



Recognized by: Higher Education Commission (HEC), Government of Pakistan

---

## Examining the Role of Socio-Emotional Intelligence in Shaping Peer Relationship Dynamics in High School Contexts

**Khush Malka**

M.Phil Scholar, Institute of Education, University of Sargodha, Pakistan.

[khush\\_malka123@gmail.com](mailto:khush_malka123@gmail.com)

**Iram Parveen\***

Assistant Professor, Institute of Education, University of Sargodha, Pakistan.

[iram.uzair@uos.edu.pk](mailto:iram.uzair@uos.edu.pk)

**Muhammad Uzair-ul-Hassan**

Associate Professor, Institute of Education, University of Sargodha, Pakistan.

[uzair.hassan@uos.edu.pk](mailto:uzair.hassan@uos.edu.pk)

\*Corresponding Author

---

### ABSTRACT

Adolescence represents an important developmental period during which there occurs intense psychological and physical change. Peer relationships during this period have been found to have an important impact on academic engagement and psychological well-being. The need to interact and respond to peers in complex and constantly shifting ways represents an important and daily reality of multidimensional peer interactions. These peer interactions contribute towards generating positive experiences or stressful and unsettling situations. Socio-emotional intelligence represents an increasingly recognized factor responsible for influencing perceptions of peer relationships. The connection between Socio-emotional intelligence and peer relationships among adolescents has been explored within this study.

The main aim of the study was to investigate to what extent Socio-emotional intelligence can predict peer relationship quality and dynamics at the high school level. The study followed a quantitative methodological framework, and data was collected from a sample of 300 students from grades 9 and 10, belonging to private and government schools. Standardized and structured questionnaires were employed to measure the levels of SEI and peer relationship dynamics of the respondents. Descriptive statistical methods were employed to measure the general levels of SEI, and inferential statistical methods, consisting of correlation,

---

---

regression, and comparative statistical analyses, were employed to investigate relationship dynamics and comparisons among groups of respondents who portrayed more positive peer interactions, better social support, and more positive interpersonal relations. Regression statistical analysis showed that Socioemotional intelligence can significantly influence peer relationship quality. The comparative statistical analyses showed marked variability across gender, school, and residency regarding both SEI and peer relationship dynamics, underscoring the role of external factors on the SEI of the respondents.

The findings of this research tend towards the fact that Socio-emotional intelligence is an important factor in having effective peer relations among high school-going adolescents. The application of these competencies in students affects the area of improved peer environments and reduced conflict among them. The findings of this research indicate an important requirement of integration of Socio-emotional Learning Modules in the curriculum. These will be of great assistance in improving peer engagements of adolescents, along with overall students. Proposals have been suggested for the same.

**Keywords:** Socio-emotional intelligence, Peer relationships, Adolescents, Emotional regulation, Social skills, Interpersonal dynamics, Social support.

---

## INTRODUCTION

The secondary school level is actually a developmental stage characterized by students gaining important cognitive and social skills. In their adolescence, students experience major changes in their emotional and social behaviors, influencing not only their academic functioning but their psychological states as well (Jones et al., 2017; Miller et al., 2020). While education is always the core of schooling, some studies have suggested the important role of social experiences, especially those involving their peers, in students' emotional well-being and academic achievements (Schwartz-Mettle & Rose, 2017).

Under this background, Socio-emotional intelligence (SEI) has attracted growing interest. This refers to the use of knowledge of and ability to recognize and understand emotions within oneself as well as across other individuals (Mayer & Salovey, 2017; Den ham et al., 2018). Findings from various empirical investigations have shown that adolescents possessing strong SEI get along better and have greater supportive peer associations, which have been shown as protective buffers mitigating stressful experiences and strengthening resilience (Durlak et al., 2019; Blair & Diamond, 2016). The crucial SEI components of empathy and self-regulation have also shown efficacy and benefits within enhanced social adjustment and mental well-being domains within adolescents (Deceit & Cowell, 2017; Li et al., 2021).

A number of authors have documented growing work in this field of inquiry; unfortunately, many works of this nature have been conditioned towards investigating either younger children or merely the one-way relationships between SEI and peer relations or vice versa and Socioemotional development (Buckskin et al., 2018; Zhang & Cui, 2023). It is crucial for developing an intervention strategy which

would meet these dual requirements of improving Socioemotional competencies and supporting peer groups during the High School ages. Various international bodies like UNESCO (2020) and WHO (2021) have identified developing Socioemotional development and social conceitedness during Secondary school as an important consideration.

The goals of the current research endeavor are an attempt to fill this gap by investigating the complex relationship between Socio-emotional intelligence and peer relations among high school students. In this way, the research aims at providing some insights that could be helpful in Socioemotional interventions within the boundaries of the school, in an attempt to promote healthier peer environments for the teenagers. This conceptual model represents the link between Socio-Emotional Intelligence (IV), Empathy (Mediator), and Dynamic Peer Relationships (DV). Socio-Emotional Intelligence improves the capacity of students to recognize and control their emotions, which consequently increases their capacity for empathy with others. Empathy, as a mediator, increases the quality of relationships with others, hence the creation of healthy peer relationships. The theoretical framework presented in Figure 1 shows the relationship between Socio-Emotional Intelligence (SEI), Empathy, and Dynamic Peer Relationships among high school students. Socio-emotional intelligence, according to the theory of Salovey & Mayer (1990) and further developed by Goleman (1995), is the "abilities and skills that people use to perceive, analyze, and respond to their own emotions and the emotions of others. "The emotional competencies and capabilities of individuals play a very important role in the social lives of high school students in peer relationships. The development of empathy in high school students contributes to the development of dynamic peer relationships characterized by trust and emotional support in social relationships. The theoretical model in Figure 1 suggests that high school students who possess high socio-emotional intelligence capabilities and skills develop dynamic peer relationships, and the mediating role of empathy in the social lives of high school students

### **Problem Statement**

The high school years are significant for the acquisition of both socio-emotional and cognitive competencies. Even though academic proficiency has remained the main concern of education, it is the emotionally and socio-emotionally trained individual who is more likely to be successful and happy. The term socio-emotional intelligence (SEI), referring to the skill to recognize, understand, and control these and other people's emotions effectively, plays a significant role in shaping peer association among adolescents. Yet, there has been very little emphasis on the relationship between SEI and peer association processes within the context of the high school environment. This is significant to understanding the intervention strategies geared toward promoting better socio-emotional intelligence and fostering beneficial associations among adolescents.

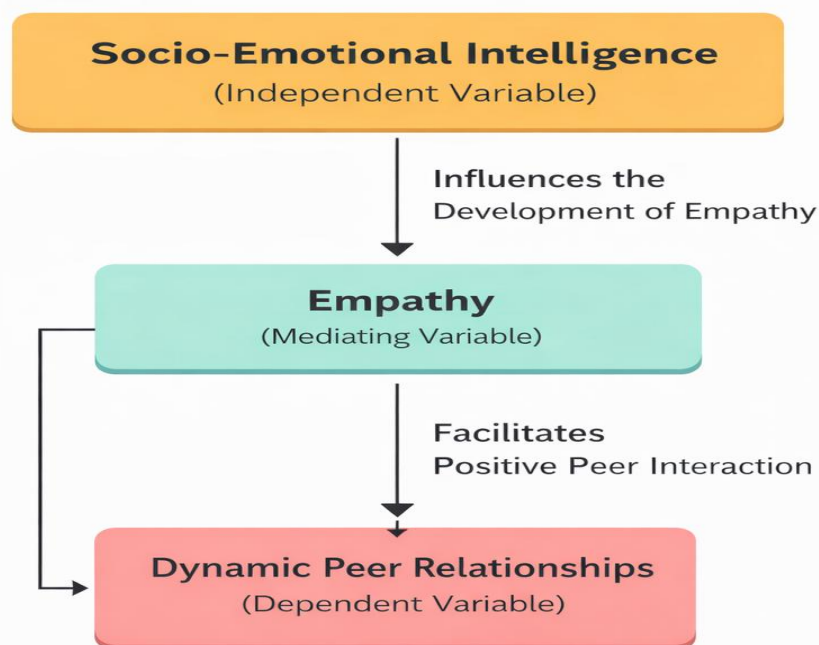
### **Research Questions**

The main objective is specified by four research questions:

- Q1: In what manner do high school students exhibit socio-emotional intelligence?
- RQ2 : Do high school students feel their relationship with their peers as a positive or negative experience?
- RQ3: How do the factors comprising socio-emotional intelligence relate with regards to peer relationships?
- RQ4: Which is, How can institutions of learning foster sister and brother relationships among pupils?

**Conceptual Framework**

Conceptual Framework of the Relationship between Socio-Emotional Intelligence, Empathy, and Dynamic Peer Relationships are:



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework illustrating the relationship between Socio-Emotional Intelligence, Empathy, and Dynamic Peer Relationships among high school students.

The above figure shows the conceptual framework that explains how Socio-Emotional Intelligence, Empathy, and Dynamic Peer Relationships are related among high school students. Socio-emotional intelligence is defined as an independent variable that affects students’ ability to recognize, understand, and

control their emotions and those of other people. Students with high socio-emotional intelligence have the ability to develop empathy.

Empathy is a mediating variable in this framework because it increases students' ability to comprehend their peers' emotions and responses, hence improving cooperation and communication among students. Through empathy, students become more responsive to other people's emotions.

As such, the role of empathy is significant with regard to the formation of dynamic peer relationships, which is the dependent variable. Positive and empathetic interactions between students play an important role with regard to the creation of trust, respect, and relationships within the school setting. This, therefore, shows that the framework indicates the indirect role played by socio-emotional intelligence with regard to the creation of dynamic peer relationships.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Adolescence is a pivotal stage of human development, where a host of changes take place, and these changes include emotional, social, and cognitive transformations. The high school years, for instance, are a crucial formative phase, where the student is engrossed in peer relationships and, at the same time, is also working on building themselves with regard to socio-emotional attributes. Socio-emotional intelligence (SEI) refers to the capacity of the individual to understand, process, and use their own emotions of themselves and those of others. The relevance of SEI in the high school context is pivotal, and it goes on to determine the nature of peer relationships and the overall influence of social and emotional associations on the psychological foundations of the high school student.

High school is a critical phase of fast-paced cognitive, emotional, and social growth during which students spend more time around peers who affect their formation of self-concept, engagement in social behaviors, self-esteem, and school performance. During the above background, the notion of Socio-Emotional Intelligence (SEI) also stands out since it encompasses awareness of oneself' emotions, awareness of others' emotions, awareness of conflict, and awareness of complex peer behaviors. It is therefore obvious that SEI is one of the constructs that is strongly connected to better social functioning and better psychological adaptations of students. Dynamic peer relations are referred to as ever-changing social behaviors that can be identified during high school. This is depicted by the ever-changing nature of friendships, social positions, cases of peer victimization in the school referred to as peer bullying, cases of peer inclusion as well as peer exclusion, and levels of peer support during high school. The relationship between SEI and peer dynamics during high school is of high theoretical value to developmental, social, and psychological studies in education, as it is fundamentally applicable to interventions such as high school peer counseling.

Socio-emotional intelligence (SEI) is also referred to as emotional intelligence, social-emotional skills, trait EI, and ability EI. It involves skills such as identifying and understanding emotions, affective control, empathy, cooperation, conflict

solving, and prosocial behaviors. Based on ability and mixed/trait models, SEI is applicable to high school settings because of peer associations that range from fluctuating friendships, social status, peer victimization in terms of bullying, peer attachment, and peer social support. Various models such as social-cognitive theory, attachment theory, and Transaction theory imply that high levels of SEI lead to more accurate social perceptions, better conflict resolution, lower levels of aggression, and higher peer association particularly amid peer contexts that continuously influence the development of SEI.

Empirical findings across cultures show that SEI is linked to increased friendship quality, increased peer acceptance, and increased feelings of belonging, as well as lower levels of involvement as a bully and a victim. Positive attachment to peers and contentedness with school are linked to increased psychological well-being and engagement. It should be noted, though, that these linkages occur within a mediated and moderated model; social skills, school engagement, and classroom emotional climate often serve as mediators of SEI, whereas gender, age, SES, and school climate are the moderators. It would seem the literature does show a complex, bidirectional relationship wherein SEI and peer interactions impact each other.

Extant studies on socio-emotional intelligence (SEI) and peer processes imply important correlations, yet methodological rigor is currently a concern given the preponderance of cross-sectional studies, inconsistent measures, a strong focus on self-report data, and a lack of cultural diversity. A scarcity of long-term and experimental work clouds findings specifically on causal constitutional mechanisms, as uncontrolled operationalization of peer variables (e.g., quality of friendships, attachment, and peer victimization and bullying) and a lack of analyses using a social network perspective seriously impede a more thorough understanding of social dynamics. Nevertheless, regardless of such shortcomings, it is clear that higher levels of SEI are associated with higher levels of high-quality friendships, peer support and acceptance, as well as lower levels of peer victimization and negative social behavior, while focusing on emotion regulation and social skills as core elements. Peer contexts and school climate also function as moderation variables in that supportive, cooperative, and non-bully schools simultaneously aid in enhancing SEI and higher-quality peer experiences. This depicts the importance of implementing high-quality social-emotional learning programs, conflict resolution strategies, empathy training programs, and anti-bully initiatives within high schools to enhance the socio-emotional development and peer experiences of adolescents.

Socio-emotional Intelligence (SEI) involves the skills of perceiving, understanding, and using emotions in self and others, together with social skills and competencies such as empathy, perspective-taking, and relationship management, and is especially important in high school where social interactions with peers remain dynamic and prominent in adolescents' lives. Theoretical approaches to understanding abilities such as ability, trait-mix approaches to SEI clarify how it is shaped by and defines social contexts, and it has been demonstrated through numerous studies across multiple cultures and contexts that there is considerable

support across measures of SEI for the hypothesis that SEI ability is directly related to higher quality friendships, peer support and attachment, less bullying and peer harassment, and increased feelings of belonging in school. Emotion regulation, empathy, emotional clarity, and social skills would seem to be particularly crucial through conflict resolution, peer conformity, and social hierarchies. Outcomes are influenced by mediators such as social skills, peer support, and school climate, and moderators including gender, age, SES, and class-level emotional climate, underlining that SEI interacts bidirectionally with peer contexts over time. Profiles of adolescents' SEI indicate that high regulation combined with high levels of empathy and sociability consistently predict more positive relationships with peers, which underlines the importance of targeted social-emotional learning programs strengthening these competencies in supporting adolescents' relational and psychological adjustment.

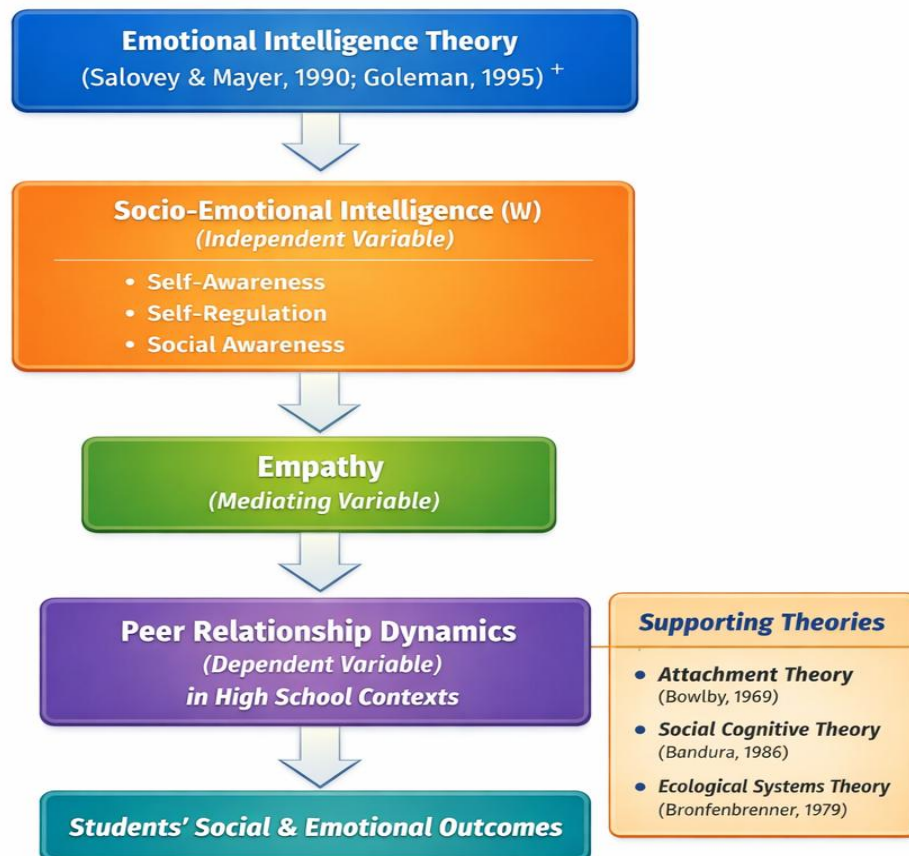
Knowledge of specific types of socio-emotional intelligence (SEI) is a crucial consideration for educators because intervention efforts need to be focused on a strength, such as emotion regulation, empathy, or social skills, depending on the types of peer relationship problems experienced by students in terms of bullying, problems in peer friendships, or the need for peer support, among other factors. There is also a need for a total assessment of the different types of socio-emotional intelligence in an individual. This will be used to provide intervention efforts based on their strengths and weaknesses across different intelligence, as well as the positive influence of peer environments and teacher participation in the intervention process, which will increase the effectiveness of different types of socio-emotional intelligence.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is informed by several theories that describe the relationship that exists between students' socio-emotional abilities and their interactions with their peers in high school environments. The fundamental foundation of this theory is Emotional Intelligence Theory, as developed by Salovey & Mayer (1990), and popularized by Goleman (1995). This theory is based on the assumption that people who are highly emotionally intelligent are able to understand and control their own emotions, as well as understand and identify the emotions of others. Socio-Emotional Intelligence (SEI), which is used in this study, is the independent variable that includes basic components that enable students to effectively respond to situations in their environments in order to ensure positive interactions with other people.

The diagram below shows the theoretical framework in understanding the role played by Socio-Emotional Intelligence in the facilitation of the dynamics of the relationship among the peers in the context of the high school. The theoretical framework of the research is based on the Emotional Intelligence Theory. The Emotional Intelligence Theory was developed by Salovey and Mayer in 1990. The theory gained more popularity in 1995 following the work of Goleman. The theory of emotional intelligence is founded on the principle of the individual's ability to recognize and control his/her own emotions, as well as those of other individuals.

Therefore, Socio-Emotional Intelligence, which is the independent variable in this study, comprises important aspects or skills which can be used to effectively interact with other individuals in the social environment.



Empathy, in this context, acts as a mediating variable in understanding the role of socio-emotional intelligence in facilitating the dynamics of peer relationship. This is because students who have higher socio-emotional intelligence skills have the ability to understand and empathize with other students, which leads to positive peer relationship dynamics, which is the dependent variable in this study. Positive peer relationship dynamics in the context of a high school refer to positive aspects of

relationships among students, which include trusting, communicating, cooperating, and empathizing with one another.

### **Emotional Intelligence Theory**

The rationale behind this study is anchored on Emotional Intelligence Theory, which was first introduced by Salovey and Mayer in 1990. The theory was further expounded on by Goleman in 1995. Emotional Intelligence Theory is anchored on the notion that emotional intelligence is “defined by the ability to monitor one’s own emotions and the emotions of others, to discriminate among different emotions, and to respond appropriately.” Socio-Emotional Intelligence (SEI) is used in this study to represent the independent variable. SEI includes self-awareness, self-regulation, and social awareness. These are the skills used by students to positively regulate their emotions and interact with other people in a positive manner, which in turn affects peer relationships in high school.

### **Attachment Theory**

Attachment Theory, as proposed by Bowlby (1969), focuses on the significance of early emotional relationships and how these relationships affect the social interactions of individuals. According to this theory, emotional relationships are vital for the development of trust, empathy, and positive social interactions. In teenagers, this theory of emotional relationships transcends family relationships and affects how teenagers relate to and associate with their peers. In this study, the theory of emotional relationships helps to understand how empathy and emotional security are useful for the development of positive peer relationship dynamics in high schools.

### **Social Cognitive Theory**

The Social Cognitive Theory was developed by Bandura in 1986. According to this theory, human behavior is the result of observation and interaction with the people in the environment. In the context of schools, students observe the behavior of the people in the class and react accordingly. In this regard, the Social Cognitive Theory justifies the assumption that students with better socio-emotional intelligence can better comprehend the behavior and interactions of the people around them and exhibit positive behavior in the context of school peers.

### **Ecological Systems Theory**

The Ecological Systems Theory, which was developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), is primarily focused on the development of humans in relation to their interaction with the different systems in the environment. According to the theory, the social and emotional development of teenagers is affected by the context of the school and the peers. In the context of high school, peer groups are considered to be vital in influencing emotional experiences and social behaviors. This theory supports the focus of this research in relation to the interaction of socio-emotional intelligence and empathy in the school context.

## **Study of the Variables**

### **Socio-Emotional Intelligence (SEI) (Independent Variable)**

Socio-Emotional Intelligence is seen as the independent variable in the study. Socio-Emotional Intelligence is defined as “the ability of the student to recognize and manage his own emotions, at the same time being sensitive to the emotions of other people.” This construct is supported in the literature of Salovey & Mayer (1990) and Goleman (1995). Socio-Emotional Intelligence is composed of self-awareness, self-regulation, and social awareness. This helps the student manage social situations and emotions in such a way that positive interactions in the school setting are developed.

### **Peer Relationship Dynamics in High Schools (Dependent Variable)**

Peer Relationship Dynamics is considered to be the dependent variable of this research. It is defined as “the nature of interaction, communication, trust, cooperation, and emotional support among students in peer groups in high school settings.” Positive peer relationships are found to play an important role in students’ social adjustment, emotional health, and overall development. This research aims to investigate how students’ socio-emotional intelligence and empathy are linked to peer relationship dynamics.

The alignment of theory for this study reveals that socio-emotional intelligence of students plays a significant role in influencing the dynamics of peer relationships in a high school setting. According to Emotional Intelligence Theory, as proposed by Salovey and Mayer (1990), and further emphasized by Goleman (1995), students who exhibit high socio-emotional intelligence are able to understand and manage emotional responses that occur in a social setting. Such emotional intelligence helps build empathy, which becomes a mediator for the enhancement of mutual understanding and supportive behaviors between peers. In addition, the theories of Attachment, Social Cognition, and Ecological Systems suggest that students who are highly socio-emotionally intelligent are more likely to build positive, cooperative, and stable peer relationships within a high school setting. The theory, therefore, implies that a high level of socio-emotional intelligence results in a high level of empathy, leading to positive and healthy peer relationship dynamics.

### **Methods And Procedure**

The study used a quantitative method of research and a correlational design. As for the choice of Correlational Design, the reason for picking this particular design for this research is that this particular research will allow the researcher to evaluate the strength and direction of association between two or more variables without manipulating these variables.

### **Population and Sampling**

In the study, the population of interest consisted of high school students in grades 9 and 10 of both public and private secondary schools. Students were selected from different schools to ensure representation based on their different settings, such as the public and private secondary schools.

A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample, which comprised 300 subjects equally distributed by gender and grade level. The sampling ensured equal distribution of the subjects to the different strata, including the different levels and gender groups, as well as the type of schools, such as rural and private.

### **Instrumentation**

Data were collected using the Likert-type scale instrument. A typical research instrument on socio-emotional intelligence and dynamic peer relationships in high school consists of standardized questionnaires and surveys that can help students recognize and manage their own and other people's emotions, empathetically relate to others, and handle constantly changing social interactions. The widely used Technique and EQ-i: YV measure a range of social and emotional competencies. In order to assess peer relationship dynamics, socio-metric techniques or peer relationship scales, such as the Friendship Quality Questionnaire, are often combined to examine such aspects as the quality of friendships, social status, and changes within groups. Taken together, these instruments enable researchers to explore how emotional intelligence influences adolescents' peer relations within the dynamic social environment at school.

### **Validation of Research Instruments**

The instrument used to identify socio-emotional intelligence and dynamic peer relationships in the high school was tested for content and construct validity. Feedback from six academic experts in the Department of Education was sought to test the content and construct validity of the instrument. Feedback was obtained based on the relevance and clarity of understanding presented in the instrument. Items showing redundancy and complications in understanding were eliminated in the process of reducing inaccuracy and improving readability. A pilot test was done on 30 students in a local high school, other than those in the main study. Feedback was sought to eliminate any ambiguities in understanding, ensuring adaptability, and improving the flow process of the instrument.

### **Reliability**

The scales' internal consistency was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha. A threshold value of 0.89 and above was taken to be acceptable for each of the scales to be reliable. This is because the reliability of the scales was measured after the pilot test to ensure its stability. The results were as follows:

**Table1.** Reliability Statistics

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>No. of Items</b>
Overall	0.89	39
Socio-Emotional intelligence	.070	29
Dynamic Peer Relationship	.094	10

---

## **Questionnaire Administration Procedure**

To ensure that the data is constant, honest, and reliable, the questionnaire needed to be administered systematically:

### **Preparation and Permissions:**

Permissions were sought from the principals of the involved schools, the concerned authority for the education sector, and, where applicable, the Institutional Review Board or Ethics Committee. Consent was sought from parents about minors below the age of consent who participated.

### **Pre-testing:**

As mentioned, a pilot test of 30 students was conducted to validate and perfect the questionnaire so that it could be clearer, more culturally valid, and reliable in nature.

### **Sampling and Scheduling**

Participants were accessed according to the stratified random sampling method. Scheduling was done in accordance with the teachers and administrators of the schools to avoid negatively affecting academic lessons.

### **Distribution of Questionnaire:**

Questionnaires were distributed within the classrooms on the dates scheduled. This was followed by a briefing for the students about the purpose and the confidentiality of the research. No student could be identified.

### **Completion and Retrieval of Questionnaires.**

The questionnaires were completed by the students within a 20–30-minute interval in a secluded room. The researcher was available in case they needed answers for any part of the questionnaires without bias. The questionnaires were filled; they were instantly retrieved and stored in a secure location.

### **Data Security and Confidentiality**

Data confidentiality was maintained. The data collected was computerized and was stored in a password-protected computer, and the files are in a locked cabinet and to be disposed of as such at the end of this study.

### **List of Experts for Tool Validation**

---

Sr#	Expert Name	Expert Designation
1	Dr. Zainab Sherazi	Lecture, Institute of Education, University of Sargodha
2	Dr. Bilal Ahmad	Associate Professor, Institute of Education, University of Sargodha
3	Dr. Ghulam Muhammad	Lecturer, Institute of Education, University of Sargodha
5	Dr. Ghazanfar Ali	Lecturer, Institute of Education, University of Sargodha
6	Dr Mushtaq Ahmad	Associate Professor, Institute of Education, University of Sargodha

---

This well-structured design allowed for a valid and reliable research tool that was ethically conducted, allowing a clear grasp of the socio-emotional and interpersonal experiences of students of high schools.

#### **Data Collection and Data Analysis**

A combination of methods, referred to as the mixed methods approach, was used for the measurement of socio-emotional intelligence and peer relationships. Both SEI and peer relations were assessed by a combination of standardized quantification methods and behavioral observation lists. SEI was quantified by the usage of standard tools, while peer relationships were ascertained using teacher and peer rating scales. Data was collected in the classroom under controlled conditions.

The use of the descriptive statistics enabled the understanding of the levels of SEI among the students. The use of the inferential statistics, which comprised the Pearson correlation and regression test, enabled the comprehension of the relationship between the levels of SEI and peer relationship dynamics. Upon the analysis of the levels of SEI and the dynamics of peer relationship, it became clear that there existed a strong positive correlation between the levels of the students' SEI and peer relationships. This portrayed the aspect that those students with high levels of SEI also had high levels of peer relationship and high levels of involvement in peer associations. Students with high levels of SEI displayed behaviors associated with cooperation, conflict management, and good friendships. Low levels of SEI were associated with peer conflict, withdrawal, and the failure to establish peer associations.

## **RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

The results and the findings of the study were as follows:

### **Demographic**

Demographic variables make sure of the truth of our sample data as a representation of population or not. Demographic variables entail those factors which could be calculated and applied to categorize participants of the selected population into smaller groups. The Demographic part of this study was prepared to obtain data on the variables of Schools, Gender, and Residence. This data helps obtain a distinct representation of the studying Students.

**Table 2.** Demographic Profile

Variable Name	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	= Male	124	41.3 %
	= Female	176	58.7 %
	Total	300	100.0%

	= Urban	214	71.3%
	= Rural	86	28.7 %
Residence	Total	300	100.0%
	1= Public	124	41.3%
	2= Private	176	58.7%
School	Total	300	100%

From the information presented on Table 4.2, it is clear that for the demographic frequency analysis, more, or 41.3%, of the 300 respondents were male (n=124), while 58.7% were female (n=176), which indicated the slightly higher proportion than the male gender. For the residents, more of the subjects hailed from the urban sector which made up 71.3% of the respondents and composed 214 (+n), while 28.7% hailed from rural areas and composed 86 (+n). For the type of school, more of the respondents come from the publicly managed schools which comprised 41.3% or 124 (+n), while those under private management comprised 58.7% or 176 (+n).

**Table 3.** Group Statistics for Socio-Emotional Intelligence (SEI) and DynamicPeer Relationships (DPR) by Gender

Gender	N	TOTALSEI			TOTALDPR		
		Mean	SD	SE	Mean	SD	SE
Male	49	115.53	4.10	0.59	37.52	2.62	0.37
Female	251	124.10	5.97	0.38	40.97	2.45	0.15

Table 3 above shows the descriptive statistics of the variable of socio-emotional intelligence (SEI) and dynamic peer relationships (DPR) in respect of gender. It was seen that the female participants have recorded higher scores in the variables of TOTALSEI (M = 124.10, SD = 5.97) and DPR (M = 40.97, SD = 2.45), compared to the male participants (M = 115.53, SD = 4.10); (M = 37.52, SD = 2.62), which clearly states that female participants display higher socioemotional traits and dynamic peer associations compared to the latter. The Standard Error of the mean (SE), in this specific instance, clearly states that the results of this work are true and original, especially in relation to the female participants, due to their large sample size.

**Table 4.** Descriptive Statistics of Socio-Emotional Intelligence (SEI) and Dynamic Peer Relationships (DPR) by Students' Background

Background Respondents	TOTALSEI Mean	TOTALSEI SD	TOTALSEI SE	TOTALDPR Mean	TOTALDPR SD	TOTALDPR SE
Urban	123.40	6.49	0.44	40.64	2.76	0.19
Rural	120.94	6.29	0.68	39.82	2.76	0.30

Table 4 below shows the descriptive statistics of socio-emotional intelligence (SEI) and dynamic peer relationships (DPR) of the students according to their residence. The scores of the total SEI (TOTALSEI) and total DPR (TOTALDPR) of the urban students were higher than those of the rural students. The urban students had a mean of 123.40 with a standard deviation of 6.49 for TOTALSEI, as opposed to the rural students' mean of 120.94 with a standard deviation of 6.29. Additionally, the urban students had a mean of 40.64 with a standard deviation of 2.76 for TOTALDPR, as opposed to the rural students' mean of 39.82 with a standard deviation of 2.76. This shows that the urban students' socio-emotional intelligence and dynamic peer relations are slightly higher compared to the rural students. The standard errors show that the estimation of the means was done with good precision, especially the urban groups.

**Table 5.** Descriptive Statistics of Socio-Emotional Intelligence (SEI) and Dynamic Peer Relationships (DPR) by School Type

School Type	TOTALSEI Mean	TOTALSEI SD	TOTALSEI SE	TOTALDPR Mean	TOTALDPR SD	TOTALDPR SE
Public	124.11	9.02	6.44	0.58	39.14	2.97
Private	125.29	5.21	0.39	41.29	2.26	0.17

The descriptive statistics on socio-emotional intelligence and dynamic peer relations based on the type of school are displayed in the mean scores of the TOTALSEI and TOTALDPR dimensions were found to be higher among private school-going children. That is, the mean scores of TOTALSEI and TOTALDPR among private school-going children were recorded to be 125.29 (mean) and 41.29 (mean) respectively, while the mean scores for TOTALSEI and TOTALDPR among public school-going children were found to be 119.02 and 39.14 respectively. The standard deviation of the scores was found to be 5.21 and 2.26 respectively.

**Table 6.** Frequency Analysis of Socio emotional Intelligence (SEI)

Sr#	Statements	Disagreement Zone		Total Disagreement	N	Agreement Zone		Total Agreement	Result
		SDA	DA			A	SA		
<b>Socio emotional Intelligence</b>									
1	I can easily identify my emotions as they occur	0 (0%)	27 (8.9%)	27 (8.9%)	1 (0.3%)	132 (43.6%)	140 (46.2%)	273 (90.1%)	Agreement
2	I understand why I feel the way I do in different situations	0 (0%)	29 (9.7%)	29 (9.7%)	1 (0.3%)	136 (45.3%)	134 (44.7%)	271 (90.3%)	Agreement
3	I am aware of how my emotions influence my behavior	1 (0.3%)	26 (8.7%)	27 (8.7%)	0 (0%)	132 (44.0%)	141 (47.0%)	273 (91%)	Agreement
4	I can recognize emotions in my peers' facial expressions.	6 (2.0%)	30 (10.0%)	36 (12%)	12 (4.0%)	138 (46.0%)	114 (38.0%)	264 (88%)	Agreement
5	I notice when my mood shifts unexpectedly	12 (4.0%)	22 (7.3%)	34 (11.3%)	10 (3.3%)	161 (53.7%)	95 (31.0%)	266 (88%)	Agreement
6	I can describe my feelings accurately	11 (3.7%)	22 (7.3%)	33 (11%)	11 (3.7%)	158 (52.7%)	98 (32.7%)	267 (89.1%)	Agreement
7	I am aware of the physical sensations that accompany my emotions	6 (2.0%)	12 (4.0%)	18 (6%)	0 (0%)	120 (40.0%)	162 (54.0%)	280 (94%)	Agreement

8	I can differentiate between similar emotions, such as frustration and anger.	6 (2.0%)	35 (11.7%)	41 (13.7%)	12 (4.0%)	127 (42.3%)	120 (40.0%)	259 (86.3%)	Agreement
9	I often reflect on my emotional responses after social interactions	6 (2.0%)	15 (5.0%)	21 (7.0%)	2 (0.7%)	121 (40.3%)	156 (52.0%)	279 (93%)	Agreement
10	I can sense when my peers are feeling upset, even without them saying anything	6 (2.0%)	34 (11.3%)	40 (13.3%)	12 (4.0%)	127 (42.3%)	121 (40.3%)	260 (86.6%)	Agreement
11	I remain calm even when others are upset	7 (2.3%)	16 (5.3%)	23 (7.6%)	2 (0.7%)	118 (39.3%)	157 (52.3%)	277 (92.3%)	Agreement
12	I can control my emotions in stressful situations	6 (2.0%)	31 (10.3%)	37 (12.3%)	10 (3.3%)	127 (42.3%)	126 (42.0%)	263 (87.6%)	Agreement
13	I avoid reacting impulsively when I'm angry	6 (2.0%)	30 (10.0%)	35 (12%)	11 (3.7%)	124 (41.3%)	129 (43.0%)	264 (88%)	Agreement
14	I can stay composed during disagreements with friends	6 (2.0%)	34 (11.3%)	40 (13.3%)	12 (4.0%)	129 (43.0%)	119 (39.7%)	260 (86.7%)	Agreement

15	I can cheer myself up when I'm feeling down	6 (2.0%)	26 (8.7%)	32 (10.7%)	8 (2.7%)	124 (41.3%)	136 (45.3%)	268 (89.3%)	Agreement
16	I can adapt my emotional responses to suit different situations	7 (2.3%)	34 (11.3%)	41 (13.6%)	12 (4.0%)	125 (41.7%)	122 (40.7%)	259 (86.4%)	Agreement
17	I can let go of negative emotions after a conflict	6 (2.0%)	26 (8.7%)	32 (10.7%)	8 (2.7%)	124 (41.3%)	136 (45.3%)	268 (89.3%)	Agreement
18	I can maintain a positive outlook even when things aren't going well	6 (2.0%)	34 (11.3%)	40 (13.3%)	12 (4.0%)	126 (42.0%)	122 (40.7%)	260 (86.7%)	Agreement
19	I can stay focused on tasks even when I'm feeling emotional	6 (2.0%)	29 (9.7%)	35 (11.3%)	10 (3.3%)	126 (42.0%)	129 (43.0%)	265 (88.3%)	Agreement
20	I can tell when someone needs help, even if they don't ask	7 (2.3%)	34 (11.3%)	41 (%)	12 (4.0%)	128 (42.7%)	119 (39.7%)	259 (89.4%)	Agreement
21	I understand how my actions affect others' feelings	6 (2.0%)	29 (9.7%)	35 (11.7%)	9 (3.0%)	128 (42.7%)	128 (42.7%)	265 (88.4%)	Agreement
22	I can sense the mood of a group without them saying	6 (2.0%)	27 (9.0%)	33 (11%)	9 (3.0%)	126 (42.0%)	132 (44.0%)	267 (89%)	Agreement

	anything								
23	I am aware of social cues, like body language and tone of voice	6 (2.0%)	26 (8.7%)	32 (10.7%)	9 (3.0%)	124 (41.3%)	135 (45.0%)	268 (89.3%)	Agreement
24	I can empathize with my peers' experiences and perspectives	6 (2.0%)	28 (9.3%)	34 (11.3%)	11 (3.7%)	125 (41.7%)	130 (43.3%)	266 (88.7%)	Agreement
25	I can recognize when someone is feeling left out	6 (2.0%)	30 (10.0%)	35 (12%)	11 (3.7%)	124 (41.3%)	129 (43.0%)	264 (88%)	Agreement
26	I can understand why someone might be upset, even if I don't agree with them.	6 (2.0%)	34 (11.3%)	40 (13.3%)	12 (4.0%)	129 (43.0%)	119 (39.7%)	260 (86.7%)	Agreement
27	I can see things from my friends' points of view	6 (2.0%)	26 (8.7%)	32 (10.7%)	8 (2.7%)	124 (41.3%)	136 (45.3%)	268 (89.3%)	Agreement
28	I can tell when someone is	7 (2.3%)	34 (11.3%)	41 (13.6%)	12 (4.0%)	125 (41.7%)	122 (40.7%)	259 (86.4%)	Agreement
	pretending to be happy								
29	I can understand the emotions behind my peers'	6 (2.0%)	26 (8.7%)	32 (10.7%)	8 (2.7%)	124 (41.3%)	136 (45.3%)	268 (89.3%)	Agreement

actions									
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

It is clear from Table 6 that the frequency distribution indicates a consistent majority of students agreed with statements on socio-emotional intelligence. For almost all items, over 85% of the respondents fell under the agreement zone, which indicated a level of good control over emotions. The students have reportedly been able to recognize, understand, and describe their emotions. They showed great awareness of others' emotions, such as recognizing social cues and perceptions of their peers' emotions. A majority of students reported an ability to control their emotions during stressful events and demonstrate good behavior. The findings suggest overall great awareness of socio-emotional intelligence among the students.

**Table 7.** Frequency Analysis of Dynamics peers Relationship (DPR)

Sr#	Statements	Disagreement Zone		Total Disagreement	N	Agreement Zone		Total Agreement	Result
		SDA	DA			A	SA		
Dynamics peers Relationship									
1	I can resolve conflicts with my peers effectively	12 (4.0%)	48 (16.0%)	60 (20%)	17 (5.7%)	138 (46.0%)	85 (28.3%)	240 (80%)	Agreement
2	I can express my feelings without causing offense	12 (4.0%)	54 (18.0%)	66 (22%)	5 (1.7%)	145 (48.3%)	84 (28.0%)	234 (78%)	Agreement
3	I can give and receive constructive feedback	6 (2.0%)	30 (10.0%)	36 (12%)	18 (6.0%)	138 (46.0%)	108 (36.0%)	264 (88%)	Agreement
4	I can maintain friendships even after disagreements	6 (2.0%)	37 (12.3%)	43 (14.3%)	12 (4.0%)	143 (47.7%)	102 (34.0%)	257 (85%)	Agreement
5	I can support my friends when they're	12 (4.0%)	6 (2.0%)	18 (6%)	11 (3.7%)	200 (66.7%)	71 (23.7%)	282 (94.1%)	Agreement

	going through tough times								
6	I can collaborate well with others in group settings	12 (4.0)	9 (3.0%)	21 (7.0%)	10 (3.3%)	186 (62.0%)	83 (27.7%)	279 (93%)	Agreement
7	I can make new friends easily	5 (1.7%)	17 (5.7%)	22 (7.4%)	5 (1.7%)	121 (40.3%)	152 (50.7%)	278 (92.7%)	Agreement
8	I can help mediate conflicts between my peers	5 (1.7%)	17 (5.7%)	22 (7.4%)	5 (1.7%)	124 (41.3%)	149 (49.7%)	278 (92.7%)	Agreement
9	I can adapt my communication style to fit different people	5 (1.7%)	21 (7.0%)	26 (8.7%)	5 (1.7%)	132 (44.0%)	137 (45.7%)	274 (91.4%)	Agreement
10	I can maintain positive relationships with a diverse group of peers.	0 (0%)	30 (7.1%)	30 (7.1%)	0 (0%)	132 (44.0%)	138 (46.0%)	254 (90%)	Agreement

It can be observed from Table 7 that for all items related to positive association practices with peers, the students showed a marked level of agreement. The level of agreement for all items was found to range between 78% and 94%, which typically falls within the agreement zone for people exhibiting exceptional interpersonal and social skills. The students rate that they can cope with conflicting situations very efficiently and that their friendship isn't affected, even in case there's conflict and/or disagreement between the two and their friends. This reflects that students have exceptional communication skills, which involve expressing one's emotions, flexibility with one's communication style, and ability to provide constructive comments/suggestions. They rate that they are confident altogether about their ability to support one's colleagues emotionally and have a common goal whenever they have to work together as a team.

**Table 8.** Mean Score

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
-----------	---	------	----------------

---

<b>1. Independent Variable: Socio-Emotional Intelligence (SEI)</b>			
<b>A. Emotional Awareness (Items 1–10)</b>	300	37.7733	3.07247
<b>B. Emotional Regulation (Items 11–19)</b>	300	37.9900	2.81121
<b>C. Social Awareness (Items 20–29)</b>	300	11.8491	2.38808
<b>2. Dependent Variable:</b>			
<b>A. Peer Relationship Dynamics (Items 30–39)</b>	300	44.1467	2.64104

---

The values for the means and standard deviations for the study variables are provided in the descriptive statistics table. The results showed that the value for the mean for the dimension of Socio-Emotional Intelligence, specifically for the dimension of Emotional Awareness, was 37.77 (SD=3.07), implying that students generally have a relatively higher level of awareness concerning their emotions and feelings. The results also showed that students are relatively consistent concerning this dimension, as revealed by the value for the standard deviation.

The results for the dimension of Emotional Regulation showed that the value for the mean was 37.99 (SD=2.81), implying that students generally have a relatively higher capacity to manage and control their emotions and feelings in different situations. The results also showed that students have a relatively lower level of consistency concerning this dimension, as revealed by the value for the standard deviation.

For Social Awareness, the mean is 11.84 and standard deviation is 2.38. This means that the respondents, on average, understand and are sensitive to the emotions and feelings of other people.

In terms of the dependent variable, Peer Relationship Dynamics, a score of 44.14, with a standard deviation of 2.64, was obtained, implying that students tend to have positive and healthy relationships with their peers in their social environment, and a relatively low standard deviation implies that most respondents share similar perceptions regarding their relationships with peers.

Overall, the findings indicate that students in the sample demonstrate relatively high socio-emotional intelligence and positive peer relationship dynamics, suggesting that socio-emotional competencies may contribute to better interpersonal relationships among peers.

**Table 9.** Correlation

		TOTALSEI	TOTALDPR
TOTALSEI	Pearson Correlation	1	.713**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
TOTALDPR	N	300	300
	Pearson Correlation	.713**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N		300	300

As can be viewed in Table 8, correlation analysis reveals that there was a strong positive association between socio-emotional intelligence and dynamics of peer relationships, that is, between TOTALSEI and TOTALDPR.

The value of the correlation coefficient is 0.713, which indicates a positive relationship between strong socio-emotional intelligence and strong peer relationship dynamics. The value is also significant at 0.01 levels ( $p = 0.000$ ), which indicates that it is not a random or casual relationship. It is clear that those students who have a strong understanding of their emotions and also the abilities to regulate those emotions have strong peer relationship dynamics. The reason is perhaps that those students who have strong socio-emotional traits have the ability to communicate, empathize, and settle conflicts effectively when they deal with peers.

**Table 10.** Regression

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1174.961	1	1174.961	3.820	307.561
	Residual	1138.436	298			.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Total	2313.398	299			

Table 10: The table below is the able that evaluates the regression model to see if the model is significant to predict the data on dynamics of the relationship among peers. Total variance from the regression sum of squares indicates that it has a total variance of 1174.961 on the TOTALDPR due to the variable socio-emotional intelligence.

Since, the error sum of squares is the sum of residuals that the model cannot explain. Its value is 1138.436.

The total sum of squares stands at 2313.398. This accounts for the general variance of the dynamics of peer relationship. From this stage, the mean square value of the regression and the residual are calculated at 1174.961 and 3.820 respectively. This value forms the basis of the Statistic. The calculated F-statistic stands at 307.561. This makes a good representation of the model having a good fit as well as accounting for a good proportion of the variance. The value of the significance,  $p <$

0.001, portrays the model as significant. Socio-emotional intelligence remains a significant predictor of the dynamics of the peer relationship.

**Table 11.** Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model Coefficients	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
Beta					
(Constant) 1	3.105	2.130		1.458	.146
TOTALSEI	.304	.017	.713	17.537	.000

The regression equation, as stated in Table 11 : "However, if the regression equation is expressed as the prediction of dynamics of peer relationship (TOTALDPR) from the variables of socio emotional intelligence (TOTALSEI)," the unstandardized constant is 3.105. In this case, the regression equation predicts the overall score of TOTALDPR

The unstandardized coefficient in the equation for TOTALSEI is 0.304, indicating that as the variable 'socio-emotional intelligence' changes by one unit, the variable 'TOTALDPR' changes by

The value of the standardized coefficient or Beta is 0.713, which indicates a strongly positive influence of TOTALSEI on the dynamics of peer relationship. The value of t for TOTALSEI is 17.537 and  $p = 0.000$ , which indicates its high significance as a predictor. The value of t for the intercept is 1.458 and  $p = 0.146$ , which is not significant. This further reaffirms the fact that the significant predictor variable for peer relationship dynamics is socio-emotional intelligence. It can be interpreted that those having high scores on socio-emotional intelligence also exhibit good peer relations.

## DISCUSSION

The connection between socio-emotional intelligence and peer relationships has long been recognized as an important dimension of educational psychology. The observations and findings of this study substantiate this body of knowledge. Emotional awareness, control, and empathy have been identified as integral components of human emotions and their functions from an interpersonal perspective (Mayer and Salovey 1997). Supporting this position, this study confirms that an increased level of socio-emotional intelligence proves highly beneficial in enhancing social interactions and peer relationships.

As illustrated and supported by Denham et al. (2018), outcomes show that teenagers who can effectively recognize and control their emotions relate constructively to groups and have consistent and supportive friendships. Within the components of SEI, it has been identified that the factor of Empathy has been a significant catalyst to facilitate cooperation, provision of emotional support, and

minimizing interpersonal conflict. This supports Deceit and Cowell (2017), who suggest that the qualities of Empathy are useful to overcome social difficulties pertaining to adolescents.

The data also indicates that the dynamics of peer relationships are viewed more favorable in the presence of high SEI, and this agrees with the assertion that “socio-emotional competencies predict more trusting and intimate social relationships, positive adjustment, and the ability to be resilient” (Durlak et al. 2019, p. 1567). On the contrary, there is a high presence of peer misunderstanding, withdrawal, and relationship problems associated with those who have low SEI, and this is in accordance with the statement: “emotional incompetence is a key source of social rejection and exclusion” (Buckskin et al. 2018, p.

Demographic variables, too, reflected the global pattern. Girls showed stronger emphatic ability, and this aligns with findings from Li et al. (2021), whereas SEI scores were higher among both urban and private school pupils, indicating the impact of exposure and opportunities on emotional skill acquisition. The findings underscore the impact of moderating factors like school and socio-cultural factors on SEI and peer interactions.

The research also reaffirms the need for socio-emotional learning (SEL) in schools, as discussed by UNESCO in 2020 and WHO in 2021. The predictive value of SEI on the quality of peer relationships suggests the use of SEL interventions in teaching empathy, communication skills, conflict management, and self-directed regulation of emotions as a means of creating a positive peer context.

In conclusion, the results support the assertion of the fundamental importance of SEI in relation to adolescents’ peer relationships, influencing cooperation, trust, social belonging, and emotional adjustment. The extension of this investigation involves the identification of demographic differences, and emphasizes upon the predictive validity of SEI in its application to real-world settings in an attempt to facilitate social-emotional functioning among adolescents within high school environments.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study clearly underlines the fact that the factor of socio-emotional intelligence is a major influential factor as far as peer associations are concerned among high school students. Students possessing higher amounts of SEI, which entails aspects of empathy, awareness, and self regulation, are likely to have better, cooperative, and supportive peer associations. This, in turn, continues to validate the fact that students possessing higher amounts of EI are likely to deal better with social matters compared to others.

These results also verify that there is a strong positive link between SEI and peer interactions; hence, a recommendation can be made that students with knowledge and control of their emotions participate well in peer interactions. Students with access to peer emotional support and students with high emotional

competencies mostly developed intensive and long-lasting relationships with their peers and avoided conflicts with them.

The predictive validity of SEI confirms the hypothesis that emotional skills are important for peer relationships. Increasing SEI enhances the abilities of students in communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution, and leads to the achievement of effective peer relationships.

The connection between the variables of SEI indicates the importance of the development of students during their adolescent life.

It is clear from the study how the demographics of gender, type of school, and background influence the development of socio-emotional skills and behavior with peers. It is an indicator that the school needs student-centrist strategies where the emotional needs of the students are met.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the development of socio-emotional intelligence is required for the improvement of peer relations, handling emotional well-being, and integration of social adjustments in the lives of adolescents. A huge contribution can be made by schools to the extent that they can introduce the development of socio-emotional intelligence, along with the handling of counseling and positive peer interactions. Schools and institutions can play a great role in personal and social success in terms of development in socio-emotional intelligence.

### **Recommendations**

The following are the recommendations of the study:

1. It appears that the university should cultivate a spirit of togetherness, openness, collaboration, and mutual respect among the students, employees, and the university administration.
2. The workshops and training sessions conducted in relation to the promotion of openness, feedback, listening, and trust might be able to impact the enhancement of skills related to the area of communication.
3. The involvement of student counseling, advice, and the like in connection with an establishment for the students for them to become more involved can be particularly mentioned.
4. For the stakeholders in the curriculum development process and the tutors, an interactive learning process should be employed for the stimulation of cognitive and social engagement.
5. An approach to monitor or gauge organizational culture, communications, and engagement in relation to, among other things, the aforementioned aspects can be developed by the management.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

The following are the suggestions for future research:

- ❖ Future studies should explore the culture of the institution and the climate of communication at different universities in Pakistan.
- ❖ Longitudinal studies would be advisable as a means of examining the impact of institutional culture upon engagement and achievement.

- ❖ Additional mediator and/or moderating variables, for instance, academic motivation, teacher and student relationships, self-regulation, etc., might be explored to improve understanding of relationships among the institutional culture and various learning outcomes.
- ❖ For capturing both the quantitative findings and the deeper understanding of students' real lives, mixed method designs are suggested.
- ❖ Future research should also investigate the role of communication climate in promoting or inhibiting students' engagement in online, blended, and digital learning environments, which are becoming more and more pertinent within the current context of higher education.
- ❖ Schools should adopt socio-emotional learning components targeting aspects of empathy, self-regulation, and communications. They should emphasize activities and staff development in cooperation and respect in schools.
- ❖ Reflective tasks, group work, and role play exercises will be valuable in helping to promote the improvement of SE skills. Moreover, it will be essential that teachers apply restorative practices in dealing with the different kinds of conflict that will develop between the students. Having a different attrition for the poor SEI group will be essential.
- ❖ Seminars for empathy, control of control of emotions, and self-awareness should be provided for the counselors. The counselors should be provided with a support group so as to deal with the problem of loneliness and build team spirit among themselves.

## REFERENCES

- Adeyemo, D. A. (2005). The relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among high school students. — foundational work in EI/education.
- Association between emotional intelligence and prosocial behaviors in children and adolescents:  
a meta- analysis (n = 20,621) — significant positive correlation between EI and prosocial behavior.
- Emotional intelligence and adolescent well- being trait emotional intelligence is positively associated with subjective well- being and negatively with stress and anxiety in Spanish adolescents.
- Güler, B., & Turan, S. (2024). The role of emotional intelligence in predicting peer relationships in adolescents. *Journal of Educational Issues*, 8(1), 73–83.
- Opara, I., & Onyekuru, B. U. (2013). Influence of emotional intelligence on school adjustment among adolescents. — used widely in high school EI literature.
- Parker, J. D., Summertime, L. J., Hogan, M. J., & Majeski, S. A. (2004). Emotional intelligence and academic success in high school students: A construct validation study (contextual support). — widely cited in adolescent EI research.

The mediating role of social skills in the relationship between trait EI and school adjustment among adolescents.

Trigueros, R., Sanchez- Sanchez, E., Mercader, I., et al. (2020). Relationship between emotional intelligence, social skills and peer harassment in adolescents. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(12), 4208.

Peer attachment and class- level emotional intelligence predict psychological well-being in Spanish adolescents.

Peer attachment, empathy, and prosocial behavior during adolescence. — Peer attachment linked to emotional and behavioral outcomes.

Brown, B. B., & Larson, J. (2009). Peer relationships in adolescence. — classic developmental reference.

Hartup, W. W. (1996). The company they keep: Friendships and their developmental significance. — foundational perspective on peer influence.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (n.d.). What is the CASEL framework? — SEL competencies.

UNESCO. (2024). What you need to know about social and emotional learning. — policymaker emphasis on SEL integration.

UNESCO. (2024). Build resilience through social emotional learning (SEL). — global SEL promotion.

Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta- analysis of school- based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1), 405–432.

Learning Policy Institute. (2023). Evidence for social and emotional learning in schools: What does the research say?

OECD (2023). Nurturing Social and Emotional Learning Across the Globe. — broad international data and policy relevance.

Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (1997). What is emotional intelligence? In P. Salovey & D. Sluyter (Eds.), *Emotional development and emotional intelligence: Implications for educators*. Basic Books.

Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9(3), 185–211.

Denham, S. A., et al. (2018). Social- emotional competence in childhood and adolescence. — widely referenced in SEL research.

Blair, C., & Diamond, A. (2016). Biological processes in prevention and intervention: The promotion of self- regulation as a means of preventing school failure. *Development and Psychopathology*.

- Deceit, J., & Cowell, J. M. (2017). The complex relation between morality and empathy. — supports empathy as a core SEI component.
- Schwartz- Mettle, A., & Rose, C. (2017). Peer relationships and adolescent well-being. — supports emotional/social pathways in schooling.
- WHO (2021). World Health Organization policy guidance on school health and adolescents.
- SEL and adolescent well being (policy emphasis, can be cited with UNESCO for international context).