

Chapter 15

Emotional Wellbeing of Students in Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

The emotional well-being of students at higher education institutions was examined in this chapter. The study used a conceptual review as its framework, and data from published results presented in this chapter showed that most students in higher education institutions faced emotional challenges as a result of their new environment, financial challenges, academic-related stress, anxiety, and depression. Furthermore, many students in higher education are still adjusting to their new experiences and finding their fit in order to achieve in their academic pursuits. It is recommended that higher education institutions adopt innovative techniques to increase students' emotional wellbeing, such as boosting student awareness, building and designing a culture of wellbeing, and providing digital mental services.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional well-being is characterised as a sense of calm and freedom from tension (Jordan, 2021). Emotional well-being measures how well people control their thoughts, feelings, and actions in order to function in their daily lives. People's emotional well-being has been found to influence their mental health (Jordan, 2021). Positive emotional well-being is essential for achieving balanced mental health and general well-being. According to research, people with positive emotional health are better able to cope with everyday challenges and problems, resulting in more stable mental health and general well-being (Lister, Seale & Douce, 2021). Research has shown that emotional distress increases vulnerability to physical sickness by altering the immunological response, resulting in poor health conditions. As a result, a convincing intervention aimed at improving an individual's emotional well-being is likely to have a good impact on their overall health (Walker, 2022; Lister et al, 2021).

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Emotional wellbeing is the ability of a person to accept and control their emotions as well as deal with obstacles in life. How well someone is able to function on a daily basis or how they are able to handle change or uncertainty can both be influenced by their emotional health. A person's mental and physical health may suffer as a result of emotional difficulties (Douwes et al., 2023). Many college students are struggling with well-being difficulties such as psychological and emotional distress, anxiety and depressive symptoms, and a higher risk of burnout (Wang, 2020). Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines wellbeing as the presence of positive emotions and moods (contentment or happiness), the absence of negative emotions (depression or anxiety), satisfaction with life, fulfilment, and positive functioning (Izutsu et al., 2020; CDC, 2018). Academic achievement is fundamentally reliant on student welfare. According to the CDC and other top public health organisations, wellbeing has both individual and aggregate effects on a range of outcomes of interest to students in higher education. These effects can be both negative and positive. A vast body of research has demonstrated that mental health issues have a major impact on academic achievement and graduation rates in higher education, which goes beyond simply having happy students (Cage et al., 2020). Well-being is crucial for degree completion, just as it is for students' success in their day-to-day lives. However, based on the state of affairs as they are today, far too many students in higher education institution lack the emotional stability necessary for them to excel in the academic setting and realise their full potential (Cage et al., 2020).

Although managing stress is a normal part of life, stress can have a negative impact on some students' physical, emotional, and mental health (Lister, 2021). The dropout rates for students who have a diagnosable mental health issue range from 43 percent to as high as 86 percent (Teixeira et al., 2021). Given that most mental diseases initially manifest in youth and early adulthood, this risk is especially important for institutions of higher education (Teixeira et al., 2021). Children and teenagers may experience mental health concerns. According to a review of related literature, girls are more likely than boys to experience mental health issues as they get older (Cage et al., 2020). As a result, a lot of graduate and undergraduate students arrive on campus suffering from an undetected mental illness that manifests itself throughout their time in school. Attention is being paid to the health of students in higher education institution. In full-time higher education, students' ages typically range from 17 to 24. According to Truschel (2020), this is also the important age for the start of psychological and emotional issues. Truschel (2020) asserts that student well-being is receiving more attention in higher education since it affects academic performance and drop-out rates. Due to the detrimental effects on the emotional health of students in higher education, the COVID-19 epidemic and its effects, such as social exclusion, lockdowns, and online education, have increased this emphasis (Manap et al., 2019).

Some of the challenges that relate to the emotional wellbeing of students in higher institutions are presented below.

CHALLENGES RELATING TO THE EMOTIONAL WELLBEING OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Young adulthood is defined as an identity-forming period in which individuals go through emotional, behavioural, sexual, economic, academic, and social transformations, as well as different conflicts. Students are more likely than the overall population to suffer from mental health disorders. Statistically, more than half of American public university students suffer from depression and anxiety (Cage et al, 2020). Similarly, a survey of undergraduate students at Coventry University in the United Kingdom in

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