



Online Learning in Covid-19: A Study on the Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy and Mental Well-Being of Female University Students

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ABSTRACT

Following the announcement of the pandemic of coronavirus 2019-(nCoV), the universities in India have shifted to online learning. The use of online learning is an effort to limit the spread of Covid-19. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between the emotional intelligence, self-efficacy & mental well-being of university students as a result of online learning during COVID-19. The study was conducted - on 58 university students from Bangalore. Standardized measures of Emotional Intelligence, Self-efficacy and Mental well-being, were administered to the participants. The findings indicate a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. The results also reveal a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and mental well-being. The findings also show a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and mental well-being. The study has important implications and, the incorporation of emotional intelligence into the university curriculum is recommended. Universities must introduce policies to improve students' self-efficacy levels to ensure that their level of mental well-being is in check. Learning strategies must be revised & revisited. This will ensure optimal learning outcomes regardless of the pandemic and the online learning setting.

Keywords : Emotional Intelligence, Self-efficacy, Mental Well-being, University Students, Online Learning

Introduction :

"People's beliefs about their abilities have a profound effect on those abilities. Ability is not a fixed property; there is huge variability in how you perform. People who have a sense of self-efficacy bounce back from failure; they approach things in terms of how to handle them rather than worrying about what can go wrong." - Albert Bandura

The COVID-19 pandemic stimulated the closure of educational institutions and has induced a shift towards implementing online learning as the assembling of students was prohibited. Such closure accelerated the advancement of the online learning conditions so that education would be undisturbed. Emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and mental well-being are essential resources for improving students' learning, achievement and quality in education.

Emotional intelligence has an indispensable influence on students' academic learning. Students with higher emotional intelligence are more self-confident in enduring academic hurdles. (Jan & Anwar, 2019)

Self-efficacy is linked to scholarly accomplishment, practices and perspectives (Faulkner et. al., 2009; Hagger et al., 2001; Yalcinalp, 2005; Salami, 2004). Researchers have supported that students' self-regulation skill is fundamental to be determined and thriving in online learning, particularly during this COVID-19 outbreak season (Vilkova and Shcheglova 2021).

O'Regan (O'regan, K., 2003) depicted mental well-being as being imperative during online learning. Mental health is critical in learning as it relates to and works, as a driving force for academic accomplishment, inspiration, effectiveness, personality arrangement, individual advancement, and overall well-being. (Ainley, 2008; Arguel et al., 2019; Artino, 2012; Jackson, 2010; Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014)

Emotional Intelligence :

Salovey and Mayer (1990) and Mayer and Salovey (1997) proposed that emotional intelligence (EI) was the expression and evaluation of the emotions of oneself and others, the ability to regulate the emotions of oneself and others, and the ability to use emotions to solve practical problems. In other words, it was a comprehensive ability to perceive, evaluate, and express emotions accurately.

EI is a powerful predictor of mental health and well-being, and, it can help students balance their mental ability, personal and social relationships, academic success, and psychological well-being (Goleman, 1995; Shaheen and Shaheen, 2016).

Individuals with EI can use suitable strategies to better comprehend, express, and transfer emotions, regardless of whether they are positive or negative (Koubova and Buchko, 2013).

Emotional intelligence is a vital determinant influencing individual achievement levels, particularly for college students (Liu and Jiao, 2017).

Self-efficacy :

Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in his/her ability to organise and execute a required course of action to achieve the desired result (Bandura, 1997).

Academic attainment, behaviours, and attitudes are linked to self-efficacy (Faulkner et al., 2009; Hagger, Chatzisarantis & Biddle, 2001; Yalcinalp, 2005; Salami, 2004).

Self-efficacy impacts a person's ability to cope with adversity as well as his/her susceptibility to stress and melancholy (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Gerbino & Pastorelli, 2003).

A broad and stable sense of personal capacity to deal well with a variety of stressful situations is the goal of general self-efficacy (Adeyemo, 2008; Schwarzer, 1994).

Mental Well-being :

Mental well-being relates to a person's psychological functioning, life satisfaction and ability to develop and maintain mutually benefiting relationships. Psychological wellbeing includes the ability to maintain a sense of autonomy, self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life and self-esteem. Staying mentally healthy is more than treating or preventing mental illness. (Brown & Janmohamed, 2008)

In these trying times, it has become more important than ever to improve student mental health to prevent the known implications of continuous psychological distress and to mitigate any detrimental effects of the pandemic on mental health. (Lyons et al., 2010).

Mental health is a crucial component of having a successful and productive life (Cilar et al., 2019).

Barriers to mental well-being that dwell within the higher education culture, practices, structures and learning conditions may be addressed through intervention in these areas (Hughes & Spanner, 2019).

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the emotional intelligence, self-efficacy & mental well-being of university students during online learning in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hypothesis

- There will be a positive correlation between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy & mental well-being.
- There will be a positive correlation of emotional intelligence on both the self-efficacy and the mental well-being of students.
- There will be a positive correlation of self-efficacy on the mental well-being of students.

Method

Sample :

The sample consisted of 58 female university students from Bangalore and, they were studying via the online/virtual mode due to COVID-19. The subjects were from the age group of 18-25 years.

Measures :**The following standardized tests were used -**

- **The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test** : (SSEIT) was developed by Schutte et.al., (1998) to assesses emotional intelligence based on self-report responses to items. The scale has 33 items measured on a five-point scale ranging from 1-strongly disagrees to 5-strongly agree.
- **Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale** : (GSES) was developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). The GSES is a 10-item scale that assessed self-efficacy based on personality disposition. It is measured on a 4-item Likert scale ranging from 1 = Not at all true to 4 = Exactly true.
- **The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale** : (WEMWBS) was developed by Tennant et, al., (2006). It comprises 14 items that relate to an individual's state of mental well-being (thoughts and feelings) in the previous two weeks. Responses are made on a 5-point scale ranging from 'none of the time' to 'all of the time'.

Procedure :

The participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the questionnaires were filled through Google forms. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of the information to elicit their honest responses without any fear or inhibitions. Each participant was thanked for their support & kind cooperation. Standardized psychological tests were administered to participants.

Results :

Mean, Standard Deviation & Correlations were measured to find out the relation between all the variables.

Table 1 : Shows N, Mean and Standard Deviation of the sample. (N=58)

	Emotional Intelligence	Self-efficacy	Mental well-being
N	58	58	58
Mean	124	29.6	48.4
Standard deviation	14.4	3.91	9.16

Table 2 : Shows the correlation between all the three studied variables.

	Emotional Intelligence	Self-efficacy	Mental well-being
Emotional Intelligence	—		
Self-efficacy	0.492 ***	—	
Mental well-being	0.331 *	0.378 **	—

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Discussion :

The results found out that there is a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy ($r = 0.492, p < .001$). The results also observed a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and mental well-being ($r = 0.331, p < .05$). Hence, the hypothesis that there will be a positive correlation of emotional intelligence on both the self-efficacy and the mental well-being of students is accepted. The results further found a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and mental well-being ($r = 0.378, p < .01$). Thus, the hypothesis that there will be a positive correlation of self-efficacy on the mental well-being of students is accepted. Overall, the hypothesis that there will be a positive correlation between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy & mental well-being is accepted.

Individuals with high EI can better focus on various issues and use problem-solving techniques that improve their mental capabilities and social acceptability (Hasanvand and Khaledian, 2012)

Students' online learning self-efficacy encompasses not only their ability to complete online learning activities but also related abilities and knowledge of using technology for educational purposes to engage in online learning successfully (Bawa, 2016). The World Health Organization urges people to

be supportive of one another and work together as a community to maintain mental health in times of crisis (WHO, 2020). This can assist college students to cope with life issues and, more significantly, overcome the online learning shock during the COVID-19 epidemic (Saltzman et al., 2020)

Conclusion :

Students have become self-directed learners as a result of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students with emotional intelligence should be able to participate in learning activities from home during the Covid-19 pandemic with ease. The self-efficacy of online learners may be important to reflect on current online learning practices during this pandemic. The students' mental well-being is critical to the effectiveness of online learning during times such as now. This research aims to look into the relationship between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and mental well-being among university students during online learning during the pandemic.

It was hypothesized that there will be a positive correlation between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy & mental well-being. The study was conducted on 58 university students from Bangalore. The standardized measures of emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and mental well-being were administered to participants through google forms. The results revealed a significant positive correlation between the emotional intelligence, self-efficacy & mental well-being of the female university students. The study has significant implications, such as the need to provide the students with EI and mindfulness training. In addition, strategies to boost students' self-confidence and self-efficacy levels must be introduced to ensure optimal learning results despite the existing situation. This may make it easier for them to deal with the current situation's demands. To grasp the effect virtual learning has on students' well-being during COVID-19, the researchers and, more importantly, the institutions must evaluate the shift in a balanced manner.

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