

The Role of Social Comparison and Self-Concept on Emotional Intelligence among Adolescents

Anshika Rana^{1*}, Dr. Rajat Kanti Mitra²

ABSTRACT

This research paper examines the influence of social comparison and self-concept on the development of emotional intelligence among adolescents. Adolescents' psychological health and social functioning are greatly impacted by their emotional intelligence, which is defined as their capacity to recognize, interpret, and control emotions. The act of comparing oneself to others in order to assess one's own skills, traits, and accomplishments is referred to as social comparison. The appraisal and assessment of one's own qualities and values are included in one's self-concept. The study aims to explore the interplay between social comparison, self-concept, and emotional intelligence, and their potential impacts on adolescents' emotional development. The research approach entails data collection from 115 adolescents using standardized questionnaires and measures assessing social comparison (Allan and Gilbert, 1995), Self-concept (Robson, 1989), and Emotional intelligence (Schutte, 1998). The associations between variables will be examined using statistical analysis, such as correlation and regression studies. The findings of this study are expected to provide insights into the intricate dynamics of social comparison and self-concept in relation to the development of emotional intelligence among adolescents. The implications of the research can contribute to the design of interventions and programs aimed at promoting positive emotional development and well-being in this critical stage of life.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Social Comparison, Self-Concept*

Today's world revolves around individuals who constantly urge to evaluate themselves within their surroundings. The domain pertaining to evaluation can be a success, physical attributes, intellectual abilities, etc. Studies have shown that comparisons of some form occur in up to 10% of our thoughts. The impulse to evaluate oneself concerning our surroundings in the context of society is Social Comparison. Social comparison is a psychological process whereby people evaluate their skills, characteristics, and viewpoints by contrasting them with those of others. People utilize social comparison to better understand who they are, dispel uncertainty, and increase their self-esteem. In human life, this practice is typical. According to a study, social comparison can have both positive and detrimental effects on a person's behaviors and well-being. On the one hand, social comparison can influence individuals to do better and reach their goals. Social comparison,

¹Student- MA Clinical Psychology, Supervisor and Faculty, Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences (AIPS) (2021-2023)

²Assistant Professor, AIPS, Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India

*Corresponding Author

Received: June 15, 2023; Revision Received: July 14, 2023; Accepted: July 18, 2023

The Role of Social Comparison and Self-Concept on Emotional Intelligence among Adolescents

on the other hand, can have negative unfavorable effects including jealousy, envy, and self-doubt.

We compare some aspects of who we are to those of other people in order to better understand who we are (such as our behavior, views, status, and accomplishments). This behavior is known as social comparison. (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007). The social comparison hypothesis states that people evaluate their own social and personal values by comparing themselves to others. Leon Festinger, a psychologist, created this specific idea in 1954. Later research found that people who often assess their performance in relation to that of others may have a strong desire to change, but they may also experience significant dissatisfaction, guilt, or remorse. These emotions might motivate people to engage in risky behaviors like lying or disordered eating.

Self-comparison is the process of contrasting oneself with another individual or group of individuals. Social comparison is broken down into two categories:

- 1. Upward social comparison:** This social comparison signifies when an individual weighs themselves with an individual who is deemed to be “better” in some way or the other. This is considered to be a vital tool if used adequately. When an individual compares themselves to others in an upward direction may feel optimistic, upbeat, motivated, and driven to accomplish their objectives. On the other perspective, a person may feel jealous of the situation of the person they are comparing themselves to and may even feel unsatisfied and resentful that they are not in the same position as them. This may lead to the low self-esteem of the individual. It is referred regarded as social comparison bias when upward comparison results in these envious thoughts and negative affect.
- 2. Downward Social Comparison:** This comparison refers to when an individual compares themselves to someone that is perceived as "worse" in some regard, than or not as capable as the other individual. This has the same benefits and drawbacks as an upward comparison. When comparing themselves to someone below them, one can feel thankful because they realize their superior circumstances and are appreciative of what they have. This could go wrong because a person might develop a contemptuous attitude towards individuals who are less fortunate than they are since they are not as valuable. This can lead to a boost in the self-esteem of the individual because they perceive themselves as better than others. This can also increase the self-confidence of the individuals. In addition, if they are already succeeding, they may feel less motivated and exert less effort to achieve their objectives.

While certain comparisons may give you confidence and encourage you to work towards a goal, others may make you feel inadequate and less willing to do so.

Self-Concept

Adolescence is the developmental period. It is also a transition phase from childhood to adulthood. During this transition phase, there are a lot of changes involved including biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional changes. These changes are responsible for transforming adolescents' vision of self to a more complex, well-organized, and consistent view of adulthood. This vision of self-shapes the structure of self-concept. This self-concept structurally becomes more differentiated and organized with the transition phase. Adolescents are more likely to describe themselves in complex, abstract, and psychological terms. Self-esteem is modified during these years, which is an evaluative side of self-

The Role of Social Comparison and Self-Concept on Emotional Intelligence among Adolescents

concept. Adolescence is marked by a period of heightened sensitivity and critical acquisitions. Self-concept is considered to be an important factor during adolescence. Adolescents have varied abilities, self-confidence, and high academic achievements if they have a high self-concept that shapes their identity in society. The high self-concept helps them develop leadership qualities, life skills, etc.

Carl Rogers, the founder of humanistic psychology, suggested the components of self-concept:

- **Self-Image:** The way we perceive ourselves is our self-image. Self-image encompasses our perceptions of our physical characteristics (such as brown hair, blue eyes, and height), our social standings (such as wife, brother, or gardener), and our personality attributes (such as extroverted, serious, or kind).
- Reality and self-image are not compatible. One or more of their qualities may be overemphasized in the minds of certain people. These inflated perceptions, which can be positive or negative, might cause a person to have a more positive impression of some aspects of oneself while having a more negative assessment of others.
- **Self-Esteem:** Self-esteem is the value that we accord ourselves. How we see ourselves determines how much self-esteem we individually have. The evaluations incorporate our comparisons to others as well as others' reactions based upon it.
- Our self-esteem grows when we see people responding favorably to our actions in comparison to others. On the other hand, self-esteem decreases when we see people respond negatively in some areas where we are incapable compared to others. We can have positive self-esteem in certain areas (like "I am a good student") while having negative self-esteem in others (like "I am not well-liked").
- **Ideal Self:** Our ideal selves are whom we strive to be. Self-perception and one's ideal selves frequently conflict. This contradiction may have a negative effect on one's self-esteem. One's self-esteem may be badly impacted by this incongruity.
- Self-image and the ideal self can be consistent or inconsistent, according to Carl Rogers. When one's self-image and their ideal version of themselves coincide, this is called congruence. Congruence is challenging to obtain, but once it is, increased congruence will result in self-actualization. When one's self-image and their ideal version of themselves conflict, incongruence results. Inconsistency between the self and experiences causes internal conflict (also known as cognitive dissonance), which limits self-actualization.

Self-concept is developed or shaped by the person via interactions with and thoughts on their circumstances; it is not innate to them. This aspect of self-concept is significant since it may be managed or changed (Franken, 1994).

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the ability of an individual to identify and regulate one's own emotions, along with others' emotions. Emotional intelligence comprises of few skills: namely emotional awareness, or the capacity to recognize and name one's own emotions as well as the capacity to channel those emotions into activities like thinking and problem-solving. The ability to manage emotions is the last component of emotional intelligence, and it encompasses being able to control one's own emotions when necessary as well as assist others do the same.

The Role of Social Comparison and Self-Concept on Emotional Intelligence among Adolescents

Emotional intelligence can be traced from the works of Edward Thorndike, who introduced the concept of “social intelligence” in 1920. Social intelligence is the ability to comprehend and manage interpersonal relationships effectively. Thorndike’s theories laid the groundwork for understanding the influence of non-cognitive skills in social interactions. The idea of multiple intelligences was first investigated independently by psychologists Howard Gardner and John Mayer in the 1970s. They posited that intelligence is not just defined by cognitive ability but also covers other domains, such as social and emotional capabilities. In Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, a variety of skills were included as part of intelligence, including intrapersonal and interpersonal skills that are strongly tied to emotional intelligence. Moreover, psychologists Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer along with Daniel Goleman, popularized the term “emotional intelligence” in the 1990s. Emotional intelligence is the capacity to perceive, comprehend, recognize, and successfully regulate emotions in oneself and others, according to Salovey and Mayer.

Researches signify that emotional intelligence has four levels including emotional perception, ability to reason, understanding emotions, and regulating emotions:

- **Perceiving emotions:** The initial step is to comprehend emotions to perceive them accurately. In various cases, this entails an understanding of non-verbal cues such as body language and facial expressions.
- **Reasoning with emotions:** The second stage involves promoting thinking and cognitive activity while using emotions. Our emotional responses to objects that catch our attention determine what gets our attention first and how we behave.
- **Understanding emotions:** There are several underlying meanings associated with the observed emotions. The observer must ascertain what triggered the person's particular emotion.
- **Managing emotions:** The capacity to control one's emotions is crucial. Regulating emotions, acting appropriately when emotions occur, and reacting to other people's emotions are all parts of emotional management.

These four model branches are organized in a complicated manner, with simpler processes appearing at lower levels and more sophisticated ones appearing at higher levels. Higher levels call for more conscious involvement and management of emotions compared to lower levels, which include feeling and expressing emotions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kumar (2016). This study aims to investigate the association between 11th-grade students' self-concept and emotional intelligence. Students in senior secondary schools were evaluated on their self-concept and emotional intelligence using a correlational methodology. Purposive sampling methods were used to choose a sample of 226 students from senior secondary schools in the CBSE-affiliated Patiala area. Both the Self-concept Questionnaire (SCQ) and the Mangal Emotional Intelligence Inventory (MEII), both established by Drs. S. K. Mangal and Shubhra Manga, were used in the study. The data were analyzed using Karl Pearson's product-moment correlation approach. The study's results show a strong relationship between emotional intelligence and self-concept. Furthermore, it was shown that other aspects of self-concept, such as "physical," "social," "temperamental," "educational," and "intellectual," were connected with emotional intelligence. The study concludes that educational institutions ought to promote an environment that is favorable for the growth of self-concept.

The Role of Social Comparison and Self-Concept on Emotional Intelligence among Adolescents

Verma et al. (2022). The transition and developmental changes during adolescence are very crucial, they need to face various issues which can affect their further stages of life. Better emotional intelligence will enable them to manage their own emotions and comprehend those of others. They will be able to handle various behavioral issues and will be able to have better lives if they have higher levels of emotional intelligence. This article discusses various factors which affect emotional intelligence such as age, gender, parental support, etc. This article also discusses research on how teenage behavior, mental health, and academic performance are influenced by emotional intelligence. Adolescents must develop stronger emotional intelligence if they want to improve their standard of living. The results have shown that emotional intelligence impacts several areas of adolescent life and contributes to the standard of living.

Bakhsh and Nirupama (2012). The study's goal was to determine how social maturity affected the emotional intelligence of undergraduate respondents. The independent factors, such as social maturity level, are aspects of the highest relevance, as indicated by the fact that the resulting t-ratio ($t = 5.08 >.01$) was also demonstrated to be statistically significant. According to this methodology, it is appropriate to state that the respondents' emotional intelligence is considerably influenced in a variety of ways by their level of social maturity. The results of this study are consistent with the notion that social maturity is an important factor that influences the respondents' varying degrees of emotional intelligence. Knowing what to do and working towards it by imitating positive social behavior models are signs of social maturity.

Saadat et al. (2017). The current study sought to ascertain how perfectionism, self-concept clarity, self-esteem, and the percentage of social comparison related to each other. All Tehran high school girls were included in the current cross-sectional survey. Cluster sampling in many stages was used to choose 477 girls. The correlation matrix's findings suggested that self-esteem and self-concept clarity and social comparison have a strong negative association ($P 0.000$). Perfectionism and social comparison had a substantial positive connection ($P 0.000$). Stepwise regression analysis revealed that self-concept clarity was a significant predictor of 17% of the variation in social comparison. The perfectionism and self-esteem variables considerably raised the coefficients of determination to 24% and 26%, respectively. Although self-esteem and a clear sense of one's self were significant detractors from the social comparison (both $P 0.000$), perfectionism was a substantial predictor of social comparison. The capacity to predict social comparison more precisely than perfectionism, according to beta coefficients, was self-concept clarity, self-esteem, and self-worth ($=-0.28$, $= 0.27$, and $=-0.18$, respectively). In addition to helping to understand how eating disorders and negative body image arise, focusing on individual variations that make people susceptible to social comparison has implications for both prevention and therapy.

METHODOLOGY

Hypothesis

- There will be a significant relationship between social comparison and self-concept on emotional intelligence among adolescents.
- There will be a significant relationship between social comparison and emotional intelligence among adolescents.
- There will be a significant relationship between self-concept and emotional intelligence among adolescents.

The Role of Social Comparison and Self-Concept on Emotional Intelligence among Adolescents

- There will be a significant difference in the levels of social comparison and self-concept on emotional intelligence among adolescents.

Variables

Independent variables are the social comparison and self-concept.

The dependent variable is Emotional Intelligence. This is a dependent variable because the impact of social comparison and self-concept is to be observed on emotional intelligence.

Sample and its Selection

This research study includes a sample size of 115 participants belonging to the adolescent age group. The age of the participants ranges from 15-20 years. The sample was gathered from numerous schools. The selected sample belonged to the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. Using a stratified sampling methodology, the data was obtained using the survey method. The respondents were open to participating in the survey, which was both descriptive and elaborate and aided by various standardized scales.

Research Design

The research design of this study is majorly based on quantitative research methodology as it uses descriptive statistics to quantify the relationship between independent and dependent variables. In a categorical way, this study is of relational type of research so we will be used correlation to assess the relationship between social comparison, self-concept, and emotional intelligence, and to study the cause-and-effect relationship we will be using regression analysis between social comparison, self-concept on emotional intelligence.

Description of Tools Used

1. **Social Comparison Scale:** Allan and Gilbert (1995) created this scale to assess how individuals perceive their social status and that of others. This scale consists of 11 bipolar components. The 11 criteria include evaluations of status, beauty, and how well they believe they can adjust to their surroundings. Low scores are a sign of inferiority complexes and low self-esteem. With Cronbach alphas of .88 and .96 with clinical populations and .91 and .90 with student groups, the scale has been shown to have high reliability. (Allan and Gilbert, 1995, 1997).
2. **The Self-Concept Questionnaire (SCQ):** Robson created and standardized the scale, which was applied in this research investigation. An eight-point scale, from completely disagree to completely agree, is used for scoring. According to how an individual generally feels, they are asked to rate how much they agree or disagree with each statement. The SCQ has been shown to have good validity (clinical validity of .70; i.e., the relationship between SCQ results and evaluations of self-esteem on a 10-point visual analog scale provided by skilled therapists for a sample of mental patients; Robson, 1989) and good reliability (Cronbach's alpha of .89).
3. **The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT):** Using four subscales—emotion perception, use of emotions, self-relevant emotion management, and other person management—this scale is designed to assess general emotional intelligence (EI). The SSEIT is organized using Salovey and Mayer's (1990) EI model. In terms of emotional intelligence, the EQ-I models and the SSEIT model are closely related. The SSEIT's reliability tests yield positive findings, according to Schutte et al. (1998). 346 university students and people from various localities comprised the sample, and a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.790 was reported. In the current study, the internal reliability of the SSEIT for a sample of 107 first-year students.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Table: 1 Mean and Standard deviation between Social comparison, self-concept, and emotional intelligence.

	Social Comparison	Self-Concept	Emotional Intelligence
N	115	115	115
Mean	76.55	123.76	121.78
Std. Deviation	16.175	21.077	12.407

Table: 2 Correlation between Social comparison, self-concept, and emotional intelligence

		SOCIAL COMPARISON	SELF CONCEPT	EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
SOCIAL COMPARISON	Pearson Correlation	1	.389**	.151
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	.107
	N	115	115	115
SELF CONCEPT	Pearson Correlation	.389**	1	.232*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		.013
	N	115	115	115
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE	Pearson Correlation	.151	.232*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.107	.013	
	N	115	115	115

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

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table: 3 Regression analysis

Model Summary

R	R Square
.270 ^a	.073

a. Predictors: (Constant), AGE, SELF-CONCEPT, SOCIAL COMPARISON

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	75.211	21.823		3.446	<.001
	SOCIAL COMPARISON	.041	.077	.053	.531	.596
	SELF CONCEPT	.130	.059	.222	2.214	.029
	AGE	1.640	1.224	.124	1.340	.183

a. Dependent Variable: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

DISCUSSION

Emotional Intelligence and Self-Concept are critical aspects of an individual’s psychological well-being and achievements in various life domains. Adolescence is considered to be a crucial phase during the development of an individual. This phase is also essential for the development of emotional intelligence. The capacity to recognize and control one's own emotions as well as those of others is known as emotional intelligence. Along with emotional intelligence, the development of self-concept is also considered to be an essential aspect during adolescence. The self-concept defines as an individual’s thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions about themselves. With the development of emotional intelligence and self-concept, the urge for constant comparison among society also increases during adolescence. Adolescents are also significantly influenced by social experiences during this period. This

The Role of Social Comparison and Self-Concept on Emotional Intelligence among Adolescents

refers to social comparison. Social comparison is the tendency for people to assess their skills, traits, and ideas about others.

The current research aims to explore the role of social comparison and self-concept on emotional intelligence among adolescents. The study investigates how social comparison and self-concept are associated with emotional intelligence. It investigates how these variables influence emotional regulation and social skills.

The study hypothesizes that social comparison and self-concept may have a significant effect on the development of emotional intelligence among adolescents. The study was conducted on 115 participants using a survey approach to analyze the variables. Using standardized tests of emotional intelligence, social comparison, and self-concept, the study used a quantitative research approach to gather information.

The first hypothesis put forward by this study is that there will be a significant relationship between social comparison and self-concept. After analysis, the result signifies that there is a positive correlation between social comparison and self-concept with a Pearson correlation of 0.389. This correlation is statistically significant at 0.01 level ($p < 0.001$), indicating that there is a reliable relationship between social comparison and self-concept. This suggests that with an increase in social engagement, social interaction, and social comparison, adolescents tend to have higher self-concepts. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

We discovered from the literature and research that exposure to upward social comparison generally has negative effects. Additionally, contrary to expectations, a substantial negative correlation between ascending emotional intelligence and social comparison. Additionally, there has been evidence of a link between emotional intelligence and negative social comparison (Hasanvand, 2011; Khaledian et al., 2015). Similarly, it was also observed from the literature that emotionally stable young adults mostly had higher levels of Emotional Intelligence (Butler, 2014).

The other formulated hypothesis is there will be a significant relationship between social comparison and emotional intelligence among adolescents. The Pearson correlation coefficient between emotional intelligence and social comparison is 0.151. This signifies that there is no significant and reliable relationship between social comparison and emotional intelligence. Social comparison doesn't impact emotional intelligence among adolescents in any manner. Hence, we reject the hypothesis.

The study also hypothesizes that there will be a significant relationship between self-concept and emotional intelligence among adolescents. The Pearson correlation coefficient between them is 0.232, indicating a positive correlation. This correlation is statistically significant at 0.05 level. This signifies that there is a significant and reliable relationship between self-concept and emotional intelligence among adolescents. This indicates that adolescents who have high self-concept tend to have higher emotional intelligence and adolescents with low self-concept tend to have low emotional intelligence. Hence, we accept the formulated hypothesis. As adolescents are more conscious of their feelings and have a better understanding of others' emotions, adolescents who have a good self-concept typically have greater levels of emotional intelligence. Adolescents with a negative self-concept, on the other hand, may have trouble controlling their emotions and exhibiting empathy because they may be less conscious of their own emotions and find it hard to comprehend those of others.

The Role of Social Comparison and Self-Concept on Emotional Intelligence among Adolescents

Research says everyone constantly needs to have a strong sense of self to make decisions throughout their lives. People with positive self-concepts tend to be more upbeat, self-assured, and happy about things, which can improve their emotional intelligence. The goal of this study is to present a broad review of the connection between emotional intelligence and one's self-perception. People with superior emotional intelligence tend to be able to recognize themselves through their interactions with others. The formation of self-concept in this situation is influenced by a variety of elements. In essence, the process of using emotional intelligence has started with an individual's perception of themselves in relation to their surroundings. (Roida, 2020).

The results of this study indicate that self-concept is a predictor of emotional intelligence, unlike social comparison. On the other hand, social comparison is a predictor of self-concept. Adolescents are more likely to have greater levels of emotional intelligence if they engage in constructive social comparison and have a good self-concept. To support the development of emotional intelligence in teenagers, it is crucial to foster good self-concept and positive social experiences. The findings of this study have important implications for parents, educators, and mental health professionals who interact with adolescents. (Trigueros et al., 2018; Parra et al., 2020).

In a nutshell, this study emphasizes the role of social comparison and self-concept in forming teenagers' emotional intelligence. It implies that programs designed to raise teenagers' emotional intelligence ought to prioritize fostering pleasant social interactions and boosting their self-concept. By considering these factors, educators, and mental health professionals can plan interventions to promote positive outcomes. Interventions that highlight the improvement of self-concept and provide positive role models for emotional skills, may help adolescents develop stronger emotional intelligence. These findings may contribute to practical implications for interventions that help in improving emotional intelligence, such as CBT, mindfulness, and enhancing social skills. Hence, this study can contribute to various aspects and domains of adolescent life.

REFERENCES

- Bakhsh, Nirupama, 2012, emotional intelligence personality and social maturity.
- Bosch, Jannis & Wilbert, Jürgen. (2023). The impact of social comparison processes on self-evaluation of performance, self-concept, and task interest. *Frontiers in Education*. 8. 1033488. 10.3389/feduc.2023.1033488.
- Koneri, Roopmala. (2017). "Emotional Intelligence of Adolescence in Relation to Self-Concept ". *Artha - Journal of Social Sciences*. 9. 10.12724/ajss.17.3.
- Kumar, V. (2016). Relationship between emotional intelligence and self-concept among adolescents. 96. 1153-1161.
- Saadat, Seyed Hassan & Shahyad, Shima & Pakdaman, Shahla & Shokri, Omid. (2017). Prediction of Social Comparison Based on Perfectionism, Self-Concept Clarity, and Self-Esteem. *Iranian Red Crescent Medical Journal*.
- Verma A. (2020). The Relationship between Self-Concept and Emotional Intelligence. 10.2991/assehr.k.200311.014.

Acknowledgement

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

The Role of Social Comparison and Self-Concept on Emotional Intelligence among Adolescents

How to cite this article: Rana, A. & Mitra, R.K. (2023). The Role of Social Comparison and Self-Concept on Emotional Intelligence among Adolescents. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(3), 691-700. DIP:18.01.065.20231103, DOI:10.25215/1103.065