

## Relationship between Social and Emotional Competency and Academic Achievement among Adolescents

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### ABSTRACT

This research investigates the relationship between Social-Emotional Competence (SEC) and Academic Achievement (AA) among adolescents, highlighting the critical role of emotional intelligence in shaping students' academic success. The study involved 111 adolescents from tuition centers in Ahmedabad, with data collected through Google Forms and analyzed using Spearman's correlation coefficient. Results reveal a statistically significant positive correlation ( $p < 0.001$ ) between SEC and AA, emphasizing the interconnected nature of emotional intelligence and cognitive functioning. While the moderate correlation underscores the multifaceted nature of academic achievement, the findings emphasize the need for a holistic approach to understanding the factors influencing student success. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies, diverse sample representations, mixed-methodology strategies, intervention studies, teacher training, and cultural adaptation of SEL measures to enrich the understanding of the complex interplay between SEC and AA.

**Keywords:** *Social- Emotional Competency, Academic Achievement, Social Emotional Learning*

Current theoretical frameworks classify Emotional Intelligence (EI) in two ways (a) through ability models and (b) through trait models (Brouzos et al., 2014). Performance tests can assess ability-based EI, and trait-based EI is usually measured through self-report tests. Many researchers maintain that there is a significant influence of EI on how a student navigates through emotionally challenging situations and their academics as well. Sevdalis et al. (2007) reported that children with high EI are perceived by their peers as being kinder, socially competent, and less aggressive than children with high EI. Teaching Social Emotional intelligence in schools helps children to acquire the ability EI that might enhance a student's personality. Brouzos et al. (2014), through their study, can deduce that teachers perceive students' learning performance as influenced by how they adapt their emotions to the changing behavior and situations in school. This study also found that trait EI does not correlate with a student's academic achievement; however, positive correlations were found between ability-based EI and academic achievement.

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## **Relationship between Social and Emotional Competency and Academic Achievement among Adolescents**

Ability-based EI can be acquired and enhanced by Social Emotional Learning (SEL) practices in schools. "SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions (Fundamentals of SEL - CASEL, 2022)".

### ***Scope and shortcomings of the current SEL framework***

Teachers are the main drivers of SEL; therefore, teachers' own SEL competence also influences how children learn. In the current research, Schonert-Reichl (2017) says that classrooms having deep and warm teacher-child relationships gives rise to positive social-emotional development among students compared to classrooms with teachers who can poorly manage their social-emotional regulation because students' academic achievement and behavior suffer. Teaching remains one of the most stressful jobs. Stressed-out teachers also have stressed out students. If the teachers are socially aware they can recognize and understand interpersonal emotions including those of their students. Such teachers work to build strong and supportive relationships. By being culturally aware, they will be able to understand different perspectives and recognize that their student's perspectives might differ from their own.

Recent scientific evidence shows SEL increases students' academic, career, and life success (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Local, federal, and state policies should support the social, emotional, and academic growth of the youth.

### ***Theoretical perspective***

Another perspective proposes teaching SEL by altering the instructional process and including collaborative Learning as a powerful medium of such instruction. When referring to sociocultural or social constructivist viewpoints, "collaborative learning" is frequently used. The notion that knowledge is a social concept is an assumption. Learning happens when individuals with various backgrounds, knowledge, and experiences converse and exchange ideas. This suggests a more flexible method of instruction wherein group work is increasingly under the authority of the pupils. Students frequently start collaborating as a regular element of class activities. The teacher's facilitative role sets the stage for collaboration by giving students agency, imparting collaboration skills, and helping students mature through peer discussion. Students in these classes get valuable skills in negotiation and conflict resolution and a peer culture that supports academic accomplishment. They also enjoy the excitement of studying academic subjects with one another (Zins et al., 2007).

The environment of a school is also essential to foster successful SEL among students. The environment of the schools should be such that students perceive it in a way that allows them to promote and allow them to practice the skills they have learned. Not many types of research focus on this aspect. The learning context includes elements including communication patterns, performance standards, norms and regulations in the classroom, the organizational atmosphere of the school, the dedication to the academic success of all children, district policies, and parental and community involvement (Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

Specific initiatives are to advance health, stop crime and violence, foster school ties and attachment, stop dropouts, and lessen teen pregnancy and AIDS. As a result, there are too

## **Relationship between Social and Emotional Competency and Academic Achievement among Adolescents**

many initiatives in place; on average, 14 techniques are being used by schools nationwide to curb bad behavior and foster safe settings. Given the multiplicity of attempts, how successfully they can perform so many diverse tasks must be questioned.

The CASEL model is one of the most prominent and influential models in studying the SEL framework. The five competencies in this model are: (a) self-management, or the capacity to control one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors; (b) self-awareness, or the capacity to recognize one's emotions and accurately assess one's strengths and weaknesses; (c) social awareness, or the capacity to be aware of the cultures, beliefs, and feelings of others and their environment; (d) relationship skills, or the capacity to effectively interact with others, collaborate well with peers, and forge meaningful relationships and (e) responsible decision making, following moral and ethical standards, future planning and the way to contribute to the general wellbeing (Ross & Tolan, 2018).

### ***Indian research on SEL***

In India, there is significantly less amount of research in this area. The majority of the studies explore the domains of SEL separately rather than together. The studies with checks that study the entire domain of SEL are majorly comparative studies. One research was conducted in Punjab to compare teachers' knowledge about the subject between public and private preschools. The results revealed that teachers in private preschools had better knowledge about SEL than in public preschools. More studies need to explore the relationship between SEL and students' academic performance, social functioning, emotional competence, or school engagement. Indian literature predominantly focuses on teachers' competence rather than highlighting the benefit of including the SEL program in the curriculum.

Furthermore, along with the scarcity of research, finding a reliable article is challenging. This might be possible because India is yet to develop and establish its literacy norms. Most areas of India have low-income schools wherein day either follow state board or CBSE. Boards run by the government provide less flexibility of instructions. They also have the chapters and units fixed, which are supposed to be followed. This gives significantly less scope for creativity and autonomy. The explicit teaching of social and emotional learning must be incorporated into educational policies. While developing education policies that incorporate SEL, our policies must ensure that the social, economic, and cultural context is considered.

Furthermore, most of the SEL measures have been developed in English in the West, because of which there are fewer culturally adaptive resources and literature about the Indian subcontinent (Sharma et al., 2022). The newest developments in Indian tech can enable different types of human contact by fusing the real and virtual worlds (A. Sharma, 2021). Virtual, augmented, and mixed reality technologies, robotics, mobile video chats, and virtual teachers for a far less interactive and more interactive experience (A. Sharma, 2021).

### ***Hypothesis***

- (H<sub>0</sub>): There is no relation between students' Social Emotional Competence and academic achievement.
- (H<sub>1</sub>): There is a positive relationship between students' Social Emotional Concept and Academic Achievement

## Relationship between Social and Emotional Competency and Academic Achievement among Adolescents

### METHOD

#### Sample

The study involved a sample of 111 adolescents aged between 15 and 17 years. Participants included students from tuition centers in Ahmedabad. The data was collected through Google Forms and was circulated through WhatsApp. The study followed simple random sampling where every member had an equal opportunity to participate in the study. Informed consent was obtained from both the participants and their legal guardians prior to data collection.

There were a total of 109 individuals in the sample disclosed their gender. Out of these, 65 were identified as female, representing 59.63% of the total, and 44 were identified as male, representing 40.37% of the total.

*Table 1: Overview of distribution among gender*

	Frequency	Percentage
Female	65	59.63302752
Male	44	40.36697248

There are no missing values in the dataset. The central tendency of the data is indicated by a median value of 104. The interquartile range (IQR), is calculated to be 22.0. The dataset's range spans from a minimum value of 61 to a maximum of 148, underlining the variability in the observations.

The obtained Shapiro-Wilk statistic (W) is 0.990, and shows a relatively normal distribution. This notion is supported by a p-value of 0.562, which is relatively high and indicates that there is no significant departure from normality.

*Table 2: descriptive statistics*

	SEC
N	111
Missing	0
Median	104
IQR	22.0
Minimum	61
Maximum	148
Shapiro-Wilk W	0.990
Shapiro-Wilk p	0.562

#### Tools

- **Academic Achievement:** Academic achievement was evaluated through the examination of 10th-grade board examination percentages, which were obtained from official academic records. This objective measure provided insight into the participants' academic performance in a standardized manner.
- **Social and Emotional Competency:** Social and emotional competency was assessed using the Washoe County School District Social and Emotional Competency Assessment (WCSD-SEC). The WCSD-SEC is a validated instrument designed to measure a wide range of social and emotional competencies in adolescents. This assessment encompasses various domains, self-awareness, self-

## Relationship between Social and Emotional Competency and Academic Achievement among Adolescents

regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. It consists of 8 subscales, with 5 items in each subscale. Participants responded to on a 5-point Likert scale to provide a comprehensive overview of their social and emotional competencies. The WCS-D-SEC has demonstrated reliability and validity in previous research, making it a suitable tool for this study (Crowder et al., 2019; Gordon et al., 2022).

### *Procedure*

The students were approached and obtained permission to conduct a survey, post permission Informed consent and assent was obtained before beginning the questionnaire. The data for SEC and AA was collected through Google Forms. The primary aim of the study is to analyze the correlation between Academic Achievement and Social Emotional Competence of adolescents. The ethics that would be taken into consideration are. First, the confidentiality of the participant would not be breached at any point of the research tenure. The participant will have their anonymity and privacy; it would be on the participant to participate and be free to drop out from the research.

### *Analyses*

The research used a correlation design. The data is not manipulated. No variables are controlled since this is a non-experimental research. Spearman's correlation was used to assess the relationship between academic achievement and social-emotional competence (SEC) among adolescents. Academic achievement was measured using 10th board marks, and SEC was measured using the Washoe County School District Social and Emotional Competency Assessment. Spearman's correlation coefficient is a non-parametric measure of rank correlation, which means that it does not assume that the data is normally distributed. This is appropriate for data such as 10th board marks and SEC, which may not be normally distributed.

## **RESULTS**

The correlation matrix table shows the results of a Spearman's correlation analysis between academic achievement (10th board exam percentage) and social-emotional competence (SEC). The Spearman's correlation coefficient is a non-parametric measure of rank correlation, which means that it does not assume that the data is normally distributed.

The Spearman's correlation coefficient in the table is 0.329, which is significant at the  $p < 0.001$  level. This means that there is a strong positive correlation between academic achievement and SEC. This means that adolescents with higher academic achievement also tend to have higher SEC.

The correlation coefficient of 0.329 is considered to be a moderate correlation. This means that there is a significant relationship between academic achievement and SEC, but it is not a perfect relationship

Overall, the correlation matrix table suggests that there is a strong positive relationship between academic achievement and SEC.

## Relationship between Social and Emotional Competency and Academic Achievement among Adolescents

**Table 3: Correlation Matrix**

		10th Board Exam Percentage	SEC
10th Board Exam Percentage	Spearman's rho	—	—
	df	—	—
	p-value	—	—
SUM	Spearman's rho	0.329***	—
	df	109	—
	p-value	<.001	—

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

### DISCUSSION

The primary aim of this research was to investigate the correlation between students' Social-Emotional Competence (SEC) and their Academic Achievement (AA) among adolescents.

Spearman's correlation coefficient of 0.329 was calculated. This indicates a statistically significant positive correlation ( $p < 0.001$ ) between SEC and AA. This means that students with higher social-emotional competence tend to exhibit better academic performance. This positive correlation can be attributed to the interconnected nature of emotional intelligence and cognitive functioning. Adolescents with well-developed social and emotional skills are likely to display improved self-regulation, enhanced interpersonal relationships, and better problem-solving abilities, all of which contribute to their academic success.

The research results support the alternative hypothesis (h1), which posited a positive relationship between students' Social-Emotional Competence and Academic Achievement. The moderate correlation between these variables implies that while social-emotional competence contributes significantly to academic success, it is not the sole determinant. Other factors, such as cognitive abilities, family support, and environmental influences, may also play integral roles in shaping students' academic performance which could be explored by other researches.

While the correlation is deemed moderate, several factors might contribute to this relationship. One plausible explanation could be that emotional intelligence facilitates effective stress management and coping strategies, enabling students to navigate challenging academic demands more efficiently.

The study's findings are consistent with the research by Sevdalis et al. (2007) and Schonert-Reichl (2017), who also emphasized the significant influence of emotional intelligence on academic achievements. Similar to our results, Sevdalis et al. (2007) highlighted the positive social perception of individuals with higher emotional intelligence, indicating the relevance of these skills in various social contexts, including academic settings. Moreover, Schonert-Reichl (2017) emphasized the critical role of teachers in nurturing students' social-emotional development, which aligns with our findings on the importance of teacher-student relationships in influencing academic outcomes.

#### **Limitations**

The reliance on self-report measures for assessing Social and Emotional Competency (SEC) might introduce response biases and subjectivity in the data. It is essential to recognize that self-reported data can be influenced by social desirability bias, potentially affecting the accuracy and reliability of the results. Moreover, the participants were asked to rate on an

## Relationship between Social and Emotional Competency and Academic Achievement among Adolescents

ordinal scale due to which the exact marks were not obtained. Thus, the measurement of academic achievement was not completely accurate. The data is non-parametric hence. The cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability to establish causal relationships between SEC and AA. While the research highlights a significant correlation, it does not provide insights into the directionality of the relationship. Future longitudinal studies could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic interplay between social-emotional competence and academic achievement over time. The study's focus on a specific geographical location and educational setting might overlook the influence of broader contextual factors such as cultural, socio-economic, and familial backgrounds on the relationship between SEC and AA. The impact of these external variables on students' social-emotional development and academic performance warrants further investigation for a more holistic understanding. The study primarily concentrated on the relationship between SEC and AA, neglecting to account for other potentially influential variables such as parental involvement, teaching methodologies, or the influence of peer dynamics.

### *Future direction*

Longitudinal studies that monitor the growth of social-emotional competencies and academic achievements over an extended duration are recommended. These long-term research may put light on the cause-and-effect relationships and potential development pathways of SEC and AA, leading to a deeper knowledge of how these factors interact and influence one another over time. The study must be expanded to include a more representative and diverse sample of teenagers from a range of socioeconomic origins, cultural contexts, and educational settings. This method enables researchers to investigate how environmental and cultural factors influence the relationship between SEC and AA, providing a more thorough understanding of the underlying dynamics. In order to obtain a more thorough knowledge of the relationship between academic accomplishment and social-emotional abilities, researchers should employ approaches that integrate mixed methods. In addition to supporting the quantitative findings, qualitative data can offer insightful information about the actual experiences and perspectives of educators, parents, and kids. It can also help to better understand the underlying mechanisms. Research is needed to determine the efficacy of particular Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) initiatives or approaches in enhancing adolescents' academic performance and SEC. To inform the creation and execution of research-based SEL programmes in educational environments, and assess the effects of specific interventions on various facets of academic achievement and social-emotional development.

Researchers should investigate how teacher preparation programmes and other support systems assist teachers in developing their social and emotional intelligence as well as the effects this has on student outcomes. It would be worthwhile to investigate the effectiveness of professional development initiatives aimed at improving teachers' ability to assist students' academic and social-emotional development while they are in the classroom. It is recommended that researchers focus their efforts on developing and assessing social-emotional competency assessments that take into account the cultural subtleties and settings of various groups, especially those residing in the Indian subcontinent. It is possible to gain a more accurate and comprehensive knowledge of students' social-emotional abilities in various cultural contexts by taking into consideration the assessment tools' cultural relevance and appropriateness.

## CONCLUSION

The findings strongly suggest that a student's emotional intelligence significantly impacts their academic performance, emphasizing the crucial role of emotional skills in their overall success. The moderate correlation observed indicates the complex interplay between social and emotional capabilities and cognitive abilities, underlining the need for a holistic approach to comprehend the various factors influencing student achievement.

Social-emotional learning increases social and emotional competency. This research acts as evidence to reinforce schools to provide SEL to increase the academic achievements of their students.

Acknowledging the study's limitations of using of self-reported data it is emphasized to conduct inclusive longitudinal research. Using a combination of methodologies such as mixed design will give the scope to explore other variables as well. The significance of effective interventions, teacher training, and culturally sensitive assessment tools is crucial for promoting students' holistic development and academic accomplishments.

Very few studies are conducted to identify how adolescents' SEC influences their academics. This is one such paper that recognizes the importance of providing SEL to adolescents. This research not only highlights the crucial role of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) but also emphasizes the necessity for comprehensive educational policies that integrate social-emotional skills into the academic curriculum. By recognizing the impact of social and emotional factors on academic achievement, educators and policymakers can foster a supportive learning environment that facilitates the overall growth of adolescents, preparing them for future personal and academic triumphs. Further research in this field will continue to contribute to the enhancement of educational practices and policies focused on nurturing students' emotional well-being and academic achievements.

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## Relationship between Social and Emotional Competency and Academic Achievement among Adolescents

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## Relationship between Social and Emotional Competency and Academic Achievement among Adolescents

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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