

Peer Safety Climate and Socioemotional Adjustment among Key Stage 1 Learners

Melowin A. Mendez^{1*} and Severino T. Morales Jr.^{1,2}

¹Northeastern College

*melowin.mendez091@deped.gov.ph, ²severinomoralesjr@northeasterncollege.edu.ph

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the relationship between peer safety climate and socioemotional adjustment among Key Stage 1 learners at Villa Flor Elementary School in Cauayan City. A cross-sectional multi-informant relational design was employed, using a child-friendly pictorial scale to measure peer safety climate and a teacher-rated checklist to assess socioemotional adjustment. Participants were selected through proportionate stratified random sampling across grade levels and class sections. Data were summarized using medians and interquartile ranges, while quantile regression with classroom-clustered bootstrap confidence intervals was applied to determine whether peer safety climate predicted adjustment at different levels of learner functioning. Results showed

moderate levels of peer safety climate and socioemotional adjustment, with overall medians of 2.65 and 2.68, respectively. Protection from intimidation and fair handling of disagreements received the lowest ratings, while response to peer conflict emerged as the weakest dimension of socioemotional adjustment. Peer safety climate significantly predicted socioemotional adjustment at the 25th, 50th, and 75th percentiles. The strongest association was observed among learners with lower adjustment, indicating that children experiencing greater socioemotional difficulties were more responsive to variations in peer safety. The findings underscored the importance of consistent protection from intimidation, structured conflict resolution, supportive peer routines, and classroom-based socioemotional learning. Strengthening these practices may improve emotional regulation, cooperative behavior, classroom participation, and constructive responses to peer conflict among young learners.

Keywords: *Classroom climate, Key Stage 1 learners, Peer safety climate, Quantile regression, School adjustment, Socioemotional adjustment*

INTRODUCTION

A child's experience of school is shaped not only by lessons, activities, and teacher guidance, but also by the way classmates treat one another each day. Feelings of safety can grow when learners are welcomed into games, spoken to respectfully, protected from ridicule, and encouraged to ask for help when disagreements arise. When these conditions are absent, school may become a place associated with fear, embarrassment, or social isolation. The worldwide scale of this concern is substantial. Data compiled across 144 countries and territories showed that nearly one in three students had experienced bullying by peers at school during the previous month. School violence and bullying were also associated with poorer health, well-being, participation, and educational outcomes, establishing peer safety as both a child protection issue and an educational concern (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2019).

The early years of formal schooling are especially important because children are still developing the emotional and social abilities needed to function within a classroom community. Key Stage 1 learners are learning

how to share space and materials, wait for their turn, express frustration, respond to correction, form friendships, and resolve ordinary disagreements. These experiences gradually influence how they view themselves and other people. Wang et al. (2016) found that the quality of classroom relationships experienced by children at six to seven years of age was associated with their emotional well-being, self-concept, and school liking in later years. Children with adaptive relationships involving both teachers and peers showed the strongest social and emotional outcomes, while those with less adaptive relationships experienced poorer adjustment. This evidence shows that peer experiences during the first years of school should not be treated as minor or temporary matters because they may contribute to later patterns of adjustment.

Peer safety climate may be understood as the quality of the social conditions learners experience in their interactions with classmates. It includes respectful treatment, freedom from intimidation, acceptance within the group, willingness to help, fair handling of conflict, and confidence that harmful behavior will be addressed. A safe peer climate does not mean that children never disagree. Conflict is a normal part of childhood, particularly when learners are still developing language, self-control, and perspective-taking. Safety becomes evident when disagreements are managed without repeated humiliation, deliberate exclusion, threats, physical aggression, or abuse of power. It is also strengthened when classmates understand that reporting harmful conduct is acceptable and when adults respond in ways that children can recognize as fair and protective. Research involving elementary learners has shown that children's perceptions of how teachers respond to peer victimization may influence both their understanding of classroom safety and their socioemotional well-being (Johnson et al., 2024).

The absence of peer safety may be expressed through physical aggression, insulting remarks, teasing, rejection, rumor spreading, exclusion from activities, and other behaviors that cause distress. Young learners may not always describe these experiences clearly. Some may become quiet, avoid classmates, refuse to attend school, or complain of physical discomfort. Others may respond through irritability, aggression, impulsivity, or difficulty following classroom expectations. The effects may therefore appear as either inward emotional difficulties or outward behavioral problems. Johnson et al. (2024) explained that peer victimization is associated with harm to children's emotional well-being and that learners' perceptions of adult responses are particularly meaningful for those who experience frequent victimization. A classroom may have written rules against bullying, but children's sense of safety is also shaped by what they see adults and peers do when an incident occurs.

Socioemotional adjustment refers to the ways children manage their feelings, relate to other people, cope with difficulties, and behave within the expectations of their social environment. Among Key Stage 1 learners, healthy adjustment may be observed through emotional regulation, cooperation, empathy, confidence, prosocial behavior, appropriate help-seeking, and constructive participation in classroom activities. Adjustment difficulties may appear through anxiety, withdrawal, persistent sadness, aggression, defiance, impulsiveness, or repeated conflict with others. These patterns are closely connected with the opportunities children receive to practice social and emotional abilities. Santamaria-Villar et al. (2021) explained that teaching socioemotional competencies in primary education can support cooperation, respect, emotional expression, self-regulation, assertive communication, and constructive conflict resolution. These abilities allow learners to respond to peer difficulties without immediately turning to aggression, avoidance, or emotional distress.

Evidence from school-based social and emotional learning programs also shows that these competencies can be strengthened through deliberate educational support. Taylor et al. (2017) examined 82 school-based interventions involving 97,406 learners from kindergarten through secondary school. Their meta-analysis found that the benefits of social and emotional learning continued beyond the completion of the programs and were reflected in positive youth development. Such findings suggest that socioemotional adjustment is not a fixed characteristic that children either possess or lack. It develops through repeated experiences, guided practice, supportive relationships, and opportunities to apply emotional and interpersonal skills in authentic situations. A safe peer environment may support this development by giving children room to communicate, make mistakes, repair relationships, and seek support without fear of ridicule or retaliation.

Positive peer relationships provide another pathway through which children may develop a sense of competence and well-being. Acceptance by classmates and the presence of friendships can reassure learners that

they have a valued place within the group. In a study of primary school children, Țepordei et al. (2023) found that the perceived number of friends was positively associated with life satisfaction, while peer acceptance was positively associated with academic achievement. Peer relationships were also connected with children's perceived academic competence, which helped explain differences in both well-being and achievement. Although the participants were older primary learners, the findings illustrate how relationships with classmates can shape children's views of themselves. When learners feel accepted, they may be more willing to speak, participate, cooperate, and persist. When they are repeatedly rejected or embarrassed, they may begin to doubt their social and academic abilities.

A sense of belonging further connects peer safety with adjustment. Belonging develops when children feel accepted, respected, included, and supported by people in the school community. Štremfel et al. (2024), through a systematic review of 86 studies involving learners from six to nineteen years old, found that school belonging was associated with academic, behavioral, psychological, and socioemotional outcomes. The review identified relationships with peers and teachers as important influences on whether learners feel that they belong in school. It also noted that research remains concentrated in certain geographical settings, leaving many cultural and educational environments less represented. For young learners, belonging may begin with simple but meaningful experiences such as having someone to sit with, being chosen for an activity, receiving help from a classmate, and knowing that others will listen when something feels wrong.

Camacho et al. (2025) followed 1,052 primary school children from Spain, Poland, and Norway and found that a supportive school climate predicted greater prosocial behavior and fewer internalizing and externalizing difficulties. School climate also supported resilience, which helped children manage stressful experiences and contributed to better adjustment over time. In a separate analysis, Castro et al. (2025) found that peer relationships were among the school climate dimensions most strongly associated with social and emotional skills, while bullying experiences had a negative relationship with these abilities. Together, these findings indicate that adjustment cannot be explained solely by individual temperament or family background. The relational conditions children encounter in school may either support or strain their developing ability to manage emotions and social demands.

Within Philippine basic education, learner well-being has gained stronger legal recognition through Republic Act No. 12080, otherwise known as the Basic Education Mental Health and Well-Being Promotion Act. The law requires the development of school-based mental health programs that include assessment, monitoring, mental health awareness, crisis response, referral systems, and emotional, developmental, and preventive services. It recognizes that schools have responsibilities that extend beyond responding to serious psychological concerns. Schools must also create conditions that support healthy development and address barriers affecting learners' ability to participate meaningfully in education. Examining peer safety is consistent with this mandate because children's daily relationships may either strengthen emotional well-being or contribute to distress that remains unnoticed until it affects behavior, attendance, or learning (Republic Act No. 12080, 2024).

Although international research has established connections among peer relationships, school climate, belonging, and child adjustment, evidence focused specifically on Key Stage 1 learners in Philippine public elementary schools remains limited. Findings drawn from older learners or from education systems outside the country may not fully reflect how younger Filipino children understand safety, friendship, exclusion, conflict, and emotional support. Learners in the early grades may also have difficulty explaining their experiences directly, making school-based observation and developmentally appropriate assessment necessary. A localized examination can help identify whether children experience their peer environment as respectful, inclusive, and protective, as well as whether these experiences are associated with their capacity to regulate emotions, cooperate with others, and adjust to classroom life.

This study examines the peer conditions experienced by young learners and their level of socioemotional adjustment at Villa Flor Elementary School in Cauayan City. It determines whether peer safety climate is significantly related to how learners manage emotions, form relationships, display prosocial behavior, and respond to the social demands of schooling. The findings may provide teachers and school leaders with evidence for

strengthening classroom routines, peer-support practices, conflict-management procedures, child protection measures, and socioemotional learning activities. By listening closely to the experiences of younger learners, the study may help the school build a classroom community where safety is felt through everyday interactions and where children are supported as they learn to live and work with others.

Literature Review

Peer Safety Climate and Classroom Norms

Peer safety climate is influenced by the behaviors that children observe, tolerate, and value within their classroom group. When aggression becomes common or appears to improve a learner's social standing, children may interpret harmful conduct as an accepted part of peer interaction. Laninga-Wijnen et al. (2021) examined 1,511 children from 58 elementary classrooms and found that aggressive peer norms were associated with less favorable perceptions of classroom cooperation, cohesion, conflict, and isolation. Classrooms with higher average levels of aggression were also marked by lower social self-esteem and weaker feelings of belonging among learners. The effects of aggressive norms were not limited to children who directly experienced victimization because the general peer atmosphere influenced how the entire class perceived safety and social connectedness. This finding suggests that peer safety should be examined as a shared classroom condition rather than as a collection of isolated incidents. For Key Stage 1 learners, repeated exposure to teasing, exclusion, intimidation, or aggressive play may gradually shape their understanding of which behaviors are acceptable and whether classmates can be trusted. Clear expectations for respectful interaction are therefore necessary to prevent harmful peer behaviors from becoming normalized within the classroom.

Peer Relationships and Early School Adjustment

The transition into formal schooling requires young children to adapt to classroom routines while building relationships with teachers and classmates. Peer relationships are especially important during this period because learners must cooperate, share resources, participate in group activities, and manage disagreements with children outside their families. Demirtaş-Zorbaz and Ergene (2019) studied 517 first-grade learners and found that peer relationships had a significant direct influence on school adjustment. Their model described adjustment through school liking, collaborative participation, self-directedness, and adaptive behavior, which closely reflect the social and emotional demands placed on children during the early grades. The study also showed that externalizing behaviors, including aggression, impulsivity, and rule-breaking, affected adjustment partly through their influence on peer relationships. Children who display difficult behavior may experience conflict or rejection, while strained peer relationships may further weaken their willingness to cooperate and participate. Positive peer interactions can provide young learners with encouragement, companionship, and opportunities to practice appropriate behavior. Examining peer safety climate among Key Stage 1 learners is therefore important because the quality of their relationships may influence how comfortably and successfully they adjust to school life.

Peer Rejection and Socioemotional Risk

Peer rejection is a serious concern during the early elementary years because it may be associated with different combinations of emotional, behavioral, social, and academic difficulties. Hall et al. (2022) examined 224 peer-rejected learners from Grades 1 to 4 and identified four distinct socioemotional profiles. Some children displayed aggression and other externalizing problems, while others showed internalizing difficulties, emotional dysregulation, weak social skills, withdrawal, or low prosocial behavior. Learners with multiple difficulties and those described as internalizing and dysregulated also experienced poorer relationships with teachers and greater academic challenges. These findings indicate that peer-rejected children do not form a single group with identical needs. One learner may react to rejection by becoming aggressive, another may withdraw quietly, and another may struggle to regulate emotions while appearing disruptive. This variation is particularly important when studying Key Stage 1 learners because emotional distress may be expressed through behavior rather than through clear verbal descriptions. Assessing socioemotional adjustment through several indicators can help reveal both

visible conduct problems and less noticeable emotional struggles associated with an unsafe or rejecting peer environment.

Classroom Climate and Psychological Well-Being

The quality of classroom life can influence children's emotional and behavioral functioning beyond individual friendships or conflicts. Wang et al. (2020) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of 61 studies involving 73,824 learners from kindergarten through secondary school. Their findings showed that a positive classroom climate was associated with stronger social competence, motivation, engagement, and academic achievement. It was also associated with lower levels of socioemotional distress and externalizing behavior. Among the dimensions examined, socioemotional support had the strongest negative association with emotional distress, showing the value of a classroom where learners feel cared for, respected, and able to seek assistance. This evidence supports the view that socioemotional adjustment develops through daily participation in a social environment rather than through individual traits alone. Among Key Stage 1 learners, classroom experiences provide repeated opportunities to manage emotions, cooperate with others, resolve disagreements, and respond to setbacks. A peer climate marked by acceptance and protection may strengthen these abilities, whereas a climate characterized by fear, exclusion, or hostility may interfere with their development. Peer safety climate can therefore be treated as an important condition associated with children's socioemotional adjustment.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional multi-informant relational design. This design allowed the researcher to examine the association between peer safety climate and socioemotional adjustment without introducing an intervention or altering the learners' usual classroom conditions. Information on peer safety climate was obtained directly from the learners through a developmentally appropriate pictorial scale, while socioemotional adjustment was assessed independently by their class advisers. The use of separate information sources reduced the possibility that the observed relationship resulted merely from a single person answering both measures. The two sets of responses were gathered within the same data collection period and were matched through anonymous identification codes. The design was considered suitable because the study aimed to determine whether differences in learners' perceptions of peer safety were associated with differences in their emotional regulation, social interaction, prosocial behavior, and adjustment to classroom demands.

Research Locale

The investigation was conducted at Villa Flor Elementary School, located in Villa Flor, Cauayan City, Isabela. The school served children from the surrounding community and provided elementary education under the public basic education system. The locale was selected because it offered direct access to Key Stage 1 classrooms in which learners regularly interacted through academic activities, play, group work, and routine classroom responsibilities. These daily interactions provided an appropriate setting for examining how children experienced acceptance, respect, protection, cooperation, and conflict among peers. Data collection took place inside designated school areas that were familiar, quiet, and suitable for young learners. The regular teaching schedule was considered so that the administration of the instruments caused minimal disruption to classroom instruction.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants consisted of learners who were officially enrolled in Key Stage 1 at Villa Flor Elementary School during the period covered by the study. Learners were included when they had attended school regularly enough for their class advisers to observe their classroom behavior, had received permission from a parent or legal guardian, and had personally agreed to participate through an age-appropriate assent process. Learners who

required additional communication support were provided with reasonable assistance without changing the meaning of the questions. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was applied. Each grade level and class section formed a sampling stratum, and the participants were selected randomly from the official class lists in proportion to the number of eligible learners in each group. This procedure ensured that no single grade level or class section was overrepresented while maintaining the independence of participant selection.

Research Instrument

The study used a two-source measurement package composed of the Peer Safety Climate Pictorial Scale and the Teacher-Rated Socioemotional Adjustment Checklist. The Peer Safety Climate Pictorial Scale measured respectful peer treatment, inclusion and acceptance, protection from intimidation, supportive peer behavior, and fair handling of disagreements. Each statement was written as a brief, child-friendly sentence and was accompanied by facial expressions and simple visual response choices. The researcher read the statements aloud using uniform instructions to reduce the possible influence of differences in reading ability. The Teacher-Rated Socioemotional Adjustment Checklist was completed by the class advisers and assessed emotional regulation, cooperative interaction, prosocial conduct, adaptive classroom participation, and responses to peer conflict.

The initial item pool underwent content validation by specialists in elementary education, guidance and counseling, child protection, educational research, and measurement and evaluation. The validators assessed the relevance, clarity, developmental appropriateness, cultural suitability, and alignment of each item with the intended construct. Items with an item-level content validity index below .78 were revised or removed. The Peer Safety Climate Pictorial Scale obtained a scale-level content validity index based on average agreement of S-CVI/Ave = .95, while the Teacher-Rated Socioemotional Adjustment Checklist obtained S-CVI/Ave = .96. These values indicated excellent agreement among the validators regarding the adequacy of the instrument content. Cognitive interviews were also conducted with Key Stage 1 learners from a school outside the research locale. The learners generally understood the instructions, illustrations, response choices, and item wording. Minor revisions were made to several statements that contained unfamiliar or lengthy expressions.

The revised instruments were pilot tested among Key Stage 1 learners and class advisers from a comparable public elementary school that was excluded from the main investigation. The same instructions, administration arrangements, and scoring procedures intended for the actual data collection were followed during the pilot test. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The Peer Safety Climate Pictorial Scale obtained a coefficient of $\alpha = .88$, indicating good internal consistency. The Teacher-Rated Socioemotional Adjustment Checklist obtained a coefficient of $\alpha = .91$, indicating excellent internal consistency. The dimension-level coefficients ranged from .76 to .86 for the peer safety scale and from .79 to .89 for the socioemotional adjustment checklist. No combined alpha coefficient was interpreted because the instruments measured two theoretically distinct variables and were completed by different sources. Items with weak corrected item-total correlations, unclear wording, or inconsistent responses during the pilot administration were reviewed and refined before the final instruments were administered.

Data Gathering

Permission to conduct the study was secured from the appropriate education authorities and the school administration before any participant was approached. The researcher coordinated with the school head and class advisers regarding the schedule, available rooms, and procedures for protecting instructional time. Information sheets and parental consent forms were distributed to the parents or legal guardians of eligible learners. The purpose of the study, the activities involved, the voluntary nature of participation, and the measures used to protect confidentiality were explained in clear language. Only learners with signed parental consent were invited to complete the assent procedure.

The Peer Safety Climate Pictorial Scale was administered individually or in very small groups to maintain attention and privacy. The researcher read each statement in the same manner and allowed the learners sufficient time to select the picture that represented their response. Teachers were not present close enough to hear

individual answers, which helped reduce pressure to provide socially acceptable responses. No learner was asked to name a classmate or describe a specific incident during the scale administration.

The class advisers completed the socioemotional adjustment checklist separately. They based their ratings on the learners' observable behavior across classroom activities, group tasks, play periods, transitions, and ordinary peer interactions. They were instructed to consider patterns observed over time rather than a single event. The teachers did not receive access to the learners' answers on the peer safety scale. After both instruments had been completed, the responses were linked using assigned codes rather than names. The accomplished forms were checked for completeness, encoded into a password-protected file, and verified against the original records before analysis.

Data Analysis

The responses were analyzed through a distribution-sensitive procedure rather than relying solely on conventional mean comparison and Pearson correlation. Frequencies, percentages, medians, and interquartile ranges were initially calculated to describe the learners' peer safety climate and socioemotional adjustment scores. Median-based summaries were selected because the instruments used ordered response categories and because young learners' ratings were not assumed to follow a normal distribution.

The primary relationship between the variables was examined through quantile regression. Peer safety climate served as the explanatory variable, while socioemotional adjustment served as the outcome variable. Regression estimates were calculated at the 25th, 50th, and 75th percentiles of socioemotional adjustment. This approach determined whether peer safety climate had a different association among learners with lower adjustment, typical adjustment, and higher adjustment. It provided more information than a single average regression coefficient because it showed where within the adjustment distribution the relationship was strongest.

Classroom-clustered bootstrap confidence intervals were used to account for the possibility that learners from the same classroom shared common experiences and were therefore not completely independent. The resampling procedure was performed at the classroom level so that the natural grouping of the data was preserved. The regression coefficients, 95 percent confidence intervals, probability values, and pseudo coefficient of determination were reported. A result was considered statistically significant when the probability value was below .05 and the confidence interval did not include zero. The direction and size of the coefficients were interpreted together so that statistical significance was not treated as the sole basis for drawing conclusions.

Ethical Consideration

The study followed ethical principles applicable to research involving children. Participation occurred only after written informed consent had been obtained from a parent or legal guardian and verbal or pictorial assent had been obtained from the learner. The children were told that participation was voluntary, that there were no right or wrong answers, and that they could stop at any point without punishment or loss of school privileges. Refusal to participate did not affect grades, classroom treatment, or access to school services.

The instruments avoided questions that required learners to identify alleged aggressors, disclose names, or publicly recount distressing experiences. Administration took place in a setting that protected privacy while maintaining appropriate adult supervision. The researcher observed the learners for signs of discomfort and discontinued the activity when a child appeared distressed or requested to stop. A referral procedure was coordinated with the school's child protection personnel and designated guidance support staff for situations in which a learner's response suggested an immediate safety or well-being concern.

Participant names were not entered into the research database. Identification codes were used to connect the learner and teacher instruments, and the code list was stored separately from the encoded responses. Teachers, classmates, and unauthorized individuals were not given access to individual answers. The findings were presented only in summarized form, and no statement was included that could identify a particular learner, class, or family. Electronic records were protected through password-controlled storage, while printed forms were kept in a secured location. All research materials were retained only for the period required by the approving institution and were disposed of through secure deletion and document shredding after that period.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. *Level of Peer Safety Climate among Key Stage 1 Learners*

Dimension	Median	Interquartile Range	Interpretation	Rank
Respectful Peer Treatment	2.88	0.63	Moderate	1
Supportive Peer Behavior	2.79	0.71	Moderate	2
Inclusion and Acceptance	2.67	0.76	Moderate	3
Fair Handling of Disagreements	2.49	0.81	Low	4
Protection from Intimidation	2.41	0.86	Low	5
Overall Peer Safety Climate	2.65	0.69	Moderate	

Scale interpretation: 1.00 to 1.75 = Very Low; 1.76 to 2.50 = Low; 2.51 to 3.25 = Moderate; 3.26 to 4.00 = High.

Table 1 shows that the overall peer safety climate was moderate, with a median of 2.65 and an interquartile range of 0.69. Respectful peer treatment obtained the highest median of 2.88, followed by supportive peer behavior with a median of 2.79. These findings indicated that many learners commonly experienced polite communication and occasional assistance from classmates. However, these positive practices were not strong or consistent enough to be classified as high.

Protection from intimidation obtained the lowest median of 2.41 and was interpreted as low. Fair handling of disagreements was also low, with a median of 2.49. These results suggested that some learners did not consistently feel protected from teasing, threats, forceful behavior, or repeated exclusion. Disagreements among classmates were also not always handled calmly or fairly. The relatively wide interquartile ranges for these dimensions showed that learners from the same school did not experience peer safety in the same way. While some children felt secure with classmates, others appeared to encounter less favorable peer conditions.

The findings reflected a classroom climate in which ordinary cooperation and respectful behavior were present, but weaknesses remained in situations involving conflict, intimidation, and social power. Laninga-Wijnen et al. (2021) explained that aggressive peer norms could affect how children viewed classroom cooperation, belonging, and social safety. When hurtful behavior was tolerated or treated as normal, learners could become uncertain about whether their classmates or teachers would protect them. The low result for protection from intimidation therefore represented an important concern rather than a minor weakness in classroom interaction.

Table 2. *Level of Socioemotional Adjustment among Key Stage 1 Learners*

Dimension	Median	Interquartile Range	Interpretation	Rank
Prosocial Conduct	2.94	0.58	Moderate	1
Cooperative Interaction	2.87	0.61	Moderate	2
Adaptive Classroom Participation	2.73	0.65	Moderate	3
Emotional Regulation	2.57	0.72	Moderate	4
Response to Peer Conflict	2.44	0.79	Low	5
Overall Socioemotional Adjustment	2.68	0.64	Moderate	

Scale interpretation: 1.00 to 1.75 = Very Low; 1.76 to 2.50 = Low; 2.51 to 3.25 = Moderate; 3.26 to 4.00 = High.

Table 2 presents an overall socioemotional adjustment median of 2.68, which was interpreted as moderate. Prosocial conduct had the highest median of 2.94, while cooperative interaction followed with a median of 2.87. Teachers generally observed that learners shared materials, offered help, participated with classmates, and showed concern for others. These behaviors indicated that the learners possessed developing social abilities that supported classroom participation.

Emotional regulation received a median of 2.57, placing it near the lower boundary of the moderate category. This result indicated that some learners experienced difficulty managing frustration, waiting for their turn, accepting correction, or calming themselves after upsetting situations. The lowest result was obtained by response to peer conflict, with a median of 2.44. This dimension was interpreted as low, showing that conflict often created difficulty for learners. Some children may have responded by crying, withdrawing, reporting every minor disagreement, acting aggressively, or refusing to continue an activity.

The low rating for-peer conflict response was consistent with the low results for protection from intimidation and fair handling of disagreements in Table 1. This pattern suggested that the difficulties were not confined to individual learners. The peer environment may have provided limited support for children who were still developing the ability to communicate feelings and resolve problems. Hall et al. (2022) noted that children experiencing peer rejection could display different combinations of emotional dysregulation, withdrawal, aggression, and weak social skills. The result therefore supported the need to recognize both visible behavioral reactions and less noticeable emotional difficulties.

Table 3. *Distribution of Learners According to Peer Safety Climate and Socioemotional Adjustment Levels*

Level	Peer Safety Climate	Socioemotional Adjustment
High	14.00%	17.00%
Moderate	48.00%	53.00%
Low	30.00%	25.00%
Very Low	8.00%	5.00%
Total	100.00%	100.00%

Table 3 shows that almost half of the learners were classified under the moderate level of peer safety climate, while 38.00 percent fell under the low or very low categories. Only 14.00 percent experienced a high level of peer safety. This distribution indicated that a considerable group of children did not consistently experience acceptance, protection, and fairness in their interactions with classmates.

For socioemotional adjustment, 53.00 percent were classified at the moderate level, while 30.00 percent were within the low or very low categories. The remaining 17.00 percent demonstrated high adjustment. The presence of learners in the lower categories showed that a meaningful portion of the group experienced difficulties in regulating emotions, managing peer conflict, cooperating consistently, or adapting to classroom expectations.

The distributions showed that the overall moderate medians did not represent all children equally. A general school average could hide the experiences of learners who felt unsafe or showed adjustment difficulties. Wang et al. (2020) emphasized that classroom climate was associated with social competence, emotional distress, behavior, and engagement. The present distribution similarly indicated that peer conditions and adjustment should be examined beyond overall scores because learners at the lower end may require more focused support.

Table 4. *Quantile Regression Analysis of Peer Safety Climate and Socioemotional Adjustment*

Socioemotional Adjustment Quantile	Regression Coefficient	Clustered Bootstrap Standard Error	95% Bootstrap Confidence Interval	p-value	Pseudo R ²	Decision
25th Percentile	0.42	0.10	0.22 to 0.61	.002	.18	Significant
50th Percentile	0.34	0.09	0.16 to 0.51	.004	.14	Significant
75th Percentile	0.19	0.08	0.03 to 0.35	.028	.08	Significant

Note: Confidence intervals were generated using classroom-clustered bootstrap resampling. The relationship was considered statistically significant when $p < .05$ and the confidence interval did not include zero.

Table 4 shows that peer safety climate significantly predicted socioemotional adjustment at the 25th, 50th, and 75th percentiles. All regression coefficients were positive, indicating that higher peer safety climate scores were associated with better socioemotional adjustment.

The strongest association was observed at the 25th percentile. The coefficient of 0.42 indicated that a one-unit increase in peer safety climate was associated with a 0.42-unit increase in socioemotional adjustment among learners in the lower adjustment group. The confidence interval ranged from 0.22 to 0.61 and did not include zero. The probability value of .002 showed that the relationship was statistically significant. The pseudo coefficient of determination of .18 indicated that peer safety climate accounted for a meaningful portion of the differences among learners with lower socioemotional adjustment.

At the median, the coefficient remained positive and significant at 0.34, with a probability value of .004. This result showed that peer safety was also important among learners with typical levels of adjustment. At the 75th percentile, the coefficient decreased to 0.19 but remained statistically significant. The smaller coefficient at the upper quantile indicated that peer safety had a weaker association among learners who already displayed stronger socioemotional functioning.

The difference across the quantiles revealed that peer safety climate did not affect all learners with the same strength. Its association was greatest among children who were already experiencing difficulties in emotional regulation, classroom participation, and peer interaction. This result was more informative than a single average correlation because it identified the group that appeared to benefit most from a safer peer environment.

CONCLUSION

The peer safety climate among Key Stage 1 learners was generally moderate, while protection from intimidation and the fair handling of disagreements remained areas of concern. Socioemotional adjustment was also moderate, although difficulties were evident in emotional regulation and responses to peer conflict. The quantile regression analysis showed that peer safety climate significantly predicted socioemotional adjustment across different levels of learner functioning, with the strongest effect observed among learners with lower adjustment. These findings indicated that children who experienced greater respect, inclusion, support, and protection from harmful peer behavior were more likely to regulate their emotions, cooperate with classmates, participate appropriately in classroom activities, and manage conflict constructively. It is therefore recommended that Villa Flor Elementary School strengthen classroom-based peer safety measures through clear behavioral expectations, consistent responses to teasing and intimidation, guided conflict-resolution activities, cooperative learning tasks, peer buddy systems, and regular socioemotional learning sessions. Teachers should closely monitor both visible and less noticeable signs of adjustment difficulty, coordinate with parents and child protection personnel when concerns arise, and provide targeted support to learners who frequently withdraw, become distressed, or react aggressively during peer interactions. School leaders should also conduct periodic assessments of classroom peer climate and include child-friendly safety and emotional well-being activities in the school improvement and child protection programs.

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