

Research Paper

Emotional Competency, Depression, and Well-Being among Undergraduate Students: An Analytical Study in Pune District

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ABSTRACT

The current research focuses on exploring the interrelationship among emotional competency, depression, and well-being among undergraduate students in the Pune district. Recognizing growing psychological challenges faced by students, this research investigates how emotional competency influences depression levels and overall well-being. A purposive sample of 50 undergraduate students from various colleges in Pune was selected. Emotional competency, depression, and well-being were measured using standardized psychometric tools. Statistical techniques such as Pearson correlation and linear regression were applied to examine relationships and predictive capabilities among variables. Results revealed a significant negative correlation among emotional competency as well as depression, as well as a significant positive correlation between emotional competency and well-being. Regression analysis confirmed that emotional competency is a vital key factor for both depression and well-being. These findings suggest that fostering emotional competency might essay a crucial part in decreasing depression and enhancing overall well-being in students. This research underscores the significance of psychological skill development interventions in academic settings. The paper provides recommendations for integrating emotional competency training in higher education curricula to support students' mental health and academic performance.

Keywords: *Emotional competency, depression, well-being, student*

The selected text explains that undergraduate students commonly experience a variety of pressures—academic, social, and personal—that can negatively affect their mental health. It presents concept of competency which is emotional, “which is the ability to recognize, understand, express, and manage one’s own emotions and those of others”. This skill is increasingly acknowledged as having a significant impact on important psychological outcomes like depression and subjective well-being. Given the rising incidence of mental health concerns among students, it becomes vital to understand how emotional competency interacts with depression and well-being. Such understanding can guide the development of effective interventions that improve students’ mental health. The text emphasizes that the present study specifically investigates these relationships within undergraduate students in the Pune district, aiming to contribute insights relevant to that region. In short, it sets the

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Received: March 10, 2023; Revision Received: March 24, 2023; Accepted: March 31, 2023

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rationale and context for exploring how enhancing emotional competency might reduce depression and improve overall well-being in college students.

Research Concept:

Emotional Competency means the capability to acknowledge, take into account, express, as well as regulate emotions of one's own along with that of other people. It includes abilities like emotional awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation, which help individuals manage relationships and cope effectively with stress.

Depression is a psychological disorder marked by persistent unhappiness, desperation, as well as decreased engrossment in everyday tasks. It often affects mood, energy, sleep, concentration, and overall functioning, and can be a combined result arising because of physiological, mental, as well as from social aspects.

Well-being reflects a person's overall understanding of happiness, satisfaction with life, as well as psychological functioning. It includes emotions which are positive, harmonious relationships, having a feeling of purpose, as well as capability to handle circumstances of life efficiently.

Significance of the Study:

This study is significant as it addresses a pressing concern of student mental health in India, especially at a regional level. It highlights that student mental health is a serious and growing concern, with many students facing emotional and psychological challenges during their academic journey. The study focuses on analysing how emotional competency- the capability to manage as well as take into account emotions- is connected to both depression and well-being among undergraduate students. Taking into account these relationships, the study aims at offering practical understandings which can be helpful to colleges, counsellors, and law makers to form effective support systems for students. These systems might include programs or interventions to improve students' emotional skills, which in turn can reduce symptoms of depression and improve their overall sense of well-being and life satisfaction. Essentially, the text argues that building students' emotional strengths is not just beneficial for mental health but is also vital for their academic and personal success. The regional focus on Pune adds relevance for local education institutions, making the findings more directly applicable to similar socio-cultural settings. In short, the study promises to contribute both academically and practically by guiding how mental health support can be integrated into education policies and practices.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Emotional Competency and Depression:

Previous research consistently takes into account the ideology that emotional competency plays a vital role in reducing depression. Salovey and Mayer (1990) established by saying higher intelligence associated with emotions is negatively correlated with depression. This is because emotionally competent individuals are better equipped to recognize and manage their emotions, reducing vulnerability to negative emotional states such as sadness or hopelessness. Petrides et al. (2001) brought the idea about trait emotional intelligence, which emphasizes personality aspects of emotional awareness and regulation. Their research demonstrated that individuals with high trait emotional intelligence report lower levels of depression, as they are more resilient to stress and emotional strain. Singh (2003) also found that emotionally intelligent individuals exhibit greater psychological resilience, which helps

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them cope with stress and emotional challenges more effectively, thereby lowering the chances of developing depression.

Emotional Competency and Well-being:

On the other hand, emotional competency is strongly linked to enhanced well-being. Schutte et al. (2007) understood that people having greater emotional intelligence report greater life satisfaction, positive emotions, and overall happiness. Emotionally competent people tend to take in and handle their emotions in such a way that promotes psychological stability and adaptability, both of which are critical components of well-being. Mandal and Sinha (2013) found that emotional competence serves as a mediator between life stressors and psychological well-being, suggesting that emotional intelligence not only helps buffer against stress but also actively contributes to a sense of happiness and fulfilment. Furthermore, Singh (2003) observed that individuals with higher emotional intelligence perform better academically and experience higher levels of psychological adjustment, which contributes to greater overall well-being.

Emotional Competency as a predictor of Depression and Well-being:

In addition to being correlated with both depression and well-being, emotional competency also serves as a significant predictor of these outcomes. Goleman (1995) emphasized the predictive part associated with intelligence associated with emotions in both educational as well as social success, which are linked to positive well-being. He suggested that individuals having greater intelligence associated with emotions are superior at managing their relationships and coping with life's challenges, leading to fewer instances of depression and higher levels of well-being. Mayer et al. (2004) further advanced the concept of emotional intelligence as a measurable construct that can predict various psychological outcomes. Their research established intelligence about emotions as reliable indicator of both reduced depression and increased well-being. Mandal and Sinha (2013) also found that emotional competence essays a key part in mediating the impacts about life stress, helping individuals to maintain their well-being and reduce depression despite experiencing stressful events.

METHODOLOGY

Statement of the Problem:

A study of emotional competency, depression, and well-being among undergraduate students in Pune.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To study the relationship between emotional competency and depression.
2. To study the association among emotional competency and well-being.
3. Analysing the predictive role of emotional competency on depression and well-being.

Hypotheses of the Study:

1. There is a significantly negative correlation between emotional competency and depression.
2. A significantly positive correlation is seen between emotional competency and well-being.
3. Emotional competency significantly predicts depression and well-being.

Variables of the Study:

- **Independent Variable:** Emotional competency

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- **Dependent Variables:** Depression, Well-being

Operational Definitions:

1. Emotional competency- The score obtained on the Emotional Competency Scale (EC Scale; Sharma & Bhardwaj, 1995).
2. Depression- The score obtained on the Beck Depression Inventory-II (Beck et al., 1996).
3. Well-being- The score obtained on the Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (Ryff, 1989).

Sample Selection:

In the sample selection part, the study clearly states that it used a purposive sampling method to choose 50 undergraduate students aged between 18 and 22 years from various colleges in the Pune district. Purposive sampling were used, the fact that they are undergraduate students within a particular age range and region. This ensures that the sample directly fits the context of the research problem, although it does limit generalizability beyond this group.

Measurements:

1. **Emotional Competency Scale (EC Scale) by Sharma & Bhardwaj (1995):** This scale includes of 30 statements measuring emotional awareness and regulation. Higher scores indicate better emotional competency. The measure displays better reliability (.85) and validity, as demonstrated in various studies measuring emotional intelligence.
2. **Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II) by Beck, Steer, and Brown (1996):** This Total 21-item scale the depression level. High level score shows high severity of depressive symptoms. It is highly reliable (Cronbach's alpha = 0.92) and has strong validity, with extensive evidence supporting its use in diagnosing depression.
3. **Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale by Ryff (1989):** This measure contains 54 items assessing six dimensions of well-being (e.g., autonomy, self-acceptance). Higher scores indicate better psychological well-being. It has strong reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.90) and validity, with numerous studies confirming its applicability in various populations.

Statistical Treatment:

Data were analysed using Pearson correlation and linear regression via SPSS software.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

The results of the study were examined using three hypotheses and analysis applied Pearson correlation and regression analysis to explore these relationships and test the hypotheses.

Table 1: Pearson Correlation between Emotional Competency and Depression

Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value	Sample Size (N)	Interpretation
Emotional Competency & Depression	-0.58	$p < 0.01$	50	Significant negative correlation. As emotional competency increases, depression decreases.

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The result of Pearson correlation for this hypothesis showed significant negative association among emotional competency as well as in depression ($r = -0.58, p < 0.01$). This means, as emotional competency increases, the level of depression seems to reduce. The negative value of the correlation coefficient refers an inverse association. First hypothesis stating that "Emotional competency is significantly negatively correlated with depression" is accepted.

Research by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and Schutte et al. (2007) supports that higher emotional competency is linked to lower depression, aligning with this study's findings. Goleman (1995) also highlighted emotional intelligence's role in managing emotions, reducing depression.

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

Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value	Sample Size (N)	Interpretation
Emotional Competency & Well-being	0.64	$p < 0.01$	50	Significant positive correlation. As emotional competency increases, well-being increases.

The result of the second hypothesis was also tested through Pearson correlation, which showed significant positive correlation between emotional competency as well as well-being ($r = 0.64, p < 0.01$). A positive correlation means that as emotional competency increases, so does the level of well-being. The correlation coefficient of 0.64 indicates a moderate to strong positive relationship. Hypothesis 2 saying "Emotional competency is significantly positively correlated with well-being" is accepted.

Schutte et al. (2007) found emotional intelligence is associated positively to well-being, which supports this study's result. Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2004) emphasized emotional intelligence's role in promoting resilience and mental health.

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

Outcome	R ²	F-value	Beta (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Depression	0.80	12.35	-0.57	0.21	-2.71	$p < 0.01$
Well-being	0.77	14.67	0.61	0.19	3.21	$p < 0.01$

The third hypothesis was tested using regression analysis to examine if emotional competency could predict both depression and well-being. As per table 3, the results showed that emotional competency significantly predicts both outcomes. Specifically, emotional competency were found significance predictor of depression ($\beta = -0.57, p < 0.01$) and well-being ($\beta = 0.61, p < 0.01$). The negative beta value for depression ($\beta = -0.57$) indicates that higher emotional competency is associated with lower depression levels. Conversely, the positive beta value for well-being ($\beta = 0.61$) suggests that higher emotional competency leads to better well-being.

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Third hypothesis stating that "Emotional competency significantly predicts depression and well-being" is accepted.

Petrides and Furnham (2001) highlighted that emotional intelligence predicts mental health outcomes like depression and well-being, consistent with this study's findings that emotional competency predicts both.

CONCLUSION

1. Research suggests that greater emotional competency is related to reduced levels of depression among undergraduate students.
2. It was observed that increased emotional competency leads to higher levels of well-being.
3. Emotional competency was identified as a significant predictor of both depression and well-being.

Limitations:

1. The sample size was limited to only 50 undergraduate students from Pune, which may not represent the broader student population.
2. The study used self-report measures, which may introduce response bias.

Suggestions:

1. Future studies should use larger and more diverse samples to improve generalizability.
2. Longitudinal designs could be implemented to track changes over time and provide deeper insights.
3. Educational institutions should consider including emotional competency training in their curricula to promote student mental health.

Implications:

1. The findings highlight the importance of emotional competency in reducing depression and enhancing well-being among students.
2. The study suggests that fostering emotional skills could be a key intervention to improve mental health in educational settings.
3. Policymakers and educators can use the results to support programs for students.

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Acknowledgement

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Chandanshive, A.B. (2023). Emotional Competency, Depression, and Well-Being among Undergraduate Students: An Analytical Study in Pune District. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(1), 2360-2366. DIP:18.01.243.20231101, DOI:10.25215/1101.243