Emotional Competency, Academic Stress, and Psychological Well-being: An Analytical Study among Undergraduate Students of Ranchi District

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the relationship between emotional competency, academic stress, and psychological well-being among undergraduate students in Ranchi district. A total of 180 students aged between 17 and 21 years were selected using convenience sampling. The study aimed to examine the association between emotional competency and academic stress, emotional competency and psychological well-being, and to determine whether emotional competency can significantly predict both academic stress and psychological well-being. Standardized psychological tools were used for data collection, including the Emotional Competency Scale by Sharma and Bhardwaj (1995), the Academic Stress Scale from the Bisht Battery of Stress Scales (1987), and the Psychological Well-being Scale by Sisodia and Choudhary (2012). The collected data were analysed using SPSS-26, employing Pearson correlation and linear regression analysis. The results revealed a significant negative correlation between emotional competency and academic stress ($r = -0.51$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that higher emotional competency is associated with lower academic stress. A significant positive correlation was found between emotional competency and psychological well-being ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that individuals with higher emotional competency experience better psychological well-being. Regression analysis further demonstrated that emotional competency significantly predicts both academic stress ($\beta = -0.53$, $p < 0.05$) and psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.05$). The findings highlight the crucial role of emotional competency in managing academic stress and enhancing psychological well-being among undergraduate students. The study suggests that incorporating emotional intelligence development programs in educational settings may contribute to improved mental health outcomes.

Keywords: *Emotional Competency, Academic Stress, Psychological Well-being, Undergraduate Students, Emotional Intelligence.*

Undergraduate students frequently face a range of pressures, including social, academic, and personal ones, which can have a detrimental impact on their mental health, according to the chosen text. "The ability to recognize, understand, express, and manage one's own emotions and those of others" is the emotional competency idea that is presented. Academic stress and subjective Psychological Well-being are two critical psychological outcomes that are becoming recognized to be significantly impacted by this talent. Given the increasing prevalence of mental health issues among students, it is critical to comprehend the relationship between academic stress and well-being and emotional competencies. The creation of successful programs that enhance students' mental health can be guided by this knowledge. The text emphasizes that in an attempt to give information relevant to that area, the current study explicitly examines these connections among undergraduate students in the Ranchi District. In summary, it provides the rationale and context for examining how enhancing emotional competency could reduce academic stress and improve the overall wellness of college students.

RESEARCH CONCEPT

The ability to recognize, consider, express, and control one's own emotions as well as those of others is known as emotional competency. It comprises skills that help people manage relationships and deal with stress, such as emotional awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation.

A psychological condition known as academic stress is characterized by enduring discontent, desperation, and a diminished level of interest in routine duties. It frequently has an impact on mood, energy, sleep, focus, and general functioning. It might be a combination of physiological, mental, and social factors.

A person's overall perception of happiness, life satisfaction, and psychological functioning is all reflected in their level of Psychological Well-being. Positive emotions, harmonious relationships, a sense of purpose, and the ability to effectively manage life's situations are all included.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is important because it tackles the urgent issue of student mental health in India, particularly on a regional scale. It emphasizes how many students experience emotional and psychological difficulties while pursuing their academic goals, making student mental health a significant and expanding concern. The study focuses on examining the relationship between academic stress and wellbeing among undergraduate students and emotional competency, or the capacity to both manage and consider emotions. Considering these connections, the study seeks to provide useful insights that institutions, counsellors, and legislators can use to create efficient student support networks. Programs or treatments to enhance students' emotional intelligence may be part of these systems, which can lessen the signs of academic stress and enhance their general Psychological Well-being and sense of fulfilment in life. In essence, the book makes the case that developing students' emotional skills is essential for both their academic and personal success, in addition to being good for their mental health. The findings are more immediately applicable to comparable sociocultural contexts because of the regional emphasis on Ranchi, which adds significance for nearby educational institutions. In summary, by guiding how mental health support might be incorporated into educational policies and practices, the study promises to make both scholarly and practical contributions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Emotional competency has emerged as a crucial psychological construct influencing students' academic and mental health outcomes. It encompasses the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and express emotions effectively. Over the past few decades, researchers have examined its relationship with academic stress and psychological well-being.

Emotional Competency and Academic Stress

Several studies have highlighted a significant relationship between emotional competency and academic stress. According to Daniel Goleman (1995), individuals with higher emotional intelligence are better equipped to manage stress due to their enhanced emotional regulation skills.

Research conducted by Reuven Bar-On (2006) found that students with higher emotional competency levels demonstrated lower levels of stress, as they could effectively cope with academic demands and pressures. Similarly, studies by Salovey and Mayer (1990) suggest that emotional awareness and regulation play a key role in reducing stress responses.

Empirical findings consistently indicate a **negative correlation between emotional competency and academic stress**, where emotionally competent students exhibit better coping strategies, resilience, and adaptability in academic settings.

Emotional Competency and Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being refers to an individual's overall emotional health, life satisfaction, and functioning. Research in this domain strongly supports a positive association with emotional competency.

According to Carol Ryff (1989), well-being includes dimensions such as self-acceptance, personal growth, and emotional balance. Studies show that individuals with higher emotional competency tend to report greater life satisfaction and emotional stability.

Research by Martin Seligman (2011) in the field of positive psychology emphasizes that emotional skills contribute significantly to flourishing and happiness. Emotional competency helps individuals maintain positive relationships, manage negative emotions, and sustain mental health.

Thus, literature consistently supports a **positive correlation between emotional competency and psychological well-being**.

Predictive Role of Emotional Competency

Beyond correlation, emotional competency has also been studied as a predictor of both academic stress and psychological well-being.

Studies indicate that emotional competency significantly predicts students' ability to handle academic challenges and maintain mental health. Petrides and Furnham (2001) demonstrated that emotional intelligence predicts stress management and emotional adjustment.

Further, research suggests that emotional competency acts as a protective factor, reducing stress levels while enhancing well-being. Students with high emotional competency tend to use adaptive coping strategies, such as problem-solving and emotional regulation, which in turn influence both academic stress and psychological well-being outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

An investigation into Ranchi undergraduate students' emotional intelligence, academic stress, and general well-being.

Objectives

- To investigate the relation between academic stress and emotional competence.
- To investigate the relationship between well-being and emotional competence.
- Examining how emotional intelligence predicts academic stress and well-being.

Hypotheses

- There is a significantly negative correlation between emotional competency and Academic Stress.
- A significantly positive correlation is seen between emotional competency and psychological well-being.
- Academic stress and psychological well-being are strongly predicted by emotional competency.

Variables

- **Independent Variable:** Emotional competency
- **Dependent Variables:** Academic Stress, Psychological Well-being

Sample Selection:

The study explicitly indicates in the sample selection section that it selected 180 undergraduate students from Ranchi District between the ages of 17 and 21 using a Convenience Sampling technique. Because they are undergraduate students in a specific age range and geographic area, purposeful sampling was utilized. Although this restricts generalizability outside of this group, it guarantees that the sample directly fits the context of the study problem.

Measurements:

Emotional Competency Scale by Sharma & Bhardwaj (1995): This scale comprises thirty statements that assess emotional regulation and awareness. Higher scores are a sign of improved emotional intelligence.

Numerous studies measuring emotional intelligence have shown that the scale has greater validity and reliability (.85).

Bisht Battery of Stress Scales (Scale of Academic Stress -SAS) -This battery of stress scales was developed by Bisht (1987). It measures exclusive stress types having all four components of stress, i.e., frustration, conflict, pressure, and anxiety in them. This battery consists of thirteen scales which measure thirteen types of stresses, viz., Existential Stress, Achievement Stress, Academic Stress, Self-Concept Stress, Self-Actualization Stress, Physical Stress, Social Stress, Role Stress, Institutional Stress, Family Stress, Financial Stress, Vocational Stress, and Superstition Stress. Of these thirteen scales, the Scale of Academic Stress will be used. There are a total of 80 items in the Scale of Academic Stress. The battery of scales is in Hindi, and the age group on which it was standardized is 13+ to 17 years. The internal consistency reliability coefficient of SAS is .88.

Psychological Well-being Scale (PWBS) 2012: This Scale was developed by Sisodia and Choudhary, was used to measure Psychological Well-being among the participants. It contains 50 items measuring five dimensions (subscales) of Psychological Well-being, i.e., Life satisfaction, Efficiency, Sociability, Mental health, and Interpersonal relations. Each subscale has 10 items, each item with the five-point response category ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Thus, the scale provides scores on five dimensions/subscales, in addition to a score on the total psychological well-being. A high score indicates high psychological well-being. For the total Psychological Well-being score, the internal consistency reliability coefficient is reported to be .90, and the test-retest reliability is reported to be .87 for the normative sample. The test manual claims face and high content validity. This scale was administered to all age groups.

Statistical Treatment:

Data were analyzed using SPSS-26 statistics for Pearson correlation and linear regression.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Three hypotheses were used to analyze the study's findings. Pearson correlation and regression analysis were used to investigate these relationships and test the hypotheses.

Table 1: Pearson Correlation between Emotional Competency and Academic Stress

Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	p- value	Sample Size (N)	Interpretation
Emotional Competency & Academic Stress	-0.51	$p < 0.05$	***180***	Significant negative correlation. As emotional competency increases, Academic Stress decreases.

The Pearson correlation analysis for this hypothesis revealed a strong negative link between academic stress and emotional competency ($r = –0.51$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that academic stress appears to decrease as emotional competency rises. An inverse relationship is shown by a correlation coefficient that is negative. "Emotional competency is significantly negatively correlated with Academic Stress" is the first hypothesis, and it is accepted.

Higher emotional competency is associated with lower academic stress, according to research by Jisha G.R. (2021) which is consistent with the results of this study is emphasized the importance of emotional intelligence in controlling emotions and lowering academic stress.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation between Emotional Competency and Psychological Well-being

Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value	Sample Size (N)	Interpretation
Emotional Competency & Psychological Well-being	0.71	$p < 0.05$	180	Significant positive correlation. As emotional competency increases, well-being increases.

The second hypothesis's outcome was also examined using Pearson correlation, which revealed a strong positive relationship between psychological well-being and emotional competency ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.05$). A positive association indicates that psychological well-being rises in tandem with emotional competency. A moderate to strong positive link is shown by the correlation coefficient of 0.71. "Emotional competency is significantly positively correlated with psychological well-being" is the second hypothesis, and it is accepted. One of the most widely cited works is by Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer (1990), who introduced the concept of emotional intelligence. Their work suggests that the ability to understand and manage emotions contributes to better psychological adjustment and well-being.

Another key contribution comes from Daniel Goleman (1995), who emphasized that emotional competence (a practical application of emotional intelligence) is crucial for mental health, life satisfaction, and overall well-being.

Empirical support is also found in studies like K. V. Petrides and Adrian Furnham (2001), which showed that individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to report greater happiness and psychological well-being.

Similarly, Reuven Bar-On (2006) found that emotional and social competencies are strongly linked to psychological health, stress management, and life satisfaction.

Table 3: Regression Analysis for the Prediction of Academic Stress and Psychological Well-being by Emotional Competency

Outcome	R^2	F-value	Beta (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Academic Stress	0.8	11.25	-0.53	0.23	-2.68	$p < 0.05$
Psychological Well-being	0.8	13.57	0.62	0.21	3.18	$p < 0.05$

Regression analysis was used to assess the third hypothesis, which asked whether emotional competency may predict both psychological well-being and academic stress. Table 3's findings demonstrated that both outcomes are significantly predicted by emotional competency. In particular, academic stress ($\beta = -0.53$, $p < 0.05$) and well-being ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.05$) were found to be significantly predicted by emotional competency. Higher emotional competency is linked to reduced levels of academic stress, according to the negative beta value for academic stress ($\beta = -0.53$). On the other hand, the positive beta value for psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.62$)

indicates that psychological well-being is positively correlated with emotional competency.

"Emotional competency significantly predicts Academic Stress and Psychological Well-being" is the third hypothesis, and it is accepted.

One widely cited study by K. V. Petrides and colleagues found that higher emotional intelligence is strongly associated with better psychological well-being, including greater life satisfaction and lower levels of distress. Their work supports your finding that emotional competency positively predicts well-being.

Similarly, Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer, who originally developed the concept of emotional intelligence, demonstrated that individuals with higher emotional competence are better at managing emotions, which contributes to improved mental health and reduced stress.

CONCLUSION

- Studies indicate that lower levels of academic stress among undergraduate students are associated with higher emotional competency.
- Higher levels of well-being are correlated with greater emotional competency.
- Academic stress and psychological well-being were found to be significantly predicted by emotional competency.

Limitations:

- Only 180 Ranchi undergraduate students were included in the survey, which might not accurately reflect the larger student body.
- Self-report measures were used in the study, which could lead to response bias.

Suggestions:

- To increase generalizability, larger and more varied samples should be used in future research.
- To monitor changes over time and offer more profound insights, longitudinal designs could be used.
- To support students' mental health, educational institutions ought to think about incorporating emotional competency training into their curricula.

Implications:

- The results emphasize the significance of emotional competency in lowering academic stress and improving students' psychological well-being.
- According to the study, developing emotional intelligence may be a crucial strategy to enhance mental health in learning environments.
- The findings can be used by educators and policymakers to support student programs.

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