



A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC MOTIVATION, SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ENGLISH ANXIETY

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Abstract

Social intelligence helps students in ensuring that they remain positive even in times of challenges and difficulties while being in a group setting. This study investigates the relationship between social Intelligence, English anxiety, and academic motivation amongst grade 7 English-medium SSC board school students. The study collected the data using standardised tools for social intelligence, English anxiety and academic motivation. The sample consisted of 95 grade 7 students (53 males and 42 females). The data was analysed using t-test and Pearson correlation. Results revealed that there is no significant difference in the social intelligence ($t = -0.52$), a significant difference in the academic motivation ($t = -3.31$) and a significant difference in the English anxiety ($t = 2.23$) of the students based on gender. The study also revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between social intelligence and academic motivation, a significant negative correlation between social intelligence and English anxiety and a significant negative correlation between English anxiety and academic motivation. From these findings, it is concluded that a higher social intelligence would cause a decrease in English anxiety and an increase in academic motivation. Thus, these findings show that social intelligence plays an important role in managing English anxiety and thus positively contributes to the increase of academic motivation. Hence, social intelligence should be an important part of the curriculum in order to decrease English anxiety and boost social intelligence.

Keywords: *anxiety, academic motivation, social intelligence, fear of speaking, positive outlook*

Introduction

In today's world, where English is the most commonly used global language (Speaknow, 2024), proficiency in the English language is highly required for academic as well as professional

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lives. In order for students to be successful in the future, one of the most important skills which is required is proficiency in the English language (The Importance of Learning English in Today's Globalised World, n.d.). Without which, the students might face a challenge in communicating in their professional life. Since the English language has become more and more important in the use of technology and media, it has a greater importance than ever before. But speaking in English is not easy for everyone, especially in social situations. Many students face anxiety while speaking in the English language. In some cases, speaking in a social situation might cause anxiety even for a student who is highly proficient in the English language because the student may be hesitant to participate in the class discussion, since they are scared of the unwanted feedback from their peers (Li, 2022). According to Horwitz et al. (1986), public speaking is one of the most commonly expressed concerns mentioned by the students. In order for students to be able to communicate better and more clearly, it is important that students are fluent in the English language. Students who are not fluent or students who are afraid of their peers for speaking in English tend to avoid the places where they have to speak in English (Trisanti & Wariyati, 2023). If this fear of using the English language is not solved at an early age, it can eventually lead to English language anxiety (Shami et al., 2025). English language anxiety would thus cause a decrease in academic motivation, as they are negatively correlated with each other.

In order for students to increase their academic motivation and decrease their English anxiety, the students need to maintain a positive outlook during stressful or difficult group activities. This is where social intelligence comes into play. It is a skill that students can use to mitigate the various challenges that one faces while using the English language (Hampel et al., 2011). Social intelligence is the ability to manage and navigate social interactions and thus maintain relations better. When a student faces language anxiety in a group setting, students with high social intelligence would be able to understand the rest of the group members better and take their responses in a positive way, thus enabling them to consider that the other group members would understand that English is a developing process and that it is okay to make mistakes. Sometimes, students might get angry because of being mocked by their peers while making errors in the English language. Here, if a student is socially intelligent, then the student would tend to understand that their fellow peers are only mocking for a temporary period, and once they get better with the English language, their mocking would reduce and eventually be eliminated completely. This helps the students maintain their motivation and thus not get affected by their mocking.

Literature Review

Gupta and Mili (2017), conducted a study to find out the relationship between Academic Motivation and Academic Achievement of 9th-class students in the state of Assam in India. It was found that there was a significant and positive relationship between academic motivation and academic achievement. It was also found that there was a significant difference in academic motivation between high and low achievers and that males had a lower academic motivation than females.

Obikeze (2026), investigated the correlation between social intelligence, test anxiety and academic achievement. The study consisted of 392 students from Anambra (Nigeria). The study found that academic test anxiety and academic achievement were significantly negatively correlated, whereas social intelligence and academic achievement were significantly positively correlated. It was also found that social intelligence and test anxiety together predicted academic achievement.

Fellmann and Redolfi (2017), studied the literature on social intelligence and creative intelligence based on gender. The results obtained were that females were more socially intelligent than males.

Saxena and Jain (2013), investigated the social intelligence of undergraduate students on the basis of their gender and stream in Bhilai city, Chhattisgarh. The sample consisted of 120 students. The data was collected using surveys, and the analysis found that males have a lower social intelligence than females.

Sen and Panda (2025), surveyed 400 students in the state of West Bengal. This was a correlational study between English anxiety and proficiency. The study revealed that higher anxiety leads to lower proficiency and that urban females had lower anxiety than urban males.

Liu and Du (2024), conducted a study on Chinese university students based on their English motivation, anxiety, use of English and English achievement. The sample consisted of 439 students from two Chinese universities. The study found that there was a significant correlation between English learning motivation, English classroom anxiety and use of English. It was also found that English classroom anxiety, use of English and English learning motivation predicted the students' English achievements.

From the literature, it is evident that English motivation, academic motivation and language anxiety play an important role in students' learning. It is also seen that social intelligence acts as a predictor of academic achievement. The researcher also found that there are many studies conducted separately on social intelligence, academic motivation and language anxiety, but the

researcher observed that there were no studies that examined all three variables together in an Indian context and that too in the state of Maharashtra. Hence, the researcher planned to conduct this study using social intelligence, academic motivation and English anxiety as variables on middle school students.

Statement problem

A Study of the Relationship Between Academic Motivation, Social Intelligence and English Anxiety

Variables of the study

Independent variables:

- English anxiety
- Social intelligence

Dependent variable:

- Academic motivation

Research questions

The following research questions were raised for the present study.

1. Is there a relationship between:
 - a. social intelligence and academic motivation
 - b. social intelligence and English anxiety
 - c. between academic motivation and English anxietyof grade 7 students?
2. Does the relationship between social intelligence, academic motivation and language anxiety of grade 7 students differ by gender?

Research objectives

1. To study:
 - a. the social intelligence
 - b. academic motivation
 - c. English anxietyof grade 7 students.
2. To compare the
 - a. social intelligence
 - b. academic motivation
 - c. English anxietyof male and female grade 7 students.

3. To find the relationship between
social intelligence and academic motivation
social intelligence and English anxiety
English anxiety and academic motivation
of grade 7 students.
4. To find the relationship between social intelligence and academic motivation of grade 7:
 - a. Male students
 - b. Female students
5. To find the relationship between social intelligence and English anxiety of grade 7:
 - a. Male students
 - b. Female students
6. To find the relationship between English anxiety and the academic motivation of grade 7:
 - a. Male students
 - b. Female students

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis are as follows:

1. There is no significant difference in the social intelligence of grade 7 students on the basis of gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the academic motivation of grade 7 students on the basis of gender.
3. There is no significant difference in the English anxiety of grade 7 students on the basis of gender.
4. There is no significant relationship between social intelligence and academic motivation of grade 7 students.
5. There is no significant relationship between social intelligence and English anxiety in grade 7 students.
6. There is no significant relationship between English anxiety and the academic motivation of grade 7 students.
7. There is no significant relationship between social intelligence and academic motivation of grade 7 male students.

8. There is no significant relationship between social intelligence and academic motivation of grade 7 female students.
9. There is no significant relationship between social intelligence and English anxiety of grade 7 male students.
10. There is no significant relationship between social intelligence and English anxiety of grade 7 female students.
11. There is no significant relationship between English anxiety and the academic motivation of grade 7 male students.
12. There is no significant relationship between English anxiety and the academic motivation of grade 7 female students.

Limitations of the study

1. The study is focused only on students of the SSC board.
2. The study is restricted to students of English medium schools.
3. The study is restricted to students studying in Mumbai.
4. The study only focuses on one type of intelligence, which is social intelligence.

Methodology

The present study aims to measure and identify the relationship between social intelligence, English anxiety and academic motivation of the students. In order to do so, the researcher is using a descriptive method of research. In addition to this, the researcher is also finding the correlation between these variables; thus, a correlational method is also used.

Sample

The sample consists of grade 7 SSC board English medium students. A sample size of 100 students (50 male and 50 female students) was selected, out of which 5 questionnaires were discarded as they were incomplete. Thus, a final sample of 95 students (53 males and 42 female students) was considered for the study. The researcher has used a simple random sampling (lottery method) for the selection of one SSC board school.

Tools for data collection

The researcher has used a researcher-made personal data sheet, a researcher-made academic motivation scale, a standardised English anxiety scale made by Anupama Chakrabarti and Madhumala Sengupta and a standardised social intelligence scale made by Bindu Joseph and Prem Prabha Singh. All the tools used were both valid and reliable.

Data analysis

For the present study, the researcher used descriptive statistical techniques in order to describe the data, these were mean, median, mode and standard deviation. For testing the hypothesis t-test and the Pearson product-moment correlation have been used.

Results

The descriptive analysis of data revealed the following findings:

Descriptive analysis of data (N= 95)

Variable	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Social intelligence	201	202	203	16.91	-0.550	1.31
English anxiety	93	94	94	15.66	-0.358	-0.089
Academic motivation	158	155	151	19.78	0.367	0.240

From the above table, it can be seen that the distribution of social intelligence and English anxiety is negatively skewed, which indicates that the scores are massed at the high end of the scale, i.e. to the right end and are spread out more gradually towards the left side. Also, that academic motivation is positively skewed, this indicates that the scores are massed at the low end of the scale, i.e. to the left end and are spread out more gradually towards the right side. The kurtosis for social intelligence and academic motivation variables is positive. Positive kurtosis indicates a leptokurtic distribution. Whereas kurtosis for English anxiety is negative. This means that there is a platykurtic distribution.

The inferential analysis of the data is shown below:

Analysis 1:

t-ratio for social intelligence scores of school students on the basis of gender

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	Level of Significance
Social intelligence	Male	53	200	17.07	-0.58	Not Significant
	Female	42	202	16.83		

(Critical value of t at 0.01 and 0.05 LOS is 2.61 and 1.98 respectively.)

The above table shows that the t-ratio for social intelligence is -0.58. The obtained t-ratio is less than the tabulated level and is not significant at 0.01 nor at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant difference in the social intelligence of school students on the basis of their gender. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Analysis 2:

t-ratio for academic motivation scores of school students on the basis of gender

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	Level of Significance
Academic motivation	Male	53	152	18.45	-3.31	0.01
	Female	42	165	19.23		

(Critical value of t at 0.01 and 0.05 LOS is 2.61 and 1.98 respectively.)

The above table shows that the t-ratio for academic motivation is -3.31. The obtained t-ratio is more than the tabulated level and is significant at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the academic motivation of school students on the basis of their gender. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Analysis 3:

t-ratio for English anxiety scores of school students on the basis of gender

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	Level of Significance
English anxiety	Male	53	96	17.15	2.23	0.05
	Female	42	90	12.75		

(Critical value of t at 0.01 and 0.05 LOS is 2.61 and 1.98 respectively.)

The above table shows that the t-ratio for English anxiety is 2.23. The obtained t-ratio is more than the tabulated level and is significant at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the English anxiety of school students on the basis of their gender, i.e., male and female. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Analysis 4:

r-value of social intelligence and academic motivation of middle school students

Variables	N	df	r-value	Level of Significance
Social intelligence and Academic motivation	95	93	0.267	0.01

(Critical value of r at 0.01 and 0.05 LOS and df = N-2 is 0.256 and 0.196 respectively.)

The above table shows that the r-value for social intelligence and academic motivation is 0.26. The obtained r-value is more than the tabulated value and is significant at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, there is a positive, low and significant correlation between social intelligence and academic motivation for the total sample of school students. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Analysis 5:

r-value of social intelligence and English anxiety of middle school students

Variables	N	df	r-value	Level of Significance
Social intelligence and English anxiety	95	93	-0.217	0.05

(Critical value of r at 0.01 and 0.05 LOS and df = N-2 is 0.256 and 0.196 respectively.)

The above table shows that the r-value for social intelligence and English anxiety is -0.217. The obtained r-value is more than the tabulated value and is significant at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, there is a negative, low and significant correlation between social intelligence and English anxiety for the total sample of school students. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Analysis 6:

r-value of English anxiety and academic motivation of middle school students

Variables	N	df	r-value	Level of Significance
English anxiety and Academic motivation	95	93	-0.296	0.01

(Critical value of r at 0.01 and 0.05 LOS and df = N-2 is 0.256 and 0.196 respectively.)

The above table shows that the r-value of English anxiety and academic motivation is -0.296. The obtained r-value is more than the tabulated value and is significant at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, there is a negative, low and significant correlation between English anxiety and academic motivation for the total sample of school students. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Analysis 7:

r-value of social intelligence and academic motivation of male students

Variables	N	df	r-value	Level of Significance
Social intelligence and Academic motivation	53	51	0.263	0.05

(Critical value of r at 0.01 and 0.05 LOS and df = N-2 is 0.330 and 0.254 respectively.)

The above table shows that the r-value for social intelligence and academic motivation is 0.263. The obtained r-value is more than the tabulated value and is significant at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, there is a negative, low and significant correlation between social intelligence and academic motivation for the male school students. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Analysis 8:

r-value of social intelligence and academic motivation of female students

Variables	N	df	r-value	Level of Significance
Social intelligence and Academic motivation	42	40	0.262	Not Significant

(Critical value of r at 0.01 and 0.05 LOS and df = N-2 is 0.361 and 0.276 respectively.)

The above table shows that the r-value for social intelligence and academic motivation is 0.262. The obtained r-value is less than the tabulated value and is not significant at 0.01 nor at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, there is no significant correlation between social intelligence and academic motivation of female school students. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Analysis 9:

r-value of social intelligence and English anxiety of male students

Variables	N	df	r-value	Level of Significance
Social intelligence and English anxiety	53	51	-0.199	Not Significant

(Critical value of r at 0.01 and 0.05 LOS and df = N-2 is 0.330 and 0.254 respectively.)

The above table shows that the r-value for social intelligence and English anxiety of male students is -0.199. The obtained r-value is less than the tabulated value and is not significant at 0.01 nor at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, there is no significant correlation between social intelligence and English anxiety in male school students. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Analysis 10:

r-value of social intelligence and English anxiety of female students

Variables	N	df	r-value	Level of Significance
Social intelligence and English anxiety	42	40	-0.231	Not significant

(Critical value of r at 0.01 and 0.05 LOS and df = N-2 is 0.361 and 0.276 respectively.)

The above table shows that the r-value for social intelligence and English anxiety of female students is -0.231. The obtained r-value is less than the tabulated value and is not significant at 0.01 nor at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, there is no significant correlation between social intelligence and English anxiety in female school students. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Analysis 11:**r-value of English anxiety and academic motivation of male students**

Variables	N	df	r-value	Level of Significance
English anxiety and academic motivation	53	51	-0.329	0.05

(Critical value of r at 0.01 and 0.05 LOS and df = N-2 is 0.330 and 0.254 respectively.)

The above table shows that the r-value for English anxiety and academic motivation is -0.329. The obtained r-value is more than the tabulated value and is significant at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, there is a negative, low and significant correlation between English anxiety and academic motivation of male school students. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Analysis 12:**r-value of English anxiety and academic motivation of female students**

Variables	N	df	r-value	Level of Significance
English anxiety and academic motivation	42	40	-0.112	Not Significant

(Critical value of r at 0.01 and 0.05 LOS and df = N-2 is 0.361 and 0.276 respectively.)

The above table shows the r-value for English anxiety and academic motivation of female students is -0.112. The obtained r-value is less than the tabulated value and is not significant at 0.01 nor at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, there is no significant correlation between English anxiety and academic motivation of female school students. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Major findings of the research

From the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. There is no significant difference in the social intelligence of students on the basis of gender. Hence the null hypothesis 1 is accepted.
2. There is a significant difference in the academic motivation of students on the basis of gender at 0.01 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis 2 is rejected.
3. There is a significant difference in the English anxiety of students on the basis of gender at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis 3 is rejected.
4. There is a significant relationship between social intelligence and academic motivation of the students at 0.01 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis 4 is rejected.

5. There is a significant relationship between social intelligence and English anxiety of the students at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis 5 is rejected.
6. There is a significant relationship between English anxiety and academic motivation of the students at 0.01 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis 6 is rejected.
7. There is a significant relationship between social intelligence and academic motivation of male students at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis 7 is rejected.
8. There is no significant relationship between social intelligence and academic motivation of female students. Hence the null hypothesis 8 is accepted.
9. There is no significant relationship between social intelligence and English anxiety of male students. Hence the null hypothesis 9 is accepted.
10. There is no significant relationship between social intelligence and English anxiety of female students. Hence the null hypothesis 10 is accepted.
11. There is a significant relationship between English anxiety and academic motivation of male students at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis 11 is rejected.
12. There is no significant relationship between English anxiety and academic motivation of female students. Hence the null hypothesis 12 is accepted.

Significance of the study

The findings from the study will show the effect of social intelligence on English anxiety and academic motivation of the students. It will also help in the identification of relationships between social intelligence, English anxiety and academic motivation. This will help the teachers, parents and various policy makers to devise various strategies and policies that will help the students increase their social intelligence, thus causing an increase in their academic motivation and a reduction in their English anxiety. Also, this will ensure that the students' English anxiety stays low and they will be able to perform better in a holistic way, thus achieving some of the objectives of NEP 2020.

Discussion

From the above results, we can see that females are more socially intelligent; this coincides with the various studies done where females are more socially intelligent (Saxena, 2013; Ali et al., 2019; Fellmann and Redolfi, 2017). This can be because females are brought up in such a way that they are taught to focus on relations, which helps them practice social dynamics, thus leading to better social intelligence. Also, as mentioned by Gupta and Mili (2017), the researcher also found that females have a higher academic motivation as compared to males. This can be related to the study by Duckworth & Seligman (2006), which found that girls were

more self-disciplined, started their homework earlier and spent more time on it than boys. The present study also matched with the findings of Sen and Panda (2025), which stated that English anxiety was low for female students as compared to male students. This is due to the fact that females hold a positive attitude towards learning English, and this acts as a buffer while facing anxiety (Neto, 2018). From the correlation study, it can be seen that as social intelligence increases, academic motivation increases, and as social intelligence increases, English anxiety decreases, thus leading to an increase in academic motivation. Thus, it can be said that an increase in social intelligence would help the students manage their negative emotions during difficult times (Hampel et al., 2011), and thus would cause a decrease in English anxiety and result in an increase in academic motivation.

Recommendations

From the study, it can be seen that social intelligence has an impact on English anxiety and academic motivation. Thus, the following recommendations are made, which would help the students benefit and thus lead them to live their lives to the fullest.

1. Language labs should be set up in schools to ensure that students get ample support to practice and learn their English language skills, other than that of the classroom. This will enable students to practice well before speaking in the classroom.
2. Policymakers should include SEL (socio-emotional learning) in the core curriculum in order to train students for conflict resolution and foster diverse social interactions.
3. Teachers should use SEL (socio-emotional learning) as a pedagogy to ensure that students can use empathy and care in order to boost social intelligence. This can be done by ensuring the inclusion of group activities like jigsaw, think-pair-share, and role-playing activities, etc. This will ensure cooperative learning among students and thus enhance their socio-emotional skills.
4. Parents can talk about the perspectives of different individuals while watching movies or reading books. This can lead to adding the viewpoints of other individuals and thus lead to empathy.
5. The teachers can also do an analysis of the number of males in the class, as this will help the teacher to modify their teaching level to cater to male students, as males have a higher English anxiety than females.
6. Teachers and parents can model empathy and effective communication so that students understand the different ways of handling tough or difficult situations in a better way.

7. Teachers can use positive and polite phrases or sentences when a student makes an error. For example, the teacher can say, “It is fine to make errors, take care next time”, or “Everyone makes mistakes”. These phrases can help students overcome their fear that they will be judged for their mistakes.

Thus, including these recommendations would help students be more socially intelligent and reduce their English anxiety to boost their academic motivation. This will not only enable students to be more confident in their English language and increase their academic motivation, but will also increase their academic achievement, as academic motivation and academic achievement are positively correlated (Pokhriyal, A. K., & Pangtey, U. M., 2023). This will also help the students to be more empathetic and socially intelligent in their professional lives as they grow older, and thus lead to holistic development.

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