacher, environment, school, and child in curating

meaningful experiences for the children. To accurately juxtapose both curriculum frameworks, the approach for measuring socio-emotional development had to be established.

The four main reasons for ECEC assessment were reviewed while discussing the effectiveness of some available socio-emotional development assessment tools. The socio-emotional development domain's makeup was discussed to clarify this study's focus. The theoretical framework underpinning children's socio-emotional development was discussed. Theories like Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, Freud's psychoanalytic theory, and Skinner's behaviorism theories were examined and correlated with children's socio-emotional development. Understanding the theoretical framework will help understand the BITSEA/C tool to be used for juxtaposing the effectiveness of the Reggio Emilia approach with the Alberta Flight framework. This chapter concluded with a discussion of the BITSEA tool for measuring the problem and competency scores for preschool children. The next section will be focused on the approach for conducting this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Purpose

The purpose of this quantitative cross-sectional study was to collect teachers' perceptions of children's socio-emotional development and to examine whether there were statistically significant differences in teachers' ratings of students based on whether students were enrolled in Reggio Emilia-based ECEC centers or in centers that strictly followed Alberta's Flight framework. This study enabled the researcher to investigate the framework's potential role in children's socio-emotional development. A secondary purpose of this study was to determine if there were differences in the socioeconomic factors among children in the Reggio Emilia-based centers and Alberta Flight framework-based centers. This chapter provides an overview of the methods used in the study, along with a description of the participants.

Research Questions

This study investigated the following research questions:

RQ1 - Are there significant differences in teachers' perceptions of the socio-emotional development of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework?

RQ2 - Is there a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the socioeconomic status of children who attend Reggio Emilia-based centers and Alberta Flight framework-based centers?

Hypothesis

H1o - There is no difference in the competence total score of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework.

H1a - There is a significant difference in the competence total score of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework.

H2o - There is no significant difference in the socioeconomic factors of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework.

H2a - There is a significant difference in the socioeconomic factors of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework.

Research Design

The research design serves as the roadmap for conducting a study and finding answers. Research design creates a framework to test the relationships between variables using a postpositivist worldview, which is a traditional form of research based on observation and measurement (Creswell, 2013). This study examined whether there are differences between the socioemotional development of children who attend two well-known early childhood programs. The researcher investigated the differences between the Alberta Flight framework and the Reggio Emilia approach in helping children develop emotionally based on teachers' perceptions.

Sample

The target sample for this study were teachers who shared data about students from Reggio Emilia and Alberta Flight preschools. There were two groups: teachers from schools that use the Reggio Emilia framework (Reggio) and teachers from schools that use the Alberta Flight framework (Flight). The researcher sent out surveys to 400 preschool directors asking them to share the survey with one of their teachers. Each teacher from each preschool was asked to rate

the average socioemotional development of all the students in their class. Hence, each teacher completed one survey that was the average for the entire class.

The researcher worked with the preschool directors for approval to conduct research in their respective preschools. Once approval was granted, the preschool directors were given the electronic survey to share with their teachers.

The researcher shared the questionnaires with the preschool directors in each school. The goal was to have a minimum of 30 responses for each group (R1-Rn and F1-Fn) using each framework. Personally identifiable information like the children's names and dates of birth were not needed to be collected since the teachers were only recording one survey which was the average for the class. Each teacher's response was assigned an identification number (e.g., R1, R2, etc. for Reggio Emilia school and F1, F2, etc. for Alberta Flight Framework-based schools) to ensure their anonymity.

Sampling Procedures

The researcher gathered a list of Reggio Emilia schools and Alberta Flight Framework-based schools by searching on Daycare and Preschool Teachers' Associations in Canada websites (e.g., Northern Alberta Preschool Teachers Association). Each school's website was reviewed to validate the framework used. Preschools that utilize multiple frameworks were eliminated from the list as the focus was on preschools that indicated on their website that they use one of the two frameworks in focus. The researcher identified 400 Reggio Emilia and Alberta Flight Framework preschools from the internet. The researcher then sent introductory emails to the preschool directors, advising them of the research and requesting their participation.

Instrumentation

The data collection tool used by the researcher is a revised version of the BITSEA survey developed by researchers at Yale University and the University of Massachusetts (Briggs-Gowan & Carter, 2002). The BITSEA, a brief version of the extensive ITSEA (Infant-Toddler Social Emotional Assessment), is designed to be completed by childcare providers. Each question can be answered by observing each child during the course of a school day. The BITSEA is one of the most effective tools in the hands of childcare professionals for assessing children's emotional development, especially in the early identification of psychosocial deficiencies (de Wolff et al., 2013; Pontoppidan et al., 2017).

The BITSEA is a standardized assessment tool that measures various aspects of emotional development in young children, including social engagement, self-regulation, and emotional expressiveness. The BITSEA assesses the emotional development of children and presents the results under four domains: externalizing, internalizing, dysregulation, and competence (Briggs-Gowan & Carter, 2002). The 11-item BITSEA/C can be used by parents and childcare professionals in determining the emotional competencies of infants and toddlers aged 12 to 36 months (Briggs-Gowan et al., 2004). The BITSEA/C was chosen for this research because it is succinct and contains accurate measures for determining the emotional competencies that children have developed.

Variables

Dependent Variables

There were two dependent variables in this research. One is the emotional development of preschool aged children, which was measured using the Brief Infant-Toddler Social and Emotional Assessment (BITSEA) competency scores. The BITSEA contains questions that

measure socio-emotional problems and socio-emotional competencies in children. There are 31 questions on the BITSEA's problem scale to measure externalizing, internalizing, dysregulation, maladaptive, and atypical behavioral problems. There are also 11 questions on the BITSEA's competence scale to measure social-emotional abilities in children for areas like empathy, social cues, mastery, and social relationships. Scoring high on the problem scale or low on the competence scale is considered unfavorable. Aside from the 42 items, the BITSEA also includes two single-item queries concerning a parent's apprehensions about their child's language development and their child's behavior, emotions, or relationships (Kruizinga et al., 2012).

The BITSEA is made up of 42 questions. Examples of statements that help with capturing the problem and competency scores are as follows:

- Shows pleasure when he or she succeeds (for example, claps for self)
- Gets hurt so often that you can't take your eyes off him or her
- Seems nervous, tense, or fearful
- Is restless and can't sit still
- Follow rules
- Wakes up at nap time and needs help to fall asleep again
- Cries or has tantrums until he or she is exhausted
- Is afraid of certain places, animals or things. What is he or she afraid of?

Each item follows a 3 point scale "0"= Not true/rarely, "1" = Somewhat true/ Sometimes, "2"= Very true/always. For certain items, a respondent may also respond "N" which means no opportunity.

Additional statements that will help to measure problem and competency development are as follows:

- Often get very upset
- Gags or chokes on food
- Imitates playful sounds when you ask him or her to
- Refuses to eat
- Points to show you something far away
- Seems very unhappy, sad, depressed, or withdrawn
- Hits, bites, or kicks you (or other childcare provider)
- When upset, gets very still, freezes, or doesn't move

The BITSEA instrument can be utilized as a self-administered tool or as a structured interview. Each child's emotional development is measured by the problem and competency score that is generated by adding up ratings for each problem and competence item and comparing them with the benchmark scores provided in the manual (Briggs-Gowan & Carter, 2006). The BITSEA identifies a child as having a "possible problem" if a percentile rank of 25 or higher is obtained on the problems scale, and a "possible deficit/delay range" if a percentile rank of 15 or lower is obtained on the Competence scale (Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families, 2011). Since this research study was focused on determining the emotional competence of children, the researcher focused on the 11 items that make up the competency score (BITSEA/C). This research study was unfunded, and did not involve translating the original BITSEA, hence the BITSEA/C survey was free to use.

The manual for the BITSEA states that the norming sample included 600 children from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds in the United States (Briggs-Gowan & Carter, 2006). The sample was stratified by age, sex, and race/ethnicity to ensure that it was representative of the general population of young children in the United States. The norming

process involved administering the BITSEA to the children in the sample and using the results to establish norms for the various domains and subdomains of the assessment. These norms allow clinicians and researchers to compare the scores of individual children to those of the norming population and make judgments about their social-emotional and behavioral development.

The second dependent variable is the average socioeconomic status of the students in each class. Socioeconomic status is a term used to describe an individual's level of access to financial, educational, and social resources, and the resulting social status, advantages, and recognition that come with these resources (Pace et al., 2017). Socioeconomic status measures variables like family income, level of education of parents, and employment status of parents was difficult to capture in this study because the teachers were not privy to, or were at liberty to disclose that information. The researcher only requested information on whether the students qualify for a subsidy or not, to indicate SES status. Teachers were asked in the survey, "How many children in your class qualify for early childhood education subsidy?" and were provided with the option to enter the number. In Alberta, Canada, families who have children enrolled in a licensed preschool program and an annual income lower than $180,000 are eligible to apply for a monthly subsidy of $125 (Government of Alberta, 2023).

Independent Variables

Framework type was the independent variable in this study. The researcher sent separate surveys to each group of teachers and, before merging teachers' responses, coded whether the teachers work at a Reggio Emilia or Alberta Flight school. The Reggio Emilia framework is an approach that emphasizes children's self-expression and self-regulation, while the Alberta Flight Framework is an approach that focuses on academic skills and cognitive development.

Reliability and Validity

The BITSEA is a standardized tool used to assess the social and emotional development of infants and toddlers. The reliability and validity of an assessment tool are important factors that determine the quality of the results and their usefulness in making informed decisions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of test results over time. A reliable assessment tool will produce similar results if it is administered multiple times to the same individuals. The reliability of the BITSEA has been evaluated through various methods such as test-retest reliability, inter-rater reliability, and internal consistency reliability (Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families, 2011). Test-retest reliability assesses the consistency of results over time by administering the assessment multiple times to the same individuals. If an infant or toddler is evaluated on the BITSEA assessment twice and receives similar scores, it can be concluded that the tool has high test-retest reliability.

Inter-rater reliability measures the agreement between different individuals (raters) who administer the assessment. If multiple raters give similar scores to the same individual, the tool has high inter-rater reliability. Internal consistency reliability measures the consistency of results within the assessment itself, which can be evaluated using methods such as Cronbach's alpha, which measures the correlation between different items in the assessment. A high value of Cronbach's alpha indicates high internal consistency reliability. Briggs-Gowan et al., (2004) reported that BITSEA had very good to excellent internal consistency as demonstrated by a Cronbach alpha rating of 0.87 for problems and 0.91 for competencies. Carter et al. (2003) found acceptable interrater reliability between the ratings given by the research team and the ratings provided by early intervention providers.

Validity refers to the accuracy and meaningfulness of test results. A valid assessment tool measures what it is intended to measure and provides accurate information about an individual's abilities and skills. The validity of the BITSEA has been evaluated by examining its content validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity. Content validity evaluates whether the BITSEA assesses all relevant aspects of social and emotional development. Criterion-related validity measures the relationship between the BITSEA scores and other measures of social and emotional development. Construct validity evaluates the underlying theoretical basis of the BITSEA and whether it accurately measures the construct it was designed to assess. Criterion-related validity was evaluated by comparing the BITSEA with the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)/1.5-5 and independent evaluator ratings Briggs-Gowan et al. (2004). In Briggs-Gowan et al.'s research, the discriminant validity was assessed by comparing BITSEA cutpoint status with MacArthur–Bates Communicative Development Inventory (MCDI) vocabulary scores. In the study, Predictive Validity was examined by comparing Year 1 BITSEA scores with Year 2 ITSEA and CBCL/1.5-5 scores. Finally, correlational and sensitivity-specificity analyses were employed to assess the performance of the BITSEA relative to the ITSEA. Most analyses used full birth cohort data. Substudy sample data were used to assess interrater reliability, test-retest reliability, and correlations with evaluator ratings.

In conclusion, the reliability and validity of the BITSEA are important considerations when evaluating the quality of the results and making decisions based on the assessment. The tool has been widely used and has been found to have good reliability and validity, making it a useful tool for assessing the social and emotional development of infants and toddlers.

Data Collection

The researcher sent an introductory letter (Appendix C) to the directors of preschools that

agreed to participate in the survey and follow the Reggio-Emilia or Alberta Flight program in Alberta, Canada. The researcher then requested the email addresses of teachers who had been selected to participate in filling out the survey for their classes from the directors. Once the researcher received the email addresses of the participating teachers, those participating teachers were sent a letter with a personalized link to the electronic survey (Appendix D). The preschool directors were advised to give the teachers two weeks to respond. A reminder email was sent to participating teachers one week after the response window, giving them another week to capture as many responses as possible (Appendix F). All surveys were anonymous and confidential. The data collection efforts occurred over a month.

The researcher's approach to data collection further enhanced the researcher's chances of getting teachers' responses. After 6 months of reaching out to schools, the researcher proceeded to analyze the responses received from 47 Alberta flight schools and 26 Reggio Emilia schools. The survey was used to gather information about the students in their classrooms, including their socio-emotional development and socioeconomic status. The survey consisted of multiple-choice questions.

Data Analysis

Once the survey window closed, the researcher analyzed the data collected using *t*-tests to examine the relationships between the independent variable (framework type) and the dependent variables (competency scores, socio-economic status).

The data from the dependent variables were mainly analyzed using *t*-tests. Several scholars have shown that BITSEA problem and competency scores can be analyzed using *t*-tests (Briggs-Gowan et al., 2004; Haapsamo et al., 2009). Separate *t*-tests were performed on the competency scores for each class, school, and framework type for comparison and analysis. *t*-

tests were also utilized to interpret the socioeconomic information that was captured for each class.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequency distributions and measures of central tendency. Inferential statistics (*t*-tests) were used to determine if there were significant differences between the two groups of teachers (Reggio and Flight) in terms of their perceptions of the framework and their teaching practices. The results of the study were also used to determine if there were significant differences in the socio-emotional development of the students in the Reggio Emilia and Alberta Flight preschools.

The researcher analyzed the quantitative data collected using *t*-tests analysis in SPSS. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) serves as structural equation modeling software, assisting in research endeavors, theory testing, and the exploration of intricate data relationships (IBM Corporation, 2024). This tool is owned and maintained by IBM. SPSS can be used to study the relationship between two groups.

The size of the *t*-score can determine if there are similarities or differences in the mean value between the two groups (Goss-Sampson, 2019). A *t*-test compares two data populations and their means (Goss-Sampson, 2019). This study captured information from primarily two groups; hence, a *t*-test was the best statistical tool for this study. A null hypothesis was used to test for the significant difference between two populations—in the case of this study, teachers' perceptions of their students who attend the Reggio Emilia and the Alberta Framework. Since the researcher did not receive the same number of surveys for each sample, an equal variance *t*-test was not utilized. The researcher received an unequal number of samples for each data set, hence, the unequal variance *t*-test (Welch's *t*-test) was used.

The Chi-square test is a statistical test used to determine if there is a significant difference

between observed and expected frequencies in one or more categories of a contingency table. The test is widely used in research studies to analyze categorical data, such as survey results, medical diagnoses, or gender distribution in a population, and to test hypotheses (Busk & Marascuilo, 1992). According to Agresti (2019) there are different types of chi-square tests, including:

- *Pearson's chi-square test*: This test is used to determine the association between two categorical variables when both variables have more than two categories. The Pearson's chi-square test is the most commonly used chi-square test and is used to test for independence between two variables.
- *Yates' correction for continuity*: This is a modification to Pearson's chi-square test, used when the sample size is small or the expected frequencies are less than five. The Yates' correction for continuity corrects for the bias introduced by the use of an approximation in the calculation of the test statistic.
- *Fisher's exact test*: This test is used when the sample size is small and the expected frequencies are less than five in any cell of a contingency table. The Fisher's exact test is a more accurate test than the chi-square test in such situations.
- *Likelihood ratio chi-square test*: This test is used to compare the goodness-of-fit of two models. The Likelihood ration chi-square test compares the observed frequencies to the expected frequencies under two different models, and determines which model provides a better fit to the data.

In this study, *t*-tests were chosen over chi-square tests to analyze the data due to the nature of the research questions and the type of variables being investigated. *t*-tests are particularly suited for comparing means between two groups, which aligned with the objectives

of the study to examine differences in teachers' perceptions between two curricular frameworks. Additionally, *t*-tests are more appropriate when dealing with continuous or interval-level data, such as Likert scale ratings, which were used to measure teachers' perceptions of children's socio-emotional development. This approach allowed for a more nuanced examination of differences between groups, providing valuable insights into the impact of different curricular frameworks on teachers' perceptions.

Limitations and Delimitations

Even though this study has the potential to improve an understanding of the types of curricula that can help children's socio-emotional development, there were still limitations to this study. The researcher decided to limit the focus of this study to the effect of the Reggio Emilia approach and the Alberta Flight framework on children's socio-emotional development. While the framework in use at the preschool can greatly impact emotional development, there are many other factors, like physical health, and home life, not considered in this study that can also significantly impact children's emotional development (Chaudry & Sandstrom, 2020; Gambaro et al., 2015).

Researchers suggest that children's socio-emotional development can be affected by many factors. According to Briggs-Gowan et al. (2013), children's age, gender, developmental level, ethnic background, and socioeconomic status has an impact on children's socio-emotional development. Mondi et al. (2021) argued that children's cultural background could affect the identification, response, and even caregivers' openness to remediation of socio-emotional development challenges. The environment in which children spend the most time can either encourage or discourage socio-emotional development, learning, and overall development (Goldschmidt & Pedro, 2019).

The main input for this study came from the responses to the surveys provided by the preschool teachers. While the researcher expected that the preschool teachers would carefully complete the surveys, it is possible that this was not the case. While the BITSEA/C tool does not require advanced knowledge of students' behaviors, teachers can still potentially arrive at different conclusions when completing the survey. The researcher arrived at conclusions based on the responses provided by the teachers.

There was a possibility of low response rates to the surveys. The fact that this research involved children, that preschool teachers were required to fill out the survey for each child, and this would have to be filled out outside of their regular working hours, might have led to a low response rate.

This study might have produced more accurate results if it were longitudinal or, at a bare minimum, spanned several years. The accuracy of this study could be enhanced by measuring the competency scores of the participants when they first arrived at the preschool and again after about a year of attending the preschool. The researcher therefore recommends this as a further area of research.

Ethical Issues

This study involved capturing the emotional development of children, and as a result, reasonable care was taken to preserve the children's privacy and confidentiality. The children were not taken out of their safe space, and there was no direct communication between them and the researcher. Since the participants were teachers who were evaluating children, the school directors were made fully aware of the purpose of the study as well as how the data collected was stored, used, and disposed of.

The researcher did not collect the participants' names and each class in each dataset was

identified as either R1-Rn for Reggio Emilia students or F1-Fn for Alberta Flight framework students. Following the completion of the study, the data collected was securely deleted. The decision to participate or decline to participate in this study rested solely with the school directors and teachers. The researcher informed the school directors through the consent form that the teachers' participation was voluntary and that there would be no repercussions or penalty for non-participation.

The researcher completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) and received a completion certificate (Appendix A). The researcher also studied the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (1979) before embarking on this research. The researcher adopted the learnings from CITI and the *Belmont Report* to gather data from participants. The *Belmont Report* recommends that researchers treat individuals as autonomous agents and protect their privacy and dignity. The report also recommends that researchers strive to do good, minimize harm, and not cause harm while fairly distributing the benefits and burdens of research (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979).

The researcher obtained consent from all participants in this study before they were allowed to answer the items in the survey. The consent form included in Appendix B contains clear language showing that participation in the survey is voluntary. The researcher minimized breach of confidentiality by implementing various measures such as minimizing the use of direct identifiers, substituting codes for identifiers, implementing strong computer passwords, storing data offline, limiting the transfer of direct identifiers, and encrypting transmitted and stored data. Even though this study measured the impact of two curricula on children, the researcher did not directly interview or interact with the children and hence was not subject to the limitations on

research with children as subjects. The researcher required teachers to fill out the questionnaire without the involvement of the children.

The study was conducted with the principle of "do no harm" in mind, and no participant was exposed to harm or significant risks. No exploitative practices were used and no vulnerable populations were included in the research. Fair procedures were implemented to ensure justice and all participants were treated equally, with the same benefits, such as the option of receiving the study results via email.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study examined the effects of the Reggio Emilia framework and the Alberta Flight framework on the socio-emotional development of young children. The proposed sample was to consist of 60 teachers, 30 from schools that use the Reggio Emilia framework and 30 from schools that use the Alberta Flight framework. The data were collected through electronic surveys, and the results of the study provided valuable information about the perceptions of the teachers and the impact of the two preschool programs on the socio-emotional development of young children.

Chapter 4: Results

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine whether there are significant differences in teachers' perceptions of children's socio-emotional development based on whether they have enrolled in Reggio Emilia-based ECEC centers or in centers that strictly follow Alberta's Flight framework. The researcher also examined the effect of the children's socioeconomic status.

In this study, the competence section of the Brief Infant-Toddler Social and Emotional Assessment (BITSEA/C) survey served as a valuable instrument for assessing the emotional development of preschool children within the two curricular frameworks under investigation: the Alberta Flight curriculum and the Reggio Emilia curriculum. The BITSEA survey, designed to measure social-emotional competence problems in young children aged 12 to 36 months, provided a comprehensive framework for capturing key dimensions of emotional well-being and socio-emotional skills relevant to the study's objectives.

The decision to utilize the BITSEA/C survey was informed by several factors, including its established reliability and validity, its alignment with the theoretical underpinnings of the study, and its practical suitability for assessing emotional development in preschool-aged children. Developed by Briggs-Gowan and Carter (2002), the full BITSEA survey encompasses two main domains: social-emotional competence and behavior problems, each consisting of multiple subscales that capture specific aspects of emotional functioning. This study is, however, only utilizing the competence domain (BITSEA/C).

Within the domain of social-emotional competence, the BITSEA/C survey includes subscales such as Prosocial Behaviors, Compliance, and Attentional Focusing, which are

indicative of children's ability to regulate their emotions, interact positively with others, and engage in age-appropriate activities. These subscales provide valuable insights into children's emotional awareness, self-regulation, and interpersonal skills, which are essential components of emotional development in early childhood.

The utilization of the BITSEA/C survey in this study involved administering the instrument to teachers of preschool children enrolled in schools implementing either the Alberta Flight curriculum or the Reggio Emilia curriculum. A Qualtrics survey link was sent to preschool principals via email. The quantitative data from this survey were analyzed using the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS). *t*-tests analysis were run on variables to determine the differences, if any, between teachers' perception of preschool children's socio-emotional development in the Reggio Emilia and Alberta Flight based ECEC centers, using the 11-item BITSEA/C survey instrument.

Overall, the utilization of the BITSEA/C survey in this study represents a methodologically rigorous approach to assessing the emotional development of preschool children within diverse curricular contexts. By incorporating validated measures of social-emotional competence, this research endeavor aims to provide a robust foundation for understanding the impact of educational frameworks on children's emotional well-being and socio-emotional development, thereby contributing to the broader literature on early childhood education and emotional learning.

What follows in this chapter is a discussion of the *t*-tests analysis results, as well as an overview of the other responses to survey questions addressing the socio-emotional development results as observed by the preschool teachers.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process for this study commenced with the compilation of a comprehensive list of preschools implementing either the Reggio Emilia or Alberta Flight curriculum. Leveraging available resources on the internet, a list of 400 preschools was meticulously retrieved, ensuring representation from both curricular frameworks. Subsequently, the retrieved information underwent rigorous cleaning and validation procedures to verify the accuracy of school details and email addresses.

Once the list of preschools was refined and validated, the next step involved the distribution of the research survey via the Qualtrics platform. On June 1, 2023, the survey was dispatched to the directors of the 400 identified preschools, inviting their participation in the study. Each preschool director received a personalized invitation to complete the survey, providing them with clear instructions and an overview of the research objectives.

Recognizing the busy schedules of preschool administrators and educators, a generous timeline was allocated for survey completion. Directors were granted one month to fill out the survey, allowing ample opportunity for thoughtful responses and comprehensive data collection. Additionally, multiple reminders were sent to preschools throughout the survey period to encourage participation and ensure maximum response rates. Despite concerted efforts to solicit responses from preschools, the initial response rate fell below expectations, prompting proactive measures to enhance engagement and maximize participation. To address the challenge of low response rates, the researcher adopted a multi-pronged approach, which included personalized follow-up communications via email. The researcher's proactive engagement with preschools involved conveying the importance of their participation in the study, emphasizing the potential benefits of the research findings for informing educational practice and policy. Furthermore, the

researcher sought to address any concerns or queries raised by preschool directors, fostering a collaborative and supportive relationship throughout the data collection process.

Despite persistent efforts to elicit responses from preschools, the low response rate persisted, necessitating an extension of the survey deadline. In recognition of the time constraints and logistical challenges faced by participating preschools, the deadline for survey completion was extended multiple times, with the final deadline set for December 20th, 2023. Throughout the extended data collection period, the researcher maintained regular communication with preschools, providing ongoing support and encouragement to facilitate survey completion. Additionally, personalized outreach efforts were intensified, with emphasis placed on building rapport and addressing any barriers to participation encountered by preschool administrators. By employing a systematic and proactive approach to data collection, the researcher endeavored to overcome challenges associated with low response rates and maximize the representativeness of the study sample. The extended data collection period, coupled with targeted outreach efforts, aimed to ensure robust and comprehensive data collection, enabling rigorous analysis and interpretation of findings related to the emotional development of preschool children within diverse curricular contexts.

Sample

The target sample size for this study aimed to include 30 Alberta Flight schools and 30 Reggio Emilia schools to ensure adequate representation of both curricular frameworks. However, the researcher ultimately obtained responses from 47 Alberta Flight schools and 26 Reggio Emilia schools, resulting in a slightly larger sample size for the Alberta Flight group. This discrepancy in response rates may have been influenced by various factors, including the availability and distribution of schools adhering to each curriculum within the study region.

Tables 1 and 2 provide a breakdown of the sample demographics, including gender distribution and socioeconomic status. Upon examination of the data, the researcher noted that the standard deviation values for the number of children in the class and those qualifying for subsidies were relatively close to the mean values. This observation suggests that the data points are more spread out, indicating higher variability. This spreading out of data points vis-a-vis the mean reflects a relatively heterogenous sample in terms of class size and socioeconomic status, which may impact the generalizability of the findings.

Furthermore, the researcher observed a higher number of responses from Alberta Flight-based schools compared to Reggio Emilia-based schools. One potential explanation for this discrepancy is the prevalence of Alberta Flight schools in the study region, particularly in Alberta, Canada, where government support for early childhood education is more readily available. Preschools that meet the affordability criteria established by the government receive various forms of support, including wage top-ups for qualifying educators, affordability grants allocated directly to childcare operators, and subsidies for eligible families.

To qualify for the early childhood education subsidy of $125 per month for each child, families must enroll their children in a government-licensed preschool program and have a combined income of $180,000 or less (Government of Alberta, 2023). This financial assistance program aims to make early childhood education more accessible and affordable for families, particularly those from low- to middle-income backgrounds. The availability of government support for Alberta Flight-based preschools may have contributed to the higher response rates observed in this study compared to Reggio Emilia-based schools.

Overall, the observed differences in response rates and sample demographics underscore the importance of considering contextual factors and regional variations when interpreting study

findings. While efforts were made to recruit a diverse sample representing both curricular frameworks, the influence of external factors such as government policies and funding mechanisms cannot be overlooked. These contextual nuances should be taken into account when interpreting the study findings and considering their implications for educational policy and practice.

Table 1

Description of the Schools in the Sample Based Upon Teachers' Responses

	Alberta Flight			Reggio Emilia		
	M	*n*	*SD*	*M*	*n*	*SD*
Number of children in class - Male	16.38	45	13.38	14.41	27	12.24
Number of children in class - Female	15.93	45	14.72	12.33	27	12.59
Number of children in class - Non-binary / third gender	0.11	45	0.53	0.04	27	0.19
Number of children in class - Prefer not to say	0.40	45	2.68	5.30	27	27.52
How many children qualify for an early childhood education subsidy in this class?	15.16	45	15.54	17.37	27	29.81
Total students	32.82	45	27.41	26.78	27	24.18
Proportion of students on subsidy	0.50	45	0.30	0.55	26	0.42

Table 2

Range of the Schools in the Sample Based Upon Teachers' Responses

	Framework Type					
	Alberta Flight			Reggio Emilia		
	Mean	*Minimum*	*Maximum*	*Mean*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
Number of children in class - Male	16.38	.00	52.00	14.41	.00	42.00
Number of children in class - Female	15.93	.00	73.00	12.33	.00	42.00
Number of children in class - Non-binary / third gender	0.0	.00	3.00	0	.00	1.00
Number of children in class - Prefer not to say	0.0	.00	18.00	5	.00	143.00
How many children qualify for an	15.16	.00	66.00	17.37	.00	143.00

early childhood education subsidy in this class?						
Total students	32.82	6.00	125.00	26.78	.00	84.00
Percent	0.50	.00	1.00	0.55	.00	1.25

Data Analysis

First, the researcher cleaned the data and removed cases with missing values. Next, the researcher re-coded the data from words to numbers. As a next step, the researcher computed descriptive statistics for each of the survey items, including the means, frequencies, counts, and standard deviations (see Tables 4 and 5). The entire BITSEA has 42 items, and it is a nationally standardized screener designed to assess behavioral problems and competencies in 12- to 36-month-olds (Pontoppidan et al., 2017). There are two subscales in the BITSEA: problems (e.g., internalizing problems, externalizing problems) and competencies (e.g., socio-emotional traits about attention, focus, mastery). The researcher used only the competencies items in the current analysis. To examine whether there were latent constructs in the 11 competencies items, the researcher completed an exploratory factor analysis.

The researcher conducted a principal component analysis on the 11 BITSEA/C items with oblique rotation (promax). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = .798). Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2(55) = 260.492$, $p < .001$, indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large for principal component analysis. An initial analysis was run to obtain eigenvalues for each component in the data. Two components had an eigenvalue over Kaiser's criterion of one and explained 52.08% of the variance. Given the large sample size, Kaiser's criteria for components, and the convergence of a scree plot that showed inflexions that justify retaining two components, the final analysis retained two factors. The researcher named those two factors Prosocial Competence and

Attention Competence.

Table 3 shows the factor loadings after rotation in a pattern matrix. The factor scores were computed using the regression method and saved as standardized scores with a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. The factor of Prosocial Competence included six items (Table 3) and had acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's α = .817), with no suggested improvement in the alpha value if an item was removed. The factor of Attention Competence included five items (Table 3) and had acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's α = .707), with no suggested improvement in the alpha value if an item was removed.

Table 3

Factor Loadings

	Prosocial Competence	Attention Competence
Tries to help when someone is hurt (for example, gives a toy)	0.883	
Plays well with other children (not including brother or sister)	0.751	
Hugs or feeds dolls or stuffed animals	0.698	
Shows pleasure when he or she succeeds (for example, claps for self)	0.647	
Imitates playful sounds when you ask him or her to	0.605	
Can pay attention for a long time (other than when watching TV)	0.513	
Is affectionate with loved ones		0.912
Looks for a childcare provider when upset		0.753
Looks right at you when you say his or her name		0.611
Follows rules		0.552
Points to show you something far away		0.458

The researcher examined the assumptions of the *t*-test. One of the assumptions is related to the normal distribution of the data. The purpose of the *t*-test is to compare characteristics of two groups–in this case, preschools using either the Alberta Flight or Reggio Emilia frameworks–and the mean values become representative when the population has a normal

distribution, which is why it is critical to assess the normality of the data (Kim & Park, 2019). The researcher analyzed the normality of the BITSEA/C items, combined BITSEA/C score, and two BITSEA/C factors and discovered the data did not meet assumptions of normality. The Shapiro and Wilk (1965) values for the items and factors were $p < .001$ and visual inspections of the normal Q-Q Plots also suggested the data were not normally distributed. When reviewing the BITSEA/C results, it is evident that most providers selected "very true or often" for the majority of items, which has positively skewed the BITSEA/C values.

An additional assumption is related to the sample size. The central limit theorem suggests that the distribution of sample mean values tends to follow a normal distribution regardless of the population distribution if the sample size is large enough. Typically, researchers need a minimum sample size of 30 per group analyzed to approach a normal distribution (Chang et al., 2006); however, the researcher did not obtain the minimum threshold in the sample. Additionally, the researcher had an easier time obtaining responses from teachers in Alberta Flight programs than in Reggio Emilia programs. When the sample size ratios between groups are large, researchers should spend more time reviewing the assumptions of homogeneity of variance. The smaller the sample size, the greater the influence of the values of individual samples on variance (larger samples tend to have less variance because the data are typically grouped closer to the population mean). The researcher examined Levene's equality of variances (Brown & Forsythe, 1974), which were non-significant ($p > .05$) for every individual BITSEA/C item, the summed BITSEA/C score, and the two BITSEA/C factors. Those results suggest the assumption for homogeneity of variance was satisfied in the sample.

Descriptive Results

Table 4 presents an insightful overview of the emotional development observations

reported by teachers from both the Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia curriculum frameworks. Notably, the data reveals consistent trends in the ratings provided by teachers across various emotional indicators, shedding light on both similarities and differences in children's emotional behaviors within each curriculum.

One striking observation from Table 4 is the consistently high ratings given by both Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia teachers for traits such as "Shows pleasure when he or she succeeds" and "Is affectionate with loved ones." These high ratings suggest that these particular emotional behaviors are readily observable and easily measurable by teachers within the classroom environment. The demonstrative nature of these behaviors, coupled with their positive connotations, likely contributes to their prominence in teachers' observations of children's emotional development.

Furthermore, the low scores assigned by both Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia teachers for the indicator "Can pay attention for a long time (other than when watching TV)" are noteworthy. This finding aligns with existing research highlighting the developmental characteristics of preschool-aged children, who typically exhibit shorter attention spans compared to adults (McClelland et al., 2013). Despite variations in curricular frameworks, the observed challenge in sustaining attention for extended periods is a common characteristic of early childhood development, reflecting the inherent developmental stage of preschool-aged children rather than specific curriculum-related factors.

The understanding that preschool-aged children naturally possess limited attention spans underscores the importance of developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood education, regardless of the curricular framework employed. Both the Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia curricula are designed to recognize and accommodate the developmental needs of young

children, emphasizing active engagement, hands-on exploration, and experiential learning opportunities to support optimal growth and development.

Overall, the insights gleaned from Table 4 underscore the importance of considering both individual and contextual factors when interpreting observations of children's emotional development in early childhood education settings. By recognizing the developmental nuances inherent in preschool-aged children and adopting evidence-based practices informed by developmental science, educators can effectively support the emotional growth and well-being of young learners within diverse curricular frameworks.

Table 4

Prosocial and Attention Competence Mean and Standard Deviation Breakdown

	Alberta Flight			Reggio Emilia		
	M	*n*	*SD*	*M*	*n*	*SD*
Shows pleasure when he or she succeeds (for example, claps for self)	1.86	44	0.35	1.81	26	0.40
Follows rules	1.61	44	0.49	1.42	26	0.58
Looks for a childcare provider when upset	1.75	44	0.44	1.65	26	0.49
Looks right at you when you say his or her name	1.57	44	0.50	1.50	26	0.58
Is affectionate with loved ones	1.86	44	0.35	1.73	26	0.45
Plays well with other children (not including brother or sister)	1.55	44	0.55	1.38	26	0.57
Can pay attention for a long time (other than when watching TV)	1.20	44	0.59	1.19	26	0.69
Tries to help when someone is hurt (for example, gives a toy)	1.30	44	0.55	1.35	26	0.63
Imitates playful sounds when you ask him or her to	1.66	44	0.53	1.50	26	0.58
Points to show you something far away	1.64	44	0.61	1.58	26	0.50
Hugs or feeds dolls or stuffed animals	1.68	44	0.52	1.50	26	0.58
Total BITSEA/C	17.68	44	3.27	16.62	26	4.23

Prosocial Competence	0.07	44	0.96	0.12	26	1.07
Attention Competence	0.13	44	0.82	0.23	26	1.23

Table 5 shows the breakdown of the Prosocial and Attention Competence measures for both the Alberta Flight and Reggio preschools that were surveyed. Both Alberta Flight and Reggio teachers rated the prosocial and attention competence measures highly. The low rating was evident by the low values given to "Not true/Rarely" for all the prosocial and attention competence measures. The values in this table show the actual numbers attached to each value and the ratio of each compared to the whole, in percentages.

Table 5 provides a detailed breakdown of the Prosocial and Attention Competence measures reported by teachers in both Alberta Flight and Reggio preschools surveyed. This comprehensive analysis reveals notable trends in the ratings assigned to each measure, offering insights into the emotional and behavioral characteristics observed within each curriculum.

One prominent observation from Table 5 is the consistently high ratings assigned by both Alberta Flight and Reggio teachers across all Prosocial and Attention Competence measures. Specifically, the low values attributed to "Not true/Rarely" for each measure indicate that teachers perceived children in both curricular frameworks as demonstrating high levels of prosocial behavior and attentional competence. This pattern suggests a positive overall assessment of children's emotional and behavioral development within both educational contexts.

Table 5

Prosocial and Attention Competence Number & Percentage Breakdown

		Alberta Flight		Reggio Emilia	
		n	*%*	*n*	*%*
Shows pleasure when he or she succeeds (for example, claps for	Not true / Rarely	0	0.00	0	0.00
	Somewhat true / Sometimes	6	13.60	5	19.20

self)	Very true / Often	38	86.40	21	80.80
	Not true / Rarely	0	0.00	1	3.80
Follows rules	Somewhat true / Sometimes	17	38.60	13	50.00
	Very true / Often	27	61.40	12	46.20
	Not true / Rarely	0	0.00	0	0.00
Looks for a childcare provider when upset	Somewhat true / Sometimes	11	25.00	9	34.60
	Very true / Often	33	75.00	17	65.40
	Not true / Rarely	0	0.00	1	3.80
Looks right at you when you say his or her name	Somewhat true / Sometimes	19	43.23	11	42.30
	Very true / Often	25	56.80	14	53.80
	Not true / Rarely	0	0.00	0	0.00
Is affectionate with loved ones	Somewhat true / Sometimes	6	13.60	7	26.90
	Very true / Often	38	86.40	19	73.10
	Not true / Rarely	1	2.30	1	3.80
Plays well with other children (not including brother or sister)	Somewhat true / Sometimes	18	40.90	14	53.80
	Very true / Often	25	56.80	11	42.30
	Not true / Rarely	4	9.10	4	15.40
Can pay attention for a long time (other than when watching TV)	Somewhat true / Sometimes	27	61.40	13	50.00
	Very true / Often	13	29.50	9	34.60
	Not true / Rarely	2	4.50	2	7.70
Tries to help when someone is hurt (for example, gives a toy)	Somewhat true / Sometimes	27	61.40	13	50.00
	Very true / Often	15	34.10	11	42.30
	Not true / Rarely	1	2.30	1	3.80
Imitates playful sounds when you ask him or her to	Somewhat true / Sometimes	13	29.50	11	42.30
	Very true / Often	30	68.20	14	53.80
	Not true / Rarely	3	6.80	0	0.00
Points to show you something far away	Somewhat true / Sometimes	10	22.70	11	42.30
	Very true / Often	31	70.50	15	57.70
	Not true / Rarely	1	2.30	1	3.80
Hugs or feeds dolls or stuffed animals	Somewhat true / Sometimes	12	27.30	11	42.30
	Very true / Often	31	70.50	14	53.80

Research Question 1

The first research question was, are there significant differences in teachers' perceptions of the socio-emotional development of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework? The researcher had two hypotheses:

H1o - There is no difference in the competence total score of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework.

H1a - There is a significant difference in the competence total score of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework.

Below, the researcher has provided the results based upon each question of the survey and the two factors created.

Shows Pleasure When He or She Succeeds

The results suggested there was no statistically significant difference between teachers' responses regarding whether children in their class show pleasure when they succeed based upon whether teachers work under the Alberta Flight or Reggio Emilia frameworks: $t(68) = .614$, $p > .05$ (Table 6). The mean values for Alberta Flight teachers' responses (M = 1.86, SD = 0.35) were not statistically different from those for Reggio Emilia teachers' responses (M = 1.81, SD = 0.40). An examination of Table 5 shows that 86.4% of Alberta Flight teachers selected "very true/often" to the item compared to 80.8% of Reggio Emilia teachers. Further, 100% of both Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia teachers either selected "very true/often" or "somewhat true/sometimes," so there were very few practical differences in teachers' responses to that item.

Table 6

Shows Pleasure When He or She Succeeds

	t	*df*	*p*	*Mean Diff. (MD)*	*SE (MD)*	*CI (MD)*		*d*
Shows pleasure when he or she succeeds (for example, claps for self)	0.614	68	0.271	0.056	.091	0.126	0.238	0.152

Follows Rules

The results suggested there was no statistically significant difference between teachers' responses regarding whether children in their class follows rules based upon whether teachers

work under the Alberta Flight or Reggio Emilia frameworks: $t(68) = 1.466$, $p > .05$ (Table 7). The mean values for Alberta Flight teachers' responses (M = 1.61, SD = 0.49) were not statistically different from those for Reggio Emilia teachers' responses (M = 1.42, SD = 0.58). An examination of Table 5 shows that 61.4% of Alberta Flight teachers selected "very true/often" compared to 46.2% of Reggio Emilia teachers. Further, 100% of both Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia teachers either selected "very true/often" or "somewhat true/sometimes," so there were very few practical differences in teachers' responses to that item.

Table 7

Follows Rules

	t	*df*	*p*	*Mean Diff. (MD)*	*SE (MD)*	*CI (MD)*		*d*
Follows rules	1.466	68	0.074	0.191	0.130	0.069	0.450	0.363

Looks for a Childcare Provider When Upset

The results suggested there was no statistically significant difference between teachers' responses regarding whether children in their class look for a childcare provider when upset based upon whether teachers work under the Alberta Flight or Reggio Emilia frameworks: $t(68) = 0.853$, $p > .05$ (Table 8). The mean values for Alberta Flight teachers' responses (M = 1.75, SD = 0.44) were not statistically different from those for Reggio Emilia teachers' responses (M = 1.65, SD = 0.49). An examination of Table 5 shows that 75.0% of Alberta Flight teachers selected "very true/often" to the item compared to 65.4% of Reggio Emilia teachers. Further, 100% of both Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia teachers either selected "very true/often" or "somewhat true/sometimes," so there were very few practical differences in teachers' responses to that item.

Table 8

Looks for a Childcare Provider When Upset

	t	*df*	*p*	*Mean Diff. (MD)*	*SE (MD)*	*CI (MD)*		*d*
Looks for a childcare provider when upset	0.853	68	0.198	0.096	0.113	0.129	0.321	0.211

Looks Right at You When You Say His or Her Name

The results suggested there was no statistically significant difference between teachers' responses regarding whether children in their class look right at teachers when the teachers say the child's name based upon whether teachers work under the Alberta Flight or Reggio Emilia frameworks: $t(68) = 0.517$, $p > .05$ (Table 9). The mean values for Alberta Flight teachers' responses (M = 1.57, SD = 0.50) were not statistically different from those for Reggio Emilia teachers' responses (M = 1.50, SD = 0.58). An examination of Table 5 shows that 86.4% of Alberta Flight teachers selected "very true/often" to the item compared to 73.1% of Reggio Emilia teachers. Further, 100% of both Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia teachers either selected "very true/often" or "somewhat true/sometimes," so there were very few practical differences in teachers' responses to that item.

Table 9

Looks Right at You When You Say His or Her Name

	t	*df*	*p*	*Mean Diff. (MD)*	*SE (MD)*	*CI (MD)*		*d*
Looks right at you when you say his or her name	0.517	68	0.303	0.068	0.132	0.195	0.331	0.129

Is Affectionate With Loved Ones

The results suggested there was no statistically significant difference between teachers' responses regarding whether children in their class are affectionate with loved ones based upon

whether teachers work under the Alberta Flight or Reggio Emilia frameworks: $t(68) = 1.380$, $p > .05$ (Table 10). The mean values for Alberta Flight teachers' responses (M = 1.86, SD = 0.35) were not statistically different from those for Reggio Emilia teachers' responses (M = 1.73, SD = 0.45). An examination of Table 5 shows that 56.8% of Alberta Flight teachers selected "very true/often" to the item compared to 42.3% of Reggio Emilia teachers. Further, close to 100% of both Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia teachers either selected "very true/often" or "somewhat true/sometimes," so there were very few practical differences in teachers' responses to that item.

Table 10

Is Affectionate With Loved Ones

	t	*df*	*p*	*Mean Diff. (MD)*	*SE (MD)*	*CI (MD)*		*d*
Is affectionate with loved ones	1.380	68	0.086	0.133	0.096	0.059	0.325	0.341

Plays Well With Other Children (Not Including Brother or Sister)

The results suggested there was no statistically significant difference between teachers' responses regarding whether children in their class play well with other children based upon whether teachers work under the Alberta Flight or Reggio Emilia frameworks: $t(68) = 1.168$, $p > .05$ (Table 11). The mean values for Alberta Flight teachers' responses (M = 1.55, SD = 0.55) were not statistically different from those for Reggio Emilia teachers' responses (M = 1.38, SD = 0.57). An examination of Table 5 shows that 29.5% of Alberta Flight teachers selected "very true/often" to the item compared to 34.6% of Reggio Emilia teachers. Further, 85–90% of both Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia teachers either selected "very true/often" or "somewhat true/sometimes," so there were very few practical differences in teachers' responses to that item.

Table 11

Plays Well With Other Children

	t	*df*	*p*	*Mean Diff. (MD)*	*SE (MD)*	*CI (MD)*		*d*
Plays well with other children (not including brother or sister)	1.168	68	0.123	0.161	0.138	0.114	0.436	0.289

Can Pay Attention for a Long Time (Other Than When Watching TV)

The results suggested there was no statistically significant difference between teachers' responses regarding whether children in their class can pay attention for a long time based upon whether teachers work under the Alberta Flight or Reggio Emilia frameworks: $t(68) = 0.078$, $p > .05$ (Table 12). The mean values for Alberta Flight teachers' responses (M = 1.20, SD = 0.59) were not statistically different from those for Reggio Emilia teachers' responses (M = 1.19, SD = 0.69). An examination of Table 5 shows that 61.40% of Alberta Flight teachers selected "Somewhat true / Sometimes" to the item compared to 50% of Reggio Emilia teachers. Further, 80 - 90% of both Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia teachers either selected "very true/often" or "somewhat true/sometimes," so there were very few practical differences in teachers' responses to that item.

Table 12

Can Pay Attention for a Long Time

	t	*df*	*p*	*Mean Diff. (MD)*	*SE (MD)*	*CI (MD)*		*d*
Can pay attention for a long time (other than when watching TV)	0.078	68	0.469	0.012	0.156	0.300	0.324	0.019

Tries To Help When Someone Is Hurt (For Example, Gives a Toy)

The results suggested there was no statistically significant difference between teachers' responses regarding whether children in their class tries to help when someone is hurt based upon whether teachers work under the Alberta Flight or Reggio Emilia frameworks: $t(68) = -0.352$, $p > .05$ (Table 13). The mean values for Alberta Flight teachers' responses (M = 1.30, SD = 0.55) were not statistically different from those for Reggio Emilia teachers' responses (M = 1.35, SD = 0.63). An examination of Table 5 shows that 34.1% of Alberta Flight teachers selected "very true/often" to the item compared to 42.3% of Reggio Emilia teachers. Further, over 90% of both Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia teachers either selected "very true/often" or "somewhat true/sometimes," so there were very few practical differences in teachers' responses to that item.

Table 13

Tries to Help When Someone is Hurt (For Example, Gives a Toy)

	t	*df*	*p*	*Mean Diff. (MD)*	*SE (MD)*	*CI (MD)*		*d*
Tries to help when someone is hurt (for example, gives a toy)	0.352	68	0.363	0.051	0.144	0.338	0.237	0.087

Imitates Playful Sounds When You Ask Him or Her To

The results suggested there was no statistically significant difference between teachers' responses regarding whether children in their class imitates playful sounds when they are asked to based upon whether teachers work under the Alberta Flight or Reggio Emilia frameworks: $t(68) = 1.175$, $p > .05$ (Table 14). The mean values for Alberta Flight teachers' responses (M = 1.66, SD = 0.53) were not statistically different from those for Reggio Emilia teachers' responses

(M = 1.50, SD = 0.58). An examination of Table 5 shows that 68.2% of Alberta Flight teachers selected "very true/often" compared to 53.8% of Reggio Emilia teachers. Further, close to 100% of both Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia teachers either selected "very true/often" or "somewhat true/sometimes," so there were very few practical differences in teachers' responses to that item.

Table 14

Imitates Playful Sounds When You Ask Him or Her To

	t	*df*	*p*	*Mean Diff. (MD)*	*SE (MD)*	*CI (MD)*		*d*
Imitates playful sounds when you ask him or her to	1.175	68	0.122	0.159	0.135	0.111	0.429	0.291

Points to Show You Something Far Away

The results suggested there was no statistically significant difference between teachers' responses regarding whether children in their class points to show the teachers something far away based upon whether teachers work under the Alberta Flight or Reggio Emilia frameworks: $t(68) = 0.417$, $p > .05$ (Table 15). The mean values for Alberta Flight teachers' responses (M = 1.64, SD = 0.61) were not statistically different from those for Reggio Emilia teachers' responses (M = 1.58, SD = 0.50). An examination of Table 5 shows that 70.5% of Alberta Flight teachers selected "very true/often" to the item compared to 57.7% of Reggio Emilia teachers. Further, 90-100% of both Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia teachers either selected "very true/often" or "somewhat true/sometimes," so there were very few practical differences in teachers' responses to that item.

Table 15

Points to Show You Something Far Away

	t	*df*	*p*	*Mean Diff. (MD)*	*SE (MD)*	*CI (MD)*	*d*

Points to show you something far away	0.417	68	0.339	0.059	0.142	0.225	0.344	0.103

Hugs or Feeds Dolls or Stuffed Animals

The results suggested there was no statistically significant difference between teachers' responses regarding whether children in their class hug or feed dolls or stuffed animals based upon whether teachers work under the Alberta Flight or Reggio Emilia frameworks: $t(68) = 1.354$, $p > .05$ (Table 16). The mean values for Alberta Flight teachers' responses (M = 1.68, SD = 0.52) were not statistically different from those for Reggio Emilia teachers' responses (M = 1.50, SD = 0.58). An examination of Table 5 shows that 70.50% of Alberta Flight teachers selected "very true/often" to the item compared to 53.80% of Reggio Emilia teachers. Further, about 100% of both Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia teachers either selected "very true/often" or "somewhat true/sometimes," so there were very few practical differences in teachers' responses to that item.

Table 16

Hugs or Feeds Dolls or Stuffed Animals

	t	*df*	*p*	*Mean Diff. (MD)*	*SE (MD)*	*CI (MD)*		*d*
Hugs or feeds dolls or stuffed animals	1.354	68	0.090	0.182	0.134	0.086	0.450	0.335

Total BITSEA/C

The results suggested there was no statistically significant difference in the total BITSEA/C based upon whether teachers work under the Alberta Flight or Reggio Emilia frameworks: $t(68) = 1.180$, $p > .05$ (Table 17). The mean values for Alberta Flight teachers' responses (M = 17.68, SD = 3.27) were not statistically different from those for Reggio Emilia

teachers' responses (M = 16.62, SD = 4.23).

Table 17

Total BITSEA/C

	t	*df*	*p*	*Mean Diff. (MD)*	*SE (MD)*	*CI (MD)*		*d*
Total BITSEA/C	1.180	68	0.121	1.066	0.904	0.737	2.870	0.292

Prosocial Competence

Upon closer examination of the mean values for Prosocial Competence scores reported by Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia teachers (as shown in Table 4), no statistically significant differences were found between the two groups. The mean Prosocial Competence score for Alberta Flight teachers' responses was calculated as M = 0.07, with a standard deviation of SD = 0.96, while the mean Prosocial Competence score for Reggio Emilia teachers' responses was M = 0.12, with a slightly higher standard deviation of SD = 1.07.

Despite numerical differences in mean scores, these variations did not reach statistical significance, as evidenced by the calculated *p*-value exceeding the predetermined threshold of .05. This finding suggests that any observed differences in Prosocial Competence scores between the two curricular frameworks may be attributed to random variability rather than systematic effects of the curriculum itself.

The statistical analysis conducted on the Prosocial Competence scores offers valuable insights into the emotional development of preschool children within the Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia curriculum frameworks. As indicated by Table 18, the results revealed no statistically significant difference in Prosocial Competence scores between teachers working under the two curricular frameworks. The calculated *t*-value of .798, with 68 degrees of freedom, yielded a *p*-value greater than .05, indicating that any observed differences in Prosocial

Competence scores were not statistically significant.

Overall, the non-significant findings regarding Prosocial Competence scores highlight the shared commitment of both Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia curricular frameworks to promoting prosocial behaviors and positive social interactions among preschool-aged children. By fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment, educators play a critical role in cultivating empathy, cooperation, and kindness among young learners, regardless of the specific educational approach employed.

Table 18

Prosocial Competence

	t	*df*	*p*	*Mean Diff. (MD)*	*SE (MD)*	*CI (MD)*		*d*
Prosocial competence	0.798	68	0.214	0.198	0.248	0.297	0.693	0.198

Attention Competence

The results suggested there was no statistically significant difference between the Attention Competence scores based upon whether teachers work under the Alberta Flight or Reggio Emilia frameworks: $t(68) = 1.480$, $p > .05$ (Table 19). The mean values for Alberta Flight teachers' responses (M = 1.13, SD = 0.82) were not statistically different from those for Reggio Emilia teachers' responses (M = 0.23, SD = 1.23). While there was a numerical difference in mean Attention Competence scores between the two groups, this disparity did not reach statistical significance, as evidenced by the calculated *p*-value exceeding the predetermined threshold of .05. Despite the apparent variation in mean scores, the absence of statistical significance suggests that any observed differences may be attributed to random variability rather than systematic effects of the curricular framework.

Table 19

Attention Competence

	t	*df*	*p*	*Mean Diff. (MD)*	*SE (MD)*	*CI (MD)*		*d*
Attention competence	1.480	68	0.072	0.363	0.245	0.126	0.852	0.366

Research Question 2

The second research question was, is there a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the socioeconomic status of children who attend Reggio Emilia-based centers and Alberta Flight framework-based centers? The researcher had two hypotheses:

H2o - There is no significant difference in the socioeconomic factors of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework.

H2a - There is a significant difference in the socioeconomic factors of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework.

Below, the researcher has provided the results based upon each question of the survey.

Number of Children Who Qualify for an Early Childhood Education Subsidy

Table 20 shows the breakdown of students who qualify for government subsidy. Preschools meeting government affordability standards receive support, including wage top-ups for educators, direct grants to childcare operators, and subsidies for eligible families. Families with a combined income of $180,000 or less can receive a $125 monthly subsidy by enrolling their children in a licensed preschool program (Government of Alberta, 2023). This initiative aims to enhance accessibility and affordability of early childhood education, particularly for low- to middle-income families. In comparison to Table 21 that shows how many students actually received the subsidy. Table 20 shows that every child qualifies for the early education subsidy.

The result may demonstrate that the government succeeded in reaching more families with the subsidies.

The results suggested there was no statistically significant difference between the number of children who qualify for an early childhood education subsidy in the Alberta Flight or Reggio Emilia-based schools: $t(68) = 0.414$, $p > .05$ (Table 20). The mean values for Alberta Flight teachers' responses (M = 15.16, SD = 15.54) were not statistically different from those for Reggio Emilia teachers' responses (M = 17.37, SD = 29.81).

Table 20

Number of Children Who Qualify for an Early Childhood Education Subsidy

	t	*df*	*p*	*Mean Diff. (MD)*	*SE (MD)*	*CI (MD)*		*d*
Number of children who qualify for an early childhood education subsidy in this class	0.414	70	0.340	2.215	5.344	12.873	8.443	0.101

Percent of Students on Subsidy

Table 21 shows the percentage of students in the researcher's sample that received government subsidy.

The results suggested there was no statistically significant difference between the percentage of children who qualify for an early childhood education subsidy in the Alberta Flight or Reggio Emilia-based schools: $t(68) = 0.608$, $p > .05$ (Table 21). The mean values for Alberta Flight teachers' responses (M = 0.50, SD = 0.30) were not statistically different from those for Reggio Emilia teachers' responses (M = 0.55, SD = 0.42).

Table 21

Percent of Students on Subsidy

	t	*df*	*p*	*Mean Diff. (MD)*	*SE (MD)*	*CI (MD)*		*d*
Percent of students on subsidy	0.608	69	0.273	0.052	0.085	0.221	0.118	0.150

Table 22 shows the research questions and the results of their null and alternative hypothesis. All two research questions' null hypotheses were accepted due to the results of the data. The researcher rejected all two research questions' alternative hypotheses due to significant results in the data.

Table 22

Null and Alternative Hypothesis Results

Research Question	Null Hypothesis	Reject or fail to reject null hypothesis	Alternative Hypothesis	Reject or fail to reject alternative hypothesis
RQ1: Are there significant differences ($p < 0.05$) in teachers' perceptions of the socio-emotional development of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework?	H1o: There is no significant difference in the competence total score of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework.	Failed to reject	H1a: There is a significant difference in the competence total score of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework.	Reject
RQ2: Is there a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in teachers' perceptions of the socioeconomic status of children who attend Reggio Emilia-based centers and Alberta Flight framework-based centers?	H2o: There is no significant difference in the socioeconomic factors of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework.	Failed to reject	H2a: There is a significant difference in the socioeconomic factors of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework.	Reject

Conclusion

A total of 400 Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia-based preschools were emailed to get the target sample size of 60 teachers, 30 from schools that use the Reggio Emilia framework and 30 from schools that use the Alberta Flight framework, to participate in this study. After about 6 months of reaching out to schools, the researcher finally settled with responses from 47 Alberta Flight schools and 26 Reggio Emilia schools.

This study sought first to collect teachers' perceptions of children's socio-emotional development and to examine whether there are statistically significant differences in teachers' ratings of students based on whether students are enrolled in Reggio Emilia-based ECEC centers or in centers that strictly follow Alberta's Flight framework.

The investigator performed a principal component analysis on the 11 BITSEA/C items using oblique rotation (promax). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure confirmed the adequacy of the sample for the analysis (KMO = .798). Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2(55) = 260.492$, $p < .001$, suggested that the correlations between items were significant, supporting the suitability of the data for principal component analysis. Considering the sample size, adherence to Kaiser's criteria for components, and the scree plot displaying inflections justifying the retention of two components, the ultimate analysis upheld two factors. These factors were identified by the researcher as Prosocial Competence and Attention Competence.

The results of $t(68) = .798$, $p > .05$ (Table 18) for Prosocial Competence suggested there was no statistically significant difference between teachers' responses based upon whether teachers work under the Alberta Flight or Reggio Emilia frameworks. The results of $t(68) =$

1.480, $p > .05$ (Table 19) for Attention Competence suggested there was no statistically significant difference between teachers' responses based upon whether teachers work under the Alberta Flight or Reggio Emilia frameworks.

The secondary purpose of this study was to determine if there are differences in the socioeconomic factors among children in the Reggio Emilia-based centers and Alberta Flight framework-based centers. The results from the tests the researcher conducted showed that there is no statistically significant difference between the socioeconomic factors of children in the Reggio Emilia-based centers and Alberta Flight framework-based centers.

In conclusion, Chapter 4 has presented a comprehensive analysis of the study's findings through principal component analysis of the 11 BITSEA/C items utilizing oblique rotation (promax). These results offer valuable insights into the socio-emotional development of preschool children within the context of early education frameworks. Building upon this analysis, Chapter 5 will delve into a thorough discussion of the implications of these findings, exploring their significance for early childhood education policies, practices, and research. Additionally, this chapter will offer recommendations for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers based on the study's outcomes, aiming to contribute to the ongoing efforts to enhance the socio-emotional well-being and development of children in early education settings.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

Introduction

Early childhood is a critical period of rapid growth and development, marked by significant milestones across cognitive, social, and emotional domains (Blewitt et al., 2019). During these formative years, children acquire foundational skills and competencies that lay the groundwork for their future academic success and overall well-being (Slot, 2018). Central to this developmental journey is the cultivation of emotional intelligence, which includes the ability to navigate social interactions effectively and recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions (Carter et al., 2004).

The importance of emotional development in early childhood cannot be overstated, as researchers have consistently demonstrated the profound impact of emotional development on various aspects of children's lives, including academic achievement, mental health, and interpersonal relationships (Tayler et al., 2016). Furthermore, early experiences with emotional regulation and social-emotional skills play a crucial role in shaping long-term outcomes, influencing individuals' resilience, empathy, and overall quality of life (Trommsdorff & Cole, 2011; Waldemar et al., 2016).

Given the critical role of emotional development in early childhood, educators and policymakers have increasingly recognized the significance of incorporating socio-emotional learning into early childhood education and care (ECEC) curricula (Koltcheva & Coelho, 2022). By providing young learners with opportunities to explore and express their emotions in a supportive and nurturing environment, ECE programs aim to foster the development of essential emotional competencies, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, and social awareness

(Zachrisson et al., 2021).

However, despite the growing emphasis on socio-emotional learning in ECE, significant variations exist in the approaches and methodologies employed within different curricular frameworks (Arias de Sanchez et al., 2012). The diversity of ECEC programs, influenced by factors such as cultural context, educational philosophy, and policy mandates, has led to the proliferation of various curricular models, each with its unique emphasis on emotional development (Arias de Sanchez et al., 2012).

Two such curricular frameworks that have gained prominence in Alberta Canada in recent years are the Alberta Flight curriculum and the Regional Emilia curriculum. While both frameworks share a common goal of promoting holistic development in preschool children, they embody distinct pedagogical approaches and instructional practices, which may have differential effects on children's emotional development (Makovichuk et al., 2014).

The Alberta Flight curriculum, developed by the Alberta Ministry of Education, is characterized by its interdisciplinary approach to learning, emphasizing hands-on exploration, inquiry-based activities, and experiential learning opportunities. Grounded in constructivist principles, the curriculum seeks to empower children as active participants in their learning journey, fostering curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking skills (Makovichuk et al., 2014).

In contrast, the Reggio Emilia curriculum, inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, is rooted in the belief that children are capable and competent learners who construct knowledge through interactions with their environment and peers (Edwards et al., 1998). Emphasizing collaboration, project-based learning, and the arts, the Reggio Emilia curriculum places a strong emphasis on the aesthetic and expressive dimensions of learning, encouraging children to communicate and express their emotions through various mediums (Edwards et al., 1998).

While both the Alberta Flight and the Regional Emilia curricula share a commitment to holistic development, their divergent pedagogical philosophies and instructional practices may shape children's emotional experiences and socio-emotional competencies in unique ways (Kelly, 2014). Therefore, it is imperative to examine whether significant differences exist in the emotional development of preschool children enrolled in these two curricular frameworks, as this knowledge can inform educational policy and practice, ultimately enhancing the quality of early childhood education.

Overview of Study

The primary aim of this study was to investigate whether significant differences exist in the emotional development of preschool children based on their exposure to either the Alberta Flight Framework or the Reggio Emilia curriculum. This research sought to provide valuable insights into the impact of different curricular frameworks on children's emotional competencies and social-emotional skills during the critical early childhood years.

In addition to exploring the differential effects of curricular frameworks, the study also aimed to examine the potential influence of socioeconomic status on children's emotional development within each curriculum. Socioeconomic status was operationalized based on whether children received the Government of Alberta's subsidy, serving as a proxy measure for economic disadvantage. By investigating the intersection of socioeconomic status and curriculum type, the study aimed to elucidate the nuanced interplay between contextual factors and children's emotional outcomes.

By comparing the emotional development outcomes of children enrolled in the Alberta Flight Framework and the Reggio Emilia curriculum, policymakers and curriculum developers can gain valuable insights into the relative strengths and weaknesses of each approach. These

insights can inform evidence-based decision-making and guide the ongoing evolution of educational frameworks towards a more comprehensive and effective model (Hewes et al., 2019).

Moreover, the identification of potential disparities in emotional development outcomes based on socioeconomic status highlights the importance of addressing equity considerations within early childhood education. By recognizing and addressing the unique needs of economically disadvantaged children, policymakers can work towards creating more inclusive and equitable educational environments that foster the holistic development of all learners. This study aimed to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of curricular frameworks in shaping children's emotional development and underscore the importance of fostering prosocial and attention competencies in early childhood education.

Overall, this study sought to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between curricular frameworks, socioeconomic status, and children's emotional development in early childhood. By shedding light on these dynamics, the findings of this research have the potential to inform curriculum design and educational policy initiatives aimed at promoting the holistic development and well-being of young learners. Through collaborative efforts and evidence-based practices, educators and policymakers can work towards creating more nurturing, supportive, and inclusive early childhood education environments that lay the foundation for lifelong emotional resilience and success.

Research Questions

This study investigated the following research questions:

- RQ1: Are there significant differences in teachers' perceptions of the socio-emotional development of children who attended a Reggio Emilia center and those

who attended a center based on Alberta's Flight framework?

- RQ2: Is there a significant difference in the socioeconomic status of children who attend Reggio Emilia-based centers and Alberta Flight framework-based centers?

Discussion

The findings from this study appear to suggest that there are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of the socio-emotional development of children based upon whether teachers worked at a Reggio Emilia center or a center based on Alberta's Flight framework. The results also suggest that there are no significant differences in the socioeconomic status of children who attend Reggio Emilia-based centers and Alberta Flight framework-based centers. Thus, the findings from this study appear to show that both Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia teachers perceive children in their respective educational settings as demonstrating similar levels of Prosocial and Attention competencies. This similarity in perceptions perhaps demonstrates the importance of fostering positive social interactions and empathy among preschool-aged children, regardless of the specific educational approach employed.

The researcher believes that the results of this study can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the growing recognition of emotional development as a critical component of preschool curriculum underscores the emphasis placed on fostering socio-emotional skills in early childhood education. Given the increasing awareness of the importance of emotional development in shaping lifelong outcomes, educators are likely to prioritize the cultivation of prosocial behaviors and attention among young learners. Moreover, the Alberta Flight framework drew inspiration from the Reggio Emilia curriculum, suggesting a shared focus on socio-emotional development. This alignment in pedagogical approaches and philosophies between Flight and Reggio Emilia may contribute to their perceived strengths in socio-emotional

development, thereby leading to similarities in overall teachers' perceptions. Overall, these factors collectively contribute to the observed patterns in teachers' perceptions of socio-emotional development in preschool-aged children across the Flight and Reggio Emilia curricula.

The high ratings for prosocial behaviors, such as “Shows pleasure when he or she succeeds (for example, claps for self)” and “Is affectionate with loved ones,” appears to suggest that both curricula provide nurturing and supportive environments for socio-emotional development in children. These findings underscore the emphasis placed on social-emotional learning and interpersonal relationships within early childhood education, regardless of the specific curricular framework employed. By promoting prosocial behaviors and positive social interactions, educators play a crucial role in cultivating empathy, cooperation, and kindness among young learners (Slot, 2018).

Similarly, the high ratings for attentional competence measures by both Alberta Flight and Reggio preschools, such as “Can pay attention for a long time (other than when watching TV),” highlight the importance of fostering attentional skills and self-regulation in early childhood (Blair & Razza, 2007). These findings align with research indicating that the development of attentional competence is closely linked to academic success and overall well-being (Blair & Raver, 2015). By providing engaging and developmentally appropriate learning experiences, it appears that both Alberta Flight and Reggio preschools may support children’s attentional development and prosocial growth (Kelly, 2014).

These findings underscore the complexity of factors influencing children’s attentional abilities in early childhood education settings and caution against simplistic interpretations of curricular effects. While Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia frameworks embody distinct pedagogical philosophies and instructional practices, their differential impact on children’s

attentional competence may be nuanced and multifaceted, influenced by a myriad of contextual factors (Thomas, 2020). According to Hewes et al. (2019), implementing a curriculum framework goes beyond checkboxes, involving a complex, theory-driven yet intuitive process rooted in localized knowledge. The ideal curriculum framework will integrate the curriculum into daily childcare experiences, focusing on mentorship and collaborative reflection rather than rote training (Hewes et al., 2019).

In light of the study results, it becomes imperative to delve deeper into the contextual nuances of preschool environments, including classroom dynamics, teacher-student interactions, and environmental stimuli, to elucidate the mechanisms underlying attentional development in young children. Effective curriculum implementation requires experienced mentors and dedicated time for educators to engage in dialogue (Hewes et al., 2019). By adopting a holistic approach that considers the interplay of individual, interpersonal, and environmental factors, educators and policymakers can better support the attentional needs of preschool children, fostering optimal conditions for their emotional development and academic success (Bowne et al., 2017).

The findings from this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of curricular frameworks in shaping children's emotional development and underscore the importance of fostering prosocial and attention competencies in early childhood education. By promoting positive social interactions and interpersonal relationships, educators can empower children to thrive emotionally, socially, and academically, laying the foundation for lifelong success and well-being (Blewitt et al., 2019; Slot, 2018).

By acknowledging the developmental realities of preschool-aged children and aligning instructional practices accordingly, educators can create environments that foster children's

emotional well-being and cognitive development (Haslip & Gullo, 2018). Moreover, the consistent observations across curricular frameworks suggest there may be a shared understanding among teachers regarding the emotional behaviors and developmental milestones typical of preschool-aged children, further emphasizing the universality of certain developmental trajectories during early childhood (Haslip & Gullo, 2018).

Implications for Theory

The results of this study challenge existing theories that suggest significant differences in socio-emotional development between children enrolled in Reggio Emilia-based Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) centers and those in centers strictly following Alberta's Flight framework. These findings indicate that, from the perspective of teachers, both curricular frameworks are perceived to have similar impacts on children's socio-emotional development. This challenges the notion that specific curricula inherently lead to different socio-emotional outcomes, highlighting the need for a more nuanced understanding of the factors influencing children's development in early childhood education settings (Arias de Sanchez et al., 2012). This could also be because many curricula have adopted more practices that facilitate socio-emotional development in children (Mondi, et al., 2021).

The curriculum used in early childhood education plays a crucial role in shaping the psychosocial development of young children. A well-designed curriculum provides opportunities for children to engage in meaningful social interactions, develop emotional regulation skills, and build positive relationships with peers and adults (Arias de Sanchez et al., 2012). By incorporating activities that promote empathy, cooperation, and communication, curriculum can foster the development of important psychosocial competencies such as empathy, resilience, and self-esteem (Arias de Sanchez et al., 2012). Moreover, curriculum that embraces diversity and

inclusivity can help children develop a positive sense of identity and appreciation for cultural differences, contributing to their overall well-being and social competence (Arias de Sanchez et al., 2012). The careful selection and implementation of curriculum in early childhood settings are essential for supporting children's psychosocial development and laying the foundation for lifelong learning and success. This study has shown that there are no significant differences between the Reggio Emilia approach and Alberta Flight framework and, hence, both may aid in preschool children's psychosocial development.

The selection and implementation of curriculum in early childhood education are pivotal in shaping the psychosocial development of young children, especially when viewed through the lens of psychoanalytic theory. Grounded in the work of pioneers such as Freud (1953) and Erikson (1994), psychoanalytic theory emphasizes the influence of early childhood experiences on individuals' personality development and social functioning (Knapp, 2020). A curriculum informed by psychoanalytic principles aims to create environments that support children's exploration of their emotions, relationships, and sense of self. By providing opportunities for symbolic play, expression of feelings, and reflection on personal experiences, such a curriculum can help children develop a secure sense of identity, emotional resilience, and healthy interpersonal relationships (Makovichuk, et al., 2014). The Reggio Emilia and Alberta Flight framework are psychoanalytically informed curricula that recognize the importance of the teacher-child relationship in fostering trust, empathy, and a sense of security, thereby creating a supportive context for children's psychosocial growth (Kelly, 2014; Makovichuk, et al., 2014).

In behaviorism, curriculum emphasizes the importance of observable behaviors and the use of reinforcement and rewards to promote learning. By providing clear expectations, structured routines, and systematic reinforcement strategies, behaviorist-inspired curriculum can

help children acquire new skills, develop self-regulation abilities, and establish positive behavioral patterns (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Cognitive constructivist curriculum, on the other hand, focuses on the active construction of knowledge through hands-on exploration, problem-solving, and inquiry-based learning activities (Zhao et al., 2014). By encouraging children to engage in meaningful, context-rich experiences, such curriculum fosters critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and a deep understanding of concepts and ideas. Social constructivist curriculum places a strong emphasis on the social and cultural contexts of learning, emphasizing collaborative learning, peer interactions, and the co-construction of knowledge (Rogoff, 1990). Through group projects, discussions, and collaborative problem-solving activities, social constructivist curriculum promotes communication skills, perspective-taking, and the development of a sense of belonging and community (Rogoff, 1990). The main principles from behaviorism, cognitive constructivism, and social constructivism have been integrated in the Reggio Emilia and Alberta Flight curriculum design and implementation.

Implications and Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The findings from this study hold implications for educational policy and practice, particularly in the context of curriculum design and refinement. The study's findings challenge conventional assumptions about the direct influence of specific curricular frameworks on children's socio-emotional development. Traditionally, educators and policymakers have debated the merits of various educational approaches, often assuming that certain curricula inherently foster better emotional outcomes than others (Arias de Sanchez et al., 2012). However, the lack of significant differences in socio-emotional development between children in Flight and Reggio Emilia-based centers suggests that either the impact of curriculum on emotional development may be more nuanced than previously thought or the sample was too small to draw a meaningful

conclusion from. This finding implies that factors beyond the curriculum itself, such as teacher practices, classroom environment, and family support, may play a significant role in shaping children's socio-emotional development (Ishimine & Tayler, 2014). Ishimine and Tayler underscored the intricacies and obstacles linked to appraising quality in early childhood environments, stressing the significance of addressing various facets such as pedagogy, curriculum, environment, and child outcomes.

Regardless of the specific curriculum employed, educators should prioritize fostering prosocial behaviors, emotional regulation, and interpersonal skills among young learners. These foundational skills not only contribute to children's immediate well-being but also serve as critical predictors of long-term academic success, social competence, and mental health (Blewitt et al., 2019). Therefore, practitioners and policymakers should continue to emphasize the integration of SEL into early childhood education curricula and instructional practices to support children's holistic development (Koltcheva & Coelho, 2022).

The examination of socioeconomic factors and their lack of significant differences between children in Reggio Emilia-based and Alberta Flight framework-based centers highlights the importance of addressing equity considerations in early childhood education. While previous researchers have suggested that children from low-income backgrounds may face greater socio-emotional challenges (Votruba-Drzal et al. 2004), this study suggests that the type of curriculum may not be a significant factor in determining these outcomes. This study underscores the need for comprehensive, cross-cutting approaches for promoting equity in early childhood education, including targeted interventions to support children and families facing socioeconomic adversity (Votruba-Drzal et al., 2004).

The study underscores the crucial role of teachers in shaping children's socio-emotional

development. Educators' perceptions, attitudes, and practices significantly influence the emotional climate of the classroom and the socio-emotional experiences of young learners (Hewes et al., 2019). Therefore, professional development programs should prioritize the enhancement of teachers' socio-emotional competencies, cultural responsiveness, and trauma-informed practices (Baustad & Bjørnestad, 2020). By equipping educators with the knowledge, skills, and resources to create nurturing and inclusive learning environments, practitioners can effectively support children's emotional growth and well-being (Baustad & Bjørnestad, 2020).

Educators and policymakers should recognize the importance of fostering socio-emotional development in young children, regardless of the specific curriculum employed. Given the lack of significant differences in socio-emotional outcomes between children in Reggio Emilia-based and Flight framework-based centers, practitioners can focus on implementing evidence-based strategies to support children's social-emotional well-being within their respective educational contexts. This includes promoting positive social interactions, emotional regulation, and empathy among children, as well as providing supportive environments that nurture their socio-emotional growth.

Additionally, professional development programs for early childhood educators should emphasize the development of social-emotional competencies and culturally responsive practices (Baustad & Bjørnestad, 2020). By equipping educators with the knowledge and skills to create inclusive and supportive learning environments, practitioners can better meet the socio-emotional needs of diverse groups of children and promote their overall well-being (Baustad & Bjørnestad, 2020).

Policymakers should consider the findings of this study when designing and implementing early childhood education policies and initiatives. The lack of significant

differences in socio-economic factors between children in Reggio Emilia-based and Alberta Flight framework-based centers suggests that socio-economic disparities may not be exacerbated by the choice of curriculum. However, policymakers should continue to prioritize efforts to promote equity and access to high-quality early childhood education for all children, regardless of their socio-economic background or educational setting (Pace et al., 2017).

Recommendations for Future Research

Researchers can build upon the findings of this study by exploring additional factors that may influence children's socio-emotional development in early childhood education settings. This additional research can include examining the role of teacher-child interactions, parental involvement, and community resources in shaping children's socio-emotional outcomes. Additionally, researchers can conduct longitudinal studies to investigate the long-term effects of different curricular frameworks on children's socio-emotional development considering factors such as school readiness, academic achievement, and mental health. Additionally, researchers could investigate the interactions between curriculum, teacher practices, and child outcomes, examining how these factors collectively shape children's socio-emotional development within diverse educational contexts (Hewett, 2001). Moreover, future research should consider other contextual factors, such as family dynamics, community resources, and cultural influences, in understanding children's socio-emotional development and designing effective interventions to support their holistic well-being (Yates et al., 2010).

Furthermore, qualitative research methods, such as interviews and focus groups, could provide deeper insights into teachers' perceptions and practices related to socio-emotional development in early childhood education. By employing a mixed-methods approach, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the complex factors influencing

children's socio-emotional development and inform evidence-based practices and policies in the field of early childhood education.

Limitations

The study's sample size, while adequate for statistical analysis, may not fully represent the diversity of early childhood education settings. The imbalance in the number of respondents from Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia-based schools may also limit the generalizability of the findings.

The reliance on teachers' perceptions of children's socio-emotional development may introduce bias or subjectivity into the data. Teachers' ratings may be influenced by their own experiences, beliefs, or expectations, potentially impacting the accuracy of the results.

The study's reliance on voluntary participation may introduce selection bias, as schools or teachers who chose to participate may differ systematically from those who did not. Additionally, the researcher's outreach efforts may have been more successful in schools that are more motivated or engaged in research activities, potentially skewing the sample.

While the Brief Infant-Toddler Social and Emotional Assessment (BITSEA/C) is a widely used tool for assessing socio-emotional development in young children, its reliance on Likert scale responses may limit the depth of information obtained. Future studies may benefit from incorporating additional measures or qualitative methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of children's socio-emotional development.

The study's findings may be specific to the context of Alberta, Canada, and may not be applicable to other geographic regions or cultural contexts. Cultural differences in parenting practices, educational philosophies, and societal norms may influence children's socio-emotional development in ways that were not captured in the study.

The study's cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw causal conclusions about the relationship between curricular frameworks and children's socio-emotional development. Longitudinal studies tracking children's development over time would provide more robust evidence of the impact of different curricular approaches.

The study did not account for potential confounding variables, such as teacher experience, classroom environment, or parental involvement, which may influence children's socio-emotional development. Future research could include more comprehensive control variables to better isolate the effects of curricular frameworks.

By acknowledging these limitations, future research can build upon the findings of this study and address methodological gaps to provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors influencing children's socio-emotional development in early childhood education settings.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the socio-emotional development of preschool children in Alberta Flight and Reggio Emilia-based preschools, exploring teachers' perceptions and potential differences based on curricular frameworks. Through a rigorous process of data collection and analysis, key insights were gained, providing valuable contributions to the field of early childhood education.

The study targeted a sample size of 60 teachers, evenly split between Reggio Emilia and Alberta Flight framework-based schools. Despite extensive outreach efforts, responses were received from 47 Alberta Flight schools and 26 Reggio Emilia schools. The principal component analysis confirmed the adequacy of the data for analysis, yielding two factors identified as Prosocial Competence and Attention Competence.

The statistical analyses revealed no statistically significant differences in teachers'

perceptions of children's socio-emotional development between the two curricular frameworks. Both Prosocial Competence and Attention Competence were found to be similar regardless of the curriculum used. Additionally, there were no significant differences in the socioeconomic factors among children in Reggio Emilia-based and Alberta Flight framework-based centers.

The findings suggest that while curricular frameworks may vary in their philosophies and approaches, they may not significantly influence children's socio-emotional development as perceived by teachers. Both Reggio Emilia and Alberta Flight frameworks appear to provide environments conducive to the development of prosocial behaviors and attentional competencies in preschool-aged children.

Furthermore, the lack of significant differences in socioeconomic factors between children in different curricular settings underscores the importance of equity considerations in early childhood education. Regardless of the curriculum used, it is essential to ensure that all children have access to high-quality learning experiences that support their holistic development.

These findings have important implications for both theory and practice in the field of early childhood education. The results challenge existing theories suggesting significant differences in socio-emotional development between children enrolled in different curricular frameworks. Instead, they highlight the importance of considering multiple factors, including teacher practices, classroom environment, and family support, in shaping children's socio-emotional development (Ishimine & Tayler, 2014). Educators should prioritize evidence-based strategies to support children's socio-emotional development within their respective educational contexts, focusing on fostering positive social interactions, emotional regulation, and empathy among children (Mondi, 2021). Policymakers should consider the findings when designing and implementing early childhood education policies, ensuring that efforts to promote equity and

access are prioritized.

While this study provides insights, there are several avenues for future research to explore. Longitudinal studies could investigate the long-term effects of different curricular frameworks on children's socio-emotional development, considering factors such as school readiness and academic achievement. Additionally, qualitative research methods could provide deeper insights into teachers' perceptions and practices related to socio-emotional development in early childhood education.

In conclusion, the findings of this study contribute to advancing our understanding of the factors influencing children's socio-emotional development in early childhood education settings. By recognizing the importance of fostering socio-emotional competencies in young children and addressing equity considerations in early childhood education, practitioners, policymakers, and researchers can work collaboratively to create supportive and inclusive environments that promote the well-being and development of all children.

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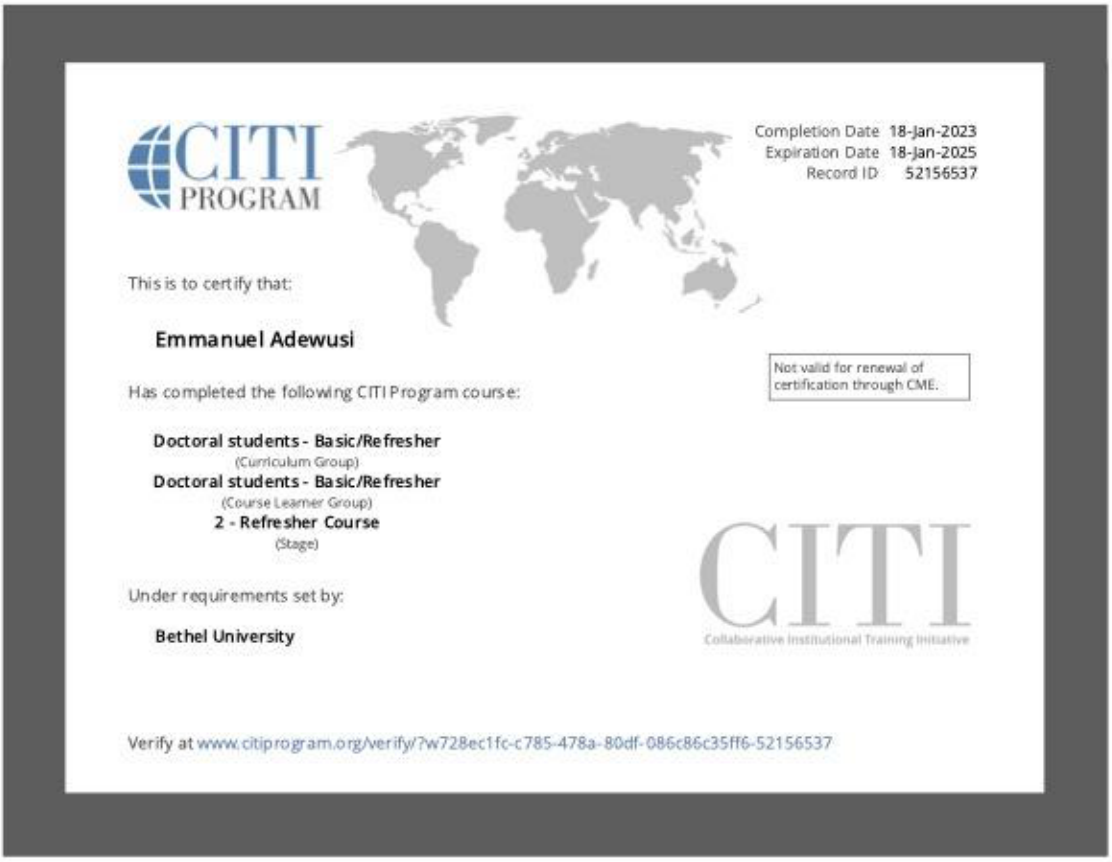
Appendix A

CITI Certification



CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 18-Jan-2023
Expiration Date 18-Jan-2025
Record ID 52156537

This is to certify that:

Emmanuel Adewusi

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Doctoral students - Basic/Refresher
(Curriculum Group)
Doctoral students - Basic/Refresher
(Course Learner Group)
2 - Refresher Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Bethel University

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w728ec1fc-c785-478a-80df-086c86c35ff6-52156537

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form (Level 1)

You are invited to participate in a research study based on the connection between early childhood education framework and the emotional development of preschool-aged children. In this study, I will investigate the relationship between preschool education framework and emotional development and which components in a framework impacts children's emotional development. This study will enable early childhood education stakeholders to adopt the most effective early education framework to enable preschool children to enjoy emotional development.

The risks to survey participants are minimal. The study focuses on the perception of educators on the emotional development of preschool-aged children and will require educators document their observations of the children's emotional development. There are no expected short-term or long-term consequences from completing the survey. If at any point during the survey, you feel emotionally distressed, you may choose to stop participating at any time.
If you choose to participate in this study, you will have access to the survey via the provided link after confirming that you fully understand the details of the study. I will utilize the BITSEA/C, the 11 items competency portion of the BITSEA, for this research study. The BITSEA/C will take less than 5 minutes to complete. The survey is the BITSEA/C, developed by researchers at Yale University and the University of Massachusetts (Briggs-Gowan & Carter, 2002).

I will collect survey data through a secure platform called Qualtrics, and only they will have access to the data. Participants' contact information was obtained through a request to your school director/principal and any personal information will not be kept after the study. I will then

present the findings in a dissertation, using only aggregated data and not identifying any individual participants.

Please note that as participants you have the right to freely say “no” and decline participation without any consequence to your status or employment at your pre-school. You can choose to complete the survey or withdraw from it at any point during the survey process.

This research project has been reviewed and approved in accordance with Bethel University’s Levels of Review for Research with Humans. If you have any questions about the research and/or research participants’ rights or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact the following individuals,

- Emmanuel Adewusi at ema28638@bethel.edu
- Dr. Krista Soria at krs73996@bethel.edu

Please keep a copy of this email for your records if you plan to engage in the research described above.

You are making a decision regarding whether or not to participate in this research. Your electronic signature indicates that you have read the information above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice.

Signature: Signature of Investigator:

Date Date

Appendix C

Introductory Letter

My name is Emmanuel Adewusi, and I am a doctoral student at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota. My research study focuses on teachers' perceptions of the effect of early childhood education curriculum on the socio-emotional development of children.

I am reaching out to request permission to involve your teachers in the recruitment for this study. It will take less than five minutes for each teacher you choose to fill out a survey based on their observations of the children they teach. Each teacher will be asked to complete a survey that represents the average for their class.

If you choose to grant permission, kindly respond by indicating so and send the name and email address of the teacher to me at ema28638@bethel.edu. With your permission, the findings from this research study will be shared with you.

Confidentiality is highly valued in this study. No personally identifiable information, such as names or dates of birth, will be captured. No teacher or child will be identifiable in any written reports or publications.

Participation in this study by your staff is voluntary. If they decide to participate, they may withdraw from the study at any time without affecting your relationship or theirs with Bethel University, and their information will be destroyed. There are no risks associated with participating in this study.

Thank you for your consideration!

Emmanuel Adewusi

Appendix D

Electronic Survey (BITSEA/C)

Mapi Research Trust has granted permission to use the survey developed by Briggs-Gowan & Carter (2002)

Instructions: Many statements describe normal feelings and behaviors, but some describe feelings and behaviors that may be problems. Please do your best to respond to every item. Please circle the ONE response that best describes the average behavior of the children in your class in the LAST MONTH.

Teacher:

Number of children in class: ____ Boys ____ Girls

Date of BITSEA/C Survey Completion:

Preschool Name:

Framework Type: Reggio Emilia Framework ☐ Alberta Flight Framework ☐

How many children qualify for an early childhood education subsidy in this class?

0 = Not true / Rarely **1 = Somewhat true / Sometimes** **2 = Very true / Often**

1. Shows pleasure when he or she succeeds (for example, claps for self). 0 1 2
2. Follows rules. 0 1 2
3. Looks for a childcare provider when upset. 0 1 2
4. Looks right at you when you say his or her name. 0 1 2
5. Is affectionate with loved ones. 0 1 2

6. Plays well with other children (not including brother or sister). 0 1 2

7. Can pay attention for a long time (other than when watching TV). 0 1 2

8. Tries to help when someone is hurt (for example, gives a toy). 0 1 2

9. Imitates playful sounds when you ask him or her to. 0 1 2

10. Points to show you something far away. 0 1 2

11. Hugs or feeds dolls or stuffed animals. 0 1 2

Appendix E

Teachers' Email Addresses

My name is Emmanuel Adewusi, and I am a doctoral student at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota. You are invited to participate in a study about the perception teachers have on the socio-emotional development of children.

You were selected as a possible participant because you are a teacher at an early childhood education center that uses Reggio Emilia or Alberta Flight Framework and your Director provided your email address to me. You are uniquely positioned to provide valuable information about your perception on the socio-emotional development of children depending on the early childhood education framework in use.

If you decide to participate, kindly fill out the online survey that will take less than five minutes. The survey can be accessed through this **link**. You are required to complete this survey for each class.

Confidentiality is highly valued in this study. No personally identifiable information like names or date of birth of participants will be captured. No one will be identifiable in any written reports or publications.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without affecting your relationship with Bethel University, and your information will be destroyed. There are no risks for participating in this study.

If you are willing to participate, I will send you an informed consent letter to sign. Thank you for your consideration!

Emmanuel Adewusi

Appendix F

Reminder Email

Hello,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Emmanuel Adewusi, and I am a doctoral student at Bethel University. I am following up to remind you to respond to the online survey that was sent to you. The deadline for response was last week but I am providing an extension for one extra week to solicit as many responses as possible. It will take less than five minutes to complete.

Thank you for supporting this research effort.

Emmanuel Adewusi

Appendix G

Permission to Use BITSEA

Mapi Research Trust

SPECIAL TERMS No81143

These User License Agreement Special Terms (Special Terms) are issued between Mapi Research Trust ("MRT") and Emmanuel Adewusi (User).

These Special Terms are in addition to any and all previous Special Terms under the User License Agreement General Terms.

These Special Terms include the terms and conditions of the User License Agreement General Terms, which are hereby incorporated by this reference as though the same was set forth in its entirety and shall be effective as of the Special Terms Effective Date set forth herein.

All capitalized terms which are not defined herein shall have the same meanings as set forth in the User License Agreement General Terms.

These Special Terms, including all attachments and the User License Agreement General Terms contain the entire understanding of the Parties with respect to the subject matter herein and supersedes all previous agreements and undertakings with respect thereto. If the terms and conditions of these Special Terms or any attachment conflict with the terms and conditions of the User License Agreement General Terms, the terms and conditions of the User License Agreement General Terms will control, unless these Special Terms specifically acknowledge the conflict and expressly states that the conflicting term or provision found in these Special Terms control for these Special Terms only. These Special Terms may be modified only by written agreement signed by the Parties.

1. User information

User name	Emmanuel Adewusi
Category of User	Student
User address	3900 Bethel Drive, St. Paul, 55112, MN, United States
User VAT number	
User email	emmanuel.adewusi@cccghq.org
User phone	7807293140
Billing information	3900 Bethel Drive, St. Paul, 55112, MN, United States

Mapi Research Trust

2. General information

Effective Date	Date of acceptance of these Special Terms by the User : 15 Feb 2023
Expiration Date (Term)	Upon completion of the Stated Purpose
Name of User's contact in charge of the request	Emmanuel Adewusi

3. Identification of the COA

Name of the COA	BITSEA - Brief Infant Toddler Social Emotional Assessment
Author	Briggs-Gowan MJ, Irwin JR, Wachtel K, Carter AS, Cicchetti DV
Copyright Holder	Yale University and the University of Massachusetts
Copyright notice	BITSEA © Yale University and the University of Massachusetts 2002

Bibliographic reference	Briggs-Gowan MJ, Carter AS, Irwin JR, Wachtel K, Cicchetti DV. The Brief Infant-Toddler Social and Emotional Assessment: screening for social-emotional problems and delays in competence. J Pediatr Psychol. 2004 Mar;29(2):143-55 (Pubmed abstract). Briggs-Gowan MJ, Carter AS, McCarthy K, Augustyn M, Caronna E, Clark R. Clinical validity of a brief measure of early childhood social-emotional/behavioral problems. J Pediatr Psychol. 2013 Jun;38(5):577-87 (Full-text article)
Module(s)/version(s) needed	• BITSEA_Childcare provider form

4. Context of use of the COA

The User undertakes to use the COA solely in the context of the Stated Purpose as defined hereafter.

4.1 Stated Purpose

Other project

Title	A Qualitative Examination of Teachers' Perception of Children's Socio-emotional Development in Reggio Emilia and Alberta Flight Framework-driven Early Childhood Education and Care Centres
Disease or condition	
Planned Term*	Start: 03/2023 End: 06/2023
Description (including format or media)	Doctoral Research

4.2 Country and languages

MRT grants the License to use the COA on the following countries and in the languages indicated in the table below:

Version/Module	Language	For use in the following country

BITSEA_Childcare provider form	English	the USA

The User understands that the countries indicated above are provided for information purposes. The User may use the COA in other countries than the ones indicated above.

5. Specific requirements for the COA

- The Copyright Holder of the COA has granted ICON LS exclusive rights to translate the COA in the context of commercial studies or any project funded by for-profit entities. ICON LS is the only organization authorized to perform linguistic validation/translation work on the COA.
- The term of this WO cannot exceed the following date: May 13 2028
- In case the User wants to use an e-Version of the COA, the User shall send the Screenshots of the original version of the COA to MRT or ICON LS for review and approval. The Screenshots review may incur additional fees.
- In case the User wants to use an e-Version of the COA, ICON LS shall update (if needed) and populate the COA translations into the User's or IT Company's system and the User shall send the Screenshots of the translations of the COA to ICON LS for approval. The update (if needed), population of translations and the Screenshots review may incur additional fees.

User Qualifications

Administration and interpretation of the COA requires training in standardized screening practices.

In addition, it is critical to carefully read the manual that will be provided by MRT to User and seek consultation about any parts that are not easily understood.

To be eligible for use, the User and/or supervisor must agree to ALL of the following conditions:

1. Maintain the confidentiality of all assessment results
2. Avoid labeling or diagnosing individuals solely on the basis of an at risk score or the parent's report of symptoms
3. Administer and score the COA precisely according to the instructions
4. Provide results only to authorized persons in conformity with professional standards for screening instruments.

If the User is a trainee or lacks the equivalent of a Master's degree or appropriate license/certificate, the User shall have his supervisor complete the following:

Supervisor's signature: _____

Print supervisor's full name: Dr. Krista Soria Dr. Krista Soria

Mapi Research Trust

The following questions and the responses will attest to User's (or supervisor's) professional qualifications to administer the COA.

Registration of Qualifications: Check whether qualifications are for

User: Yes/~~No~~

Supervisor: ~~Yes~~/No

Profession: Educator

Degree: Master, Information Technology Management; MISSM

University: Clark University, Boston, MA; Concordia University of Edmonton

Does User have a valid license or certificate issued by a state regulatory board? Yes/No

License/Certificate Type: N/A

License/Certificate #: N/A

State/Jurisdiction: N/A

Date of License Expiration: N/A

Certifying or Licensing Agency: N/A

User's signature of this WO indicates agreement with the above conditions.

- If applicable, the License Fees apply annually.

By accepting these Special Terms, the User acknowledges and confirms that it has read and approves the User Agreement General Terms.