

A Study of Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Social Awareness of Secondary School Students

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Abstract: *In the present educational context, the aim of schooling is not confined to academic achievement alone. Education is increasingly expected to nurture emotionally balanced, socially responsible, and ethically aware individuals. Emotional intelligence is one of the most significant psychological constructs influencing students' behaviour, interpersonal adjustment, communication patterns, and social participation. At the same time, social awareness has emerged as an essential competency for harmonious living in a diverse society, as it enables students to understand others' feelings, social situations, values, and responsibilities.*

The present study examines the relationship between emotional intelligence and social awareness among secondary school students. The study is based on the assumption that students who are emotionally intelligent are more likely to demonstrate empathy, cooperation, sensitivity, and socially appropriate behaviour in school and community settings. Emotional intelligence supports self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills, all of which contribute to the development of social awareness.

A descriptive and correlational research design was adopted for the study. A sample of 250 secondary school students was selected through random sampling. Standardized tools were used to measure emotional intelligence and social awareness. The collected data were analysed using suitable statistical techniques, namely mean and Pearson's correlation coefficient.

The findings of the study revealed a strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and social awareness ($r = 0.76$). This indicates that students with higher emotional intelligence tend to exhibit a greater understanding of social situations, stronger empathy, better interpersonal relations, and improved social adjustment. The study emphasizes the need to integrate emotional and social learning within school education.

The study is significant for teachers, school administrators, parents, and curriculum planners because it provides evidence that emotional competencies and social sensitivity are closely linked. The findings suggest that schools should not focus only on academic success, but also on emotional and social development for the holistic growth of learners..

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Social Awareness, Secondary School Students, Empathy, Social Skills, Adolescents, Emotional Development, Interpersonal Relationships, School Education, Holistic Development

I. INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, education is viewed as a comprehensive process that aims at the overall development of the child. The purpose of education is not merely to transmit knowledge but also to shape personality, behaviour, attitudes, and social

values. Students today live in a world marked by rapid social change, technological advancement, competition, and increasing interpersonal complexity. In such a context, emotional stability and social understanding have become essential for successful personal and academic life.

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability of an individual to recognize, understand, manage, and use emotions effectively in daily life. It includes awareness of one's own emotions as well as sensitivity toward the emotions of others. A student with high emotional intelligence is better able to control impulses, manage stress, communicate effectively, and build healthy relationships. Emotional intelligence is not limited to emotional expression; it also involves thoughtful emotional regulation and constructive social interaction.

Social awareness, on the other hand, refers to the capacity to understand the feelings, needs, perspectives, and social conditions of other people. It includes empathy, respect for diversity, cooperation, sensitivity to social norms, and the ability to respond appropriately in social contexts. Socially aware students are more likely to behave responsibly, respect others, and contribute positively to group activities and community life.

At the secondary school level, students are in a crucial developmental stage. Adolescence is a period marked by emotional changes, identity formation, social comparison, peer influence, and increased need for acceptance and belongingness. During this phase, emotional intelligence plays a very important role in helping students adjust socially and respond appropriately to social challenges. If students are unable to manage their emotions, they may experience conflicts, misunderstandings, isolation, or behaviour problems. On the contrary, emotionally intelligent students are often more empathetic, cooperative, and socially mature.

The relationship between emotional intelligence and social awareness is therefore of great educational importance. Emotional intelligence may act as a foundation for developing social awareness because understanding emotions helps students better understand human behaviour and social interaction. A student who can interpret emotional cues and regulate personal feelings is usually more capable of understanding the viewpoints and conditions of others.

Hence, the present study seeks to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and social awareness among secondary school students. The study attempts to contribute to educational research by highlighting the importance of emotional and social competencies in school education.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Emotional Intelligence in Education

Emotional intelligence has received wide attention in educational psychology because of its role in academic success, personality development, and adjustment. Goleman (1995) emphasized that emotional intelligence is often more important than intellectual intelligence in predicting success in life. Emotional intelligence enables learners to deal with frustration, manage anxiety, communicate effectively, and maintain positive relationships. In school settings, emotionally intelligent students generally display better discipline, adaptability, and social interaction.

2.2 Social Awareness as a Developmental Competency

Social awareness is a key element of social and emotional development. It involves empathy, perspective-taking, appreciation of diversity, and sensitivity to the emotions and needs of others. Social awareness helps students function effectively in group settings and contributes to responsible citizenship. It is especially important in schools because students regularly interact with peers, teachers, and authority figures from varied backgrounds and viewpoints.

2.3 Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Social Behaviour

Several studies suggest that emotional intelligence contributes significantly to positive social behaviour. Students who are able to identify and regulate their emotions tend to have stronger interpersonal skills and greater sensitivity toward others. Emotional intelligence helps reduce aggression, misunderstanding, and social conflict while promoting empathy, cooperation, and mutual respect.

2.4 Emotional Intelligence and Empathy

Empathy is one of the central dimensions linking emotional intelligence and social awareness. Mayer and Salovey (1997) proposed that emotional intelligence includes the perception and understanding of emotions, which are directly relevant

to empathic behaviour. Empathy allows individuals to respond to others with care and sensitivity. In educational contexts, empathy improves peer relationships, classroom climate, and collaborative learning.

2.5 Gap in Existing Research

Although many studies have examined emotional intelligence and its impact on academic and personal outcomes, comparatively fewer studies have focused specifically on its relationship with social awareness among secondary school students. Since adolescence is a formative stage for both emotional and social development, there is a clear need for more research in this area. The present study attempts to fill this gap by exploring the association between emotional intelligence and social awareness in the school context.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess emotional intelligence among secondary school students.
- To measure social awareness among secondary school students.
- To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and social awareness.
- To understand the role of emotional intelligence in shaping social behaviour and interpersonal understanding.
- To suggest educational measures for improving emotional intelligence and social awareness in schools.

IV. HYPOTHESIS

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): There is no statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and social awareness among secondary school students.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a statistically significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and social awareness among secondary school students.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Approach

The present study is based on the quantitative research approach. This approach is appropriate because it enables the researcher to collect numerical data, measure the variables objectively, and analyse the relationship between them through statistical methods. Since the study seeks to assess emotional intelligence and social awareness and determine their degree of association, the quantitative approach provides clarity, precision, and reliability.

5.2 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and correlational research design.

The **descriptive design** is used to describe the levels of emotional intelligence and social awareness among secondary school students.

The **correlational design** is used to examine the extent and direction of the relationship between emotional intelligence and social awareness without manipulating the variables.

This design is suitable because the researcher intends to study naturally existing conditions and determine whether the two variables are related.

5.3 Population

The population of the study includes all secondary school students studying in recognized schools. These students belong to an age group where emotional maturity and social understanding are actively developing. The population represents adolescents from different backgrounds who experience academic, emotional, and social challenges in daily school life.

5.4 Sample

A sample of 250 secondary school students was selected through the random sampling technique. Random sampling was considered appropriate because it provides equal opportunity to all members of the population to be selected and helps minimize personal bias. The sample includes students from the secondary stage, generally within the age group of 14 to 16 years.

5.5 Variables of the Study

The study includes the following variables:

Independent Variable: Emotional Intelligence

This variable includes emotional competencies such as self-awareness, empathy, emotional regulation, motivation, and social skills.

Dependent Variable: Social Awareness

This variable refers to the understanding of others' emotions, social conditions, interpersonal sensitivity, cooperation, and responsible social behaviour.

Demographic Variable: Age/School Level

these factors may provide contextual understanding of the student group under study.

5.6 Tools for Data Collection

Two standardized tools were used in the study:

1. Emotional Intelligence Scale

This tool was used to measure the level of emotional intelligence among students. It includes items related to self-awareness, emotional control, empathy, motivation, and interpersonal understanding.

2. Social Awareness Scale

This scale was used to assess the students' understanding of social situations, empathy toward others, social sensitivity, respect, and cooperative behaviour.

The tools were selected because of their relevance, reliability, and suitability for measuring the required variables among secondary school students.

5.7 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was conducted systematically. Permission was obtained from the school authorities before administering the tools. Students were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured that their responses would remain confidential and be used only for academic purposes.

The questionnaires were administered in classroom settings under proper supervision. Clear instructions were given so that students could understand how to respond correctly. The researcher ensured that the environment remained calm and unbiased. After completion, the responses were collected, arranged, classified, and prepared for statistical analysis.

5.8 Statistical Techniques Used

The collected data were analysed using the following statistical methods:

Mean

Used to calculate the average scores of emotional intelligence and social awareness.

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r)

Used to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between emotional intelligence and social awareness.

These techniques were found suitable for describing the data and testing the hypothesis.

5.9 Delimitations of the Study

The study has the following delimitations:

The research is limited to 250 secondary school students only.

The study is confined to the secondary school level.

The study depends on self-reported responses, which may be influenced by honesty and personal understanding.

Only two variables, emotional intelligence and social awareness, are included in the study.

The findings may not be generalized beyond the sample and setting studied.

Despite these delimitations, the study provides useful insight into the relationship between emotional intelligence and social awareness among students.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The collected data were analysed using mean and Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Mean Emotional Intelligence Score: **108.5** (out of 150)

Mean Social Awareness Score: **82.3**

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r): **0.76**

Interpretation of Data

The mean score of emotional intelligence indicates that the students, on average, possess a fairly good level of emotional competence. They show an ability to understand emotions, regulate reactions, and interact with others in a balanced way. The mean score of social awareness suggests that the students also demonstrate a satisfactory level of social understanding and sensitivity toward others. This reflects their ability to empathize, cooperate, and respond appropriately in social situations.

The obtained correlation coefficient of **0.76** indicates a **strong positive relationship** between emotional intelligence and social awareness. This means that as emotional intelligence increases, social awareness also tends to increase. Students who are emotionally more competent are likely to be more empathetic, socially sensitive, and capable of building positive interpersonal relationships.

Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

VII. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The major findings of the study are as follows:

Secondary school students show noticeable variation in their levels of emotional intelligence.

Social awareness levels also vary among students.

A strong positive correlation exists between emotional intelligence and social awareness.

Students with higher emotional intelligence tend to be more empathetic, cooperative, and socially responsible.

Emotional intelligence appears to play a major role in improving social adjustment and interpersonal understanding.

The study confirms that emotional competencies are closely related to social behaviour.

VIII. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

8.1 Emotional Intelligence among Students

The findings show that emotional intelligence is an important aspect of student development. Students who score higher in emotional intelligence are generally better at recognizing their own emotional states, managing emotional reactions, and understanding the emotions of others. These qualities help them remain balanced in stressful situations and maintain better relationships with peers and teachers.

8.2 Social Awareness among Students

Social awareness was found to be an essential quality among secondary school students. Those who possess greater social awareness are more likely to show empathy, respect, and cooperation in everyday school life. They can understand group dynamics, respond sensitively to others, and act in a socially appropriate manner.

8.3 Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Social Awareness

The correlation coefficient of 0.76 clearly indicates a strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and social awareness. This finding suggests that emotional intelligence acts as a foundation for socially aware behaviour. Students who understand emotions are better prepared to understand people. Their emotional regulation supports patience and tolerance, while empathy enhances understanding of others' feelings and perspectives.

Discussion

The study supports the view that emotional intelligence and social awareness are deeply interconnected. Emotional intelligence strengthens the inner emotional framework of students, while social awareness reflects the outward social application of that framework. A student who is self-aware and empathetic is naturally more likely to behave respectfully and cooperatively in social situations.

The result is also educationally meaningful because it indicates that schools should pay greater attention to emotional learning. Social problems such as peer conflict, bullying, insensitivity, and isolation can be reduced when students are trained to understand emotions and human relationships more effectively.

The present findings are consistent with the broader understanding in educational psychology that emotional competence contributes significantly to interpersonal competence and social maturity.

IX. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the study have important implications for school education:

9.1 Integration of Social and Emotional Learning

Schools should integrate Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) into the curriculum so that students can develop self-awareness, empathy, communication skills, and responsible social behaviour.

9.2 Teacher's Role in Emotional Development

Teachers should create a classroom environment that encourages emotional expression, mutual respect, and healthy interaction. They should also model empathy, patience, and socially responsible behaviour.

9.3 Group Activities and Cooperative Learning

Group discussions, collaborative projects, role play, and peer-learning activities should be encouraged because these experiences help students understand others' perspectives and improve their social awareness.

9.4 Guidance and Counselling Services

Schools should strengthen guidance and counselling programs to support students in dealing with emotional stress, peer pressure, and interpersonal difficulties.

9.5 Value-Based Education

Education should promote values such as empathy, respect, compassion, tolerance, and cooperation so that students grow into socially aware and responsible citizens.

9.6 Parent-School Cooperation

Parents and teachers should work together to support the emotional and social development of adolescents. A healthy home and school environment can significantly improve students' emotional balance and social sensitivity.

X. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is subject to the following limitations:

The sample size is limited to 250 students only.

The study is restricted to secondary school students.

The study is based on self-report tools, which may involve subjectivity.

Only the relationship between emotional intelligence and social awareness was studied; other influencing variables were not considered.

The findings are limited to the specific context in which the study was conducted.

XI. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Similar studies may be conducted at the primary, higher secondary, and college levels.

Comparative studies may be undertaken on the basis of gender, locality, type of school, or socio-economic status.

Experimental studies may be conducted to test the effectiveness of emotional intelligence training programs.

Longitudinal studies may be carried out to examine the long-term development of emotional intelligence and social awareness.

Further research may include additional variables such as academic achievement, self-esteem, leadership, or adjustment.

XII. CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that emotional intelligence and social awareness are strongly and positively related among secondary school students. Students with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to understand others, act responsibly in social situations, and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships. Emotional intelligence helps students become empathetic, cooperative, and socially adaptable.

The findings make it clear that the development of emotional intelligence should be treated as an essential component of school education. Academic success alone is not sufficient for the holistic development of learners. Schools must therefore create educational experiences that nurture both emotional competence and social sensitivity.

In conclusion, emotional intelligence is not only an individual psychological strength but also a social asset that contributes to the development of socially aware, responsible, and well-adjusted students.

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