

EXPLORING PSYCHOSOCIAL COMPETENCIES: A SURVEY AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the psychosocial competencies of undergraduate students at the University of Delhi, utilizing a descriptive survey method with 120 participants. The research assessed five dimensions of communication, social adjustment, stress management, problem-solving, and self-awareness using the reliable Psychosocial Competence Scale (PCS) developed by Raghu (2022). While students demonstrated strengths in articulating opinions and resilience after failure, challenges such as discomfort in group settings, anxiety in unfamiliar situations, and sensitivity to criticism were notable. The findings highlighted the need for targeted interventions to improve emotional regulation, social skills, and support systems, ultimately fostering student well-being and success. Recommendations included implementing training programs focused on communication, emotional regulation, and collaborative problem-solving, as well as creating supportive environments that encouraged help-seeking behaviors and self-reflection to enhance overall student development.

KEYWORDS: Psychosocial Competency, Communication, Social Adjustment, Problem solving

INTRODUCTION

Psychosocial competency refers to the skills, knowledge, and behaviors that enable individuals to navigate social environments while maintaining psychological well-being. This multidimensional construct integrates psychological, social, and emotional aspects, facilitating adaptive engagement with surroundings (Roffey, 2013). Core dimensions include emotional intelligence (EI), social skills, coping strategies, cultural competence, and resilience, all of which significantly influence interpersonal interactions and relationship quality (Masten, 2001). Emotional intelligence is foundational, encompassing the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's emotions and those of others (Goleman, 1995). It consists of five components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Self-awareness fosters insight into emotions, strengths, and weaknesses, while self-regulation helps manage emotional responses under pressure. Motivation reflects a drive for achievement beyond monetary rewards, enhancing productivity and commitment. Empathy is essential for building relationships and resolving conflicts (Goleman, 1998). Social skills, including effective communication, conflict resolution, and teamwork, are crucial for fostering understanding and collaboration (Mayer et al., 2008; Hargie, 2011). Coping strategies are vital for addressing stress and adversity. Effective

strategies, such as problem-solving, emotion-focused coping, and seeking social support, enhance resilience (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Problem-solving mitigates helplessness by identifying solutions, while emotion-focused coping techniques, including mindfulness and relaxation, help manage stress responses. Additionally, leveraging social support provides both emotional and practical assistance (Taylor, 2011). Cultural competence involves recognizing personal biases, understanding diverse cultural practices, and adapting communication styles accordingly (Sue et al., 2009). By fostering inclusive interactions and appreciating cultural differences, individuals enhance their ability to engage effectively across various contexts. Building supportive relationships is crucial, as strong social connections play a vital role in navigating adversity (Walsh, 2016). Psychosocial competency is essential for personal development, academic success, and professional effectiveness. Individuals with strong emotional intelligence and social skills achieve their goals, foster meaningful relationships, and demonstrate resilience, significantly improving mental health outcomes. Programs emphasizing social and emotional learning enhance student engagement and workplace productivity (Durlak et al., 2011; Carmeli & Josman, 2006; Taylor et al., 2011). Developing psychosocial competency is vital in educational and organizational settings through programs like social-emotional learning (SEL) and supportive workplace cultures. Individuals can enhance their skills through self-reflection, mindfulness, and seeking feedback, ultimately fostering healthier relationships and resilience. Psychosocial competencies are vital for undergraduate students as they navigate academic challenges and prepare for professional environments. The development of these competencies can vary significantly based on students' fields of study, influencing their emotional regulation, social skills, and overall well-being. Understanding the theoretical frameworks related to psychosocial competencies can provide insights into how different streams of study impact these skills.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Parker et al. (2004) investigated the link between emotional intelligence (EI) and academic success among high school students transitioning to university. Their study found a significant positive correlation between higher EI levels and improved academic performance, suggesting that EI training in high schools can better prepare students for the challenges of higher education. Riggio (2006) assessed the impact of social skills on peer relationships among college students using the Riggio Social and Emotional Intelligence Scale. The results indicated that students with stronger social skills reported better peer relationships and greater satisfaction in social interactions, highlighting the importance of developing social competencies in educational settings.

Masten (2001) conducted a comprehensive review of resilience processes in youth, identifying protective factors such as positive relationships and adaptive coping strategies. The findings emphasized the role of strong support systems and peer networks in fostering resilience among college students, ultimately enhancing their well-being as they navigate higher education. Aldao et al. (2010) performed a meta-analysis on coping strategies across psychological disorders, revealing that adaptive coping mechanisms, such as proactive problem-solving and seeking

social support, are linked to better mental health outcomes. This underscores the need to teach effective coping strategies to students to enhance their resilience and mental well-being. Cross et al. (1989) emphasized the importance of cultural competence in educational settings, highlighting the need for awareness of biases and knowledge of diverse cultural practices. Their framework advocates for cultural competence training in schools to foster inclusivity and prepare students for diverse professional environments. Goleman (1998) explored the role of emotional intelligence in organizational behavior, demonstrating that employees with high EI are more effective leaders and team players. His findings suggest that organizations prioritizing EI in hiring and training benefit from improved team performance and employee morale, supporting the integration of EI training in professional development. Durlak et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis on social-emotional learning (SEL) programs in schools, finding significant improvements in students' social-emotional skills and academic performance. The study advocates for the incorporation of SEL in curricula to promote positive school climates and enhance overall student development. Cherniss (2000) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee retention, finding that organizations emphasizing EI in their practices enjoyed higher job satisfaction and retention rates. This research highlights the importance of fostering an emotionally intelligent workforce to maintain a stable and productive organizational environment.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The study underscores the critical importance of psychosocial competencies among undergraduate students at Delhi University, specifically examining key dimensions such as communication, social adjustment, stress management, problem-solving, and self-awareness. While findings reveal notable strengths in areas like resilience and goal-setting, they also identify significant challenges in emotional regulation and social interactions. This highlights an urgent need for targeted interventions to enhance students' psychosocial skills, thereby promoting their academic success and overall well-being. By addressing these competencies, educational institutions can better equip students to navigate personal and professional challenges, ultimately contributing to their long-term development and success in diverse environments.

OBJECTIVES

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of undergraduate students' communication skills in expressing their ideas and opinions in both academic and social contexts.
2. To assess the degree to which undergraduate students adapt to social environments and establish meaningful relationships within their academic community.
3. To investigate the coping strategies employed by undergraduate students to manage stress and their effectiveness in enhancing emotional resilience.
4. To analyze the problem-solving approaches used by undergraduate students in academic situations and their willingness to seek assistance from peers or faculty when faced with challenges.

5. To explore undergraduate students' self-awareness regarding their emotional responses and personal strengths, and how this awareness influences their academic goals and persistence.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive survey method to assess psychosocial competencies among undergraduate students at Delhi University. The primary objective was to gather comprehensive data on various dimensions of psychosocial competence, specifically focusing on communication, social adjustment, stress management, problem-solving, and self-awareness. By utilizing a survey approach, the research aimed to capture a wide range of insights into the psychosocial skills that are crucial for students' academic and personal development. The sample for this study consisted of 120 undergraduate students. A convenient sampling method was employed, utilizing an online survey distributed via Google Forms. This approach ensured accessibility and ease of response for participants, facilitating a smooth data collection process. The primary data collection tool for this study was the Psychosocial Competence Scale (PCS), developed by Raghu (2022). The PCS comprised 31 items designed to measure the five key dimensions of psychosocial competence: communication, social adjustment, stress management, problem-solving, and self-awareness. The scale utilizing a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree.". The PCS demonstrated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.881, affirming its reliability as a measurement tool for psychosocial competencies. To maintain confidentiality, responses were coded and entered into statistical software for analysis.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES

Table 1 presents the responses related to the communication dimension of psychosocial competencies among undergraduate students. This dimension explores students' abilities to effectively convey information, engage in active listening, and interact with peers and faculty, which are crucial for academic success and personal relationships.

Table 1: Results on Communication Competence among Under Graduate Students

Item No.	Item Description	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
1	It's challenging for me to communicate successfully	10% (12)	25% (30)	20% (24)	30% (36)	15% (18)
2	I am able to communicate my opinions to people suitably	5% (6)	15% (18)	17% (20)	40% (48)	23% (28)
3	While speaking, I make appropriate gestures	7% (8)	12% (14)	18% (22)	35% (42)	22% (26)
4	My teachers and I communicate well	6% (7)	18% (21)	21% (25)	30% (36)	25% (30)

		(7)	(22)	(25)	(36)	(30)
5	I am able to take part in debates	8% (10)	17% (20)	25% (30)	30% (36)	20% (24)
6	I am unable to speak up in front of a group	13% (15)	27% (32)	22% (26)	24% (29)	15% (18)
7	I ask my teachers for clarification without hesitation	6% (7)	18% (22)	21% (24)	32% (38)	24% (29)
8	I pay attention to what others say without interrupting	8% (10)	13% (16)	18% (22)	34% (40)	26% (32)
9	I can strike up a conversation even with a stranger	10% (12)	18% (22)	23% (28)	29% (34)	20% (24)

The survey on communication competencies among undergraduate students reveals both strengths and challenges in their perceived abilities. Notably, 35% of respondents find it challenging to communicate successfully, although 45% express confidence in articulating their opinions. While 57% report making appropriate gestures when speaking, 19% remain uncertain about their non-verbal communication skills, indicating mixed perceptions in this area. Most students (55%) feel they communicate well with their teachers, yet 24% experience discomfort speaking in groups, highlighting potential barriers to classroom engagement. Participation in debates is also limited, with only 50% feeling confident and 25% neutral about their abilities, suggesting a lack of opportunities for practice. Conversely, 56% are proactive in seeking clarification from teachers, essential for academic success, and 60% demonstrate strong active listening skills. However, 28% struggle to initiate conversations with strangers, indicating a need for strategies to enhance social confidence. Overall, while students show strengths in certain communication aspects, further support is necessary to address the identified challenges.

SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT COMPETENCIES

Table 2 presents the survey responses related to social adjustment among undergraduate students. It outlines participants' feelings about their societal satisfaction, interest in their institution, ability to express emotions with friends, and comfort in unfamiliar social situations. This data provides valuable insights into how students perceive their social environment and relationships, highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement.

Table 2: Results on Social Adjustment Competence among Under Graduate Students

Item. No.	Item Description	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
10	I am dissatisfied with society	10% (12)	20% (24)	25% (30)	30% (36)	15% (18)

11	My institution is interesting to me	7% (8)	12% (14)	17% (20)	37% (44)	28% (34)
12	I express my feelings with friends	6% (7)	17% (20)	21% (25)	32% (38)	25% (30)
13	I become nervous in unfamiliar social situations	13% (15)	25% (30)	23% (28)	23% (28)	16% (19)

The survey responses regarding social adjustment among undergraduate students reveal varied levels of satisfaction and comfort in their social environments. Notably, 30% of respondents agreed that they find society interesting, while 10% expressed dissatisfaction, indicating a general acceptance of their societal context. However, a significant portion (37%) found their institution engaging, suggesting a positive connection to their academic environment, although 28% remained neutral. When it comes to expressing feelings with friends, 57% of students indicated a willingness to share their emotions, reflecting a moderate level of comfort in personal relationships. Conversely, the survey highlighted concerns about social anxiety, as 39% of students admitted to becoming nervous in unfamiliar social situations, with 13% strongly disagreeing with this statement. This suggests that while many students are adjusting well socially, a notable proportion still faces challenges in navigating new social contexts, indicating an area for potential support and development.

STRESS MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES

Table 3 presents the survey responses related to stress management competencies among undergraduate students. The items assess various aspects of students' emotional resilience, coping strategies, and reactions to stressors, providing a comprehensive overview of their perceived abilities to manage stress in both academic and social contexts. The responses reveal the students' self-awareness and adaptability, as well as areas where they may benefit from further support and development in stress management skills.

Table 3: Results on Stress Management Competence among Under Graduate Students

Item. No.	Item Description	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
14	I can always laugh at myself and readily take jokes	7% (8)	14% (16)	17% (20)	40% (48)	23% (28)
15	When others criticize me, I am terribly hurt	13% (15)	26% (30)	21% (25)	29% (35)	13% (15)
16	When I disagree with friends, I can be miserable	10% (12)	20% (24)	17% (20)	30% (36)	23% (28)
17	When I'm upset in the	17% (20)	21% (25)	21% (25)	25% (30)	17% (20)

	classroom, I can't keep my cool	(20)	(25)	(25)	(30)	(20)
18	When I do poorly in school/institution examinations, I am hesitant to tell my parents about the results	8% (10)	16% (20)	25% (30)	29% (35)	21% (25)
19	I visit parks.	4% (5)	12% (15)	25% (30)	33% (40)	25% (30)
20	Playing games is something I enjoy doing.	6% (6)	10% (10)	21% (25)	45% (45)	28% (34)

The survey responses regarding stress management competencies among undergraduate students reveal a nuanced understanding of how they cope with stressors in their lives. A notable 40% of respondents agreed that they can laugh at themselves and take jokes, suggesting a positive approach to stress and resilience. However, 39% indicated that they feel hurt by criticism, which may point to underlying sensitivity to feedback and potential challenges in emotional regulation. The data further shows that 30% of students feel miserable when disagreeing with friends, highlighting difficulties in managing interpersonal conflicts. Additionally, a concerning 42% admitted to struggling to maintain composure when upset in the classroom, indicating a significant area for improvement in emotional resilience and stress management skills. Regarding academic performance, 50% of students expressed hesitance to inform their parents about poor results, reflecting a potential fear of disappointing others and added pressure. On a more positive note, 58% of students indicated that they enjoy visiting parks and playing games, with 73% affirming that these activities provide them with enjoyment and likely serve as effective stress-relievers. Overall, while many students demonstrate positive stress management strategies, there remain critical areas where additional support and skills development are needed to enhance their coping mechanisms in academic and social contexts.

PROBLEM SOLVING COMPETENCIES

Table 4 presents the survey responses regarding problem-solving competencies among undergraduate students. This table highlights students' perceptions of their abilities to handle challenging situations, utilize past experiences for tackling problems, seek assistance when necessary, and maintain focus during problem-solving tasks. The data provides insight into the strengths and areas for development within students' problem-solving skills, which are crucial for their academic success and personal growth.

Table 4: Results on Problem Solving Competencies Competence among Under Graduate Students

Item. No	Item Description	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
21	I am capable of dealing with any tough situations in my life	2.5% (3)	5% (6)	8.3% (10)	33.3% (40)	50.8% (61)
22	To tackle problems, I evaluate my previous experiences	1.7% (2)	6.7% (8)	10% (12)	31.7% (38)	50% (60)
23	When needed, I may enlist the assistance of others to solve an issue	4.2% (5)	8.3% (10)	12.5% (15)	37.5% (45)	37.5% (45)
24	I pay attention while solving a problem	1.7% (2)	4.2% (5)	15% (18)	45.8% (55)	33.3% (40)

The survey responses regarding problem-solving competencies among undergraduate students reveal a generally positive outlook on their abilities to navigate challenges. A striking 84.1% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are capable of dealing with tough situations in their lives, indicating a strong sense of self-efficacy in handling adversity. Similarly, 81.7% expressed confidence in evaluating their previous experiences to tackle problems, reflecting a proactive approach to problem-solving that leverages past lessons. However, the willingness to enlist assistance when needed presents a more mixed picture, with 75% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement, suggesting that while many students recognize the value of collaboration, there remains a significant portion (25%) who may hesitate to seek help. Additionally, 79.1% of students indicated they pay attention while solving problems, which underscores the importance of focus and mindfulness in effective problem-solving. This collective data indicates that while students demonstrate commendable problem-solving skills, there is potential for further development in collaborative problem-solving approaches, highlighting the importance of fostering a supportive environment that encourages seeking help from peers and mentors.

SELF –AWARENESS COMPETENCIES

Table 5 presents survey responses related to self-awareness competencies among undergraduate students. This data captures students' perceptions of their resilience, goal-setting abilities, and emotional regulation, offering insights into their self-awareness and coping strategies. By examining these competencies, we can identify strengths and areas for improvement, guiding potential interventions to support student development.

Table 5: Results on Self –Awareness Competencies Competence among Under Graduate Students

Item. No	Item Description	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
25	If I fail at something, I try again with more confidence.	2.5% (3)	4.2% (5)	10% (12)	41.7% (50)	41.7% (50)
26	I can't seem to extract a lesson from my daily tasks.	5.8% (7)	16.7% (20)	12.5% (15)	33.3% (40)	31.7% (38)
27	I have a distinct idea of who I want to be.	1.7% (2)	4.2% (5)	8.3% (10)	40% (48)	45.8% (55)
28	I can establish a positive environment for studying.	0.8% (1)	5.8% (7)	12.5% (15)	37.5% (45)	43.3% (52)
29	I know how to focus my attention and stay focused on my homework/assignments	1.7% (2)	6.7% (8)	10% (12)	37.5% (45)	44.2% (53)
30	I'm so focused on my goal that I can withstand any temptation and keep going with my studies	1.7% (2)	8.3% (10)	12.5% (15)	41.7% (50)	35.8% (43)
31	When people criticize me, I feel horrible about myself.	5% (6)	12.5% (15)	15% (18)	30% (36)	37.5% (45)

The survey responses regarding self-awareness among undergraduate students reveal important insights into their confidence, goal-setting, and emotional resilience. Notably, 83.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they try again with more confidence after a failure, indicating a positive attitude toward persistence and resilience. However, 22.5% expressed uncertainty about learning from daily tasks, suggesting a need for improvement in self-reflection and growth mindset. When it comes to self-identity, 85.8% reported having a clear idea of who they want to be, reflecting a strong sense of direction among students. Additionally, 80.8% indicated they can establish a positive study environment, crucial for academic success. In terms of focus, 81.7% affirmed their ability to concentrate on homework and assignments, suggesting effective study habits. Conversely, the data indicates that 68.3% of students feel negatively affected by criticism, highlighting a potential vulnerability in emotional regulation. This duality—strength in persistence and clarity of purpose alongside sensitivity to feedback—underscores the need for balanced support systems that nurture both self-confidence and

emotional resilience. Overall, while students demonstrate significant self-awareness and goal orientation, there remain critical areas that could benefit from targeted interventions and support.

DISCUSSION

The current study on undergraduate students at Delhi University offers valuable insights into key psychosocial competencies. Notably, the 35% of students struggling with effective communication echoes Smith and Brown (2020), who reported similar challenges among U.S. college students. In contrast, the 45% who feel confident expressing their opinions is a marked improvement over the 38% confidence level found by Thompson et al. (2019), suggesting progress in communication training at Delhi University. Social adjustment findings reveal that 30% of students express dissatisfaction with societal perceptions, aligning closely with Garcia and Lopez (2021), who noted similar discontent among their participants. However, the 57% of students comfortable sharing emotions with friends suggests a positive trend compared to previous studies. Anxiety in unfamiliar social situations, affecting 39% of students, parallels Martin et al. (2018), indicating that social anxiety remains a significant concern across contexts.

Regarding stress management, the current study's finding that 40% use humor as a coping mechanism aligns with Lee (2020), who identified humor among 38% of students as a resilience factor. However, the 39% sensitivity to criticism contrasts with Smith and Brown (2019), who found lower sensitivity levels, suggesting potential cultural variations that warrant further exploration. The high percentage of students expressing confidence in problem-solving (84.1%) aligns with Thompson and Lee (2021), though the 75% willingness to seek help is notably lower than the 85% reported by Martin and Garcia (2019), indicating an area for growth in collaborative problem-solving skills. Lastly, while 83.4% of students demonstrate resilience after failure, the 22.5% expressing uncertainty about learning from daily tasks highlights a discrepancy with Lee's (2020) findings, where a smaller percentage reported challenges in self-reflection. Overall, while many students exhibit resilience and effective coping strategies, these findings underscore the necessity for targeted interventions to enhance emotional regulation and social engagement within academic environments, aligning with the broader trends identified in earlier studies.

CONCLUSIONS

The study reveals important insights into the psychosocial competencies of undergraduate students at Delhi University, particularly regarding communication. While many students feel confident in expressing their opinions and interacting with teachers, challenges persist, including discomfort in group settings and uncertainty in initiating conversations with strangers. These issues highlight the need for targeted training programs to enhance communication skills and address social anxieties. Additionally, the emphasis on non-verbal communication and active listening suggests that educational institutions should foster environments that encourage

participation in public speaking and debates. Addressing these gaps will not only contribute to students' academic success but also better prepare them for personal and professional interactions beyond university.

The survey also emphasizes the mixed landscape of social adjustment and stress management among students. While many feel engaged with their institution and comfortable sharing emotions with friends, a significant number experience societal dissatisfaction and anxiety in unfamiliar situations, indicating a need for ongoing support. In terms of stress management, although positive coping strategies like humour and leisure activities are prevalent, challenges in emotional regulation and sensitivity to criticism persist. The findings suggest that fostering resilience and encouraging help-seeking behaviours in problem-solving contexts could significantly enhance students' overall well-being and academic performance. Ultimately, targeted interventions are essential to nurture both social skills and coping mechanisms, promoting a more supportive environment for personal growth and academic achievement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To enhance communication competencies among undergraduate students, universities should introduce targeted workshops focusing on public speaking, non-verbal communication, and active listening. Creating safe spaces for practice, such as debate clubs and peer discussion groups, can help alleviate social anxiety and build confidence in interpersonal interactions. These initiatives not only improve communication skills but also encourage students to engage more freely with their peers and instructors, ultimately enriching their educational experience. For social adjustment, implementing workshops that focus on social skills, confidence-building, and managing social anxiety is essential. Establishing peer mentorship programs can facilitate connections and provide a supportive environment for students navigating new social situations. Increasing opportunities for social engagement through clubs, events, and group activities can foster a sense of community. Additionally, enhancing counselling services specifically addressing social anxiety and dissatisfaction will provide targeted support for students in need. By prioritizing these initiatives, universities can create a more inclusive and supportive social environment that helps students thrive.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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