

# Strengthening Social Emotional Learning in Overcoming The Mental Health Crisis of Students in the Digital Age: Perspective of Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Theory

Dina Kamilia

Master of Social Studies Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Jember, Jember, Indonesia

[dinacece22@gmail.com](mailto:dinacece22@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** *The development of digital technology has brought significant changes to the lives of students, particularly in communication patterns, social interactions, and the learning process. The digital era has given rise to various mental health issues such as academic stress, anxiety, low emotional control, cyberbullying, and a decline in the quality of direct social interactions. This study aims to analyze the strengthening of social emotional learning to address the mental health crisis of students in the digital era through the perspective of Daniel Goleman's emotional intelligence theory. The study used a literature study method by reviewing various scientific sources such as journals, books, articles, and relevant previous research. The results show that social emotional learning plays a crucial role in helping students develop self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These abilities are key factors in maintaining emotional stability and increasing students' mental resilience amidst the pressures of digital life. The implementation of social emotional learning through self-reflection activities, cooperative learning, role-playing, and the use of digital media such as Google Classroom, Canva, educational videos, and digital reflection journals can create more interactive, supportive, and inclusive learning. Thus, the integration of social emotional learning in education is an important strategy to support the psychological well-being of students in the digital era.*

**Keywords:** Social Emotional Learning, Digital Age Mental Health, Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The increasingly rapid development of digital technology has brought about significant changes in the lives of today's students, particularly in communication patterns, social interactions, and the learning process (Tamara et al., 2025). On the one hand, technological advances provide easy access to information and support a more flexible learning process, but on the other hand, they also give rise to various psychological issues that impact students' mental health. The phenomenon of increasing anxiety, academic stress, depression, low emotional regulation skills, and social media addiction are issues increasingly found among adolescents in today's digital era.

This condition is exacerbated by the high intensity of social media use, cyberbullying, virtual social pressure, and the declining quality of direct social interactions (Herman et al., 2025). The digital era has a significant impact on students' psychological well-being, particularly regarding excessive anxiety, sleep disturbances, and low self-esteem due to uncontrolled technology use. Therefore, issues related to students' mental health are a very urgent issue that requires immediate attention through a more humanistic and adaptive educational approach to current developments (Pertiwi et al., 2023)

One approach deemed relevant to addressing these issues is social emotional learning (SEL). Social learning is the process of developing an individual's ability to recognize emotions, manage themselves, build positive social relationships, demonstrate empathy, and make responsible

decisions. This approach aligns with Daniel Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence, which emphasizes that a person's success is influenced not only by intellectual intelligence but also by the ability to manage emotions and build social relationships.

From Goleman's perspective, emotional intelligence encompasses self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills, which are essential for students to cope with the pressures of digital life. The digital environment presents social pressures and a limitless flow of information. Therefore, emotional intelligence is a crucial foundation for building resilience, self-control, and psychological well-being in students. Previous studies have shown that the application of social emotional learning can increase empathy, collaboration skills, control aggressive behavior, and reduce emotional stress in students in the digital age (Media et al., 2025)

Previous research has shown that studies on student mental health in the digital age have focused more on the negative impacts of technology and social media use on students' psychological well-being. This highlights the importance of schools' role in maintaining students' mental health in the digital age. Meanwhile, studies on social-emotional learning generally emphasize the development of character, empathy, and student abilities. Digital-based social-emotional learning can be an effective tool to help students navigate social, emotional, and academic challenges, particularly in resource-constrained school environments (Angosta, 2024)

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze the

strengthening of social-emotional learning in addressing the mental health crisis of students in the digital era through the perspective of Daniel Goleman's emotional intelligence theory. This study seeks to explain how social-emotional learning can help students develop emotional management skills, empathy, self-awareness, and social skills as a form of protection against mental health disorders in the digital era. Thus, this study is expected to provide conceptual and practical contributions to the world of education in designing learning that is not only oriented towards academic aspects, but also towards the psychological well-being of students.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research employed a literature review method, examining various scientific sources such as journals, books, articles, and relevant previous research findings. Data were obtained through the collection, identification, and analysis of various literature related to the research topic. This method did not involve direct field data collection but instead relied on available secondary data. The analysis was conducted descriptively and analytically to identify relationships between concepts, strengthen scientific arguments, and generate a comprehensive understanding

This research method aims to collect data and information from various written sources to build a strong theoretical foundation and identify previous research and the research results are analyzed systematically to obtain scientific conclusions (Dr. Amir Hamzah, 2020)

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Emotional Intelligence Theory (Daniel Goleman)

The theory of emotional intelligence developed by Daniel Goleman suggests that a person's success is determined not only by their intellectual quotient (IQ), but also by their ability to understand, manage, and control their emotions. Goleman states that emotional intelligence (EQ) is an individual's ability to recognize their own feelings and those of others, motivate themselves, and build positive social relationships (Goleman, 1995). In the context of education, this theory plays an important role because students are not only required to excel academically, but also to be able to manage emotional stress, interact healthily, and adapt to social changes in the digital era (Sahlan, 2025)

According to Goleman, there are 5 main components of emotional intelligence (Daniel Goleman, 2000)

#### 1. Self-Awareness

An individual's ability to recognize emotions, understand the causes of these feelings, and recognize the impact of their emotions on behavior. Students with good self-awareness tend to better understand their psychological state and are therefore able to control their emotional responses when facing academic and social pressures. Previous research has shown that self-awareness plays a crucial role in shaping students' mental health and

abilities in the school environment (Cahyaningrum, 2025)

#### 2. Self-Regulation

The ability to manage emotions appropriately to prevent negative behavior. Individuals with self-control are able to handle anger, anxiety, or stress more wisely. In the digital age, this skill is crucial because students often face pressure from social media, cyberbullying, and technology addiction, which can impact their social and emotional well-being. Through self-control, students can make calmer decisions and reduce impulsive behavior (Hermiati et al., 2020)

#### 3. Self-Motivation

The ability to motivate oneself to achieve goals, remain optimistic, and persevere in the face of adversity. Goleman explains that individuals with high self-motivation tend to have a passion for learning, discipline, and the ability to bounce back from failure. In social-emotional learning, self-motivation is a crucial component in building mental resilience in students, ensuring they don't give up easily when facing academic and social challenges (Nugraha & Susilawati, 2022)

#### 4. Empathy

The ability to understand and feel the emotional states of others. Empathy can help students develop tolerance, social awareness, and the ability to appreciate differences. In the school environment, empathy is essential for creating harmonious social relationships and preventing conflict between students. Research shows that students with high empathy tend to be better able to cooperate and build positive communication with those around them.

#### 5. Social Skills

The ability to build relationships, collaborate, communicate, and resolve conflicts effectively. Social skills help students adapt to social environments and foster healthy interactions, both in person and through digital media. In the implementation of social-emotional learning, social skills are a crucial component in creating a collaborative, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for students' mental health (Nurvitari, 2024)

Overall, Daniel Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence provides an understanding that educational success focuses not only on cognitive abilities but also on students' social, emotional, and social skills. These five components of emotional intelligence are interconnected in shaping individuals who are able to manage emotions, build healthy social relationships, and face the challenges

of modern life more positively and adaptively. Therefore, Goleman's theory serves as an important foundation for the development of social, emotional learning in today's education world

### 3.2 Social Emotional Learning(SEL)

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is a process of helping individuals (children and adults) develop the basic skills for living well. In this context, individuals focus not only on themselves or on skills and competencies, but also on positive relationships with others and the environment(Daniel Goleman, 1998)

The social emotional learning process is the process of learning to recognize and manage emotions, solve problems, develop good social relationships, be able to empathize, make the right decisions, and be responsible(Daniel Goleman, 1995).

Social and emotional learning can be done collaboratively in the school community (Kenneth W. Merrell & Barbara A. Gueldner, 2010). Social emotional learning can be taught:

1. Routinely: situations or conditions are determined later. Usually conducted outside of academic hours.
2. Integrated into specific subjects: Social-emotional learning can also be integrated into specific subjects. Students can discuss specific cases, work in groups, role-play, or engage in other activities.
3. Culture: become a culture in the school environment, for example getting used to solving problems peacefully, respecting other people's opinions, and so on.

Research results show that students' mental health issues in the digital age are increasing due to the increased use of technology and social media in their daily lives. Observations indicate that students experience various emotional problems, such as anxiety, academic stress, mental weakness, difficulty controlling emotions, low self-confidence, and a tendency to withdraw from direct social interactions. These conditions are exacerbated by excessive social media use, digital-based academic pressure, and students' lack of ability to manage their emotions healthily

Previous research explains that the digital era has had a significant impact on students' maternal health, especially due to cyberbullying, virtual social pressure, and digital distractions that affect adolescents' psychological well-being (Nisrina et al., 2025)

Adolescence is a critical developmental period marked by various life changes, including challenges in relationships, growth, social comparison, and anxiety (Rahmawati et al., 2025)

Research findings indicate that students with strong social-emotional skills tend to be better able to cope with psychological stress in digital environments. The ability to recognize one's own emotions, manage them, build social relationships, and empathize are crucial factors in maintaining stable mental health. From the perspective of Daniel

Goleman's emotional intelligence theory, this demonstrates a close relationship between emotional intelligence and an individual's ability to cope with social and emotional stress.

Furthermore, research findings show that implementing social emotional learning (SEL) in schools can help students improve their emotional management and social skills. Teachers employ various learning methods, such as cooperative learning, reflective learning, and role-playing, to help students understand their own and others' emotional states. Self-reflection activities, group discussions, and social simulations provide space for students to express their emotions positively and build healthy interpersonal relationships. Social emotional learning has a positive impact on students' emotional regulation, prosocial behavior, and psychological well-being in digital learning environments(Cai et al., 2026)

Observations with teachers indicate that social-emotional learning approaches have become the most important component following the increased use of digital technology in the learning process. Teachers assessed that students often experience decreased learning focus, social media addiction, and difficulty building direct social communication. Therefore, schools have begun integrating character education and social-emotional learning into learning activities to help students develop self-control and social empathy. These findings align with research suggesting that social-emotional learning can improve students' adaptability, strengthen character education, and reduce aggressive behavior in the digital age (Sahlan, 2025)

In the learning process, the use of digital media such as mental health educational videos, Google Classroom, Canva, and digital reflection journals can support strengthening social emotional learning through the development of self-awareness (Hardiyanti et al., 2025). emotional management, social skills, and self-reflection. Students also demonstrate greater enthusiasm when learning is interactive and contextualized to their digital lives.

Previous research explains that the appropriate use of media and technology can be a facilitator for the development of students' social emotional competencies (Rahayu & Wulandari, 2025). This study found that social-emotional learning not only functions as a character education approach but also as a preventive strategy to address the mental health crisis of students in the digital era.

The role of teachers is crucial in building a learning environment that supports students' mental health. Teachers serve not only as transmitters of learning materials but also as emotional facilitators, helping students cope with psychological stress in the digital age. A humanistic approach to learning can create a safer, more supportive, and more inclusive learning environment, enabling students to feel more comfortable expressing their feelings. This aligns with the emphasis on the importance of teachers' psychological support

for students' emotional well-being in the digital transformation of education (Ilhamuddin et al., 2023)

The results and discussion of this study focus on the importance of strengthening social-emotional learning in addressing students' mental health in the digital era through the perspective of Daniel Goleman's emotional intelligence theory. plays a vital role in addressing the mental health crisis in students in the digital age. Integrating social and emotional learning into the school environment is an urgent need to help students build emotional resilience, social skills, and psychological well-being amidst increasingly complex technological developments.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Strengthening Social Emotional Learning (SEL) plays a crucial role in addressing the mental health crisis facing students in the digital age. Technological advancements and the increasingly rapid flow of information not only positively impact the learning process but also give rise to various psychological issues such as stress, anxiety, poor emotional control, social pressure, and even a decline in students' social interaction skills. In these circumstances, SEL (Self-Emotional Learning) emerges as an educational approach that can help students develop the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions in a healthy manner.

Based on the perspective of Daniel Goleman's emotional intelligence theory, individual success is not only determined by intellectual intelligence, but also by emotional abilities which include self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

By strengthening social-emotional learning, students can improve their emotional regulation skills, build more positive social relationships, and develop mental resilience in facing the challenges of digital life. Furthermore, implementing SEL in schools can create a safer, more supportive, and more inclusive learning environment, thereby sustainably supporting students' mental health.

Thus, integrating social-emotional learning into the education system is a necessity in the digital age. Teachers, schools, and parents also need to collaborate to create an educational environment that focuses not only on academic achievement but also on strengthening students' emotional and social aspects, thereby creating a mentally healthy, adaptive, and character-driven generation

#### 5. THE FINAL WORD

The author would like to express his gratitude to all parties who have contributed constructive suggestions and input so that they can help the preparation of this article to be realized with the desired and optimal results.

#### 6. REFERENCES

- [1] Angosta, J. (2024). *Enhancing Social and Emotional Competencies in Rural Middle School Students: A Cluster-Randomized Study on Character Playbook*. 45(3), 34–45.
- [2] Cahyaningrum, N. (2025). Perkembangan Gangguan Sosioemosional pada Anak dalam Perspektif Teori Kecerdasan Emosional Goleman: Studi Kasus. 9(c), 227–233.
- [3] Cai, L., Wu, D., Fan, H., & Guo, S. (2026). *BMC Psychology Article in Press Promoting social and emotional learning in K-12 students through digital-based interventions: a systematic review and meta-analysis IN Promoting Social and Emotional Learning in K-12 Students through Digital-Based Interventions: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis AR IN*
- [4] Daniel Goleman. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence*.
- [5] Daniel Goleman. (1998). *Working with Emotional Intelligence*.
- [6] Daniel Goleman. (2000). *Working with Emotional Intelligence*.
- [7] Dr. Amir Hamzah, M. A. (2020). No Title Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan (Library Research) Kajian Filosofis, Teoretis, Aplikasi, Proses, dan Hasil Penelitian (Edisi Revisi).
- [8] Goleman, P. D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*.
- [9] Hermiati, F. K., Cholifah, P. S., Luh, N., & Nuraini, S. (2020). *How emotional intelligence and self-regulated learning shape fi fth-grade students' critical thinking?* 8(2), 244–260
- [10] Ilhamuddin, M. F., Pratiwi, T. I., Wiyono, B. D., & Surabaya, U. N. (2023). *Edukasi Program Psychological Well-Being Siswa Untuk Guru Bk Smp Sidoarjo*. 3, 40–43.
- [11] Kenneth W. Merrell & Barbara A. Gueldner. (2010). *Social and Emotional Learning in the Classroom*.
- [12] Media, I., Selatan, S., Emosional, P. S., & Karakter, P. (2025). *Systematic Literatur Review: Pengaruh Pendekatan Pembelajaran Sosial Emosional Terhadap Pengembangan Karakter Siswa di Era Digital*. 6(1), 331–347.
- [13] Nisrina, G., Isyani, N., Meilani, P., & Dinata, K. I. (2025). *Cyberbullying in the Digital Era: A Systematic Review from a Technology Psychology Perspective*. 105–114.
- [14] Nugraha, A. E., & Susilawati, I. (2022). *Kecerdasan Emosional Menurut Goleman Dalam Perspektif Kurikulum 2013 Paud*. 1(2).
- [15] Nurvitarini, D. M. (2024). *Multimoda Dalam Meningkatkan Perkembangan Sosial-Emosional Peserta Didik*. 4(3), 265–271. <https://doi.org/10.17977/um064v4i32024p265-271>
- [16] Pertiwi, A. R. C. E., Sihotang, H., Studi, P., Administrasi, M., & Indonesia, U. K. (2023). *Upaya Sekolah Meningkatkan Kesehatan Mental Peserta Didik*

*Di Era Digital*. 21(2), 180–195.  
<https://doi.org/10.25170/psikoedukasi.v21i2.4946>

- [17] Rahayu, S., & Wulandari, A. (2025). *The Effect of Digital Technology Use on Emotion Regulation of Elementary School Students*. 6(3), 1647–1658
- [18] Rahmawati, P., Dwita, A. K., Puriani, R. A., & Putri, R. M. (2025). Jurnal Pendidikan Transformatif ( JPT ) Pengaruh Intensitas Penggunaan Media Sosial Terhadap Tingkat Kecemasan Pada Remaja Jurnal Pendidikan Transformatif ( JPT ). 04(02), 177–186.
- [19] Sahlan, M. (2025). Dampak Pembelajaran Sosial Emosional Terhadap Perkembangan Peserta Didik. 2(1), 120–126.
- [20] Tamara, G., Binti, S., Ikhwan, N., Pebriani, S., Nasution, Z. U., & Arbiani, M. (2025). *Komunikasi Pendidikan Di Era Digital : Sebuah Kajian Konseptual Tentang Tranformasi Interaksi Edukatif Educational Communication In The Digital Age : A Conceptual Study On The Transformation Of Educational*. 1(3), 1097–1106