ARTICLE REVIEW (Revised)

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

1. Problem Statement a. University students experience **mental difficulties** when they moved away from their family's environment during academic years, possibly due to adjustment problem, loneliness and unable to create relationships at the new environment. Significant risk to student's mental health is the intense feeling of insecurity on financial crisis, lack of recognition of their qualifications leading to discouragement, 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:

  Question 1) what related factors affecting the students can be associated

                with psychological distress among the University students?

  Question 2) is there a relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EQ), Spirituality

           and psychological health?

  c) Research hypotheses:

  1) There are associations between related factors such as gender, permanent residence,

          economic status, work and their anxiety and depression among university

     students.

  2) University students practicing high level Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and

      Spirituality are experiencing low level of Psychological distress.

2. Important Factors identified in the study:

d) Hypothesis #1: **Dependent variables:** anxiety, depression

Independent variables: gender, permanent residence, economic

status, work

Hypothesis #2: **Dependent variable**: psychological distress

Independent variables: emotional Intelligence (EQ), and

spirituality.

Population: University student lives away from home

3) n/a

3. Research Design

a) Quantitative method was used to test related factors contributing to anxiety and

depression, and the association between emotional intelligence, spirituality and

psychological distress among university students. This 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 was used both to examine related factors associated with

anxiety and depression and association between Emotional intelligence (EQ),

Spirituality and Psychological distress.

c) Cross-sectional type of research is used as related to 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 relationship between related factors contributing to the anxiety and depression for the students, and the correlation between emotional intelligence (EQ), spirituality and psychological distress.

4. Sampling

a) Target populations are students in the Departments of the University of Thessaly during their academic studies. 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)   Hypothesis #1: **Dependent variables:** anxiety, depression

Independent variables: gender, permanent residence, economic status, work

(Main point) **Hypothesis #2**: **Dependent variable**: psychological distress

Independent variables: emotional Intelligence (EQ), and spirituality.

b) Description of the operational definitions of the variables:

- To measure psychological distress, Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS), was used. Scale has fourteen questions out of which seven concern development of anxiety disorder and remaining seven on depression.

- To assess (EQ), A Greek version of Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Fort (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 assesses spirituality peace, meaning and faith, and a score for the total spirituality. 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.

- Related factors such as gender, permanent residence, economic status, and work, among others, were measured using statistical analysis from their socio demographic and academic information.

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 at the facilities of University of Thessaly from randomly selected students using a 4-parts questionnaire format during their academic studies. The first part of the questionnaire is a sheet containing information on socio demographic and academics. The second part is using Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS), to assess psychological distress. The third part consisted of the Greek version of Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form (TEIQue-SF), to assess EQ. And the fourth is using Greek version of Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness therapy-Spiritual Well-Being Scale-12 non-illness, FACIT-Sp-12 to assess spiritual dimension,

b) n/a

7. Findings and Discussion - Brief summary:

The purpose of this research is to investigate the related factors that influence students' psychological distress and the possible relationship between psychological distress, emotional intelligence and spirituality among University students of Thessaly.

Key findings:

On hypothesis #1, findings reveal that factors such as permanent residence and annual family income were significantly positively correlated with anxiety. Student work and financial stress are also burdensome and significantly associated with anxiety. Depression was significantly associated with gender. Student work and financial burden have a positive effect on depression.

On hypothesis #2, this investigation of the relationship between HADS scale with TEI and FASITsp12 showed negative correlations between anxiety, depression, and total scales of most of dimensions of students' emotional intelligence and spirituality.

Therefore, this study shows student's psychological health can be impacted by related factors. That permanent residence, financial status, gender and work related burden have significant positive correlation with student's feeling of anxiety. It also shows that strong family bonds and meaningful interpersonal relationships can be protected factors against anxiety and depression. On the contrary, financial pressures and obligations have significant negative impact associated with anxiety and depression.

Emotional Intelligence levels explains the fact that majority of students are reporting low level of psychological distress. Thus, the influence of Emotional Intelligence on Students' Mental Health indicates the need to cultivate to a satisfactory level to cope with anxiety and depression. In this study, negative indicators were identified between factors and Emotional Intelligence (EQ), and negative emotions such as anxiety and depression. Therefore, the higher the level of Emotional Intelligence (EQ), the lower they experience psychological distress. According to this research, previous study also supports importance of (EQ) in Mental Health and its inhibitory role in the development of negative emotions.

On Spirituality, according to this research, previous studies reveal that spirituality contributes to coping with difficult situations as well as mental stability. Spirituality enhances the level of peace, optimism, and eases stressful experiences. This present study identified a negative relation between anxiety and student spirituality. Similar negative relationships were also observed between depression and the presence of meaning, peace, and faith. Therefore, increased levels of Spirituality tend to evoke positive emotions and suspend the expression of anxiety and depression.

The concluding remarks from this article partly says "in the context of student life characterized by anxiety, crisis of interpersonal relationships, uncertainty and the attempt to redefine the 'self', maintaining emotional health is a key concern. Emotional Intelligence and Spirituality are essential parameters that influence the level of Mental Health and the overall quality of life of students".