

Mechanism-Based Model of Teacher Competence: Explaining How Instructional Practices and Contextual Support Shape the Socio-Emotional Development of Students with Dyslexia

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ABSTRACT:

Dyslexia is increasingly recognised as a learning difficulty that also carries important socio-emotional implications. However, research on teacher competence remains fragmented and mainly descriptive, with limited explanation of how teacher competence shapes students' socio-emotional development. To address this gap, this study conducted a systematic literature review of empirical studies published between 2022 and 2025 on teacher competence in supporting the socio-emotional development of students with dyslexia. Following PRISMA 2020 guidelines, 21 studies were systematically identified and synthesised using a thematic approach. The findings conceptualise teacher competence as a dynamic and multidimensional construct comprising knowledge, instructional practices, socio-emotional responsiveness, and professional self-efficacy. The analysis further identifies instructional practices as the primary mechanism through which professional competence influences socio-emotional outcomes, while contextual factors, including intervention programmes and school-level support, shape the strength of this relationship. Based on this synthesis, the study proposes a mechanism-based explanatory model that advances existing literature by shifting the focus from domain-based descriptions to a process-oriented understanding of teacher competence. The findings contribute to theory by offering a dynamic and context-sensitive framework, while also providing practical implications for teacher education, classroom practice, and policy development in special education.

Keywords: Dyslexia, Teacher competence, Socio-emotional development, Instructional practices, Teacher self-efficacy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Dyslexia is widely recognised as a specific learning difficulty that primarily affects reading accuracy, fluency, and spelling. From a broader perspective, dyslexia affects a substantial proportion of the

school population, with prevalence estimates ranging between 5% and 10%, reinforcing its significance as a global educational concern (Sakhai et al., 2025). In addition, dyslexia is frequently associated with co-occurring psychological

conditions, with many affected students experiencing at least one form of emotional or behavioural difficulty (Darweesh et al., 2020; Woodcock, 2025). However, its impact extends beyond academic performance to include significant socio-emotional challenges. A growing body of empirical evidence indicates that students with dyslexia are more likely to experience elevated levels of anxiety, reduced self-esteem, and difficulties in social adjustment compared to their typically developing (Feng et al., 2024; W. Yu et al., 2025). These socio-emotional difficulties impede academic progress and may also undermine overall well-being and long-term educational trajectories.

Despite this recognition, research and educational practices have disproportionately prioritised cognitive and instructional dimensions of dyslexia, often at the expense of socio-emotional considerations. As a result, the development of classroom-based support strategies remains fragmented, with insufficient integration of emotional and psychological dimensions into instructional practices. This imbalance constrains the implementation of holistic approaches capable of addressing the interconnected academic and socio-emotional needs of students with dyslexia (Polychroni et al., 2024; Wilmot et al., 2023). More critically, this fragmentation reflects a broader limitation in the literature, where socio-emotional dimensions are often treated as peripheral rather than integral to learning processes, resulting in an incomplete understanding of students' educational experiences.

Within this context, teachers play a critical role in shaping both academic and socio-emotional experiences. Beyond instructional delivery, teachers influence students' self-perceptions, emotional regulation and engagement with learning. These influences are especially important in classroom contexts where students with dyslexia frequently encounter stress-inducing situations, such as reading aloud and peer comparison, which may intensify anxiety and emotional discomfort (Mori et al., 2025). Empirical evidence consistently shows that supportive teacher–student relationships and emotionally responsive teaching practices can mitigate adverse socio-emotional outcomes. In

contrast, insufficient support may exacerbate anxiety, frustration and disengagement (Morte-Soriano & Soriano-Ferrer, 2024; Wilmot et al., 2023). Teacher competence can therefore be viewed as a potentially central mechanism in addressing the holistic needs of students with dyslexia. However, while the importance of teacher support is well acknowledged, the processes through which teacher competence translates into socio-emotional outcomes remain insufficiently explained.

A major limitation in the existing literature concerns the fragmented and domain-based conceptualisation of teacher competence. Many studies adopt a domain-specific perspective, examining components such as knowledge, instructional practices or self-efficacy in isolation, without adequately capturing their interrelationships or explaining how these components are enacted within classroom contexts. For instance, teachers often demonstrate a combination of accurate understanding and persistent misconceptions about dyslexia, which may limit both instructional effectiveness and socio-emotional support (Martan et al., 2023; Peltier et al., 2022). Similarly, although adaptive and differentiated teaching strategies are widely advocated, their implementation remains inconsistent and highly context-dependent (Nkomo & Dube, 2023; Wood et al., 2025). Consequently, much of the literature remains descriptive and provides limited insight into the processes through which teacher competence influences students' socio-emotional outcomes.

This limitation is further complicated by the absence of integrative frameworks that account for the role of contextual support systems, such as intervention programmes and school-level resources, which may shape the effectiveness of teaching practices. As a result, the literature provides limited insight into not only whether teacher competence matters, but how and under what conditions it influences socio-emotional development.

In response to these gaps, this study conducts a systematic literature review of empirical studies published between 2022 and 2025, focusing on teacher competence in supporting the socio-

emotional development of students with dyslexia. Drawing on an explanatory perspective, this study conceptualises teacher competence as a dynamic system in which cognitive (knowledge), motivational (self-efficacy) and socio-emotional components interact and are enacted through instructional practices. Instructional practices are positioned as the mediating process linking professional competence to students' socio-emotional outcomes, while contextual support systems shape the strength and consistency of this relationship. Accordingly, the review is guided by the following research question: What are the key domains and underlying mechanisms of teacher competence in supporting the socio-emotional development of students with dyslexia?

This study makes three contributions to the literature. First, it advances the conceptualisation of teacher competence by moving beyond domain-based perspectives towards a mechanism-based and process-oriented model. Second, it provides an explanatory account of how teacher competence influences socio-emotional development by identifying instructional enactment as a mediating mechanism and contextual support as moderating conditions. Third, it proposes a dynamic and context-sensitive framework illustrating how students' outcomes may, over time, influence teachers' self-efficacy and instructional practices. Taken together, these contributions provide a more comprehensive and theoretically grounded understanding of teacher competence in supporting the socio-emotional development of students with dyslexia. These contributions culminate in the development of a proposed explanatory framework that conceptualises teacher competence as a dynamic, context-sensitive and recursive system influencing the socio-emotional development of students with dyslexia.

1.1 Literature Review

Existing literature indicates that teacher competence in supporting students with dyslexia is inherently multidimensional; however, its conceptualisation remains fragmented and insufficiently integrated. While numerous studies have examined discrete components such as teacher knowledge, instructional practices, and self-efficacy,

these dimensions are often treated in isolation, limiting a comprehensive understanding of how teacher competence operates within real classroom contexts.

A substantial strand of research has examined teachers' knowledge of dyslexia, consistently revealing a pattern of partial understanding accompanied by persistent misconceptions (Bollig et al., 2026). Although teachers may demonstrate awareness of key characteristics, evidence suggests that this knowledge is often superficial and inconsistently applied. More importantly, the coexistence of accurate knowledge and misconceptions highlights a critical limitation: knowledge alone does not necessarily translate into effective instructional or socio-emotional support (Gonzalez, 2025). In contrast to traditional assumptions that position knowledge as a primary determinant of competence, emerging evidence suggests that its impact is contingent upon other factors, particularly beliefs and self-efficacy (Heyder et al., 2026). This suggests that existing research may have overemphasised cognitive dimensions while overlooking the influence of motivational and affective factors.

Research on pedagogical competence also underscores the importance of differentiated and adaptive instructional strategies in supporting students with dyslexia (Han, 2025). These studies highlight the role of instructional flexibility and individualised support in enhancing both academic and socio-emotional outcomes. However, despite this consensus, a persistent gap exists between theoretical recommendations and classroom implementation. While some studies report positive outcomes associated with adaptive teaching, others emphasise constraints such as limited training, time, and institutional support (Esparza et al., 2026). This pattern suggests that pedagogical competence cannot be fully understood as a standalone domain, but rather as a context-dependent process shaped by external conditions. Consequently, the literature remains limited in explaining how instructional practices are enacted and sustained in real-world settings.

Beyond cognitive and instructional dimensions, socio-emotional competence has increasingly been

recognised as a critical component of effective teaching. Empirical evidence demonstrates that emotionally responsive practices, including empathy, supportive relationships, and sensitivity to students' emotional needs, play a significant role in reducing anxiety and enhancing self-esteem among students with dyslexia (Feng et al., 2024; Kennedy et al., 2026; Omar, 2026). However, despite its recognised importance, socio-emotional competence is frequently treated as a supplementary or peripheral dimension rather than as an integral component of teacher competence. This marginalisation limits the development of holistic models capable of capturing the interconnected nature of academic and socio-emotional support.

Recent studies have also begun to emphasise the role of protective factors in shaping socio-emotional outcomes. While earlier research has largely emphasised deficits, emerging evidence highlights the importance of emotional intelligence, positive self-concept, and adaptive coping mechanisms in fostering resilience among students with dyslexia (Polychroni et al., 2024). This perspective is supported by empirical evidence which further indicates that adaptive coping, self-regulation, and access to supportive social and educational contexts play a critical role in fostering resilience among learners with dyslexia (Vanderground, 2026). For instance, students with higher levels of emotional regulation and more positive perceptions of their abilities are less likely to experience psychological distress (Alves Vieira et al., 2026; Morosini et al., 2026).

This perspective moves beyond deficit-based models and suggests that socio-emotional development is shaped by a dynamic interplay between risk and protective factors. However, existing studies rarely integrate these internal processes with teacher-related variables, resulting in a fragmented understanding of how classroom practices influence student resilience (Bazen et al., 2023). Within this perspective, teacher practices may play a crucial role not only in mitigating negative outcomes but also in strengthening these protective mechanisms. By fostering supportive classroom environments, reinforcing positive self-perceptions, and promoting adaptive coping

strategies, teachers can contribute to more resilient socio-emotional development among students with dyslexia.

Contextual factors add another layer of complexity. Increasing attention has been given to intervention-related competence, particularly teachers' ability to engage with structured programmes and school-based support systems (Adi et al., 2025). While such interventions have demonstrated effectiveness in improving emotional regulation and reducing anxiety, they are often implemented in isolation from everyday classroom practices. In contrast, other studies emphasise the importance of integrated support systems, highlighting that the effectiveness of teaching practices is contingent upon broader institutional and organisational conditions (Mazzuki, 2024; Nopas, 2026; Rapisa et al., 2026). This pattern suggests that contextual factors are not merely external influences but play an active role in shaping the effectiveness of teacher competence.

Broadly, the reviewed literature points to several limitations. First, there is a strong tendency towards domain-based and descriptive approaches that categorise components of teacher competence without adequately explaining their interrelationships. Second, insufficient attention has been given to the processes through which teacher competence is enacted and translated into student outcomes. Third, contextual factors are often treated as external variables rather than as integral elements of the teaching process. These limitations indicate the absence of an integrated and process-oriented framework capable of explaining not only what constitutes teacher competence, but how and under what conditions it influences socio-emotional development of students with dyslexia. In particular, there is a need to move beyond static conceptualisations towards an understanding of teacher competence as a dynamic and context-sensitive system (Emam et al., 2026; Zhang & Tian, 2025).

Emerging research further highlights the importance of internal psychological mechanisms within students. Socio-emotional outcomes are increasingly understood as the result of dynamic interactions between cognitive challenges and

psychological processes, including anxiety, self-concept, and emotional regulation. These processes often form reciprocal relationships, creating feedback loops in which academic difficulties reinforce emotional distress, which in turn further impedes learning. Within this dynamic, teacher practices may function as external regulatory mechanisms that disrupt negative cycles and promote more adaptive trajectories (Calandri et al., 2025; Gebre et al., 2025). However, current literature rarely integrates these internal and external processes within a unified framework.

This pattern reinforces the possibility of a feedback loop in which cognitive and socio-emotional processes mutually reinforce one another over time (Chung et al., 2024). Within this dynamic, teacher practices and instructional support may function as external regulatory mechanisms that disrupt negative cycles and facilitate more adaptive socio-emotional trajectories (Xu, 2024). Accordingly, a comprehensive understanding of socio-emotional development among students with dyslexia requires not only consideration of instructional and contextual factors, but also careful attention to the underlying psychological processes within learners. The present study therefore adopts an integrative perspective that conceptualises teacher competence as a dynamic interaction of cognitive, motivational, and socio-emotional components, enacted through instructional practices (Savina et al., 2025). Within this framework, instructional practices serve as a mediating mechanism linking teacher competence to socio-emotional outcomes, while contextual support systems function as moderating conditions shaping the strength of this relationship (Li et al., 2022). This perspective extends existing descriptive approaches by providing a more integrated and process-oriented explanation of teacher competence.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study used a systematic literature review (SLR) guided by the PRISMA 2020 framework to ensure a transparent, structured, and replicable process. The SLR approach is well suited for synthesising evidence in fields characterised by conceptual

fragmentation and methodological diversity, such as research on teacher competence and socio-emotional development in dyslexia. This approach is widely recommended for synthesising fragmented bodies of research and identifying underlying patterns across heterogeneous studies (Peters et al., 2020). Given the heterogeneity of study designs, contexts, and outcome measures in this field, a systematic review enables the integration of findings across qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research. This allows for the identification of recurring patterns, relationships, and underlying mechanisms that are not easily captured through individual studies. To enhance transparency and methodological rigour, the review followed a predefined protocol that guided the search strategy, screening process, and data synthesis. Although the protocol was not formally registered in databases such as PROSPERO, all procedures were established prior to data collection and conducted in accordance with PRISMA 2020 guidelines.

To enable a deeper analytical interpretation, this study adopted a thematic synthesis approach. Rather than providing a purely descriptive review, thematic synthesis facilitates the development of higher-order analytical themes by systematically coding and integrating findings across studies. This approach is particularly appropriate for generating process-oriented and explanatory insights, which align with the objective of developing a dynamic model of teacher competence in supporting the socio-emotional development of students with dyslexia.

2.2 Identification

The literature search was carried out across two major databases, Scopus and Web of Science (WoS), selected for their extensive coverage of high-quality peer-reviewed literature in education, psychology, and social sciences, as well as their strong indexing and citation tracking capabilities (Pranckutė, 2021). While additional databases such as ERIC and PsycINFO may provide complementary coverage, Scopus and WoS were prioritised to ensure the inclusion of studies with high academic impact and indexing reliability.

The review was confined to studies published between 2022 and 2025 were included, considering the first online publication date for articles published ahead of print to capture the most recent empirical developments in the field. This timeframe reflects the growing scholarly emphasis on the socio-emotional dimensions of dyslexia and the evolving conceptualisation of teacher competence as a dynamic and context-sensitive construct. In addition, the post-pandemic educational context has significantly reshaped teaching practices and heightened awareness of students' socio-emotional well-being, making recent studies particularly relevant. By focusing on contemporary empirical evidence, the review aims to provide an up-to-date and contextually grounded synthesis while avoiding redundancy with earlier studies that have predominantly focused on cognitive and academic aspects of dyslexia. To strengthen theoretical

interpretations and ensure contextual relevance, selected studies published beyond this time frame have been included in literature reviews and discussions. However, these studies were not included in the formal PRISMA screening process or thematic synthesis of empirical findings.

A comprehensive search strategy was designed using Boolean operators and combinations of keywords across four domains: population, teacher competence, socio-emotional outcomes, and educational context. Synonyms and spelling variations (e.g., socio-emotional and socioemotional; wellbeing/well-being) were included to maximise search sensitivity. Database-specific search functions were applied, including TITLE-ABS-KEY in Scopus and Topic Search (TS) in Web of Science. The initial search yielded a total of 193 records prior to duplicate removal.

Table 1. Search strings

Database	Search String
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY(("dyslexia" OR "specific learning disorder" OR "learning disabilities" OR "reading difficulties") AND ("socio-emotional" OR "socioemotional" OR "emotional development" OR "mental health" OR "social skills") AND ("teacher competence" OR "teacher competency" OR "teacher efficacy" OR "teaching practices") AND ("primary education" OR "elementary education" OR "special education"))
Web of Science	TS=((dyslexia OR "specific learning disorder" OR "learning disabilities") AND ("socio-emotional" OR socioemotional OR "emotional development" OR "social skills" OR wellbeing OR "mental health") AND ("teacher competence" OR "teacher competency" OR "teacher efficacy" OR "teaching practices" OR pedagogy) AND ("primary school" OR "primary education" OR "elementary education" OR "special education"))

2.3 Screening

Following duplicate removal, the remaining records underwent title and abstract screening to assess their preliminary relevance to the objectives of the review. Studies were screened based on their focus on dyslexia, teacher-related variables, and socio-emotional dimensions within educational settings. Articles that were clearly unrelated to the research focus were excluded at this stage. Following screening, 65 articles were retained for full-text eligibility assessment.

2.4 Eligibility

Following the screening stage, the remaining articles underwent a full-text assessment to determine their

eligibility for inclusion in the review. This stage involved a detailed evaluation of each study to ensure alignment with the research objectives and predefined inclusion criteria. Eligible studies were those that focused on students with dyslexia or related learning difficulties, examined aspects of teacher competence such as knowledge, instructional practices, or self-efficacy, and addressed socio-emotional outcomes including emotional well-being, mental health, or social adjustment. In addition, studies were required to be conducted within relevant educational contexts, particularly primary or special education settings, and to employ empirical research designs, including

quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method approaches.

Studies were excluded if they focused exclusively on medical, neurological or purely cognitive aspects of dyslexia without reference to educational or socio-emotional dimensions. Articles that did not involve teachers or instructional practices or that were conducted outside the relevant educational contexts were also excluded. Furthermore, non-empirical publications, including conceptual papers, reviews, editorials, books, and conference proceedings, were excluded from the formal review process and were used only to support theoretical interpretation and conceptual discussion within the manuscript. Studies lacking sufficient methodological clarity or empirical relevance to the research focus were also removed at this stage.

During the full-text review, each article was carefully examined to assess its conceptual relevance,

methodological rigour, and contribution to understanding the mechanisms linking teacher competence to students' socio-emotional development. This process ensured that only studies directly aligned with the objectives of the review were retained. Although the final number of included studies ($n = 21$) may appear modest, this reflects the application of clear and rigorous inclusion criteria, aligned with the PRISMA 2020 framework. The review was deliberately focused on recent empirical studies published between 2022 and 2025 that explicitly examine the intersection of teacher competence and socio-emotional development in the context of dyslexia. This focused scope was intended to ensure conceptual precision, analytical depth, and direct alignment with the objectives of the review, with greater emphasis placed on explanatory insight rather than broad coverage of loosely related studies. The overall selection process is illustrated in Figure 1.

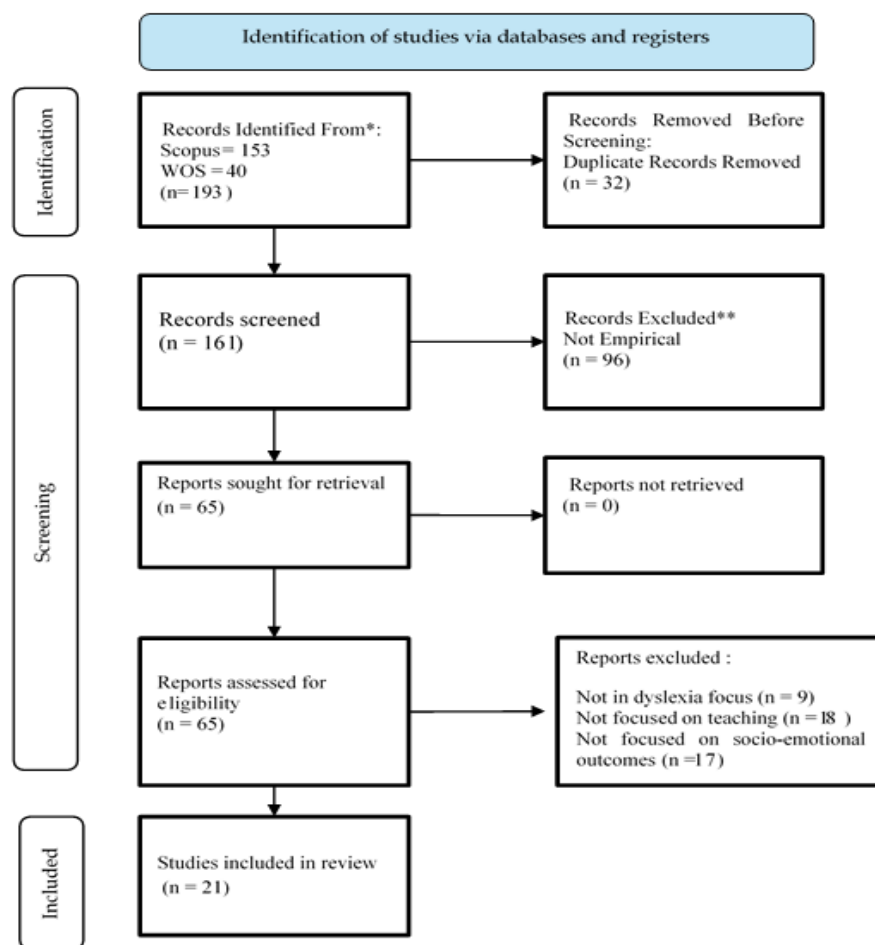


Figure 1: PRISMA 2020 Systematic Literature Flow Diagram

2.5 Quality Appraisal

The methodological quality of the included studies was assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) (2018), which is specifically designed for systematic reviews incorporating qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research (Hong et al., 2018). The MMAT enables the appraisal of diverse study designs through design-specific criteria, including the clarity of research questions, appropriateness of the methodological approach, adequacy of data collection procedures, and rigor of data analysis.

All included studies were first categorised according to their methodological design (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods) and subsequently evaluated using the corresponding MMAT criteria. The appraisal process was conducted independently by two reviewers to enhance reliability and minimise bias. Inter-rater agreement was assessed using Cohen’s Kappa ($\kappa = 0.82$), indicating strong agreement. In accordance with MMAT guidelines, the appraisal did not involve the calculation of numerical scores or the use of exclusion thresholds. Instead, the assessment was used to support the interpretive synthesis of findings, enabling a

balanced consideration of methodological strengths and limitations across studies (Hong et al., 2018).

Overall, the included studies showed generally acceptable to high methodological quality, with most showing clear alignment between research objectives, data collection methods, and analytical procedures. Quantitative studies typically employed appropriate measurement tools and statistical analyses, while qualitative studies demonstrated coherence between research questions and interpretive approaches. However, several recurring limitations were identified, including small sample sizes, reliance on cross-sectional designs, limited use of longitudinal approaches, and insufficient reporting of validity and reliability measures in some studies.

These patterns reflect broader methodological challenges in special and inclusive education research (King et al., 2020). To enhance transparency, these limitations were systematically documented and considered during the synthesis process. Particular attention was also given to the contextual relevance of each study in relation to teacher competence and socio-emotional outcomes, ensuring alignment between quality appraisal and the objectives of the review.

Table 2. Methodological quality appraisal of included studies using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) (2018)

No.	Author (Year)	Study Design	S1	S2	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	Overall Appraisal
1	(Adi et al., 2024)	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
2	(Zhang et al., 2025)	Qualitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
3	(Hanssen et al., 2025)	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	High
4	(Kargiotidis & Manolitsis, 2023)	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
5	(Masupe & Malahlela, 2025)	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	High
6	(Wilmot et al., 2023)	Qualitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
7	(Donolato et al., 2024)	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
8	(Abdel Moneem et al., 2024)	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
9	(López-Zamora et al., 2025)	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
10	(González Contreras et al., 2025)	Qualitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Moderate

11	(Chambre & Anderson, 2025)	Qualitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
12	(Nijakowska, 2022)	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
13	(Wood et al., 2025)	Mixed Methods	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
14	(Kouvava et al., 2025)	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
15	(Nkomo & Dube, 2023)	Qualitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	High
16	(Feng et al., 2024)	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
17	(X. Yu et al., 2025)	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
18	(Polychroni et al., 2024)	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
19	(Martan et al., 2023)	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
20	(Adi et al., 2025)	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
21	(Peltier et al., 2022)	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High

Note. S1–S2 represent the screening questions of the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) (2018), assessing the clarity of research questions and the adequacy of the data collected. C1–C5 represent design-specific methodological criteria for qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies, including appropriateness of methodology, data collection, data analysis, and coherence between findings and research objectives (Hong et al., 2018). The overall appraisal was assigned based on the pattern of criteria met, without the use of numerical scoring, in line with MMAT guidelines.

2.6 Data Extraction and Thematic Synthesis

A structured data extraction process was conducted to ensure consistency and transparency across all included studies. Key information extracted from each study included publication details such as author, year, and country, study design, participant characteristics, dimensions of teacher competence, types of socio-emotional outcomes, and key findings related to the research objectives. The extracted data were then systematically organised into a data matrix to facilitate comparison and synthesis across studies.

The analysis was carried out using an inductive thematic synthesis approach, allowing themes to emerge from the data rather than being predetermined. This approach is well suited for synthesising heterogeneous evidence and identifying underlying patterns across qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies. The thematic synthesis was guided by the six-phase framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which involves familiarisation with the data, initial coding, generation of candidate themes, review of themes,

definition and naming of themes, and reporting of findings. Coding was conducted iteratively, beginning with initial codes derived directly from study findings and subsequently refined into higher-order analytical themes.

To enhance analytical rigour, the coding process was conducted by two reviewers and cross-validated through regular discussions. Discrepancies in coding and theme development were resolved through consensus, ensuring consistency and reliability in the analytical process. An audit trail was maintained throughout the analysis to document coding decisions and theme development. Quantitative findings were integrated into the thematic synthesis by mapping statistical results onto the identified themes, allowing for triangulation across different types of evidence. This integrative approach enabled the development of a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between teacher competence and socio-emotional outcomes. Through this process, four overarching themes were identified, representing the key domains and mechanisms through which teacher competence influences the

socio-emotional development of students with dyslexia. These themes form the basis of the proposed explanatory structure presented in the results section.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Study Characteristics

Table 3 summarises the characteristics of the 21 included studies in Table 3. The studies were published between 2022 and 2025, reflecting recent developments in research on dyslexia and socio-emotional development within educational contexts. In terms of research design, the majority of studies employed quantitative approaches (n = 15), including cross-sectional, survey, comparative, quasi-experimental, and case-control designs. Four studies adopted qualitative methodologies, while one study utilised a mixed-methods design. This distribution suggests a strong emphasis on quantitative evidence, complemented by qualitative insights that provide contextual depth.

The study samples varied across contexts, with most studies conducted in primary school settings and involving students with dyslexia, teachers, or both. Teacher-related variables examined across studies included instructional practices, teacher self-efficacy, pedagogical knowledge, and emotional support strategies. This pattern suggests that teacher-related variables are not only central to instructional processes but also play a critical role in

shaping students’ socio-emotional experiences. These variables were consistently linked to student outcomes such as self-esteem, social skills, emotional regulation, and overall well-being. Geographically, the studies were conducted across diverse regions, indicating growing global attention to the socio-emotional dimensions of dyslexia. Despite contextual variation, a consistent pattern emerged, suggesting that teacher competence functions as a central mechanism influencing both academic and socio-emotional dimensions of student development. This distribution suggests that the role of teacher competence in shaping socio-emotional outcomes is consistently recognised across diverse educational contexts, reinforcing its relevance as a global educational concern.

Across the reviewed studies, teacher competence was conceptualised through multiple dimensions, including instructional, relational, and inclusive practices. The evidence consistently demonstrates a clear association between teacher competence and the socio-emotional development of students with dyslexia. A detailed summary of the included studies is presented in Table 3. For analytical clarity, each included study was systematically mapped onto the four overarching themes derived from the thematic synthesis. This mapping ensures conceptual alignment between the extracted evidence and the proposed proposed explanatory framework.

Table 3. Summary of Included Studies

No.	Author (Year)	Design	Key Findings	Mapped Theme	Role in Mechanism
1	Adi et al. (2024)	Cross-sectional	Students exhibited elevated emotional and behavioural difficulties, indicating socio-emotional vulnerability	Socio-Emotional Development Outcomes	Output (Emotional & Behavioural Outcome)
2	Zhang et al. (2025)	Qualitative	Emotional support from family significantly influences children’s socio-emotional development	Contextual Support Systems	Moderator (School-based & Contextual Support)
3	Hanssen et al. (2025)	Survey	Teachers demonstrated moderate competence,	Foundational Teacher Competence	Input (Professional

			indicating gaps in preparedness		Readiness Constraint)
4	Kargiotidis & Manolitsis (2023)	Longitudinal	Literacy difficulties were associated with increasing anxiety over time	Socio-Emotional Development Outcomes	Output (Anxiety Trajectory)
5	Masupe & Malahlela (2025)	Correlational	Teacher competence significantly influences instructional effectiveness	Instructional Enactment	Mediator (Instructional Effectiveness)
6	Wilmot et al. (2023)	Qualitative	Students reported low self-esteem and negative learning experiences	Socio-Emotional Development Outcomes	Output (Self-esteem & Experience)
7	Donolato et al. (2024)	Case-control	Emotional and motivational factors are closely linked to learning outcomes	Socio-Emotional Development Outcomes	Output (Emotional-Motivational Process)
8	Abdel Moneem et al. (2024)	Quasi-experimental	Socio-emotional interventions significantly reduced anxiety levels	Contextual Support Systems	Moderator (Intervention Effectiveness)
9	López-Zamora et al. (2025)	Comparative	Students exhibited higher levels of behavioural difficulties compared to peers	Socio-Emotional Development Outcomes	Output (Behavioural Outcome)
10	González Contreras et al. (2025)	Qualitative	Increased stress levels observed due to learning disruptions	Socio-Emotional Development Outcomes	Output (Stress & Psychological Impact)
11	Chambre & Anderson (2025)	Qualitative	Misconceptions about dyslexia persist even after training	Foundational Teacher Competence	Input (Knowledge Misconception)
12	Nijakowska (2022)	Pre-post	Professional training significantly improved teacher self-efficacy	Foundational Teacher Competence	Input (Motivational Enabler)
13	Wood et al. (2025)	Mixed-method	Adaptive teaching strategies enhance both academic and emotional outcomes	Instructional Enactment	Mediator (Adaptive Instruction)
14	Kouvava et al. (2025)	Comparative	Social skills and peer relationships were significantly affected	Socio-Emotional Development Outcomes	Output (Social Adjustment)
15	Nkomo & Dube (2023)	Qualitative	Teachers require individualised strategies to support diverse learners	Instructional Enactment	Mediator (Implementation Constraint)
16	Feng et al. (2024)	Cross-sectional	Dyslexia is strongly associated with	Socio-Emotional Development Outcomes	Output (Mental Health Outcome)

			depression, anxiety, and bullying		
17	Yu et al. (2025)	Case-control	Reading difficulties are significantly linked to mental health outcomes	Socio-Emotional Development Outcomes	Output (Mental Health Outcome)
18	Polychroni et al. (2024)	Comparative	Emotional intelligence is a key predictor of anxiety levels	Socio-Emotional Development Outcomes	Output (Emotional Regulation Indicator)
19	Martan et al. (2023)	Survey	Teachers demonstrated limited depth of knowledge regarding dyslexia	Foundational Teacher Competence	Input (Knowledge Limitation)
20	Adi et al. (2025)	Quasi-experimental	Psychoeducational programs improved emotional regulation	Contextual Support Systems	Moderator (Psychoeducational Support)
21	Peltier et al. (2022)	Survey	Teachers hold mixed knowledge and misconceptions about dyslexia	Foundational Teacher Competence	Input (Knowledge Variability)

For analytical clarity, each included study was systematically mapped according to its functional role within the proposed explanatory model. This mapping indicates that teacher competence operates within an integrated system in which its influence on students' socio-emotional outcomes is enacted through instructional practices and shaped by contextual conditions. As presented in Table 3, the evidence was organised into four interrelated components: foundational teacher competence (input), instructional enactment (mediator), socio-emotional development outcomes (output), and contextual support systems (moderator). This mapping extends beyond descriptive synthesis by explicitly demonstrating how each study contributes to explaining the underlying processes through which teacher competence influences students' socio-emotional development.

3.2 Quality Assessment Results

The methodological quality of the included studies was assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT). The studies demonstrated generally acceptable to high methodological quality across qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods designs. Most studies showed strong alignment between research objectives, data collection

methods, and analytical procedures. Quantitative studies generally employed appropriate measurement tools and statistical analyses, while qualitative studies demonstrated coherence between research questions, data sources, and interpretive approaches.

While most studies met the majority of methodological criteria, several exhibited minor limitations, particularly in areas related to reporting transparency and methodological rigour, as reflected in occasional "No" ratings across specific criteria. These limitations included small sample sizes, reliance on cross-sectional designs, limited use of longitudinal approaches, and insufficient reporting of validity and reliability measures in some studies. Several methodological limitations identified across the included studies may introduce potential risks of bias. The predominance of cross-sectional designs restricts causal interpretation, while small and context-specific samples may limit the generalisability of the findings. In addition, inconsistent reporting of validity and reliability procedures in several studies may affect the overall robustness of the evidence. These limitations were therefore carefully considered during the interpretive synthesis to ensure that the findings were analysed with appropriate caution, with greater

emphasis placed on studies demonstrating stronger methodological alignment, transparent reporting, and more rigorous analytical procedures.

In qualitative research, a small number of studies lacked explicit discussion of researcher reflexivity and analytical transparency. Notably, no studies were excluded based on the quality appraisal outcomes. Instead, the MMAT assessment was used to inform the interpretation of findings, ensuring that evidence from studies with methodological limitations was considered with appropriate caution. Broadly, the consistency of findings across studies with varying methodological strengths enhances the credibility and robustness of the synthesis.

The thematic synthesis identified four analytically connected components that together explain how teacher competence operates in shaping the socio-emotional development of students with dyslexia. Rather than being treated as isolated domains, these themes represent an explanatory process comprising foundational teacher competence, the instructional enactment of competence, students' socio-emotional outcomes, and contextual support systems that condition the strength of these relationships. This structure enables the findings to be interpreted not merely as descriptive categories, but as interconnected elements within an explanatory model of teacher competence.

3.3 Thematic Finding

Table 4. Thematic Matrix of Teacher Competence and Socio-Emotional Development

Theme	Subtheme	Description	Supporting Studies	Number of Studies
Foundational Teacher Competence	Knowledge of Dyslexia & Misconceptions	Teachers demonstrate partial understanding, often characterised by coexistence of accurate knowledge and misconceptions	Peltier et al. (2022); Martan et al. (2023); Chambre & Anderson (2025)	3
	Teacher Self-efficacy & Professional Development	Professional training enhances teacher confidence and readiness to support students	Nijakowska (2022); Hanssen et al. (2025)	2
	Professional Readiness & Competence Level	Variability in competence reflects gaps in preparedness and instructional readiness	Hanssen et al. (2025); Masupe & Malahlela (2025)	2
Instructional Enactment	Differentiated & Adaptive Instruction	Flexible and adaptive teaching supports both academic and emotional outcomes	Wood et al. (2025); Masupe & Malahlela (2025)	2
	Individualised & Inclusive Strategies	Teachers require tailored approaches to meet diverse learner needs	Nkomo & Dube (2023); Wood et al. (2025)	2
	Instructional Effectiveness	Teacher competence is reflected in the quality of instructional implementation	Masupe & Malahlela (2025); Wood et al. (2025)	2
Socio-Emotional Development Outcomes	Emotional Difficulties	Students experience anxiety, depression, and emotional distress	Feng et al. (2024); Yu et al. (2025); Kargiotidis & Manolitsis (2023); González Contreras et al. (2025)	4
	Self-esteem & Emotional Experience	Students report low self-esteem and negative learning experiences	Wilmot et al. (2023); Donolato et al. (2024)	2
	Social Adjustment & Peer Relationships	Difficulties in peer interaction and social integration are evident	Kouvava et al. (2025)	1

	Emotional Intelligence & Mental Health	Emotional regulation and psychological processes influence outcomes	Polychroni et al. (2024)	1
	Behavioural Outcomes	Increased behavioural difficulties compared to peers	Adi et al. (2024); López-Zamora et al. (2025)	2
Contextual Support Systems	Socio-emotional Interventions	Targeted interventions improve emotional regulation and reduce anxiety	Abdel Moneem et al. (2024); Adi et al. (2025)	2
	Psychoeducational Programs	Structured programs support emotional development	Adi et al. (2025)	1
	School-based & Contextual Support	External support systems, including family and school context, influence socio-emotional outcomes	Zhang et al. (2025); Nkomo & Dube (2023)	2

Note. The number of studies (*n*) reflects the frequency of studies contributing to each subtheme. As individual studies may address multiple aspects, they may be represented across more than one subtheme.

3.3.1 Theme 1: Foundational Teacher Competence as a Conditional Input Rather Than a Deterministic Factor

These findings challenge the prevailing assumption that teacher knowledge alone is sufficient to support students with dyslexia. The evidence indicates that teacher competence is grounded in foundational capacities, particularly knowledge of dyslexia, professional beliefs, and self-efficacy. Although teachers demonstrate partial understanding of dyslexia, the coexistence of accurate knowledge and persistent misconceptions suggests that knowledge functions as a necessary but insufficient condition for effective practice (Chambers, 2022; Peltier et al., 2022). Teachers were found to be more familiar with surface-level instructional strategies than with the underlying etiology, cognitive characteristics, and developmental implications of dyslexia, reflecting fragmented rather than comprehensive professional understanding (Martan et al., 2023).

This limitation reflects a broader issue within the literature, where teacher competence is often conceptualised as the static accumulation of knowledge rather than a functional and enacted capability. The present findings suggest that foundational teacher competence operates as a conditional input within the proposed mechanism, rather than a direct determinant of socio-emotional outcomes. Its effectiveness depends on its interaction with motivational factors, particularly self-efficacy. Evidence indicates that teachers with

higher self-efficacy are more likely to translate knowledge into adaptive instructional practices highlighting the regulatory role of belief systems in shaping instructional behaviour (Nijakowska, 2022; Nkomo & Dube, 2023). Professional development and targeted training were consistently associated with stronger teacher confidence, better instructional decision-making, and greater readiness to implement inclusive classroom support strategies (Hanssen et al., 2025; Masupe & Malahlela, 2025).

Quantitative studies consistently reported that professional training was associated with stronger teacher self-efficacy and greater instructional readiness, whereas qualitative findings provided deeper insight into how teachers negotiated uncertainty and misconceptions within authentic classroom contexts. These findings suggest that foundational competence is not determined solely by knowledge acquisition, but is also shaped by teachers' interpretive and reflective capacities.

Theoretically, this extends Pedagogical Content Knowledge by demonstrating that knowledge transformation is not purely cognitive, but mediated by motivational and affective dimensions. Similarly, the findings align with Self-Efficacy Theory, suggesting that competence is activated through teachers' beliefs about their own capabilities rather than by knowledge alone. Thus, foundational competence is better understood as a direct predictor of student outcomes, but as an enabling condition that requires activation through

subsequent processes. This reconceptualisation addresses a key gap in the literature by shifting from a possession-based to a process-based understanding of teacher competence. Taken together, the findings suggest that foundational teacher competence functions as a conditional input rather than a direct determinant of socio-emotional outcomes, requiring activation through subsequent instructional processes.

3.3.2 Theme 2: Instructional Enactment as the Central Mechanism of Competence Translation

One important contribution of this study is the identification of instructional enactment as the primary mechanism through which teacher competence influences socio-emotional outcomes. Moderate evidence consistently highlights the role of adaptive and differentiated instructional practices in supporting both academic engagement and socio-emotional well-being (Wood et al., 2025). Teachers who employed multisensory approaches, simplified reading materials, additional learning time, and assessment adjustments were found to create more supportive and emotionally secure learning environments for students with dyslexia. These adaptive practices were associated not only with improved literacy participation, but also with reduced classroom anxiety and stronger student engagement (Masupe & Malahlela, 2025).

While evidence across studies consistently supports the importance of adaptive instructional practices, differences emerged regarding the extent to which such practices could be sustained in resource-constrained environments. Quantitative studies generally demonstrated positive associations between instructional adaptation and socio-emotional outcomes, whereas qualitative evidence highlighted contextual barriers such as limited training opportunities, time constraints, and insufficient institutional support.

This challenges dominant domain-based models that implicitly assume linear relationships between competence and outcomes. The persistent gap between knowledge and implementation (Nkomo & Dube, 2023) suggests that competence is not inherently functional unless it is enacted within the complexity of classroom interactions. In this sense,

instructional practices serve as a transformational interface between teacher capacity and student experience. This mechanism also shows that variability in student outcomes may not stem solely from differences in competence, but from differences in the quality of enactment. Teachers with similar levels of knowledge may produce divergent outcomes depending on their ability to adapt instruction, respond to student needs, and sustain inclusive practices.

This finding moves the literature beyond correlational explanations towards a process-oriented explanatory interpretation, where instructional enactment explains how competence becomes effective. It also extends existing pedagogical models by emphasising that teaching is not merely the application of knowledge, but a dynamic process of continuous adjustment and responsiveness. This supports the conceptualisation of instructional enactment as the central mediating mechanism through which teacher competence is operationalised and translated into students' socio-emotional experiences.

3.3.3 Theme 3: Socio-Emotional Outcomes as Core Indicators Rather Than Secondary Consequences

The findings provide clear evidence that socio-emotional outcomes should be conceptualised as central rather than peripheral to the educational experiences of students with dyslexia. A consistent body of evidence indicates that these students experience heightened socio-emotional vulnerability. Across the literature, students with dyslexia are frequently reported to demonstrate higher levels of anxiety, depression and psychological distress compared to their peers (Morte-Soriano & Soriano-Ferrer, 2024). These findings consistently show that emotional difficulties are not isolated reactions to academic failure, but rather persistent developmental concerns that shape students' broader school experiences.

Children with dyslexia frequently experience internalising difficulties such as anxiety, embarrassment, school-related stress, and emotional exhaustion. In addition, parents reported

externalising behaviours including school refusal, emotional outbursts, and resistance toward homework activities. These findings indicate that dyslexia affects not only academic functioning but also broader socio-emotional adjustment, highlighting the importance of family support and school connectedness as important protective factors (Adi et al., 2024; López-Zamora et al., 2025). Collectively, the evidence suggests that students with dyslexia experience persistent emotional vulnerability characterised by anxiety, reduced self-concept, and social withdrawal (Donolato et al., 2024; Polychroni et al., 2024).

Quantitative findings consistently indicate elevated levels of anxiety, depression, and emotional distress among students with dyslexia. Qualitative evidence further highlights lived experiences characterised by frustration, stigma, and diminished self-worth (Feng et al., 2024; X. Yu et al., 2025). In addition, students frequently experience difficulties in peer relationships and social integration, which may contribute to feelings of exclusion and a reduced sense of school belonging (Kouvava et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2025). These findings suggest that socio-emotional difficulties are not merely secondary consequences of dyslexia, but central aspects of students' educational experiences.

The consistency of findings across both quantitative and qualitative studies strengthens the evidence that socio-emotional difficulties are not merely secondary consequences of dyslexia, but central components of students' educational experiences. However, the severity and manifestation of these difficulties appeared to vary according to contextual and relational factors, particularly classroom climate, peer interactions, and teacher responsiveness.

Kargiotidis and Manolitsis (2023) further demonstrated that children with early literacy difficulties are significantly more vulnerable to social anxiety, particularly in situations involving peer evaluation such as reading aloud, answering questions publicly, or participating in group activities. Similarly highlighted that students with dyslexia experience increased emotional stress during adverse educational conditions, reinforcing the role of environmental pressures in shaping

mental health outcomes (González Contreras et al., 2025). These findings are consistent with Wilmot et al. (2023), who reported that children with dyslexia frequently experience both internalising and externalising difficulties, including anxiety, emotional exhaustion, school refusal, and behavioural distress.

Similarly, Donolato et al. (2024) demonstrated that children with dyslexia experience a diminished reading self-concept and higher levels of social anxiety, indicating that dyslexia shapes not only academic performance but also children's academic identity and emotional functioning. This suggests that dyslexia should not be understood merely as a literacy-related difficulty, but rather as a condition with broader psychosocial implications that require holistic educational and emotional support from both schools and families. These results imply that improvements in academic outcomes cannot be fully understood without considering their socio-emotional correlates. This reinforces the need for more holistic models that integrate emotional, social, and behavioural dimensions, rather than treating them as separate or secondary constructs.

3.3.4 Theme 4: Contextual Support Systems as Boundary Conditions of Effectiveness

The findings indicate that the effectiveness of teacher competence is contingent upon the presence and alignment of contextual support systems. Intervention programmes and psychoeducational supports have demonstrated significant positive effects on emotional regulation and anxiety reduction (Abdel Moneem et al., 2024; Adi et al., 2025). These findings suggest that socio-emotional development is strengthened when targeted support extends beyond academic remediation and explicitly addresses emotional awareness, coping strategies, and resilience. Adi et al. (2025) demonstrated that art-based psychoeducational interventions significantly reduced anxiety, sadness, anger, and worry among children with dyslexia, indicating that structured emotional learning can function as an effective protective mechanism.

Although intervention-based studies generally reported positive socio-emotional outcomes, the

available evidence remains limited due to the predominance of short-term and context-specific research designs. Consequently, conclusions regarding the long-term sustainability and transferability of contextual support systems across diverse educational settings should be interpreted with caution. However, their impact is often limited by weak integration with everyday classroom practices. This reveals a structural issue within educational systems, where individual teacher competence and institutional support mechanisms operate in parallel rather than as an integrated system. As a result, even highly competent teachers may be constrained by insufficient resources, training opportunities, limited collaboration, or weak organisational support. Zhang et al. (2025), further highlighted that family understanding and positive parental perceptions significantly contribute to students' emotional resilience, suggesting that school support alone may be insufficient without strong home-school alignment.

Within the proposed model, contextual support systems function as moderating conditions, shaping the strength and consistency of the relationship between instructional practices and socio-emotional outcomes (Bronfenbrenner, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). This aligns with Ecological Systems Theory, which emphasises that individual processes are embedded within broader environmental contexts. Nkomo and Dube (2023) similarly showed that broader school responsiveness, teacher collaboration, and institutional commitment strongly influence the effectiveness of inclusive teaching practices and students' sense of belonging.

This perspective shifts the focus from individual teacher deficits to systemic conditions, suggesting that improving student outcomes requires not only enhancing teacher competence but also strengthening institutional infrastructures. This has significant implications for policy, particularly in designing integrated intervention models that align

teacher practices with broader support systems. This provides strong support for the role of contextual support systems as moderating conditions that shape the strength and consistency of the relationship between instructional practices and socio-emotional outcomes.

3.4 Synthesis of Mechanism-Based Relationships

Taken together, the four themes support a reconceptualisation of teacher competence as a dynamic and integrated system rather than a static construct. Foundational competence functions as the essential input, instructional enactment operates as the primary explanatory process, socio-emotional outcomes represent the system's output, and contextual support systems define the conditions within which these processes operate. This integrated perspective advances the literature by moving beyond descriptive categorisation towards explanatory modelling, while foregrounding how teacher competence is translated into classroom practice within authentic educational settings. It also highlights how educational effectiveness is shaped by contextual conditions, particularly through the continuous interaction between individual capabilities and systemic support structures (Korkeaniemi et al., 2025).

Based on the thematic synthesis and the integrated relationships identified across the reviewed studies, the present study proposes an explanatory framework illustrating how foundational teacher competence is translated into socio-emotional outcomes through instructional enactment under varying contextual conditions. This framework is presented in Figure 2. Overall, the strength of evidence supporting the proposed relationships may be considered moderate to strong, particularly where findings converged across qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods studies. However, evidence regarding long-term sustainability and causal mechanisms remains comparatively limited.

Table 5. Mechanism-Based Synthesis of Teacher Competence and Socio-Emotional Development

Component	Main Function	Key Evidence	Role In Proposed Model
Foundational Teacher Competence	Provides cognitive and motivational capacity	Knowledge, self-efficacy, dyslexia awareness	Foundational Input
Instructional Enactment	Translates competence into classroom practice	Adaptive teaching, emotional responsiveness	Mediating Process
Socio-Emotional Outcomes	Reflects student emotional and social functioning	Anxiety reduction, self-esteem, engagement	Developmental Outcome
Contextual Support Systems	Shapes effectiveness of instructional practices	Intervention programmes, school support	Contextual Moderator

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study offer a reconceptualisation of the relationship between teacher competence and the socio-emotional development of students with dyslexia. Beyond descriptive associations, the evidence points to a more complex, mechanism-driven process. The findings indicate that teacher competence influences socio-emotional outcomes indirectly through instructional enactment, rather than functioning as a direct predictor (Masupe & Malahlela, 2025; Wood et al., 2025). This challenges domain-based models that assume a direct relationship between competence and student outcomes. Instead, the findings support a process-oriented interpretation, where competence becomes effective only when translated into adaptive and responsive teaching practices within specific contextual conditions. This relationship is further shaped by mediating and contextual conditions, highlighting the importance of examining underlying mechanisms rather than isolated variables (Collie et al., 2025).

A key contribution of this study is the positioning of teacher competence as a dynamic and process-oriented system. While prior research has examined knowledge, instructional practices, and self-efficacy as discrete components, the present synthesis demonstrates that these elements function as an interdependent system enacted through classroom practices and shaped by contextual conditions (Diokno, 2025; Hanssen et al., 2025). This shifts the

analytical focus from what teachers possess to how competence is activated and sustained in real classroom settings. In doing so, the study extends existing models by offering an oriented explanation that better captures the complexity of teaching processes.

Central to this process-oriented interpretation is the role of instructional enactment as the primary mediating process linking teacher competence to socio-emotional outcomes. While foundational competence provides the necessary knowledge, beliefs, and self-efficacy, its influence remains largely latent unless translated into classroom practice (Martan et al., 2023; Peltier et al., 2022). Theoretically, competence represents a latent capacity rather than enacted behaviour, and its effects are realised only when operationalised through instructional actions. This suggests that variability in student outcomes may not simply reflect differences in competence itself, but rather differences in how effectively such competence is enacted in real classroom contexts.

The findings also indicate that teacher knowledge and beliefs, in isolation, are insufficient unless operationalised through adaptive instructional practices (Nkomo & Dube, 2023; Wood et al., 2025). This reinforces the view that competence is not a static cognitive attribute, but a functional capability emerging through interaction with classroom demands. Instructional practices therefore function as the pathway through which competence influences observable outcomes,

including reduced anxiety, improved self-esteem, and stronger social adjustment (Donolato et al., 2024; Durlak et al., 2022; Wilmot et al., 2023). Research further demonstrated that children with early literacy difficulties are particularly vulnerable to social anxiety, especially in situations involving peer evaluation such as reading aloud, answering questions publicly, and participating in classroom discussions. This suggests that socio-emotional distress is often reinforced by everyday classroom interactions, making teacher responsiveness and emotionally safe instructional environments critically important (Kargiotidis & Manolitsis, 2023; López-Zamora et al., 2025).

This challenges linear models of teacher effectiveness and supports a more adaptive and context-responsive conceptualisation of teaching. This perspective is further reinforced by empirical evidence indicating that teacher socio-emotional competence and instructional practices function as key mechanisms in promoting student engagement and well-being (Gebre et al., 2025). The effectiveness of this mechanism is not uniform but contingent upon contextual conditions. The findings demonstrate that intervention programmes and school-based support systems function as moderating factors that influence the strength and consistency of the relationship between instructional practices and socio-emotional outcomes (Nkomo & Dube, 2023; B. Y. Zhang et al., 2025). Empirical evidence shows that structured psychoeducational and socio-emotional interventions can significantly enhance emotional regulation and reduce psychological distress among students with dyslexia (Abdel Moneem et al., 2024). However, the frequent lack of integration between these interventions and everyday classroom practices suggests a misalignment between individual teacher competence and institutional support systems. This indicates that the impact of teacher competence is conditional rather than fixed, depending on the coherence and availability of contextual resources. This has broader implications for educational policy, indicating that efforts to improve student outcomes should extend beyond individual teacher development to include systemic and institutional support structures.

Theoretically, these findings can be interpreted through an integrative framework that draws on multiple established theories. In line with Pedagogical Content Knowledge, effective teaching involves the transformation of knowledge into forms that are meaningful and accessible to learners. However, the present study extends this perspective by demonstrating that such transformation is not solely cognitive but is mediated by motivational and socio-emotional factors, particularly teacher self-efficacy and emotional responsiveness (Calandri et al., 2025). Teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy are more likely to engage in adaptive instructional practices and sustain supportive learning environments, thereby contributing to more positive socio-emotional outcomes (Hanssen et al., 2025; Nijakowska, 2022). This aligns with Self-Efficacy Theory, which emphasises the role of belief systems in shaping behaviour, while also suggesting that self-efficacy itself is dynamically influenced by classroom experiences and student responses.

In addition, the findings highlight the recursive nature of the relationship between teacher competence and student outcomes. Rather than representing a unidirectional process, socio-emotional outcomes appear to feed back into teachers' beliefs and practices. Positive student responses may reinforce teachers' sense of efficacy and encourage continued use of adaptive strategies, whereas persistent challenges may undermine confidence and limit instructional responsiveness (Adi et al., 2024; Carbonneau et al., 2022). This feedback loop underscores the evolving and adaptive nature of teacher competence, positioning it as a continuously recalibrated system shaped through ongoing interaction.

The findings can also be understood through an ecological lens. Consistent with Ecological Systems Theory, teacher competence operates within a broader system of contextual influences, including school structures, intervention frameworks, and resource availability. The identification of contextual support systems as moderating conditions reinforces the importance of these environmental factors, suggesting that effective support for students with dyslexia requires alignment between individual competence and

systemic conditions (Adi et al., 2025; Morte-Soriano & Soriano-Ferrer, 2024). This perspective shifts attention from individual explanations to a broader understanding of educational effectiveness, where outcomes are shaped by interactions across classroom, school and policy contexts. (Forteza-Forteza et al., 2021; Nnamani, 2024). Of particular relevance, the convergence of findings across qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies strengthens the credibility of the proposed interpretation. Although methodological variations resulted in differences in emphasis and contextual focus, the overall evidence consistently highlights the interconnected role of teacher competence, instructional enactment, and contextual support systems in shaping students' socio-emotional outcomes.

Unlike previous domain-based reviews that primarily categorise dimensions of teacher competence, the present study proposes a mechanism-oriented explanatory framework that conceptualises teacher competence as a dynamic and interconnected process shaped by contextual influences and ongoing instructional interactions. The framework advances existing literature by explaining not only what constitutes teacher competence, but also how and under what conditions such competence influences students' socio-emotional development.

Collectively, these findings extend the literature beyond descriptive and correlational accounts by offering a more integrated explanation of how teacher competence functions within authentic educational settings. The findings suggest that teacher competence operates through interconnected cognitive, motivational, and instructional processes. Its influence on students'

socio-emotional development is further shaped by contextual conditions and reinforced through ongoing instructional experiences and feedback mechanisms

Practically, these insights underscore the need for teacher education programmes to move beyond knowledge acquisition and prioritise the enactment of competence through adaptive instructional practices and socio-emotional responsiveness. Professional development should therefore focus not only on pedagogical knowledge, but also on strengthening teacher self-efficacy and reflective capacity, given the recursive nature of competence development (JohnBull & Hardiman, 2023). At the policy level, the results highlight the importance of developing integrated support systems that align classroom practices with broader intervention frameworks. Without such alignment, even highly competent teachers may face structural constraints in translating their capabilities into effective practice.

Overall, this study contributes a theoretically grounded and theoretically informed model that reconceptualises teacher competence as a dynamic, context-sensitive, and mechanism-driven system. As illustrated in Figure 2, teacher competence operates as a recursive process in which foundational capacities are enacted through instructional practices to influence students' socio-emotional outcomes. This relationship is mediated, context-dependent, and continuously shaped by feedback mechanisms, offering a more comprehensive explanation of how teacher competence functions in real classroom contexts.

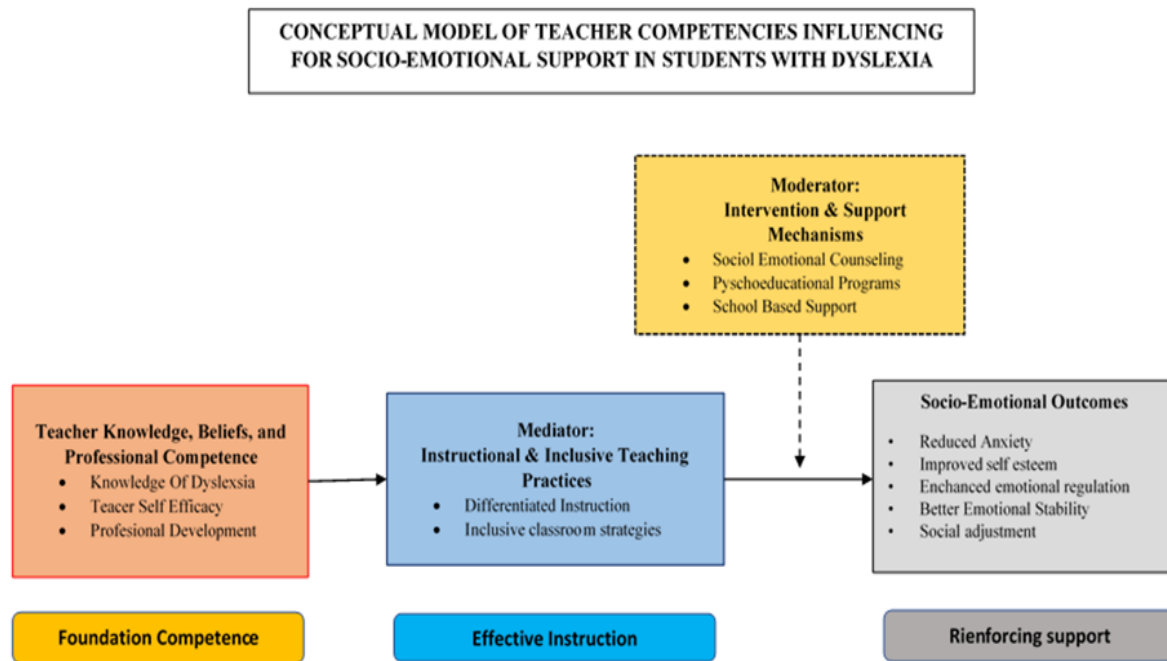


Figure 2. Proposed Dynamic Mechanism-Based Framework of Teacher Competence in Supporting the Socio-Emotional Development of Students with Dyslexia

A dynamic process-oriented model of teacher competence in supporting the socio-emotional development of students with dyslexia. The model conceptualises teacher competence as a dynamic system comprising foundational capacities (knowledge, beliefs, and self-efficacy) that are enacted through instructional practices, which function as a mediating mechanism linking competence to students' socio-emotional outcomes. These outcomes include anxiety, self-esteem, emotional regulation, and social adjustment. The strength of this relationship is shaped by contextual support systems, including intervention programmes and school-level resources, which operate as moderating conditions. A feedback loop indicates the recursive nature of the process, whereby student outcomes influence teachers' self-efficacy and subsequent instructional practices.

4.1 Limitations and Future Research

Despite these contributions, this study is subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the review was restricted to empirical studies published in English only, which may have resulted in the exclusion of relevant research conducted in other languages. Moreover, the focus on peer-reviewed journal

articles excluded grey literature, such as reports and theses, which may provide complementary insights into teacher competence and dyslexia. Such restrictions are common in systematic reviews but may introduce publication and language bias, potentially limiting the comprehensiveness of the evidence base (Page et al., 2021).

Second, the heterogeneity of the included studies presents a limitation. Variations in research design, measurement tools, and sample characteristics may affect the comparability and consistency of findings across studies. Although a quality assessment was conducted, differences in methodological approaches and reporting standards may influence the robustness of the synthesis. Third, the review specifically focused on primary school contexts, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other educational levels, such as early childhood or secondary education. Furthermore, some studies did not explicitly report socio-emotional outcomes, requiring interpretative thematic analysis, which may introduce a degree of subjectivity.

Several important research gaps remain evident within the existing literature. First, the predominance of cross-sectional and short-term studies restricts understanding of the long-term

developmental impact of teacher competence on students' socio-emotional functioning. Second, evidence from diverse educational and socio-cultural contexts remains relatively limited, particularly within low-resource and underrepresented educational settings. Third, although the present review proposes an explanatory framework linking teacher competence, instructional enactment, and socio-emotional outcomes, empirical validation of these interrelationships is still insufficient. Future research employing longitudinal, intervention-based, and mixed-methods approaches is therefore needed to strengthen both theoretical and practical understanding of these interconnected processes.

Despite these limitations, the findings provide a meaningful foundation for future research. Several directions are particularly important. An important priority for future studies is the adoption of a more integrative approach to examining teacher competence. Existing research tends to focus on isolated dimensions, such as knowledge or pedagogy, without adequately capturing the interactions between cognitive, pedagogical, and socio-emotional components. Empirical studies that test comprehensive and multidimensional models of teacher competence are therefore needed to advance theoretical understanding.

There is also a need for longitudinal research to examine the sustained impact of teacher competence on the socio-emotional development of students with dyslexia. Current evidence is largely cross-sectional or short-term, limiting insights into developmental trajectories and long-term outcomes (Wilmot et al., 2023). Further attention should be directed toward intervention-based studies conducted in authentic classroom settings. While existing interventions reveal promising results, many are implemented under controlled conditions, raising concerns about ecological validity. Research that evaluates the effectiveness, scalability, and sustainability of interventions in real-world educational contexts is essential.

Another important direction concerns the role of teacher training and professional development. Future studies should examine which forms of training are most effective in addressing

misconceptions, enhancing instructional practices, and strengthening socio-emotional competencies. Experimental and quasi-experimental designs would be particularly valuable in establishing causal relationships (Monahan et al., 2025). Consideration of contextual and cultural factors also remains essential. As many studies are conducted within specific geographical settings, cross-cultural investigations are needed to enhance the generalisability of findings and to better understand how educational systems and cultural norms shape teaching practices and student experiences. Cross-cultural research is essential in educational studies to account for variations in pedagogical practices, institutional structures, and cultural expectations that influence both teaching and learning processes (OECD, 2021).

5. CONCLUSION

This study provides a systematic synthesis of recent empirical evidence on teacher competence in supporting the socio-emotional development of students with dyslexia. The findings indicate that teacher competence extends beyond knowledge acquisition and is reflected in teachers' ability to implement adaptive instructional practices that support students' emotional well-being, self-esteem, and social adjustment. The review also highlights the importance of contextual support systems, including intervention programmes and school-based support, in strengthening the effectiveness of instructional practices. A key contribution of this study lies in the development of a mechanism-based explanatory framework that integrates teacher knowledge, self-efficacy, instructional practices, and contextual support within a unified structure. By moving beyond descriptive categorisations of teacher competence, the study offers a more integrated and process-oriented explanation of how teacher-related factors influence socio-emotional outcomes among students with dyslexia.

The findings carry important implications for teacher education, classroom practice, and educational policy. Teacher preparation programmes should place greater emphasis on adaptive instruction and socio-emotional responsiveness, while schools and policymakers should strengthen institutional support systems that

enable teachers to implement inclusive and emotionally supportive practices effectively. Overall, this study contributes a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of the role of teacher competence in supporting the socio-emotional development of students with dyslexia and provides a valuable foundation for future empirical and intervention-based research.

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