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**An Overview of A Study on Undergraduate Students' Social Emotional Learning-Awareness,  
Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making**

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**ABSTRACT**

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This study explores the development and interrelationship of four core social-emotional learning competencies—Social Emotional Learning-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making—among undergraduate students. Drawing on established social emotional learning frameworks, the research investigates how these competencies manifest in academic and social contexts, and how they contribute to students' overall personal and interpersonal growth. The study highlights the importance of integrating social emotional learning components into higher education curricula to support students' holistic development and lifelong success. Implications for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers are discussed. This study examines the presence, development, and interrelationships of four fundamental social-emotional learning competencies—Social Emotional Learning-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making—within the undergraduate student population. These competencies, as outlined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning are essential for fostering students' emotional intelligence, interpersonal effectiveness, and ethical behavior in both academic and non-academic settings. The primary objective of this research is to assess how these competencies are expressed among undergraduate students, to what extent they influence each other, and how they



collectively contribute to personal well-being, academic engagement, and social integration. The study also seeks to identify gaps in students' social emotional learning development and propose strategies for enhancing these skills within the context of higher education.

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

In recent years, the role of social and emotional competencies in higher education has gained increasing attention, particularly in relation to student success and well-being. Undergraduate students, navigating the transition from adolescence to adulthood, encounter various academic, social, and personal challenges that require more than cognitive intelligence alone. The development of emotional and interpersonal skills is therefore critical to their ability to adapt, build meaningful relationships, and make responsible decisions.

This study seeks to examine these four core social emotional learning competencies in the context of undergraduate students. By investigating the extent to which these skills are present and interrelated, the research aims to provide insights into how they influence students' academic engagement, interpersonal interactions, and personal development. The findings are expected to inform educators, Social Emotional Learning and policymakers on strategies to integrate social emotional learning more effectively into undergraduate education, ultimately contributing to the formation of well-rounded, emotionally intelligent individuals.

Social Emotional Learning-awareness, which involves recognizing one's emotions, thoughts, and values, forms the foundation for personal growth and emotional regulation. Social awareness extends this understanding to others, encompassing empathy and the ability to appreciate diverse perspectives. Effective communication and conflict resolution require strong interpersonal skills, and responsible decision-making include choosing morally righteous, positive courses of action for one's own and other people's conduct.

This study aims to explore the interrelationship between these social emotional learning competencies and the experiences of undergraduate students. By examining these dimensions, the research seeks to highlight their significance in academic success, interpersonal relationships, and overall well-being. The findings are intended to contribute to educational strategies that support the emotional and social development of students, thereby enhancing their capacity to thrive in both academic and real-world settings.

The study sample consisted of undergraduate students from diverse academic disciplines and demographic backgrounds, allowing for analysis across variables such as gender, age, year of study, and



field of specialization. Statistical analysis revealed significant correlations among the four competencies, with Social Emotional Learning-awareness serving as a foundational skill that influenced both social awareness and responsible decision-making. Students with higher Social Emotional Learning-awareness were more likely to exhibit empathy, demonstrate effective relationship skills, and engage in reflective, ethical decision-making processes.

The study concludes that integrating social emotional learning principles into undergraduate education is critical for supporting holistic student development. Recommendations include embedding social emotional learning-focused activities into coursework, offering workshops and peer mentoring programs, and training faculty to model and facilitate social emotional learning in the classroom. These strategies can help create a more supportive and emotionally intelligent campus culture, ultimately preparing students not only for academic achievement but also for success in their personal, professional, and civic lives.

### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:**

In today's increasingly complex and interconnected world, academic institutions are tasked not only with imparting knowledge but also with nurturing students' emotional and social competencies. Traditional education systems have long prioritized cognitive and technical skills, often overlooking the equally important emotional and interpersonal dimensions of learning. However, as a critical factor in student success, well-being, and long-term personal and professional development.

The framework of social emotional learning, as defined by organizations such as the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, includes five core competencies: Social Emotional Learning-awareness, Social Emotional Learning-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Of these, four—Social Emotional learning, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making—are particularly relevant to the transitional period of undergraduate education. During this stage, students face various emotional, academic, and social pressures that can influence their identity formation, interpersonal relationships, and ethical decision-making.

Social Emotional Learning-awareness enables students to understand their emotions, strengths, limitations, and values, which is fundamental to effective Social Emotional Learning-regulation and goal setting. Social awareness allows them to empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, fostering inclusive behavior and community engagement. Relationship skills are essential for establishing healthy interpersonal connections, managing conflict, and working collaboratively. Responsible decision-



making helps students evaluate consequences, make ethical choices, and assume accountability for their actions.

Despite the recognized value of these competencies, there is limited research on how they manifest and interact among undergraduate populations, particularly in diverse educational settings. Understanding the current levels and interrelationships of these skills in students can guide interventions and curriculum development aimed at fostering holistic student development.

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:**

This theoretical review explores the conceptual underpinnings of the four-core social-emotional learning (Social Emotional Learning) competencies—Social Emotional Learning-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making—as they relate to undergraduate students. It draws on established psychological, educational, and developmental theories that form the basis for understanding how these competencies influence students' behavior, academic success, and interpersonal relationships.

Emotional Intelligence Theory — as proposed by Goleman (1995) and Mayer & Salovey (1997) — positions self-awareness as a core element of emotional intelligence (EI). Goleman (1995) emphasizes that individuals with high EI can recognize and comprehend their own emotions, thereby influencing their thoughts and behaviors. Mayer and Salovey (1997) expand this view by defining EI as the capacity to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions to support thinking processes. Within undergraduate education, self-awareness in the framework of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) enables students to evaluate their academic aspirations, cope effectively with stress, and strengthen their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986).

Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) - Social awareness is the ability to comprehend and empathize with others, particularly within diverse environments. According to Bandura's Social Learning Theory, social behaviors are acquired through processes of observation, imitation, and interpersonal interaction. In higher education, social awareness allows students to develop intercultural competence and sensitivity to group dynamics. The ability to recognize social cues and respond appropriately supports peer collaboration, classroom participation, and the development of inclusive academic communities.

Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969), Interpersonal Theory (Sullivan, 1953)-Relationship skills involve effective communication, teamwork, conflict resolution, and building meaningful relationships. Bowlby's Attachment Theory suggests that early relationships influence one's capacity to form healthy interpersonal connections in later life. Sullivan's Interpersonal Theory emphasizes that personality is



shaped through social interactions. In college, developing strong relationship skills can improve group learning, promote student retention (Tinto, 1993), and enhance emotional well-being.

Cognitive-Behavioral Theory (Beck, 1967), Moral Development Theory (Kohlberg, 1973)-Responsible decision-making involves evaluating consequences, ethical reasoning, and making choices that respect one Social Emotional Learning and others. Beck's Cognitive-Behavioral Theory highlights the role of cognitive processes in shaping behavior, which is essential in understanding how students make informed, goal-directed decisions. Kohlberg's stages of moral development provide a framework for understanding ethical decision-making. Undergraduate students, especially during emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000), are at a stage where they are forming values, making career choices, and engaging in independent living—contexts that require responsible decision-making.

The development of Social Emotional Learning-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making is supported by a range of psychological and educational theories. These theoretical foundations suggest that social emotional learning competencies are not only developmental but also learnable and teachable. Understanding the theoretical basis of these skills provides a strong foundation for exploring how they manifest in undergraduate students and informs strategies to enhance student well-being, academic performance, and social engagement.

Wagani & Gaur (2024), At Amity University, Mumbai, a two-phase study (N=300 + intervention group) showed Social Emotional Learning-awareness strongly predicts health, well-being, spirituality—and that a 5-day Social Emotional Learning-Awareness Intervention Program significantly improved students' well-being.

India Today (2024), Reports that TISS-trained mindfulness workshops helped enhance Social Emotional Learning-awareness and stress reduction in undergraduate students.

Goel et al. (2024), A qualitative study in India explores how assertiveness—rooted in Social Emotional Learning-awareness and empathy—supports relationship building in college students.

Delhi University “Negotiating Intimate Relationships” (2025): A new general elective integrates emotional awareness, boundary-setting, and red-flag recognition to build relationship and communication skills among undergraduates.

Life Skills Education in Puducherry (2023), a mixed-method study in urban adolescents (precursor to college-age) indicates that life-skills programs improved conduct, Social Emotional Learning-awareness, and responsible behaviors.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

While academic achievement continues to be a primary focus in higher education, increasing attention is being given to the development of social and emotional competencies that are essential for student well-being, interpersonal success, and long-term personal growth.

However, despite the recognized importance of these competencies, there remains a lack of empirical research on how they are developed and applied by undergraduate students across diverse academic and social contexts. Many students may struggle with emotional regulation, empathy, effective communication, or ethical decision-making—skills that are critical not only for academic success but also for personal and professional life beyond university.

This gap in understanding raises several key concerns: To what extent do undergraduate students demonstrate these competencies? How do these skills interact with one another? Are there significant differences in these abilities across student demographics or academic backgrounds? And what can institutions do to better support students in developing these essential life skills?

Addressing these questions is necessary to inform educational strategies, support services, and policy interventions aimed at enhancing student development. Here's a rewritten version of your sentence: This study aims to examine the levels and interrelationships of self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making within the framework of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) among undergraduate students, as well as to explore the factors influencing their development.

Thus, this study seeks to investigate the levels and interrelationships of Social Emotional Learning-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making among undergraduate students, and to identify factors that may influence their development.

**IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:**

The transition into adulthood during undergraduate education is a critical developmental period marked by personal, social, and academic challenges.

**Enhancing Personal Growth and Mental Health:** Social Emotional Learning-awareness allows students to recognize their emotions, thoughts, and values, leading to better emotional regulation and Social Emotional Learning-confidence. Understanding one Social Emotional Learning is foundational for managing stress, reducing anxiety, and fostering a positive Social Emotional Learning-image—issues that are increasingly prevalent among undergraduate populations.

**Promoting Interpersonal and Social Competence:** Social awareness and relationship skills help students build empathy, communicate effectively, and form healthy relationships. These skills are vital



not only in peer interactions but also in navigating increasingly diverse college environments and professional networks.

**Fostering Ethical and Informed Decision-Making:** Responsible decision-making supports students in making constructive choices about their academic, social, and personal lives. In an age where young adults are often faced with complex moral and practical decisions, this competency is key to avoiding risky behavior and promoting accountability.

**Improving Academic and Career Readiness:** social emotional learning competencies directly impact academic performance, motivation, and engagement. Moreover, employers increasingly seek graduates with soft skills such as collaboration, emotional intelligence, and ethical judgment, making this study relevant to workforce preparedness.

**Guiding Institutional Policy and Curriculum Design:** Findings from this study can inform universities and educators on how to better support students through Social Emotional Learning services, social emotional learning-integrated curricula, and student development programs. This evidence-based approach can foster a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.

**Contributing to Existing Literature:** While social emotional learning is well-studied in early education, there is comparatively less research focusing on its impact at the undergraduate level. This study fills that gap by exploring how these competencies develop during college years and how they interrelate, offering new insights for researchers and practitioners alike.

### **SCOPE OF THE STUDY:**

This study aims to examine the levels and interrelationships of four core social-emotional competencies—Social Emotional Learning-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making—among undergraduate students. It seeks to assess how these competencies influence students' personal development, social interactions, and decision-making abilities within the academic environment.

The study will focus on the following:

**Population:** Undergraduate students enrolled in a Social Emotional Learning acted higher education institution (or institutions) during the academic year [Insert Academic Year].

**Variables:** The study specifically investigates four components of social-emotional learning:

- Self-Awareness (Social Emotional Learning)
- Social Awareness
- Interpersonal and Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making



**Purpose:** To explore the current state of these competencies among students and determine correlations or patterns that can inform educational practices, student development programs, and institutional support services.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

The main aim of this study is to explore the growth and interconnectedness of self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making within the Social Emotional Learning framework among undergraduate students.

Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Assess the level of Social Emotional Learning-awareness among undergraduate students in terms of emotional recognition, personal values, and Social Emotional Learning-perception.
2. Evaluate the degree of social awareness demonstrated by students, including empathy, respect for diversity, and understanding of social cues.
3. Determine the strength of students' relationship skills, such as communication, teamwork, conflict resolution, and relationship-building.
4. Analyze students' capacity for responsible decision-making, focusing on ethical reasoning, consequences evaluation, and goal-oriented behavior.
5. Explore the interrelationship among Social Emotional Learning-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, and how these competencies influence one another.
6. Identify any significant differences in these competencies based on demographic variables such as age, gender, academic discipline, or year of study.
7. Provide recommendations for enhancing social and emotional learning within undergraduate curricula and support services.

### **ROLE OF A STUDY ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING-AWARENESS, SOCIAL AWARENESS, RELATIONSHIP SKILLS, AND RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING:**

**Social Emotional Learning-Awareness-**Social Emotional Learning -awareness is the ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions, thoughts, values, and their influence on behavior.

#### **Role in Student Development:**

- It serves as the foundation for all other social-emotional skills.



- Helps students identify personal strengths and limitations, which is essential for setting academic and personal goals.
- Promotes emotional regulation, Social Emotional Learning-confidence, and stress management—critical in adapting to the demands of college life.
- Encourages introspection and personal accountability, fostering greater motivation and persistence in learning.

**Social- Awareness-** Social Awareness — the capacity to recognize, understand, and empathize with others, encompassing individuals from varied cultural and social backgrounds.

**Role in Student Development:**

- Facilitates empathy, open-mindedness, and respect for others in multicultural college settings.
- Enhances students' capacity to engage in inclusive discussions, group work, and campus life.
- Supports conflict resolution and reduces social biases or misunderstandings.
- Encourages civic engagement and community involvement, reinforcing a sense of global citizenship.

**Relationship Skills-** These skills include the accessibility to establish to communicate clearly, listen actively, cooperate, and resolve conflict constructively.

**Role in Student Development:**

- Strengthens collaboration in academic group projects and extracurricular activities.
- Enables the formation of meaningful peer and mentor relationships that contribute to emotional and academic support.
- Builds networking competence important for internships, job opportunities, and professional development.
- Reduces isolation and promotes a sense of belonging, which is critical for mental well-being and retention.

**Responsible Decision-Making-** Responsible decision-making is the ability to make ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior based on safety, social norms, and the well-being of Social Emotional Learning and others.

**Role in Student Development:**

- Encourages sound judgment in academic integrity, time management, and lifestyle choices.



- Helps students evaluate consequences before acting, which reduces risky behaviors such as substance use or academic dishonesty.
- Supports the development of ethical reasoning and long-term planning, essential for career readiness and adulthood.
- Enables students to reflect on their responsibilities and role within society and campus communities.

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