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Research Paper

Effect of Emotional Well-Being on Academic Stress of Secondary School Students: A Case of Howrah District

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ABSTRACT

Academic stress is a common psychological distress in students' lives. This study aims to explore the association between academic stress and emotional well-being of secondary school students in the Howrah district, West Bengal. A total of 242 secondary school students participated in this study. Simple random sampling was used to select the participants. Data were collected using the Ghoshal-Banerjee academic stress scale (Cronbach's alpha reliability = 0.78) and emotional well-being scale for secondary school students (Cronbach's alpha reliability = 0.85). A correlational research design was employed to conduct the study. The results indicate that a positive correlation exists between academic stress and emotional well-being, and emotional well-being significantly predicts academic stress. Based on the related literature and the study findings, the limitations of the study, scope for further research, and implications were discussed.

Keywords: *Academic Stress, Emotional Well-Being, Secondary School Students, Correlation*

Students' mental well-being is a part of their holistic development (NCERT, 2022). Mental well-being is divided into three parts: personal well-being, social well-being and emotional well-being. Perceiving stress indicates depression and poor emotional well-being (Slimmen et al., 2022; Hosseinkhani et al., 2020; Deng et al., 2022). Academic stress is a mental distress that students feel during their academic life, due to family pressure, pressures to perform, peer relationships, institutional environment, and teacher behaviours for school students (Clabaugh et al., 2021; Reddy et al., 2022; Hosseinkhani et al., 2020; Aloia & McTigue, 2019), but homework overload, assessment-related pressure, and imbalance between academic and personal life were also causes of academic stress for university students (Pérez-Jorge et al., 2025). Emotional well-being refers to the positive state of one's emotions and optimal balance between positive and negative emotions (Chaves & Kern, 2017). In a study by Abdullah and Alam (2024) indicated that academic stress has a substantial impact on academic performance and emotional well-being in university-level students. In addition, Baiju and Rajalakshmi (2021) found a low positive correlation between academic stress and psychological well-being among college students of Kerala. Furthermore, a highly significant positive correlation was found between negative emotions and academic stress of Chinese high school students by Yuan (2022). A meta-analysis

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carried out by Ansari et al. (2024) indicated that academic stress and emotional well-being had a significant negative relationship (Dharshini et al., 2022), a contrary positive relationship was found between academic stress and emotional well-being (Clabaugh et al., 2021), but a moderate, significant positive relationship exists between academic stress and mental well-being of higher secondary school students in Mizoram (Laldikpuii & Vijayan, 2023). According to the best available knowledge, psychological well-being and overall mental well-being have been investigated in previous studies. As mentioned in the literature, few studies have been conducted on this topic that researchers try to investigate in India; therefore, this study is an attempt to fill the empirical gap in knowledge by exploring if any association exists between academic stress and emotional well-being of secondary school students in Howrah district, India.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the association between emotional well-being and academic stress of secondary school students.
2. To find out if there is any significant effect of emotional well-being on the academic stress of secondary school students.

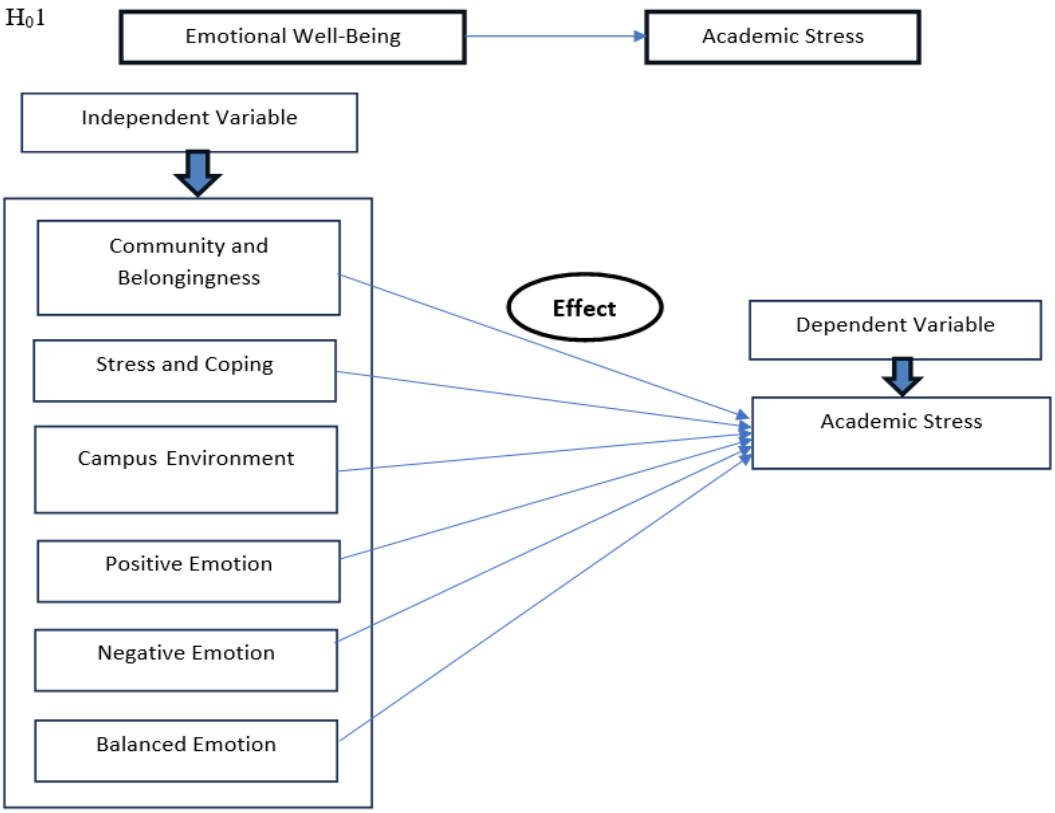
Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the objectives, two null hypotheses have framed

$H_0$1: There is no significant relationship between emotional well-being and academic stress of secondary school students.

$H_0$2: There is no significant effect of emotional well-being on academic stress of secondary school students.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY



METHOD AND MATERIAL

Tools

General Information Schedule

By the general information schedule, researchers collect the demographic characteristics of the participants. Age, sex, family type, residence, and locations of schools were included.

Emotional Well-Being Scale for Secondary School Students

This scale consists of 59 items with five dimensions: community and belongingness, stress and coping, campus environment, positive emotion, negative emotion and balanced emotion. A five-point Likert-type scale was used to collect responses from the participants (Aybek & Toraman, 2022). The five anchors were: Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, and Strongly Disagree=1, while a high score indicates high emotional well-being. The range of this scale was 134-270 (Table 5). Internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha) reliability of this scale was 0.85, which indicates the scale is very reliable to measure emotional well-being of Secondary school students. This scale was also validated by three experts to establish the content validity of the scale. Inter-dimensional correlation range of the scale is -.04 to .60 (Table 6). Scale statistics are described in Table 2.

Ghoshal-Banerjee Academic Stress Scale (2023)

25 items Ghoshal-Banerjee Academic Stress Scale was used to measure the academic stress of the participants. This Scale was translated from English to Bengali language. Back translation was used to translate the scale. There were four dimensions of the scale, such as personal feelings, institutional factors, social environment and emotional environment. A four-point Likert-type self-reported scale with four anchors (Always True=4, Sometimes True=3, Sometimes False=2 and Always False=1) was used. A high score indicates high academic stress. Score range was 34-92. Internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha) reliability of this scale was 0.78, which indicates the scale has good reliability. The content validity was established by three experts. The internal consistency of the base scale was 0.78. Scale statistics are described in Table 3.

Design and Participants

A correlational research design was used in this study (Creswell, 2012). A total of 242 students participated, including 91 males (37.6%) and 151 females (62.4%). The mean age of the participants was 15.79 (*SD* =.41). Among the participants, 50 (20.7%) were 15 years old, while 192 (79.3%) were 16 years old. Simple random sampling was used to select the participants. Demographic characteristics of the sample are displayed in Table 1.

Data Collection Procedure

Data have been collected through three standardized questionnaires. The primary data have been collected from the rural and urban areas of the Howrah district, state of West Bengal, only. With the normal classroom setting, before collecting data, all participants have been informed that the data will remain confidential, and permission was taken from all-head masters/mistresses of schools.

Statistical Technique

Considering the normality of data (Tables 4 and 5), researchers used descriptive statistics such as Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis to describe the nature of data and inferential statistics (Parametric Statistics) such as Pearson's product-moment correlation (*r*) and multiple regression analysis to test the hypotheses. Statistical analysis was conducted using the *IBM-SPSS 23* version.

RESULT AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Variables

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	91	37.6 %
	Female	151	62.4 %
Residence	Rural	194	80.2 %
	Urban	98	19.8 %
Type of Family	Nuclear	96	39.7%
	Joint	146	60.3%
Location of School	Rural	174	71.9%
	Urban	68	28.1%

In Table 1, the demographic characteristics of the variables are represented. Data show that there are 91 male participants (37.6 %) and 151 female participants (62.4 %), in term of residence there are 194 (80.2 %) participants lived in rural areas while 98 (19.8 %) participants lived in urban area, in term of type of family 96 (39.7%) participants belong to nuclear family and 146 (60.3%) participants belong to joint family. As per the location of school, 174 (71.9%) students participated from rural area schools, and 68 (28.1%) students participated from urban area schools.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Well-Being

	Males		**Females**		**Entire Sample**		**Conbrach's Alpha**
Domains	***Mean***	***SD***	***Mean***	***SD***	***Mean***	***SD***	***Value***
Community and Belongingness	32.41	4.97	32.54	5.78	32.49	5.48	
Stress and Coping	33.58	4.00	31.79	4.58	32.47	4.45	
Campus Environment	25.64	5.74	28.02	5.82	27.12	5.90	
Health and Family Life	29.36	4.34	28.80	4.07	29.01	4.18	**0.85**
Positive Emotion	41.45	7.14	39.32	7.84	40.12	7.64	
Negative Emotion	35.07	6.76	33.04	6.60	33.80	6.72	
Balanced Emotion	19.77	3.42	19.47	3.98	19.58	3.78	
Overall Emotional Well-Being	217.27	20.07	212.99	23.60	214.60	22.40	

In Table 2, Descriptive Statistics are presented based on gender, as well as for the entire sample of Emotional Well-being. Data indicate that the mean and SD of the Community and Belongingness dimension of male students (M = 32.41, SD = 4.97), for female students (M = 32.54, SD = 5.78), and (M = 32.49, SD = 5.48) for the entire sample. The mean and SD of

Stress and Coping for male students is (M = 33.58, SD = 4.00), for female students (M = 31.79, SD = 4.58) and for the entire sample (M = 32.47, SD = 4.45). For the campus environment dimension of male students (M = 25.64, SD = 5.74), for female students (M = 28.02, SD = 5.82), and for the entire sample (M = 27.12, SD = 5.90). For the Health and Family Life dimension of male students (M = 27.12, SD = 5.90), for female students (M = 28.80, SD = 4.07), and for the entire sample (M = 29.012, SD = 4.18). For the positive emotion dimension of male students (M = 41.45, SD = 7.184), for the female students (M = 39.42, SD = 7.84), and for the entire sample (M = 40.12, SD = 7.64). For the negative emotion dimension for male students (M = 35.07, SD = 6.76), for the female students (M = 33.04, SD = 6.60), and for the entire sample (M = 33.80, SD = 6.72). For the balanced emotion dimension for male students (M = 19.77, SD = 3.42), for the female students (M = 19.47, SD = 3.98), and for the entire sample (M = 19.58, SD = 3.78). Finally, for overall emotional well-being, (M = 217.27, SD = 20.07) for male participants, (M = 212.99, SD = 23.60) for female participants and (M = 214.60, SD = 22.40) for the entire sample.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Academic Stress

	Males		**Females**		**Entire Sample**		**Conbrach Alpha**
Domains	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Value*
Personal Feeling	32.07	6.85	26.76	6.62	28.76	7.17	
Institutional Factor	17.68	3.42	17.10	3.68	17.32	3.58	0.78
Social Environment	10.59	2.09	10.68	2.10	10.64	2.10	
Emotional Environment	7.77	1.75	7.91	1.72	7.86	1.72	
Overall Academic Stress	68.11	9.72	62.45	10.25	64.58	10.40	

Table 3, displays the descriptive statistics of the Academic Stress of Secondary School students. For personal feeling, (M = 32.07, SD = 6.85) for male students, (M = 26.76, SD = 6.62) for female students and (M = 28.76, SD = 7.917) for the entire sample. In the dimension of the institutional factor, for male students (M = 17.68, SD = 3.42), (M = 17.10, SD = 3.68) for female students and (M = 17.32, SD = 3.58) for the entire sample. In the dimension of the Social Environment, for male students (M = 10.59, SD = 2.09), (M = 10.68, SD = 2.10) for female students and (M = 10.64, SD = 2.10) for the entire sample. With respect to Emotional environment (M = 7.77, SD = 1.75) for male students, (M = 7.91, SD = 1.72) for female students and (M = 7.86, SD = 1.72) for the entire sample. At the end, for overall academic stress, male students (M = 68.11, SD = 9.72) reported a higher mean than female students (M = 62.45, SD = 10.25) and (M = 64.58, SD = 10.40) for the overall sample.

Normality Testing of Data

Table 4. Skewness and Kurtosis Value of Academic Stress

	SK		**KU**		
Domain	**Value**	**SE**	**Value**	**SE**	**Range**
Personal Feeling	.16	.16	-.39	.31	13-48
Institutional Factors	-.09	.16	-.50	.31	7-24
Social Environment	-.25	.16	.30	.31	4-16
Emotional Environment	.26	.16	-.38	.31	3-12
Overall Academic Stress	-.06	.16	-.09	.31	34-92

Table 4, In case of academic stress, it is clearly observed that the four dimensions and overall academic stress data are normal with respect to the calculated absolute values of Skewness and Kurtosis. Whereas personal feeling Shows that absolute value of Sk= .16 and Ku= -.39 (Range = 13-48), for institutional factors Sk= -.09 and Ku= -.50 (Range = 7-24), and for social environment Sk= -.25 and Ku= .30 (Range = 4-16), for emotional environment Sk= .26 and Ku= -.38 (Range = 3-12).

For overall academic stress Sk= -.06 (SE=.16) and Ku= -.09 (SE=.31) (Range =34-92), where the *z* value of *Sk* is -.06/.16 = -.38 (Skewness/Standard Error of Sk), and the z-value of Ku is -.09/.31 = -.29 (Kurtosis/Standard Error of Kurtosis).

Table 5. Skewness and Kurtosis Value of Emotional Well-Being

	SK		KU		
Domain	Value	SE	Value	SE	Range
Community and Belongingness	-.82	.17	1.53	.31	12-45
Stress and Coping	.19	.17	-.36	.31	22-44
Campus Environment	-1.04	.17	1.16	.31	7-35
Health and Family Life	-.40	.17	.39	.31	16-39
Positive Emotion	-1.65	.17	3.37	.31	12-50
Negative Emotion	-.23	.17	-.55	.31	18-50
Balance Emotion	-.79	.17	-.80	.31	7-25
Total Emotional Well-Being	-.73	.17	1.50	.31	134-270

Table 5 shows the Skewness and Kurtosis Value of the emotional well-being Scale. The absolute value of Sk and Ku for community and belongingness is Sk = -.82 and Ku= 1.53 (Range = 12-45), for stress and coping Sk = .19 and Ku= -.36 (Range = 22-44), for campus environment Sk = -1.04 and Ku= 1.16 (Range = 7-35), for health and family life Sk = -.40 and Ku = .39 (Range = 16-39), for positive emotion Sk = -1.65 and Ku= 3.37 (Range = 12-50), for negative emotion Sk = -.23 and Ku= -.55 (Range = 18-50), for balanced emotion Sk = -.79 and Ku= -.80 (Range = 7-25) also for overall Emotional Well-Being Scale Sk = -.73 and Ku= 1.50 (Range = 134-270).

The values of Skewness and Kurtosis are within an acceptable limit for the Academic Stress scale and Emotional Well-Being Scale (Sk < 2 and Ku < 7) (Kim, 2013; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007; Field, 2009). Again, the Central Limit Theorem states that if the sample size is larger than 30 (Sample size > 30), then the distribution is treated as a normal distribution. Therefore, we conclude that the dataset of this study is normally distributed, and we can confidently analyse the data through parametric statistics and generalize the study results across the population.

Table 6. Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Community & Belongingness	**1**								
2. Stress & Coping	.19**	**1**							
3. Campus Environment	.44**	.28**	**1**						
4. Health & Family Life	.24**	.11	.28**	**1**					
5. Positive Emotion	.31**	.21**	.30**	.60**	**1**				
6. Negative Emotion	-.04	.17**	-.09	.22**	.06	**1**			
7. Balance Emotion	.26**	.19**	.38**	.37**	.50**	.06	**1**		
8. Emotional Well-Being	.58**	.50**	.62**	.67**	.75**	.37**	.63**	**1**	
9. Academic Stress	.10	.24**	.13*	.21**	.20**	.38**	.19**	.36**	**1**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In this table 6, correlations are displayed between academic stress and seven dimensions of the emotional well-being Scale. In the correlation matrix, it is clearly indicated that a moderately significant positive correlation exists between academic stress and emotional well-being $r = .36$, p (two-tailed) $< .01$. Additionally, a significant positive association exists between academic stress and stress and coping $r = .24$, p (two-tailed) $< .01$, campus environment $r = .13$, p (two-tailed) $< .05$, health and family life $r = .21$, p (two-tailed) $< .01$, positive emotion $r = .20$, p (two-tailed) $< .01$, negative emotions $r = .38$, p (two-tailed) $< .01$ and balanced emotion $r = .19$, p (two-tailed) $< .01$. But there is no significant association between academic stress and community and belongingness dimension of emotional well-being scale.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 7. Model Summary

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.454[a]	.207	.183	9.405	.207	8.700	7	234	.000	1.374

a. Predictors: (Constant), Community & Belongingness, Stress & Coping, Campus Environment, Health & Family Life, Positive Emotion, Negative Emotion, Balanced Emotion

b. Dependent Variable: Academic Stress

From the model summary, at first, the Durbin-Watson test indicates that the value is <2, which means that the assumption of the regression model was not violated. R-squared value is .207, which means that Emotional Well-Being accounts for 20.7 % of the variation in Academic Stress.

Table 8. Anova table

ANOVA[a]						
Model		**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
1	Regression	5387.080	7	769.583	8.700	.000[b]
	Residual	20699.928	234	88.461		
	Total	26087.008	241			
a. Dependent Variable: Academic Stress						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Community & Belongingness, Stress & Coping, Campus Environment, Health & Family Life, Positive Emotion, Negative Emotion, Balanced Emotion						

The above ANOVA table indicates that the conjoint effect of community & belongingness, stress & coping, campus environment, health & family life, positive emotion, negative emotion, and balanced emotion on academic stress was found Significant at the 0.01 level ($F(7, 234) = 8.700$).

Table 9. Coefficients

Coefficients[a]										
Model		**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**	**95.0% Confidence Interval for B**		**Collinearity Statistics**	
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**			**Lower Bound**	**Upper Bound**	**Tolerance**	**VIF**
1	(Constant)	23.123	6.496		3.559	.000	10.324	35.921		
	Community and Belongingness	.018	.126	.009	.140	.889	-.231	.267	.765	1.307
	Stress and Coping	.295	.147	.126	2.004	**.046**	.005	.585	.856	1.168
	Campus Environment	.114	.125	.065	.912	.363	-.133	.361	.673	1.486
	Health and Family Life	.043	.190	.017	.224	.823	-.332	.418	.581	1.721
	Positive Emotion	.115	.109	.085	1.057	.292	-.100	.330	.528	1.895
	Negative Emotion	.543	.096	.351	5.633	**.000**	.353	.733	.875	1.143
	Balanced Emotion	.204	.194	.074	1.052	.294	-.178	.585	.687	1.456
a. Dependent Variable: Academic Stress										

The coefficient table (Collinearity Statistics) shows that the VIF value is less than 3.3, which indicates this model is free from multicollinearity (Mat Roni et al., 2020). In terms of predictors, Stress and Coping $t = 2.004$ ($p < .05$) (Unstandardized Coefficients beta = .295), and negative emotion $t = 5.633$ ($p < .05$) (Unstandardized Coefficients beta = .543) are significant predictors of academic stress.

DISCUSSION

In this study, the researchers explored the moderate positive and significant relationship between academic stress and emotional well-being among secondary school students. Low to moderate positive significant relationship exists between academic stress and all six dimensions of well-being, except community and belongingness. Additionally, out of seven dimensions of well-being, only two, namely stress and coping and negative emotions, are significant predictors of academic stress.

In recent times, academic stress has become a major issue in academia, with a significant impact on students' physical, mental, and emotional well-being, as well as their academic performance (Iqra, 2024). Previous research has shown that academic stress has a significant association with mental health as well as psychological and emotional well-being (Abdullah et.al., 2024). Hosseinkhani et al. (2020b) found that high academic stress can lead to poor mental health issues and increases negative emotions of adolescent students (Yuan, 2022; Laldikpuii & Vijayan, 2022). Similarly, academic stress also harms the psychological well-being of college and university students (Barbayannis et al., 2022; Olivera et al., 2023; Pandey et al., 2024; Slimmen et al., 2022) On the other side, O'Sullivan (2010) reported that eustress was positively associated with academic stress because medium-level stress encourages students' involvement in their academic journey (Seley, 1974), where Academic demands can increase well-being when self-efficacy is high (Bandura,1997). However, LePine et al. (2005) showed that the challenge stressor is positively related to high motivation, academic engagement and well-being.

IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

The practical contribution of the study may help the teachers, parents, policymakers and researchers**.** A good environment in school premises is very important for the positive feelings of the students, where students spend most of their time at school. So, this study informs all the teachers to maintain a cooperative, motivated and fear-free environment for the students. Co-curricular activities reduce academic stress, so it is recommended to ensure the participation in such activities (Drawing, singing, etc.) by the students. Parents have to be more friendly with their children and create a supportive environment where young learners can speak freely of their problems as they speak with their friends. Finally, it refers to all stakeholders to be aware of the initiative by the government of India, namely '*MANADARPAN'* as a part of Atma Nirvar Bharat Abhiyan, where students are provided with online psychological support for mental health and well-being. National Education Policy (2020) also stresses the development of students' emotional well-being (p. 39).

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH OF THE STUDY

Not only this study, but also all studies have certain limitations. First, this study only explores the association between academic stress and emotional well-being among government-aided secondary school students in West Bengal. Second, this study did not employ any qualitative

approach. Self-reported questionnaires are another pitfall of the present investigation. Third, no private school students were involved in the study.

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Considering the delimitations and limitations of the study, further research may be conducted with the same variables on private school students. Similar studies may be carried out on higher secondary, college-level, and university students, as well as engineering (IIT, NIT), medical, and management level, with a longitudinal research design. Similar studies may also be conducted among students of Kendriya Vidyalayas, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas, and Eklavya Model Residential Schools using a different research approach, such as a qualitative methodology involving interviews and focus group discussions. A mixed methods research design may be appropriate for further investigation. An experimental research design can be used under further consideration.

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Conflict of Interest

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