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## Emotional wellness in education: A dive into the academic consequences of mental health

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### ABSTRACT

*This research explores the relationship between mental health and academic performance among university students. A qualitative survey of 100 second-year students at Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women uncovers challenges and coping mechanisms related to mental health. It was found that a considerable percentage remains unaware of available mental health resources on campus. Preliminary findings include the critical need for mental health support, suggesting the importance of integrating such facilities within universities. The relationship can further be explored by leveraging the right computer science tools to collect and analyze data.*

*Keywords: Mental Health, Academic Performance, Students*

### I. INTRODUCTION

While discussions surrounding mental health have progressively become more mainstream, we often fail to recognize the strategies students employ to uphold their academic performance amidst grappling with diverse mental health challenges. It is important to acknowledge that no mental health challenge can be simply categorized as easy or difficult to manage. The effects of each situation on the human mind are unique to the individual, and consequently, the coping mechanisms utilized also differ. Mental health plays a critical role in cognitive functioning. Conditions like anxiety and depression can impair memory, problem-solving skills and decision-making abilities, hindering a student's overall learning capacity. As students face mounting pressures and challenges, their mental well-being has emerged as a critical determinant of their learning outcomes. By delving into the multifaceted aspects of this issue, we endeavor to provide educators with valuable insights to enhance support systems and foster a conducive learning environment for all students. By being attentive to each other's well-being, extending support, and normalizing conversations about mental health, we create a cohesive community that empowers one another through difficult phases. Understanding the effects of mental health on student learning is of utmost importance due to its far-reaching implications.

In the world of education, where we seek knowledge and personal development, mental health is closely connected to our

experiences. As we explore this topic, we discover how mental well-being affects students' learning journeys. By identifying key patterns and insights, this study could contribute to the development of targeted interventions and strategies that foster a conducive learning environment for all students, irrespective of their mental health status.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In recent years, a growth in terms of the exploration of the potential effects carried by a range of mental health challenges has been observed. Taking into consideration the mental health of students, it is essential to pay attention towards the overlooked aspect of academic life. It is concerning to see that there still exist people whose thoughts bend towards the idea that students are unaffected by mental health struggles. The link between mental health and student learning is just a small part of a bigger picture. As I base my research currently on university students, I am mindful of the broad scope that mental health covers. Even a seemingly simple term like “mental health” is actually quite complex in its meaning and implications. As suggested in the research conducted by Joanne Ling Li Yi, Ross Azura Zahit and Sheilla Lim Omar Lim [1], it is believed that there exists a lack of evidence in terms of the effect on student academic performance during online learning in the COVID-19 period. Most of the research during this period is directed towards the economic sector. The presence of limited studies investigating the relationship between mental health and academic performance of undergraduate students during online learning was mentioned as well. The objective of the research was to assess how mental health factors and status are associated with the academic performance of undergraduate students. The same was planned to be assessed through the GPA obtained by students. For the purpose of gathering and analyzing data, a quantitative approach was carried out.

The data collected from the University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) was taken into action through a random sampling technique wherein the sample population consisted of undergraduates from eight different faculties in UNIMAS. The implementation of the survey was done through the division of the survey into two categories: Demographic Factors and Health. The aim of the first section was to gather basic information regarding the respondents' background. In the case of the second section, health was measured through the use of the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) developed by Goldberg and Williams. Social dysfunction, anxiety and depression, and loss of confidence were the factors put to test. Analysis was further carried out through the ratings in the survey that were based on a four-point Likert scale ranging from zero to three. The data obtained for further analysis was by using The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. In order to investigate whether or not students' mental health affected their mental health performance, Descriptive statistics and Spearman correlation analysis was carried out. The validity and reliability of the GHQ performance was considered based on previous research findings, measuring in terms of the Cronbach's Alpha value. The same questionnaire was applied by Kashyap and Singh (2017) in the context of male tannery workers in Kanpur, India.

A high Cronbach's value of 0.93 was obtained. Hankins (2008) had a similar result, namely 0.90. GHQ-12 was considered valid and considered to be a good proxy for measuring psychological distress. 140 students participated and the distribution of respondents by faculty was represented in the form of a pie chart. As per the results obtained from the survey in relation to the grade point average (GPA), 55% students scored more than 3.49, 39.3% scored in the category of 3.00-3.49, 4.3% scored in the category of 2.5 - 2.99 and 1.49% scored less than 2. This was represented in a form of a table along with the frequency corresponding to the percentages. The first hypothesis that was tested was based on the claim “There is a significant relationship between mental health factors and the undergraduate students' academic performances in GPA”. According to the results obtained, academic performance is expected to decline as the level of loss of confidence increases. In case of social dysfunction, anxiety and depression, no significant correlation was found. The second hypothesis tested was “There is a significant relationship between mental health status and the undergraduate students' academic performances in GPA”. It is suggested that the student's academic performance will be affected negatively i.e. as there an increment is observed in the GHQ-12 score received by the respondents, their academic performance will show a decline in terms of their GPA. COVID-19 brought a negative impact on the psychological and emotional well-being of university students. This impact further caused a significant impact on the academic performance of the students during online learning sessions.

Dr. K.C. Barmola's research [2] centered on three primary objectives. Firstly, to uncover the relationship between family environment and mental health of adolescents. Secondly, examine the association between family environment and academic performance of adolescents. Lastly, to investigate how mental health and academic performance of adolescents are related. The study involved the selection of a sample comprising 300 students from five distinct public schools situated in Haridwar and Dehradun districts of Uttarakhand. These students fell in the age range of 14 to 16 years. Family Climate Scale with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.76 was used. A Mental Health Scale having an overall reliability coefficient of 0.84 used as well. For evaluating academic performance,

total marks of formative assessment part two were recorded from the schools. Additionally, for the purpose of finding a relationship, Chi-square test ( $\chi^2$ ) was carried out. The relationship between family environment and mental health was showcased initially.

High, average and low levels of mental health were compared with favorable, neutral and unfavorable state of family environments. On the basis of statistical analysis, the value of  $\chi^2$  found was 10.97 which at 0.01 level of significance is highly significant. Thus, it was inferred that parental involvement, communication, time spent, awareness and emotional support with children could be the cause of this significant relationship. Moving on to the relationship between family environment and academic performance, the value of  $\chi^2$  found was 7.64 which is not significant. The lack of significance in this relationship could potentially be attributed to the greater emphasis placed on individual strategies for academic performance, as well as the existing generational gap between parents and their children. Lastly, the results of the relationship between mental health and academic performance were presented. 23.54 was the  $\chi^2$  value found at a significance level of 0.01 suggesting that the particular relationship is significant. This may be due to parenting, awareness about mental health and getting pressurized due to a more competitive world to get higher education. Dr. Barmola's research helps us better understand how family, mental health and school performance is connected to one another. The detailed findings would definitely be useful for teachers as well as parents who want to create a positive environment that supports the overall growth of youngsters in our rapidly changing society.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

The sample size chosen consists of 100 second year students from Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women. The age of all students ranges from 18-19 years. The survey ensures to maintain the anonymity of the participant. This sample size allows for diversity in terms of academic backgrounds, interests and perspectives. Furthermore, it strikes a balance between obtaining enough data for meaningful analysis and ensuring that the research remains manageable in terms of data collection, processing, and analysis. Being a second year student myself, I feel it would be better positioned to understand the context, challenges, and dynamics of this particular group.

A survey consisting of 12 questions was shared across second year students. These questions focussed upon the collection of qualitative responses. Mental health is a multifaceted issue that involves intricate emotions, thoughts and behaviors. Qualitative data allows us to uncover personal stories, emotions, coping mechanisms, and challenges that might not be adequately captured through quantitative measures alone. It further aids in the identification of recurring themes, patterns and trends within participants' responses.

An organized approach will be followed to ensure a comprehensive exploration of the data gathered through the survey.

#### **Step 1: Data Organization**

A document that will serve as a repository for the collected data will be created. This will ensure that the responses are easily accessible for subsequent stages of analysis.

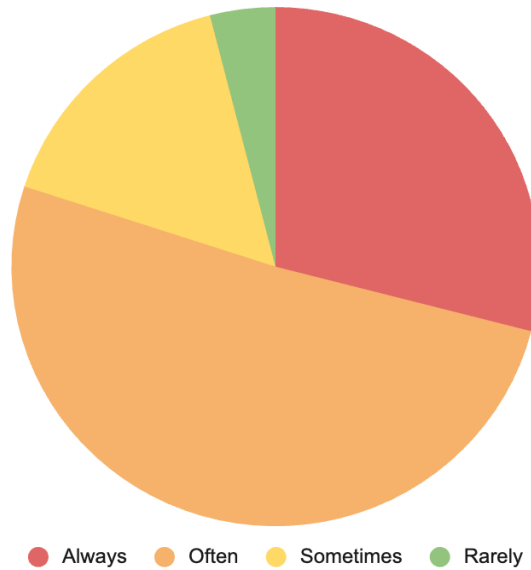
#### **Step 2: Familiarization**

For the purpose of familiarization, the responses to multiple choice questions will be highlighted according to the chosen options. On the other hand, in order to organize the data received through short answer type questions, mind-maps would be created to represent the distinct ideas.

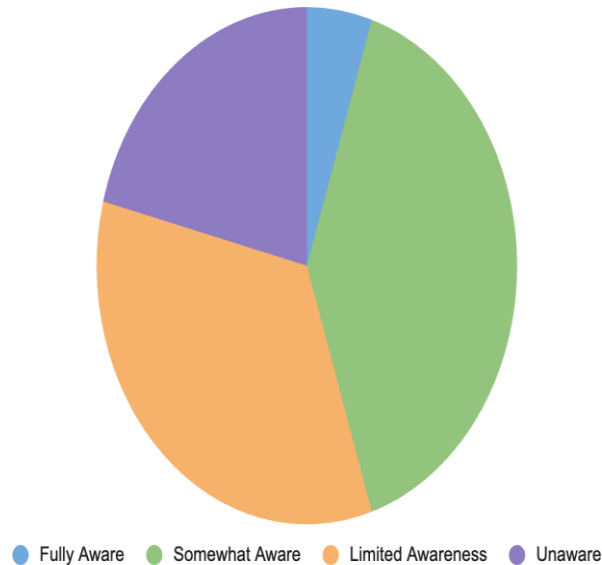
### **IV. RESULT AND ANALYSIS**

The questions asked in the survey focussed on the way students' academic capabilities depend on their mental health. Furthermore, the accessibility towards mental health assistance and resources within the university was put to question. It is extremely important for the students to have a safe space in the environment they spend their time in. Hence, it is important for the universities to take action to incorporate facilities related to mental health.

When questioned regarding the difficulty to meet deadlines or complete coursework whilst dealing with mental stress, 51% of students answered "Often".



When questioned about how aware the students were regarding the mental health assistance and resources available on campus, 21% were completely unaware.



When in a positive and focused mental state, individuals often showcase enhanced analytical thinking and a greater resilience in the face of challenges. A poor mental state hinders the presence of mind, therefore impeding the ability to think logically and find effective solutions. Our mental health is directly proportional to the way we comprehend situations and act upon them. Negative emotions like stress, anxiety, or frustration act as obstacles in the academic life of a student. Cultivating a healthy mental state through practices like meditation and focusing on the positive aspects of life, one can get their minds to calm down and regain focus. Several times, individuals prefer distracting their minds by engaging themselves in activities like cleaning, organizing, dancing, reading, and listening to music. Incorporating mental health assistance and resources in universities is crucial for ensuring student well-being and their academic success. It reduces stigma, supports holistic development, and provides a student with a safe space to share and grow. Universities can do the same by conducting interactive discussions for students to share their thoughts and connect with one another. Furthermore, formation of support groups, organizing awareness drives, and providing access to counseling are some other ways a university can make mental health a natural part of the curriculum.



## V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE

This paper initiates a journey into studying the extent to which the academic life of a student gets impacted based on their current state of mind. The survey conducted by me allowed me to analyze data and observe different points of views. Everyone has a different method for handling their everyday life situations, and having a healthy way to do so is definitely beneficial. As a Computer Science student, I would like to work upon analyzing different moods of students over a certain period of time. For the same, collecting regular data analyzing the change in moods would help understand the impact emotions have on our everyday lives.

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