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## Relationship among social competence, mental well-being and academic performance of undergraduate students

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### Abstract

*Higher education is important aspect in the students life. There are various elements that supports them during learning. In undergraduate students, the social competence and mental well-being are recognized as crucial element for the academic development. Therefore, the purpose of the current research was to investigate the relationship among social competence, mental well-being and academic performance of undergraduate students. Correlational research design was applied in present study. By following quantitative method a sample of 411 university of Mianwali students were selected through random sampling techniques. Data was gathered from faculty of sciences, faculty of social sciences and faculty of arts and humanities. Two adopted scale i.e., Social competence and Mental well-being was used. Academic performance of the students were measured by their CGPA (Cumulative Grade Point Average). Both instruments were reliable according to the Cronbach's alpha's results. Data was analyzed by using mean, standard deviation, correlation and regression analysis in SPSS V.27. The relationship of social competence and mental well-being was significant, However, the relationship was insignificant between social competence and academic performance, and mental well-being and academic performance. According to the results the effect of social competence and mental well-being on academic performance was found insignificant. It was suggested that universities organize workshops and conflict resolution training that foster social competency based on the findings. Along with improving students' interpersonal abilities, these activities will boost their sense of worth and mental agility.*

**Key Words:** Social Competence, Mental Well-Being, Student, undergraduate and Academic performance

**Introduction**

In today's educational settings academic performance is inclined by various cognitive and non-cognitive characteristics as well as intellectual competence. A student's university overall environment and academic achievement are highly impacted by various elements such as coping stress, emotional integrity, social competence, mental well-being and psychological resilience that help in effective social engagement. In determining pupils' mental and social health, these elements have crucial importance in perspective of academic success (García-Feijoo et al., 2023). There are various academic challenges for those students whom suffer emotionally or socially. The need of intellectual growth has become vivid in higher educational level where students have to suffer from more academic and social pressure. Lack of social competence can prevent from collaboration, communication and conflict management. Likewise, stress, low motivation etc. are signs of weak mental health which affect academic performance (Kern et al., 2015). In order to maintain an inclusive learning environment, it is imperative to focus on both social and psychological elements, specifically for undergraduate students of University of Mianwali.

Social competence is defined as the ability to act sensibly and effectively in a various social situations. According to Rose-Krasnor (1997), it involves a multiplicity of skills, such as cooperation, communication, empathy, and emotional control and these skills mainly promote academic performance and learning. These are important to be learnt by focusing on academic activities rather than being distinctive. Pupils interact with their fellows in many ways when necessary and build supportive relationship; socially competent students perform good in academics (Wentzel, 2015). On the other hand students with lack of social skills feel alone, engage less with peers and perform low academically. It represents that this social networking creates sense of affiliation and emotional stability in students. Additionally, social competence improves mental well-being, emotional health and academic performance.

Mental well-being also has impact on academic performance, which includes emotional balance, life satisfaction, and independence from mental illnesses including anxiety and depression (WHO, 2014). Pupils that are mentally healthy are better able to manage stress, maintain their motivation, and stay cognitively involved in their studies. On the other hand, poor mental health can result in academic decline, fatigue, and disengagement. Research has shown that academic performance and mental health are significantly positively correlated, highlighting the importance of mental health interventions in educational settings (García-Feijoo et al., 2023; Kern et al., 2015). Additionally, adolescents who are mentally well are better able to engage in social activities, build strong peer relationships, and ask for emotional help. In addition to enhancing focus and self-control, emotional resilience also supports the growth of social competence.

According to Sahu (2022), this mutually reinforcing interaction between social and emotional elements helps students maintain their academic commitment. Strong social skills and emotional control increase a student's likelihood of setting objectives, overcoming obstacles in the classroom, and maintaining motivation (Suleman et al., 2020). Academic results have been demonstrated to be considerably enhanced by Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs that focus on both mental and interpersonal development (Durlak et al., 2011). Cultural background, family dynamics, peer relationships, and institutional support all have an impact on students' social competency at the university level (Legkauskas et al., 2019). Together, these elements influence kids' motivation and academic adjustment. Additionally, studies indicate that academic performance depends on having strong social networks and emotional support systems, which are facilitated by interpersonal skills (Spence, 2003). As a result, academic achievement needs to be seen as a multifaceted concept that is intimately related to students' mental and social growth.

This study aims to explore the interrelationship among social competence, mental well-being, and academic performance in the context of students at the University of Mianwali. By examining these variables collectively, the study highlights the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach to student development that transcends traditional academic metrics as well as an increment in current literature. Current study will provide input to the policy makers to suggest measures to improve the social competence and organize activities which can pay favorable contribution towards the mental well-being in order to boost the academic performance of the study which is a significant aspect in various circumstances.

**Literature review:**

In higher educational settings, the academic and overall developments of students depends on various factors, and social competence and mental well-being are from one of those elements. According to Rose-Krasnor (1997), social competence is the capacity to engage with people in a constructive manner, build relationships, and act correctly in social situations. It encompasses abilities like cooperation, empathy, communication, and conflict resolution all of which are essential for a student to succeed in academic environments. Socially competent students are more likely to collaborate with their peers, take an active part in class discussions, and ask for assistance when necessary all of which have a direct impact on academic success (Wentzel, 2015). Academic achievement and social skills are positively correlated, according to numerous studies. According to Wentzel (2015), children with excellent social skills are more likely to be motivated, self-reliant, and involved in class all of which are important indicators of academic success.

In academic settings, students' ability to focus, efficiently manage their time, and handle academic pressure is greatly influenced by their mental health. Better memory, problem-solving abilities, and general academic performance are all displayed by students who are

more relaxed (Kern et al., 2015). Academic performance can be significantly hampered by poor mental health, which includes conditions like anxiety, downhearted, and emotional tiredness (Sahu, 2022). Academic achievement and psychological well-being are strongly correlated, according to numerous research. According to García-Feijoo et al. (2023), students who had better mental health demonstrated noticeably higher levels of resilience and academic engagement. On the other hand, particularly among university populations, mental anguish can lead to higher dropout rates, poor academic attention, and absenteeism.

Mental health and social competency are interrelated concepts. Because they are more likely to feel like they belong and receive social support, students who possess strong social skills also typically have higher emotional stability (Carey, 2013). In addition to lowering feelings of loneliness and promoting emotional security, healthy social connections also guard against mental health issues. According to Spence (2003), social competence can serve as a protective barrier against psychological stressors, assisting people in adjusting to shifting circumstances and lessening emotional suffering. Furthermore, students with better mental well-being often find it easier to initiate and maintain social relationships. Emotional regulation, a core component of psychological health, enhances one's ability to respond appropriately in social situations. This reciprocal relationship suggests that efforts to improve one domain may positively affect the other. Educational institutions that simultaneously promote mental health and social skill development report improved student outcomes on both fronts (Magnesio & Davis, 2010).

Academic achievement is greatly influenced by social and emotional elements in addition to academic prowess. A student's overall academic efficiency is influenced by the integration of their mental health and social competence. High emotional and social functioning adolescents are more likely to participate in class, have positive interactions with teachers and classmates, and effectively handle academic stress, according to Suleman et al. (2020). Likewise, Durlak et al. (2011) discovered that school-based social and emotional learning (SEL) initiatives resulted in both enhanced emotional well-being and notable increases in academic performance. A comprehensive perspective on student achievement is offered by the combined influence of social and emotional development. It suggests that in order to maximize academic results, emotional control and interpersonal skills must be added to cognitive development. Many educators have advocated for policies and procedures that promote well-rounded student development as a result of this viewpoint.

While previous research has established individual links between social competence, mental well-being, and academic performance, few studies have examined the combined effect of social and emotional factors on students' academic outcomes, particularly in the context of Pakistani higher education. There is a lack of region-specific data, especially from emerging universities, regarding how these constructs interact and influence student performance.

Moreover, most existing studies have focused on primary or secondary school populations, leaving a significant gap in research at the university level. The present study addresses this gap by exploring the combined impact of social competence and mental well-being on the academic performance of university students, with a specific focus on the University of Mianwali. By examining these constructs in tandem, this research aims to offer deeper insights into the psychosocial factors that contribute to academic success in higher education settings. Such insights can inform the development of comprehensive student support services and academic interventions tailored to the needs of university students in Pakistan.

Objectives of the study:

- To find out the relationship among social competence, mental well-being and academic performance.
- To find out the effect of social competence and mental well-being on academic performance.

### Methodology

Current study followed quantitative method and correlation research design. Population of current study was all undergraduate students of the University of Mianwali. A sample of 400 students were selected using simple random sampling from nine departments (Urdu, English, psychology, CS & IT, Islamic studies, Zoology, Mathematics, Chemistry, Commerce and Education) of university of Mianwali. In current study two adopted scales i.e., the Multidimensional Social Competence Scale (MSCS) developed by Trevisan et al. (2018) and the Mental Wellbeing Scale developed by Fen et al. (2013) was used. Academic performance was measured using the students' Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). Both instruments were reliable as the value of Cronbach's alpha for Social Competence Scale was 0.70 and for Mental Well-being Scale was 0.906. Data was collected by both mode physical visits of departments and online using Google form. Collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (means & standard deviations and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation and Multiple regression analysis). All ethical standards were followed in current research.

### Results

Table 1 *Students level of Social competence*

Statements	Mean	Std.Devitation	Level
1. I prefer to spend time alone.	3.70	1.260	High
2. I require motivation to communicate with or interact with others.	3.40	1.360	Medium
3. I show little interest in people.	3.55	1.265	Medium
4. I enjoy meeting new people.	3.64	1.291	Medium
5. I initiate friendly conversation with people.	3.91	1,204	High

6. I ask people questions about themselves or their lives.	3.16	1.326	Medium
7. I understand when people are being arrogant.	3.83	1.171	High
8. I can see things from another person's perspective.	3.55	1.377	Medium
9. I cannot predict what other people will do or how they will react.	3.18	1.363	Medium
10. I can understand when people are joking.	4.07	1.119	High
11. I am sensitive to the feelings and concerns of others.	4.00	1.216	High
12. I show concern for others when they are distressed.	4.07	1.105	High
13. I congratulate people when good things happen to them.	4.31	1.075	High
14. I try to cheer up people (when they are upset).	4.01	1.242	High
15. I apologize after hurting someone.	4.29	1.054	High
16. I do not offer to help people (unless they are told to).	2.91	1.384	Medium
17. I change my behavior according to the situation.	4.07	1.144	High
18. I dress appropriately of my age and social situation.	4.11	1.162	High
19. I hide my true feelings (when necessary) so that I don't come across as rude.	3.94	1.222	High
20. My expectations to friends are reasonable.	3.92	1.189	High
21. I can change conversations to my favorite topic or interest.	3.87	1.233	High
22. I give other people a chance to speak during conversations.	4.27	1.097	High
23. I have trouble joining conversations appropriately.	3.36	1.264	Medium
24. I can read other peoples facial expression easily.	4.01	1.186	High
25. I look people in the eye when talking to them.	3.79	1.277	High
26. I use appropriate gestures when communicating with people.	3.88	1.180	High
27. I speak with a boring, dull tone of voice.	2.55	1.312	Medium
28. I smile appropriately in social situations.	3.91	1.121	High
29. I get frustrated easily.	3.28	1.346	Medium
30. I am patient (e.g., when waiting).	3.50	1.357	Medium
31. My emotional responses tend to be extreme.	3.47	1.206	Medium
32. I stay calm when problems come up.	3.52	1.351	Medium

Table 1 revealed a high level of social competence among respondents.

Table 2 *Students level of Mental Well Being*

Statement	Mean	Std.Deviation	Level
1. I feel balanced in myself	3.73	1.243	High
1. I am appreciative of life-	3.97	1.088	High
2. I accept what life has to offer	4.00	1.136	High
3. I am able to think clearly	4.02	.994	High
4. I am able to accept myself	4.24	1.366	High
5. I am able to think rationally-	4.06	1.075	High
6. I am able to make good decisions	3.97	1.139	High
7. I am able to accept reality	4.19	1.061	High
8. I appreciate my own self-worth	4.20	1.031	High
9. I am able to make friends	3.87	1.250	High
10. I am able to keep company with others	3.98	1.162	High
11. I am able to seek help when need	3.85	1.238	High
12. I am able to offer help to others	4.22	.994	High
13. I am able to maintain a good family life	4.11	1.130	High
14. I feel peace	3.95	1.182	High
15. I seek for self-development /growth / cultivation.	4.06	1.146	High
16. I am alert.	3.90	1.146	High
17. I am not depressed.	3.46	1.316	Medium
18. I am optimistic about the future	3.93	1.171	High
19. I am able to cope with life's challenges	4.01	1.121	High
20. I am resilient about the future.	3.71	1.134	High
21. I stand firm under stress	3.62	1.170	Medium
22. I am Spiritual.	3.92	1.069	High
23. I am happy	3.86	1.193	High
24. I am content.	3.72	1.106	High
26. i am calm.	3.87	1.164	High
27. I have the strong support of my family and friends.	4.07	1.205	High
28- I can handle most situations	4.05	1.089	High
29- I am able to contribute positively to the world	4.17	1.049	High
30- I believe that life is a continued development of myself	4.24	1.074	High

According to the table 2 the high level of mental well-being was found in respondents.

### Correlation Analysis

Table 3 *Correlation analysis among Social competence, mental well-being and academic performance of respondents (N= 411)*

Variable		MW	AP
SC	Pearson correlation	.627	.026
	Sig. ( 2-tailed)	.001	.604
MW	Pearson correlation		.018
	Sig. ( 2-tailed)		.709

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Above table revealed a significant positive relationship between social competence and mental well-being as  $p = .001$  and  $r = .627$ . The relationship between social competence and academic performance was insignificant as  $p = .604$  and  $r = .026$  and relationship of mental well-being and academic performance was also insignificant as  $p = .709$  and  $r = .018$ .

### Linear Regression Analysis

Table 4 *Effect of social competence on academic performance of students*

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardize Coefficients	t	Sig.
	Beta	Std.Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.271	.098		33.436	.001
SC	.0001	0.002	0.026	0.519	.709

According to Table 4 the parameter model of regression analysis was insignificant. So, an insignificant effect of social competence on academic performance was found ( $\beta = .026$ ,  $p = .709$ ). It mean that value of independent variable does not differ the value of dependent variable.

Table 5 *Effect of mental well-being on academic performance of students*

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardize Coefficients	t	Sig.
	Beta	Std.Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.271	.098		33.436	.001
MWS	.000	0.001	0.018	.347	.709

According to Table 5 the parameter model of regression analysis was insignificant. So, an insignificant effect of mental well-being on academic performance was found ( $\beta = .018$ ,  $p = .709$ ). It mean that value of independent variable does not differ the value of dependent variable.



## Discussion

Current study intended to check the relationship among social competence, mental well-being and academic performance of students. The current study revealed a significant positive relationship between social competence and mental well-being, suggesting that students with higher social skills tend to experience better emotional health. This finding aligns with the work of Denham et al. (2003), who emphasized that social and emotional competence leads to greater emotional stability. Lau and Hue (2011), found that adolescents with strong social skills exhibited fewer depressive symptoms and greater psychological well-being. However, contrary findings were also reported by Rehman and Haider (2013), a statistically insignificant relationship between social competence and mental well-being in university students.

Regarding the association between social competence and academic performance, the results showed no significant relationship. The studies by Rehman and Haider (2013) support the present study's finding by showing no significant effect of social competence on academic performance. This studies of Bashir et al. (2018) found that social competence significantly predicted students' academic success and contradicted current research findings.

Similarly, no significant relationship was found between mental well-being and academic performance in the current study. The present findings are in line with Rehman and Haider (2013), who observed no significant statistical relationship between students' mental health and their CGPA. While previous research by Keyes (2006) and Sood and Anand (2010) suggested that mental well-being plays an important role in students' academic outcomes. These mixed findings indicate that while social and emotional factors contribute to students' personal development, their direct effect on academic performance may vary depending on contextual, cultural, and institutional factors.

In present study there was insignificant effect of social competence on academic performance. When motivation and classroom behavior were taken into account, Wentzel (1991) discovered that although social competence helps with peer acceptability and teacher-student relationships, it had no obvious impact on academic performance. According to Malecki and Elliott (2002), social skills had a small predictive value on academic achievement in standardized academic outcomes, despite having a positive correlation with teacher perceptions. The importance of interpersonal skills in academic success was highlighted by Aprara et al. (2000), who showed that pro-social behavior and social competence in early adolescence significantly predicted later academic accomplishment. The study of Manzoor and Malhotra (2024) revealed that pupil with high social competence have a significant effect of social competence on academic performance and contradicted current research. According to DiPerna and Elliott (1999), social competence—which includes cooperation and self-

control also significantly improved students' academic performance, particularly for primary school pupils.

In present study there was insignificant effect of mental well-being on academic performance. While mental well-being and job happiness (in students, similar to academic satisfaction) are linked to subjective outcomes like motivation or mood, Riketta (2008) argued that they have little to no direct impact on performance indicators like grades and favored current study. Despite students reporting a range of mental health issues, Yusoff et al. (2013)'s investigation of stress and psychological well-being among medical students revealed that well-being ratings did not significantly predict academic grades and supported current research. According to Keyes et al. (2012), children who were "flourishing," or had higher levels of mental well-being, performed noticeably better academically than their counterparts who were struggling or languishing and contradicted current research results. Shankar and Park (2016) discovered a strong link between GPA and the mental health of college students. Higher levels of well-being were linked to improved academic achievement and engagement.

### **Conclusion**

According to current study results the Social competence and mental well-being are strongly connected. Students who possess the ability to navigate relationships, communicate openly, and manage their emotions are also more likely to feel mentally stable and emotionally supported (Denham et al., 2003). Social competence and mental well-being do not directly influence academic performance as measured by CGPA in current study. This means that these traits might not guarantee high grades, but they do have an undeniable impact on students' happiness, motivation, and resilience. The relation between mental well-being and academic performance was significant. Social competence does not plays a predictive role in academic performance of students. The effect of mental well-being on academic performance was also insignificant.

### **Recommendations**

Following recommendations were offered for universities, educators, policymakers, and future researchers on the basis of results:

1. Universities may arrange workshops and conflict resolution training that develop social competence. These programs will not only build students' relationship skills but also strengthen their emotional intelligence and self-confidence.
2. Institutions must provide counseling services, mental health awareness seminars, and stress-relief workshops.
3. Future researchers should explore how factors such as family background, financial status, peer pressure, time management, and motivation mediate the relationship between social/emotional traits and academic performance.

4. Future research may include students from rural, urban, public, private, and culturally diverse universities, to ensure generalizability

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