

# A Comprehensive Review of the Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem on Social Adaptation in Adults

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## Abstract

This study aimed to comprehensively analyze the body of knowledge to determine how emotional intelligence (EI) and self-esteem (SE) affect an individual's social adjustment during adulthood. We explore relevant research to understand how these factors impact one's ability to handle social settings effectively. Together, these studies provide compelling evidence that individuals with a more significant level of emotional Intelligence (EI) and good self-esteem (SE) should react to stressful situations more adaptable than individuals with lower EI and negative SE, including reducing reactivity (less psychological deterioration, less physiological arousal), and recovering from stressful situations more quickly as considered. Even though the fundamental mechanisms through which emotional intelligence and self-esteem are related to those outcomes remain largely unknown. This study identifies important areas that still require attention and offers detailed guidelines for designing, implementing, and evaluating future treatments that promote emotional intelligence and self-esteem, leading to better adult social adaptability.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, adjustment of adult, Self-esteem, literature review.

## Introduction

### Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Emotional Intelligence (EI) was first defined more than three decades ago as a set of skills for understanding emotions and using them to influence one's thoughts and actions. Since its inception, Emotional Intelligence (EI) has generated considerable interest and controversy (Salovey and Mayer, 1990, 1997). Goleman (2000) stressed the necessity of emotional intelligence, which he characterized as self-control, commitment, and self-motivation, to attain this. According to Goleman, people with strong EI are more successful, possess improved social skills, are more concentrated when learning, and can work well in groups.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is an umbrella term that describes how we perceive, control, utilize, and comprehend our and others' emotions (Zeidner et al., 2012). Specifically, the majority of research on emotional Intelligence (EI) focuses on the ability to comprehend and control emotions, engage in social interaction and relationship management related to societal adaptation (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Goleman, 1998; Saarni, 1999; Chan, 2003; Low & Nelson, 2005; Jensen et al., 2007). University students' emotive abilities and social interactions are positively correlated (Lopes et al., 2004; Paulo et al., 2004). It has also been associated with social adjustment (Chan, 2003) and self-esteem (Schutte et al., 2002). In such a context, emotional intelligence is crucial for influencing human behavior, particularly adult attitudes associated with social adjustment. It makes sense that (Steinmayr and Spinath, 2012) characterized the term as the essential element of success for individuals and society.

### Social Adjustment

Social adjustment is the process of adjusting to one's social environment. A person's ability to adjust to their surroundings and self depends heavily on their emotional intelligence. A well-adjusted individual may express their emotions when appropriate in a way acceptable to others. In turn, adjustment can be defined as an individual's response to the demands and stresses of a social environment.

Rao (1990) defines "Adjustment would be a harmonious relationship of an individual to his enrollment which affords him a comfortable live devoid of strain, stress, conflict and frustration." The "adjustment" primarily relating how a person may attempt to manage inner tension, need conflict, and frustration while establishing harmony between his consciousness and environmental demands.

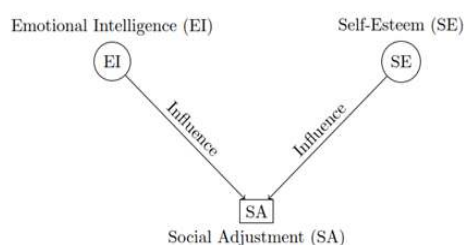


Figure 1: Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem on Social Adjustment in Adults

### Self Esteem (SE)

Self-esteem, another important construct, is a general evaluation of one's importance or worth, whether positive or negative. In the words of Cherry (2019), "self-esteem" is a person's total perception of their importance or self-worth. It may be termed as a wide range of self-perceptions, including how you view your looks, beliefs, feelings, behaviors, and interpersonal relationships in the outside world.

According to (Abo Jado (2015), self-esteem means an individual's total assessment in the form of their social, emotional, and physical characteristics. Self-esteem can be shown in how people feel about themselves, their importance, value, and what they expect from life. The phrase refers to how we feel about or respect ourselves, not the idea that we think of ourselves as the best individual in the world (Podesta and Connie, 2001). Individuals with high self-esteem at one moment in time are likely to keep it years later because self-esteem is more stable through time in adulthood than in childhood and old age. (Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005)

We have evaluated research studies investigating EI and SE and their effect on adults' societal adaptation to examine the subject matter as thoroughly as possible. Consequently, numerous researches have produced convincing evidence of the significant connection. However, due to a tiny sample size or the fact that participants were restricted to a particular age group, gender, or culture, each study has only examined a small portion of the overall association. One may say that the secret to adjustment is Emotional Intelligence and self-esteem. Hence the researcher is interested in examining how self-esteem and emotional quotient affect adult adjustment.

### Objectives of Review

This study's primary goal is to review all the available literature to determine how emotional intelligence and self-esteem affect adults' ability to adjust to social situations. The study specifically seeks to accomplish the following goals:

- Establishing the link between adults' social adjustment and emotional intelligence

- Examining the link, if any, between individuals' social adjustment and their sense of self-worth.

## Methodology

This paper takes the form of a literature review. Required databases were thoroughly searched for publications in the English language in scholarly journals. The article was considered relevant when "emotional intelligence, self-esteem & social adjustment" appeared in the title or abstract, along with other additional search items. An enormous amount of prior research has sought to identify the link between the social adjustment of adults and their emotional Intelligence (EI) and self-esteem. Finally, it highlights some areas that require further investigation.

The item was deemed pertinent when "emotional intelligence, self-esteem & social adjustment" appeared as a phrase, a term in the title, or the abstract, combined with one or more additional searches.

## Literature Review

The researcher reviewed the relevant literature while considering the significance of previous investigations. It is based on sources, including examining research publications, study abstracts, encyclopedias in the university library, and studies that may be found online.

### Emotional Intelligence (EI) Concerning Adult's Social Adjustment

A well-adjusted person is one whose personality development follows a healthy route of socialization and who is unaffected negatively by interactions such as conflicts and emotions. The impact of EI on adults' social adjustment is to help them develop their capacity for empathy and responsible interpersonal behavior. This research suggests that emotionally intelligent adults can make better judgments, live morally, and use emotions as motivation and guidance (Engelberg and Sjoberg, 2004). They collaborate better, are better at problem-solving, and are better at becoming leaders, better partners, and better parents. They are more conscious of pleasant and unpleasant feelings but are not always "happier" (Freedman et al., 2006).

Adult social adjustment in our society has been reported to

be a significant issue, ascribed to adults' low emotional intelligence and incapacity to regulate their emotions. Those who are more aggressive are more likely to display mental issues, engage in criminal activity, have unhappy marriages, and experience unemployment than those who are less aggressive (Alsaker & Olweus, 2002; Cocco & McCloskey, 2009). (Singh, 2014) suggests that coaches who work for state colleges adjust better than those who work for central universities. Additionally, it was discovered that the emotional intelligence at the state and central universities did not differ noticeably. Boosting emotional skill assurance would affect the perception of social support. Hence one can encourage flexible career growth (Fabio and Kenny, 2012). People are not only passive recipients of happy emotions. (Kashdan, Young, & Machell, 2015). Instead, they play an active role in generating their own positive emotional experience instead of relying on external situations.

(Suyatno, Hidayat, 2018), Based on the findings, the schools prefer to emphasize emotional intelligence development, which may impact how pupils develop their capacity for social adjustment and future success. The outcome was consistent with previous studies by (Kaewmani, 2014; Akkhanawat, 2007; Ketkaew et al., 2021), demonstrating a favorable relationship between the emotional quotient and social adjustments.

While the research recognizes the importance of emotional intelligence for social adjustment, it does not detail how it affects social adjustment or the underlying psychological mechanisms. Further investigation is required to understand these mechanisms, further clarifying the function of emotional intelligence on the part of social adjustment.

### Self-esteem Concerning Adults' Social Adjustment

Self-esteem (SE), or an individual's overall assessment, is essential for social integration (Chikweru & Eremie, 2015). The results indicate an encouraging inverse relationship between the number and quality of one's social networks and one's self-esteem over the lifespan. As we mentioned in the introduction, actual people's actions will show how high or low self-worth can cause positive or harmful changes in those individuals. According to studies (Baumeister et al.,

2003; and Orth et al., 2008), lower self-esteem is significantly associated with the chance of depression in adults and adolescents, while higher self-esteem boosts happiness. Exhibiting physical love, using adaptable and productive conflict resolution approaches, and participating in other positive activities are all related to high self-esteem (Diamond et al., 2010). These behaviors can predict self-esteem shifts (Roberts & Bengtson, 1993) and relationship satisfaction (Johnson et al., 2005). The authors (Swann Jr. et al., 2007) conclude that self-views are significant, beneficial, and crucial to creating and conducting programs to enhance them.

(Feng Kong et al. 2012) In a study of adolescents, they looked at how social support and self-worth affect the relationship between trait emotional intelligence and life happiness. Their findings suggest that males, more so than women, benefit more from social support in feeling content with their life. Numerous studies have demonstrated that EI and SE are significantly and favorably related. (Abbas & Ul Haq 2011; Afreen Faiza 2022). Despite men's stronger self-esteem, women are often more emotionally mature than men. Therefore, a person's maturation and adaptation depend on their identity. According to previous research, adults' self-esteem and social adjustment are related. However, this does not explain how this trait might assist people in dealing with daily difficulties. Several vital theories, however, support the view that individuals' self-esteem affects the nature of their interactions with other people.

### **Relationships among Key Factors**

High levels of SE and EI are essential components in improved adjustment. From birth until the moment of death, a person's life is a process that balances all of their internal needs with the demands their environment makes outwardly. For a developing adult, maintaining emotional control is a significant challenge. Many young people nowadays suffer from issues related to social integration. Therefore, emotional intelligence will probably foster social skills while serving as a bridge between success and self-esteem.

Researchers have not yet developed a framework for emotional intelligence skills that addresses self-esteem and

social adaptation. Nonetheless, Daniel Goleman's widely accepted model of emotional intelligence includes the following crucial skills. The interrelationships between emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and social competence can all be significantly impacted by the following skills:

- **Self-Awareness:** Understanding one's self-esteem and how it affects social interactions and adjustment helps with emotional self-awareness.
- **Self-Regulation:** People who can control their emotions and behaviors can better deal with problems with their self-worth and successfully navigate social situations.
- **Motivation:** Motivation is essential to building and maintaining self-esteem, achieving social adaptation goals, and overcoming challenges.
- **Empathy:** Possessing empathy enables people to comprehend and react to the feelings and experiences of others, promoting constructive social interactions and growth.
- **Social Skills:** People with strong social skills can establish and sustain connections, navigate social situations, and adjust to a variety of social circumstances, all of which have a favorable impact on social adjustment and self-esteem.

Although not specifically concerned with self-esteem, these emotional intelligence abilities can help people feel better about themselves by encouraging self-awareness, emotional control, and wholesome interpersonal interactions. As a result, those with higher emotional intelligence may have better social adaptability since they can function and thrive in social settings.

The nuances and complexity of the relationships between SE and EI and Social adaptability must be understood. As research advances and our understanding of this subject grows, new frameworks or models may appear.

According to this study's findings (Tajpreet and Maheshwari, 2015), EI and SE have a substantial positive association at the 0.01 level. According to the study, emotionally intelligent teenagers have high self-esteem, highlighting the need to develop young people's emotional intelligence before they evolve into adults and have higher self-esteem. Emotional intelligence was positively

connected with wages for both men and women (L.Sjoberg 2008), demonstrating its relationship to other social competence metrics. Interestingly, those with high EI scores tended to be less concerned with succeeding monetarily. Additionally, (Latifa & Islami, 2020) discovered that social support, academic self-concept, emotional intelligence, and academic stress had significant combined impacts on adversity quotient and accounted for a sizable amount of its variation. However, mistakes or other elements not included in this study affected the remaining percentage.

(Barragán Martn, et al., 2021) It was discovered that there is a favorable relationship between emotional quotient, self-worth, and academic engagement. They found that emotional intelligence directly affects both work engagement and self-esteem, and SE is a connection between them. Likewise, a significant association between college adjustment and EI, in addition to SE, was discovered by (Jung & Cho Chung, 2012). According to the study, initiatives encouraging significant satisfaction in nursing students and providing adequate academic counseling and coaching are crucial for college adjustment. In addition, (Tambelli et al., 2012) contend that self-esteem may work as a buffer against emotional issues or well-being during childhood and early adolescence.

Research shows that self-concept and emotional intelligence significantly affect how successfully individuals adjust (Deshmukh, 2017).

Emotional intelligence is related to positive social adaptation (Onwubiko, 2020). Despite the link between poor self-esteem and social dysfunction, adults do not appear to be affected considerably.

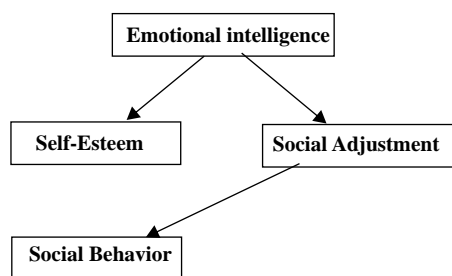


Figure 2: Representing, Self-esteem, Social adjustment, and Emotional intelligence in connection to each other

According to a study by Baumeister et al., people with high self-esteem may also be extra aggressive, despite their propensity for optimism in the face of hardship. Self-esteem, family dynamics, and social adjustment did not correlate in a statistically meaningful way. These results show negative relationships with others and self-esteem at all phases of life. Hence, assumptions consistent with one another are included in conventional and modern theories. Self-perception and acclimation may be related, according to some. Additionally, earlier studies have shown a strong link between adults' social adjustment and emotional intelligence. The findings show how important emotional intelligence is in determining self-esteem and explain how social competence benefits it. (Cheung and co 2015). For young individuals to have a solid basis for their self-esteem, emotional intelligence must be developed. The current research looks at the connections among social adjustment, self-esteem, and emotional intelligence at various stages of life, as well as how these connections might be addressed.

#### **Based on the literature research, this study found:**

- The finding that adult social adjustment is greatly influenced by emotional Intelligence (EI) is supported by literature that adults with greater degrees of emotional intelligence are better at interacting with others, solving problems, taking initiative, and adjusting to social situations.
- The association of low emotional intelligence with all adverse outcomes, including mental health problems, violence, criminal activity, unhappy marriages, and unemployment, complies with earlier research emphasizing emotional intelligence's importance in general wellness-being and successful social adjustment.
- Another essential aspect affecting social adjustment in adults is self-esteem, consistent with this finding that people with high self-esteem typically have greater social integration and general well-being.
- Emotionally intelligent adults have high self-esteem. Different contexts have observed these interwoven linkages, and it is found that academic engagement, work engagement, and college adjustment are all

influenced by emotional intelligence and self-esteem.

- According to studies, positive emotional intelligence, as opposed to solid self-esteem, performs better as a predictor of positive social adjustment than low and positive emotional intelligence.
- It is essential to recognize that people with high self-esteem can exhibit undesirable characteristics, such as increased hostility. Additional research is required to thoroughly comprehend the complex interactions between self-esteem, social adjustment, and other attributes.
- Self-esteem and emotional intelligence substantially affect an adult's capacity for adaptation. More study is necessary to thoroughly understand these two concepts' methods and processes underlying the link.
- The current research supports the practical implementation of the study's findings by demonstrating that therapies that enhance both factors can improve the adjustment and well-being of adults.
- Interestingly, those with high emotional intelligence appear less concerned with monetary success, suggesting a distinct viewpoint on achievement.
- The current study advises giving therapy, meditation workshops, or other similar strategies to emotionally immature individuals to help them develop a healthy self-concept, sense of self-worth, and social well-being.

Overall the findings emphasize the importance of individual psychological factors in adult social adjustment, including self-perception, interpersonal abilities, and emotional awareness. The study further emphasizes the need for more research and the development of interventions that strengthen these elements to help people achieve optimal adjustment and general life satisfaction.

## Conclusion

Effective adjustment is directly related to having an excellent quality of life because those who struggle with adjustment are prone to adverse effects, including clinical anxiety, sadness, and social issues. In light of this, it becomes crucial for people to have good social skills and emotional intelligence, as these traits greatly influence their

capacity to negotiate social situations and successfully make significant contributions to society.

The results of this review show that having positive self-esteem has a wide range of sound effects on adults, such as more robust social interactions, improved mental and physical health, and reduced antisocial behavior. Adults with emotional immaturity should be discovered as soon as possible.

Then, with the assistance of family, acquaintances, and the larger community, they can be managed by teaching them various emotional intelligence techniques, which play a significant role in how well individuals adapt. It is crucial to observe that both emotional intelligence and self-esteem are linked yet have no impact on adults' adjustment. However, vast research has demonstrated that EI and self-esteem are linked, and the mechanisms or processes underlying this association have received comparatively little attention. These findings should be evaluated in light of future research on adult adjustment and methods for modifying it that emphasize both components (EI & SE).

In addition, research indicates that emotional competence skills are essential for all adults and that effective self-esteem therapies may benefit individuals and society. Future research should focus on emotional intelligence and effective self-esteem management techniques to cover gaps in the literature and broaden our understanding of adult adjustment, drawing on the insights and limitations of the various studies included in this review. This review concludes by emphasizing the importance of emotional intelligence and self-esteem in adult adjustment and providing helpful information for developing interventions and strategies to help people achieve the highest social integration and well-being levels.

## Limitations & strength

Although emotional literacy and growth can be proven in people of all ages, future studies may identify people of different ages who need help regulating their negative feelings.

According to studies, there are gender disparities in the links between social behavior and EI. However, the studies in our evaluation did not thoroughly investigate potential

gender impacts, emphasizing the need for more study in this area.

Given the above, this study must identify how emotional intelligence and self-esteem impact individuals' social integration while performing jobs and obligations since doing so will help the nation's growth.

Adults' social adjustment regarding emotional intelligence and self-worth has yet to be studied. This study highlights how EI moderates the influence of social adjustment on adults. This study also emphasizes the importance of self-esteem as a critical social adjustment element. Understanding these linkages can impact the development of therapies and approaches for improving social and emotional functioning in various circumstances.

We can only infer that emotional sensitivity and self-esteem significantly impact adult adjustment. A person with good adjustment skills seizes every opportunity and improves the lives of others around him.

## Recommendation

Future research should examine how self-esteem interacts with other characteristics, such as aggressiveness, to understand better how it affects social adjustment. To close knowledge voids in the literature and deepen our comprehension of adult adjustment, to close knowledge voids in the literature and deepen our comprehension of adult adjustment further research is needed, particularly regarding effective self-esteem management techniques and emotional intelligence. The discovery that those with high emotional intelligence pay less attention to financial achievement also indicates the need for more investigation into these individuals' unique viewpoints on success.

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