

	ADVANCE SOCIAL SCIENCE ARCHIVE JOURNAL Available Online: https://assajournal.com Vol. 5 No. 01 Jan-Mar 2026. Page#. 4303-4311 Print ISSN: 3006-2497 Online ISSN: 3006-2500 Platform & Workflow by: Open Journal Systems https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21400272	
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Impact of Students' Emotional Intelligence Level on the Development of their Socialization Skills among Secondary School Students: Gender-Wise Comparative View

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Abstract

The study analyzed the impact of emotional intelligence of secondary school students on the development of their socialization skills from the gender-wise comparative perspective. Quantitative descriptive survey design was employed to collect data from 327 students (168 males and 159 females) selected from public secondary schools using proportionate random sampling. Emotional intelligence and five dimensions of socialization skills (communication, cooperation and teamwork, conflict resolution, empathy and respect for others, adaptability and flexibility) were evaluated through a self-developed questionnaire validated by experts. Independent samples t-tests were used to analyze data. The results showed significant differences in communication ($p = .007$), cooperation and teamwork ($p = .001$), empathy and respect for others ($p = .034$), and adaptability and flexibility ($p = .034$) based on gender with male students having higher average scores. However, no significant gender difference was found in conflict resolution skills ($p = .121$). The study concludes that emotional intelligence contributes significantly to the students' socialization skills, but its influence varies depending on the social competence and gender.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Gender Differences, Secondary School Students.

Introduction

The twenty first century education is about holistic development of students. It is not only about the academic achievements but also about the emotional, social and interpersonal skills of the students. Among these qualities that impact the personal and social development of kids, emotional intelligence has been put forward as one of the most significant psychological constructs. Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to a person's capacity to notice, comprehend, manage and use emotions effectively in oneself and others. This idea has been popularised by the work of Peter Salovey and John Mayer, but later popularised by Daniel Goleman, who suggested that emotional competences are as important as cognitive ability for success in life. One of the most important factors in teenage growth is emotional intelligence, which enables people to regulate their feelings, create meaningful relationships, communicate effectively and adjust to social situations.

Students in secondary school are in a transitory period characterized by fast physical, cognitive, emotional and social changes. Adolescence is a time when students face many problems, including forming their identity, peer pressure, academic stress, and changing parental expectations. Being able to recognize and control emotions is important for healthy relationships and effective social interactions. Students with higher emotional intelligence generally have better emotional regulation, empathy, cooperation, and communication skills, which helps them adapt to school and society. On the other hand, students with low emotional intelligence are

often inclined to interpersonal difficulties, social isolation, and behavioural problems. Studies have found that emotional intelligence is protective of the psychological and social well-being of adolescents and contributes greatly to their social functioning and interpersonal competence. Recent research shows a strong association between emotional intelligence and social skills in teenagers. Students with higher levels of emotional intelligence often display stronger communication skills, more empathy, and better interpersonal interactions. Emotional intelligence allows teenagers to recognize the feelings of others, react accordingly in social settings, and build healthy relationships. Mukhtar et al. (2024) established a significant effect of emotional intelligence on the communication skills and other interpersonal skills of secondary school students. This means that students with higher emotional intelligence tend to have constructive interactions with their peers and teachers. Similarly, Samokhvalova (2024) revealed a favorable impact of emotional intelligence on the communication skills and successful social functioning of teenagers, highlighting its importance in social adaptation and relationship development.

Emotional intelligence matters not just in speech and social interaction. It is strongly linked with prosocial behaviour like empathy, cooperation, assisting others, and responsible decision-making. Adolescents with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to show positive social behaviors and less likely to show aggressive, bullying or antisocial behaviors. González Moreno and Molero Jurado (2024) found a link between emotional intelligence and better lifestyles and greater prosocial behaviors in teenagers, emphasizing its significance in social development. Krishnakumar et al. (2024) observed a substantial difference between male and female students in terms of emotional intelligence of secondary school students. Female students had higher emotional competence than male students.

Likewise, Rivera Morales et al. (2024) reported significant variations in socio-emotional abilities as a function of gender in secondary school pupils, which suggests the importance of comparative studies considering gender as an influential variable.

In Pakistan, there has been limited empirical research conducted to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and socialisation abilities from a gender-wise comparative viewpoint, especially at the secondary school level. Most research have focused on academic achievement, motivation or behavioural consequences, with very little emphasis to the social implications of emotional intelligence among teenagers. This link is especially crucial to understand because adolescence is a critical period for the development and honing of social skills. The learning of the impact of emotional intelligence on the socialisation skills of male and female students can provide significant insights to teachers, school administrators, counsellors, and policymakers who want to enhance the social and emotional health of students.

Literature Review

Emotional Intelligence

Central to educational psychology is the idea of emotional intelligence (EI), which accounts for how individuals perceive, comprehend, manage, and utilize emotions in themselves and in others. The idea was originally established by Mayer and Salovey (1997) who described emotional intelligence as a series of mental skills associated with emotional processing and reasoning. Goleman (1995) later popularized the notion by stating that emotional intelligence is a better predictor of success in life than traditional intelligence (IQ), particularly in the social and interpersonal domains.

Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004) have identified four basic skills that constitute emotional intelligence: emotional perception, emotional facilitation of thought, emotional understanding and emotional control. During this time emotional intelligence is especially important, it helps

pupils to deal with emotional issues and to build strong connections. Emotional intelligence continues to grow during adolescence and has a major influence on emotional adjustment and interpersonal behaviour (Cabello, Fernández-Berrocal, & Castillo, 2024).

In the same vein, Villegas-Lirola (2024) reported that secondary school pupils with high emotional intelligence tend to have better emotional regulation, less aggressive tendencies, and better relations with their peers. These pupils are more prepared to deal with academic stress and social pressure. In Pakistani context, Ali, Raza and Naseer (2024) discovered that secondary school students' level of emotional intelligence is moderate and differences are influenced by school environment, teaching practices and family history. They emphasized that emotional intelligence is plastic and can be developed by education and social experience.

Berk (2013) notes that peer relationships and educational contexts are significant for socialization in adolescence. Schools offer an organized environment for pupils to communicate, collaborate, and build interpersonal skills. In the view of Gresham and Elliott (1990) academic achievement and psychological well-being are dependent on social skills. Students that have excellent social skills are more likely to participate constructively in the classroom, to make friends, and to adjust well to social situations.

Emotional Intelligence and Social Skills

A substantial amount of literature has documented a robust positive link between emotional intelligence and social skills in teenagers. Emotional intelligence helps pupils to comprehend emotions, recognize social cues and interact effectively with others. Samokhvalova (2024) also found a significant association between emotional intelligence and communication abilities in adolescents. Students with higher emotional intelligence have stronger verbal and non-verbal communication, emotional awareness and interpersonal sensitivity.

Rehman, Munawar and Haider (2025) also established that emotional intelligence substantially predicts socialization skills and academic success of secondary school pupils. The results suggest that emotionally intelligent students are more socially involved, cooperative and emotionally stable. Mukhtar, Zafar, Dinpuri, and Naz (2024) found that emotional intelligence has a favorable effect on communication and motivation, which are both important for socialization. Denham (2006) states that kids who are emotionally competent are more likely to display empathy, prosocial behaviour, and cooperation. Emotional intelligence also helps pupils to resolve problems with peers efficiently.

Villegas-Lirola (2024) revealed that emotional intelligence decreases cyber-victimization and social anxiety among teenagers. Students with stronger emotional intelligence tend to be more resilient and socially adaptive. Furthermore, Cabello et al. (2024) pointed out that emotional intelligence promotes emotional control and interpersonal efficacy, both of which are essential for successful social adjustment in school settings.

Gender Variations in Emotional Intelligence

Substantial gender differences in emotional intelligence, with female students scoring higher than male students in emotional awareness and social sensitivity. They attributed these disparities to the patterns of socialization according to gender. Similarly, Rivera Morales, Guajardo Espinoza, and Aguirre (2024) found that female students have greater socio-emotional skills, such as empathy, cooperation, and emotional understanding.

Cabello et al. (2024) also discovered that emotional intelligence develops differently in boys and females, with girls exhibiting higher emotional awareness and regulation skills. However, in some settings, Ali et al. (2024) found no significant gender differences in emotional intelligence, suggesting that environmental and educational factors may diminish gender gaps.

Socialization Skills

Female pupils get greater scores in cooperation, empathy and interpersonal communication (Rivera Morales et al., 2024). Boys, on the other hand, tend to be leaders and task-oriented. Furthermore, female students have greater social skills and better interpersonal relationships than males. Gresham and Elliott (1990) emphasized the importance of contextual and instructional elements in social skills development and proposed that gender differences can be reduced in schools by providing structured socio-emotional learning programs.

Objectives

1. To compare the effect of emotional intelligence on the development of communication skills among male and female secondary school students.
2. To compare the effect of emotional intelligence on the development of collaboration and teamwork abilities among male and female secondary school students.
3. To compare the effect of emotional intelligence on the development of conflict resolution abilities of male and female secondary school students.
4. To compare the effect of the emotional intelligence on the development of empathy and respecting others skills in male and female secondary school pupils.
5. To compare the influence of emotional intelligence on the development of adaptation and flexibility skills between male and female secondary school pupils.

Null Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school pupils in terms of the effect of emotional intelligence on the development of their communication abilities.

H02: There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school pupils in terms of the impact of emotional intelligence on the development of their collaboration and teamwork skills.

H03: There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school pupils on the effect of emotional intelligence on the development of their conflict resolution skills.

H04: There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school pupils on the impact of emotional intelligence on the development of their empathy and appreciating others skills.

H05: There was no significant difference between male and female secondary school pupils in terms of the effect of emotional intelligence on the development of their adaptability and flexibility skills.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to quantitatively examine the effect of emotional intelligence on the development of socialisation skills among secondary school pupils. The sample consisted of secondary school students who attended public secondary schools. A proportionate random selection procedure was adopted to pick a sample of 327 students comprising of 168 males and 159 females. Data were gathered via a self-developed questionnaire, with topics pertaining to emotional intelligence and socialization abilities such as communication, cooperation and teamwork, conflict resolution, empathy and respect for others, and adaptability and flexibility. The instrument was evaluated by specialists and has satisfactory dependability. Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The independent samples t-test was used to compare male and female students on the impact of emotional intelligence on several dimensions of socialization skills at the 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1

Gender-wise Comparison Regarding Impact of Secondary School Students' Emotional Intelligence Level on the Development of their Communication Skills.

Students' Gender	Students	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig. level
Male Students	168	4.61	.367	2.71	.007
Female Students	159	4.48	.391		

Table 1 illustrates the comparison of the impact of secondary school students' emotional intelligence level on the development of their communication abilities according to gender. The results show that male students ($M = 4.61$, $SD = 0.367$) scored higher on average than female students ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 0.391$), indicating that male students evaluated emotional intelligence as having a bigger influence on the development of their communication skills. A t-value of 2.71 was calculated with a p-value of .007. The p-value is less than .05, the set significance level, hence the difference between male and female students is statistically significant. Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between male and female secondary school pupils with respect to the impact of emotional intelligence on the development of their communication abilities is rejected. The results show that the development of communication skills is more related to emotional intelligence in male students than in female students.

Table 2

Gender-wise Comparison Regarding Impact of Secondary School Students' Emotional Intelligence Level on the Development of their Cooperation and Teamwork Skills

Students' Gender	Students	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig. level
Male Students	168	4.62	.341	3.40	.001
Female Students	159	4.50	.371		

Table 2. Gender wise comparison of the effect of emotional intelligence level of secondary school pupils on the development of skills of co-operation and team work. The results show that male students ($M = 4.62$, $SD = 0.341$) had a higher mean score than female students ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 0.371$). This means that male students felt a bigger impact of emotional intelligence on the improvement of collaboration and teamwork abilities. The calculated t-value was 3.40 and the p-value .001, Since this p-value is smaller than the significance criterion of .05, the difference between male and female pupils is statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male and female secondary school students on the effect of emotional intelligence on the development of their cooperation and team work skills is rejected. The results show that the effect of emotional intelligence in encouraging cooperation and team abilities among male students is much more significant than among female students.

Table 3

Gender-wise Comparison Regarding Impact of Secondary School Students' Emotional Intelligence Level on the Development of their Conflict Resolution Skills

Students' Gender	Students	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig. level
Male Students	168	4.42	.402	1.553	.121
Female Students	159	4.36	.419		

Table 3 displays the gender-wise comparison of secondary school pupils regarding impact of emotional intelligence on their dispute resolution skills. Results demonstrate that the mean score of male students ($N = 168$, $M = 4.42$, $SD = .402$) is slightly higher than that of female students ($N = 159$, $M = 4.36$, $SD = .419$). However, the difference is modest. The result of the independent samples t-test shows that the t-value is 1.553 with a significant value of .121 which is higher than 0.05. This means that the gap between male and female pupils is not statistically

significant. Thus, null hypothesis (H03) is accepted. The study concluded that there is no significant difference between male and female secondary school students on the effect of emotional intelligence on the development of students' conflict resolution abilities, both male and female students have practically identical results in the development of conflict resolution skills.

Table 4

Gender-wise Comparison Regarding Impact of Secondary School Students' Emotional Intelligence Level on the Development of their Empathy and Respecting Others Skills

Students' Gender	Students	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig. level
Male Students	168	4.49	.409	2.14	.034
Female Students	159	4.40	.425		

Table 4. Gender-wise comparison of secondary school students on the impact of emotional intelligence on the development of their empathy and respecting others skills. The table shows that the male students (N = 168, M = 4.49, SD = .409) are slightly higher than the female students (N = 159, M = 4.40, SD = .425). The independent samples t-test shows the t-value of 2.14 with the significance value of .034 which is less than 0.05. This shows that the difference between male and female students is statistically significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that there is a significant gender-wise difference in the impact of emotional intelligence on the development of empathy and respecting others skills among secondary school students with the relatively higher scores of male students as compared to female students in this regard.

Table 5

Gender-wise Comparison Regarding Impact of Secondary School Students' Emotional Intelligence Level on the Development of their Adaptability and Flexibility Skills

Students' Gender	Students	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig. level
Male Students	168	4.50	.413	2.14	.034
Female Students	159	4.41	.422		

Table 5 shows a gender-wise comparison of the effect of emotional intelligence on the development of adaptation and flexibility skills in secondary school pupils. The data show that male students (N = 168, M = 4.50, SD = .413) had a somewhat higher mean than female students (N = 159, M = 4.41, SD = .422). The independent samples t-test results show t-value of 2.14 and significant value of .034 which is less than 0.05. This suggests that there is a statistically significant difference between male and female students. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. It was established that the impact of emotional intelligence on the development of adaptation and flexibility skills among secondary school students is significantly different based on gender. In this regard, male students are substantially higher than female students.

Main findings:

The study observes a mixed pattern of gender variations in the effect of emotional intelligence on secondary school students' social and interpersonal abilities. Four of the five skill areas (communication, cooperation & teamwork, empathy & respect, adaptability & flexibility) exhibit significant gender disparities in mean scores in favour of male pupils. The effect of emotional intelligence on communication, cooperation and teamwork, conflict resolution, empathy and respect for others, adaptability and flexibility as interpersonal and social skills of secondary school pupils in terms of gender differences were explored in this study. The results showed a mixed pattern of significant and non-significant differences across skill areas, which partly agree with and partly depart from earlier studies in the field of emotional intelligence.

Discussion

There was a statistically significant difference in communication abilities by gender, with males scoring better than females ($p = .007$). This finding is in line with studies that suggest that emotional intelligence is highly related to effective communication skills as individuals with high emotional intelligence are more capable of effectively communicating and controlling social interactions (Goleman, 1995; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004). However, this finding is inconsistent with certain research that have indicated higher levels of emotional awareness and communication sensitivity among female students (Bar-On, 1997; Petrides & Furnham, 2006). The present finding could be related to environmental or cultural differences where male students see more improvement in communication through emotional intelligence development.

A substantial gender difference was detected in cooperation and collaborative skills ($p = .001$) with male students scoring higher. This finding supports the concept that emotional intelligence contributes favourably to group functioning, collaboration, and leadership within peer contexts (Goleman, 1998). However, it varies from past study demonstrating that females generally exhibit better cooperative and affiliative behaviors due to increased empathy and social sensitivity (Eisenberg et al., 2006). The observed outcome may reflect differences in classroom dynamics where emotionally intelligent male students take more active roles in group involvement and task coordination.

In contrast, no significant gender difference was seen in conflict resolution skills ($p = .121$), indicating that emotional intelligence benefits both male and female students equally in handling interpersonal problems. This finding is well compatible with Mayer and Salovey's (1997) ability model of emotional intelligence, which highlights that emotional regulation and problem-solving skills are universal competencies not constrained by gender. It also confirms prior empirical findings demonstrating that emotional intelligence is a critical predictor of conflict management success regardless of demographic variables (Schutte et al., 2001).

A significant gender difference was detected in empathy and respecting others skills ($p = .034$), with male students again displaying higher mean scores. This conclusion is somewhat incongruous with a substantial body of data demonstrating that females often score higher in empathy and prosocial conduct due to greater emotional expressiveness and interpersonal sensitivity (Hoffman, 2000; Eisenberg et al., 2006). The present conclusion may represent shifting social trends where emotional intelligence training or school-based interventions are boosting empathy-related competencies more equally across genders, or may be driven by self-reported perceptions rather than behavioral assessments.

Similarly, a significant gender difference was seen in adaptability and flexibility skills ($p = .034$), favoring male students. This fits with Goleman's (1998) statement that emotional intelligence increases adaptability by enabling individuals to regulate emotions and adjust to changing settings efficiently. However, it conflicts with research demonstrating that females frequently demonstrate superior adaptability due to stronger emotional awareness and coping methods (Bar-On, 2000). The imbalance may be linked to disparities in academic conditions, classroom standards, or leadership chances afforded to male students.

Overall, the data indicate that emotional intelligence has a more significant perceived influence on male students across most interpersonal skill categories, except for conflict resolution where both genders perform equally. This mixed pattern supports certain previous theoretical models of emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Goleman, 1995) but is inconsistent with gendered emotional development research that tend to favour females in empathy and interpersonal sensitivity. The inconsistencies indicate that gender disparities in emotional

intelligence outcomes may be context-dependent and affected by sociocultural, educational, and classroom interaction factors.

Recommendations

- It is suggested that educational officials and school administrations incorporate structured emotional intelligence training programs into the secondary school curriculum. Special focus should be given to strengthening students' communication, teamwork, empathy, and adaptability abilities through interactive activities, group discussions, and role-playing exercises.
- Teachers should employ gender-sensitive instructional strategies to address the identified inequalities in emotional intelligence outcomes. Since male students demonstrated better reported gains in most skill areas, tailored help should be provided to female students to strengthen their engagement in collaborative tasks, communication exercises, and leadership responsibilities.
- It is important that teachers acquire specialized training in emotional intelligence-based pedagogy. Training programs should focus on how to cultivate students' emotional awareness, conflict management, empathy, and adaptability in classroom situations.

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