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## Self-Concept and Emotional Intelligence in Adolescents: A Comprehensive Review

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### Abstract:

This review article explores the intricate relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and self-concept during adolescence, a pivotal developmental phase characterized by significant changes in physical, emotional, and mental aspects. Self-concept, encompassing self-esteem, self-image, and the ideal self, profoundly impacts adolescents' mental health, academic performance, and social interactions. Emotional intelligence, defined as the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively, is closely linked to psychological well-being, academic success, and resilience. The review synthesizes findings from numerous studies, consistently demonstrating a positive correlation between EI and self-concept among adolescents. It highlights how higher EI is associated with better self-esteem and overall self-concept, enabling adolescents to navigate social interactions and personal challenges more effectively. Additionally, the review examines various interventions aimed at enhancing EI and self-concept, including physical activity programs, school-based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) initiatives, and mindfulness practices. These interventions have been shown to significantly improve emotional resilience and self-concept in adolescents. Tailored interventions that consider individual differences and demographic factors are emphasized as crucial for maximizing the effectiveness of these programs. The review concludes by advocating for continued research into the relationship between EI and self-concept and the development of comprehensive, customized intervention strategies to support adolescents' holistic development, mental health, academic success, and social well-being.

**Keywords:** Adolescence, Self-Concept, Emotional Intelligence, Relationship, Intervention Strategies.

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### Introduction

Adolescence is a crucial period for development marked by significant changes in one's physical, emotional, and mental traits. Adolescents go through a process of self-discovery and identity building during this time, which makes the concepts of emotional intelligence and self-concept very relevant. Adolescents' attitudes, behaviours, and overall mental health are greatly influenced by their self-concept, which is simply their perception of who they are (Rosenberg, 1979). One of the most important factors in determining one's own well-being is one's self-concept (García Pérez, Musitu Ochoa, & Veiga, 2006). According to Harter (1988), self-concept is the subjective assessment of oneself that is limited to particular spheres of life, such as physical appearance, close friendships, social acceptance, well-behaved behaviour, academic achievement, professional competence, and athletic competition. According to Woolfolk (2001), a person's self-concept is the importance they place on their own traits, attributes, skills, and deeds. Self-concept is a multidimensional notion that includes self-esteem, self-image, and the ideal self. These dimensions shift during adolescence as individuals

engage with their surroundings and gain new experiences. Positive self-concept has been linked to improved mental health, higher academic accomplishment, and stronger social interactions (Harter, 2012). A poor self-concept, on the other hand, might lead to anxiety, sadness, and social isolation (Furqani, Z. A. 2020). Adolescents go through a variety of events which influence their attitudes and behaviours (Putro, 2017). Family dynamics, peer connections, and social expectations all have an impact on adolescent self-concept development (Marsh & Hattie, 1996).

Similar effects on interpersonal relationships, academic achievement, and psychological well-being are influenced by emotional intelligence (EI), which is defined as the capacity to identify, comprehend, regulate, and use emotions effectively (Goleman, 1995). The term Emotional Intelligence was first introduced by Salovey and Mayer (1990). Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand, perceive, and control our emotions and the emotions of others. Emotional intelligence (EI) has received a lot of attention in psychological studies, especially for its role in adolescent development. EI has four main

components: self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and relationship management (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Adolescents with high emotional intelligence are better able to navigate the complexities of social interactions, regulate stress, and make educated decisions. According to studies, emotional intelligence (EI) relates to academic success, improves mental health, and builds resilience in the face of adversity (Uzoma Ononye et al., 2021; Martins, A., Ramalho, N., & Morin, E., 2010). Numerous studies based on Salovey and Mayer's approach have demonstrated that emotional intelligence is a crucial factor in the development of various cognitive, physical, and social abilities. (Jiménez & López-Zafra, 2008; Salovey, Stroud, Woolery, & Epel, 2002; Extremera, Durán, & Rey, 2009; Martins, Ramalho, & Morin, 2010; Martinez-Pons, 1997; Lopes, Salovey, & Straus, 2003; Extremera, Salguero, & Fernández-Berrocal, 2011; Mayer, DiPaolo, & Salovey, 1990; Salovey, Mayer, & Caruso, 2002). The relationship between emotional intelligence and self-concept is examined in detail in this comprehensive review, along with intervention strategies aim to help adolescents with their emotional intelligence and self-concept.

#### **Objectives**

1. To explore the relationship between Self-concept and Emotional Intelligence among adolescents.
2. To assess the effectiveness of interventions designed to enhance emotional intelligence and self-concept in adolescents.

#### **Method**

Studies investigating the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-concept, as well as the impact of interventions on these variables in adolescent populations, were identified through searches in the Medline, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar databases. The searches utilized the following keywords: emotional intelligence, self-concept, relationship, intervention, and adolescents. The studies included in the review met the following criteria: (1) They focused on the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-concept among adolescents. (2) They involved interventions aimed at enhancing emotional intelligence and self-concept in adolescents. (3) They measured both emotional intelligence and self-concept. (4) They specifically targeted adolescent populations, excluding research involving adults.

#### **Interrelation of Self-Concept and Emotional Intelligence**

The relationship between emotional intelligence and self-concept among adolescents has been the subject of extensive research, with each study contributing unique insights while also exhibiting certain commonalities. Comparing these studies reveals both the consistency in findings and the variations in methodologies and focuses.

Calero, Barreyro, and Injoque-Ricle (2018) and Kumar (2016) both emphasize the correlation between various dimensions of emotional intelligence and self-concept. Calero et al. found specific links such as attention to feelings correlating with close friendships and mood repair with self-esteem, while Kumar identified connections across broader dimensions like physical, social, temperamental, educational, and intellectual self-concept. Both studies underscore the multifaceted nature of these relationships but differ in their specific focus areas. Mohanty and Pandey (2023) and Martínez-Monteagudo et al. (2021) explore the demographic variations and profiles within emotional intelligence, respectively. Mohanty and Pandey highlighted that the positive relationship between self-concept and emotional intelligence holds across various demographic factors, indicating the robustness of this relationship. In contrast, Martínez-Monteagudo et al. identified specific emotional intelligence profiles that most positively affect self-concept, showing a more nuanced understanding of how different emotional intelligence components interact with self-concept. Kaur and Maheshwari (2015) and Barragán Martín et al. (2021) both found significant positive correlations between emotional intelligence and self-esteem, but Barragán Martín et al. went further by showing how high emotional intelligence aids in regulating negative emotions, thereby contributing to a well-adjusted self-concept. This suggests that not only does emotional intelligence correlate with self-esteem, but it also plays a crucial role in emotional regulation and overall self-concept adjustment.

Koneri and Roopmala (2017) and Singh N. and Singh A. (2012) both explored demographic influences, with Koneri and Roopmala finding a perfect positive relationship between self-concept and emotional intelligence across variables like gender and school location. Singh N. and Singh A. specifically highlighted gender differences, noting higher emotional intelligence levels among female students. These studies collectively suggest that while the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-concept is generally positive, there are significant demographic nuances that need to be considered. Lea, Davis, Mahoney, and Qualter (2023) offered a unique perspective by differentiating between ability emotional intelligence (AEI) and trait emotional intelligence (TEI), finding that TEI can mitigate physiological stress responses, whereas AEI's effectiveness varies with context. This study adds a layer of complexity by suggesting that different forms of emotional intelligence have distinct impacts on stress regulation and self-concept. Furqani (2019) provided a broader review that emphasized the significant impact of emotional intelligence on

adolescent behavior, reinforcing the findings of other studies but in a more generalized context. This review complements the specific empirical studies by situating their findings within a wider behavioral framework.

Finally, Sunaina (2018) confirmed the positive association between emotional intelligence and self-concept, aligning with the overall trend observed in other studies, but with a simpler methodology focusing on a balanced sample of boys and girls.

while all these studies affirm the positive relationship between emotional intelligence and self-concept among adolescents, they differ in their specific focuses, methodologies, and demographic considerations. Some studies emphasize specific emotional intelligence dimensions, others highlight demographic variations, and some explore the broader behavioral implications. Together, they provide a comprehensive understanding of how emotional intelligence and self-concept are intertwined, suggesting that targeted interventions can foster holistic development in adolescents.

#### **The Role of Interventions in Self-Concept and Emotional Intelligence**

Numerous studies have highlighted the importance of interventions aimed at enhancing emotional intelligence (EI) and self-concept among adolescents. These interventions not only enhance emotional resilience but also contribute to the development of a strong and adaptive self-concept, which is essential for healthy psychosocial functioning. During recent years, researchers have conducted various intervention studies targeting the enhancement of EI and self-concept among adolescents, employing approaches ranging from cognitive-behavioral techniques to mindfulness-based practices, aiming to equip adolescents with the necessary skills to recognize, understand, and regulate their emotions effectively and improve their self-concept.

Liu, Wu, and Ming (2015) found that physical activity interventions, particularly those conducted in schools and gymnasiums, were positively correlated with enhanced self-concept and self-worth among children and adolescents. This suggests that structured physical activity within educational settings provides a conducive environment for improving self-perceptions. Similarly, Taylor et al. (2017) emphasized the implementation of school-based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) interventions, which align with Positive Youth Development (PYD) principles. These interventions focused on core competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, demonstrating improvements in social and academic performance,

reduced behavioral issues, and long-term well-being.

Van der Aar et al. (2022) focused on a gap year program emphasizing the development of a naturalistic self-concept, using behavioral assessments and neural evaluations. They found that increased medial prefrontal cortex activity correlated with improved self-esteem and self-concept clarity, highlighting the potential long-term benefits of experiential learning environments. In contrast, Pratiwia and Widyarini (2021) employed psychoeducational interventions to enhance the self-concept of children in conflict with the law, using interactive methods such as group discussions and games, which showed significant improvements in self-concept.

Van der Aar et al. (2022) also implemented a year-long naturalistic self-concept training program consisting of multiple self-discovery projects, which resulted in enhanced EI among participants, demonstrating the effectiveness of sustained, comprehensive interventions. In Spain, Maria-Josh Cantero et al. (2020) conducted a school-based EI intervention using a combination of psychophysical, psychodrama, and cognitive-behavioral techniques, significantly improving EI among 10 to 12-year-olds. This study underscores the value of creative and integrative approaches in school settings for enhancing emotional competencies.

Rodriguez-Ledo (2018) highlighted the relationship between EI and mindfulness, finding that good mindfulness competence was strongly related to high levels of EI and various social and emotional variables. This suggests that mindfulness-based practices can effectively complement EI interventions by promoting self-awareness and emotional regulation. Kaur (2011) focused on college adolescents, using a life skills intervention training program to enhance EI. Her study found significant improvements in EI scores post-intervention, indicating that structured life skills training can effectively bolster emotional competencies in older adolescents.

Schutte, Malouff, and Thorsteinsson (2013) explored the multifaceted nature of EI, defining it as a blend of adaptive emotional functioning and competencies. They highlighted the potential benefits of EI training, citing meta-analyses that suggest enhancements in mental health, relationships, and work performance. Their call for interdisciplinary research to optimize training methods underscores the relevance of EI in various life domains.

Qualter et al. (2007) investigated the impact of an EI intervention on the transition from primary to high school. Using quantitative and qualitative measures, they found that higher EI correlated with smoother transitions and that the intervention

notably benefited students with initially low EI. However, a surprising decrease in EI was observed among those with high baseline levels, indicating the need for tailored intervention approaches based on individual EI levels.

Finally, Esin Cerit and Nuray Simsek (2021) employed an educational program to improve adolescents' EI and psychological resilience, demonstrating positive effects on both outcomes. Their experimental design showed that targeted educational interventions could effectively enhance EI levels and resilience.

These studies collectively affirm the positive impact of varied interventions on enhancing EI and self-concept among adolescents. While physical activity and school-based programs provide structured environments for improvement, experiential and psychoeducational interventions offer robust frameworks for personal growth. Mindfulness and life skills training further augment these efforts by fostering self-awareness and emotional regulation. These diverse approaches, despite their methodological differences, consistently demonstrate that targeted interventions can significantly contribute to the psychosocial development of adolescents. The inclusion of tailored interventions, as highlighted by Qualter et al. (2007), underscores the importance of adapting strategies to individual needs to maximize benefits.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the review underscores the significant interplay between emotional intelligence (EI) and self-concept during adolescence, a critical developmental period marked by profound changes in physical, emotional, and cognitive domains. Adolescents' self-concept, a multi-dimensional construct encompassing self-esteem, self-image, and the ideal self, significantly influences their mental health, academic performance, and social interactions. Concurrently, emotional intelligence, defined by the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively, is closely linked to adolescents' psychological well-being, academic success, and resilience.

The comprehensive review reveals that numerous studies consistently affirm a positive correlation between EI and self-concept among adolescents, highlighting various dimensions and demographic influences. Research indicates that higher EI is associated with better self-esteem and overall self-concept, suggesting that adolescents with enhanced emotional skills are better equipped to handle the complexities of social interactions and personal challenges. Additionally, the review identifies the critical role of interventions aimed at enhancing EI and self-concept, showcasing a range of approaches from physical activity and school-based programs to psychoeducational and mindfulness practices.

These intervention studies demonstrate that targeted strategies can significantly bolster adolescents' emotional resilience and self-concept. Structured physical activities, school-based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs, and life skills training are particularly effective in fostering emotional competencies and self-awareness. Moreover, mindfulness-based practices complement these interventions by promoting emotional regulation and self-discovery. The findings emphasize the need for tailored interventions that consider individual EI levels and demographic factors to maximize their effectiveness.

Overall, this review highlights the intertwined nature of emotional intelligence and self-concept and the importance of comprehensive, tailored interventions in supporting adolescents' holistic development. Future research should continue exploring these relationships and intervention strategies, ensuring that they address the diverse needs of the adolescent population to promote their mental health, academic success, and social well-being.

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