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Relationship between Students' Emotional Wellbeing and Academic Performance after Summer Break

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Abstract

The current study explored the relationship between wellbeing and academic performance among school students after having the summer break. 300 students were taken, among them 150 were male students and 150 were female students. Demographic information, Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale and the Academic Performance Scale were used to collect the data. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship perceived wellbeing and academic performance. Gender differences were also found in terms of well-being and academic performance. It was further found that female students reported higher wellbeing as compared to male students whereas male students scored slightly higher in academic performance after the summer break. It was recommended to take a larger sample with diversity so result can be generalized.

Keywords: Emotional wellbeing, academic performance, school students, post-vacation adjustment

Introduction

Student wellbeing has been considered as a crucial factor that influences academic success, especially students from secondary schools. Wellbeing comprises of many factors like positive mindset, personal growth, all of them require motivation, confidence and active participation in school. Students with emotional stability and social support are found more active and engage in participating in learning activities. Sun et al. (2024) Found that students who possess lower psychological wellbeing had poor academic outcomes. This research finding indicates the significance of mental health in schools. Similarly, Marrone (2024), using data from the South Australian Wellbeing and Engagement Collection, students who gained higher wellbeing scores showed more involvement in accomplishing the academic tasks. Zhang (2024) also found that university students experience mental health challenges. Due to this, their academic performance impacted so there is a need to enhance the psychological stability of students for effective learning.

Wellbeing is a construct which includes positive emotions and life satisfaction. The

current study is about students, so it includes other dimensions like emotional, physical and psychological aspects of wellbeing (Dodge et al., 2012; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Huppert, 2014). Zou (2024) found that wellbeing of university students is influenced by several factors such as social support and autonomy in educational settings.

Academic performance includes many aspects such as classroom participation, communication skills and how students perceive their abilities. Those students who are more confident and showed stronger wellbeing usually possess the characteristics of motivation and self-regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Furthermore, student's positive connectivity with a school enhances emotional resilience and academic performance (Arslan & Coşkun, 2022; Kiuru et al., 2019). Such findings show that schools play a crucial role for nurturing the complete development of students.

The current study examines the students' wellbeing and academic performance after the summer break. Students after the summer vacation become more motivated, with better concentration levels and confidence. Due to this their academic performance increases. It gives insight into how the non-academic experience influences the academic performance of students. In view of positive psychology principles, students with high levels of wellbeing are likely to succeed in academic performance as their optimism levels increase.

Hypotheses

- There will be a significant positive relationship between perceived wellbeing and academic performance among school students.
- Female school students will differ from male school students in terms of perceived wellbeing among school students.
- Female school students will differ from male school students in terms of academic performance among school students.

Objectives

- To find the relationship between perceived wellbeing and academic performance among school students.
- To find gender differences in terms of perceived wellbeing among school students.
- To find gender differences in terms of academic performance among school students.

Method

Research Design

The cross-sectional correlational design was used. Purposive sampling technique was used to collect data.

Participants

The present study was comprised of a purposive sample of youth (N = 300), with ages

ranging from 13 to 15 years. Participants, both youth girls (n =150) and youth boys (n

Vol 01, Issue 01, 2025 **ISSN (Online): 3106-6569, (Print): 3106-6550**

= 150), were recruited from various private and public schools primarily from Rawalpindi district, Pakistan.

Instruments

The Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale is used to measure the different aspects of wellbeing like personal growth, positive emotions and relationships. The scale was developed by Liddle and Carter in 2015. It has 12 items. It is 5-point Likert type scale ranging from never=1, not much of time= 2, some of time= 3, quite a lot of time=4 and all the time=5. It has two subscales which include six items of positive emotional state and six items of positive outlook. It also has one additional subscale which includes three items on social desirability.

The Academic Performance Scale is used to measure how children perceive their own performance in academics. The scale was developed by Carson Birchmeier, Emily Grattan, Sarah Hornbacher, and Christopher McGregory. It includes 8 items. It is a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree=5, agree=4, neutral=3, disagree=2, strongly disagree=1. It has 2 weeks test-retest reliability of 0.85.

Procedure

Samples were taken from private schools in cities by visiting them. Students filled in the questionnaires in their usual classroom environment. Printed form of questionnaires were distributed between the students in classrooms one after the other by the researcher. They were guided about the purpose of research and advised to be honest and sincere in filling the items as there was no right and wrong in research. They were given total 6-7 minutes to mark the items of the scale. Then they filled in the questionnaires after reading each statement carefully. The ethical considerations of the study included the use of research scales that were freely available. Consent was obtained from the school management prior to interacting with the participants. Children were not compelled to complete the forms under any circumstances, and they were allowed to select responses according to their own will without any pressure.

Vol 01, Issue 01, 2025 **ISSN (Online): 3106-6569, (Print): 3106-6550**

Table 1

Frequencies, standard deviation, min and max values of demographic characteristics of the study (N=300)

Variables		M(SD)	f (%)
Age		.740	
	13		85(28.3)
	14		136(45.3)
	15		79(26.3)
Gender			
	Male		150(50.0)
	Female		150(50.0)
Class		.732	
	6		62(20.7)
	7		134(44.7)
	8		104(34.7)
Area of Living			
	Rural		33(11.0)
	Urban		267(89.0)
Learner			
	Average		80(26.7)
	Intelligent		220(73.3)

SD=Standard Deviation, M=Mean, f=Frequency, %=percentage

Results

Descriptive analysis was performed to get the mean, standard deviation for the study variables e.g. wellbeing and academic performance.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics of wellbeing, academic performance (N=300)

Vol 01, Issue 01, 2025 **ISSN (Online): 3106-6569, (Print): 3106-6550**

Variables	M	SD	Min	Max
Perceived Wellbeing	40.70	6.158	27	58
Perceived Academic Performance	28.73	3.658	15	38

Note: M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, min=minimum, max=maximum

Table 3

Reliability scores of scales. (N=300)

Scales	k	a
Wellbeing	15	.776
Academic Performance	8	.621

k=no. of items, a= Cronbach's alpha reliability

Table 4

Correlation between Perceived Wellbeing and Academic Performance (N = 300)

Variables	1	2	M	SD
1. Perceived Wellbeing		.09*	40.70	6.158
2. Academic Performance	.09*		28.73	3.658

*Where p=0.086**

Results showed that there was a significant positive relationship between perceived wellbeing and academic performance.

Table 5

Independent sample t-test to compare men and women (N=300)

Variables	men (150)	women (150)			95% CI		
	M(SD)	M(SD)	t	p	LL	UL	Cohen's d
Wellbeing	38.3733 (6.24182)	43.0333 (5.11796)	7.071	<.001	3.36300	5.95700	.816

Vol 01, Issue 01, 2025 **ISSN (Online): 3106-6569, (Print): 3106-6550**

Academic performance	29.0600 (3.65313)	28.4067 (3.64553)	-1.550	.122	-1.48261	.17594	-.179

Note: p<.001, M=mean, SD= standard deviation, LL=lower limit, UL=upper limit

Discussion

The current study found the strong positive connection between perceived wellbeing and their academic performance after the summer break. Students with higher levels of wellbeing achieved higher academic performance. It highlighted the significance of emotional and psychological resources to support motivation and concentration levels (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Students with higher levels of wellbeing are more likely to involve themselves in activities such as continued efforts which ultimately lead to academic outcomes. On the other hand, students with lower wellbeing cannot emotionally regulate themselves properly which ultimately affects their academic outcomes.

Both personal and environmental factors are involved in shaping the connection between wellbeing and academic performance among school students. Students go through the different circumstances with different types of family supports, availability of resources which ultimately leads to strengthen or limit their wellbeing on academic performance (Arslan & Coşkun, 2022; Kiuru et al., 2019).in school settings, there are different other factors like classroom climate and peer interaction that may influence their academic performance. Gender differences were also found in the study. It was found that female students reported higher wellbeing scores as compared to male counterparts, there is a likelihood that they have better emotional and psychological health. It weas found by the previous research conducted by (Mishra, Panda, & Das) 2011 that females students report higher levels of self-esteem and subjective well-being. There are many other factors play an important role like female students have greater emotional awareness, possess better coping strategies and have strong social network which enhance their wellbeing. On the other hand, society demands expectations from male students. Due to these, male students are unable to express their emotions properly and it limit their abilities to adapt the effective coping strategies. Due to this, their academic performance also influences.

The present study found slight gender differences in terms of academic outcomes. Male students had higher academic performance as compared to female counterparts. Such type of difference may link to female health conditions and mood issues which ultimately impact the consistency (Ahuja & Garutsa, 2024). It was also found that different factors such biological, psychological and environmental affect the academic performance of students.

This observed relationship between wellbeing and academic performance is supported by positive psychology, which focuses on the role of personal strengths, positive emotions, and meaningful

Vol 01, Issue 01, 2025 **ISSN (Online): 3106-6569, (Print): 3106-6550**

engagement in driving optimal functioning. Students who have higher levels of wellbeing are generally intrinsically motivated, self-assured, and able to self-regulate their learning to achieve better academic performance. Poorer wellbeing students exhibit maladaptive behaviors that include procrastination, avoidance, or negative self-assessment, all of which hinder learning.

School environment is crucial to enhance students learning. There are many schools related factors like teacher support, peer relationship and the school environment which influence the academic performance of students. Students 'academic success can be enhanced when positive school environment is available to them. On the other, negative school environment has a negative influence on students' academic functioning (Kiuru et al., 2019; Arslan & Coşkun, 2022).

Although this study is valuable for school students but still few limitations were found. Data was collected by using questionnaires and students self-reported their wellbeing and academic performance. There is a possibility that other factors such as health, motivation and environment may influence the result. Data was collected from schools of Pakistan. It was not collected from other states. Therefore, results cannot be generalized to other cultural settings. It was a cross-sectional design-based study. It has been recommended to conduct the longitudinal study in the future so both variables of the study can be examined across a wide range of ages.

5.1. Conclusion

The present study highlights the significant role of students' wellbeing after summer break in enhancing academic performance. Higher level of wellbeing lead to attain better academic success as students with better emotional, psychological states can perform well in academics. Gender differences were found in terms of wellbeing and academic performance of students. School curricula must be included strategies which boost the overall wellbeing of students. Teachers can play an effective role in designing the strategies which may boost the students' wellbeing. In turn, students' academic performance can be increased.

Limitations

- Self-reported data was taken during the current study. Other factors such as students' health, their levels of motivation and environment have not been considered which indirectly influence the results of study.
- Data was collected from schools of Pakistan. Therefore, it cannot be generalized to other cultural settings.

Recommendations

- It is essential to monitor students' wellbeing during summer break. Students are not supposed to follow the structured routine patters during the summer break which ultimately affect their level of motivation.
- Gender differences were found in terms of both variables i.e., wellbeing and academic performance of students. Different interventions to be designed as per the needs and

Vol 01, Issue 01, 2025 **ISSN (Online): 3106-6569, (Print): 3106-6550**

requirements for both genders to boost wellbeing.

- Teachers should provide support to students after the summer break. Students' overall wellbeing affects after a long summer break.
- Teachers are recommended to teach different socio-emotional learning programs to students. Students would learn emotional awareness and expressiveness with the help of these programs.
- Current research was cross-sectional based. It is recommended to conduct longitudinal research in the future therefore, changes in terms of students' wellbeing and academic performance can be observed.
- It is recommended to use larger sample size for future research. Therefore, generalizability of the study can be improved.

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Vol 01, Issue 01, 2025 **ISSN (Online): 3106-6569, (Print): 3106-6550**

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