

**Arab American University
Faculty of Graduate Studies
Department of Education Sciences
Master Program in Innovation in
Education**



**A Proposed Training Program Based on Emotional Intelligence to
Enhance the Mental Health of Students at Arab American
University**

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**This Thesis was Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
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Thesis Approval

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Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this thesis is substantially my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the Arab American University or any other institution.

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Dedication

To my parents, for their unwavering support.

To my supervisor, whose guidance, insight, and patience have shaped the academic rigor of this work.

To my late friends, whose memory continues to remind me why perseverance matters. May their memory live through the work and purpose they once inspired.

And to myself, for choosing not to quit when the process became demanding.

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Abstract

In view of the growing psychological and academic demands on our university students, it is necessary to seek ways that effectively promote mental health and coping. Emotional intelligence is one of the main psychological factors that can assist in enhancing a student's psychological quality of life, reduce stress, anxiety and depression, and in addition to enhancing social interaction and academic performance. From this perspective, this study aimed to identify the level of mental health, emotional intelligence and academic pressure of Arab American university students. Then, propose a training program based on emotional intelligence to enhance the mental health of students. The study population consisted of all undergraduate students enrolled in various faculties at Arab American University and a convenient sample of 300 students.

The study adopted a developmental research approach aimed at designing a proposed training program based on emotional intelligence to enhance the mental health of students at the Arab American University. A questionnaire was used as the primary data collection tool to measure levels of emotional intelligence, levels of depression, levels of anxiety, levels of stress, and levels of academic pressure among the students. The results obtained from the questionnaire were used to identify students' needs and to guide the development of the proposed training program.

The results showed that the level of emotional intelligence among undergraduate students varied. with 37.3% of students demonstrating a low level, 50.3%, showing a medium level, and only 12.3% having a high level of emotional intelligence. Many students also experienced significant mental health challenges. The highest percentage, 45.7%, reported an extremely severe level of depression; 51.7%, had an extremely severe level of anxiety; and 38.7% exhibited a severe level of stress. In terms of academic pressure, 69.7% of students

experienced a medium level of pressure, which was the highest among the categories reported.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Mental Health, Academic Pressure, Students, Palestine.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

University life is the first step for a student and is significantly different from school life, which contrasts with school life at all levels; this environment differs not only through scientific and educational methods but also from a social standpoint. Each student will have their own set of goals they wish to achieve, and how closely these goals are aligned with skills learned during undergraduate studies will affect each student's success. They will be faced with both positive and negative events and circumstances that test their interpersonal skills and ability to adapt to new situations. Thus, they will be expected to become independent, self-sufficient individuals who can identify and utilize their own unique skills for positive ends. The happiness, satisfaction, and ability to make choices regarding both their personal and academic lives are three important aspects that contribute to the success of university students, and can ultimately lead to long-lasting personal and professional accomplishments, as well as overall mental health (Badawi & Dabbar, 2023).

In the context, mental health is a dynamic condition that shows the individual's ability to cope with various stressors and is an essential for achieving a stable and balanced life (Galderisi et al., 2015). The role of good mental health on productivity, education, and the community is vital, while poor mental health affects productivity, education, and population rates of anxiety, depression and other stress-related issues (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2021). In recognition of the importance of mental health, in 2015 the United Nations designated mental health as a Sustainable Development Goal, along with the other key Sustainable Development Goals "Good Health and Well-being". Mental health has a very important function in creating sustainable communities that can effectively deal with continued challenges and changes in their environment (United Nations, 2015).

Building on this, research on mental abilities is a central focus on the field of psychometrics and pedagogy. Initially, it centered on the concept of general intelligence, which later evolved into the recognition of two factors: verbal intelligence and performance (non-verbal) intelligence. This led to the development of a theory suggesting the existence of multiple intelligences, including mathematical, musical, linguistic, artistic, spatial and emotional intelligence . As a result, the concept of emotional intelligence emerged in the last two

decades. Thorndike was one of the first to highlight emotional intelligence as a form of social intelligence, which is considered part of mental abilities (Talafta, 2014).

Consequently, emotional intelligence is considered one of the latest forms of intelligence in the field of mental health and psychology. This concept has evolved due to the nature of the era in which we live, requiring a modern perspective on intelligence. Nowadays, society faces many social, health, cultural, and environmental challenges that necessitate individuals to have strong emotional abilities to cope with these challenges and communicate efficiently with others. Emotional intelligence is defined as a set of mental skills associated with the processing of emotional information, including the ability to perceive emotions and utilize them in the thinking process (Hamad & Ahmed, 2016).

Moreover, emotional intelligence is a person's capacity to identify and understand their own emotional state and the emotional state of others. It is a vital factor in improving mental health and social adaptability for students who attend universities (Abd El-Ilah, Abd El-Aziz & Owais, 2023). Individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence possess persistence, intrinsic motivation and collaboration. Therefore, they serve as a source of inspiration for others by being aware of their own emotions and understanding how others feel. They also tend to be open and contemplative; therefore, they have lower levels of psychological stress than individuals with low levels of emotional intelligence (Bayoumi, 2016).

Numerous studies have proven that by developing emotional intelligence skills, university students can cope better with pressure and regulate their impulsivity. Studies by Zou, Zeb, Nisar, Yasmin, Poulouva, & Arslan Haider (2022), Jidi (2022), Mohammed & Said (2022), Al-Dhamini & Zayed (2021), Boukhalfa & Ben Cheikh (2019), Sharifi & Zagara (2018), and Majzoub (2016) have shown that emotional intelligence has a positive effect on improving mental health.

Based on that, the current study aims to propose a program based on emotional intelligence that aims to improve the mental health of Arab American University Students, with the potential for students at other universities to benefit as well.

1.2 Study Significance

The importance of the study is divided into two main parts:

Theoretical importance: The theoretical significance lies in the proposal of a program based on emotional intelligence aimed at improving the mental health of students at Arab American University. This is achieved by identifying the psychological and emotional challenges faced by students and then setting clear educational, psychological and emotional goals. These goals will help identify the components of the proposed training program, which will play a role in increasing students' emotional intelligence, ultimately leading to improved mental health..

Applied importance: this aspect focuses on the implementation of the program designed to support the mental health of university students. This will be achieved by developing strategies and solutions tailored to the students' needs and the challenges they face, with the aim of reducing the psychological challenges they suffer from. In addition, academics will benefit from this study through a deeper understanding of students' mental health, including levels of anxiety, depression, and stress. Emotional intelligence provides an opportunity for educators to better understand the role that it plays in enhancing the mental health of their students. Educators can create and implement strategies based on emotional intelligence to help promote and enhance student mental health. This particular work represents an innovative and valuable approach to examining specific problems and their accompanying solutions that may lead to greater psychological health among students.

1.3 Statement of Research Problem

Students' overall well-being and academic excellence are significantly impacted by their mental health. Mental health impacts how a student feels, behaves, and thinks, thereby impacting their decision making and social cohesiveness, as well as their academic success. Mental Health is defined by the World Health Organisation (2018) as "a person's ability to deal with the stresses of life in all aspects; without being negatively affected by psychological stress".

In addition to this, there is no doubt that feeling, understanding and expressing emotions is a basic need of all humans and is vital for social interaction. Not being able to do so could hinder someone's mental health. The expression and sharing of one's emotions and the ability to understand others' emotions is fundamental to the personal development and growth associated with mental health (Mohammed & Said, 2022).

Many studies have shown an increase in the prevalence of mental health problems among Palestinian university students. For example, Palestinians attending higher education institutions show an increase in mental health disorders as a result of living under occupation.

A study conducted at Al Quds University found that 43.7% of nursing students had severe anxiety and 25.5% had severe depression (Abuejheisheh et al., 2024). Another study of the Faculty of Medicine from Palestine Polytechnic University found more than half of students surveyed had moderate to severe anxiety and depression symptoms. Second-year students had higher symptom levels compared to other groups (Ashera & Amro, 2024). Following the violence that occurred in October 2023, a survey conducted by Ahmad, El Sharif, Abuiram, & Dweib (2024) on 1815 students, indicated that 65.9% had symptoms of depression and 60.9% had symptoms of anxiety based on the HADS Scale.

Emotional intelligence helps improve mental health by allowing people to communicate more effectively and resolve their challenges. Emotional intelligence is also viewed as a trait, which includes the personal, emotional and social skills of an individual (Al-Fayzi, 2015). Thus, emotional intelligence helps predict different coping strategies of university students who face life pressures (Abd El-Ilah, Abd El-Aziz, & Owais, 2023). Students who possess high levels of emotional intelligence tend to use positive coping strategies for their psychological stressors. This fact reflects the positive association between emotional intelligence and mental health. Furthermore, the ability of an individual to express and share their emotional experiences with others is one of the primary components of mental health, leading to the development of a stable and meaningful personality (Mushagaba, 2014).

Building on this, many previous studies have confirmed that counseling and training programs play an effective role in helping individuals facing crises and deal with them in a structured and scientific manner. These programs also contribute to improving thinking skills, which are essential for enhancing crisis management abilities, adaptability to change, and positive thinking among university students. Examples include the study by AL-Amrousi (2022), the study by Salman, Asif, Mustafa, Khan, Shehzadi, Tahir, Raza, Khan, Hussein, Khan, butt, & Mallhi (2020) and the study by Al-Halabi (2016) .

Due to the positive role of emotional intelligence in mental health, The researcher aims to propose a training program based on emotional intelligence to support the mental health of university students, particularly those at Arab American University. The research focuses on designing a program that helps improve students' mental health by addressing issues such as anxiety, depression and academic stress.

Ultimately, the beneficiaries of this program are university students, as it helps them to deal more effectively with psychological challenges, and helps students cope with depression,

academic anxiety and stress. Which positively reflects on their academic performance and overall health. This will also be useful for students who are experiencing psychological stress. It is also of interest to specialists in the field of psychological support at universities because it provides the scientific foundations that will enable them to develop support programs adapted to different educational contexts.

1.4 Study Objectives

The current study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Identify and understand the main psychological and emotional challenges faced by students at Arab American University.
2. Set clear educational, psychological, and emotional goals should the proposed training program aim to achieve in order to improve the mental health of students at Arab American University.
3. Identify the components of the proposed training program and the appropriate activities to enhance students' emotional intelligence at Arab American University in order to improve their mental health.
4. Ensuring the effective integration of the program into students' emotional intelligence development to improve their mental health.
5. Identify the proposed strategies for implementation of the program, the expected obstacles, and how they can be overcome.

1.5 Study Questions

Main question:

What is the proposed training program based on emotional intelligence to enhance the mental health of students at Arab American University?

From the main question, a set of the following sub-questions branch out:

1. What are the main psychological and emotional challenges faced by students at Arab American University?

2. What educational, psychological, and emotional goals should the proposed training program aim to achieve in order to improve the mental health of students at Arab American University?
3. What are the components of the proposed training program and the appropriate activities to enhance students' emotional intelligence at Arab American University in order to improve their mental health?
4. What strategies are proposed for implementation of the program?
5. What obstacles are expected in the implementation of the program, and how can they be addressed?

1.6 Study Limitations

- **Time Limits:** This study will be conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2024/2025.
- **Spatial Limits:** The research will be confined to the Arab American University.
- **Human Limits:** Participants will include undergraduate students from all academic years at the Arab American University.
- **Objective Limits:** The focus is on designing a program based on emotional intelligence to improve university students' mental health.

1.7 Terms Definition

1.7.1 Mental Health: It is the ability of an individual to manage the stresses of life in various aspects without allowing psychological pressures to affect them negatively. It includes psychological, social and emotional aspects related to the individual. Mental health has a key role in achieving the general well-being of the individual, because it affects his life positively and negatively (World Health Organization, 2018).

Procedural Definition: The ability of an individual to face all the stresses of life, without allowing them to affect him in a negative way. It includes psychological, social and emotional aspects related to the individual. Mental health is a major part of an individual's life because it affects his life in a positive or negative way.

1.7.2 Academic pressure: Psychological problems experienced by students during their academic performance, can stem from various factors, including their aspiration for high academic achievement, the complexity of study subjects (Al-Ghamdi, 2015).

Procedural Definition: A state of imbalance that causes stress and tension for students due to various situations they encounter while striving to achieve the best academic performance.

1.7.3 Anxiety and Stress: Anxiety and stress are important mental health issues that have a negative impact on students. Previous studies have proven that elevated levels of anxiety and stress can cause impairment in academic performance and overall well-being. According to the American College Health Association (2020), 63% of college students in the United States suffer from severe anxiety due to distance education (Greenberg et al., 2021).

Procedural Definition: Anxiety is the state of worry or fear that arises in response to perceived threats or danger that are vague, uncertain, or anticipated in the future. It may disrupt sleep, concentration, emotional regulation, and cognitive functioning, and can negatively impact one's ability to perform daily activities.

Stress, on the other hand, is a psychological and physical reaction to specific academic or social pressures, such as exams, deadlines, or performance expectations. Physical symptoms of stress may include irritability, fatigue, headaches, and muscle tension.

Although stress and anxiety are closely related, anxiety is typically internal and longer-lasting, whereas stress usually results from an external situation and tends to be short-term unless it becomes chronic.

1.7.4 Depression: It is a disorder that negatively affects, first, the cognitive aspects of an individual, including memory, attention, and concentration, and secondly, physical aspects, such as feeling tired and constantly exhausted (Greenberg et al., 2021).

Procedural Definition: Depression is a disorder that affects students negatively by creating stress and anxiety related due to study pressures, including tests and how people learn, both mentally and physically.

1.7.5 Emotional Intelligence : The range of abilities that all people have that are needed for success in all aspects of life, including enthusiasm, perseverance, "emotional intelligence " (how to understand, manage, and control your own emotions), Self-motivation and the ability to recognize emotions in others and interact well with them (Al-Frayan & Al-Issa, 2021).

Procedural Definition: Emotional intelligence will be taught as the ability of individuals to have enthusiasm, perseverance and self-motivation for an educational setting. Additionally, students will be taught how to recognize the emotions of others in order to respond appropriately.

1.8 Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into five main chapters. Chapter 1 includes the introduction and some main concepts. This chapter provides an outline for the main basics that the thesis stands upon to design a mental health support program. Moreover, this chapter defines some of the concepts and maps the relations between them.

Chapter Two: Includes a Review of Related Literature to Mental Health and emotional intelligence

Chapter Three: Methodology

Chapter Four: Results of the Study

Chapter Five: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

In this chapter, the Researcher examines the relevant literature, previous studies, the theoretical framework of mental health and blended learning. Additionally, insights from educational literature, findings from previous studies, and critique of previous studies are reviewed.

2.1 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Mental Health

Mental health is a fundamental pillar of an individual's life, enabling them to achieve stability and adapt to the circumstances and situations they encounter. It is closely linked to physical health, representing a state of balance between an individual's psychological and physical functions. This balance allows individuals to realize their potential and achieve their goals in life (Ben Skerifa & Madani, 2024).

2.1.1.1 Definition of Mental Health

Buffa & Azran (2023) defined mental health, based on Adolf Meyer's perspective, as the development of socially personal behavior and the prevention of mental disorders. Mental health involves an individual's ability to adapt to the external world in a way that promotes well-being and enables them to face various challenges effectively.

Al-Qasas & Bin Ghadfa (2022) described mental health as skills and competencies necessary to meet daily needs, and how to cope with all that is expected of a person on a daily basis without compromising, or exhausting, their own resources. This also includes feeling competent, satisfied, and happy with oneself.

Mehreza (2021) defined mental health as a psychological compatibility, where the individual is experiencing being happy, satisfied and psychologically secure. This state enables them to realize their potential, utilize their abilities, and invest their energies to address life's challenges and psychological crises with a positive outlook.

Al-Qaisi (2019) defined mental health as an individual's ability to face various problems and difficulties, as well as life's stresses, in positive ways-free from excessive emotion, stress, or anxiety.

Al-Aswad (2019) defined it as a state of psychological stability and compatibility experienced by an individual during their interaction with the social environment in a positive manner.

Batool & Hanif (2018) describe mental health from two perspectives: the medical model which highlights the absence of pathological psychological disorder, and the psychological perspective, which emphasizes the presence of positive emotions and traits in an individual.

Al-Omari (2018) defined mental health as a state in which an individual adapts, overcomes, and achieves compatibility with the negative circumstances and situations they encounter within themselves, their environment, and the bored world.

Magzoub (2016) described mental health as a state of adaptation conformity in which an individual triumphs over challenges and lives in true peace with themselves, their environment, and the world around them.

Lukat et al. (2016) defined mental health as a comprehensive concept encompassing emotional, psychological, and social aspects. It is described as a unified structure that reflects an individual's experience of positive emotions, life satisfaction, and effective performance.

2.1.1.2 Theories of Mental Health

Cognitive Theory

Cognitivists believe that mental health depends on how individuals perceive and think about events in the environment. An increased sense of self-efficacy promotes physical health and overall well-being (Galit, 2021).

Behavioral Theory

Watson and Skinner argue that human behavior is learned and can be changed or modified. Mental health, according to this perspective, is achieved when an individual learns correct psychological and social habits from their environment. Watson emphasizes that mental

health is acquired, and negative mental states arise when individuals adopt harmful habits or incorrect wrong ways of thinking, leading to unhappiness and sadness (Al-Tayeb, 2016).

Humanistic Theory

Maslow suggests that mental health is achieved when an individual satisfies various needs and attains self-realization. When a person is unable to fulfill these needs, they may experience distress and a decline in mental health (Zeidan, 2021; Al-Qarala, 2017).

Maslow identified the characteristics of a self-fulfilling human being:

1. A realistic perception of the world and ability to confront difficulties instead of escaping into fantasies.
2. A high degree of self acceptance and others.
3. The ability to find joy, humor and enjoyment in life.
4. Resistance to social pressures.
5. Originality and creativity in work and problem-solving.

Psychoanalytic Theory

Freud believes that an individual with good mental health possesses the capacity for love, work, and productivity. He focused on the obstacles that hinder mental health, rather than on how an individual can develop it. For Freud, mental health is the ability of the ego to reconcile personal desires with the demands of reality (Badawi & Dabbar, 2023; Al-Qaisi, 2019)

Adler argued that methods of socialization play a crucial role in shaping an individual's personality, overcoming feelings of inferiority and improving his psychological health. The pursuit of goals contributes to the development of a strong personality capable of meeting life's challenges. Fromm, on the other hand, diverged from Freud by emphasizing the importance of social factors in shaping personality. He believes that an authoritarian society factors negative personality traits, whereas an ideal society encourages the growth of a productive personality capable of achieving positive mental health (Badawi & Dabbar, 2023).

2.1.1.3 Analytical Review of Mental Health Theories

Various psychological perspectives exist to explain mental health and how people create psychological well-being and reconcile life's challenges through integrating psychological well-being with cognitive theory, behavioral theory, and humanistic theory. Each of these theories has its own emphasis in explaining mental health.

The focus of cognitive theory is to emphasize the influence of the way people think or perceive life. Therefore, the cognitive perspective indicates that an individual's psychological well-being is a function of how they interpret and assess events in their environment. In other words, a person's psychological well-being will depend on their ability to think positively and realistically. If they have distorted or negative thoughts, they may experience psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, or stress (Galit, 2021). Hence, developing good thought patterns and using adaptive cognitive strategies are critical to achieving good mental health.

The basis of the behavioral theory is observable behavior and the impact of environmental learning. Watson and Skinner determined that the behaviors exhibited by people are a result of the process known as conditioning or reinforcement from the surrounding environment. Mental health through this perspective is achieved when individuals develop proper behavioral patterns or coping methods that allow them to respond to the demands of the environment adequately (Al-Tayeb, 2016). However, this way of thinking has received criticism for only concentrating on observable behavior while providing insufficient focus on emotional and cognitive processes that occur in the individual inside.

A broad understanding of mental health can come from the theories and methods of Humanistic psychology, which promote self-development and growth as the source of our overall well-being. According to Maslow, self-actualization and the fulfilling of our psychological needs provide us with the greatest amount of well-being. If we are unable to fulfill these needs, we may experience frustration, stress, or a loss of place within ourselves (Zeidan, 2021; Al-Qaralah, 2017); therefore, although these theories point out the significance of personal developing, there are no specific practical techniques for improving one's mental health through the techniques of humanistic psychology.

The three theoretical perspectives of cognitive, behavioural, and humanistic psychology each have their strengths and weaknesses; however, they have the ability to provide a well-rounded picture of mental health by providing different theories of how thoughts, behaviour, and self-development affect our mental health and the way we develop the skills to improve our mental health.

2.1.1.4 Manifestations of Mental Health

Al-Momani & Awaudat (2020) classified manifestations of mental health into four groups:

1. **Psychological adaptation:** The individual's ability to feel content and comfortable within themselves.
2. **Social adaptation:** The ability to build and maintain healthy relationships.
3. **Problem-solving:** The capacity to effectively handle challenges and responsibilities.
4. **Disease-free:** A state of being free from mental illnesses.

Bosaha (2018) & Al-Shamri (2022) identified several additional manifestations of mental health, including:

1. **Normality:** The individual demonstrates behavior that is acceptable and typical in society, aligning with what is considered normal for the majority.
2. **Compatibility:** This includes personal compatibility, self-satisfaction, emotional stability, , social harmony.
3. **Happiness:** The individual's ability to experience happiness with themselves and others, fostering social integration and forming friendships.
4. **Integration:** Functional and dynamic integration, including the harmonization of psychological motives and actions.

Masoudi (2018) highlighted other important manifestations of mental health:

1. **Absence of acute psychological conflict:** The individual experiences minimal internal and external conflicts.

2. **Mental superiority:** A high level of mental energy, which reflects positive mental health
3. **Motivation:** A driving force that propels the individual to pursue activities and achieve goals, guiding their actions and efforts.
4. **Emotional balance:** The ability to maintain self-control during emotional situations, ensuring stability in reactions.

2.1.1.5 Factors Associated with Mental Health

Laranjeira & Querido (2022) highlighted two key factors associated with mental health:

1. The presence of hope, which plays a significant role in promoting positive mental health as it serves as a positive motivation to achieve desired goals.
2. Planning and defining strategies related to the goals to be accomplished.

Carvalho et al. (2022) identified several additional factors:

1. Maintaining a balance between the individual and their environment, which helps preserve positive mental health.
2. Controlling emotions by focusing on positive thoughts and establishing meaningful connections with others.
3. Transforming life's disappointments into personal satisfaction, making independent decisions, and solving problems effectively.
4. Prioritizing the maintenance of positive emotions, commitment to achieving goals, and fostering healthy relationships.

Sienra et al. (2023) emphasized that recognition within one's environment and society contributes to better adaptation, optimism, problem-solving abilities and psychological flexibility.

An Dong et al. (2023) pointed out that an individual's ability to control their emotions, demonstrate courage, and maintain self-esteem are critical factors in sustaining positive mental health.

2.1.1.6 Mental Health Goals

Al-Siddiq et al. (2023) outlined several several goals for mental health:

1. Creating harmony between the individual and their surrounding environment.
2. Helping individuals control their emotions and manage their actions
3. Enabling individuals to assume responsibilities effectively.
4. Enabling self-appreciation and self-respect.
5. Developing the ability to move away from his internal psychological conflicts.

Haider (2017) identified additional goals for mental health, including:

1. Promoting an individual's understanding of themselves, their feelings, and inclinations.
2. Achieving psychological and social compatibility.
3. Cultivating a sense of happiness within oneself and with others.
4. Facilitating self-realization, enabling individuals to exploit their abilities and prepare them to face life's challenges.

2.1.1.7 Characteristics of a Mentally Healthy Individual

Nagy (2020) pointed out that an individual with positive mental health should include several characteristics

First:Compatibility:

1. **Social compatibility:** Includes family, school, professional and social compatibility.
2. **Personal compatibility:** Refers to the individual's satisfaction with themselves.

Secondly:The individual's feeling of happiness with themselves: includes comfort, security, confidence, self-esteem and acceptance, self-tolerance and reassurance.

Third:Feeling happy with others: Includes respect for others, establishing social relationships, belonging to society, cooperation with others, and the ability to assume social responsibility.

Fourth:Self-realization and exploitation of abilities: Involve understanding oneself, accepting facts related to one's abilities objectively, putting effort into work and being satisfied with it.

Fifth: The ability to face the demands of life:

Achieved through:

1. Living in the present and accepting reality.
2. Making efforts to solve problems.
3. Viewing life and its problems in a proper way.
4. Coping with everyday frustrations.
5. Taking personal and social responsibilities.
6. Welcoming good ideas.
7. Controlling and adapting to the environment.

Sixth: Psychological integration:

Achieved through:

1. Full and harmonious functioning of a person physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually.
2. Enjoying health and exhibiting normal developmental growth.
3. Living in safety and peace: enjoying physical, psychological, and social well-being, along with enjoying life and planning for the future.

IbnShrek & Schneicher (2018) noted additional characteristics of mental health:

1. **Freedom from mental illnesses:** Mental health represents the emotional, social, and mental state that an individual enjoys. It is characterized as a dynamic state that may change due to adaptation.
2. **Balance:** Achieving a balance between reality and the individual's internal and external positive and negative factors.
3. **Coping with conflicts and stresses:** Mental health enables an individual to face daily conflicts and stresses, helping them feel secure and stable.

2.1.2 Anxiety

Anxiety is one of the most widespread topics in the medical field, as it is associated with many psychological problems and stresses. It is considered one of the most common human emotions and a natural response to a threat. Anxiety is also one of the key symptoms of various mental disorders, which can have a negative impact on an individual's life, as well as their mental and physical health. If an individual suffers from chronic anxiety, they may face further problems in the future (Fouagla & Zafari, 2024).

2.1.2.1 Definition of Anxiety

Barlow (2024) defines anxiety as a classification of mental health that causes physical symptoms such as sweating, trembling, nervousness, and fear.

Preston et al. (2023) define anxiety as the individual's feeling of discomfort, such as nervousness or fear, regarding specific events that could happen either at the present moment or in the future.

Al-Bahnasawy, Hashem & Al-Mutairi (2023) defines anxiety as the individual's feeling of fear, lasting for at least six continuous months, which leads to subjective stresses, such as poor social relationships and difficulty controlling anxiety. This fear is often triggered by something specific.

Al-Anzi & Al-Zahrani (2022) defined anxiety as an emotional experience in which an individual expresses feelings of fear, threat, and tension toward something specific, accompanied by physical, physiological, emotional and social symptoms.

Al-Baghdadi & Al-Ashmawi (2020) defined anxiety as the individual's negative thinking about the future, negative outlook on life, uneasiness, an inability to face life events and pressures, a loss of security, and a lack of self-confidence.

Superficial (2020) defines it as a general state of tension regarding the occurrence of a possible danger, which may be accompanied by fear and both psychological and physical symptoms.

2.1.2.2 Theories Explaining Anxiety

Behavioral Theory

The role of conditional learning in developing anxiety is highlighted by the behavioral approach. For instance, when a person perceives that their heart rate increases due to a threat, they will become anxious because they perceive that there is a real threat at that moment, or they feel that there is a threat coming. The individual can also learn to feel anxiety for others and surroundings (Al-Hanouti, 2016).

Cognitive Theory

An individual will process anxiety through three different dimensions by using a cognitive lens. The first dimension is the physical aspect, where a person has sensory recognition of bodily sensations, including an increased heart rate. The second dimension is the cognitive aspect, where the individual has a perception of danger in a given situation, often filled with irrational thoughts such as fear of losing or failing. The final dimension is the behavioral aspect, whereby the person avoids situations that trigger anxiety and in doing so prevents the occurrence of anxious feelings (Al-Janabi, 2019).

2.1.2.3 Types of Anxiety

Anxiety can be classified into several types:

1. **General Anxiety Disorder (GAD):** This refers to a condition where an individual constantly feels anxious or nervous about events in their life, particularly concerning daily activities and personal relationships (Knowles & Olatunji, 2020).
2. **Panic Disorder:** This involves sudden episodes of intense panic, characterized by symptoms such as trembling, confusion, confusion, nausea, and difficulty breathing.

Panic attacks often occur rapidly due to exposure to events that cause fear or stress, through they may also happen without an apparent cause (Lee et al., 2020)

3. **Specific Phobias:** This type of anxiety is marked by an intense fear of a specific object or situation, which the individual may recognize as irrational or exaggerated but still finds difficult to control (Sapra et al., 2023)

2.1.2.4 Causes of Anxiety

Anxiety can arise from various factors, which are broadly categorized as follows:

- **Psychological Causes**

Psychological factors are closely linked to an individual's mental state. Feeling of injustice, inequality, and a sense of being wronged can lead to introversion, sadness, and persistent negative thinking. Such individuals may perceive themselves as unlucky or feel disliked by others (Al-Jabali, 2016).

- **Social Causes**

Waterman (2021) highlighted several social factors that contribute to anxiety:

1. A lack of trust in others, which fosters introversion and limits the individual's ability to express their thoughts and feelings.
2. Poor communication and social skills, resulting in difficulty forming friendships and maintaining social relationships
3. Traumatic social experiences such as bereavement, illness, or divorce, which can lead to mental health challenges.
4. Stress accumulated over time due to prolonged exposure to pressure or difficulties.

- **Chronic Stress**

Rhyan (2020) emphasized that accumulated stress is a significant cause of anxiety. When stress continues over an extended period, it can evolve into chronic anxiety, surpassing the effects of short-term stress caused by temporary problems.

- **Genetic and Medical Causes**

Al-Sadoun (2017) suggested that some medical conditions may trigger anxiety, such as thyroid disorders or low blood sugar levels. Additionally, certain medications, such as those for blood pressure stimulations, may induce anxiety (Asfour, 2016).

Other Contributing Factors

Mehmet & Brik (2016) identified additional causes of anxiety, including:

1. Psychological and behavioral disorders.
2. Social phobias and sleep disturbances.
3. Chronic health conditions such as cancer.
4. Family-related problems.
5. Substance abuse, including drug and alcohol.
6. Exposure to difficult experiences and constant fatigue.
7. Feeling of internal and external threat.

2.1.2.5 Anxiety Symptoms

Electra (2018) identified several symptoms of anxiety, including:

1. A persistent feeling of discomfort.
2. Sleep disorders.
3. Severe tension and trembling.
4. Changes in weight and appetite.
5. Sexual dysfunction.
6. Muscle tension.
7. Social phobia.
8. Mental and psychological disorders, such as depression.
9. Physical disorders.

Shukrawi (2016) highlighted additional symptoms, including:

1. Nausea.
2. Vomiting.
3. Generalized pain and discomfort.

2.1.2.6 Anxiety Treatment

Al-Huish (2016) indicated that the treatment of anxiety can be achieved through psychotherapy and medication.

- **Drug Therapy**

Individuals suffering from anxiety disorders are prescribed appropriate medications depending on the specific type of disorder they are experiencing. Common medications include:

1. **Buspirone:** An anti-anxiety medication,
2. **Antidepressants:** Used to treat anxiety disorders.
3. **Benzodiazepine or Alpha-Blockers:** These tranquilizers are used in the short term to reduce anxiety symptoms.

- **Psychotherapy**

Also referred to as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), psychotherapy involves psychological counseling where the individual speaks with a specialist. This short-term therapy focuses on developing specific skills to alleviate anxiety symptoms. The individual may also be exposed to anxiety-inducing situations to learn how to confront and manage them in a constructive and positive way.

2.1.3 Depression

Many individuals suffer from various personality disorders, including depression, which ranks second after anxiety. Depression affects individuals of all ages, but its symptoms and severity vary (Elsayed & Sabry, 2022). Due to the prevalence of misconceptions in society, approximately 60% of individuals with depression do not seek medical assistance. This is

because many people feel that depression is a stigma associated with mental health disorders, which is rejected by society and prevents him from completing his personal and professional life (Ormel, Kessler & Schoevers, 2019).

2.1.3.1 Definition of Depression

Salik & Marwaha (2022) defined depression as a mood disorder that leads to feelings of sadness and a loss of desire and interest in activities. Clack & Ward (2019) confirmed that depression affects the biological, individual and social functioning of the affected individual. Forbes et al. (2021) described depression as an emotional and social disorder caused by an excessive focus on negative aspects and ineffective engagement with others.

Abu Al-Nour et al. (2020) defined it as a state of sadness caused by conditions related to pain and loss. They also highlighted that depression is often associated with a sense of something missing, even when the individual cannot identify the exact cause of their sadness.

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) defined depression as a common psychological disorder that affects individuals worldwide across all age groups. It influences social behavior, often leading to isolation and introversion, and disrupts social and professional relationships.

Ismail (2018) depression is an emotional state that includes feelings of sadness, separation from others, unfaithfulness to oneself, and hopelessness. These feelings can disrupt the individual's ability to reach their goals as well as add to their loneliness and guilt.

Finally, Kauffman & Landrun (2018) define depression as a state where one experiences discomfort, a lack of desire and interest, and diminished enjoyment in everyday life.

2.1.3.2 Types of Depression

Jones (2015) & Rahimat & Adeli (2022) summarized depression into different categories, including:

1. **Primary Depressive Disorder:** This is a short-term type of depression with symptoms lasting from a few weeks to several months with many people experiencing extreme sadness. Symptoms can include losing interest in life, sleeping a long time, difficulty

concentrating, having suicidal thoughts and feeling guilty even when one isn't involved in anything.

2. **Persistent Depressive Disorder:** The depression includes the same basic symptoms of depression severe sadness, lack of engagement in daily life, difficulty sleeping, obsessive thoughts about your past actions, and lower levels of energy and activity with the difference being the definition of PDD is that it persists for two years or more.
3. **Psychotic Depression:** Is distinct in that it includes not only the common symptoms of depression but also psychotic symptoms such as hallucinations (e.g., hearing non-existent voices) or delusions, such as a belief in one's own worthlessness.
4. **Manic Depressive Disorder:** This type of depression is marked by extreme and rapid mood swings. For example, an individual may feel happy one moment and deeply depressed the next.

While Fayed (2016) & Rahimat & Adeli (2022) noted the existence of two types of depression:

1. **Unipolar Depression:** This type is characterized by individuals experiencing one or more major depressive episodes without accompanying manic episodes. According to Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV, 1994), an individual must exhibit at least five of the following symptoms to be diagnosed: persistent sadness, significant weight gain or loss, lack of energy, feelings exhaustion and fatigue, loss of interest and happiness daily activities, decreased ability to think or concentrate, suicidal thoughts and feelings of guilt.
2. **Bipolar Depression:** This type is associated with frequent manic episodes alongside recurring major depressive episodes. In some cases, individuals may experience only manic episodes without any depressive episodes.

2.1.3.3 Severity Levels of Depression

Rahimat & Adeli (2022) categorized depression into three levels based on severity:

1. **Mild Depression:** Individuals with mild depression experience occasional mood swings, often triggered by a negative event. Anxiety may dominate their emotions,

leading to feelings of frustration. Life changes, such as a shift in lifestyle, can also contribute to this condition.

2. **Moderate Depression:** This level is marked by persistent mood swings and the appearance of physical symptoms of depression. Symptoms can vary between individuals. At this stage, it is crucial for individual needs to seek medical intervention to manage the condition.
3. **Major Depression:** Is the most severe form and poses significant risk to an individual's life. symptoms may include hallucinations and persistent suicidal thoughts. Immediate medical and psychological intervention is critical at this stage.

2.1.3.4 Classification of Depressive Disorders

The American Psychiatric Association has categorized depressive disorders into five distinct types (Salk and Marwa, 2022; Singh, Volner & Marlowe, 2023)

1. Dysthymic Disorder.
2. Major Depressive Disorder.
3. Persistent Depressive Disorder (partial depression).
4. Premenstrual Depressive Disorder.
5. Depressive Disorder Due to Another Medical Condition.

2.1.3.5 Symptoms of Depression

The World Health Organization (2023); Suleiman & Al-Ibrahim (2024); Cho et al., (2019) & Meng et al., (2020) identified several symptoms of depression, including:

1. Decreased concentration.
2. Feelings of guilt.
3. Low self-esteem.
4. Despair about the future.
5. Suicidal ideation.

6. Sleep disorders.
7. Loss of appetite.
8. Weight changes (either increase or decrease).
9. Persistent fatigue.

Ismail & Ismail (2019) categorized the symptoms of depression into four main aspects:

Emotional Aspects:

1. Sadness.
2. Hopelessness.
3. Guilt.
4. Negative feelings towards oneself and others.
5. Mood volatility.
6. Loss of passion and will.
7. Pessimism about the future.

Cognitive Aspects:

1. Low self-assessment.
2. Confused thinking.
3. Decline in cognitive abilities.
4. Inability to make decisions.
5. Lack of attention and concentration.
6. Forgetfulness.

Motivational Aspects:

1. Suicide tendencies.

2. Constant withdrawal.
3. Negative thinking.

Physical Aspects:

1. Fatigue.
2. Stress.
3. Lethargy.
4. Reducing activity levels.

Additionally, Ormel, Kessler & Schoevers (2019) highlighted several common features across all depressive disorder, including:

1. Feeling of emptiness.
2. Grief.
3. Constant mood swings.
4. Nervousness.
5. Physical and cognitive changes negatively affect the individual's performance of his daily tasks.

2.1.3.6 Theories of Depression

Cognitive theory: depression arises from an individual's tendency to view themselves and their future pessimistically. Thoughts produce significant reactions in both positively and negatively ways and cause individuals to take action in response to the way they think and feel. In this process, people can react negatively to their thoughts, and eventually develop depressed moods as a result. Therefore, cognitive theory proposes that the behaviour of an individual is the primary reason for depressed moods and individuals who have low self-esteem and negative cognitions are also at greater risk of experiencing depressive reactions in response to stressful events (Kafouri, 2020).

Behavioral theory: States that the experience of depression is an example of how previous experiences have shaped one's behaviour. It also states that a lack of positive reinforcement or reward comes from not receiving positive or rewarding experiences throughout life (Kassem, 2022).

Biological theory: emphasize the role of brain chemistry and neurological functionality have a direct impact on depression. This theory indicates that one has an emotional or depressed state due to the imbalance of chemicals in the brain. The chemicals have a direct effect on what someone is thinking, feeling, and doing. Electric pulses sent through the body by neurons are sent to neurotransmitters, which are then transmitted by the neural network of the body. Disorders in neural pathways, imbalances in brain chemicals, or problems with neuronal connections can create what can be viewed as a disorder in the brain's physical and chemical operation. (Ismail, 2015).

Suleiman & Ibrahim (2024) identified four primary methods for treating depression:

1. **Behavioral Activation:** is an approach that encourages people to participate in the activities that they most enjoy. It helps create an emotional sense of accomplishment and self-esteem, as well as a belief in oneself to be able to succeed. In addition, provides support in decreasing negative emotional states and reducing the severity of mood disturbances.
2. **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** helps people with depression deal with daily challenges by providing techniques for managing their thoughts and behaviours. This intended to develop improved coping mechanisms and encourage healthier ways of thinking.
3. **Interactive Environmental Psychotherapy:** offers therapeutic group experiences to those who experience depression. It also helps develop positive and empathic connections between individuals within the group and encourages its members to reach out when assistance is required.
4. **Problem-Solving Therapy:** provides individuals with the ability to address the stresses associated with their lives. By developing constructive problem-solving skills, individuals are able to enhance their overall psychological well-being and improve their quality of life.

2.1.4 Psychological Academic Pressure

2.1.4.1 Definition of Psychological Academic Pressure

According to Al-Qarala and Al-Hawari (2024), academic psychological pressure occurs when a student (due to their assignments, curricula and homework related to their schools) experiences feelings of tension, anxiety and stress.

Mukhtar (2023) described it as a state of stress and anxiety experienced by students as a result of diverse thoughts stemming from their studies or societal pressures.

Ibrahim (2021) defined academic psychological pressure as the result of academic pressure that students experience from homework and exams, leading to feelings of anxiety and stress on their mental health.

The American Psychological Association (2012) describes academic pressure as the sense of stress and anxiety caused by the requirements of school; academic pressure on students could result in negative feelings, including exhaustion and depression, leading to a decreased ability to learn.

Sarasota County Schools (2022) defined academic pressure as a student's sense of anxiety and overwhelm caused by studying, including the large amount of homework consistently, such as assignments and final exams.

Khadrawi (2019) defines it as any situation a student encounters that results in a deterioration of their psychological state, leading to discomfort, anxiety and stress.

2.1.4.2 Symptoms of Psychological Academic Pressure

The American Psychological Association (2012) categorized the symptoms of academic stress into three sections:

Psychological Symptoms:

1. Anxiety.
2. Depression.
3. Isolation.

4. Low self-confidence.
5. Lack of sleep.
6. Memory impairment.

Physical Symptoms:

1. Headache.
2. Stomach pain.
3. Fatigue.
4. Increased heartbeat.
5. General exhaustion.
6. Difficulty managing oneself.

Behavioral Symptoms:

1. Aggressiveness.
2. Misconduct.
3. Decreased academic performance.

2.1.4.3 Causes of Psychological Academic Pressure

Students experience various academic pressures, leading to psychological pressure due to several reasons such as:

1. Academic Motivation (Beharu, 2018).
2. Study Environment (Beharu, 2018).
3. Teacher Quality (Odrizola-González et al, 2020).
4. Management System (White et al, 2021).
5. Assessment and Extracurricular Activities (Fares et al, 2016).

2.1.4.4 Sources of Psychological Academic Pressure

Students experience psychological academic pressure due to several different factors.

Noreen et al. (2021) identified three primary sources academic stress:

1. Pressures from parents, teachers, and personal attitudes.
2. Exam stress and workload.
3. Pressures arising from the nature of the education and management system.

Rustam & Tentama (2020) highlighted four sources of academic stress:

1. Emotional factors.
2. Psychology factors.
3. Knowledge-related stress.
4. Physiological stress.

Harb (2018) outlined seven sources of psychological academic stress:

1. Academic exams.
2. Study materials.
3. Physical equipment.
4. Economic pressure.
5. Work restrictions.
6. Social relations.
7. Academic expectations.

2.1.4.5 Explanatory Theories of Psychological Academic Stress

Cox & McKay's Theory: This theory asserts that psychological stress is a unique experience by each person. It is part of a dynamic system that determines how a person interacts with their environment (al-Qarala, & Al-Horai, 2024).

Cognitive Behavioral Theory: This theory connects a student's behavioral problems with their thoughts and confidence levels regarding themselves. It states that a student does not develop emotional problems, including depression and academic stress, because of their surroundings or social environment but rather because the student has a certain perception of their surroundings or social environment and the student's self-perceived value (Marhej & Al-Mahja, 2022).

Roger's Theory of Perceptions and Self-Determination: This theory emphasizes the importance of personal perceptions and sensations formed through self-determination and self-realization. This theory emphasizes an understanding of knowledge through personal perception. The purpose of self-knowledge and an understanding of self is to allow students the ability to change through self-directed behavior (Marhej & Al-Mahja, 2022).

2.1.5 Emotional Intelligence

emotional intelligence is how self-awareness develops in people who can utilize their self-awareness to positively influence their actions. People have the correct perception of all facets of their lives and understand themselves and others through their feelings, desires and motivations. emotional intelligence consists of the ability to become aware of feelings, beliefs, thoughts and motivations and strengths and weaknesses. This awareness enables individuals to plan and manage their lives, evaluate their thinking, and make informed decisions (Ben Wazza, 2018).

emotional intelligence has changed considerably from the prior to 1990 and 2000. Since this concept includes numerous elements of cognitive and emotional systems, it is an ambiguous and complex construct. Initially, psychologists viewed it as an unstructured and difficult-to-control concept, believing that emotions caused confusion in an individual's thinking. However, in the last years of the 20th century, researchers recognized the importance of emotional intelligence as a dominant ability influencing all other competencies. Moreover, studies have shown a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and mental health (Saleh, 2016).

2.1.5.1 The History of the Development of the Concept of emotional intelligence (Marrakchi & Kharmoush, 2018)

- **The First Stage**

Although emotional intelligence is a modern concept, it has a long history of research and theorizing in psychology. Meyer emphasized that the origin of emotional intelligence dates back to the 18th century. Psychologists observed that the human cognition of three main components:

1. **Knowledge: Encompasses** higher mental functions such as memory, thinking and judgment.
2. **Conscience:** Includes emotions such as feelings and mood.
3. **Motivation:** Involves needs related to both biological and behavioral aspects.

Some proponents of traditional intelligence theories attempted to incorporate emotions into the study of intelligence. For example, Thorndike introduced a theory of intelligence that identified three types:

1. **Abstract Intelligence:** Related to mathematical and linguistic skills.
2. **Practical Intelligence:** Involving the ability to handle objects and solve practical problems.
3. **Social Intelligence:** Concerned with interpersonal skills and understanding others.
4. Thorndike is considered to be laying the foundation for the concept of emotional intelligence by expanding on the idea of social intelligence.

- **The Second Stage**

Between 1973 and 1989, researchers focused on developing measures for non-verbal communication to better understand emotional cues. These measures aimed to capture emotional information conveyed through facial expressions, body language, gestures, and voice tones all of which signal emotional states.

In his model of the structure of the mind, Guilford introduced the concept of behavioral content, which represents information primarily described as non-verbal. This includes social interactions requiring an awareness of others' perceptions, emotions, intentions and actions. While Guilford emphasized the perception of others, which he associated with social intelligence, he did not give equal attention to self-perception.

2.1.5.2 Definition of Emotional Intelligence

Al-Mufdi et al. (2023) defined emotional intelligence as an individual's perception of their feelings and emotions and their ability to use them positively towards themselves and others. It also involves the ability to manage relationships effectively while considering mental health, happiness and overall life satisfaction.

Bujang et al. (2022) described it as an individual's ability to recognize their own feelings and the feelings of others in order to effectively face situations and make informed judgments.

Rabihi (2022) emotional intelligence is a collection of skills that are possessed by an individual, which consist of correct thinking, emotional awareness, motivation, accomplishment, and the ability to apply these skills in daily life.

Ghazou (2020) described it as an individual's ability to realize their own emotions through self-reflection, understand emotional knowledge, and regulate their feelings in a way that allows them to influence others.

Ahmad (2019) defined emotional intelligence as a mood state that results from an individual's capability to apply their feelings and emotions to resolve problems, enhance cognitive processes, and to communicate effectively with others.

Smiley & Ben Amara (2018) defined it as a combination of different personal characteristics, qualities and social-emotional competencies, which together allow a person to comprehend their own feelings and emotions, as well as those of others, thereby improving their capacity to successfully navigate both their professional and social activities with greater rationality.

2.1.5.3 The Importance of emotional intelligence

The importance of emotional intelligence , as noted by Ghali (2018), is represented by the following points:

1. Understanding non-verbal communication can assist in handling situations before a problem arises.
2. It helps perceive personal feelings and effectively modify your behaviour prior to experiencing any issues.

3. Having the ability to understand how someone else may be feeling allows you the opportunity to empathise and make informed decisions quickly and effectively.
4. Developing the capacity of others to develop strong interpersonal skills.

While Li et al. (2024) pointed out that the importance of emotional intelligence is reflected in three key areas:

1. **Workplace:** emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in job performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and adaptability to work-related demands.
2. **Personal life:** It contributes to building strong personal relationships, managing stress and coping with various challenges.
3. **Education:** It helps teachers handle work pressures, enhance the quality of instruction, and improve relationships with students.

2.1.5.4 Theories of emotional intelligence

- **Behavioral Theory**

Proponents of the behavioral school believe that the experiences an individual goes through, especially in the early stages of life, which are marked by dependence on parents, play a key role in shaping the individual. The individuals strive to improve these experiences. The adaptation process depends on acquiring a set of appropriate habits and effective ways of interacting with others, which the individual learns over time. These habits help in reducing stress and satisfying desires and needs (Bomjan, 2020).

- **Goleman Theory**

In 1995, Goleman presented his model on emotional intelligence (Al-Jaid & Al-Sudairi, 2024). He classified the skills and abilities that constitute emotional intelligence into five dimensions:

1. **Self-awareness:** The ability of an individual to recognize and understand their feelings and influence of those emotions while using innate emotions to guide decision-making. Self-awareness occurs when an individual is aware of their emotions in the

moment, uses preferences to guide their decisions, makes realistic self-assessments, and has self-confidence (Al-Durini, 2024).

2. **Self-management:** Refers to the ability to control one's inner state, motives, and potential (Al-Dardir et al., 2017). The goal of self-management is for an individual to use emotional responses as signals for action and to manage relationships that require emotions regulation (Al-Durini, 2024).
3. **Social intelligence (social awareness):** The ability of an individual to recognize what others are feeling and respond based on their emotional reactions. It also involves sensitively to different cultures and environments (El-Sebai, 2021).
4. **Empathy:** Refers to an individual's ability to sense what others are feeling and to develop positive relationships with them (Ugoani, 2015).
5. **Motivation:** provides direction towards the attainment of specific objectives. It aids decision making, striving for excellence, and helps overcome frustration (Ugoani, 2015).

The authors of the theory of emotional intelligence described emotional intelligence as a skillset that defines the personality traits and aspects of an individual's make-up that allow for interaction with others in different types of situations. Characteristics of emotional intelligence include self-regulation, persistence, and motivation. In addition, one of the most important elements of self-efficacy is the idea that people need to learn how to create and be successful in their life, and face challenges, through developing a belief that they can succeed (Breshi & Qamuda, 2019).

- **The Theory of Dulux & Hicks**

Dulux & Hicks defined emotional intelligence as the capacity to empathize with others, understand one's own feelings, and use one's feelings to achieve goals. They theorized five basic dimensions of emotional intelligence (Abed, 2019):

1. Self-awareness.
2. Self-regulation.
3. Empathy.

4. Social skills.
5. Self-motivation.

- **Shapiro Theory**

Abu Rahma (2018) noted that emotional intelligence is a skill that can be learned alongside other skills. These skills can be divided into six areas:

1. Skills related to ethical behavior.
2. Thinking.
3. Problem-solving.
4. Social interaction.
5. Academic, scientific, and emotional success.

- **Bar-On theory**

Bar-On is regarded as the founder of the mixed model of emotional intelligence, having integrated an individual's emotional and social aspects. He focused on the skills of self-awareness, managing emotions, establishing interpersonal relationships, and adapting to changes in the environment and society (Abu Shandi, 2022). The Bar-On model was one of the first attempts to articulate the concept of emotional intelligence when it was introduced in 1988. Bar-On identified 15 different skills of emotional intelligence organized into five major categories (Al-Harasi, 2022):

1. **Intrapersonal Skills:** These are skills that contribute to an individual's self-awareness, self-affirmation, self-esteem, self-realization and ability to be independent.
2. **Interpersonal Skills:** These involve an individual's ability to create and maintain personal relationships with others, including empathy, social connectedness, and social responsibility.
3. **Adaptation:** This dimension describes how an individual adapts to continual change through their use of flexibility and ability to think logically when solving problems.

4. **Stress Management:** Refers to how well an individual can manage the stress in their life, including how resilient they are under pressure and their ability to control their impulses.
5. **General Mood:** This dimension includes an individual's level of optimism and happiness, contributing to an overall state of emotional well-being.

- **The Theory of emotional intelligence by Salovey & Meyer**

In 1990, Salovey & Meyer published two articles concerning the need for therapy centered around how people process their emotions as well as other people's emotions. The model they developed was called "emotional intelligence " and includes four dimensions (Al-Harasi, 2022) :

1. **The Perception of Emotions:** This competency defines an individual's ability to assess their emotional states and express them appropriately.
2. **Use of Emotions:** Competent individuals can assess and classify emotional experiences into categories and view multiple perspectives from situations to aid effective decision-making.
3. **Understanding Emotions:** Assesses an individual's ability to analyse, interpret, and connect emotional transitions (moving from happy to sad) as well as to recognise the reasons for emotional changes.
4. **Management of Emotions:** Defines the ability of the individual to effectively regulate emotions. Individuals do not control what emotions occur, but they are responsible for determining how those emotions affect how they act.

2.1.5.5 Analytical Review of Emotional Intelligence Theories

Many theorists have described emotional intelligence through various models that allow people to comprehend and manage their emotion. From a behavioral perspective, emotional intelligence is theorized to be learned behaviors primarily through experiential learning and social interaction (such as with family); this is particularly important during early life (Bomjan, 2020). This shows that how we learn through our environment influences our reaction to emotion.

Goleman developed one of the most recognized models for emotional intelligence. This model conceptualizes emotional intelligence as a collection of competencies that relate to both individual and collective functioning. Goleman identifies five core components, which are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These are trainable skills and may be developed through training programs that are conducted in a structured manner (Al-Durini, 2024; Ugoani, 2015).

Similarly, the Bar-On model refers to emotional intelligence as a set of social and psychological traits that enable an individual to adapt to their environment, deal with stress, and build positive relationships with others. The Salovey and Mayer model sees emotional intelligence as the totality of a person's capability to recognize and comprehend their own feelings as well as their ability to understand others' feelings, and the ability to help others manage their feelings.

In developing the training program, Goleman's model was chosen because of its emphasis on practical social and emotional competencies that can be developed through training (for example, self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills), which correlate directly to the objectives of the training program for improving college students' mental health.

2.1.5.6 The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Enhancing Mental Health

Mental health is essentially associated with emotional intelligence. When individuals can identify and manage their emotions, they have an improved ability to control their emotional reactions and deal with stress. Individuals possessing high levels of emotional intelligence are generally more psychologically adjusted, possess better coping mechanisms, and experience lower levels of anxiety and depression, which reduces the overall amount of stress experienced.

Often, students are confronted with academic pressures, social challenges, and emotional difficulties which can adversely influence their mental health. By acquiring emotional intelligence skills, such as self-awareness, self-regulation of emotions, empathy, and positive relationships with others, students can deal with these difficulties more effectively. Therefore, incorporating training related to emotional intelligence into higher education will have a significant impact on improving psychological well-being and enhancing the ability of students to cope with academic and life-related stressors.

Based on this relationship, the present study proposes a training program based on emotional intelligence competencies to enhance the mental health of university students at the Arab American University.

2.1.5.7 Strategies of emotional intelligence

Bahaj, Hafsi, & Qaloun (2023) identified several strategies that can be used to develop an individual's emotional intelligence :

1. **Self-Focus Strategy:** This involves maintaining a record that reflects the leader's emotional states, providing an opportunity to understand both current and past emotions.
2. **Meditation and Reflection on the External Environment:** Various meditation and reflection techniques help individuals become more aware of how emotions influence behavior.
3. **Empathic Listening Practice:** This strategy involves actively listening to others with sensitivity and understanding, regardless of whether their emotions align with or differ from one's own.

2.1.5.8 The Importance of emotional intelligence for Students (Al-Dardir et al., 2017)

Because students and teachers spend so much time in schools and universities, they influence who they are through the school's environment, either positively or negatively. This is part of why schools and universities are often considered a place in which individuals feel satisfied.

There are several ways emotional intelligence can influence education:

- Students who are happy and secure tend to be more successful learners, teachers who teach in an emotionally intelligent environment do a better job teaching.
- Schools with a higher level of emotional intelligence tend to achieve a larger amount of success than other schools.
- Emotional intelligence helps reduce problematic behaviors and discipline issues.
- Learning becomes more effective and engaging.

Research regarding emotional intelligence in education focuses on understanding the connection between emotion and daily challenges. Students cannot become effective learners without expressing their feelings. Emotional intelligence creates a positive mindset and increases understanding, creating room to accept new ideas. This ultimately contributes to overall satisfaction.

Psychologists have defined emotional intelligence as an important, contemporary concept contributing to the success of individuals. In addition, it enhances individual growth and development, and it improves an individual's ability to solve problems, as well as improve one's overall mental health.

2.2 Related Studies

2.2.1.1 Studies on the Emotional Intelligence

Abdul Ghaffar, said, & Mohammed (2024) aimed to examine how emotional intelligence relates to students' quality of life at a university by also taking into account specific demographic characteristics (gender, area of study, geographic location, socio-economic status). In addition, determine whether or not emotional intelligence will predict a student's overall happiness with their current situation. The research involved 485 students enrolled at the South Valley University located in Qena, Egypt. To conduct the research, two scales applied: emotional intelligence Scale and Quality of Life Scale. The result showed there was a positive correlation between students' levels of emotional intelligence and their quality of life. However, no statistical differences in students' levels of emotional intelligence based upon their demographic background (gender, socioeconomic status, or geographic location) could be determined. Conversely, there were significant differences between urban and rural student populations when comparing the quality of life; urban students reported higher levels of quality of life. Lastly, the findings support that emotional intelligence does positively contribute to enhancing students' quality of life at South Valley University in Qena.

Similarly, Abdul Rahman's study (2024) focused on developing emotional intelligence among preschool-age children. A program was developed that included specific habits of mind and an emotional intelligence scale was utilized as part of the experimental approach. The sample included 20 preschool-age children between (4-6) years old. Results indicated that there were significant differences between pre-and post-test scores on the emotional intelligence scale among the experimental group (the post-test scores were higher).

Additionally, a difference was found between the average post-test scores for the experimental group and the control groups. However, this difference was not statistically significant when comparing individual follow-up measurements.

In another related study, Khatib & Borji (2024) aimed to discover how emotional intelligence and achievement motivation are connected in all types of students at the end of their third year of secondary school. A quantitative approach was used with both the emotional intelligence Scale and the Achievement Motivation Scale as instruments to determine these relationships. The 500 students sampled for this study were 108 higher-achieving students and 392 academically-lagging students. The findings showed that there was a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and motivation to achieve in both of the groups studied.

Zdidi's study (2024) aimed to examine the relationship between levels of emotional intelligence and achievement motivation among students of Bouira University Algeria was conducted with three levels low, medium, and high for emotional intelligence. The sample consisted of 99 students. Using a descriptive methodology, the emotional intelligence Scale and the Achievement Motivation Scale. The results indicated that the level of emotional intelligence affected students' motivation to achieve. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between low emotional intelligence and students' motivation to achieve, while there was a direct relationship between the level of medium emotional intelligence and motivation to achieve. Lastly, there was a strong positive correlation between the level of high emotional intelligence and the students' motivation to achieve at the university level.

Wargi & Geagea study (2024) aimed to determine the link between the emotional intelligence and Academic Achievement of Fourth-Year Secondary Education Students. There were 101 student participants in this sample. An emotional intelligence Scale was applied. The result showed that the participants had a median level of emotional intelligence and made average academic achievements. Although there was no statistical comparison of emotional intelligence values or academic achievement values for Mathematics, there was a measurable difference for overall academic achievement. The correlation between emotional intelligence and academic achievement was found to be weak for both Mathematics and general academic achievement.

Further studies, Boznad (2022) focused on identifying the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy among guidance counselors in the state of Mesilla. The descriptive-associative method of analysis was used with a sample consisting of 56 vocational school guidance counselors. Analysis revealed a statistically significant correlation between both emotional intelligence and self-efficacy.

Moreover, Sabbah et al. (2020) performed a study at the Lebanese University to measure the level of emotional intelligence in the students. They employed a descriptive research methodology to conduct their study (n=705). The data obtained revealed that students possess a higher level of emotional intelligence. In addition, they found a statistically significant relationship between subjective feeling measures and emotional assessment measures. Furthermore, there was a negative association between emotion use and regulation and reliance on technology.

Lastly, Kant's study (2019) aimed to determine the level of emotional intelligence among Central University of India students based on gender and academic specialization. Data were collected using a sample (n=400). The results indicated that students had emotional intelligence, with significant differences found based on gender, favoring females, based on academic specialization, favoring males.

2.2.1.2 Studies on the Mental Health

The study by Buari & Khattar (2024) focused on determining the amount of psychological distress among students' experiences and how they quantify their academic stress. It aims to indicate how psychological distress varies among a sample of 89 first-year students, from the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Algiers 2 and the Faculty of Science and Technology at the University of Houari Boumediene. The study found that some students had higher levels of psychological distress than others, there was a general correlation between a student's level of psychological distress and their level of mental health. Students also experienced a much greater amount of academic stress than from any other source of psychological-distress. Furthermore, there were no statistically significant differences in students' experiences of academic stress based on gender, academic specialization, or intended career direction.

Similarly, the study of Haad & Saadawi (2024) focused on assessing how students at Belhadj Bouchaib University in Ain Temouchent, Algeria, rate their mental health. The

research was specifically designed to look into any differences in mental health between male and female students. The GHQ-12 Mental Health Scale was used, and the method of analysis used was descriptive with an analytical approach. The research sample used was 50 university students. Findings from the research indicated that the majority of the respondents rated their mental health as low. There were also substantial variances in mental health levels between genders.

Building on the theme of mental health, Mustafa study (2024) examined how solitude affects college student mental wellbeing. Solitary feelings often lead to nostalgic feelings. Data came from 160 College of Commerce Students (ages 18-21) at Cairo University using Psychological Loneliness Scales and Memory Scale. Results revealed that psychological loneliness significantly predicted individuals experiencing nostalgic sensations. There were no gender differences noted within psychological loneliness or nostalgic sensation.

In a related study, Qaja, Ben Amor, & Qaja (2024) after the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers studied how university students feel about their mental health. A descriptive methodology was used for this study. A mental health checklist was also used for this study. The sample consisted of 149 from The Gulf University. The findings indicated that there were high levels of mental health for students. However, there were differences based on gender, academic specialization, and type of residence. Also, no statistical differences were found based on the level of academics.

Similarly, Badawi & Dabbar (2023) conducted a study to assess the level of mental health among second-year psychology students at Al-Wadi University. Using a descriptive analytical method, the mental health scale was applied. They examined a sample of 30 students of both genders. The results indicated a low level of mental health among university students and found no significant differences based on place of residence. Based on these findings, the researchers proposed several recommendations.

Further exploring the relationship between mental health and coping mechanisms, Shafik & Al-Qamah study (2023) aimed to assess the level of mental health among university students and identify the most common problem-solving strategies they employ. The study applied the Arabic Mental Health Scale and Problem-Solving Method Scale to a sample of 394 male and female students from various universities in Egypt. The findings revealed that students had a good level of mental health. Regarding problem-solving

methods, social support was the most commonly used strategy, followed by the rational method, interactive religiosity, the innovative method, the emotional method, and, lastly, the neglect method. Additionally, the study found a significant relationship between mental health and problem-solving style. Mental health was positively associated with rational, innovative, social support, and interactive religiosity styles, while it was negatively associated with emotional style and neglect style .

The study by Barakhliya & Barakat (2021) aimed to assess the mental health of university students. Using a descriptive approach and a mental health scale. The study involved gathering information from a sample of 300 students at the Department of Social Sciences. Findings revealed that university students are generally very healthy with regard to their mental health; there were no significant differences found based on gender.

Finally, Khelifi's study (2018) investigated the relationship between mental health and psychological stress among students at the University of Algiers. The research employed a descriptive approach, incorporating both a mental health scale and a psychological stress scale. The sample included 200 students from the Faculty of Humanities and social sciences at Mouloud Maamari University. The results showed there is a strong negative correlation between psychological stress levels and positive mental health, as well as a strong positive correlation between psychological stress levels and negative mental health.

2.2.1.3 Studies on the Mental Health and emotional intelligence

The study by Mohammed & Said (2022) This study investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and mental health in students at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Al-Marj University. The study also assessed different types of academic programs and fields of study and the academic level. The researchers utilized a quantitative approach, using the Mental Health Scale and emotional intelligence. The study sample consisted of 100 students. The results showed a high level of both mental health and emotional intelligence. There was a positive correlation between mental health and emotional intelligence; however, there were no statistically significant differences between the groups based on the academic year and other variables. However, the results showed that the academic year variable favored students in their second year.

Similarly, the study conducted by Dehghan, Kaboudi, Alizadeh, & Heidarisharaf (2020) explored the relationship between emotional intelligence , mental well-being, and social

anxiety in blind and deaf learners. Sample sizes include 28 blind participants and 58 deaf participants (both male and female). The findings indicate that there is a link between these three constructs (emotional intelligence, mental health, and social anxiety). Additionally, it was recommended that visual and hearing disabilities may have an impact on an individual's level of emotional intelligence, mental well-being, and social anxiety. Furthermore, blind and deaf learners experience a negative correlation between their level of emotional intelligence and their level of mental well-being and social anxiety.

In a related study, Boukhalfa & Ben Cheikh (2019) The study investigated students' perceptions of emotional intelligence and mental health at the Institutes of Science and Technology of Physical Activities and Sports at the University of Algiers. A descriptive approach was used, including the emotional intelligence Scale and the Mental Health Scale, which were administered to the sample of 20 students during the academic year 2020-2021. The results revealed a positive, significant correlation between emotional intelligence and mental health.

Additionally, Sharifi & Zagara study (2018) focused on the role of emotional intelligence in maintaining mental health. The researchers adopted a quantitative approach. The researchers used quantitative data analysis methods, including emotional intelligence Scale; Psychosocial Pressure Scale; and Mental Health Scale in their study which was conducted with 150 participants. In their findings, emotional intelligence positively affects mental health, as well as alleviates the psychosocial pressures.

Finally, the study conducted by Iqrufa (2018) found how emotional intelligence and mental health relate to gender and whether there are any differences due to academic specialization. The research used two scales to measure emotional intelligence and mental health with a sample including 94 students who attend secondary schools. Results indicate a strong positive association between the total scores of both measures. Additionally, there were meaningful differences in total mental health score based on gender, favoring females, and academic specialization favoring students in scientific fields. Similarly, there were statistically significant differences in total emotional intelligence scores by gender, favoring males, and academic specialization, favoring students in literary specialization.

2.2.1.4 Studies on the Academic Pressure

The study investigated how COVID-19 influenced academic stress in university students and how it affects their mental health. It was a mixed-methods study that collected quantitative data through a validated survey and qualitative data through focus groups. The objective was to develop a comprehensive understanding of the physical, psychosocial, and behavioural manifestations of academic stress in 256 students in the Education faculty of the University of La Laguna. The quantitative analysis indicated that the main sources of stress for university students were excessive amounts of homework, test anxiety, and difficulties balancing study and daily activities. Qualitatively, it provided information about the strategies and resources that university students use to manage these stressors, such as time management, using emotional support, etc. Results indicate that universities need to create policies that help mitigate the negative consequences of academic stress and create a healthy and supportive environment for university students (Pérez-Jorge et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the study by Matorre (2025) The purpose of this study was to determine if the family dynamics of College Undergraduates influenced their stress, anxiety, resilience, and mental distress related to mental health issues. This research was descriptive, using quantitative methods with a sample of 300 undergraduate students from several different colleges. Each participant completed an Academic Stress Scale, Family Assessment Device, Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale, and Mental Health Scale. Findings indicated that both academic pressure and dysfunctional family dynamics were positively correlated with mental health distress, and negatively correlated with anxiety resilience. Academic pressure and family dynamics were identified as significant predictors for mental health distress, whereas anxiety resilience acted as a protective factor against mental health distress. To promote the mental well-being of students, it is necessary to look at both academic and family stress holistically and to develop anxiety resilience.

Moreover, the study by Murtaza et al. (2025) aimed to examine how undergraduate students experience academic stress and its impact on their mental wellbeing. Researchers indicate that the stress associated with academia is a byproduct of the pressure created by academia, and they indicate that these academic stressors will lie at the foundation of mental health-related problems such as anxiety, frustration, pressure and physical health problems. Parental and environmental expectations of students, peer influences, and student involvement with extra-curricular activities all contribute to a student's level of academic stress. University life presents students with increased responsibilities and a higher level of intellectual demands, combined with separation from their families, which makes students more susceptible to

developing depression and anxiety. Quantitative descriptive surveys were used to assess levels of academic stress and mental health through the surveying of a sample size of undergraduate students at Superior University Lahore using structured questionnaires. The results indicate that the majority (79%) of undergraduate students experience high levels of academic stress and 72% of undergraduate students experiencing at least moderate levels of mental health. Furthermore, there is a negative correlation between academic stress and mental health; as academic stress levels increase, mental health levels decrease. Also, there is a positive correlation between higher academic stress levels and health issues.

Moreover, the study by Hussain (2024) aimed to determine the various impacts of academic pressure on university student's mental health and overall well-being. A combination of survey (quantitative) data on the frequency of mental health related to academic pressure and interviews (qualitative) were used to determine what types of coping mechanisms students use for managing the academic pressure they face and what types of support systems they are accessing. This study indicated that the factors influencing academic pressures experienced by University students were: the expectations of their families and society in general, no institutional support, lack of access to mental health resources, and students' individual characteristics including gender, socio-economic status, and resilience.

In contrast, the study by Rabbi & Islam (2024) aimed to explore the connection between academic stress and mental distress among students who attend Khulna University. Data were gathered qualitatively and quantitatively using a mix of methods: researchers collected quantitative information about academic stress variables, the level of anxiety students experience, and the students' academic success. Additionally, conducted qualitative interviews to gather additional insights into the way students perceive and interpret academic-related stressors. Researchers found that 15.68% of students stated that they experienced "very high" levels of academic-related stress throughout their lives, and 76.8% reported experiencing "extreme" levels of academic-related stress at some point in their academic careers. Furthermore, 16.7% of participants experienced "extremely severe" anxiety and nearly 61.1% experienced anxiety at least once during their academic career. Overall, this study highlighted the importance of developing an education system that provides mental health support and creates a conducive atmosphere for academic success and personal development.

Finally, the study by Córdova Olivera et al. (2023) aimed to explore the correlation between academic pressure and mental health, to understand how academic pressure affects college

students as well as find solutions to lessen any adverse effects. Researchers conducted a survey of undergraduate students at a private university in Bolivia and collected data via Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis to assess whether academic pressure was predictive of poor mental health outcomes for undergraduate university students. Results revealed that the greatest amount of academic pressure experienced by undergraduate university students was caused by their own behaviour, by placing unrealistic expectations upon themselves in terms of their academic capabilities and time management skills, and evaluating their own response to academic stress. In addition, the data also support the finding that high levels of academic stress may lead to the development of languishing mental health conditions in individuals experiencing high levels of academic stress.

2.2.2 Critique of Previous Studies

2.2.2.1 Critique of Studies on the Emotional Intelligence

Previous studies have examined emotional intelligence across multiple populations, including youth, students and consultants; This shows emotional intelligence is equally significant throughout all age ranges. All of these studies have had different ways in which the research was conducted: some conducted a quantitative descriptive research design and others conducted an experimental research design. This diversity has contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of emotional intelligence .

The results of these studies confirmed a positive correlation between high emotional intelligence , student's motivation and student academic success; low levels of emotional intelligence were associated with low motivations and academic success in students (Jadidi, 2024 and Khatib & Burji, 2024). In a study by Abdul Ghaffar, Said & Mohammed (2024) confirmed that by increasing emotional intelligence , university students were able to enhance their quality of life. There is a correlation between emotional intelligence and academic success with varying strengths, with some correlations shown in the study conducted by Wargi & Geagea (2024); emotional intelligence also influences self-efficacy (Bouznad, 2022). This study confirms the importance of emotional intelligence in university students as well as other groups in Society.

There is some evidence from studies that show how well an educational and guidance program based on developing habits of mind can help develop an individual's emotional intelligence , especially in children. Abdul Rahman (2024) stated that children who attend

programs specifically built to help children develop their emotional intelligence will have many significant benefits.

When it is related to university students, many studies have shown how emotional intelligence is affected by factors like gender and type of major. I believe that this indicates a need for more research to determine the causes of these differences in emotional intelligence across demographic groups, as well as how the student's environment and the technologies they use influence their emotional intelligence. Additionally, I believe conducting experimental and longitudinal studies can provide critical information on the long-term effects of developing emotional intelligence on university students.

2.2.2.2 Critique of Studies on the Mental Health

Mental health is essential for university students because it gives them the ability to be balanced academically and socially while also minimizing academic and social pressures on them. A lot of previous studies have taken a descriptive-analytical approach to studying mental health for students and used a variety of different tools to measure mental health and psychological stress, with mental health scales and psychological stress scales being the two most prominent.

Multiple previous studies confirm that mental health has a positive relationship with students and is an important contributor to lowering feelings of loneliness and academic stress, including studies by Mustafa (2024) and Buari & Khattar (2024). Additionally, several studies have yielded conflicting results on how demographic variables impact the mental health of students. Studies like Haad & Saadawi (2024) show that students' mental health differs depending on demographic variables such as specialization and gender, whereas Mustafa's (2024) study suggests no statistically significant difference based on demographic variables.

With regard to student mental health, studies have established that positive mental health is associated with less psychological stress. Conversely, negative mental health results in nostalgia and impacts problem solving methods. Positive mental health has positively correlated with innovation, rationality, and social support.

The findings of many studies have indicated differing levels of mental well-being within the general population of students. For example, findings from Qaja et al. (2020) suggested that

many university students report having a high level of well-being, while Badawi & Dabbar (2023) discovered that the majority of their participants indicated having a low level of well-being.

The Researcher emphasizes the need for further studies to understand the development of mental health and its impact on various factors. It is crucial to identify the causes of declining mental health among students and propose solutions to improve it. Additionally, there is a need to develop guidance programs to enhance the university students' mental well-being and reduce the academic and social pressures they experience.

2.2.2.3 Critique of Studies on the Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Mental Health

Previous studies have aimed to identify the extent to which emotional intelligence affects the mental health of university students. The studies used a quantitative analytical method, adoption measures of mental health and emotional intelligence. Previous research has confirmed the existence of a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and students' mental health, as high emotional intelligence leads to improved mental health and reduction in psychological stress and anxiety.

However, studies have differed the role of demographic variables in emotional intelligence and mental health. For example, an Iqrufa's study (2018) found statistically significant differences in the overall mental health based on academic specialization, favoring certain specialization. Additionally, It reported significant differences in emotional intelligence by gender, favoring males. In contrast, the study by Mohammed & said (2022) found no significant differences in mental health based on academic specialization and no significant differences in emotional intelligence based on gender.

Given the positive impact of emotional intelligence on students' mental health, the Researcher recognizes the need to support students' mental health well-being and reduce psychological stress, anxiety, and depression resulting from the academic pressure. Therefore, a program based on emotional intelligence will be proposed to enhance students' emotional intelligence and improve their mental health.

2.2.2.4 Critique of Studies on the Academic Pressure

The studies reviewed indicate that, regardless of the type of educational institution, there is an ongoing relationship between the impact of academic stressors and poor mental health among

university students. For example, In Pérez–Jorge et al. 's (2025) findings, it indicates that increased academic demands due to COVID-19 resulted in increased anxiety and stress levels. Their findings underscore the importance of institutions providing policy for the student population that will assist in promoting the health and well-being of students. The use of academic pressure along with dysfunctional familial issues were also predictors of increased emotional distress and reduced levels of resilience in regard to anxiety (Matorre, 2025).

Similar findings in regard to the effect of psychosocial influences on academic stressors and mental health outcomes are also suggested by Murtaza et al. (2025), who found that approximately 79% undergraduate students experienced high levels of academic stress, while also finding that there is a negative correlation between levels of academic stress and mental health. In Pakistan, Hussain (2024) suggested that multiple mental health difficulties are connected to academic stress because of societal expectations and institutional restraints combined with a lack of resources available for mental health assistance. Rabbi & Islam (2024) obtained similar findings where 76.8% of students had experienced high levels of academic stress while in college.

Academic stress appears to be extremely common and remains persistent. Córdova Olivera et al. (2023) reported that students' internalized academic expectations could create self-imposed academic stress resulting in languishing mental health, which can be as impactful as externally imposed academic pressures. Across different studies, a consistent pattern emerges indicating that academic stress tends to be predictive of anxiety, psychological distress, and decreased well-being. Additionally, as noted in the reviewed literature, although many students develop coping strategies, these strategies vary in their level of effectiveness and do not necessarily protect against the negative psychological impact of academic stress (Pérez-Jorge et al., 2025; Murtaza et al., 2025).

Thus, the combined results of the studies indicate a practical need for educational institutions to implement more focused intervention programs that help students to manage their emotions and develop structured support systems that reduce adverse mental health outcomes for students (Hussain, 2024; Rabbi & Islam, 2024). Therefore, the current research should investigate academic stress more closely and provide the foundation for this research based on empirical evidence, by exploring a program to train students in emotional intelligence aimed at enhancing the mental well-being of students at Arab American University.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology adopted in the study, including the research instruments, their validity and reliability, the study population, sample, data collection procedures, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design and Approach

The study employed a quantitative research approach. A descriptive-correlation design was used, as it allows for the descriptive of the study variables — such as mental health, emotional intelligence, and academic pressure.

In addition, the study also utilized a developmental approach by using the data collected from the questionnaire results as a foundational source for the creation of the proposed training program. Thus, the questionnaire functioned as the first data collection and analysis instrument to determine students' psychological and affective needs, which ultimately led to the construction of the training program.

This approach was deemed appropriate for achieving the research objectives and answering the research questions because it enables the researcher to collect numerical data, measure variables objectively, and determine the strength and direction of the relationships between them.

3.2 Study Population and Sample

The study included every student from all of the undergraduate enrolled in the various faculties at Arab American University for the 2024-2025 Academic Year. A convenience sample was used that included 300 total undergraduate students from the different faculties of the university. The sampling technique was used because it allows for easy access to participants who were available and willing to participate in the study during the period of data collection.

The sample included male and female undergraduate students that were from different academic years, faculties, ensuring diversity in terms of gender, specialization, and level of study. The sample was designed to be as representative of the population of students attending the University as possible based on the fact that the sample was taken from eligible undergraduate students at the University. The sample size was deemed to provide a reasonable

amount of statistical analysis and to have the representation of a diverse array of demographic factors.

3.3 Study Instruments

3.3.1 Description of the instrument

The researcher developed a structured questionnaire entitled "*Assessment of Mental Health and Emotional Intelligence of Arab American University Students*" to collect the necessary data for this study.

The instrument consisted of the following four main parts:

1. Demographic information:

This section included items related to gender, year of study, and academic faculty to enable demographic-based analysis.

2. Emotional Intelligence Scale

The emotional intelligence Scale, adopted from Yahya (2024), was made up of 15 items distributed across five subscales: empathy, social interaction, emotion regulation, emotion management, and emotional awareness.

Participants were instructed to check (✓) in the box that best represented the response that most accurately reflected their level of agreement with the statement. Using a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree. The scale consisted of 15 items. Total scores would range from 15 to 75. A higher total score indicates higher levels of emotional intelligence .

3. Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS)

This study used a modified version of the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS) based on work published by Liasi et al (2021). There are a total of 24 items split evenly across 3 different scales, with 8 items in each dimension of depression, anxiety and stress. The participants completed the items using a 5-point Likert Scale (1 = Never, 5 = Almost all of the time), which measured the frequency of how often each statement was true for them.

4. Perception of Academic Stress (PAS) Scale

The tool adopted from Bedewy & Gabriel (2015), This scale consists of two subscales which assess students' perceptions of their academic stress. It includes:

- Pressures Related to Academic Expectations (4 items)
- Pressures Related to Self-perception of Academic Pressure (6 items)

Participants indicated their level of agreement with each statement on a five-point Likert Scale with responses: (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree. The total possible score could range from 10 to 50, with higher scores reflecting higher perceived levels of academic pressure.

3.3.2 Validity of the Instrument

To ensure content validity, four academics with expertise in relevant fields (Psychology, Education, Measurement & Evaluation, Clinical Psychology) reviewed the questionnaire for content validity. Two of the experts were from Arab American University; one was from Goldsmiths, University of London; and one from Istanbul Aydin University. The experts evaluated all the items on the questionnaire for the following criteria: clarity, linguistic accuracy, relevance to the objectives of the study, and suitability for the cultural context within which the study was conducted.

Each expert rated each of the questionnaire items as 'approved' or 'not approved'. Only those items that received at least an 80% agreement rating from the experts were retained in the final version.

The researcher considered the experts' comments and suggestions in making their final decision about the content of the questionnaire. The modifications made based on their comments and suggestions included:

- Improving clarity of some of the items through linguistic and structural revisions.
- Changing the DASS Scale from a 4-point Likert Scale to a 5-point Likert Scale in order to enhance the sensitivity of responses.
- Reordering and moving the emotional intelligence Scale items for a more logical flow within Section Two of the questionnaire.

These revisions promoted the linguistic accuracy, clarity, and comprehensiveness of the tool.

3.3.3 Reliability of the Instruments

The researcher verified the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire by using Cronbach's alpha coefficients to determine the internal consistency reliability of the scales and subscales. For Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70 are generally considered acceptable for research in the social sciences (Nunnally, 1978). As such, the coefficients obtained in this study reflect reliable instruments for measuring their respective constructs.

Table (3.1): Internal Consistency of the Study Scales According to Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Emotional Intelligence	0.80
DASS Scale	
Depression	0.70
Anxiety	0.70
Stress	0.75
Total	0.71
PAS Scale	0.77

Table (3.1) shows that all of Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70. While the depression and anxiety scales had the lowest acceptable Cronbach's alpha (0.70) for research purposes, they still meet the standard set by Nunnally (1978) for reliability. Overall, the results confirm that instruments demonstrate adequate internal consistency reliability.

3.3.4 Validation of the Proposed Training Program

Five experts in psychology, education and related disciplines evaluated the program in terms of its objectives, content, training strategies, and suitability for university students. After receiving recommendations and endorsements from the experts on the training program,

numerous modifications were made to improve the clarity and structure of the training program. The final format of the training program can be found in Appendix A.

3.4 Study Procedures

To gather the data for the study, the researcher received official approval from Arab American University to administer the questionnaire electronically and in person to maximize the availability and participation of respondents throughout the various faculties.

Participants were provided with information about the study's purpose and received assurances of confidentiality and voluntary participation prior to completing the questionnaire. Data collection took place over a four-week period. All responses were coded and treated as SPSS (version 26).

To validate quantitative data, the researcher:

- Checked for missing responses and removed incomplete questionnaires.
- Conducted preliminary reliability testing.
- Utilised proper descriptive statistical analyses.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The research committed to addressing all ethical considerations. Accordingly, official approval was obtained from the relevant authorities prior to data collection. Ethical approval for carrying out this research was received from the Research Ethics Committee of the Arab American University (approval code R-2025/A/53/N).

Every participant was asked to give their consent prior to commencing with this study. An explanation was provided regarding the study and what was involved, including the participant's rights, including the right to stop their participation, at any time, with no penalties. Participation in the study was totally voluntary; no financial incentives or coercion were applied.

Safety and privacy were strictly maintained by not asking for any identifying details. Each questionnaire was assigned a number for coding purposes, and all data collected were to be used solely for educational and research purposes. The ethical principles of respect,

beneficence, and justice were strictly adhered to and no participant was subjected to any physical, psychological, or emotional harm.

3.6 Statistical Methods and Data Analysis

To collect data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 26). Two types of analyses conducted:

- Descriptive statistics, which describe the demographic characteristics of the sample and the primary variables.
- Inferential statistics, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients was calculated again in order to check for the internal consistency reliability of the study measures.

3.6.1 Scoring and Interpretation

Emotional Intelligence Scale: items rated on a 5-point Likert ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree. The total score ranged from 15 to 75, interpreted as follows: Low (15-35), Moderate (36-55), and High (56-75).

DASS Scale: This study utilized a modified version of the DASS as a means to assess depression, anxiety, and stress. The questionnaire contained 24 items (8 items per dimension: Depression, Anxiety, and Stress) and used a Likert-like scale from 1 (never) to 5 (almost always) for measurement. The subscale total score was calculated by summing the responses for each of the eight corresponding items. Thus, the range of possible scores for each subscale was 8 to 40, and for the total score of mental well-being there was a total possible score of 24 to 120.

Severity Classification

- **Depression:** 8-15 normal, 16-18 mild, 19-23 moderate, 24-29 severe, and 30-40 extremely severe;
- **Anxiety:** 8-13 normal, 14-15 mild, 16-19 moderate, 20-22 severe, and 23-40 extremely severe.
- **Stress:** 8-19 normal, 20-22 mild, 23-27 moderate, 28-33 severe, and 34-40 extremely severe.

Perception of Academic Stress Scale: Items rated on a 5-point Likert scale from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree. The total score ranged from 10 to 50, interpreted as follows: Low (10-26), Moderate (27-38), and High (39-50).

Chapter Four: Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the research questions using SPSS and writing the findings of the instrument, questionnaire to (Measuring the Level of emotional intelligence , DASS Scale, PAS Scale) for undergraduate students at Arab American University.

4.2 First Section

This section consists of demographic data, such as academic year, gender and faculty, related to undergraduate students at Arab American University, represented by frequency and percentage columns in the table.

Table (4.1): Distribution of the Study Sample by Gender

Gender	Percentage	Frequency
Male	45.7%	137
Female	54.3%	163
Total	100%	300

The results showed that 54.3% of the participants were female, while 45,7% were male. Figure (4.1) shows the distribution of the study sample by gender.

Distribution of Students by Gender (N=300)

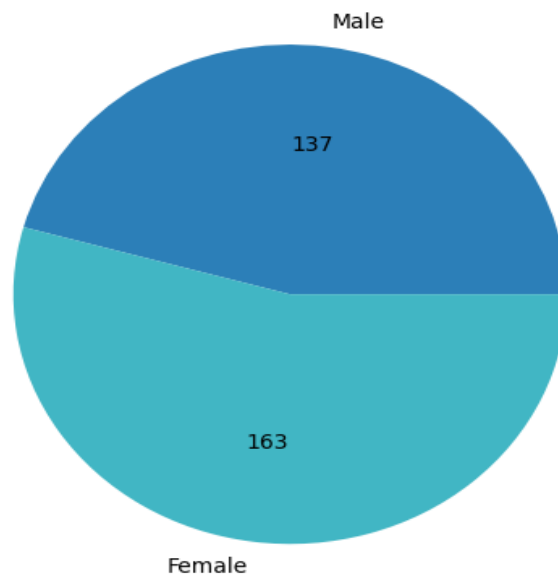


Figure (4.1): Distribution of the Study Sample by Gender

The next variable, presented in Table (4.2), shows the distribution of participants according to their academic year.

Table (4.2): Distribution of the Study Sample by Academic Year

Academic Year	Percentage	Frequency
First Year	11%	33
Second Year	19%	57
Third Year	23.7%	71
Fourth Year	28%	84
Fifth Year	17%	51
Sixth Year	1.3%	4
Total	100%	300

The results showed that 28% of the participants were in their fourth year, while 23.7% were in their third year, 19% in their second year, 17% in their fifth year, and 11% and 1.3% were in their first and sixth year respectively. Figure (4.2) shows the distribution of the study sample by academic year.

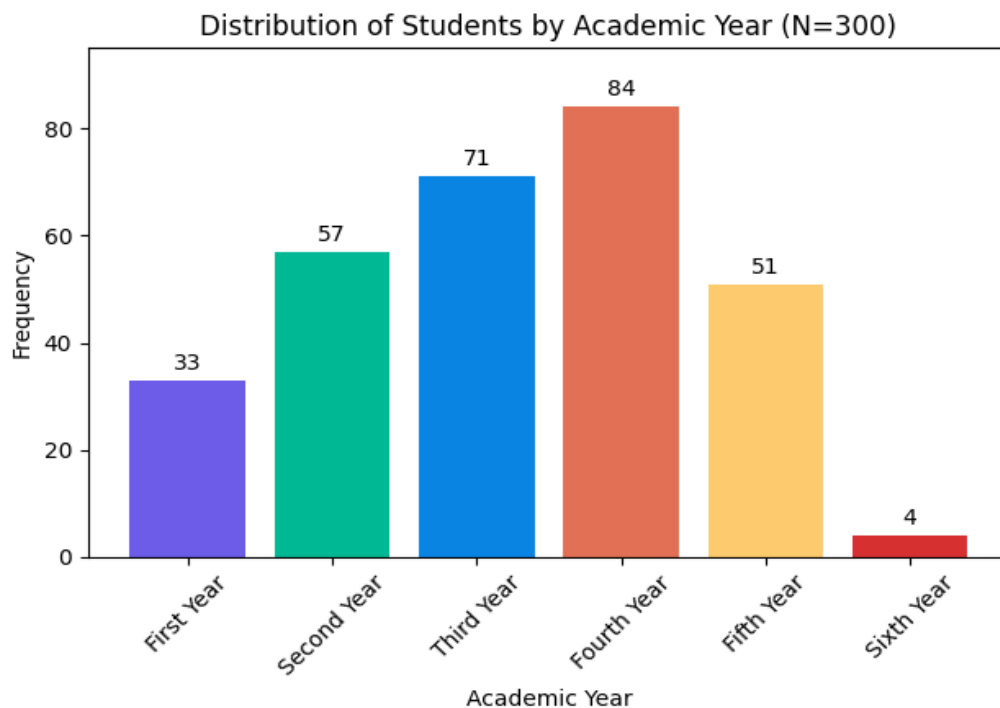


Figure (4.2): Distribution of the Study Sample by Academic Year

The next variable, presented in Table (4.3), shows the distribution of participants according to their faculty type.

Table (4.3): Distribution of the Study Sample by Faculty Type

Faculty	Percentage	Frequency
Faculty of Sciences and Arts	17.7%	53
Faculty of Commerce	18.3%	55
Faculty of Law	27.7%	83
Faculty of Allied Medical Sciences	21.7%	65
Faculty of Dentistry	14.7%	44

Total	100%	300
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The results showed that 27.7% of the participants were from the Faculty of Law, while 21.7% from the Faculty of Allied Medical Sciences, 18.3% from the Faculty of Commerce, and 17.7% and 14.7% were from the Faculty of Sciences and Art and Dentistry, respectively. Figure (4.3) shows the distribution of the study sample by faculty type.

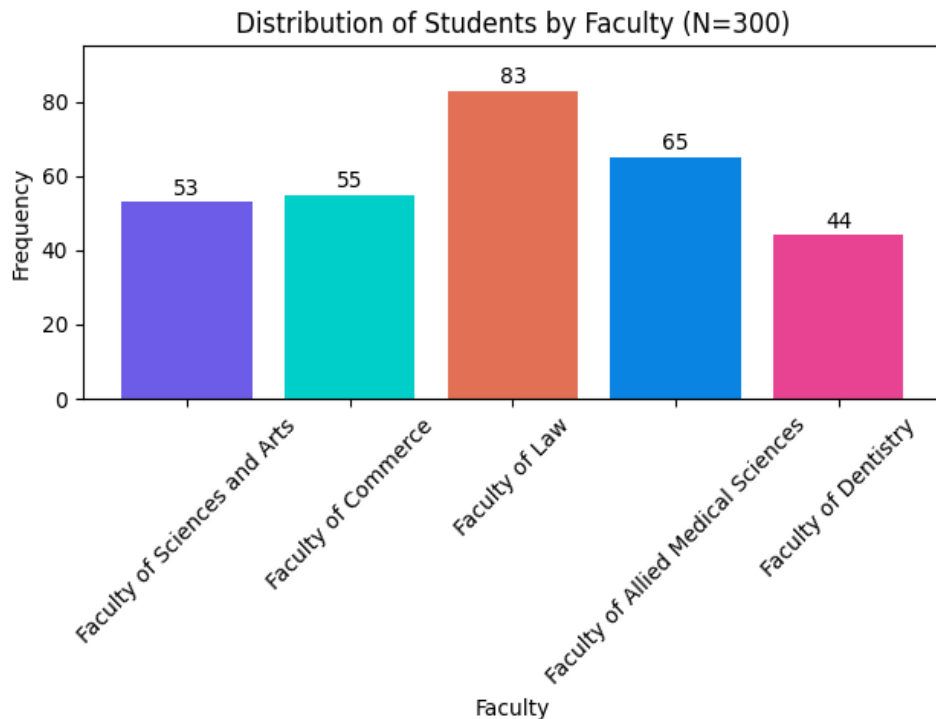


Figure (4.3): Distribution of the Study Sample by Faculty Type

4.3 Main Questions:

What is the proposed training program based on emotional intelligence to enhance the mental health of students at Arab American University?

The answer to the main question is derived from the detailed results presented in the sub-questions. These results describe the psychological and emotional challenges faced by students, the goals that the proposed program must achieve, the components and strategies from implementation, and the statistical relationships that justify the development of a training program based on emotional intelligence to improve students' mental health.

4.3.1 Research Question One

What are the main psychological and emotional challenges faced by students at Arab American University?

This question is answered by examining the results obtained from the measures of emotional intelligence , depression, anxiety, stress, and academic pressure.

4.3.1.1 emotional intelligence Levels

Before presenting the results, the scoring and interpretation criteria for the emotional intelligence Scale are shown in table (4.4), based on the classifications described in Chapter Three.

Table (4.4): Scoring and Interpretation Criteria of emotional intelligence

Level	Score Range
Low	15-35
Moderate	36-55
High	56-75

Table (4.5): The Level of emotional intelligence Among Undergraduate Students at Arab American University

Level of emotional intelligence	Frequency	Percentage
Low	112	37.3%
Medium	151	50.3%
High	37	12.3%
Total	300	100%

Table (4.5) shows that 37.3% of the students had a low level of emotional intelligence, and 12.3% had a high level of emotional intelligence. The highest percentage, 50.3%, had a medium level of emotional intelligence. Figure (4.4) shows the distribution of emotional intelligence levels among undergraduate students at the Arab American University.

Distribution of Emotional Intelligence Levels Among Students (N=300)

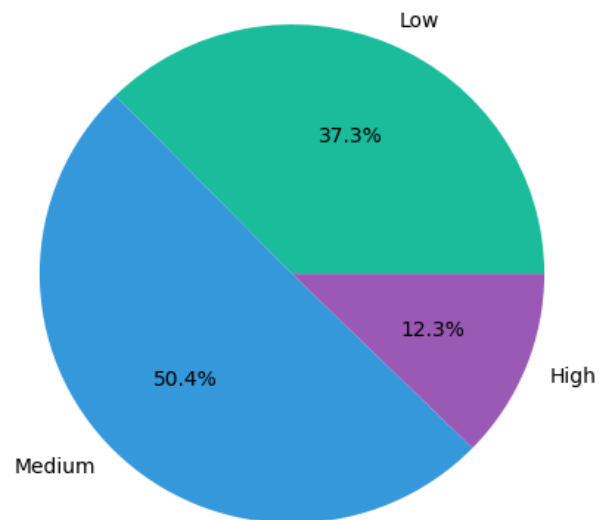


Figure (4.4) Distribution of emotional intelligence Levels among Undergraduate Students at the Arab American University

4.3.1.2 Depression Levels

Before presenting the results, the scoring and interpretation criteria for the Depression Scale are shown in table (4.6), based on the classifications described in Chapter Three.

Table (4.6): Scoring and Interpretation Criteria of Depression Scale

Level	Score Range
Normal	8-15
Mild	16-18
Moderate	19-23
Severe	24-29
Extremely severe	30-40

Table (4.7): Level of Depression Among Undergraduate Students at Arab American University

Level of Depression	Frequency	Percentage
Normal	17	5.7%
Mild	18	6%
Moderate	44	14.7%
Severe	84	28%
Extremely severe	137	45.7%
Total	300	100%

Table (4.7) shows that only 5.7% of the students had a normal level of depression, 6% had a mild level, 14.7% had a moderate level, 28% had a severe level of depression, and the highest percentage, 45.7%, had an extremely severe level of depression. Figure (4.5) shows the distribution of depression levels among undergraduate students at the Arab American University.

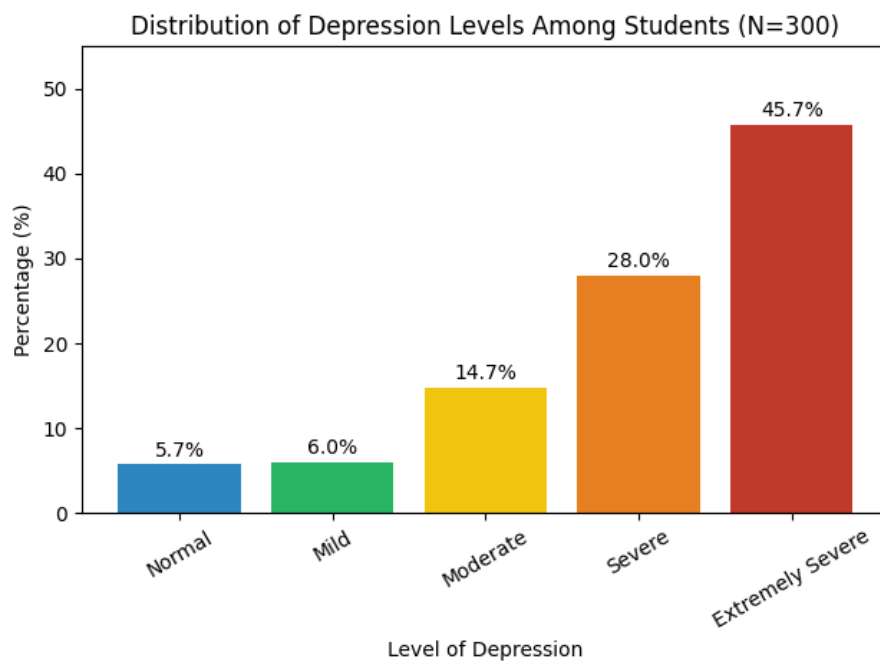


Figure (4.5): Distribution of Depression Levels Among Undergraduate Students at the Arab American University

4.3.1.3 Anxiety Levels

After presenting the results related to depression, Table (4.8) presents the scoring and interpretation criteria for the Anxiety Scale, based on the classifications described in Chapter Three.

Table (4.8): Scoring and Interpretation Criteria of Anxiety Scale

Level	Score Range
Normal	8-13
Mild	14-15
Moderate	16-19
Severe	20-22
Extremely severe	23-40

Table (4.9): Level of Anxiety Among Undergraduate Students at Arab American University

Level of Anxiety	Frequency	Percentage
Normal	22	7.3%
Mild	19	6.3%
Moderate	48	16%
Severe	56	18.7%
Extremely severe	155	51.7%
Total	300	100%

Table (4.9) shows that only 7.3% of the students had a normal level of anxiety, 6.3% of the students had a mild level of anxiety, 16% had a moderate level, 18.7% had a severe level of anxiety, and the highest percentage, 51.7%, had an extremely severe level of anxiety. Figure (4.6) shows the distribution of anxiety levels among undergraduate students at the Arab American University.

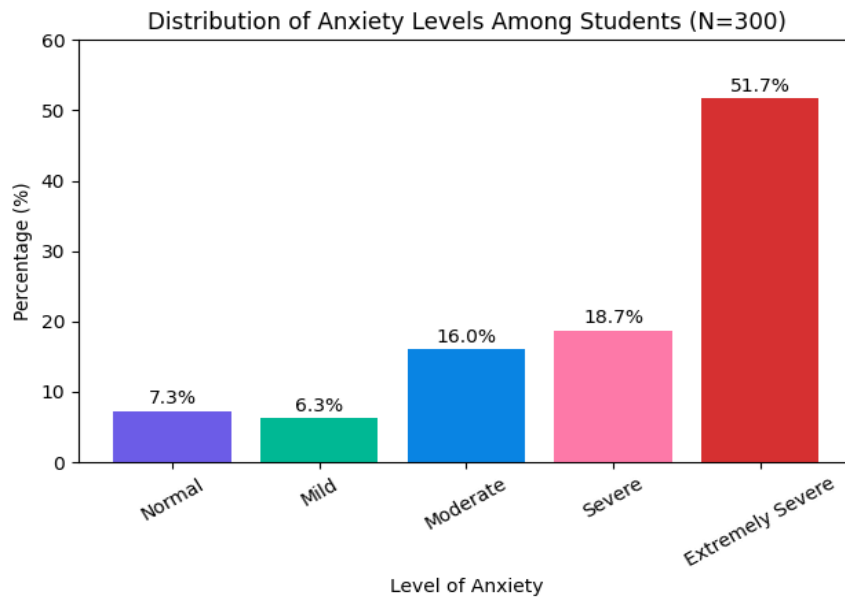


Figure (4.6): Distribution of Anxiety Levels Among Undergraduate Students at the Arab American University

4.3.1.4 Stress Levels

After presenting the results related to anxiety, Table (4.10), presents the scoring and interpretation criteria for the Stress Scale, based on the classifications described in Chapter Three.

Table (4.10): Scoring and Interpretation Criteria of Stress Scale

Level	Score Range
Normal	8-19
Mild	20-22
Moderate	23-27
Severe	28-33
Extremely severe	34-40

Table (4.11): Level of Stress Among Undergraduate Students at Arab American University

Level of Stress	Frequency	Percentage
Normal	36	12%
Mild	29	9.7%
Moderate	79	26.3%
Severe	116	38.7%
Extremely severe	40	13.3%
Total	300	100%

Table (4.11) shows that only 12% of the students had a normal level of stress, 9.7% had a mild level, 26.3% had a moderate level, 13.7% had an extremely severe level of stress, and the highest percentage, 38.3%, had a severe level of stress. Figure (4.7) shows the distribution of stress levels among undergraduate students at the Arab American University.

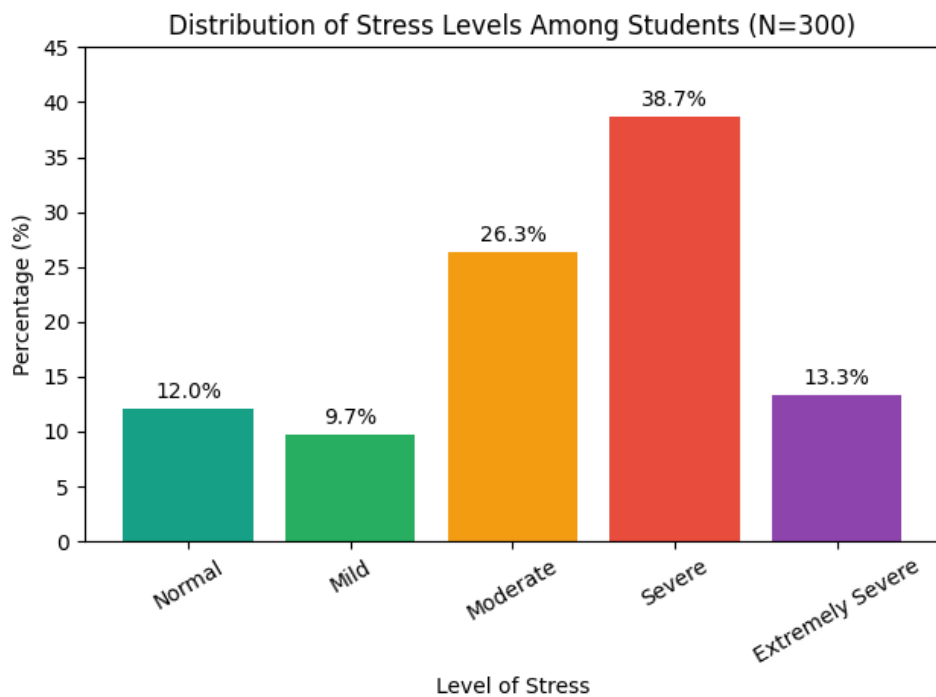


Figure (4.7): Distribution of Stress Levels Among Undergraduate Students at the Arab American University

4.3.1.5 Academic Pressure Levels

Before presenting the results, the scoring and interpretation criteria for the Academic Pressure Scale are shown in table (4.12), based on the classifications described in Chapter Three.

Table (4.12): Scoring and Interpretation Criteria of Academic Pressure

Level	Score Range
Low	10-26
Moderate	27-38
High	39-50

Table (4.13): Level of Academic Pressures

Among Undergraduate Students at Arab American University

Level of Academic Pressures	Frequency	Percentage
Low	62	20.7%
Medium	209	69.7%
High	29	9.7%
Total	300	100%

Table (4.13) shows that 20.7% of the students had a low level of academic pressure, and 9.7% had a high level of academic pressure. The highest percentage, 69.7%, had a medium level of academic pressure. Figure (4.8) shows the distribution of academic pressure levels among undergraduate students at the Arab American University.

Distribution of Academic Pressures Among Students (N=300)

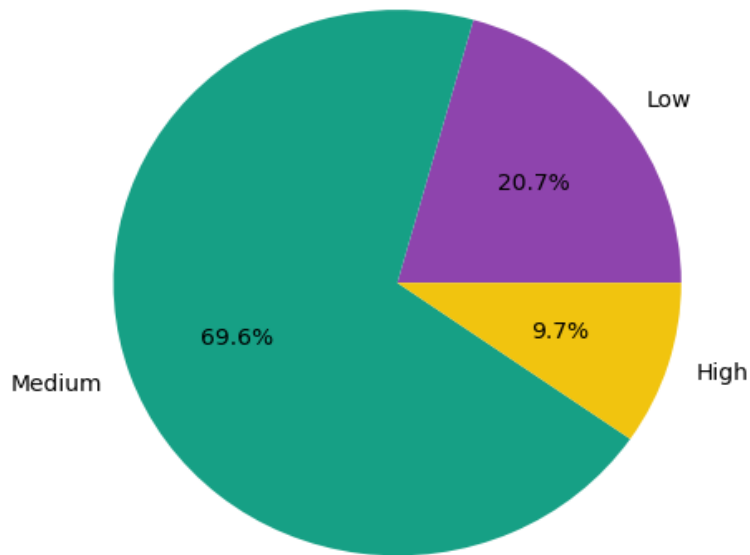


Figure (4.8): Distribution of Academic Pressure Levels Among Undergraduate Students at the Arab American University

4.3.2 Research Question Two

What educational, psychological, and emotional goals should the proposed training program aim to achieve in order to improve the mental health of students at Arab American University?

Based on the results presented in Research Question One, as demonstrated in Tables (4.5), (4.7), (4.9), (4.11), and (4.13), the goals of the proposed training program include:

- Enhancing students' emotional intelligence .
- Reducing levels of depression, anxiety, and stress.
- Improving students' ability to manage academic pressure.
- Strengthening emotional awareness and self-regulation.
- Promoting interpersonal and communication skills.
- Enhancing coping strategies to improve mental well-being.

4.3.3 Research Question Three

What are the components of the proposed training program and the appropriate activities to enhance students' emotional intelligence at Arab American University in order to improve their mental health?

Based on the results presented in Research Question One, as demonstrated in Tables (4.5), (4.7), (4.9), (4.11), and (4.13), the components of the proposed training program include:

- emotional awareness module.
- Emotional regulation module.
- Stress and anxiety management module.
- Social and interpersonal skills module.
- Academic pressure management module.

Each module includes activities such as reflective exercises, breathing techniques, mindfulness practices, group work, and skill-building tasks.

4.3.4 Research Question Four

What strategies are proposed for implementation of the program?

Based on the results presented in Research Question One, as reported in Tables (4.5), (4.7), (4.9), (4.11), and (4.13), the proposed implementation strategies include:

- Conducting structured group sessions.
- Providing individual support when needed.
- Using active learning strategies (role-play, simulation, guided activities).
- Engaging mental health professionals in delivery.
- Following up with students through weekly monitoring.
- Integrating the program within university services and extracurricular activities.

4.3.5 Research Question Five

What obstacles are expected in the implementation of the program, and how can they be addressed?

Based on the results presented in Research Question One, as reflected in Tables (4.5), (4.7), (4.9), (4.11), and (4.13), the expected obstacles include:

- Low motivation among students.
- Academic workload limiting participation.
- Time constraints within university schedules.
- Need for trained facilitators.

These obstacles may be addressed by:

- Providing incentives for participation.
- Offering flexible schedules.
- Ensuring administrative support.
- Training facilitators to deliver the program effectively.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we provide a thorough analysis of the findings and results obtained in this research study. As such, this chapter serves as the conclusion to this research project and outlines what can be learned from these results regarding how to improve future policies and procedures in the field of study.

The discussion focuses on analyzing the data, an analysis of key patterns, trends, relationships, and differences identified in the analysis of the data, an examination of the implications of these findings in relation to the overall study, and an examination of other aspects of the analysis that may have impacted the discussion of the findings.

Following the discussion, a set of practical recommendations will be offered based on the actual results of the study. These practical recommendations are intended to provide concrete guidance for improving practice and decision making in the studies field. Each recommendation will include a description of how to put the recommendation into practice, as well as the benefits of implementing the recommendation.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 Discussion of the Results Related to Research Question One

What are the main psychological and emotional challenges faced by students at Arab American University?

5.2.1.1 Discussion of the Results Related to Emotional Intelligence in University Students:

The results of this study indicate that about 50.3% of university students have average emotional intelligence. However, many also have high levels of psychological stress, anxiety, and depression. These results also highlight the importance of emotional intelligence as a protective factor for mental health and adaptation to university life.

emotional intelligence has been shown in previous research to help improve quality of life, achieve psychological stability, and provide an individual with abilities to cope with stressful

life situations (Abdul Ghaffar, Mohd, & Mohd, 2024; Boznad, 2022). It will also enhance self-efficacy (Boznad, 2022).

emotional intelligence influences a range of student behaviour. It is associated not only with psychological well-being but also with academic achievement, social adaptation, integration into the university environment, decision-making, and problem-solving skills. Studies by Al-Khatib & Al-Borji (2024) and Zdidi (2024) confirm the close connection between achievement motivation and emotional intelligence. Furthermore, a study conducted by Wargi & Geagea (2020) found that students who possess high levels of emotional intelligence will be more likely to manage their emotions effectively when it comes to academics and cope with academic stress, thus improving their chances for academic success.

In addition to achievement motivation, the finding of Sabah et al. (2020) demonstrated the significance of the social aspect of emotional intelligence. This includes characteristics such as empathy and interpersonal communication as well as the ability to resolve conflicts. These social characteristics are critical to successfully completing a degree in a university environment.

In short, based on the studies referenced above, it is reasonable to presume that students who have high levels of emotional intelligence and socio-emotional competencies will achieve higher levels of academic performance than students who possess either lower levels of emotional intelligence or socio-emotional competencies.

Theoretically, regulating and expressing emotion appropriately, will allow an individual to adjust effectively to day-day stressors. This is the theoretical construct that supports the significant negative correlation found in this study between depression, anxiety and stress symptoms and the ability to manage one's feelings.

Given these findings and their consistency with existing literature, the researcher strongly believes that emotional intelligence should not be viewed anymore as an additional or optional skill in post-secondary education. Instead, it should be viewed as a requirement that is essential to the development of the student as a whole and a significant contributor to improving their overall quality of life while in university.

Emotional intelligence provides the means to develop a comprehensive student identity; therefore, enable students to regulate their emotions, develop routines for relieving stress, and develop positive relationships with others. With the exponential increase in the academic and

psychological demands being placed on students, developing emotional intelligence will be a preventative and therapeutic mechanism for students. The researcher thinks that emotional intelligence has both a scientific and a philosophical framework from which to develop an agenda for education and personal development; it is an investment in both the individual and the educational mission at large. The researcher recommends that emotional intelligence training programs be considered essential rather than as a necessary supplement. They will provide necessary interventions to restore psychological balance and build resiliency. For the long term, the benefits of emotional intelligence will include better educational results and an increasing number of future leaders as active agents for effecting passive change.

5.2.1.2 Discussion of the Results Related to Mental Health in University Students:

Undergraduate students at the Arab American University are facing severe levels of psychological distress, according to the results in this report. The results indicate that (45.7 %) of students reported extremely severe levels of depression and (51.7%) reported extremely severe levels of anxiety. The highest percentage of affected students (38.7%) reported severe stress. This is often a result of dealing with everyday issues that have a negative impact on academic performance and adjustment to general life. Overall, undergraduate students are suffering from high levels of emotional and psychological stress and exhaustion because they face increased pressure from the academic, social, and economic environments in which they live today. This highlights the urgent need for evidence-based intervention programs—particularly those grounded in emotional intelligence—that foster psychological balance and enhance overall mental well-being.

The findings in this research are consistent with the literature that indicates that mental health problems amongst university students have increased. The results also indicate that a large number of individuals are suffering from moderate, severe or extreme levels of psychological distress. As an example, Buari & Khattar (2024) reported that the main source of psychological distress for students was academic stress; thus, 69.7% of students reported moderate levels of academic stress. Similarly, the findings of Haad & Saadawi (2024) and Badawi & Dabbar (2023) showed that students' mental wellness declined over time and were consistent with the high levels of depression and anxiety seen in the present study.

In relation to the association between mental health and psychological variables, the study conducted by Shafik & Al-Qama (2023) demonstrated a relationship between mental health and psychosocial factors. The findings supported a relationship between positive mental health

outcomes and adaptive coping strategies including social support and interactive religiosity. Emotional intelligence has been suggested as a moderator for psychological adjustment and resilience, as demonstrated by the studies conducted by Khalifi (2018) which showed a negative correlation between psychological stress and mental health.

Consequently, the findings indicate that emotional intelligence plays a major role in the maintenance of psychological stability in students, and contribute to the existing literature on the development of effective strategies to promote emotional intelligence skills for improving mental health and reducing academic stress in students.

Based on the results, as well as previous research, the researcher believes that universities should implement an overall framework that addresses not only the emotional, but also the social and psychological needs of university students. Such frameworks must move beyond conventional counseling approaches and take a therapeutic, developmental approach using the principles of emotional intelligence. The increasing levels of anxiety, depression and stress, alongside academic workload on students, cannot continue to be ignored, as these factors adversely influence educational performance, behaviour, student-to-teacher relationships, and future potential.

The researcher identifies the dimensions of emotional intelligence as a common factor for psychological, social and cognitive development, which will allow students to build their self-regulated, interpersonal, and emotional competencies through all domains of their life. Emotional intelligence should be integrated into the learning experience of university students through the use of co-curricular activities, community service learning experiences and academic programs and should be seen as a primary learning strategy as opposed to something that supports other strategies.

Based on the empirical evidence presented, the researcher emphasizes that strengthening emotional intelligence can be a means of improving students' mental health and decreasing the effects of academic stress, especially in contexts where institutional psychological services may be insufficient. Moreover, the findings open new pathways for future research to explore the associations between emotional intelligence and other variables such as academic achievement, satisfaction, with university life, decision-making processes, and professional adaptability.

5.2.1.3 Discussion of the Results Related to Academic Pressure in University Students:

The current research indicates that academic pressure is one of the most significant psychological stressors experienced by undergraduate students at the Arab American University. According to Table (4.13), the majority of students (69.7%) reported a moderate amount of academic pressure; however, only (9.7%) said that they experienced high amounts of academic pressure and only (20.7%) rated their level of academic pressure as low. This indicates that while the majority of students do not experience extreme amounts of academic pressure, the academic demands that are placed on students continue to be an ongoing and significant cause of stress and distress for many undergraduate students and could have a negative impact on students' mental health and academic adjustment.

Similar findings have emerged from international research that identifies academic stress as a significant stressor in the lives of many university students. Pérez-Jorge et al. (2025) reported that academic overload, assessment pressure, and difficulties in balancing academic and personal life were among the primary sources of stress affecting students' mental well-being. Córdova Oliveras et al. (2023) confirmed that academic stress is one of the most predictive components of mental health issues for undergrad students and will increase once students reach the Extreme Levels of Stress. The evidence of moderate academic stress in the present study supports prior research demonstrating the cumulative impact that even moderate continued academic demand on mental health will have on students.

In addition, similar findings were reported by Monserrat-Hernández et al. (2023) when examining the relationship between academic stress and psychological well-being and the effect of physical activity and nutrition on academic stress. does not operate in isolation but interacts with other behavioral and health-related variables. It also supports the current research's interpretation about moderate levels of academic pressure being one of the contributing factors to psychological distress when taken in conjunction with a high level of anxiety and stress, even if the level of pressure was not classified as high.

Rabbi & Islam (2024) reported similar findings when they stated there are a large percentage of university students that would report experiencing Academic Stress sometime prior to graduating from University; nevertheless, even though a lower percentage of students would indicate high academic stress in the current study, the dominance of moderate pressure suggests a similar pattern in which academic stress remains a widespread experience that can escalate if not effectively managed.

Furthermore, the results align with (2025) identified academic pressures as a major predictor of the poor mental health seen in undergraduate students. In addition, the interaction between family factors and academic pressures can increase the likelihood of an undergraduate student experiencing mental health problems resulting from academic pressure. Therefore, the existence of moderate academic pressures in the sample studied by this research may serve as a risk factor for mental health issues when combined with other risk factors such as lack of coping skills and institutional support.

The current study results replicate the same findings of other studies completed in different cultural settings showing a high level of academic stress among university students (Hussain, 2024; Murtaza et al., 2025). Each of these studies found that there was a strong negative correlation between academic stress and other types of mental health issues. Academic pressure was identified as a predominant cause of psychological distress in the current study sample. However, I believe that academic stress will ultimately be considered an additional risk factor for mental health disorders when it is combined with other types of stress (e.g., depression and anxiety), which the participants of this study experienced.

The findings of this study are consistent with previously published literature on the psychological difficulties that university students experience due to academic stress. With many of the students reporting moderate levels of academic pressure. The predominance of moderate academic pressure suggests that students are continuously exposed to academic demands that may negatively impact their mental health over time; therefore, it's essential to implement preventative and supportive strategies and interventions to assist with this issue. As such, these findings provide further evidence of a need for academic pressure management to be included in the structure of emotional intelligence -based training programs developed to improve students' mental health and promote long-term academic and psychological well-being.

5.2.2 Discussion of the Results Related to Research Question Two

What educational, psychological, and emotional goals should the proposed training program aim to achieve in order to improve the mental health of students at Arab American University?

Based on the results presented in Research Question One, which found low to moderate levels of emotional intelligence and relatively high levels of depression, anxiety, stress, and academic

pressure in students. Thus, the primary objective of the program is to improve the level of students' emotional intelligence and provide additional support for their emotional well-being. The results of the current research suggest that a large percentage of students possess insufficient emotional intelligence skills, which will negatively affect their ability to manage their emotions and adapt to the demands of university and social situations. Effects have encouraged research that has already been done and provides evidence as to how important emotional intelligence is in supporting students to live a better quality of life and how this affects people's mental health and wellbeing. Earlier studies by Abdul Ghaffar, Said, & Mohammed (2024) demonstrated the strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and the quality of life experienced by university students, while Sabbah et al. (2020) demonstrated how emotional intelligence can positively impact emotional regulation for students and help facilitate healthy social interactions. Thus, developing a higher level of emotional intelligence is a key component upon which many other psychological and educational objectives can be established.

In addition to enhancing emotional intelligence, the proposed program aims to reduce levels of depression, anxiety, and psychological stress, which are already at dangerously high levels for students according to the findings of the current study. The fact that the percentage of students experiencing severe and extremely severe symptoms of depression and anxiety is so high has created a very pressing need for targeted psychological intervention. Previous literature has consistently supported the notion that emotional intelligence is an effective deterrent to psychological distress, with Sharifi & Zagara (2018) finding evidence of the strong negative impact of stress on the mental health of students, while Mohammed & Said (2022) establishing a positive association between emotional intelligence and the overall mental health of university students. Thus, the programme will aim to achieve a reduction in psychological symptoms through enhancing emotional intelligence, which will ultimately enable students to better control their experience of negative emotion and improve their general emotional stability and functioning.

An additional primary objective of the proposed training program will be to educate students on how to manage academic pressures. The findings of the current study show that most students are exposed to moderate levels of academic pressure, which is likely to be damaging to their academic performance and psychological health. This finding is consistent with Buari & Khattar's (2024) identification of academic stress as a leading source of psychological stress experienced by university students. Also, Shafik & Al-Qamah (2023) indicated that students

who report higher levels of mental health tend to employ more suitable coping and problem-solving techniques when coping with academic stressors. Therefore, through emotional intelligence training, a higher level of individual capacity to cope with academic pressure will ultimately contribute to decreasing the magnitude of academic stress and enhancing successful transitions into university life.

As academic distress was occurring at such great levels with students in educational settings, helping to strengthen students' emotional awareness and ability to self-regulate has become another primary objective for the proposed program. Emotional awareness and self-regulation are central aspects of emotional intelligence and play an important role in how well one can manage and balance their emotions. Kant (2019) showed that self-regulation has a critical role in supporting psychological adjustment to circumstance. In contrast, Wargi & Geagea's study (2024) demonstrated a positive correlation between emotional control and academic achievement. Similarly, Sabbah et al. (2020) identified effective emotion regulation as one of the predictors of healthy, adaptive behaviours. All of the above studies clearly illustrate the importance of promoting both emotional awareness and self-regulation as part of the program's goals.

As part of the stated objectives of the proposed training program, developing interpersonal and communication skills is a primary goal. According to the findings presented in this study, students who experience psychological challenges may not be able to create successful social relationships with other people in the same university setting due to the development of poor emotional intelligence that impacts upon a range of social competencies. The previous studies by Zdidi (2024) and Al-Khatib & Al-Borji (2024) show that emotional intelligence improves when there is an increase in a student's desire to create social contact with others and provide adaptive means of interacting with other students. Therefore, an additional necessary goal for helping students create supportive social contacts is to develop new skills in interpersonal and communication skills.

Finally, the proposed training program will assist students in developing coping strategies to ultimately help improve their mental well-being. The negative association established from the data gathered from this study suggests that students with a higher degree of emotional intelligence are likely to have an easier time coping with stress. This is consistent with the findings of Shafik & Al-Qamah's (2023) that the use of adaptive coping strategies, such as social support, and rational problem-solving, directly relate to an improved mental state.

Khelifi (2018) has also confirmed the negative correlation between the level of psychological stress experienced by an individual and their positive mental health. As a result of this, one of the primary objectives of the proposed training programme will be to provide students with the tools and strategies needed to help manage and cope with stress and maintain long-term psychological well-being.

5.2.3 Discussion of the Results Related to Research Question Three

What are the components of the proposed training program and the appropriate activities to enhance students' emotional intelligence at Arab American University in order to improve their mental health?

The findings of the current study reveal low to moderate levels of emotional intelligence as well as very high levels of depression, anxiety, stress, and academic pressure. Thus, it is necessary to develop an integrated training programme comprising interconnected elements. These components were derived directly from the empirical findings reported in Research Question One and reflect the multidimensional nature of emotional intelligence as a psychological construct. Therefore, the proposed training programme for improving the mental health and adaptive functioning of students encompasses modules on emotional awareness, emotional regulation, stress and anxiety management, social and interpersonal skills, and managing academic pressure.

The findings from a study that determined whether or not students could identify emotional distress in themselves led to the recommendation that students receive training to become better able to recognize their own and others' emotional states through developing an understanding of the emotional state being expressed. Learning to recognize one's own emotions as well as the emotions of another person is a prerequisite for developing the skill of emotional intelligence and ultimately improving the mental wellness and functioning of the individual.

The previous studies on emotional awareness have shown that emotional awareness can make a positive impact on one's mental wellness. According to Sabbah et al. (2020), individuals who exhibit high levels of emotional awareness will have a greater ability to identify and express their own feelings, as well as understand and connect with the feelings of others than individuals with lower levels of emotional awareness. Similarly, a study conducted by Kant (2019) indicates that a university student's level of emotional awareness has an impact on their level of emotional intelligence. Thus, effectively incorporating reflective exercises and

emotional identification activities in an emotional awareness module is important to develop a student's ability to identify their emotions and the emotions of others.

The emotional regulation module has been designed in direct response to the high anxiety, depression and stress observed in this study. Emotional regulation is a primary component of "emotional intelligence " and provides a foundation for psychological balance. The existing evidence base indicates that successful emotion regulation allows students to better manage academic and life stressors. An example of this is Sharifi & Zagara's (2018) finding that emotional intelligence contributes significantly to reducing psychological stress on mental health. As also reported by Mohammed & Said, the emotionally intelligent student exhibits greater psychological resilience and thus can benefit from activities such as mindfulness, breathing exercises, and guided emotional regulation exercises which strengthen their ability to cope with distressing emotions.

Given the exceptionally high levels of anxiety and stress reported in the present study, it has been identified as a necessity for developing the stress and anxiety management module for the proposed. University students face a high degree of academic and psychological stress. In identifying psychological distress as a cause of stress in many cases, Buari & Khattar (2024) concluded that academic stress is a leading cause of psychological distress in their research, while Khelifi (2018), finds a negative relationship between the mental psychological health and psychological pressure. To reduce stress levels and to avoid psychological fatigue, the stress management activities incorporated into the module, such as relaxation methods, grounding methods, and cognitive coping strategies were based on best practices.

The social and interpersonal skills module, which represents the social elements of emotional intelligence , is essential to help students to become successful members of the university community; there are many psychological challenges identified in this research that can negatively impact a student's ability to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships and social adjustment, to which students develop, may be influenced negatively by these emotional issues. Studies show emotional intelligence can be helpful in developing communication skills and social skills. Zdidi (2024) and Al-Khatib & Al-Borji (2024), there are relationships between emotional intelligence , higher motivation, and greater social engagement and interaction. Therefore, students should be involved in a variety of training activities, such as group work, role-playing, and communication skills training to develop empathy, cooperation, and conflict resolution skills.

Finally, the higher than moderate levels of academic pressure reported by the majority of students, further supports the need for this academic pressure management module to help reduce stress levels and ultimately improve academic performance. According to the findings of Shafik & Al-Qamah (2023), students with higher mental health can engage in more effective problem-solving and coping strategies than students with lower levels of mental health. Students in this academic pressure module will learn how to organize their time, prioritize their work and learn to solve their problems.

In conclusion, the components, activities of the training program presented reflect a holistic and integrated approach to develop emotional intelligence and improve mental health for university students. By addressing emotional, psychological, social, and academic at the same time, the integrated program is in line with current ways of thinking regarding emotional intelligence as being a central mechanism in creating resilience and psychological well-being while adapting to university life.

5.2.4 Discussion of the Results Related to Research Question Four

What strategies are proposed for implementation of the program?

The current findings indicate that psychological distress was high and academic stress was moderate to high among university students, which highlights the need for organizations to develop a strategic plan with step by step instructions for how to create the training programs. Establishing a framework of structured group support sessions is among the most important first steps to helping students feel safe to speak out and express their feelings, thoughts, and experience with one another. Research shows that structured group psychological intervention leads to an increase in both self-awareness and a connection to other members of the university community; through developing a sense of belonging, these advances increase students' well-being and consequently lead to improved mental health. Shafik & Al Qamah (2023) have determined that social support is a significant coping strategy that supports students successfully coping and maintaining more beneficial outcomes related to mental health than those without such support. Therefore, it is essential that structured group sessions be developed and implemented to support the psychological adaptation of students transitioning into the university environment.

In addition to helping students adjust to the university environment through the provision of structured group sessions, providing both individual support, and group support will also

provide two critical elements for supporting the implementation of an effective intervention program. This is true particularly for those students in this study who were found to be experiencing the most severe symptoms of depression, anxiety, or stress. In general, group interventions teach students how to develop skills, and individual support gives them individualized support based on their individual psychological and emotional needs. Individual characteristics should be taken into consideration in the evaluation of the relationship between emotional intelligence and mental health (Mohammed & Said, 2022). Developing an individualized session support framework will increase the overall effectiveness of the intervention program by providing the most appropriate psychological support to vulnerable students.

Active learning strategies including simulated activities, role-playing/role-play and guided activities are critical components of an effective program. Experiential learning vs. passive learning develops emotional intelligence through experiential learning not passive learning. Developing their emotional intelligence through experiential learning develops their students' developing emotional regulation, communication, problem-solving in simulated or role-play situations. Research conducted by Sharifi & Zagara (2018) also supports the conclusion that there is statistically significant evidence that experiential learning reduces psychological stress, and increases emotional competence. Furthermore, Abdul Rahman (2024) further indicated that organization training programs work to improve your emotional intelligence by incorporating practical and interactive experiences as a part of your organization training program. Therefore, Abdul Rahman (2024), development of emotional intelligence provides additional support to utilize active learning strategies during training program implementation.

When developing the program, a key element to consider will be the use of mental health practitioners, due to the high level of psychological distress that many participants have experienced. Facilitators need to be trained to help manage the emotional processes associated with the delivery of the program, promote sensitive dialogue, and address the psychological needs of the students. Prior research has shown that involving trained professionals in the delivery of interventions focused on mental health is essential for ethical practice and effective program implementation. Various studies demonstrated that providing structured interventions to enhance the emotional intelligence and mental health of students delivered by trained professionals produces positive outcomes (Boukhalfa & Ben Cheikh, 2019).

Continually tracking student performance via a weekly check-in ensures a student benefits from the intervention with improved success over time. A facilitator has the ability to track progress and detect new problems as they arise throughout the duration of an intervention and continue to encourage student growth through ongoing tracking. This aligns with findings by Shafik & Al-Qamah (2023), which indicates that students require continuous encouragement to develop positive coping abilities and sustain their mental well-being. Regular follow-up also holds students accountable for incorporating their emotional intelligence skills into their everyday academic and social lives.

Finally, integrating the knowledge gained from emotional intelligence training into universities' existing organisational structures, students will gain greater access to the program and ensure that it remains sustainable over time. When emotional intelligence is integrated as part of the University framework, it becomes an intrinsic element of the student's overall development rather than a secondary consideration. This approach is consistent with the findings of Sabbah et al. (2020) that emotional skill development should be part of the total education experience for all students. Furthermore, when emotional skill development is embedded in the university's existing structures, it creates a supportive environment that improves the emotional well-being of students, increases their emotional resilience, and enhances their overall development.

The proposed implementation strategy provides a comprehensive and research-driven method of supporting students' psychological, emotional and academic needs through a combination of individual and group support, creating a hands-on learning experience, utilizing trained professionals who provide ongoing guidance, conducting regular assessments of student progress, and embedding the program into the university's infrastructure. Thus, increasing the chance of success in achieving improved mental health and emotional intelligence outcomes for university students.

5.2.5 Discussion of the Results Related to Research Question Five

What obstacles are expected in the implementation of the program, and how can they be addressed?

The present study results, indicating a high degree of psychological distress and a significant amount of academic pressure, demonstrate that various factors present barriers to implementing the training program as proposed. Of these, one major barrier is low levels of motivation among

students to engage with psychological and emotional learning. Students experiencing significant distress or anxiety or depression may lack the motivation and emotional investment needed to seek out or participate in anything outside of their currently assigned academic responsibilities. In addition, previous studies have found that in the face of high levels of psychological stress, there is a reduced likelihood that students will seek out assistance or preventative care. Shafik & Al-Qamah (2023) suggest that students under psychological pressure tend to place a higher value on addressing their immediate academic concerns than attempting to improve their emotional wellness, thus reducing the amount of time they will likely choose to volunteer for these types of programs.

A major obstacle to implementing programs is a student's significant academic workload during university (e.g., moderate and high levels of academic pressure identified in this study). Due to the academic demands, deadlines and exams placed on them. These challenges often leave students with very little time available to engage in all the training sessions or to consistently take part in training sessions. This finding agrees with earlier findings from Buari & Khattar (2024), that academic stress is the most common type of psychological distress reported among university students. When students experience significant levels of academic pressure, their perception of a training program is often that of an additional source of stress, rather than a source of support, which results in them being less likely to take advantage of such programs.

Time constraints on students' academic schedules are another primary barrier to implementing a training program. Depending on how each university's academic calendar is formatted, combined with students' social and personal responsibilities, many students will likely have a difficult time consistently participating in a training program. Time constraints are consistently cited in the literature as a significant impediment to providing mental health assistance in university. Badawi & Dabbar (2023) indicate that undedicated time by universities when it comes to providing mental health assistance generally decreases the efficacy of such assistance, particularly if the program is not effectively incorporated into an academic or extracurricular structure.

In addition to challenges related to the students, the requirement for trained facilitators is a key obstacle for institutions. In addition, those that were involved in this research had very high levels of psychological distress. The lack of trained professionals facilitating the training program will prevent the program from effectively addressing students' mental health needs

and meeting ethical standards. Boukhalfa & Ben Cheikh (2019) state that the success of mental health intervention will be directly related to the expertise and skill level of the professionals that run them. Therefore, without properly trained facilitators, the program's ability to meet students' mental health needs will be less effective.

Despite the challenges outlined above, this study also presents several realistic methods for addressing these issues. Incentives such as personal development certificates, recognition through academic credit, or offering extracurricular credits for participation can motivate students to participate in the project and increase the number of students who have access to this type of training. Additionally, offering programs on flexible schedules, such as providing several options for when to attend a session based upon students' availability, will assist in addressing the barriers associated with time and will allow students to have increased opportunity for access to the program; integrating programs into current university services or student activities may assist in normalizing participation within the culture of the university and making it easier for students to become actively involved in their education.

Administrative support is necessary to address some institutional barriers. Administrative endorsement is a facilitator of the scheduling process and allows for coordination between the administration and academic units and the provision of resources, all of which significantly increase the program's chances of success and long-term viability. Providing facilitators with the knowledge and competencies necessary to effectively implement the program serves as another major strategy to address barriers to the success of professionals. Previous research conducted by Abdul Rahman (2024) indicates that when a trained professional leads a structured training program, an increase in emotional intelligence outcomes is more likely to occur. Therefore, investing in facilitator training will allow the program to be delivered with competence, consistency, and awareness of students' psychological issues.

The anticipated barriers that were identified in this study are consistent with barriers previously identified in the mental health intervention literature in higher education. However, the strategies that were suggested to overcome these barriers through motivation, flexible implementation of the program, providing administrative support to facilitators, and providing training to facilitators provide a reasonable evidence-based model for the implementation of the program and proactive solutions that increase the effectiveness and long-term impacts of the program on students' mental and emotional health.

5.3 Conclusion

This study aimed to propose a training program based on emotional intelligence to enhance the mental health of undergraduate students at the Arab American University. The result showed that a significant portion of students had moderate to low levels of emotional intelligence, and high levels of depression, anxiety and stress along with moderate levels of academic pressure. These results indicate that university students face significant psychological and academic challenges that may negatively affect their well-being and academic adjustment.

Finally, by using the findings, the research developed a training program for the implementation of emotional intelligence -based interventions that would meet the emotional, psychological, and academic needs of the university students through the use of structured components and research-supported implementation strategies. As a result, the study points out that it is necessary to implement emotional intelligence training as an integral component of a university's mental health initiatives and create a structure to support the comprehensive growth of students in higher education.

5.4 Recommendations

1. To help reduce academic stress and improve overall mental health, the researcher suggests that universities implement emotional intelligence training. This type of training focuses on self-awareness, managing one's emotions, showing empathy and developing social skills.
2. The researcher encourages integrating emotional intelligence into both academic and non-academic activities so that students may develop personally as well as psychologically.
3. The researcher suggests strengthening the role of university psychological services by training counselors in emotional intelligence -based methods to help students manage their emotions because many students experience anxiety, depression attending university.
4. The researcher recommends increasing academic and administrative qualifications that emotional intelligence principles and benefit students through improved levels of engagement towards enhancing student behavior will also support students' psychological development.

5. The researcher stresses the importance of structured awareness sessions that help students identify and appropriately express their emotions on an ongoing basis through frequent workshops.

5.5 Future Studies

1. The researcher suggests conducting studies on emotional intelligence by using qualitative methods of research to better understand how emotional intelligence affects the experiences of students in coping with and managing the many stressors they face in their university experiences.
2. The researcher recommend that exploring the relationship between emotional intelligence training and other variables associated with students' mental health and academic success, such as psychological resilience, academic adjustment, and university
3. The researcher suggests assessing the impact of emotional intelligence on the educational level, including that of high school students and graduate students. This would provide an opportunity for researchers to further establish the impact of emotional intelligence at all levels of education.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The Proposed Training Program

Table 1: General Specifications of the Proposed Emotional Intelligence -Based Training Program to Enhance University Students' Mental Health

Items	Details
Name of the Program	Training Program Based on Emotional Intelligence to Enhance the Mental Health of Students at Arab American University
Target Group	Undergraduate Students at Arab American University
The Duration of the Program	2 months
Number of Sessions	20 training sessions
The Duration of Each Session	90 minutes
General Objectives	Teach students skills related to emotional intelligence Improve emotional regulation and stress management skills Enhance mental health, academic performance, and social functioning
Target Areas	Self-Awareness Self-Regulation Internal Motivation Empathy Social skills
Expected Obstacles	Social stigma regarding mental health Lack of student motivation to participate Limited academic time available for students Low commitment to attendance Lack of administration/institutional support Limited material or human resources
Solutions to Obstacles	Social stigma regarding mental health ➤ Raise awareness about the importance of mental health and connect it to life skills development. Low student motivation to participate ➤ Use motivational strategies such as certificates, symbolic rewards and aligning activities with students' interests.

	Lack of academic time for students ➤ Scheduling sessions during non-peak school hours and offering flexible participation. Ineffective commitment to attendance ➤ Involve students in designing program activities to foster ownership and a sense of responsibility. Lack of administrative/institutional support ➤ Present the program's objectives and benefits to administration, aligning them with the university's vision and mission. Limited material or human resources ➤ Optimize the use of available resources and seek collaboration with other departments or qualified volunteers.
Assessment Tools	emotional intelligence scale DASS scale for stress, anxiety and depression Program Satisfaction Questionnaire
Expected Results	Decrease in anxiety, depression, psychological stress Increase in social interaction Improvement in self-awareness and the ability to regulate emotions

Table 2: Detailed Implementation Plan of the Training Sessions: Objectives, Strategies, and Duration

Number	Title	Objectives	Strategies	The Duration of Each Session
1	Overview and Description of the Program	Overcoming psychological barriers introduce participants to the objectives of the program	Brainstorming, group/peer exercises, graphic representations of concepts	90 minutes
2	Definition of Emotional and its components	Introducing students to the concept, dimensions and importance of emotional in daily life	Interactive lectures, group discussion with diagnostic exercises	90 minutes
3	Self-Awareness and Emotions	Train students to perceive emotions and understand how emotion influences behavior	Writing about feelings, self-reflection, case story	90 minutes

4	Emotions and Stress Management	Develop strategies to manage negative emotions and reduce anxiety	Relaxation exercises, role-playing, deep breathing exercises	90 minutes
5	Self Motivation and Goal Setting	Strengthen intrinsic motivation and support personal goal setting	SMART Goals, visualising the future	90 minutes
6	Positive Thinking	Foster positive thinking and enhance psychological flexibility	Reverse analysis, applied cases	90 minutes
7	Empathy and Understanding the Feelings of Others	Cultivate empathy by recognizing and understanding the feelings of others	Videos, role-playing, discussion	90 minutes
8	Active Listening	Enhance listening and interaction skills for effective communication	Listening exercises, small group exercises	90 minutes
9	Developing Positive Relationships	Encourage the development of positive social interactions and relationships	Representation of situations, open dialogue	90 minutes
10	Conflict Management	Learn techniques for managing conflicts in a respectful and constructive manner	Role-playing, negotiation strategies	90 minutes
11	Adaptation to the University environment	Facilitate adaption to university life through emotional support strategies	Problems analysis, realistic solutions	90 minutes
12	Time Management	Develop organizational skills and the ability to priorities academic responsibilities	Timetable, Eisenhower Matrix (urgent and important)	90 minutes
13	Strengthen self-confidence	Build self-confidence and belief in one's abilities	Mirror exercise, feedback	90 minutes

14	Mental Health and Emotional Balance	Raise awareness of the importance of mental health and achieving emotional balance	DASS analysis, meditative exercises	90 minutes
15	Regulation of emotions in Daily Life	Apply emotion regulation strategies in real-life situations	Role playing from the perspective of analysis of situations	90 minutes
16	Problem-Solving Techniques	utilize emotional intelligence to approach problem-solving and decision-making	ideal model, peer exercises	90 minutes
17	Team Dynamics in emotional intelligence	Strengthen teamwork and interpersonal collaboration using emotional emotional	Collaborative activities, Group Representation	90 minutes
18	Exam Anxiety and Emotion Regulation	Practice maintaining emotional balance and resilience during exams	Simulation tests, relaxation exercises	90 minutes
19	Practical Application - Complete Survey	Apply acquired emotional intelligent skills to practice, real-life scenarios	Projects, conference, group representation	90 minutes
20	Final Assessment and Evaluation	Evaluate program outcomes, gather feedback, and plan for sustained implementation	Post-test, group discussion, certificates of participation	90 minutes

Appendix B: The Questionnaire



Dear students

Warm greetings,

Peace be blessing be upon you

I am pleased to present to you this questionnaire, which is part of the requirements of completing a master's thesis in Innovation in Education, entitled "**A Proposed Training Program Based on Emotional Intelligence to Enhance the Mental Health of Students at Arab American University**".

Given the importance of your perspectives in this field, we kindly ask you to respond to the questionnaire items as accurately and honestly as possible. The reliability of the results greatly depends on the accuracy of your responses. Your participation is therefore valuable, and your input is essential to the success of this research.

Please be assured that all responses will be used strictly for academic research purposes, and confidentiality will be fully maintained.

- **Participation in this study is optional**
- **The questionnaire takes approximately 10 minutes to complete**

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation

Sincerely,

Madleen Jihad Naji Masae'd

Part One: Demographic Data

Variable	Type	
Gender	Male	
	Female	
Year of study	First year	
	Second year	
	Third year	
	Fourth year	
	Fifth year	
	Sixth year	
Faculty	Faculty of Sciences and Arts	
	Faculty of Commerce	
	Faculty of Law	
	Faculty of Supportive Medical Sciences	
	Faculty of Dentistry	

Part Two: Measuring the Level of emotional intelligence

• Please put a mark (X) in the box indicating your degree of agreement with each of the following statements:

emotional intelligence Scale		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Sub-Scale						
Empathy	I am good at listening when others talk about their problems					

	I understand the emotional needs of others					
	I am able to read people's emotions through body language					
Social Interaction	I enjoy interacting with colleagues and friends, both socially and formally					
	I am able to influence others and persuade them to change their attitudes					
	I find it easy to talk to people I do not know					
Emotion Regulation	I can overcome challenges and achieve success even under pressure					
	I strive to carry out my daily tasks calmly, with a high level of energy and focus					
	When I fail to achieve my goals, I remain patient and composed					
Emotion Management	I am able to regulate my behaviour and upsetting situations					
	I can easily evoke positive emotions, such as joy and humor when needed					
	I struggle to cope with life's challenges and feelings of anxiety and frustration					
Emotional Awareness	I am able to manage my negative emotions when making important life decisions					
	I can distinguish between my positive and negative emotions, even in stressful situations					
	I am able to express my emotions openly in front of others					

Part Three: DASS Scale for Measuring Depression, Anxiety and Stress

• Please put a mark (X) in the box indicating your degree of agreement with each of the following statements:

#	Depression	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1	I did not experience positive emotions at all					
2	I feel as though there is nothing to look forward to in the future					
3	I feel downhearted and sad					
4	I find it difficult to motivate myself to engage in any activity					
5	I am unable to feel excited about anything					
6	I perceive no reason to be optimistic about the future					
7	I feel that I have no personal worth					
8	I feel that I have lost interest in nearly all things					

#	Anxiety	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1	I find myself in situations that make me very anxious until they are over					
2	I experience fear without any identifiable cause					
3	I worry that I might lose control and behave in an inappropriate or awkwardly manner					
4	I am afraid that I will become overwhelmed by simple but unfamiliar task					
5	I experience trembling in my hands or body					
6	I have difficulty breathing even when not engaged in physical activity					

7	I feel as though I am on the verge of a panic attack					
8	I become aware of my heartbeat even in the absence of physical effort					

#	Stress	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1	I feel distressed by trivial matters					
2	I tend to exaggerate my reactions to situations					
3	I perceive myself as hypersensitive					
4	I feel impatient when faced with any form of delay					
5	I feel as though I am expending excessive nervous energy					
6	I find myself intolerant of anything that hinders my ability to complete tasks					
7	I feel both anxious and emotionally unstable					
8	I acknowledge that I become easily agitated and irritable					

Part Four: PAS Scale for Measuring Academic Pressure

- Please put a mark (X) in the box indicating your degree of agreement with each of the following statements:

Academic Pressure Scale		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Sub-Scale						
Pressures Related to Academic Expectations	The competition with my classmates for grades is very intense					
	My teachers often criticize my academic performance					
	My teachers have unrealistic expectations of me					

	My father's Unrealistic expectations cause me stress					
Pressures Related to Students' Academic Self-Perceptions	I am confident that I will be a successful student					
	I am confident that I will succeed in my future career					
	I can make academic decisions easily					
	I am afraid of failing courses this year					
	I believe that my anxiety about exams reflects a weakness in my character					
	Even if I pass my exams, I worry about finding a job					

Appendix C: The List of Questionnaire's Reviewers

Name	Major	E-mail
Dr. Wael Abu Hassan	Associate Professor of Allied Medical Sciences, Arab American University.	wael.abuhasan@aaup.com
Dr. Ayman Yousef	Professor of Political Science, Arab American University	ayman.yousaf@aaup.com
Dr. Karina Linnell	Professor in Psychology and Neuroscience, Goldsmiths, University of London	K.J.Linnell@gold.ac.uk
Dr. Ahmed Tezcan	Professor of Clinical Psychology, Istanbul Aydın Üniversitesi	aertantezcan@aydin.edu.tr

Appendix D: The List of the Proposed Training Program Reviewers

Name	Major	E-mail
Dr. Karina Linnell	Professor in Psychology and Neuroscience, Goldsmiths, University of London	K.J.Linnell@gold.ac.uk
Dr. Ahmed Tezcan	Professor of Clinical Psychology, Istanbul Aydın Üniversitesi	aertantezcan@aydin.edu.tr
Dr. Saliha Arabaci	Research Assistant of Cognitive Psychology, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Turkey	saliha.arabaci@asbu.edu.tr

عنوان الرسالة: برنامج تدريبي مقترح قائم على الذكاء العاطفي لتحسين الصحة النفسية لطلبة الجامعة العربية الأمريكية

اسم الطالب الرباعي: مدلين جهاد ناجي مساعد

لجنة الإشراف:

د. مصدق براهيمه

د. يحيى جابر

د. وائل أبو حسن

الملخص

في ضوء المطالب النفسية والأكاديمية المتزايدة على طلبة الجامعة العربية الأمريكية، من الضروري البحث عن طرق تعزز الصحة العقلية والتكيف بشكل فعال. الذكاء العاطفي هو أحد العوامل النفسية الرئيسية التي يمكن أن تساعد في تحسين نوعية الحياة النفسية للطلاب، وتقليل التوتر والقلق والاكتئاب، بالإضافة إلى تعزيز التفاعل الاجتماعي والأداء الأكاديمي. من هذا المنظور، هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على مستوى الصحة العقلية والذكاء العاطفي والضغط الأكاديمي لطلبة الجامعات العربية الأمريكية، ومن ثم اقتراح برنامج تدريبي قائم على الذكاء العاطفي لتعزيز الصحة النفسية للطلبة. تألف مجتمع الدراسة من جميع الطلبة الجامعيين المسجلين في كليات مختلفة في الجامعة العربية الأمريكية وعينة مناسبة من 300 طالب.

اعتمدت الدراسة منهج بحثي تطويري يهدف إلى تصميم برنامج تدريبي مقترح قائم على الذكاء العاطفي لتعزيز الصحة النفسية للطلبة في الجامعة العربية الأمريكية. تم استخدام استبيان كأداة لجمع البيانات الأولية لقياس مستويات الذكاء العاطفي، ومستويات الاكتئاب، ومستويات القلق، ومستويات التوتر، ومستويات الضغط الأكاديمي بين الطلبة. تم استخدام النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها من الاستبيان لتحديد احتياجات الطلبة وتوجيه تطوير البرنامج التدريبي المقترح.

أظهرت النتائج أن مستوى الذكاء العاطفي بين الطلبة الجامعيين اختلف. مع 37.3% من الطلبة يظهرون مستوى منخفض، 50.3 %، يظهرون مستوى متوسط، و 12.3% فقط لديهم مستوى عال من الذكاء العاطفي. كما واجه العديد من الطلبة تحديات كبيرة في مجال الصحة العقلية. أعلى نسبة، 45.7%، أبلغت عن مستوى شديد للغاية من الاكتئاب؛ 51.7%، كان لديهم مستوى شديد للغاية من القلق؛ و 38.7% أظهروا مستوى شديد من التوتر. من حيث الضغط الأكاديمي، شهد 69.7% من الطلبة مستوى متوسط من الضغط، وهو الأعلى بين الفئات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الذكاء العاطفي، الصحة النفسية، الضغط الأكاديمي، الطلبة، فلسطين.