

## Social Awareness and Responsible Decision Making of Students in Grade 4 and 5 in Vietnam

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### Abstract

Awareness about other people (social awareness) and responsible decision-making are the basic elements of SEL (Social and emotional learning). The reality of social awareness and responsible decision making of students in grade 4 and 5 and the correlation between these two elements have not been considerably studied in Vietnam. This study identifies the reality of the two and the relationship between them. The survey on 1004 students in grade 4 and 5 by questionnaires and situations illustrates the fact that the mean of the ability to be aware of other people is 2.25- the average in the scaling point and that of the ability to make responsible decisions is 2.42, which is above the average in the scaling point. There is a difference in the ability of social awareness and responsible decision making in terms of grade-4-and-5 students' gender and residential areas. There is a strong and close correlation between the two abilities. The clearer students are aware of other people, the more responsible the decisions are.

**Key words:** social awareness (Awareness of/ about other people), decision-making, students, the relationship, the correlation, primary schools

### 1. Introduction

Social awareness is the ability to recognize, empathize with other people from different backgrounds and cultures. The recognition and evaluation of the similar and different issues individually and in groups (CASEL, 2015)<sup>1</sup>. Social awareness includes the groups of abilities: evaluating the differences of other people, understand and take their perspectives, care them, show one's care and sensitiveness, sympathy, empathy with other people's emotional experiences(Bahman & Maffini 2008<sup>2</sup>, Beamish & Bryer 2015<sup>3</sup>; Davidson 2011<sup>4</sup>, Kress & Elias 2006<sup>5</sup>). Social awareness involves the flexibility, behavioral change and adaptability of an individual based on certain circumstances(Cantor & Kihlstrom 1987<sup>6</sup>, 1989<sup>7</sup>, Davidson 2011<sup>8</sup>). An essential element of social awareness is the capacity to understand other people's emotions under various circumstances, which means sympathy and empathy towards them (Bruce 2010<sup>9</sup>).

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<sup>2</sup> Bahman, S & Maffini, H 2008, *Developing Children's Emotional Intelligence*, Continuum International Publishing Group, New York

<sup>3</sup> Beamish, W & Bryer, F 2015, 'Social and emotional learning', In S, Garvis & D, Pendergast (eds.), *Health and wellbeing in childhood*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, Australia.

<sup>4</sup> Davidson, H 2011, *Kidzmix: Helping kids become social heroes ages 5-12 years*, Kidzmix Publishing (online).

<sup>5</sup> Kress, JS & Elias, MJ 2006, 'School-based social and emotional learning programs', In KA Renninger & IE Sigel (eds.) *Handbook of child psychology*, vol.4, 6th edn, Wiley, New York, pp. 592-618.

<sup>6</sup> Cantor, N & Kihlstrom, JF 1987, *Personality and Social Intelligence* (Century Psychology Series), Prentice Hall College Div, Englewood Cliffs, NJ

<sup>7</sup> Cantor, N & Kihlstrom, JF 1989, 'Social intelligence and cognitive assessments of personality', In RS, Wyer & TK, Srull (eds.) *Advances in Social Cognition*, vol. 2, pp. 1-59, Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ.

<sup>8</sup> Davidson, H 2011, *Kidzmix: Helping kids become social heroes ages 5-12 years*, Kidzmix Publishing (online).

<sup>9</sup>Bruce, C 2010, *Emotional Literacy in the Early Years*, Sage Publications, London, UK.

Children can understand other people's emotions via their non-verbal messages conveyed by observing the expressions on their face, body and language and their voice (Bahman & Maffini 2008<sup>10</sup>). In this social interaction, these two individual groups are in harmony with each other, respect and get to clearly understand each other (Bahman & Maffini 2008<sup>11</sup>; Bruce 2010<sup>12</sup>; Theobald 2015<sup>13</sup>). Awareness of other people plays an important role in carrying out their functions and adapting to live in multi-cultural contexts from their early age to the maturity(Jones, Greenberg & Crowley 2015<sup>14</sup>).

Responsible decision-making is the capacity to choose to positively make up their minds about their personal behavior and social behavior based on ethical and social norms and respect towards other people. This includes risk judgement and sensible decisions with personal responsibility (CASEL,2015)<sup>15</sup>. Skills to make decisions are closely related to the abilities such as the capacity to accurately evaluate the situations, positively react to these problems, identify and clarify the problems by self-reflecting strategies, problem-solving skills and social and moral norms conforming (Beamish & Bryer 2015<sup>16</sup>; Kress & Elias 2006<sup>17</sup>). Responsible decision-making helps students to solve their problems better and more appropriately.

The previous studies represents the fact that Bahman & Maffini (2008)<sup>18</sup>, Theobald (2015)<sup>19</sup>, Davidson (2011)<sup>20</sup>identify the correlation between social awareness and the establishment of relationship with plenty of individuals in the society. Roffey (2011)<sup>21</sup>studied the correlation between social awareness ability and assiduous attention and tender care about other people's perspectives. Bahman & Maffini (2008)<sup>22</sup>, Davidson (2011)<sup>23</sup>, Denham (2012)<sup>24</sup>did research on the correlation between empathy and academic results of students. Bahman & Maffini (2008)<sup>25</sup>,

<sup>10</sup> Bahman, S & Maffini, H 2008, *Developing Children's Emotional Intelligence*, Continuum International Publishing Group, New York.

<sup>11</sup> Bahman, S & Maffini, H 2008, *Developing Children's Emotional Intelligence*, Continuum International Publishing Group, New York.

<sup>12</sup>Bruce, C 2010, *Emotional Literacy in the Early Years*, Sage Publications, London, UK.

<sup>13</sup> Theobald, M, Danby, S, Thompson, C & Thorpe, K 2015, 'Friendships,' In S, Garvis & D, Pendergast (eds.), *Health and wellbeing in childhood*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, Australia.

<sup>14</sup> Jones, DE, Greenberg, M & Crowley, M 2015, 'Early social-emotional functioning and public health: The relationship between kindergarten social competence and future wellness,' *American Journal of Public Health*, e-View Ahead of Print, doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2015.302630

<sup>15</sup> Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (2015), *Guide: Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs—Middle and High School Edition*

<sup>16</sup> Beamish, W & Bryer, F 2015, 'Social and emotional learning', In S, Garvis & D, Pendergast (eds.), *Health and wellbeing in childhood*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, Australia.

<sup>17</sup> Kress, JS & Elias, MJ 2006, 'School-based social and emotional learning programs', In KA Renninger & IE Sigel (eds.) *Handbook of child psychology*, vol.4, 6th edn, Wiley, New York, pp. 592-618.

<sup>18</sup> Bahman, S & Maffini, H 2008, *Developing Children's Emotional Intelligence*, Continuum International Publishing Group, New York

<sup>19</sup> Theobald, M, Danby, S, Thompson, C & Thorpe, K 2015, 'Friendships,' In S, Garvis & D, Pendergast (eds.), *Health and wellbeing in childhood*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, Australia.

<sup>20</sup> Davidson, H 2011, *Kidzmix: Helping kids become social heroes ages 5-12 years*, Kidzmix Publishing (online).

<sup>21</sup>Roffey, S 2011, 'Enhancing connectedness in Australian children and young people,' *Asian Journal of Counselling*, vol.18, no.1 & 2, pp.15-39.

<sup>22</sup> Bahman, S & Maffini, H 2008, *Developing Children's Emotional Intelligence*, Continuum International Publishing Group, New York

<sup>23</sup> Davidson, H 2011, *Kidzmix: Helping kids become social heroes ages 5-12 years*, Kidzmix Publishing (online).

<sup>24</sup> Denham, SA, Bassett, HH, Sirotnik, YS & Zinsser, K 2012, Head Start preschoolers' emotional positivity and emotion regulation predict their classroom adjustment, social behavior, and early school success, invited poster, 12th Head Start Research Conference, Washington, DC.

<sup>25</sup> Bahman, S & Maffini, H 2008, *Developing Children's Emotional Intelligence*, Continuum International Publishing Group, New York

Theobald (2015)<sup>26</sup>, Davidson (2011)<sup>27</sup> identified the relationship between social awareness with the establishment of acquaintances with other individuals in the society. Roffey (2011)<sup>28</sup> researched the correlation between social awareness ability with meticulous attention and loving care about other people. Bahman & Maffini (2008)<sup>29</sup>, Davidson (2011)<sup>30</sup>, Denham (2012)<sup>31</sup> studied that between empathy and academic results.Forgas (2000)<sup>32</sup> and Humphrey (2007)<sup>33</sup> did research on the relationship between responsible decision making and positive feelings and behavior of children.Jones, DE, Greenberg, M & Crowley, M (2015)<sup>34</sup> studied the correlation between social awareness ability and children's health in the future. Brackett, Mayer và Warner (2004)<sup>35</sup> studied the correlation between their own emotions and anti-social reactions like aggression, crime, violence and dropout.

There have been no studies on the situation of social awareness and responsible decision-making and the relationship between the two in Vietnam. Therefore, this research identifies the reality of social awareness and responsible decision-making and the relationship between the two elements of primary school students in Vietnam as new research ideas.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Method design

The questionnaires and situations designed are delivered to 1004 students in grade 4 & 5 in Ho Chi Minh city and Can Tho. The studies was carried out from February to May 2018.

### 2.2. Survey population

The population has been randomly chosen from 05 primary schools in Vietnam with the samples from students of grade 4 and 5 distributed as follows:

- About the grade: Grade 4 with 524 students (52%), grade 5 with 480 students (47,8%)
- About gender: 501 male students (occupying 49,9%) and 503 female counterparts (taking up 50,1%)
- About schools: Mac Dinh Chi primary school with 155 students (15,4%), Tra Nooc primary school with 177 students (17,6%), Binh Thuy primary school with 190 students (18,9%), Dang Van Bat primary school with 239 students (23,8%), Linh Dong primary school with 243 students (24,2%) as participants of the survey.
- About the age: 42 students aged 9 (4,2%), 498 students of age 10 (49,6%), 458 students aged 11 (45,6%), and 06 students of 12 (0,6%).
- About the nationality: 994 Vietnamese students (99%), 01 Chinese (1%).
- About the city: 482 students from Ho Chi Minh City (48%), 552 students from Can Tho City (52%).

### 2.3. Data collection

The questionnaire designed includes the following items:

<sup>26</sup> Theobald, M, Danby, S, Thompson, C & Thorpe, K 2015, 'Friendships,' In S, Garvis & D, Pendergast (eds.), Health and wellbeing in childhood, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, Australia.

<sup>27</sup> Davidson, H 2011, Kidzmix: Helping kids become social heroes ages 5-12 years, Kidzmix Publishing (online).

<sup>28</sup> Roffey, S 2011, 'Enhancing connectedness in Australian children and young people,' Asian Journal of Counselling, vol.18, no.1 & 2, pp.15-39.

<sup>29</sup> Bahman, S & Maffini, H 2008, Developing Children's Emotional Intelligence, Continuum International Publishing Group, New York

<sup>30</sup> Davidson, H 2011, Kidzmix: Helping kids become social heroes ages 5-12 years, Kidzmix Publishing (online).

<sup>31</sup> Denham, SA, Bassett, HH, Sirotnik, YS & Zinsser, K 2012, Head Start preschoolers' emotional positivity and emotion regulation predict their classroom adjustment, social behavior, and early school success, invited poster, 12th Head Start Research Conference, Washington, DC.

<sup>32</sup> Forgas, JP (ed.) 2000, Feeling and thinking: Affective influences on social cognition, Cambridge University Press, New York.

<sup>33</sup> Humphrey N, Curran A, Morris E, Farrell P & Woods K 2007, 'Emotional Intelligence and education: A critical review', Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology, vol. 27, no.2, pp.235 -254.

<sup>34</sup> Jones, DE, Greenberg, M & Crowley, M 2015, 'Early social-emotional functioning and public health: The relationship between kindergarten social competence and future wellness,' American Journal of Public Health, e-View Ahead of Print, doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2015.302630

<sup>35</sup> Brackett, MA, Mayer, JD, Warner, RM 2004, 'Emotional intelligence and its relation to everyday behaviour,' Personality and Individual Differences, vol.36, pp. 1387-1402.

- Introduction of the objectives of the survey and the instructions to help answer the questions
- The information of the participants containing questions about school, class, city, gender, nationality and age
- The content of the survey contains the following:
  - + The question system to collect the data about social awareness and responsible decision making of students in grade 4 and 5. There are 18 questions on students' social awareness and 11 for responsible decision-making. The answers are rated into 03 points (Linkert scale) (Jacob Jacoby & Michael S. Matelf 1971)<sup>36</sup>. The answers were designed in three levels for students to choose from. Additionally, there were several open questions and supplement qualitative answers to help assess the accuracy of the answers chosen.
  - + The situations or problems in which students of grade 4 and 5 have to express their social awareness and make responsible decisions

#### **- Data analysis:**

Students' answers and problem solutions were assessed based on 03 points of Likert scale (Jacob Jacoby & Michael S. Matelf 1971)<sup>37</sup>and coded via SPSS for windows 16.0 as follows: scale 1 =1, Scale 2=2, Scale 3 =3.

$$\text{Distance Value} = (\text{Maximum} - \text{Minimum}) / n = (3-1)/3 = 0.67$$

Therefore, the meanings of the scales were understood as:

- + From 1 to 1.67= under average
- + From 1.68 to 2.33= average
- + From 2.34 to 3= above average

SPSS was used to analyze the data collected by Anova, Pearson Correlation. Mean, Std. Deviation, Percent, Frequencies to quantify the data and ensure the requirements of quantity to be met.

### **3. Research results**

#### **3.1. The reality of grade-4-and-5 students' social awareness**

The results of evaluating the **grade-4-and-5 students' social awareness** analyzed based on 03 points in Linkert scale are as follows in Table 1.

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<sup>36</sup> Jacob Jacoby & Michael S. Matelf (1971) Three-Point Likert Scales Are Good Enough, Journal of Marketing Research, Vol.VIII, pp .495-500

<sup>37</sup> Jacob Jacoby & Michael S. Matelf (1971) Three-Point Likert Scales Are Good Enough, Journal of Marketing Research, Vol.VIII, pp .495-500

**Table1. The reality of grade-4-and-5 students' social awareness**

Ord er	CONTENT	SCALE						Mean	Standard deviatio n	Ranki ng			
		1		2		3							
		SL	%	SL	%	SL	%						
1	Social awareness is the recognition, empathy with other people. It includes the recognition of similarities and differences.	54	5,4	225	22,4	725	72,2	2.67	0.574	3			
2	Social awareness plays an essential role in learning and living.	112	11,2	324	32,3	568	56,6	2.45	0.686	6			
3	Interest in getting to know other people	332	33,1	231	23,1	440	43,8	2.11	0.870	11			
4	Frequency to get to know other people to aware of them.	192	19,1	634	63,1	178	17,7	1.98	0.607	13			
<b>Awareness of desires and judgements of the other people of oneself.</b>													
5	Knowing what parents expect from oneself	55	5,5	154	15,3	795	79,2	2.73	0.551	2			
6	Knowing what teachers expect from oneself	136	13,5	249	24,8	619	61,7	2.48	0.721	5			
7	Knowing what friends expect from oneself	383	38,1	396	39,4	225	22,4	1.84	0.762	15			
8	What parents think of and judge oneself	306	30,5	485	48,3	213	21,2	1.90	0.713	14			
9	What parents think of and judge oneself	359	35,8	445	44,3	200	19,9	1.84	0.729	15			
10	What parents think of and judge oneself	443	44,1	427	42,5	134	13,3	1.69	0.693	16			
<b>Awareness of other people's emotions</b>													
11	Recognizing when a person is sad or happy although they do not say anything at all.	57	5,7	525	52,3	422	42	2.36	0.587	8			
12	Knowing what parents, teachers and friends like	236	23,5	498	49,6	270	26,9	2.03	0.709	12			
<b>Empathy and sympathy</b>													
13	Knowing how to put themselves in other people's place to understand and sympathize with them	118	11,8	449	44,7	437	43,5	2.31	0.672	9			
14	Knowing how to love someone when they deal with unexpected things	94	9,4	253	25,2	657	65,4	2.56	0.658	4			
15	Talking and playing with friends from a wide variety of regions	217	21,6	447	44,5	340	33,9	2.12	0.735	10			
16	Receiving and accepting ideas from friends or other people	89	8,9	508	50,6	407	40,5	2.31	0.627	9			
17	Last week, A did not do well in his/her test. A was so worried that he/she did not sleep well all the week. As his/her close friend, how do you feel?	31	3,1	186	18,5	787	78,4	2.75	0.497	1			
18	Knowing what your teachers feel when you talk in the class	132	13,1	186	18,5	787	78,4	2.39	0.708	7			
<b>Total</b>								<b>2.25</b>	<b>0.324</b>				

Table 1 presents that the mean of the students' social awareness is 2.25, which is the average in the scaling point. The mean of the performances in social awareness of the sample varies from 1.69 to 2.84. Meanwhile, the percentage of each performance has the even coverage of levels 1, 2 and 3. The data reveals the fact that students in grade 4 and 5 have the highest social awareness in expressing their emotions when their friends did not do well in the test (Mean=2.75, Std. =0.497). The second highest is perceiving their parents' expectations (Mean=2.73; Std. =0.551) while the third involves knowing what social awareness is (Mean=2.67, Std. =0.574). The fourth highest is the love for someone coping with unexpected things (Mean=2.56, Std. =0.658). The fifth is the perception of teachers' expectations (Mean=2.48, Std. =0.721).

The table also illustrates the level of grade 4-and-5 students' low social awareness. The lowest noted is knowing what friends think or judge themselves (Mean=1.69, Std. =0.693). The second lowest is being aware of teachers' perceptions toward them (Mean=1.84, Std. =0.729) and their friends' expectations about them (Mean=1.84, Std. =0.762). The third noted is knowing what parents think of them (Mean=1.90; Std. =0.713). The fourth is the frequency to get to understand other people (Mean=1.98, Std. =0.607). The last is the recognition of their parents', teachers' and friends' likes and dislikes (Mean=2.03, Std. =0.709).

When they were given the situation of “ Do you know what teachers feel when you talk in class?”, Doan Thao N, Luu Dat K and Phan Ngoc Bao C responded “I don’t know” while Ngo Tue L, Tran Vo Ngoc Phi N and Nguyen Thi Kim A said “I don’t clearly know”. Vu Minh N, Nguyen Ba Van A and Nguyen Ngoc Thanh T answered, “Obviously, they are sad and angry”. This reveals the fact that these students of this age start to understand other people and place themselves into other people’s place. The differences of social awareness of the students in terms of gender and residential areas are expressed in table 2.

Table 2. The differences in the mean of grade 4-and-5 students’ social awareness in terms of gender and in Ho Chi Minh city and Can Tho city

CONTENT			Mean	Sig. (Anova)	Standard Deviation
Social awareness	Gender	Male	2.20	0.000	0.324
		Female	2.31		
	Residential areas	Ho Chi Minh	2.18	0.000	0.324
		Can Tho	2.32		

The results based on Anova show sig. =0.000, which indicates the statistical differences in the mean of students’ social awareness in terms of gender. The mean of male students’ social awareness is 2.2 and that of their female counterparts is 2.31. The 0.11 difference rate is worth considering. Analysis of variance Anova also shows sig.=0.000, which means the statistical differences in the mean of students’ social awareness in terms of residential areas of Ho Chi Minh city and Can Tho city. The mean of Can Tho city population is 2.32 while that of Ho Chi Minh City is 2.18, i.e. the considerable difference rate is noted at 0.14.

#### 4.2.4.5. The reality of responsible decision making of grade-4-and-5 students

The results of grade-4-and-5 students’ responsible decision-making are illustrated in table 3.

Table3. The reality of responsible decision making of grade-4-and-5 students

ORDER	CONTENT	SCALE						MEAN	Standard deviation	Ranking	
		1		2		3					
SL	%	SL	%	SL	%	SL	%				
1	Responsible decision-making is to make the most appropriate, accurate choice and to be responsible for the decisions taken.	32	3,2	253	25,2	719	71,6	2.68	0.529	2	
2	Responsible decision making plays an important in learning and living.	28	2,8	214	21,3	762	75,9	2.73	0.502	1	
3	Paying attention to choosing the appropriate decisions	65	6,5	497	49,5	442	44	2.37	0.603	9	
4	Before making decisions, you think of their advantages and disadvantages.	55	5,5	391	38,9	558	55,6	2.50	0.599	7	
5	When your friend likes a new thing but you do not, you do not want to buy it right away.	443	44,1	489	48,7	72	7,2	1.63	0.614	11	
6	You often acknowledge your fault when you do something wrong.	32	3,2	379	37,7	593	59,1	2.56	0.557	5	
7	You always take responsibility for what you have done.	66	6,6	387	38,5	551	54,9	2.48	0.617	8	
8	You clean and store your belongings after usage by yourself.	31	3,1	330	32,9	643	64	2.61	0.547	3	
9	You keep your promises.	27	2,7	351	35	626	62,4	2.59	0.542	4	
10	You do not consider being good at learning to fulfill all of your responsibility.	357	35,6	309	30,8	338	33,7	1.98	0.832	10	
11	Nếu sai, em có thể nhận lỗi cả với em hoặc các bạn nhỏ tuổi hơn mình If you are wrong, you admit to your fault with your younger brothers, sisters or friends.	49	4,9	365	36,7	587	58,5	2.53	0.588	6	
<b>Total</b>								<b>2.42</b>	<b>0.303</b>		

The data in table 3 reflects that primary school students’ responsible decision-making has the mean of 2.42, which is slightly above average in the scaling point. The mean varies from 1.63 to 2.73. The percentage shown in the table also reveals the differences in ranking from 1 to 3.

When it comes to detailed analysis, the data indicates the fact that primary school students’ responsible decision making focuses the highest in the role of their decisions (Mean=2.73, Std.=0.502), the second highest is their perception of what responsible decision making is (Mean=2.68, Std.=0.529). The last noted here is to know how to clean and store their possessions (Mean=2.61, Std. =0.547).

The ability to make responsible decisions that these school students responded not to be great and remarkable is also reflected in the above table. The most limited ability figured out here is the choice of not buying the things that their friends love (Mean=1.63, Std. =0.614). The second is the perception towards being good at their study (Mean=1.98, Std. =0.832). Right after this is the attention to choose the appropriate decisions (Mean=2.27, Std. =0.603).

When given the situation of “Once, you played in the park. You didn’t find the dustbin to put the plastic bag when you finished the cake”, Tran Mai Lan P, Nguyen Ngoc Bang T, Chau Tuong Q said “Take it home and put it into the dustbin at home”. Meanwhile, Dinh Hoang B, Do Quoc K, Tran Le Cam T responded, “I don’t know”. Hoang Cong Minh, Dang Vo Hoang V, Nguyen Mai T reacted to the situation by saying “Put it aside”, Nguyen Dang Kh addressed the problem in the way that “I will throw it on the street”, Vu Minh Q “Throw it on the street or put it on the bench in the park”. These responses reveal the fact that students of grade 4 and 5 start to make responsible decisions and take responsibility for what they have made up their minds.

Table 4. The differences in the mean of grade 4-and-5 students’ responsible decision-making in terms of gender and in Ho Chi Minh city and Can Tho city

CONTENT			Mean	Sig. (Anova)	Standard Deviation
Making responsible decisions	Gender	Male	2.38	0.000	0.303
		Female	2.47		
	Residential areas	Ho Chi Minh	2.38	0.000	0.303
		Can Tho	2.47		

The results based on Anova show sig. =0.000, which indicates the statistical differences in the mean of students’ responsible decision-making in terms of gender. The mean of male students’ social awareness is 2.38 and that of their female counterparts is 2.47. The 0.09 difference rate is worth considering. Analysis of variance Anova also shows sig.=0.000, which means the statistical differences in the mean of students’ responsible decision making in terms of residential areas of Ho Chi Minh city and Can Tho city. The mean of Can Tho city population is 2.47 while that of Ho Chi Minh City is 2.38, i.e. the considerable difference rate is noted at 0.09.

### 3.3. The correlation between social awareness and responsible decision making of students in grade 4 and 5

The correlation coefficients between social awareness and responsible making decision of students in grade 4 and 5 are illustrated in the following table.

Table 5. Correlation coefficients between grade- 4 -and -5 students’ social awareness and responsible decision-making

Correlation	Responsible decision making	
	Correlation Coefficient	Sig.
Social awareness	0.537**	0.000

The result in table 5 with sig. =0.000 presents the strong correlation between grade- 4 -and -5 students’ social awareness and responsible decision-making.

## 4. Discussion

The hypothesis put forward is that primary school students’ social awareness, responsible decision making has no correlations, and there will be no differences between the two in terms of gender and residential areas. The study results reject this hypothesis. The previous studies discovered the correlations between social awareness and relationship establishment with other individuals (Bahman & Maffini, 2008)<sup>38</sup>; (Theobald, 2015)<sup>39</sup>; (Davidson, 2011)<sup>40</sup>,

<sup>38</sup> Bahman, S & Maffini, H 2008, Developing Children’s Emotional Intelligence, Continuum International Publishing Group, New York

<sup>39</sup> Theobald, M, Danby, S, Thompson, C & Thorpe, K 2015, ‘Friendships,’ In S, Garvis & D, Pendergast (eds.), Health and wellbeing in childhood, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, Australia.

<sup>40</sup> Davidson, H 2011, Kidzmix: Helping kids become social heroes ages 5-12 years, Kidzmix Publishing (online).

and meticulous attention and true care for other people's perceptions and opinions. (Roffey, 2011)<sup>41</sup> studied the correlation between the ability to be socially aware and caring for other people's ideas and academic results (Bahman & Maffini, 2008)<sup>42</sup>, (Davidson, 2011)<sup>43</sup>, (Denham, 2012)<sup>44</sup>. There has been also the relationship between responsible decision-making and healthy emotions and good behavior of children (Forgas, 2000)<sup>45</sup>, (Humphrey, 2007)<sup>46</sup> and their health in future time (Jones, DE, Greenberg, M & Crowley, M 2015)<sup>47</sup>.

The results with Anova with  $\text{sig}=0.000<0.05$  determine the statistical significance in the mean social awareness of male and female students and their residential areas, Can Tho and Ho Chi Minh city. Female students appear to know about the other better than their male counterparts do. Those who live in Can Tho seem to be more socially aware than those leading their life in Ho Chi Minh city. This reveals the fact that gender or residential areas exert impact on grade-4-and-5 students' social awareness.

With  $\text{sig} = 0.000 < 0.05$ , the result represents the statistical significance in the mean of responsible decision making of male and female students and their residential areas, Can Tho and Ho Chi Minh city. Female students seem to make more responsible decisions than their male counterparts do. Those who live in Can Tho are better at making responsible decisions than those in Ho Chi Minh city. In fact, gender and residential areas affect the students' making responsible decisions.

With  $\text{sig.} = 0.000<0.05$ , the strong and close correlations between social awareness and responsible decision-making are identified. The clearer one's social awareness is, the better one is responsible making decision is and vice versa. When one wants to make sensible decisions, they have to accurately understand other people's emotions, hobbies, needs and desires. When one can be socially aware, they can give others appropriate decisions that do not offend or hurt others.

Therefore, primary school students have various abilities of social awareness and responsible decision-making. The mean of social awareness of students in grades 4 and 5 varies from 1.69 to 2.84. The mean of their decision-making is from 1.63 to 2.73. However, these abilities and performances vary from level 1 to 3, which illustrates the fact that several students who clearly understand about some of their emotional aspects know little or hardly know about other ones. In terms of responsible decision-making ability, students in grade 4 and 5 do not have the stability and there are still situations exerting influence on this ability. On given the situation of "Do you know your parents' feelings when you talk in class?" some students said "I do not know" or "I do not clearly know" but others responded, "They will be sad and angry". So, at this age, students of grade 4 and 5 start to get to understand other people. When they do this process, they place themselves in other people's place to understand and empathize with them although not all the students can handle like this.

When it comes to responsible decision making, the situation was given as "Once, you played in the park. You didn't find the dustbin to put the plastic bag when you finished the cake", the students show different reactions towards this. Some made irresponsible decisions like "Throw it away" "Throw it on the street or put it on the park bench", others chose to make responsible ones like "Take it home and put it into the dustbin at home". Some other students did not know what to do with the plastic bag.

<sup>41</sup>Roffey, S 2011, 'Enhancing connectedness in Australian children and young people,' *Asian Journal of Counselling*, vol.18, no.1& 2, pp.15-39.

<sup>42</sup> Bahman, S & Maffini, H 2008, *Developing Children's Emotional Intelligence*, Continuum International Publishing Group, New York

<sup>43</sup> Davidson, H 2011, *Kidzmix: Helping kids become social heroes ages 5-12 years*, Kidzmix Publishing (online).

<sup>44</sup> Denham, SA, Bassett, HH, Sirotnik, YS & Zinsser, K 2012, Head Start preschoolers' emotional positivity and emotion regulation predict their classroom adjustment, social behavior, and early school success, invited poster, 12th Head Start Research Conference, Washington, DC.

<sup>45</sup>Forgas, JP (ed.) 2000, *Feeling and thinking: Affective influences on social cognition*, Cambridge University Press, New York.

<sup>46</sup> Humphrey N, Curran A, Morris E, Farrell P & Woods K 2007, 'Emotional Intelligence and education: A critical review', *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology*, vol. 27, no.2, pp.235 -254.

<sup>47</sup> Jones, DE, Greenberg, M & Crowley, M 2015, 'Early social-emotional functioning and public health: The relationship between kindergarten social competence and future wellness,' *American Journal of Public Health*, e-View Ahead of Print, doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2015.302630

Therefore, it is necessary that gender and residential areas be paid close attention on organizing educational activities to improve students' ability to be socially aware and make appropriate decisions. At the same time, the correlations between these two elements of SEL should be focused to ensure these abilities to be effectively nurtured.

The survey results demonstrate gender and residential areas play a significant role in the students' social awareness and responsible decision-making level. The underlying reason for this should be discussed in further research. The correlation between the inter-components of SEL- self-awareness, self-management, social management, social awareness and responsible decision-making is figured out in (CASEL, 2015)<sup>47</sup>. The previous studies focus much on the internal and external components of SEL while this correlation between SEL internal elements should be a new issue to be studied.

## 5. Conclusion

The study results indicate the mean of social awareness ability of students in grade 4 and 5 in Vietnam is 2.25 – average point and that of responsible decision-making is 2.42- slightly above the average in the scaling point. Primary school students' social awareness and responsible decision making has strong relationship. The clearer students understand other people, the more responsible their decisions are. Gender and residential areas exert considerable impact on the level of students' social awareness and responsible decision making. This study suggests that educators pay close attention to the correlations between these two internal SEL elements and the characteristics of students' gender and residential areas in order to improve their training effectiveness and build as well as develop students' social awareness and responsible decision-making.

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