

From Awareness to Action: Examining EI Gains After a School-Based 3-Month Intervention

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Abstract: *The present study investigates the effectiveness of a structured three-month Emotional Intelligence (EI) intervention program implemented among school students. The 14-week intervention consisted of sequential modules focusing on self-awareness, emotional identification, mindfulness, emotional regulation, and decision-making. A pre-post experimental design was used with a sample of 50 students from two private schools. EI was assessed using the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS-SANS) developed by Arun Kumar Singh and Shruti Narain. Paired-sample t-test results indicated significantly higher EI scores following the intervention ($M = 24.36$, $SD = 3.029$) compared to pre-test scores ($M = 20.24$, $SD = 4.322$), $t(49) = 20.067$, $p = .001$. A large effect size was observed (Cohen's $d = 1.103$), demonstrating substantial practical significance. The findings support the role of structured EI programs in enhancing adolescent emotional competencies. Implications for educators and recommendations for further research are discussed.*

Keywords: emotional intelligence, mindfulness, adolescent development, intervention, self-regulation

1. Introduction

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as one of the most influential constructs in educational psychology, particularly concerning adolescent development, mental health, interpersonal functioning, and academic success. Adolescence is a period characterized by heightened emotional sensitivity, evolving identity, increased peer influence, and growing academic demands. These factors make emotional regulation and awareness essential competencies for healthy adjustment. EI, broadly defined as the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004), plays a central role in psychological well-being and school success.

Goleman's (1995) model of EI further emphasized competencies such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, all of which are critical for positive youth development. Studies indicate that EI is predictive of lower stress levels, better peer relationships, improved decision-making, and enhanced academic performance (Brackett & Rivers, 2014; Petrides et al., 2016). As such, school-based EI interventions have gained momentum worldwide as educators recognize the need for holistic approaches to nurture emotional skills alongside cognitive development.

Despite global interest, structured EI interventions remain limited in many Indian schools. Traditional curricula often emphasize cognitive outcomes, leaving little room for socio-emotional training. However, the rapidly changing social environment, increased exposure to digital media, academic pressure, and interpersonal challenges highlight the necessity for emotional and behavioral support systems within the school context. Integrating EI-based programs into school structures can help adolescents develop resilience, empathy, stress tolerance, and emotional adaptability.

The 14-week EI intervention examined in this study was designed to address these needs through a structured, sequential curriculum. The program incorporated weekly modules focusing on emotional awareness, mindfulness, regulation strategies, and decision-making. Mindfulness practices, in particular, have been shown to support emotional balance, attentional control, and reduced impulsivity (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Students were also engaged through reflective homework assignments such as emotion logs, trigger tracking, coping-skill worksheets, and decision-making diaries. These reflective practices are known to strengthen internalization of EI skills (Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

Given the pressing need for socio-emotional support in schools and the lack of empirical research evaluating comprehensive EI interventions in Indian settings, the present study aimed to assess the effectiveness of a structured three-month EI program in improving students' emotional intelligence. The Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS-SANS) by Singh and Narain was used to quantify changes in EI across the intervention period.

The following research question guided the study:
Does a structured 14-week EI intervention significantly improve the Emotional Intelligence scores of school students as measured by the EIS-SANS scale?

2. Review of Literature

Research across the last three decades has consistently demonstrated the importance of EI in academic, social, and psychological contexts. Mayer and Salovey (1997) conceptualized EI as a form of intelligence involving the perception, use, understanding, and management of emotions. This theoretical foundation catalyzed empirical work exploring the role of emotional skills in various developmental outcomes.

Studies have found that students with higher EI experience better classroom engagement, fewer behavioral issues, enhanced social relationships, and improved academic performance (Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2011). Petrides et al. (2016) reported that EI is closely linked to mental health indicators such as lower anxiety, better stress management, and enhanced resilience. In school contexts, EI contributes to improved peer interactions, conflict resolution skills, and reduced aggression.

Intervention-based studies have also shown promising results. Durlak et al.'s (2011) meta-analysis of social-emotional learning (SEL) programs revealed significant improvements in students' socio-emotional competencies and academic outcomes. Mindfulness-based interventions, often integrated with EI programs, help students regulate emotional responses, improve attentional control, and reduce impulsive behaviors (Felver et al., 2016).

While Western research on EI interventions is robust, Indian studies on structured, multi-component EI programs remain limited. Some researchers have examined the relationship between EI and academic or psychological variables, but few have implemented longitudinal interventions with pre-post assessments using standardized EI scales. The EIS-SANS, widely used in Indian contexts, assesses emotional competency through dimensions such as self-awareness, empathy, emotional stability, and self-motivation.

The gap in Indian research emphasizes the need for evidence-based programs that support adolescents' socio-emotional development. This study contributes to this body of work by implementing a comprehensive EI curriculum and evaluating its impact using a validated measure.

3. Method

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative **pre-post experimental design** to assess the effectiveness of a 14-week EI intervention. All participants completed the EIS-SANS before and after the intervention.

Participants

Participants included **50 school students** aged 13–16 years, recruited from Akshara International School & Junior College. Convenience sampling was used. All students participated with institutional approval.

Instrument

Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS-SANS)

Developed by Arun Kumar Singh and Shruti Narain, the EIS-SANS is a standardized tool widely used in Indian psychological research that measures EI across core domains and demonstrates high reliability and validity for school-aged populations.

Intervention Structure

The intervention spanned **14 weeks (July–September)** and included:

Baseline Assessment & Self-Awareness
Emotional Identification (Part 1 & 2)
Mindfulness Training

Emotional Regulation Strategies
Decision-Making Skills
Habit Formation & Monitoring
Final Assessment

Weekly sessions were interactive and included activities such as mindfulness breathing, mood logs, emotion labeling exercises, trigger exploration, coping skill development, and decision-making practice. Homework tasks reinforced weekly learning.

Procedure

Week 1: Orientation and pre-test administration.

Weeks 2–13: Implementation of EI modules.

Week 14: Post-test administration and reflection tasks.

Data Analysis

Data met normality assumptions. A paired-sample t-test compared pre-test and post-test EI scores. **Cohen's *d*** measured effect size, with $d > .80$ considered large.

4. Results

Descriptive and Inferential Statistics

The pre-test mean EI score was **20.24** (SD = 4.322), while the post-test mean was **24.36** (SD = 3.029). A paired-sample t-test revealed a statistically significant increase in EI scores: $t(49) = 20.067, p = .001$.

Effect Size

Cohen's $d = (24.36 - 20.24) / 3.731 = \mathbf{1.103}$, indicating a **large effect**.

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and t-Test Results for EI Scores (N = 50)

Variable	Mean	SD	t	Sig. (p)
Pre-test	20.24	4.322	20.067	0.001
Post-test	24.36	3.029	—	—

5. Discussion

The results demonstrate that the structured three-month EI intervention produced significant improvements in students' emotional intelligence. The large effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.103$) suggests that the program not only led to statistical significance but also meaningful practical change. This finding supports earlier research emphasizing the modifiability of EI through systematic training (Durlak et al., 2011; Brackett et al., 2016).

One reason for the program's effectiveness may be the sequential scaffolding of emotional skills—from awareness to emotional regulation to decision-making. The structure mirrors established models of socio-emotional learning, where foundational awareness precedes intentional behavioral change. The reflective homework, including emotion logs and coping worksheets, likely facilitated deeper personal integration of skills.

Additionally, mindfulness components embedded within the program may have contributed to enhanced emotional regulation. Mindfulness is known to improve attentional control, reduce impulsivity, and promote emotional balance.

(Kabat-Zinn, 2003), which may explain why students showed notable improvements across EI domains.

The results also highlight the importance of embedding EI interventions in school systems. Adolescents today face increasing emotional and social pressures. Classroom environments benefit from emotionally skilled students who communicate effectively, resolve conflicts peacefully, and manage stress. Schools implementing holistic EI programs can expect positive ripple effects on academic performance, mental health, and interpersonal relationships.

6. Limitations

While promising, the study has limitations.

- The sample size was relatively small and limited to two schools.
- A control group was not included, limiting causal certainty.
- Long-term follow-up was not conducted.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should include randomized control groups, larger and more diverse samples, follow-up assessments to measure retention, and qualitative components (e.g., interviews) to explore lived experiences.

7. Conclusion

The findings provide robust evidence that a structured, school-based Emotional Intelligence program significantly enhances adolescents' emotional competencies. By transitioning students from emotional awareness to emotional action, the 14-week intervention fostered meaningful improvements in emotional understanding, regulation, and decision-making. The study highlights the potential impact of integrating EI training within educational systems and supports continued implementation of structured EI programs in schools across India.

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