

Perception of students with respect to educational stress and emotional intelligence: A study on online education during COVID-19

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Abstract

As a result of COVID-19, the online education system has been introduced in the traditional education system in India. Online education provides comprehensively effective teaching and innovation in the system but somewhere, it has been observed that it also has some key areas need to be more explored to make it relevant and adaptable for the education system. In this study, it has been identified the perception of students by experiencing the online classes and their level of stress too. Furthermore, their coping strategies were also explored to mitigate the level of educational stress. In this research, primary data has been collected from 218 undergraduate and postgraduate students of Delhi-NCR from April-May 2021. It has been analysed by a chi-square test applied to the perception of academic stress scale (PAS) and emotional intelligence scale (EIS). It was found that there was a significant difference between academic failure and two different environments that affect the study among students. Furthermore, students have also engaged themselves in various online courses that can help them to learn new things. The significant implication of the results can be used by the government to draft the educational policies for the country, for academicians,

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it will be helpful to manage their curriculum and teaching pedagogy and for students, it will be helpful to use mitigate the stress and coping from that by using various ways.

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1. Introduction

Around 1.2 billion students were getting their education through online mode as a result of COVID-19. UNESCO also worked with education ministries all over the world and established the channel for students to continue their learning with variety of assistance such as technical facilities, digital learning platforms, online meetings and supports (UNESCO, 2020). A study conducted by World Economic Forum, online learning has improved students' memory and ability to absorb knowledge at a quicker rate. There are many technologies and digital courses introduced by various colleges, institutions, and public sector organizations, that support instructor and student in dealing with the educational stress brought on by the lockdown in the country. Byju's, India-based online educational platform launched by Byju Raveendran, has mentioned that its learning app would be available to children for free (Lewis, 2020). (Vorobeve & Dana, 2021) introduced some copies of strategies used by African entrepreneurs in Finland. These were disengagement, delay, compensation and adaptation. They explained that African entrepreneurs adopted such strategies to overcome the economic recession caused by pandemic.

According to (Misra and Castillo, 2004), educational stress occurs when students suffer stress connected to their education due to causes such as class rivalry, family pressure, syllabus stress, and other financial concerns. According to (Essandoh, 1995) and (Mori, 2000), some students may experience this as a result of relocating to other areas, absorbing different cultural values and languages, and adjusting to academic norms. Parents, teachers, friends, and others routinely compare students to other children their age and siblings. This always results in a scenario where the kids are confused and under continual pressure to do well, get good grades, win extracurricular competitions, sign up for sports and other activities, and so forth. Many times, parents have been observed placing these unreasonable demands on their kids to satisfy expectations that they themselves were unable to achieve due to other commitments.

Today's teenagers are under intense pressure to participate in a range of extracurricular activities to fulfil their academic and educational institutions requirements. Due to this educational pressure, students have reported weak in their focus in study and academic performance.

This stress has the detrimental effect on their happiness, career decisions, sleeping problems, psychosomatic symptoms, future planning, psychological issues such as depression and anxiety, and so on (Acharya, 2003; Bedewy & Gabriel, 2015; Iqbal et. al., 2015). In the domains of business, psychology, and education, emotional intelligence is a highly debated subject. (Chandra & Mathur, 2016) concluded that it is also related to dealing with mental upheavals, adopting methods and capacities which prevents emotional fatigue, such as mental pressure, control of emotions, and ignorance of emotional negativity and ego problems. (Hyde et. al. 2002) created the emotional intelligence measure utilised in this research, which was initially given to 200 Indian CEOs. The scale initially included 106 elements, but only 34 were included in the final form following statistical analysis. According to (Hyde et. al. 2002) and (Suleman et. al., 2019), individuals are graded on whether they are "above average emotionally intelligent," "below average emotionally intelligent," or "average emotionally intelligent,". Students were given a number of activities in primary school that helped them comprehend and strengthen emotionally, as well as applicability that helped them channel their thoughts and emotions in productive ways. Students demonstrate their own awareness, participation in various value-based learning programs, and aggressive and empathic work behaviour. Many academic activities, such as group projects, team exercises, role plays, and so on, assist students in developing all of these skills as well as their academic success.

2. Objectives of the Study

The following are the research objectives:

1. To investigate the impact of educational stress on students as a result of online education.
2. To assess how students deal with educational stress by using emotional intelligence coping methods.
3. To investigate the gender-wise impact of emotional intelligence and educational stress, as well as other factors such as educational failure, learning and home environment on online education.

3. Hypotheses & Research Methodology

3.1 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been developed for the study.

H1: There is no significant association between gender and academic failures.

H2: There is no significant association between gender and learning and home environment of the students.

H3: There is no significant association between PAS and EIS and their gender.

3.2 Data and Sampling

In this study, the purposive sampling technique has been used on a significant varied set of pupils who are studying of graduation and post-graduation from various Indian business schools. However, 218 students (during April-May 2021) replied with completed answers and were included in the research after several follow-ups. Researchers also conducted a naturalistic inquiry by using telephonic interviews and discussions with respondents to explore the different coping strategies related to their academic stress. The respondents were from different institutions and contacted via telephonic mode. Their contact details were arranged from filled questionnaire by them.

3.3 Tools

(Bedewy & Gabriel, 2015 introduced the Perceptions of Academic Stress (PAS) an eighteen-item, five-point Likert scale that is designed to evaluate students' views of educational stress and its causes. Students studying under-graduation and post-graduation were given the same score on this scale. The answers collected on a five-point Likert Scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree. The four dimensions are extracted as follows: performance demands (0.6), workload perception and examination (0.6), self-perception (0.5), and time limitations (0.6). 0.7 has been observed as total reliability for internal consistency, with higher values suggesting that pupils are more stressed (Bedewy & Gabriel, 2015).

To check the emotional intelligence of individuals, Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) has been used. It is a scale having 32 items and assesses using a five-point Likert scale (Hyde et. al., 2002). The answers measured ten dimensions: self-awareness, empathy, self-motivation,

emotional stability, managing relationships, integrity, self-development, value orientation, commitment, and altruistic conduct, and ranged from (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The scale's split-half reliability coefficient was 0.88, and the reliability content was 0.93 (Uzzaman et. al., 2017). The significant score represents that a person's emotional and personal lives are in harmony.

4. Data Analysis

Data analysis performed on the gathered data and results are shown in this section.

Table 1 explains the demographic profile of students including gender, education, geographical location of Indian regions, academic failure, satisfaction with the online learning environment, and satisfaction with the current home environment. The result suggested that there are 47.2 percent females and 52.7 per cent males; pursuing their education as under-graduation (83.9 percent) and post-graduation (16.1 percent); and were from different regions such as east (4.1 percent), west (75.2 percent), north (18.8 percent), south (1.8 percent). Furthermore, academic failure, satisfaction with online learning environment and home environment. The result for these variables depicts that 85 percent of students have never failed and 15 percent failed more than once in academics; 58.7 percent of students have responded that they are not satisfied and rest 41.3 percent are satisfied with the online learning environment; whereas satisfaction with home environment suggested that 15.1 percent of students answered as dissatisfaction whereas 84.9 percent represents that they are satisfied with the home environment.

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for PAS and EIS, with mean = 3.276, standard deviation = 1.120, skewness = -0.71 and kurtosis value of 2.960 for PAS. The computed values for EIS scale were mean = 3.904, standard deviation = 0.855, skewness = -0.582 and kurtosis = 3.153.

Table 3 shows the chi square analysis determines the impact and difference between male and female students' academic failure histories as "never failed" and "failed more than once". Overall, males reported a higher score i.e., 107.3 for the criterion "failed more than once" than females i.e., 135.2, while female students reported a higher score i.e., 23.1 for the "never failed" than male students i.e., 19.0. The value of chi-square was calculated as 285.53 with a significant p-value at 95 percent level of significance.

Table 4 shows the satisfaction level of students with learning and home environment by using chi-square test categorised by male students and female students. The result suggested that males reported a strong score i.e., 0.18 on their experience that they are not satisfied with the learning environment whereas, female students reported 0.2. However, both students (male and female) have reported equal levels of satisfaction with the online learning environment. The chi-square value reported 1.01 with an insignificant p-value i.e., 0.316 whereas, for home environment, male students reported low scores on dissatisfaction i.e., 64.4 and females reported high dissatisfaction i.e., 81.2. For satisfaction levels, males reported lower scores than females. The chi-square test value was reported to be 170.03 with a significant p-value at a 95% level of significance.

Table 5 shows the education level of male and female students on PAS scale. The result suggested that there is no significant difference in the mean score of male students and female students for both education levels (undergraduate and post-graduate). Furthermore, the chi-square value was observed at 0.309 with an insignificant p-value i.e., 0.578.

Table 6 shows the chi square test on the gender-wise education level of students using EIS. It has been reported that for under-graduation, females have reported high scores than males i.e., $1.01 < 1.32$, whereas for post-graduation, females also have reported high scores i.e., 7.17 than male students i.e., 5.48. The value of chi-square was reported at 14.99 with a significant p-value.

5. Results and Interpretation

Lockdown in the country and social distance imposed as a preventive initiative for pandemic have profoundly affected the daily life of all students, educators, and families. Everyone has avoided areas where they spend the bulk of their quality time, such as companies, schools, and so on. "Some students miss their schools, college campuses, friends, library visits, lab work, group projects, and so forth" (Chandra, 2021).

The first hypothesis is found significant and concluded that there is the significant association between male and female and their academic failures. The second hypothesis is also significant and found there is significant association between male and female and their learning environment and home environment. The third hypothesis is also found significant and can be concluded there is a association between PAS and EIS level and their gender.

To understand more about the various coping mechanisms employed by students, a phone interview was performed with 15 selected respondents, during which they addressed about their dealing with the academic stress caused by the pandemic circumstances. There are few participants stated that they have started to enrolled themselves in virtual courses to acquire the wider range of technical knowledge. Some students have reported to participating in a variety of innovative events (such as cooking, music, scripting, painting, and so on). It takes time to understand everything since the digital internship is going on. They have also explained the better use of their emotional presence and behaviour to come out from the situation like pandemic.

6. Conclusion

Students are experiencing increased levels of stress due to a wide variety of academic and non-academic issues, including psychological, socio-cultural, and environmental concerns. Many students are put under an enormous amount of pressure, which may lead to burnout. In contrast, early childhood is a critical time for children to develop their emotions, which can have an impact on their overall well-being and their ability to cope with life's challenges. Children develop emotional intelligence through seeing and making relationships with their peers, guardians, surroundings, and academics (Suess et. al., 1992). But as a result of the current scenario, we have undoubtedly learned that it is now crucial for academics to foster emotional intelligence in pupils through physical distance rather than mental isolation. It can be possible because of new innovations in the area of technology. Students were able to "reduce unpleasant and unexpected emotional outbursts" (Uzzaman et. al., 2017), diverting attention to other tasks, whether consciously or unconsciously, is one of the coping mechanisms used by responders.

Table 1
Demographic Analysis of Students

Gender	Female	103	47.2%
	Male	115	52.7%
Education	Undergraduate	183	83.9%
	Post-graduate	35	16.1%
Location in Delhi-NCR	East	9	4.1%
	West	164	75.2%
	North	41	18.8%
	South	4	1.8%
Academic Failure	Never	185	85.0%
	More than once	33	15.0%
Satisfaction with online learning environment	No	128	58.7%
	Yes	90	41.2%
Satisfaction with current home environment	No	33	15.1%
	Yes	185	84.8%

Source: Primary Data Calculation

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics

Statistics	EIS	PAS
Total Frequency	218	218
Mean Value	3.904	3.276
Standard Deviation (SD)	0.855	1.120
Standard Error (SE)	0.232	0.061
Skewness	-0.582	-0.71
Kurtosis	3.153	2.960

Source: Primary Data Calculation

Table 3
Academics Failure using Chi-Square Test

Calculated values	Male	Female	Total
Set 1 (Never failed)	7252 (19.0)	6437 (23.1)	13689
Set 2 (failed more than once)	1753 (107.3)	693 (135.2)	2428
Total	8987	7130	16117

Source: Primary Data Calculation

Table 4
Learning and Home Environment using Chi-Square Test

	Values	Male	Female	Total
Learning Environment	Set 1 (No)	5226 (0.18)	4202 (0.2)	9428
	Set 2 (Yes)	3761 (0.3)	2928 (0.3)	6689
Home Environment	Set 1 (No)	1002 (64.4)	1312 (81.2)	2314
	Set 2 (Yes)	7985 (10.8)	5818 (13.6)	13803
	Total	8987	7130	16117

Source: Primary Data Calculation

Table 5
PAS Scale using Chi-Square Test

Calculated values	Undergraduate	Postgraduate	Total
Male	2462 (0.02)	482 (0.12)	2944
Female	2113 (0.03)	397 (0.14)	2510
Total	4575	879	5454

Source: Primary Data Calculation

Table 6
EIS Scale using Chi-Square Test

Calculated values	Undergraduate	Postgraduate	Total
Male	5031 (1.01)	1012 (5.48)	6043
Female	3973 (1.32)	647 (7.17)	4620
Total	9004	1656	10663

Source: Primary Data Calculation

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