



Self-Awareness Analysis as an Indicator of Social-Emotional Competence in Elementary School Students

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Abstract

This study examines the role of self-awareness in the development of social-emotional competencies among primary school students. Self-awareness, as a key aspect of emotional intelligence, enables students to recognize and manage their emotions, understand their strengths and weaknesses, make decisions, express their thoughts, and evaluate their actions. The research was conducted at SDN Bogoarum 2, with 16 students from grades 5 and 6 as subjects. Data were collected using a self-awareness questionnaire based on Daniel Goleman's theory, complemented by interviews with teachers. The results showed that 68.75% of students exhibited a high level of self-awareness, while the remaining 31.25% scored lower. The study found that self-awareness positively influenced emotional regulation, decision-making, and self-expression. However, areas such as making decisions and articulating thoughts needed further improvement. These findings underscore the importance of self-awareness in fostering emotional and social development in students, which is crucial for their academic success and interpersonal relationships.

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Introduction

The challenges of education in the future are becoming increasingly complex, requiring students to balance academic, social, and emotional skills. Social and emotional abilities are crucial to develop alongside academic achievements. The prevalence of bullying, depression, and juvenile delinquency highlights a lack of social and emotional competencies among students. Insufficient emphasis on these competencies can negatively impact students'

personality development and social relationships. Therefore, education must integrate the development of social and emotional skills into its curriculum.

Education at the elementary school level plays a fundamental role in shaping students' character and preparing them for future challenges. According to [Salsabila et al. \(2020\)](#), character education is essential for developing quality human resources capable of confronting the evolving demands of society. In the modern world, challenges extend beyond academic performance and encompass the development of strong character and emotional resilience. As [Goleman \(2009\)](#) notes, success is more influenced by emotional intelligence than by intellectual intelligence, with 80% of success attributed to emotional competence and only 20% to cognitive abilities. This highlights the increasing importance of social-emotional learning (SEL) in educational settings, where students' emotional and social skills are just as crucial as their academic abilities.

Social-emotional competence, as outlined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), is a framework that promotes personal growth and interpersonal effectiveness in students ([Borowski, 2019](#)). This framework consists of five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Among these, self-awareness is identified as a foundational skill, enabling individuals to recognize and understand their emotions, thoughts, and values. This competency not only influences behavior but also contributes to better decision-making and relationship-building ([Azizah & Septiana, 2023](#)). Developing self-awareness at a young age sets the stage for students to effectively manage their emotions and navigate social interactions with empathy and respect.

Self-awareness, as defined by CASEL, is the ability to accurately perceive one's emotions, thoughts, and values, and to understand how these influence behavior in different situations. [Goleman \(2009\)](#), in his emotional intelligence theory, emphasizes that self-awareness is one of the core components of emotional intelligence. Being aware of one's emotions helps individuals regulate their feelings and actions, leading to more effective interactions with others. Furthermore, self-awareness is essential for personal growth, as it allows individuals to recognize areas for improvement, learn from their experiences, and develop their potential. As [Setianawati et al. \(2024\)](#) suggest, this awareness helps individuals adapt and thrive in both personal and social contexts, fostering resilience and emotional well-being.

Theory of cognitive development further elaborates the significance of self-awareness in the context of children's growth. According to [Pakpahan & Saragih \(2022\)](#), children's cognitive abilities progress through distinct stages, each marked by different ways of thinking and understanding the world. This developmental framework is crucial for designing effective interventions aimed at enhancing self-awareness in children. By understanding the cognitive stages, educators can tailor their teaching methods and activities to help students develop greater self-awareness in line with their cognitive and emotional maturity. Such interventions

can significantly impact how students perceive themselves and interact with their peers (Solihin et al., 2024).

Students with low levels of self-awareness often face challenges in managing their emotions and behaviors. For instance, these students may struggle with time management, setting priorities, and handling academic pressures, all of which negatively affect their academic performance (Wolters & Brady, 2021). Furthermore, a lack of self-awareness can contribute to emotional difficulties, such as increased stress, anxiety, and depression, which further hinder students' ability to focus and perform in school. As Ruja et al. (2024) have noted, students who lack self-awareness are more likely to experience emotional instability, which can lead to academic underachievement and social difficulties. Without the tools to manage their emotions, these students may also exhibit impulsive behaviors that disrupt their learning environment and affect their peers.

Moreover, the absence of self-awareness can also contribute to social challenges among students. Szczygiel (2021) assert that students with limited self-awareness often struggle to understand and appreciate differences in others, which can lead to conflicts and misunderstandings. Such students may also exhibit difficulties in forming healthy peer relationships, as they lack the emotional insight to navigate social dynamics effectively (Lestyono et al., 2024). For example, they may fail to recognize the impact of their words or actions on others, resulting in unintentional harm and social friction. Furthermore, students who lack self-awareness are more likely to rely on external support to solve problems, diminishing their ability to work independently and develop critical thinking skills (London et al., 2023).

Self-awareness plays a crucial role in preventing negative behaviors such as bullying. According to Puspitasari (2023), students with strong self-awareness are better equipped to understand the emotional consequences of their actions, reducing the likelihood of engaging in bullying or other harmful behaviors. By recognizing their own emotions, students can better regulate their impulses and interact with others in a positive and respectful manner. This ability to manage emotions and behavior is particularly important in fostering a safe and supportive school environment, where all students feel valued and respected (Jannah, 2023). By promoting self-awareness, schools can create an atmosphere of empathy and mutual understanding, which is essential for preventing bullying and other forms of aggression.

The rising number of bullying incidents in Indonesian schools, as reported by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), further underscores the need for a focus on self-awareness in education. In 2023, there were 3,800 reported cases of bullying, the majority of which took place within educational settings. This trend reflects a broader societal issue where students struggle to regulate their emotions and engage in healthy social interactions. In addition to bullying, incidents of student fights and aggression, often sparked by minor issues, indicate a lack of emotional regulation and self-awareness. These problems are not confined to individual behavior but are also reflective of the wider social environment in which students are

growing and learning. The increasing number of children seeking help for mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression, further highlights the urgency of addressing self-awareness in schools.

In response to these concerning trends, it is essential to conduct research that focuses on the development of self-awareness among elementary school students. By understanding how self-awareness evolves in the school environment, educators can design effective interventions and support systems to help students build emotional intelligence. Previous studies have demonstrated the positive effects of self-awareness on academic achievement and overall well-being. [Alviansyah et al. \(2022\)](#) found that students with higher self-awareness tend to perform better academically, as they are more focused, motivated, and disciplined in their learning. Similarly, [Setianawati et al. \(2024\)](#) showed that promoting self-awareness through cultural practices, such as the 5S (smile, greetings, politeness, respectful behavior, and courteousness), contributes to a more positive and humane educational environment.

Despite these positive findings, there is still a need for further research to explore how self-awareness develops in elementary school students, particularly in the context of their learning environments. This research is critical for identifying effective strategies to enhance self-awareness and other social-emotional competencies at an early age. The findings from such studies can help educators and policymakers better understand the role of self-awareness in academic and social success, allowing them to implement targeted interventions that support students' emotional and social development. By fostering self-awareness in elementary school students, we can create a foundation for lifelong emotional intelligence and well-being, ultimately helping them navigate the complexities of both academic and social life.

Method

Research design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design. The qualitative approach aims to provide a comprehensive description of the phenomenon being studied, focusing on the detailed reports and perspectives of the subjects. According to [Lim \(2024\)](#), qualitative research seeks to describe complex situations, exploring words and detailed accounts from the subjects or respondents. This method allows for an in-depth examination of the context and the natural settings of the participants. The research design is chosen because it enables the researcher to investigate the social-emotional competence of elementary school students, particularly their self-awareness, through personal experiences and perceptions.

Research sample

The respondents in this study consist of 2 teachers and 16 students from grade 5-6 at SDN Bogoarum 2, Plaosan District, Magetan Regency. The selection of this sample was based on the teachers' role in interacting with the students daily and their ability to observe students' development in self-awareness. The students were selected as they are within the age group most likely to be developing critical social-emotional competencies such as self-awareness. The sample was chosen purposefully to gain insights from those who directly engage with the students, ensuring a deep understanding of the context and behavior of the participants.

Research procedure

The research procedure consists of several steps that guide the study from data collection to analysis. First, the researcher prepared the instruments, which include a self-awareness questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Data collection was carried out through surveys and interviews. Surveys were distributed to the students in grades 5-6, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with the two teachers to gather their observations and insights into the students' self-awareness. The interviews provided additional context to the survey data and helped to triangulate the results, ensuring accuracy and a more comprehensive understanding. The self-awareness questionnaire was designed based on the self-awareness indicators by [Goleman \(2009\)](#), focusing on aspects such as emotional recognition, decision-making, independence, and self-reflection. After data collection, the results were analyzed to determine the self-awareness levels of the students.

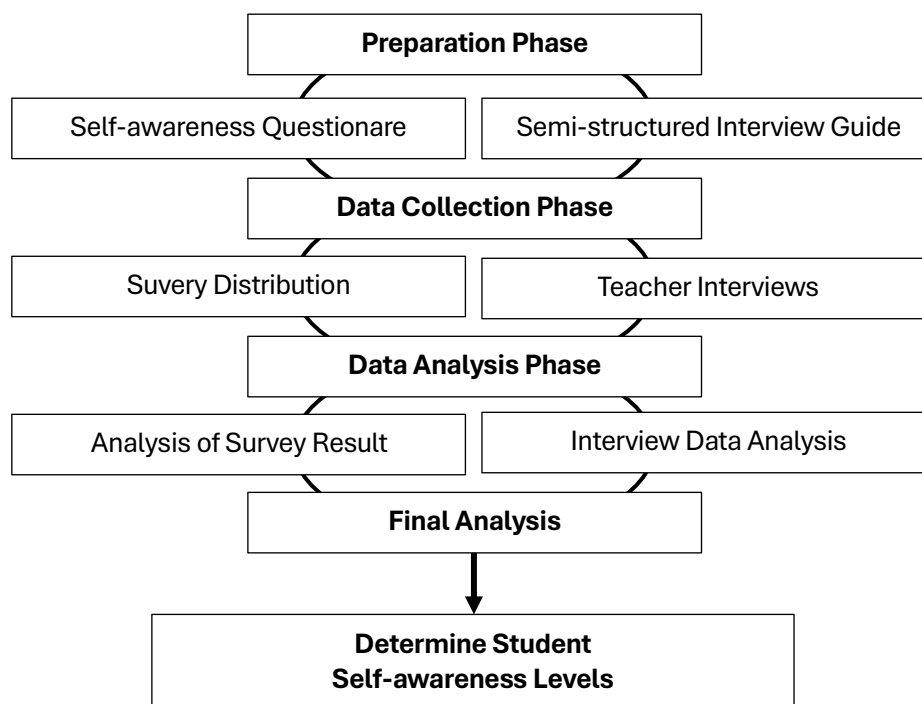


Figure 1. Research Procedure Flow Chart

Data analysis

Data analysis in this study involves both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The primary data source is the questionnaire filled out by the students, which is then analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results of the questionnaires are converted into Likert scale scores, where the responses are scored according to the Table 1.

Table 1. Questionnaire Scoring

Statement	Answer	Score
Positive (+)	Often	4
	Sometimes	3
	Rarely	2
	Never	1
Negative (-)	Often	1
	Sometimes	2
	Rarely	3
	Never	4

Following data reduction, the total scores for each student were calculated. The scores were then classified using the following categorization system based on the Guttman scaling formula in Table 2.

Table 2. Classification of students' self-awareness

Score Range	Classification
79-94	Very High
61-78	High
43-60	Low
14-42	Very Low

In addition to measuring overall self-awareness, the research also examines the students' self-awareness levels based on specific indicators. The classification for each indicator is also calculated to determine which aspects of self-awareness need improvement. The classification for each indicator is as follows Table 3.

Table 3. Classification of each indicator

Score Range	Classification
833-1024	Very High
641-832	High
449-640	Low
256-448	Very Low

To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation was employed. This technique compares data obtained from the surveys with information gathered from interviews with the two

teachers. The teachers, as daily mentors of the students, provided insight into their observations and interactions with the students, thus offering a more holistic perspective. Triangulation helps to confirm the consistency of the findings and enhances the accuracy of the results.

The data were then presented in tables based on the classification of student scores, enabling a clear overview of the students' self-awareness levels. These tables allow for easy identification of patterns and trends, which were subsequently analyzed to draw conclusions regarding the students' social-emotional development in relation to self-awareness. The presentation of data aims to provide actionable insights for educators and policymakers in fostering self-awareness among elementary school students.

Results and Discussion

Results

After distributing the instruments to 16 subjects, consisting of 5th and 6th-grade students from SDN Bogoarum 2, the data obtained is as follows Table 4.

Table 4. Survey Results Scores

Student	Score	Classification
Student 1	60	Low
Student 2	69	High
Student 3	66	High
Student 4	60	Low
Student 5	76	High
Student 6	76	High
Student 7	67	High
Student 8	56	Low
Student 9	68	High
Student 10	60	Low
Student 11	71	High
Student 12	62	High
Student 13	75	High
Student 14	65	High
Student 15	59	Low
Student 16	65	High

Based on the data in Table 6, after applying the Guttman scaling formula, it was found that 68.75% or 11 students scored within the “high” self-awareness category, while the remaining 31.25% or 5 students scored within the “low” self-awareness category. The average score for self-awareness was 65.94, which corresponds to a “high” self-awareness category.

The analysis indicates that the self-awareness level of the 5th and 6th-grade students at SDN Bogoarum 2 falls under the “high” category. The findings suggest that students possess a good level of self-awareness, which is a crucial aspect of their social-emotional competence. However, to gain a more detailed understanding of their self-awareness, an analysis of each self-awareness indicator is necessary.

The results of the student responses according to the self-awareness indicators are presented as follows Table 5.

Table 5. Student Responses for Each Indicator

No.	Indicator	Score	Classification
1	Recognizing or understanding their own feelings and behaviors	784	High
2	Recognizing strengths and weaknesses	663	High
3	Having an independent attitude	712	High
4	Making appropriate decisions	583	Low
5	Being able to express thoughts effectively	612	Low
6	Ability to evaluate oneself	651	High

Indicator 1: Recognizing or Understanding Their Own Feelings and Behaviors

The score for this indicator was 784, placing it in the “high” category. The responses to statements 1 and 2 mostly indicated “often” or “sometimes”, while the negative statements (3 and 4) were mostly answered with “never” or “rarely”. This suggests that most students are aware of what makes them happy, how they respond when sad, what causes them sadness, and they recognize when they are angry. This indicates a strong ability to understand and manage their emotions.

In interviews with teachers, it was noted that students could express their likes and dislikes clearly, especially regarding subjects. Students are energetic when they enjoy a subject, but less motivated when they dislike it. Some students even skipped school on days when subjects they disliked were scheduled. Overall, students demonstrated good emotional regulation, particularly when angry. There were no instances of violent outbursts, which are common in younger students. However, one student did exhibit occasional difficulty in expressing their anger appropriately, occasionally directing their frustration at peers.

Indicator 2: Recognizing Strengths and Weaknesses

This indicator scored 663, which is also categorized as high. The responses to statements 5 and 6 indicated “often” or “sometimes,” while the negative statements (7 and 8) showed that half of the students answered “rarely” or “never”. This suggests that many students are aware of their talents, strengths, and weaknesses, and they have a clear understanding of the areas in which they excel and those they do not.

In interviews with teachers, it was revealed that students confidently accept tasks that align with their abilities, such as serving as ceremony officers. They demonstrate self-

awareness by excelling in tasks they are good at and taking responsibility for them. When assigned to represent the school in competitions, students, despite initial hesitation due to shyness, eventually took on the task once they recognized it matched their strengths.

Indicator 3: Having an Independent Attitude

The score for this indicator was 712, placing it in the “high” category. The majority of students answered “often” to statement 9, while statement 10 was answered with “sometimes.” For the negative statements (11 and 12), half of the students answered “rarely.” Most students independently prepared their school supplies. A smaller number still sought guidance when completing tasks, and many students carried out tasks without assistance.

Teacher interviews highlighted that students did not ask for help from parents or peers when completing school tasks or homework unless they had first attempted the task on their own. Students took initiative in their routine activities, such as cleaning the school yard, without waiting for instructions from teachers. This indicates a high level of independence in their daily responsibilities.

Indicator 4: Making Appropriate Decisions

The score for this indicator was the lowest among all, at 583, which falls into the “low” category. Responses to statements 13 and 14 mostly indicated “rarely,” while negative statements 15 and 16 were often answered with “often.” This suggests that students struggle with making decisions with confidence and are often uncertain about the choices they make. They also had difficulty explaining the reasoning behind their decisions and tended to doubt themselves when questioned.

Teacher interviews further revealed that students frequently ignored advice from teachers and followed their own desires without considering consequences. Examples include eating snacks during class or refusing to change into appropriate attire after physical education lessons. Some students followed peers' behavior, even when it contradicted school rules, such as dressing inappropriately or not adhering to class conduct.

Indicator 5: Being Able to Express Thoughts Effectively

This indicator scored 612, which is categorized as “low.” Most students answered “rarely” to statements 17 and 18, while the majority answered “often” to the negative statements 19 and 20. This indicates that many students are not confident in expressing their thoughts and ideas, and they often feel embarrassed or unsure when speaking to others.

Teacher interviews revealed that in group discussions, students were reluctant to speak up or share their ideas due to shyness. Many students felt unsure of themselves and avoided speaking in front of the class, offering short or non-verbal responses instead. Some students had difficulty articulating their ideas clearly, often jumping between topics or providing vague answers.

Indicator 6: Ability to Evaluate Oneself

This indicator scored 651, placing it in the “high” category. Most students answered “sometimes” to statements 21 and 22, while nearly all answered “never” to statement 23, and most answered “rarely” to statement 24. This suggests that many students reflect on their actions and acknowledge their mistakes, with only a few expressing frustration when receiving criticism and not making efforts to correct their errors.

Teacher interviews indicated that students demonstrated self-reflection, often acknowledging their mistakes without blaming others or external circumstances. For example, students who failed to complete assignments did not blame their parents or external factors. They would strive to correct their mistakes in subsequent weeks, showing a willingness to improve.

The findings from this study reveal that the self-awareness of students in grades 5 and 6 at SDN Bogoarum 2 is generally high. However, improvements in decision-making and communication skills are needed to further enhance their social-emotional competencies.

Discussion

Self-awareness is one of the critical aspects in the development of students' social-emotional competencies, particularly in primary education. Social-emotional competence involves an individual's ability to recognize and manage their own emotions, empathize with others, and build positive relationships with peers. In this context, self-awareness serves as the foundational element that allows students to achieve optimal social-emotional competence. The significance of self-awareness is rooted in emotional intelligence, enabling individuals to recognize, regulate, and modulate their emotions effectively ([Giftsy Dorcas, 2023](#)). This study demonstrates how self-awareness in students serves as an indicator of their social-emotional competence and shows that students with high self-awareness are likely to exhibit better emotional and social development.

The findings of this study provide an in-depth analysis of each self-awareness indicator. The first indicator discussed is the ability to manage emotions. According to [Mertens et al. \(2022\)](#), managing emotions is a core aspect of self-awareness, as it involves reflecting on one's thoughts and feelings. Emotional management plays a pivotal role in determining the level of self-awareness, as it reflects how students handle their emotions when confronted with various situations. From the results of the study, it is clear that most students have achieved a high level of emotional awareness, which is a fundamental component of emotional intelligence. The ability to recognize and control emotions in different contexts helps students engage more effectively with their peers and their learning environments ([Destari et al., 2024](#)).

The next self-awareness indicator is recognizing one's strengths and weaknesses. According to [Medina & Orantes \(2021\)](#), knowing one's strengths and weaknesses enhances

self-understanding, which is crucial for social intelligence. Self-awareness is intrinsically linked to social intelligence because understanding oneself helps an individual relate better to others and develop empathy. The study's findings show that most students possess a high degree of self-awareness about their personal abilities. This self-awareness allows them to acknowledge their strengths, whether in academics, extracurricular activities, or social interactions, and understand their areas for improvement. This type of self-reflection is crucial for personal growth and contributes to more positive social interactions and increased academic performance.

Independence is another indicator that showed a high score in this research. [Rahmawati & Nasution \(2023\)](#) highlight the importance of independence for students, as it fosters self-management, decision-making skills, and responsibility. Independent students are more capable of taking responsibility for their actions and carrying out tasks without relying on others. The research findings align with this theory, as the majority of students demonstrated autonomy in their daily routines and schoolwork. Independence, coupled with self-awareness, positively impacts emotional development, as students are more confident in their abilities and make decisions that align with their personal values and strengths. Independent behavior in students also facilitates their ability to manage challenges and make proactive choices without excessive reliance on external guidance.

Making appropriate decisions is also a vital self-awareness indicator. This skill, as [Songer & Yamamoto \(2023\)](#) explain, enhances independent learning, fosters motivation, and encourages exploration of various options, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes and the development of critical thinking skills. Students who make well-informed decisions tend to exhibit greater confidence in their choices and are more responsible for the outcomes of those choices. From the research findings, it is evident that although many students are capable of making decisions, some still struggle with choosing the best course of action. Improving decision-making skills in students not only boosts their confidence but also strengthens their critical thinking abilities, which are essential for academic success and personal development.

The ability to express thoughts and feelings is another crucial component of self-awareness and social-emotional competence. As [Rozy & Sukardi \(2023\)](#) note, the ability to express ideas and emotions is important for students because it improves their speaking skills, fosters effective communication, and supports academic success. The study found that many students have difficulties expressing themselves clearly, often opting to remain silent or pass on answering questions to peers. This lack of self-expression can be attributed to feelings of insecurity or discomfort with speaking in public, which impedes their ability to communicate their ideas effectively. Improving this aspect of self-awareness can lead to better communication skills, as students become more comfortable expressing themselves in various settings, from group discussions to one-on-one conversations with teachers and peers.

Self-reflection and evaluation also emerged as significant indicators of self-awareness in this study. According to [Blândul & Bradea \(2022\)](#), self-evaluation is crucial for students because it is tied to academic performance, fosters self-awareness, and contributes to personal growth. The ability to reflect on one's actions and recognize areas for improvement is a key part of developing emotional intelligence and social-emotional competence. The results from this study reveal that students, for the most part, are able to assess their own actions and recognize when they have made mistakes. This ability to engage in self-evaluation helps students understand their strengths and weaknesses, allowing them to make informed decisions to improve their behaviors and academic performance.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of self-awareness in fostering emotional regulation. The ability to regulate emotions is fundamental to emotional intelligence, as it enables individuals to manage stress, handle frustration, and respond to challenges in constructive ways ([Giftsy Dorcas, 2023](#)). Emotional regulation is closely linked to self-awareness, as students must first recognize their emotions before they can manage them effectively. In this study, many students demonstrated a high level of emotional regulation, indicating a strong ability to control their emotional responses to various situations. This ability contributes not only to better academic outcomes but also to healthier social interactions, as students are less likely to engage in disruptive behaviors when they are emotionally aware and in control.

Social-emotional competence, as highlighted in this study, is an essential factor in overall student development. The results indicate that students with higher levels of self-awareness tend to perform better socially and emotionally. They are more capable of handling conflicts, understanding the perspectives of others, and building positive relationships ([Solihin et al., 2024](#)). These skills are integral to creating a positive learning environment where students can thrive academically and socially. The study also suggests that self-awareness should be nurtured from an early age to ensure that students develop the emotional and social skills necessary for success in both school and life.

The research findings also underscore the role of teachers in fostering self-awareness among students. Teachers can encourage self-reflection by providing constructive feedback and offering opportunities for students to engage in activities that promote self-exploration and emotional regulation. By creating a classroom environment that values emotional intelligence, teachers can help students recognize the importance of understanding and managing their emotions. This, in turn, will support their overall development and enable them to become more empathetic, responsible, and self-confident individuals.

The study also revealed that while most students demonstrated a high level of self-awareness, some indicators, such as decision-making and expressing thoughts effectively, could benefit from further development. These areas of growth are crucial for students to develop as competent social and emotional individuals. Teachers, parents, and school administrators can collaborate to provide more opportunities for students to practice these

skills in real-life situations. Encouraging students to engage in decision-making processes and express their ideas in various forms will help them gain confidence and improve their ability to communicate effectively. In conclusion, self-awareness plays a central role in the development of students' social-emotional competencies. The findings of this study highlight the importance of nurturing self-awareness in primary school students to promote emotional regulation, social interactions, decision-making, and communication skills. By focusing on these self-awareness indicators, educators can create a supportive environment that fosters the development of emotionally intelligent students who are capable of thriving in both academic and social contexts. This research contributes to our understanding of the role of self-awareness in social-emotional competence and provides valuable insights into how educators can support students' emotional and social development.

Ultimately, the study suggests that fostering self-awareness in students not only helps them become more emotionally intelligent but also equips them with the skills needed for academic success and positive social relationships. Encouraging self-awareness through structured activities, guided reflection, and supportive teaching practices will ensure that students are better prepared to navigate the challenges they face in school and beyond.

Conclusion

This study highlights the critical role of self-awareness in the development of social-emotional competencies in primary school students. The research demonstrates that students with high self-awareness are better able to manage their emotions, understand their strengths and weaknesses, and make independent decisions. Furthermore, self-awareness enhances students' ability to express their thoughts and evaluate their actions, contributing to improved academic and social outcomes. While the majority of students in this study displayed strong self-awareness, areas such as decision-making and self-expression require further development. Teachers and educators play a vital role in nurturing self-awareness by creating supportive environments and providing opportunities for self-reflection. Overall, fostering self-awareness is essential for the emotional and social growth of students, enabling them to succeed academically and build positive relationships.

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