

MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN ACADEMIC AND CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTS

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Abstract:

In today's fast-paced and highly competitive world, mental health has become an important concern in both academic and corporate settings. Students and professionals are constantly exposed to pressure, deadlines, and expectations, which can negatively affect their emotional well-being. Mental health, understood as a state of psychological and emotional stability, plays a crucial role in determining how individuals think, behave, and perform (World Health Organization, 2019). At the same time, emotional intelligence—the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others—has gained attention as a key factor in coping with stress and maintaining balance (Mayer et al., 2004).

This paper explores the relationship between mental health and emotional intelligence in academic and corporate environments. Using a qualitative approach based on existing literature, it examines the types of stress faced by students and employees and how emotional intelligence helps in dealing with these challenges. The findings suggest that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are generally better at handling stress, maintaining relationships, and staying productive (Goleman, 1995).

The paper also highlights the importance of institutional support, such as counseling services and emotional intelligence training. It concludes that improving emotional intelligence can significantly enhance mental well-being and overall performance. The study recommends integrating mental health awareness and emotional skill development into both educational systems and workplace policies.

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Introduction:

Mental health has increasingly become a central topic of discussion in both academic research and public discourse. In earlier decades, success in education and employment was largely associated with intellectual ability, technical knowledge, and measurable performance outcomes. However, in recent years, there has been a growing recognition that psychological well-being plays an equally important role in determining how individuals function and succeed in different environments. Mental health is not merely the absence of illness; rather, it represents a state in which individuals can cope with stress, work productively, and contribute meaningfully to society (World Health Organization, 2019).



The growing concern around mental health is closely linked to the changing nature of modern life. Globalization, rapid technological advancement, and increasing competition have created environments that demand constant adaptation and high performance. In both academic institutions and corporate organizations, individuals are expected to multitask, meet tight deadlines, and consistently achieve high standards. While these expectations may drive growth and

innovation, they also create significant psychological pressure.

In academic environments, especially at the postgraduate level, students face multiple layers of stress. Academic expectations are often intense, requiring continuous assessment, research work, presentations, and examinations. At the same time, students must make important decisions about their future careers, often in uncertain and competitive job markets. Financial pressures, social comparisons, and the need to meet family expectations further contribute to emotional strain. As a result, many students experience anxiety, self-doubt, and burnout, which can negatively affect both their mental health and academic performance (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Another important dimension of academic stress is the changing nature of learning environments. The shift toward digital and hybrid learning, especially after global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic, has altered how students interact with peers and educators. While technology has improved access to education, it has also reduced face-to-face interaction, leading to feelings of isolation and disconnection. This lack of social support can further intensify mental health challenges.

In corporate environments, the nature of stress is somewhat different but equally significant. Employees are expected to perform efficiently in fast-paced and often unpredictable settings. Long working hours, high performance expectations, and job insecurity are common features of modern workplaces. Additionally, the increasing use of digital communication tools has made it difficult for employees to disconnect from work, blurring the boundaries between personal and professional life. Over time, this can lead to chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, and burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Workplace culture also plays a crucial role in shaping mental health outcomes. Supportive environments that encourage communication and collaboration can help reduce stress, while toxic or highly competitive cultures can have the opposite effect. Employees who feel undervalued or unsupported are more likely to experience dissatisfaction and psychological distress.

In this context, emotional intelligence has emerged as a key concept that helps explain how individuals respond to these challenges. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions in oneself and others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Unlike cognitive intelligence, which is relatively stable, emotional intelligence can be developed over time through learning and practice.

The importance of emotional intelligence lies in its practical application. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are better able to handle stress, communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, and maintain positive relationships. They are also more resilient, meaning they can recover more quickly from setbacks and adapt to changing circumstances. These qualities are particularly valuable in both academic and corporate environments, where interpersonal interactions and emotional demands are high.

The relationship between mental health and emotional intelligence is therefore deeply interconnected. Emotional intelligence can act as a protective factor that reduces the negative impact of stress and enhances overall well-being. At the same time, poor mental health can make it more difficult for individuals to regulate their emotions, creating a cycle that affects both personal and professional functioning.

Given the increasing importance of mental health in today's world, it is essential to explore how emotional intelligence can be used as a tool to improve well-being and performance. This paper aims to examine the role of emotional intelligence in managing mental health challenges in academic and corporate settings. It also

seeks to highlight the need for institutional support systems that promote psychological well-being and emotional development.

Objectives:

1. To understand the importance of mental health in academic and corporate life.
2. To examine the concept and components of emotional intelligence.
3. To compare the mental health challenges faced by students and employees.
4. To explore how emotional intelligence helps in managing stress.
5. To analyze its impact on performance and productivity.
6. To suggest practical ways to improve mental health and emotional intelligence.

Research Methodology:

This study is based on a qualitative research approach and uses secondary data. Information has been collected from academic journals, books, and reports from recognized organizations such as the World Health Organization and the American Psychological Association.

A comparative method is used to understand similarities and differences between academic and corporate environments. Thematic analysis is used to identify patterns related to stress, emotional intelligence, and mental health.

One limitation of this study is the absence of primary data such as surveys or interviews. Additionally, individual experiences may vary depending on cultural and social factors.

Findings:

The analysis of existing literature reveals several important insights into the relationship between mental health and emotional intelligence across academic and corporate environments. While the nature of stressors differs in these settings, the underlying psychological impact shows significant similarities.

In academic environments, students are exposed to continuous performance pressure through examinations, deadlines, and competitive evaluation systems. Many students also experience uncertainty regarding their future careers, which further intensifies anxiety. Over time, these stressors can lead to emotional exhaustion, reduced motivation, and burnout (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Additionally, the shift toward online and hybrid learning has limited social interaction, contributing to feelings of isolation and reduced emotional support.



In corporate environments, employees face high job demands, strict deadlines, and performance expectations. The pressure to remain constantly productive, combined with job insecurity and workplace competition, significantly affects mental well-being. Burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion and decreased efficiency, has become a common issue in modern workplaces (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Work-life imbalance further aggravates these conditions, making it difficult for individuals to recover from stress. A key finding of this study is the critical role of emotional intelligence in managing these challenges. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence demonstrate better self-awareness and emotional regulation, enabling them to respond to stress in a more controlled and constructive manner (Mayer et al., 2004). They are also more likely to maintain positive relationships, seek support when needed, and adapt to changing circumstances. Two established frameworks help explain these dynamics.



The Maslach Burnout Model identifies three dimensions of burnout—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment—which often emerge under sustained stress in both academic and corporate contexts (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). The Mayer-Salovey Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence highlights four key abilities—perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions—that enable individuals to cope effectively with stress and enhance performance (Mayer et al., 2004). Together, these models underscore how emotional intelligence can buffer stress, reduce burnout risk, and improve overall mental health outcomes. Overall, higher emotional intelligence is strongly associated with lower stress, greater resilience, and improved performance in both academic and workplace environments. These findings confirm that emotional intelligence is not only a personal asset but also a practical tool for promoting well-being and productivity.

Conclusion:

The present study highlights the growing importance of mental health and emotional intelligence in both academic and corporate environments. As modern life becomes increasingly fast-paced and demanding, individuals are exposed to multiple sources of stress that can significantly affect their psychological well-being. In academic settings, students face pressure related to performance, competition, and future uncertainty, while in corporate environments, employees deal with workload demands, job insecurity,

and work-life imbalance. Despite the differences in context, the nature of stress and its impact on mental health show clear similarities across both domains.

One of the key insights of this study is that mental health cannot be viewed in isolation from emotional capabilities. Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in shaping how individuals perceive and respond to stressful situations. Those with higher levels of emotional intelligence are better equipped to manage their emotions, maintain interpersonal relationships, and adapt to challenging circumstances. This ability not only helps in reducing stress and anxiety but also contributes to long-term psychological resilience. The findings also suggest that emotional intelligence has a direct impact on performance and productivity. Students who are emotionally aware and self-regulated tend to perform better academically, as they can manage exam pressure and maintain focus. Similarly, employees with high emotional intelligence contribute more effectively to their organizations through better communication, teamwork, and decision-making. In this sense, emotional intelligence serves as a bridge between mental well-being and functional success. Furthermore, the study emphasizes that mental health is not solely an individual responsibility but also an institutional concern. Educational institutions and corporate organizations play a vital role in shaping environments that either support or hinder psychological well-being. A lack of support systems, poor communication, and unrealistic expectations can worsen mental health outcomes, whereas supportive policies and practices can significantly improve them. In conclusion, the integration of emotional intelligence development and mental health support is essential for creating sustainable and healthy environments. As emotional intelligence is a skill that can be developed over time, there is a strong opportunity for institutions to incorporate it into training programs and educational curricula. Addressing mental health proactively, rather

than reactively, will not only enhance individual well-being but also improve overall performance and organizational effectiveness. Therefore, a balanced approach that combines emotional awareness with structural support is crucial for long-term success in both academic and corporate contexts.



Recommendations:

- Include emotional intelligence training in education.
- Provide workplace mental health programs.
- Promote awareness and reduce stigma.
- Train leaders to support mental health.
- Encourage work-life balance.
- Conduct regular mental health assessments.
- Build supportive environments.

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