



Perceived Stress and Emotional Intelligence among Graduate and Post Graduate Students – A Conceptual Research

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the interplay between perceived stress and emotional intelligence among graduate and postgraduate students. As academic and personal pressures continue to mount, understanding how stress perception relates to emotional intelligence becomes increasingly vital for student welfare and academic achievement. The sample encompasses students from diverse disciplines and institutions, spanning both graduate and postgraduate levels. Perceived stress levels are gauged using established scales, while emotional intelligence is assessed through validated measures. Employing quantitative research methods, I scrutinize the data to uncover any significant correlations or variances in stress perception and emotional intelligence between the two student cohorts. The study's outcomes are anticipated to offer valuable insights into the coping mechanisms and emotional regulation strategies employed by graduate and postgraduate students, illuminating potential avenues for educational support and intervention. By addressing these issues, tailored interventions can be developed to bolster emotional well-being and academic performance among graduate and postgraduate students.

INTRODUCTION

STRESS

Stress can be defined as "a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances" (**Oxford Languages, 2022**). Here the stress refers to the feeling of pressure or strain experienced when faced with difficult situations.

"Stress is a perceptual phenomenon arising from a comparison between the demand on the person and his or her ability to cope" (**Lazarus & Folkman, 1984**). According to Lazarus & Folkman, stress happens when what's expected of, we feel like more than what we think that we can handle.

"Stress is the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it" (**Selye, 1976**). According to Selye stress means it is how our body reacts to anything that asks something of it, whether it may good or bad.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

"Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, control, and evaluate emotions, both in oneself and others, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions effectively" (**Mayer & Salovey, 1997**). According to Mayer & Salovey emotional intelligence means being able to understand and manage feelings in yourself and others and using that knowledge to make good choices and interact well with people.

"Emotional intelligence involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (**Bar-On, 1997**). According to them emotional intelligence means being aware of your own and other's feelings, understanding them and using that knowledge to make better decisions and behave properly.

"Emotional intelligence is the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships" (**Goleman, 1995**). According to Goleman emotional intelligence means understanding and controlling our own emotions, as well as recognizing and managing the feelings of others to handle relationships well.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

"Graduate students are individuals who have completed a bachelor's degree and are pursuing advanced studies at the post-baccalaureate level, typically leading to a master's or doctoral degree" (**Council of Graduate Schools, 2017**). Here it means those who finished college and are now studying more in-depth for a master's or doctorate degree.

"Graduate students are engaged in advanced academic and research work beyond the undergraduate level, often working towards a higher degree such as a master's or doctorate" (Nerad & Miller, 1996). According to them graduate students are students who do more advanced academic and research work after finishing their bachelor's degree, usually aiming for a master's or a doctorate.

"Graduate students are students who have obtained a bachelor's degree and are enrolled in a program of study at a higher education institution, typically leading to a master's or doctoral degree, where they engage in specialized coursework, research, and professional development" (Bair & Haworth, 1999). According to Bair and Haworth, graduate students are people who finished their bachelor's degree and are now studying for a master's or doctoral degree, where they learn advanced topics, do research and develop professionally.

POST GRADUATE STUDENTS

"Postgraduate students are individuals who have completed an undergraduate degree and are pursuing advanced studies at the graduate level, typically leading to a master's or doctoral degree" (Burns & Sinfield, 2008). According to Burns and Sinfield, Postgraduate students are people who finished their first degree and are now studying for a higher one, like a master's or a Ph.D.

"Postgraduate students refer to those enrolled in programs of study beyond the undergraduate level, typically leading to a master's or doctoral degree, and who are engaged in advanced coursework, research, and professional development" (Moses & Knutsen, 2007). According to them, Postgraduate students are those who are studying more after their bachelor's degree, like for a master's or Ph.D. and they do advanced classes, research and professional training.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study "**Attachment styles, emotional intelligence, and perceived stress among law students**" was to examine the relationships between law students' interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, and stress levels (Anjum, Qazi, Amin, Ramzan & Alvi, 2023). In Lahore, Pakistan, they questioned 150 law students from various schools about these topics. They discovered that students' emotional intelligence and interpersonal attachment styles accurately predict how stressed they will feel. According to the study, these variables account for nearly one-third of the reasons why students experience stress. This implies that students' stress levels are influenced by their interpersonal relationships and understanding of emotions.

The study on "**The Role of Mindful Self-Care in the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Burnout in University Students**" investigated the relationship between academic burnout among university students and emotional intelligence (EI), mindful self-care (MSC), and student well-being (Loi & Pryce, 2022). They discovered that lower levels of burnout and greater MSC were associated with higher EI. A part of the association between EI and some aspects of burnout, like weariness and efficacy, was mediated by mindful self-care. According to these results, engaging in thoughtful self-care may enhance students' wellbeing and guard against academic burnout.

A study was carried out in 2016 in three colleges at four State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) in Northern India: Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana; Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar; Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar; and Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture and Technology, Udaipur on "**The Extent of Perceived Stress among Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students of Selected State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) of Northern India**". Understanding how stressed out undergraduate and graduate students felt was the goal (Negi & Kaur, 2022). 360 undergraduates and 180 graduate students made up the total of 540 randomly chosen students. The results demonstrated that stress was experienced by both undergraduate and graduate students, with a greater proportion of postgraduate students experiencing high levels of stress than undergraduates.

"**The Relationship Between Postgraduates' Emotional Intelligence and Well-Being: The Chain Mediating Effect of Social Support and Psychological Resilience**"; The goal of this study was to better understand postgraduate students' well-being by examining the functions of psychological resilience, social support, and emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence was found to be a mediator between psychological resilience, social support, and general well-being, and to be positively correlated with postgraduate students' well-being (Zhang, Deng, Zhao, Xuebin & Hou, 2022). The study, which included more than 1,200 postgraduate students, emphasized the value of emotional intelligence in overcoming obstacles encountered when pursuing a postgraduate degree. These results highlight the need of fostering resilience and emotional intelligence in postgraduate students in order to improve their general well-being.

The study "**Perceived Stress and Social Support Among Postgraduate Students: Implications for Well-Being and Engagement**" examined the relationship between postgraduate students' well-being and professional engagement in Ghana and their perceptions of stress and social support (Kosi, 2021). They used a questionnaire to gather data from 205 students, and PLS-SEM ver3 was used for analysis. The results imply that well-being, social support, and perceived stress are significant factors in predicting students' work involvement. The relationship between social support and involvement is partially explained by well-being, but not by perceived stress. In conclusion, the study emphasizes the value of social support for students and points out the necessity of enhancing university support services.

The study "**The Role of Emotional Intelligence and Perceived Employability in Undergraduate Students**" examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and undergraduate business students' perceived employability in Malaysian public universities. Through the use of a questionnaire, the researchers discovered that all emotional intelligence dimensions were correlated with perceived employability, indicating that emotional intelligence has a direct impact on employability. The results emphasize the significance of emotional intelligence in helping students overcome obstacles related to their careers, and they provide guidance for designing programs aimed at improving students' emotional intelligence and improving their employment

prospects. This study is the first to demonstrate the relationship between emotional intelligence dimensions and employability in this particular context (Aziz, Raza & Aldeehani,2020).

The study “**Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Stress in Undergraduate Medical Students**” looked at undergraduate medical students' emotional intelligence and academic stress (Jamil,2020). They discovered that lower levels of perceived stress were linked to stronger emotional intelligence. Students in their second year reported feeling more stressed than those in their first year, and girls expressed higher levels of stress than boys did. Furthermore, first-year students generally demonstrated a little higher level of emotional intelligence than second-year students. These results underline the significance of including emotional intelligence training in undergraduate education programs by suggesting that raising emotional intelligence may aid students in stress management.

The study on “**A study of gender differences on stress and Emotional intelligence**” looks into the preconceived notions that both male and female postgraduate students have regarding stress and emotional expressiveness. In particular, it looks to examine if these preconceptions apply at UTM Perdana School and in an academic environment (Baqtayan, Gul, Ghafar & Perdana School of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy, University Technology Malaysia 2018). This study examines two main aspects: (1) variation in stress and emotional intelligence (EI) between male and female postgraduate students; and (2) significance of gender in EI and stress levels. According to the findings, female students often experience slightly higher levels of stress than their male counterparts. Male students, however, typically have higher EI when it comes to stress management. The fact that these disparities were not statistically significant raises the possibility that biological or environmental factors, rather than gender, may be to blame.

The study by Enns, Eldridge, Montgomery & Gonzalez, investigates the link between **emotional intelligence (EI), perceived stress, and coping responses among undergraduate and graduate students** in helping disciplines at a US public university (Enns, Eldridge, Montgomery & Gonzalez,2018). Results show that higher EI is associated with lower perceived stress, with coping strategies mediating this relationship. Specifically, those with higher EI tend to use more adaptive coping and less maladaptive coping, leading to reduced stress levels. The findings suggest that interventions targeting EI may effectively reduce stress among students in psychology, nursing, and social work programs.

The study by Sarrionandia, Ramos-Díaz & Fernández-Lasarte, delves into “**the interplay between emotional intelligence (EI), resilience, and perceived stress among undergraduate students**” across cultural contexts, filling a gap in existing literature (Sarrionandia, Ramos-Díaz & Fernández-Lasarte,2018). By examining samples from the United States and the Basque Country, the research provides valuable insights into the universal applicability of these psychological constructs. Utilizing structural equation modeling, the study demonstrates that EI serves as a negative predictor of perceived stress, mediated by resilience, for both American and Basque students. These findings underscore the significance of EI and resilience in mitigating perceived stress among university students, suggesting the potential efficacy of intervention programs targeting these factors. The study contributes to the growing body of research on psychological well-being in higher education settings and underscores the importance of cross-cultural perspectives in understanding these dynamics. Further exploration of intervention strategies aimed at enhancing EI and resilience holds promise for addressing perceived stress and promoting student well-being on a global scale.

The study by Ranasinghe, Wathurapatha, Mathangasinghe & Ponnampereuma; “**Relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI), perceived stress, and academic performance among medical undergraduates**” is investigated in this study (Ranasinghe, Wathurapatha, Mathangasinghe & Ponnampereuma,2017). Findings reveal that higher EI scores are associated with better academic performance, particularly among final-year students. Furthermore, factors such as gender, satisfaction with the chosen field of study, and engagement in extracurricular activities are linked to EI levels and academic success. Notably, higher levels of EI correlate with lower levels of perceived stress. These results underscore the importance of EI in academic achievement and stress management among medical students, suggesting that interventions aimed at enhancing EI could potentially improve academic outcomes and promote better coping strategies for future healthcare professionals.

This study by on “**Assessment and determinants of emotional intelligence and perceived stress among students of a medical college in South India**” investigated the relationship between medical students' emotional intelligence and stress levels related to their coursework (Joseph, Joseph, Panicker, Nelliyanil, Jindal & Viveki,2015). They questioned roughly 400 first- and second-year students regarding their stress levels and emotions. They discovered that older pupils typically have stronger emotional self-control. Second-year students typically experience less stress than first-year students do. Research indicated that pupils who have higher emotional intelligence typically experience lower levels of stress. Consequently, students may experience reduced stress during their medical training if they develop stronger coping mechanisms early in their education.

DISCUSSION

The complex link between graduate and postgraduate students' perceived stress and emotional intelligence is highlighted in this study, which explores a critical component of student well-being. Through examining this relationship, the research hopes to provide important insights for support services and educational institutions by shedding light on how students manage the demands of both their personal and academic lives. Using quantitative research tools to examine the data is one interesting feature. A better knowledge of the relationships and variations in stress perception and emotional intelligence across several student cohorts is made possible by the study's use of established scales and validated measurements, which assure robustness in its findings.

Furthermore, the study's findings are made richer by the focus on a variety of fields and institutions within the sample. It emphasizes the necessity for specialized solutions that take these variations into account by acknowledging that stress and emotional intelligence may present differently in different academic subjects and learning situations. Proactive student assistance is demonstrated by the suggested interventions meant to improve academic

achievement and emotional well-being. Establishments can foster learning and personal development by including stress management and emotional regulation measures into their educational programs. All things considered, this study not only advances our knowledge of student welfare but also has applications for building a stronger, more cohesive academic community. In higher education settings, stakeholder collaboration is essential to the successful implementation of interventions and the creation of long-lasting positive change.

CONCLUSION

Above research offers valuable insights into the complex interplay between perceived stress and emotional intelligence among graduate and postgraduate students. Through the analysis

of a diverse sample, I will discover notable correlations and discrepancies in stress perception and emotional intelligence within these student cohorts. These finding marks the significance of acknowledging and addressing the unique stressors encountered by students in higher education settings. Tailored interventions focused on emotional regulation abilities and stress management techniques can play a pivotal role in fostering student well-being and academic achievement. It is crucial for educational institutions to prioritize initiatives aimed at supporting the comprehensive development of graduate and postgraduate students, creating environments that facilitate both academic success and emotional flourishing. By collaboration among educators, administrators, and mental health professionals, we can work towards cultivating a more supportive and resilient academic community.

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