# Assessing the Social-Emotional Competence of Social Science Students at Selected Public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Sulu

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*ABSTRACT***.** This study aimed to evaluate the social-emotional competencies of Social Science students at selected publicly funded higher education institutions in Sulu throughout the academic year 2024-2025. A descriptive research approach was utilized for this investigation. As stated by Bless and Higson-Smith (1995, p. 63), research design is defined as "a program that guides a researcher in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting observed facts." Additionally, Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 75) characterize research design as a "roadmap or schematic" that outlines the process through which research is conducted to achieve specific objectives. The research was conducted across several HEIs in Sulu, with a larger concentration of these institutions located in Jolo. These institutions are directly overseen as established by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Region IX and BMHTE-BARMM. The study participants consisted of Social Science students currently enrolled at these selected public institutions, irrespective of gender, civil status, ethnicity, religious background, or place of origin. The findings indicated that, in general, Social Science students exhibited strong social-emotional competencies, with no significant differences observed based on gender, year level, or parental income. However, differences were noted with respect to the students' age and the educational background of their parents. The positive correlations between the various competencies align with CASEL's integrated model, underscoring their importance in both the personal and academic success of students.
*KEYWORDS: Social, Emotional, Competence, Social Science*

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## Introduction

As the world rapidly evolves, the need for individuals who are resilient and adaptable is steadily increasing. Social-emotional competence (SEC), which encompasses the ability to manage emotional responses, create bonds, and make responsible decisions, plays a key role in meeting these demands (Clarke et al., 2015; Greenberg et al., 2003; Taylor et al., 2017 in Eriksen & Bru, 2022). SEC allows individuals to harmonize their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, leading to more effective social interactions (CASEL, 2019; Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000 in Ferreira et al., 2020). For Social Science students, whose studies often require critical thinking and teamwork, SEC is essential for fostering empathy, communication, and emotional resilience skills

that are essential for both academic achievement as well as personal growth (Greenberg et al., 2003; Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000 in Ferreira et al., 2020; Savellon, Asiri, & Chavez, 2024).

Despite the growing recognition of SEC's importance in higher education (Wang & Eccles, 2012; Hall & DiPerna, 2017; O'Connor et al., 2018 in Eriksen & Bru, 2022), there is a lack of research that explores the connection between specific SEC components and student outcomes, particularly within non-Western contexts (Jagers et al., 2015; Holsen et al., 2008; Taylor et al., 2017 in Eriksen & Bru, 2022). This research intends to bridge this gap through an investigation of how SEC through components including self-awareness, self-regulation, social understanding, interpersonal skills, and decision-making (CASEL, 2019) influences the educational performance, social interactions, and personal development of Social Science students in selected publicly funded higher education institutions (HEIs) in Sulu. Contextually, recent studies from the Philippines highlight the significance of self-awareness in managing professional stress (Dagoy et al., 2024), student self-confidence and efficacy (Chavez, Anuddin, Mansul, et al., 2024), emotional coping strategies in learning (Inoferio et al., 2024), and the role of cultural awareness and socio-emotional adaptation in diverse educational settings (Chavez & Vicente, 2024). These findings align with the holistic objectives of SEC development in higher education.

**Research Questions**

This study evaluated the level of social-emotional competence among Social Science students at selected publicly funded higher education institutions (HEIs) in Sulu for the school year 2024-2025.

It aimed to address the following questions upon its conclusion:

1. What is the demographic composition of the student replies regarding:
   1.1 Age;
   1.2 Gender;
   1.3 Year level;
   1.4 Parent's mean monthly earnings; and
   1.5 Parent's Educational achievement?
2. What is the level of social-emotional competence of Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu in the following dimensions:
   2.1 Self-awareness;
   2.2. Social awareness;
   2.3. Self-management;
   2.4. Relationship management; and
   2.5 Responsible decision-making?
3. Is there a significant difference in the level of emotional and social skills of Social Science students at designated publicly funded higher education institutions in Sulu when data is available are categorized in accordance with:
   3.1 Gender;
   3.2. Age;
   3.3. Year level;
   3.4. Parent's average monthly income; and
   3.5. Parent's educational attainment?
4. Is there a significant correlation among the sub-levels subsumed under degree of social-emotional competency of Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu?

**Foreign Literature and Studies**

*Observed social-emotional abilities and Autonomy Support*. Collie et al. (2024) explored the function of perceived social-emotional competency (perceived-SEC) among 501 Australian students. Their findings underscored the importance of autonomy-supportive pedagogy in enhancing students' global perceived-SEC. Specific competencies such as tolerance, emotional management, and emotional awareness showed distinct associations pertaining to well-being and social-emotional competencies prosocial behavior. These results highlight the significance of perceived SEC linked to pedagogical approaches an important consideration for HEIs in Sulu striving to cultivate student welfare in conjunction with competence.

*Emotional Regulation, Well-being. and Academic Engagement*. Eriksen and Bru (2022) analyzed the connections between social-emotional competences (emotional control, interpersonal skills, and academic preparation), emotional well-being and school engagement among young people. They discovered that emotional regulation was the strongest predictor of well-being, which mediated its influence on behavioral and emotional engagement in school. Additionally, planning skills directly fostered engagement. This suggests that emotional and organizational skills may be critical targets to enhance social science students' academic motivation and success in Sulu's HEIs.

*Cultural Context and Social-Emotional Structure*. Wang (2022) addressed the adaptation of Western SEL frameworks within Eastern, collectivistic cultures, specifically Western China. Notably, responsible decision-making did not emerge as a separate factor; instead, social harmony prioritizing collective benefit was distinct. The study demonstrated steady SEC structure during early adolescence and found that SEL programs improved reading and math performance, with teacher-student relationship mediating reading outcomes. This emphasizes the cultural specificity of SEC constructs and the need for context-responsive frameworks when assessing social science students in Sulu's culturally diverse environment.

*Emotional Self-Regulation as Foundation for School Success.* Liew and Spinrad (2022) clarified conceptual ambiguities around emotional self-regulation and emphasized its foundational role in linking SECs to whole-child school success. Their heuristic model advocates a holistic approach valuing social, emotional, academic, and extracurricular engagement. For HEIs in Sulu, embedding emotional self-regulation strategies within curricula can promote well-rounded student growth in a variety of areas.

*Integrating SEL in Language and Curriculum.* Gay et al. (2022) introduced pedagogical approaches combining SEL with Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in English classes, fostering emotional competencies alongside language proficiency. Their model, applied to primary students, suggests dual-purpose learning can enhance both emotional and academic skills. Adaptation of such integrative approaches could benefit social science education in HEIs by combining subject matter with socio-emotional skill development.

*School Climate and Policy Impact.* Llorent et al. (2021) analyzed how school climate policies affect SEC, bullying, and cyberbullying among adolescents. Their findings support investing in positive school climate policies to reduce bullying and improve student social-emotional outcomes insights crucial for HEI administrators in Sulu aiming to create supportive campus environments.

*Sociocultural Frameworks and Mentorship.* Nguyen (2021) proposed the "zone of proximal self" framework, illustrating how higher education learning ecologies and mentorship cultivate academic and SEC development. Findings highlight the influence of socialization and

community, which can inform equity-focused mentorship programs tailored for social science students at Sulu HEIs.

*Management and Crisis Adaptation in SEL.* Sánchez et al. (2021) examined the function of school management in strengthening SEC during COVID-19. Their quantitative study of private school directors showed positive management impact on sustaining SEC through health crises, emphasizing active leadership's role in supporting socio-emotional development a lesson transferable to HEI administration in Sulu amid ongoing public health challenges.

*Cultural Specificity and Inclusive SEL Assessment*. Jukes et al. (2021) identified community-valued competencies such as obedience and social responsibility in Tanzania, with socioeconomic and urban-rural factors influencing SEC ratings. Farmer and Adams (2021) evidenced that foundational SEL skills relate strongly to applied competencies among students with special needs. Both studies call for culturally sensitive, inclusive SEL frameworks, essential for addressing Sulu's diverse student demographics.

*Sustainable SEL Integration in Teaching Practices*. Ferreira et al. (2020) proposed a model focused on sustainability integration of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) criteria and ongoing evaluation everyday educational instruction. This approach aims to cultivate emotionally resilient, flexible learners capable of tackling complex challenges, aligning with Sustainable Development Goals. This model offers a practical pathway for embedding SEC development systematically within social science programs at Sulu's public HEIs.

The reviewed foreign literature underscores the critical role of culturally responsive SEC frameworks, autonomy-supportive pedagogy, emotional regulation, school climate, and integrated curriculum approaches in fostering social-emotional competence. These insights provide essential guidance for assessing and enhancing the SEC of social science students in selected public HEIs in Sulu, ensuring holistic student development aligned with global best practices and local cultural contexts.

**Local Literature and Studies**

*Challenges in Online Learning During the Pandemic.* Fabito et al. (2021) investigated challenges faced by computing students during the COVID-19 Enhanced Community Quarantine in Luzon, Philippines. Surveying 300 students, the study identified key barriers hindering online learning: challenges in elucidating subjects with instructors, absence of a proper learning environment and inadequate internet connectivity. The findings suggested that both students and faculty were unprepared for complete online education, impacting learning effectiveness and adaptation to students' needs. Complementing this, Chavez and Lamorinas (2023) examined the restructuring of evaluative methodologies and strategies during the pandemic, highlighting the need for flexible, responsive assessment approaches in online education to better accommodate student needs.

*Emotional Well-being Interventions: Gratitude and Kindness.* Datu et al. (2021) executed a three-week online experimental study involving 107 Filipino undergraduates to investigate the impacts acts of thankfulness and compassion towards well-being throughout the epidemic. The study demonstrated that participants engaging in thankfulness and kindness practices reported significantly greater happy feelings than controls, emphasizing the applicability and emotional benefits of such interventions within non-Western cultural settings afflicted by Anxiety related to COVID-19.

*Academic Adjustment and Senior High School Strand.* Alipio (2020) analyzed academic Performance and adaptation differences among 14,062 Freshmen Filipinos in health sciences

across 79 HEIs, focusing on the influence of senior year in high school (SHS) strands. Students enrolled in the STEM discipline showed the farthest degrees of academic adaptation and performance. Moreover, SHS strand moderated the adjustment-performance relationship, suggesting that prior educational background plays a crucial role in college success.

*Student Engagement, Psychological Well-being, and Life Quality.* Cleofas (2020) explored links the correlation among student engagement, mental well-being, and well-being in a sample of 249 college students at a private university. Results revealed that participation correlation among school organizations with lower depression, greater favorable emotion, and higher contentment with life. Additionally, quality social interactions within the school environment were associated with overall well-being, highlighting the social context's importance in mental health.

*Grit and Depression Among Filipino Students.* Datu et al. (2019) studied the relationship between grit (perseverance for long-term goals), the significance of existence and melancholia in Four hundred forty-seven Filipino high school pupils. Structural equation modeling indicated that grit positively influenced the existence of significance in life, which in turn predicted lower depression levels. This suggests that fostering Grit may function as a protective factor against depressive symptoms via enhancement of life purpose.

*Procrastination Tendencies in University Students.* Mandap (2016) examined procrastinating behaviors. of Two hundred college students at Bulacan State University. The study found gender differences, with males procrastinating more than females. Lower academic self-efficacy was associated with higher procrastination scores. No significant differences in procrastination were found across academic courses or performance levels, underscoring the influence of self-belief on time management.

*Stress Causes, Effects, and Coping Mechanisms Among IT Students.* Mazo (2015) examined sources and effects of stress and coping strategies among 51 Undergraduates pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Information Technology at Leyte Normal University. Major stressors included thesis writing and school projects. Common effects were sleeplessness and irritability, with gender differences in stress experiences observed. Students primarily coped by using computers and praying, indicating both technological and spiritual coping methods.

*Parental Support and Educational Challenges*. Chavez, Adalia, and Alberto (2023) highlighted parental support tactics and motivation in facilitating children's proficiency in English acquisition learning, emphasizing the critical role of family engagement in scholarly achievement. This is consistent with the findings of Murro et al. (2023), who highlighted the difficulties faced by parents with lower educational attainment in supporting their children's modular distance learning during the pandemic. Their study emphasizes the socio-economic and educational inequalities that influence students' learning conditions and socio-emotional well-being.

*Academic Integrity and Humanized Teaching*. Chavez (2023) assessed online academic Integrity and empathetic pedagogy practices at Zamboanga Peninsula Polytechnic State University, highlighting approaches that support ethical behavior and foster meaningful teacher-student relationships, which are central to developing social-emotional competence in higher education learners.

*Workplace Awareness and Gender-Related Policies.* Chavez et al. (2024) examined awareness and organizational compliance related to the Magna Carta for female healthcare professionals, educators, and minimum-wage employees in the labor environment. Their study provides insight into gender-sensitive policies and organizational dynamics affecting female

educators and workers, further contextualizing the socio-emotional challenges and supports needed within educational institutions.

The reviewed local studies converge on themes impacting Filipino students' social-emotional competence, including environmental barriers, emotional interventions, educational background, mental health, motivation, behavior tendencies, and stress management. These contextual insights are crucial for tailoring support mechanisms and interventions in higher education settings within the Philippines, specifically in public institutions like those in Sulu.

## Methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology that will be used in carrying out this study. It covers the research design, setting, participants, sampling methods, data collection procedures and instruments, research tools, as well as the validity, reliability, and statistical analysis of the data.

1. *Research Design*

This study utilized a descriptive research design. Bless and Higson-Smith (1995, p. 63) define research design as 'a program that directs a researcher in gathering, analyzing, and interpreting observed data.' Furthermore, Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 75) describe it as the 'plan or framework' that outlines the approach for conducting a study to accomplish its goals.Thus, this study described, quantified, and inferred as well as discovered substantial disparities and correlations among variables, enabling the forecasting of future occurrences based on current information or phenomena. students of Social Sciences at selected HEIs in Sulu.

2. *Research Locale and Respondents*

This research was performed at selected HEIs during the Academic Year 2024-2025. These higher education institutions are situated in the different municipalities of Sulu, but most of them situation within Jolo municipality. These Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) fall under the close oversight of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Region IX and BMHTE-BARMM.

The participants in this study were students. of Social Sciences at Approved government-supported higher education institutions in Sulu that are presently enrolled throughout this academic year 2024-2025 irrespective of their civil status, religious affiliation, ethnicity, and place of origin.

Distribution of respondents

| No. | Social Science Students at selected HEIs in Sulu | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | First year | 25 |
| 2 | Second year | 25 |
| 3 | Third year | 25 |
| 4 | Fourth year | 25 |
| | Total: | 100 |

3. *Sampling Design*

This study employed a purposive sampling approach, which is a non-probability method. A total of 100 participants were intentionally chosen based on availability. The participants were Social Science learners from selected publicly funded higher education institutions in Sulu. Purposive sampling was utilized in this study ensured that factors for example, gender, age, parental education level, parental typical monthly income, and year level were adequately represented.

4. *Research Instrument*

The research utilized a survey questionnaire primary tool utilized to collect data pertaining to the social-emotional skills of Social Sciences students of at selected HEIs in Sulu. Social-

emotional competence the questionnaire was modified and structured with minor adjustments from CASEC (2019) Model of Social-Emotional Competence.

CASEC (2019) Model is standardized research instrument with proven reliability and validity. However, to suite its usefulness of the surveys in the local context to be utilized in this study was examined by no fewer than two specialists from the instructors of the School of Graduate Studies at Sulu State College.

This study utilized a research instrument consisting of two sections. Section One of the questionnaire aimed at gathering population characteristics information from Social Science students at selected HEIs in Sulu, including elements like gender, age, and parental educational background, parental typical monthly income and academic standing. Section Two aimed to collect data on the students' level of social-emotional competence (SEC), covering dimensions such as self-awareness (five items), social awareness (five items), self-management (five items), relationship management (five items), and responsible decision-making (five items).

Data to be gathered through these questionnaires were evaluated using a 5-point Likert Scale, including 5=Always (A); 4=Often (O); 3=Sometimes (S); 2=Seldom (Sl) and 1=Never (N).

5. *Data Gathering Procedure*

The subsequent procedures were adhered to during the information collection process:

1) Permission to distribute the questionnaire was secured issued by the Dean's Office of Graduate Studiesas well as from the College Presidents or heads of the institutions, and the Deans or Department Heads of the Social Sciences departments;and
2) The research Personally initiated and managed the surveys, along with their retrieval.

6. *Statistical Treatment of Data*

descriptive and inferential analysis techniques were correctly applied in analyzing the information collected in this research, as outlined below:

1) For the first study question, the frequencies and percentages were used to describe the characteristics of the student participants.
2) For the second research question, the average and standard deviation were calculated to assess the level of social-emotional competence (SEC).
3) For To address the third research question, an independent samples t-test was performed to analyze significant discrepancies in the level of SEC based on gender. Additionally, A One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to performed to identify meaningful differences when the data were categorized by age parental education level, parental average monthly income, and year level.
4) For the fourth research question, the The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (Pearson's r) was used to applied to assess the strength of the relationships within the subcategories beneath the level of SEC.

The subsequent rating scale intervals will be utilized in the analysis of the findings derived from both descriptive and inferential statistical methods.

| Point | Scale Value | Descriptors |
|---|---|---|
| 5 | 4.50- 5.00 | Always (A) |
| 4 | 3.50- 4.49 | Often (O) |
| 3 | 2.50- 3.49 | Sometimes (S) |
| 2 | 1.50- 2.49 | Seldom (Sl) |
| 1 | 1.00- 1.49 | Never (N) |

## Results

This chapter outlines the analysis and interpretation of the results derived obtained from the data collected in this study. It specifically outlines the socio-demographic characteristics of the students, including sex, age group, academic year, parental mean monthly earnings, and parental level of education. The chapter also discusses the level of societal -emotional competence (SEC) among Social Science students, focusing on dimensions including self-awareness, interpersonal awareness, self-regulation, relationship management, and ethical decision-making. Additionally, it examines the significant differences in SEC based on the students' socio-demographic profiles, as well as the correlations between the subcategories of SEC among Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu.

Following the accurate evaluation and quantitative analysis of the information collected In this research, the results are presented, analyzed, and interpreted in relation for every research question: 1. How are the population characteristics among the student participants with regard to sex, age group, academic year, parental mean monthly earnings, and parental academic background?

*1.1 In terms of Gender*

Table 1.1 the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants based on gender is shown as shown in the table. From this information, it is observed that 27% of the 100 students are male, while 73% are female. This indicates that a larger proportion of female students participated in the study in contrast to their male counterparts.

Table 1.1 Socio-demographic profiles of the participants based on gender.

| Gender | Number of respondents | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 27 | 27% |
| Female | 73 | 73% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

*1.2 In terms of Age*

Table 1.2 the table presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants based on age. According to the data, 36% of the 100 students are 18 years old or younger, 13% are 19 years old, and 51% have reached the age of 20 or older. This indicates that a large number of respondents are aged 20 or above, which aligns with the typical age range of college students.

Table 1.2 Socio-demographic Characteristics profiles of the participants categorized by age.

| Age | Number of respondents | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| 18 years old and below | 36 | 36% |
| 19 years old | 13 | 13% |
| 20 years old and above | 51 | 51% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

*1.3 In terms of Year Level*

Table 1.3 The Overview of table displays the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents in terms of year level at HEIs in Sulu. From this data, it can be observed that each year level is equally represented, indicating that the respondents provide a balanced representation of their respective year levels.

*Table 1.3 Socio-demographic Characteristics profiles of the respondents based on their academic year.*

| Year Level | Number of respondents | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| First year | 25 | 25% |
| Second year | 25 | 25% |
| Third year | 25 | 25% |
| Fourth year | 25 | 25% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

*1.4 In terms of Parent's Average Monthly Income*

Table 1.4 Overview of table presents the socio-demographic profile of respondents regarding their parents' mean monthly earnings. According to the data, 83% of the 100 students have an average monthly income of 10,000 or less, 16% fall within the 10,001 to 20,000 range, and only 1% have an average monthly income above 20,000. This suggests that the majority of respondents come from families earning 10,000 per month or less, indicating that they are likely part of the marginalized sector.

*Table 1.4 Socio-demographic Characteristics profiles of the respondents based on their parents' average monthly income*

| Parent's Average Monthly Income | Number of respondents | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| 10,000 and below | 83 | 83% |
| 10,001 to 20,000 | 16 | 16% |
| 20,001 and above | 1 | 1% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

*1.5 In terms of Parent's Educational Attainment*

Table 1.5 the table illustrates the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents with regard to their parents' level of education. Based on the data, 9% of the 100 students' parents have no formal education, 27% have completed elementary education, 23% have a high school education, 37% hold a bachelor's or vocational degree, and 4% have attained a master's or doctorate degree. This implies that majority of the respondents' parents have structured education.

*Table 1.5 Socio-demographic Characteristics profiles of the respondents according to parent's educational achievement.*

| Parent's Educational Attainment | Number of respondents | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| No formal education | 9 | 9% |
| Elementary level | 27 | 27% |
| High School level | 23 | 23% |
| Bachelor's degree/ Vocational | 37 | 37% |
| Master's degree/ Doctorate degree | 4 | 4% |
| Total | 100 | 100% |

2. What is the level concerning social-emotional abilities among Social Science learners at selected public HEIs in Sulu across the following aspects: self-recognition, social understanding, emotional regulation, relationship handling, and ethical decision-making?

*2.1 In terms of Self-awareness*

Table 2.1 he table presents the level of social- psychological competence of Social Science students in chosen public higher education institutions in Sulu, specifically in the dimension of self-awareness. Overall, the respondents recorded an overall average score of 4.036

having a standard deviation of 0.65897, that corresponds to the "often" category under self-awareness.

Among the individual items, statement number one—"I know what I am thinking and doing"—attained a high average score of 4.19, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.929, also rated as "often." Similarly, statement number four—"I know when I am moody"—garnered an average score of 4.11 with a standard deviation of 1.034, likewise falling under the "often" category.

Nguyen (2021) highlighted that interactions within the learning environment of higher education institutions are crucial in promoting students' growth in both academic and social-emotional competencies as they progress toward their ideal selves.

He further added that how frightened selves draw attention to injustices and emphasize the value of community.

Moreover, de Carvalho et al. (2016) emphasized that through a mindfulness practice, it strengthens the importance for the teachers and students to regulate social-emotional learning to experience a more positive effect and to be more of self-compassionate in personal accomplishment and in self-kindness.

*Table 2.1 Level of social-emotional competence of social science students at selected public HEIs within Sulu regarding self-awareness.*

| No | Statements | Mean | S.D. | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I know what I am thinking and doing. | 4.19 | .929 | Often |
| 2 | I understand why I do what I do. | 3.99 | 1.020 | Often |
| 3 | I understand my moods and feelings. | 3.94 | .952 | Often |
| 4 | I know when I am moody. | 4.11 | 1.034 | Often |
| 5 | I can read people's faces when they are angry. | 3.95 | 1.192 | Often |
| Weighted Mean | | 4.036 | .65897 | Often |

Legend: (5) 4.50 – 5.00 = Always; (4) 3.50 – 4.49 = Frequently; (3) 2.50 – 3.49 = Occasionally; (2) 1.50 – 2.49 = Rarely; (1) 1.00 – 1.49 = Never

*2.2 In terms of Social Awareness*

Table 2.2 illustrates the degree of social-emotional competence of Social Science students in designated public higher education institutions in Sulu, specifically focusing on the dimension of social awareness. The overall composite mean score recorded by the respondents was 3.710, having a standard deviation of 0.70974, reflecting a rating of "often" in this category.

In particular, item number one—"I recognize how people feel by looking at their facial expressions"—received an elevated mean score of 3.97, accompanied by a standard deviation of 1.058, rated as "often." Likewise, item number four—"I understand why people react the way they do"—achieved an average score of 3.76, with a standard deviation of 1.074, also classified as "often." In the same way, item number five—"If a friend is upset, I have a pretty good idea why"—earned an average score of 3.76 and a standard deviation of 1.004, maintaining the same rating.

Jeremic et al. (2015) noted that by the improving one's ability to empathize, convey positive emotions, handle underrepresented groups more effectively, and work with others students encouraged for better goals, positive outcomes and effects and not in the direction of embracing prefabricated knowledge.

Moreover, Wang (2022) pointed out that social-emotional competencies found to have positive impact on students' outcomes. Responsible decision-making did not stand out instead social

harmony emerged beneficial with the effort and willingness to achieve remarkable academic performance.

Table 2.2 Social-emotional competence of Social Science students at selected public higher education institutions in Sulu, specifically in the area of social awareness.

| No | Statements | Mean | S.D. | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I recognize how people feel by looking at their facial expressions. | 3.97 | 1.058 | Often |
| 2 | It is easy for me to understand why people feel the way they do. | 3.55 | 1.038 | Often |
| 3 | If someone is sad, angry or happy, I believe I know what they are thinking. | 3.50 | 1.020 | Often |
| 4 | I understand why people react the way they do. | 3.76 | 1.074 | Often |
| 5 | If a friend is upset, I have a pretty good idea why. | 3.77 | 1.004 | Often |
| Weighted Mean | | 3.710 | .70794 | Often |

Legend: (5) 4.50 – 5.00 = Always; (4) 3.50 – 4.49 = Frequently; (3) 2.50 – 3.49 = Occasionally; (2) 1.50 – 2.49 = Rarely; (1) 1.00 – 1.49 = Never

*2.3 In terms of Self-management*

Table 2.3 illustrates the level of social-emotional competence of Social Science students at selected public higher education institutions in Sulu in terms to self-management. The data show that, overall, the respondents achieved an overall mean score of 3.628, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.76806, that falls under the "often" category in the self-management dimension.

More specifically, item number one "I can stay calm in stressful situations" achieved an average score of 3.76, with a standard deviation of 1.016, categorized as "often." Item number two "I stay calm and overcome anxiety in new or changing situations" earned an average of 3.59, with a standard deviation of 1.129, also rated as "often." Similarly, item number four "I can control the way I feel when something bad happens" garnered an average score of 3.76, with a standard deviation of 1.074. Lastly, item number five "When I am upset with someone, I will wait till I have calmed down before discussing the issue" achieved an average score of 3.54, with a standard deviation of 1.184, maintaining the same "often" rating.

West et al. (2018) reported that self-assessment as one the assessment in describing social-emotional competencies from the development of a continuous improvement effect in the students' success.

Similarly, Davidson et al. (2018) reported that continuous measure improvement approach facilitated through a self-report measure of the students regarding their social and emotional competency in identifying risk and guide practice.

Table 2.3 Social-emotional competence of Social Science students at selected public higher education institutions in Sulu, particularly in the aspect of self-management.

| No | Statements | Mean | S.D. | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I can stay calm in stressful situations. | 3.76 | 1.016 | High |
| 2 | I stay calm and overcome anxiety in new or changing situations. | 3.59 | 1.129 | High |
| 3 | I stay calm when things go wrong. | 3.49 | 1.087 | Moderate |
| 4 | I can control the way I feel when something bad happens. | 3.76 | 1.074 | High |
| 5 | When I am upset with someone, I will wait till I have calmed down before discussing the issue. | 3.54 | 1.184 | High |
| Weighted Mean | | 3.628 | .76806 | High |

Legend: (5) 4.50 – 5.00 = Always; (4) 3.50 – 4.49 = Frequently; (3) 2.50 – 3.49 = Occasionally; (2) 1.50 – 2.49 = Rarely; (1) 1.00 – 1.49 = Never

*2.4 In terms of Relationship Management*

Table 2.4 illustrates the social-emotional competence levels of Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu, specifically focusing on relationship management. Overall, the respondents achieved a combined mean score of 3.852 and a standard deviation of 0.64799, which shows falls under the "often" category for this dimension.

In detail, item number one "I will always apologize when I hurt my friend unintentionally" achieved the highest mean score of 4.38, with no variation (standard deviation of 0.982, rated as "often." Item number two "I always try and comfort my friends when they are sad" recorded a mean value of 4.02, accompanied by a standard deviation of 1.092. Item number three "I try not to criticize my friend when we quarrel" scored an average score of 3.82, accompanied by a standard deviation of 1.077. Furthermore, item number five "I stand up for myself without putting others down" earned a mean value of 3.93, accompanied by a standard deviation of 1.148, all within the "often" category.

Farmer and Adams (2021) highlighted the impact of social-emotional skills in improving students' overall development, supporting Mahoney et al.'s (2020) assertion that the development of social and emotional skills (SEL) has become a vital key aspect of current educational practices due to growing demands from educators, parents, and students. However, they also noted that SEL approaches vary in effectiveness. These conditions underscore the importance of schools fostering both personal and professional growth by promoting supportive relationships, youth voice, and collaborative partnerships between school, family, and community—ultimately strengthening student development.

Table 2.4 Level of social-emotional competence of social science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu regarding interpersonal relationships management.

| No | Statements | Mean | S.D. | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I will always apologize when I hurt my friend unintentionally. | 4.38 | .982 | High |
| 2 | I always try and comfort my friends when they are sad. | 4.02 | 1.092 | High |
| 3 | I try not to criticize my friend when we quarrel. | 3.82 | 1.077 | High |
| 4 | I am tolerant of my friend's mistakes. | 3.11 | 1.294 | Moderate |
| 5 | I stand up for myself without putting others down. | 3.93 | 1.148 | High |
| Weighted Mean | | 3.852 | .64799 | High |

Legend: (5) 4.50 – 5.00 = Always; (4) 3.50 – 4.49 = Frequently; (3) 2.50 – 3.49 = Occasionally; (2) 1.50 – 2.49 = Rarely; (1) 1.00 – 1.49 =Never

*2.5 In terms of Responsible Decision-Making*

Table 2.5 presents the level of social-emotional competence among Social Science students in various public higher education institutions in Sulu, particularly in the area of responsible decision-making. Overall, the respondents attained an overall mean score of 3.916, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.74083, indicating interpreted as "often" within this competency domain.

Specifically, item number five "I consider the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy before deciding to use it" received an elevated mean score of 4.04, accompanied by a standard deviation of 1.044. Item number two "I ensure that there are more positive outcomes when making a choice" achieved a mean score of 3.99, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.948. Likewise, item number three "I weigh the strengths of the situation before deciding on my action" garnered a

mean value of 3.92, accompanied by a standard deviation of 1.051. All these items are rated within the "often" category.

Zahid et al. (2024) discovered that university students demonstrated a high degree of responsible decision-making enabling them to ethical and constructive choices in various situations. The high level of this competence suggests that students are likely to consider the consequences of their actions and make choices that align with their values and consider the welfare of others.

Table 2.5 presents the level of social-emotional competence among social science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu, focusing on responsible decision-making.

| No | Statements | Mean | S.D. | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | When making decisions, I take into account the consequences of my actions. | 3.79 | 1.018 | High |
| 2 | I ensure that there are more positive outcomes when making a choice. | 3.99 | .948 | High |
| 3 | I weigh the strengths of the situation before deciding on my action. | 3.92 | 1.051 | High |
| 4 | I consider the criteria chosen before making a recommendation. | 3.84 | 1.117 | HIgh |
| 5 | I consider the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy before deciding to use it. | 4.04 | 1.044 | High |
| Weighted Mean | | 3.852 | .64799 | High |

Legend: (5) 4.50 – 5.00=Always; (4) 3.50 – 4.49=Often; (3) 2.50 – 3.49=Sometimes; (2)1.50 – 2.49=Seldom; (1)1.00 – 1.49=Never

3. Does the level of social-emotional competence among Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu significantly differ when grouped in terms of gender, age, academic year, parents' monthly income, and parents' level of education?

*3.1 According to Gender*

Table 3.1 shows the disparities in social-emotional competence among Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu in relation to gender. Overall, the mean scores and corresponding t-values suggest that there is no meaningful statistical difference between male and female respondents in this category.

Ajayi et al. (2022) revealed that the socio-emotional skills gaps naturally diminish in the HEIs where male and female students achieve similar educational attainment. This reduces gender-stereotyped skill development since they do not equate to disparities in holistic social-emotional competence.

However, According to Llorent et al. (2019), social and emotional competence was surprisingly higher in female students from the ethnic-cultural majority relevant to literacy competence. This reveals a contradicting result as being revealed within this study.

As a result, the hypothesis suggesting that "There is no significant difference in the level of social-emotional competence of Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu when data are categorized according to gender" is accepted. Table 3.1 illustrates the variations in the extent of promoting literacy development in early elementary years in terms based on gender.

| VARIABLES | Grouping Gender | Mean | S. D. | Mean Difference | t | Sig. | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-awareness | Male | 4.007 | .63605 | -.03917 | -.263 | .793 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 4.047 | .67125 | | | | |
| Social Awareness | Male | 3.859 | .57060 | .20446 | 1.283 | .202 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 3.655 | .75075 | | | | |
| Self-management | Male | 3.851 | .58070 | .30665 | 1.792 | .076 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 3.545 | .81463 | | | | |
| Relationship Management | Male | 3.807 | .55879 | -.06109 | -.417 | .678 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 3.868 | .68086 | | | | |
| Responsible Decision-making | Male | 3.948 | .54798 | .04404 | .263 | .793 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 3.904 | .80354 | | | | |

Significance at an alpha level of 0.05

*3.2 According to Age*

Table 3.2 illustrates the discrepancies in the level of social-emotional competence among Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu, organized by age. According to the mean scores and t-values, it is evident that a notable statistical difference is observed in this category.

Feraco & Meneghetti (2023) revealed that aged 12-19 years old provides strong evidence for age-related differences in social-emotional competence. There were distinct development trajectories during adolescence and early adulthood in each domain in social-emotional competence.

As a result, the hypothesis which states that "There is no significant difference in the level of social-emotional competence of Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu when data are categorized according to gender" is disapproved. Table 3.2 presents the variations in social-emotional *competence of Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu based on age.*

| SOURCES OF VARIATION | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-awareness | Between Groups | .540 | 2 | .270 | .617 | .542 | Not |
| | Within Groups | 42.450 | 97 | .438 | | | Significant |
| | Total | 42.990 | 99 | | | | |
| Social Awareness | Between Groups | .584 | 2 | .292 | .575 | .565 | Not |
| | Within Groups | 49.286 | 97 | .508 | | | Significant |
| | Total | 49.870 | 99 | | | | |
| Self-management | Between Groups | 3.668 | 2 | 1.834 | 3.250 | .043* | |
| | Within Groups | 54.734 | 97 | .564 | | | Significant |
| | Total | 58.402 | 99 | | | | |
| Relationship Management | Between Groups | .609 | 2 | .305 | .721 | .489 | Not |
| | Within Groups | 40.960 | 97 | .422 | | | Significant |
| | Total | 41.570 | 99 | | | | |
| Responsible Decision-making | Between Groups | 1.795 | 2 | .898 | 1.657 | .196 | Not |
| | Within Groups | 52.539 | 97 | .542 | | | Significant |
| | Total | 54.334 | 99 | | | | |

Significance at alpha 0.05

*3.2.1* A post-hoc analysis with the Tukey HSD Test was conducted to determine which age groups exhibited different mean scores in the aspects of social-emotional competence as assessed by Social Science students at particular public HEIs in Sulu.

The results of this analysis, presented in Table 3.2.1, show that the differences in mean scores regarding social-emotional competence in Sulu, as perceived by the students, were computed by taking the difference between the higher group mean and the lower group average.

a) In the self-awareness category, the findings indicate that no specific age group had a notably higher perception of social-emotional competence compared to others.

b) In the social awareness category, the analysis reveals that no group showed a better perception of social-emotional competence in relation to the others.

c) In the self-management category, the group of respondents aged 18 years and below showed a difference in the mean of -0.57863* with a standard deviation of 0.24036 and a p-value of 0.050, indicating that it is statistically reaching significance at an alpha threshold of level of 0.05 when compared to the group of respondents aged 19 years. Therefore, under this sub-category, no other group exhibited a significantly better perception of social-emotional competence in the selected public HEIs in Sulu compared to the 19-year-old group.

d) In the relationship management category, The data suggest that there are no significant variations between groups regarding their perception of social-emotional competence in this area.

e) Similarly, in the responsible decision-making category, the analysis reveals that no groups have a significantly better perception of social-emotional competence in reaching significance at an alpha threshold of category.

*Table 3.2.1 Subsequent Analysis: Variations in the degree of social-emotional competence in selected public HEIs in Sulu based on age.*

| Dependent Variable | (I) Grouping Age | (J) Grouping Age | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) Self-awareness | 18 years old and below | 19 years old | .23419 | .21406 | .520 |
| | | 20 years old and above | .08758 | .14401 | .816 |
| | 19 years old | 18 years old and below | -.23419 | .21406 | .520 |
| | | 20 years old and above | -.14661 | .20554 | .756 |
| | 20 years old and above | 18 years old and below | -.08758 | .14401 | .816 |
| | | 19 years old | .14661 | .20554 | .756 |
| (b) Social Awareness | 18 years old and below | 19 years old | -.22991 | .23065 | .581 |
| | | 20 years old and above | -.00458 | .15517 | 1.000 |
| | 19 years old | 18 years old and below | .22991 | .23065 | .581 |
| | | 20 years old and above | .22534 | .22147 | .568 |
| | 20 years old and above | 18 years old and below | .00458 | .15517 | 1.000 |
| | | 19 years old | -.22534 | .22147 | .568 |
| (c) Self-management | 18 years old and below | 19 years old | -.57863* | .24306 | .050 |
| | | 20 years old and above | -.01634 | .16352 | .995 |
| | 19 years old | 18 years old and below | .57863* | .24306 | .050 |
| | | 20 years old and above | .56229* | .23339 | .047 |
| | 20 years old and above | 18 years old and below | .01634 | .16352 | .995 |
| | | 19 years old | -.56229* | .23339 | .047 |
| (d) Relationship Management | 18 years old and below | 19 years old | .25085 | .21027 | .460 |
| | | 20 years old and above | .08464 | .14146 | .821 |
| | 19 years old | 18 years old and below | -.25085 | .21027 | .460 |
| | | 20 years old and above | -.16621 | .20190 | .690 |
| | 20 years old and above | 18 years old and below | -.08464 | .14146 | .821 |
| | | 19 years old | .16621 | .20190 | .690 |
| (e) Responsible Decision-making | 18 years old and below | 19 years old | .29444 | .23814 | .435 |
| | | 20 years old and above | .27484 | .16021 | .205 |
| | 19 years old | 18 years old and below | -.29444 | .23814 | .435 |
| | | 20 years old and above | -.01961 | .22866 | .996 |
| | 20 years old and above | 18 years old and below | -.27484 | .16021 | .205 |
| | | 19 years old | .01961 | .22866 | .996 |

*. The mean difference is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

*3.3 According to Year Level*

Table 3.3 presents the differences in the degree of social-emotional competence of social science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu according to year level. The table reveals that, generally, the overall mean differences and t-values obtained under this category indicate no significant difference.

Huerta Cuervo et al. (2022) reported that there was a distinct social-emotional profiles when compared to university year levels. This implies that they may improve conflict resolution abilities with greater to empathy in interpersonal interactions which can be attributed to educational-stage effects.

As a result, the hypothesis, suggesting that "There is no significant difference in the level of social-emotional competence of Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu when data are categorized according to year level" is confirmed.

Table 3.3 presents the differences in the extent of social-emotional competence of Social Science students across different public HEIs in Sulu concerning year level.

| SOURCES OF VARIATION | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-awareness | Between Groups | .635 | 3 | .212 | .480 | .697 | Not |
| | Within Groups | 42.355 | 96 | .441 | | | Significant |
| | Total | 42.990 | 99 | | | | |
| Social Awareness | Between Groups | 2.129 | 3 | .710 | 1.427 | .240 | Not |
| | Within Groups | 47.741 | 96 | .497 | | | Significant |
| | Total | 49.870 | 99 | | | | |
| Self-management | Between Groups | 3.714 | 3 | 1.238 | 2.173 | .096 | Not |
| | Within Groups | 54.688 | 96 | .570 | | | Significant |
| | Total | 58.402 | 99 | | | | |
| Relationship Management | Between Groups | 1.118 | 3 | .373 | .885 | .452 | Not |
| | Within Groups | 40.451 | 96 | .421 | | | Significant |
| | Total | 41.570 | 99 | | | | |
| Responsible Decision-making | Between Groups | 1.064 | 3 | .355 | .639 | .592 | Not |
| | Within Groups | 53.270 | 96 | .555 | | | Significant |
| | Total | 54.334 | 99 | | | | |

Significance at alpha 0.05

*3.4 According to Parent's Average Monthly Income*

Table 3.4 displays the variation in the level of social-emotional competence of Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu according to the average monthly income of their parents. The data indicates that observed that, overall, The mean differences and t-values observed in this category do not show any statistically not substantial differences.

Zahid et al. (2024) noted that students were capable of identifying and comprehending their own feelings effectively showing proficiency in managing relationships and interacting positively with others due to their ability to make ethical and constructive choices. These competencies significantly enhances their overall skills and academic performance. A more conducive learning environment could potentially enhance students' social-emotional competence leading the improvement of their academic outcomes even students may face challenges such financial difficulties, stress or burnout, etc. They may be able to overcome these.

Consequently, the hypothesis stating, "There is no significant difference in the level of social-emotional competence among Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu when categorized according to their parent's average monthly income," is upheld.

Table 3.4: Variations in the level of social-emotional competence among Social Science students at selected public higher education institutions in Sulu, classified according to the average monthly income of parents.

| SOURCES OF VARIATION | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-awareness | Between Groups | .042 | 2 | .021 | .048 | .953 | Not |
| | Within Groups | 42.948 | 97 | .443 | | | Significant |
| | Total | 42.990 | 99 | | | | |
| Social Awareness | Between Groups | 1.551 | 2 | .776 | 1.557 | .216 | Not |
| | Within Groups | 48.319 | 97 | .498 | | | Significant |
| | Total | 49.870 | 99 | | | | |
| Self-management | Between Groups | 2.111 | 2 | 1.055 | 1.819 | .168 | Not |
| | Within Groups | 56.291 | 97 | .580 | | | Significant |
| | Total | 58.402 | 99 | | | | |
| Relationship Management | Between Groups | .747 | 2 | .373 | .887 | .415 | Not |
| | Within Groups | 40.823 | 97 | .421 | | | Significant |
| | Total | 41.570 | 99 | | | | |
| Responsible Decision-making | Between Groups | .507 | 2 | .254 | .457 | .634 | Not |
| | Within Groups | 53.827 | 97 | .555 | | | Significant |
| | Total | 54.334 | 99 | | | | |

Significance at alpha 0.05

3.5 According to Parent's Educational Attainment

Table 3.5 illustrates the variations in social-emotional competence among Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu, based on their parents' educational attainment. From the table, it is evident that the mean differences and t-values under this category show a significant difference.

Richiţeanu-Năstase et al. (2024) revealed that there are no notable gaps in social-emotional competence based on parental educational attainment. Students with parents who did not complete high school showed lower initial level of social-emotional competence compared to those whose parents had higher educational attainment. However, despite these initial differences, the growth patterns in social-emotional competence were more similar across different parental education group. They suggested that while parental education influences initial competency levels, it does not drastically affect the growth patterns of social-emotional competence over time.

Consequently, the hypothesis suggesting that "There is no significant difference in the extent of social-emotional competence of Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu when data are categorized according to parent's educational attainment" Therefore, the hypothesis stating that there are no differences is rejected.

Table 3.5 illustrates the differences in the level of social-emotional competence among students at selected public HEIs in Sulu, categorized by their parents' educational attainment.

| SOURCES OF VARIATION | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-awareness | Between Groups | .584 | 4 | .146 | .327 | .859 | Not Significant |
| | Within Groups | 42.406 | 95 | .446 | | | |
| | Total | 42.990 | 99 | | | | |
| Social Awareness | Between Groups | 4.730 | 4 | 1.182 | 2.489 | .048* | Significant |
| | Within Groups | 45.140 | 95 | .475 | | | |
| | Total | 49.870 | 99 | | | | |
| Self-management | Between Groups | 3.261 | 4 | .815 | 1.404 | .238 | Not Significant |
| | Within Groups | 55.141 | 95 | .580 | | | |
| | Total | 58.402 | 99 | | | | |
| Relationship Management | Between Groups | .579 | 4 | .145 | .335 | .853 | Not Significant |
| | Within Groups | 40.991 | 95 | .431 | | | |
| | Total | 41.570 | 99 | | | | |
| Responsible Decision-making | Between Groups | 10.783 | 4 | 2.696 | 5.881 | .000* | Significant |
| | Within Groups | 43.551 | 95 | .458 | | | |
| | Total | 54.334 | 99 | | | | |

Significance at alpha 0.05

A post-hoc analysis using the Tukey HSD Test was conducted to determine which groups, categorized by parents' educational attainment, showed varying mean levels in various areas of social-emotional competence, as perceived by Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu. The analysis results, as presented in Table 3.5.1, the differences in the means of the groups are evident social-emotional competence in Sulu, as perceived by the Social Science students at selected Public higher education institutions in Sulu are determined by subtracting the higher group mean from the lower group mean.

a) In the self-awareness category, the data shows that no group of respondents has a superior perception of social-emotional competence compared to others in selected public HEIs in Sulu under this category.

b) In the social awareness category, the group with no formal education A mean difference of -0.76425, with a standard error of 0.27103 and a p-value of 0.045, indicates statistical significance $\alpha = 0.05$ when compared to the high school level group. Additionally, the no formal education group exhibited a mean difference of -0.78258, with a standard error of 0.25620 and a p-value of 0.024, shows statistical significance $\alpha = 0.05$ when compared to the bachelor's degree/vocational group. Therefore, within This sub-category, with no other groups of respondents demonstrate a clearer insight into the scope of social-emotional competence in selected public HEIs in Sulu than the high school level and bachelor's degree/vocational groups.

c) On self-management category, it shows that there are no Groups of respondents have a more effective way of understanding the scope of social-emotional competence in selected public HEIs in Sulu under self-management category.

d) On relationship management category, it shows that there are no Groups of respondents have a clearer way of comprehending the scope of social-emotional competence in selected public HEIs in Sulu under relationship management category.
e) In the responsible decision-making category, the group with no formal education showed a mean difference of -1.22963, with a standard error of 0.26061 and a p-value of 0.000, indicates a statistically significant result $\alpha = 0.05$ compared to the elementary level group. Additionally, the no formal education group demonstrated a mean difference of -1.06280, with a standard error of 0.26621 and a p-value of 0.001, shows statistical significance $\alpha = 0.05$ when compared to the high school level group. Furthermore, the no formal education group exhibited a mean difference of -1.06727, with a standard error of 0.25165 and a p-value of 0.000, indicates a statistically significant result $\alpha = 0.05$ when compared to the bachelor's degree/vocational group. Therefore, within in this sub-category, no other groups of respondents demonstrate a clearer understanding of the scope of social-emotional competence in selected public HEIs in Sulu than the elementary level, high school level, and bachelor's degree/vocational groups, respectively.
Table 3.5.1. Post Hoc Analysis: Variations in the scope of social-emotional competence in selected public HEIs in Sulu, based on parents' educational attainment.

| Dependent Variable | (I) Grouping Parent's Educational Attainment | (J) Grouping Parent's Educational Attainment | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) Self-awareness | No formal education | Elementary level | .07407 | .25716 | .998 |
| | | High school | -.10821 | .26269 | .994 |
| | | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | -.04264 | .24832 | 1.000 |
| | | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | .17222 | .40149 | .993 |
| | Elementary level | No formal education | -.07407 | .25716 | .998 |
| | | High school | -.18229 | .18958 | .872 |
| | | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | -.11672 | .16911 | .958 |
| | | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | .09815 | .35795 | .999 |
| | High school | No formal education | .10821 | .26269 | .994 |
| | | Elementary level | .18229 | .18958 | .872 |
| | | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | .06557 | .17740 | .996 |
| | | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | .28043 | .36194 | .937 |
| | | No formal education | .04264 | .24832 | 1.000 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Elementary level | .11672 | .16911 | .958 |
| | | High school | -.06557 | .17740 | .996 |
| | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | .21486 | .35165 | .973 |
| | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | No formal education | -.17222 | .40149 | .993 |
| | | Elementary level | -.09815 | .35795 | .999 |
| | | High school | -.28043 | .36194 | .937 |
| | | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | -.21486 | .35165 | .973 |
| (b) Social Awareness | No formal education | Elementary level | -.64444 | .26532 | .117 |
| | | High school | -.76425* | .27103 | .045 |
| | | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | -.78258* | .25620 | .024 |
| | | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | -.65556 | .41423 | .512 |
| | Elementary level | No formal education | .64444 | .26532 | .117 |
| | | High school | -.11981 | .19560 | .973 |
| | | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | -.13814 | .17447 | .932 |
| | | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | -.01111 | .36931 | 1.000 |
| | High school | No formal education | .76425* | .27103 | .045 |
| | | Elementary level | .11981 | .19560 | .973 |
| | | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | -.01833 | .18303 | 1.000 |
| | | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | .10870 | .37343 | .998 |
| | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | No formal education | .78258* | .25620 | .024 |
| | | Elementary level | .13814 | .17447 | .932 |
| | | High school | .01833 | .18303 | 1.000 |
| | | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | .12703 | .36281 | .997 |
| | | No formal education | .65556 | .41423 | .512 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | Elementary level | .01111 | .36931 | 1.000 |
| | | High school | -.10870 | .37343 | .998 |
| | | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | -.12703 | .36281 | .997 |
| (c) Self-management | No formal education | Elementary level | -.62222 | .29324 | .219 |
| | | High school | -.66763 | .29955 | .178 |
| | | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | -.51652 | .28316 | .366 |
| | | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | -.66111 | .45782 | .601 |
| | Elementary level | No formal education | .62222 | .29324 | .219 |
| | | High school | -.04541 | .21618 | 1.000 |
| | | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | .10571 | .19283 | .982 |
| | | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | -.03889 | .40817 | 1.000 |
| | High school | No formal education | .66763 | .29955 | .178 |
| | | Elementary level | .04541 | .21618 | 1.000 |
| | | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | .15112 | .20230 | .945 |
| | | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | .00652 | .41273 | 1.000 |
| | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | No formal education | .51652 | .28316 | .366 |
| | | Elementary level | -.10571 | .19283 | .982 |
| | | High school | -.15112 | .20230 | .945 |
| | | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | -.14459 | .40099 | .996 |
| | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | No formal education | .66111 | .45782 | .601 |
| | | Elementary level | .03889 | .40817 | 1.000 |
| | | High school | -.00652 | .41273 | 1.000 |
| | | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | .14459 | .40099 | .996 |
| | No formal education | Elementary level | .00000 | .25283 | 1.000 |
| | | High school | -.15266 | .25827 | .976 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | -.11952 | .24414 | .988 |
| | | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | .12778 | .39473 | .998 |
| | Elementary level | No formal education | .00000 | .25283 | 1.000 |
| | | High school | -.15266 | .18639 | .924 |
| | | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | -.11952 | .16626 | .952 |
| | | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | .12778 | .35192 | .996 |
| | High school | No formal education | .15266 | .25827 | .976 |
| | | Elementary level | .15266 | .18639 | .924 |
| (d) Relationship Management | | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | .03314 | .17442 | 1.000 |
| | | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | .28043 | .35585 | .933 |
| | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | No formal education | .11952 | .24414 | .988 |
| | | Elementary level | .11952 | .16626 | .952 |
| | | High school | -.03314 | .17442 | 1.000 |
| | | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | .24730 | .34573 | .953 |
| | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | No formal education | -.12778 | .39473 | .998 |
| | | Elementary level | -.12778 | .35192 | .996 |
| | | High school | -.28043 | .35585 | .933 |
| | | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | -.24730 | .34573 | .953 |
| (e) Responsible Decision-making | No formal education | Elementary level | -1.22963* | .26061 | .000 |
| | | High school | -1.06280* | .26621 | .001 |
| | | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | -1.06727* | .25165 | .000 |
| | | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | -.83889 | .40687 | .245 |
| | Elementary level | No formal education | 1.22963* | .26061 | .000 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | High school | .16683 | .19212 | .908 |
| | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | .16236 | .17137 | .877 |
| | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | .39074 | .36275 | .818 |
| High school | No formal education | 1.06280* | .26621 | .001 |
| | Elementary level | -.16683 | .19212 | .908 |
| | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | -.00447 | .17978 | 1.000 |
| | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | .22391 | .36680 | .973 |
| Bachelor's degree/Vocational | No formal education | 1.06727* | .25165 | .000 |
| | Elementary level | -.16236 | .17137 | .877 |
| | High school | .00447 | .17978 | 1.000 |
| | Master's degree/Doctorate degree | .22838 | .35637 | .968 |
| Master's degree/Doctorate degree | No formal education | .83889 | .40687 | .245 |
| | Elementary level | -.39074 | .36275 | .818 |
| | High school | -.22391 | .36680 | .973 |
| | Bachelor's degree/Vocational | -.22838 | .35637 | .968 |

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 significance level.

4. Is there a statistically significant correlation among the sub-levels subsumed under level of social-emotional competence of Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu?
4.1 "Relationship between the sub-levels included under level of social-emotional competence.
Table 4.1 The table displays the relationship between the components -levels contained within the scope of social-emotional competence of Social Science students at chosen public higher education institutions in Sulu. It can be observed indicating a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between social awareness and self-management (r = 0.688; sig = 0.000), relationship management and responsible decision-making (r = 0.571; sig = 0.000), social awareness and responsible decision-making (r = 0.563; p = 0.000), as well as self-management and responsible decision-making (r = 0.510; sig = 0.000). Additionally, a moderate positive and significant correlation exists among self-awareness and relationship management (r = 0.469; sig = 0.000), self-awareness and responsible decision-making (r = 0.447; p = 0.000), self-management and relationship management (r = 0.414; p = 0.000), as well as self-awareness and self-management (r = 0.391; sig = 0.000), self-awareness and social awareness (r = 0.386; p = 0.000), along with social awareness and relationship management (r = 0.363; sig = 0.000).

These results indicate a significant positive correlation among the sub-levels under social-emotional competence for Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu.\

In a study conducted by van de Sande et al. (2023), it was observed that self-management had the strongest correlation with emotional and behavioral challenges, and played a mediating role in the connection between self-awareness and these challenges. Furthermore, understanding of social dynamics was shown to have the strongest association with other skills. Moore & Gregory (2024) also reported that self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, interpersonal skills, and accountable decision-making are interconnected fundamental skills of social-emotional learning. Each component activates and supports the others, contributing to overall social-emotional development and effective decision-making.

Consequently, the hypothesis stating, "There is no significant correlation among the sub-levels subsumed under the level of social-emotional competence of Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu," was not supported.

Table 4.1 Relationship between the sub-levels included under *level of social-emotional competence of Social Science students at selected public higher education institutions in Sulu*

| Variables | Pearson *r* | Sig. | N | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-awareness | | | | |
| Social Awareness | .386** | .000 | 100 | Moderate |
| Self-management | .391** | .000 | 100 | Moderate |
| Relationship Management | .469** | .000 | 100 | Moderate |
| Responsible Decision-making | .447** | .000 | 100 | Moderate |
| Social Awareness | | | | |
| Self-management | .688** | .000 | 100 | High |
| Relationship Management | .363** | .000 | 100 | Moderate |
| Responsible Decision-making | .563** | .000 | 100 | High |
| Self-management | | | | |
| Relationship Management | .414** | .000 | 100 | Moderate |
| Responsible Decision-making | .510** | .000 | 100 | High |
| Relationship Management | | | | |
| Responsible Decision-making | .571** | .000 | 100 | High |

Legend: ** *The correlation coefficient is statistically significant at an alpha level of 0.01*
*Correlation Coefficient Scales Adopted from Hopkins, Will (2002): 0.0-0.1=Nearly Zero; 0.1-0.30=Low; 0.3-0.50=Moderate; 0.5-0.7-0=High; 0.7-0.9= Very High; 0.9-1=Nearly Perfect*

## Conclusion

The conclusions drawn from this study are as follows:

1. The student-respondents in selected public HEIs in Sulu are sufficiently represented in terms of gender, age, academic year, parents' average monthly income, and parents' educational background.
2. On average, the student-respondents in selected public HEIs in Sulu report frequently experiencing different facets of social-emotional competence in their academic endeavors, specifically in self-awareness, social understanding, self-regulation, relationship skills, and accountable decision-making.
3. Regarding significant differences, the study revealed no notable differences in the degree of social -emotional competence among Social Science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu when sex, academic year, and parents' monthly average income were used as categories. However, significant differences were observed when the data were categorized by age and parents' level of education.

The overall non- meaningful findings emphasize the perceived importance of social-emotional competence among learners. These results are consistent with the CASEC (2019) Model of Social-Emotional Competence, which outlines the method by which students develop their capacity to apply these competencies. Self-awareness refers to the ability to identify one's emotions and thoughts, which affect behavior. Self-regulation helps regulate stress, impulses, and motivation while striving to achieve personal and academic objectives. Social awareness involves empathizing with others from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, recognizing social and ethical standards, and acknowledging the significance of family, school, and community. Relationship management focuses on creating healthy and fulfilling connections with individuals and groups. Accountable decision-making entails making thoughtful choices that reflect societal standards, safety issues, ethical principles, and consideration for the well-being of oneself and others. These competencies have been identified as key drivers of academic and personal success among social science students at selected public HEIs in Sulu. Furthermore, the CASEC model emphasizes students' adaptability when facing personal and academic challenges, leading to greater success.

4. Regarding the significant relationships, the study found a highly positive and significant correlation among the sub-levels of social-emotional competence within Social Science learners at selected public HEIs in Sulu.

These significant findings reinforce the work of Moore & Gregory (2024), who reported that self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making are key components of emotional intelligence or core aspects of social-emotional development are interconnected core competencies within the realm of social and emotional development. Each component activates and supports the others, enhancing overall social-emotional development and effective decision-making.

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