


## Parental Influence on Children’s Social and Emotional Intelligence: a Gender Differentiated Analysis

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### Abstract

The social and emotional intelligence of children, although it also assumes an innate component, is mainly formed in the family context, this being shaped by the behavior of the parents and the parenting style. This aspect is relevant for a better understanding of how parents and the family can contribute to the development of this ability among children, which has proven to be vital in many areas of their quality of life. The purpose of the current study is to investigate the relationship between the social and emotional intelligence of parents and that of children, both at a general level and differentiated by gender, respectively of mothers and fathers. The research sample consisted of 575 subjects, respectively 214 mothers, 166 fathers and 195 children. We used the IPIP social-emotional intelligence scale for adults and Bar-On Youth Social-Emotional Intelligence Inventory for children. The results indicate a negative correlation ( $r=-0.01$ ), but insignificant, between the level of socio-emotional intelligence of parents and children, but a positive and significant correlation between the level of socio-emotional intelligence of mothers and that of children ( $r=0.52$ , and  $p=0.002$ ). As for fathers, we obtained a positive, but insignificant correlation between the two variables ( $r=0.21$ ,  $p=0.30>0.002$ ).

**Keywords:** social intelligence, emotional intelligence, parent-child relationship, gender differences, family context, psychosocial development.

### Introduction

In the contemporary society, the way in which individuals interact has changed significantly under the influence of the social and cultural changes to which they are subjected, whether we consider natural aspects or the phenomenon of globalization, digitization and the rapid technological advance, which has greatly influenced communication and solving problems. It can be said, to a certain extent, that it is possible we are facing a crisis of culture against the background of all the natural and societal factors that affect and modify the quality of life, (Otovescu 2016, 156). However, one thing is certain, despite all external influences, the family still plays a primary role in the shaping of individuals from childhood.

Given these changes and challenges, the development of social intelligence and specific skills is more important now than ever, both in terms of personal well-being and the potential impact on society. The present paper on social and emotional intelligence in the family context, has important practical significance, especially for developing countries, such as Romania. One argument for this is that social intelligence helps individuals to function in a group, ensures their progress in it, influences the job satisfaction or the ability of making and maintaining friendships (Joseph & Lakshmi, 2010). It also plays a significant role in determining one's resilience and is directly associated with positive psychological health (Palucka et al., 2011). Thus, the present research was applied in a family context, investigating existing associations between parents and children, as well as role-gender differences: the correlation between the level of socio-emotional intelligence of mothers and children and of fathers and children.

### **Literature Review**

The concept of social and emotional intelligence is a relatively recent one in the history of sociology and psychology, the first definition appearing at the beginning of the 20th century (Thorndike, 1920, 227). It has been disputed over time in terms of the attributed semantics, for certain theorists (Scarr, 1989), being considered an aspect related to personality and relational skills, which cannot be associated to the stoic term of "intelligence" which designates performance, adaptation, problem solving, while for other theorists, it represents the new wave of knowledge in terms of performance, adaptation and problem solving (Salovey et al. 2002, 159). It is currently a very popular concept, becoming particularly known through Daniel Goleman's two works on social and emotional intelligence: "Emotional Intelligence" (2001) and "Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships" (2018). Subsequently, the concept of emotional and social intelligence is explored in the Model of Mayer et al. (1990), the authors considering that this is the ability to perceive, access and generate emotions in such a way as to aid individual reason, people to recognize their own emotions and emotional knowledge and manage to regulate their affects, so as to contribute to emotional and intellectual development. Subsequently, Goleman's model takes up the idea of Mayer & Salovey (1990) and highlights the components of social and emotional intelligence: emotional self-regulation, self-awareness, relational skills and social awareness. Finally, Bar-On (2006) in his model as an element of novelty, involves 5 basic markers: interpersonal, decision-making, self-expression, self-participation and stress management.

The implications of social and emotional intelligence in terms of the quality of family life, namely the quality of membership in the family and society is an interesting aspect. Cultural Atlas (2021) describes the family concept and relatives as one of the most important in Romanian life, as the emotional and financial support for their members. Although immediate relationships are very important, the individualistic tendency within the family is accentuated, which has developed more and more in the last 25 years. Emotional intelligence plays an important role in providing social support, both quantitatively and qualitatively. In this sense, the relationship is bidirectional, family functionality being a determinant of emotional intelligence and vice-versa. The safety that the family represents for the child's growth and the environment of its development, by ensuring a secure attachment and balanced relationships, will determine the development of a higher level of emotional intelligence among children, benefiting from success and social support. Rani, Sumit & Sangwan (2018, 3270) believe that the emotional connection and intimacy between parents and children gives children a sense of security, contributing to the development of a positive self-concept.

Also, as a way of inter-human communication, the family is among the most enduring, being specific to all stages of historical development and being very stable as a social structure (Constantinescu, 2004, 10). From this point of view, we cannot omit its importance in the formation and development of a socio-emotional skill. Judy & Arthur (apud. Rani, Sumit and Sangwan 2018, 3271) note that parents with strong values, integrity, positive attitudes, can inoculate children with a set of attitudes of this kind such as honesty, discipline, justice, integrity. The process of shaping and transmitting these sets of moral traits is analogous to the pattern of forming social and emotional intelligence skills from parent to child.

On the other hand, children who have relationships with empathetic, emotionally intelligent parents or other such family members, also develop high levels of empathy and emotional intelligence. Children who experience abuse, neglect, and rejection, whose parents have low levels of empathy and social understanding, are less likely to develop healthy levels of social intelligence (Howe, 2017, 1). The risks these children are exposed to, as most probably their parents were initially exposed to, involve future stress in relationships, poor mental health, problematic social behavior or difficulty coping with obstacles. The empathetic and socially intelligent individual has the ability to see and feel things from another person's perspective, he can put himself in their shoes, he can understand how those around him affect his ability to think and feel and will influence how he will speak and act socially. Highly empathetic people and those with strong social intelligence generally enjoy successful, less stressful relationships, are interested in other people and what is relevant to those around them.

Parents may differ in their gender-relevant roles in developing these skills. While many studies emphasize the importance of maternal figures in shaping social and emotional intelligence, the paternal role is also significant. Fathers contribute to modeling emotional intelligence and influencing how children's behaviors are addressed and educated (Mojgan et al., 2010). The level of emotional intelligence of children correlates positively with that of fathers (Mirza and Rezdvan, 2011), so fathers who have a higher level of emotional intelligence will be calmer and will rather use positive reinforcement for agreeable behaviors of their children, compared to fathers with low emotional intelligence who will focus on punishing negative behaviors and aggression. Also, the structure and size of the family can represent a variable in the development of the level of social and emotional intelligence. Goel and Aggarwal (2012) reveal that families with more than one child can contribute to increasing social intelligence, as children with brothers/sisters show a higher level of general social intelligence compared to children with single parents. Also, Morand (1999, 643-649) highlights a positive correlation between the size of the family as the number of members and the level of emotional intelligence, probably due to the interactional complexity caused by the high number of members.

In general, emphasis has been placed on the positive relationship between parent and child and parental education, which provides children with a favorable context for shaping a positive self-image (Rani, Sumit, & Sangwan, 2018). Conversely, children subjected to a deficient environment, characterized by neglect or abuse, will have a low level of social and emotional intelligence (Howe, 2017). Furthermore, social intelligence has been shown to be a mediator of aggression, reducing it among boys, and is a predictor of popularity among adolescents (Wallenius, Punamaki, & Rimplea, 2007). Within the family, members who have a higher level of social intelligence are more cooperative, and children who proved to come from a supportive family were perceived by those around them to be more empathetic and

tolerant (Barragan et al., 2021). A special emphasis is on the role that the father has in the formation of the social and emotional intelligence of the child, considering the fact that paternal contributions have been under-evaluated in the scientific field in terms of child development, including the social and emotional level. Father's emotion affects children's emotion and social behavior (Adeleke, 2017; Mojgan et al., 2010; Shafer, 2021). Also, there are a number of recommendations in the process of educating children's socio-emotional intelligence from adults. Thus, empathy, respect, behavior in specific social contexts and self-efficacy are traits that can be adequately modeled by parents and can contribute to shaping a superior socio-emotional intelligence of the child (Matthews, 2019).

Thus, the present study starts explores in a way the various approaches of development and learning which stipulate that one of the methods of training in the case of children is through imitation and social learning (Bandura, 1977). It starts from the idea that children learn and form through interactions with others in the social context, primarily in the family, thus they acquire new information and behaviors by imitating their parents. Goleman himself (2018) believes that family experiences are the beginning for emotional learning. The formation of an individual's character and morality starts from parents and is later continued by teachers in school, and one of the basic factors in this process is interaction and communication with others as (Andrioni & Ghiță 2021, 16) also presents. A sociological perspective (Kadri, Bensefiane, Buheji, 2019) defines the family as the main context that regulates the actions of its members, shapes their lives, behaviors, ensures the genetic transmission of legacies from one generation to another and allows the emergence and perpetuation of traditions, customs behaviors, through the prism of social memory as highlighted by Otovescu & Pârlea (2013, 33), fulfilling an important social function. Thus, in the present research we expected that the parental model to have a major impact on children in terms of shaping socio-emotional intelligence skills.

Parental gender roles also have to be taken into account, distinguishing between maternal and paternal figures, as it is well known that although both are extremely relevant, they can influence the child's social profile differently, so it was expected that the study to reveal possible differences between mothers and fathers and the association of their level of socio-emotional intelligence with that of the child. It was also taken into account that the Romanian family, although during the communist period tried to homogenize the roles, later returned to patriarchy, thus, although fathers are the ones responsible for the financial security and stability of the family, mothers are usually the ones who spend more time with children and are more involved in their upbringing and education, so it was anticipated to obtain statistically significant results for mothers in relation to association compared to fathers. However, certain previous research emphasizes the relevance of father figures in shaping social intelligence, so in the case of families where children grow up without fathers, they lack the effects of positive socialization, compared to those raised in intact families (Băran-Pescaru, 2006). In the South-West region of the country, where the research was be carried out, the counties of Dolj, Olt, Vâlcea and Mehedinți have a lower divorce rate, below 1%, so it can be said that the family is generally traditional, the most common form being the nuclear family with one child. So, taking into account this sociological aspect, as well as the modern trends in which fathers are much more present in children's lives, it represented a challenge and a curiosity for the researcher to investigate the potential gender differences in terms of associations between child and parent at the level of socio-emotional intelligence.

Another argument of interest for which we wanted to investigate the parent-child bond in this study is the fact that the family enters into a relationship with a multitude of other systems, such as that of friends, the professional, the educational environment, so that if we obtain a lack of association between the level of socio-emotional intelligence of parents and children, it is possible to open the way to a new hypothesis, namely that this ability may rather be influenced by one of the other systems stated or genetically programmed, innate. A challenge in this regard is also launched by previous research that does not necessarily support this possible association. Duncan (1973) notes that 50 years of research on adult social intelligence does not reveal any relevant information regarding the possibility that the social intelligence of the parents to be transmitted to the children. So, from a theoretical point of view, the conclusion will be intriguing, but we expected to obtain a positive correlation, with a larger effect size in the case of maternal figures compared to paternal ones.

## **1. Research Methodology**

### **Research objectives**

The primary aim of this study is to examine the general relationship between parents' socio-emotional intelligence and that of their children. Additionally, the research seeks to differentiate the nature and strength of the correlation between socio-emotional intelligence levels, specifically by analyzing the relationship between mothers and children as well as between fathers and children.

One practical contribution of this research, based on the results and predictions, is to provide a deeper understanding of how parenting styles and the parental role influence the development of socio-emotional intelligence in children, which is crucial for enhancing their quality of life.

### **Hypotheses of the research**

The study is grounded in the following hypotheses:

- H1: The higher the socio-emotional intelligence level in parents, the higher the socio-emotional intelligence level will be in their children.
- H2: There are significant differences in the strength of the association between mothers' socio-emotional intelligence and that of their children compared to the association between fathers' socio-emotional intelligence and their children's.

### **Research variables**

This research identifies four independent variables: 1. the socio-emotional level of parents in general, 2. the socio-emotional level of mothers and 3. of fathers, and 4. the socio-emotional level of children.

In the case of the first research hypothesis (H1) there are the two independent variables category - quantitative (numerical) variables: 1. the level of socio-emotional intelligence of parents and 2. the level of socio-emotional intelligence of children.

In the case of the second research hypothesis (H2) there are three independent variables category - quantitative (numerical) variables: 3. the level of socio-emotional intelligence of mothers, 2. the level of socio-emotional intelligence of fathers and 4. the level of socio-emotional intelligence of children.

## 1.2. Research Methods and Tools

The research methods and tools were carefully selected based on a thorough operationalization of key concepts and an extensive review of the scientific literature in the field. The primary research method employed is a sociological survey, administered through a structured questionnaire. For data collection and processing, quantitative techniques were utilized, including the use of the SPSS statistical software for analysis, and standardized methods for recording responses.

This study adopts a quasi-experimental design, wherein the researcher's involvement is minimal, limited to providing instructions and clarification to respondents during the completion of the questionnaire. The researcher does not actively influence the responses, ensuring objectivity and maintaining a balanced researcher-participant relationship.

### *Social/Emotional/Personal Intelligence Scale*

To assess socio-emotional intelligence among the adult participants, the study employed a tool from the IPIP (International Personality Item Pool) project, initiated by Goldberg (1999). This project sought to develop and refine scales and inventories that assess various personality traits. The selected instrument aligns with the objectives of this study as it evaluates social intelligence based on self-reported interactions. The decision to use this particular tool is supported by recommendations from Rusu et al. (2012), who validated the instrument on a sample of Romanian students and found it to be a reliable measure.

The scale consists of 10 items and was translated from English to Romanian by Iliescu (2015). It is freely available for research purposes on Research Central (2022) and is part of a broader collection of 371 personality scales validated for use in Romanian populations (Iliescu, Popa, & Dimache, 2015). Each questionnaire item is presented as a statement, and respondents rate their agreement on a 5-point Likert scale:

- Strongly Disagree (if the statement is completely false or if the respondent strongly disagrees with it);
- Disagreement (if the statement is rather false or if he disagrees with it);
- Neutral (if the statement is equally true and false or if it is neutral about it);
- Agree (if the statement is rather true or if he agrees with it);
- Strongly agree (if the statement is clearly true or strongly agrees with it).

### *Bar-On -Emotional Quotient Inventory: Youth Version*

The group of children as a respondent's subgroup was tested with the instrument - the Bar-On Youth Emotional Quotient Inventory-Youth Version. This tool was based on the theory developed by the author on the conceptual model of socio-emotional intelligence and is recommended to be used in contexts such as educational environments, child protection institutions and social assistance (Bar-On, 2006). The author claims that in developing the questionnaire he started from the hypothesis that effective social and emotional functioning will lead to an overall well-being in the case of the individual. This aspect is supported by the predictive value of the tool in areas of life such as high performance in social interactions, academic results or at work, positive impact on physical and mental health, subjective well-being (Krivoy et al., 2000; Ruderman and Bar-On, 2003). It is applicable to people between the ages of 7 and 18 years old, is a self-report instrument, contains a number of 30 items, and its administration takes an average of 10 minutes. In our case, the instrument was processed and translated by the researcher into Romanian, in order to use it on the Romanian population.

Each item of the questionnaire represents a statement, to which the respondent ticks the correct answer from the 4 options, on a Likert scale, as it follows: 1-Never, 2-Rarely, 3-Sometimes, 4-Often, 5-All the time.

### 1.3. Formation and Selection Criteria of the Sample

The present research is selective, based on the sample and the selection of respondents according to a defined set of criteria, so that they are representative of the population assigned to the study. The sampling in this case was non-probabilistic, taking into account that the selection of people follows a preferential procedure, of convenience according to the criteria for inclusion and selection of respondents (Kazimier, 1967; Mărginean, 2000).

The sampling technique was convenience, based on access within the respondent families. Depending on the availability of respondents to the research in question, family members from the South-West area of Romania, both parents and their children, between the ages of 7 and 18 were included in the sample. The selection criteria of the respondents were: the availability to participate in the study, the geographical area of origin, the age category and the capacity from a psycho-emotional point of view to complete the research instruments.

#### Research population

The research population consisted of 220 families, totaling 575 respondents. These were divided into specific groups of interest for the study: 340 parents from 220 families (100 single-parent families and 120 nuclear families), and 235 children aged between 7 and 18, all of whom were members of the families included in the study.

The parents' age was not a criterion of interest in this study. Additionally, the participants came from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, and no restrictions were placed on factors such as profession, gender, education level, or other socio-demographic characteristics.

#### Methods of collecting and processing data

The study participants were verbally instructed on the purpose, hypotheses, and the methods of the research and completed a physical consent form. In the case of the underage children, the parents provided consent on behalf of their children.

The research tools were administered in a pencil-and-paper format within an indoor environment, designed to maintain confidentiality and create suitable conditions for participants. A clinical psychologist, who is also the principal investigator of this research, administered the instruments.

Once the data were collected, the researcher manually scored the questionnaires according to predefined scoring guidelines. Demographic details, including age, gender, and parent category, were input alongside the raw scores into the SPSS statistical program (IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26) for analysis.

To test the hypotheses, Pearson's linear correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was used to measure the association between the two quantitative variables being examined. Additionally, the confidence coefficient was calculated using an online tool provided by the Psychometrica website.

## 2. Research Results

### 2.1. Testing the First Research Hypothesis (H1)

To test the first research hypothesis (H1) – "the higher the level of social and emotional intelligence in parents, the higher the level of social and emotional intelligence will be in their children" – the Pearson linear correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was employed. This statistical tool is commonly used to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between two continuous, quantitative variables.

In this context, the correlation was investigated between the scores obtained by parents on the IPIP socio-emotional intelligence scale and the scores obtained by their children on the Bar-On Emotional Intelligence Inventory (Youth Version). The hypothesis was tested using data from the sample of 220 families, consisting of both parents and their children.

To carry out this analysis, the SPSS 26 statistical software was utilized, with the specific procedure Analyze > Correlate > Bivariate selected to compute the Pearson correlation coefficient. This method enabled a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between the two variables - parental socio-emotional intelligence and children's socio-emotional intelligence - across the entire sample.

The Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) ranges from -1 to +1, where: +1 indicates a perfect positive correlation (as one variable increases, the other also increases), -1 indicates a perfect negative correlation (as one variable increases, the other decreases), and 0 indicates no correlation (no linear relationship between the variables).

The hypothesis would be supported if a statistically significant positive correlation is found, meaning that higher socio-emotional intelligence scores in parents are associated with higher scores in their children. The significance level ( $p$ -value) was set at  $p < 0.05$ , as is standard in behavioral and social science research, to determine whether the observed correlation is statistically significant and unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Table 1. Correlation between the social-emotional intelligence of the parents and of the children

Correlations			
		SEQ_parent	SEQ_child
SEQ_parent	Pearson Correlation	1	-.013
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.803
	N	575	575
SEQ_child	Pearson Correlation	-.013	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.803	
	N	575	575

Source: from SPSS v.26 data processing

The obtained results indicate a negative correlation ( $r=-0.01$ ), but insignificant, between the level of socio-emotional intelligence of parents and children, since the value of  $p$  is higher than the significant threshold of 0.05 ( $p=0.8$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). Also, the proximity of  $r$  to 0 in the case of the present hypothesis ( $r=-0.01$ ) indicates a small effect size. In other words, there is a weak association between the two variables.



## 2.2. Testing the Second Research Hypothesis (H2)

To verify our second hypothesis of the research, there are significant differences between the level of association of socio-emotional intelligence of mothers and children and the level of socio-emotional intelligence of fathers and children, the potential existence of a separate correlation by parental gender was investigated. Thus, the association between the level of socio-emotional intelligence of mothers and that of children, as well as separately that of fathers and that of children, was investigated. Similarly, the Pearson linear correlation coefficient was used in the SPSS 26 program, following the previously presented procedure.

Table 2. Correlation between the socio-emotional level of mothers and children

Correlations			
		SEQ_mother	SEQ_child
SEQ_parent	Pearson Correlation	1	.520**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	214	214
SEQ_child	Pearson Correlation	.520**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	214	214

Note: \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: from SPSS v.26 data processing

The obtained results indicate a positive, significant correlation between the level of socio-emotional intelligence of mothers and that of children ( $r=0.52$ , and  $p=0.002$ ). The value of  $p$  being lower than the significant threshold of 0.01, established by the program through the Flag significant correlations option ( $p=0.0$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), indicates that the association between the two variables is significant. Later, the confidence limits for the tested correlation were calculated, in order to evaluate the precision of the estimate made on the sample of the present study at the population level, with the help of the online calculation option on the specialized website Psychometrica (2022). The correlation value ( $r=0.52$ ) and the number of subjects for this hypothesis ( $n=214$ ) were entered into the calculation formula, the 95% confidence coefficient was set, and the automatic calculation formula reveals a confidence interval between 0.41 and 0.62. Since the lower limit exceeds the value of 0, i.e., the null hypothesis, the correlation is significant for the population from which the sample was drawn and has a high estimation precision.

Regarding the effect size for the obtained correlation coefficient  $r=0.52$ , according to the description model proposed by Hopkins (Popa, 2008, 163-164), it has a high-type effect size. This indicates a major level of association between the two variables at the sample level.

The scatterplot depicted in Figure 1 visualizes the relationship between the socio-emotional intelligence (SEI) levels of mothers and their children. Each point on the scatterplot represents an individual pair (mother-child) from the dataset, plotted according to the mother's SEI score on the x-axis and the child's SEI score on the y-axis.

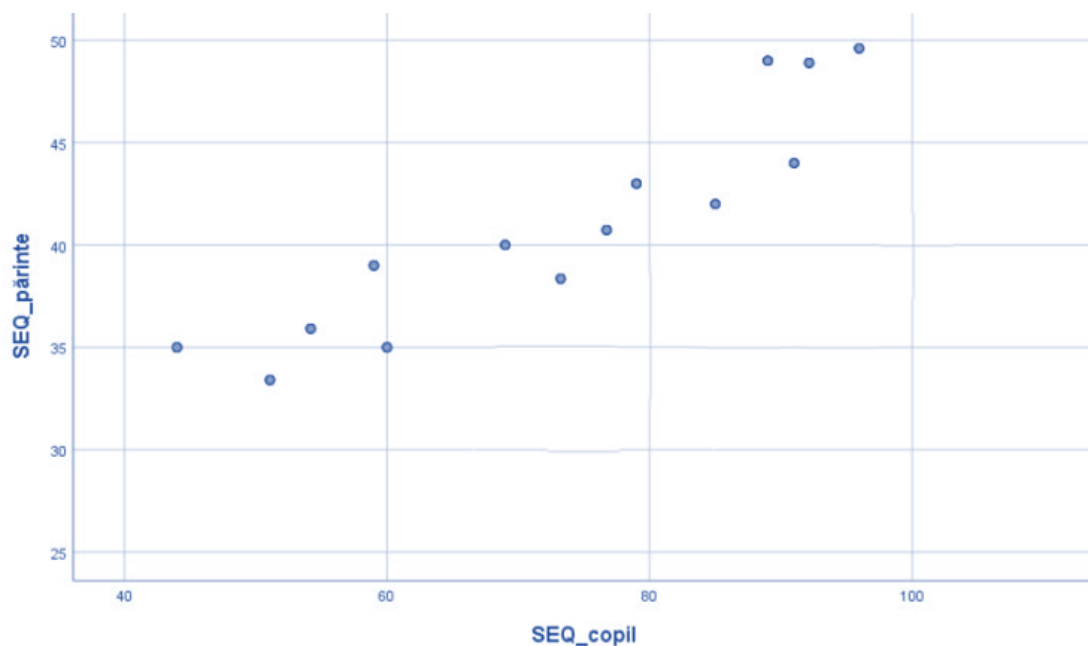
The scatterplot allows for a clear visual assessment of the correlation:

- **Positive Correlation:** If the points generally form an upward slope, this indicates that as the socio-emotional intelligence of mothers increases, so does that of their children.

This supports the hypothesis that higher SEI in mothers is associated with higher SEI in children.

- **Strength of Correlation:** The degree to which the points cluster around a straight line can indicate the strength of the correlation. A tighter cluster suggests a stronger correlation, while more scattered points suggest a weaker association.
- **Outliers:** Any points that deviate significantly from the general pattern may represent outliers - pairs where the socio-emotional intelligence levels of mother and child do not follow the overall trend.

Figure 1. Scatterplot graphic of the correlation between the socio-emotional level of intelligence of mothers and children



Source: from SPSS v.26 data processing

The following Table 3 presents the Pearson correlation analysis between the socio-emotional intelligence (SEQ) of fathers and their children.

Table 3. Correlation between fathers' socio-emotional intelligence and their children's socio-emotional development

Correlations			
		SEQ_father	SEQ_child
SEQ_parent	Pearson Correlation	1	.021
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.303
	N	166	166
SEQ_child	Pearson Correlation	.021	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.303	
	N	166	166

Source: from SPSS v.26 data processing

The results obtained indicate that the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between fathers' socio-emotional intelligence and their children's socio-emotional intelligence is  $r = 0.021$ . This value indicates a very weak positive correlation, meaning that the relationship between these

two variables is almost negligible. Essentially, the socio-emotional intelligence of fathers has little to no impact on the socio-emotional intelligence of their children, based on this data. The significance level (p-value) associated with this correlation is  $p = 0.303$ , which is much higher than the conventional threshold for statistical significance ( $p < 0.05$ ). Since the p-value exceeds 0.05, the result is not statistically significant. This suggests that the observed weak correlation is likely due to random variation and does not represent a meaningful association between the two variables.

## **Conclusions**

As shown by the statistical analysis of the data subjected to the present research, the first hypothesis of the research is refuted, so there is no significant association between the level of socio-emotional intelligence of parents and of their children.

This hypothesis started from the idea that the family is the primary group in which the individual begins to socialize and the models provided in the primary stage of life will have a major influence on the subsequent development and formation of the adult (Turculeț & Tulbure, 2014). The conclusion that there is no association between the level of social intelligence of parents and children is in agreement with previous research, including (Duncan, 1973) highlighting at the time of his practice and theorizing that 50 years of study did not reveal a relationship between the two variables.

However, there are positive associations between the level of education provided in the family, values transmitted by parents (Rani, Sumit, & Sangwan, 2018) and the level of socio-emotional intelligence, or negative associations between abuse and neglect in the family and this ability (Howe, 2017). It can be observed that although they are contextual-family variables, they do not involve the direct degree of development of the trait of socio-emotional intelligence in the case of parents and children, in the form of a genetic aspect, transmitted transgenerationally.

Katanani and Mas'oud (2017), on the other hand, are of the opinion that there are several variables involved in the parent-child relationship, so that a simple correlation of the level of social and emotional intelligence in their case is mediated and facilitated by several factors. One of the examples given is the age that influences the level of socio-emotional intelligence of the children rather than the level that the parent seems to have in this regard. The concept of age brings with it the idea of a developmental stage that entails different levels of ability in terms of emotion regulation and social skills (Das & Sahu, 2014). Also, parenting practices have been shown to predict the level of socio-emotional intelligence (Alegre, 2012), but also parental availability and control (Alegre and Benson, 2010). It is possible that these arguments are potential explanations also in the case of invalidation of the hypothesis at a general level, regarding the degree of socio-emotional functioning of parents and children, in this study.

On the other hand, our second hypothesis is confirmed, as we obtained a significant positive correlation between the socio-intelligence of the mothers and that of the children, but not a significant one in case of the fathers and children. In the case of fathers, although there are a number of opinions that highlight the major role that father figures play in children's well-being, shaping their personality and character through presence, interaction and play (Băran-Pescaru, 2006; Yogman et al., 2016; Adeleke, 2017; Shafer, 2021), it seems that the association between their level of socio-emotional functioning and that of the children is insignificant in the case of the present research. One of the explanations can be the fact that there are gaps within families, respectively in the assumption of parental roles, especially on

the part of father figures, since, culturally speaking, the male gender was less present and involved over time in growth and development children, although this appears to be changing at present (US Census Bureau, 2013).

In the case of the maternal figure, as previously mentioned, although no association between the social intelligence of parents and children was concretely identified in the elaborated study, nor by gender category (Duncan, 1973) considers that the maternal role is much greater in the formation of social and emotional intelligence skills, as mothers are present from the first days of their birth with their children and are much more involved in terms of time spent together or in their upbringing. Also, a potential explanation can be the existence of gender differences at the level of socio-emotional intelligence, as women recorded higher levels than men. Based on this conclusion and the cultural influence on the father figure as a way of involvement in the child's upbringing, it makes sense that a stronger bond is identified between mothers and children than between fathers and children or parents in the broad sense of the word. In the same direction (Tsujino and Oyama-Higa 2017, 206) are of the opinion that, in general, children are influenced more by mothers, since they spend the most time with them.

Contemporary society is in a process of continuous change and transformation, which is natural since a number of factors that cannot be controlled have a direct impact on people, communities and their lives. As future research directions, of impact would be the exploration of the phenomenon at the national level and possibly the comparison of specific areas of the country to investigate potential differences, as well as the identification of cultural aspects that can influence the differences in social and emotional intelligence.

Another form would be for additional research to explore the relationship between social and emotional intelligence on target groups, constituted as specific samples. Some examples would include people as part of vulnerable groups, ethnic minorities, young people who have come out of the child protection system.

Investigating a larger number of sociological and cultural variables may represent another aspect of interest that can be taken into account in future research directions. It is possible that variables such as traditional-conservative/liberal values or parenting, attachment styles represent mediators between the social-emotional intelligence of the children and that of their parents. Studying and developing a mediation model, observing the role of the variables and whether one of them is the mediator of the other two can be a later opening point in terms of statistical research and the conceptual scheme addressed.

#### Credit Authorship Contribution Statement

Ghiță Roxana-Cătălina contributed to the conceptualization, methodology, data collecting, formal analysis, investigation, validation, visualization, writing - original draft preparation, and writing - review and editing of the present research study. Ghiță, R.C. has read and agreed to the published version of the study and acknowledges that this final version was reviewed and approved.

This statement outlines the specific contributions of the author and the researcher of the present study, ensuring transparency and acknowledgment of her individual role in the research process.

#### Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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