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Analytical Review on Socio-Psychological Analysis of the Fast Track Policy in Primary Education

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ABSTRACT

Providing educational centres responsive to children's potential and individual needs is critical in developing their overall growth and improving their academic success. Accelerated education provides space and ease for intellectually gifted children to enhance their educational achievement. The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of acceleration policies has various impacts on students' social and psychological development, particularly their emotional well-being. Positive effects are the improvement in self-concept, self-esteem, attitude towards academics, motivation, self-confidence, and career plans. Additionally, acceleration policies can have academic gains and improve the social and emotional adjustment of students. On the other hand, findings on the effects of acceleration programmes indicate that they will have no noticeable impact on social development or even be neutral, particularly in the area of students' ability to make friends. Contrarily, evidence points to the flaws in accelerated policy execution lying within student's problems of interaction with their age mates via the lack of enough time to socialise. This is because they are weighed down by academic loads. The chances of accelerated students losing opportunities for developing their leadership skills through believing they belong among their age group classmates are high.

Keywords: Elementary education, fast-track, psychology, social

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INTRODUCTION

Providing educational infrastructure that is appropriate for the potential and needs of children is necessary for their growth and success in school. By the understanding and accommodation of the unique gifts, interests, and learning styles of each child, education can offer an environment that supports their strengths and helps them

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improve their weaknesses (Howitt, 2019; Mishra, 2013). Education should therefore provide infrastructure that allows children to be instructed based on their capabilities. This would translate to children being given personalised learning, one-on-one care, and avenues for discovery and achievement in fields where they are talented or interested.

Education also needs to include inclusivity and diversity by providing for the diverse needs of disabled, culturally diverse, or diversely capable students. By providing a range of educational resources, adaptive technology, and special programmes, school buildings can ensure all children are given an equal chance to high-quality education (Delahunty & Kimbell, 2021). Additionally, adequate classrooms, appropriate learning materials, and facilities to enable physical education and experiential learning are important to provide the optimal learning environment. In conclusion, giving a priority to providing education facilities that are built to be responsive to children's potential and needs is central to facilitating their development, to inclusivity, and to ensuring that all children are capable of achieving their full potential (Santika et al., 2021).

Quality education ought to promote the application of individuality in each child and promote the application of student-centred learning where their weaknesses and strengths are valued and respected (Khalafov, 2021; Tulasi & Rao, 2021). This way, children are supposed to academically, socially, and emotionally thrive since their learning experience is tailored to their specific needs and abilities. Additionally, there is also a need to provide inclusive and accessible educational infrastructure so that the special needs of children can fully reap the benefits of the learning process (Irvan & Jauhari, 2018). Intellectually gifted children, possessing above-average intellectual intelligence, are one such group of special needs children.

Students who have greater than average intellectual ability require special attention regarding education. Offering educational institutions with infrastructures that cater to their potential or special needs is crucial to ensure their maximum development and academic success. These students have special abilities and require customised education programmes to challenge and improve their intellectual potential (Demchenko et al., 2021; Suherman, 2014). By offering a differentiated and enriched curriculum, special schools or programmes for gifted students can provide them with intellectual stimulation and academic challenges at an appropriate level. This personalised approach not only enables children to achieve their full potential but also enables them to develop a sense of belongingness and positive self-image

Among the services offered under formal education is the acceleration of talented children through the provision of accelerated or fast-track class programmes in schools. These are especially for students who have high intellectual intelligence (IQ) or high talent. The goal is to provide an accelerated curriculum and learning experience to high-ability students in

grade school (S. Chandrasekhar & Laily Noor Ikhsanto, 2020). The acceleration programme is tailored to meet the educational requirements of possibly gifted and/or exceptional talent students so that they may complete normal programmes in a shorter time than their non-participating peers. This would mean completing elementary school in 5 years and junior high or senior high school in 2 years. In practice, all uses of acceleration programmes are accompanied by enrichment programmes that provide additional learning time to further extend and deepen their knowledge (Directorate of Special Schools Development, 2011). Education acceleration programmes attempt to condense the learning chances of students with gifted abilities.

Such students are empowered through the programmes to progress faster, acquire knowledge over and above their current curriculum, and receive assistance tailored to their needs and interests. Not only do such programmes offer academic benefits by enabling high-ability students to outperform their peers, but they also have a positive impact on their social and emotional development (Duan et al., 2010). Through interactions with intellectual peers and challenging tasks, fast-track programmes enable students to feel a sense of belonging and provide a supportive learning environment for gifted students. Fast-tracking in education can be a beneficial option for high-ability students. It helps them learn faster, stretches them academically, and prevents boredom or complacency in class.

By offering advanced classes or accelerated programmes, instructors are able to meet the demands of gifted students and offer the perfect learning environment that supports their intellectual development. Additionally, fast-tracking education helps students gain valuable skills such as time management, resilience, and critical thinking. Accelerated educational programmes give talented students the opportunity to delve further into their subject of interest and accelerate their studies (Duan et al., 2010; Steenbergen-Hu & Moon, 2011).

Children who are placed on the fast track are typically those with a high IQ or strong intellectual abilities. Accelerated programmes focus primarily on cognitive and academic skills, placing less emphasis on social and psychological development. Therefore, it is important to thoroughly examine how the fast-track approach impacts the psychological and social development of children, particularly at the elementary school level. This article aims to delve deeper into four main aspects: (1) the concept of fast track or acceleration; (2) the legal and policy foundations of fast track in basic education; (3) the implementation of fast track in basic education; and (4) the social and psychological development of students in fast-track programmes at the basic education level.

The urgency of conducting research on the socio-psychological analysis of fast-track policies in basic education through the SLR approach is very high because this policy has a broad impact on

students' psychological development, social equality, and the effectiveness and fairness of the education system. With a systematic approach, the results of this research can be an important reference in formulating policies that are more targeted and based on strong scientific evidence

This study makes a distinctive contribution to the existing body of literature in several important ways. First, it is among the first to systematically examine the socio-psychological impacts of fast-track policies specifically at the primary education level within the Indonesian regulatory context, using a structured Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach encompassing articles published from 2014 to 2024. Second, unlike previous reviews that tend to focus exclusively on academic outcomes or general well-being, this study integrates legal-policy analysis with socio-psychological impact assessment—a dimension that has been underrepresented in prior scholarship. Third, by synthesising 30 carefully selected articles under a three-dimensional analytical framework (positive, neutral, and negative socio-psychological impacts), this review offers a more nuanced and structured picture of the consequences of fast-track education than what is currently available in the literature. These features collectively strengthen the originality and practical relevance of the present study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The presence of education institutions that are responsive to potential and needs of students offers a core basis for pursuing quality and equitable education. Research shows that learning environments that are responsive to children's learning style, interest, and ability can best assist learners' academic growth and emotional growth as well (Howitt, 2019; Mishra, 2013). To this effect, education needs to facilitate individualised approaches that adopt the diversities of the learners, i.e., special children and gifted learners. Such education for diversity and inclusivity not only brings out the greatest possible academic achievements but also promotes students' confidence to feel closer to and be a part of the learning fraternity (Delahunty & Kimbell, 2021).

One type of student to be treated differently is higher-than-average intellectual capacity for students. Such students need instruction services that stimulate and engage their intellectual potential to the fullest (Demchenko et al., 2021). Acceleration programmes have been documented through research to be an effective way of meeting the educational needs of gifted children (Steenbergen-Hu & Moon, 2011). These programmes grant students the power to attain education levels in a shorter time frame and to learn learning content at a higher level that is conducive to their capacity. Besides facilitating scholastic growth, acceleration programmes also nurture important skills such as time management, intellectual judgment, and autonomy in learning (Colangelo et al., 2004; Duan et al., 2010).

However, there are certain studies that highlight that the use of acceleration

programmes primarily focuses on cognitive development and not much on students' social and emotional development (Worrell et al., 2019). Gifted students who are taking acceleration programmes often struggle with social adjustment, especially if they are not in an environment where they have the opportunity to interact with peers at the same developmental level. Therefore, academic acceleration plans need to be balanced with plans fostering students' psychological well-being and social competence as well (Kulik & Kulik, 2004).

In Indonesian policy on education, acceleration programmes have been regulated as a form of extraordinary educational service for students with high ability, according to Ministerial Regulation No. 70 of 2009 and the Directorate for Special Education guidelines (Directorate of Special Schools Development, 2011). Nevertheless, implementation of such programmes is most often confronted with hindrances, including difficulties in establishing student selection criteria, teacher preparedness, and providing appropriate curricula. Thus, a systematic review of acceleration policy socio-psychological impacts is called for to promote more holistic and equitable implementation

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this article is a literature study, which is secondary research to find, assess, and interpret all evidence relevant to a given research question based on the research objectives to be achieved. The procedures in this study include data collection, data analysis, and conclusion drawing (Kosztyán et al., 2021). The literature search was conducted across four major academic databases: Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, Springer, and Taylor & Francis. The keywords used in data collection were acceleration or fast-track, the legal basis of acceleration, implementation of acceleration in education, social development, psychological development, and basic education. All data collected are primary data published in the form of national and international journals registered and indexed in Scopus, Springer, Taylor & Francis, with a publication limit of the last 10 years, namely 2014-2024. After the data was collected, the next step was to sort the collected articles based on the inclusion criteria that would be used in this literature study. The analytical framework applied to synthesise findings across the selected articles was a thematic-categorical approach, in which the socio-psychological impacts of fast-track policies were organised into three dimensions: (1) positive impacts, (2) neutral effects, and (3) negative consequences. This framework enabled a structured and comparative analysis of findings across diverse study contexts and methodologies.

The inclusion criteria used in this study are (1) studies that evaluate acceleration policies, (2) studies that analyse basic acceleration policies from 2014 to 2024, and (3) studies that focus on primary and junior secondary school education levels. Articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria were eliminated from the analysis process. The

authors collected articles sourced from Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, Springer, Taylor & Francis, which were then subjected to an article selection process. The article selection process was carried out in stages: identification, screening, and inclusion.

At the identification stage, 477 articles on accelerated education were found. Then, after screening, 97 articles were found that discussed acceleration in the field of basic education. Of the 97 articles, 30 were suitable for analysing the socio-psychological impact of acceleration policies in primary education

RESULTS

The phase of result presentation and elaboration is structured in line with the research objectives that the author aims to achieve. These objectives are: (1) examining the concept of fast track (acceleration); (2) examining the juridical and policy basis of fast track (acceleration) in basic education; (3) examining the policy of fast track (acceleration) implementation in basic education; and (4) evaluating the social and psychological development of students in fast track (acceleration) programmes at the basic education level. The data for the study were gathered based on the process of selecting articles used in phases: identification, screening, and inclusion. During the identification phase, 477 articles of accelerated education policy were identified through Google Scholar with a search engine to apply, publish, or perish.

The search terms used were accelerated education, accelerated education policy, basic education, socio-psychological effect, and educational psychology. The second step is screening of articles by reading each article by title, abstract, and keywords to determine if the article is related to the research subject, i.e., fast-track or acceleration policies in basic education, socio-psychological effect studies, and those studies from the last 10 years. In this screening process, 97 articles were gathered from 477 articles that were suitable for the research subject. In the last phase (including), 30 articles were found to be suitable for analysis of the socio-psychological impact on students of acceleration policy in primary school.

The articles were filtered for completeness of text in a bid to meet relevance and quality. All studies were searched for methodological quality, theory base, and contribution to knowledge on the socio-psychological impact of fast-track policies. Articles that gave empirical data, theoretical insights, or broad review articles were included in the final literature review.

The Concept of Fast Track (Accelerated) Education

The term "fast track" or "acceleration" is employed with different meanings. According to content analysis of articles gathered by researchers, acceleration is a policy that enables students to progress with the curriculum in less time and complete their education earlier (Steenbergen-Hu & Moon, 2011). Acceleration also refers to a study practice under which gifted students are permitted to progress faster

(McClarty, 2015; Plucker & Callahan, 2014; Tuhurima, 2016). The objective of the policy of acceleration is to provide high-level treatment in terms of accelerated learning for highly gifted students so that they can finish their course of studies in a shorter period than their other fellows under the mainstream programme. Hence, the acceleration programme or policy is an approach to meet the academic needs of highly able and talented students (Andayani, 2010; Buddeberg & Hornberg, 2017; Dare & Nowicki, 2019). Accelerated students may choose to skip one grade or move through a subject or topic at a faster rate than other students (Southern & Jones, 2004).

The concept of fast-track education is a pedagogical strategy used to cater to students with higher mental ability by enabling them to complete the curriculum within a shorter period than the normal track. Acceleration programmes take numerous forms, such as grade skipping, subject acceleration, dual enrollment, and early entrance, and are all designed to allow gifted students to learn at a faster rate with more sophisticated content (Assouline et al., 2015; Southern & Jones, 2004). Steenbergen-Hu and Moon (2011) believe that acceleration is one of the most scientifically supported and effective interventions utilised to increase the academic accomplishments of talented students, without causing negative effects in their social and emotional lives. Acceleration is not only a matter of instructional effectiveness; it is also a manifestation of equitable instructional differentiation, in which students are offered access to learning experiences aligned with their cognitive readiness (Dare & Nowicki, 2019; Plucker & Callahan, 2014).

Research by McClarty (2015) and Buddeberg and Hornberg (2017) indicate that acceleration can alleviate underachievement and disengagement in learning, which is commonly experienced by high-ability students in regular classroom settings. Additionally, acceleration fosters self-confidence and achievement orientation among students because they feel challenged and are able to explore their topics of interest at a deeper level. However, the achievement of acceleration programmes largely depends on the educational system's readiness, e.g., far-reaching mechanisms of gifted learner identification, teacher and parental support, and curriculum flexibility (Gross et al., 2003; Worrell et al., 2019). Acceleration has been integrated into education policy at the national level in most countries as a form of special educational service, for example, in Indonesia by Ministerial Regulation No. 70 of 2009, although its implementation remains not homogeneous (Tuhurima, 2016).

Thus, the concept of fast-track education is an adaptive, potential-centred, and evidence-based approach to instruction and learning. Its application is not necessarily about accelerating educational progress, but more about ensuring that students' preparedness to learn is matched with complexity in instruction. Thus, acceleration programmes need careful governance and overall systemic support to adequately foster the academic potential of gifted students

without truncating their social and affective development.

The Juridical Basis of Fast Track (Acceleration) Policy in Primary Education

The legal foundation for the implementation of the fast-track (acceleration) policy in the primary education sector in Indonesia is rooted in a number of regulations that emphasise the necessity to fulfill each child's right to develop optimally according to their potential and needs. Article 28H, verse (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia states that everyone has the right to receive special facilities and treatment to obtain equal opportunity and benefit to achieve equality and justice. This article is the constitutional basis for the implementation of inclusive and adaptive education responsive to the needs of students with intellectual potential and/or exceptional talent.

The legal basis for implementing the fast-track programme in Indonesia is UUD 1945 Article 28H (2), UU No. 23/2002 on Child Protection Article 52, UU No. 20/2003 on the National Education System Articles 3 and 5, Permendiknas No. 34/2006 on the Development of Learners with Special Intelligence Potential and/or Talent, Permendiknas No.70/2009 on Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities and Potential for Special Intelligence and/or Talent Article 5, and PP No. 66/2010 on the Amendment to Government Regulation No. 17/2010 on Education Management and Implementation Article 53. These regulations emphasise the importance of providing children with special needs the opportunity to develop their talents and abilities (Fachrudin, 2019).

Implementation of Fast Track (Acceleration) Policy in Primary Education

The school has a specific process through which they implement the acceleration policy. They, first and foremost, get approval from the department of education and culture. That approval is their legal basis on which they implement the acceleration programme (Tuhurima, 2016). There are some factors that need to be taken into consideration when having accelerated policies or programmes. They involve hiring students with high IQ, above 130, designing specially customised curriculum to be imparted to accelerated classes, providing necessary infrastructure and facilities, and appointing appropriately qualified and seasoned instructors (Zarkasyi, 2016). Policy acceleration implementation might be greater than one manner, such as missing grades or advancing into classes earlier than expected (McClarty, 2015). One of the mechanisms through which academic acceleration is done is curriculum compaction, with subject and value-based options (Dare & Nowicki, 2019). The effectiveness of the accelerated options is dependent on the cognitive ability and learning potential of the students. Accelerated programmes are implemented on a fixed education calendar. The policy of acceleration is enforced at the primary school level in grade four. Throughout this roll-out, content covered at grades 4, 5, and

6 is completed in two years (Cindy Alfianita & Gunansyah, 2018). Content selection is done considering the difficulty level and weightage given to it. Collaborative learning methodologies are also applied. Teachers' responsibilities in this regard are crucial because they need to be fully cognizant of the students' traits, particularly their mental acuity.

The implementation of acceleration (fast-track) policies at the primary school level must be planned in a systematic manner and implemented on a regulation-based system. The formal process begins with the application for approval from the local education authority, which legally has the right to approve the implementation of acceleration programmes in schools (Tuhurima, 2016). The success of these programmes is determined by a series of key factors, including the selection of the gifted students with an IQ of 130 or higher, the establishment of an adapted and specialised curriculum, the availability of supporting facilities, and the professional competence of the teaching staff entrusted with their educational process (Zarkasyi, 2016). Acceleration may be attained by various means, such as grade skipping, early entry, or curriculum compaction—a method of compacting learning material on the basis of competence acquisition and students' needs (Dare & Nowicki, 2019; Southern & Jones, 2004). Curriculum compaction allows learners to bypass what they have already learned, hence streamlining the learning process to become more meaningful and efficient.

A study by McClarty (2015) indicates that acceleration not only requires mental readiness but also places a demand on students to have adaptive and flexible learning skills to cope with a fast-paced instructional pace. Acceleration policies in primary education are typically applied at grade four, where students progress through the learning of grades four, five, and six within two years. Selection of learning materials applied in this curriculum is dependent on the relative importance and complexity of each competency standard (Cindy Alfianita & Gunansyah, 2018). Collaborative learning strategies to further academically and to facilitate students' social-emotional life are also employed. Roles in implementation are significantly driven by the teacher, particularly in selecting students' intellectual traits, managing classroom dynamics, and developing responsive learning interventions (Assouline et al., 2015).

Though acceleration policies hold enormous promise for optimising the academic achievement of gifted students, their implementation requires serious institutional and pedagogical preparedness. Without explicit selection procedures, effective teacher training, and sound assessment policies, acceleration can lead to new inequities in the elementary school system (Colangelo et al., 2004; Worrell et al., 2019). Therefore, application of acceleration policies must be selectively and data-driven in order to not only enable educational advancement but also ensure students' social and psychological development.

Socio-Psychological Impact of Fast-track (acceleration) Policies for Students in Primary Education

Positive Socio-Psychological Impacts

Based on the analysis of the articles collected by the researchers, the fast track or acceleration programme policy has a positive impact on the self-esteem and motivation of students. Gifted students usually feel a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction with being appropriately challenged in their studies (Hemelt & Lenard, 2020). Yet, this feeling of achievement is often matched with enhanced stress and anxiety because of heightening academic pressures (Reis & Renzulli, 2019). The research implies that though acceleration will be able to enhance self-confidence, it is also likely to exert excessive pressure upon pupils, necessitating sufficient support systems in order to alleviate stress. These findings are consistent with self-concept theory, which posits that a student's perception of their own capabilities fundamentally shapes their academic motivation and emotional regulation (Ranny et al., 2017; Syahraeni, 2020).

The results showed that there were no considerable negative effects of the policy of the acceleration programme and even had beneficial results for gifted students (Siegle et al., 2013). The findings of the study demonstrated that students who were involved in the acceleration programme did not experience negative effects on social and psychological existence, especially of students' emotions. Another result of the study found that the students were as or even higher in social acceptance and extracurricular activities than non-accelerated students. The results of the study are evidenced by studies (Plucker & Callahan, 2014) which support the findings that the acceleration programme policy is positively effective on students. The study uncovered that acceleration has the potential to benefit students educationally and boost social and emotional well-being. The emotional maturity of the students dictates the students' social adjustment (Susilowati, 2013).

Based on the findings, the implementation of acceleration policies for gifted students is confirmed to have positive effects on socio-emotional growth of children, including self-concept, self-esteem, study attitude, motivation, self-confidence, and career aspiration (Kim, 2016). The positive effect is referring to learners' self-concept of their own capabilities, values, and self-identity. The mentioned above self-concept is a perception of himself which will further determine his behavior (Ranny et al., 2017; Syahraeni, 2020). Having this self-concept will affect students in thinking, feeling, perceiving, and acting. Knowing the self-concept of the students, then these students may or most likely will have some sense of self-esteem or value. If this sense of self-worth is enhanced and already owned by students, students will have an academic attitude, be motivated to always excel, and be more confident in themselves and their environment, which eventually affects students' careers in the future. These positive outcomes are well-grounded in social-

emotional learning (SEL) frameworks, which emphasise the role of self-awareness and emotional competence in academic achievement and life success (Steenbergen-Hu & Moon, 2011; Worrell et al., 2019).

Neutral Effects on Social Development

Research findings by Wai (2015) suggest that the policy of acceleration programmes does not impact social development much or is indifferent. This suggests that it has neither a positive nor a negative impact on the social development of students, specifically on the ability to form friendships. The same conclusions are obtained from studies by Rogers (2015) that state acceleration policy provides low to moderate social-emotional benefits to students. This means that the acceleration policy has not had a high positive impact on the social-emotional development of students. From a theoretical standpoint, this neutral pattern may be explained by the fact that acceleration programmes are primarily designed to address cognitive and academic needs, with insufficient attention to the social-emotional dimensions of gifted learners' development (Worrell et al., 2019). When the educational environment does not provide structured opportunities for peer social interaction, the socio-emotional effects of acceleration tend to be limited or negligible.

Negative Socio-Psychological Impacts

Contrary to the positive findings described above, Nafsiyah (2021) reported several negative impacts associated with the implementation of acceleration policies in schools. The adverse consequence is that the students cannot cope with their peers or have problems in social integration due to less activity time with peers and due to age gaps with their peers. Students feel isolated and find it difficult to make friends. This is because students are required to do well academically, leaving little time for social interaction and the natural development of peer relationships. Furthermore, according to the findings of the study, it was discovered that students missed out on leadership skill development because accelerated students had a tendency of feeling rejected by their older counterparts. These negative outcomes can be interpreted through the lens of social adjustment theory: when accelerated students are placed with older peers but have not yet reached the same level of social maturity, the resulting mismatch in social dynamics can create barriers to belonging and hinder the development of interpersonal competencies (Andayani, 2010; Kulik & Kulik, 2004). This underscores the critical importance of ensuring that academic acceleration is accompanied by robust social-emotional support structures, including counseling services, peer mentoring programmes, and inclusive extracurricular activities that bridge age-related social gaps.

DISCUSSION

Acceleration is a policy aimed at providing outstanding treatment in the guise of accelerated learning to students possessing outstanding abilities, such that such students can complete their education before the normal (regular programme). Based on the

analysis of the article, it can be argued that the application of the acceleration policy has positive, neutral, and negative impacts on social and psychological development, especially on students' emotions. Socio-emotional factors affecting children, like self-concept, self-esteem, learning attitude, motivation, confidence, and vocational desires, all have positive impacts. Academic benefits as well as social and emotional adaptation are also impacted by acceleration policies that can leave students. However, results show that there is no effect on social growth using acceleration programmes or that they have the same effect as having no effect. This implies that it neither contributes nor inhibits students' social development, specifically the formation of friendships. Alternatively, there are findings to the effect that the adverse effect of the adoption of the acceleration policy is that the students do not easily mix with their agemates due to the lower amount of activity time with peers and the age difference. This is because students should perform well in academics. Moreover, students are deprived of the opportunity to become leaders since fast children are ostracised by their peers who are older than them.

The findings of this study carry several specific and actionable implications for key stakeholders involved in the implementation of fast-track programmes at the primary education level. For policymakers, it is recommended that acceleration programme regulations be revised to include mandatory provisions for socio-emotional support services alongside academic acceleration, ensuring that the holistic development of gifted students is embedded within the legal and institutional framework of fast-track education. For school administrators, this study recommends implementing regular monitoring mechanisms to assess the social and emotional well-being of accelerated students, including ensuring structured opportunities for peer interaction, extracurricular participation, and integration with age-appropriate social activities so that accelerated students do not become socially isolated. For teachers, the findings highlight the need for targeted professional development training that equips educators to identify early signs of social isolation, emotional stress, or peer rejection among gifted students, and to apply differentiated socio-emotional interventions in response. Future research should consider longitudinal studies to track the long-term socio-psychological outcomes of acceleration programme participants, as well as comparative studies across different national and cultural contexts to better understand the contextual factors that moderate the effects of fast-track policies on students' social and emotional development.

CONCLUSION

This systematic review demonstrates that fast-track (acceleration) policies in primary education exert a complex, multidimensional influence on students' social and psychological development. Synthesising the selected studies revealed three broad patterns of impact. Positively, acceleration can strengthen gifted students'

self-concept, self-esteem, learning attitude, motivation, self-confidence, and career aspirations, while providing the academic challenge needed to reduce boredom and underachievement. In several contexts, the effect on social development is neutral, neither advancing nor hindering students' ability to form friendships, largely because acceleration programmes are designed around cognitive rather than social-emotional needs. Negatively, inadequately supported acceleration may leave students socially isolated, reduce the time available for peer interaction, and limit the development of leadership and interpersonal skills because of age gaps with older classmates. Taken together, the evidence indicates that the academic benefits of acceleration can be sustained only when they are accompanied by deliberate socio-emotional support. Fast-track policy at the basic education level should therefore be implemented selectively, holistically, and on the basis of sound evidence, pairing accelerated learning with counselling, peer mentoring, and inclusive social opportunities so that gifted students can develop as whole individuals.

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