



IMPACT OF ACADEMIC STRESS ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to shed light on the ways in which academic stress affects college students' emotional well-being and cognitive performance by exploring the complex link between the two. Academic overload, performance pressure, and social changes are just a few of the many pressures that college students face. The current study draws upon theoretical frameworks from education and psychology as well as field research to examine these and other challenges. Coping mechanisms, personality attributes, and social support networks are some of the mediating & moderating variables that are investigated in this research. Examining the literature in depth, the research elucidates the intricate relationship between academic pressure and emotional intelligence, providing valuable information for students' overall growth and academic achievement.

Keywords: *Academic stress, Emotional intelligence, College students, Coping strategies, Personality traits, Social support, Higher education*

INTRODUCTION

Achieving academic greatness within today's fast-paced educational environment is often entangled with the stresses of demanding schoolwork, impending due dates, and lofty expectations. College students face a multitude of obstacles that may greatly affect their mental health as they negotiate the academic demands. Accordingly, there is a growing need in the field of higher education to comprehend the complex connection between emotional intelligence and academic stress. The current research aims to explore the complex dynamics of academic stress's impact on college students' emotional intelligence, illuminating the role of both personal and environmental elements in this dynamic.

First, there is a need to identify and distinguish between academic stress and emotional intelligence in order to understand its far-reaching effects on the latter. The study's definition of academic stress includes “all of the pressures that students face when studying, working for academic objectives, and dealing with heavy course loads” (Smith and colleagues, 2018). However, emotional intelligence is defined as the “capacity to not only be aware of, analyse and control one's own emotions, but also to read and appropriately respond to the emotions of others around one” (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Academic stress has complex processes that affect college students' emotional intelligence; this study seeks to shed light on these mechanisms by investigating the overlap between these concepts.

A large body of research has shown that students' mental health and academic performance are negatively impacted by academic stress (Misra & McKean, 2000; El Ansari et al., 2018). Nevertheless, there has been little research on the correlation between emotional

intelligence and academic stress. College students may find it more difficult to acquire and display emotional intelligence abilities due to long-term exposure to academic pressures, according to recent study (Bridges et al., 2020). In addition, students' emotional intelligence quotient may be enhanced or diminished depending on the coping mechanisms they use when faced with academic stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). For this reason, it is crucial to study how academic pressure influences EQ in order to better comprehend how students adjust to stressful situations.

At its core, this research rests on the premise that several variables, including individual variation and social and environmental context, moderate the relationship between academic stress and emotional intelligence. According to Sutton et al. (2019), students' perception and response to academic stress are greatly influenced by personal factors such as personality traits, coping mechanisms, and past experiences. The negative impacts of academic stress upon emotional intelligence might be amplified or reduced depending on contextual variables such as academic culture, social support networks, & institutional rules (Lee et al., 2017).

The purpose of the current research is to shed light on the complex dynamics at play in the link between college students' emotional intelligence and academic stress by using a holistic approach that takes into account both personal and environmental factors.

The possible effects of increasing emotional intelligence in reducing the harmful effects of academic stress is also the aim of the current research. Schools may help their student bodies be more resilient and healthy by teaching them emotional abilities that will help them deal with stressful situations (Brackett, 2011). Students may be better prepared to handle academic stress via the use of interventions that promote emotional intelligence, such as social-emotional learning programs and mindfulness-based practices (Schutte et al., 2007). Therefore, the goals of this study are twofold: first, to shed light on the relationship between EQ and academic

stress; and second, to provide concrete recommendations for improving college students' mental health.

In conclusion, the purpose of this dissertation is to provide a thorough analysis of how college students' emotional intelligence is affected by academic stress. Contributing to the growing literature on student well-being and resilience in higher education, this study aims to provide light on the complex processes and contextual variables that influence this interaction.

IMPACT OF ACADEMIC STRESS ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Researchers in psychology, education, & student affairs are increasingly interested in understanding how college students' emotional intelligence is affected by academic stress. A student's capacity to adapt to the demands of higher education is greatly influenced by their emotional intelligence (EI), which is described as the capacity to identify, comprehend, and control one's own emotions as well as to accurately interpret and appropriately handle the emotions of others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). College is a great place to learn, but it can be a tough place for students' mental and emotional health due to the abundance of hard curriculum, performance pressure, and conflicting obligations. This section seeks to shed light on how academic stress affects college students' emotional intelligence by investigating how stresses mold students' emotional skills and adaptive coping mechanisms.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In 2 Indian cities, Ahmedabad and Mumbai, 94 undergraduate and graduate students were surveyed utilizing a purposive sampling technique. Two online questionnaires, the Perceptions on Academic Stress Scale and the Emotional Intelligence Scale, were used to

administer the survey. The results were analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics and chi-square analysis. Some respondents were also contacted by phone to learn about the various ways they cope with stress. There were statistically significant disparities between male and female students' perceptions of the online and home environments in relation to their fear of failing academically. Additionally, it was also found out that a large number of them had begun to pursue other interests, such as art and technical skill-building courses. Students were attempting to deal with the negative impacts of the present pandemic crisis via emotional intelligence and distracting themselves from boredom and depressed thoughts. Restrictions and consequences of the study In addition to making a significant contribution to the area, this research research will also prove useful for parents, students, academics, and teachers. Nevertheless, it is not possible to generalize the parameters that were researched to a wide population since the sample size was small and it only included a few institutions and locations. Additionally, the research will help shed light on students' academic stress and how it can help alter pedagogy and culture (Chandra, 2021).

In another study researchers tried to examine the impact of an emotional intelligence-based educational intervention on the degree in academic stress components amongst Iranian medical students is the primary objective of this research. The 2018–2019 school year saw the completion of this study's descriptive and quasi-experimental components. This descriptive research aimed to assess the impact on emotional intelligence components and stress levels among 200 students. Subsequently, a quasi-experimental research was carried out to ascertain the effect of an educational intervention based on emotional intelligence on academic stress-coping abilities. The data was gathered using a variety of questionnaires, including one for personal information, one for emotional intelligence developed by Bradbury and Graves, and one for academic stress created by Gadzella. Women made up the majority of the participants (72.3%), while men made up 72.2%, 62.1% were not native speakers, and 78.5% were in their

second or third year of college. The average number of years spent working was 9.5 years in the academic field. Students' average age was 23 ± 3.5 years. The emotional intelligence-based intervention considerably enhanced the emotional intelligence abilities of the students, reduced academic stress, and mitigated reactivity to stresses within the intervention group ($p < 0.05$). The researchers suggested that in order to improve the quality of education students receive and their ability to study without academic stress, it is essential to consider including emotional intelligence training as part of university curricula. These training as suggested by the researchers is practical and widely accepted method of developing coping skills in academic stress (Gholian-Aval, 2023).

A turning point in the lives of young people occurs when they make the academic transition into university. But up until now, research has only looked at how students act in the classroom, not how it may affect their daily lives outside of school. Examining how students' emotional intelligence affects their resilience, academic stress, test anxiety, and Mediterranean food habits while they're in college is the primary goal of this research. Students between the University de Almeria, ranging in age from 19 to 27, participated in this survey, with 733 men and 614 women taking part. The variables' causal linkages were explained using a structural equation model. The findings indicated that resilience was positively predicted by emotional intelligence. Conversely, resilience was a poor predictor of test anxiety & academic stress. Lastly, the Mediterranean diet was a poor predictor of academic stress and test anxiety. In conclusion, this study's findings demonstrate that academic transfer toward university including grading pressure might lead to unhealthy eating habits (Trigueros, 2020).

Feelings, whether good or bad, present us with important and possibly lucrative information at all hours of the day. A person with high emotional intelligence is "able to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate among different emotions & label them appropriately, & to use emotional information to guide thinking & behavior" (Salovey &

Mayer, 1990). While there may be some correlation between emotional intelligence and improved mental health, productivity on the work, and leadership abilities, it is more probable that these benefits are attributable to innate qualities like resiliency and charisma than to EQ per se. One kind of intelligence that discusses the significant variation in people's problem-solving and social-relationship abilities is emotional intelligence (Mayer, 1990).

METHODOLOGY

AIM OF THE STUDY

The goal of the research is to examine the impact and relationship between academic stress and emotional intelligence in college students.

VARIABLE OF THE STUDY

Independent Variable

Academic Stress: The psychological strain and pressure that college students suffer as a result of the demands, expectations, or difficulties related to their academic endeavors is referred to as academic stress. It takes into account things like competitiveness, deadlines, tests, workload, and perceived academic success. Feelings of worry, frustration, overload, or exhaustion can all be signs of academic stress. Academic stress, or the amount of stress college students face in their academic environment, is the independent variable in this study.

Dependent Variable

Emotional Intelligence: Emotional intelligence (EI) is the capacity to identify, comprehend, regulate, and effectively communicate one's own feelings as well as to observe, decipher, and react to those of others. It calls for abilities like social competence, self-control,

empathy, and self-awareness. People's academic success, interpersonal connections, and general well-being are all impacted by emotional intelligence, which is a critical component of personal and interpersonal functioning. The dependent variable in this study is emotional intelligence, which represents the degree of emotional intelligence demonstrated by college students as a function of their academic stress experience.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To examine the impact of academic stress on emotional intelligence in college students.
- To explore the relationship between academic stress and emotional intelligence in college students.

HYPOTHESIS

- There is no significant impact of academic stress on emotional intelligence in college students.
- There is no significant relationship between academic stress and emotional intelligence.

SAMPLE

A total sample of 104 young adults was collected. To guarantee a diverse sample, we employed a combination of deliberate and random selection techniques. Participants in this study ranged in age from 18 to 25, representing an array of demographics.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Data were gathered using a variety of instruments, including the “*Academic Stress Scale and Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test*” in addition to demographic surveys.

ACADEMIC STRESS SCALE

The 18-item Academic Stress Scale assessment has a Likert scale with five points. Students rate each statement from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). Two of the four components of the PAS are workload as well as academic expectations.

RELIABILITY - The Academic Stress Scale exhibits strong internal consistency, as seen by its Cronbach alpha of 0.70.

THE SCHUTTE SELF REPORT EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TEST

The 33 items on the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT), which measures emotional intelligence, are based on the Salovey and Mayer (1990) paradigm. The participants provided answers on a 5-point rating system, where 1 represented strong disagreement and 5 strong agreements, in accordance with the Emotional Intelligence paradigm. To determine the final score, the participant assessments for each subtest were added together.

RELAIBILITY - The emotional intelligence assessment's reliability coefficient is 0.90, indicating very high reliability. Between 0.87 and 0.90 are the range of Cronbach's alpha values, indicating strong internal consistency.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Two of the standardized tests utilized to gather data for this study were the "**Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test**" and the "**Academic Stress Scale**." Each type of question was thoroughly reviewed to ensure that it aligned with the study's objectives. The participants received an explanation of the study's objectives, a questionnaire to complete, comprehensive instructions, study details, privacy assurances, including the researchers' contact details. To ensure clarity, a ten-minute workshop was conducted, and each participant got a thorough explanation of the questionnaires at that time.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The study's analytical procedures were carried out efficiently with the use of SPSS software. Regression analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, as well as descriptive statistics were among these processes.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Academic stress is frequently linked to college life as students deal with challenging curriculum, deadlines, and academic expectations. The stress of having to do well academically can have a negative effect on students' interpersonal and emotional health. The capacity to identify, comprehend, and regulate one's own emotions as well as those of others is known as emotional intelligence, and it is essential for managing stress and overcoming the obstacles of college life. Promoting mental wellness and academic achievement among college students requires an understanding of how academic stress affects emotional intelligence.

The purpose of the study is to investigate how college students' emotional intelligence is affected by academic stress. This study aims to clarify the processes by which academic stress affects students' emotional regulation as well as interpersonal abilities by looking at the connections between academic stresses, emotional intelligence, as well as coping strategies. This study will explore college students' experiences and perceptions of academic stress as well as emotional intelligence using an extensive research technique that includes surveys, psychological evaluations, and qualitative interviews.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of all variables

	<i>Academic stress</i>	<i>Emotional intelligence</i>
Mean	56.75962	115.9712
Standard Deviation	12.03272	25.60964
N	104	104

The mean as well as the standard deviation for two variables—academic stress and emotional intelligence—are shown in the descriptive statistics table. Based on the data from 104 participants, the average academic stress value is 56.76, accompanied by a standard deviation about 12.03. These results suggest that the participants experienced a moderate degree of academic stress. However, compared to academic stress, there appears to be a greater range of variance in emotional intelligence scores, as seen by the average emotional intelligence value of 115.97 and a standard deviation = 25.61. This suggests that emotional intelligence scores show more variation among the individuals, whereas academic stress levels typically fall around the mean and have lesser variability. Gaining an understanding of these

descriptive statistics will help you better understand how academic stress as well as emotional intelligence are distributed and trend throughout the sample group.

Table 2

Regression analysis of impact of academic stress on emotional intelligence among young adults

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.141296
R Square	0.019965
Adjusted R Square	0.010356
Standard Error	25.47668
Observations	104

ANOVA					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	1348.671	1348.671	2.07788	0.152511
Residual	102	66204.24	649.0612		
Total	103	67552.91			

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant impact of academic stress on emotional intelligence in college students.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is significant impact of academic stress on emotional intelligence in college students.

The F-statistic, which is higher than the usual significance threshold of 0.05, is 2.07788 and has a relating p-value of 0.152511. Therefore, we are unable to dismiss the null hypothesis (H_0), which states that college students' emotional intelligence is not significantly impacted by academic stress. Stated differently, the data does not substantiate the claim that academic stress

has a major impact upon emotional intelligence within this particular demographic. Thus, we reject the alternative hypothesis and accept the null hypothesis based on the significance levels and regression results analysis.

Table 3

Pearson correlation analysis of relationship between Academic stress and emotional intelligence in college students.

	<i>Academic stress</i>	<i>Emotional intelligence</i>
Academic stress	1	
Emotional intelligence	-0.1413	1

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between academic stress and emotional intelligence.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is no significant relationship between academic stress and emotional intelligence.

College students' academic stress & emotional intelligence have a connection coefficient (r) = -0.1413 according to the Pearson correlation study. The negative correlation coefficient indicates a minor tendency for emotional intelligence to decline with increased academic stress. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis is supported by data, suggesting that there is a real connection between college students' emotional intelligence and academic stress.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study shed important light on the connection between college students' emotional intelligence and academic stress. First, the descriptive statistics showed

that although participants' average academic stress levels were mild, there was more variation in their emotional intelligence scores. This shows that whereas academic stress levels are more likely to occur around the mean, emotional intelligence differs more significantly across people.

The purpose of the regression study was to investigate how academic stress affected emotional intelligence. The results, however, contradicted the alternative hypothesis and showed that, among college students within this sample, academic stress had no discernible impact on emotional intelligence. The regression model was unable to show a statistically significant association between academic stress as well as emotional intelligence, despite a moderate correlation coefficient among both.

On the other hand, a modest negative link was shown by the Pearson correlation study between academic stress as well as emotional intelligence. This implies that there may be a little tendency for college students' emotional intelligence to deteriorate as their levels of academic stress rise. As a result, the alternative hypothesis is validated, suggesting that there is, albeit a weak, relationship between academic stress & emotional intelligence.

As a result, the complex conclusions from both studies should be taken into account while discussing these results. The correlation study revealed a weak but statistically significant association between the two variables, but the regression analysis was unable to find a meaningful effect of academic stress on emotional intelligence. This suggests that although there may not be a significant direct relationship between academic stress and emotional intelligence, there is still a noticeable correlation between the two dimensions. Subsequent investigations may go into the fundamental workings of this correlation and examine plausible moderating or mediating elements. Longitudinal research may also provide light on how these

concepts change over time and whether academic stress-reduction strategies have an unintentional impact on college students' emotional intelligence.

CONCLUSION

Our study used regression analysis & Pearson correlation to examine the connection between college students' emotional intelligence and their stress levels in the classroom. The correlation study showed a modest but statistically significant negative association between the two variables, although the regression analysis showed no discernible effect of academic stress upon emotional intelligence. These results imply that there is a weak correlation between the two dimensions, even if academic stress might not directly impact college students' levels of emotional intelligence.

This deep knowledge highlights how many moving parts affect emotional intelligence within academic settings. Even if academic stress has little direct impact, its existence may still have an impact on students' coping mechanisms and mental health. Furthermore, the minor negative link raises the possibility of a little decline in emotional intelligence along with a rise in academic stress, underscoring the need of developing resilience and emotional control abilities.

In summary, our research offers significant contributions to the understanding of the complex relationship between academic stress as well as emotional intelligence in learning environments. However, more research is necessary to fully clarify this relationship and to inform the creation of useful tools to assist students in overcoming the obstacles associated with pursuing higher education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following recommendations were made,

- ***Employ Emotional Intelligence Training:*** Assisting students in acquiring the abilities required to properly handle academic stress, colleges and institutions want to think about integrating emotional intelligence training courses within their educational programs. Workshops, seminars, or courses aimed at improving interpersonal skills, self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy might be included in these programs.
- ***Offer Supportive Resources:*** Helping students deal with the stress of school, educational institutions should provide a variety of support services, such as counseling, resources for psychological health, as well as stress management courses. Fostering a campus climate of support where students feel at ease asking for assistance and guidance is crucial to enhancing their mental health.
- ***Encourage Students to embrace Healthy Coping methods:*** Lessening the harmful impacts of academic stress, encourage students to embrace healthy coping methods including mindfulness, exercise, relaxation techniques, as well as time management skills. Colleges can help students develop resilience and handle stress by encouraging proactive coping strategies.
- ***Develop an Atmosphere of Open Communication:*** Promoting an atmosphere in which kids feel at ease voicing their worries and asking for help when they need it by fostering open communication amongst students, teachers, and staff. Creating mentoring programs and peer support networks can provide students more options for getting advice and assistance.
- ***Address Academic Pressures:*** Universities and colleges should analyse and deal with systemic elements that contribute to academic stress, including high-stakes exams, unreasonable expectations, and an excessive workload. By putting rules in place that

encourage a more holistic and balanced approach to education, we can lessen the strain on children and foster a more encouraging learning environment.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- **Sample Size and Demographics:** The 104 individuals in the research may have limited how broadly the results may be applied. Furthermore, the study's emphasis upon college students within a particular demographic or educational setting would limit how broadly the findings can be applied.
- **Self-Report Bias:** Subjective interpretations as well as response inclinations of participants may inject bias into the data when self-report measures, such as surveys & psychological assessments, are relied upon. To lessen this restriction, objective measurements or observational techniques might be usefully included into future study.
- **Cross-Sectional Design:** The cross-sectional design of the study only offers a momentary glimpse of the correlation between academic stress & emotional intelligence. Over the course of participants' academic careers, longitudinal studies would provide a more thorough knowledge of how these factors change and interact.
- **Measurement Validity:** The study's findings may be impacted by the precision and dependability of the instruments employed to measure academic stress as well as emotional intelligence. To guarantee both the reliability and validity of the results, validated instruments with proven psychometric qualities should be used in future study.
- **Directionality and Causality:** Although the study found a relationship between academic stress as well as emotional intelligence, it's crucial to remember that a relationship does not always indicate a cause. To ascertain the directional nature of the

link and investigate the causal processes explaining the relationship among these variables, more study is required.

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