

The Effects of Emotional Intelligence and Spiritual Intelligence on Student's Social Empathy at STIKOM Batam

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the influence of emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence on the social empathy of students at STIKOM Batam. The research employed a quantitative approach using a correlational survey design. Data were collected through questionnaires administered to 100 students selected using probability sampling techniques. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, multiple linear regression analysis, t-test, F-test, and coefficient of determination (R^2). The findings indicate that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on students' social empathy. Spiritual intelligence also has a positive and significant effect on students' social empathy. Simultaneously, emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence significantly influence students' social empathy. These findings suggest that strengthening emotional and spiritual intelligence can contribute to improving students' social empathy and support character development in higher education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education plays a strategic role in developing human resources who are not only academically competent but also possess strong social character. Universities function not only as institutions for the advancement of knowledge but also bear the responsibility of fostering students' values, attitudes, and social competencies so that they can contribute meaningfully to society. As young intellectuals, university students are expected to demonstrate critical thinking skills alongside social sensitivity in addressing various issues within their communities (Puluhulawa, 2013). Therefore, the success of higher education should not be measured solely by academic achievement but also by students' ability to build social relationships and demonstrate concern for others.

One of the essential social competencies that university students should possess is social empathy. Social empathy refers to an individual's ability to understand others' perspectives, experience their emotional conditions, and respond positively to the situations encountered by others (Urumsah et al., 2016). Empathy is a fundamental aspect of healthy social relationships because it enables individuals to understand the needs, feelings, and problems experienced by others. Individuals with high levels of social empathy tend to exhibit caring, tolerant, cooperative, and helping behaviors.

Conversely, low levels of social empathy may lead to individualistic behavior, apathy, and a lack of concern for social issues within the surrounding community. The rapid advancement of digital technology in the modern era has significantly transformed the patterns of social interaction among university students (Ionaşcu et al., 2025). Information technology provides greater convenience in communication and access to various sources of knowledge. However, if not balanced with adequate social competence, it may also reduce the quality of face-to-face social interactions. The increasing tendency toward individualism, declining student participation in social activities, and reduced sensitivity to community issues represent major challenges in fostering the social character of younger generations.

These conditions highlight the importance of strengthening individuals' internal capacities that support the development of students' social empathy (Ancelot & Fontaine, 2018; Rahmawaty et al., 2021). One psychological factor that is presumed to influence social empathy is emotional intelligence. According to Goleman (1995), emotional intelligence refers to an individual's ability to recognize personal emotions, regulate emotions, motivate oneself, understand the emotions of others, and establish effective social relationships (Amram, 2022). The ability to understand others' emotions (empathy) is one of the core components of emotional intelligence and is closely associated with interpersonal competence. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are generally better able to understand the psychological conditions of others, making them more likely to demonstrate positive social behaviors.

In addition to emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence is considered another important factor influencing students' social behavior. Zohar and Marshall (2000) define spiritual intelligence as an individual's capacity to create meaning in life, understand moral values, and use these values as the basis for decision-making and behavior. From the perspective of Islamic Education, spiritual intelligence is closely related to the development of moral character (akhlak), God-consciousness (taqwa), social responsibility, and concern for fellow human beings (Fidelis et al., 2024). Individuals with strong spiritual intelligence are not merely oriented toward personal interests but also possess an awareness of contributing positively to their social environment. Several previous studies have demonstrated the relationship between emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, and students' social behavior.

Research conducted by Sembiring, Milfayetty, and Siregar found that emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence are positively associated with university students' prosocial behavior. Their findings indicate that higher levels of emotional and spiritual intelligence increase individuals' tendencies to engage in helping behaviors and demonstrate greater social concern (Sembiring et al., 2020). Similarly, Sihombing, Armyanti, and Triharja reported a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and students' empathy levels (Wijaya et al., 2025). Their findings suggest that the ability to recognize and regulate emotions contributes substantially to understanding the emotional conditions of others.

Furthermore, Naufal and Nuraqmarina found that emotional intelligence has a positive relationship with university students' prosocial behavior. Individuals with better emotional regulation tend to exhibit greater self-control and are more likely to engage in helping behaviors within their social environment. Another study conducted by Suwardi, Ahman, Machmud, and

Iswanti revealed that both emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence are associated with students' academic development (Samul, 2020). Their findings emphasize that emotional and spiritual intelligence are essential aspects of holistic individual development, encompassing both academic and social dimensions.

Moreover, research by Nada, Befahandher, Nadia, Aini, and Hidayat demonstrated that emotional intelligence significantly influences the social adjustment of first year university students. Students with higher emotional intelligence exhibit better social adaptation and are more capable of establishing positive interpersonal relationships within the university environment (Andrei, 2023). Although previous studies have examined the relationships between emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, prosocial behavior, empathy, social adjustment, and academic achievement, research specifically investigating the influence of emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence on university students' social empathy remains relatively limited.

Most prior studies have focused on prosocial behavior or social adjustment as dependent variables, whereas social empathy as the ability to understand and respond to the social conditions of others has received comparatively little attention as an outcome variable examined simultaneously with these two predictor variables (Pinto et al., 2024). Furthermore, the context of students at STIKOM Batam presents unique characteristics because they study within a technology-oriented higher education institution where the intensity of digital technology use is relatively high (Aini et al., 2023). This condition makes it important to examine how internal factors, namely emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence, contribute to the development of students' social empathy. Therefore, this study aims to provide empirical evidence regarding the effects of emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence on the social empathy of students at STIKOM Batam.

2. METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational research design to examine the effects of emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence on students' social empathy at STIKOM Batam, Indonesia. The population comprised active undergraduate students, with 100 respondents selected using probability sampling. The study involved emotional intelligence (X_1) and spiritual intelligence (X_2) as independent variables and social empathy (Y) as the dependent variable (Anwar & Rana, 2024). Data were collected through a structured 36 item questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instrument was tested for validity and reliability, with all items declared valid and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients exceeding 0.70. Data collection was conducted with participants' voluntary consent while maintaining anonymity and confidentiality. The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics through descriptive statistics, validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests including Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality, multicollinearity, and Glejser heteroscedasticity tests, followed by multiple linear regression analysis (Zhou et al., 2024). Hypotheses were tested using partial (ttest) and simultaneous (F-test) significance tests, as well as the coefficient of determination (R^2), with statistical significance set at 0.05.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Developing Students Social Empathy through Emotional Intelligence

A total of 100 undergraduate students from STIKOM Batam participated in this study. The respondents consisted of both male and female students from various academic programs. Most respondents were between 18 and 24 years old, representing the typical age range of

undergraduate students and a developmental stage characterized by active social and emotional growth.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	42	42,0
Female	58	58,0
Total	100	100,0

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Table 1 shows that female students accounted for 58% of the respondents, while male students represented 42%. Although female respondents slightly outnumbered male respondents, the distribution indicates that both groups were adequately represented in the study (Costa & Faria, 2025). This composition provides sufficient variation for examining the relationships among emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, and social empathy.

Descriptive statistics were calculated to provide an overview of the distribution of the research variables before inferential statistical analyses were conducted.

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional intelligence	100	32	60	48,73	5,213
Spiritual intelligence	100	30	60	49,15	4,856
Social empathy	100	28	60	47,86	5,107

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables

As presented in Table 2, emotional intelligence obtained a mean score of 48.73 (SD = 5.213), while spiritual intelligence recorded the highest mean score of 49.15 (SD = 4.856). Social empathy had a mean score of 47.86 (SD = 5.107). The relatively high mean scores indicate that the respondents generally reported positive levels of emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, and social empathy (Issah, 2018). The standard deviations ranged from 4.856 to 5.213, indicating moderate variability in respondents' responses. This suggests that although individual differences existed, the responses were relatively homogeneous and did not exhibit substantial dispersion (Hajnci & Vučenović, 2020). Consequently, the descriptive statistics provide an initial indication that the data are sufficiently stable for further statistical analysis.

3.2. Spiritual Intelligence as a Foundation for Social Responsibility

Before testing the research hypotheses, the quality of the research instrument was evaluated through validity and reliability analyses to ensure that the questionnaire accurately measured the intended constructs. The validity test was performed by comparing the calculated correlation coefficient (r-value) of each questionnaire item with the critical r-table value of 0.197. The results showed that all questionnaire items had correlation coefficients greater than the critical value (Mayer et al., 2024). Therefore, every item included in the questionnaire was considered valid and suitable for measuring the intended constructs.

The validity results indicate that all questionnaire items were capable of representing the dimensions of emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, and social empathy. Consequently, the instrument met the validity requirements and could be used for subsequent analyses. Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha to evaluate the internal consistency of the measurement instrument. Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha to evaluate the internal consistency of the measurement instrument.

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Standard	Interpretation
Emotional intelligence	0,891	0,70	Reliable
Spiritual intelligence	0,873	0,70	Reliable
Social empathy	0,885	0,70	Reliable

Table 3. Reliability Test Results

As shown in Table 3, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranged from 0.873 to 0.891, all of which exceeded the recommended minimum threshold of 0.70. Emotional intelligence obtained the highest reliability coefficient ($\alpha = 0.891$), followed by social empathy ($\alpha = 0.885$) and spiritual intelligence ($\alpha = 0.873$). These results indicate that the questionnaire demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency. Therefore, the instrument was considered reliable and appropriate for collecting data on the three research variables.

Before conducting multiple linear regression analysis, the research data were examined to determine whether they satisfied the classical assumptions required for regression analysis (Martínez-Rodríguez & Ferreira, 2025). These tests included normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity analyses. The normality of the data was examined using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. The test results are presented in Table 4.

Description	Value
N	100
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0,200

Table 4. One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

Table 4 shows that the significance value obtained from the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was 0.200, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. This result indicates that the residuals were normally distributed. Therefore, the normality assumption required for multiple linear regression analysis was fulfilled. The multicollinearity test was conducted to examine whether a high correlation existed between the independent variables. The results are presented in Table 5.

Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Interpretation
Emosional intelligence	0,681	1,468	No multicollinearity
Spiritual intelligence	0,681	1,468	No multicollinearity

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test

As shown in Table 5, both independent variables produced tolerance values greater than 0.10 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values below 10. These findings indicate that multicollinearity was not present in the regression model. Consequently, emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence could be included simultaneously in the multiple regression analysis without violating the multicollinearity assumption. The heteroscedasticity assumption was examined using the Glejser test. The results are summarized in Table 6.

Variable	Sig.	Interpretation
Emosional intelligence	0,384	No heteroscedasticity
Spiritual intelligence	0,526	No heteroscedasticity

Table 6. Glejser Test Results

The significance values for emotional intelligence (0.384) and spiritual intelligence (0.526) were both greater than 0.05. These findings indicate that heteroscedasticity was not detected in the regression model. Therefore, the assumption of homoscedasticity was satisfied, indicating that the regression model was appropriate for further statistical analysis.

3.3. Integrating Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence to Strengthen Social Empathy

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effects of emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence on students' social empathy. The estimated regression equation is presented as follows: $Y = 8.215 + 0.356X_1 + 0.421X_2$

The regression equation indicates that both independent variables have positive regression coefficients. The positive coefficient of emotional intelligence ($B = 0.356$) indicates that increases in emotional intelligence are associated with increases in students' social empathy, assuming the other variable remains constant. Likewise, the positive coefficient of spiritual intelligence ($B = 0.421$) indicates that higher levels of spiritual intelligence are associated with higher levels of social empathy. The overall performance of the regression model is presented in Table 7.

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0,697	0,485	0,474	2,846

Table 7. Model Summary

As presented in Table 7, the multiple correlation coefficient (R) was 0.697, indicating a relatively strong positive relationship between the independent variables and students' social empathy. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.485, indicating that 48.5% of the variation in students' social empathy could be explained by emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence. The remaining 51.5% of the variance was attributable to other variables not included in the present model. The overall significance of the regression model was evaluated using the F-test, as presented in Table 8.

Model	F	Sig.
Regression	45,638	0,000

Table 8. ANOVA Results

Table 8 shows that the regression model produced an F-value of 45.638 with a significance level of 0.000. Since the significance value was below 0.05, the regression model was statistically significant, indicating that the independent variables jointly contributed to explaining variations in students' social empathy. The regression coefficients for each independent variable are presented in Table 9.

Variable	B	t	Sig.
Constant	8,215	2,486	0,015
Emotional intelligence	0,356	4,215	0,000
Spiritual intelligence	0,421	5,372	0,000

Table 9. Regressions Coefficients

Table 9 indicates that both emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence had positive regression coefficients and statistically significant probability values ($p < 0.05$). These findings demonstrate that each independent variable made a positive contribution to the regression model and was statistically associated with students' social empathy. Hypothesis testing was conducted using partial significance tests (t -tests) for the first and second hypotheses and a simultaneous significance test (F -test) for the third hypothesis. The first hypothesis proposed that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on students' social empathy. The analysis produced a t -value of 4.215 with a significance value of 0.000, which was below the significance level of 0.05.

Therefore, the first hypothesis (H_1) was accepted, indicating that emotional intelligence significantly affected students' social empathy. The second hypothesis proposed that spiritual intelligence has a positive and significant effect on students' social empathy. The analysis yielded a t -value of 5.372 with a significance value of 0.000. Since the significance value was lower than 0.05, the second hypothesis (H_2) was accepted. This result indicates that spiritual intelligence had a statistically significant positive effect on students' social empathy.

Hypothesis	t	Sig.	Decision
H1: Emotional intelligence → Social empathy	4,215	0,000	Accepted
H2: Spiritual intelligence → Social empathy	5,372	0,000	Accepted

Table 10. Partial Hypothesis Testing

The third hypothesis proposed that emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on students' social empathy. The simultaneous significance test produced an F -value of 45.638 with a significance value of 0.000. Since the significance value was below 0.05, the third hypothesis (H_3) was accepted.

F	Sig.	Decision
45,638	0,000	H_3 accepted

Table 11. Simultaneous Hypothesis Testing

The coefficient of determination further showed that the regression model explained 48.5% of the variance in students' social empathy.

R Square	Percentage
0,485	48,5%

Table 12. Coefficient of Determination

Overall, the statistical analyses indicate that emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence, both individually and simultaneously, were significantly associated with students' social empathy within the proposed regression model.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that emotional intelligence is an important determinant of students' social empathy. The positive relationship identified in this study indicates that students who are able to recognize, understand, regulate, and express their emotions appropriately are more capable

of understanding the emotional conditions and perspectives of others. Emotional competence therefore contributes to the development of interpersonal sensitivity, effective communication, and constructive social interaction. These findings are consistent with Goleman's (1995) theory, which positions empathy as one of the core dimensions of emotional intelligence.

According to Goleman, emotionally intelligent individuals possess not only self-awareness and self-regulation but also the capacity to recognize emotional cues expressed by other people. Such abilities enable individuals to build healthier interpersonal relationships and respond more appropriately in various social situations. Similarly, Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2004) argue that emotional intelligence involves perceiving, understanding, managing, and utilizing emotions to facilitate adaptive thinking and behavior (Bru-Luna et al., 2021). Consequently, individuals with higher emotional intelligence are expected to demonstrate greater empathy and social concern. The present findings are also supported by previous empirical studies.

Sihombing et al. (2021) found that emotional intelligence significantly improves students' empathy because emotionally intelligent individuals are better able to recognize and interpret other people's emotional experiences. Likewise, Naufal and Nuraqmarina (2022) reported that emotional intelligence positively influences prosocial behavior through improved emotional regulation and self-control. Similar conclusions were reported by Sembiring et al. (2020), who found that emotional intelligence contributes positively to helping behavior and social responsibility among university students. The consistency of these findings indicates that emotional intelligence remains one of the most influential psychological factors in developing positive social behavior within higher education.

In the context of STIKOM Batam, the importance of emotional intelligence becomes increasingly relevant because students study within an academic environment characterized by intensive technology utilization. Digital communication often reduces opportunities for direct interpersonal interaction, making emotional competencies increasingly important for maintaining meaningful social relationships. Therefore, universities should provide learning experiences that strengthen emotional awareness, collaborative skills, reflective learning, and interpersonal communication alongside academic competence.

Besides emotional intelligence, this study demonstrates that spiritual intelligence also contributes significantly to students' social empathy. This finding indicates that empathy is influenced not only by emotional competence but also by an individual's ability to understand meaning, internalize moral values, and apply ethical principles in everyday life. Students possessing higher spiritual intelligence tend to demonstrate greater compassion, social awareness, and responsibility toward others. These findings support the theory proposed by Zohar and Marshall (2000), who describe spiritual intelligence as the ability to construct meaning, evaluate life based on values, and make decisions guided by ethical principles.

Unlike emotional intelligence, which emphasizes emotional processes, spiritual intelligence provides a moral framework that directs individuals toward socially responsible behavior. Consequently, students with higher spiritual intelligence are more likely to demonstrate empathy because they perceive helping others as part of their personal values and life purpose. From the perspective of Islamic Education, these findings are also consistent with Nata (2012), who emphasizes that spiritual intelligence contributes to the development of *akhlaq*, *taqwa*, and social responsibility.

Islamic education encourages learners not only to strengthen their relationship with God but also to maintain harmonious relationships with fellow human beings. Therefore, empathy becomes a practical manifestation of internalized religious and moral values. The present findings are consistent with Sembiring et al. (2020), who reported positive relationships between spiritual intelligence and students' prosocial behavior. Likewise, Suwardi et al. (2022) concluded that

spiritual intelligence contributes to students' holistic development by strengthening both academic and social competencies.

These studies reinforce the argument that spiritual development should be integrated into higher education to produce graduates who possess both professional competence and strong moral character. The findings indicate that emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence jointly explain a substantial proportion of students' social empathy. This suggests that social empathy develops through the interaction of emotional competence and spiritual values rather than through a single psychological factor (Audrin & Audrin, 2023). Emotional intelligence enables students to recognize and understand emotional experiences, whereas spiritual intelligence provides ethical direction regarding how those emotional experiences should be translated into socially responsible actions. The coefficient of determination obtained in this study also indicates that more than half of the variation in students' social empathy remains unexplained.

This finding suggests that social empathy is a multidimensional construct influenced by numerous internal and external factors. Variables such as personality traits, family environment, peer interaction, organizational participation, religiosity, digital media usage, and cultural background may also contribute to the development of students' empathy. Future studies are therefore encouraged to incorporate these variables to obtain a more comprehensive explanation of social empathy. One important contribution of this study is its focus on social empathy as the dependent variable. Previous studies have generally concentrated on prosocial behavior, academic achievement, or social adjustment.

In contrast, this study specifically examines students' ability to understand and respond to broader social realities through the combined influence of emotional and spiritual intelligence. This perspective enriches the existing literature by demonstrating that empathy should be understood not merely as an emotional response but also as a value-driven social competence. The findings also provide practical implications for higher education institutions (D'Amico & Geraci, 2023). Universities should not limit student development to academic achievement alone but should design educational environments that simultaneously strengthen emotional competence, spiritual values, ethical awareness, and community engagement. Such an integrated educational approach is expected to produce graduates who are academically competent, emotionally mature, spiritually grounded, and socially responsible in addressing contemporary societal challenges.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined the effects of emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence on students' social empathy at STIKOM Batam. The findings demonstrate that both emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence have positive and significant effects on social empathy, individually and simultaneously, indicating that students with stronger emotional competencies and spiritual values tend to show greater sensitivity, understanding, and concern for others. Together, these variables explain a substantial proportion of the variation in students' social empathy, although other factors also contribute to its development. This study contributes to the literature by highlighting the complementary roles of emotional and spiritual competencies in strengthening social empathy within a technology oriented higher education context. The findings suggest that higher education institutions should integrate emotional and spiritual development into curricular and extracurricular activities through emotional awareness, reflective learning, ethical decision-making, collaboration, and community engagement. However, the study is limited by its single-institution setting, relatively small sample, and reliance on self-report questionnaires; therefore, future research should involve larger and more diverse samples, additional explanatory variables, and longitudinal

or mixed-methods approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing students' social empathy.

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