

Social Relationships in School: A Systematic Literature Review using PRISMA

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Abstract

Social relationships between school, community, and parents are crucial for holistic development of students. However, school-community relationships are often discussed in technical or administrative terms. Therefore, it is necessary to understand how community people interact within schools, how power is shared or contested, and how cultural meanings shape roles and expectations. And, there are limited studies that consolidate these dimensions of social relationships between school and community. Therefore, the objective of this study is to consolidate the study on social relationships between school and community to show the research trends and process of development of social ties between school and community, utilizing the systematic literature review using PRISMA. The findings suggest that the research trend in social relationships in school has increased, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative research designs. The studies on this issue are categorized into i) *the need for social relationships*, ii) *supportive school ecology as a medium of social relationship*, iii) *the role of stakeholders*, and iv) *ways to develop strong social relationships in school*. This shows that social relationships are crucial and school plays an important role to enhance social relationships. The findings are helpful for school to foster social relationships by engaging parents and community. Future researchers can implement mixed methods studies beyond the subject area of social science for an in-depth understanding of social relationships and their importance on well-being and learning of students.

Keywords

Social relationship, school, parents, community, PRISMA

1. Introduction

The relationship of school with community plays important role to determine the everyday culture of the school. Their interaction is mandatory as both parties are united by students and plays crucial role in holistic development of students (Ramírez-García et al., 2018). Without understanding social relationships among the parents, teachers, students, and wider community, the environment of school cannot be understood. For holistic development of learners with quality teaching learning process, the good social relationship in school with communities and parents are necessary (Simweleba & Serpell, 2020). Bronfenbrenner (1987) in his ecological model of human development also highlighted the importance of the role of school and community and suggested their relationships is important for betterment of learners as they are interconnected to each other. The overall development of learners in terms of their quality learning environment, academic progress, and personal and social competencies, the healthy social relationship is necessary in school (Cárcamo Vásquez & Garreta Bochaca, 2020; Cueli Naranjo & López Larrosa, 2022).

The adaptive behavior of learners in school and their behavior towards other learners, teachers, and other members of school is influenced by the involvement of parents and community along with relationship with peers (Fernández-Freire Álvarez et al., 2020). The attitude of parents to involve in school relationship helps monitoring learning process of learners like monitoring of home assignments and their overall learners' holistic development (Fernández-Freire Álvarez et al., 2020). Likewise, the involvement of community is also crucial to enhance the social relationship in school and helps in the cohesion of stakeholders of school (Aierbe-Barandiaran et al., 2023; Intxausti et al., 2016). Thus, it is important for community and parents to involve in development of social relationship in school for betterment of learners especially in their early years (Gálvez,

2020). It is important for community members, mainly the parents, to be aware of how their participation in schools contributes to their children's educational achievement (Alamolhoda, 2020). Parents and teachers are agent of connecting community and school and develop the good relationship in school (Fernández-Freire Álvarez et al., 2020). Parents and teachers as an agent can help in the development of healthy social relationship in school leading to holistic development of learners (Park et al., 2017).

The parents role in development of social relationship is crucial in learning activities that value in the holistic growth of learners (Burriel, 2022). However, parents' participation in school is low. Parents' low participation is one of the challenges on effective learning of learners. Thus, parents need to regularly involve in the development of healthy social relationship and for that they need regular communication with teachers and school management which enhances the learning experience and enrich educational community (Aierbe-Barandiaran et al., 2023).

Problem Statement

Social connection and community engagement are crucial for resiliency and also important for mitigating potential risk for education among youth (Fisseha et al., 2025). As stated earlier, the good social relationship between school and community is crucial for overall development of students (Aierbe-Barandiaran et al., 2023; Alamolhoda, 2020; Álvarez et al., 2020; Fernández-Freire; Intxausti et al., 2014). However, school-community relationships are often discussed in technical or administrative terms, through mechanisms such as School Management Committees, parental involvement, or local government oversight (Gobby & Niesche, 2019). However, it is necessary to know the process of developing social relationships and understand the importance of social relationships in the holistic development of learners. But, there are hardly any studies that consolidate these dimensions of social relationship between school and community. This paper fills this gap. Therefore, this paper consolidates the study on social relationships among school and

community to show the process of development of social ties among school and community. In doing so, this study also highlights the role of stakeholders like community, teachers, parents and students in the development of social relationships. The next sections of this study are methodology, findings, discussions and conclusion.

2. Materials and Methods

In order to meet the objective of this paper, this study uses a systematic literature review approach. This approach helps in the synthesis of existing knowledge and identifies knowledge gaps for further research (Nor et al., 2023; Pradana et al., 2023). Apart from that, transparency, minimum bias and replicability are also ensured with a systematic literature review approach. (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009). For systematic literature review, this study undertook the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis (PRISMA) reporting checklist as suggested by Page et al. (2021). The PRISMA supports to find appropriate literature. In order to perform PRISMA, two steps; appropriate study selection and theme generation through coding are required (Hosany et al., 2022; Orellano et al., 2020).

Literatures Selection

For appropriate literature selection, this study follows four-step processes as suggested by Hosany et al. (2022). The steps are *identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion*.

Identification

For the identification step, four aspects are crucial for a comprehensive literature search for the identification of appropriate papers. They are keywords, databases, timeline and language (Shrestha et al., 2025). The keywords used for school are “school”, “primary school”, “secondary school”, “elementary school”, and “high school”. Similarly, for community, the keywords used are “community”, “society”, “neighborhood”, “locality”, “cultural group”, and “ethnic group”. Finally,

for social relationship, the keywords used are “social relationship”, “social connection”, and “social tie”.

For databases, this study selected two popular databases, Scopus and Web of Science (WoS), for identifying authentic articles (Bhattarai et al., 2024). The timeline was selected from 2020 to 2025. And only open-access journal articles written in English were selected. Likewise, the subject area was limited to social science and sociology.

The keywords were searched in title, abstract, and keywords with code utilizing Boolean operators. The code used in Scopus is title-abs-key ((school or "primary school" or "secondary school" or "elementary school" or "high school") and (community or society or neighborhood or locality or "cultural group" or "ethnic group") and ("social relationship" or "social connection" or "social tie")) and pub-year > 2019 and pub-year < 2026 and (limit-to (doctype , "ar")) and (limit-to (language , "English")) and (limit-to (srctype , "j")) and (limit-to (oa , "all")) and (limit-to (subjarea , "soci")). Likewise, the code used in wos is ts (school or "primary school" or "secondary school" or "elementary school" or "high school") and community or society or neighborhood or locality or "cultural group" or "ethnic group") and ("social relationship" or "social connection" or "social tie")) with all the criteria set as explained above.

From Scopus database, 62 articles were identified and 3 articles were fetched from WoS. After that, using software R-Studio, duplicate articles were identified and removed. There were 2 duplicate articles. Following that, 63 articles with all the information were downloaded in an excel sheet for further review using R-Studio.

Screening and Eligibility

Furthermore, abstract screening was performed. Only empirical papers were selected as eligible for further processing. There were 3 papers, which were review-based. Likewise, the papers that were

not focused on social relationships were also deemed as ineligible. There was 1 such paper. Thus, only 59 papers were further reviewed. After this, two inclusion/exclusion criteria were determined.

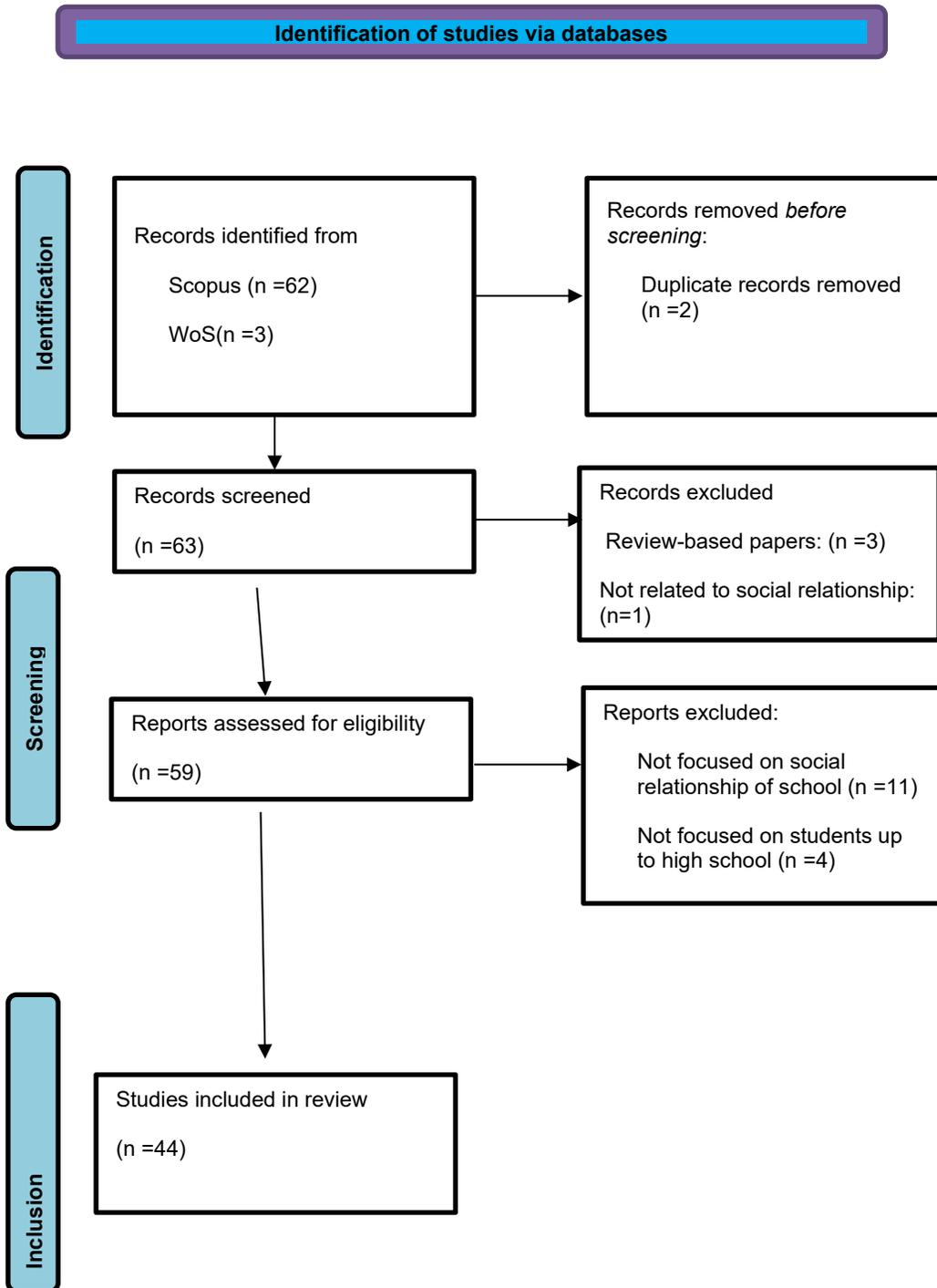
Inclusion/Exclusion

First, only articles that researched social relationships in school were included. Thus, those articles, which do not conduct a study on the social relationship of school were excluded. There were 11 articles that did not research social relationships in of school settings. Second, only articles that were researched on students up to high school were included. Any articles that make a study on students of higher education, like bachelor's, master 's, and above, were excluded. There were 4 such papers. Thus, in total 19 papers were excluded from further processing. Finally, 44 papers were included for final review process.

The entire process of PRISMA for appropriate literature identification is shown in Figure 1, adopted from Page et al. (2021).

Figure 1

PRISMA Flowchart



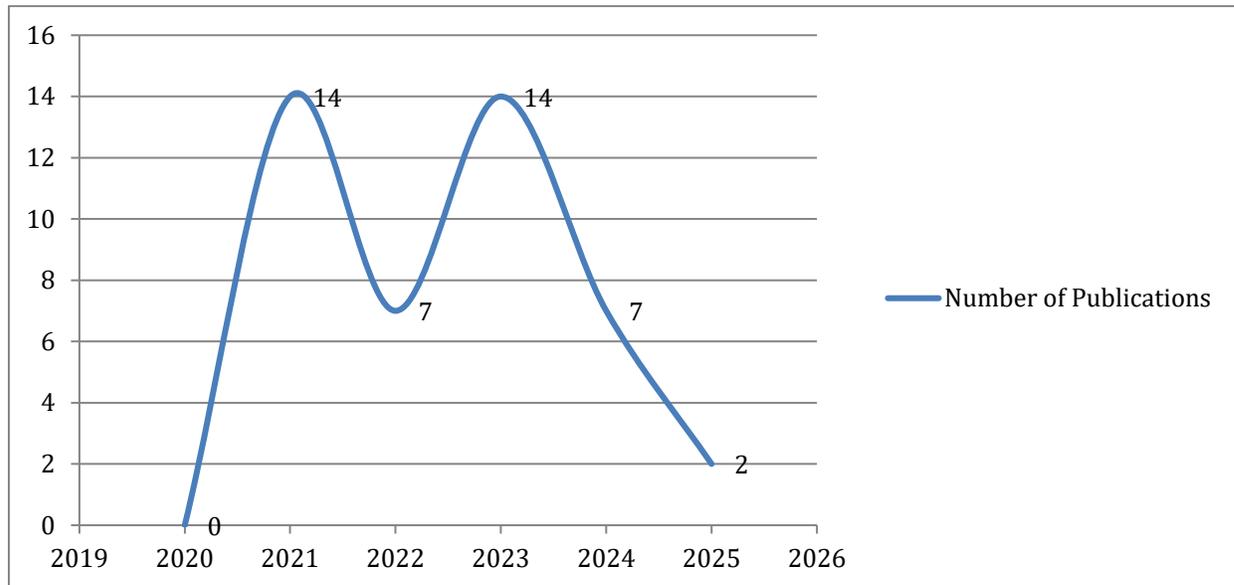
Coding and Theme Generation

After the selection of appropriate literature, the main information, like title, year of publication, thematic concentration, methodology, and major findings, was synthesized. Based on this research, trends and themes were developed to show the process of development of social ties between school and community.

3. Results

Research Trends

There has been a significant number of publications since 2020. The highest number of publications was in 2021 and 2023 (n=14), followed by 2022 and 2024 (n=7). The number of publications per year is shown in Figure 2. However, the research trend is not constantly increasing. There has been a decreasing trend after 2023.

Figure 2*Number of Publications per Year*

Research Design Implemented

The researchers of these papers have used qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Table 1 presents an overview of research design implemented by reviewed articles. The qualitative (n=22) and quantitative research (n=20) designs are popular research designs on this issue. While few articles (n=2) have implemented mixed methods research design. The approaches used in quantitative research are survey, quasi-experimental research design, latent class analysis, random controlled trial, pre-test and post-test, and social network analysis. Likewise, in qualitative studies, researchers have utilized case study, focus group discussion, in-depth interview, semi-structured interview, and asynchronous remote communities (ARC) methodology. Furthermore, in mixed methods research design, researchers have used explanatory sequential mixed methods study and exploratory sequential mixed methods research design.

Table 1*Research Design Implemented*

S.N.	Research Design	Frequency
1	Qualitative	22
2	Quantitative	20
3	Mixed Methods	2

Social Relationship in School

Using the empirical review, this study developed themes on the aspect of social relationships in school. The generated themes are i) *the need of for social relationship*, ii) *supportive school Ecology as a medium of social relationship*, iii) *the Role of Stakeholders*, and iv) *ways to develop strong social relationships in school*. The themes developed from the empirical review are shown in Annex A.

The Need for Social Relationship

For good learning and positive growth of students, it is crucial to develop strong social ties in school. Many reviewed studies have highlighted the importance of developing supportive school ecology with strong social relationships. Fisseha et al. (2025) have highlighted the importance of education and social engagement with the host community via school for developing resiliency among refugee youths. School needs to support the development of good social relationships with the community. Such social relationship helps in better education among students (Aartun & Standal, 2024; Afifi et al., 2022). Aartun and Standal (2024) have suggested that school establish a mechanism of social relationships for better physical education. Likewise, Afifi et al. (2024) in their studies have shown the importance of social connection among students for reducing distress and enhancing holistic development of learners. These papers have suggested developing good social relationships in school and creating a supportive school ecology. Supporting this idea, Kim (2021) has suggested better teacher and student relationships for enhancing the well-being of the

students. Likewise, social ties with friends, parents, communities, and teachers are also important for the well-being of students for creating infrastructure for better learning, which results in better academic performance (Luijten et al., 2021; Michelson et al., 2021; Mieziene et al., 2022). The community and school can work closely to develop the well-being of students, thus highlighting the importance of social ties between community and school (Kishida et al., 2022)

Bavčević et al. (2024) have suggested that prosocial behavior and good social relationships are crucial for the satisfaction and happiness of the students. This will lead to the positive growth of the adolescents (Bayly & Vasilenko, 2021). Likewise, the good social relationship between student and teacher is an important factor to enhance the students' engagement to mitigate the struggle of students against the oppressive practice of school (Calabrese Barton et al., 2021). In the same line, García-Ceberino et al. (2023) shows the crucial need of social relationships in physical education for social, educational, and health benefits to students. Good social relationships are also crucial for reducing use of substances among adult students (Schick et al., 2023).

Social relationships are also beneficial for children with autism and their parents. It is important to have good social networks among parents of autism to transition to a new school (Hassrick et al., 2021). Similarly, the community and school can work closely to develop the well-being of deaf students, thus highlighting the benefit of social ties between community and school (Kishida et al., 2022)

Social ties and social support are also beneficial for the well-being of the teachers. Diab and Green (2024) found that social support and social relationships enhanced the intrinsic motivation of novice teachers. Their study highlighted the need of social support for the teachers' well-being and effectiveness.

Supportive School Ecology as a medium of social relationship

Social relationships in school are crucial for holistic development of students and teachers. In order to develop strong social ties, the role of school is crucial. It can be a place where stakeholders like school management, community, teachers, and students can come together and develop a strong bond. The study of Banwell and Kingham (2023) suggested that school can act like a bumping space where stakeholders come together for solving the issues related to the neighborhood or school. The space of a school like a library and playground, can provide opportunities for social interaction. The study of Goździak and Popyk (2024) also suggested school as a place of social interaction and facilitates social integration. Likewise, through a participatory approach, school is a critical actor where social interaction takes place for social change (Gallardo López & Muñoz-Villaraviz, 2021). The school can closely work with the community to develop a system like a web-based resource for enhancing the well-being of students (Kishida et al., 2022). Thus, school integrates the system of knowledge transfer to develop a strong social connection with communities (Pekarcik et al., 2023).

The Role of Stakeholders

Various stakeholders like teachers, parents, friends, and community play a significant role in the development of strong social ties in school. Many of the reviewed articles have highlighted the crucial role of such stakeholders in enhancing the social relationship in school. One of the major stakeholders is the teacher in maintaining the social relationship. The study of Kim (2021) suggested that the teacher plays a significant role in the development of social relationships with students that enhance the well-being of students. Likewise, Michelson et al. (2021) also suggested that teachers can play a crucial role in creating learning communities by developing a technology based system with the support of parents. Especially, the homegrown teacher is crucial as they are keener to develop the student-teacher relationship (Starrett et al., 2021). Likewise, the study of Stenbom and Geijer (2024) suggests that teachers must act as community facilitators for creating personalized learning by digitalizing education. They must act like social architect and facilitators

to enhance cognitive, social, and emotional development of students (Vinokur et al., 2023). Teachers have the potential to bring transformation in education and create a sustainable and thriving future.

The role of parents is important for the enhancement of social ties of students. They must collaborate with the school for creating better social relationships. The study of Bayly and Vasilenko (2021) suggested that parents are important stakeholders to create good social relationships among students. Likewise, the role of family is crucial to develop the strong social bond of their children and enhance their well-being (Kim, 2021). The involvement of parents in building social relationships can enhance the social ties of students. The study of Kishida et al. (2022) shows that involvement of parents in the use of web-based resources developed by community and school enhanced the well-being of the students. In the same line, the study of Michelson et al. (2021) found the involvement of parents with community and school to develop technology-driven resources to enhance the learning of the students. O'Neal et al. (2023) also highlighted the importance of parents for strong social relationships. In their study, they found parental deployment in military families leads to less social connection and less social support. Parents can play a crucial role in knowledge transfer with support from school to their house and community, which enhances the social relationship.

The peers can also help in the development of the social ties of fellow students. The role of friends is crucial for enhancing the social relationship of students (Kim, 2021). The peers play an important role in the creation of a good social bonds (Bayly & Vasilenko, 2021). The study of Luijten et al. (2021) also suggested friends are crucial for building high-quality relationships to enhance well-being.

Way to Develop a Strong Social Relationship in School

School is a medium of community development through building better social relationships and to enhance social relationships, schools integrate diversified approaches, which can be categorized into pedagogical approach, intervention program, integration of technology, and social-based learning approach.

One of the important approaches for developing strong social relationships in school is the integration of different pedagogical approaches in teaching and learning. One of the pedagogical approaches is integration of mother tongue in teaching and learning in school. This helps to develop the cultural identity among students and motivates them for community engagement. The study of Arubaiya'a (2023) suggested that integration of local language in teaching pedagogy helps to reduce the erosion of social relationships among students. It is important for teachers to respect trans-lingual resources brought from different students for building strong social ties among students (Choi, 2022). Nolan and Mac (2022) also have highlighted the need for pedagogic communication with linguistic strategy as a medium of social relationship development.

Similarly, teachers can implement an innovative pedagogical approach in teaching and learning. For example, the storification in teaching (learning through story) can reduce the antisocial behavior of students along with strengthening school and community (Aura et al., 2025). Another innovative idea is to integrate an innovative play world approach (learning through play) in teaching. Such a learning approach helps in the development of social skills among students (Bjerknes et al., 2023). In line with this, increasing frequency of exercise during school time apart from teaching improves the social relationship and enhances the well-being of the students (Cheon, 2021). Similarly, teacher can implement extracurricular art activities in their teaching. This enhances social support from peers through social engagement and friendship that strengthen the sense of community (Bone et al., 2023). Apart from those, implementation of multicultural pedagogy giving importance to all the cultures helps to develop the learning and social community (Noor et al., 2021).

To improve the social mandate in the school, teachers can implement an intervention program. For example, the study of Carbone and Assante del Leccese (2023) suggested that psychological clinical intervention in their teaching in school enhances the social mandate among students. Likewise, implementation of comprehensive school programs helps to enhance the social bonding in the school community (Storey et al., 2021).

The integration of technology is also crucial in enhancing social relationships in school. The use of social media can be useful for social relationship enhancement. It is important for school to develop media literacy through social media for better social connection (Gibson & Connolly, 2023). In the same line, community and school can work together to develop the web-based resource, which enhances the social relationship and well-being of the students (Kishida et al., 2022). Such online technology is better suited during the pandemic for enhancement of social relationships and well-being (Sandhu & Barn, 2023). Likewise, better tools of data collection like schoolweavers as technology, can be used to understand the collaboration in school (Díaz-Gibson et al., 2021). Technology can be used for providing training to develop social ties and enhance the well-being of students. The study of Hirshberg et al. (2022) found that smartphone-based training enhanced the social relationship and well-being in school. Use of mobile phone can positively influence the social bonding among peers (Žanić et al., 2023). Teachers can utilize technology such as digitalization of education for the betterment of students, and such technology helps them to focus on being facilitators of social ties with community (Stenbom & Geijer, 2024).

Social based learning is another important approach to strengthen the social relationship in school (Vinokur et al., 2023). The integration of a culturally responsive approach in teaching leads to enhanced social ties (Badwan et al., 2021). Similarly, the study of Barbalich and Ball (2023) suggested to incorporate community-embedded extracurricular programs for enhancing social bonding in the school. Community is involved in a co-production approach on teaching along with educators and students for enhancing the social bonding (Milton et al., 2025). It is important to

develop for creating warm learning community for better recognition of each student and develop good social relationships among them (Niemi & Vehkakoski, 2024). For social-based learning, it is crucial to create homegrown teachers as they have strong ties with children and contribute in the enhancement of social bonding (Schick et al., 2023). And it is necessary to teach integrating scientific content, connecting it to social issues which leads to strong social ties (da Silva et al., 2021).

4. Discussion

The result of this study suggest that social relationships are crucial, and school plays an important role to enhance social relationships with the implementation of different approaches like innovative pedagogy and technology. These findings are also supported by the social ecology framework (Fisseha et al., 2025). This framework suggests that surroundings like school environment are important for the well-being of learners. Likewise, support of the school, parents, and peers is important for the well-being of learners as stated in social support and social connection theory (Diab & Green, 2024). The role of social support is crucial for holistic development of learners.

This study shows the need for social relationships among school and community. School and community are important stakeholders to create good learning environment in school with their continuous communication as they are united by students (Ramírez-García et al., 2018). The absence of good relationship between community and school hinders the quality of teaching and learning activities in school (Simweleba & Serpell, 2020). Social relationships are crucial to enhance learning and well-being of students. For building good social relationships, there must be a supportive school ecology (Banwell & Kingham, 2023; Gallardo López & Muñoz-Villaraviz, 2021; Goździak & Popyk, 2024).

Multi-stakeholders play a role in the creation of good social relationships in school. It is important for community members and parents to actively involve and participate in school related issues.

Training benefits them to actively involved in school activities and play important role in creating environment for holistic development of learners (Alamolhoda, 2020). Teacher and parents can paly agent role to develop the healthy relationship in school and enhances the dynamism of the school (Fernández-Freire Álvarez et al., 2020).

School, parents, and community can integrate diversified approaches to enhance social. Parents can helps in adding the pedagogical value that contributes to the development of a school for all (Burriel, 2022). The use of technology like smartphones and online applications is crucial for the enhancement of social relationships in school (Antonucci et al., 2017). Integration of innovative pedagogy in teaching and learning enhances the social relationship. Innovative pedagogy can improve the teacher, parents and students' relationship and bonding (Flogie et al., 2019).

The holistic development of children requires good social ties, which is explained by theories like social connection and social support theory. For this, parents, teachers, school management and community consider and get engaged in creating strong social bonding. Such health relationship contributes in the holistic development of learners.

Limitations

This study has consolidated the issue of social relationships in school and its importance for holistic development of students. However, there are certain limitations of this study. First, the choice of keywords is limited for social relationships. It is recommended to increase the keywords for expansion of the scope of the research in the issue. Second, it is time-bound. The articles retrieved were from only 2020. Earlier studies could have added more dimensions to the issue of social relationships in school. Third, this study has only chosen social science and sociology as study areas. This might limit the scope of the study on the issue. Finally, this study has just synthesized the knowledge of previous studies to consolidate the ideas of those studies. Thus, this study did not critically analyze those studies.

5. Conclusion

The social relationship in school is crucial for holistic development of the students. This relationship is reflected in the quality of education that students receive, as well as in their academic progress and social and behavioral competencies. Community and parental involvement in the school is one of the factors that most influences the success of the school for students, favoring their adaptation to the school, and their behavior towards teachers and peers, and increasing their motivation to learn. However, school-community relationships are often discussed in technical or administrative terms, through mechanisms such as School Management Committees, parental involvement, or local government oversight. But, such approaches often miss the everyday realities of how community people interact within schools, how power is shared or contested, and how cultural meanings shape roles and expectations. Therefore, it is necessary to understand social relationships beyond technical or administrative terms. For this, it is necessary to understand the importance of social relationships in school and school fosters the environment for social relationships with engagement of parents and community. Along with engagement of stakeholders, school gets ready to integrate innovative pedagogy and technology in their teaching learning system that supports social relationships. This benefits holistic development of children and their learning.

The results of this systematic review are helpful for academicians, policy makers, educational institutions, individuals, parents, community, students and future researchers. With the help of these findings, policymakers can make transparent policies to strengthen social relationships between schools and communities. Educational institutions foster social relationships by implementing pedagogy and technology to enhance social relationships. Parents engage in school for developing social ties and help in the better learning of students. They act as knowledge transfer agents. Likewise, the community supports schools in fostering social relationships. Furthermore, future researchers can implement mixed methods research for in-depth understanding of the study of social relationships in school and its influence on holistic development of students. Likewise, they

can broaden the scope of the study by making research beyond social science and sociology as a subject area.

Ethical Approval

Since, this study does not use human participants, thus, it does not require ethical approval.

Declaration of conflicting interests

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Annex A

S.N	Area of focus	Theme	Authors
1	Importance of Social Engagement	Need for social relationship	(Fisseha et al., 2025)
2	Social relationship provides better education, reducing distress		(Aartun & Standal, 2024; Afifi et al., 2022)
3	For better physical education		Aartun and Standal (2024)
4	For better well-being		(Bavčević et al., 2024; Bayly & Vasilenko, 2021; García-Ceberino et al., 2023; Hassrick et al., 2021; Kishida et al., 2022; Luijten et al., 2021; Michelson et al., 2021; Mieziene et al., 2022; Schick et al., 2023)
5	For intrinsic motivation		(Diab and Green, 2024)
6	School as bumping space	Supportive school ecology as a medium of social relationship	Banwell and Kingham, 2023
7	The space of school like library and playground		Goździak and Popyk, 2024
8	School as a critical actor		(Gallardo López & Muñoz-Villaraviz, 2021).
9	School as developing system		(Kishida et al., 2022; Pekarčik et al., 2023)
10	Teacher play significant role	Role of stakeholders	(Kim, 2021; Michelson et al., 2021; Starrett et al., 2021; Stenbom and Geijer, 2024; Vinokur et al., 2023)

11	Role of Parents		(Bayly and Vasilenko, 2021; Kim, 2021; Kishida et al., 2022; O'Neal et al., 2023)
12	Peers support		(Kim, 2021; Luijten et al., 2021)
13	Pedagogical Approach	Way to develop the strong social relationship in school	(Arubaiya'a, 2023; Choi, 2022; Nolan and Mac, 2022)
14	Innovative pedagogical approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storification • Play world approach • Increasing exercise • extracurricular art activities • multicultural pedagogy 		(Aura et al., 2025; Bjercknes et al., 2023; Bone et al., 2023; Cheon, 2021; Noor et al., 2021)
15	Intervention Program		(Assante del Leccese, 2023; Storey et al., 2021)
16	Integration of technology		Díaz-Gibson et al., 2021; Gibson & Connolly, 2023; Hirshberg et al., 2022; Kishida et al., 2022; Sandhu & Barn, 2023; Stenbom & Geijer, 2024; Žanić et al., 2023
17	School based learning		Badwan et al., 2021; Barbalich and Ball, 2023; da Silva et al., 2021; Milton et al., 2025; Niemi & Vehkakoski, 2024; Schick et al., 2023; Vinokur et al., 2023