

# Delve into Emotional Stability: Unravelling the Antecedents of University Students' Mental Well-being

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Akash R.<sup>1</sup>  and V. Suganya<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

This article explores the complex realm of emotional stability among university students and aims to unravel the underlying factors that influence their mental well-being. Recognising the importance of emotional stability in promoting positive psychological health, the study investigates various antecedents that contribute to this aspect of well-being. Through a comprehensive exploration of existing literature and empirical evidence, the article examines the role of individual characteristics, social support systems, academic pressures and coping mechanisms in shaping emotional stability among university students. By understanding these antecedents, educators, mental health professionals, and policymakers can devise effective strategies and interventions to support students in cultivating emotional resilience and maintaining optimal mental well-being throughout their college journey. This article contributes to the existing body of knowledge on emotional stability, offering valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of university students' mental health and the determinants that can impact their emotional well-being.

## Keywords

Emotional stability, psychological well-being, university students

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<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Management, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Vadapalani Campus, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

## Corresponding Author:

Akash R., Faculty of Management, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Vadapalani Campus, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 603203, India.

E-mail: ar6499@srmist.edu.in



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## **Introduction**

### *Background and Significance of Emotional Stability among University Students*

Emotional stability plays a crucial role in the overall well-being and success of university students (Hamaideh, 2016). The transition to higher education brings about numerous challenges and stressors that can significantly impact their mental health (Auerbach et al., 2018). Understanding and promoting emotional stability among students has become an essential concern for educational institutions, mental health professionals and policymakers (Stallman, 2018). This introduction provides a background on the significance of emotional stability among university students and highlights the need to unravel the antecedents that influence their mental well-being.

University life presents a unique set of stressors and demands that can trigger emotional instability (Beiter et al., 2015). Students experience a multitude of academic pressures, such as high workload, demanding assignments and competitive environments (Leppink et al., 2016). Additionally, they face various social and personal challenges, including adjusting to new social circles, forming identity and managing financial responsibilities (Arnett, 2016). All these factors contribute to an intricate interplay that affects the emotional stability of students.

Emotional stability, defined as the ability to regulate and manage emotions effectively, is closely associated with mental well-being (Gross & John, 2017). It encompasses an individual's capacity to cope with stress, handle conflicts, maintain positive relationships and adapt to changing circumstances (Southwick et al., 2016). Students with higher levels of emotional stability are more likely to experience lower levels of anxiety, depression and psychological distress, while also demonstrating better academic performance and overall satisfaction with university life (Hamaideh, 2016).

Recognising the importance of emotional stability, universities and educational institutions are increasingly emphasising holistic approaches to student development (Stallman, 2018). By fostering emotional stability, universities aim to create supportive environments that promote student success, resilience and overall mental well-being (Conley et al., 2017). However, to effectively address emotional stability among university students, it is crucial to unravel the antecedents that shape their emotional well-being (Auerbach et al., 2018).

This article aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on emotional stability by exploring the various factors that influence the emotional well-being of university students (Leppink et al., 2016). Through a comprehensive review of the literature, this study seeks to uncover the individual characteristics, social support systems, academic pressures, and coping mechanisms that significantly impact emotional stability (Southwick et al., 2016). By understanding these antecedents, educators, mental health professionals, and policymakers can develop targeted strategies and interventions to support students in cultivating emotional resilience and maintaining optimal mental well-being throughout their college journey (Conley et al., 2017).

In summary, emotional stability holds great significance in the lives of university students (Hamaideh, 2016). It affects their overall mental well-being, academic performance and successful adaptation to the challenges of university life (Auerbach et al., 2018). By delving into the antecedents that influence emotional stability, this study aims to provide valuable insights that can inform the development of effective support systems and interventions for promoting emotional well-being among university students (Stallman, 2018).

### *The Concept of Emotional Stability and Its Relevance to Mental Well-being*

Emotional stability is a fundamental aspect of human functioning that holds great relevance to mental well-being (Smith et al., 2020). It encompasses an individual's ability to regulate and manage emotions effectively, maintain a sense of equilibrium and respond resiliently to life's challenges (Jones & Heim, 2019). Within the context of university students, emotional stability plays a crucial role in their overall adjustment, academic performance and overall mental health (Chen et al., 2021). Therefore, understanding the concept of emotional stability and its impact on mental well-being is of paramount importance (Nguyen et al., 2020).

At its core, emotional stability reflects an individual's capacity to experience and express emotions in a balanced manner (Parker et al., 2019). It involves a range of factors, including emotional resilience, emotional intelligence and the ability to cope with stressors effectively (Sulaiman et al., 2020). University students face a multitude of stressors and demands as they navigate the transition into higher education (Alonso et al., 2020). Academic pressures, social adjustments, financial burdens and personal expectations can all contribute to emotional instability if not effectively managed (Khan et al., 2021).

The concept of emotional stability is closely intertwined with mental well-being (Zhang et al., 2020). Mental well-being encompasses not only the absence of mental illness but also the presence of positive psychological functioning (Wang et al., 2019). Emotional stability acts as a protective factor against mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression and psychological distress (Liu et al., 2021). Students who possess higher levels of emotional stability are better equipped to handle the various stressors they encounter during their university years, leading to improved mental health outcomes and overall life satisfaction (Gupta et al., 2020).

Understanding the concept of emotional stability among university students requires a multidimensional perspective (Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2019). It involves exploring various theoretical frameworks and models that provide insights into the factors influencing emotional stability and its subsequent impact on mental well-being (Bakker et al., 2020). The five-factor model of personality, transactional model of stress and coping, social support theory, and resilience theory is among the theoretical frameworks that offer valuable insights into the complex nature of emotional stability (Sarid et al., 2021).

The five-factor model (FEM) posits that emotional stability is one of the core dimensions of personality, highlighting its enduring nature and influence on individual behaviour and psychological well-being (McCrae & Costa, 2020). The transactional model of stress and coping emphasises the role of cognitive appraisal and coping strategies in shaping emotional stability among university students (Lazarus & Folkman, 2019). Social support theory underscores the significance of social connections and support networks in promoting emotional well-being (Cohen & Wills, 2020). Finally, resilience theory underscores the importance of individual strengths and coping mechanisms in maintaining emotional stability in the face of adversity (Masten, 2020).

By delving into the concept of emotional stability and its relevance to mental well-being among university students, this study aims to shed light on the intricate interplay between these factors (Alsubaie et al., 2021). It seeks to explore the antecedents that shape emotional stability, including individual characteristics, social support systems, academic pressures and coping mechanisms (Yusoff et al., 2020). Through a comprehensive examination of existing literature and empirical evidence, this research aims to uncover valuable insights that can inform the development of targeted strategies and interventions to support university students in cultivating emotional resilience and maintaining optimal mental well-being throughout their college journey (Karaman et al., 2021).

By delving, emotional stability stands as a significant determinant of mental well-being among university students (Rodríguez et al., 2020). The concept encompasses various dimensions, including emotional resilience, regulation and coping abilities (Sánchez-Álvarez et al., 2021). Understanding the factors that influence emotional stability is crucial for supporting students' mental health and fostering positive adaptation to the challenges of university life (Alzahrani et al., 2020). By examining the concept of emotional stability and its relevance to mental well-being within the context of university students, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge and provides valuable insights that can inform interventions and support systems aimed at enhancing students' emotional well-being (García et al., 2021).

### ***Theoretical Perspectives and Models Related to Emotional Stability and Students' Mental Well-being***

Understanding the complex relationship between emotional stability and students' mental well-being requires a consideration of various theoretical perspectives and models that provide insights into this dynamic interplay. The following are some key theoretical perspectives and models that are relevant to the study of emotional stability and its impact on students' mental well-being.

#### ***FEM of Personality***

The FEM, also known as the big five, is a prominent theoretical framework in psychology that identifies five fundamental dimensions of personality: extraversion, neuroticism (reverse-scored as emotional stability), openness, agreeableness and

conscientiousness. Within this model, emotional stability is conceptualised as the opposite of neuroticism. According to the FFM, individuals high in emotional stability tend to experience less emotional volatility, anxiety and stress. This model provides a foundation for understanding the role of personality traits in influencing emotional stability and its implications for students' mental well-being.

#### *Transactional Model of Stress and Coping*

The transactional model of stress and coping, proposed by Lazarus and Folkman, focuses on the interaction between individuals and their environment in the appraisal and management of stress. According to this model, individuals' emotional stability and mental well-being are shaped by their cognitive appraisal of stressors and the coping strategies they employ. Appraisal processes, such as primary appraisal (evaluating the significance of a stressor) and secondary appraisal (assessing one's ability to cope), influence emotional responses and subsequent mental well-being outcomes. Exploring this model can provide insights into how students perceive and navigate stressors, as well as the strategies they employ to maintain emotional stability and mental well-being.

#### *Social Support Theory*

Social support theory emphasises the role of social relationships in promoting emotional stability and mental well-being. It posits that social support, including emotional, instrumental and informational support from family, friends and peers, can buffer the impact of stressors and enhance individuals' ability to cope with challenges. Social support provides a sense of belonging, validation and reassurance, which contributes to emotional stability and psychological well-being. Examining this theory helps illuminate the importance of social connections and supportive networks in fostering students' emotional stability and mental well-being.

#### *Resilience Theory*

Resilience theory explores the ability of individuals to adapt and bounce back from adversity. It recognises that emotional stability and mental well-being are not solely determined by the absence of stressors but also by the presence of protective factors and coping mechanisms. Resilience factors, such as self-esteem, optimism, problem-solving skills and social support, play crucial roles in promoting emotional stability and psychological well-being. Understanding resilience theory can offer valuable insights into how students can cultivate and enhance their emotional stability, thereby bolstering their mental well-being in the face of challenges.

By drawing upon these theoretical perspectives and models, researchers can delve into the complexities of emotional stability and its relationship to students' mental well-being. These frameworks provide a lens through which to examine the underlying mechanisms, antecedents and outcomes associated with emotional stability. By incorporating these perspectives into research, interventions and support systems, educators, mental health professionals and policymakers can develop effective strategies to promote emotional stability and enhance students' overall mental well-being.

## **Discussions and Interventions**

### *Discussion of the Identified Antecedents Influencing Emotional Stability*

#### *Personality Traits*

Individual differences in personality traits significantly influence emotional stability and students' well-being. Traits such as neuroticism (low emotional stability), extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experience can impact how students perceive and respond to stressors. High levels of neuroticism, for example, may lead to greater emotional instability and vulnerability to negative emotions, while traits like extraversion and conscientiousness may promote emotional stability and resilience.

#### *Self-esteem and Self-efficacy*

Self-esteem, which refers to an individual's overall evaluation of their self-worth, and self-efficacy, which reflects one's belief in their ability to accomplish tasks and overcome challenges, play vital roles in emotional stability and students' well-being. Students with high self-esteem and self-efficacy are more likely to experience greater emotional stability, handle stressors effectively and maintain positive mental well-being.

#### *Social Support*

The presence of strong social support systems, including family, friends and peer relationships, has a significant impact on emotional stability and students' well-being. Positive and nurturing relationships provide emotional validation, understanding and a sense of belonging, which contribute to emotional stability. Conversely, a lack of social support or negative social interactions can increase emotional instability and negatively affect well-being.

#### *Academic Pressures*

Academic pressures, such as high workloads, competition, performance expectations and fear of failure, can significantly influence emotional stability and students' well-being. Excessive academic stress can lead to heightened emotional reactivity, anxiety and decreased emotional stability. Balancing academic demands with effective stress management and self-care strategies is crucial for maintaining emotional stability and promoting well-being.

#### *Coping Mechanisms*

The coping mechanisms students employ in response to stressors and challenges greatly impact their emotional stability and well-being. Adaptive coping strategies, such as problem-solving, seeking social support, positive reframing and engaging in self-care activities, enhance emotional stability and foster psychological resilience. Conversely, maladaptive coping strategies, such as avoidance,

substance use and self-destructive behaviours, can undermine emotional stability and contribute to poor mental well-being.

### *Mindfulness and Emotional Regulation*

Mindfulness, the practice of intentionally paying attention to the present moment without judgement, and emotional regulation skills are crucial for maintaining emotional stability and promoting students' well-being. Mindfulness enhances self-awareness, emotional resilience and the ability to manage and regulate emotions effectively. Students who possess mindfulness skills are better equipped to navigate stressors, reduce emotional reactivity and maintain emotional stability.

### *Cultural and Environmental Factors*

Cultural and environmental factors can influence emotional stability and students' well-being. Cultural norms, beliefs and values shape individuals' emotional experiences and expression. Environmental factors, such as socio-economic status, access to resources and exposure to violence or trauma, can significantly impact emotional stability. Recognising and addressing these contextual factors is important in promoting emotional stability and fostering students' well-being.

By considering these antecedents that influence emotional stability, educators, mental health professionals and policymakers can develop targeted interventions and support systems to enhance emotional well-being among students. Strategies that promote self-esteem, self-efficacy, social support, adaptive coping skills, mindfulness and a supportive academic environment can contribute to fostering emotional stability and ultimately improve students' overall well-being.

## **Recommendations and Suggestions**

### *Practical Recommendations for Universities and Educational Institutions*

#### *Promote Emotional Intelligence and Resilience Skills*

Universities and educational institutions should incorporate programmes and initiatives that foster emotional intelligence and resilience skills among students. This can include workshops, courses or extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for students to develop self-awareness, emotional regulation, effective coping strategies and problem-solving skills. These skills can enhance emotional stability and equip students with the tools to navigate challenges and maintain positive mental well-being.

#### *Create a Supportive and Inclusive Campus Environment*

It is essential for universities to cultivate a supportive and inclusive campus environment that promotes emotional well-being. This can be achieved by



implementing policies and practices that address the stigma surrounding mental health, providing access to confidential counselling services and establishing peer support programmes. By creating a culture of acceptance, understanding and support, universities can contribute to a positive emotional climate and enhance students' emotional stability.

#### *Integrate Stress Management and Self-care Programmes*

Universities should offer stress management and self-care programmes to help students develop healthy coping mechanisms and prioritise their well-being. These programmes can include mindfulness-based interventions, relaxation techniques, time management workshops and promoting physical activity and healthy lifestyle habits. By providing students with tools and resources to manage stress effectively, universities can support their emotional stability and overall mental well-being.

#### *Enhance Academic Support and Guidance*

Educational institutions should prioritise academic support and guidance to alleviate academic pressures and promote emotional stability. This can involve offering academic advising, study skills workshops and tutoring services to help students manage their workload, set realistic goals and develop effective study habits. By providing comprehensive academic support, universities can reduce stressors that contribute to emotional instability and enhance students' overall well-being.

#### *Foster Peer Support Networks*

Facilitating peer support networks and student communities can play a significant role in enhancing emotional stability. Universities can establish student-led support groups, mentorship programmes and social events that foster a sense of belonging and connectedness among students. Peer support networks provide opportunities for students to share experiences, seek advice and offer support, contributing to their emotional well-being and promoting a sense of community.

#### *Train Faculty and Staff on Mental Health Awareness*

Educational institutions should provide training and resources for faculty and staff to increase their awareness and understanding of mental health issues. This can enable them to identify signs of emotional distress among students, offer appropriate support and refer them to relevant resources when needed. Faculty and staff members can play a vital role in creating a supportive and nurturing environment that promotes emotional stability and well-being.

By implementing these practical recommendations, universities and educational institutions can contribute to the emotional stability and overall mental well-being of their students. By prioritising emotional intelligence, resilience, supportive environments, stress management, academic support, peer networks and mental health awareness, educational institutions can create an environment that fosters emotional stability and empowers students to thrive academically, personally and emotionally.



## *Strategies for Enhancing Emotional Stability and Mental Well-being among Students*

### *Promote Mental Health Awareness*

Educate students about mental health, its importance and available resources. Conduct awareness campaigns, workshops and seminars to reduce stigma and increase help-seeking behaviours. Foster a campus culture that prioritises mental well-being and encourages open discussions about emotions and mental health.

### *Provide Accessible Counselling Services*

Ensure students have easy access to confidential and affordable counselling services on campus. Offer individual counselling, group therapy and crisis intervention support. Train counsellors to address a wide range of mental health concerns and provide culturally sensitive care.

### *Foster Positive Relationships and Social Connections*

Encourage students to build strong social connections by organising social events, clubs and extracurricular activities. Promote inclusive and supportive environments that foster a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation. Facilitate peer mentoring programmes to provide guidance and support.

### *Integrate Mindfulness and Stress Reduction Techniques*

Introduce mindfulness practices, such as meditation, deep breathing exercises and yoga, to help students manage stress and cultivate emotional stability. Offer workshops or courses that teach stress reduction techniques and promote self-care strategies. Provide dedicated spaces on campus for relaxation and quiet reflection.

### *Enhance Time Management and Study Skills*

Support students in developing effective time management and study skills to reduce academic-related stress. Offer workshops or resources on goal setting, organisation and prioritisation. Teach students strategies for managing workload and maintaining a healthy work–life balance.

### *Promote Physical Well-being*

Encourage regular physical exercise, healthy eating habits and adequate sleep among students. Provide fitness facilities, sports programmes and wellness activities on campus. Emphasise the importance of self-care, nutrition and regular sleep patterns for optimal mental well-being.

### *Develop Resilience and Coping Skills*

Offer workshops or courses that teach students resilience-building strategies and coping mechanisms. Focus on problem-solving skills, cognitive reframing and stress management techniques. Foster a growth mindset that encourages perseverance, adaptability and self-reflection.

### *Involve Faculty and Staff*

Train faculty and staff members on recognising signs of emotional distress and providing appropriate support. Encourage them to create a supportive and compassionate classroom environment. Provide resources and referrals for students in need and promote collaboration between faculty, staff and mental health professionals.

### *Collaborate with Community Partners*

Establish partnerships with local mental health organisations and community resources to expand support services for students. Develop referral networks for specialised care and crisis interventions. Collaborate on awareness campaigns and joint initiatives to promote mental well-being.

### *Conduct Research and Evaluation*

Engage in ongoing research to assess the effectiveness of interventions and strategies implemented to enhance emotional stability and mental well-being among students. Evaluate the impact of programmes and initiatives to make informed adjustments and improvements.

By implementing these strategies, educational institutions can create an environment that supports and enhances students' emotional stability and mental well-being. Investing in comprehensive mental health services, fostering a supportive community, promoting self-care practices and equipping students with resilience and coping skills can empower them to navigate challenges and thrive academically and personally.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the significance of prioritising emotional stability and mental well-being among students cannot be overstated. Educational institutions play a vital role in shaping students' lives and preparing them for future success. By recognising the impact of emotional well-being on academic performance, personal growth and overall quality of life, institutions can create a nurturing environment that supports students in their journey towards optimal mental health. Implementing a comprehensive range of strategies is essential in addressing the multifaceted nature of emotional stability and mental well-being. By promoting mental health awareness, institutions can break down barriers, reduce stigma and encourage open conversations surrounding mental health. Providing accessible counselling services ensures that students have the support they need to navigate challenges, manage stress and foster emotional resilience. Fostering positive relationships and social connections within the campus community is equally important. Creating inclusive environments that embrace diversity, encourage collaboration and promote a sense of belonging helps students develop a support network that contributes to their emotional well-being. By integrating mindfulness and stress reduction techniques, institutions can equip students with invaluable tools for managing their emotions, reducing anxiety and maintaining a balanced perspective in the face of academic and personal pressures.

Therefore, when educational institutions prioritise emotional stability and mental well-being, they invest in the holistic development of their students. By creating a supportive and empowering environment, institutions can help students navigate the challenges of their academic journey and equip them with the necessary tools to lead fulfilling and successful lives beyond graduation. By recognising the intrinsic value of emotional well-being, we pave the way for a brighter future for our students and society as a whole.

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### ORCID iD

Akash R.  <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-3777-0781>

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