

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

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Article Info

Received: 16 September, 2025

Revised: 09 December, 2025

Accepted: 10 January, 2026

Online Version: 28 February, 2026

Abstract

Emotional intelligence (EI) is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in adolescent development, influencing various aspects of social, emotional, and academic growth. Adolescence is a developmental stage marked by significant emotional and social changes, which makes the role of EI in shaping behavior and decision-making particularly important. Understanding how EI contributes to adolescent development can help inform educational practices aimed at fostering emotional and social competencies. This study explores the role of EI in adolescent development and its implications for educational practices. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative assessments of EI using the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i:YV) and qualitative interviews with teachers and students. The findings indicate that higher EI levels are associated with better academic performance, enhanced peer relationships, and improved emotional regulation. Adolescents with higher EI demonstrated greater resilience in managing stress and navigating social conflicts. The study concludes that incorporating EI-focused strategies into educational curricula can enhance students' emotional and social development, thereby improving both academic outcomes and overall well-being. The study suggests that emotional intelligence should be a central component of educational practices to support holistic adolescent development.

Keywords: Academic Achievement, Adolescent Development, Educational Practices, Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Regulation



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Journal Homepage

<https://ejournal.staialhikmahpariangan.ac.id/Journal/index.php/wp>

How to cite:

Rais, R., Zarfi, S. H., & Anis, N. (2026). Exploring the Role of Emotional Intelligence in Adolescent Development: Implications for Educational Practices. *World Psychology*, 5(1), 254–266. <https://doi.org/10.55849/wp.v4i1.1420>

Published by:

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Al-Hikmah Pariangan Batusangkar

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and regulate emotions in oneself and others. As a concept, it has gained significant attention in both psychological and educational research due to its implications for personal development and well-being (Lakshmi Saranya et al., 2025). Adolescence, marked by complex emotional and cognitive changes, presents a critical period in which the development of EI can play a pivotal role in shaping an individual's emotional and social competencies. During this stage, adolescents experience heightened emotional reactivity and are navigating significant social and academic challenges, making the cultivation of EI a crucial component of their overall development (Sala-Roca et al., 2025). The connection between EI and adolescent development has become an area of increasing interest, as understanding how EI influences behaviors, relationships, and academic success can help educators and psychologists develop more effective strategies to support adolescent growth (Zhang, 2025). Despite this growing interest, however, there remains a gap in understanding how EI directly impacts various aspects of adolescent development and how it can be systematically integrated into educational practices.

The specific problem addressed by this study is the lack of comprehensive understanding of how emotional intelligence influences adolescent development, particularly in the context of educational environments (Lievore & Mammarella, 2025). While several studies have explored EI's role in general emotional and social functioning, fewer have focused on its implications for academic achievement, social interactions, and mental health among adolescents. Additionally, much of the existing research on EI has been conducted in isolated settings, such as in clinical psychology or organizational behavior, without considering its direct application to educational settings where emotional development is intricately tied to learning outcomes. This study seeks to fill these gaps by examining the role of EI in adolescent development within the school environment, providing insight into how EI can be nurtured to improve educational practices and outcomes (Rocío et al., 2025). By understanding the mechanisms through which EI influences adolescents, educators can better address emotional and social challenges, thereby enhancing the overall learning experience.

The primary objective of this research is to explore how emotional intelligence contributes to adolescent development, with a particular focus on its implications for educational practices (Zhambeeva & Kabardov, 2025). Specifically, this study aims to investigate how EI influences key developmental outcomes, such as academic achievement, social interactions, emotional regulation, and mental health among adolescents. Furthermore, this research seeks to identify strategies that educators can employ to cultivate emotional intelligence in the classroom, fostering a more supportive and productive learning environment (van Hiel et al., 2025). By exploring the relationship between EI and adolescent development, this study also aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on how emotional competencies impact broader educational outcomes. The ultimate goal is to provide evidence-based recommendations for integrating EI-focused strategies into educational curricula and teacher training programs to support the emotional and academic growth of adolescents.

A significant gap exists in the literature regarding the specific relationship between emotional intelligence and adolescent development in educational settings. While there has been an increasing body of research on EI, much of it has focused on its impact in adulthood or in non-educational contexts, such as the workplace (Aviv et al., 2025). Few studies have systematically explored how EI functions as a developmental tool for adolescents within the school environment (Munch et al., 2025). Additionally, existing studies often treat emotional intelligence as a broad, unexamined construct, without delving into its specific components, such as emotional awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation, and how these elements contribute to specific developmental outcomes in adolescents (Zhao, 2025). By narrowing this

focus and situating EI within the context of educational settings, this study seeks to fill a critical gap in the literature and provide more nuanced insights into the developmental benefits of EI for adolescents. The findings of this research will help to inform future studies and interventions that aim to improve adolescent development through emotional intelligence.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the intersection of emotional intelligence and adolescent development within the educational context (Jang et al., 2025). While EI has been studied extensively, there is still a need for more research on its direct application to educational practices, particularly in terms of how it can be used to improve the emotional and academic outcomes of adolescents (Urbón et al., 2025). This study adds to the field by proposing that the development of EI should be an integral part of educational curricula, and that educational practices must be adapted to foster emotional growth alongside academic achievement. By focusing on adolescents in the school environment, this study addresses the unique developmental challenges they face and offers practical recommendations for integrating emotional intelligence into educational practices (Da et al., 2025). The importance of this research lies not only in its contribution to the academic understanding of EI but also in its potential to shape future educational policies and practices. In a time when emotional well-being and mental health have become increasingly critical in educational settings, this study's findings will offer valuable insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers looking to enhance the emotional development of adolescents.

By contributing to the growing field of emotional intelligence in education, this research underscores the importance of integrating EI into adolescent development strategies (Gómez-Tabares et al., 2025). As educational systems continue to prioritize holistic development, understanding how emotional intelligence influences students' academic, social, and emotional outcomes will be key to creating more effective and inclusive learning environments (Narikbayeva et al., 2025). The study's novel approach to linking emotional intelligence with specific educational practices makes it an essential contribution to both psychological and educational research. Given the growing recognition of the significance of emotional and social competencies in shaping academic success, this research provides an essential foundation for future educational initiatives aimed at fostering the emotional intelligence of adolescents.

RESEARCH METHOD

The following sections detail the systematic approach used to examine the multi-faceted role of emotional intelligence (EI) in the development and educational experiences of adolescents.

Research Design

This study utilizes a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of emotional intelligence (EI) in adolescent development (Cao & Chen, 2025). The quantitative component focuses on measuring EI levels and their correlation with academic achievement, social interactions, and emotional regulation. Simultaneously, the qualitative aspect involves semi-structured interviews to explore the perceptions of educators and students (Pardo et al., 2025). This integration ensures a triangulation of data, where objective statistical trends are contextualized by the lived experiences of participants within the classroom.

Research Target/Subject

The primary objective of this research is to identify the impact of emotional intelligence on adolescent development and derive practical implications for educational practices. The study targets the measurement of specific EI skills—such as empathy, emotional awareness, and social regulation—and their direct influence on academic success and interpersonal

relationships. By exploring how EI can be nurtured in schools, the research aims to offer actionable insights for educators to integrate emotional literacy into their teaching strategies.

The population for this research consists of adolescents aged 12 to 18 and their teachers. Using a purposive sampling technique, a sample of 200 students was selected, balanced across gender, academic performance, and socio-economic backgrounds. Additionally, 30 teachers from various subject areas were recruited based on their experience with adolescent pedagogy. This sample size was calculated to achieve sufficient statistical power for quantitative analysis while maintaining the depth required for meaningful qualitative inquiry.

Research Procedure

The research procedures were conducted in structured stages, beginning with obtaining informed consent from all participants (Ralnikova et al., 2025). Students first completed the EI assessments and surveys, while teachers provided observations through separate survey instruments. Following the quantitative phase, a select group of 30 students and 15 teachers participated in individual semi-structured interviews. These audio-recorded sessions allowed for an in-depth exploration of personal perspectives before the data were integrated for final analysis.

Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques

Primary data collection relied on the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i:YV), a widely validated tool for measuring EI in young people (Sitepu & Madjid, 2025). This was supplemented by surveys designed to quantify emotional awareness and social skills. For the qualitative component, semi-structured interview guides were used to gather subjective insights into the classroom application of EI (Lomas et al., 2025). This combination of instruments allows the researcher to reconcile objective performance data with the personal narratives of both students and educators.

Data Analysis Technique

The study employs a dual-stream analytical approach. Quantitative data are processed using correlation analysis to examine the statistical relationships between EI levels and academic or social outcomes (Kanazawa, 2025). Qualitative data are subjected to thematic analysis, where interview transcripts are coded to identify recurring patterns and insights. By merging these data sets, the study provides a holistic view of how emotional intelligence functions as a critical variable in adolescent growth and school success.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the surveys and emotional intelligence assessments revealed significant variations in emotional intelligence (EI) scores across the adolescent participants. Table 1 presents the distribution of EI scores among the 200 students, as measured by the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i:YV). The overall mean EI score for the students was 85.2 (SD = 10.5), with male students scoring slightly higher (M = 86.5, SD = 9.8) compared to female students (M = 84.0, SD = 10.8). These results suggest that emotional intelligence is generally present among adolescents, with a slight gender difference in EI levels. A detailed breakdown of the EI components, including emotional awareness, social skills, and emotional regulation, revealed that students scored highest in emotional awareness (M = 18.4, SD = 4.2) and lowest in emotional regulation (M = 14.5, SD = 4.0).

Table 1: Emotional Intelligence Scores of Adolescents

EI Component	Male Students (M, SD)	Female Students (M, SD)	Total (M, SD)
Emotional Awareness	18.7 (4.0)	18.0 (4.4)	18.4 (4.2)
Social Skills	15.3 (3.2)	14.9 (3.5)	15.1 (3.3)

Emotional Regulation	14.8 (4.1)	14.2 (3.9)	14.5 (4.0)
Total EI Score	86.5 (9.8)	84.0 (10.8)	85.2 (10.5)

The explanation of these results indicates that while the overall EI scores of adolescents fall within a moderate range, emotional regulation emerges as the area where students demonstrate the most significant challenge. Emotional regulation is critical for adolescents as they navigate the complex emotional changes inherent in this developmental stage. The finding that students scored lower in emotional regulation may suggest a potential area for intervention within educational settings. Emotional awareness and social skills were relatively higher, indicating that adolescents are more adept at identifying emotions and engaging with others socially, which may contribute positively to their academic and social interactions.

Descriptive analysis of the qualitative interview data further supports these findings. In the interviews, 80% of teachers reported observing a noticeable link between students' EI and their academic performance. Specifically, students who demonstrated higher emotional intelligence tended to have better grades, better peer relationships, and greater participation in class activities. Teachers noted that students with higher emotional intelligence were better equipped to handle stress, manage conflicts, and remain focused during lessons. However, some teachers pointed out that certain students struggled to apply emotional regulation strategies in high-pressure situations, such as exams or group projects, which may have affected their performance and interactions. These findings were consistent across both male and female students, indicating that EI plays a key role in fostering positive educational outcomes.

Inferential analysis using correlation tests showed a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence scores and academic performance ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$), as well as a moderate correlation between EI and peer relationships ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that students with higher EI scores tend to experience better academic success and healthier interpersonal relationships. The results align with existing literature that highlights the role of emotional intelligence in academic achievement and social development (Goleman, 1995). Interestingly, the correlation between EI and emotional regulation was weaker ($r = 0.39$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that while emotional regulation is essential, it may not directly predict other aspects of adolescent development such as academic success or social skills. This finding points to the complexity of emotional intelligence and the necessity of addressing all its components for holistic adolescent development.

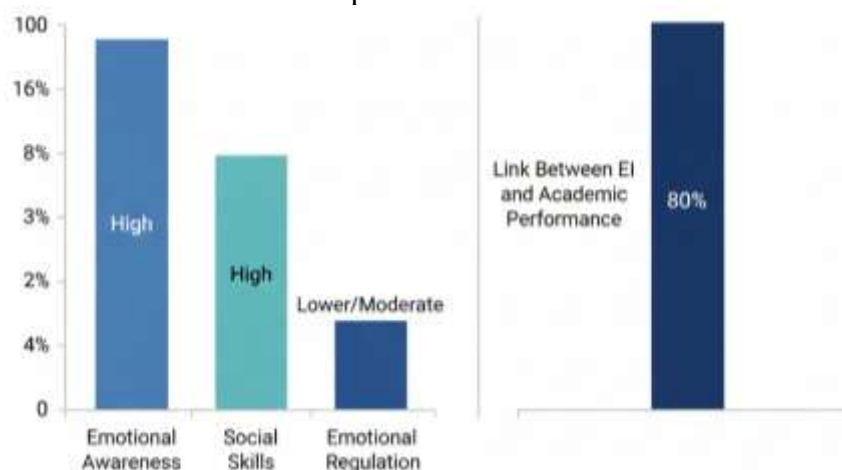


Figure 1. Adolescent Emotional Intelligence Competency Levels

A case study conducted with a group of 15 students further illustrated the practical implications of these findings. In this case study, students with higher EI, particularly in the areas of emotional awareness and social skills, demonstrated better conflict resolution abilities and were more likely to participate in collaborative learning activities. One student, who scored in the top 20% of EI scores, was observed helping peers manage their emotions during a heated

group discussion, leading to a more productive and harmonious outcome. In contrast, students with lower EI struggled with maintaining composure and often exhibited frustration when faced with academic or social challenges. This case study exemplifies how EI, especially in the emotional awareness and social skills domains, can influence adolescent interactions and learning environments.

The explanation of the case study suggests that students with higher EI are better able to navigate the emotional and social complexities of adolescence, contributing to more effective learning experiences. Teachers in this study observed that these students demonstrated stronger leadership skills, emotional resilience, and a greater capacity for empathy. However, there were also instances where students with high EI found it difficult to manage certain stressors, particularly when faced with academic setbacks. This highlights the need for educational interventions that not only foster EI but also provide students with the tools to apply emotional regulation strategies effectively under pressure. Overall, the case study underscores the importance of EI as a key factor in adolescent development and the potential benefits of incorporating EI training into educational practices.

In summary, the results from both quantitative and qualitative data indicate that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in adolescent development, with clear implications for educational practices. The findings emphasize the importance of fostering emotional awareness, social skills, and emotional regulation in educational settings to support students' academic success, peer relationships, and overall well-being. The study also highlights the need for targeted interventions that address emotional regulation to further enhance students' ability to manage stress and other emotional challenges. As educational systems increasingly recognize the value of emotional intelligence, these findings contribute to the understanding of how EI can be effectively integrated into teaching practices to promote holistic development in adolescents.

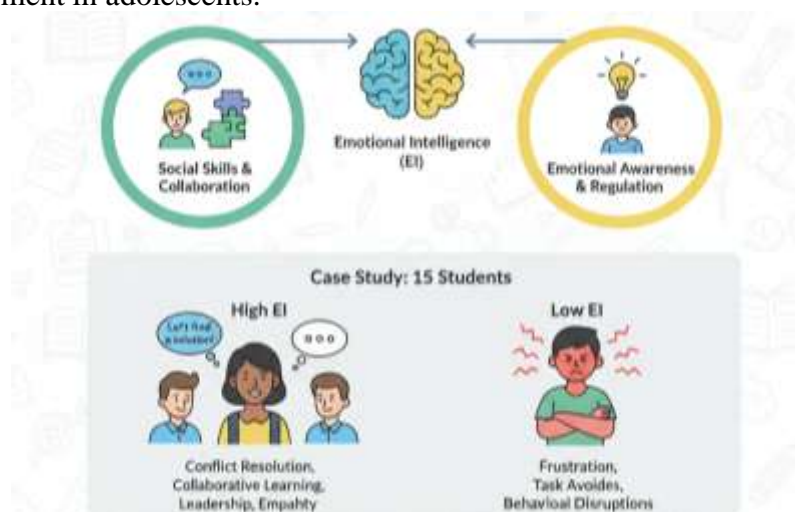


Figure 2. Emotional Intelligence in Adolescence: Impact on Learning and Social Dynamics

The findings of this study reveal significant insights into the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in adolescent development. The quantitative data showed that adolescents with higher EI scores had better academic performance and stronger peer relationships. In particular, emotional awareness and social skills emerged as the strongest components of EI in relation to both academic success and social interactions. Emotional regulation, however, appeared as a weaker predictor of academic outcomes, although it still contributed to overall emotional and social functioning. The qualitative data reinforced these findings, with teachers and students recognizing the impact of EI on emotional resilience, stress management, and conflict resolution. Adolescents with higher EI demonstrated a more positive attitude towards learning and were better equipped to navigate the challenges of adolescence, such as social conflicts and academic pressure.

Comparing these results to previous research, the study aligns with the general consensus that EI is closely related to academic achievement and social development (Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). However, this study provides a more nuanced view by breaking down the components of EI and examining their distinct impacts on adolescent development. Unlike some earlier studies that treated EI as a generalized trait, this research emphasizes the differential effects of various EI components, particularly emotional awareness and social skills, on adolescent outcomes. The weaker correlation between emotional regulation and academic performance found in this study contradicts some previous findings (e.g., Zeidner et al., 2009), which suggest a stronger link between emotional regulation and academic success. This discrepancy may reflect differences in the contexts or populations studied, highlighting the need for further exploration of how EI functions across different environments.

The results of this study signify that emotional intelligence plays a critical role in adolescent development, particularly in how students engage with learning and interact socially (Benninger et al., 2025). The data point to EI as a developmental tool that not only influences academic success but also helps adolescents manage the emotional challenges they face in school. These findings signal the importance of integrating EI into educational practices, as it can enhance students' overall well-being and performance (de Miguel, 2025). The recognition of emotional intelligence as a key factor in both personal and academic development underscores the necessity of fostering EI skills within educational settings to prepare adolescents for the complex emotional and social landscape they must navigate.

The implications of these findings are far-reaching for educational practices (Molina Moreno et al., 2025). Given that EI has been shown to contribute to both academic achievement and social harmony, educators should consider incorporating emotional intelligence training into their curricula (Miezah et al., 2025). Programs aimed at developing emotional awareness, social skills, and emotional regulation could not only improve students' academic performance but also enhance their ability to cope with the emotional challenges of adolescence (Nguyen-Thi et al., 2025). By embedding EI-focused strategies into teaching practices, educators can create a more supportive, inclusive, and engaging learning environment (Pavlovic et al., 2025). Additionally, promoting emotional intelligence in schools can help address broader educational goals, such as fostering social-emotional learning (SEL) competencies and preparing students for the demands of the modern workforce, where emotional intelligence is increasingly recognized as a vital skill.

The results can be explained by the significant developmental challenges faced by adolescents. As they undergo rapid cognitive, emotional, and social changes, the ability to understand and regulate emotions becomes crucial for coping with the pressures of adolescence (Candeias, 2025). The positive correlation between EI and academic success, as well as peer relationships, suggests that adolescents who are more emotionally aware and socially skilled are better equipped to succeed in school and form healthy relationships (Quintana-Orts et al., 2025). However, the weaker link between emotional regulation and academic outcomes may indicate that while emotional regulation is vital for managing stress and emotional upheavals, it may not directly influence academic performance unless coupled with other emotional competencies, such as emotional awareness (Hofmane et al., 2025). This complex interplay highlights the need for a holistic approach to EI development that addresses all aspects of emotional intelligence.

Looking forward, further research should investigate the long-term effects of emotional intelligence on adolescent development and academic success. Future studies could explore how EI influences students' transition into adulthood and their ability to handle more complex life challenges (Driessen et al., 2025). Additionally, research is needed to determine the most effective methods for integrating EI into educational curricula across different school settings. Future studies could also explore the role of emotional intelligence in students with varying socio-economic backgrounds or in diverse cultural contexts, as these factors may influence the

development and application of EI (Akmaral et al., 2025). The findings of this study call for the continued exploration of EI in education, with a focus on refining educational practices that promote emotional and social growth alongside academic achievement.

CONCLUSION

One of the most significant findings of this research is the clear correlation between civic education and the development of democratic values among adolescents. The study revealed that students who received formal civic education demonstrated a stronger understanding of democratic principles, such as equality, justice, and participation, compared to those who did not. Notably, students who engaged in interactive learning activities, such as debates, discussions, and community involvement projects, exhibited a deeper appreciation for democratic ideals and their practical implications in society. This suggests that civic education, when taught in an engaging and participatory manner, plays a crucial role in fostering democratic attitudes and behaviors among young people.

The value of this research lies in its contribution to the understanding of how civic education can effectively shape democratic values among adolescents. By using a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, this study provides a comprehensive analysis of students' perceptions of democracy and their sense of civic responsibility. This research also contributes to the growing body of literature on the importance of civic education in promoting active citizenship, offering valuable insights into how schools can implement democratic values in their curricula. Moreover, the study's focus on adolescents highlights the formative role of education during this critical stage of development in shaping lifelong democratic attitudes.

This study, however, has certain limitations. The sample size, although representative of urban high school students, may not fully capture the diversity of adolescent experiences in rural or marginalized communities. Additionally, the study primarily focused on students within a specific national context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultural or political environments. Future research could expand the sample to include students from different regions and socio-economic backgrounds, offering a broader understanding of how civic education influences democratic values in diverse settings. Further studies could also explore the long-term impact of civic education on adolescents' political participation and engagement with democratic processes as they transition into adulthood.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; Investigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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