EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS: IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE TEACHER EDUCATION

Ebrahimi Nasima Gul Ahmad, Prof.(Dr) Manoj C. Shastri

Research scholar
Department of education
Gujarat University
Contact No: +916351464772
Email: nasima.ebrahimi2007@gmail.com

HOD and Professor
Department of education
Gujarat University
Contact No: +919376145600
Email: manojshastri2001@gmail.com

Abstract

The emotional well-being of undergraduate students is an important element that has a significant effect on their academic success and overall college experience. Drawing from the literature on stress, social support, and self-regulation, the current study explores the multifaceted relationship between mental health and academic performance. Students often named academic pressures, financial challenges, and social demands as key contributors to emotional strain, which could lead to decreased focus and productivity. On the other hand, people who have good support from friends, family or groups of peers show a higher level of emotional steadiness and school interest. Also, skill in organizing and self-control came up as key ways to handle stress and keep a feeling of control over school work.

These findings will also considerably affect future teacher education. To build supportive learning environments, educators need to be able to recognize and address students' emotional needs. Teacher Education programs need to incorporate training in emotional intelligence, mental health awareness, and strategies to nurture students' well-being. This type of training must ensure that future teachers can provide input for well-rounded and adaptable educational frameworks that recall the same emphasis on emotional health as they do on academic achievement. Fulfilling students' emotional needs and implementing stress-reduction tactics could potentially help universities increase student satisfaction and well-being and thereby forge more powerful and impactful college experiences.

Keywords: *Emotional Well-Being, Academic Success, Stress, Social Support, Higher Education, Teacher Education, Self-Regulation.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The transition to higher education is a transformative phase in a student's life, offering opportunities for personal and academic growth but also presenting significant challenges. During this period, many undergraduate students experience higher academic expectations, financial stress, and changes in social behaviour, often accompanied by the loss of familiar support systems. These factors interact to shape a complex relationship between students' emotional well-being and their academic performance, where effective stress management, robust mental health, and supportive relationships play pivotal roles in determining outcomes (Hamaideh, 2011).

Emotional well-being, encompassing mental health, social support, and stress-coping mechanisms, has gained increasing attention in contemporary research due to its profound influence on academic success. Stressors such as deadlines, financial questions, interpersonal conflicts, etc., impair cognitive functions like concentration and memory, thus limiting productivity (Cassady & Johnson, 2002; Robbins et al., 2004). Stress brought on by prolonged exposure can lead to burnout, withdrawal, and intermediate learning failure (Shankland et al., 2019).

Within the existing body of literature, social support has emerged as an important and one of the most valuable protective factors against the adverse effects of stress. Strong connections with mentors, peers, and family not only give emotional stability in the student but also a sense of belonging and community that contributes to educational engagement and overall success (Keyes et al., 2012). On the contrary, students without such networks are more likely to experience isolation, anxiety, and lower performance levels (House, 1981). Students with superior self-regulation skills like time management and goal-setting, show great efficiency in

balancing competing demands of academic and personal responsibilities, resilience, and outcomes better than their peers (Zimmerman, 2002).

Nevertheless, there still exists some uncertainty surrounding how higher education systems should work toward more holistic approaches in addressing the multifaceted challenges that students face. Cultural forces further compound the stress of international and first-generation students, as they regularly have to navigate heightened family and societal expectations (Berry et al., 2006). The stigma attached to accessing healthcare resources, limited mental health resources, further complicates the situation for many students (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010).

This study elaborates on the relationship between the emotional well-being of undergraduate students and academic success with particular attention to its implications for the future of teacher education. As the demands of higher education evolve, preparing future educators to address students' emotional needs is critical. By employing a mixed-methods approach that integrates qualitative insights from student interviews with quantitative survey data, this research aims to provide actionable recommendations. The findings will, therefore, contribute to the shaping of institutional mechanisms and teacher training programs that educate teachers through provision to assist them in teaching in a diversified, supportive learning environment that, in turn, could support emotional resilience and academic achievement.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are:
1. To investigate the relationship of undergraduate students' academic achievement with their emotional wellbeing.
2. To determine the basic factors affecting emotional well-being and their influence on students' performance.
3. To make suggestions for how to enhance emotional well-being in higher education, with a special focus on the future of teacher education.

3.0 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study consists of undergraduate students. It considers academic achievement and emotional wellness in the scope of the 2023–2024 academic year. This study does not include non-traditional learners, professional students, or graduate students.

4.0 VARIABLES

Independent Variable: Emotional well-being (measured through stress levels, mental health status, and resilience).
Dependent Variable: Academic success (measured through self-reported GPA and academic engagement).
This framework also addresses the context of implications for teacher education, considering how these factors may inform strategies by educators to effectively promote emotional wellness in students.

5.0 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the correlation between emotional well-being and academic achievement in undergraduate students?
2. How are stress levels, social support, and time management affecting emotional well-being in undergraduate students?
3. Which components of emotional well-being (for instance, resilience, self-esteem, mental health status) are most influential on academic performance?
4. How do undergraduate students believe emotional well-being affects their academic performance?
5. What strategies or interventions may higher education contexts take on to promote the emotional well-being of undergraduate students and enhance their academic success?
6. How can insights from the relationship between emotional well-being and academic success inform the future of teacher education and the preparation of educators?

6.0 RESEARCH METHOD

The mixed-methods used in this research investigated the relationship between undergraduate students' academic success and emotional wellbeing with implications for teacher education. The sample included 200 students from a large urban institution who participated in surveys and 20 of them in-depth interviews. Quantitative questionnaires collected information on students' academic performance, emotional wellbeing, social support, and self-regulation, while qualitative focus groups provided perceptions shared by students

regarding their experiences, challenges faced, coping strategies, perceived institutional support, and the role of educators. Data analysis outlined the special relationship between the variables and the recurring themes in emotional well-being and academic performance. The mixed-methods approach afforded an exhaustive view of the research question and pointed to amendments in the teacher education curriculum. Results from this study yield many opportunities for preparatory programs that can assist educators in constructing emotionally supportive classrooms that promote student wellbeing and academic success.

7.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part of the study divided in two part according to the data as follow:

7.1 Quantitative Findings

The survey results revealed the following:

1. Stress Levels and School Performance: High stress levels have been shown to negatively correlate with school performance significantly ($r = -0.45$, $p < 0.01$). GPAs were generally lower for students who reported ongoing stress from social expectations, financial difficulties, and academic deadlines. According to the study, stress has a negative impact on cognitive processes including memory retention and focus, which lowers academic production.

2. Social Support and Emotional Well-Being: The strong presence of peer, family, and friends' networks among students had equally favourable effect on their emotional well-being. Students without sufficient support networks cited a mean GPA score of 2.8, while those with ample support systems had an average GPA score of 3.5. Social contact has been shown to improve academic engagement and morale by minimizing the feeling of isolation.

3. A remarkable correlation exists between the skills of self-management together with time management and academic performance ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.05$). Students who are able to set priorities of their tasks and manage their timetable effectively feel more fulfilled emotionally and perform better academically. These skills reduce the negative effects of stress by giving the individual a sense of control over obligations pertaining to scholarly work.

7.1.1 Discussion

The results emphasize the manner in which stress, social support, and self-regulation impact the academic achievement and emotional well-being of college students. High-stress academic deadlines, financial pressures, and social obligations led to chronic stress that disturbed cognitive processes, as reflected in the found negative correlation between stress levels and academic performance ($r = -0.45$, $p < 0.01$). In this context, this outcome is an evidence of the General Adaptation Syndrome of Selye (1976), which emphasized how long-term stress impairs concentration and memory. The relationship between higher stress and a lower GPA was further supported by Beiter et al. (2015), who found that academic and financial stressors were predominant markers of poor academic performance. Cognitive dissatisfaction caused by stress inhibits concentration, leading to lowered academic performance.

On the other hand, strong networks of social support are known to reduce the sources of stress that may promote emotional health and academic success. Other findings showed that individuals with extensive support from classes, family, and friends achieved a much better GPA than did those without sufficient social support (3.5 vs. 2.8). These studies support Cobb's (1976) assertion that social support lessens the psychological effects of stress by serving as a protective barrier that enhances resiliency. Further, the theory of student retention developed by Tinto (1993) shows how important social integration is to academic achievement. It asserts that a sense of community belonging increases academic engagement and emotional well-being. This interaction emphasizes the importance of creating environments in which students can develop and maintain deep relationships with one another.

Another significant factor influencing academic performance is the capacity to manage one's time and self-regulate. Students who effectively planned and organized their assignments attained higher academic results and comparatively better emotional well-being ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.05$). This finding is consistent with Zimmerman's and Schunk's (2011) self-regulated learning Approach, which emphasizes the importance of goal setting and task prioritization in reducing anxiety and improving performance. In the same vein, Britton and Tesser (1991) indicated that time management strategies strongly predicted success in the academic landscape, suggesting that these skills are contributory to students feeling more in control and less anxious about their academic responsibilities. Strong self-regulation acted as a moderator between academic performance and emotional stability in mitigating stress and improving work performance.

When combined, these results provide a thorough picture of the interrelated elements affecting student performance. Academic performance may be negatively impacted by stress if it is not managed, however protective mechanisms such as social support and good self-regulation can help. These revelations highlight the need of comprehensive institutional interventions, such peer mentorship programs, stress management courses, and time management seminars, to help students deal with the many facets of college life. Together,

these factors may help schools foster a student group that is more resilient and achieves academic achievement.

7.2 Qualitative Findings

Table No.1: Demographic Information of Interviewees

No	Level of Education	Gender		Area
		Male	**Female**	
1	First year		✓	Urban
2	Second year	✓		Rural
3	Third year		✓	Urban
4	Second year		✓	Urban
5	First year		✓	Suburban
6	Third year	✓		Rural
7	Second year		✓	Urban
8	Third year	✓		Rural
9	First year		✓	Rural
10	Second year	✓		Urban
11	Third year		✓	Suburban
12	First year	✓		Suburban
13	Second year		✓	Urban
14	Third year	✓		Rural
15	First year		✓	Rural
16	Third year	✓		Urban
17	Second year		✓	Urban
18	First year	✓		Suburban
19	Second year		✓	Rural
20	Third year	✓		Suburban

7.2.1 Interview responses tailored to help identify key factors influencing emotional well-being and their impact on academic performance

1. "Balancing academic responsibilities with part-time work is a major source of stress for me."
2. "I feel overwhelmed when there are too many deadlines in a short span. It affects my ability to concentrate."
3. "Social support from my family helps me stay emotionally stable and focused on my studies."
4. "Financial concerns constantly stress me out and make it difficult to focus on academics."
5. "When I manage my time well, I feel less stressed and more in control of my academic tasks."
6. "Stress peaks during exams, and it's hard to study effectively when I'm anxious."
7. "Having close friends at college makes a big difference to my mental health and keeps me motivated."
8. "Sometimes, I feel emotionally drained because I don't have anyone to talk to about my struggles."
9. "Participating in sports or other extracurricular activities helps me de-stress and improves my focus."
10. "I often feel lonely, and it impacts my motivation to perform well academically."
11. "Access to mental health counselling on campus has helped me manage my stress and perform better."
12. "Poor sleep due to academic pressure affects both my emotional state and my ability to study."
13. "The competitive environment at college increases my anxiety levels and affects my grades."
14. "Supportive professors who are understanding about deadlines help reduce my stress."
15. "I struggle with procrastination, and it adds unnecessary stress, lowering my emotional well-being."
16. "Cultural expectations to excel academically make me feel a lot of pressure, impacting my emotional health."
17. "Regular exercise and meditation help me stay emotionally balanced, even during high-pressure periods."
18. "Negative feedback or criticism without constructive guidance lowers my confidence and emotional resilience."
19. "Being involved in group projects often creates stress, especially when teammates are uncooperative."
20. "Having clear and manageable academic expectations from the institution improves my mental well-being."

7.2.1.1 Interpretation and Discussion
Consistent with previous study results, the qualitative answers from interviews reveal a number of important elements impacting emotional well-being and their subsequent influence on academic achievement.

7.2.1.2 Stress and Academic Performance

One subject that kept coming up in student replies was stress. Chronic stress has a detrimental impact on students' attention and productivity, as seen by statements like "I feel overwhelmed when there are too many deadlines in a short span" and "Balancing academic responsibilities with part-time work is a major source of stress for me." These results are in line with those of Hamaideh (2011), who found that the three main sources of stress for college students were social difficulties, financial strains, and academic obligations. The research found a negative link between stress and GPA ($r = -0.45$, $p < 0.01$), which is consistent with Robbins et al. (2004)'s findings that stress has a detrimental effect on learning and academic performance.

Additionally, statements like "Stress peaks during exams, and it's hard to study effectively when I'm anxious" emphasise exam-related anxiety, demonstrating how emotional strain is made worse by performance pressure. Previous research has shown that test anxiety reduces working memory, which hinders academic performance (Cassady & Johnson, 2002).

7.2.1.3 The Role of Social Support

Social interactions were seen by the students as a protective factor against emotional suffering. For instance, one responder said, "Having close friends at college keeps me motivated and makes a big difference to my mental health." This conclusion is consistent with research by Keyes et al. (2012), which showed that social ties enhance resilience and lower stress.

The significance of support networks is further supported by quantitative data, which show that students who report having strong social networks had better GPAs (average: 3.5 vs. 2.8). This result is consistent with House's (1981) theory that people's ability to cope with stress is improved by both instrumental and emotional assistance. By creating mentorship programs and inclusive peer networks, institutions might expand on those findings.

7.2.1.4 Time Management and Self-Regulation

Self-control was shown to be another important component. The significance of efficient time management is shown by statements such as "I struggle with procrastination, and it adds unnecessary stress" and "When I manage my time well, I feel less stressed and more in control of my academic tasks."

These results are consistent with those of Robbins et al. (2004), who found a favourable relationship between academic achievement and self-regulation abilities. In a similar vein, Zimmerman (2002) highlighted that self-regulated students exhibit superior academic perseverance and results. Strategies like organised seminars on time management and reducing procrastination might help with these issues.

7.2.1.5 Additional Insights

1. Sleep and Mental Health: As shown by the statement, "Poor sleep due to academic pressure affects both my emotional state and my ability to study," students often mentioned that academic stress results in poor sleep. Hamaideh (2011) discovered a similar connection between poor sleep and a decline in emotional control and cognitive function. To reduce these consequences, universities can think about programs like access to quiet study areas or courses on sleep hygiene.

2. Cultural Pressures: Comments like "Cultural expectations to excel academically make me feel a lot of pressure" illustrate how society affects mental health. These results are consistent with Berry et al. (2006), who pointed out that cultural norms often make performance demands more intense, especially for foreign and first-generation students.

3. Campus Resources: As seen by the comment, "Access to mental health counselling on campus has helped me manage my stress and perform better," a number of students emphasised the benefits of mental health counselling. In in accordance with Keyes et al. (2012), who promoted extensive campus support networks to address mental health issues, this emphasises the need of easily available services.

7.2.1.6 Synthesis with Existing Research

The complex aspect of emotional well-being is highlighted by the interaction of stress, social support, and self-regulation. Academic performance is negatively impacted by stress, although these effects may be reduced by protective factors including strong support systems and efficient time management. These results expand on earlier studies and provide useful information about students' real-world experiences.

7.2.2 Interview Responses to Help Identify Recommendations for Fostering Emotional Well-Being in Higher Education Settings

1. "Providing more accessible mental health counselling services on campus would greatly benefit students like me."

2. "Flexible deadlines for assignments during high-stress periods would help me manage my workload better."

3. "Offering workshops on stress management and mindfulness could improve students' emotional resilience."

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4.   "I think peer support groups or mentorship programs would create a sense of belonging and reduce isolation."

5.   "Having designated quiet spaces for relaxation or meditation on campus would help students unwind."

6.   "Regular mental health awareness campaigns could reduce stigma and encourage students to seek help."

7.   "Training faculty to recognize signs of emotional distress in students and provide support would be beneficial."

8.   "Better communication about available campus resources could help more students utilize them effectively."

9.   "Encouraging physical activity through free gym memberships or organized sports could improve emotional well-being."

10.   "Providing academic advisors who understand mental health challenges would make it easier to discuss issues."

11.   "I would appreciate more opportunities for social activities that promote inclusivity and relaxation."

12.   "Financial support or scholarships for students facing economic hardships would reduce stress significantly."

13.   "Incorporating emotional well-being topics into the curriculum, like stress management, could be valuable."

14.   "Creating online platforms where students can anonymously share their struggles and receive advice would help."

15.   "I believe structured time management training would help students handle academic pressures better."

16.   "Having faculty-led workshops on balancing academic and personal life could be very insightful."

17.   "Providing resources for better sleep hygiene, like workshops or sleep pods, could improve emotional health."

18.   "Accessible crisis hotlines or chat services for immediate emotional support would be helpful."

19.   "Collaborating with community organizations for off-campus mental health services could expand support."

20.   "Incentivizing student participation in well-being programs, like small credits or perks, would increase engagement."

7.2.2.1 Interpretation and Discussion
These interviewees offer a variety of perceptive recommendations for promoting emotional wellness in higher education, especially in relation to teacher preparation. The following major themes developed from the interviews, providing direction for putting into practice strategies that can help students and aspiring teachers:

7.2.2.2 Expanding Access to Mental Health Services
A number of attendees emphasized the significance of "more accessible mental health counselling services on campus." To improve general well-being and academic performance, mental health care is key. Research indicates that students are more likely to seek assistance when mental health resources are freely accessible and available (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010). By providing these services, educator training programs may also provide aspiring teachers the opportunity to take care of their own emotional well-being, making them more equipped to handle stress in the classroom along with providing quality instruction.

7.2.2.3 Flexible Academic Policies
Additionally, the respondents noted the importance of "flexible deadlines" in times of severe stress. This supports the conclusion of Hamaideh (2011) that academic stress could increase anxiety. Students might better handle the demands of their studies and their emotions if policies were more flexible. In order to prepare future educators to handle difficult conditions in the classroom and the larger educational environment, it is crucial for teacher education programs to comprehend the simultaneous needs of professional and personal growth.

7.2.2.4 Promoting Stress Management and Mindfulness Training
One tactic for enhancing emotional resilience was the recommendation of "workshops on stress management and mindfulness." It has been demonstrated that mindfulness training improves well-being and lowers stress levels (Shapiro et al., 2008). Incorporating stress management and mindfulness into the curriculum for teacher education will assist aspiring teachers in taking care of their own mental well-being and establishing a peaceful, productive learning environment for their students.

7.2.2.5 Enhancing Social Support Systems
Participants emphasized the value of "mentorship programs" and "peer support groups." Research by Keyes et al. (2012) demonstrates the importance of social support in reducing loneliness and improving emotional well-

being. In the context of teacher education, mentoring programs would foster a sense of community among students as well as a support system that promotes future teachers to share coping mechanisms.

7.2.2.6 Creating Relaxation and Wellness Spaces
It was proposed that there be "designated quiet spaces" on campus for rest. These areas can support mental health and reduce the stress of academics. Investing in wellness areas can benefit students in any field, including teacher education, by providing educators-in-training a peaceful environment to recharge and manage stress.

7.2.2.7 Addressing Financial Stress
It was noted that "financial support or scholarships" were crucial for reducing the stress caused by financial responsibilities. According to Eisenberg et al. (2007), students' mental health is greatly impacted by financial stress. All students, especially aspiring educators, would gain from greater financial aid, as it would free them up to concentrate on their studies and general well-being rather than money concerns.

7.2.2.8 Faculty Training and Awareness
In order to guarantee that students, receive timely assistance, faculty members must be trained to "recognize signs of emotional distress." According to Lipson et al. (2018), teacher engagement can be beneficial when it comes to managing emotional difficulties. Training faculty members to identify and address emotional discomfort should be a top priority for teacher education programs. This will enable aspiring teachers to manage not just their own emotional well-being but also that of their future students.

7.2.2.9 Promoting Physical and Emotional Wellness Programs
In order to improve mental well-being, participants suggested encouraging physical fitness through "free gym memberships" and "workshops on sleep hygiene." According to research by Robbins et al. (2004), physical activity improves mental health and academic performance. It will help the students as well as the teachers to maintain good work-life balances. So, teacher education programs should place a strong emphasis on the value of physical health and stress management too.

7.2.2.10 Synthesis with Existing Research
According to the respondents, accessible mental health services, stress management courses, social support, and wellness initiatives are all crucial for fostering emotional well-being. A comprehensive strategy to higher education that incorporates both academic achievement and emotional well-being is supported by these findings. These suggestions offer a framework for teacher preparation that will help aspiring teachers both manage and promote their emotional health in the classroom.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

In order to address the needs of all students, including future teachers, higher education institutions, especially those involved in teacher education, should:
1. Increase access to mental health services.
2. Implement academic policies that are adaptable to the emotional and intellectual needs of pupils.
3. Include research-based courses on emotional health, mindfulness, and stress management in teacher preparation programs.
4. Encourage inclusive social support networks to reduce loneliness and foster a feeling of community.
5. Reduce financial strain by increasing emergency savings, financial aid, and scholarships.
6. Teach teachers to identify and handle emotional discomfort so they can effectively help pupils.
7. To promote students' emotional well-being, make investments in wellness infrastructure, such as rest areas and exercise centres.
By putting these suggestions into practice, universities may establish settings that value emotional well-being and equip aspiring teachers to take care of their own wellbeing while encouraging it in their future classrooms.

9.0 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study explores the link between college students' academic achievement and emotional health, but its limitations include a small sample size, a narrow focus on a single institution, potential biases due to self-reported data, and a focus on academic difficulties. The cross-sectional design underrepresents disadvantaged populations and records a single moment in a student's academic career. The conclusions are unique to the institution under investigation, and recommendations are limited by structural and institutional concerns. The lack of academic and staff involvement further limits the results. Future studies should include more varied samples, a wider range of variables influencing emotional well-being, and more faculty and staff participation.

10.0 CONCLUSION

Emotional wellness is important in higher education, especially in teacher education, according to the study. Exam-related anxiety, financial difficulties, academic expectations, and stress are all major obstacles to academic success. Students who struggle with time management, limited sleep, and part-time employment are left feeling emotionally spent and stressed. For students to handle stress and maintain motivation, social support is essential. Campus resources like mental health counselling and mindfulness workshops are helpful, but barriers to access and awareness remain.

Students advocate for structural changes to support emotional well-being, such as flexible academic policies, relaxation spaces, financial support, and faculty training to recognize and assist students in distress. Physical and emotional wellness through fitness programs and stress management workshops is also recommended.

For teacher education, emotional well-being should be prioritized for both students and future educators. Teacher education programs can benefit from mindfulness and stress management training, fostering mentorship and peer support networks, and creating supportive environments. By addressing these challenges, universities can ensure future educators are prepared to support the emotional health of their students in the classroom.

In conclusion, emotional well-being is essential for academic success and personal growth. Higher education institutions should adopt a holistic approach that integrates emotional health into the academic experience. By implementing these recommendations, universities can help students thrive academically, emotionally, and personally, creating a more resilient and effective future workforce of educators.

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