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Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skills, Learning Strategies and Academic Performance Among College Students

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Abstract

Aim: The study intends to identify the role of learning strategies in mediating between the social, emotional, and behavioral skills and academic performance of second-year college students with the end goal of creating a program that can help further develop social, emotional, and behavioral skills and create a support system in their academics.

Methodology: The study used a descriptive quantitative research design using two different surveys, which were the BESSI and the CMLSS, along with the general weighted average (GWA) of the students to identify the relationship between the three different variables and how learning strategies play a part in mediating between SEB skills and academic performance of 346 respondents from a university in Metro Manila. The participants were identified using probability sampling, and they were filtered using a criterion such as the respondents must be currently enrolled in the institution, a second-year college student, and have finished the whole term. To further identify and analyze the data, frequency distribution, weighted mean, one-way ANOVA, and mediation analysis were applied.

Results: The study found that students are advanced when it comes to their self-management skills, cooperation skills, emotional resilience skills, and innovation skills. They are in the intermediate when it comes to social engagement skills. Moreover, they were more proficient when it came to using rehearsal, elaboration, critical thinking, and metacognitive self-regulation. While they fall within the average when it comes to using organizations and when it comes to their time and study environment, effort regulation, peer learning, and help-seeking, a student's social engagement skills, emotional resilience skills, and innovation skills differ when they are of different sexes. However, neither sex nor cluster makes any difference when it comes to the learning strategies that the students use and their academic performance. Mediation analysis further shows that learning strategies do not mediate the relationship between SEB skills and academic performance, although it did show a significant indirect effect.

Conclusion: The SEB skills of the students do not affect their learning strategies or their academic performance. While learning strategies do not also affect the academic performance of the students, thus, learning strategies do not mediate the relationship between SEB skills and academic performance. A proposed Skills and Academic Support Program was developed to address the students' holistic development in terms of their SEB skills and learning strategies to help their academic performance further.

Keywords: social, emotional, behavioral skills, learning strategies, academic performance, second year college students

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INTRODUCTION

People have often believed that intelligence is the only possible explanation for the academic success of students. However, the United Nations proposed number 4 of their Sustainable Development Goal on Education, wherein they seek to redesign the education systems that could address the needs of students, and it was found that not only cognitive skills, such as basic literacy and numeracy that play a part in the success of the individual but they also want to ensure that all individuals are equipped with the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and behaviors that they need and was built on the holistic vision that they need to expose the students or learners to three types of inter-related learning: cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral (Singh & Duraiappah, 2020, as cited in UNESCO, 2021). The Department of Education also realized the importance of teaching the students social and emotional learning to address the development of the emotional quotient (EQ) of the students aside from just plainly focusing on their intelligence quotient (IQ). This was integrated in their curriculum of their subject *Edukasyong Pagpapakatao* to develop well-rounded and wholesome individuals by developing their self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships skills, and responsible decision making. The inclusion of SEL in the curriculum is aligned with the Education For All (EFA) that aims to upgrade the quality of basic education (Ronda, 2009). Currently, the Philippines has achieved a remarkable progress in increasing the education level of its work force, however the educational attainment of an individual has become an inadequate basis for measuring workforce skills. Majority of the employers' do not look for the academic knowledge or the technical acumen but rather their socioemotional skills, or the noncognitive skills, soft skills, or behavioral skills. Increasing studies also suggests that these skills are increasingly crucial to the job requirement of the global economy. However, governments and educational institutions within the country are only beginning to recognize the importance of these set of skills and its development (Acosta, 2017).

Recently, social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) skills, a new construct was introduced by Soto et al. (2020) and were defined as the ability of the individual to manage their goals, maintain and create social relationships, regulate their emotions, and learn from their experience. These skills were believed to be something that any person can learn, practice, and improve over time. These skills were found to be great indicators of an individual's success, either in school or in their respective careers. However, their research only indicated high school students and was not used to measure college students' success. With this new construct, there are only a few studies that indicate whether these students can use these skills to achieve academic success, or whether these skills support these students to achieve academic success. Especially with the pandemic, students will most likely be adjusting to their new online setup. Due to this new learning modality, some students might find themselves struggling to adjust to online learning because they must be more responsible for their learning. With their different abilities and competencies, each student has different ways of learning, given that students are accustomed to traditional learning. In turn, most of them turned out to be more kinesthetic, visual, or auditory learners.

Considering this, students must be well-equipped with different learning strategies that can help them with the new learning modality. These learning strategies are classified as noncognitive skills because these are skills that we develop and form once an individual starts studying, which essentially form into a habit. In addition, these are not things that an individual can automatically have; they are learned and developed as they grow older. This type of learning enables students to develop different learning strategies that help them achieve high academic performance. Learning strategies are not innate; they are actions that are just developed into habits through trial and error, and failing to utilize a learning strategy may mean that the skills we currently have are not suitable for that kind of strategy. Thus, if developing these skills can help students acquire and utilize other learning strategies, then these skills can help students achieve high academic performance, which made universities today focus on developing students not just in terms of their knowledge but also their skills and abilities to help students be more prepared when they graduate.

Hence, these are things that all learners need to enhance and develop to be able to successfully navigate through their academic problems. With this, different guidance counselors have been trying to help their students by equipping them with different learning strategies that they could utilize in this online set-up to help the students, and further developing these noncognitive skills can also help the students to develop their cognitive skills (Gabrieli et al., 2015, as cited in Bjorklund-Young, 2016).

Due to the new learning modality, wherein students must study at home, students all have different access to resources or may have an environment that is not conducive enough for learning, and this in turn can affect the

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academic performance of the students. There are different ways to measure their academic performance; this can be seen through their achievements, their skills, their grades, and their actual performance at school. Given the different factors that can likely affect the performance of the student, the general weighted average (GWA) is used to measure the overall scholastic achievement of the student. This encompasses the grades of the student when it comes to the academic factor, but it also considers their behavior or conduct inside the classroom, and it also considers the skills that they display inside the classroom that are not usually accounted for in scholastic achievement.

Thus, to develop the students' skills and, at the same time, target the academic performance of students who find themselves having a hard time delivering the desired performance in their academics, this can be useful for not just students but also for the teachers, the guidance counselors, and the whole institution, as this will serve as one of their counseling programs or different student activities that can enable students to be developed holistically.

Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Theory

Albert Bandura believed that behavior was correct in explaining how humans think and learn to a limited extent. This includes learning through reinforcement and punishment of behaviors, and observational learning by modeling or observing others. This later on was modified wherein Bandura included explanations of learning through attention and cognitive factors, such as the expectations and beliefs of the individual. The theory retained the emphasis on the behavioral aspect, such as modeling, and included cognitive aspects, such as thinking, self-regulating, and believing. This is called the Social Cognitive Theory, it is defined by Bandura as the dynamic system that explains learning, motivation, and human adaptation. This theory further addresses how individuals were able to develop social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral capabilities.

The system described by Social Cognitive Learning Theory is called Triadic Reciprocal Causality, this is the dynamic interplay among the three kinds of factors or influences: personal, environmental, and behavioral, and they all influence and are influenced by each other. Personal factors are the beliefs, expectations, cognitive abilities, motivation, attitudes, and knowledge of the individual. While, the physical and social environment includes resources, consequences of actions, other people, models and teachers, and physical settings. Lastly, behavior includes individual actions, choices, and verbal statements. If these personal factors, behaviors, and the environment are in constant interaction, then the cycle of events is more likely to progress and become self-perpetuating (Woolfolk, 2020).

Student Involvement Theory

Astin (1984) identified student involvement theory as the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student allots to their academic experience. Furthermore, Astin further explained that if a student is highly involved, this means that they devote their energy to studying, joining campus activities, or participating in student organizations, and they can engage with their professors or different faculty members and with their peers. Astin defined an uninvolved student as someone who disregards their studies, does not join or participate in campus activities or organizations, and does not spend time with their peers or converse with their teachers or other faculty members. Thus, the theory emphasized the behavioral component as the most critical because how the individual acts and behaves defines and identifies how much the student is involved. With this, the theory encourages educators, faculty, or other school members to focus on how the student behaves, what they do, how motivated they are, and how much time they spend devoting their time and energy to learning. The theory has five basic postulates: that student involvement requires an investment of psychological and physical energy, that student involvement is continuous, that the amount of energy invested varies from student to student, that the different aspects of involvement may be qualitative and quantitative, that what a student gains from being involved (or their development) is directly proportional to the extent to which they were involved (in both aspects of quality and quantity), and that academic performance is correlated with student involvement.

Objectives

This study aimed to identify the role of learning strategies as well as the mediation among social, emotional, and behavioral skills and the academic performance of second-year college students.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

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1. How may the profile of the respondents be described in terms of:
   1.1. sex, and
   1.2. cluster?
2. What is the level of SEB skills, the type of learning strategies students most commonly used, and the academic performance of the respondents?
3. Is there a significant difference in the SEB skills, learning strategies, and academic performance of the students when compared based on their profiles?
4. Is there a significant relationship among the variables of the study?
5. What program may be proposed that could help students further develop their SEB skills and create a support system in their academics?

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive quantitative research design. Descriptive research was used to describe certain individuals, groups, situations, and events in their natural nature; it also generates a "thick description" of the individual's social life (Geertz, 1973, as cited in Leavy, 2017). Siedlecki (2020) also stated that when using this research design, the researcher describes the variables instead of manipulating them, wherein they look at the characteristics of the population and try to identify the problems that exist within them. Moreover, it also stated that one of the methods of data collection in this kind of design was through surveys.

Furthermore, a quantitative research design states that one type of quantitative research is a survey research design, which provides a quantitative description of variables such as the attitudes, trends, tests, and opinions of a population. Furthermore, a survey design answers three types of questions, such as descriptive, relationships between two variables, and predictive variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Thus, the researcher deemed this type of method suitable to determine whether learning strategies mediate the relationship between social, emotional, and behavioral skills and the academic performance of college students. This method was utilized by using two standardized questionnaires to measure the two main variables of the research: the SEB skills and the learning strategies of the students.

Population and Sampling

There was a total of 346 participants in the study, all of whom were second-year college students who were currently enrolled in the university and had finished the term. It was believed that second-year students usually experience the "sophomore slump," wherein students seem to drift through their second year of college while they experience what they want out of their college life (Lemons & Richmond, 1987; Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000, as cited in Wang & Kennedy, 2013).

The participants were identified by using the results of the Needs Assessment conducted by the university, wherein it was found that first-year students were more focused on the adjustment to their school life, while third-year college students were focused on their career path and internship, and lastly, second-year college students were more focused on their academics. To further identify the required sample size of participants for the research, the researcher used the Raosoft sampling size calculator to determine the right sample size for the population of the whole university. The students that were included in the research were specifically determined using probability sampling. Probability sampling ensures the results of the study are generalizable to the target population. In this sampling method, each of the individuals has an equal chance of being selected for the study (Acharya et al., 2013). The researcher set up a criterion to make sure that the students participating in the study: must be second-year college students, currently enrolled in the university, and must finish the term. Students who chose not to participate in the study or have transferred or dropped out during the middle of the term will be excluded from the study. This also excluded the first-year students, third-year students, and graduate students.

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Instrument

The research instrument that was used in this study was a questionnaire. The researcher adopted two questionnaires to measure the SEB skills and their learning strategies. The first questionnaire is called the Behavioral, Emotional, and Social Skills Inventory (BESSI). This was used to measure the SEB skills of the students and was uploaded through Google Forms along with the informed consent. The second questionnaire is the Cognitive and Metacognitive Learning Strategies Scale (CMLSS) to measure the learning strategies of the students. Like BESSI, this questionnaire was also uploaded through Google Forms with the informed consent attached on the top of the questionnaire.

The Behavioral, Emotional, and Social Skills Inventory (BESSI) was used to measure the SEB skills of the students. This survey was developed by Dr. Christopher J. Soto and his team last May 2021 after identifying 32 skill facets and categorizing them into five major skill domains, it was run through a series of confirmatory factor analyses using two different sample populations. It was found that the 32-facet model was loaded on factors representing its intended skill facet, and all of these were found to be intercorrelated with each other. While their reliabilities show that each of the items has an alpha reliability that ranges from 0.80 to 0.93 (Sewell, et al., 2022).

To determine the levels of the students' SEB skills, verbal interpretation was used, which came from the alternative instructions and response scale that were also posted on the website of SEB Skills. For the scoring of the survey, if the score of the student falls within 1.00-1.49, they will be within the beginner level; a score of 1.50-2.49 shows that they were at the advanced beginner level; a score within 2.50-3.49 will mean that they fall within the intermediate level; 3.50-4.49 is the advanced level; and lastly, you need to score between 4.50-5.00 to be considered an expert. To identify the SEB skills of the students, the five major skill domains of the BESSI were used, namely: self-management skills, cooperation skills, social engagement skills, emotional resilience skills, and innovation skills. First, self-management skills talk about the capacity of an individual to pursue their goals and finish their tasks. Second, cooperation skills are the individual's capacity to actively engage with other people. Third, social engagement skills are the capacity to maintain positive relationships with other people. Fourth, emotional resilience skills are the capacity of an individual to regulate their moods and emotions. And lastly, innovation skills are the capacity of an individual to engage with novel or new ideas and experiences.

The Cognitive and Metacognitive Learning Strategies Scale (CMLSS) was used to measure and identify the different learning strategies the students use. The Cognitive and Metacognitive Learning Strategies Scale (CMLSS) was adopted from the second part of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) with the permission of the publisher. The MSLQ was developed by Paul R. Pintrich and his team in 1991. It was subjected to internal reliability coefficient, and factor analyses, and was correlated with academic performance and aptitude measures. The scale correlations with final grade turn out to be significant, despite being moderate, and still show predictive validity. Meanwhile, it's Cronbach's alpha ranges from .52 to .93 (Pintrich, et al., 1991).

It uses a 7-point Likert scale, with 1.00–2.49 for low, 2.50–3.49 for below average, 3.50–4.99 for average, 5.00–6.49 for high, and 6.50–7.00 for very high. There are nine learning strategies, which are a combination of both cognitive and metacognitive strategies: rehearsal, elaboration, organization, critical thinking, metacognitive self-regulation, time and study environment, effort regulation, peer learning, and help-seeking.

Lastly, the instrument used to measure the academic performance of the students was their general weighted average (GWA) for the whole third semester of FY 2022-2023. The grades range from 1.00 to 3.00. A grade of 1.00 is equivalent to 96–100%, which means excellent. While grades of 1.25 and 1.50 were equivalent to 94-95% and 92-93%, respectively, which both translate into Very Good, and grades of 1.75 (89–91%), 2.00 (87-88%), and 2.20 (84–86%) are interpreted as good. Grades of 2.50 (79–81%) and 2.75 (75-78%) are interpreted as fair. While a grade of 3.00 (75-78%) means pass, and lastly, a grade of 5.00 is equivalent to below 75%, which translates into a failure.

Data Collection

The research was first formed by conducting a needs assessment at a university, and by reading the reports of the results, it eventually became a subject of interest. With the current testing program of the university, they were able to identify the social, emotional, and behavioral skills of the students, which they utilized in their research at the university. Since social, emotional, and behavioral skills are fairly new terms that were coined by Soto et al. (2020), the researcher further explored different literature and existing studies, which became a subject of interest. The

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questionnaires or items were readily available on the internet and were part of the public domain, which was consented to by the owners.

For the actual data gathering, the researcher sent a letter to the guidance counselor to ask for permission to conduct the research at the university, explaining the purpose and nature of the study. Once the researcher had permission, the researcher collected the list of second-year students who were currently enrolled in the university. Using the criteria set by the researcher, the students who passed the criteria received an email that included information about the study and a link to the CMLSS and BESSI through a Google Form. In that Google form, informed consent was attached, so students who did not want to participate were advised to close the window and disregard the message. After answering the Google forms, the researcher extracted the responses from the form and then waited for the end of the term to collect the general weighted average (GWA) of the participating students.

In addition, since the actual data collection was done via online without any observation, the study limits itself to being affected by other extraneous variables that may affect the respondents and the results.

Treatment of Data

The BESSI and the CMLSS were the instruments used to gather the SEB skills and their learning strategies, respectively. At the same time, the general weighted mean (GWA) of the students was used to measure their academic performance.

For the profile of the students (i.e., sex and cluster) and their grades, or GWA, the researcher used frequency distribution, and the data was put in a frequency distribution table to help the researcher identify how many occurrences the number or grade has been shown (Coolican, 2014). Frequency distribution takes a disorganized set of data and places them in an organized tabulation, such as ranking them from highest to lowest or grouping individuals who have the same scores to help the researcher see the entire set of scores (Gravetter et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, the measures of central tendency, or weighted mean was used to analyze the scores of the students in the BESSI AND CMLSS. Using the BESSI, the researcher identified the level of the students in terms of their proficiency in the five given skill domains using their mean scores. The researcher used the mean scores of the students in CMLSS to determine the learning strategies each student mostly uses when studying for school. The mean, or arithmetic mean, is where all the values in the data set are added up and divided by the total number of values. This treatment of the data shows the exact midpoint of all the combined values (Coolican, 2014).

While, a one-way ANOVA was used to determine the significant difference between SEB skills, learning strategies, and academic performance when respondents were grouped according to their sex and cluster, Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is the analysis of more than two conditions, and it is a powerful parametric procedure that tests the differences between several means (Coolican, 2014). Furthermore, ANOVA uses sample data as the basis for drawing general conclusions about populations (Gravetter et al., 2021).

Furthermore, to determine the relationship between the SEB skills of the students and their academic performance and the relationship between learning strategies and academic performance, the researcher used correlation analysis, more specifically, the Pearson correlation. The Pearson moment correlation, commonly known as simply the Pearson correlation, is the most common correlation that measures the degree of linear relationship between two different variables (Gravetter et al., 2021).

To solve for the mediating role of the learning strategy between the SEB skills of the students and their academic performance, the researcher used the mediation analysis by Baron and Kenny (1986) using SPSS. This data analysis consists of three regressions; however, the first step has been controversial, especially if the first two variables have a relationship and have a strong theoretical background. This means that even if there is no significant relationship between the first two variables, it is still okay to proceed to the next step (Shrout & Bolger, 2002, as cited in Kim, 2016).

Ethical Considerations

In compliance with the research ethics, the researcher used tests or questionnaires that were consented to by the authors to be free of use and put up in the public domain. In terms of the adaptation of the CMLSS, the researcher sought permission to adapt the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire for the learning strategies, which was run through local validation by two psychometricians and one psychologist.

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The researcher also sought permission and submitted a letter to the guidance counselor to be able to conduct the study at the university. Informed consent was also given to the participants before the test administration for them to be aware of the nature and purpose of the study and ensure that the respondents' privacy and confidentiality would be strictly upheld by the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and research ethics. This further talks about the rights and responsibilities of the respondents regarding their participation in the study, including discussions about the study's potential risks. This also includes the fact that if the respondents feel uncomfortable during the process, they may opt to discontinue answering the questionnaires. Due to the questionnaire being conducted online and through the use of a third party (Google), the researcher also provided a link to the rules of Google in terms of their data privacy.

Google forms require users to use their school email, which can also be used to trace them, and will no longer be anonymous to the researcher. Nonetheless, the informed consent given clearly stated that they were well aware of the risks involved in participating in this study. The researcher further elaborated that the data such as their sex, course, grades (GWA), and results were the only data used and presented in the research; other data such as their names, email, or any other identifiable data were strictly confidential. Furthermore, the researcher was guided by the Psychological Association of the Philippines' ethical considerations regarding research practice.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents in terms of their sex and clusters. A total of 346 students participated in the study, which was categorized according to their characteristics. It further shows that the greatest number of respondents under sex was female, with 75.43% of the population, or 261, while 25.47%, or 85 of the respondents, were male. The table shows that in terms of clusters, programs that were clustered under the health-related professions had the greatest number of respondents (n = 110; 31.79%), next came were the programs that were clustered under the Social Science (n = 76; 21.97%). Third, were the programs that were clustered under Architecture (n = 66; 19.08%). Fourth, were programs clustered under Business and Management Education (n = 53; 15.32%). Fifth, were those programs clustered under Teacher Education (n = 11; 3.18%). While programs clustered under Information Technology (n = 9; 2.60%) and Science and Math (n = 2; 0.58%) came in sixth and seventh respectively. Lastly, the program under the Agriculture cluster has the least number of respondents (n = 1; 0.29%).

Table 1
Profile of the Respondents
n=346

Characteristics	f	%
Sex		
Female	261	75.43
Male	85	24.57
Cluster		
Agriculture	1	0.29
Architecture	66	19.08
Business and Management Education	53	15.32
Health-Related Profession	110	31.79
Humanities	18	5.20
Information Technology	9	2.60
Science and Math	2	0.58
Social Science	76	21.97
Teacher Education	11	3.18

Note. n = 346 second year college students. The programs were grouped into clusters according to the CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 1, S. 2005.

Table 2 below shows the overall level of the students when it comes to SEB skills. The table shows that students were within the advanced range when it comes to their SEB skills, and it further shows that the students were

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all within the advanced range in terms of their self-management skills, cooperation skills, emotional resilience skills, and innovation skills. However, the students fall within the intermediate range when it comes to their social engagement skills.

Since the study was conducted during the pandemic, wherein online classes were in effect, students must learn how to manage their studies on their own, especially during asynchronous classes. This discusses that these skills, such as self-management skills, cooperation skills, emotional resilience skills, and innovation skills, were most commonly utilized during online classes. This shows that students can focus on their goals even with distractions because these students were more committed to learning considering that they were working at their own pace and being able to organize their own time gives them confidence, which motivates them further and helps students get a clear notion of responsibility in managing their learning, which leads them to better appreciate their grade increase as they view it as a result of their effort in their learning process derived from their motivation (Chavez-Miyauchi et al., 2021). Due to the shutdown of sudden lifestyle changes due to the pandemic, students must suddenly transition from traditional face-to-face education into virtual education, with less interaction with their teachers, classmates, peers, and friends (Cardenas et al., 2020). However, students were likely found to be more innovative and tend to make the most out of the experiences they encountered instead of letting this hinder their studies. Such as during their asynchronous classes, which include activities that can be done individually, help students improve their problem-solving abilities or critical thinking skills. And when activities were done in groups, students' cooperation skills, or how they work with others or in teams, were more likely to continuously improve. Meanwhile, with their online classes, they still have their traditional lectures, and with this the students are more likely to have no chance to engage with their fellow students, teachers, or in their actual classes (Karim & Alam, 2021).

Even with the students' ability to be more innovative, a study found that even though students find the quality of online learning to be perceivable, they still find some disadvantages to it, such as a shortage of opportunities to socialize and interact with their classmates and friends. Even the teachers find it difficult to manage virtual classes effectively, as some students were often late to class and leave class during the middle of lessons, and some do not want to open their cameras, which makes it harder for teachers to engage with them during classes (Dung, 2020). Especially since learning usually takes place when individuals interact and engage in different social contexts (Bandura, 2011, as cited in Karim and Alam, 2021), and student engagement was found to influence their academic performance and the more engaged the student is, the more effort that they put into their academics, and this includes being able to engage or converse with their peers and teachers (Astin, 1984). However, this does not seem to be true to the results of the study, as there may be different factors at home that hinder social learning, especially since the current study was done in a different context.

Table 2
Respondents Level of Social, Emotional, and Behavioral (SEB) skills
n=346

Domains	Mean	Std. Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Self-Management Skills	3.85	0.72	Advanced
Social Engagement Skills	3.33	0.80	Intermediate
Cooperation Skills	4.02	0.67	Advanced
Emotional Resilience Skill	3.60	0.85	Advanced
Innovation Skills	3.64	0.70	Advanced
Composite Mean	**3.69**	**0.64**	**Advanced**

Note. 1.0-1.49 Beginner; 1.50-2.49 Advanced beginner; 2.50-3.49 Intermediate; 3.50-4.49 Advanced; 4.50-5.0 Expert

Table 3 shows the different types of learning strategies and the students' level of proficiency in using them. The table further shows that, overall, students find themselves at an average level when it comes to using different learning strategies. Students have a high level of skill when it comes to rehearsal (M = 5.22), elaboration (M = 5.39), critical thinking (M = 5.06), and metacognitive self-regulation (M = 5.08), which means that students were most likely to be well-versed when it comes to memorizing, making connections between items, solving problems, thinking critically, and being aware of one's capacity for learning and being able to improve their performance on their own.

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Out of the four, the most commonly used and most familiar learning strategy was elaboration. On the other hand, students find themselves to be within the average when it comes to organization (M = 4.67), time and study environment (M = 4.77), effort regulation (M = 4.73), peer learning (M = 4.49), and help-seeking (M = 4.51). This shows that students can organize their lessons and notes, plan and manage the place where they will study and what time they will study, work with others, and ask for help from others. The lowest, and where students seemed to have a bit of difficulty using it, was help-seeking.

The results were aligned with the result in Table 2, wherein the lowest skill the students had was social engagement, and one form of engaging with others was seeking help, which discusses that low engagement skills hinder students from being able to create connections with others, also hinder them from being able to seek help from others such as their classmates, teachers, friends, or even parents, and would rather work on their own.

Help seeking behavior is not a good predictor of the academic performance of students especially for distance learners (Neroni et al., 2019), especially with the sudden shift from the traditional learning into an online education, students suddenly must change their lifestyle which includes their loss of social interaction with their teachers, classmates, friends, and peers (Cardenas et al., 2020). Thus, students find themselves having a difficult time in developing their social communication skills (Dung, 2020) which led the students to develop their skills that lean towards self-management (Chavez-Miyauchi et al., 2021). However, this contrasts with those students in traditional education, wherein the high-performing students were usually the ones who seek help from others rather than the low-performing students (Neroni et al., 2019) which led the students to believe that the experiences they get during their online learning cannot really replace the experience that they get during the face-to-face learning (Dung, 2020).

Table 3
Types and Levels of Proficiency in Learning Strategies
n=346

Subscales	Mean	Std. Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Rehearsal	5.22	1.28	High
Elaboration	5.39	1.17	High
Organization	4.67	1.07	Average
Critical Thinking	5.06	1.13	High
Metacognitive self-regulation	5.08	0.96	High
Time and Study environment	4.77	0.91	Average
Effort Regulation	4.73	1.01	Average
Peer Learning	4.49	1.58	Average
Help Seeking	4.51	1.05	Average
Composite Mean	**4.88**	**0.84**	**Average**

Note. 1.0-2.49 Low; 2.50-3.49 Below average; 3.50-4.99 Average; 5.00-6.49 High; 6.50-7.0 Very high

Table 4 shows the frequency of the students' general weighted average (GWA). The table further shows the grade point system that was currently used in the university, along with the numbers of students with the GWA and its percentage. There were 18 or 5.20% of the students with a GWA of 1.00, while there were 85 or 24.60% of the sample that have garnered a 1.25 GWA, having the greatest number of respondents. For the GWA of 1.50, it shows that there were 82, or 23.70%, who have this grade. Then there were 68, or 19.70%, respondents who have a GWA of 1.75, and 37, or 10.70%, have a GWA of 2.00. While 27 or 7.80% of the respondents have a GWA of 2.25, 16 or 4.60% of the respondents have an average of 2.50. And lastly, only 7 or 2.00% of the respondents have a grade of 2.75, which also has the least number of respondents.

The results may show that the students' performance may become "inflated" because of the pandemic, as it usually ends without any improvement and just stays the same. If there were any changes, it can be due to the academic background of the instructor, class level, fields, and university entrance scores, which can be determinants of the average course grades. Some increases in the students' grades were due to the instructors' lack of experience in the distant learning which led them to become lenient and tend to give out higher grades to compensate for their circumstances (Karadag, 2021).

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Table 4
Respondents Academic Performance
n=346

General Weighted Average	Verbal Interpretation	f	%
1.00	Excellent	18	5.20
1.25	Very Good	85	24.60
1.50	Very Good	82	23.70
1.75	Good	68	19.70
2.00	Good	37	10.70
2.25	Good	27	7.80
2.50	Fair	16	4.60
2.75	Fair	7	2.00
3.00	Pass	6	1.70

Note. 1.0-2.49 Low; 2.50-3.49 Below average; 3.50-4.99 Average; 5.00-6.49 High; 6.50-7.0 Very high

Table 5 shows the summary of the differences between the levels of social, emotional, and behavioral skills of the students when they were grouped according to their profile, which was their sex and cluster. The table further shows that the self-management skills of students have no significant difference between the students' sex (p = 0.361) and cluster (p = 0.274). The cooperation skills of students also have no significant difference when they were classified according to their sex (p = 0.096) and cluster (p = 0.594). However, the table further presents that the students' social engagement skills have a significant difference when they were classified according to their sex (p = 0.001), but there was no significant difference when they were grouped according to their cluster (p = 0.367). Emotional resilience skills also have a significant difference when grouped according to their sex (p = 0.004) and no significant difference when grouped according to their cluster (p = 0.129); lastly, innovation skills have a significant difference when they were grouped according to their sex (p = 0.025), but have no significant difference when they were classified according to their cluster (p = 0.645).

This data shows that while the cluster in which a student was involved does not play a part in affecting the different skills that they were proficient in, this may have occurred because of the pandemic, where every student must adjust to their environment. And students can easily manage their distractions at home to focus on their goals; they can easily work with others or work well in teams as they have already been doing this even before the pandemic; and lastly, they can easily solve their problems because these students are very flexible when it comes to adjusting to the different events and experiences that they may experience in life instead of letting it become a hindrance to their studies (Karim and Alam, 2021). Moreover, students find themselves adjusting when it comes to their engagement with others, handling their moods and emotions, and solving problems critically.

Additionally, the results further found that female students usually have a harder time reaching out to others, especially during the online set-up. They were also more likely to find it difficult to control their emotions and to think critically compared to the male students, which made them more susceptible to lockdown fatigue according to a study conducted by Labrague and Ballad (2021), wherein they experienced an increased level of fatigue compared to male students. In contrast, male students were more flexible when it comes to engaging with other students or participating in social groups, hobby groups, and community-related organizations and even having depressive symptoms compared to women (Xiao et al., 2021).

Table 5
Differences of Levels of SEB Skills When Grouped According to Profile
n=346

Domains	Sex		Cluster	
	f	Sig.	f	Sig.
Self-Management Skills	1.073	0.361	1.218	0.274

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Social Engagement Skills	5.626	0.001**	1.091	0.367
Cooperation Skills	2.13	0.096	0.846	0.594
Emotional Resilience Skills	4.456	0.004**	1.501	0.129
Innovation Skills	3.169	0.025*	0.795	0.645

Note. *significant at 5% level; ** significant at 1% level

Table 6
Difference of Level of Learning Strategies When Grouped According to Profile
n=346

Subscales	**Sex**		**Cluster**	
	f	Sig.	f	Sig.
Rehearsal	1.05	0.371	1.063	0.391
Elaboration	0.164	0.921	1.135	0.332
Organization	0.049	0.986	0.798	0.642
Critical Thinking	0.155	0.926	0.976	0.468
Metacognitive Self-Regulation	0.603	0.614	1.171	0.306
Time and Study environment	0.538	0.656	0.703	0.736
Effort Regulation	0.412	0.744	0.961	0.482
Peer Learning	1.171	0.321	1.025	0.424
Help Seeking	0.607	0.611	0.293	0.987

Note. *significant at 5% level; ** significant at 1% level

Table 6 shows the overall difference between the different learning strategies when they were grouped according to their profiles. The table further shows that there were no significant differences in all the subscales of CMLSS when respondents were grouped by profile, as shown by all p-values (Sig) >.05. This table further elaborates that rehearsal has no significant difference when they were grouped according to their sex (p = 0.371) and cluster (p = 0.91). Elaboration also has no significant difference when classified according to their sex (p = 0.921) and cluster (p = 0.332). Furthermore, this also shows organizations having no significant difference when grouped according to their sex (p = 0.986) and cluster (p = 0.642). While critical thinking also shows no significant difference when grouped according to their sex (p = 0.155) and cluster (p = 0.468), This also includes metacognitive self-regulation, which has no significant difference when they were grouped according to their sex (p = 0.614) and cluster (p = 0.306). Time and study environment also show that there was no significant difference when grouped according to sex (p = 0.656) and cluster (p = 0.736). Moreover, this also includes the Effort Regulation subscale, which shows no significant difference when grouped according to sex (p = 0.744) and cluster (p = 0.482). Then, the subscale Peer Learning also shows that there was no significant difference even when the students were grouped according to sex (p = 0.321) and cluster (p = 0.424). And lastly, help-seeking also has no significant difference when students were grouped according to sex (p = 0.611) and cluster (p = 0.987).

This data shows that neither the sex of a student nor their cluster affects what type of learning strategies the students mostly use. In contrast to this, a study discussed that there are differences in the learning strategies used by students of different demographics, however, even environmental factors play a role on the type of learning that they use. Some of these determiners are the gender, enrollment status, college grades, affiliations, and the students' participation in a learning community (Dumford, Cogswell, & Miller, 2016).

The contrasting results of the study may be explainable because of how students were set up online, so all the students will most likely be using the same kind of learning strategy despite their profiles, which may imply that the students were more likely to be motivated to use all the learning strategies, if there are external factors such as support and encouragement to maintain their motivation to learn (Avila & Genio, 2020). Furthermore, a study by Raza et al. (2020) states that for students to effectively use learning strategies, such as self-regulation, they must be well-adjusted to the environment around them, which in this case is learning through an online set-up, as distance learners tend to have a busy schedule (i.e., work and family responsibilities) so they view managing their time and study environment to be important (Ronning, 2009 as cited in Neroni et al., 2019).

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Table 7
Difference in GWA When Grouped By Profile
n=346

Profile	f-value	Sig.	Decision	Profile
Gender	1.284	0.28	Not significant	Gender
Course	2.713	0.068	Not significant	Course

Note. *significant at 5% level; ** significant at 1% level

Meanwhile, Table 7 shows the difference in the academic performance of the students when they were grouped according to their profile. The table further shows that both genders (p = 0.28) have no significant difference and do not affect the academic performance of the students. While cluster (p = 0.068) also has no significant difference when it comes to their academic performance, it does not affect their GWA.

The courses were all adjusted to adapt to the pandemic or made to be more flexible with online learning, which helped the students still attain their typical performance (Barletta et al., 2022), even the students' learning strategies was not different from their performance before since students were motivated to learn and attend their classes despite them being online, given that they were given the right amount of support and encouragement from those around them (Avila & Genio, 2020). However, Voyer and Voyer (2014) found that female students have a huge advantage in most course subjects compared to males, which directly challenges the findings of the research of Neroni et al. (2019), where they discussed that despite the differences of learning strategies that different genders used, there has been no difference between the academic performance of men and women.

Table 8
Relationship Between SEB Skills, Learning Strategies, and Academic Performance
n=346

		Learning Strategies	SEB Skills	
SEB Skills	Corr. coeff	-0.033	1	SEB Skills
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.537		
	Decision	**Not significant**		
Academic Performance	Corr. Coeff	0.055	0.000	Academic Performance
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.308	0.997	
	Decision	**Not significant**	**Not significant**	

Table 8 presents the relationship between social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) skills, learning strategies, and academic performance. It further shows that the relationship between SEB skills and learning strategies was not significant (p = 0.537) and does not affect each other, which shows that SEB skills do not affect the learning strategies that students were most likely to use. While academic performance and learning strategies also display that the relationship between the two variables was not significant (p = 0.308) and does not affect each other, which means that the learning strategies used by the students do not affect their academic performance, while academic performance and SEB skills have been found to have no significant relationship (p = 0.997), this shows that SEB skills do not affect the academic performance of the student. Lastly, the mediation analysis shows a significant indirect effect of the time and study environment (t = 2.1074, p =.0358) on the relationship between the SEB skills and academic performance of the student, with a standardized indirect effect (-.0065), which was below the range of LLCI -.0228 and ULCI.0047. This means that the time and study environment play a significant role in SEB skills and academic performance.

The data in Table 8 further shows that the SEB skills of the students do not affect their academic performance, and even their learning strategies have no effect on their academic performance. which shows that learning strategies

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do not mediate the relationship between SEB skills and academic performance. However, the mediation analysis did show that there was a significant indirect effect, which may have been the cause of some external factors, especially since the study was done during the pandemic, wherein students were not able to properly utilize their SEB skills and learning strategies. Especially since learning strategies such as self-regulation can only lead to academic success if students have already adjusted to their environment (Raza et al., 2020). Likewise, in a study conducted by Bjugstad (2023), the school environment helps facilitate the engagement of the student, and in turn, affects the academic performance of the student. Bjugstad further highlighted that the influence of environmental contexts and institutional factors is critical to the positive development of the youth because these contexts help create or diminish the opportunities to be able to develop positive skills and abilities. Thus, teachers should also consider the students' learning environments, since some students might experience anxiety due to their new learning modality and their thought about being isolated from the society (Siguno, 2021). Another study also stated that one of the factors that may affect student success in their academics was the learning environment, the effort when it comes to using learning strategies, the cognitive ability, and the attention and engagement given to the lesson (Ruffing et al., 2015). Similarly, a study made by Neroni et al. (2019) found that time management was one of the important and positive predictors of academic performance of distance learners or non-traditional learners; hence, it is important for them to learn how they can manage their time and study environment due to their busy schedules.

Table 9 shows the proposed skills and academic interventions that can help students develop their skills and enhance their academic performance. This proposed intervention plan will help build social engagement skills, effort regulation, peer learning, and help-seeking, and improve the time and study environment of the students. The following programs and activities were all based on previous research or existing literature that proposed the same type of recommendation with the same results.

The first area focuses on the social engagement skills of the students, which were within the intermediate range. According to Astin (1984), the Student Involvement Theory states that the academic performance of the students was correlated with how much they were involved with their studies, engaging in activities and organizations, and conversing with their professors and students. Thus, to enhance the social engagement skills of the students, the programs consist of enabling them to participate and engage with others.

The second area focuses on the average use of time and the study environment when it comes to learning strategies. A study conducted by Raza et al. (2020) shows that the environment of the student, especially in school, was important because it affects their achievement and performance and helps predict their future academic success. In this case, the programs that were created focus on creating a conducive environment for learning that can also promote a space where students can do group work.

The third area focuses on the average use of effort regulation when using learning strategies. This also shows how students were more innovative and flexible, which means that they were quick to adjust to the experiences that they may experience (Karim and Alam, 2021). By adjusting to their environment, students were more likely to develop skills that were more centered on the management of their studies (Chavez-Miyauchi et al., 2021). The activities regarding self-awareness help students identify their strengths and weaknesses, which they can use to manage their studies.

Then, the fourth area shows the average use of peer learning when using learning strategies. This confirms the study done by Siguno (2021), where students prefer a more cooperative type of learning that encourages students to engage with other students. All of the activities written in the program were more focused on working together, as this could also help students to be more aware of what they need to work on, which also establishes and enhances the students' resource management and cognitive-metacognitive strategies. This also enhances the academic, social, affective, and psychological outcomes of the student (Johnson et al., 1998, as cited in Tran et al., 2019).

And lastly, the fifth area shows the average use of seeking help from others when choosing learning strategies. This type of learning strategy was very important as well, especially during this time of the pandemic, wherein students tend to become demotivated when it comes to attending their online classes. And that is why it is important to promote an environment that encourages help-seeking. According to Karim and Alam (2021), students need to receive emotional support from their respective families, the school, and their mentors. To be able to acquire this support, students must be able to ask for help.

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Table 9
Proposed Skills and Academic Support Program
n=346

Areas	Program	Objectives	Person/s Involved	Success Indicator
Intermediate Social Engagement Skills	Peer Support Group	This aims to provide students with someone they can count on while they were still adjusting to the school.	Students, Peer Facilitators Organization	New students can adjust to the school environment, and this can also promote student engagement and help them build relationships.
	Study Area	School admin and teachers can set-up a study area aside from the library wherein students can also create a place where they can work in groups.	School admin, teachers	This will help students to have a conducive learning environment, and with study groups will also help them to promote peer learning and help seeking from those students who were more knowledgeable than them. This can also help cultivate relationships and teamwork in the students.
	Homeroom Program: Self-Awareness	This will be a focus group discussion type during homeroom, wherein students can get to meet others who may need help to be more self-aware. Advisers will guide them by giving philosophical questions to help	Advisers, Students	This will help students to become more aware of themselves. This will further help students to be more empowered when hearing feedback, and help them build relationships with others.

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		them reflect, and with others to support them and to give them feedback and observations about the individual.		
Average Time and Study Environment	Mindfulness practice: Journaling	This activity will be written daily, this will help the students to talk about their feelings and what they feel like writing. This will be then discussed with their guidance counselor to give them insights.	Advisers, students	This will help students to become more aware of themselves.
Average Effort Regulation	Peer Study Buddy	This aims to partner a student with a peer facilitator from the same course this can be older or in the same grade if they were knowledgeable about the subject that the student needs to study.	Students	To promote relationships, and to promote peer-to-peer learning.
Average Peer Learning	Peer-to-Peer Teaching	This aims to help students to communicate with their fellow classmates, and to gain more aware of their ability in terms of the subject that they were studying for. Teachers will partner students; high performers will be grouped	Teachers, students	To promote relationships. To help students be more aware of their ability or develop their metacognitive self-regulation or just metacognitive skills. This also helps to develop peer-to-peer learning and teamwork.

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		with low performers.		
Average Help Seeking	Safe Space	Teachers will encourage students to openly ask questions by becoming closer to their students, and making sure to emphasize that the classroom is a safe space for students to ask questions. Teachers must also incorporate a growth mindset, wherein if students made a mistake, they can learn from that mistake instead of taking it as a negative impact.	Teachers, students	This will help teachers to build rapport with their students, and promote a safe-space learning environment for the students.

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Overall, the study discusses that learning strategies do not mediate the relationship between the social, emotional, and behavioral skills of second-year college students and their academic performance. Even with how the respondents were grouped in their profile, either by sex or by their program cluster, there was no effect between the variables. Even without proper communication or engagement with their teachers and classmates through their online classes, teachers were able to adapt their courses to distance learning, which in turn helped the students adapt their learning styles and became effective for the students as it was found that it did not affect the students' grades and performance. Students may be receiving the proper support, and having a supportive environment helps the student to become more motivated and be well-adjusted to the online learning setup wherein they can just focus and study at their own pace, which enables them to utilize the learning strategies that they were equipped with.

In terms of profile, the majority of the second-year college students were female, and there was a comprehensively large number of respondents from programs that were clustered under the health-related profession.

Students are advanced when it comes to their self-management skills, cooperation skills, emotional resilience skills, and innovation skills. And find themselves in the intermediate when it comes to social engagement skills. In terms of learning strategies, it was found that the students were more proficient when it came to using rehearsal, elaboration, critical thinking, and metacognitive self-regulation. While they fall within the average range when it comes to using organizations and when it comes to their time and study environment, effort regulation, peer learning, and help-seeking.

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A student's social engagement skills, emotional resilience skills, and innovation skills differ when they are of different sexes. However, neither sex nor cluster makes any difference when it comes to the learning strategies that the students and their academic performance use.

Furthermore, the SEB skills of the students do not affect their learning strategies or academic performance. While learning strategies do not also affect the academic performance of the student. In addition, learning strategies do not mediate the relationship between SEB skills and academic performance.

Lastly, the proposed Skills and Academic Support Program was developed to address the students' holistic development in terms of their SEB skills and learning strategies to further help their academic performance.

Given these results, the researcher was able to come up with recommendations to address these findings.

First, is for the participants to continuously improve their current learning strategies, to learn new strategies or habits, and to further develop their peer engagement skills.

Since students could stay motivated and focus on their goals as long as they had support, parents could also support their children by giving them the time to focus on their studies. Another way of supporting the students is for the parents to create a conducive environment for learning to adapt to the new normal since schools will most likely be integrating a hybrid setup.

It was found that students could manage their goals, cooperate with others, manage their emotions, and apply new learning to their experiences. Teachers could also utilize these skills by creating a lesson plan that focuses on improving them. For the teachers to create a lesson plan that could utilize the learning strategies of the students, which are rehearsal, elaboration, critical thinking, and metacognitive self-regulation, In a face-to-face setting, it is important for teachers to continuously improve and promote other learning strategies, such as organization, time and study environment, effort regulation, peer learning, and help-seeking. Since the research found that students are average when it comes to time, study environment, and social engagement skills, the school administration could create a conducive study environment by creating study areas and improving facilities such as classrooms and the library. To encourage social engagement and promote peer relations, the university could create programs or fairs wherein students could participate and get to know other students.

The current study used a new construct, which is the social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) skills, and even the Behavioral, Emotional, and Social Skills Inventory (BESSI), which has no norms yet for the Philippine setting and is usually used in the industrial and educational settings in previous research. Since this was given during the time of the pandemic, which may have also affected some of the results. Moreover, it is advisable to also apply the construct in an industrial setting, or some could also investigate checking the psychometric properties of the questionnaire in a Philippine setting. Moreover, future researchers could also investigate using the questionnaire now that there is a face-to-face setup, and they could also consider investigating the difference between the results of the students in an online learning and face-to-face setup. As the participants are only second-year college students, future researchers may consider using other demographics, such as age, to include other year levels.

Lastly, the proposed Skills and Academic Support Program can be further checked, enhanced, and validated by experts for it to be used and implemented. Aside from the mentioned program, it is also recommended for the curriculum developers to utilize the results of the study.

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