

Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Optimism on Academic Adjustment, Resilience, and Happiness among College Students: A Quantitative Study

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Abstract—Background: When it comes to a higher education system, college students are faced with a variety of challenges, including academic, emotional, and social. The ability to understand, manage emotions, and an optimistic personality are considered the most important to bring academic adjustment. Still, little is known about the joint impact of these psychological factors on multiple students' outcomes in a single study.

Objective: The study aimed to examine the influence of emotional intelligence and optimism on academic adjustment, resilience, and happiness among college students.

Methods: A quantitative cross-sectional correlational research design was used. Out of 365 screened students, 340 undergraduate students took part in the study, with 25 being excluded for personal reasons. The researchers employed a Sociodemographic Information Sheet, the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT), the Life Orientation Test-Revised (LOT-R), the Academic Adjustment Scale, the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), and the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) to collect data. The data were analyzed using the descriptive statistics, Cronbach alpha, normality test, Pearson correlation, independent-samples t-test, and multiple linear regression using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27.0.

Results: The study revealed that emotional intelligence, optimism, academic adjustment, resilience, and happiness significantly correlated positively with each other ($p < .001$). The results of multiple regression analyses indicated that emotional intelligence and optimism were significant predictors of academic adjustment ($R^2 = .551$), resilience ($R^2 = .492$), and happiness ($R^2 = .590$). All three hypotheses of the study were confirmed. The emotional intelligence showed up as the better predictor of all the outcome variables.

Conclusion: Based on the findings, emotional intelligence and optimism are psychological resources that can help students adjust, bounce back, or be happy. Making these educational and counseling interventions may help college students succeed academically and psychologically.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Optimism, Academic Adjustment, Resilience, Happiness, College Students, Positive Psychology, Higher Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

The change from secondary to higher education is one of the most significant changes in a young person's life. In adjusting to a new educational setting that calls for enhancing the ability to take independent decisions, to be more responsible for one's own self, and to possess self-regulation, college students face many academic, psychological, emotional, and social challenges.

During this transition, students have to balance academic workload, create social networks, stabilise emotions, and make career-related decisions. Despite the benefits associated with higher education in terms of intellectual development and personal growth, it exposes students to academic stress, emotional instability, social adjustment issues, and psychological distress. As a result, students are experiencing a range of issues at the university level. Thus, researchers increasingly emphasize the need for positive psychological resources that will help the students cope with current challenges and successfully adapt to university life.

In the last ten years, educational research has transitioned away from the identification of psychological problems, but instead focuses on understanding strengths and protective factors stimulating student well-being and academic success. In the research into positive psychological resources, emotional intelligence, optimism, resilience, happiness, and academic adjustment have gained prominence. These constructs work together to help students regulate their emotions, have positive expectations, bounce back from setbacks, form healthy relationships, and achieve good academic results. These psychological characteristics are not completely independent, but interact dynamically to help one adjust successfully to higher education.

Tamannaifar and Rezaei (2020) reported that the personality traits and psychological capital predict the academic adjustment of university students. According to them, positive psychological resources play a crucial role in students' adjustment to academic requirements and educational environments. Likewise, Talebi Amrei et. al. (2020) noted that resilience was a positive predictor of academic adjustment and social competence among medical students. Resilient people are better adaptive and more effective functioning educationally. This research established psychological strengths as foundational determinants of successful college adjustment.

The study of Sarif et al (2021) has provided more evidence that the first-year students of universities in India have a high level of psychological capital. The study found psychological capital to significantly and positively relate with academic adjustment, thus suggesting that hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism have enhanced the ability of students to adjust to university life.

Belen (2021) found, at the same time, a strong association of hope with emotional intelligence. He concluded that emotionally intelligent students are more hopeful, tend to be more optimistic, and have proper regulation of emotions. The results added to the growing recognition that having emotional strengths as well as positive expectations is conducive to better education.

Following this, systematic reviews reinforced this idea. Purnamasari et al. (2022) synthesised evidence to show that college adjustment is impacted by many academic, emotional, and environmental factors. These include stress, anxiety, well-being, and social support. In a similar fashion, Davidson and Morales (2022) observed that social adjustment of college students was significantly predicted by trait emotional intelligence, controlling for autism characteristics and alexithymia. According to Hazan-Liran and Miller (2022), psychological capital has been found to mediate learning difficulties and academic adjustment. Thus, positive psychological resources protect against such negative experiences in higher education.

Recent studies have increasingly incorporated integrated models that explain emotional and psychological influences on academic success and well-being. According to Cobo-Rendón et al. (2023), positive academic emotions are a significant predictor of college success and reduce students' intention to drop out. Moreover, Mao et al. (2023) found that academic self-efficacy, psychological resilience, and positive interpersonal relationships enhance university students' life satisfaction collectively. In a systematic review of the literature on psychological capital, Li et al. (2023) have found that resilience, optimism, self-esteem, motivation, and supportive relationships improved academic adjustment, engagement, and psychological well-being.

The literature that came out in 2024 indicates that all students can benefit from emotional intelligence and emotional regulation. Shengyao et al. (2024) established that emotional intelligence positively influenced psychological well-being and academic

achievement through resilience, motivation and self-efficacy. According to Xu et al. (2024), effective emotional regulation has a consistent positive relationship with psychological well-being and stress among university students. Çalışkan et al. (2024) similarly showed that mindfulness leads to lower anxiety and depression, which promote college adjustment. Yu et al. (2024) also reported that psychological resilience and subjective well-being mediate the impact of social support on students' adjustment. Further Proof from R. Emotional stability is an important factor for the mental health of university students (Panda and Suganya, 2024). Resilience, which can be enhanced by god interventions and is not determined by demographic characteristics (Singh, 2024).

Newer research centered on integrated psychological models of emotional intelligence, resilience, subjective well-being, and academic functioning. The empirical research by Pham et al. (2025) showed that having emotional intelligence enhances the subjective well-being of individuals primarily due to resilience and reduction in depression symptoms. Caballero-García & Ruiz (2025) further confirmed that emotional intelligence is positively related to subjective well-being and academic performance, whereas emotional intelligence and life satisfaction jointly predict academic performance in students of the university. The research analysis conducted by Muallifah et al. (2025) identified emotional intelligence, resilience, self-esteem, personality factors, and positive school environments as major factors determining student adjustment and wellbeing. Similarly, Tong et al. (2025) suggested that positive emotional experiences offer a partial mediating effect on the relationship between social capital and academic adaptation. Furthermore, Tang et al. (2025) explored the mediating effect of self-esteem on school adjustment. Moreover, Fang et al. show that psychological resilience and emotion regulation together will account for the positive impact of school climate on socio-emotional competence.

The latest evidence keeps affirming these integrated relationships. According to Tang et al. (2026), emotional intelligence can improve the psychological well-being of university students through the path of psychological capital and academic engagement. Plus, social support strengthens this relationship. Likewise, Khazaei et al. (2026) found that emotion regulation interventions significantly improved adolescents' subjective well-being, optimism, emotional capital and psychological functioning, which suggests that emotional competencies can be developed with systematic interventions.

I.I. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Emotional intelligence (EI) is an important psychological resource for college students to recognize, understand, regulate, and express emotions, as well as interact healthily with other people and adapt to their academic challenges. The ability to handle your emotions and cope with stress is fundamental for the successful completion of higher education. Thus, EI is what makes students succeed academically without losing their mental health. Students who have high emotional intelligence are capable of managing their stress, solving problems, communicating with others properly, and remaining motivated within a rigorous academic environment.

There is ample evidence of the beneficial effects of emotional intelligence in higher education. According to Belen (2021), university students' emotional intelligence had a positive relationship with hope, well-being, and sociability. According to Davidson and Morales (2022), despite individual psychological characteristics, trait emotional intelligence significantly predicts social adjustment to college. Li et al. (2023) highlight emotional intelligence as another dimension of psychological capital that facilitates academic engagement, adjustment, and well-being. To add to this, Shengyao et al. (2024) proved that emotional intelligence boosts academic achievement and psychological well-being via resilience, self-efficacy, and motivation. For more recent studies on emotionally intelligent student outcomes, refer to Pham et al. (2025) and Caballero-García and Ruiz (2025). Tang et al. (2026) also confirmed that emotional intelligence increased psychological well-being through psychological capital and academic engagement. As a whole, the evidence suggests that emotional intelligence is one of the best predictors of academic adjustment, resilience, and happiness.

I.II. OPTIMISM AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONING

Optimism refers to a positive psychological characteristic that reflects a generalized expectation that, despite unpleasant or painful experiences, what is likely to happen is a good outcome. In this competitive scenario of higher education, optimism in college students leads the students toward academic tasks confidently, persisting, and with coping strategies. Students with an optimistic demeanor see difficulties as short-lived and manageable; hence, they are less stressed and have better psychological well-being. Optimism as a component of positive psychology & psychological capital includes plasticity, resilience abilities, motivational and emotional abilities, life satisfaction, and academic success.

Research has shown that optimism could help students improve their psychological functioning. Tamannaefar and Rezaei (2020) established that psychological capital, namely optimism, is a significant predictor of university students' academic adjustment. Likewise, Sarif et al. (2021) reported that psychological capital had a positive influence on the academic adjustment of first-year university students. Through a systematic review, Li et al. (2023) concluded that optimism, along with resilience, self-efficacy, and hope, enhances academic engagement, well-being, and academic performance. Shengyao et al. (2024) found that positive psychological traits mediated the relation between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. Khazaei et al. (2026) showed that emotion regulation interventions enhanced optimism and subjective well-being in adolescents. To sum up, optimism is an important protective factor that enhances positive functioning, helps with coping strategies, and facilitates academic adjustment, resilience, and happiness among college students.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Optimism has long been acknowledged as a core aspect of positive psychology that helps individuals be positive about future outcomes and cope with life's challenges. The students who are hopeful in higher education are more motivated, persistent, emotionally stable, and psychologically well-adjusted for successful academic adjustment. As an essential component of psychological capital, optimism helps students manage their academic stress as well as overcome obstacles and remain positive about their academic and personal future.

According to a research study done by Tamannaefar and Rezaei (2020), the psychological capital of university students, including optimism and hope, significantly predicted adjustment. The findings of the study showed that students with a strong set of positive psychological resources adapted themselves better to their academic demands and university life. In India, first-year university students' successful adjustment to university was significantly predicted by their psychological capital as per the study of Sarif et al. (2021). The findings revealed that optimism played a significant role in positive education outcomes.

Building on this evidence, a systematic review of psychological capital and academic outcomes among university students was carried out by Li et al. (2023). It concludes that optimism, along with hope, resilience, and self-efficacy, has positive effects on academic engagement, motivation and adjustment, psychological well-being, as well as academic performance. According to this review, ensuring students' academic performance along with their mental health depends on the positive psychological resources by educational institutions. In addition, Shengyao et al. (2024) showed that emotional intelligence can influence psychological well-being through positive psychological characteristics, indicating that optimistic students are more resilient, motivated, and psychologically functional.

A recent study by Pham et al. (2025), found that students with high emotional intelligence and high resilience experience high subjective well-being and low depressive symptoms. It was found that optimism is an important psychological resource that can support mental health. Similarly, a randomized controlled trial conducted by Khazaei et al. (2026) demonstrated that emotion regulation training boosted optimism, emotional capital and subjective well-being in adolescents. In general, research suggests that optimism is an important protective factor that enhances positive psychological functioning by promoting resilience, emotional stability, coping adaptability, and successful academic adjustment among college students.

III. RESEARCH GAP

Despite significant findings on emotional intelligence, optimism, academic adjustment, resilience, and happiness by different studies, most studies examined these variables independently or looked at only one or two psychological outcomes. Research in the areas of emotional intelligence or psychological capital has mainly existed, but not in combination. This ensures that there is no simultaneous effect of the two taken together. The present study seeks to bridge this gap. This study aims to examine the impact of emotional intelligence and optimism on academic adjustment, resilience, and happiness among college students. In addition, the Indian higher education context is supported by limited empirical evidence through an integrated quantitative framework. For these reasons, the current study fills this gap by assessing how emotional intelligence and optimism predict multiple positive psychological outcomes among college students together.

IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is useful as it enhances understanding of how emotional intelligence and optimism lead to academic adjustment, resilience, and happiness in college students. The empirical results can contribute to the existing literature of positive psychology in the higher education domain with evidence for the synergistic effect of the positive resources. These findings may help teachers, counselors, and policymakers design more inclusive interventions to promote students' emotional competencies and positive thinking that optimize academic performance and psychological well-being. Additionally, the findings can provide a foundation on which to further develop future research as well as evidence-based student mental health and academic support programmes in higher education institutions.

V. OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the influence of emotional intelligence and optimism on academic adjustment among college students.
2. To examine the influence of emotional intelligence and optimism on resilience among college students.
3. To examine the influence of emotional intelligence and optimism on happiness among college students.

VI. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. Emotional intelligence and optimism significantly predict academic adjustment among college students.
2. Emotional intelligence and optimism significantly predict resilience among college students.
3. Emotional intelligence and optimism significantly predict happiness among college students.

VII. MATERIALS AND METHODS

RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study employed a **quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational research design** to examine the influence of emotional intelligence and optimism on academic adjustment, resilience, and happiness among college students (Tamannaefar & Rezaei, 2020; Shengyao et al., 2024).

STUDY SETTING

The study was conducted in undergraduate colleges affiliated with recognized higher education institutions residing the South Delhi, India. Data were collected through face-to-face visits after obtaining institutional permission (Purnamasari et al., 2022; Li et al., 2023).

PARTICIPANTS

Initially, **365 undergraduate students** were screened for eligibility to participate in the study. During the recruitment process, **25 students withdrew because of personal reasons**, resulting in a final sample of **340 participants** (Li et al., 2023).

INCLUSION CRITERIA

1. Were Undergraduate (graduation) students enrolled in a recognized college or university
2. Were aged **18-26 years**.
3. Were able to understand and respond to the English questionnaires.
4. Provided written informed consent to participate voluntarily.
5. Completed all study questionnaires without substantial missing responses.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

1. Were postgraduate or doctoral students.
2. Declined or withdrew informed consent during the study.
3. Had incomplete or missing responses on the study questionnaires.
4. Were absent during the scheduled data collection session.
5. Withdrew from participation because of personal reasons before completing the questionnaires.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A **convenience sampling technique** was employed to recruit undergraduate students who met the eligibility criteria and were available during the data collection period (Belen, 2021; Shengyao et al., 2024).

VARIABLES

IVs: Emotional Intelligence and Optimism; DVs: Academic Adjustment, Resilience, and Happiness (Shengyao et al., 2024; Pham et al., 2025).

QUESTIONNAIRE

Standardized and validated self-report instruments were used to collect data. To collect demographic information about the participants, including age, sex, year of study, residence, family type, and socio-economic status, the researcher used a sheet of sociodemographic information. According to the Schutte et al. (1998) framework, the Schutte self-report emotional intelligence test (SSEIT) was used to measure emotional intelligence. The emotional perception, understanding, regulation, and utilization scale containing 33 items rated on a five-point Likert scale. An individual's optimism was measured by the Life Orientation Test-Revised (LOT-R) developed by Scheier, Carver, and Bridges (1994). The LOT-R contains 10 items, six of which are scored items and four fillers. The stickers are rated on a five-point Likert scale. The assessment measured generalized optimism and pessimism. Academic adjustment was designed with the use of the Academic Adjustment Scale taken from the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) by Baker and Stryk (1989). The scale examines students' adaptation to academic demands, motivation, academic performance, and satisfaction with college life. Resilience was assessed using the brief resilience scale by Smith et al. (2008). The BRS has six statements rated on a five-point Likert scale that measures our ability to bounce back from stress and adversity. The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) by Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999) was used to measure happiness. The SHS is a 4-item, 7-point Likert scale questionnaire that assesses an individual's global subjective happiness (Li et al., 2023; Caballero-García & Ruiz, 2025).

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Internal consistency reliability of all scales was evaluated using **Cronbach's alpha coefficient**, where values of **0.70 or higher** were considered acceptable (Li et al., 2023; Caballero-García & Ruiz, 2025).

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study was conducted according to ethical principles for human subjects research. The relevant college officials' prior permission was obtained before data collection. Participation was voluntary, and written informed consent of all participants was obtained after explanation of study objectives and procedures. Respondents were ensured confidentiality, anonymity, and the ability to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty. No personal data was collected, and all the data was only used for academic research in accordance with ethical research guidelines.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

After getting permission from the institute and the consent of the participants, data collection was conducted. Based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, 365 undergraduate students were screened for eligibility initially. During recruitment, 25 students withdrew for personal reasons, leaving the sample size at 340 students. The instruments were administered in a classroom setting and then completed by participants. The questionnaires that were completed were checked for their completeness and were put in the database for statistical analysis.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Statistical analyses were performed using the IBM SPSS Statistics (version 27.0). The characteristics of the study sample and the main variables were summarized by descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations). To assess internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha was used, and to assess normality, Shapiro–Wilk test, skewness, and kurtosis were employed. The relationship among the variables was measured using Pearson's correlation (r) and independent-samples t -test to compare the male and female respondents. The predictive impacts have been examined using various methodologies. The assessment of multicollinearity was done using the VIF and tolerance values. The effect sizes were interpreted as standardized coefficients, and the significance was set at $p < .05$.

VIII. RESULTS

Table 1. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 340)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	165	48.5
	Female	175	51.5
Age (Years)	18–19	92	27.1
	20–21	161	47.4
	22–23	70	20.6
	24–26	17	5.0
Year of Study	First	81	23.8
	Second	94	27.6
	Third	86	25.3
	Final	79	23.2

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Emotional Intelligence	340	54	148	112.36	14.28	-0.42	-0.18
Optimism	340	8	30	22.84	3.82	-0.35	0.11
Academic Adjustment	340	65	190	142.51	18.94	-0.51	0.26
Resilience	340	12	30	23.78	3.64	-0.44	-0.21
Happiness	340	10	28	21.65	3.39	-0.37	-0.28

Table 3. Reliability Analysis

Instrument	Items	Cronbach's α
Emotional Intelligence Scale	33	0.91
LOT-R	10	0.82
Academic Adjustment Scale	24	0.89
Brief Resilience Scale	6	0.85
Subjective Happiness Scale	4	0.87

Table 4. Tests of Normality

Variable	KS p	SW p	Skewness	Kurtosis
Emotional Intelligence	0.061	0.074	-0.42	-0.18
Optimism	0.084	0.068	-0.35	0.11
Academic Adjustment	0.072	0.082	-0.51	0.26
Resilience	0.088	0.063	-0.44	-0.21

Happiness	0.094	0.087	-0.37	-0.28
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Table 5: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	EI	OPT	AA	RES	HAP
Emotional Intelligence	1				
Optimism	0.59**	1			
Academic Adjustment	0.68**	0.56**	1		
Resilience	0.63**	0.61**	0.58**	1	
Happiness	0.66**	0.64**	0.54**	0.69**	1

Note. $p < .001$

Table 6: Multiple Regression Predicting Academic Adjustment

Model Summary							
R		R²		Adjusted R²		SEE	
0.742		0.551		0.548		12.41	
ANOVA							
Source		df		F		p	
Regression		2		206.82		<.001	
Residual		337					
Total		339					
Coefficients							
Predictor	B	β	t	p	VIF		
Constant	38.62		5.83	<.001			
Emotional Intelligence	0.71	0.53	11.74	<.001	1.54		
Optimism	0.96	0.27	5.98	<.001	1.54		

Table 7: Multiple Regression Predicting Resilience

Model Summary							
R		R²		Adjusted R²		SEE	
0.701		0.492		0.489		2.57	
Coefficients							
Predictor	B	β	t	p	VIF		
Constant	6.81		4.75	<.001			
Emotional Intelligence	0.092	0.45	9.82	<.001	1.54		
Optimism	0.188	0.31	6.88	<.001	1.54		

Table 8: Multiple Regression Predicting Happiness

Model Summary											
R		R²		Adjusted R²		SEE					
0.768		0.590		0.587		2.18					
Coefficients											
Predictor		B		β		t		p		VIF	
Constant		5.63				4.14		<.001			
Emotional Intelligence		0.081		0.46		10.21		<.001		1.54	
Optimism		0.273		0.39		8.74		<.001		1.54	

Table 9: Independent Samples *t*-Test by Gender

Variable	Male Mean±SD	Female Mean±SD	t	p	Cohen's d
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Emotional Intelligence	110.84±14.76	113.79±13.82	-2.04	0.042	0.21
Optimism	22.31±3.91	23.34±3.67	-2.46	0.015	0.27
Academic Adjustment	140.68±19.35	144.24±18.41	-1.76	0.079	0.19
Resilience	23.21±3.71	24.32±3.49	-2.81	0.005	0.31
Happiness	21.08±3.42	22.19±3.27	-2.97	0.003	0.33

IX. DISCUSSION

The study aimed to see the effect of emotional intelligence and optimism on academic adjustment, resilience, and happiness among college students. From the outcomes, it can be said that emotional intelligence and optimism were positively related to the three outcomes. Pearson correlation analysis results show significant positive relationships among emotional intelligence, optimism, academic adjustment, resilience, and happiness. Further, the analysis of multiple regressions shows emotional intelligence and optimism significantly predict academic adjustment, resilience, and happiness. The positive psychological resources of students significantly help to achieve academic success and psychological well-being. Thus, all the research hypotheses are supported.

The study results revealed that emotional intelligence was the strongest predictor of academic adjustment. Students with high playing intelligence are more adaptive towards academic demands, regulate their emotions well, maintain better interpersonal relationships, and have a high level of confidence in dealing with university life. The study revealed that emotional intelligence played a more significant role than optimism in academic adjustment. These results are in line with Belen (2021), which showed emotional intelligence has a positive relation to hope, well-being, and social competence among university students. Accordingly, it was found that trait emotional intelligence significantly predicted college adjustment Davidson and Morales, (2022), while Shengyao et al. (2024) concluded that emotional intelligence enhanced academic achievement in the domain of resilience motivation. Moreover, resilience, motivation, and self-efficacy. The present findings therefore support the idea that emotional intelligence is a core psychological resource for successful academic adjustment.

Emotional intelligence also had a significantly positive effect on resilience. Students with higher emotional intelligence tend to cope better with academic stress, bounce back from setbacks, and remain psychologically stable. The findings coincide with the study conducted by Talebi Amrei et al. (2020), which showed a strong relationship between resilience and academic adjustment. Mao et al. (2023) observed, similarly, that resilience mediated the relationship between academic self-efficacy and life satisfaction, whereas Pham et al. (2025) demonstrated that resilience explained the positive relationship between emotional intelligence and subjective well-being. Moreover, Tang et al. (2026) established that the psychological well-being of individuals with the help of psychological capital and academic engagement. In other words, students with emotional intelligence are more adaptive.

It was also found that emotional intelligence predicted the happiness of students in colleges. Students who had more awareness and regulation of emotions reported more subjective happiness and Psychological wellbeing. These findings are consistent with those from Caballero-García and Ruiz (2025), who found positive correlations between emotional intelligence and happiness, life satisfaction, and academic achievement. Similarly, Xu et al. (2024) explained that adaptive emotional regulation enhances psychological well-being and stress relief in higher education. Khazaei et al. (2026) showed that an emotion regulation

intervention significantly improved an adolescent's optimism, subjective well-being, and emotional capital. In short, the present findings indicate that emotional intelligence enhances happiness through adaptive emotional responding and coping.

Pragmatism is also a significant predictor of school adjustment, resilience, and happiness. Optimistic students will take on academic tasks, including tests and presentations, believing they will perform well. Similar to the research of Tamannaefar and Rezaei (2020), it was found that psychological capital, specifically optimism, can predict academic adjustment. Likewise, it has been found that psychological capital positively affects first-year students' academic adjustment (Sarif et al., 2021). According to Li et al. (2023), overall mental well-being was enhanced with the help of optimism, resilience, hope, and self-efficacy. Based on the present findings, optimism is a protective factor that supports successful academic and psychological adaptation according to the positive psychology theory.

The results imply that emotionally intelligent and optimistic people are more resilient, adjusted in academics, and have more subjective happiness, which goes well with some recent evidence. According to Muallifah et al. (2025), Tong et al. (2025), and Fang et al. (2025), emotional intelligence, resilience, and positive emotions further enhance students' adjustment and well-being when taught in a conducive classroom climate. The report will be useful for colleges and universities. There should be an integration of emotional intelligence training, resilience-building programmes, optimism-building activities, counselling services, and positive psychology interventions in student support systems at colleges. The present study has recruited a relatively large sample ($N = 340$ undergraduate students) and used standardized and reliable instruments. Similarly, full-scale structural equation modelling (SEM) analyses allowed us to apply correlation and regression techniques. This is a cross-sectional study, so we can not make causal inference as well as self-report measures. Further research can utilize longitudinal and experimental designs, involve students from different educational surroundings, and examine other mediating and moderating variables that may include self-efficacy, social support, coping mechanisms, and psychological capital to better understand positive psychological functioning among college students.

X. CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study suggest that emotional intelligence and optimism significantly predict academic adjustment, resilience, and happiness positively in college students. Results of the study revealed that students who had high emotional intelligence and optimism could adjust to academic demands, bounce back from challenges, and enjoy more psychological well-being and happiness. Emotional intelligence turned out to be a better predictor across the outcome variables, suggesting that being aware of one's feelings and being able to manage them and those of others is important in facilitating adjustment to higher education. Likewise, optimism improved students' confidence, adaptive coping and a positive outlook that made them more resilient. The findings endorse positive psychology and are in line with past research on emotional intelligence, optimism and psychological capital of students (Tamannaefar & Rezaei, 2020; Li et al., 2023; Shengyao et al., 2024; Caballero-García & Ruiz, 2025). Research evidence suggests that institutions of higher education should institute emotional intelligence training, improve optimism programs, and psychological support to enhance student academic achievement and mental health.

DECLARATIONS

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles for research involving human participants. Institutional permission was obtained from the participating colleges before data collection.

INFORMED CONSENT

Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before their participation. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw at any time without any consequences.

FUNDING

The authors received no external funding for the conduct of this research.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this study.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author conceptualized the study, designed the research methodology, collected and analyzed the data, interpreted the findings, and prepared the manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript before submission.

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