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Gender Differences in Socio-Emotional Skills and their Relationship with Academic Performance among University Students

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Abstract
The socio-emotional skills of learners have a significant impact on their academic achievements and overall growth. This research study has explored the link between socio-emotional skills and academic achievements among undergraduate university students in Pakistan along with the influence of socio-economic factors on this association. Quantitative research design was adopted for this research study. The sample comprised of 1200 undergraduate university students from selected public and private universities of Lahore. Structured questionnaires were utilized for the collection of data pertaining to socio-emotional skills, academic achievement of respondents, and socio-economic background of respondents. Socio-emotional skills of learners were assessed in terms of their self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making. Stratified random sampling technique was used for the selection of respondents from different institutions and genders. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were applied for the analysis of data in the light of the research variables. The results of the study indicate that gender differences are dimension-dependent and not universal. Female university students had higher levels of relationship management, social awareness, responsible decision-making and SECs in general compared to male students.

Keywords: *socio-emotional skills, academic performance, university students, socio-economic background, higher education, Pakistan*

Introduction

Socio-emotional competencies (SECS) can be defined as the combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositional attributes that allow people to be able to perceive, manage and regulate emotions, behavior, build relationships, and deal with social situations. In higher education institutions, SECS have been explored through constructs which overlap with each other such as social-emotional learning (SEL), emotional intelligence (EI), emotional competence, self-regulation, empathy, resilience, communication competence,

and interpersonal skills. This conceptual convergence has enhanced the area in various ways but it has caused inconsistencies in measurement and definitions as well. In a recent scoping review conducted on university students, it was found that there were huge inconsistencies in theoretical frameworks and instruments for measuring SECS and most of these were not even standardized instruments for university students. (Gandía-Carbonell et al., 2025).

One of the most utilized models is that of collaborative for academic, social, and emotional learning (CASEL), which emphasizes five mutually interacting competencies, namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The competency of self-awareness consists of the ability to recognize one's own emotions, values, strengths, and weaknesses. Self-management consists of emotion management, stress management, perseverance, and goal-oriented actions. Social awareness pertains to empathy as well as understanding the point of view of people belonging to different cultures and social classes. Communication, cooperation, conflict resolution, and seeking help constitute relationship skills, while responsible decision-making implies ethical and constructive decisions (collaborative for academic, social, and emotional learning (CASEL), 2020).

While the development of the competencies by CASEL was done primarily through research on school children, these competencies are very important for university students, who experience more freedom with regard to their academic life, identity issues, financial challenges, social changes, e-learning requirements, and career uncertainty. In this sense, secs cannot be seen as something that is only relevant to those who need remediation and are “soft” skills independent of academic learning.

Academic Performance

The increasing role of SECs in higher education is proven by studies connecting the emotional and social well-being of students with their academic adaptation and achievement. One of the critical features of SECs is the emotional intelligence of students that has been related to academic achievement due to the fact that students who can recognize and control their emotions can cope with exam stress, stay motivated, concentrate on studies, and utilize the information they receive. MacCann et al. (2020) in the meta-analysis of 158 articles and 42,529 students found out that there was a small to moderate correlation between EI and academic achievement.

Employability and Professional Preparation

Increasing significance of SECs has also been attributed to the change in expectations from the labour market. It is expected that future employees must have the ability to collaborate, work under conditions of uncertainty, communicate well, lead, deal with conflict situations and be able to make responsible decisions. Resilience, agility, flexibility, leadership and social influence are some of the key skills, which are expected to be particularly significant in the period of 2025-2030 according to the Future of Jobs Report 2025, published by the World Economic Forum (2025).

This trend is especially crucial for higher education due to an increased need for professionals to collaborate with other disciplines, communicate digitally, deliver services, make ethical decisions and learn constantly. While technical skills still matter, professional success may largely depend on one’s ability to share his or her knowledge, understand needs of other people, react to their suggestions and feedback, cope with stress and work as a team player. In the healthcare sector, as well as in teaching, social work, psychology, business and public service professions, such competences are essential for ethics and success of the practice.

Pedagogical Implications and Research Gaps

Literature shows that SECs can be taught instead of viewing them as unchangeable personality characteristics. Reflective writing, mentoring, role-playing, case-based learning, peer feedback, group work, simulation, mindfulness activities, guided discussions, emotional diary keeping, and chances to practice communication and conflict management are some effective methods for doing so. However, the most effective methods go beyond lecture-based emotion courses and offer repeatable and contextualized practice. There are also findings from interventions in higher education institutions' mental health that prove the effectiveness of supervised skill training compared to information-based interventions.

However, there are several limitations in literature. Firstly, many studies use self-report and cross-sectional designs that make it impossible to draw cause-and-effect relations and increase the risk of bias due to social desirability. Secondly, the measures of SEC are very different in terms of their content and underlying theory. Ability EI, trait EI, mixed EI, self-efficacy, empathy, and social skills measures, for instance, are all measuring different constructs. Therefore, the diversity of the measurement tools may account for inconsistencies in results found. Gandía-Carbonell et al. (2025) found 121 standardized SEC measures among those reviewed. Third, the database still is unevenly distributed geographically and culturally. Research on SEC is highly concentrated within Western societies as well as medical and nursing fields.

Increasing importance of socio-emotional competencies in higher education

In addition, socio-emotional competencies (SECs) have become essential in universities due to the growing significance of not only disciplinary knowledge and cognitive competencies but also socio-emotional competencies to be successful academically. Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, empathy, emotional regulation, resilience, communication, and responsible decision-making are some of the competencies included in the category of socio-emotional competencies that help students deal with academic pressure, build positive interpersonal relationships, collaborate with others, and react positively to academic and interpersonal difficulties (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2020; Gandía-Carbonell et al., 2025).

Furthermore, SECs play a crucial role in helping students belong to a group, feel included, and retain within higher education institutions. Empathy, perspective-taking, respectful communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution can contribute to building positive inter-personal relations and allow students to successfully engage in various activities in a multi-cultural environment of university. Thus, higher education institutions can develop SECs of students through providing supportive learning environment, providing constructive feedback, cooperative learning, respectful discussion, and active participation of students (Gandía-Carbonell et al., 2025).

Moreover, the importance of SECs has grown due to new requirements of the labour market and of professional life. Nowadays employers need graduates who have good communication skills, are able to work cooperatively, adapt to uncertainty, manage conflicts, show their leadership qualities, and make responsible decisions. In this context, SECs are seen as vital elements of graduate employability and professional readiness rather than just additional “soft skills” (World Economic Forum, 2025).

Transition from school to university and its social/emotional demands.

This transition process is very developmental, since the students have to adjust to their independence and new environment at the same time. There is a lot of social and psychological stress for the freshmen, especially because they are moving out of their comfort zones and getting used to the new institution and its ways of operation.

In college, students are supposed to be more responsible when it comes to more flexible education, heavier workload, self-study, time management, assessment pressures, and self-advocacy. At school, where teachers are always on the watch, in college, students have to organize their time, seek help with academics, understand policies of the institution, and control their motivation. Students who come to college without proper study skills, planning ability and awareness of what is expected from them in college may feel insecure, anxious and unconfident (Stokoe et al., 2024).

The transition process also entails some practical adult life duties including money management, arranging means of transport or place to live, cooking, handling employment while studying and sometimes being away from home. These obligations may add to stress, especially for students from rural communities, poor families and first-time entrants into college. A systematic review conducted recently found that transition process is affected by personal and contextual factors; family and peer support, good sleeping pattern and resilience make transition easier, but racial discrimination and poor resilience make it harder (Braun et al., 2024).

Social and emotional challenges

Socially, students need to make new friends, engage with new peer groups, talk to lecturers, and find their place in the university community. Transition from school life implies loss of daily interaction with known classmates, teachers, and family members. For some students, especially for commuters, introverts, mature students, workers, or culturally disadvantaged, making new social connections might prove challenging. Loneliness, exclusion, and concerns about whether one fits into the new environment might arise in the first semester.

Emotionally, this stage is associated with self-awareness, emotion management, resilience, seeking help, and confidence. Such emotions as homesickness, fear of failure, feelings of being an imposter, money worries, and parental pressure are common among students at this stage. In Stokoe et al.'s study (2024), anxiety, stress, perfectionism, difficulty in making new friends, poor preparation, and problems with time management emerged as personal factors affecting the adjustment process for first-year students. On the other hand, resilience, organization, motivation, optimism, and emotional self-management were considered resources.

Role of emotional regulation, interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, and responsible decision-making

Importance of academic performance as an indicator of university success.

Academic achievement is an important metric of university success since it represents how well students meet their learning objectives, gain discipline-based knowledge, and advance through their programs of study. It can be measured through such metrics as grade point average (GPA), grades for courses, exam results, credits taken, passing rates, and advancing to subsequent semesters. In a recently published review of 77 empirical papers and 18 meta-analyses, cumulative GPA and academic credits gained were revealed to be the best consistent metrics for success in university education (Kocsis et al., 2025). High academic performance is valuable not only due to its impact on graduation, eligibility for scholarships and further education, but also because it can affect students' self-confidence, persistence at universities, and employment possibilities. For universities, data about students' academic performance allows finding students requiring early intervention and assessing effectiveness of their work with them in teaching and student services. But while academic achievement cannot be considered the only metric of university success, more general metrics such as retention, completion of degrees, well-being, belonging, employment,

civic engagement, and transferable skills development are also needed because the educational experience of students extends far beyond academic performance.

2. Material and methods

The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional research design to explore gender differences on socio-emotional skills and its association with academic achievement among university students. Data was collected from 1,200 university students using a standardized Socio-Emotional Skills Scale that measures self-awareness, self-management, relationship management, social awareness, and responsible decision-making. The academic achievement of the participants was measured using CGPA.

The content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed using the Content Validity Index (CVI). Internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's alpha. Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics Software. Tools like descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, Pearson's correlation, and multiple linear regressions were employed to analyze data in line with the research objectives. Statistical significance was at $p < .05$.

2.1 Sampling Techniques and Sample size

Target population for the research was constituted of all the undergraduate students registered in any university and other institutes of higher learning in Pakistan. Accessible population consisted of full-time undergraduate students registered in social sciences, business sciences, and natural sciences in public and private universities of Lahore. Active learners of age 18-25 years were selected, whereas students enrolled in distance learning program, those on leave or probation, or pursuing postgraduate bridging studies were not selected.

A multistage stratified random sampling method was applied in the study. Four universities were purposefully chosen, which were two public universities (University of the Punjab, and University of Education) and two private universities (University of Management and Technology and Forman Christian College). Stratification of students was done on basis of nature of university (public/ private) and gender (male/female), followed by simple random sampling in each stratum using computer-generated random numbers.

Total of 1,200 undergraduate students made up the sample of the study. Sample distribution was equal in both categories of universities (public/private) with 600 from each, and in case of gender (male/ female) also, with 600 males and 600 females.

2.2 Instrument for Study

Data was collected through a structured questionnaire comprising three major sections: socio-emotional skills, academic performance, and socio-economic background. Socio-emotional skills were assessed through items covering key competencies of the CASEL framework, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making. The development of the instrument was theoretically informed by Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, Goleman's Competence Model of Emotional Intelligence, and established measures such as the General Self-Efficacy Scale and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. Academic performance was measured through participants' self-reported CGPA categories, while socio-economic background was assessed in terms of parents' educational and occupational status and family income.

Procedure

The study was conducted in a systematic manner involving a number of steps. Firstly, literature was reviewed with regard to the development of conceptual framework and identification of suitable indicators for

measuring socio-emotional skills, academic achievement, and socio-economic background. The structured questionnaire was then prepared and evaluated in terms of its content validity. Once necessary permissions had been obtained, data were gathered from undergraduate students using the required sampling process. Questionnaires gathered from the sample were coded and entered the computer software for further statistical analysis. Suitable statistical procedures were used to analyze the relationship between socio-emotional skills, socio-economic background, and academic achievement.

2.4 Data Analysis

The gathered data was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were employed in the analysis of data. Content validity was measured through S-CVI/Ave and S-CVI/UA, while reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha for the Socio-Emotional Skills Scale. The independent-samples t test was used to analyze the difference in socio-emotional skills and academic achievement by gender. To examine the relationship between socio-emotional skills and academic performance, Pearson's correlation was used. Finally, the multiple linear regression analysis was done to determine the predictive power of socio-emotional skills on academic performance.

3. Results

Table 1

Demographic information of the participants (n=1200)

Variables	N	%	*Mean*	*SD*
Gender				
Male	600	50		
Female	600	50		
Age (years) *M(SD)*			20.71	1.36
19-20	609	51		
21-22	458	38		
23-24	133	11		
CGPA *M(SD)*			3.16	0.44
2.5–2.7	226	19		
2.7–3.0	345	29		
3.0–3.5	277	23		
3.5–4.0	352	29		

Table 1 shows the demographic details of 1,200 participants. The sample included 50% male participants (n=600) and 50% female participants (n=600). The mean age of the participants was 20.71 (SD = 1.36). Concerning the age distribution, 51% of participants (n=609) were aged 19–20 years, 38% (n=458) were aged 21–22 years, and 11% (n=133) were aged 23–24 years. Therefore, most of the participants were between 19 and 22 years old.

The participants had a mean CGPA of 3.16 (SD = 0.44). With respect to CGPA classification, 19% (n=226) of participants had a CGPA between 2.5 and 2.7, 29% (n=345) of participants had a CGPA between 2.7 and 3.0, 23% (n=277) of participants had a CGPA between 3.0 and 3.5, and 2

indices.

Validity and reliability of Research Instrument

The validity and reliability of the research instrument were tested in order to ensure that the instrument effectively measures the constructs and yields reliable results. Content validity was determined using the Content Validity Index (CVI). A group of subject-matter experts was selected in order to examine the

relevancy of each item within the construct being measured. The Scale-level Content Validity Index according to the average method (S-CVI/Ave) and the Scale-level Content Validity Index according to universal agreement (S-CVI/UA) were computed in order to determine the content validity of the research instrument. The reliability of the research instrument was determined using Cronbach's alpha (α).

Table 2

Content validity Index *of Socio-Emotional Skills Scale*

S-CVI/Ave	S-CVI/UA
0.84	0.74

The Content Validity Index (CVI) of the Socio-Emotional Skills Scale shows that there is a satisfactory to good degree of content validity in the measure. S-CVI/Ave = 0.84: This means that on average 84% of the content of the scale is considered as being relevant by the experts. A score of 0.80 and above is considered as indicating satisfactory content validity. S-CVI/UA = 0.74: This means that 74% of the items were found to have universal agreement among the experts on their relevance.

Table 3

Internal Consistency Reliability of Socio-Emotional Skills Scale

Socio-Emotional Skills	No. of Items	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Self-awareness	12	1-12	0.876
Self-Management	16	13-28	0.784
Relationship Management	11	29-39	0.846
Social Awareness	13	40-52	0.855
Responsible Decision-Making	08	53-60	0.829
Overall Socio-Emotional Skills	60	1-60	0.945

Table 3 shows the Socio-Emotional Skills Scale exhibited satisfactory to excellent internal consistency reliability. Alpha coefficients for the five dimensions of the scale varied between .784 to .876, thus reflecting satisfactory reliability for all the subscales. The highest reliability level was achieved for Self-awareness (α=.876), whereas for Social Awareness and Relationship Management α = .855 and α = .846, respectively. The lowest reliability level was attained for Self-Management (α = .784). Overall, the scale exhibited excellent internal consistency (α = .945).

Table 4

Comparison of Male and female Socio-Emotional Skills and academic performance

Sr.#	**Socio-Emotional Skills and**	Male		Female		Independent samples t-test		
	Academic Performance	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	t-value	df	p-value
1	Self-awareness	3.30	0.77	3.36	0.72	-1.32	1198	0.187
2	Self-Management	3.30	0.69	3.33	0.58	-0.92	1198	0.358
3	Relationship Management	3.33	0.71	3.61	0.76	-6.52	1198	<.001
4	Social Awareness	3.40	0.66	3.53	0.64	-3.53	1198	<.001
5	Responsible Decision-Making	3.37	0.74	3.51	0.75	-3.06	1198	0.002
6	Socio-Emotional Skills	3.34	0.58	3.47	0.57	-3.80	1198	<.001
7	Academic Performance (CGPA)	3.61	1.02	3.65	1.15	-0.59	1198	0.553

As Table 4 demonstrates, girls outscored boys in relation management, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and socio-emotional skills in general ($p < .05$). Nevertheless, there was no significant gender gap in self-awareness, self-management, and academic success (CGPA).

Table 5

The relationship between Socio-Emotional Skills and academic performance

Socio-Emotional Skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Self-awareness	-						
2. Self-Management	.600**	-					
3. Relationship Management	.528**	.566**	-				
4. Social Awareness	.571**	.627**	.709**	-	.		
5. Responsible Decision-Making	.524**	.562**	.568**	.709**	-		
6. Socio-Emotional Skills	.788**	.806**	.824**	.875**	.821**	-	
7. Academic Performance	.355**	.421**	.356**	.476**	.671**	.555**	

As indicated in Table5, socio-emotional skills dimensions were positively correlated with each other and with academic performance at $p < .01$. Relationship management and social awareness demonstrated the strongest inter-dimension correlations ($r = .709$), as well as social awareness and responsible decision-making ($r = .709$). Academic performance exhibited the strongest correlations with responsible decision-making ($r = .671$) and socio-emotional skills in general ($r = .555$). In general, good socio-emotional skills predicted academic performance.

Table 6

Multiple Regression summary: Effect of factors of Socio-Emotional Skills on Academic performance

Variables	B	SE	B	t-value	p-value
Self-awareness	.150	.141		1.061	0.289
Self-Management	.077	.066	.052	1.165	0.244
Relationship Management	.264	.074	.154	3.561	<.001
Social Awareness	.110	.092	.065	1.194	0.233
Responsible Decision-Making	1.067	.067	.729	15.893	<.001
Socio-Emotional Skills	.502	.230	.266	2.187	0.029
$R=0.68$, $R^2=0.46$, Adjusted $R^2=0.45$, $F(4, 1199)=199.97$, $p<.001$					

From Table 6, it is apparent that socio-emotional skills significantly predicted academic performance by accounting for 46% of the variation therein ($R^2 = .46$, $p < .001$). From the dimensions, responsible decision-making emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .729$, $p < .001$) followed by relationship management ($\beta = .154$, $p < .001$). On the other hand, self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness did not predict academic performance.

Table 7

Multiple Regression summary: Effect of factors of Socio-Emotional Skills on Academic performance

Variables	B	SE	B	t-value	p-value
Self-awareness	.150	.141		1.061	0.289
Self-Management	.077	.066	.052	1.165	0.244
Relationship Management	.264	.074	.154	3.561	<.001
Social Awareness	.110	.092	.065	1.194	0.233
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Socio-Emotional Skills	.502	.230	.266	2.187	0.029
$R=0.68$, $R^2=0.46$, Adjusted $R^2=0.45$, $F(4, 1199)=199.97$, $p<.001$					

As seen from Table 7, the socio-emotional skills were a significant predictor of academic performance with $R^2 = .46$, accounting for 46% of the explained variance ($p < .001$). The strongest predictor was responsible decision-making ($\beta = .729$, $p < .001$), then relationship management ($\beta = .154$, $p < .001$), and overall socio-

emotional skills (β = .266, p = .029). Self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness were not significant predictors of academic performance.

Table 8

The relationship between Socio-Emotional Skills and academic performance (n=1200)

Socio-Emotional Skills	Male r	Female r	p-value	Significant difference
1. Self-awareness	.403**	.360**	0.384	No
2. Self-Management	.570**	.331**	< .001	**Yes**
3. Relationship Management	.394**	.376**	0.715	No
4. Social Awareness	.479**	.535**	0.192	No
5. Responsible Decision-Making	.722**	.726**	0.885	No
6. Socio-Emotional Skills	.629**	.569**	0.384	No

The findings indicate that gender significantly moderated the relationship between self-management and academic achievement, with a stronger correlation among males (r = .570) than females (r = .331), z = 5.25, p < .001. However, gender did not significantly affect the correlations for the other socio-emotional skill dimensions. Although females reported significantly higher relationship management, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and overall socio-emotional skills, no significant gender difference was found in academic achievement (p = .553).

4. Discussion

The outcomes of the current investigation shed significant light on gender differences in socio-emotional competencies (SECs), the connection between SECs and academic achievement, as well as the prediction role of certain socio-emotional dimensions in the academic success of students. According to the research outcomes, socio-emotional competencies have a positive correlation with academic achievement, whereas gender differences are better visible in certain dimensions of SECs rather than in all of them. Such results may be considered in line with the literature, where it has been revealed that socio-emotional competencies are linked to academic achievement, and gender differences in these competencies depend on the particular dimension (Portela-Pino et al., 2021; Sojer et al., 2024).

The current research revealed significant differences between females and males, with females outperforming males in terms of relationship management, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and socio-emotional skills. The results of the study corresponded to the results of previous studies showing that females tend to have better interpersonal and other-oriented emotional competencies. For instance, Sojer et al. (2024) discovered that girls scored significantly higher in terms of interpersonal emotional skills and the perception of other people's emotions, while boys performed better in some intrapersonal skills, such as emotion regulation and self-control.

In addition, the findings of the present study are consistent with those of Portela-Pino et al. (2021), who found gender differences in relation to specific socio-emotional competencies, which included better competencies in relation management of girls and better self-management competence of boys. Therefore, gender differences in SECs can be viewed as specific differences in competencies of different genders in certain socio-emotional areas. The considerably higher results of female students in relation management and social awareness could indicate their relative tendency to interpersonal communication, emotional empathy, and developing positive social relations. Such competencies are particularly important in the context of university education, where students have to interact effectively, cooperate with other students,

understand different viewpoints, and maintain positive interpersonal relations. Similar higher interpersonal emotional skills of female university students were found by Sojer et al. (2024).

Gender differences in responsible decision-making are also noteworthy. The female participants in the current study received better results on this dimension in comparison with the male participants. This result is consistent with Portela-Pino et al. (2021) who considered decision-making an essential socio-emotional competence linked to student performance. This study highlighted the significance of decision-making as the second most essential socio-emotional variable that affected academic performance.

On the other hand, the current study did not find any statistically significant gender differences in self-awareness and self-management. This is an important finding as it proves that gender differences did not affect all dimensions of SEC equally. Prior studies also produced inconsistent results with regard to intrapersonal competencies. Sojer et al. (2024) reported that males performed better in several intrapersonal emotional skills such as emotional regulation while females had more developed interpersonal emotional skills.

The results of correlation analysis showed that there was a significant positive relationship between all aspects of socio-emotional skills and academic achievement. Specifically, self-awareness, self-management, relationship management, social awareness, and responsible decision-making had a positive impact on academic performance. In addition, overall socio-emotional skills were found to be moderately positively related to academic performance. It means that those students who have higher levels of socio-emotional competencies will demonstrate better academic achievement.

The highest correlation coefficient with academic performance was revealed in case of responsible decision-making, then followed by overall socio-emotional skills and social awareness. The importance of this result is explained by the fact that responsible decision-making presupposes the ability to evaluate consequences, choose appropriate actions and responses, solve problems, and make good decisions. It can be helpful to cope with academic tasks.

The results of this study coincide with those presented by Portela-Pino et al. (2021) according to whom students with better grades possessed higher socio-emotional competencies and decision-making was the main predictor of academic success. Such results serve as confirmation for the present research result on the high correlation between responsible decision-making and academic performance.

The multiple regression analysis showed that socio-emotional competencies made a significant contribution to explaining the variations in academic performance. The regression analysis accounted for about 46% of variance in academic performance; hence, SECs can be considered as one of the most important psychological and behavioral attributes associated with academic performance.

From the list of individual dimensions, responsible decision making proved to be the most significant predictor of academic success, while relationship management was the second predictor. Self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness did not prove to make a unique and statistically significant contribution to the prediction when controlled for other predictors. This indicates that despite the correlation of several SEC dimensions with academic success, their effects may vary when the correlation between SEC dimensions is considered.

This finding is in line with the research by Portela-Pino et al. (2021), who consider decision-making an essential predictor of student success. Moreover, the results show that academic success might not be linked to the understanding of emotions by students and/or the ability of interaction with other people but also linked to responsible decision-making.

5. Conclusion

The paper shows that socio-emotional skills have a positive impact on the academic performance of students at university, with responsible decision-making and relationship management as the best predictors of good performance. In terms of gender, females scored better in the categories of relationship management, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and socio-emotional skills in general, but there were no differences regarding self-awareness and self-management. In general, socio-emotional skills can explain about 46% of the variations in the performance of university students.

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