MEDIATING EFFECT OF SCHOOL CLIMATE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL SOCIAL SKILLS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN EDUKASYON SA PAGPAPAKATAO OF GRADE 5 LEARNERS

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Abstract:

This study aimed to investigate the mediating effect of school climate on the relationship between social skills and academic achievement in Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (ESP) among Grade 5 pupils of Silway 8 Elementary School for the school year 2022-2023. A non-experimental quantitative design was employed, utilizing a descriptive correlation technique to gather relevant data. The study's respondents consisted of 122 Grade 5 learners, with total enumeration used to obtain the population, representing the entire Grade 5 cohort at Silway 8 Elementary School, Polomolok 5 District, Division of South Cotabato. The results indicated that Grade 5 learners exhibited very high social skills in terms of interpersonal abilities, high approaches to learning, and internalizing problem behavior, while demonstrating low self-control and externalizing problem behavior. Learners with advanced social skills in internalizing behaviors were adept at regulating their emotions, dealing with stress, and expressing themselves in a healthy manner. They exhibited resilience, empathy, and a positive outlook, contributing to a supportive and understanding social environment. Additionally, the school climate was perceived most positively concerning teaching and learning and the environment, while safety was noted in fewer instances. Overall, the academic achievement of the learners was deemed good, meeting standard expectations. Moreover, significant relationships were found between social skills and academic achievement, social skills and school climate, and between school climate and academic achievement among Grade 5 learners.

Keywords: educational management, school climate, social skills, academic performance, Philippines

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1. Introduction

Many schools nationwide attempt to build a pleasant school climate to nurture the success and emotional well-being of students, teachers, and staff and address problems that increase bad behavior and reduce accomplishment. Failure to address issues connected to the school environment on purpose may result in missed chances for student progress and better well-being. On the other hand, an opposing school climate has been linked to various adverse effects on students and has been proven to aggravate hazardous conduct and impair attainment. Please intentionally address issues connected to the school environment to avoid missed chances for student progress and better well-being (Konold *et al.*, 2018).

A positive school atmosphere, built on meaningful interactions, safety, and tailored environments, significantly improves student success and school experiences. It increases graduation and college readiness rates, lowers dropout rates and teacher turnover, and contributes to the overall well-being of students and teachers. Additionally, it helps turn around underperforming schools, reduces risky behaviors and depressive symptoms, fosters a sense of belonging, and boosts student motivation and achievement, closing achievement gaps (Moss & Petrie, 2019).

Moreover, a correlation study on social skills and academic achievement in Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (ESP) among Grade 5 learners highlights the critical role that social skills play in holistic education. ESP, as a subject, emphasizes values formation and ethical behavior, which are closely linked to social interactions. By examining the relationship between learners' social skills—such as communication, empathy, and cooperation—and their academic performance in ESP, the study aims to understand how interpersonal competencies influence the comprehension and application of moral principles. This research is timely, as educators increasingly recognize the importance of fostering both cognitive and socio-emotional development to prepare students for collaborative and responsible citizenship. Understanding this correlation can guide teachers in designing interventions and teaching strategies that integrate social skills development with academic learning, ultimately enhancing both areas for Grade 5 learners (Akinde, 2022).

Furthermore, a study on the relationship between social skills and school climate emphasizes the interconnectedness of interpersonal competencies and the overall learning environment. Social skills, including communication, empathy, and conflict resolution, significantly contribute to fostering positive interactions among students, teachers, and staff, which are essential for creating a supportive and inclusive school climate. By examining this relationship, the study aims to explore how well-developed social skills influence the perceptions of safety, respect, collaboration, and belonging within the school. This research is timely, as a positive school climate has been shown to enhance student engagement, well-being, and academic success. Insights from this study can guide educators and administrators in implementing programs and strategies that

simultaneously promote social skills development and cultivate a healthier, more harmonious school environment (Dicke *et al.*, 2020).

Accordingly, a study on the relationship between school climate and academic achievement in Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (ESP) among Grade 5 learners underscores the impact of the learning environment on values education. A positive school climate, characterized by safety, inclusivity, mutual respect, and supportive relationships, provides an essential foundation for effective moral and ethical learning. By examining how school climate influences academic performance in ESP, the study aims to highlight how a nurturing environment enhances students' understanding and application of values and ethical principles. This research is crucial, as a favorable school climate not only supports cognitive and socio-emotional development but also fosters active engagement in learning. The findings can help educators and school leaders implement policies and practices that strengthen the school climate, ultimately improving academic outcomes in ESP and fostering holistic development among Grade 5 learners (Hollins & Peterson, 2021).

Consequently, the urgency to conduct this study at Silway-8 Elementary School stems from its focus on fostering a supportive environment that prioritizes student safety, academic support, wholesome nutrition, and social-emotional growth. Understanding how this positive school climate impacts academic achievement in Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (ESP) is crucial, as the subject relies on a nurturing setting for effective learning. This study aims to explore how the school climate influences students' engagement with values education and academic performance, offering valuable insights for further enhancing the school's approach to student development and success.

Hence, this study at Silway-8 Elementary School aims to examine how school climate influences the relationship between social skills and academic achievement among Grade 5 pupils, particularly in Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (ESP). It seeks to identify specific social skills that impact academic performance. The research gap lies in the limited understanding of how school climate mediates this relationship, offering valuable insights for improving both social skills development and academic outcomes.

2. Literature Review

2.1 School Climate

School climate, alongside the other variables in the study, plays a vital role in shaping school performance. It is a fundamental element of a school's overall structure. School climate encompasses the nature of school life, including its values, norms, and the interactions among staff and students. It is characterized by the norms, values, teacher relationships, instructional practices, learning activities, and organizational structure within the school. Furthermore, school climate includes the standards, ethics, and expectations that help create a shared sense of community while promoting physical and psychological safety for all members (Mumuni *et al.*, 2020; Reardon, 2022; Thessin & Louis, 2019).

Moreover, school climate is a complex and multi-dimensional concept that reflects the overall personality and atmosphere of a school, including its norms, values, expectations, and the quality of relationships within the school community. It is often described as the character of school life, shaped by the social interactions among students, teachers, and staff, as well as the shared experiences and sense of belonging within the school. Research emphasizes the importance of the psychosocial environment and how positive inter-group relationships influence student learning, behavior, and the overall functioning of the school. Unlike administrative or physical factors, such as teacher salaries or school facilities, school climate focuses on creating a safe, supportive, and engaging environment that fosters both academic and personal growth for all members of the school community (Haynes & Warren, 2019; Vandelannote & Demanet, 2021).

Consequently, the school atmosphere strongly influences pupils' emotional and behavioral results. It impacts pupils' ability to adapt psychosocially, mental health outcomes, and self-esteem. Additionally, it affects the conduct of pupils, such as the prevalence of bullying and violence, juvenile delinquency, and drug and alcohol abuse. The impression of the school atmosphere has also been demonstrated to influence students' academic progress, which is particularly pertinent to this study. In addition, assessing school climate involves asking particular interest groups to report their perceptions. These groups' perceptions include parents, students, principals, and teachers. Perspective is important since various groups may perceive the school atmosphere differently. But frequently, just one group's perceptions—typically, students in most studies—have been evaluated (Colaianne *et al.*, 2020; Williams & Davis, 2021).

Certainly, the structure and purpose of the school climate are the same; each school has its characteristics. What is felt in a school's classrooms, corridors, and gardens and what differentiates it from other locations is the climate. The personality that distinguishes individuals from each other responds to the school climate. School climate is defined as an organizational characteristic that differentiates one school from the other and influences the behavior of its members. School climate is the character and quality of the school life, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning and leadership practices, and organizational structure (La Salle, 2020; Zhang *et al.*, 2021).

In organizations, events and procedures have a routine. A newly joined member creates a "cognitive map" to make sense of the new process around him. This map makes it more meaningful to see what he experiences, hears, and sees in the organization. With every new experience and feedback the member has in the organization; their cognitive maps are reorganized. Consequently, the individual is affected by the organizational climate. In addition to that, as a member of the organization, he also affects the climate. Therefore, it can be concluded that the climate works in a cycle within the organization (Mitchell, 2020; Padilla *et al.*, 2020).

Further, School climate is a key element of an effective school model, as only schools with a positive climate can maximize their effectiveness. Efforts to improve schools, including plans and reforms, are most successful when school climate is taken into account. A positive school climate benefits all members of the school community,

fostering not only students' academic growth but also their social and emotional well-being. Research has shown that students who perceive their school climate as positive are less likely to engage in risky or violent behaviors, receive fewer disciplinary actions, exhibit stronger trust, and report greater life satisfaction (Gordon & Fefer, 2019; Lumadi, 2019).

Hence, a healthy and open school climate has remarkable results for both organizational goals and the psychological satisfaction of the members. In schools with a positive climate, members of the organization feel that they are valuable and work in cooperation by devoting themselves to their work. In these schools, change is accomplished in a shorter period without resistance. Schools with high morale and motivation also have high academic performance. Positive school climate perceptions of teachers are associated with higher learners' achievement in reading and mathematics. In addition, it has been found that a positive school climate has a positive relationship with organizational motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment (Lacks & Watsons, 2018; Seitsinger, 2019).

In the same way, schools are dynamic and complex organizations centered on student learning, requiring the cooperation and collaboration of managers, teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders to function effectively. Within this framework, school climate is shaped by a variety of factors, including leadership styles, communication patterns, relationships among school members, and shared values and goals. Research highlights that the attitudes and behaviors of school managers play a critical role in influencing school climate, as their leadership sets the tone for interactions, decision-making, and overall school culture. Additionally, the involvement of teachers, students, and parents in creating a supportive and inclusive environment is equally vital, as it fosters trust, respect, and shared accountability. The interplay of these elements determines whether a school climate can positively impact academic achievement, social development, and the well-being of all members of the school community (Ertem *et al.*, 2021; Harris & Jones, 2018; Oliveira *et al.*, 2022).

Meanwhile, since different groups may have varied perspectives on the school climate, perspective is essential. However, the perspectives of only one group—typically, students in most studies—have frequently been assessed. Put another way, culture is what schools do, but climate is how you feel while it is happening. A healthy school climate improves teacher effectiveness, results in more protected learning time, develops a culture of school improvement, boosts teacher satisfaction, and generates a more professional workplace that promotes career longevity (Johnson, 2019; Medina *et al.*, 2020).

As has been noted, school atmosphere is one of three connectivity components with opposing viewpoints regarding school bonding, attachment, and engagement. If students' responses provide signs of school involvement, attachment, and bonding, then the nature of the school provides indicators of school climate. The quality of life of children and all school members can be improved by implementing social standards, positive beliefs and practices, and good sharing experiences among school members.

School climate is comprised of numerous aspects that are influenced by school-based activities, such as school characteristics, all school members' beliefs and perceptions of school safety and effectiveness (Bradshaw *et al.*, 2021; Dicke *et al.*, 2020).

2.1.1 Safety

Ensuring safety in schools is important for the well-being of all involved. Physical security measures play an essential role, including controlled access points and surveillance systems. Trained security personnel further enhance on-site safety. Emergency preparedness is vital, with regular drills and updated contact information. Having emergency supplies readily available adds an extra layer of precaution. Education is key, both in terms of safety awareness and conflict resolution skills. Anti-bullying programs contribute to fostering a respectful and inclusive environment. Crisis intervention involves counseling services for emotional challenges and a threat assessment process to address potential threats promptly (Gordon *et al.*, 2019).

Moreover, collaboration with law enforcement, including school resource officers and community policing, establishes a quick response system. Maintenance of infrastructure and secure technology systems contributes to overall safety. Health and wellness protocols, especially during disease outbreaks, are essential. Mental health support and resources are integral components of a safe and nurturing environment. Cybersecurity measures, such as internet safety education and data protection, are increasingly important in the digital age. The involvement of the entire school community, including students, staff, parents, and local authorities, is essential for effective safety measures. Regular assessments and updates to safety protocols ensure adaptability to evolving challenges, creating a comprehensive approach to a safe school environment (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018; Huang & Anyon, 2020).

On the other hand, school security is a complex undertaking aimed at creating a safe and conducive learning environment for students and staff. Physical security measures, such as controlled access points, surveillance systems, and the presence of trained security personnel, form the foundation. These measures are complemented by emergency preparedness strategies, including regular drills, updated contact information, and the provision of emergency supplies. Education plays a pivotal role, encompassing safety awareness, conflict resolution skills, and anti-bullying programs. Crisis intervention involves counseling services, a threat assessment process, and community support networks to address mental health concerns promptly (Anderson, 2019; Hollins & Peterson, 2021).

Additionally, collaborative efforts with law enforcement, community policing, and parental involvement contribute to a holistic security approach. Infrastructure safety, health and wellness protocols, and cybersecurity measures further enhance the overall safety net. Regular assessments and updates ensure adaptability to emerging challenges, ultimately fostering a secure and nurturing school environment. The effectiveness of school security also relies on proactive measures, such as fostering a culture of vigilance and open communication within the school community. Encouraging students and staff

to report any suspicious activities or concerns contributes to early detection and intervention. Security personnel, in addition to their surveillance role, can engage with students in a positive manner, promoting trust and collaboration. Consequently, technological advancements, like the implementation of access control systems and advanced surveillance technologies, enhance the precision and speed of security responses. Integrating these technologies with communication systems ensures a swift and coordinated reaction during emergencies (Amadi & Amadi, 2020; Konold *et al.*, 2018).

Furthermore, community partnerships with local law enforcement agencies create a collaborative network that extends beyond the school premises. This collaboration may involve joint training exercises, sharing of intelligence, and coordinated response plans, fostering a seamless integration of school security into broader community safety initiatives. In addressing the evolving landscape of potential threats, schools should also consider cybersecurity measures to safeguard sensitive information and ensure the secure use of technology within the educational environment. Implementing regular cybersecurity awareness programs for students and staff helps mitigate the risks associated with online activities (Akinde, 2022; Rena & Wanka, 2019).

2.1.2 Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning are closely connected processes that lie at the heart of the educational experience. Effective teaching goes beyond delivering information; it also involves creating an engaging and supportive learning environment. Skilled educators use a range of instructional methods to accommodate diverse learning styles and abilities, promoting a dynamic and inclusive classroom. Establishing positive teacher-student relationships is essential, as it strengthens communication, trust, and the overall learning experience. Additionally, integrating technology and interactive tools into teaching strategies can boost student engagement and deepen their understanding of the subject matter (Lindstrom-Johnson *et al.*, 2019).

On the flip side, successful learning requires active participation and critical thinking. Encouraging curiosity, self-directed inquiry, and problem-solving skills fosters a lifelong love of learning. A positive learning community values collaboration and respects individual perspectives. Assessments and feedback help gauge understanding and adjust teaching strategies. Recognizing diverse learning needs ensures every student reaches their full potential. The synergy between effective teaching methods and engaged learning forms the bedrock of a successful educational experience, equipping students with both knowledge and skills for lifelong learning and adaptability (Dogan & Kaya-Tosun, 2020; Mahoney *et al.*, 2020).

In terms of teaching, ongoing professional development is essential for educators to stay abreast of evolving pedagogical approaches, curriculum enhancements, and educational technologies. The ability to adapt teaching methods based on the latest research and best practices ensures that educators can meet the diverse needs of their students effectively. Furthermore, fostering a positive classroom culture involves promoting values such as respect, inclusivity, and open communication, creating an

environment where students feel safe to express their ideas and opinions (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018; Huang & Anyon, 2020).

For academic success, students should develop effective study habits and time management skills, embracing a growth mindset for resilience. Autonomy in learning, along with involvement in extracurricular activities, enhances motivation and holistic development, fostering leadership and social skills. Effective education involves collaboration among teachers, parents, and the community. Open communication with parents provides insights into students' development, and community partnerships offer real-world applications and diverse perspectives (Anderson, 2019; Hollins & Peterson, 2021).

2.1.3 Interpersonal Relationship

Interpersonal relationships are the intricate connections and interactions that individuals form with one another, encompassing a spectrum from casual acquaintanceships to deep, meaningful bonds. These relationships play a fundamental role in shaping the social fabric of communities and societies. Effective communication is at the heart of successful interpersonal relationships, involving not only the exchange of information but also active listening, empathy, and understanding. The ability to navigate conflicts constructively and express oneself authentically fosters trust and intimacy (Dogan & Kaya-Tosun, 2020; Mahoney *et al.*, 2020).

Beyond communication, shared experiences contribute significantly to the development and strengthening of interpersonal bonds. Whether in personal or professional settings, engaging in activities together, celebrating successes, and supporting one another during challenges deepens the sense of connection. Reciprocity, where both parties contribute to the relationship, is vital for its sustainability and mutual satisfaction. Cultural awareness and respect for diversity are essential aspects of navigating interpersonal relationships in our increasingly globalized world. Acknowledging and appreciating differences in backgrounds, perspectives, and values fosters an inclusive and harmonious environment (Lindstrom-Johnson *et al.*, 2019).

Furthermore, the digital age has transformed the landscape of interpersonal relationships, introducing virtual connections through social media and online platforms. While these tools offer new avenues for communication, maintaining the authenticity and depth of relationships in the digital realm poses unique challenges.

In essence, interpersonal relationships form the foundation of social cohesion and individual well-being. Nurturing these connections requires a combination of effective communication, shared experiences, reciprocity, cultural awareness, and adaptability to the evolving dynamics of our interconnected world. Whether in personal or professional spheres, the quality of our relationships profoundly influences the richness of our lives (Akinde, 2022; Rena & Wanka, 2019).

In addition to communication and shared experiences, trust plays a crucial role in establishing strong interpersonal relationships. It is built and maintained through consistency, reliability, and dependability, where individuals can rely on each other to

follow through on commitments and behave in ways that are predictable and supportive. Trust fosters a secure environment, enabling people to feel safe enough to be vulnerable, express their thoughts and emotions openly, and believe that their needs and concerns will be taken seriously and respected. This sense of trust strengthens bonds, improves collaboration, and enhances the overall quality of interactions, whether in personal or professional settings. Moreover, trust creates a sense of psychological safety, which is essential for effective communication, problem-solving, and the nurturing of positive, long-lasting relationships (Bradshaw *et al.*, 2021; Dicke *et al.*, 2020).

With this in mind, effective conflict resolution skills are essential for managing disagreements in relationships. Addressing conflicts constructively, listening to different perspectives, and finding mutually satisfactory resolutions enhance relationship resilience. Additionally, incorporating humor and appreciating lighthearted moments contributes to a positive connection. Cultivating emotional intelligence, including self-awareness, emotional management, and empathy, further improves the quality of interpersonal interactions, fostering deeper connections and a sense of mutual understanding (Johnson, 2019; Medina *et al.*, 2020).

2.1.4 Institutional Environment

It includes the context, culture, and structures of an organization, shaping interactions through policies, norms, and values. It profoundly affects the institution's functioning, decision-making, and member experiences. The core consists of guiding principles and values defining the mission and vision, setting the institution's identity and approach to goals. A robust institutional culture aligns member actions with the mission, fostering shared purpose and unity. Overall, the institutional environment is integral in shaping the organization's dynamics and success (Ertem *et al.*, 2021; Harris & Jones, 2018; Oliveira *et al.*, 2022).

Relatively, the policies and procedures established within the institutional framework serve as a regulatory mechanism, providing guidelines for organizational behavior, decision-making, and compliance. Well-defined policies contribute to a structured and transparent environment, ensuring consistency and fairness in various processes. Leadership within the institutional environment plays a pivotal role in shaping its culture and direction. Effective leaders not only articulate and embody the organization's values but also inspire and guide members toward achieving common objectives. The leadership style, communication strategies, and decision-making processes employed by those in authoritative positions significantly impact the overall dynamics of the institutional setting (Lacks & Watsons, 2018; Seitsinger, 2019).

Consequently, collaboration and communication are essential elements within the institutional environment. Open lines of communication facilitate the exchange of ideas, information, and feedback, fostering a more inclusive and engaged community. Collaboration among different departments or units encourages a holistic approach to problem-solving and goal attainment. Diversity and inclusivity within the institutional environment contribute to a rich and dynamic community. Embracing diverse

perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences enhances creativity, innovation, and overall organizational resilience. Inclusivity ensures that all members feel valued, respected, and have equal opportunities to contribute to the institution's success (Gordon & Fefer, 2019; Lumadi, 2019).

Additionally, adaptability to change is another key aspect of the institutional environment. Institutions that can respond effectively to external challenges or evolving internal needs demonstrate resilience and long-term sustainability. This adaptability often requires a willingness to reassess policies, update practices, and embrace innovation. Financial stewardship is a critical component of the institutional environment, as it directly influences an organization's capacity to fulfill its mission. Sound financial management practices, budgeting, and resource allocation contribute to the institution's stability and long-term viability. Transparency in financial operations builds trust among stakeholders and ensures accountability in the use of resources (Anderson, 2019; Hollins & Peterson, 2021).

Perhaps, strategic planning and goal-setting are integral to the institutional environment, providing a roadmap for the organization's future. Institutions that engage in thoughtful strategic planning can align their activities with long-term objectives, identify potential challenges, and seize opportunities for growth and improvement. Quality assurance and accreditation processes are essential in maintaining and enhancing the credibility of an institution. Adherence to recognized standards and continuous efforts to meet or exceed benchmarks demonstrate a commitment to excellence in education, services, or other institutional objectives (La Salle, 2020; Zhang *et al.*, 2021).

2.1.6 Staff

School staff consisting of a range of professionals, are the cornerstone of an educational institution. Teachers take the lead in delivering lessons, promoting learning, and guiding students, playing a crucial role in academic achievement. Administrators, such as principals and vice-principals, offer leadership by managing school operations and ensuring the smooth implementation of policies. Support staff, including administrative assistants and clerks, provide vital administrative support, handling records and aiding communication. Counselors contribute by offering guidance on academic, personal, and social matters, fostering the overall well-being of students (Mitchell, 2020; Padilla *et al.*, 2020).

Moreover, librarians, custodians, and cafeteria staff play essential roles in creating a conducive environment for learning, managing resources, and ensuring a clean and nourishing space. Special education staff tailor's instruction to meet diverse learning needs, while school nurses attend to students' health. The collaborative efforts of technology support staff, maintenance personnel, and other roles contribute to a holistic educational experience, where each staff member's expertise and dedication collectively shape a positive and enriching environment for students. Effective communication and collaboration among these diverse roles are essential for the school's overall success and

the holistic development of its students (Haynes & Warren, 2019; Vandelannote & Demanet, 2021).

Additionally, the presence of special education staff, including special education teachers and aides, underscores the commitment to inclusivity and individualized learning. These professionals provide targeted support to students with diverse learning needs, ensuring that every individual receives an education tailored to their abilities. School librarians not only manage resources but also play a pivotal role in fostering a love for reading and research, contributing to students' intellectual development. Moreover, technology support staff are increasingly vital in the digital age, providing technical expertise to integrate technology into the learning process and assisting both educators and students in navigating the digital landscape (Colaianne *et al.*, 2020; Williams & Davis, 2021).

In addition, the teamwork among all school staff is important for creating a complete educational experience. From the helpful guidance of counselors to the care provided by cafeteria and custodial staff, every role contributes to the well-being of the school community. The dedication of teachers and administrators, the skills of support staff, and the specialized help from other professionals all come together to create an environment that not only teaches academic subjects but also promotes values, encourages personal growth, and prepares students for the real world beyond the classroom. The combined efforts of these individuals are what make a school truly thrive (Mumuni *et al.*, 2020; Reardon, 2022; Thessin & Louis, 2019).

2.1.7 Social Skills

Social skills are essential behaviors for all children, considered part of a broader concept called social competence. They are defined as effective responses within a specific situation that maximize positive outcomes for the individual. Social skills training groups provide a facilitated and controlled environment for children to learn and apply these skills to their daily lives. By drawing on their symbolic capabilities, children can derive meaning, construct guides for action, solve problems cognitively, engage in reflective thought, and communicate effectively with others within this structured environment. Overall, social skills contribute to children's social competence and their ability to navigate various interpersonal situations (Li *et al.*, 2021; Vankoya, 2018).

Considering that social skills training programs have been effective in helping children improve how they interact with others. These programs give children the chance to practice and model positive behaviors. Research has shown that social skills training can improve abilities like academic performance, self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-control. Social skills are learned behaviors that help people connect with others in a positive way and avoid inappropriate reactions. Examples include sharing, helping, giving compliments, and using good manners, all of which help build strong relationships. Mastering these skills is important for a child's future relationships with both peers and adults (Seymour, 2019; Shirin, 2020; Suryani *et al.*, 2021).

Furthermore, behavior differs based on the external environment in which they were brought up. Not surprisingly, many aspects of their personalities and behavior differ sharply. Humans use social standards to judge if a behavior is acceptable and social control to manage it. According to sociology, conduct is the most fundamental human action and has no purpose because it is not intended for others. However, it can play a part in diagnosing autism spectrum disorders. According to moral values, human behavior may also depend upon the common, usual, unusual, acceptable, or unacceptable behavior of others (Ajzen, 2020; Yuner & Burgaz, 2019).

It is hypothesized that the human brain downloads the environment randomly to comprehend and take in the surroundings, regardless of whether they are pleasant or unpleasant. Children who feel in control of their environments are more likely to experience feelings of self-worth, independence, and confidence, all of which significantly impact the development of children's personalities and ultimately determine how successful and content they will be in their relationships and life as a whole (Adorno, 2021; Tabb, 2020).

2.1.8 Approaches to Learning

It encompasses a variety of strategies and mindsets that individuals employ to acquire and process information effectively. A key approach involves fostering a growth mindset, where individuals believe in the potential for improvement through effort and perseverance. Embracing challenges, learning from mistakes, and viewing feedback as a constructive tool contribute to a dynamic and resilient approach to learning (Mitchell, 2020; Padilla *et al.*, 2020).

Additionally, metacognitive strategies, including goal-setting, planning, and self-reflection, improve the ability to monitor and regulate one's learning. Collaborative learning, emphasizing teamwork and shared problem-solving, promotes diverse perspectives and enhances understanding. Inquiry-based learning, driven by curiosity and critical questioning, encourages active engagement and deeper comprehension. Technological integration enhances learning through interactive and adaptive environments. A comprehensive learning approach involves combining these strategies, adapting to individual preferences and contexts, recognizing learning as a lifelong, iterative process extending beyond formal education (La Salle, 2020; Zhang *et al.*, 2021).

2.1.9 Self-Control

Is a personal development and success, encompassing the ability to regulate one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. It is the capacity to resist impulsive reactions and stay focused on long-term goals, even in the face of temptations or distractions. Developing self-control requires a combination of awareness, mindfulness, and intentional decision-making. This skill empowers individuals to make rational choices, manage stress effectively, and maintain a balanced and disciplined life. Whether in the realm of work, relationships, or personal habits, self-control plays an essential role in fostering resilience, perseverance, and overall well-being. Cultivating self-control involves practicing

patience, setting realistic goals, and creating habits that align with one's values. Ultimately, individuals with strong self-control are better equipped to navigate life's challenges, make sound decisions, and achieve sustainable success (Mumuni *et al.*, 2020; Reardon, 2022; Thessin & Louis, 2019).

Provided that, self-control extends beyond the mere suppression of impulses; it involves the conscious allocation of mental and emotional resources toward constructive and goal-oriented endeavors. The ability to delay gratification is a hallmark of self-control, enabling individuals to withstand immediate pleasures for the sake of more substantial, long-term rewards. This skill proves invaluable in various aspects of life, from managing finances and maintaining a healthy lifestyle to excelling in academic or professional pursuits (Colaianne *et al.*, 2020; Williams & Davis, 2021).

Additionally, self-control is closely tied to emotional intelligence, enabling thoughtful responses rather than impulsive reactions to challenges. It involves understanding emotions, recognizing triggers, and employing strategies for composed navigation of complex feelings. This emotional regulation enhances personal relationships and fosters positivity in both professional and personal spheres. Developing self-control also entails cultivating a growth mindset, encouraging individuals to see setbacks as opportunities for learning and improvement. Those with strong self-control, maintaining a growth-oriented perspective, can persevere in adversity and continuously strive for personal and professional growth (Haynes & Warren, 2019; Vandelannote & Demanet, 2021).

2.1.10 Interpersonal Skills

It often referred to as people or social skills, and are essential attributes that enable individuals to effectively communicate and interact with others. These skills encompass a wide range of abilities, including effective communication, active listening, empathy, teamwork, and conflict resolution. A person with strong interpersonal skills can navigate social situations with ease, build positive relationships, and collaborate efficiently in both personal and professional settings. Effective communication involves not only expressing oneself clearly but also being attentive to others' perspectives and responding appropriately (Johnson, 2019; Medina *et al.*, 2020).

Moreover, active listening, an essential component of interpersonal skills, involves giving full attention to the speaker, understanding their message, and providing thoughtful responses. Empathy, the ability to understand and share others' feelings, fosters deeper connections and mutual understanding. Teamwork skills are essential for achieving common goals, while conflict resolution skills help manage and resolve disagreements in a constructive manner. Developing and honing these interpersonal skills is vital for success in various aspects of life, as they contribute to building strong connections, fostering a positive work environment, and enhancing overall personal growth and development (Ertem *et al.*, 2021; Harris & Jones, 2018; Oliveira *et al.*, 2022).

Additionally, adaptability is a key aspect of interpersonal skills, as it involves being flexible and open to different perspectives and approaches. Being able to adjust

one's communication style to suit different personalities and situations enhances the effectiveness of interactions. Moreover, interpersonal skills also encompass cultural competence, which involves understanding and appreciating diversity in a globalized world. Individuals with strong interpersonal skills are often culturally sensitive, respecting and valuing differences in background, beliefs, and customs. Building rapport is another critical facet of interpersonal skills, as it involves creating a positive connection with others. This can be achieved through genuine interest, friendliness, and a willingness to connect on a personal level (Bradshaw *et al.*, 2021; Dicke *et al.*, 2020).

Networking, both personally and professionally, depends on strong interpersonal skills. Being able to start and maintain meaningful relationships with different people is important for personal growth, career success, and overall achievement. A key part of good interpersonal skills is empowering others. Leaders and team members with these skills motivate and inspire those around them, creating a positive and supportive atmosphere. Encouraging others' development, offering helpful feedback, and recognizing accomplishments are all ways interpersonal skills help build positive social connections (Lacks & Watsons, 2018; Seitsinger, 2019).

In addition, interpersonal skills, vital for effective communication and collaboration, go beyond clear articulation to include active listening, empathy, and adaptability. Effective communicators not only express ideas clearly but also engage in active listening, showing genuine interest in others. Empathy, a key aspect, enhances understanding by recognizing and sharing others' feelings. Adaptability allows individuals to adjust communication styles to diverse situations and personalities. Interpersonal skills also involve cultural competence, fostering diversity appreciation for inclusive environments. Whether in personal or professional settings, mastering these skills is essential for building rapport, resolving conflicts constructively, and fostering collaborative and empowering social dynamics (Gordon & Fefer, 2019; Lumadi, 2019)

2.1.11 Externalizing Problem Behavior

It refers to the manifestation of difficulties or challenges in an individual's behavior that are expressed outwardly and observable by others. Unlike internalizing problems, which may involve internal struggles such as anxiety or depression, externalizing behaviors are more evident and can include actions like aggression, defiance, or impulsivity. These behaviors often present challenges in various contexts, such as at home, in school, or within the community. Externalizing problems can be rooted in a combination of genetic, environmental, and social factors, making it essential to approach them with a comprehensive understanding (Mumuni *et al.*, 2020; Reardon, 2022; Thessin & Louis, 2019).

Accordingly, children or individuals who exhibit externalizing behaviors may face obstacles in forming positive relationships, achieving academic success, and navigating social environments. Identifying and addressing these behaviors early on is vital for intervention and support. Effective strategies involve not only addressing the observable behaviors but also exploring and understanding the underlying causes, which could

range from familial stressors to neurodevelopmental factors. Interventions often include a combination of behavioral therapy, counseling, and support from educators and caregivers to help individuals develop coping mechanisms, emotional regulation, and more adaptive social skills (Haynes & Warren, 2019; Vandelannote & Demanet, 2021).

Consequently, externalizing problem behavior can manifest in various ways, including conduct disorders, oppositional defiant behavior, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity issues. It is essential to recognize that these behaviors often serve as outward expressions of deeper emotional struggles or unmet needs. For children and adolescents, externalizing problems may be exacerbated by factors such as inconsistent parenting, exposure to trauma, or difficulties in school. Understanding the environmental and systemic factors contributing to these behaviors is essential in formulating effective intervention strategies (Colaianne *et al.*, 2020; Williams & Davis, 2021).

In addition, in educational settings, teachers play a pivotal role in recognizing and addressing externalizing behaviors. Implementing positive behavior support systems, creating structured and consistent environments, and collaborating with mental health professionals can contribute to a more comprehensive approach to managing externalizing problems. Additionally, involving families in the intervention process is essential, as a collaborative effort between home and school environments enhances the likelihood of positive outcomes. Furthermore, addressing externalizing behaviors requires a shift in perspective from punitive measures to therapeutic interventions. Punishment alone may not address the root causes of the behavior, and a focus on skill-building, emotional regulation, and social-emotional learning becomes imperative (Bradshaw *et al.*, 2021; Dicke *et al.*, 2020).

2.1.12 Internalizing Problem Behavior

It involves internal challenges affecting mental and emotional well-being, manifesting as symptoms like anxiety and depression. Unlike externalizing behaviors, these struggles are directed inward and may result from stressors or emotional difficulties. Internalizing behaviors can hinder the expression of emotions, impacting social connections for both children and adults. These issues also adversely affect academic performance, influencing concentration and motivation. Recognizing and addressing internalizing behaviors is essential for promoting mental health and overall well-being (Ertem *et al.*, 2021; Harris & Jones, 2018; Oliveira *et al.*, 2022).

Additionally, interventions for internalizing problems often involve a combination of therapeutic approaches, counseling, and support from mental health professionals. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is commonly used to help individuals recognize and modify negative thought patterns and behaviors. Creating a supportive and understanding environment, both at home and in educational settings, is essential for individuals dealing with internalizing issues. Educators and caregivers play a critical role in recognizing signs of internalizing problems and providing appropriate support. Building a trusting relationship and open communication channels can encourage

individuals to express their feelings and seek help (Amadi & Amadi, 2020; Konold *et al.*, 2018).

Similarly, internalizing problem behavior varies across age groups. In children, it may appear as separation anxiety, social withdrawal, or declining academic performance. Adolescents might exhibit self-harm, eating disorders, or heightened sensitivity to social rejection. Adults facing internalizing challenges may experience persistent sadness, low self-esteem, or difficulties in maintaining relationships. Recognizing environmental factors, such as family dynamics and peer relationships, is essential in addressing internalizing behaviors. Adverse childhood experiences, trauma, and chronic stress can contribute to the development and worsening of internalizing problems (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018; Huang & Anyon, 2020).

Hence, internalizing problem behavior encompasses a broad spectrum of emotional and mental health difficulties that manifest internally. Recognizing the diversity of symptoms across age groups and understanding the impact of environmental factors are essential for effective intervention. By fostering supportive environments, implementing targeted interventions, and promoting mental health awareness, we can better address internalizing behaviors and enhance the overall well-being of individuals facing these challenges (Haynes & Warren, 2019; Vandelannote & Demanet, 2021).

2.2 Academic Achievements

When children feel control over their environments, they are more likely to feel self-worth, confidence, and independence. These feelings are essential for a child's personality development and indicate whether they will be successful and happy in their relationships and life. Academic achievement is commonly measured with examinations that assess important procedural knowledge, such as skills, and declarative knowledge, such as facts that students have learned (Ritchie, 2018; Wang *et al.*, 2019).

Whereas academic achievement, used interchangeably with academic performance, is indispensable in every formal educational institution. It relates to academic human activities carried out in a formal educational setting. Academic achievement is a measurable index that depicts a student 's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in an educational setting. Testing, which has played a key part in educational systems everywhere and will continue to do so, is used to determine students' academic success (Ayeni & Amanekwe, 2018; Mishra, 2020).

Further, evaluation of educational achievement is indispensable for effective formal and even non-formal education. The Joint Committee of the American Association of School Administrators, the Joint Committee on Testing Practices, and the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation in the United States have reiterated that teaching without testing to ascertain the learners 'academic achievement is unthinkable. This viewpoint is shared by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. The procedure for gaining access to and exploiting knowledge structures, as well as a variety of affective, motivating, and stylistic factors that affect the

final responses, are all included in academic achievement, which is typically measured with tests (Adnan *et al.*, 2022; Auru & Niigwum, 2020; Wilson, 2021).

On top of that, academic achievement significantly impacts various aspects of daily life, including work, relationships, and leisure. Demographic and psychological factors play a substantial role in academic success. Studies on young students' academic achievement show inconsistent findings regarding the influence of creativity, age, and gender. Recognizing multiple intelligences (MI) is essential for teachers, as it helps better prepare students for future challenges, makes the curriculum accessible to all, and enhances engagement and excitement in the learning process (Adnan *et al.*, 2022; Bhagat *et al.*, 2019).

Indeed, the academic world is one of the best means to prove such ideas. The results of the studies show the importance of bearing in mind emotional skills, not only in the personal aspect but in the academic world. EI levels in university students predicted their academic performance at the end of the school year, a link found in many investigations. A significant correlation exists between EI and academic achievement, making the latter EI, the trait that predicts a person's academic performance at a larger scale, instead of a standard achievement survey (Ayele *et al.*, 2022; Chopel & Norbu, 2021).

On the other hand, aggression in schools hurts academic achievement in Latin America. They affirmed that students who have been physically or verbally abused perform less. Bullying is a serious problem throughout Latin America. They showed that kids who experience aggressiveness from their classmates do worse in reading and arithmetic than those who do not, and that students who attend classes where there is more physical or verbal abuse perform worse than those who attend classes with less abuse. Academic success is significantly impacted by bullying in school. Around 10% to 15% of teenagers experience bullying twice or more each month (Gaias *et al.*, 2022; Menin *et al.*, 2021).

Hence, bullying negatively impacts academic achievement by causing victims to lose interest in learning and experience a decline in grades due to distractions. It involves an imbalance of power within peer groups and is a form of aggression. A study by Pulido with 1,186 respondents establishes a reciprocal relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) scores and academic performance. These findings highlight the need to incorporate emotional intelligence education in academia to prepare students for everyday life (Byers *et al.*, 2021; Raza *et al.*, 2020).

2.3 Correlation between Social Skills and Academic Achievement

A child having good social skills can perform better in academic achievement in school, behave positively, and establish and maintain relationships with others effectively. As he can seek the cooperation of others, he can handle every situation confidently. A child develops such qualities of behavior by observing people and the environment around them. It is easy for individuals with adequate social skills to establish and maintain relationships. Further, social skills facilitate interaction and communication with the

society, i.e., the people of the society, through appropriate language, eye contact, and relevant questions. Social skills are important in establishing and maintaining good relationships with other people and obeying social rules (Dogan & Kaya- Tosun, 2020; Mahoney *et al.*, 2020).

Primarily, social skills are the components of behavior that helps to adapt across a variety of social settings and enable us to get adjusted to society. The abilities that enable us to establish and sustain healthy social connections, support peer acceptance and a successful school adjustment, and successfully navigate social situations are known as social skills. Good social skills are very important for proper functioning in life. These skills help us to know how to make good decisions in life, what to say to others, how to ask others for help, and how to maintain good relationships in society. Social Skills enable individuals to behave in diverse situations (Smolkowski *et al.*, 2022).

Additionally, an individual's possession of good social skills influences academic performance, participation in co-curricular activities, social and family relationships, and behavior. Children who believe they control their surroundings are more likely to experience self-worth, confidence, and independence, shaping their personality development and predicting future success and contentment in relationships and life. Researchers have studied the impact of social skills on academic achievement and school adjustment. Additionally, behavior problems during the preschool years are identified as significant predictors of continued behavior problems, poor peer standing, and academic difficulties during kindergarten (Giordano *et al.*, 2021; Synder-Renfro, 2019).

Furthermore, children without adequate social skills risk facing peer rejection, behavior problems, and poor academic achievement. Interpersonal skills are essential for peer acceptability and social integration throughout infancy and adolescence. Students who participated in social and emotional learning of the SEL program improved grades and standardized tests. Based on the review of the research mentioned above, it can be concluded that Social Skills play an important role in academic achievement and adjustment in school among children (Mahoney *et al.*, 2018; Wolchik *et al.*, 2021).

2.4 Correlation between Social Skills and School Climate

A positive school climate and the development of social, emotional, and academic competencies contribute to public health. The social environment influences learning by stimulating the mind and systematically rewarding learning. A positive school climate correlates with lower rates of drug use and fewer self-reports of mental health issues among high school students. A positive school atmosphere in early adolescence predicts better psychological well-being, emphasizing the importance of fostering a positive school environment for overall public health outcomes (Joyce, 2019; Parr *et al.*, 2020).

Positive school climate is associated with reduced student absenteeism and lower suspension rates, particularly in middle and high schools. Research highlights the importance of a positive school environment in effective risk prevention. Social skills play a vital role in fostering care for others, responsible decision-making, and effective handling of challenging situations. Good social skills enable a child to relate well with

peers and maintain positive relationships with teachers, contributing to effective coping in social and school environments. The development of social skills is considered a essential foundation for future academic success and career-related abilities, as they encourage positive interactions and help avoid negative interactions with others (Brasof & Peterson, 2018; Jadoon *et al.*, 2020).

Moreover, social skills are not the same thing as behavior. Rather, they are components of behavior that help an individual understand and adapt across various social settings. One way to define social skills is as a collection of abilities that help someone establish and maintain healthy social interactions, b) help them fit in with their peers and transition well to school, and c) help them deal with the broader social environment. Social skills can also be defined within social and emotional learning — recognizing and managing our emotions, growing in caring and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, and making positive decisions (Frey *et al.*, 2019; Weissberg, 2019).

2.5 Correlation between School Climate and Academic Achievements

The concept of school atmosphere is complex. It has been referred to as the school's unspoken character and environment, encompassing its standards, beliefs, and goals. The "quality and character of school life" has also been used to characterize it. The school atmosphere strongly influences pupils' emotional and behavioral results. It influences pupils' ability to adapt psychosocially, mental health results, and sense of self (Colaianne *et al.*, 2020; Hubers, 2020; Moss & Petrie, 2019).

Further, school climate has long interested researchers because of its importance in school. However, due to the mass of research, the multitude of variables, methodologies, theories, and models, school climate is not easily defined. School climate is the overall feelings students and staff have about the school environment over time. These feelings concern how comfortable each individual feels, how their learning or teaching is supported, and how safe they feel in school. The authors write that school climate reflects the school environment (Anderson, 2019; Hollins & Peterson, 2021).

Moreover, fifteen key elements of a positive and supportive school climate were identified, with several overlapping factors influencing the overall school environment. These include achievement motivation, collaborative decision-making, equity and fairness, the general atmosphere of the school, order and discipline, parent involvement, school-community relations, staff commitment to student learning, staff expectations, leadership, school facilities, resource sharing, caring and sensitivity, student interpersonal relationships, and student-teacher relationships. Middle school students' perceptions of school climate often reflect informal aspects of school life, such as peer attitudes toward school, interactions with teachers, and formal disciplinary policies. Research indicates that while school climate and classroom climate are distinct constructs, they share overlapping characteristics (Lindstrom-Johnson *et al.*, 2019).

On the same vein, a positive school climate positively affects students and, conversely, a negative school climate harms students. Improvements in student conduct

and academic success, learning, failure, delinquency, absenteeism, suspension, and low motivation have all been related to school atmosphere. Positive student behaviors and attitudes would be supported by comfortable and supporting sentiments, whereas learning and behavior would be negatively impacted by uncomfortable and unsupportive feelings such as worry, fear, frustration, and loneliness (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018; Huang & Anyon, 2020).

In view of, academic accomplishment is one of the main considerations for recruiting managers, especially for recent graduates. Thus, to get high marks and prepare for future employment chances while also meeting the employer's requirements, students must exert the most effort in their academic endeavors. Teachers' attribute has a significant relationship with students' academic performance. Such attributes include teachers' knowledge of the subject matter, communication ability, emotional stability, good human relationships, and interest in the job (Amadi & Amadi, 2020; Konold *et al.*, 2018).

For this reason, this supports the present study's findings, which show that teacher-related factors were deemed the most impactful category of factors that impact student nurses' academic performance. One requirement for students to perform well on any exam is that their professors be familiar with them and thoroughly understand their level of physical, intellectual, and psychological preparation. Higher education performance depends upon the academic performance of graduate students. Measuring students' previous educational outcomes is the most important indicator of students' future achievement; this means that the higher the appearance, the better the student's academic performance in future endeavors (Akinde, 2022; Rena & Wanka, 2019).

3. Methodology

This chapter presents and discusses the methods and procedures used in the conduct of the study. It will include the research design, locale of the study, research respondents, data gathering procedure, research instrument and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design
This study employs a quantitative, non-experimental design utilizing a correlational technique to collect data, thoughts, facts, and information relevant to the subject. It adopts a descriptive-correlation research design, where data is gathered without applying adjustments or treatments (Gehle, 2013), and neither the environment nor the factors are controlled. The design explains and analyzes existing conditions, identifies relationships between variables, and determines what is present or absent (Calderon, 2006; Calmorin, 2007). As a fact-finding study, it examines the traits, behaviors, and experiences of the respondents (Calmorin, 2007).

Moreover, the study describes the level of social skills, assesses academic achievement, and evaluates the school climate among Grade V pupils in Silway-8 Elementary School, Division of South Cotabato. Furthermore, it is correlational as it seeks

to determine the relationships among social skills, academic achievement, and school climate. To deepen the analysis, mediating analysis is incorporated to explore whether and how school climate mediates the relationship between social skills and academic achievement. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the variables' interactions, uncovering indirect relationships and contributing to a more nuanced interpretation of factors affecting pupils' academic achievement.

Hence, this analysis is correlational since it used the survey questionnaire to collect the primary data and looked at the connections between factors like social skills and academic accomplishment, social skills and school climate, and school environment and academic achievement. The study is interested in determining the connection between social skills and academic accomplishment, social skills and school climate, and academic achievement and school climate.

3.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted at Silway-8 Elementary School, located in Silway 8, Polomolok, South Cotabato. The school is widely recognized for its commitment to academic excellence and fostering holistic development among its students. With a strong emphasis on both cognitive and socio-emotional growth, the school has cultivated an environment where students can thrive academically while developing important life skills. The dedicated faculty plays a significant role in creating an engaging and supportive learning environment, ensuring that students not only excel in their studies but also develop the necessary skills to navigate the challenges of the future.

Moreover, Silway-8 Elementary School is equipped with modern facilities that support an interactive and collaborative approach to learning. The school encourages close cooperation between students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders, promoting a sense of community and shared responsibility in the educational process. This collaborative atmosphere helps nurture well-rounded individuals and future leaders, reinforcing the school's role in advancing education in the region. Through its comprehensive approach, Silway-8 Elementary School is committed to empowering students and contributing positively to the educational landscape of Polomolok, South Cotabato.

Hence, the school takes pride in its present accomplishments such as having received awards on best Solid Waste Management (SWM) School Implementer in Polomolok in Polomolok South District, Municipality of Polomolok, and the Province of South Cotabato, School-Based Management (SBM) level 3 in the regional level, and other academic pursuits like strengthening the learners' reading skills through the latest SHARP program. Currently, the school is headed by its principal with 5 faculties and 1,576 learners. The school is known for its advocacies that make the school one of the child-friendly schools in the town, educational advocacies, and its, famous tagline "Padayon nga Pagbasa, Ginikanan Masaligan Ka". It also actively disseminates information and peer counseling on mental health awareness.

Hence, the school prioritizes the holistic development of its learners, stakeholders, and faculty by fostering a balanced approach to education that addresses academic, social, emotional, and physical growth. Through collaborative efforts, it aims to create an inclusive environment that supports the diverse needs of students while encouraging professional development for teachers and active engagement with the community.

3.3 Population and Sample

The subject respondents of this study were the 122 overall grade V Elementary Learners. They represented the grade V population of Silway -8 Elementary School, Polomolok 5 district, Division of South Cotabato. These pupils ranged from 10-11 years of age.

The study applied census or total enumeration as it sought to gather comprehensive data from all Grade 5 learners in the target population. The table below shows the respondents of the study.

The **inclusion criteria** for this study required respondents to be Grade 5 learners enrolled at Silway-8 Elementary School, Polomolok 5 District, Division of South Cotabato, during the specified school year. Learners had to be within the age range of 10–11 years at the time of the study and actively attending classes. Participation was also contingent upon obtaining written consent from a parent or guardian, and learners needed to be available and willing to participate in all phases of the study, including pre-tests, interventions, and post-tests.

The **exclusion criteria** disqualified learners who were younger than 10 or older than 11 years, had transferred schools, or exhibited irregular attendance during the study period. Learners with medical, developmental, or behavioral conditions that could hinder their participation in the intervention or data collection process were also excluded. Additionally, learners whose parents or guardians did not provide written consent or who themselves did not assent to participate were not included in the study.

Withdrawal criteria allowed respondents or their parents/guardians to voluntarily withdraw consent at any time during the study. Learners could also be withdrawn due to non-compliance with significant aspects of the study, such as missing the pre-test, intervention, or post-test sessions. Respondents whose health or safety concerns posed risks to themselves or the study's integrity were withdrawn, as were learners who experienced a change in enrollment status, such as transferring out of Silway-8 Elementary School during the research period. These criteria ensured that the study adhered to ethical standards while maintaining its validity and reliability.

3.4 Research Instruments

There were 2 sets of questionnaires used in this study. The researcher adapted the constructed Questionnaire from the study of Gresham and Elliot (1990) to describe the level of social skills of the Silway-8 Elementary School learners.

3.4.1 Questionnaire for Social Skills of Grade 5 Learners

A questionnaire was used to determine the extent of the school climate of grade 5 learners. It was adapted from the study by Gresham and Elliot (1990). There were 3 indicators in this questionnaire. Safety consisted of 5 statements, teaching and learning consisted of 6 statements, and the environment consisted of 5 statements.

The five-point scale was used for the research variables. Santos (2007) claims that the Likert Scale asks respondents to check or leave blank certain categories related to an attitude, an object, and a stimulus. Using average calculations or, more broadly, any mathematical operations to consider the numbers produced from a rating scale as measures is usual practice.

The five orderable gradations to assess the level of social skills with their respective range of means and descriptions were as follows:

Range of Means	Descriptive Level	Interpretation
4.20-5.00	Strongly Agree	This means that the level of social skills is manifested at all times.
3.40-4.19	Agree	This means that the level of social skills is manifested most of the time.
2.60-3.39	Moderately Agree	This means that the level of social skills is manifested occasionally.
1.80-2.59	Disagree	This means that the level of social skills is manifested in a few instances.
1.00-1.79	Strongly Disagree	This means that the level of social skills is not manifested at all.

3.4.2 Questionnaire for School Climate of Grade 5 Learners

A researcher-made questionnaire was used to determine the level of social skills of grade 5 learners. It was adapted from the study by Gresham and Elliot (1990). It was composed of 5 indicators: the approaches to learning, self-control, interpersonal skills, externalizing problems in behavior, and internalizing problems in behavior. Approaches to learning were composed of 7 statements, self-control was composed of 5 statements, interpersonal skills consisted of 5 statements, externalizing problems on behavior consisted of 6 statements, and internalizing problems on behavior consisted of 5 statements.

The five-point scale was used for the research variables. Santos (2007) claims that the Likert Scale asks respondents to check or leave blank certain categories related to an attitude, an object, and a stimulus. Using average calculations or, more broadly, any mathematical operations to consider the numbers produced from a rating scale as measures is usual practice.

The five orderable gradations to assess the extent of school climate with their respective range of means and descriptions were as follows:

Range of Means	Descriptive Level	Interpretation
4.20-5.00	Always	This means that the extent of school climate is engaging at all times.
3.40-4.19	Often	This means that the extent of school climate is engaging most of the time.
2.60-3.39	Sometimes	This means that the extent of school climate is engaging occasionally.
1.80-2.59	Rarely	This means that the extent of school climate is engaging in a few instances.
1.00-1.79	Never	This means that the extent of school climate could be more engaging.

Experts on questionnaire construction validated the two sets of questionnaires. The experts' comments were properly incorporated into the instrument's finalization. With the assistance of knowledgeable validators, the questionnaires were created in a very detailed format so that the respondents would feel at ease and comfortable answering each question and comprehending the study's goal.

3.5 Data Collection
The following procedures were followed in gathering the data:

In conducting the study, the researcher followed a structured data collection process to ensure reliability and ethical standards. The researcher first developed a research questionnaire tailored to measure the variables of school social skills, academic achievement, and school climate, which was validated by professionals to ensure its relevance and accuracy. The researcher then sought approval from the Ethics and Review Committee and the Graduate School, followed by obtaining permission from the Schools Division Office of South Cotabato to conduct the study in the schools. These steps ensured the research adhered to ethical guidelines, particularly when working with young learners in the Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao subject.

Once authorization was granted, the researcher prepared copies of the questionnaire according to the expected number of respondents and explained the Informed Consent Form (ICF) to the respondents. After providing sufficient time for completion, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the Grade 5 learners. Upon collection, the researcher ensured that all items were properly answered, which was crucial for ensuring the integrity of the data. This methodical approach allowed for the accurate collection of data, enabling the researcher to examine how school climate influences the relationship between social skills and academic achievement, offering insights into how these factors interact within the context of Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao.

3.6 Statistical Tools
The following statistical tools were used to answer the study's specific problems.

3.6.1 Mean

It was used to determine the extent of school climate, level of social skills, and academic achievement of Grade 5 learners.

3.6.2 Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation

The tool was used to determine whether there is a significant relationship between social skills and academic achievement, social skills and school climate, and school climate and academic achievement.

3.6.3 Path Analysis

Path Analysis was employed to show the strength of the causal correlations between the variable's resilience, adaptive behavior, and job performance, as well as the mediation effect of adaptive behavior on the relationship between resilience and job performance of public school teachers, thereby achieving objective 5 of the study.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

Significant ethical issue plays a vital role in gathering the data. The ethical considerations in this research were concerned with the proper conduct of the study, confidentiality, and anonymity. The RMMC Ethics and Review Committee's requirements for ethical consideration were adhered to in this study, especially when dealing with the participants and the data, including but not limited to the following:

3.7.1 Voluntary Participation

The respondents were allowed to participate without any plan of repercussion, reparations, or loss of benefits. Following the respondent's explanation of the study's objective, the respondent's rights to contribute to the body of knowledge were carefully considered and anticipated. The respondents in this study were not coerced into taking part. If people get uncomfortable while participating in the study, they can stop.

3.7.2 Privacy and Confidentiality

The Data Privacy Act of 2012 ensures that respondents' privacy rights are protected only with their informed consent. In a quantitative study, privacy was maintained by allowing respondents to omit their names from the survey. Personal information like age, gender, occupation, and health conditions was also withheld to protect their identity. The answers provided in the survey were treated confidentially, thus upholding their privacy and security.

3.7.3 Informed Consent Process

Given the limitations of the inquiry, potential research volunteers were fully informed of the study's goals, methods, and rewards in the most detailed way conceivable. The fact that the respondents' permission was requested demonstrates that their participation was freely given. It provided respondents with the necessary information and discussed the

survey's methodology. The informed consent form required respondents to sign to indicate that they freely chose to participate in the study. The respondents' identities were not listed on the survey form, and their responses were kept private. The respondents knew they could withdraw from participating in the study at any time.

3.7.4 Recruitment

The respondents were informed of why they had become part of the study. For the respondents to understand what the study was all about, the researcher explained the purpose of the study so that they could further infer from the researcher and also view the study's essence. Apart from the letter, the researcher gave the rationale of the research and its significance.

3.7.5 Risks

Research was conducted to determine if there was an acceptable positive benefit-risk ratio. This study's need to protect the respondents from significant harm is equally essential. The study prioritized the welfare of the respondents. Furthermore, the respondents were not harmed since their identity was held confidential. Their security and safety were of the utmost concern. As the researcher, there was a need to ensure that the respondents were physically, emotionally, and socially ready. In answering the survey questionnaire, the researcher provided the respondents did not feel discomfort or awkwardness.

3.7.6 Benefits

Reading proficiency level holds global significance as it was a fundamental skill for individuals to access education, information, and opportunities, enabling social and economic development worldwide. Strong reading proficiency is essential for fostering critical thinking, empowering individuals to make informed decisions, participate actively in society, and contribute to the overall progress and well-being of communities and nations. This study hoped to provide relevant data on the Department of Education on the reading proficiency level of Grade III learners that is beneficial in this time of New Normal. The result of the study will be a basis for creating intervention programs for school administrators and school heads as a reference in formulating school policies and programs that will aid learners' reading skills.

3.7.7 Plagiarism

The study had no trace or evidence of misinterpretation of someone else's work. The study was subjected to plagiarism detectors like Grammarly software. As a researcher, there is a need to have positive character and integrity, which are associated with moral virtues and values. The researcher must have better knowledge about the paradigm of plagiarism to have a credible research paper.

3.7.8 Fabrication

The study had no indication or cue of purposive misinterpretation of what had been done. There was no making up of data and results or purposefully putting forward conclusions that were not accurate. The researcher employed and integrated theories related to the information and other inferential concepts.

3.7.9 Falsification

The study did not purposefully misrepresent the work to fit a model or theoretical expectation and had no evidence of overclaiming or exaggeration. Furthermore, this study needed to adhere to manipulating the data, which involved formulating statements or disregarding important details, maneuvering materials, tools, or methodologies that would mislead others. The study-maintained integrity by accurately reporting all data, with transparency in methodology and results to uphold scientific rigor. Additionally, every effort was made to prevent bias by faithfully recording observations and including all relevant data, thereby supporting a reliable and trustworthy representation of the research findings

3.7.10 Conflict of Interest (COI)

The study was free of any indications of a conflict of interest, such as the disclosure of a COI, which is a set of circumstances in which a professional's judgment about a primary interest, like the welfare of participants or the validity of the research, is likely to be influenced by a secondary interest, like monetary or academic gains or recognitions. In addition, the respondents were coerced into participating in the study by the researcher, who had no control or influence over them.

3.7.11 Deceit

The study had no trace of misleading the respondents about any possible danger. There must be humongous protection of the rights of the participants in any study, especially that they have attained higher education, so balanced and appropriate principles shall be adhered to. Every precaution was taken to maintain transparency throughout the research process, upholding ethical standards to foster trust and safeguard participants' well-being.

3.7.12 Permission from Organization/Location

The researcher of this study followed protocols. Upon receiving the signal from the panelists, the adviser, and the committee of the RMMC ERC, the researcher sought approval from the school division Superintendents for the conduct of the study through a formal letter. After this, the researcher wrote a formal letter addressed to the District Supervisor and school Principal of the schools involved in the study, attaching the school's endorsed letter from the Schools Division Superintendent. The Senior High School learners who were part of the study were oriented before administering the survey questionnaire.

3.7.13 Authorship

Ethical authorship ensures that all individuals who contributed substantially to the research were appropriately acknowledged as authors. In contrast, those who did not meet the criteria for authorship were not included. The researcher ensured that the study's results appropriately reflected the contributions of all parties involved and were fair and transparent. Research outputs maintained their credibility and made a fair and transparent contribution to the progress of knowledge by abiding by ethical authoring norms.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The Level of Social Skills of Learners in terms of Approaches to Learning, Self-Control, Interpersonal Skills, External Problem Behavior, and Internalizing Problem Behavior

Table 2 presents the level of social skills of learners in terms of approaches to learning, self-control, interpersonal skills, external problem behavior, and internalizing problem behavior. Frequency count and percentage were utilized to treat the data gathered.

Data revealed that the level of social skills of learners in terms of approaches to learning was high, with a mean of 3.8. It implies effective communication, collaboration, and adaptability in various learning environments. Learners with advanced social skills tend to demonstrate a proclivity for cooperative and independent learning, showcasing resilience, critical thinking, and a positive attitude toward acquiring knowledge.

With regards with self-control, learners' social skills level was low, with a mean of 2.0. It indicates challenges in regulating emotions, managing impulses, and maintaining discipline in various social situations. Individuals with lower self-control may struggle with emotional outbursts, difficulty focusing on tasks, and impulsivity, potentially hindering their ability to navigate social interactions and adhere to behavioral expectations.

Regarding interpersonal skills, learners' social skills level was very high, with a mean of 4.12. It signifies an exceptional ability to engage effectively with others in various social contexts. Learners with outstanding interpersonal skills exhibit advanced communication, active listening, empathy, and teamwork. They can navigate complex social situations with ease, build positive and meaningful relationships, and contribute positively to group dynamics.

Concerning externalizing problem behavior, the learners' social skills level was low with a mean of 1.9. It indicates challenges in expressing emotions and managing interpersonal conflicts appropriately. Learners with lower social skills in externalizing behavior may exhibit disruptive conduct, aggression, or defiance, often struggling to adapt to social expectations and norms. This can lead to difficulties in forming positive relationships, engaging in effective communication, and negatively impact the overall learning environment.

Regarding internalizing problem behavior, the level of learners' social skills was high, with a mean of 3.3. It indicates a strong capacity to manage and cope with internal emotional challenges effectively. Learners with advanced social skills in internalizing behaviors are adept at regulating their emotions, dealing with stress, and expressing themselves in a healthy manner. They may exhibit resilience, empathy, and a positive outlook, contributing to a supportive and understanding social environment.

Table 2: The Level of Social Skills of Learners in terms of Approaches to Learning, Self-Control, Interpersonal Skills, External Problem Behavior, and Internalizing Problem Behavior

Indicators	Mean	Description
Approaches to Learning	**3.8**	**High**
Self-control	2.0	Low
Interpersonal Skills	4.12	Very High
Externalizing Problem Behavior	1.9	Low
Internalizing Problem Behavior	3.3	High
Total	**3.0**	**Moderate**

4.2 The Extent of School Climate of Learners in terms of Safety, Teaching and Learning, and Environment

Table 3 presents the extent of school climate of learners in terms of safety, teaching and learning, and environment. Frequency count and percentage were utilized to treat the data gathered.

Data revealed that the extent of school climate of learners regarding safety was manifested occasionally, with a mean of 1.9 which describes as sometimes. It suggests that there are intermittent occurrences or fluctuations in the perceived safety within the school environment. This could imply that certain factors, events, or conditions contribute to an inconsistent sense of safety among the learners.

With regards with teaching and learning, the extent of school climate was manifested most of the time, with a mean of 3.6, describes as often. It suggests a consistent and prevalent positive atmosphere within the educational setting. This likely reflects a supportive environment that fosters effective teaching methods, encourages student engagement, and facilitates a conducive atmosphere for learning.

In connection with the environment, the extent of school climate was manifested most of the time, with a mean of 3.3, which was described as often**.** It indicates a consistently positive and favorable atmosphere within the school setting. This manifestation likely points to a physical and social environment that is conducive to learning, characterized by a welcoming and supportive ambiance. It could signify well-maintained facilities, positive interactions among students and staff, and a general sense of safety and inclusivity.

Table 3: The Extent of School Climate of Learners
in terms of Safety, Teaching and Learning, and Environment

	Mean	Description
Safety		
1. I like my school.	3.0	Sometimes
2. I feel safe when I'm in school.	1.5	Rarely
3. I am not a part of this school.	1.0	Rarely
4. Learners in my school are rude.	1.9	Rarely
5. I feel comfortable every time I go to school.	2.0	Rarely
Total	**1.9**	**Rarely**
Teaching and Learning		
1. My teacher's lessons are interesting.	3.3	Often
2. I want to explore and learn new things in school.	3.5	Often
3. My teachers appreciate my performance.	4.1	Always
4. My school has the best teachers.	3.4	Often
5. The education and training given in my school are admirable.	3.9	Often
Total	**3.6**	**Often**
Environment		
1. I like my school.	3.2	Often
2. I feel bored when I'm in school.	2.1	Sometimes
3. Most learners in my school try to do their best.	4.2	Always
4. I actively cooperate in class.	3.8	Often
5. Learners at my school help each other when needed.	3.0	Sometimes
Total	**3.3**	**Often**

4.3 The Level of Academic Achievement of Learners

Table 4 presents the level of academic achievement of learners. Frequency count and percentage were utilized to treat the data gathered.

Data revealed that out of 122 Grade 5 learners, 12 or 10% obtained an excellent academic achievement, 46 or 38% obtained very good, 58 or 47% obtained good, and 6 or 5% obtained fair. In contrast, none of the learners obtained needs improvement.

Table 4: The Academic Achievement of the Learners

Academic Achievement	Grade 5	
	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent 95-100	12	10
Very Good 90-94	46	38
Good 85-89	58	47
Fair 80-84	6	5
Needs Improvement 75-79	0	0
Total	**122**	**100**

4.4 Significant Relationship between Social Skills and Academic Achievement

The data for this sub-problem is presented in Table 5 on page 42. Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation was used to treat the data gathered.

When social skills and academic success were assessed at the Alpha level of .05 with a df of 120, it was discovered that. The computed Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation value was 0.85, as shown in the table. In comparison to the tabular value of .195, it was more important. It resulted in the null hypothesis being rejected. Their social skills level highly impacted the learner's academic success.

Table 5: Significant Relationship between Social Skill and Academic Achievement

Variables	df	rxy value n=122		Decision	Analysis
		Computed	Tabular		
Level of Social Skills vs Academic Achievement	120	0.85	0.195	Reject null hypothesis	There is a significant relationship

4.5 Significant Relationship between Social Skills and School Climate

The data for this sub-problem is presented in Table 6 on page 43. Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation was used to treat the data gathered.

The social skills and school climate level were found to be tested at the Alpha level of .05 with a df of 120. The table shows that the computed Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation value was 0.99. It was more significant than the tabular value of .195. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The level of social skills significantly influenced the school climate.

Table 6: Significant Relationship between Social Skill and School Climate

Variables	df	rxy value n=122		Decision	Analysis
		Computed	Tabular		
Level of Social Skills vs School Climate	120	0.99	0.195	Reject null hypothesis	There is a significant relationship

4.6 Significant Relationship between School Climate and Academic Achievement

Table 7 provides the data for this sub-problem. The data was handled using Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation.

When the degree of academic success and school atmosphere were assessed at the Alpha level of .05 with a df of 120, it was discovered. The calculated Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation value was 0.84, as shown in the table. In comparison to the tabular value of .195, it was more important. It resulted in the null hypothesis being rejected. The academic success of the learner was greatly impacted by the school atmosphere.

Table 7: Significant Relationship between School Climate and Academic Achievement

Variables	df	rxy value n=67		Decision	Analysis
		Computed	Tabular		
Extent of School Climate Vs Academic Achievement	120	0.84	0.195	Reject null hypothesis	There is a significant relationship

4.7 On the Mediating Effect of School Climate

Shown in Table 8 is the path analysis of the mediating effect of school climate on the relationship between social skills and academic achievement of Grade 5 learners.

The text presents findings from a statistical analysis that explores the intricate relationships between social skills, school environment factors like atmosphere and climate, and their impact on academic achievement. It reveals several significant correlations that underscore the importance of social dynamics within educational settings. Firstly, the study identifies robust causal connections between social skills and both academic accomplishment and the school environment itself. Particularly noteworthy are the findings regarding school atmosphere, which exhibits the highest regression coefficients (0.972 unstandardized and 0.851 standardized). These coefficients suggest a potent influence of school atmosphere on shaping students' social skills, which in turn play an essential role in determining their academic success. The statistical significance of these relationships is underscored by a low p-value of 0.034, indicating a high confidence level in the observed associations.

Moreover, the analysis delves into specific regression coefficients to quantify the strength of these relationships. For instance, the coefficient measuring the link between academic success and social skills (route b) shows a modest but discernible standardized coefficient of 0.118 and an unstandardized value of 0.097, with a p-value of 0.041, just below the conventional significance threshold of 0.05. This suggests that while the influence of social skills on academic achievement is somewhat smaller compared to other factors like school atmosphere, it remains statistically significant. Additionally, the study highlights the impact of school climate on social skills, with a notable standardized regression coefficient of 0.785 and an unstandardized coefficient of 0.735, both indicating a strong relationship with academic achievement. These findings collectively underscore the intricate interplay between social dynamics, school environment, and academic outcomes, emphasizing the critical role of fostering conducive social environments within educational institutions.

Table 8: Mediating Effect: Path Analysis (Partial Mediation)

Path	Estimates		SE	C.R.	P
	Unstandardized	Standardized			
Social Skills ⟶ School Climate	.972	.851	.034	28.343	***
School Climate ⟶ Academic Achievement	.097	.118	.041	2.360	.018
Social Skills ⟶ Academic Achievement	.735	.785	.047	15.700	***

Additionally, Figure 2 shows the outcome of the computation of the mediating effect. It displays the magnitude of the three variables' path correlation coefficients, which were employed in this investigation. The route analysis produced a p-value of less than 0.05 at the 0.05 level, which is significant. Work values have a substantial role in the relationship between social skills and the academic achievement of Grade 5 learners. Additionally, the causal relationship between school climate and academic success was reduced from a significant beta coefficient value of.885 to a still significant .74 after school climate, the mediator variable. The overall impact of the raw correlation between social skills is .885. Moreover, the direct effect value of .74 illustrates the strength of the relationship between social skills and academic proficiency that was taken into account during the regression. The indirect score of 0.097 indicates how much of the initial relationship between social skills and academic accomplishment has been translated to competence. The formula is (a*b), where "a" represents the route between the mediator and independent variables and "b" represents the route between the mediator and dependent variables. The ratio index is calculated by dividing the indirect effect by the overall impact; in this instance, 0.097 divided by .885 = 0.110. 11% of the overall influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable appears to be mediated by the mediator variable. Contrarily, the remaining 89% are either direct or mediated by factors outside the model.

A third variable cannot serve as a mediator until three conditions are satisfied (Baron & Kenny, 1986). These are grouped as Steps 1–3 in Table 7. The fourth and last step is. Academic success, the dependent variable (DV) in Step 1 (Path c), is strongly predicted by social skills, the independent variable (IV). In step 2 (Path a), social skills (IV) mainly indicate school climate, the mediator (MV). In step 3 (Path b), school climate (MV) significantly affects academic achievement. Similar to this, steps 1 through 3 are meant to show that there are zero-order correlations between variables.

Furthermore, based on evaluating the connection, we may immediately assume that mediation is not likely in the absence of any relationship factors. Furthermore, one must go on to step 4 if steps 1 through 3 have a meaningful relationship with one another. The combined impact of social skills and school atmosphere is therefore substantial in step 4.

Further route analysis of the mediation effect using AMOS is necessary to triangulate the data and determine the relevance of the intervening variable. Additionally, full mediation will be accomplished if the influence of the IV on the DV ceases to be substantial at the end of the study. This indicates that the mediating variable is a mediator of all effects. If the regression coefficient is significantly decreased but still significant in the last stage, only partial mediation is obtained. It indicates that while the MV mediates a portion of the IV, other factors either have a direct effect on the IV or are mediated through variables not included in the model. In this particular case, the effect of the IV (social skills) on DV (academic achievement) is significantly lessened after controlling MV (school climate). Therefore, only partial mediation took place since the effect is still significant.

5. Conclusions

The following conclusions were established based on the data gathered. The level of social skills of Grade 5 learners was very high in terms of interpersonal skills, high in approaches to learning and internalizing problem behavior, and low in self-control and externalizing problem behavior. Moreover, the school climate of Grade 5 learners was manifested most of the time in terms of teaching, learning, and environment, while manifested in a few instances in safety. Further, the academic achievement of Grade 5 learners was good. They meet only the standard expectations of them.

On the other hand, there was a significant relationship between social skills and academic achievement, social skills and school climate, and school climate and academic achievement of Grade 5 learners. Also, there was a partial mediating effect of school climate on the relationship between school social skills and academic achievement in ESP of Grade 5 learners.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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