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The Relationship between Emotional Well-Being and Academic Performance in a University/College Setting

Edelfin P. Tan¹*, Jerick M. Quintua¹, Leonessa J. Cortes¹

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ABSTRACT

This study endeavors to determine the connection between emotional well-being and academic performance among college students at FEU Roosevelt. Using a correlational quantitative research design, the study aims to determine the strength and direction of the correlation between the students' emotional well-being measured by the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS), and their academic achievement measured via self-reported Grade Point Average (GPA). The respondents were randomly selected by stratified random sampling from different academic programs, including very competitive ones such as Business Administration and Information Technology. An internet-based self-report survey was used for data collection, and descriptive statistics and the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient were used for data analysis using SPSS. An inverse correlation exhibiting high significance was found between emotional well-being and academic performance; students who study in more demanding programs show lower emotional well-being and poorer academic performance. These results are in line with current literature which identifies stress and emotional tension as contributory factors to academic failure, especially in high-stress academic environments. The research highlights the importance of universities adopting proactive mental health care and providing individualized interventions for high-stress courses, particularly for students enrolled in such courses. This study contributes to the body of knowledge about emotional well-being and academic performance in Philippine tertiary institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional well-being is identified as a dominant aspect of scholars' academic achievement in the modern university setting. Scholars are exposed to increasing academic pressures that could affect their mental well-being as tertiary education keeps evolving, particularly in countries such as the Philippines that have witnessed substantial curriculum reforms like the implementation of the K-12 program (David *et al.*, 2019). The reform has heightened the load and expectations imposed on students, particularly in high-stakes, high-level of thinking courses, although its intent was to more effectively prepare them for postsecondary schooling and ultimate employment.

Emotional mental health challenges such as stress, depression, and anxiety are increasingly prevalent in university students, and these symptoms have been established to inversely correlate with academic achievement in some global settings (Beiter *et al.*, 2015). With greater sensitivity, there remains a lack of quantitative, empirical research in the realm of Philippine tertiary education that addresses the statistical correlation between students' emotional well-being and academic achievement. This disproportion necessitates that a correlational study be conducted that can provide objective, fact-based information about how these two variables interact in a post-K-12 educational setting. Students in high-demand study fields like health sciences,

engineering, or business study fields tend to have stringent study requirements placed upon them, rendering them specifically susceptible to emotional stress (Quek *et al.*, 2019). Without proper coping strategies or institutional intervention, emotional duress can affect learning, focus, and academic performance. These issues are further compounded by post-pandemic socio-economic challenges, hence the urgency for timely research capable of guiding institutional interventions.

Research Questions

1. How is the emotional well-being level of university students?
 - 1.1. In what ways does emotional well-being differ among high-demand academic program students?
 - 1.2. What are the most common emotional or mental health issues among university students?
2. What is the academic performance level among university students?
 - 2.1. How does academic performance vary among students of different levels of emotional well-being?
3. Is there a meaningful relationship between emotional well-being and academic performance among university students?
 - 3.1. What is the strength and direction of correlation between emotional well-being scores and academic performance indicators (e.g., GPA)?

¹ Tertiary Education Division, FEU Roosevelt, Philippines

* Corresponding author's e-mail: edelfintan24@gmail.com

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The study utilized a quantitative correlational research design to establish the correlation of emotional well-being and academic achievement among students at the college level. It is suitable for ascertaining if there is a statistically significant relationship between two measurable variables without altering any conditions.

Locale of the Study

The research was carried out at FEU Roosevelt, which provides a good array of academic programs, such as those characterized by high scholastic expectations, like Business Administration and Information Technology.

Sampling Method

The study employed a stratified random sampling method to obtain a proportionate representation of respondents from varying year levels and fields of study. This facilitates broader generalizability of findings within the population as well as adjusting for differences in experiences between students enrolled from high-load courses compared to those in less rigorous programs.

Respondents

The respondents were 150 college students who were taking undergraduate courses. Demographic information, including age, gender, year level, and program was gathered through a demographic questionnaire. Personal identifiers were not collected to ensure confidentiality.

Data Gathering Procedure

With approval from the university’s research ethics board, data was obtained through an online self-report survey administered through official student communication channels (e.g., university email, LMS, or social media groups). Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was collected electronically prior to embarking on the survey.

Instruments

Emotional Well-Being Scale – The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) was employed to

measure students’ emotional well-being. This is a 14-item Likert-scale questionnaire created by Tennant *et al.* (2007), with responses given on a 1 (None of the time) to 5 (All of the time) scale. The WEMWBS is a validated, widely used index of positive mental health, which has established reliability and internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha > 0.89).

Academic performance was measured based on respondents’ self-reported Grade Point Average (GPA) from the last completed semester. GPA is a normalized and quantifiable indicator widely employed to indicate students’ academic achievement.

Both measures pilot tested 10–15 non-participating students to evaluate clarity, response time, and survey flow. Required revisions was implemented before full deployment.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was coded and analyzed with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The statistical treatments to be utilized are as follows:

Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage) to describe levels of emotional well-being and academic performance.

Pearson’s correlation coefficient (r) to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between emotional well-being and academic performance.

Whereas, the significance level will be established at $p < 0.05$.

Scope and Limitations

This research targets solely the emotional well-being and academic achievement of college-level students in a single institution. It does not consider external variables such as family, financial, or socio-environmental factors that might affect either construct. Furthermore, the use of self-reported GPA can pose the risk of reporting bias. The results may not be generalizable to all universities in the Philippines, especially public or vocational universities, because of variations in academic setting and student population.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Emotional Well-Being and Academic Performance

| Variable | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|----------------------|-----|------|--------------------|---------|---------|
| Emotional Well-Being | 150 | 47.8 | 5.46 | 30 | 65 |
| Grade Point Average | 150 | 2.9 | 0.36 | 1.25 | 4.0 |

As shown in Table 1, the average emotional well-being score among all respondents was 47.8 (SD = 5.46), and

the average GPA was 2.9 (SD = 0.36), with higher GPA scores indicating better academic performance.

Table 2: Emotional Well-Being by Academic Program

| Program | N | Mean Emotional Well-Being | SD |
|-------------------------|----|---------------------------|------|
| Business Administration | 50 | 42.69 | 5.48 |
| Information Technology | 50 | 45.40 | 5.36 |
| Hospitality Management | 25 | 51.43 | 5.94 |
| Education & Others | 25 | 51.73 | 5.06 |

Table 2 reveals that students in Business Administration and Information Technology reported significantly lower emotional well-being compared to other academic programs.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Between Emotional Well-Being and GPA by Program

| Program | Pearson r | p-value |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Business Administration | -0.577 | <0.001 |
| Information Technology | -0.463 | <0.001 |
| Hospitality Management | -0.216 | 0.299 |
| Education & Others | -0.262 | 0.205 |

As indicated by Table 3, there existed a high degree of negative correlation between emotional well-being and GPA among Business Administration ($r = -0.577, p < 0.001$) and Information Technology ($r = -0.463, p < 0.001$) students, suggesting better emotional well-being is highly

linked with improved school performance (higher GPA mark). There existed no significant relationship among students who were enrolled in Hospitality Management or Education programs.

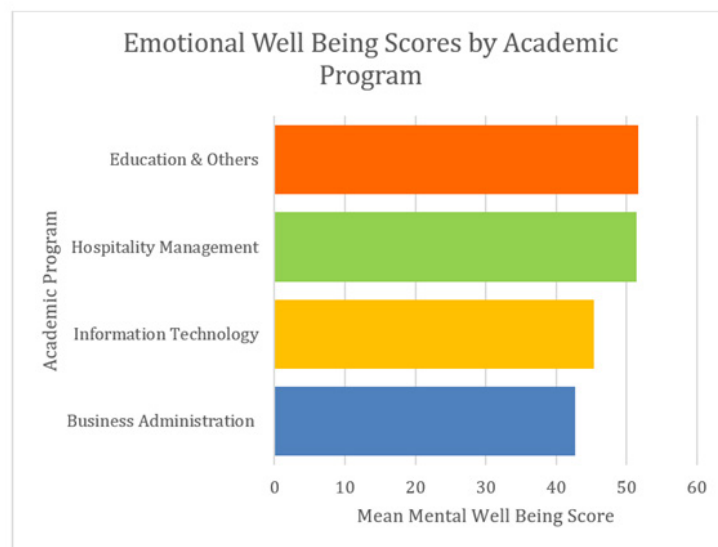


Figure 1: Emotional Well-Being Scores by Academic Program

Figure 1 illustrates the mean emotional well-being scores across different academic programs. Students in Business Administration and Information Technology report

lower well-being scores compared to those in Education and Hospitality Management.

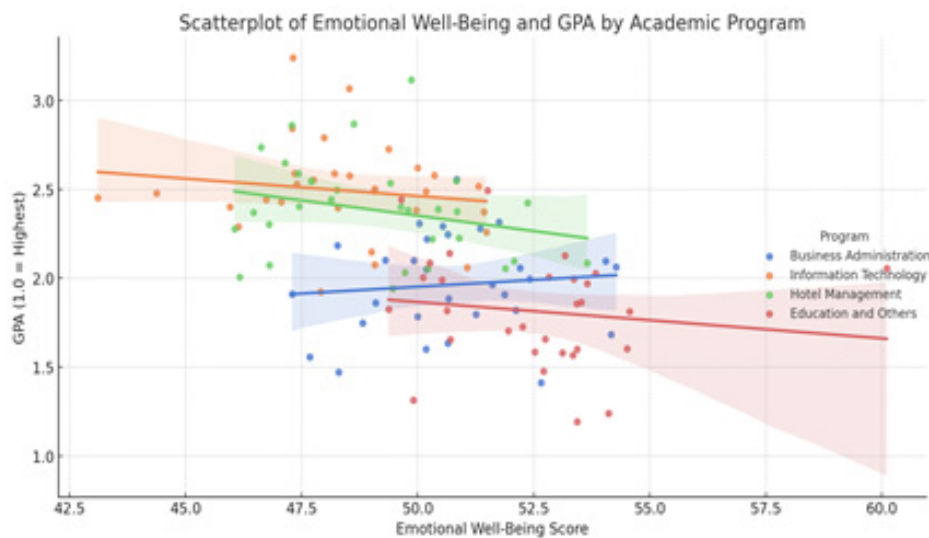


Figure 1: Scatterplot of Emotional Well-Being and GPA (Business Administration and Information Technology)

Figure 2 presents a scatterplot showing the relationship between emotional well-being and GPA across academic programs. A negative trend is observed particularly among students in Business Administration and Information Technology, indicating that lower emotional well-being scores are associated with lower GPAs in these groups.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the research show a significant positive relationship between well-being and academic progress, particularly among the most difficult directions of training the Business and IT specialties. Students in this field reported lower well-being scores and a higher negative correlation between well-being and GPA compared to their peers in non-STEM majors.

This is consistent with prior work indicating that students in competitive academic environments frequently suffer from elevated levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional fatigue, which results from the extremity of academic challenge, competitive atmospheres, and the exceptional amount of workload pressure (Altiok & Üstün, 2013; Beiter *et al.*, 2015). These stressors can compromise cognitive integrity, attention and academic motivation, resulting in underachievement at school (Owens *et al.*, 2012).

New research backs this up that academic pressure isn't just tough, it's actively harming students' mental health. Tamayo (2024) warns that the relentless drive to succeed triggers severe anxiety, ruins sleep, and leads to burnout, especially in high-pressure majors. It's worse where the stakes feel highest.

Furthermore, Patricio (2024) pushes for schools to spot struggling students early. Simple, campus-level support think mindfulness groups or accessible counseling isn't just feel-good stuff. It's proven to boost both well-being and grades.

As can be observed from Figure 1, Business Administration and Information Technology students scored markedly lower on the emotional-well-being scale than their peers in Hospitality Management, Education, and other programs, echoing recent Philippine data showing that emotionally demanding study arrangements (for instance, juggling work and study loads) suppress emotional-intelligence scores among college cohorts (Dulalas *et al.*, 2025).

This supports the view that program structure and workload materially shape students' affective health. Consistent with past work, students in STEM and allied-health disciplines often report lofty academic aspirations that can go unmet when institutional mental-health supports are insufficient (Pascoe *et al.*, 2020).

Figure 2 depicts a clear negative relationship between emotional well-being and academic performance, indicating that students with better emotional health tend to earn higher grades. A complementary Philippine study of online learners found that stronger emotional intelligence, together with sound study habits, significantly boosted learning motivation and ultimately academic

success (Balano & Napil, 2024).

This mirrors earlier evidence that mental-health problems predict lower GPA and higher dropout risk (Eisenberg *et al.*, 2009; Stallman, 2010).

Interestingly, students in less-intensive programs such as Hospitality Management and Education reported higher emotional well-being, yet no significant link emerged between their well-being and GPA. Similar results have been noted in satisfaction-focused research where more relaxed blended-learning schedules improved students' mood and course satisfaction without automatically lifting grades (Hilot *et al.*, 2025), underscoring academic intensity as a key modulator of the emotional-academic nexus.

These findings reinforce calls for proactive, program-tailored emotional-health initiatives on campus (Keyes *et al.*, 2012).

Practical implications Colleges should: (Ito sir pa paragraph nlng po)

1. Scale mental-health services – expand counseling capacity and embed mental-health screening in high-stress programs.
2. Integrate resilience training – add credit-bearing workshops on coping, self-regulation, and help-seeking to first-year curricula.
3. Adopt department-specific supports – for example, peer-mentorship circles for STEM/IT cohorts facing heavy lab loads, or workload-management seminars for Business students during capstone terms.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study uncovered significant negative correlations between the emotional well-being and academic performance of university or college students, specifically those pursuing highly rigorous programs like Business Administration and Information Technology. These students had lower emotional well-being scores and showed greater mental health to academic outcome associations, which indicates that intensive workloads in academic work might jeopardize student performance. The research emphasizes the importance of emotional well-being in academic achievement and highlights the necessity of tackling mental health issues in schools.

Recommendations

Given the evidence, it is advocated that institutions of higher education adopt targeted interventions in mental health and support mechanisms, particularly in academically demanding programs. These can take the forms of department-oriented counseling services, stress management workshops, academic advising, and incorporation of wellness education in the curriculum. Universities and colleges also need to cultivate a culture that supports emotional well-being as an integral part of academic achievement, with the aim of guaranteeing that students have access to the resources they need to succeed both emotionally and academically.

In order to enhance the impact of research and

its generalizability, the future studies will include participants from other institutions in various areas in the Philippines. To reduce self-report bias, the authors may be able to introduce hard measures of academic performance (e.g., official GPA records) and supplement with qualitative data such as interviews or focus groups for richer detail. Finally, the role of moderator variables such as Socio-Economic Status (SES), social support and mental health services might also explain the relationship between emotional health and academic achievement.

Compliance To Ethical Standards

The researchers assure that all ethical procedures were strictly adhered to during the conduct of this research. Informed consent was properly taken from all the respondents before gathering data, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without any penalty. Anonymity and confidentiality of all answers were maintained, and all data were treated in strict compliance with the Data Privacy Act. The welfare of the participants was taken care of, and no psychological or emotional damage was caused to them due to their involvement. The researchers state that there is no conflict of interest regarding this study. Proper citation of all sources was done, and plagiarism was avoided at all costs. Data interpretation was done objectively, without academic or personal bias, and the findings of the study were utilized for academic and research purposes only.

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