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Social–Emotional Learning and Motivation Among Grade 4–6 Learners in Philippine Private Schools: A Descriptive–Correlational Study

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Abstract

In the post-pandemic era, the importance of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) has become increasingly crucial as students navigate the emotional and psychological challenges brought on by disrupted learning and social isolation. This study explores the relationship between SEL and motivation, focusing on intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy for learning and aims to assess the levels of SEL competencies and motivation in Grade 4 to Grade 6 learners (N = 107) in private schools in the Philippines. Using the Motivational Learning Style Questionnaire (NCRIPTAL, 1991; $\alpha \geq 0.93$) and the Social and Emotional Competence Questionnaire (Zhou & Ee, 2012; $\alpha \geq 0.80$) data was collected and analyzed using a descriptive correlation design, revealing that most participants exhibit average SEL competency. In terms of motivation, majority of learners demonstrate high levels of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy for learning and performance. The findings highlight a moderate positive correlation between SEL and intrinsic motivation ($r(105) = .42$, $p < .001$), as well as a weak positive correlation between SEL and extrinsic motivation ($r(105) = .23$, $p < .05$). Moreover, a strong positive correlation ($r(105) = .61$, $p < .001$) was found between SEL and Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance. These results suggest that SEL skills play a critical role in enhancing learners' motivation and education engagement. Consequently, schools are encouraged to integrate SEL development into their curricula to foster increased motivation and interest in learning. Additionally, teachers are urged to adopt effective strategies for incorporating SEL into their teaching practices to support student growth in both emotional and motivational aspects of learning.

Keywords: Social-Emotional Learning, Motivation, Academic Performance, Learners

Introduction

The mental health of about 1 in 7 children, or 332 million worldwide, was put at risk by prolonged lockdowns during COVID-19, leaving many fearful, isolated, and anxious (UNICEF, 2021). UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore stressed that separation from friends and loved ones has serious impacts, highlighting the need for stronger attention to child and adolescent mental health. Even before the pandemic, half of all mental disorders began before age 15, and 75% by early adulthood, with one in four children living with a parent with a mental disorder (WHO, 2022).

Lockdowns further trapped children experiencing violence, neglect, or abuse at home and left vulnerable groups, such as children with disabilities or those in conflict zones, without

support. Social development was also hindered, making social-emotional learning (SEL) critical for assessing and supporting children's well-being. Research shows SEL enhances engagement, memory, and academic interest, while also fostering caring relationships, reducing behavioral problems, and improving performance (Elias, 2003).

Studies all over the globe indicate that mastering social-emotional skills is linked to improved well-being and academic success, while a lack of competence in these areas can result in various personal, social, and academic challenges (Durlak et al., 2011). Recent findings have shown that students who develop social and emotional competence tend to lead healthier lives and achieve better academic outcomes (Greenberg et al., 2003). As a result, educators and school administrators worldwide are advocating for educational approaches that focus on fostering social and emotional skills (Durlak et al., 2011).

In the Philippines, SEL is gaining increasing attention in both research and policy, though there are gaps in implementation and contextualization. Teacher self-efficacy in SEL implementation has been identified as vital as revealed in a scoping review by Ignacio (2024) which found that professional development, experience, school leadership, and socio-cultural factors significantly affect a teacher's ability to deliver SEL in K-12 classrooms. The Department of Education has also worked with UNICEF, SEAMEO INNOTECH, and partners like ChildFund to develop a localized SEL competency framework tailored to Filipino learners to better reflect local culture and needs (Tiagan, 2022). Studies in elementary schools show that while many pupils exhibit moderate levels of SEL skills overall, strengths are typically seen in self-awareness, whereas self-management, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills lag behind (Palma & Barberan, 2025).

Recent research shows that social-emotional learning (SEL) strengthens students' academic motivation through emotional, interpersonal, and cognitive mechanisms. Meta-analytic findings by Cipriano et al. (2024) demonstrate that SEL programs significantly enhance social-emotional skills, school attitudes, and functioning, all factors closely tied to engagement and motivation. Conceptual work by Dussault and Thompson (2024) explains that SEL competencies align with the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, providing a foundation for autonomous motivation as described in Self-Determination Theory. Supporting this, Howard et al. (2021) show that autonomous motivation predicts stronger academic performance and persistence than controlled forms of motivation. Empirical evidence also links emotional engagement to achievement. Liu et al. (2024) report that intrinsic motivation and emotional engagement directly predict academic performance in higher education. Schoolwide SEL programs further improve motivational climates, as Bergin et al. (2024) found that enhanced teacher SEL skills increased students' prosocial behavior and engagement.

SEL is a well-researched topic, however, this study still addresses several gaps. First, while there is a growing number of SEL studies on Filipino students, much of the SEL research is still based on Western or well-resourced educational environments, making it difficult to generalize findings to varied sociocultural or educational systems, including those in the Philippines. Second, only a few studies directly connect SEL with specific motivational frameworks, such as self-efficacy or intrinsic/extrinsic motivation. This theoretical gap limits understanding of the mechanisms through which SEL influences academic behavior and engagement. Lastly, this study examines younger learners' SEL within private primary schools in Iligan City and Cagayan de Oro City in Mindanao, Philippines. Focusing on these contexts contributes to a deeper understanding of how SEL relates to student motivation within regional, culturally diverse school environments.

Thus, this study aims to examine whether Grades 4–6 learners' SEL have a significant relationship to their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Particularly, it seeks to answer the

following research questions:

1. What are the Learners' Level of Social-Emotional Learning?
2. What are the results for Learners' Motivation for Learning in terms of:
   2.1 Intrinsic Motivation
   2.2 Extrinsic Motivation; and
   2.3 Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance?
3. Is there a significant relationship between Students' Social-emotional learning (SEL) and Motivation in terms of:
   3.1 Intrinsic Motivation
   3.2 Extrinsic Motivation; and
   3.3 Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance?
   H_1: There is a significant relationship between the learners' social-emotional learning and Motivation.

Related Literature

Research on learner motivation consistently highlights the central role of social and emotional processes in shaping engagement. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) posits that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation vary depending on the extent to which learners experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Studies involving upper-elementary learners show that when classrooms support these psychological needs through emotionally safe and collaborative environments, children demonstrate higher intrinsic interest and more internalized forms of extrinsic motivation (Jang et al., 2016). Such findings underscore the importance of examining how learners' emotional and interpersonal skills, which are components of social and emotional learning (SEL), may contribute to the fulfillment of these motivational needs.

Parallel to SDT, Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory emphasizes that learners' beliefs in their capabilities influence task engagement, persistence, and the quality of motivation. Empirical evidence demonstrates that students with stronger emotional regulation and social awareness tend to report higher self-efficacy, which in turn supports more self-driven learning behaviors (Klassen & Usher, 2010). In middle childhood, self-efficacy is also shaped by peer relations and classroom climate, suggesting that SEL competencies can reinforce motivational orientations by enabling learners to interpret challenges more positively and sustain effort in academic tasks.

Complementing these perspectives, the CASEL SEL framework identifies competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, and relationship skills as foundational to adaptive learning behaviors. Large-scale meta-analyses have shown that students who participate in high-quality SEL programs exhibit improved emotional regulation, stronger sense of competence, and increased school engagement (Durlak et al., 2011). Related studies involving Grades 4–6 learners also indicate that SEL skills not only predict academic adjustment but also contribute to students' intrinsic curiosity and more internalized extrinsic goals (Zilva, 2023). The research presented suggest that SEL competencies may shape motivational orientations by enhancing learners' self-beliefs, emotional capacities, and interpersonal connectedness, all key mechanisms this study seeks to investigate.

Methods

Research Design

The study used a descriptive correlational design, which aims to identify the relationship between variables without manipulating them (Copeland, 2022). The researcher gathered data to describe the variables of interest and explore how they are connected. The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive overview of the variables and their relationships, without altering them or assuming causality. Additionally, the data collection involved quantitative information obtained from the research instruments.

Setting and Participants

The participants for this study were selected from a private elementary school in Iligan City; Linamon, Lanao Del Norte; and Cagayan De Oro City, Misamis Oriental, Philippines. The schools are on its second year of face-to-face classes.

The study used purposive sampling and was conducted in the Grade 4, Grade 5, and Grade 6 classes across the institution's three branches: (1) Iligan City Main campus, (2) Linamon, Lanao Del Norte Branch, and (3) Cagayan De Oro City Branch for the school year 2024-2025. Each branch adheres to the same curriculum and restricts class sizes to a maximum of 20 students per grade level. The grade levels mentioned are chosen due to their maturity level and different life experiences they have to be able to relate to the questions and have differing answers.

The study employed purposive sampling based on clearly defined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Learners were included in the sample if they were currently enrolled in Grades 4 to 6 in the participating schools, had obtained parental or guardian consent, and personally provided assent to take part in the study. These criteria ensured that participants were ethically recruited and that the sample reflected the specific population targeted by the research.

Students were excluded if parental consent was not granted, if they refused or withdrew their assent at any point, or if they were absent during the scheduled data collection. Learners whom the school administration did not permit to participate for administrative or safeguarding reasons were also excluded.

Given these procedures, the resulting purposive sample represents the subset of upper-elementary learners who were both eligible and willing to participate. While this sampling method allowed the study to focus closely on the population relevant to the research question, it also introduces limitations regarding generalizability.

Students who did not secure consent or who were absent may differ in meaningful ways from those who participated, which may affect the representativeness of the final sample. Nonetheless, within the context of the participating school, the sample adequately reflects the accessible population of Grades 4–6 learners and is appropriate for examining the relationship between students' SEL competencies and their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

This study is limited by the sample size of 107 students drawn exclusively from three private schools. The distribution is in the table that follows. As such, the findings may not fully represent the experiences or perspectives of students in public schools or other educational contexts. Consequently, the generalizability of the results to a wider population should be interpreted with caution.

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents Per Branch

Grade Level	Branch A	Branch B	Branch C
Grade 4	17	20	15
Grade Level	**Branch A**	**Branch B**	**Branch C**
Grade 5	16	18	15
Grade 6	26	11	9

Instruments

The researcher adapted the Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire by Zhou & Ee (2012) to accommodate the maturity and comprehension level of the participants. The 32-item questionnaire was made more specific and by matching it to the language of a 9-12-year-old learner by incorporating situational questions that are in a school-based setting. The said tool was used for a pilot-testing conducted among 30 learners not included in the actual gathering of data. The result displayed high reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha value of $\alpha \geq 0.80$. It included statements such as, "I have my own opinions and I don't copy them from my classmates.", know how my classmate or teacher feels by the look on their face." And , "I can easily adjust and adapt to changes.", among others.

Additionally, the 25-item Motivation instrument was extracted from "Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire" by the National Center for Research to Improve Postsecondary Teaching and Learning (NCRIPTAL) with Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha \geq 0.93$. It includes items such as "When I take a test, I think about how better my classmates are than I am.", "I think what I learn in the class can be used in other class.", and "I believe I will do good in my class.", among others.

Both tools are validated by an expert on English Education with a master's degree and 36 years of experience in teaching and validation.

Procedure

This research has undergone ethical review from the Xavier University – Research Ethics Board (REB) with the protocol code MAED-202400177 issued on February 2025. The researcher first asked for parents' consent at collected students' assent before conducting the study. Data was collected through administering a survey and having participants complete a questionnaire related to Social-Emotional Learning. Following this, the respondents filled out a survey on Motivational Strategies in Learning. During the session, the teachers read the question to students and answered questions that students might have about the items. After reading each question, the researcher provided a situation to help clarify the question for the learners. The students individually answered each question in the questionnaire after the teacher read it, ensuring that all students understood the question.

Data Analysis

The research employed descriptive statistics to provide a brief interpretation of the participants' data, calculating the mean to assess the distribution of learners' levels of Social-Emotional Learning and Motivation, including Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, and Self-Efficacy for learning and performance. Additionally, the standard deviation of the collected data was determined. The researcher used the scoring guidelines presented in tables 2 and 3 as a reference for score interpretation.

Table 2

Motivational Learning Style Questionnaire Scoring Guide

Scale	Response	Interval	Descriptive Equivalent
5	Strongly Disagree	4.21 – 5.00	Very High Motivation
4	Disagree	3.41 – 4.20	High Motivation
3	Somewhat Agree	2.61 – 3.40	Average Motivation
2	Agree	1.81 – 2.60	Low Motivation
1	Strongly Agree	1.00 – 1.80	Very Low Motivation

Table 3

The Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire Scoring Guide

Scale	Response	Interval	Descriptive Equivalent
5	Very true to me	4.21 – 5.00	Very High Social-Emotional Competence
4	Often true to me	3.41 – 4.20	High Social-Emotional Competence
3	Sometimes true to me	2.61 – 3.40	Average Social-Emotional Competence
2	Rarely true to me	1.81 – 2.60	Low Social-Emotional Competence
1	Not at all true to me	1.00 – 1.80	Very Low Social-Emotional Competence

The researcher also used the Pearson R correlation to examine the significant relationships between variables like SEL, Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, Self-Efficacy for learning and performance. As the tool is self-reported, triangulation with additional data sources, such as teacher observations, were conducted.

Findings and Discussion

Problem 1. What are the Learners' Level of Social-Emotional Learning?

Table 4 presents the results of the Distribution of Learners' Level of Social-Emotional Learning.

Table 4

Results of Distribution of Learners' Level of Social-Emotional Learning

Level of SEL	Frequency	Percentage
Very High (4.21 – 5.00)	2	1.87
High (3.41 – 4.20)	40	37.38
Average (2.61 – 3.41)	59	55.14
Low (1.81 – 2.60)	6	5.61
Very Low (1.00 – 1.80)	0	0.00
Total	107	100.00

Over-all Mean = 3.59 Description: Average sd = 0.50

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Self-Awareness	3.30	0.69	Average
Social Awareness	3.92	0.69	High
Self-management	3.37	0.80	Average
Relationship Management	3.55	0.70	Average
Responsible Decision Making	3.80	0.77	High

Most learners (55.14%) fall in the "average" category of social-emotional learning (SEL), while 37.38% demonstrate "high" skills, 5.61% "low," and 1.87% "very high." None scored "very low." The mean score of 3.59 confirms an overall "average" SEL level, with consistent performance (SD = 0.50). This reflects a satisfactory baseline of SEL, though it also indicates areas in need of improvement.

By domain, social awareness ranked highest (M = 3.92; SD = 0.69), showing students' strength in empathy, cooperation, and conflict resolution—likely shaped by frequent peer interactions. In contrast, self-awareness scored lowest (M = 3.30; SD = 0.69). Developmental factors help explain this: children's prefrontal cortex, central to self-reflection and regulation, matures well into early adulthood (Pfeifer et al., 2016). Likewise, children are often egocentric, making it difficult to deeply reflect on themselves or adopt others' emotional perspectives (Hayashi & Nishikawa, 2019). This imbalance suggests that learners tend to prioritize understanding others over reflecting on their own behavior.

Institutional and classroom contexts also shape these outcomes. Smaller class sizes enable closer teacher-student relationships, more individualized feedback, and earlier intervention in behavioral concerns. This fosters a safer, more supportive environment where learners feel comfortable practicing SEL skills such as relationship management and self-regulation (Laitsch et al., 2021). To monitor behavior, it is observed that the school also uses a "yellow card" disciplinary record, requiring teachers to document instances of misbehavior. While this system provides accountability, it is reactive rather than developmental. The absence of regular homeroom guidance or structured reflection periods further limits opportunities for students to explore self-awareness and emotional regulation in proactive ways. Retreat programs are offered, but only once for graduating pupils, leaving a gap in consistent SEL support.

Class size also affects the quality of SEL activities. In smaller classes, teachers can more effectively facilitate discussions, role-playing, and group projects, ensuring equal participation and deeper exploration of social-emotional themes (Kriezi, 2023). Larger classes, as pointed out by O'Day & Smith (2016), often struggle with equitable participation, weaker peer connections, and greater difficulty in sustaining a nurturing environment. This indicates that institutional factors such as class size, teacher strategies, and availability of guidance programs all play a significant role in shaping SEL development (Bačová, 2025; Laitsch et al., 2021).

While learners show solid competencies in social awareness and responsible decision-making, gaps in self-awareness and self-management remain. These findings highlight the need for continuous, structured SEL initiatives integrated into daily classroom life. Targeted support in reflection and self-regulation, combined with smaller class sizes and proactive institutional programs, can strengthen students' SEL development, contributing to healthier personal growth, improved academic engagement, and more positive social relationships. These insights may help guide schools in refining SEL practices that better respond to learners' developmental needs while remaining aligned with the evidence.

Problem 2. What are the results for Learners' Motivation for Learning in terms of:

2.1 Intrinsic Motivation

2.2 Extrinsic Motivation; and

2.3 Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance?

Table 5 presents the results of the Distribution of Learners' Motivation for Learning in terms of Intrinsic Motivation.

Table 5

Results of Distribution of Learners' Motivation for Learning in terms of Intrinsic Goal Motivation

Level of Intrinsic Motivation	Frequency	Percentage
Very High (4.21 – 5.00)	12	11.21
High (3.41 – 4.20)	45	42.06
Average (2.61 – 3.41)	39	36.45
Low (1.81 – 2.60)	11	10.28
Very Low (1.00 – 1.80)	0	0.00
Total	107	100.00

Over-all Mean = 3.73 Description: High SD = 0.63

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
It excites me if the task is challenging so I can learn new things.	3.67	0.92	Average
Even if it is difficult to learn, I am excited to learn new things.	3.79	1.04	High
The most satisfying thing for me is trying to understand the topic as thoroughly as possible.	3.89	1.13	High
When I have a chance, I will choose assignments that I can learn from even if they don't guarantee a good grade.	3.55	1.06	Average

Most learners (42.06%) reported a "high" level of intrinsic goal orientation, while 36.45% were "average," 11.21% "very high," and 10.28% "low." None fell into the "very low" category. The mean score of 3.73 places learners in the "high" range (3.41–4.20), with a relatively low standard deviation (0.63), indicating consistency across responses. This shows that learners are generally motivated by personal satisfaction, curiosity, and genuine interest in learning, rather than by external rewards.

Indicators of self-awareness support this result. For example, many learners strongly agreed with the statement: "I know the reason why our teacher asks us to do something. I don't just do it because she tells us to. I do it because I know how much it will help me." Such responses reveal that students see value in learning tasks and internalize their purpose, which aligns with intrinsic goal orientation. Another high-scoring item stated: "The most satisfying thing for me is trying to understand the topic as thoroughly as possible." This reflects a deep learning orientation, where mastery and comprehension are themselves sources of fulfillment.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) explains these findings by highlighting the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in nurturing intrinsic motivation. Haerens et al. (2013) found that autonomy-supportive teachers also tend to strengthen students' competence and sense of connection, creating a classroom environment where students' psychological needs are met. Similarly, Ryan & Deci (2020) emphasize that support from teachers and parents enhances motivation, especially when it fosters autonomy and social connectedness. This may help explain why high social awareness, observed in related findings, complements and sustains intrinsic motivation. Students who feel connected and supported find learning more personally meaningful.

Nevertheless, some limitations appear. While students value deep understanding, they are less likely to choose learning opportunities that do not contribute directly to grades, as shown by the lowest-scoring item: "When I have a chance, I will choose assignments that I can learn from even if they don't guarantee a good grade." This suggests that although intrinsic motivation is strong, extrinsic considerations are still positively associated with students' academic choices.

Overall, the results are highly encouraging. A high level of intrinsic goal orientation suggests that learners engage in tasks out of genuine interest, persist through challenges, and pursue goals with autonomy and satisfaction, a notion that Ghanizadeh and Jahedizadeh (2015) also found in their study. This intrinsic drive is linked to long-term academic success, creativity, and lifelong learning. At the same time, the findings indicate the need to continue fostering autonomy-supportive environments while addressing the subtle pull of extrinsic motivators that may constrain students' willingness to fully embrace learning for its own sake. These insights may assist educators in shaping learning environments that better support students' natural curiosity and sustained engagement, while remaining mindful of the balance between intrinsic and extrinsic influences.

Table 6 presents the results of the Distribution of Learners' Motivation for Learning in terms of Extrinsic Motivation.

Table 6

Results of Distribution of Learners' Motivation for Learning in terms of Extrinsic Goal Motivation

Level of Extrinsic Motivation	Frequency	Percentage
Very High (4.21 – 5.00)	17	15.89
High (3.41 – 4.20)	61	57.00
Average (2.61 – 3.41)	21	19.63
Low (1.81 – 2.60)	8	7.48
Very Low (1.00 – 1.80)	0	0.00
Total	107	100.00

Over-all Mean = 4.01 Description: High SD = 0.66

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Getting a good grade is the most satisfying thing for me right now.	4.25	1.18	High
My main concern in my classes is getting a good grade.	4.12	0.96	High
I want to get better grades than my classmates.	3.43	1.24	Average
I want to do well in this class because it is important to show my ability to my family, friends, and classmates.	4.22	0.93	High

Most learners (57.00%) reported a "high" level of extrinsic motivation, while 19.63% showed "average," 15.89% "very high," and 7.48% "low." None fell into the "very low" category. The mean score of 4.01 places the group solidly in the "high" range, with a moderate spread (SD = 0.66). This indicates that students are strongly motivated by external factors such as grades, praise, rewards, or meeting performance standards, though variation still exists across learners.

The highest-rated indicator, "Getting a good grade is the most satisfying thing for me now" (M = 4.25; SD = 0.66), highlights how performance outcomes are central to students' motivation. Interestingly, the lowest-rated item, "I want to get better grades than my classmates.", suggests that learners' extrinsic drive is not primarily rooted in competition with peers. Instead, extrinsic motivation appears tied to personal achievement benchmarks and external approval, particularly from parents and teachers, rather than comparative ranking.

Family background may help explain these patterns. Many learners likely come from middle-class households, where achievement is often valued as a marker of intelligence and long-term stability. As Yamamoto & Holloway (2010) note, parents who attribute achievement to innate ability often see performance as relatively fixed, whereas those who emphasize effort believe improvement is possible through persistence. Both perspectives may encourage children to value high grades as essential indicators of success. By contrast, working-class families often view education more pragmatically, as a pathway to social mobility, financial security, and improved status. In both cases, however, academic achievement is strongly emphasized, reinforcing extrinsic goal orientation among learners.

These findings suggest that extrinsic motivation among students is shaped by cultural and familial expectations surrounding education as both a requirement and a stepping stone to a secure future. While extrinsic motivation often drives effort and persistence, it also underscores a reliance on outcomes rather than process-driven learning (Covelli, 2024). Still, the absence of strong peer-competition motives suggests that learners are not primarily motivated by outperforming others but by meeting external standards of success (Chen et al., 2018; Dull et al., 2015). Overall, the prevalence of high extrinsic motivation reflects a results-oriented mindset: students strive for achievement to satisfy parents, secure future opportunities, and fulfill social expectations. This reliance on external motivators can foster diligence but may limit the depth of engagement with learning for its own sake. To balance this, it is crucial to continue fostering intrinsic motivation alongside extrinsic incentives, so learners not only meet expectations but also find personal meaning and satisfaction in the learning process. These insights can help educators design learning environments that acknowledge cultural expectations while gradually encouraging deeper, more self-directed forms of engagement.

Table 7 presents the results of the Distribution of Learners' Motivation for Learning in terms of Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance.

Table 7

Results of Distribution of Learners' Motivation for Learning in terms of Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance

Level of Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance	Frequency	Percentage
Very High (4.21 – 5.00)	5	4.67
High (3.41 – 4.20)	44	41.12
Average (2.61 – 3.41)	33	30.84
Low (1.81 – 2.60)	20	18.69
Very Low (1.00 – 1.80)	5	4.67
Total	107	100.00

Over-all Mean = 3.44 Description: Average SD = 0.75

Indicator	Mean	SD	Description
I believe I will do good in my class.	3.55	1.13	Average
I am sure I can understand the teachings no matter how hard the topic is.	3.29	1.09	Average
I know that I can learn whatever is being taught in class.	3.62	1.08	Average
I am sure that I can understand even the most difficult topic in my classes.	2.99	1.21	Average
I'm confident I can do an excellent job on the assignments and tests.	3.28	1.14	Average
Indicator	**Mean**	**SD**	**Description**
I expect to do well in class.	3.71	1.05	High
I'm sure I can master the skills taught by my teachers.	3.58	1.05	Average
Considering the difficulty in my class, and my skills, I think I will do well in this class.	3.51	1.22	Average

The largest proportion of learners (41.12%) reported high self-efficacy, suggesting that they believe in their capacity to perform well and overcome learning challenges. Another 30.84% showed average self-efficacy, reflecting a moderate level of confidence in their abilities. Smaller groups included those with low self-efficacy (18.69%), very high self-efficacy (4.67%), and very low self-efficacy (4.67%). The mean score of 3.44 falls within the "average" range, indicating that learners, on the whole, feel moderately capable of succeeding in learning tasks. The standard deviation of 0.75 suggests noticeable variability, with confidence levels spread across the spectrum.

About 75% of learners exhibit moderate to high self-efficacy, while roughly 23% report low to very low levels. This shows that although most students feel reasonably confident, a significant minority may struggle with doubts about their academic abilities. Such variation highlights the importance of fostering stronger, more consistent self-belief among learners.

Self-efficacy is often shaped by social comparisons and peer influence. As Gambel (2021) explains, observing peers who are similar in ability can boost students' confidence, leading to a "If they can do it, I can too" mindset. Given respondents' high levels of social awareness, their self-efficacy is likely affected by classmates' performance, not necessarily through direct competition but through the motivation of belonging and shared success. These statements reflect what Cheng (2023) mentions as goals that provide meaning and purpose to an activity.

Encouragement from teachers and parents also plays a vital role. Supportive messages such as "You can do this" help learners build confidence and internalize belief in their abilities. At the institutional level, positive reinforcement tools like star rewards, praise, and public recognition appear to contribute to students' generally moderate-to-high levels of self-efficacy (Deaver, 2018). However, Ryan & Deci (2020) mention that such boosts may be fragile if not supported by sustained success, as repeated failures can quickly undermine confidence.

While most learners display adequate confidence in their abilities, the presence of low and very low self-efficacy among nearly a quarter of students points to the need for intentional support. Reinforcing positive peer models, maintaining consistent encouragement, and addressing test-related stress can help build more resilient self-efficacy, ultimately empowering learners to engage more fully with academic challenges (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Taken together, these findings may inform targeted classroom practices that strengthen learners' confidence in manageable, evidence-aligned ways.

Problem 3. Is there a significant relationship between Students' Social-emotional learning (SEL) and Motivation in terms of:

3.1 Intrinsic Motivation

3.2 Extrinsic Motivation; and

3.3 Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance?

Table 8 presents the results of the Significant Relationship between the Learners' Social-Emotional Learning and their Intrinsic Motivation.

Table 8

Pearson Correlation between Social-emotional learning (SEL) and Intrinsic Motivation

Variable	Pearson r
Respondents' SEL vs Intrinsic Motivation	0.421 ***

N = 107 , *p < .05, **p < .01, **p < .001

The overall SEL, a composite measure of the five SEL components, shows a moderate positive correlation with intrinsic motivation ($r(105) = .42$, $p < .001$). This indicates that higher levels of SEL are associated with higher intrinsic motivation for learning. The correlation is highly significant at the 0.01 level, and it's the highest among all the individual SEL components.

As indicated in the study of Zins et al., students who are equipped with SEL skills are more likely to pursue goals for intrinsic reasons, such as personal achievement or mastery, rather than focusing on external factors like recognition or rewards. Students with strong SEL competencies, such as managing emotions and maintaining positive relationships, tended to set and pursue intrinsic goals in their academic work and personal lives, leading to increased persistence and enjoyment in their tasks (Zins et al., 2007).

This finding suggests that the more developed a person's social-emotional skills are, the more likely they are to be intrinsically motivated to achieve their learning goals. Responsible decision-making appears to be most strongly associated with intrinsic motivation, with overall SEL showing the highest positive correlation with intrinsic goal orientation. These patterns may help educators identify which SEL competencies to emphasize when aiming to nurture deeper, self-driven engagement among learners.

Table 9 presents the results of the Significant Relationship between the Learners' Social-Emotional Learning and their Extrinsic Motivation.

Table 9

Pearson Correlation between Social-emotional learning (SEL) and Extrinsic Motivation

Variable	Pearson r
Respondents' SEL vs Extrinsic Motivation	0.230 *

N = 107 , *p < .05, **p < .01, **p < .001

There is a weak positive correlation between overall SEL and Extrinsic motivation ($r(105) = .23$, $p < .05$). This suggests that as respondents develop their overall SEL competencies, their motivation based on external rewards also tends to increase, though the correlation is weak. Social Emotional Learning are often designed to improve students' emotional regulation, interpersonal skills, and decision-making abilities.

While these competencies are typically linked with intrinsic motivation (e.g., personal growth and emotional well-being), they also have implications for extrinsic goals such as academic achievement, rewards, or external recognition. For example, a study by Durlak et al. (2011) on SEL programs found that students who developed stronger social-emotional skills were more likely to perform better academically, which is often an extrinsic goal (grades, scholarships, recognition). Although the motivation to succeed academically is often extrinsic the SEL competencies (self-regulation and goal-setting) can indirectly support the achievement of these external goals.

The correlation between SEL and academic achievement can thus be considered weak to moderate, as the skills learned through SEL may contribute to extrinsic motivation, but they are not the primary driving force behind it. Nonetheless, these findings suggest that integrating SEL into classroom practices may still provide supportive conditions that complement other motivational and instructional strategies.

Table 10 presents the results of the Significant Relationship between the Learners' Social-Emotional Learning and their Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance Motivation.

Table 10

Pearson Correlation between Social-emotional learning (SEL) and Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance Motivation

Variable	Pearson r
Respondents' SEL vs Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance	0.615 ***
N = 107	*p < .05, **p < .01, **p < .001

The strong positive correlation between overall SEL and self-efficacy for learning and performance ($r(105) = .61$, $p < .001$). This indicates that individuals with stronger overall Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) skills tend to have a higher belief in their ability to succeed in learning and performance tasks.

Addressing the emotional needs of learners is crucial for their overall social-emotional growth. The ability to navigate the emotional challenges they encounter can boost their self-esteem, enhance their self-image, and improve social relationships, ultimately allowing them to reach their full potential (Arwansyah & Suharyanto, 2025). Therefore, it is important to explore research on how highly talented individuals perceive their own empowerment, self-worth, abilities, and the emotional impact of their experiences within their social context.

The data suggests that Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) skills are positively correlated with self-efficacy for learning and performance. Specifically, self-management, responsible decision-making, and overall SEL show the strongest associations, indicating that individuals with well-developed SEL competencies tend to hold stronger beliefs in their ability to succeed academically. These findings align closely with Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, which posits that self-regulation, emotional control, and reflective decision-making strengthen individuals' perceptions of competence. As learners manage emotions, persist through challenges, and make responsible choices, they accumulate mastery experiences, Bandura's most powerful source of self-efficacy, thereby boosting confidence in their academic capabilities.

These results may also be interpreted through Ryan and Deci's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes the importance of competence, autonomy, and relatedness in fostering intrinsic motivation and sustained engagement. SEL competencies such as self-management and responsible decision-making support the development of competence and autonomy, enabling learners to regulate their behavior, set goals, and navigate academic challenges more effectively. In this sense, strong SEL skills help satisfy basic psychological needs, thereby enhancing both self-efficacy and motivation.

The correlations observed in this study are theoretically consistent: SEL strengthens learners' regulatory and interpersonal abilities, which in turn fosters greater self-efficacy and more adaptive motivational orientations. These findings may guide educators in designing SEL-focused strategies that support students' motivational growth while remaining aligned with their developmental needs.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings indicate that most learners demonstrate an average level of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) competency, suggesting a typical ability to manage emotions, build relationships, and make responsible decisions. In terms of motivation, learners exhibit high levels of both intrinsic and extrinsic goal orientation, showing that they are driven by both personal interest and external rewards. Additionally, they possess strong self-efficacy, believing in their ability to succeed in learning tasks. The study further reveals significant relationships between SEL and motivation for learning. SEL is moderately associated with intrinsic goal

orientation and strongly linked to self-efficacy and motivational strategies for learning. While SEL also has a positive relationship with extrinsic motivation, this connection is weaker and less significant. These findings highlight the crucial role of SEL in enhancing learners' motivation, particularly in fostering self-efficacy and effective learning strategies.

Given these insights, there are several important implications for real-world practice. Schools and educators should integrate SEL-focused activities into the curriculum to strengthen students' emotional regulation, decision-making, and relationship-building skills, ultimately improving their motivation and learning outcomes. Recognizing the varying degrees of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among students, teachers can adopt personalized learning approaches that support both self-driven learners and those who respond better to external reinforcement. Additionally, teacher training programs should include strategies for fostering SEL competencies, ensuring that educators can provide the necessary emotional and motivational support for academic success. Beyond the classroom, schools should implement student support programs such as mentoring, counseling, and peer-support initiatives to enhance self-efficacy and encourage positive learning behaviors. Moreover, parents and communities should be actively involved in reinforcing SEL and motivation strategies at home and in extracurricular activities, creating a holistic learning environment. By implementing these strategies, educational institutions can cultivate a more supportive and motivating atmosphere, leading to improved student engagement, resilience, and academic achievement.

Limitations and Future Research

While the study offers important insights into the role of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in relation to student motivation, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, only students' SEL competencies were included in the learner profile. Other potentially influential variables, such as age differences and socio-economic status, were not examined, as these were not found to vary significantly among the respondents. Future studies could expand the range of demographic and contextual factors considered to capture a more nuanced picture of the interplay between SEL and motivation.

Second, the use of purposive sampling drawn solely from private school learners limits the generalizability of the results to other educational contexts, particularly public schools. The collective administration of questionnaires also may have introduced response bias, as learners could have been influenced by the presence of peers or teachers during data collection.

Third, the study relied exclusively on self-report measures, which are subject to social desirability effects and may not fully capture learners' actual SEL competencies or motivational orientations.

Fourth, the analyses conducted did not include effect sizes or more advanced statistical approaches such as regression. Incorporating these methods in future research would provide greater precision in determining the strength of associations and predictive relationships between SEL and motivational constructs. Such analyses could deepen understanding of how specific SEL competencies contribute to different dimensions of learner motivation.

Finally, the sample was limited to 107 students from three private schools, which constrains the generalizability of the findings. Broader investigations involving larger and more diverse samples, including both public and private schools across varied regions, would help establish whether the observed patterns hold in different educational contexts. The cross-sectional design also restricts the ability to infer causal relationships, as it reflects learners' SEL and motivation at only one point in time.

Future research may consider conducting longitudinal or intervention-based studies to examine how learners' SEL competencies and motivational orientations develop over time and respond to targeted SEL programs. This, and other future research that addresses these

limitations will not only refine the understanding of the links between SEL and motivation but also provide stronger evidence for the integration of SEL in both classroom practice and policy.

Declarations

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