

# Social Competence Among Secondary School Students And Its Impact On Emotional Intelligence

Abhijit Giri<sup>1\*</sup>, Prof (Dr) Sunita Singh<sup>2</sup>, Prof (Dr) Preeti Pandey<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup>Research Scholar (Author), IES University, IES University, Ratibad, Main Rd, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh 462044, Mail address:

[abhijit.giri9009@gmail.com](mailto:abhijit.giri9009@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Professor & Pro Chancellor (Guide), IES University, ES University, Ratibad, Main Rd, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh 462044, Mail address:

[phdcell@iesuniversity.ac.in](mailto:phdcell@iesuniversity.ac.in)

<sup>3</sup>Associate Professor (Co-Guide), IES University, ES University, Ratibad, Main Rd, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh 462044

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

The study provides a thorough examination of the Interconnectivity of Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Social Competence (SC) with regard to secondary school students' socioeconomic status. The study used a random sampling method to select the respondents, primary data was collected via the help of a questionnaire and secondary data was collected from various sources journals, articles, and previously published papers. The study involved 250 secondary students from different schools in Mathura (Uttar Pradesh) and they formed the sample. The study used MS – Excel and SPSS 26 as statistical tools. The analysis of the results revealed that they are optimistic since there is a positive relationship between E.I. and social skills. Socioeconomic background was found to be a predictor of emotional intelligence. The results of the study stated that there is a positive impact of social competence on emotional intelligence. Slightly higher scores of positive affect and generalized credit belonging to different branches of self-efficacy were noted among students from higher socioeconomic status (SES) as compared to those belonging to the lower SES. It is therefore the need to cultivate emotional intelligence and social competence among the students in the secondary school for them to excel in their academic work as well as grow properly. Thus, schools and educators should perhaps think about how interventions and programs that are aimed at bolstering these skills can be introduced.

**Keywords:** Emotional intelligence, Social competence, Secondary school students, Socioeconomic background, Academic Success

## 1. Introduction

Having the capacity to connect effectively with one's peers, instructors, and the larger social environment is known as social competency, and it is an important developmental milestone for students in secondary school (Drigas and Papoutsis, 2021), it is important for both professional and academic achievement, it encompasses abilities like empathy, communication, and dispute resolution. The significance of emotional intelligence (EI) in determining social competence has been more apparent in recent times (Duong, et al., 2020). A person's capacities to identify, comprehend, control, and constructively use their emotions; what is commonly referred to as emotional intelligence; is crucial in determining the nature of their relationships and interactions with others. People who are emotionally intelligent are more likely to be socially competent, according to research, since they are better able to handle social complexity and form strong relationships (Eriksen, et al., 2024). It is well-recognized that student engagement (SE) is a key indicator of academic achievement. Students' engagement (SE) is a multi-faceted term that describes their level of dedication to and participation in their educational experience. Three aspects have been proposed for SE in educational research: emotional/affective, behavioral, and cognitive (Santos, et al., 2023).

Social competency is crucial for secondary school students because it affects their growth as individuals, their ability to succeed academically, and their quality of life in general (Estévez, et al., 2020). The capacity to build strong connections with family, friends, and instructors depends on one's level of social competency, which encompasses skills like effective communication, empathy, and dispute resolution (Salavera and Usán, 2021).

Having high levels of social competency helps students deal with the pressures of group work, handle social situations with grace, and understand how to work together effectively. Consequently, this boosts their academic achievement and adds to the cheerful atmosphere at school (Legkauskas and Magelinskaite-Legkauskiene, 2019). Having strong social skills is also associated with better mental health, stronger self-esteem, and fewer behavioral issues. Therefore, it is crucial to foster social competence among secondary school students for their overall development, helping them to become adjusted, socially skilled, and successful people in the future (Magelinskaitė-Legkauskienė, et al., 2018).

Understanding and responding to social signals and situations is greatly impacted by emotional intelligence (EI), which is a crucial competency for students in secondary school (Guo, et al., 2023). To communicate effectively and create relationships, EI is essential, as it includes the capacity to understand and control one's own emotions as well as those of other people (Barragan, et al., 2021). Students who score higher on the emotional intelligence test are well capable of coping with their emotions, listening attentively, and empathizing with others, all of which help them succeed in social situations. Relationships flourish when people are able to empathize with one another, which in turn increases trust and respect (Tampubolon, et al., 2021). Students high in emotional intelligence also tend to be more adept at mediating disagreements and keeping the peace in social situations. Students may cultivate more positive and fruitful relationships at school and beyond by raising their emotional intelligence, which in turn boosts their social competence (Gardner, D., 2018).

The study focuses on different areas in education that are crucial to educational psychology. Youth is a critical developmental period when social interaction skills and EI are most acquiring crucial impact on academic achievements in addition to a person's overall development. Knowledge of the association between SC and EI will enable educators and policymakers to introduce an improvement in these aptitudes in the academic curriculum. This study advances the knowledge by showing how the promotion of social competence results in superior affective regulation, social problem-solving, and quality of life among students to face future personal and occupational life challenges.

The paper is divided into seven sections. Section 1 comprises the introduction of the document. A literature review on the impact of social competence and emotional intelligence among secondary students is presented in section 2. Section 3 delineates the objectives and hypotheses of the investigation. A model and variables, as well as data and methods, were examined in Section 4. The empirical findings have been provided in detail in section 5. It has been succeeded by a discussion of the results in section 6. Section 7 contains conclusions, implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research. References have finally been included.

## 2. Literature Review

In order to understand where the field stands at the moment, this part of the study reviews and evaluates prior research. The following section has been separated into three separate parts for the sake of clarity:

- I The role of EI in determining the level of social competence.
- II Role of socioeconomic status in the development of emotional intelligence.
- III Relationship between socioeconomic status and social skills.

### 2.1 The role of EI in determining the level of social competence.

Trigueros, R., et al., (2020) arrived at the conclusion that emotional intelligence and social skills have a positive correlation ( $B = 0.44$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), whereas bullying was negatively correlated ( $B = -0.56$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Accordingly, there was a negative correlation between bullying and social abilities ( $B = -0.38$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, Rezaei, A. and Mousanezhad Jeddi, E., (2020) results demonstrated a strong relationship between the following factors: life happiness, perceived ownership of internal states, humor (a wisdom subscale), social awareness, and social abilities (a social intelligence subscale), and emotion regulation. Life happiness was not significantly related to the information processing techniques. In addition to a very significant association between each of the four components of EI and the overall score of communication skills, there was a substantial relationship between the total EI score and the overall rating of communication skills ( $r = 0.775$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) (Raeissi, P., 2023). Iqbal, J., et al., (2021) demonstrated a favorable correlation between academic success and two aspects of emotional intelligence: self-control and self-awareness. The same was true for emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and social skills subscales; they all fared better on "academic social networking sites (ASNS)". Researchers discovered that emotional intelligence factors including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management significantly impacted the commitment to the organization of vocational college professors (Mustafa, M. Z. B., et al., 2020).

### 2.2 Role of socioeconomic status in the development of emotional intelligence.

Staff members' understanding of EI as a conceptual and theoretical framework had a significant impact on the social and emotional interventions they did with children, according to the results, which showed both similarities and differences amongst schools (Wood, P., 2020). The study conducted by Koçak, O., (2021) investigated the relationship between COVID-19, emotional intelligence, depression, and life satisfaction. The results showed a negative correlation between emotional intelligence and depression and a good correlation with life satisfaction. The majority of pupils from low-income backgrounds performed poorly in school, which

forced them into the workforce at a young age, according to the study's findings. A lack of financial resources was associated with a lack of parental engagement in their children's education. After finishing high school, students from low-income families are less likely to continue their education and more likely to seek work (Vadivel, B., et al., 2023). The research conducted by Sanchez-Gomez, M., et al., (2021) employed a multi-occupational sample to examine the impact of EI on salary. The income was recorded with other socio-demographic characteristics, and the "Mobile Emotional Intelligence Test (MEIT)" was used to determine EI ability. Many clusters of symptoms were inversely connected to factors including financial stability, social support, as well as trait EI, which accounted for 20%-53% of the total variation. Trait EI, especially the aspects of well-being and self-control, explained the greatest variation across all outcomes, whereas social support and financial stability explained the most variation specifically (Espinosa, A., and Rudenstine, S., 2020).

### **2.3 Relationship between socioeconomic status and social skills.**

The study conducted by Waters, N. E., (2021) provided a thorough examination of the ways in which children's socioeconomic status affected their academic progress and served as a starting point for developing more targeted goals for policies and initiatives to reduce the achievement gap. Additionally, the results implied that the association between socioeconomic status (SES) along with academic success might be mediated by parental expectation, parental participation, and child engagement (Poon, K., 2020). The research illustrated how some aspects of HLE can aid in the acquisition of a second language by youngsters. Educational equity policies and family interventions can be better informed by the findings (Jiang, Y., et al., 2024). The low accomplishment was caused by the student's physical and psychological conditions as well as their family's socioeconomic level, according to the findings. The remedial program that was put into place was successful in bringing back 94 percent of pupils in Tamil Language and 93 percent in Mathematics (Selvarajan, P., 2022). The synchronous learning and instruction method exacerbated the social and educational exclusion and marginalization of Greek students, who were already facing difficult educational and social circumstances as a result of their families' socioeconomic status or particular personal and ethnic traits. As a result, these students were forced to drop out of school at an earlier age, dramatically increasing the dropout rate (Selvarajan, P., 2020).

## **3. Objectives and Hypothesis**

### **Objectives**

- i. To evaluate the relationship between social competence and emotional intelligence.
- ii. To identify how socioeconomic background influences emotional intelligence.
- iii. To investigate the impact of social competence on emotional intelligence.

### **Hypothesis:**

H0: Emotional intelligence and Social competence are not significantly correlated.

H1: Emotional intelligence and Social competence are significantly correlated.

H0: Socioeconomic background does not significantly influence emotional intelligence.

H2: Socioeconomic background significantly influences emotional intelligence.

H0: Social competence does not significantly impact emotional intelligence.

H3: Social competence significantly impacts emotional intelligence.

## **4. Material and Methods**

Both primary as well as secondary sources of information were employed to ascertain the "impact of social competence on emotional intelligence among secondary students." Random sampling was implemented to guarantee that secondary students were represented in the collection of primary information. A structured questionnaire was used as a primary source to gather the data from the respondents. The questionnaire was developed in accordance with the demographic parameters and various variables of the study, which include socioeconomic background, emotional intelligence, and social competence. 300 respondents responded to a total of 385 questionnaires that were distributed to secondary school students via the offline method. Details from 250 respondents who completed the questionnaire in its entirety were ultimately chosen for the study. Mathura (Uttar Pradesh) was selected as the study area for the study. The study's secondary data was gathered from a variety of sources, including governmental publications, websites, books, articles from journals, and internal documents. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies was implemented in the research design. Data analysis was conducted with SPSS 26 and MS Excel. To evaluate the study's hypothesis, the statistical instruments mean, standard deviation, regression, and correlation were implemented.

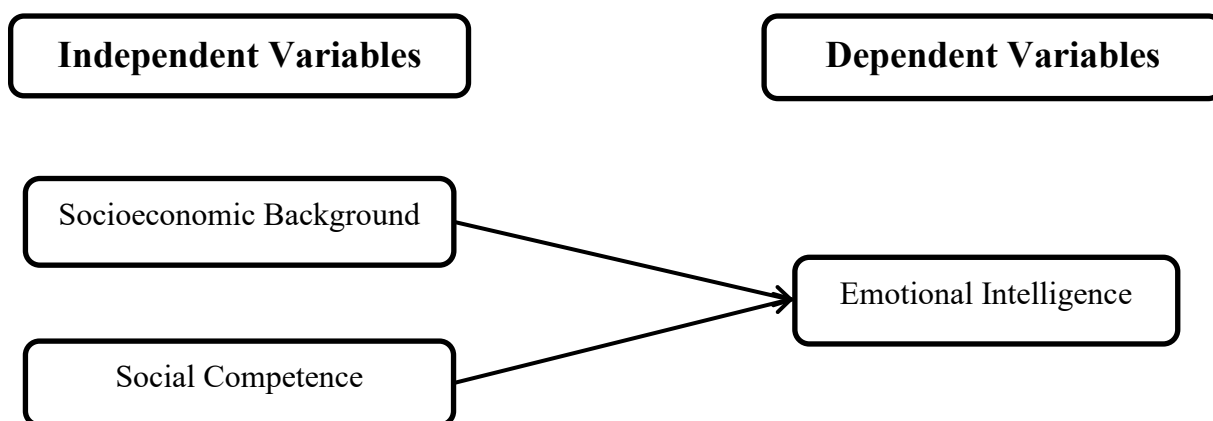


Figure 1: Research Model

## 5. Results and Interpretations

This section provides a concise summary of the data's findings and interpretation. To categorize the outcomes, the demographic characteristics, objectives, and hypotheses have been employed. A table that illustrates the findings and a clarification of those findings have been incorporated into the objectives as well as hypotheses.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Sr. No.	Demographic Variables	Characteristics	N	%
1	Gender	Male	138	55.2%
		Female	112	44.8%
2	Age	13 – 14 years	85	34.0%
		15 – 16 years	84	33.6%
		17 – 18 years	81	32.4%
3	Grade Level	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	67	26.8%
		10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	63	25.2%
		11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	60	24.0%
		12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	60	24.0%
4	Type of School	Public School	125	50.0%
		Private School	125	50.0%
5	Residence	Rural	110	44.0%
		Urban	140	56.0%
6	Family Structure	Nuclear Family	70	28.0%
		Extended Family	65	26.0%
		Single-parent Family	61	24.4%
		Blended Family	54	21.6%
7	Access to Educational Resources	Availability of study materials at home	90	36.0%
		Access to extracurricular activities	81	32.4%
		Access to private tutoring	79	31.6%

The Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents are shown in Table 1, which includes their “Gender, Age, Grade Level, Type of School, Residence, Family Structure, and Access to Educational Resources.” Table 1 indicates that 55.2% of the respondents were male and 44.8% were female. The respondents' ages are as follows: 34.0% are between the ages of 13 and 14, 33.6% are between the ages of 15 and 16, and the remaining 32.4% are between the ages of 17 and 18. The majority of respondents are in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade (26.8%), while minorities of respondents are in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades (24.0%). The respondents are from two types of schools, i.e., public school (50.0%) and private school (50.0%). Rural (44.0%) and urban (56.0%) are the two residences of the respondents. The majority of respondents (28.0%) are from nuclear families, while respondents come from a variety of family structures. The availability of study materials at home is reported by the majority of respondents (36.0%) in terms of access to educational resources.

**Obj. 1 To evaluate the relationship between social competence and emotional intelligence.**

**H0: Emotional intelligence and Social competence are not significantly correlated.**

**H1: Emotional intelligence and Social competence are significantly correlated.**

**Table 2: Correlation Analysis**

Hypothesis	Factor			Correlation			Hypothesis Result
		Mean	SD	Pearson (r)	Correlation	Sig value	
<b>H1</b>	Emotional Intelligence	8.9480	2.82866	.188**		0.003	<b>Supported</b>
	Social Competence	8.8560	2.65773				

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table 2 represents the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Social Competence. For “Emotional Intelligence,” the mean is 8.9480, and the standard deviation is 2.82866. For “Social Competence,” the mean is 8.8560, and the standard deviation is 2.65773. Emotional Intelligence and Social Competence showed a favorable and statistically significant Pearson association ( $r = .188$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Social Competence is 0.188, indicating a positive relationship. H1 was, therefore, supported.

**Obj. 2 To identify how socioeconomic background influences emotional intelligence.**

**H0: Socioeconomic background does not significantly influence emotional intelligence.**

**H2: Socioeconomic background significantly influences emotional intelligence.**

**Table 3: Regression Analysis**

Hypothesis	Regression Weights	Beta Coefficient	R2	F	t-value	p-value	Hypothesis Result
<b>H2</b>	Socioeconomic Background > Emotional Intelligence	-.126	0.016	4.024	-2.006	0.046	<b>Supported</b>

The above Table 3 Regression analysis shows that the independent variable Socioeconomic Background significantly affected dependent variable Emotional Intelligence. H2 is tested by regression. The beta coefficient is dependent on the units of the predictor variables. Here, the beta coefficient value is -.126. R2 shows only .016% of the variance for Emotional Intelligence can be evaluated via Socioeconomic Background. A p-value less than the significance level (commonly 0.05) shows that the overall regression model is statistically significant. A p-value less than the significance level (commonly 0.05) suggests that the overall regression model is statistically significant. In this case, with a p-value of 0.046, the model is statistically significant.

**Obj. 3 To investigate the impact of social competence on emotional intelligence.**

**H0: Social competence does not significantly impact emotional intelligence.**

**H3: Social competence significantly impacts emotional intelligence.**

**Table 4: Regression Analysis**

Hypothesis	Regression Weights	Beta Coefficient	R2	F	t-value	p-value	Hypothesis Result
<b>H3</b>	Social Competence > Emotional Intelligence	.188	0.035	9.097	3.016	0.003	<b>Supported</b>

The above Table 4 Regression analysis shows that the independent variable Social Competence significantly affected dependent variable Emotional Intelligence. H3 is tested by regression. The beta coefficient is dependent on the units of the predictor variables. Here, the beta coefficient value is .188. R2 shows only .035% of the variance for Emotional Intelligence can be evaluated via Social Competence. A p-value less than the significance level (commonly 0.05) shows that the overall regression model is statistically significant. A p-value less than the significance level (commonly 0.05) suggests that the overall regression model is statistically significant. In this case, with a p-value of 0.003, the model is statistically significant.

## 6. Discussion

According to the study's results, the self-assessment values of perceived EI and Social Competence are nearly identical to one another. The correlation matrix indicated a positive correlation between the two constructs. Nevertheless, Socioeconomic Background is responsible for a mere 1.6% of the variance in EI. The cumulative effect of Socioeconomic Background is statistically significant, contributing to 1.9% of variances, despite being negligibly minor. EI is significantly predicted by socioeconomic background, as indicated by the



ANOVA analysis; however, its influence is moderate. Social Competence also showed a positive and statistically significant impact on Emotional Intelligence. In general, the study underscored the significance of comprehending the correlation between these variables.

Martínez-Martínez, et al. (2020) discovered a favorable relationship between academic performance as well as emotional intelligence (EI) among students, which was in sharp contrast to the results of the previous study. Unfortunately, there also exists a negative relationship with cyber victimization. Similarly, Arias, et al. (2022) discussed that the participants demonstrate an elevated level of academic motivation along with a mid-to-high degree of emotional intelligence in all five areas (self-conscience, self-control, emotional usage, empathy, as well as social skills). Consequently, a significant and favorable relationship was observed between the two variables. In contrast, in “the study conducted by Sánchez-Álvarez, et al. (2020) the mean connection between EI and AP was better in studies that analyzed EI as capability ( $Z = 0.31$ ), yet it was weaker in studies that analyzed EI as self-reporting ( $Z = 0.24$ ), and self-reporting mixed EI ( $Z = 0.26$ ). In the same vein, the standard correlation coefficient among SEC and AA was 0.762, as shown in the study conducted by Kim and Shin, (2021). The three most important contributions to SEC were cooperation ( $R_s = 0.80$ ), analytical thinking disposition ( $R_s = 0.89$ ), and problem-solving ( $R_s = 0.86$ ). Subjective AA ( $R_s = 0.57$ ) and clinical effectiveness ( $R_s = 0.95$ ) were both associated with AA”. The research results advocated for the finalized version of the scale for emotional intelligence items, as it can be employed to assess the emotional intellect of students while maintaining a statistically significant positive relationship with academic excellence. Al-Qadri and Zhao (2021) observed statistically significant variations in the emotional intelligence of the respondents based on the gender variable.

## 7. Conclusion

The study showed that there is a positive impact of social competence on emotional intelligence in the student population of secondary schools. This infers that the more a student has the intelligence to relate and manage their own emotions and those of others better, the better the general social competence including communication, understanding, and conflict-solving skills. The results also demonstrated that social differentiation significantly affected both EI and SC, but the effect size was moderate. As the results show, the learners who come from relatively higher SES exhibited slightly higher levels of EI and SC than the learners from the lower SES group.

Thus, having refined the theoretical and empirical frameworks for analyzing the overall and specific components of emotional intelligence and social competence, these findings underscore the need for EI and SC interventions in secondary school students. Developing these resources can benefit learner's achievement, social-emotional wellness, and interactions with other learners and instructors. To address these issues, schools and educators should apply selected effective and more close-located programs aimed at enriching children's social and emotional competence including SEL instruction as well as regulation of emotions' use. Therefore it would be important for secondary school students to be tendered with these crucial skills so that they could be enabled to successfully tackle issues that come with adolescence as well as their future pursuits.

### 7.1 Implications, Limitations, and Recommendations for Further Studies

Acquisition of interpersonal and social skills assists secondary school students in their daily living and brings out responsible and productive citizens. Positive and prosaically relationships are translated into perceived relatedness and consequently, positive affect enhances the inclination to pursue goals that are positively valued by the society. Efforts undertaken as a way of enhancing the social competence of eligible children also promote their academic achievement. Yet, the research findings fail to offer a systematic account of the peculiarities of the selected studies on social competence and emotional intelligence of secondary students. The majority of the highlighted results seem to reflect overall aspects of social competence rather than those linked to the use of emotional intelligence. Future research directions involve more extensive longitudinal research to determine the mediate link between EM and SC, analyze the effects of particular school variables in SC development, assess the long-standing consequences of SC and EM on students' academic performance and general well-being, compare parenting and family environment impact on SC, and compare students' SC levels across SES and different school systems.

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