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Pupils' Grit, Locus of Control and Social-Emotional Competence on Their Academic Performance

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the relationship between grit, locus of control and social-emotional competence, and the academic performance of Grade 6 pupils in San Ildefonso Elementary School in Población, San Ildefonso, Bulacan during the School Year 2022 – 2023. With correlational research design and 161 public elementary school pupils as respondents of the study, findings showed that the public elementary school pupils ascertained their grit in terms of consistency of interest and perseverance of effort was "mostly like me." In the same vein, the public elementary school pupils described their locus of control in terms of external and internal locus of control as "mostly like me." Similarly, the public elementary school pupils described their social-emotional competence in terms of self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management and responsible decision-making as "mostly like me." Meanwhile, the academic performance of the public elementary school pupils was generally described as "very satisfactory". Highly significant relationship was found between public elementary school pupils' grit, locus of control and social-emotional competence, and their academic performance. Based on the findings of the study, the conclusion that public elementary school pupils' grit, locus of control and social-emotional competence are positively correlated to their academic performance was drawn.

Introduction

The recent resume of face-to-face learning has led to concerns raised by both the teachers and the students. Some educators discussed the difficulty of establishing a safe learning environment. Students and teachers face obstacles, such as insufficient time to explain topics and inability to comprehend the subject matter.

Teachers also observed that the masks worn by some students during the pilot face-to-face courses hindered the ability of some students to hear the instructor. Teachers also encounter obstacles, such as insufficient time or funds to handle student issues. Educators also expressed concerns about how they could effectively meet the requirements of their students using both traditional classroom techniques and online modules.

 The education system, educators, and families have raised the concept of success, particularly academic performance, to the level of a requirement for students and children, rather than a mere descriptor. Given the nature of the Philippine educational system, a student seeking admission to a prominent high school, university, or department must be able to successfully compete against his or her peers.

Grit has gained more attention recently as one of the non-cognitive factors. According to scholars, grit is a performing character strength that may be drawn upon to achieve one's maximum potential in a given endeavor (Christopoulou et al., 2018). According to Duckworth and Yeager (2015), grit is the persistence and enthusiasm for long-term goals. Grit entails working continuously and passionately toward a tough objective, sustaining effort and keeping unshakable interest through extended periods of time despite failure, setbacks, and obstacles, as well as periods of stability along the path to success.

Similar to self-control and an optimistic outlook, grit is a predictor of academic achievement. Celik and Saricam (2018) describe grit as the attribute of being resilient in the face of adversity; the capacity to recover from setbacks; and the propensity to pursue and achieve long-term goals with passion and perseverance. Previous studies have demonstrated that in a collectivist setting environment, only the grit characteristic of perseverance of effort was linked to wellbeing (Datu, Valdez, et al., 2016a). Grit predicts positive results, in accordance with the body of existing literature. According to studies, grit is linked to higher levels of life satisfaction (Datu, Yuen & Chen, 2018), positive affect (Datu, Yuen, & Chen 2017).

Grit is the capacity to persevere in the face of adversity, keeping one's head down and forging ahead regardless of failures (Anderson et al., 2016). The rising corpus of studies demonstrating a link between grit and other measures of pleasure and success lends further credence to the preventive effects of grit against mental health issues (Musumari et al., 2018). Similar to the study by Christopoulou et al. (2018), which discovered a significant and negative relationship between grit, depression, anxiety, and stress levels among respondents, additional grit-related research has discovered a correlation between anxiety and grit. Similar to despair and anxiety, a negative correlation between grit and mental health issues was shown by Musumari et al. (2018). Therefore, intervention programs that try to promote grit may be vital for safeguarding the mental health of students. Similar to the findings of Tang et

al. (2019), who identified a significant and inverse association between respondents' grit, depression, anxiety, and stress levels, there is a strong relationship between grit and anxiety.

The two fundamental components of grit are effort persistence and interest consistency. Interest is associated with significance rather than immediate short-term gratification. Individuals must first ascribe personal significance to a long-term objective and demonstrate a willingness to endure adversity and hardship while pursuing it. For an individual's work and passion to be sustained, a long-term goal must be both substantial and compelling (Perez, 2015). Although grit has been conceptualized in the Western environment, the research that has been done so far shows that it may be applied to Filipino students (Datu, Valdez, & King, 2016a, 2016b; Datu, Yuen, & Chen, 2016a; Datu et al., 2018). Both parts of grit are necessary for success, as perseverance of effort leads to mastery despite failure and consistency of interest is necessary for intentional practice to achieve mastery (Credé et al., 2017).

Additionally, internal locus of control is another concept that has been shown to mitigate the negative effects of academic stress and is associated with grit. Internality is the notion that one is responsible for obtaining rewards from one's environment, whereas externality is the view that the rewards are outside one's control and trust in luck or chance (Quing & Baudin, 2021). People with an internal locus of control believe they can affect their surroundings. Those who fall into this category typically experience increased happiness, autonomy, and decreased stress. Students who are predisposed to an internal locus of control experience less academic stress and are more resilient in the face of adversity, two qualities that have been proven to positively correlate with academic achievement (Karaman et al., 2017; Kronborg et al., 2017). Internal locus of control individuals are less likely to experience stress than external locus of control individuals. A strong sense of agency in the classroom has also been associated with persistence (Celik & Saricam, 2018). Because a person's life, perspective, explanation of the facts, feelings, and behaviors are all shaped by their thoughts, the source of those thoughts can have a profound impact on their quality of life. As a personality trait, "locus of control" refers to a person's conviction that external causes, not themselves, are ultimately accountable for their actions' results (Oğuz & Sarıçam, 2016). A different definition of locus of control differentiates between an individual's internal and external sources of influence on their behavior, both of which are regarded as outputs related to the repetition of positive or negative consequences of the behavior in relation to future expectations. Thus, locus of control is associated with outcomes such as intelligence, beliefs, and happiness (Saricam, 2015). Unfortunately, studies relating internal locus of control to mental health outcomes, as well as research relating grit to various mental health outcomes, are scarce (Datu et al., 2018), particularly in the Philippines. However, because numerous studies demonstrate that grit and internal locus of control can lead to positive outcomes, the potential protective effects of grit and internal locus of control against academic stress can also be considered.

The academic locus of control, which shares many characteristics with the traditional locus of control, can be viewed as a framework within which an individual's efforts to improve academic performance are situated. In contrast to the internal academic locus of control, which emphasizes personal responsibility for achievement, the external academic locus of control emphasizes the impact of external variables such as luck, faith, teachers, and peers. In other words, those with an internal academic locus of control believe that their own efforts are ultimately accountable for their achievement, whereas those with an external academic locus of control believe that other circumstances are crucial to their success (Celik & Saricam, 2018). Our thoughts can change to these numerous expressions due to the academic locus of control.

According to Wallston (2015), individuals with an external locus of control, on the other hand, believe that forces or powers outside or beyond themselves govern their fate and surroundings to a significant degree. This external force could be other people or individuals with the ability to influence how the future unfolds for others, or it could be luck, chance, or fate. Proactive coping and independent decision-making have been connected to internal locus of control. According to Shah et al. (2015), low-income residents who frequently searched the Internet for health information tended to be confident and had a low locus of random control. They labored to learn more about health issues and based their health decisions on what they learned. They viewed it as their responsibility as opposed to delegating it to others. In the context of food safety, it was determined that people with an internal locus of control used a variety of information sources regarding safety issues, considered themselves to be well-educated, and believed they could influence their own health through their actions. On the other hand, those with a poor health locus of control showed limited interest in and motivation for seeking out information on food safety. Those with an external locus of control are fatalistic and lack confidence in their ability to influence their own medical condition; they frequently experience feelings of helplessness and dependence. Individuals with an internal locus of control, however, frequently take charge of their own health. They see it as their own responsibility to take preventative measures and act in a way that promotes health.

The locus of control is an essential human need, according to Kinman et al. (2020). Subjective lack of control during the pandemic, caused by significant limits and the unpredictability of the pandemic's dynamics, has a bad effect on mental health and increases general stress levels and mental health issues. The psychological concept of locus of control provides a useful framework for operationalizing control loss during the COVID-19 pandemic. It reflects the extent to which individuals believe they can control events through their own actions as internal locus of control, also known as gain of control or believe they are powerless or governed by external causes as external locus of control, also known as loss of control (Misamer et al., 2021).

On the other hand, the growth of one's emotional and social skills is known as social-emotional competence. Children and teenagers benefit from social-emotional learning because it helps them learn and practice the skills, attitudes, and concepts they'll need to succeed in school and in life. These skill sets need to recognize and control negative emotions, establish and maintain constructive goals, feel and express empathy for others, build and sustain healthy relationships, and make sound, ethical choices (Weissberg, et al., 2015). Integrating one's affective, cognitive, and behavioral systems is crucial for developing the information, skills, and attitudes necessary to display social-emotional competence. In order to better organize the numerous concepts and definitions that coincide with social-emotional learning, it can be useful to frame the wide construct of social-emotional competence into two domains, namely, intrapersonal and interpersonal competences (Domitrovich et al., 2017). Therefore, interpersonal skills such as listening, communicating, perspective taking, negotiation, and social problem solving are required to interact successfully with others, while intrapersonal skills such as realistic goal setting, positive mindsets, self-control, emotion regulation, and coping strategies are required for globally effective functioning as an individual.

Together, these abilities constitute social-emotional competence, which is a comprehensive assessment of a child's readiness to handle the emotional and social demands of his or her immediate setting (Low et al., 2015). Furthermore, studies demonstrate that students' social and emotional skills are more indicative of their long-term success in school than their grades (Dusenbury et al., 2015). This isn't too shocking, considering that many academics argue that social engagement with both peers and teachers is the key to bridging the gap between classroom education and optimal student comprehension (Low et al., 2015; Domitrovich et al., 2017).

Students' levels of social-emotional preparedness also range greatly. It's fairly uncommon for beginning-of-the-year performance gaps to persist as pupils advance through school. The differences between pupils from privileged and underprivileged homes, on the other hand, tend to widen over time (Domitrovich, et al., 2017). However, despite the benefits of early cognitive-academic supports, many children enter school without the necessary social-emotional competency to enable learning (Low et al., 2015). This may be especially problematic for children from impoverished backgrounds.

The above-mentioned realities prompted the researcher to examine relationship between grit, locus of control and social-emotional competence, and the academic performance of pupils in public elementary schools.

Statement of the Problem

This study determined the relationship between grit, locus of control and social-emotional competence, and the academic performance of Grade 6 pupils in San Ildefonso Elementary School in Poblacion, San Ildefonso, Bulacan during the School Year 2022 – 2023.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. How may the grit of the public elementary school pupils be described in terms of:

1.1 consistency of interest; and

1.2 perseverance of effort?

2. How may the locus of control of the public elementary school pupils be described in terms of:

2.1 external locus of control; and

2.2 internal locus of control?

3. How may the social-emotional competence of the public elementary school pupils be described in terms of:

3.1 self-awareness;

3.2 social awareness;

3.3 self-management;

3.4 relationship management; and

3.5 responsible decision-making?

4. How may the public elementary school pupils' academic performance be described in terms of their general average in the second grading?

5. Is there a significant relationship between the public elementary school pupils' grit, locus of control and social-emotional competence, and their academic performance?

6. Based on the results of the study, what plan of action can be proposed?

Hypothesis

The hypothesis that follows was tested in the study: There is no significant relationship between the public elementary school pupils' grit, locus of control and social-emotional competence, and their academic performance.

Theoretical Framework

Different implicit theories (mindsets) that people may hold about their own abilities can shape how they approach academic situations, how they perceive their knowledge and abilities in those situations, and how they react to difficulties and failures. Implicit theories frame students' mindsets about the nature of a specific ability along a continuum from incremental to entity theory and create distinct systems of meaning. Students who subscribe to the incremental approach think that skills may be changed and improved with effort. These students are more inclined to perceive achievement situations as opportunities to grow and expand one's own competencies (Haimovitz & Dweck, 2017).

Additionally, Eskreis-Winkler et al., (2018) asserted that implicit theory has been linked with differential individual responses, especially when facing setbacks and being in stressful or demanding situations. Implicit theories frame a student's specific mindset along a continuum from an incremental theory

to an entity theory and thereby create distinct systems of meaning. Previous studies have shown that students' implicit conceptions about their capacities influence their motivation and are related to individual differences in a variety of self-regulatory processes as well as performance in academic settings.

Previous studies have shown that grit, another component, is important for students' engagement, self-regulation, and achievement in difficult and demanding circumstances. Grit is a trait-level personality construct that consists of perseverance of effort (PE) and consistency of interest (CI). Most of the grit research to far have looked into the connection between compound grit measures and academic outcomes. It has been demonstrated that more grit is connected to fewer career changes and higher retention rate (Crede, 2018).

There hasn't been enough research done on the value of PE and CI on student learning as opposed to using a grit composite score. For instance, only a few research have looked at how the PE and CI relate to one another and several motivational variables and the outcome of a challenging task in an educational setting. Although, previous research has demonstrated that implicit theories predict self-regulatory processes (e.g., goal setting) and achievement, and that students' self-regulation is influenced by their level of PE and CI, little research has examined the link between implicit theories, PE and CI, motivation, and achievement within a single study (Costa and Faria, 2018).

The tendency to maintain passion and effort when working passionately towards a long-term goal, particularly in the face of hardships and disappointments, is referred to as grit, which is a trait-level personality construct. In other words, grit is a multifaceted psychological strength construct made up of consistency of interest (CI) and perseverance of effort (PE). Eskreis-Winkler et al. (2018) state that, people with higher PE and CI are stronger learners because they are less easily discouraged by failures and setbacks, more driven to participate in strategic behavior, and more able to maintain a focused effort to succeed. Instead of short-term intensity of effort and interest, grit firmly represents long-term persistence in the pursuit of persistent goals and ongoing interest over time, despite failures or setbacks. Schmidt et al. (2018) looked at the connections between PE, CI, and the conscientiousness hierarchy. They concluded that grit may be a concept that combines the superior and diligent components of conscientiousness. Additionally, they found that CI relates to the self-discipline aspect of conscientiousness, but PE is highly related to the industriousness factor and can be seen as a measure of proactive conscientiousness.

As students who have well defined interests and goals may also have a clearer image of what they want, Fite et al. (2017) argued that in addition to conscientiousness, CI might capture a component of self-knowledge. Several researchers have proposed that PE and CI should be viewed as different variables with varying degrees of incremental validity in accordance with these findings (Muenks et al., 2017). However, literature continues to frequently employ a composite measure of grit. Researchers have shown that grit, measured as a composite score, is associated with academic and professional success, as seen by fewer career changes, higher educational attainment, or higher job retention (Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2018). However, the value of grit for academic success has been contested, and earlier research has revealed that it has little to no direct or indirect impact on students' educational outcomes. A reason for these mixed results might be that some studies used a grit composite measure instead of analyzing PE and CI separately. Researchers showed that PE correlates more strongly with academic achievement than CI or an overall grit score. A further explanation for the mixed results about grit and academic achievement might be that grit – or at least PE – is only valuable in long-term challenging situations in which individuals must apply significant effort and overcome setbacks over a long period of time in order to be successful (Steinmayr et al., 2018).

Meanwhile, locus of control is an expectancy variable that refers to a person's belief about what causes the good or bad results in his or her life, either in general or in a specific area such as health or academics. Locus of control stems from social learning theory attribution theory and refers to a person's perception about the underlying root causes of successes or failures in his or her life when individuals most often believe their successes and failures are due to factors within their control (Kumar & Asha, 2016).

Meanwhile, attribution interpretations can lead to both positive and negative reactions. In addition, there are advantages and disadvantages to having an internal or external locus of control in different settings, many psychologists and researchers agree that having an internal locus of control is ultimately the healthier attribute. Most research indicated that high ability and gifted students have an internal locus of control, the fact that a student understands him/herself in terms of strengths and weaknesses (emotional intelligence), and the orientation about what brings about the academic outcome, achievement, and success (locus of control) can contribute in no small measure to a student academic achievement (Oluseyi Akintunde & Olusegun Olujide, 2018).

Given its demonstrated link with favorable short- and long-term outcomes, developing social-emotional competence in children and adolescents is an important and worthwhile goal. In order to create The Social and Emotional Competence, Ryan and Deci (2017) drew on fundamental conceptual information from the literature on social and emotional competence as well as self-determination theory as a theoretical foundation. Through the fulfillment of fundamental psychological needs, social-emotional autonomous motivation, and socially and emotionally competent acts, social and emotional competence is operationalized.

An empirically proven theory of human behavior and development is self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The idea claims that people have a natural drive to unite their sense of self, and that this tendency can be beneficial or detrimental depending on how well their basic psychological requirements of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met. More precisely, an individual's experience of basic psychological need satisfaction within a social environment promotes optimal functioning within that context. The self-determination theory distinguishes between many motivational types. Controlled motivation, in contrast to autonomous motivation, is less self-determined and frequently subject to external influence (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Controlled motivation, on the other hand, has been linked to a variety of negative effects (such as increased procrastination; Mouratidis et al., 2018). Autonomous motivation has been linked to a wide range of beneficial outcomes (for example, behavioral engagement).

Self-determination theory also holds that the social environment has a significant impact on a person's ability to develop normally. Need-support—by way of autonomy-support, competence-support, and relatedness-support that lays a foundation for basic psychological need satisfaction (Ryan & Deci,

2017). Taken together, self-determination theory provides several premises that hold relevance to human development broadly, and social and emotional competence specifically.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

Descriptive-correlational design was applied in the conduct of the study, utilizing questionnaires and documentary analysis as data gathering devices. In research investigations, descriptive correlational design is employed to identify the relationship between different variables and produce static images of situations. This method was used to determine if significant relationship existed between the public elementary pupils' grit, locus of control and social-emotional competence, and their academic performance.

Sampling Method

The study was conducted using total enumeration. Total enumeration sampling is a type of purposive sampling technique where the researcher chooses to examine the entire population that have a particular set of characteristics. Since only one school was considered as respondents, she opted to use all Grades 6 pupils in San Ildefonso Elementary School.

Respondents

The respondents of the study were Grade 6 students of San Ildefonso Elementary School.

Table 1.

Distribution of Respondents of the Study

School	Pupil		Total
	Male	Female	
1. San Ildefonso Elementary School	80	81	161
Total	80	81	161

It can be noticed from Table 1 that a total of 161 Grade pupils were considered respondents and participated in the study.

Research Ethics Consideration

Prior to the conduct of the study, the researcher coordinated with the principal of San Ildefonso Elementary School to use all Grade 6 pupil as her respondents. Upon receiving the approved letter, she went to the school and talked to the principal for the schedule of quantitative data collection which is needed in the study.

Data Collection

In the data gathering, the questionnaire that was used for data collection has three parts. Part I is the Pupils' Grit Scale that was rated as 5 Very much like me (VML), 4 Mostly like me (ML), 3 Somewhat like me (SL), 2 Not much like me (NML), and 1 Not like me at all (NL) with item statements on Consistency of Interest and Perseverance of Effort. The Grit questionnaire was adapted from Duckworth et al. (2007) as used by Karlen et al., (2019). Part II of the questionnaire is the Pupils' Locus of Control Scale which was adapted from Suárez-Álvarez et al., (2016), with a scale of 5 Very much like me (VML), 4 Mostly like me (ML), 3 Somewhat like me (SL), 2 Not much like me (NML), and 1 Not like me at all (NL) having item statements on external locus of control and internal locus of control. Part III is Pupils' Social-Emotional Competence Questionnaire which was adapted from Zych et al., (2018) and was rated as 5 Very much like me (VML), 4 Mostly like me (ML), 3 Somewhat like me (SL), 2 Not much like me (NML), and 1 Not like me at all (NL) with item statements on self-awareness, social-awareness, self-management, relationship management, and responsible decision-making.

For the academic performance of the pupils, the researcher obtained their grades in the second grading period from their respective teachers.

Data Analysis

After collecting all the quantitative data, these were organized, tallied, tabulated, and analyzed using some statistical tools.

To describe the pupils' academic performance descriptive statistics such as range, mean and standard deviation were computed.

Meanwhile, weighted mean was computed to describe the pupils' grit, locus of control and social-emotional competence.

Correlation analysis was performed to determine if significant relationship existed between the independent variables (pupils' grit, locus of control and social-emotional competence) and dependent variable (pupils' academic performance).

Results and Discussion

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data collected and the results of the statistical treatment employed in the study with the purpose of determining the relationship between grit, locus of control and social-emotional competence, and the academic performance of pupils in public elementary schools.

The Grit of Public Elementary School Pupils

Grit is the ability to persevere through failure, hardship, and growth plateaus while exerting significant effort toward challenges. It is the ability to keep working toward a goal even when it's hard. Grit makes a student less likely to lose motivation when they don't do well on an exam or when they encounter a difficult question.

The assessments of the public elementary school pupils regarding their grit in terms of consistency of interest and perseverance of effort are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Consistency of Interest

The consistency of interest dwell in the constant pursuit of the goals set by the student and in the less flexibility in taking on goals that are considered important by significant persons or the social context. Additionally, consistency of interest is the individuals' tendencies to pursue the same or similar activities over time.

The assessments of the public elementary school pupils as regards their grit in terms of consistency of interest are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

The Grit of Public Elementary School Pupils in terms of Consistency of Interest

Item Statement	Mean	VD
1. I often set a goal and I choose to finish it.	4.17	ML
2. I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a long time.	3.76	ML
3. I am able to maintain my focus on projects, so I finish them on time.	4.01	ML
4. New ideas and projects do not distract me from the previous ones.	3.67	ML
5. My interests lasts a long time.	3.75	ML
6. I don't get interested in new tasks until I finish the previous one.	4.00	ML
Overall Mean	3.89	ML

Legend:

Scale	Verbal Description
4.21 – 5.00	Very much like me (VML)
3.41 – 4.20	Mostly like me (ML)
2.61 – 3.40	Somewhat like me (SL)
1.81 – 2.60	Not much like me (NML)
1.00 – 1.80	Not like me at all (NL)

It can be noted from the table that all items indicated therein including the computed overall mean of 3.89 garnered the same verbal description of "mostly like me". A closer look at the table reveals that item "I often set a goal and I choose to finish it" registered the highest computed weighted mean of 4.17. On the other hand, item "New ideas and projects do not distract me from the previous ones" yielded the lowest computed weighted mean of 3.67.

These results imply that the public elementary school pupils at their young age already showed the sense of being responsible. They already knew that they need to work, exert more efforts and strive hard in order for them to achieve their goals and objectives in their studies which may result to higher academic performance.

In accordance to the present findings, Usher et al., (2019) reported that consistency of interest and perseverance of efforts are termed as grit. Further, they added that students can easily achieve their educational goals if they are able to consistently stick on their goals. Moreover, they opined that most studies found a positive relationship between consistency of interests and academic success.

Perseverance of Effort

Perseverance of effort pertains to the extent to which pupils would exert durable effort in facing challenges. It is a continued effort to do or achieve something, even when this is difficult or takes a long time.

Table 3.

The Grit of Public Elementary School Pupils in terms of Perseverance of Effort

Item Statement	Mean	VD
1. I finish whatever I begin.	4.46	VML
2. Setbacks don't discourage me.	3.70	ML
3. I am diligent.	4.07	ML
4. I am a hard worker.	4.09	ML
5. I have achieved a goal that took years of work.	3.97	ML
6. I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.	3.92	ML
Overall Mean	4.03	ML

Legend:

Scale	Verbal Description
4.21 – 5.00	Very much like me (VML)
3.41 – 4.20	Mostly like me (ML)
2.61 – 3.40	Somewhat like me (SL)
1.81 – 2.60	Not much like me (NML)
1.00 – 1.80	Not like me at all (NL)

The assessments of the public elementary school pupils with regard to their grit in terms of perseverance of effort are reflected in Table 3.

Evidently, only one item "I finish whatever I begin" registered the highest verbal description of "Very much like me" with a computed weighted mean of 4.46. All the remaining items in the table received a verbal description of "Mostly like me". A closer look at the table reveals that item "Setbacks don't discourage me" got the lowest computed mean of 3.70. The overall mean was computed at 4.03 which is also verbally described as "Mostly like me".

These results imply that the public elementary school pupils showed commitment and motivation to do their work. Whenever they started a certain task, they exert more effort in order to accomplish it which may lead to success in education.

In conjunction to the findings of the present study, Wang et al., (2021) reiterated that success is not only determined by the capability of the learner but also depends on the interaction of intellectual skills and individual attributes, like grit, plus a strong desire to achieve goals. Additionally, research has shown that grit is associated with a variety of outcomes connected to wellbeing and is associated with higher levels of positive emotions (Datu, Valdez, et. al., 2016a).

The Locus of Control of Public Elementary School Pupils

Locus of control is a psychological term that describes how much a person feels in control of the events and encounters that affect their life. Locus of control is a term used in education to describe how students view the factors that contribute to their academic success or failure. The assessments of the public elementary school pupils regarding their locus of control in terms of external and internal locus of control are summarized in Tables 4 and 5.

External Locus of Control

Pupils with an "external locus of control" generally believe that their success or failure is due to external factors beyond their control, such as luck, fate, circumstance, injustice, prejudice, or unfair, biased, or unqualified teachers.

The assessments of the public elementary school pupils about their locus of control in terms of external locus of control are exhibited in Table 4.

Table 4.

The External Locus of Control of Public Elementary School Pupils

Item Statement	Mean	VD
1. When I fail, I think it is because someone is against me.	3.78	ML
2. When I have troubles, I hope the problem solves itself.	3.64	ML
3. Success only depends on luck.	3.31	SL
4. Chance plays a basic role in my life.	4.13	ML
5. It is impossible to change my future.	3.51	ML
6. To be successful is necessary to have good contacts.	4.29	VML
7. The future is predetermined.	3.84	ML
8. I like to trust in luck.	3.67	ML
9. My failures are due to the people surrounding me.	3.22	SL
10. If I have to make a decision, I let other people do it for me.	2.95	SL
Overall Mean	3.63	ML

Legend:

Scale	Verbal Description
4.21 – 5.00	Very much like me (VML)
3.41 – 4.20	Mostly like me (ML)
2.61 – 3.40	Somewhat like me (SL)
1.81 – 2.60	Not much like me (NML)
1.00 – 1.80	Not like me at all (NL)

It can be seen from the table that only one item "To be successful is necessary to have good contacts" received the highest verbal description of "very much like me" with a computed weighted mean of 4.29. A closer look at the table shows that item "If I have to make a decision, I let other people do it for me" obtained the lowest computed weighted mean of 2.95 which is verbally described as "somewhat like me". The overall mean was recorded at 3.63 which is verbally interpreted as "mostly like me".

These results imply that elementary school pupils at their very young ages already knew how to connect with others. They strongly believed that they need to build good relationships in order for them to be successful in their studies.

Accordingly, Galvin et al., (2018) believed that factors such as luck, chances, environment, other people and so forth play a role in how well things turn out. On the other hand, externals feels that they have little influence over their working environment and believe that other people's actions are to blame when something bad happens at work.

Internal Locus of Control

Pupils with an "internal locus of control" generally believe that their success or failure is due to the effort and hard work they put into their education.

The assessments of the public elementary school pupils as regards their locus of control in terms of internal locus of control are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5.

The Internal Locus of Control of Public Elementary School Pupils

Item Statement	Mean	VD
1. Success depends on my effort.	4.46	VML
2. What I achieve, depends on the effort that I make to get it.	4.17	ML
3. My future depends on what I do.	4.16	ML
4. My life depends on myself.	4.04	ML
5. My success is the consequence of my effort.	4.21	VML
6. Effort is necessary to reach a goal.	4.22	VML
7. I can solve problems if I try hard enough.	4.28	VML
8. When I fail, I assume that the mistake could be mine.	3.81	ML
9. My mistakes are my fault.	4.22	VML
10. Exam marks depend on what I have studied.	4.34	VML
Overall Mean	4.19	ML

Legend:

Scale	Verbal Description
4.21 – 5.00	Very much like me (VML)
3.41 – 4.20	Mostly like me (ML)
2.61 – 3.40	Somewhat like me (SL)
1.81 – 2.60	Not much like me (NML)
1.00 – 1.80	Not like me at all (NL)

It can be examined from the table that item "Success depends on my effort" obtained the highest computed weighted mean of 4.46 with a verbal description of "very much like me". Further examination of the table reveals that item "8. When I fail, I assume that the mistake could be mine" yielded the lowest computed weighted mean of 3.81 which is verbally described as "much like me". The overall mean was registered at 4.19 which is verbally described as "mostly like me".

These results imply that elementary school pupils strongly believed that working hard is the only key to attain their goals in life. Moreover, they knew that when they strive hard in learning their lessons, they would be able to receive higher grades.

According to Galvin et al., (2018), the internal locus of control is frequently positively correlated with attitudes, behaviors and wellbeing at work. Additionally, individuals who take care of their internal locus of control will feel confident and believe that all of the results they achieve are the direct result of the effort they put in to achieve those results.

The Social-Emotional Competence of Public Elementary School Pupils

The term "social and emotional competence" refers to the processes that children and adults use to apply their knowledge, attitudes, and skills in order to understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, create and uphold healthy relationships, and make responsible decisions.

Tables 6 to 10 reveals the assessments of the public elementary school pupils as regards their social-emotional competence in terms of self-awareness; social awareness; self-management; relationship management; and responsible decision-making.

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is the pupils' ability to focus on themselves and how their actions, thoughts, or emotions do or don't align with their internal standards. Through reflection and introspection, self-awareness is the capacity to understand oneself clearly and objectively.

Tables 6 presents the assessments of the public elementary school pupils with regard to their social-emotional competence in terms of self-awareness.

Table 6.

The Social-Emotional Competence of Public Elementary School Pupils in terms of Self-Awareness

Item Statement	Mean	VD
1. I know what I am thinking and doing.	4.44	VML
2. I understand why I do what I do.	4.16	ML
3. I understand my moods and feelings.	4.12	ML
4. I know when I am moody.	3.73	ML
5. I can read people's faces when they are angry.	3.85	ML
Overall Mean	4.06	ML

Legend:

Scale	Verbal Description
4.21 – 5.00	Very much like me (VML)
3.41 – 4.20	Mostly like me (ML)
2.61 – 3.40	Somewhat like me (SL)
1.81 – 2.60	Not much like me (NML)
1.00 – 1.80	Not like me at all (NL)

Apparently, only one item "I know what I am thinking and doing" received the highest verbal description of "very much like me" with a computed weighted mean of 4.44. Meanwhile, all the remaining items indicated in the table including the computed overall mean of 4.06 got the same verbal description of "mostly like me". A closer look at the table reveals that item "I know when I am moody" yielded the lowest computed weighted mean of 3.73.

These results imply that the elementary school pupils are already responsible of their actions. Additionally, they can decide which is right and which is wrong. Further, these pupils at their young ages already showed self-awareness.

Accordingly, Abbas (2019) reported that having a healthy self-awareness promotes emotional wellness and self-esteem. Further, he added that it provides students insight into who they are, why they react as they do, and gives them a direction for self-improvement. Self-awareness for students is crucial for success. Self-aware people have a fundamental belief in their ability to achieve a goal, and this trait helps students thrive in everything they do.

Social-Awareness

Social Awareness is the pupils' ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

Tables 7 summarizes the assessments of the public elementary school pupils with regard to their social-emotional competence in terms of social awareness.

Table 7.

The Social-Emotional Competence of Public Elementary School Pupils in terms of Social-Awareness

Item Statement	Mean	VD
1. I recognize how people feel by looking at their facial expressions.	3.96	ML
2. It is easy for me to understand why people feel the way they do.	3.96	ML
3. If someone is sad, angry or happy, I believe I know what they are thinking.	3.77	ML
4. I understand why people react the way they do.	3.81	ML
5. If a friend is upset, I have a pretty good idea why.	3.80	ML
Overall Mean	3.84	ML

Legend:

Scale	Verbal Description
4.21 – 5.00	Very much like me (VML)
3.41 – 4.20	Mostly like me (ML)
2.61 – 3.40	Somewhat like me (SL)
1.81 – 2.60	Not much like me (NML)
1.00 – 1.80	Not like me at all (NL)

Noteworthy of attention is that all items indicated in the table including the computed overall mean of 3.84 garnered the same verbal interpretation of "mostly like me". A closer examination of the table shows that items "I recognize how people feel by looking at their facial expressions" and "It is easy for me to understand why people feel the way they do" received the highest computed weighted mean of 3.96. On the other hand, item "If someone is sad, angry or happy, I believe I know what they are thinking" got the lowest computed weighted mean of 3.77.

These results imply that elementary school pupils have the ability in taking the perspective of and empathizing with others. Further, they knew that pupils who are socially responsible will eventually become academic achievers because they are aware of their priorities and limitations.

In the same vein, Zantua (2020) opined that students who are much aware and comfortable with their emotions as well as other's emotion can easily adapt to emotionally changing situations and are more likely to achieve better academic performance. These students are resilient in facing problems caused by negative thoughts and feelings.

Self-Management

Self-management, which is also referred to as "self-control" or "self-regulation," is the pupils' ability to regulate their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations.

Tables 8 indicates the assessments of the public elementary school pupils regarding their social-emotional competence in terms of self-management.

Table 8.

The Social-Emotional Competence of Public Elementary School Pupils in terms of Self-Management

Item Statement	Mean	VD
1. I can stay calm in stressful situations.	3.99	ML
2. I stay calm and overcome anxiety in new or changing situations.	4.07	ML
3. I stay calm when things go wrong.	3.83	ML
4. I can control the way I feel when something bad happens.	3.85	ML
5. When I am upset with someone, I will wait till I have calmed down before discussing the issue.	4.04	ML
Overall Mean	3.95	ML

Legend:

Scale	Verbal Description
4.21 – 5.00	Very much like me (VML)
3.41 – 4.20	Mostly like me (ML)
2.61 – 3.40	Somewhat like me (SL)
1.81 – 2.60	Not much like me (NML)
1.00 – 1.80	Not like me at all (NL)

Interestingly, all items indicated in the table including the computed overall mean of 3.95 registered the same verbal interpretation of "mostly like me". Further perusal of the table reveals that item "I stay calm and overcome anxiety in new or changing situations" received the highest computed weighted mean of 4.07. On the other hand, item "I stay calm when things go wrong" got the lowest computed weighted mean of 3.83.

These results imply that because of what had happened during the pandemic, elementary school pupils have the capabilities of adjusting themselves to difficult situations. Moreover, they already learned how to manage themselves even when there are problems and obstacles which may eventually result to better performance in class.

In conjunction to the present findings, Muluk et al., (2021) ascertained that one of the most important skills needed to succeed is the ability to self-manage. They also added that this particular skill is essential in all aspects of life, including education, and agreed that developing self-management skills in general is a useful strategy for students, potentially boosting self-confidence and the lose ability to succeed and tend to blame external circumstances for their performance.

Relationship Management

Relationship management is, as the name suggests, managing relations in pupils' life. Relationship management means to maintain good and positive relationships between and among teachers and classmates. Moreover, it means managing and maintaining positive relationships with everyone in pupils' life, may it be their family, their siblings or their community.

Tables 9 displays the assessments of the public elementary school pupils with regard to their social-emotional competence in terms of relationship management.

Table 9.

The Social-Emotional Competence of Public Elementary School Pupils in terms of Relationship Management

Item Statement	Mean	VD
1. I will always apologize when I hurt my friend unintentionally.	4.23	VML
2. I always try and comfort my friends when they are sad.	4.03	ML
3. I try not to criticize my friend when we quarrel.	3.87	ML
4. I am tolerant of my friend's mistakes.	3.73	ML
5. I stand up for myself without putting others down.	4.08	ML
Overall Mean	3.99	ML

Legend:

Scale	Verbal Description
4.21 – 5.00	Very much like me (VML)
3.41 – 4.20	Mostly like me (ML)
2.61 – 3.40	Somewhat like me (SL)
1.81 – 2.60	Not much like me (NML)
1.00 – 1.80	Not like me at all (NL)

Obviously, it can be seen from the table that only one item "I will always apologize when I hurt my friend unintentionally" received the highest verbal description of "very much like me" with a computed weighted mean of 4.23. Meanwhile, all the remaining items indicated in the same table including the computed overall mean of 3.99 got the same verbal description of "mostly like me". A closer look at the table reveals that item "I am tolerant of my friend's mistakes" yielded the lowest computed weighted mean of 3.73.

These results imply that elementary school pupils already knew how to say sorry when they did something wrong with others especially with close friends and family. This only proves that these young pupils have the ability to manage relationships which is very vital to achieve a healthy well-being and a friendly school environment.

In accordance to the present findings, Scales et al., (2019) reported that there is a rich history of research demonstrating the supportive role relationships play in positive youth development. In general, as the number of strong relationships in young people's lives increases, youth well-being and resilience increase, and reports of high-risk behaviors decrease. When a student's relationship with their teacher improves throughout the period of the academic year, this improvement is also directly linked to improvements in the student's motivation and sense of belonging in the classroom, and it is indirectly linked to GPA.

Responsible Decision-Making

Responsible decision making involves critical thinking and self-discipline. It also entails being able to predict how that choice will affect other people. This process helps pupils learn relationship skills, empathy, and how to communicate effectively.

Tables 10 presents the assessments of the public elementary school pupils as regards their social-emotional competence in terms of responsible decision-making.

Table 10.

The Social-Emotional Competence of Public Elementary School Pupils in terms of Responsible Decision-Making

Item Statement	Mean	VD
1. When making decisions, I take into account the consequences of my actions.	4.06	ML
2. I ensure that there are more positive outcomes when making a choice.	4.11	ML
3. I weigh the strengths of the situation before deciding on my action.	4.01	ML
4. I consider positive and negative effects before making decisions.	3.90	ML
5. I consider the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy before deciding to use it.	3.97	ML
Overall Mean	4.01	ML

Legend:

Scale	Verbal Description
4.21 – 5.00	Very much like me (VML)
3.41 – 4.20	Mostly like me (ML)
2.61 – 3.40	Somewhat like me (SL)
1.81 – 2.60	Not much like me (NML)
1.00 – 1.80	Not like me at all (NL)

Obviously, it can be noticed from the table that all items indicated therein including the computed overall mean of 4.01 registered the same verbal interpretation of "mostly like me". Further observation of the table reveals that item "When making decisions, I take into account the consequences of my actions" received the highest computed weighted mean of 4.11. On the other hand, item "I consider positive and negative effects before making decisions" got the lowest computed weighted mean of 3.90.

These results imply that elementary school pupils think first before doing something. This only shows that they already have the sense of responsibility in terms of decision making in spite of their young ages.

In the same manner, Pchelina and Dotsenko (2017) asserted that it was shown that responsible decisions retrospectively assessed by people turn out to be the best if "they thought everything over well enough, then put it aside/forgot, and suddenly the decision came by itself."

The Academic Performance of Public Elementary School Pupils

In this part of the study, the academic performance of the public elementary school pupils which was measured in terms of their average grades are shown in Table 11.

Table 11.

Distribution of Respondents According to Learning Performance

Grade	f (N=161)	Percent	Verbal Description
90 and above	24	14.91	Outstanding (O)
85 – 89	67	41.61	Very Satisfactory (VS)
80 – 84	68	42.24	Satisfactory (S)
75 – 79	2	1.24	Fairly Satisfactory (FS)
74 and below	0	0.00	Did Not Meet Expectations (DNE)
Range	76 – 97		
Mean	85.73		
Verbal Description	Very Satisfactory (S)		
Standard Deviation	3.52		

It can be noted from the table that 41.61 percent of the pupils obtained grades that lie within the bracket of 85 to 89 which is verbally described as "very satisfactory". A considerable portion or 42.24 percent of these pupils received grades within the bracket of 80 to 84 which is verbally described as "satisfactory". A closer look at the table shows that 14.91 percent got grades that lie within the highest bracket of 90 and above with a verbal interpretation of "outstanding". The remaining 1.24 percent registered grades within the bracket of 75 to 79 with a verbal description of "fairly satisfactory".

Further analysis of the table shows that the grades of the pupils ranged from 76 to 97. Meanwhile, the mean was computed at 85.73 which verbally described as "very satisfactory". On the other hand, the standards deviation which measures the spread of the pupils' grades from the mean was registered at 3.52. These results indicate that nearly, 161 pupils received grades that lie within the bracket of 80 to 89.

Results of the study imply that Grade 6 pupils are able to fully adapt or adjust to the new settings of education that the DepEd is implementing. An average of them falls under very satisfactory, it denoted that these pupils are still in the adjustment period.

The Relationship between Public Elementary School Pupils' Grit, Locus of Control and Social-Emotional Competence, and their Academic Performance

Table 12 exhibits the results of the correlation analysis which was done to determine if significant relationship existed between public elementary school pupils' grit, locus of control and social-emotional competence, and their academic performance. Before analyzing the data, reverse coded was made to statements which are expressed in the negative form.

Table 12.

Results of Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between Public Elementary School Pupils' Grit, Locus of Control and Social-Emotional Competence, and their Academic Performance

Psychological Factors	Academic Performance	
	r-value	p-value
Grit	0.658**	0.000
Locus of control	0.641**	0.000
Social-Emotional Competence	0.547**	0.008

Legend: ** = highly significant ($p \leq 0.01$) Numbers in the upper entry are correlation values (r-values)

Numbers enclosed in parentheses are probability values (p-values)

It can be examined from the table that highly significant relationship was found between public elementary school pupils' grit, locus of control and social-emotional competence, and their academic performance. This highly significant relationship was brought about by the fact that the computed probability values that ranged from 0.000 to 0.008 for these variables are less than the 0.01 level of significance. Further examination of the tabulated results reveals that direct relationship (as implied by the positive sign of the correlation values that ranged from 0.547 to 0.658) existed between the aforementioned variables. This indicates that as the level of pupils' grit, locus of control and social-emotional competence increases, the level of their academic performance also increases.

These results imply that when the elementary school pupils have persistent efforts and dedication for long-term goals, overcoming obstacles, effectively managing failure, and self-motivating even in the absence of extrinsic motivations, these pupils would be able to achieve higher in terms of academic performance.

In conjunction to the present findings, Allen et al., (2021) proven that traits such as grit influence psychological performance through the reduction of stress, depression, and tension, and enhancement positive feelings such as efficacy, self-regulation, pleasure, well-being, and optimism. Learners who show energy toward their homework and continue with their project, despite scholarly and social difficulties, are probably going to encounter scholastic achievement. Indeed, it has been shown that teachers who encourage grit can help learners to achieve their learning goals by motivating them to try hard and persevere in this process. In addition to this, Huéscar Hernández et al., (2020) asserted that gritty people not only can perform tasks but also keep track to achieve goals throughout their education progress and they are interested in learning involvement, the durability of commitment, and perseverance through stimulating teaching. Every successful person has perseverance, a great attribute that executives value above any other characteristic when selecting people to achieve any notable goal. Achievement and success are considered to be the effect of both perseverance and consistency. Perseverance is a result of the first failures that an applicant faces on the way to success in a field while consistency is a result of many hours of concentrated effort.

In the same manner, Wang et al., (2019) reported that (1) social-emotional competency positively predicted pupils' academic achievement (including reading, mathematics, and science); (2) social-emotional competency predicted pupils' academic emotions and attitudes, including learning anxiety and interest, and academic emotions and attitudes played a mediating role in the relation between social-emotional competency and academic achievement; and (3) social-emotional competency positively predicted pupils' interpersonal relationships, including peer relationships and teacher–student relationships, and interpersonal relationships played a mediating role in the relation between social-emotional competency and academic achievement.

Program of Activities Crafted from the Results of the Study

Results of the study revealed that pupils' social-awareness and consistency of interest yielded the lowest computed overall mean. Hence, the researcher came up with a program of activities that could enhance or develop these aspects of elementary school pupils.

Table 13.

Proposed Program of Activities

Objectives	Action	Timeline	Persons Involved	Expected Outcome
To develop the social-awareness of public elementary school pupils.	Encourage Children to Participate in Group Physical Activity and Role Playing	4th Quarter of S.Y. 2022-2023	Researcher and Pupils	At the end of the project, pupils are expected to social-awareness which may result to higher academic performance.
To develop among elementary school pupils the sense of focusing on work and be consistent on their interest in accomplishing their school tasks.	Conduct lecture series/activities focusing on the importance of having interest in doing their school work.	4th Quarter of S.Y. 2022-2023	Researcher and pupils	Pupils are expected to finish their homework and other school tasks on time.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the conclusion that public elementary school pupils' grit, locus of control and social-emotional competence are positively correlated to their academic performance was drawn.

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