RESEARCH PAPER

Role of Emotional Invalidity in Predicting Depression and Anxiety Among College Students

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ABSTRACT

Purpose

Depression and anxiety, the very common psychological issues among college students nowadays was analysed in this study using emotional invalidation to predict depression and anxiety. It also focuses on the role of academic and career pressure, relationships with others, emotional and mental well-being, and coping and emotional expression on the emotional well-being of students.

Methodology

The quantitative research design was taken. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data on 342 college students on a 5-point Likert scale. Participants were chosen by means of random sampling. The data obtained were processed in SPSS with the help of descriptive statistics, frequency distribution, correlation, regression analysis, independent sample t-test, and ANOVA to determine the relationships and predictive influence of the variables.

Results

The findings also showed that there are strong and significant associations between the study variables and the emotional well-being. The academic and career status provided an explanation of 70.3% of the variation ($R2 = 0.703$, $\beta = 0.839$, $t = 28.399$, $p < 0.001$). The greatest impact was observed on personal life and relations with the $R2 = 0.725$ ($\beta = 0.851$, $t = 29.925$, $p = 0.001$). The explanation of the variance was 72.4% by emotional and mental health ($\beta = 0.851$, $t = 29.851$, $p < 0.001$), and 67.2% by coping and emotional expression ($\beta = 0.820$, $t = 26.422$, $p < 0.001$).

Conclusion

The findings confirm that academic stress, interpersonal relationships, mental health factors, and the coping strategies play a major role in determining emotional well-being among college students.

Keywords: Emotional Invalidation, Depression, Anxiety, Emotional Well-being, College Students

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1. Introduction

The college transition is one of the most important developmental phases that usually presents fresh academic, social, and emotional challenges to the students (Mulaudzi, 2023). Some of the stressors that university students are subjected to regularly include school assignments, career-related concerns, finances, and the necessity to adjust to new societal settings (Akhtar & Akhtar, 2024). These issues make one prone to mental challenges especially depression and anxiety. Studies show that a large percentage of college students report having symptoms of these disorders, which makes them one of the most prevalent mental health issues in colleges or universities (Hyseni Duraku et al., 2023). The commonly defining effects of depression are continuous sadness, lack of interest, and cognitive problems, whereas the indicators of anxiety include excessive worry, tension, and physiological arousal, which might disrupt the functioning of the person (Mujtaba, 2025; Wang et al., 2025). In case of simultaneous development of these conditions, it influence the academic performance, interpersonal relationship, and well-being in a negative way.

Depression and anxiety are developed among college students due to a number of psychological and environmental factors. Emotional invalidation is one of

such factors that pertain to feelings when a person feels that his/her feelings are neglected, rejected, criticized or poorly understood by others. One of the contexts of emotional invalidation is the academic settings, peer relations, and the relations with family members, causing people to question their emotional experiences and repress their emotions (Mohammadkhani et al., 2023; Payne, 2025). The invalidating experience repeated over time can result in the enhancement of loneliness, self-criticism, and helplessness, which are closely related to anxiety and depression symptoms (Yazib, 2025). By contrast, perceived social support provided by friends, family, and other important people, as well as positive interpersonal relationships, act as protective factors counteracting the adverse outcomes of stress and increasing the level of psychological resilience in students (Dong et al., 2024). Considering the growing number of psychological suffering cases in the academic institutions, the influence of emotional experiences on the mental health of students deserves to be investigated. The study of emotional invalidation as a determinant of depression and anxiety is also useful in clarifying the processes that lead to psychological distress in college students. The current research is thus intended to examine the role of emotional invalidity in depression and anxiety prediction in college students with special focus on the factors of academic pressure, personal relations, emotional and mental health and patterns of coping or expressing emotional feelings. Through the research of these dimensions, the study aims to add to the further comprehension of emotional well-being (EWB) among the population of college students, as well as contribute to the significance of positive emotional support in the maintenance of mental health in students.

The main objectives of the study are,

- To examine the impact of academic and career-related pressures on the EWB of college students.
- To analyze how personal life and interpersonal relationships influence students' EWB.
- To assess the relationship between emotional and mental health factors and overall EWB among college students.
- To evaluate how coping strategies and emotional expression affect the EWB of college students.

2. Literature Review

In 2022, Yamaguchi et al., investigated the development of an emotional vulnerability scale, with reliability and validity tests on 361 Japanese university students. The scale was developed on the basis of 42 semantic units derived from interviews with 20 students. The results showed four factors of emotional vulnerability: vulnerability to criticism or denial, deterioration of relationships, discord with others, and procrastination with emotional avoidance. The 16-item scale is useful for the identification of everyday emotional vulnerability and the prevention of stress responses, depression, and other mental health issues in health psychology.

In 2025, Öztekin et al., investigated the mediating role of psychological flexibility and emotion regulation on the relationship between future anxiety, depression, and stress. The study was based on 528 undergraduate students. The results of the study showed that future anxiety has a negative correlation with psychological flexibility and cognitive reappraisal. On the other hand, future anxiety has a positive correlation with expressive suppression, depression, and stress. The results also showed that psychological flexibility and cognitive reappraisal have negative correlations with depression and stress. In contrast, expressive suppression has a positive correlation with depression and stress. The results of the study suggest that future anxiety can be controlled by increasing psychological flexibility and emotion regulation, which is an effective way of coping with depression and stress. The study is important because it illustrates the role of psychological flexibility and emotion regulation in the promotion of mental health.

In 2025, Liu et al., examined the association between depression and difficulties in emotion regulation (DER) among first-year college students because these issues often occur during the transition from high school to college life. The study employed network analysis among 992 Chinese college students and found that the symptoms of "lack of emotional clarity" and "non-acceptance of emotional responses" were associated with both depression and DER. The strongest associations were observed between non-acceptance of emotional reactions and various facets of DER, such as limited access to emotion regulation strategies and difficulty in impulse control. The findings of the study can be helpful in developing interventions for the treatment of comorbid depression and DER among college students.

In 2025, Zhai et al., examined the ability of machine learning models in predicting anxiety and depressive disorders among college students in the United States of America. The study utilized the data of 61,619 college students from 133 institutions and developed predictive models using XGBoost, Random Forest, Decision Tree, and Logistic Regression algorithms. The data was split into training and test sets for the development of the models and hyperparameter tuning using cross-validation for the optimization of the models' performance. The study proved the predictive models' efficacy in the prediction of anxiety and depressive disorders among college students in the United States of America using the area under the curve of 0.74 and 0.77. The most prominent predictors were the financial situation, campus belonging, disability, and age of the students.

In 2023, Liu et al., examined the relationship between perceived stress and depression among Chinese college students. The study proposed emotion regulation and positive psychological capital as potential moderators. The study included 1,267 students. The results indicate that cognitive reappraisal and positive psychological capital can effectively reduce the relationship between perceived stress and depression, especially among students who experience more stress. However, expression inhibition was not supported as a potential moderator. The study implies that cognitive reappraisal skills and positive psychological capital should be promoted to reduce depression risk among college students.

In 2022, Zhang et al., investigates the role of anxiety symptoms and hopelessness as a mediator of the association between academic stress and depressive symptoms in Chinese college students. The research recruited 1,309 participants and collected data through self-report scales. The data was analyzed through Haye's PROCESS macro in SPSS. The results showed a significant positive correlation between academic stress, anxiety symptoms, hopelessness, and depressive symptoms. It was found that academic stress was associated with depressive symptoms through anxiety symptoms and hopelessness. The total effect of academic stress on depressive symptoms was 0.063, with 62% of the effect mediated by anxiety symptoms and hopelessness. The research showed the need to pay attention to anxiety symptoms and hopelessness in students with high academic stress to reduce depression.

2.1 Problem Statement

The problem of growing depression and anxiety rates among college students is a subject of significant importance in the field of higher education, which affects the academic achievement, social functioning, and quality of life in general. Although multiple reasons, such as academic pressure, relationships with others, and lifestyle choices have been discussed, the contribution of the phenomenon of emotional invalidity as a perception that one has that his/her feelings were dismissed, judged, or unsupported have not been investigated well. Effective emotional regulation may be inhibited, stress vulnerability escalated, and negative emotional conditions aggravated by emotional invalidity, which could lead to the emergence of anxiety and depression symptoms. The experiences of emotional invalidity due to peers, family, or educators may be especially vulnerable to college students who are going through transitional phases in their lives and have high expectations. Thus, it is necessary to know the role of emotional invalidity in predicting depression and anxiety and use it to develop interventions aimed at maintaining EWB. This paper seeks to explore the predictive value of emotional invalidity and psychological distress to offer some insights that would guide mental health interventions among college populations.

3. Research Methodology

The research design of the study is quantitative because it aims at investigating the predictive value of emotional invalidity in depression and anxiety among college students. The study data was collected from nearly some 442 students, studying in their pre-final year engineering courses, with the help of a structured questionnaire, designed on a 5-point Likert scale, with strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The questionnaire contained questions that assess various aspects associated with emotional health such as academic and professional life, personal relationships, emotional and mental health, coping and expression of emotions among others. Since, 120 students opted for not participating in the survey, the sample size was reduced to a total of 342 college students who were sampled randomly and their responses were collected using the questionnaires. The responses obtained were numerically coded and put into SPSS software to be analyzed statistically. The data was analyzed using several statistical methods which included frequency distribution and descriptive statistics to provide a summary of the demographic traits and pattern of

response. Also, Spearman correlation analysis and regression analysis were employed to analyze correlations and predictive relationships between the variables. In addition, the independent sample t-tests were performed to determine the gender differences and ANOVA was used to test the differences between demographic groups.

3.1 Developed Hypothesis

H1: Academic and Career Status (ACS) affects the EWB.

H2: Personal Life and Relationships (PLR) affect the EWB.

H3: Emotional & Mental Health (EMH) affects the EWB.

H4: Coping & Emotional Expression (CEE) affects the EWB.

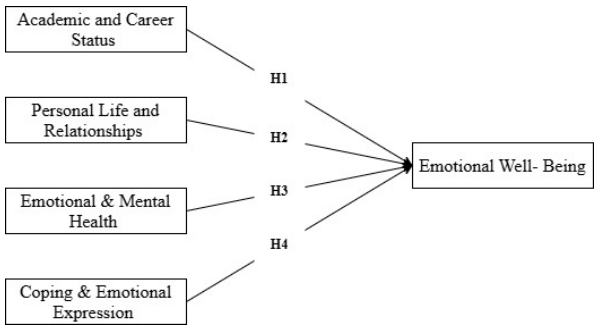

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

4. Results

4.1 Frequency Distribution

Table 1 depicts the frequency distribution of demographic characteristics of respondents. The study included a total of 342 participants. The results revealed that 179 participants (52.3%) were male, while 163 participants (47.7%) were female. The majority of students belonged to the category of 20 years of age, which comprised 31.9%, followed by 19 years, 21 years, 18 years, and 22 years. Concerning sleep patterns, most students reported sleeping between 6-7 hours, which comprised 40.1%, followed by 38.0%, which comprised students sleeping between 5-6 hours. The students sleeping between 7-8 hours comprised 11.7%, less than 5 hours comprised 6.7%, and more than 8 hours comprised 3.5%. The majority of students maintained a moderate sleep schedule.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Demographic Factors

	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	179	52.3
	Female	163	47.7
Age	18	54	15.8
	19	68	19.9
	20	109	31.9
	21	61	17.8
	22	50	14.6
Sleep	Less than 5 hours	23	6.7
	5-6 hours	130	38.0
	6-7 hours	137	40.1
	7-8 hours	40	11.7
	More than 8 hours	12	3.5

Table 2 displays the frequency distribution of the study variables according to the perceptions of the students through the application of a five-point Likert scale. In ACS, most students reported agreement with the statements. This was particularly noted in ACS3, with 38.6% agreeing and 41.2% strongly agreeing, and in ACS2, with 37.7% agreeing and 39.2% strongly agreeing. This indicates that most students are likely experiencing pressure, particularly with regards to their ACS. In PLR dimension, most students reported agreement with the statements. This was particularly noted in PLR4, with 38.9% agreeing and 40.1% strongly agreeing. This indicates that most students consider their personal relationships to be very influential in their emotional states. In EMH dimension, most students reported agreement with the statements, particularly with regards to EMH6, with 35.7% agreeing and 41.8% strongly agreeing, and with regards to EMH1, with 30.1% agreeing and 39.8% strongly agreeing. This indicates that most students are likely experiencing pressure with regards to their emotional and mental health. Likewise, when it came to CEE, most of the respondents chose agree or strongly agree, especially when it came to CEE1, which had 39.5% agree and 36.5% strongly agree, while CEE5 had 35.7% agree and 39.8% strongly agree. From the answers, it is clear that academic pressure, relationships, EWB, and coping are significant aspects that affect students' EWB.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Study Variables

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Academic and Career Status (ACS)					
ACS1	5.3	6.7	14.6	37.1	36.3
ACS2	4.4	5.3	13.5	37.7	39.2

ACS3	2.0	4.4	13.7	38.6	41.2
ACS4	6.4	8.8	13.5	34.8	36.5
ACS5	4.4	9.4	13.7	31.9	40.6
ACS6	5.3	7.6	14.0	35.7	37.4
Personal Life and Relationships (PLR)					
PLR1	6.1	8.8	12.6	33.6	38.9
PLR2	3.8	13.5	14.6	31.3	36.8
PLR3	6.1	9.6	13.2	33.9	37.1
PLR4	3.2	7.3	10.5	38.9	40.1
PLR5	5.6	6.7	12.9	37.4	37.4
PLR6	5.8	10.8	10.8	34.5	38.0
Emotional & Mental Health (EMH)					
EMH 1	4.4	11.7	14.0	30.1	39.8
EMH 2	4.7	9.4	16.4	34.8	34.8
EMH 3	7.3	11.4	9.9	34.8	36.5
EMH 4	6.4	7.6	15.5	30.4	40.1
EMH 5	5.6	4.7	16.7	38.0	35.1
EMH 6	5.0	6.1	11.4	35.7	41.8
EMH 7	4.1	5.8	16.1	38.6	35.4
EMH 8	3.5	9.6	14.0	37.4	35.4
Coping & Emotional Expression (CEE)					
CEE1	5.0	6.4	12.6	39.5	36.5
CEE2	5.8	9.1	13.2	34.5	37.4
CEE3	6.7	10.2	14.3	30.7	38.0
CEE4	5.6	9.1	12.6	34.8	38.0
CEE5	7.6	7.0	9.9	35.7	39.8

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics of the demographic variables and the study variables are presented in Table 3. The mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis of the responses of the 342 participants are included. The mean of the gender distribution is 1.48 (SD = 0.500), indicating a relatively balanced distribution of males and females. The mean of the age score is 2.96 (SD = 1.263), while the mean of the sleep pattern is 2.67 (SD = 0.895), indicating that the students generally exhibit moderate sleeping habits. The mean of the ACS dimension ranged from 3.86 to 4.13, indicating the students generally agree with the statements concerning academic pressure and career concerns. In the PLR dimension, the mean values ranged from 3.84 to 4.05. The mean values of the PLR dimension indicated the effect of interpersonal relationships on the students' emotional experiences. The mean values of the EMH dimension ranged from 3.82 to 4.03, while the mean values of the CEE dimension ranged from 3.83 to 3.96. The skewness and kurtosis values of the data distribution are within the acceptable limits.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Gender	342	1.48	0.500	0.094	-2.003
Age	342	2.96	1.263	0.048	-0.927
Sleep Pattern	342	2.67	0.895	0.422	0.153
ACS1	342	3.92	1.118	-1.053	0.480
ACS2	342	4.02	1.065	-1.183	0.966
ACS3	342	4.13	0.947	-1.151	1.182
ACS4	342	3.86	1.190	-0.973	0.063
ACS5	342	3.95	1.146	-0.983	0.095
ACS6	342	3.92	1.136	-1.033	0.341
PLR1	342	3.90	1.189	-1.014	0.124
PLR2	342	3.84	1.172	-0.762	-0.454
PLR3	342	3.86	1.194	-0.948	-0.029
PLR4	342	4.05	1.043	-1.182	0.889
PLR5	342	3.94	1.128	-1.111	0.569
PLR6	342	3.88	1.199	-0.969	-0.042
EMH1	342	3.89	1.180	-0.866	-0.263
EMH2	342	3.86	1.136	-0.875	-0.016
EMH3	342	3.82	1.245	-0.926	-0.217

EMH4	342	3.90	1.197	-0.984	0.072
EMH5	342	3.92	1.097	-1.084	0.711
EMH6	342	4.03	1.108	-1.222	0.864
EMH7	342	3.95	1.057	-1.044	0.666
EMH8	342	3.92	1.092	-0.932	0.148
CEE1	342	3.96	1.095	-1.139	0.751
CEE2	342	3.89	1.177	-0.982	0.089
CEE3	342	3.83	1.230	-0.880	-0.245
CEE4	342	3.91	1.168	-1.006	0.152
CEE5	342	3.93	1.209	-1.147	0.401

4.3 Correlation

Table 4 illustrates the descriptive statistics for demographic variables and study variables. From the study, it is clear that the mean for gender is 1.48 (SD = 0.500). This implies that both genders are fairly represented. The mean age is 2.96 (SD = 1.263). The mean sleep pattern score is 2.67 (SD = 0.895). This implies that students moderately sleep. The mean for ACS ranges between 3.86 and 4.13. This implies that students generally agree with various items regarding academic pressure and concerns. The mean for PLR ranges between 3.84 and 4.05. This implies that students experience a significant impact of interpersonal relationships on emotional experiences. The mean for EMH ranges between 3.82 and 4.03. This implies that students experience a significant emotional and psychological strain. The mean for CEE ranges between 3.83 and 3.96. The study also revealed that the values for skewness and kurtosis are within acceptable limits. This implies that data is normally distributed.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation

	ACS	PLR	EMH	CEE
ACS	1	.599**	.665**	.554**
PLR	.599**	1	.656**	.610**
EMH	.665**	.656**	1	.565**
CEE	.554**	.610**	.565**	1

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

4.4 Independent Samples Test

Table 5 shows the results of the independent samples t-test to assess the existence of significant differences in the study variables ACS, PLR, EMH, and CEE based on gender differences. The results of the test of equality of variances, which is the Levene's test, showed that the significance values of ACS (.128), PLR (.951), EMH (.347), and CEE (.846) are all more than 0.05. This implies that the assumption of equal variances was met. As such, the results of the t-test under the assumed condition of equal variances are considered. The results of the t-test showed that there were no significant differences in the variables. For instance, ACS showed a t-value of 0.616 with a significance value of 0.538, while PLR showed a t-value of -0.623 with a significance value of 0.533. In the same vein, EMH showed a t-value of 0.121 with a significance value of 0.904, while CEE showed a t-value of -0.004 with a significance value of 0.997. All p-values are greater than the standard significance level of 0.05, which implies that there is no significant difference between male and female respondents' perceptions of ACS, PLR, emotional and mental health, and coping and emotional expression. This implies that gender has no significant effect on EWB factors.

Table 5: Independent Sample T-Test

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
ACS	Male	2.329	.128	.616	340	.538	.04600	.07469	-.10091	.19290
	Female			.613	327.780	.540	.04600	.07504	-.10162	.19361
PLR	Male	.004	.951	-.623	340	.533	-.04564	.07320	-.18961	.09834
	Female			-.623	335.022	.534	-.04564	.07329	-.18981	.09854
EMH	Male	.887	.347	.121	340	.904	.00829	.06855	-.12653	.14312
	Female			.121	334.473	.904	.00829	.06866	-.12676	.14335
CEE	Male	.038	.846	-.004	340	.997	-.00027	.07791	-.15352	.15297
	Female			-.004	337.424	.997	-.00027	.07788	-.15347	.15292

4.5 ANOVA

Table 6 is a summary of the ANOVA results used to analyze the variations among the study items based on EWB. The results indicate that the sum of squares between people is 2749.593, with a corresponding number of degrees of freedom of 341. The between items variation has a mean square value of 1.803. The ANOVA results indicate that there is a significant level of variation among the items used to measure EWB. The non-additivity results indicate an F-value of 18.164, with a corresponding p-value less than 0.001. This implies that there is a significant level of interaction between respondents and items. The residual mean square is 1.022. The ANOVA results indicate a significant level of variation among the items used to measure EWB. This implies that the variables used in the study are significant to understanding students' EWB.

Table 6: ANOVA

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between People			2749.593	341	8.063		
Within People	Between Items		43.284	24	1.803	1.761	.012
	Residual	Non-additivity	18.561[a]	1	18.561	18.164	<0.001
		Balance	8361.995	8183	1.022		
		Total	8380.556	8184	1.024		
	Total		8423.840	8208	1.026		
Total			11173.433	8549	1.307		

4.6 Hypothesis Testing

Table 7 shows the results of the hypothesis testing through regression analysis to understand the impact of ACS, PLR, EMH, and CEE on EWB among college students. From the results, it is evident that all the independent variables have a statistically significant relationship with EWB. For H1, which states that ACS have an impact on EWB, the results show a strong positive correlation with an R value of 0.839 and an R^2 value of 0.703. This implies that 70.3% of the variance in EWB is attributed to academic and career-related factors. The results also show a high beta value of 0.839, which implies a strong positive relationship between ACS and EWB. Additionally, the results show a high t-value of 28.399, which implies a high impact of ACS on EWB. The results show a high F-value of 806.514, which implies a statistically significant relationship at a significance level of $p < 0.001$. Therefore, H1 is supported, implying that academic responsibilities, career expectations, and performance pressures have a significant impact on the EWB of students.

Conversely, H2 analyzes the effect of PLR on EWB. The result of the regression analysis indicates an R value of 0.851 and an R^2 value of 0.725. This implies a very strong linear relationship between personal relationships and EWB. This implies that 72.5% of the variance in EWB can be explained by factors in PLR. The value of beta (0.851) also indicates a strong positive effect on EWB. The t-value of 29.925 also indicates that the effect of personal relationships on EWB is very significant. The F-value of 895.517 indicates a strong fit in the data, while the value of $p < 0.001$ indicates that the effect of personal relationships on EWB is statistically significant. Therefore, H2 is accepted. This implies that social connections, emotional support from friends and family, and interpersonal relationships are very crucial in ensuring emotional stability and psychological well-being among college students.

H3 examines the relationship between emotional and mental health and EWB. The analysis shows that the R-value is 0.851 and that the R^2 value is 0.724. This indicates that emotional and mental health explain 72.4% of EWB. The standardized beta coefficient is 0.851, which indicates a strong positive influence of emotional and mental health on overall EWB. Moreover, it is clear that this variable has a significant predictive influence since its t-value is 29.851. Furthermore, it is evident that the model is statistically significant since its F-value is 891.054 and its significance is less than 0.001. Therefore, H3 is supported. These findings indicate that anxiety, emotional exhaustion, motivation, and mood swings are all significant contributory factors to students' EWB. Students who experience high levels of emotional stability and good mental health are likely to experience high levels of EWB.

Lastly, H4 focuses on the impact of coping and emotional expression on EWB. The findings reveal that the relationship between the two constructs is significant and strong, as the R value was found to be 0.820 and the R^2 value was 0.672. This means that coping and emotional expression have a significant impact on EWB, as these two constructs explain 67.2% of the variance in EWB among college students. The standardized beta coefficient was found to be 0.820, which reveals that the impact is positive and strong. The t-value was found to be 26.422, which reveals that the findings were statistically significant. The F-value was found to be 698.139 and the significance level was $p < 0.001$, which reveals that the findings were reliable and strong. Therefore, the findings support the hypothesis that coping and emotional expression have a significant and strong impact on EWB among college students. The findings of the hypothesis testing reveal that academic pressure, interpersonal relationships, emotional and mental health, and coping mechanisms have a significant and strong impact on EWB among college students.

Table 7: Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	R	R^2	Beta (β)	t-value	F-value	Sig. (p)	Result
H1	ACS → EWB	0.839	0.703	0.839	28.399	806.514	<0.001	Supported
H2	PLR → EWB	0.851	0.725	0.851	29.925	895.517	<0.001	Supported
H3	EMH → EWB	0.851	0.724	0.851	29.851	891.054	<0.001	Supported
H4	CEE→ EWB	0.820	0.672	0.820	26.422	698.139	<0.001	Supported

5. Discussion

The findings of the current research indicate how the ACS, personal life and relations, emotional and mental health, and coping and emotional expression have a strong impact on the EWB of college students. The results of the regression indicate that ACS are significant predictors of EWB ($R^2 = 0.703$, $\beta = 0.839$, $p < 0.001$) so that academic pressure and career expectations are key factors in influencing the psychological experiences of students. This finding is in agreement with other studies taken over the past that

have found academic stress to be one of the predominant factors contributing to the mental health of college students. Barbayannis et al. (2022) as an example suggested that academic stress had a strong positive relationship with anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion in university students. In the same way, Chen et al. (2024) also reported that academic workload and uncertainty about academic performance were important predictors of depressive symptoms during the COVID-19 pandemic. This current evidence is thus supportive of the thesis that academic settings are important factors contributing to the psychological wellness of students. Moreover, it was found that the personal life and relations were the most predictive ($R^2 = 0.725$, $\beta = 0.851$, $p < 0.001$), and the social relationships and emotional support are critical. The finding corresponds to the research conducted by Song et al. (2024), who have proven that interpersonal relationships and attachment types have a strong relationship with psychological stress and emotional stability among college students. Similarly, Dong et al. (2024) have emphasized that perceived social support and resilience mediate the promotion of psychological well-being, and supportive social settings are capable of buffering the adverse impacts of stress and emotional invalidation.

Moreover, the study has verified that emotional and mental health variables greatly predict EWB ($R^2 = 0.724$, $\beta = 0.851$, $p < 0.001$), which means that such symptoms as anxiety, emotional burnout, and mood swings have a strong impact on the overall psychological functioning of students. This result is in line with Liu et al. (2025) who have established that problems in emotion regulation and absence of emotional clarity are closely associated with depressive symptoms in first-year college students. Their network analysis indicated that emotional dysregulation is in the forefront in relating depression and other psychological challenges.

In the same manner, Mohammadkhani et al. (2023) found that emotional invalidation and negative affectivity are also related to emotional distress via repetitive and negative thinking and dysfunctional regulation of emotions. These results confirm the theoretical statement that emotional experiences and mental health statuses are tightly connected with the overall well-being of students. Moreover, the latest research discovered that coping and expression of emotions have significant influence on EWB ($R^2 = 0.672$, $\beta = 0.820$, $p = 0.001$), meaning that students who behave in adaptive ways and express emotions are more likely to be psychologically healthy. This finding is in line with the works of Oztekin et al. (2025) who, in their study, established that psychological flexibility and cognitive reappraisal lower depression and stress in university students whereas maladaptive emotional suppression exert greater influence on psychological distress. The results of the present research are in line with the available literature and indicate that EWB of college students is multidimensional. They underline that not only academic stress but also interpersonal and emotional experiences should be dealt with to achieve sufficient support of the mental health and resiliency in the academic institutions.

6. Conclusion

Research findings depict that emotional invalidation and its associated psychosocial variables are important factors to determine the emotional status of college students. The outcomes point to the pressures related to academic obligations and prospects of the future profession as the main contributor to the emotional burden of students, which frequently makes them more susceptible to anxiety and depressive emotions. Meanwhile, interpersonal relations and life experiences were identified to be the crucial factor of the emotional stability of students, thus the significance of supportive social environments. Stress, anxiety and emotional exhaustion were also emotional and mental health factors significantly related to overall well-being which implies that psychological health is also directly related with the potential of the students to be functional academically and socially. Moreover, coping with stress and emotional expression play a significant role in affecting emotional balance in students, which means that adaptive coping mechanisms and emotional outlet could lead to the improvement of psychological outcomes. In spite of these mentioned contributions, the study possesses some limitations such as the use of self-reported data, cross-sectional research design, and the use of a small sample of college students hence limiting the generalizability of the findings. Future studies can broaden the context with bigger and more diverse samples, longitudinal study designs, and other psychological or environmental independent variables to acquire a better picture of variables determining mental health of students.

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