



# College Students Social-Emotional Learning and Work Readiness Skills: Inputs for Internship Success

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**Abstract**—The transition from academic to the professional world poses significant challenges for students, necessitating the development of both technical and interpersonal competencies. This study investigates the relationship between Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Work Readiness Skills (WRS) among college students preparing for internships, using a descriptive-correlational design with regression analysis. Data were collected from 174 third-year students in a state university in Talakag, Bukidnon, Philippines, employing validated survey instruments adapted from established frameworks. Findings revealed that students generally demonstrated high levels of SEL and WRS, with SEL encompassing self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. A strong, positive, and highly significant relationship was identified between SEL and WRS. Regression analysis further confirmed SEL as a strong predictor of WRS. These results underscore the critical role of SEL in enhancing students' employability by fostering both soft skills and job-specific competencies. Integrating SEL into academic programs can better prepare students for internship success and future employment. Recommendations include curriculum enhancement, faculty training on SEL facilitation, and student participation in SEL-focused activities to bridge the gap between academic learning and workforce demands.

**Index Terms**—Social-Emotional Learning, Work Readiness Skills, Internship Preparation, Employability, Higher Education.

## 1. Introduction

The change in environment and set-up from academic to professional scheme has been a constant challenge for individuals who take a leap of their growth --- now gearing towards a journey to a successful entry to the workplace. By offering real-world experience and developing skills essential for future employment, internships play a critical part in this transition (Kapareliotis et al., 2019). As such, understanding the factors that influence internship success is vital. Among these factors, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and work readiness have emerged as key components.

The development of competencies including self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness, and relational skills is a component of social-emotional learning (SEL) (Hemi & Kasperski, 2023). It has been demonstrated to improve students' capacity for stress

management and interpersonal connection navigating, two skills necessary for success in the workplace (Bosch, 2017). Empirical studies demonstrate that proficient SEL can enhance students' academic achievement and employability by providing them with the essential skills.

Conversely, work readiness highlights job-related skills and soft skills as necessary areas for employability. Siburian et al. (2022) explained that job-related skills are particular competencies relevant to the field of specialization while soft skills include problem-solving, communication, and teamwork. Understanding how SEL and work readiness work together is key to students' internship success, and eventually, employment readiness.

There are studies that show proof of examining the link of the variables mentioned. Winterton and Turner (2019) talk about how important it is to match graduate skills to employer demands, and Ugiagbe-Green (2020) critically looks at undergraduate students' work preparation and finds that emotional and practical competences are essential to employability. Prikshat et al. (2019) highlight the theoretical frameworks and practical implications of graduate work readiness, emphasizing the importance of both hard and soft skills.

Global reference of work readiness enumerates those strategies were not properly implemented and understood which resulted in enhancing graduate work readiness. This then suggests a better framework which can be properly and comprehensively integrated to address this concern. The study of Verma et al. (2018) shows how Asia-Pacific graduates face unique challenges per country emphasizing how regional variation affects work readiness. Psychological factor considerations and not just skills-based approaches are deemed necessary to address work readiness concerns as presented in a Philippine-based study of Oblinada et al. (2023). It further presented the needs for educational institutions to consider psychological support as part of their career readiness programs.

Recent studies have pointed out a pressing need for better collaboration between schools and the workforce to ensure Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) supports career readiness

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(Conley, 2015). Currently, SEL and career readiness aren't always aligned, which is a gap that needs addressing. The study of Socas (2017) enumerates that discussions on how to properly incorporate SEL is being overlooked in community colleges suggesting that there is a need for revisiting developmental training for its faculty and staff. It has been deliberated that incorporating SEL in professional preparations, such as internships and other experiential learning opportunities, is highly needed. Additionally, there is already an acknowledgement of the need for SEL programs to be contextualized to adult learners and further be created for them. These programs should integrate job skills and offer greater support networks in continuing education (Wisniewski & Foster, 2021).

Despite having all these realizations, there are still limited existing study that connects SEL to college students preparing for internships in terms of work readiness skills. To close this gap, this study will check on third-year students' SEL levels, perceived work readiness skills, their relationship, and if SEL predicts work readiness skills.

It is believed that in order to impact and improve internship success, there is a need to comprehend the interactions between SEL and work readiness skills. As an independent researcher, this study aims to provide higher education institutions, school administrators, and educators insightful data which will result in alignment of professional expectations with academic preparations through improved academic strategies.

#### A. Framework of the Study

##### 1) Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) Framework of Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL), which provides a comprehensive model for fostering students' emotional and social development. This framework has identified five key components that are essential not only for success in school but also in the future workplace.

The five components as stipulated in the CASEL Framework include Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social-Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making which are defined as follows by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2019). Self-Awareness suggests *"the ability to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts"*. Self-Management means *"the abilities to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations"*. Social-Awareness works on *"the abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, & contexts"*. Relationship Skills dwell on *"the abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups"*. Responsible Decision-Making dwells on *"the abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations"*.

The CASEL Framework, as an underpinning theory, offers a

solid framework for comprehending how SEL competencies affect college students' preparedness for the workforce. The study examines the degree of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) among college students, particularly third-year students, and the predictive effect on their work readiness skills.

##### 2) Conceptual Framework

The Socio-Emotional Learning as presented in CASEL (2019) served as the predictor variable while work-readiness skills, strengthened by the study of (Caballero et al., 2011), will work as the criterion variable.

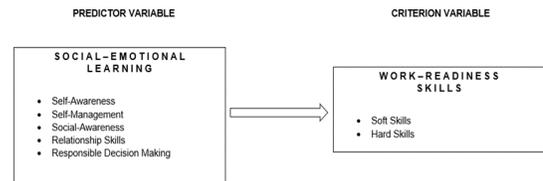


Fig. 1. Schematic diagram of the study

Figure 1 shows the schematic diagram of the study of which is divided into two main components. The Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is the predictor variable which comprises five key components: Self-Awareness; Self-Management; Social-Awareness; Relationship Skills; and Responsible Decision-Making. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) will be analyzed as a predictive factor of work readiness skills. The criterion variable is the work readiness skills which is divided into two sub-variables: Soft Skills and Hard Skills.

##### B. Statement of the Problem

The study checks on college students' social-emotional learning (SEL) and perceived work readiness skills. Further, it will check if SEL has a predictive effect on work readiness skills. Specifically, the study thrives to answer the following questions:

1. How do college students perceive their social-emotional learning in terms of:
  - 1.1 self-awareness;
  - 1.2 self-management;
  - 1.3 social awareness;
  - 1.5 relationship skills;
  - 1.5 responsible decision-making?
2. How do college students perceive their level of work readiness skills in terms of:
  - 2.1 soft skills;
  - 2.2 hard skills?
3. Is there a significant correlation between social-emotional learning and work readiness skills among college students?
4. Is there a predictive effect of social-emotional learning on students' work readiness skills?

##### C. Hypothesis

Problems 1 and 2 are hypothesis-free. Based on the theoretical framework and existing previous findings of studies, the following hypotheses are formulated for Problem 3 and Problem 4.

*Problem 3:*

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the level of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and the perceived level of Work Readiness Skills among college students preparing for internships.

*Problem 4:*

H<sub>0</sub>: The amount of change in Work Readiness Skills due to the change in the level of Social-Emotional Learning among college students is not significant.

## 2. Literature Review

### A. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Studies have emerged to qualify Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) as a crucial component to education, particularly on students' readiness for the workplace and their academic success. These studies justify how SEL impacts a huge difference in the field of education — from honing students for the job market to boosting their academic standing up until the scaffolding of the facilitators of learning, the teachers for that matter, in the proper delivery of SEL programs. However, inadequate incorporation of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in tertiary education programs, where the lack of structured, intentional activities to develop these competencies has been observed, is seen to be the main gap presented in the study of Napa *et al.* (2022). They emphasize the recognition of SEL as a key component of a well-rounded education.

Social-Emotional Learning is the process by which all adults and children learn and put into practice the attitudes, abilities, and knowledge necessary to create healthy identities, control emotions, accomplish individual and group objectives, feel and act empathetically toward others, build and sustain supportive relationships, and make thoughtful and responsible decisions (CASEL, 2019).

In the study of Hemi and Kasperski (2023), they developed a new tool called the 'EduSEL' questionnaire in order to check how well-versed are teachers in understanding and incorporating SEL in their teaching. They clarified in their study the notion of mastering one's concept before it can be of use to others following the recommendation that educators must be equipped with the skills themselves in order to effectively implement SEL. This insight is crucial for ensuring that SEL is properly integrated into the classroom.

Conley (2015) in her study scrutinized how SEL can actually be integrated in higher education highlighting how academic pressure and fostering stronger relationships among peers can be handled. Further, Millet (2020) provides an overview of SEL in higher education with the discussions and dealings of different methods and framework to thread SEL in tertiary programs. These findings and insights are crucial having considered the proper integration of SEL to following classroom engagements while highlighting the fact that it can lead to the improvisation of academic standing and emotional management. This study reinforces the idea that SEL is crucial for students as they navigate their academic and career paths, thus proving the great advantage of SEL's inclusion to university curricula.

With the idea of the integration in the curricula, Bai, Shen, and Wang (2024) explored the impact of SEL on English learning achievements in secondary schools in Hong Kong and have significantly found that SEL does not only improve students' emotional well-being but also affects the improvement of their learning in English. This can then be inferred that SEL can influence students' various academic successes.

### B. Work Readiness

Several studies have expressed interest in the study of how prepared graduates are in the workplace. There are studies that comprehensively discuss work readiness in terms of the skills, experiences, and psychological factors, even including understanding regional challenges. Mostly, an expansion in the research field and focusing targets on efforts to better graduates are on the plate. This is made possible because of the gap seen between classroom learning and real-world skills as presented in the study of Ugiagbe-Green (2020).

Considering the work of Prikshat and colleagues (2019), there is indeed a need for continuous studies to develop effective strategies in scaffolding students' shift from graduation to employment. This is further expanded by Mashigo (2014) where there has become a groundwork for understanding work readiness and highlights which areas need further studies and exploration to prepare graduates for employment.

Winterton and Turner (2019) provide a thorough overview of how we can better prepare graduates for work, emphasizing the need for stronger links between education and employment. Integrating academic and industry considerations is what transpired in this study. to ensure that students are indeed job-ready. On the other hand, the study of Kapareliotis, Voutsina and Patsiotis (2019) zooms to understanding how internship plays in the employability of a student. It shows that practical experience is invaluable for improving work readiness, suggesting that academic programs should incorporate more work-based learning opportunities to prepare students for their future careers.

Considering the skills for employment, Siburian *et al.* (2022) checks on how both soft and hard skills contribute to work readiness. This emphasizes the need for a balance between technical and interpersonal skills which is crucial to develop both skills for workplace success. Nuraini and Usman (2019) study adds the self-efficacy component in concepts affecting work-readiness. They find that self-confidence plays a significant role, suggesting that building students' self-efficacy is as important as developing their technical and interpersonal skills.

On a regional perspective, Verma and colleagues (2018) explore work readiness challenges in the Asia-Pacific region and how HR practices can help. They have identified issues in the region for HR strategies to give support to graduates for their jobs. Nankervis, Prikshat, and Cameron (2017) review the literature on graduate work readiness in Asia-Pacific economies, summarizing key trends and gaps. Their review points out where more research is needed and offers

recommendations for improving graduate employability in the region.

In the Philippines, Manala-O and Manulat Sr (2017) studies the work readiness of students at Mindanao State University Iligan Institute of Technology. It has shown that there are a variety of levels of preparedness that exist resulting in the need for targeted support for students to be more employable. Another study in Philippine school details the involvement of students to not just academic but also extra-curricular activities as causes for better work-relations and preparedness. Magallanes (2022) underscores the importance of engagement in fostering job readiness.

### C. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Work-Readiness

A number of studies confirm how Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) has played a crucial role for preparing students for both college and their future careers. SEL becomes a game-changer in education successes as it helps students and adult learners prepare for career and employment. Yoder and colleagues (2020) emphasize that today's employers are looking for social and emotional skills in addition to technical know-how. They further expressed that student can holistically meet industry demands by incorporating SEL in the teaching and learning process of students.

There is an existing study of Oblinada and colleagues (2023) where they look at the relationship between work readiness and self-esteem among education students of which it was exposed that higher self-esteem is linked to better work readiness. This affirms the need to look into the psychological aspect in career preparations. Paolini (2020) makes a strong study for SEL as a key element of career readiness. According to this study, SEL is not just about helping students in school but is also important for their success in the job market. Paolini's research underscores that SEL skills are vital for making a smooth transition from education to a professional career.

Following studies employ the idea of how SEL and work-readiness jive together. Dymnicki, Sambolt, and Kidron (2013) talks about how SEL helps students develop their skills to succeed in these areas. Socas (2017) study shows that by including SEL in the curriculum, community colleges can better support students' academic and career goals. Thru this study, it is proven that SEL can help students prosper in their spaces both academically and professionally. Wisniewski and Foster (2021) investigate the potential benefits of employability skills in conjunction with SEL for adult learners. They emphasize how crucial it is to design support networks that are specific to the requirements of adult learners in order to enable them to thrive in the workplace. According to their research, including SEL into adult education can greatly improve mature students' job outcomes.

## 3. Methodology

This section presents the research design, research locale, respondents of the study, research instrument, validity and reliability of the study, data gathering procedure, research ethical aspect, scoring procedure, and statistical treatment.

### A. Research Design

This study used descriptive-correlational with regression design to check the level of social-emotional learning and perceived work-readiness skills among college students. The study of Seeram (2019) discussed correlational research as a way to examine how two or more things are connected to see if they are related. It doesn't show that one causes the other but helps find patterns or how strong the connection is between them. The latter's statement falls under the predictive effect. This research utilized quantitative methods in presenting the collected data and analyzing the quantitative data present.

### B. Research Locale

This study was conducted in a state university located in Talakag, Bukidnon, Philippines. It is one of the 16 Satellite Campuses of a state university situated in the Province of Bukidnon. It offers two (2) programs: Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Major in Financial Management and Bachelor in Public Administration. The Campus has 753 enrolled students in the First Semester of the Academic Year 2024-2025.

### C. Sampling Design

This study aimed to measure the level of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and work readiness skills among college students. The population of this study will be taking the internship by next year. The inclusion criteria include third-year students who are eligible for their internships by next year. All other students, not qualified for the inclusion criteria provided, were not included in the study. A list of enrolled third-year students was obtained through the Campus Registrar.

This study employed stratified random sampling in determining its sample. The population was divided into strata based on academic program. Once the strata were already defined, a random number generator was used to randomly select the participants, ensuring that groups are equally represented in the final sample.

Further, the total sample size will be determined using the Raosoft Calculator with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%.

### D. Respondents of the Study

This study checked 174 identified samples from 317 enrolled third-year students. The total sample size was determined using the Raosoft Calculator with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. The use of stratified random sampling was applied to ensure representation of subgroups and reduce sampling bias.

Table 1  
Distribution of respondents of the study

Strata	Total Population	Sample Size
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration	214	117
Bachelor in Public Administration	103	57
<b>Total</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>174</b>

Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents of the study. The use of proportion was applied in order to account for

the varying sizes of enrollment across academic programs. In this way, the researcher ensured that these variations were reflected in the sample size to maintain the representation and reliability of the study.

**E. Research Instrument**

This study utilized a set of survey questionnaires adapted from the studies of Zhou & Ee (2012) and Caballero et al. (2011), assessing the level of Social-Emotional Learning and Work Readiness Skills among college students. The indicants per concept were aligned to the published studies of Zhou & Ee (2012) and Caballero et al. (2011) and were comprehensively modified.

Table 2  
Item placement and distribution

Domain	No. of Items	Placement of Items
<b>Socio-Emotional Learning</b>		
Self-Awareness	5	1,6,11,16,21
Self-Management	5	2,7,12,17,22
Social-Awareness	5	3,8,13,18,23
Relationship Skills	5	4,9,14,19,24
Responsible Decision-Making	5	5,10,15,20,25
<b>Work Readiness Skills</b>		
Soft Skills	5	1,2,3,4,5
Hard Skills	5	6,7,8,9,10

Table 2 shows the item placement and distribution of the adapted-modified tool that was used in the conduct of the study.

**F. Validity and Reliability of the Study**

To check on the validity and reliability of the research instrument, content, and face validity were made by two (2) selected experts in the field of study: a registered psychometrician and a college instructor. Reliability testing, through pilot testing, was made after the validation of the survey tool. Cronbach’s Alpha was utilized to calculate reliability. It has shown a 0.901 result translating to an excellent internal consistency.

**G. Data Gathering Procedure**

Prior to the conduct of the research, a formal letter to request approval from both the Campus Head and the respondents was made. Upon receiving the necessary approvals, the distribution of the research questionnaire took place.

After data gathering, the data gathered were secured with the researcher’s assurance that the respondents’ data were all collected in the strictest of confidence and privacy, considering their anonymity.

**H. Research Ethical Aspect**

The researcher followed the element of research ethics and the national ethical recommendations set by Capitol University and that of Bukidnon State University-Talakag Campus.

**I. Scoring Procedure**

The study used a four-point Likert Scale to allow the measurement of responses linked to the level of social-emotional learning (SEL) and perceived work-readiness among college students. Below is a table explaining the scoring procedure with its equivalent range, responses, and descriptive counterpart.

Table 3  
4-Point Likert scale on the level of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) among college students

Score	Range	Response	Description
4	3.26 – 4.00	Always	Very High
3	2.51 – 3.25	Often	High
2	1.76 – 2.50	Sometimes	Low
1	1.00 – 1.75	Never	Very Low

Table 4  
4-Point Likert scale on the perceived work-readiness skills among college students

Score	Range	Response	Description
4	3.26 – 4.00	Always	Very High
3	2.51 – 3.25	Often	High
2	1.76 – 2.50	Sometimes	Low
1	1.00 – 1.75	Never	Very Low

Table 3 and Table 4 shows the scoring guide for both social-emotional learning (SEL) and work readiness skills among college students. The use of a 4-Point Likert Scale in this study was made after considering the discussion based on the narrated response bias, like central tendency bias, in the study of Joshi et al. (2015). With this scale, responses were more decisive by removing the neutral option which will lead responses to either lean in a particular inclination.

**J. Statistical Treatment of the Data**

In order to effectively and accurately analyze the gathered data, the researcher used weighted mean and standard deviation, correlation, and linear regression as statistical tools. Using the Jamovi Application, the following descriptive and inferential statistics were investigated.

Table 5 shows the problem question numbers, data gathering instrument, and statistical analysis which were utilized in the conduct of the study. Questions 1 and 2 were both looking for the level of each variable which led to the use of mean and standard deviation. Question 3 checked on the relationship among the variables and thus used correlation, particularly Spearman’s rho as assumptions for Pearson’s r were not met. A linear regression was used to answer the 4<sup>th</sup> question, looking for a predictive effect of Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) on work readiness skills.

Table 5  
Statistical treatment of the data

Problem Questions	Data Gathering Instrument	Statistical Analysis
Problem Question 1	Survey Questionnaire	Mean and Standard Deviation
Problem Question 2	Survey Questionnaire	Mean and Standard Deviation
Problem Question 3	Survey Questionnaire	Correlation
Problem Question 4	Survey Questionnaire	Linear Regression

### 4. Results and Discussion

#### A. On the Level of Social-Emotional Learning among College Students preparing for internships in terms of Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social-Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making

The tables below detail the levels of College Students' Social-Emotional Learning organized based on the five key domains of SEL: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social-Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making respectively. The given data is collected from a sample of 174 students ready for internships.

Table 6 presents the level of self-awareness among college students. It highlights the mean scores and the corresponding interpretations for the given results. The mean score ranges between 2.891-3.489 which generally indicates a high level of self-awareness among college students. This affirms that students are clear about their values and how they use them to guide their individual goals, as presented in question 5, with a mean score of 3.489, suggesting a very high level of self-awareness.

The overall mean result of self-awareness landed at 3.245, confirming a high level of self-awareness and signifying capacitated individuals comprehending their feelings, ideas, and values and how they deal with various contexts as presented in CASEL Framework (2019). This further supports the idea that students have an adequate understanding and honest view of what and who they truly are, particularly in dealing with their thoughts, emotions, feelings, values, strengths, and weaknesses.

Considering that these college students will be enrolling for their internships, it is evident in their capacity to know

themselves well by recognizing what they are good at and what they are not. With this, it can be inferred that these students can identify what they need to work on and how their emotions dictate their engagement towards others as well.

Table 7 provides the level of self-management among college students. It presents the mean scores and the corresponding interpretations for the given results. The mean score ranges between 3.000-3.431 which generally indicates a high level of self-management among college students. This relates to students' recognition of their need for breaks or support when confronted with challenges to maintain their well-being, as presented in question 5, with a mean score of 3.431, which suggests a very high level of self-management. This confirms that students are proactive in maintaining and protecting their well-being.

The overall mean result of the level of self-management landed at 3.174, confirming a high level of self-management and suggesting their ability to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations as presented in the CASEL Framework (2019). This further supports that the students have enough control over themselves, their passions, and their mental activities affecting their reactions to situations.

This affirms that these students can easily control impulsive reactions and maintain composure in stressful situations making it an advantage in being effective to be in the workplace. With the given result, it can be inferred that their ability to stay organized, meet deadlines, and remain professional even under pressure, when they are immersed in the workplace, will be evident.

Table 6  
College students' level of social-emotional learning in terms of self-awareness (N=174)

Questions	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I am aware of how my emotions influence my actions and decisions in different situations.	3.414	0.609	Very High
I feel confident about my abilities and skills.	2.891	0.779	High
I have good understanding of my strengths and areas where I need improvement.	3.149	0.672	High
I often reflect on past experiences helping me navigate my responses to situations thoughtfully.	3.282	0.595	Very High
I am clear about my personal values and how they guide my goals.	3.489	0.586	Very High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.245</b>	<b>0.648</b>	<b>High</b>

Legend: Ranges for 4-point scale options for item: (Score Code, Range, Description) 1, 1.00-1.75, Very Low; 2, 1.76-2.50, Low; 3, 2.51-3.25, High; 4, 3.26-4.00, Very High.

Table 7  
College students' level of social-emotional learning in terms of self-management (N=174)

Questions	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I stay calm and focused when unexpected challenges arise, allowing me to keep moving towards my goal.	3.115	0.653	High
I pause to think things through before reacting when facing a difficult situation.	3.000	0.680	High
I can adjust my plans when needed while staying committed to my long-term goals.	3.155	0.700	High
I prioritize tasks effectively and avoid letting emotions control my actions even when under pressure.	3.167	0.646	High
I recognize when I need a break or support and take proactive steps to maintain my well-being.	3.431	0.602	Very High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.174</b>	<b>0.656</b>	<b>High</b>

Legend: Ranges for 4-point scale options for item: (Score Code, Range, Description) 1, 1.00-1.75, Very Low; 2, 1.76-2.50, Low; 3, 2.51-3.25, High; 4, 3.26-4.00, Very High.

Table 8  
College students' level of social-emotional learning in terms of social-awareness (N=174)

Questions	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I can easily understand and relate to how others are feeling.	3.259	0.651	High
I appreciate and respect differences among people	3.856	0.368	Very High
I try to see situations from other people's viewpoints.	3.172	0.631	High
I am good at picking up on social signals and norms.	2.874	0.605	High
I am aware of and sensitive to cultural differences in others.	3.609	0.566	Very High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.354</b>	<b>0.564</b>	<b>Very High</b>

Legend: Ranges for 4-point scale options for item: (Score Code, Range, Description) 1, 1.00-1.75, Very Low; 2, 1.76-2.50, Low; 3, 2.51-3.25, High; 4, 3.26-4.00, Very High.

Table 9  
College students' level of social-emotional learning in terms of relationship skills (N=174)

Questions	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I express myself clearly and listen well to others.	3.299	0.647	Very High
I handle disagreements in a constructive and peaceful way.	3.155	0.658	High
I work effectively with others to achieve common goals	3.362	0.646	Very High
I build and maintain trust with people I work with.	3.333	0.716	Very High
I use empathy to strengthen and maintain positive relationships.	3.466	0.565	Very High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.323</b>	<b>0.646</b>	<b>Very High</b>

Legend: Ranges for 4-point scale options for item: (Score Code, Range, Description) 1, 1.00-1.75, Very Low; 2, 1.76-2.50, Low; 3, 2.51-3.25, High; 4, 3.26-4.00, Very High.

Table 10  
College students' level of social-emotional learning in terms of responsible decision-making (N=174)

Questions	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I consider what is fair and ethical when making decisions.	3.460	0.595	Very High
I am good at analyzing problems and finding effective solutions	2.661	0.613	High
I think about the possible outcomes of my decisions before I act.	3.322	0.688	Very High
I take time to reflect on past decisions and learn from them.	3.540	0.605	Very High
I can align choices with both personal objectives and community expectations.	3.178	0.606	High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.232</b>	<b>0.621</b>	<b>High</b>

Legend: Ranges for 4-point scale options for item: (Score Code, Range, Description) 1, 1.00-1.75, Very Low; 2, 1.76-2.50, Low; 3, 2.51-3.25, High; 4, 3.26-4.00, Very High.

Table 8 demonstrates the level of social awareness among college students, with mean scores and corresponding interpretations presented. The mean score ranges between 2.874-3.856 which generally indicates a very high level of social-awareness among college students. Students' expression of respect and appreciation of individual differences is very evident with a mean score of 3.856, as presented in question 2, suggesting a very high level of social-awareness.

The overall mean result of the level of social-awareness is at 3.354, translating to a very high level of social-awareness. This further suggests that students can understand the perspectives of and empathize with others regardless of sex, culture, and status as defined in the CASEL Framework (2019). It can be further interpreted that students appreciate perspectives from diverse individuals easily through their recognition of social cues which may transpire on any occasion. Further, it affirms students' adaptability to the people around them.

Affirming students' ability to empathize with others and understand differences, building relationships is something very achievable. This further relates to these students' potential to navigate workplace dynamics.

Table 9 reveals the level of relationship skills among college students, with mean scores and corresponding interpretations presented. The mean score ranges between 3.155-3.466 which generally indicates a very high level of relationship skills among college students. Students' use of empathy in maintaining good relationships with other people is highlighted in question 5 with a mean score of 3.466 suggesting a very high level of relationship skill.

The overall mean result of the level of relationship skill is at 3.323, equating to a very high level of relationship skills. This further suggests that students acquire the skills necessary to build and preserve wholesome, encouraging, and strong relationships with others as defined in the CASEL Framework (2019).

With the given result, it can be seen a pool of future young professionals who collaborate well with others, gain trust, and establish a strong professional network which is an advantage

on their end.

Table 10 tells the level of responsible decision-making among college students. It presents the mean scores and the corresponding interpretations for the given results. The mean score ranges between 2.661-3.540 which generally indicates a high level of responsible decision-making among college students. This affirms that students take time to reflect on decisions made and learn from each of them, as presented in question 4, with a mean score of 3.540, suggesting a very high level of responsible decision-making. However, it can also be seen that students' analytical and problem-solving skills can be an area for improvement.

The overall mean result of the level of responsible decision-making landed at 3.232, confirming a high level of responsible decision-making and suggesting students' abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior as presented in CASEL Framework (2019). This further relates to students' ability to align actions with company values and objectives which are all positive points for internship success.

Summing up, Tables 6-10 suggest that college students generally possess a high level of social-emotional competence as supported by their strong self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These findings align with the information presented in the table below which shows the overall SEL scores.

Table 11  
College students' level of social-emotional learning (N=174)

Domain	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Self-Awareness	3.245	0.415	High
Self-Management	3.174	0.416	High
Social-Awareness	3.354	0.331	Very High
Relationship Skills	3.323	0.374	Very High
Responsible Decision-Making	3.232	0.394	High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.266</b>	<b>0.386</b>	<b>Very High</b>

Legend: Ranges for 4-point scale options for item: (Score Code, Range, Description) 1, 1.00-1.75, Very Low; 2, 1.76-2.50, Low; 3, 2.51-3.25, High; 4, 3.26-4.00, Very High.

The table 11 shows that the mean score for each domain ranges from 3.174-3.354, indicating that students generally

show a high level of Social-Emotional Learning across all domains. Social-awareness stands out with the highest mean score of 3.354 signifying students' ability to consider and understand different perspectives and relate to varied views and principles from diverse personalities. The relatively very high-level mean score for relationship skills (3.323) backs up this interpretation proving that these college students acquire the necessary skills to build long-lasting, healthy, inspiring, and solid interpersonal relationships, affirming their consciousness in society. Although indicating a high-level result, self-management holds the lowest mean score (3.174) signifying that there are significant opportunities for improvement to be dealt with to progress the ability to stay in control of one's feelings, thoughts, and actions, no matter what the situation is – so with responsible decision-making and self-awareness which comparatively have the same interpretation.

Thus, the mean of Social-Emotional Learning scores is 3.266, with a standard deviation of 0.386, confirming that these college students demonstrate a very high level of Social-Emotional Learning, able to understand themselves, handle their feelings, work well with others, reach their goals, and make kind and responsible choices affirming the presented study of Napa et. al (2022), recognizing SEL as a key component of a well-rounded education further affirming these students' ability to learn faster, adapt to workplace culture, and immerse as a key player for a reflective atmosphere for growth and development --- something employers value.

*B. On the Perceived Level of Work Readiness Skills among College Students preparing for internships in terms of Soft Skills and Hard Skills*

The following tables depict the perceived level of work readiness skills among college in terms of soft skills and hard skills. The given data is collected from a sample of 174 students ready for internships.

The data in Table 12 suggests that college students have a very high perception of their soft skills. All questions from the

table have a mean score of at least 3.184, with an overall mean score of 3.294, indicating a very high level of perceived soft skills. The standard deviation is at 0.637 suggesting that there is a consensus on their perceived level of soft skills.

The results manifest that the greatest perceived soft skill acquired by college students is their ability to comfortably work in teams and their contribution to collective successes. This particular question garnered the highest mean score of 3.437. Relative to that, students listening and communication skills are perceived to be very high attaining a 3.322 mean score.

The result shows that these students are generally confident in working well with teams affirming their great collaborative skills, conflict regulation, and motivation. It can then be expected that higher productivity, innovative solutions, and shared achievements are on top of everything.

Table 13 shows that college students also have a high perception of their hard skills. However, it is evident, based on the results, that their perceived level of hard skills is slightly lower than their perceived level of soft skills. The overall mean score for hard skills is 3.076, with all five questions having a mean score of at least 2.931. The standard deviation for hard skills is 0.686 suggesting that there is a general consensus among college students on their perceived level of hard skills just like that of the soft skills.

The students' strongest perceived hard skill is their acquisition of essential technical skills and comprehensive knowledge for their chosen career. However, students' knowledge of industry trends and practices is an area for improvement. This means catching up with the latest developments, standards, best practices, and technological advancements are areas these students have to deal with and master while on their preparations for internship.

Table 14 provides an overview of college students' perceived work readiness skills. This result is a combination of the data from their self-reported level of soft and hard skills, offering a holistic view of their perceived preparedness for the workforce.

Table 12  
College students' perceived level of work readiness skills in terms of soft skills (N=174)

Questions	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I feel that I can clearly and effectively communicate my ideas and listen to others.	3.322	0.608	Very High
I am comfortable working in teams and contributing to our collective success.	3.437	0.649	Very High
I am able to tackle challenges and find effective solutions when issues arise.	3.184	0.570	High
I effectively manage my time and prioritize tasks to meet deadlines.	3.264	0.713	Very High
I adapt well to changes and new situations, maintaining flexibility and a positive outlook.	3.264	0.644	Very High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.294</b>	<b>0.637</b>	<b>Very High</b>

Legend: Ranges for 4-point scale options for item: (Score Code, Range, Description) 1, 1.00-1.75, Very Low; 2, 1.76-2.50, Low; 3, 2.51-3.25, High; 4, 3.26-4.00, Very High.

Table 13  
College students' perceived level of work readiness skills in terms of hard skills (N=174)

Questions	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I possess essential technical skills and comprehensive knowledge equipping me to contribute effectively to my chosen career.	3.247	0.610	High
I am knowledgeable about industry trends and practices that will help me in my career.	3.011	0.688	High
I have a strong foundation in industry-standard tools and methodologies, allowing me to execute tasks efficiently and accurately.	2.931	0.710	High
I am capable of managing projects effectively, from planning through to execution.	3.034	0.688	High
I have honed specialized skills which are essential for success in my field and enable me to meet industry-specific challenges with confidence.	3.155	0.732	High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.076</b>	<b>0.686</b>	<b>High</b>

Legend: Ranges for 4-point scale options for item: (Score Code, Range, Description) 1, 1.00-1.75, Very Low; 2, 1.76-2.50, Low; 3, 2.51-3.25, High; 4, 3.26-4.00, Very High.

Table 14  
College students' perceived level of work readiness skills (N=174)

Domain	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Soft Skills	3.294	0.415	Very High
Hard Skills	3.076	0.514	High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.185</b>	<b>0.465</b>	<b>High</b>

Legend: Ranges for 4-point scale options for item: (Score Code, Range, Description) 1, 1.00-1.75, Very Low; 2, 1.76-2.50, Low; 3, 2.51-3.25, High; 4, 3.26-4.00, Very High.

The data presented in the table above suggests that students possess a high level of perceived work readiness having an overall mean score of 3.185. This indicates that students generally feel confident in their abilities across skills necessary for workplace success. It is also evident in the data that students have a significantly higher perception of their soft skills rather than their hard skills with a mean score of 3.294 and 3.076 respectively. This difference suggests that students place greater confidence in their interpersonal and self-management abilities compared to their technical and industry-specific knowledge. The relatively low standard deviations for both skill domains (0.415 for soft skills and 0.514 for hard skills) indicate a general consensus among students regarding their perceived levels of work readiness, suggesting a shared understanding of what constitutes work readiness and a relatively uniform level of confidence in their abilities. This result can highlight the presented study of Nuraini and Usman (2019) confirming that self-efficacy, emphasizing self-confidence playing an important role, is important in developing both technical and interpersonal skills.

C. On the Correlation between Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Work Readiness Skills among college students preparing for internships

Table 15 focuses on establishing the relationship between Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Work Readiness Skills (WRS) using Spearman's rho, a statistical correlation measure.

Table 15, showing the Spearman's rho of 0.592, demonstrates a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between SEL and WRS. The value suggests that as social-emotional learning scores increase, the work readiness skills scores tend to increase as well. The extremely low p-value of <0.001 confirms a highly significant relationship, asserting that the relationship between the variables cannot be just a product of random chance. The given data signifies the rejection of the null hypothesis further upholding the strong positive highly statistically significant relationship between social-emotional learning (SEL) and work readiness skills (WRS).

This finding has been presented in the study of Dymnicki et al (2013), supported by the study of Socas (2017), discussing

how SEL helps students develop their skills to succeed in the workplace. Further, the study of Bosch (2017) adds to the support by highlighting how SEL improves students' capacity for stress management and interpersonal connection, navigating two skills necessary for success in the workplace. In the recent study of Oblinada et al. (2023), it was discussed that psychological factor considerations and not just skills-based approaches are necessary to address work readiness. These studies surely highlight that SEL and work-readiness skills accurately jive together.

Thus, the strong, statistically significant, and positive correlation observed in this study adds to the growing body of literature advocating for the inclusion of SEL in educational and professional training programs. This suggests that incorporating SEL developments results in personal and professional advantages that can bridge the gap between academic preparation and workforce expectations.

D. On the Predictive Effect of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) on Work Readiness Skills (WRS)

The table 16 provides further insights into the relationship between social-emotional learning (SEL) and work readiness skills (WRS). The Model Fit Summary highlights how strong the predictor variable's predictive relationship toward the criterion variable is and the proportion of explained variance.

The positive value of R confirms the positive correlation observed in Table 15 and further affirms the general hypothesis that as students' socio-emotional learning increases, their work readiness skills also increase. The value of 0.621 also indicates a strong linear relationship suggesting that indeed social-emotional learning (SEL) is a good predictor of work readiness skills (WRS).

Additionally, the R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.385 means that 38.5% of the variation in work readiness skills (WRS) is predicted by social-emotional learning. This means about 39% of the changes in the work readiness skills (WRS) scores can be explained by their social-emotional learning (SEL) scores. Although 38.5% seems moderate, the complexity of work readiness must also be considered. This means that there are other factors contributing to an individual's preparedness for the workforce, which in this case, comprise the remaining 61.5%. The R<sup>2</sup> value is significant, signifying that SEL plays a substantial role in shaping work readiness. This finding supports the presentation in the study of Foster (2021) narrating the complexities and the cruciality of designing support networks that are specific to the requirements of adult learners for them to thrive in the workplace.

The estimate of 0.856 suggests that for every one-unit increase in social-emotional learning (SEL), work readiness skills (WRS) are predicted to increase by 0.856 units. The small

Table 15  
Correlation between Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Work Readiness Skills (WRS)

Correlation Between Variables	N	Spearman's Rho (p)	p-value	Interpretation	Decision on H <sub>0</sub>
SEL and WRS	174	0.592	<0.001	Significant	Reject H <sub>0</sub>

Table 16  
Linear regression analysis of SEL predicting WRS

Predictor	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Estimate	Standard Error (SE)	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
SEL	0.621	0.385	0.856	0.0825	10.38	<0.001	Significant

standard error of 0.0825 specifies the precision of the estimate. The large t-value (10.38) and low p-value (<0.001) are strong proof to reject the null hypothesis and further conclude that there is a strong, positive, and highly significant relationship between social-emotional learning (SEL) and work readiness skills (WRS) congruent to the findings presented in Table 15.

Table 16 validates those higher levels of SEL are associated with higher levels of WRS consistent with the discussions in Table 15 further stressing that SEL is, indeed, important in career preparation. Oblinada et al (2023), in their study, affirms this relationship between SEL and work readiness stating that higher self-esteem is linked to better work readiness, adding up to Paolini's study in 2020 underscoring that SEL skills are vital for making a smooth transition from education to professional world engagements.

The conducted study now shows that a very high level of social-emotional learning suggests a high level of perceived work readiness skills among these college students preparing for internships suggesting that proper incorporation of SEL in academic development and preparations plus updating with significant trends in the industry, will lead to workplace success.

### 5. Conclusion

It has been proven that there is indeed a strong, positive, highly statistical, significant relationship between Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Work Readiness Skills (WRS) among college students preparing for internships. This study also confirms that SEL is a significant predictor of WRS where about 39% of the variance in work readiness skills is explained by SEL. The findings emphasize that as the level of SEL increases, WRS also tends to increase.

With the given result, it can be claimed that SEL plays a critical role in preparing students for the workplace. Having seen its predictive effect, higher education institutions must check the incorporation of SEL initiatives into the curricula or career readiness programs and must also update the facilitators of learning on how to properly integrate SEL in their daily dealings with students.

In essence, developing social-emotional learning among students will bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world employability, addressing the importance of matching graduate skills with employer demands.

### 6. Recommendations

The findings suggest that incorporating and highlighting adult SEL plays an important part in preparing college students for work preparedness. Considering SEL incorporation into the curriculum can be an advantage for both academic and industry satisfaction. Since it has been proven that social-emotional learning (SEL) plays a vital role in career preparation, school administrators can consider training and future developments for faculty and all other facilitators of learning in terms of their social-emotional learning improvement and how they could incorporate initiatives in their classes, particularly preparing students in their internship experience.

In addition, teachers are encouraged to revisit the programs, projects, and activities in their respective classes; checking and highlighting the importance of incorporating SEL development initiatives in their assessment to constantly check the levels of students. Students are also encouraged to consider the benefit of journaling through self-reflection to constantly assess development in their social-emotional aspect and to utilize campus resources such as availing of guidance services or SEL-related resources in the library, seminars, talks, and discussions.

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