
The Impact of Montessori Education on Emotional Intelligence: A Summary of Findings

A recent study titled "The Effect of Montessori and Traditional Methods of Education on Emotional Intelligence of Children" by Dhiksha and Shivakumara (2017) explores how different educational approaches impact the emotional intelligence (EI) of students aged 12–16. It draws on data from 1,082 students in India—549 from Montessori schools and 533 from traditional schools. Emotional intelligence (EI) was measured using the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory, which assesses ten critical components of EI, including self-regard, empathy, impulse control, problem solving, emotional awareness, and flexibility. The findings reveal a striking difference in favor of the Montessori method across all EI dimensions, highlighting the significance of the educational environment in shaping emotional competencies.

The study's results demonstrate that Montessori students significantly outperformed their traditional peers in every measured aspect of emotional intelligence. For instance, in overall emotional intelligence, Montessori students scored an average of 57.69 compared to 42.08 for traditional students, a difference that was statistically significant ($p < .001$).

Montessori educators are uniquely positioned to nurture emotionally intelligent, empathetic, and resilient children.

The Montessori group also excelled in specific traits such as empathy, self-regard, and flexibility—skills that are fundamental to positive social interaction and emotional regulation. These findings support the view that Montessori's child-centered, experiential approach fosters a deeper emotional development than the conventional didactic model.

The study highlights how Montessori students exhibit higher levels of self-regard, indicating a strong sense of self-worth and confidence. They also show better impulse control and stress tolerance, suggesting that they are better equipped to manage emotions and stay composed in challenging situations. Furthermore, their elevated empathy scores imply a greater ability to understand and relate to the feelings of others, which is essential for healthy interpersonal relationships.

Interestingly, the study also explored the role of gender in emotional intelligence outcomes. While Montessori girls scored slightly higher than boys in self-regard and empathy, overall gender differences were not pronounced or consistent. This suggests that while individual differences exist, the method of education plays a more critical role in shaping emotional intelligence than gender alone.

In conclusion, the findings affirm that Montessori education provides a strong foundation for the development of emotional intelligence. By supporting independence, emotional awareness, and respectful social interaction, the Montessori method not only prepares children academically but also nurtures their emotional well-being. As educators and parents continue to recognize the importance of emotional intelligence for lifelong success, Montessori education stands out as a powerful approach for cultivating these essential human skills.



The Research in Focus

- Encourage social connections through mixed-age collaboration, group projects, and peaceful conflict resolution
- Give students meaningful choices, support their autonomy, and trust them to manage their time and emotions.
- Use materials and activities that require students to think critically and independently resolve challenges.
- Model and teach respectful communication. Invite students to share their ideas and listen actively in return.
- Maintain a prepared environment that minimizes stress, allows freedom within structure, and supports self-regulation.
- Prioritize emotional growth as much as academic learning. Recognize emotions as part of the child's holistic development.

Dhiksha, J., & Shivakumara, K. (2017). The effects of Montessori and traditional methods of education on the emotional intelligence of children. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 3(4)