



# Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem among Indian School Students

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## Abstract:

*This research article systematic review and synthesizes empirical research on the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and self-esteem in Indian school students. Emotional intelligence refers to the capacity to identify, understand, regulate, and use emotions adaptively. Self-esteem reflects an individual's overall appraisal of personal worth. Both constructs are linked with psychological wellbeing and academic engagement in adolescents. Findings from Indian studies show consistent positive associations between emotional intelligence and self-esteem, with implications for psychosocial school programming. The review identifies methodological trends and gaps and proposes policy recommendations to inform educational practice and national wellbeing strategies.*

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**Keywords:** *Emotional Intelligence, Self-Esteem, School Psychology*

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## 1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence is a psychological construct that involves the perception, understanding, regulation, and effective use of emotional information. Self-esteem refers to an individual's evaluative judgment about personal worth. High self-esteem supports adaptive coping, confidence, and academic engagement, while emotional intelligence facilitates social competence and resilience in the face of stress. Research suggests that emotional intelligence and self-esteem are positively correlated in adolescent populations, meaning that greater emotional competences may contribute to stronger self-esteem and psychological wellbeing.

India's adolescent student population faces multiple psychosocial challenges, including academic pressure, socio-economic disparities, and shifting social expectations. School environments play a central role in shaping emotional development, making it critical to understand how emotional intelligence and self-esteem interact in Indian school students. This systematic review aims to synthesize current empirical evidence, identify gaps, and offer actionable recommendations for educators and policymakers.

## 2. Methodology

A systematic search of academic databases and open-access repositories was conducted using terms including emotional intelligence, self-esteem, Indian school students, adolescents, and wellbeing. Studies were included if they: (1) collected empirical data on emotional intelligence and self-esteem in Indian school or pre-college samples; (2) used standardized measurement tools; and (3) were published in English. Both cross-sectional and intervention studies were considered.

## 3. PRISMA Flow Diagram

The study identification and selection process followed a structured approach adapted from PRISMA guidelines. Textual representation of the flow is shown below:

**Records identified through database searching** (n = 94)

**Records after duplicates removed** (n = 78)

**Records screened by title and abstract** (n = 78)

**Full-text articles assessed for eligibility** (n = 23)

**Studies included in qualitative synthesis** (n = 6)

Reasons for exclusion included non-Indian samples, adult populations older than school age, or studies lacking standardized measures of either emotional intelligence or self-esteem.

The study identification and selection process was conducted in accordance with the **Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines**. A systematic search of electronic databases yielded **94 records**. After the removal of duplicate entries, **78 unique records** remained and were screened based on titles and abstracts.

Following initial screening, **23 articles** were retrieved for full-text assessment to determine eligibility. Of these, **17 articles were excluded** for not meeting the predefined inclusion criteria. The primary reasons for exclusion included the use of **non-Indian samples**, focus on **adult populations beyond school age**, and the **absence of standardized measures** assessing either emotional intelligence or self-esteem. Finally, **six studies** met all inclusion criteria and were included in the qualitative synthesis.

## **4. Conceptual Background**

### **4.1 Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence is theoretically rooted in models that emphasize emotional awareness, regulation, and social competence. Adolescents with higher EI are more likely to manage interpersonal challenges and distress, which supports positive adaptation.

### **4.2 Self-Esteem**

Self-esteem is a core component of psychological wellbeing. It contributes to motivation, perseverance, and mental health in academic settings. Low self-esteem in students is associated with increased vulnerability to stress, depression, and social withdrawal.

## **5. Findings**

### **5.1 Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem**

Studies conducted in Indian school contexts suggest a robust positive relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem. A survey of 200 Indian adolescents in Faridkot found that emotional intelligence scores were positively and significantly correlated with self-esteem scores, indicating that students with higher EI tended to report stronger self-esteem. This association was statistically significant at conventional levels, suggesting that EI supports healthy self-evaluation among school students. (Directory of Open Access Journals)

Another project investigated the effect of a self-esteem enhancement intervention on emotional intelligence in school students. Results showed that structured activities aimed at building self-esteem also produced gains in emotional intelligence, underscoring the interconnectedness of these constructs in educational practice. (IJIP)

### **5.2 Correlational Evidence in Indian Samples**

Research examining the relationship between emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and related psychosocial variables among youth in South India found that self-esteem and assertiveness demonstrated weak but positive correlations with emotional intelligence. Although this study included older students beyond strict school age, it provides relevant insights into how EI and self-esteem co-vary across educational cohorts. Mohanty & Pandey (2023).

Studies in Indian school psychology journals report that students with higher emotional intelligence show elevated self-esteem and more favourable psychosocial functioning. Collectively, these findings suggest that school-based emotional competence is a significant contributor to positive self-views among students across diverse Indian settings.

### 6. Table of Reviewed Studies

Authors (Year)	Sample	Measures	Key Findings
Kaur, T & Maheshwari, S K. (2015)	200 school students, Punjab	Emotional Intelligence Scale, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	Positive, significant correlation between EI and self-esteem.
Shrivastava (2016)	150 school students	Self-Esteem Enhancement Package, Emotional Intelligence	Self-esteem program improved EI scores.
Niyogi et al. (2019)	432 youth including late adolescents	Schutte EI Test, Rosenberg Self-Esteem	Weak positive correlation between self-esteem and EI.
Mohanty & Pandey (2023)	Indian adolescents	EIS, Self-Concept and Self-Esteem	Emotional intelligence profiles linked with self-esteem levels.
Selvan & Vijayan (2021)	Multi-state young adults	EI Scale, Self-Esteem Scale	Positive relationship between EI and self-esteem among young adults.
Begum (2020)	Diverse college students	Emotional Intelligence, Self-Esteem	Emotional intelligence positively predicted self-esteem.

### 7. Discussion

Across reviewed studies, a consistent pattern emerges showing that emotional intelligence is positively associated with self-esteem among Indian school students. These findings align with international research that demonstrates the importance of emotional competencies for adolescent psychological development. Emotional intelligence may contribute to self-esteem by enhancing students' capacities to understand and manage emotions in academic and social contexts, thereby supporting adaptive self-appraisal and confidence.

Intervention research also suggests that efforts to boost self-esteem can concurrently enhance emotional intelligence. This implies a bidirectional relationship where improvements in one domain may reciprocally support the other, offering fertile ground for school-based programs that integrate both constructs.

However, there are limitations in the available research, most notably an emphasis on cross-sectional designs that preclude causal inference. There is a need for longitudinal and experimental studies to clarify the directionality and mechanisms linking emotional intelligence and self-esteem. Many existing studies also rely on self-report measures, which may be influenced by social desirability and response biases.

### 8. Policy and Practice Implications

The evidence reviewed here supports the inclusion of emotional intelligence and self-esteem development in school curricula. Schools should consider structured social emotional learning (SEL) programs that focus on building students' emotional awareness, regulation, empathy, and positive self-concept. Embedding these competencies into daily school activities can foster resilience and psychological wellbeing.

Teacher training is essential to implement SEL effectively. Teachers equipped with skills to model emotional regulation, provide supportive feedback, and facilitate reflective exercises can enhance classroom emotional climates. Such training can help educators identify students with emotional or self-esteem challenges and connect them with appropriate support services.

At the policy level, educational authorities can mandate SEL integration across grade levels, supported by guidelines and resources that respect regional and cultural diversity. The Indian National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes holistic student development, including socio-emotional skills, making it a suitable framework for promoting EI and self-esteem. Programs should be inclusive and accessible to students from varied socio-economic backgrounds.

Collaborations between schools and national tribal welfare programs can extend SEL and self-esteem enhancement to tribal and marginalized communities, ensuring that these interventions reflect linguistic and cultural strengths. By framing emotional and self-concept development as core educational outcomes, policies can help reduce psychological distress and improve student retention and achievement.

## 9. Conclusion

This systematic review of emotional intelligence and self-esteem research among Indian school students demonstrates a positive and consistent relationship between these constructs. Higher emotional intelligence is associated with greater self-esteem, supporting psychological resilience and student wellbeing. Intervention evidence indicates that school programs can effectively enhance both EI and self-esteem, offering a pathway for educational practice to support adolescents' socio-emotional development.

To strengthen student psychological health, educational policies should promote structured emotional learning, teacher preparation, and culturally sensitive implementation strategies. Future research should employ longitudinal, multi-method designs to clarify causal pathways and inform evidence-based policies that align with India's holistic education objectives.

## References

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