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The Impact of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) on the Mental Health Land Well-Being of Students at Henan University

Ren Jin Jin[1]*, Saifon Songsiengchai[1], Feiyan Yang[2]

[1]*Department of Education and Society, Institute of Science Innovation and Culture, Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep, Thailand*

[2]*Department of Undergraduate Programs, Institute of Science Innovation and Culture, Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep, Thailand*

Corresponding author: Ren Jin Jin, E-mail: *saifon.s@mail.rmutk.ac.th*

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) on the mental health and well-being of students at Henan University. Amid China's exam-oriented educational landscape, students often face significant psychological challenges due to academic pressure and limited emotional support. This research aims to (1) examine demographic factors, such as age, gender, socio-economic status, and educational background, specifically impact students' mental health literacy and well-being at Henan University, and (2) explore the impact of social-emotional learning on students' mental health wellness. A quantitative approach was adopted, involving a survey of 600 undergraduate and master's students selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using validated questionnaires measuring SEL competencies and mental health indicators, including emotional balance, adaptability, and academic stress management. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses included t-tests, ANOVA, and multiple regression. Findings indicate that SEL significantly improves students' mental health, with self-awareness, self-management, and responsible decision-making linked to reduced emotional and psychological imbalances. Gender, academic performance, parental education levels, and familiarity with psychology courses emerged as significant demographic moderators. Female students and those with higher academic performance or parental education reported better mental health outcomes. The study concludes that integrating SEL into the curriculum can enhance students' psychological resilience and academic success. It underscores the necessity for Chinese educational reforms to adopt comprehensive SEL programs. Recommendations include policy advocacy, teacher training, and culturally tailored SEL curricula to support students' holistic development. Future research should explore longitudinal effects and intervention-based SEL implementations in diverse educational settings.

Key words: Social-emotional learning (SEL), The Mental Health and Well-being

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary China, exam-oriented education still has a strong influence, with students' scores being the primary measure of success, and this may neglect their comprehensive development. Campus injury cases reflect students' weak psychological qualities and mental health literacy and well-being issues, especially adolescents in puberty. Against this backdrop, traditional education is being re-examined, and emotional intelligence and emotional regulation abilities are drawing more attention.

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is introduced to enhance students' emotional intelligence and emotional regulation. SEL aims to help students manage emotions, improve social skills, and boost resilience. In the US, it has been widely applied and has positive effects. In China, while the theoretical understanding of SEL deepens, practical application is still in its early stages.

This study selects four-year students from Henan University to explore the impact of SEL on their mental health literacy and well – being. Comparing students with and without SEL participation aims to understand SEL's applicability in China's education, offer new ideas for educational reform, and provide mental health support for students to achieve comprehensive development.

Research Objectives

1. To examine demographic factors, such as age, gender, socio-economic status, and educational background,

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specifically impact students' mental health literacy and well-being at Henan University
2. To explore the impact of social-emotional learning on the student's mental health literacy and well-being.

Research Questions

1. How do demographic factors, such as age, gender, socio-economic status, and educational background, specifically impact students' mental health literacy and well-being?
2. What is the impact of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) on the mental health literacy and well-being of students at Henan University?

Research Hypotheses

H1: Demographic factors significantly impact students' mental health and well-being.

H2: Social-emotional learning affects students' mental health and well-being.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Demographic

This study explores how demographic factors, such as gender, being an only child, academic performance, and parental education, impact the effectiveness of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programs. By examining these influences, we aim to tailor SEL interventions to better meet students' diverse needs and improve their overall well-being.

Gender

Gender can influence students' engagement and attitudes towards Social-Emotional Learning (SEL). Research indicates that males and females may have different emotional expressions and processing styles. For instance, females might be more inclined to discuss and express emotions, while males might be less open about emotional issues. Understanding these differences is crucial for designing targeted SEL interventions that cater to the diverse needs of all students (Posamentier et al., 2023).

Only child status

Being an only child can affect students' social skills and emotional needs. Only children might lack the experience of interacting with siblings, which can impact their emotional development and social abilities. Recognizing these differences helps provide more personalized SEL support, addressing the unique needs of students from various family backgrounds (Ferreira et al., 2020).

Academic performance level

Academic performance is closely related to SEL. Students with high academic performance might exhibit stronger self-regulation and emotional stability, while those with lower academic performance may face more emotional challenges and stress (Anyanwu et al., 2024). Analyzing how academic performance levels impact SEL can help tailor interventions to support students with varying levels of achievement(Li et al., 2023).

Parental education level

Parents' educational background can significantly influence students' engagement and success in SEL. Parents with higher education levels often emphasize education and psychological development, providing more support and resources for their children. This, in turn, can affect how well students perform in SEL programs. Understanding parental education levels' impact helps create more effective SEL strategies that accommodate students from diverse family educational backgrounds (Mahoney et al., 2021.

Prior knowledge of psychology courses

Students' prior knowledge of psychology can also affect how they respond to SEL initiatives. Those with a better understanding of psychological concepts might be more receptive to SEL programs and able to apply these skills more effectively in their daily lives. This prior knowledge provides a

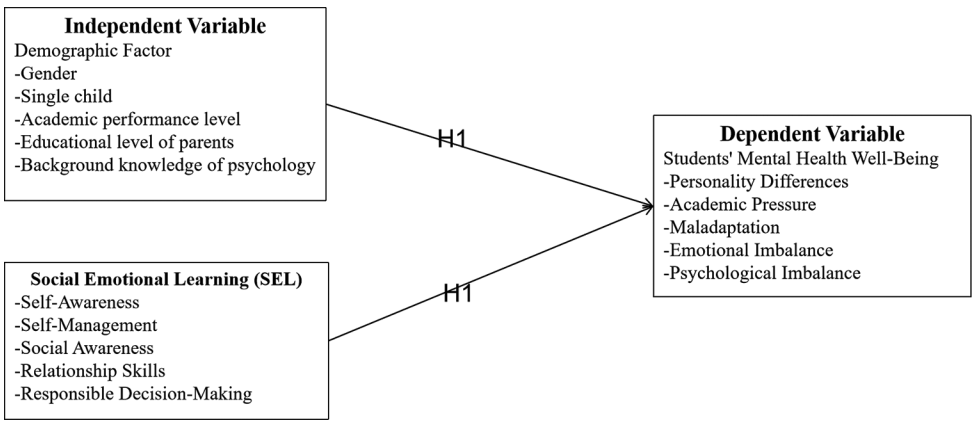

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

foundation that can enhance the overall impact of SEL on their mental health and well-being. Therefore, assessing students' previous exposure to psychology can help tailor SEL programs to meet their needs better (Kim et al., 2021).

Social Emotional Learning

In exploring the concept of emotional competence, it is essential to understand its development and impact on individuals. Saarni (1999) provides a comprehensive analysis of the development of emotional competence in her book, discussing how it shapes our understanding and expression of emotions. She highlights the role of emotional competence in social interactions and personal well-being, shedding light on its significance in our daily lives. Saarni's work, published by The Guilford Press, delves into the complexities of emotional development, offering valuable insights for researchers and practitioners alike. Studies have shown that emotional competence in early childhood plays a crucial role in developing social competence later in life. Denham (2003) examined the relationship between preschool emotional and social competence, finding a strong correlation. Their research, published in Child Development, emphasizes the importance of fostering emotional competence in young children to promote positive social outcomes.SEL's emphasis on these five core skills aims to enhance students' abilities in emotion regulation and problem-solving (Modecki et al.,2017). By cultivating these skills, students become better equipped to adapt to school life, manage interpersonal relationships, reduce problematic behaviours and emotional issues, and ultimately achieve success in their academic and personal lives. Integrating these skills into educational curricula and practices is crucial in nurturing a generation of emotionally intelligent, socially responsible, and well-rounded individuals (Frey et al., 2019).

Student' Mental Health Literacy and Well-Being

The concept of health has continuously deepened with social progress. The World Health Organization redefined health from societal norms and personal development perspectives, stating that health includes "physical, mental, moral health, and good social adaptation." In its report "Mental Health: New Understanding, New Hope," the World Health Organization pointed out that mental health is a sense of emotional and social well-being, where individuals are aware of their capabilities, able to cope with everyday life stresses, work creatively or effectively, and contribute to themselves and the society they live in.

Academic pressure

Academic pressure refers to the stress and anxiety experienced by individuals in educational settings, such as exams, assignments, and performance expectations. Studies have shown that academic pressure can have a significant impact on students' mental health and well-being, leading to issues like anxiety, depression, and burnout (Leppink et al., 2016). Effective coping mechanisms and support systems are essential in helping students manage and overcome academic pressure. Individuals who struggle with maladaptation may benefit from targeted interventions aimed at improving their coping skills and adaptive strategies. That said, Singh (2024) argues for reevaluating human-nature relationships, advocating for viewing students' mental health as essential in sustaining life and academic success. Singh (2024) calls for collaborative efforts to develop sustainable management practices that respect human needs and the environment.

Emotional imbalance

Emotional imbalance involves fluctuations in mood, difficulty in regulating emotions, and heightened emotional responses to situations. Studies have found that emotional imbalance can be associated with mental health issues, such as mood disorders and emotional dysregulation (Gratz & Roemer, 2004). Developing emotional awareness, coping skills, and emotional regulation strategies can help individuals manage their emotions more effectively. Psychological Imbalance: Psychological imbalance refers to cognitive distortions, irrational beliefs, and maladaptive thought patterns that can impact an individual's mental well-being. Research has shown that cognitive-behavioural interventions and therapy can be effective in addressing psychological imbalances and promoting cognitive restructuring (Wang & Gruenewald, 2019). Identifying and challenging negative thought patterns can contribute to improved mental health outcomes.

Related Studies

Gender

Research has shown that gender can play a significant role in influencing mental health outcomes among students. For example, studies have found that females are more likely to experience symptoms of anxiety and depression compared to males (Hankin et al., 1998). Gender differences in coping strategies and social support systems may also contribute to variations in mental health outcomes among male and female students. Understanding these gender differences can help develop targeted interventions to promote mental health literacy and well-being among students. Single child: Being an only child can have implications for an individual's mental health literacy and well-being. Research suggests that only children may experience feelings of loneliness, social isolation, and unique family dynamics that can impact their mental health (Falbo & Polit, 1986). Understanding the psychological effects of being an only child can help in providing appropriate support and interventions to address any potential mental health concerns among this group of students. Academic performance level: Academic performance is closely linked to mental health outcomes among students. Research has shown that students who experience academic stress and pressure may be at a higher risk of developing mental health issues such as anxiety and depression (Stallman, 2010). Understanding the relationship between academic performance and mental health can help implement strategies to support students in managing stress,

maintaining a healthy work-life balance, and promoting overall well-being. Parental education level: Parents' education level can significantly impact students' mental health and academic success. Research has found that higher parental education levels are associated with better mental health outcomes and higher academic achievement among students (Sirin, 2005). Parental involvement in education, access to resources, and support for academic and emotional needs can all contribute to positive mental health outcomes among students. Knowledge of psychology courses: Prior knowledge of psychology courses can influence students' understanding of mental health issues and their ability to seek help when needed. Research has shown that exposure to psychology education and knowledge about mental health can improve students' awareness of mental health concerns, reduce stigma, and promote help-seeking behaviours (Reavley & Jorm, 2011). Incorporating mental health education and psychology courses into the curriculum can enhance students' mental health literacy and well-being that contribute to better mental health outcomes.

Social emotional learning (SEL)

Through in-depth research on social and emotional courses, scholars in the United States have pointed out that social and emotional learning plays a positive role in helping students handle interpersonal relationships, recognize and regulate their own emotions, and promote changes in their behaviour and learning attitudes. Specifically, there are four main points:

Improving Students' Academic Performance: In 2017, researchers from CASEL analyzed the results of 82 social and emotional learning courses and found that, in the 3.5 years following the completion of the final course, the average academic performance of students who had received "social-emotional learning" courses was 13% higher than those who had not (Ye, 1997). CASEL researchers discuss the positive effects of social and emotional learning on students' academic performance in their book "Building School Success Through Social and Emotional Learning. Promoting Positive Behavior in Students: Social and emotional learning improves students' self-efficacy and emotional cognition, fosters a sense of rules, and reduces undesirable behaviours such as school bullying (Meyers, 2007). Taylor and other researchers found in their 2017 study that students who had received "social-emotional learning" courses had reduced frequencies of problematic behaviours and emotional distress, and their attitudes towards things were more optimistic, which is conducive to the emergence of positive behaviours in students (Zhao, 2007). Enhancing Students' Adaptability: As students' "social-emotional learning" improve, they receive less help from teachers and peers, becoming more independent. Students with higher "social-emotional learning" seek help from teachers less frequently and are less dependent on them (Shen & Zhou, 2013).

Student' mental health and well-being

The World Health Organization reports that in recent years, the mental health of children and adolescents has been receiving increasing attention from various countries. Researchers abroad believe that about ten per cent of children have clinical mental health conditions (Ford et al., 2003), with many issues going undiagnosed and untreated (Macdonald & Bower, 2000; Meltzer et al., 2000). Mental health problems hurt various aspects of children's lives, such as quality of life, school attendance (Meltzer et al., 2000), and academic performance (Richards et al., 2009).

There has been a significant change in the methods of mental health education in schools based on a review of foreign literature. Research on highly prevalent mental health issues is becoming more popular (Collishaw et al., 2010). Schools are considered ideal institutions to reach vulnerable and undiagnosed children and adolescents. While some school-based interventions aim to identify which students need specific help and support (Kendal et al., 2011), they are not always targeted toward students with mental health issues. These interventions adopt a preventive and promotive approach by enhancing students' skills and strategies to promote emotional well-being and happiness, thereby preventing the onset of mental health issues (EHWB). This approach is believed to effectively help vulnerable students build immunity against developing mental health issues, and educating all students in this manner can protect disadvantaged student groups from the stigma of targeted interventions (Greenberg, 2010). This schoolwide intervention and promotion method provides targeted support for children in need, and this school-based mental health initiative has begun to spread in many places, such as in Europe (Clouder, 2008), Australia (Graetz et al., 2008), and the United States (Barrett & Eber, 2018). Through schools as a great institution to reach students, foreign mental health education offers tailored psychological courses for students needing preventive and promotive effects.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the questionnaire survey method is frequently used to obtain a large amount of information needed for the research process. Firstly, from the literature review, this study selected information measurement that meets the actual needs of the research in this discipline, which is widely used by many researchers and has high reliability and validity. Then, questionnaires related to the research topic were filled out by fourth-grade. The core variable scale mainly includes student personal factors, Social Emotional Learning, and Student Mental Health. Henan University, a comprehensive research-oriented institution with 13 disciplines and nearly 50,000 full-time students, serves as the research background for this study. A stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure a representative sample for exploring the impact of Emotional Learning (SEL) on students' mental health literacy and well-being. Based on statistical considerations and using the Yamane formula with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, the total sample size was determined to be 600 units. The student population was divided into undergraduate and master's levels, and 300 students were randomly selected from each level. This approach minimizes bias and accurately captures the diversity

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the demographic factor

	Frequency	Per cent
1: Gender		
Male	308	51.3
Female	292	48.7
Total	600	100
2: Single child		
Yes	309	51.5
No	291	48.5
Total	600	100
3: Academic performance level		
Excellent	212	35.3
Average	242	40.3
Poor	146	24.3
Total	600	100
4: Educational level of parents		
PhD/Master's Degree	98	16.3
Bachelor's/Associate Degree	241	40.2
High School/Technical Secondary School	184	30.7
Junior High School or Below	77	12.8
Total	600	100
5:Background knowledge of psychology		
Completely unaware	129	21.5
Somewhat familiar	420	70
Very familiar	51	8.5
Total	600	100

Table 2. The descriptive statistics of social-emotional learning

	n	*M*	*SD.*	Meaning	RANK
Self-Awareness	600	3.83	1.02	Agree	2
Self-Management	600	3.85	0.97	Agree	3
Social Awareness	600	3.90	0.99	Agree	5
Relationship Skills	600	3.69	0.86	Agree	1
Responsible Decision-Making	600	3.89	1.00	Agree	4
Social Emotional Learning	600	3.83	0.66	Agree	

and distribution of the student population across different educational levels and disciplines, making the study findings robust and generalizable to the entire student population of Henan University.

FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the frequency and per cent frequency classified by the participants' demographic factors. Among the 600 respondents, 51.3% are male, while 48.7% are female, indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution. Regarding family structure, 51.5% are only children, compared to 48.5% with siblings. Academic performance reveals that 35.3% of students consider themselves excellent, 40.3% average, and 24.3% poor, suggesting a predominance of average performers in the sample. When examining parental education levels, 16.3% have parents with a PhD or Master's degree, 40.2% with a Bachelor's or Associate degree, 30.7% with a high school or technical secondary education, and 12.8% with junior high school or below. Lastly, familiarity with psychology courses shows that 21.5% of students are entirely unaware, 70% are somewhat familiar, and 8.5% are very familiar, indicating that most students have at least some exposure to the subject.

Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) among the participants. The SEL $M = 3.83$, indicating agreement with the SEL concepts.

Self-awareness $M = 3.83$, ranking fifth among the components, while Self-Management scores slightly higher at $M = 3.855$, ranking second. Social Awareness has an $M = 3.903$, ranking third. Relationship Skills received the

Table 3. The descriptive statistics of student' mental health well-being

	n	*M*	*SD.*	Meaning	RANK
Personality Differences	600	3.86	1.00	Agree	3
Academic Pressure	600	3.85	0.97	Agree	1
Maladaptation	600	3.89	1.00	Agree	5
Emotional Imbalance	600	3.85	1.02	Agree	2
Psychological Imbalance	600	3.86	0.96	Agree	4
Consumer Student' Mental Health Well-Being	600	3.86	0.90	Agree	

Table 4. Summary of hypothesis testing results

	Not Reject H0	Reject H0
Hypothesis 1		
1: Gender		0.002***
2: Single child child?		0.000***
3: Academic performance level		0.000***
4: Educational level of parents (Choose the higher one)		0.000***
5: Background knowledge of psychology	0.11	

Table 5. The multiple linear regression analysis of social awareness influence on students' mental health literacy and well-being

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	0.966	0.933	0.93	0.23

Table 6. the multiple linear regression analysis of social awareness influence on students' mental health literacy and well-being

Model		Coefficient			t	p-value
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta		
		B	Std.Error			
1	Constant	-0.099	0.06		-1.58	0.11
	Self-Awareness	0.088	0.01	0.10	6.91	0.00
	Self-Management	0.320	0.02	0.35	20.31	0.00
	Social Awareness	0.487	0.02	0.54	30.76	0.00
	Relationship Skills	0.107	0.02	0.10	6.81	0.00
	Responsible Decision-Making	0.024	0.01	0.03	2.54	0.01

Dependent Variable: Student' Mental Health Well-Being

M= 3.693, ranking first, suggesting it is perceived as the most critical area among students. Responsible Decision-Making *M* = 3.89, ranking fourth, reflecting a consensus on the importance of this skill.

Table 3 provides descriptive statistics on students' mental health and well-being. The overall *M* = 3.86 indicates agreement with the assessed mental health well-being factors. Psychological Imbalance ranks highest with *M* = 3.86, suggesting it is a significant student concern. Maladaptation is closely followed by *M*= 3.89, indicating that many students exhibit maladaptive behaviour. Academic Pressure and Personality Differences rank second and fourth, with *M*= 3.85 and *M*= 3.86, respectively, highlighting the impact of educational demands and personal traits on mental health. Emotional Imbalance is ranked fifth with *M* = 3.85, showing that emotional issues affect students' mental helth literacy and well-being.

Inferential Statistics

Table 4 This study investigated how various demographic factors affect students' mental health literacy and well-being at Henan University. Independent samples t-tests and one-way ANOVAs were used for analysis.

Table 4 Gender influenced mental health-related well-being, with female students scoring higher than male students. No significant difference was found regarding the single-child factor. Academic performance level was an important factor, with substantial differences between excellent, average, and poor performers. Parental education level also significantly affected students' mental health literacy and well-being, with higher parental education correlating with better outcomes. Moreover, background knowledge of psychology courses was a significant factor, and students who were more familiar with psychology courses had better mental health literacy and well-being.

Self-awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, Responsible Decision-Making Influence on Student' Mental Health Literacy and Well-Being

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis is applied in this study. The regression equation is as follows:

Table 7. The multiple linear regression analysis of social awareness influence on students' mental health literacy and well-being

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	0.896	0.803	0.80	0.40

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5$$

Where Y = Student' Mental Health Well-Being
X_1 = Self-Awareness
X_2 = Self-Management
X_3 = Social Awareness
X_4 = Relationship Skills
X_5 = Responsible Decision-Making
ε = Error term

Table 5 presents the results of a multiple linear regression analysis to assess the influence of various emotional and social competencies on students' mental health and well-being. The model shows a strong correlation (R = 0.966) and a high R-squared value of 0.933, indicating that approximately 93.3% of the variance in students' mental health well-being can be explained by the five predictors: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making.

$$\hat{Y} = -0.099 + 0.088X_1 + 0.32X_2 + 0.487X_3 + 0.107X_4 + 0.024X_5 \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \quad (1)$$

(0.000) (0.000) (0.000) (0.000) (0.01)

Adjusted $R^2 = 0.966$

Table 6 provides detailed coefficients from the regression model, showcasing the unstandardized and standardized coefficients for each predictor variable. The constant term is -0.099, while all predictors have positive coefficients, indicating that increased competencies are associated with improved mental health literacy and well-being.

Social Emotional Learning Influence on Students' Mental Health Well-Being

The following regression equation was formulated for investigatin the influence of social emotional learning on students' mental health well-being:

Table 8. The multiple linear regression analysis of social awareness influence on students' mental health literacy and well-being

Model		Coefficient			t	p-value
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta		
		B	Std.Error			
1	Constant	-0.804	0.096		-8.37	0.00
	Social Awareness	1.217	0.025	0.90	49.39	0.00

Dependent Variable: Student' Mental Health Well-Being

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \varepsilon$$

Where Y = Student' Mental Health Well-Being
X = Social Awareness
ε = Error term

Table 7 illustrates the results of another regression analysis focusing solely on social awareness as a predictor of students' mental health and well-being. The model displays a strong correlation (R = 0.896) and an R-squared value of 0.803, indicating that Social Awareness explains approximately 80.3% of the variance in mental health well-being.

$$\hat{y} = -0.804 + 1.217X \quad \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \quad (2)$$
(0.000) (0.000)
Adjusted $R^2 = 0.896$

Table 8 details the coefficients for the regression analysis focusing on Social Awareness. The constant term is -0.804, and the unstandardized coefficient for Social Awareness is 1.217, which signifies a strong positive relationship with students' mental health literacy and well-being. The standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.90) indicates that Social Awareness contributes significantly to the model, with a t-value of 49.39 and a p-value of 0.00, confirming its statistical significance. This highlights the crucial role that Social Awareness plays in enhancing students' mental health and well-being.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

Demographic

The conclusion derived from the analysis indicates that demographic factors significantly influence students' subjective well-being and mental health. The literature supports this assertion, highlighting various demographic variables that are critical in shaping students' experiences and psychological states. Mewafarosh and Agarwal (2022) emphasize that subjective well-being among students is significantly affected by demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and socio-economic status. Their findings suggest that students from diverse backgrounds experience varying levels of well-being, underscoring the need for tailored interventions that consider these differences. Similarly, Silva et al. (2021) explored the impact of socioeconomic status and psychosocial factors on the mental health of undergraduate students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their research revealed that students with lower socio-economic status reported higher levels of anxiety and depression. This highlights the vulnerability of particular demographic groups, particularly during crises, and the necessity for targeted psychological support. Marquez et al. (2023) further elaborate on the effects of geographic and socio-demographic factors on adolescent well-being, noting that students from different school types and regions exhibit distinct mental health profiles. This geographic variation reinforces the importance of understanding local contexts when addressing mental health issues in educational settings. Muja et al. (2024) discuss how contextual conditions, alongside socio-demographic backgrounds, influence students' well-being in higher education. Their findings indicate that the academic environment and available resources significantly affect students' mental health outcomes, suggesting that educational institutions must consider these factors in their well-being initiatives. Finally, Singh (2020) emphasizes the relationship between demographic characteristics and student engagement, highlighting that personal well-being is closely linked to students' backgrounds. This connection suggests that demographic diversity can enhance or hinder engagement, further impacting mental health.

Social Emotional Learning Influence on Students' Mental Health Literacy and Well-Being

The results of this study indicate that emotional and social competencies significantly affect students' mental health literacy and well-being. A survey of 500 college students found that emotional and social competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness significantly correlate with mental health. Among these, self-management has the most pronounced impact on mental health, suggesting that good self-management skills can effectively enhance students' psychological well-being. Additionally, social awareness has been validated as an essential factor influencing mental health.

The findings of this study are strongly supported by existing literature highlighting the critical role of emotional and social competencies in enhancing students' mental health literacy and well-being. Dubey (2024) illustrates how self-awareness training significantly improves students' emotional and social well-being, reinforcing that self-awareness is foundational for other competencies, such as self-management and social awareness. Similarly, Zhao (2024) identifies self-management as a key factor in fostering a sense of well-being among college students, aligning with our regression analysis that shows its substantial

positive impact on mental health. Furthermore, Grové and Laletas (2020) emphasize that promoting social and emotional learning cultivates social awareness, which our results indicate has the most decisive influence on mental health well-being. This suggests that fostering these competencies can improve student emotional regulation and relationship management. Lastly, Saboowala and Pandya (2016) highlight the importance of relationship skills and responsible decision-making, acknowledging their role in creating supportive environments that enhance psychological resilience. Collectively, this literature underscores the necessity of integrating emotional and social learning programs in educational settings to equip students with the skills to navigate academic and personal challenges, ultimately contributing to their mental health and overall well-being.

Recommendation

The findings from this study have several important implications for educational practice. First and foremost, recognizing the significant impact of demographic factors on students' mental health suggests that academic institutions should adopt a more personalized approach to mental health support. Tailoring interventions to meet the unique needs of students based on their backgrounds—such as gender, socio-economic status, and family structure—can enhance the effectiveness of mental health programs.

Integrating Social Emotional Learning (SEL) into the curriculum should also be prioritized. Schools can implement comprehensive SEL programs focusing on academic performance and developing social and emotional competencies. Training teachers to deliver SEL effectively and creating a school culture that values emotional well-being will foster a supportive environment conducive to learning and personal growth.

Furthermore, collaboration with mental health professionals is essential. Schools should partner with community mental health organizations to provide resources and support for students and staff. This collaboration can enhance the capacity of schools to address mental health issues proactively, particularly in times of crisis, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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