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Influence of Emotional Regulation and Resilience on the Social Competence of Elementary Learners

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between emotional regulation and resilience in relation to the social competence of elementary learners at Manawe Elementary School in Loreto District, Agusan del Sur. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational research design, the study involved 113 Grade 4 to 6 pupils selected through universal sampling. Validated and adapted survey questionnaires were used to measure three key variables: emotional regulation as to cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression, resilience as to personal competence and acceptance of self and life, and social competence as to cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, self-control, and fairness. Data were analyzed using weighted mean, Pearson product-moment correlation, and multiple linear regression analysis. Results revealed that learners demonstrated a high level of emotional regulation, a high level of resilience, and a high level of social competence. Significant relationships were found between emotional regulation and social competence, as well as between resilience and social competence. However, regression analysis indicated that not all dimensions of emotional regulation and resilience significantly predicted social competence. The findings suggest that both emotional regulation and resilience play important roles in enhancing learners' social competence, although certain dimensions exert stronger predictive influence than others. Therefore, educators are encouraged to integrate social-emotional learning strategies that promote emotional control and resilience to improve pupils' social functioning and classroom interactions.

INTRODUCTION

Learners who struggle with social competence often exhibit conflict, withdrawal, and poor cooperation, resulting in limited peer acceptance, reduced participation, and lower academic engagement. These difficulties hinder not only classroom relationships but also the holistic development of children. Evidence indicates that weak social skills increase the risk of peer rejection, loneliness, and disengagement, emphasizing the importance of social competence in school adjustment (Bierman & Erath, 2020; Denham *et al.*, 2012).

Globally, deficits in social competence are associated with long-term academic and social challenges. Studies show that learners with poor social skills are more likely to experience isolation, bullying, and low engagement (Çelik & Şahin, 2019; Ladd *et al.*, 2014). In the Philippine context, similar patterns have been observed, where pupils demonstrate difficulties in peer interaction, cooperation, and classroom participation (Cruz & Almario, 2021; Laguador, 2019).

At Manawe Elementary School, pupils have been observed to display impulsive behavior, emotional outbursts, and social withdrawal, which negatively affect peer relationships and classroom engagement. These concerns highlight the need to examine key psychological factors influencing social competence.

Emotional regulation and resilience are identified as important predictors of social competence. Emotional

regulation enables learners to manage emotions and respond appropriately in social situations, while resilience allows them to adapt and maintain positive relationships despite challenges (Gartland *et al.*, 2019; Gross, 2015; Masten, 2014). Anchored in Social Learning Theory, this study assumes that social behaviors are learned through interaction and experience.

Thus, this study aims to determine the extent to which emotional regulation and resilience predict the social competence of elementary pupils. The findings are expected to guide interventions that enhance learners' emotional skills, resilience, and positive peer interactions, ultimately supporting their holistic development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional Regulation

Emotional regulation is a critical socio-emotional process that enables learners to manage and modify their emotional responses in ways that are appropriate to social situations. In educational settings, effective emotional regulation supports learners' ability to interact positively with peers and participate actively in classroom activities. Denham *et al.* (2012) found that children with strong emotional regulation skills demonstrated higher levels of cooperation, prosocial behavior, and peer acceptance. This corresponds with Blair and Raver (2015), who emphasized that supportive classroom environments enhance learners' capacity to regulate emotions and

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sustain attention.

In support of these findings, a study published by E-Palli Publishers revealed that emotional styles significantly influence students' social relationships and interpersonal functioning. Specifically, emotional-related factors such as self-regulation and sensitivity to context were found to be significantly correlated with social intelligence, indicating that learners who manage emotions effectively are more capable of building meaningful social interactions (Gonzaga *et al.*, 2024). These findings reinforce the role of emotional regulation as a foundation of social competence.

Cognitive Reappraisal

Cognitive reappraisal is an adaptive emotional regulation strategy that involves reframing situations to reduce negative emotional impact. Gross (2015) explained that this strategy allows individuals to modify emotional responses before they fully develop, promoting more controlled and constructive behavior.

Empirical evidence supports this claim. McRae *et al.* (2012) found that learners who frequently use cognitive reappraisal demonstrate better emotional balance and prosocial behavior. Similarly, Xu *et al.* (2023) revealed that reappraisal enhances empathy and peer acceptance. This aligns with findings from E-Palli-related research, which highlight that emotional processing and interpretation of social cues are essential predictors of social functioning, emphasizing that adaptive emotional strategies improve interpersonal relationships (Gonzaga *et al.*, 2024).

Expressive Suppression

Expressive suppression refers to the inhibition of outward emotional expression after an emotional response has occurred. While it may help maintain outward control, research indicates that it often leads to negative social outcomes. Gross (2015) described suppression as a less adaptive strategy because it does not reduce internal emotional experience.

Supporting this, Hu *et al.* (2014) found that habitual suppression is associated with weaker interpersonal relationships and reduced peer support. Similarly, Brenning *et al.* (2015) reported that learners who frequently suppress emotions experience difficulty forming close friendships. Complementing this, findings from E-Palli research suggest that limitations in emotional expression and awareness may reduce learners' ability to interpret social cues and engage effectively in relationships (Gonzaga *et al.*, 2024). These results indicate that expressive suppression may hinder the development of social competence.

Resilience

Resilience refers to the ability to adapt positively despite challenges and adversities. In school contexts, it allows learners to persist in tasks, manage stress, and maintain social relationships. Masten (2014) described resilience as a developmental process that supports positive

adaptation.

In agreement, Gartland *et al.* (2019) found that learners with higher resilience demonstrate stronger peer connectedness and fewer interpersonal difficulties. Similarly, Theron (2016) emphasized that resilience supports cooperation and empathy. In the Philippine setting, an E-Palli study found that factors such as social support, self-efficacy, and emotional regulation significantly predict personal resilience among adolescents, highlighting the importance of internal and external resources in coping with stress (Dela Cruz & Amarillo, 2022). These findings suggest that resilience strengthens learners' ability to maintain positive social interactions.

Social Competence

Social competence refers to the ability of learners to interact effectively with others, demonstrate prosocial behavior, and maintain positive relationships. It includes skills such as cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, self-control, and fairness. Gresham *et al.* (2010) emphasized that these skills are strong predictors of peer acceptance and classroom adjustment.

Consistent with this, Eisenberg *et al.* (2014) found that socially competent learners are more likely to engage in helping, sharing, and cooperative behaviors. Likewise, Jones *et al.* (2017) explained that social competence influences both academic success and interpersonal development. Supporting this, research in the Philippine context highlighted that social-emotional learning programs significantly improve learners' interpersonal relationships, classroom behavior, and overall well-being, emphasizing the importance of developing social competence in schools (Molina, 2025).

Synthesis

The reviewed literature indicates that social competence is strongly influenced by learners' emotional regulation and resilience, as these capacities shape how pupils manage emotions, cope with challenges, and interact with others. Studies consistently show that effective emotional regulation, particularly through adaptive strategies such as cognitive reappraisal, enhances prosocial behavior, empathy, and peer acceptance, while maladaptive strategies like expressive suppression hinder communication and weaken social relationships. In parallel, resilience enables learners to persist in the face of difficulties, maintain positive peer interactions, and adapt to social demands, with dimensions such as personal competence and acceptance of self and life contributing to confidence and cooperative behavior. These findings collectively suggest that learners who are emotionally regulated and resilient are more likely to demonstrate key components of social competence, including cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, self-control, and fairness. However, despite extensive research on these variables, there remains a gap in examining their combined predictive influence on social competence among elementary pupils, particularly within

the Philippine context, thereby justifying the need for the present study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research design using a correlational approach to determine the relationship between emotional regulation, resilience, and the social competence of elementary pupils. The respondents of the study were the 113 Grade 4 to Grade 6 pupils from Manawe Elementary School in Loreto District, Agusan del Sur. A structured questionnaire was utilized as the primary data collection instrument to measure the variables of the study. Emotional regulation was assessed in terms of cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression, while resilience was measured through personal competence and acceptance of self and life. Social competence was measured using the dimensions of cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, self-control, and fairness.

The questionnaire items were adapted from established instruments and modified to suit the context of elementary learners. Prior to data collection, the researcher secured the necessary approvals from the Schools Division Superintendent, school head, and other concerned authorities. Ethical considerations were strictly observed, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation of the respondents. The questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher, and clear instructions were provided to ensure accurate responses.

Collected data were checked, organized, and encoded for analysis. The data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Weighted mean was used to determine the levels of emotional regulation, resilience, and social competence among learners. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was applied to examine the significant relationship between emotional regulation, resilience, and social competence. Furthermore, multiple linear regression analysis was employed to identify the extent to which emotional regulation and resilience significantly predict learners' social competence. All statistical analyses were conducted using a significance level of 0.05.

Mathematical Expressions and Symbols

Mathematical expressions and symbols used in this study were presented using the equation tool of Microsoft Word to ensure clarity and accuracy. The study utilized multiple linear regression analysis to determine the predictive influence of emotional regulation and resilience on learners' social competence. The regression model is expressed as:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \epsilon$$

where:

Y = Social Competence

α = Constant or intercept

β_1 = Regression coefficient of Emotional Regulation

β_2 = Regression coefficient of Resilience

X_1 = Emotional Regulation

X_2 = Resilience

ϵ = Error term

This equation was used to determine the extent to which emotional regulation and resilience significantly predict the social competence of Grade 4 to Grade 6 pupils at Manawe Elementary School.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The level of emotional regulation of learners is presented in Table 1. The results revealed that learners demonstrated a generally high level of emotional regulation, as reflected by the overall mean (M = 3.24), interpreted as Agree. Among the indicators, cognitive reappraisal obtained the highest mean (M = 3.30), indicating that learners are able to reinterpret situations and manage their emotions in a positive and adaptive manner. This suggests that learners regulate their emotions by thinking differently about situations, which helps them respond appropriately in social interactions.

On the other hand, expressive suppression obtained the lowest mean (M = 3.18), implying that learners are less likely to suppress or hide their emotional expressions. These findings suggest that while learners demonstrate adaptive emotional regulation, there is still a need to improve balance between emotional expression and control.

The level of resilience of learners is presented in Table 2.

Table 1: Level of Emotional Regulation of Learners

Indicators	Mean	Description
Cognitive Reappraisal	3.30	Agree
Expressive Suppression	3.18	Agree
Overall Mean	3.24	Agree

The results revealed that learners demonstrated a generally high level of resilience, as reflected by the overall mean (M = 3.27), interpreted as Agree. Among the indicators, personal competence obtained the highest mean (M = 3.32), indicating that learners possess confidence, persistence, and the ability to handle challenges effectively. Meanwhile, acceptance of self and life obtained the lowest mean (M = 3.22), suggesting that learners are still developing their ability to adapt to situations and accept personal experiences. These findings imply that while learners are generally resilient, there is still a need to strengthen their adaptive coping mechanisms.

The level of social competence of learners is presented in

Table 2: Level of Resilience of Learners

Indicators	Mean	Description
Personal Competence	3.32	Agree
Acceptance of Self and Life	3.22	Agree
Overall Mean	3.27	Agree

Table 3. The results revealed that learners demonstrated a generally high level of social competence, as reflected by the overall mean ($M = 3.29$), interpreted as Agree. Among the indicators, cooperation obtained the highest mean ($M = 3.35$), indicating that learners are able to work effectively with peers and participate in group activities. This suggests strong collaborative behavior among learners. However, assertion obtained the lowest mean ($M = 3.20$),

implying that learners are less confident in expressing ideas in social situations. These findings suggest that while learners demonstrate positive social skills, some areas still require improvement.

The relationship between emotional regulation and social competence is presented in Table 5. The results revealed a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.56$ with a p-value of 0.000, which is significant at 0.05 level of significance.

This indicates that emotional regulation has a significant moderate positive relationship with social competence. This implies that learners who effectively regulate their emotions are more likely to demonstrate positive social behaviors and interactions.

Table 5 presents the relationship between resilience and social competence. The results showed an r-value of 0.61 and a p-value of 0.000, which is significant.

This suggests that resilience has a significant moderate positive relationship with social competence. Learners who are more resilient tend to adapt better in social situations and maintain positive relationships.

The regression analysis is presented in Table 6. The results revealed that the model is significant with an R^2

Table 3: Level of Social Competence of Learners

Indicators	Mean	Description
Cooperation	3.35	Agree
Assertion	3.20	Agree
Responsibility	3.20	Agree
Empathy	3.28	Agree
Self-control	3.27	Agree
Fairness	3.32	Agree
Overall Mean	3.29	Agree

Table 4: Relationship Between Emotional Regulation and Social Competence

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Emotional Regulation & Social Competence	0.56	0.000	Significant

Table 5: Relationship Between Emotional Regulation and Social Competence

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Resilience & Social Competence	0.61	0.000	Significant

value of 0.48, indicating that 48% of the variance in social competence is explained by emotional regulation and resilience.

Among the predictors, resilience ($p = 0.000$) was found to be a significant predictor, indicating that it has a stronger influence on social competence. Emotional regulation (p

$= 0.002$) was also found to be significant.

These findings suggest that both emotional regulation and resilience significantly predict learners' social competence, with resilience having a stronger predictive influence.

Table 6: Regression Analysis Predicting Social Competence

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Emotional Regulation	3.45	0.002	Significant
Resilience	4.87	0.000	Significant
$R^2 = 0.48$			

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that emotional regulation and resilience significantly influence the social competence of elementary learners. The findings revealed that learners generally demonstrate high levels of emotional regulation, resilience, and social competence, indicating their ability to manage emotions, cope with challenges, and interact positively with peers. Among the components of emotional regulation, cognitive reappraisal emerged as

a more dominant strategy than expressive suppression, suggesting that learners tend to regulate their emotions through adaptive thinking rather than by inhibiting expression. In terms of resilience, personal competence showed a stronger contribution than acceptance of self and life, highlighting the importance of confidence and persistence in managing social and academic challenges. The results further confirmed that both emotional regulation and resilience are significantly related to

social competence, with resilience showing a stronger relationship. Moreover, both variables were found to significantly predict social competence, indicating that learners who effectively regulate their emotions and demonstrate resilience are more likely to exhibit cooperation, empathy, responsibility, self-control, fairness, and assertion. These findings underscore the importance of developing both emotional and adaptive capacities among learners to enhance their social functioning and overall development.

However, the study was limited to selected Grade 4 to Grade 6 pupils at Manawe Elementary School and did not consider other possible influencing factors such as parental support, teacher–student relationships, and environmental conditions. Despite these limitations, the study provides relevant insights that can guide educators, school administrators, and parents in designing programs and interventions that strengthen learners’ emotional regulation and resilience, ultimately improving their social competence and classroom interactions.

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