



Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Ethical Value of Secondary School Students

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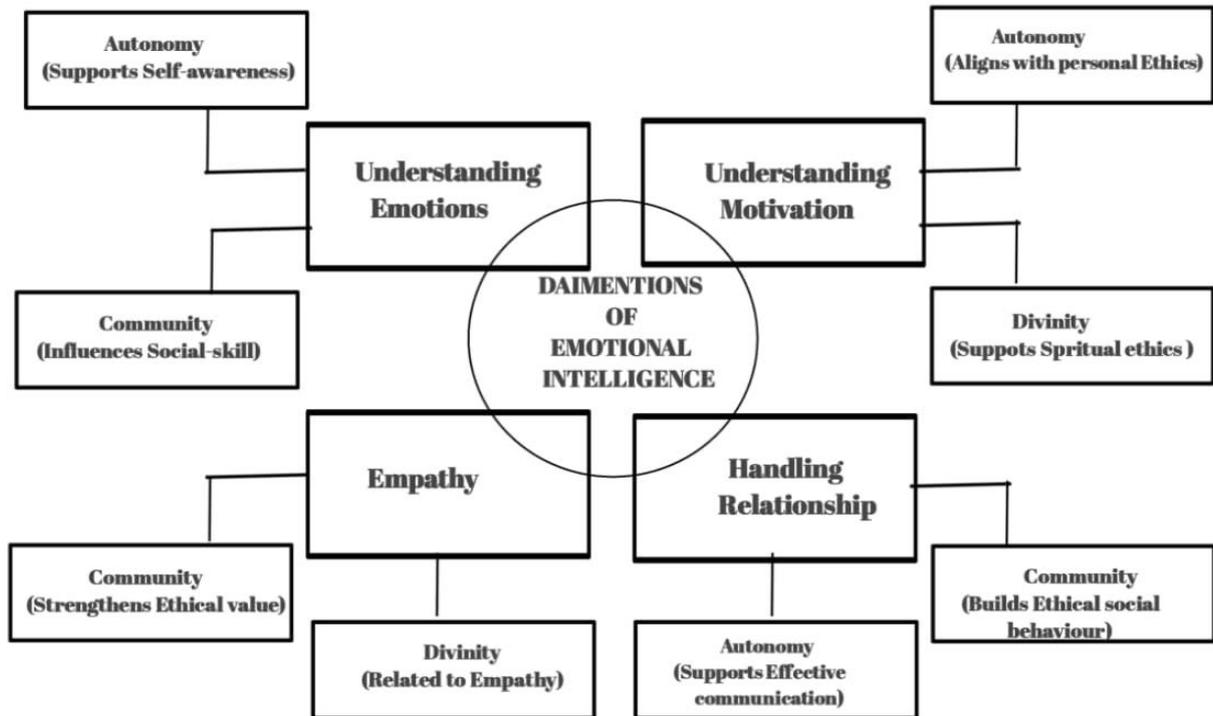
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<p>Received 13/06/2025</p> <p>Accepted 16/06/2025</p> <p>Published 09/07/2025</p>	<p>Abstract</p> <p><i>This study explores the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Ethical Values among secondary school students and investigates whether these constructs differ significantly with respect to gender and residential background. The study employed a descriptive survey method, involving a sample of 100 students (grades 9 and 10) selected through stratified random sampling from WBCHSE-affiliated schools in North 24 Parganas, West Bengal. Standardized tools were used to measure Emotional Intelligence and Ethical Values, and data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and independent samples t-tests.</i></p> <p><i>Findings revealed a very high positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Ethical Values ($r = 0.9738$), as well as between Empathy and Ethical Values ($r = 0.9962$), both statistically significant. Significant gender-based differences were observed, with girls exhibiting higher emotional intelligence and ethical values compared to boys. Similarly, students from rural areas demonstrated higher emotional intelligence and ethical values than their urban. The results indicate that emotional competencies strongly influence moral development in adolescents. These findings highlight the importance of integrating emotional skill-building into value education programs in schools. Strengthening emotional intelligence may foster greater ethical awareness and responsible decision-making among students. The study concludes that emotional intelligence is a crucial determinant of ethical behaviour and should be emphasized in educational practices to nurture morally responsible future citizens.</i></p> <p>Keywords: <i>Emotional Intelligence, Empathy, Ethical Values, Secondary School Students, Value Education</i></p>
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Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) and ethical values have garnered significant attention in recent educational and psychological research. Emotional intelligence, a term popularized by Daniel Goleman (1995), refers to the capacity to perceive, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively. As McCleskey (2016) notes, EI is a skill that must be acquired, learned, and applied in an ethical manner- emphasizing the interplay between cognition and morality in human behaviour. Ethical behaviour is shaped by societal norms and expectations and is guided by internalized moral principles. According to Bandura, moral justification can often be used to rationalize unethical behaviour, making the understanding and regulation of emotions all the more vital. Kohlberg (1984) emphasized that moral development is not only about learning what is right or wrong, but also about developing the reasoning behind moral decisions.



N.B.: Autonomy, Community and Divinity (Daimentions of Ethical value)

Fig.1: Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and Their Relationship with Ethical Values

In the educational context, emotional intelligence serves as a foundational skill that supports ethical decision-making and behaviour. Goleman (1998) identified five key components of EI- self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills- which contribute to students' moral and ethical development. These traits enable individuals to bridge the gap between understanding what is right and acting accordingly. Ethical values, on the other hand, refer to the moral principles that govern an individual's behaviour. These include autonomy, justice, honesty, and responsibility, and are shaped by personal experiences, cultural norms, and education. Scholars like Kohlberg and Erikson have highlighted the role of social and cognitive development in moral reasoning. Despite the increasing emphasis on character education in schools, the relationship between emotional intelligence and ethical values in secondary students remains

under-explored. While students may cognitively understand ethical principles, their emotional competence may significantly influence whether they act on these principles in real-life situations. Although ethical education is emphasized at the secondary level, there is limited research on how emotional intelligence influences students' ethical values. Students may understand ethical norms intellectually, but their actions can be heavily influenced by emotional factors. This study seeks to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and ethical values among secondary students, aiming to determine whether a higher level of EI correlates with stronger ethical values.

Review of Literature

In international literature, Emotional Intelligence (EI) is widely recognized as a significant predictor of ethical judgment and behaviour. Lam and Kirby (2002) demonstrated that EI can predict cognitive performance beyond general intelligence. Brackett et al. (2006) emphasized gender-based behavioural differences linked to EI, particularly in managing interpersonal relationships and avoiding deviant behaviour. Angelidis and Ibrahim (2011) revealed that individuals with higher EI tend to adopt more ethical ideologies, indicating a link between emotional self-awareness and principled decision-making. Lu and Lin (2018) further supported this connection by showing how high EI individuals exhibit more ethical behaviour, especially in socially observable contexts. Holian (2006) and Bay & McKeage (2006) also called for integrating emotional skill development into ethics training, indicating the strong theoretical and practical overlap between EI and ethical conduct in organizational and educational settings. Indian research supports the view that EI significantly contributes to the development of moral and ethical values. Kumari and Singh (2020) found a positive correlation between EI and moral values among secondary students, with consistency across gender and locality. Similarly, Sharma (2010) and Kaur & Meenakshi (2010) observed that students with better EI displayed higher social intelligence and values. Tiwari & Srivastava (2004) and Indu & Kumari (2010) explored environmental and educational influences on EI development, confirming the role of schooling and upbringing. Kumari (2023) further linked EI with academic achievement and moral values, highlighting the role of demographic factors. Overall, Indian studies affirm that emotional competencies are essential for nurturing ethical awareness and value-based behaviour in educational contexts.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the relationship between emotional Intelligence and ethical value of secondary School students.
2. To study the relationship between empathy and ethical value of secondary school students.
3. To assess emotional intelligence of secondary school students with respect to gender.
4. To assess emotional intelligence of secondary school students with respect to residence.
5. To assess ethical value of secondary school students with respect to gender.
6. To assess ethical value of secondary school students with respect to residence.

Hypotheses

H₀1: There is no Significant Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Ethical Value of secondary school students.

H₀2: There is no significant relationship between Empathy and ethical value of secondary school students.

H₀3: There is no significant difference in emotional intelligence of secondary school students with respect to gender.

H₀4: There is no significant difference in emotional intelligence of secondary school students with respect to residence.

H₀5: There is no significant difference in ethical value of secondary school students with respect to gender.

H₀6: There is no significant difference in ethical value of secondary school students with respect to residence.

Methodology of the Study

This study adopts a descriptive survey method to investigate the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Ethical Values among secondary school students. The approach is suitable for analyzing current trends, relationships, and group differences without manipulating variables. The population includes students from schools under the West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education (WBCHSE) in North 24 Parganas. A sample of 100 students (Boys and Girls) from grades 9 and 10, aged 14–16 years is selected. Stratified simple random sampling technique also used in this research for data collection from four schools. Tools include the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) and the Ethical Values Assessment (EVA). Data also analyzed using correlation coefficient (r) and independent samples t-test at a 0.05 significance level.

The study is delimited to WBCHSE schools in North 24 Parganas, students of classes 9-10, and four selected schools, ensuring contextual focus and practical feasibility.

Result and Discussion

H₀1: *There is no Significant Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Ethical Value of secondary school students*

Group	Number of Sample	Mean	r-value	p-value	Remarks
Emotional intelligence	100	20.88	0.973777	1.27E-65	significant
Ethical value		28.61			H ₀ 1 is rejected

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Emotional Intelligence and Ethical Value of secondary school students was found to be $r = 0.9738$, which indicates a very high positive correlation. This suggests that students with higher levels of emotional intelligence tend to have higher ethical values. The corresponding p-value is 1.27E-65, which is far below the commonly accepted level of significance ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the result is statistically significant, and the null hypothesis is rejected.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between Empathy and ethical value of secondary school students

Group	Number of Sample	Mean	r-value	p-value	Remarks
Empathy	100	86.13131	0.996204	4.21E-73	significant
Ethical value		49.18182			H ₀₂ is rejected

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Empathy and Ethical Value was found to be $r = 0.9962$, which indicates an extremely strong positive correlation. This means that as students' empathy increases, their ethical values also increase correspondingly. The corresponding p-value is 4.21×10^{-73} , which is far below the standard significance level of 0.05. This means the result is statistically highly significant. Hence, the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in emotional intelligence of secondary school students with respect to gender

Group	Number of Sample	Mean	SD	DF	P-value	Remarks
Boys	50	21.32	3.377235	49	2.44E-40	Significant
Girls	50	41.76	6.768957			H ₀₃ is rejected

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the emotional intelligence of boys and girls at the secondary school level. The results show a substantial difference in the mean emotional intelligence scores: Boys: M = 21.32, SD = 3.38, Girls: M = 41.76, SD = 6.77

The p-value is 2.44×10^{-40} , which is far below the conventional significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the difference in emotional intelligence between male and female students is statistically highly significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in emotional intelligence of secondary school students with respect to residence

Group	Number of Sample	Mean	SD	DF	p-value	Remarks
Urban	50	20.94	3.621985	49	2.22E-38	Significant
Rural	50	40.98	7.280082			H ₀₄ is rejected

An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether there is a significant difference in the emotional intelligence of secondary school students based on their place of residence (urban vs. rural). The results revealed a notable difference in the mean scores: Urban students: $M = 20.94$, $SD = 3.62$, Rural students: $M = 40.98$, $SD = 7.28$. The p-value obtained is 2.22×10^{-38} , which is extremely lower than the standard significance level of 0.05. This strongly indicates that the observed difference is statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_{04}) is rejected.

H₀₅: There is no significant difference in ethical value of secondary school students with respect to gender

Group	Number of Sample	Mean	SD	DF	p-value	Remarks
Boys	50	49.98	8.484055	49	9E-40	Significant
Girls	50	95.6	16.2531			H ₀₅ is rejected

An independent samples t-test was conducted to assess whether there is a significant difference in ethical values between male and female secondary school students. The results revealed a large difference in the mean scores: Boys: $M = 49.98$, $SD = 8.48$, Girls: $M = 95.60$, $SD = 16.25$. The obtained p-value is 9×10^{-40} . This value is extremely lower than the conventional significance level of 0.05, indicating that the difference is statistically very highly significant. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_{05}) is rejected.

H₀₆: There is no significant difference in ethical value of secondary school students with respect to residence

Group	Number of Samples	Mean	SD	DF	p-value	Remarks
Urban	50	95.97959	16.27819	49	1.43E-38	Significant
Rural	50	50.22449	8.397181			H ₀₆ is rejected

An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether there is a significant difference in ethical values of secondary school students based on their residence (urban vs. rural). The analysis revealed a substantial difference in the mean ethical value scores: Urban students: $M = 95.98$, $SD = 16.28$, Rural students: $M = 50.22$, $SD = 8.40$. The obtained p-value is $1.43E-38$. This value is far smaller than 0.05, indicating that the result is statistically extremely significant. The difference is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_{06}) is rejected.

Conclusion

The present study explored the relationship between emotional intelligence and ethical values among secondary school students. The results indicated a very strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and ethical values, suggesting that students with higher emotional competencies are more likely to demonstrate stronger ethical principles. A similarly high correlation was found between empathy and ethical values, highlighting empathy as a key component of moral behaviour. Significant gender differences emerged, with girls showing notably higher emotional intelligence and ethical values compared to boys. In terms of residence, rural students displayed significantly higher emotional intelligence, whereas urban students exhibited stronger ethical values. All six null hypotheses were rejected, confirming that emotional intelligence, empathy, gender, and residence are significant factors influencing students' ethical development. These findings underscore the importance of integrating emotional intelligence training into value-based education, and they suggest that educational programs should be tailored to account for gender and contextual differences. The study offers valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and counsellors aiming to nurture emotionally and ethically balanced individuals in the school environment.

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