

## ARTICLE REVIEW

### **Article 1: Association between Psychological Distress, Emotional Intelligence (EQ), and Spirituality.**

**1. Problem Statement** a. University students experience mental distress when they moved away from their family's environment due to separation anxiety, loneliness, and difficulties creating relationships at the new environment. Significant risk to student's mental health is the intense feeling of insecurity on financial crisis, lack of recognition in some cases of their qualifications leading to discouragement and often developing dysfunctional ways to manage these problems, affecting self-image, intense depression and anxiety manifesting in symptoms such as insomnia, shortness of breath, eating disorders and difficulties concentrating and organizing.

- b) Research questions:** 1) How factors are affecting most students' psychological distress? 2) Is there a link among emotional intelligence (EQ), various factors of Spirituality and Psychological health? 3) Does psychological distress have an association with emotional intelligence (EQ), and spirituality?

**c) Research hypothesis**

University students practicing Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and Spirituality are experiencing low level of Psychological distress.

### **2. Important Factors identified in the study**

- d) Dependent variable: psychological distress Independent variable(s): emotional intelligence (EQ) and spirituality.

Population: University student lives away from home

e) n/a

### **3. Research Design**

- a) Quantitative method was used aiming to test effect/relationship of factors contributing to psychological distress, emotional intelligence and spirituality among university students who lives away from home. It also uses statistical testing or numbers. Actual survey was conducted using questionnaire with a close-ended type of questions and with measurable objectives.
- b) Explanatory (causal) design has been used as it examines factors associated with Psychological distress and possible relation to Emotional intelligence (EQ), and Spirituality.
- c) Cross-sectional type of research is used to emphasize time dimension.
- d) To sum up, this research article's design utilizes quantitative, explanatory and cross-sectional type of design. It is the best design to find out possible relationships of factors associated with psychological distress, emotional intelligence (EQ) and spirituality.

### **4. Sampling**

- a) The target populations are students in their academic studies in Departments of the University of Thessaly. Participation was voluntary and out of 262 initially contacted, 206 students participated.
- b) Sampling design - Probability sampling technique was used and sample was randomly selected of different age, gender, and social status to capture diversity.

c) Inclusion criteria were their attendance at a Department of Studies at the University of Thessaly and a good knowledge of the Greek language to be able to answer the questions, and the absence of diagnosed mental illness. This study complied with ethical standards and conducted according to guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki.

d) Major strengths and limitation of sampling plan.

There are two noted limitations in this study. One is the cross-sectional study design does not allow to have a clear picture of the course of mental health, spirituality and emotional intelligence through time. Two is the moderate sample size due to non-participation of some students while others submitted incomplete data. On the strength side, this study is considered methodical, but it was carried out at the University of Thessaly, considered the most populous academic centers, increases the degree of representatives in the student population.

## **5. Conceptualization and measurements**

a) Independent variable(s): Emotional Intelligence (EQ), and Spirituality

Dependent variable: Psychological distress

b) Description of the operational definitions of the variables:

- To measure psychological distress, Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS), was used. HADS has been used in the general population, in General hospital patients, in cancer care units, and even in patients with acquired immune deficiency syndrome and in the in the student population.
- To assess (EQ), A Greek version of Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form (TEIQue-SF) was used. It is a 30 item questionnaire assessing Well-

being, Self-control, Emotionality and Sociability with a 7 point Likert scale respond.

- To assess student's spirituality, a Greek version Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy-Spiritual Well-Being Scale-12 non-illness, FACIT-Sp-12 was used. The scale evaluates a last seven days through twelve items given a 5 Likert scale, the higher the scores, indicates higher spirituality.
- Statistical analysis was used with SPSS Version 23.0 statistic software package.

c) Reliability and validity were not mention with these measurements.

d) No discussion of major strengths and limitations for the measurements.

## **6. Data Collection**

a) Data were collected from randomly selected students by a 4-parts questionnaire format at the facilities of university of Thessaly, and are in their present academic studies. The questionnaire contains information on socio demographic, academics, HADS scale to measure anxiety, Greek version of (TEIQue-SF) to measure emotional intelligence, and Greek version of FACIT-Sp-12 to assess spiritual dimension,

b) n/a

## **7. Findings and Discussion - Brief summary:**

The purpose for this research is to find out possible association of Psychological distress, Emotional intelligence (EQ), and Spirituality among students, thus supporting programs that will contribute to maintaining mental health for students during the school year. The question asked

was “Does Psychological distress, Emotional intelligence, and Spirituality are associated somehow? The hypothesis is that “University students engaged with Emotional intelligence (EQ) and Spirituality are experiencing low level of Psychological distress.” The independent variables are Emotional intelligence (EQ), and Spirituality, the dependent variable is Psychological distress.

This research was done under the approval of the University of Thessaly and passed the code of ethics. Originally 262 contacted and 206 participated. Samples were randomly selected of various ages, gender and social status with the inclusion criteria that they speak Greek language to understand the question asked, and that they are in their academic studies at any department of the university. The four-part questionnaire contains socio demographic and academic information, the (HADS) scale to measure psychological distress, (TEIQue-SF) scale to assess (EQ), and (FACIT-12) for Spirituality. The research design focuses on quantitative, explanatory and cross-sectional type, which is the best design to find out possible relationships of factors associated with our variables: psychological distress, emotional Intelligence (EQ), and Spirituality. Statistical analysis was used with SPSS Version 23.0 statistics software package.

### **Findings:**

This investigation of the relationship between (HADS) scale with (TEI) and (FACIT-sp) showed negative correlation between anxiety, depression, and total scales and most of dimensions of student’s emotional intelligence and spirituality. Thus, this study supports Emotional (EQ) levels may explain majority of students reporting low level of Psychological distress. This article also compared with their previous study, which revealed the same results.

Previous research also supports the importance of Emotional Intelligence in Mental Health and its inhibitory role of negative emotions.

On Spirituality, this article stated that according to their previous studies, spirituality contributes to coping with difficult situations as well as mental stability. Spirituality enhances the level of peace, optimism, and eases stressful experiences during their studies. The present study identified a negative relation between anxiety and student spirituality. Increased levels of Spirituality tend to evoke positive emotions and suspend the expression of anxiety and depression.

The conclusion from this article “the contribution of Emotional Intelligence and Spirituality is crucial to the well-being, happiness and meaning of life” as stated from the opening of this article is well supported by its hypothesis. As a result, Emotional Intelligence and Spirituality are essential parameters that influence the level of Mental Health and the overall quality of life of students.

- c) Is there any evidence of reliability and validity of these measures in the paper?
- d) Discuss the major strengths and limitations of the measures.

#### 6) Data Collection

- a) Discuss when, where, how, and by how data were collected (e.g. face-to-face interviews,

etc.