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A CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEY ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FACTORS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Most studies examining psychological well-being predominantly concentrate on academic contexts, emphasizing advancements in learning, concentration, and academic performance. Nonetheless, the influence of psychological well-being on stress and performance during the transition to college—an experience often fraught with challenges for both students and their families—has not been sufficiently investigated. Students frequently encounter pressures from parents, peers, and faculty, which can lead to mental disturbances such as anxiety and depression.

OBJECTIVES: The primary objective of this study was to evaluate psychological well-being and emotional intelligence among college students.

METHODS: The study recruited 237 students from XXX. Data collection was conducted using the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale and the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS).

RESULTS: The analysis yielded a P value of 0.005, indicating a statistically significant relationship between psychological well-being and emotional intelligence. Notably, Female students demonstrated higher levels of psychological well-being, whereas male students exhibited greater emotional stability.

CONCLUSION: This study underscores a correlation between various facets of psychological well-being and elevated emotional intelligence. Gender differences were identified, revealing that females displayed superior psychological well-being, while males showed enhanced emotional stability. In summary, a significant relationship between psychological well-being and emotional intelligence was affirmed.

Keywords: Psychological well-being, Emotional Intelligence, College, Students

Introduction

College students are a vital investment in a nation's future, and their mental health plays a key role in both personal and societal development (WHO, 2022). Today's students face complex challenges—academic pressure, social transitions, family changes, and exposure to new ideas—all contributing to increased stress. Studies show that 2% to 50% of students face psychological issues, impacting their academic and personal lives.

In India, strong family ties often influence students' social engagement. However, adjusting to college life, building new social connections, and managing mental health remains difficult for many.

Psychological Well-being (PWB) is a positive state of mental, emotional, and social health. It includes emotional balance, resilience, life satisfaction, autonomy, and purpose.

Ryff (1989) outlined six key dimensions:

1. Environmental mastery
2. Personal growth
3. Purpose in life
4. Autonomy
5. Self-acceptance
6. Positive relationships

PWB is linked to better coping strategies, resilience, and decision-making. It includes traits like stress tolerance, self-actualization, and interpersonal skills. While most components of PWB are widely accepted, aspects like flexibility and social responsibility are debated.

Stress—a response to internal or external challenges—is common in students. Effective stress management training is essential to help them cope.

Emotional Intelligence (EI), first introduced by Payne (1985), is the ability to understand and manage emotions. Developing EI can reduce emotional suppression and improve psychological well-being.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) acts as a protective factor against stress and is positively linked to life satisfaction and psychological well-being. Students with high EI tend to experience reduced anxiety and depression, better emotional regulation, and improved social and mental health. While emotional attention is associated with overall psychological well-being, it may inversely relate to autonomy and increase vulnerability to stress. In contrast, emotional clarity and mood repair contribute to greater vitality, mental health, and functioning.

EI enhances students' self-acceptance, autonomy, and relationships, helping them navigate academic and social challenges. Unlike IQ, EI is often neglected in education despite its critical role in mental health and academic success.

Several studies support these findings:

- Aldbyani (2025): Mindfulness training improved emotion regulation and reduced stress among Egyptian students.
- Newhart (2023) emphasized the role of social factors and recommended boosting social competence.
- Durai Raj & Sathiyan Raj (2024): Advocated AI-based systems to improve student well-being through personalized learning.
- Falola (2025): Found that EI significantly affects academic engagement, especially with digital learning support.
- Akbar (2025): Showed mixed effects of WhatsApp use—both positive (communication) and negative (misuse).
- Alam (2022) and Ravi Kant (2021): Reported gender and institutional differences in EI, with females generally showing higher scores.

Objectives of the study:

1. To study the psychological well-being of college students.
2. To study the emotional intelligence among college students.
3. To find out the relation between emotional intelligence & psychological well-being among college students.

Methods:

Samples: In this cross-sectional study, a total of 240 students were assessed for eligibility, and 237 students were confirmed from XXX. The inclusion criteria specified that participants should be between the ages of 18 and 30 and enrolled in undergraduate or postgraduate courses. The sample consisted of 100 male and 137 female participants. Students from diploma and certificate courses were excluded from the study.

Tools used:

The Psychological Well-Being Scales, developed by psychologist Carol D. Ryff, are a widely recognized tool designed to assess the psychological well-being of adolescents. This comprehensive scale features 42 items that evaluate six key dimensions of well-being and happiness: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Respondents use a 7-point rating system to express the extent of their agreement or disagreement with each of the 42 statements, where a score of 1 indicates strong agreement and a score of 7 indicates strong disagreement. This scale provides valuable insights into the various factors contributing to an individual's overall psychological well-being.

The Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) was developed by Wong and Law in 2002 to provide a brief measure of emotional intelligence (EI) suitable for research purposes. The scale consists of 16 items that assess emotional intelligence across four domains: Self-emotions Appraisal, Regulation of Emotions, Use of Emotion, and Others' Emotion Appraisal. Respondents rate their agreement with each of the 16 statements on a 7-point scale, where a score of 1 indicates Strongly Disagree and a score of 7 indicates Strongly Agree.

Procedure:

Effective communication was conducted with students to inform them about the test being administered, and verbal consent was obtained. Students agreed that their information would be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. All questions and concerns regarding the tests were addressed before data collection. The objectives of the study and instructions for the tools were provided before the questionnaires were distributed. The collected data were analyzed and compared to meet the study's objectives, and appropriate statistical methods were employed to test the research hypothesis.

Data Analysis:

This study employed correlation and regression analysis to achieve its objectives. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized for data analysis. The statistical tools employed include the Pearson’s Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, t-tests, and ANOVA. The Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient, which ranges from -1 to +1, was applied to determine the correlation coefficients between psychological well-being and emotional intelligence among college students. Although this is primarily a correlational study, the inclusion of ANOVA is deemed necessary to examine the influence of variables such as age, number of children, number of family members, and employment status on parenting attitudes, parental stress, and anxiety within the sample, as these factors are considered significant.

Statistical analysis reveals a p-value of 0.005 across all variables, indicating a significant relationship between psychological well-being and emotional intelligence among college students. Furthermore, the study elucidates gender differences in both psychological well-being and emotional intelligence, with female students exhibiting higher psychological well-being than their male counterparts. Conversely, the data also suggest that male students display a higher level of emotional stability in comparison to female students.

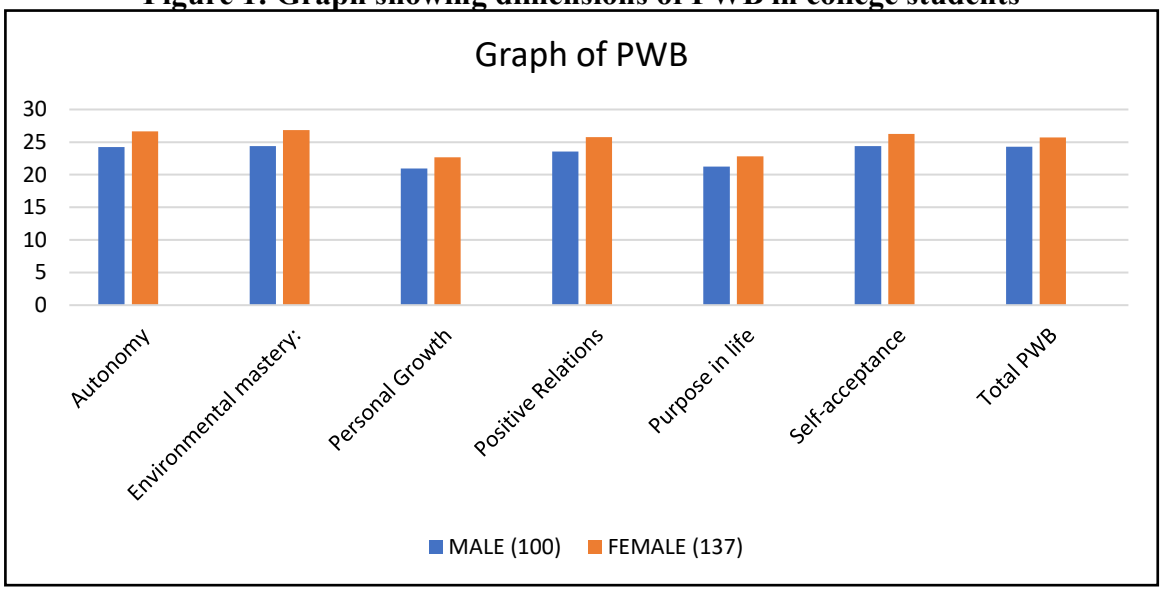
Results:

The p-value for all variables was established at 0.005, indicating a significant relationship between psychological well-being and emotional intelligence among college students. Furthermore, it reveals a gender-based difference, suggesting that females exhibit higher levels of psychological well-being compared to males. Additionally, the data indicate a higher degree of emotional stability among male students relative to their female counterparts. The table below presents the data for all variables of the study:

VARIABLES	GENDER	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	T	DF	STD ERROR DIFF.	TWO-TAILED (P VALUE)
Autonomy	Male	100	24.23	2.647106291	9.3635	235	0.261	0.01
	Female	137	26.671429	1.299932799				
Environmental mastery	Male	100	24.37	2.250274955	10.9576	235	0.224	0.01
	Female	137	26.821429	1.145952258				
Personal growth	Male	100	20.97	2.032339549	7.2682	235	0.231	0.01
	Female	137	22.65	1.52638662				
Positive relation	Male	100	23.56	2.720368365	8.1055	235	0.273	0.02
	Female	137	25.771429	1.431117977				
Purpose in life	Male	100	21.27	1.973844119	7.7304	235	0.203	0.02
	Female	137	22.842857	1.13967955				
Self-acceptance	Male	100	24.37	2.381133759	7.2443	235	0.258	0.01
	Female	137	26.235714	1.580504947				
Pwb	Male	100	24.29	3.571195086	2.8394	235	0.497	0.04
	Female	137	25.7	3.917678067				
Total Others-Emotion Appraisal	Male	100	24.1485	3.138728	5.7595	235	0.459	0.01
	Female	137	21.507	3.7201				
Total Use of Emotion	Male	100	24.8019	2.935605	3.8459	235	0.478	0.02
	Female	137	22.9632	4.0692				
Total Regulation of Emotions	Male	100	24.4653	3.006307	3.5408	235	0.468	0.05
	Female	137	22.8088	3.9093				
Total Self-emotions appraisal	Male	100	24.2376	3.1481	3.6986	235	0.466	0.03
	Female	137	22.514	3.805				
Total Emotional Intelligence	Male	100	97.6534	10.86016	5.0016	235	1.571	0.01
	Female	137	89.794	12.68				

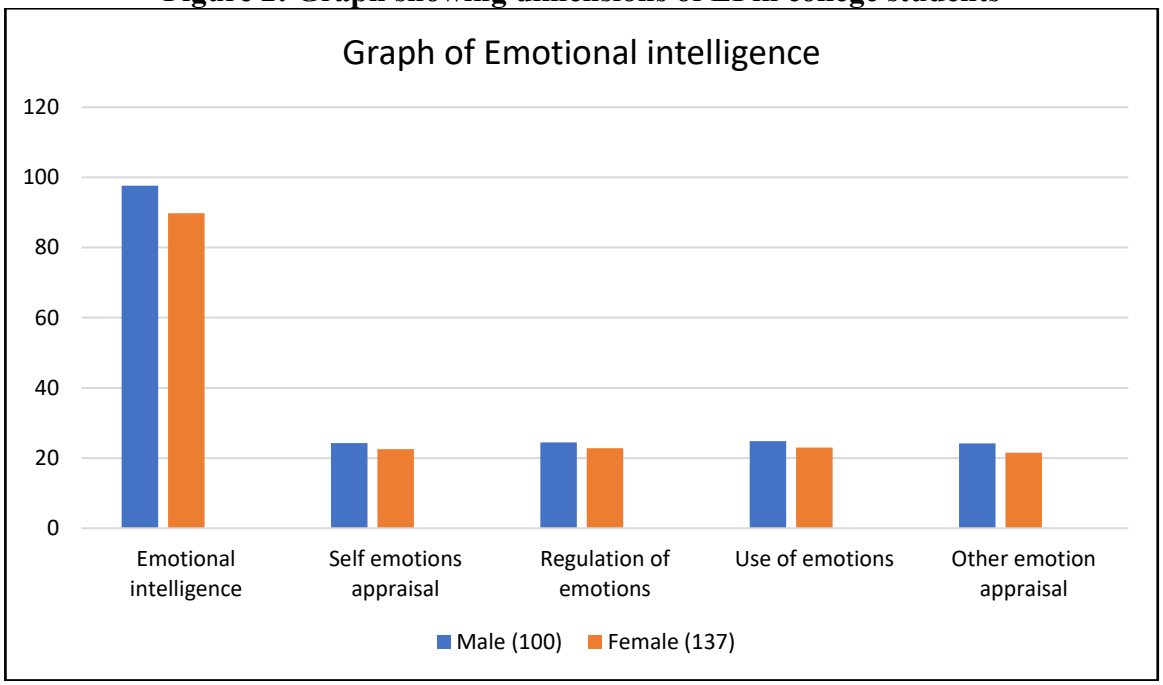
Note: Table 1 shows the Mean and SD of all the variables for Male & Female

Figure 1: Graph showing dimensions of PWB in college students



Note: No. of Male Students: 100, No. Of Female Students: 137, Total No. of Students: 237

Figure 2: Graph showing dimensions of EI in college students



Note: No. of Male Students: 100, No. Of Female Students: 137, Total No. of Students: 237

Conclusion:

The objective of this study was to evaluate the correlation between psychological well-being and emotional intelligence among college students, a goal that was successfully achieved. The findings indicated that all psychological well-being variables—namely autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life, and self-acceptance—exhibited a correlation with college students who had recently transitioned from secondary education. This suggests that higher scores in psychological well-being are associated with elevated emotional intelligence, along with enhanced emotional stability, confidence, and concentration among students.

As outlined in the introduction, the transition from secondary school to college necessitates significant adjustment and presents considerable challenges for students. This period can be particularly confusing, as students must navigate changes in their social interactions, adapt to

increased academic expectations, and manage the pressures associated with a new educational environment. Students often carry with them the mindset and behavioral patterns established during their school years. Consequently, they may experience anxiety regarding their new college environment and the academic pressures that accompany it. In contrast to their previous schooling experience, where academic burdens were comparatively lighter, students now face the reality of embarking on their careers, thereby intensifying their stress levels related to both academic performance and personal development.

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Conflicts of interest
There are no conflicts of interest.

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