

Chapter 4

Academic Stress Among First-Year Undergraduate College Students: Role of Emotional Intelligence in Coping With Academic Stress

Kavita Gupta

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, India

B. S. Parimal

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, India

Nishtha Narang

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, India

ABSTRACT

The chapter focuses on understanding the concept of emotional intelligence, encompassing perception of emotion, understanding of emotion, emotion management; stress; stress-inducing factors; academic performance; and performance-influencing elements. The chapter consists of related review of literature to highlight the importance of level of emotional intelligence in coping with academic stress during the transition period from school to first-year college life. It could be concluded that understanding the idea of emotional intelligence and ways to deal with academic stress are crucial because both have a significant impact on a student success, growth, and development.

INTRODUCTION

A person's time at college is a very important time in their life. These days, everyone's life is marked by stress. Technology, an increasingly competitive environment, and fast-paced lifestyles have caused unneeded stress for people in many walks of life. When it comes to stress, students are also an espe-

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cially sensitive group of people. It has been observed that the biggest source of stress for students is their academic workload, where they always feel as though there is too much material to learn and that they have trouble comprehending what they are reading. They can't successfully manage their time or finish their responsibilities on time. They worry about not having enough time to review what they have learned and studied, which keeps them preoccupied with grades or reaching milestones as well as the ongoing worry that they won't meet their goals. Maintaining relationships with professors and other students might be challenging for certain students. Additionally, first-year students balance work, study, and personal life. They have to provide for themselves financially while also worrying about the future. They are required to acquire and display abilities like critical analysis, inductive and deductive thinking, and logical reasoning as they move from high school to college so that they can get ready for competition. Stress is primarily caused by students' need to improve their academic performance because pupils can completely express their talents and capacities in line with educational goals through academic success. As a result, it is clear that academic performance is currently a key concern for students, instructors, parents, university officials, and the general public. However, students can learn to deal with and significantly minimise the amount of stress in their lives and enhance their academic performance by mastering the emotional intelligence abilities. The one key element in creating a stress-free environment is effective emotion management. The idea of emotional intelligence has gained a lot of popularity as a measure of a student's knowledge, abilities, and success in college, in the classroom, in their personal lives, and in general. Not only is emotional intelligence important for success in college, but it will also be important in the future for job satisfaction, motivation, and making decisions under pressure. Since emotional intelligence will help students manage stress, cope with academic pressure, and make better decisions, it is clear that higher education must include it. The one key element in creating a stress-free environment is effective emotion management.

The current chapter makes the case that in order to enhance college students' overall performance and mental health, it is vital to pinpoint and address the issues that contribute to stress and poor academic performance. This study strengthens the mounting evidence that, in order to assist students in enhancing their mental and emotional health, emotional intelligence must be included in the college curriculum.

BACKGROUND

A person's personality and quality of life both depend on their ability to feel. Emotional intelligence is crucial to both individual and professional survival. The psychological factors that have the greatest impact on human personality are emotions. One can express interior sensations most effectively with the aid of emotions. Feelings are experienced as a function of thinking and emotions. Emotions are our powerful motivational factors because they tempt us to take instant action and offer an immediate answer to any problems. They play a significant role in social settings by giving support in creating and enhancing interpersonal and intrapersonal communication and interaction. The capacity to recognize, analyse, regulate, and positively express one's emotions is known as Emotional Intelligence (EQ). A person with a high EQ is better able to empathise with others, resolve problems, enhance relationships, and overcome obstacles in life. They can also communicate more effectively and experience less anxiety and tension. Because it affects how people act and interact with others, emotional intelligence has an impact on how well people live their lives (Durlinsky, 2015). Having a high EQ can influence our decisions and assist determine our success by opening up possibilities that we might not have otherwise considered or as

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