

## SELF-AWARENESS AND ITS IMPACT ON THE ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Tanshika Goyal<sup>1</sup>, Shashank Goyal<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Student, Business Management, H.R. College of Commerce and Economics, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India.

### ABSTRACT

Life today has become challenging and complex. There is an upsurge in the rate at which students are experiencing stress and academic pressure. Emotional upheavals have been on the rise in university students due to parental as well as peer pressure. Many students are often crushed by the stress of trying to live up to some scholarly ideal and the expectations of society. Thus, there is a need to improve the self-awareness in students so that they can correct the behaviours that cause them emotional turmoil. Self-awareness will help the students become increasingly aware of their strengths and weaknesses which would in turn improve their academic as well as non-academic growth and performance. The findings from this research would help the university to promote self-disclosure among the students which would help them further disclose to the management leading to increased self-awareness both in the students and the university. It further provides an insight for the university to take measures for further enhancing the self-awareness, satisfaction and performance of the students.

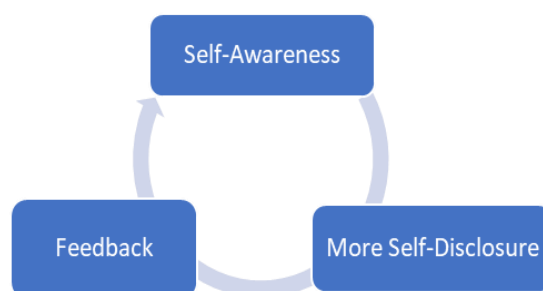
### 1. INTRODUCTION

Self-awareness is the capacity to accurately identify and recognize one's emotions, perceptions, thoughts and influences on one's behaviours as well as on others. It helps one correctly evaluate their preferences, needs, strengths, values, weaknesses, self-efficacy and self-confidence maintenance. Self-disclosure forms an important part of self-awareness. "Self-disclosure is a process of communication by which one person reveals information about themselves to another. The information can be descriptive or evaluative, and can include thoughts, feelings, aspirations, goals, failures, successes, fears, and dreams, as well as one's likes, dislikes, and favourites." Self-awareness is a continual and emerging process. Continually learning about oneself helps one to become more authentic and real. Self-disclosure has 4 benefits relevant to the study of this research, which are –

It helps increase accuracy in communication: Proper self-disclosure does not create perceptive realities thus ensuring clarity at all times.

Reduction of stress: Stress is often due to the concealment of feelings. The National Union of Students reports that the top three sources of stress among students are coursework deadlines, exams, and balancing study with other commitments. According to a study published in the Asian Journal of Psychiatry (2017), 37.7%, 13.1%, and 2.4% of the students were suffering from moderate, severe, and extremely severe depression in Indian Universities. Emotional upheavals have been on the rise in university students, thus self-awareness and self-disclosure hold much importance in a student's life.

Increase in self-awareness and increase in open communication: Proper self-disclosure leads to the emergence of a continuous and vicious cycle of self-awareness as shown below- The feedback cycle explains how when one is more self-aware, one discloses more helping the person reach to a greater self-awareness level. This leads to the creation of a continuous and vicious cycle known as the feedback cycle. The feedback cycle helps one to continuously improve at what you do, thus enhancing one's performance. Self-awareness is the foundation on which self-development is built.



It helps in increasing the open area (what is known to self as well as what is known in others) of an individual's Johari Window. Effective self-Management helps students in the efficient utilisation of resources, effective time management, development of better inter-personal relationships with teachers and peers, goal setting, greater self-esteem, self-regulation, better planning and concentration, emotional health and building self-confidence. Self-awareness helps you recognize and pursue your parallel story (your interests and aspirations) and broaden your imagination. It helps in creatively engaging in oneself and better understanding themselves and their surroundings.

The findings from this research would go a long way in helping the university to promote self-awareness in students which would significantly impact the way they handle themselves and their work. Reinforcing the statistics mentioned above, this research serves as a medium for university students to effectively disclose their expectations and grievances to the university, post which, both i.e. the university and the students, would tread on the path of effective self-awareness and of increased performance and growth. This research aims to reason the problem of stress in students due to their ineffective disclosure of feelings. To fulfil the objectives of this research, a self-awareness questionnaire was circulated to the students of NMIMS Navi Mumbai

University. The sample consisted of students ranging from 18-22 years of age, pursuing their Undergraduate degrees. All the students surveyed were in the 1st, 2nd or 3rd year of their respective courses. The questionnaire which was circulated can be found in the Appendix Section of this paper

## 2. HYPOTHESIS

The researchers' hypothesis is -

That the more a person is self-aware higher shall be his academic performance, such observation is excluding other variations as Intelligence quotient, emotional quotient, class, status, etc.

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-awareness, defined as the ability to accurately recognize and understand one's emotions, thoughts, and how they influence behavior, plays a critical role in personal development and academic success. It encompasses a continuous self-disclosure process, involving the communication of one's thoughts, feelings, aspirations, and experiences with others. This disclosure enhances emotional clarity and reduces stress by mitigating the pressure often caused by internalized feelings.

Research shows that a high level of self-awareness is associated with improved academic performance and emotional health. Self-disclosure, as part of the self-awareness process, promotes open communication, which fosters a positive feedback cycle, continually enhancing one's self-understanding. This cyclic process, as noted in studies like the one published in the Asian Journal of Psychiatry (2017), suggests that increased self-awareness can lead to better stress management, thereby supporting students' academic achievements.

The concept of self-awareness also intersects with interpersonal dynamics. When students engage in self-disclosure with peers and teachers, it strengthens their inter-personal relationships, improves self-esteem, and enhances their capacity for effective communication. Furthermore, studies indicate that self-aware students tend to exhibit stronger emotional resilience and adaptability, essential traits for managing academic challenges and social pressures.

Self-awareness also contributes to developing emotional intelligence (EI), which aids in stress reduction, better planning, and overall well-being. Regular self-disclosure can help students identify personal strengths and weaknesses, encouraging them to set realistic academic and career goals. This process facilitates a balanced approach to academic and non-academic pursuits, ultimately contributing to a healthier, more productive university experience.

In sum, existing literature supports the hypothesis that increased self-awareness positively correlates with enhanced academic performance and emotional health. As universities seek ways to support students' mental well-being, incorporating strategies that foster self-awareness can serve as a beneficial intervention in promoting holistic student success.

## 4. DATA

### Self-Awareness and Academic Performance

- **Emotional Intelligence and Academic Success:** Studies, such as those published in the Journal of Educational Psychology, indicate that students with higher emotional intelligence (a component closely related to self-awareness) tend to have better academic performance. Emotional intelligence enables students to manage stress effectively, understand their strengths and limitations, and make decisions that align with their academic goals.
- **Self-Reflection and Learning:** Research in higher education journals highlights that students who actively engage in self-reflection and assess their learning processes exhibit better academic performance. Self-reflection allows students to identify what works best for them in terms of studying and time management, which positively impacts their grades and engagement in academic activities.

### Self-Awareness and Stress Management

- **Impact on Mental Health and Stress:** According to a 2017 study in the Asian Journal of Psychiatry, a substantial percentage of university students experience moderate to severe levels of stress due to academic and social pressures. Self-awareness practices, such as mindfulness and self-reflection, help students reduce stress by enabling them to better

understand and process their emotions. This, in turn, leads to improved focus, resilience, and mental well-being, which are crucial for academic success.

- Mindfulness Interventions:** Programs that incorporate self-awareness techniques, like mindfulness and meditation, have shown positive outcomes in reducing stress and anxiety among students. Research suggests that students who participate in mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) programs report lower levels of stress and improved academic focus.

Self-Awareness and Non-Academic Performance

- Social Skills and Interpersonal Relationships:** Self-aware students often have better interpersonal relationships with peers and instructors, contributing to a supportive social network. Studies show that self-awareness aids in improving communication skills and empathy, which are essential for building and maintaining relationships within the university setting. These skills are beneficial for both academic collaboration and personal well-being.

- Extra-Curricular Engagement:** Self-aware students tend to be more involved in extra-curricular activities. A study in the Journal of Student Development found that students who have a clear understanding of their interests and goals are more likely to participate in activities that align with their aspirations. This engagement provides valuable experiences, such as leadership, teamwork, and time management skills, which contribute to overall personal development.

Correlation between Self-Awareness and Academic Outcomes

- Quantitative Studies on Self-Awareness and Academic Achievement:** Quantitative analyses, as reported in educational journals, often show a positive correlation between self-awareness scores and academic performance indicators like GPA. In one study, students with higher self-awareness scores (measured through self-report questionnaires) had statistically higher GPAs than their less self-aware peers, indicating a link between self-awareness and academic success.

- The Role of Self-Regulation:** Self-awareness contributes to self-regulation—a skill that allows students to manage their time and effort toward academic tasks effectively. Self-regulated students are more likely to set achievable academic goals and maintain motivation, which helps them sustain high performance levels even in challenging academic environments.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire was circulated online through a Google form and our team generated a response of 120 students from different years and courses. The questionnaire included questions to analyse the student's emotional health, confidence, their inter-personal relationships with teachers and peers and their academic and non-academic performances.

### 5.1 Observation

The outcomes of the surveyed students are expressed in a form of a table which is illustrated below:

| Question 1:-                            | Work full time | Work part time + Continue Education (graduate school/certificate studies/self-education) | Continue education (certifications/graduate school/self-education) | Travel | Work in freelance | Entrepreneurship | Internship | Other |
|---|----------------|--|--|--------|-------------------|------------------|------------|-------|
| What are your postcollege aspirations ? | 15             | 47   | 52   | 15     | 7                 | 19               | 9          | 3     |

| Question 2:  | Calling | Emailing | Connecting on Social Media | Messaging | Other |
|--|---------|----------|----------------------------|-----------|-------|
| How will you nurture and continue the relationships you've built in college? | 48      | 13       | 87                         | 31        | 6     |

| Question 3:                | Yes | No | Maybe |
|----------------------------|-----|----|-------|
| Do you exercise regularly? | 44  | 25 | 51    |

| Question 4:  | 1 | 2 | 3  | 4  | 5  |
|--|---|---|----|----|----|
| Rate your<br>Emotional Health?<br>(1=Unhealthy)<br>(5=Healthy) | 6 | 7 | 46 | 42 | 19 |

| Question 5:  | 1 | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  |
|--|---|----|----|----|----|
| Are you confident in your<br>appearance? Do you get<br>influenced by people's opinion<br>about your body remarks, clothing<br>style, skin tone, etc.?<br>(1=Least Confident)<br>(5=Most Confident) | 9 | 10 | 36 | 45 | 20 |

| Question 6:  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5 |
|--|----|----|----|----|---|
| How frequently do you get<br>embarrassed?<br>(1=Never)<br>(5=Always) | 12 | 47 | 38 | 21 | 2 |

| Question 7:  | 0-10 mins | 10-20 mins | 20-30 mins | 30-40 mins | More than 40 mins |
|--|-----------|------------|------------|------------|-------------------|
| What is your average attention<br>span in 1 lecture? (in mins) | 8         | 21         | 42         | 43         | 6                 |

| Question 8:   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|---|
| On an average, how<br>Many subjects were you<br>interested in during a<br>Semester? | 1 | 5 | 9 | 41 | 47 | 12 | 5 |

| Question 9:                              | Teaching<br>Style | Course<br>Curriculum | Practicality of<br>the Subject | Project Work |
|--|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Why were you interested in the subjects? | 47                | 26                   | 48                             | 13           |

| Question 10:   | 1 | 2 | 3  | 4  | 5  |
|--|---|---|----|----|----|
| Rate your relationship with<br>your teachers? (1=Least<br>Comfortable)<br>(5=Most Comfortable) | 0 | 6 | 37 | 52 | 25 |

| Question 11:                             | Yourself | Parents | University | Society | No one (I am just<br>here to get a degree) | Learning | Other |
|--|----------|---------|------------|---------|--|----------|-------|
| Who<br>influences you to<br>score marks? | 86       | 33      | 10         | 12      | 11   | 16       | 3     |

| Question 12:              | Money | Career | Social Status |  | Degree | Societal Pressure | Other |
|---------------------------|-------|--------|---------------|--|--------|-------------------|-------|
| What drives you to study? | 49    | 78     | 22            |  | 29     | 1                 | 10    |

| Question 13:   | 1 | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5 |
|--|---|----|----|----|---|
| Do you believe you achieved your best in your college?<br>(In terms of academics)<br>(1=Least)<br>(5=Most) | 9 | 33 | 52 | 20 | 6 |

| Question 14:                | 1.5-2 | 2-2.5 | 2.5-3.0 | 3.0-3.5 | More than 3.5 |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|---------|---------|---------------|
| What is your CGPA till now? | 6     | 19    | 59      | 29      | 7             |

| Question 15:   | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5 |
|--|----|----|----|----|---|
| Do you believe you achieved your best in your college?<br>(In terms of extracurricular activities) (1=Least)<br>(5=Most) | 15 | 33 | 42 | 22 | 8 |

| Question 16:  | Self-education<br>(self study) | Working<br>(full/part time) | Teaching/<br>Coaching | Performing/<br>Presenting | Analy sing/<br>Researching | Travelling | Gymming | Other |
|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------|---------|-------|
| What kinds of activities do you want to be doing with your time | 44                             | 45                          | 2                     | 28                        | 18                         | 46         | 26      | 7     |
| post college?   |                                |                             |                       |                           |                            |            |         |       |

| Question 17:                  | Dance | Music | Research | Sports | Editorial | Technology | Arts | Management<br>(Organising Committee) | Others |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|----------|--------|-----------|------------|------|--------------------------------------|--------|
| Do you have a parallel story? | 20    | 26    | 4        | 40     | 10        | 7          | 19   | 34                                   | 12     |

| Question 18:   | Yes | No | Maybe |
|--|-----|----|-------|
| Do you want to make a career out of your parallel story? | 24  | 37 | 59    |

| Question 19:   | 1 | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5 |
|--|---|----|----|----|---|
| How effective do you find the guest lectures arranged in campus? (1=Least Helpful)<br>(5=Most Helpful) | 8 | 22 | 57 | 28 | 5 |

| Question 20:  | 1 | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5 |
|---|---|----|----|----|---|
| How effective do you find the guest lectures arranged in campus? Is there any value addition? (1=Least)<br>(5=Most) | 7 | 19 | 47 | 38 | 9 |

| Question 21:  | Yes | No | Maybe |
|---|-----|----|-------|
| Do you want extracurricular activities in your college? (If yes, Suggest) | 81  | 14 | 25    |

## 5.2 Academic Performance (Inference)

The researchers have the following steps -

1. The researchers' firstly collected data on 21 questions using the survey as the rudimentary method then divided such questions amongst 3 sets, the first set comprising basic self-awareness the second set comprising the academic performance and the third being non-academic performance from their peer groups.
2. To calculate individual self-awareness, the researchers used the technique of point allotment for the first set of questionnaires in order to convert the subjective data into quantitative data.
  - a. Each question carries 5 points and the allotment of points for each individual was based on the option such individual choses. The maximum point an individual could score is 25 and the minimum being 0.
  - b. First question in the questionnaire circulated carried 0 points for selecting the first option that was not yet decided whereas all options carried 5 points as they assured one's future.
  - c. Third question in the questionnaire circulated carried 0 points for selecting sometimes as it is indefinite whereas definite responses were given 5 points.
  - d. Fourth question carried 5 points for selecting definite options (i.e. option-1 and option-5). the grey area i.e. option-2 and option-4 carried 3 points where as option-3 carried 0 points.
  - e. Same is in the case of the fifth question.
  - f. The higher is the rate of a person getting embarrassed the lower is their self-esteem which directly equates to their self-awareness. Hence, option-1 carried 5 points and option-5 carried 1 point.

Example: The first individual chose option-1 i.e. not yet decided for the first question, hence was marked 0 points. For the third question she chose option-2 and was allotted 5 points as she was aware of her personal workout schedule. For the fourth question, she was marked 0 points as she chose option-3 which was neutral on the scale of emotional health. For the fifth question, she was marked 3 points as she chose option-4 that carried a grey area. For the sixth question, she was marked 4 points as she chose option-2 stating she doesn't easily get embarrassed marking a high self-esteem. Hence the total score came out to be -  $(0+5+0+3+4 = 12)$

- g. After analysing the self-awareness of all the individuals in the sample data. individuals were classified into groups being Group-A were the individuals scoring between 20-25, Group-B scoring 12-20, Group-C scoring 10-15, and Group-D scoring 5-10.
- h. The next step was calculating the mean value of self-awareness from Group- A, B, C, and D respectively. (mean of all individuals lying in the group was calculated). Further the average CGPA of sample group-A, B, C and D were calculated individually.

The following table was calculated through the procedures mentioned above- The inferences are listed below -

| Groups | Grouping based on points allotted | No. of Responses | Average Points (how self-aware one is?) | Average academic performance | Degree of Correlation between self-awareness and academic performance |
|--------|-----------------------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------|---|
| A      | 20-25                             | 20               | 22                                      | $58.5/20 = 3$<br>(approx.)   | High  |
| B      | 15-19                             | 43               | 16.7                                    | $119.25/43 = 2.8$            | Medium  |



|   |       |    |    |               |  |
|---|-------|----|----|---------------|--|
| C | 10-14 | 48 | 12 | 133.5/48=2.78 | *Need further clarification(discussed below) |
| D | 5-10  | 9  | 8  | 23.25/9=2.58  | High   |

## 6. ANALYSIS

Fluid The researchers' tries to analyse the correlation between Self Awareness and the academic performance of the Groups individually. From the above data it has been observed that -

1.In Group-A i.e. the grouping based on the points scored between 20-25, the number of people falling in such group were 20 and their average self-awareness marked 22 points. when their average academic performance was calculated it marked 3 out of 4 points, which comparatively falls in a higher range. This clearly indicates that the correlation between self-awareness and academic performance is extremely high determining that Self-Awareness has a high impact on academic performance.

2.In Group-B i.e. the grouping based on the points scored between 15-20, the number of people falling in such group were 43 and their average self-awareness marked 16.7 points. when their average academic performance was calculated it marked 2.8 out of 4 points, which comparatively falls in a medium range. This indicates that the correlation lies in the same curve although not very strong.

3.In Group-C i.e. the grouping based on the points scored between 10-15, the number of people falling in such group were 43 and their average self-awareness marked 12 points. when their average academic performance was calculated it marked 2.7 out of 4 points, which comparatively falls in a medium range. But there is no clear correlation between self-awareness and academic performance because even though the average points scored was sharply less there was no major difference in academic performance.

4.In Group-D i.e. the grouping based on the points scored between 5-10, the number of people falling in such group were 43 and their average self-awareness marked 8points. when their average academic performance was calculated it marked 2.58 out of 4 points, which comparatively falls in a lower range. This clearly indicates that the correlation between self-awareness and academic performance is extremely high determining that Self-Awareness has a high impact on academic performance.

\*If the observation is further deeply analysed it is determined that although group A & D show high correlation between self-awareness and academic performance, groups B & C are not in complete favour of the hypothesis.

The researchers thus conclude that although there is a correlation between self-awareness and academic performance, the analysis cannot be only based on these two factors. It is determined that to perform such observations, further study on this topic is suggested.

### NON-ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Inference:

1.Post college aspirations – Majority of the responses state that the students/respondents either haven't decided yet on their post college thoughts, or are going to continue with their further education/ certifications.

Although a considerable number of responses stated that they would like to involve themselves into a start-up, or entrepreneurship, but as compared to the above mentioned cases, they stand insignificant.

2.Nurturing and continuing relationships made in college – Most of the responses stated that they would virtually connect to their fellow college mates, via the internet or via the telephonic network.

Interestingly, only 2% of the respondents were interested for a reunion.

3.Regular exercise – Majority of the respondents exercise irregularly, and a comparable number of respondents exercise regularly. Although, almost 20% of the respondents stated that they do not exercise at all.

4.Emotional health – 46 % of the responses portray that the respondents are at a mediocre position when it comes to their emotional health. It somewhat portrays the generation might be emotionally vulnerable.

Almost 10% of the respondent's state that they possess an obnoxious state of emotional health, which is significant enough to be worried about.

5.Influenceability – According to the data received, more than half of the respondent crowd is strongly influenced by other people's opinion and remarks over one's body, clothing style etc. which gives a window for the social media influencers to subtly grow. Getting affected by other's opinions indicates a low level of self-esteem and confidence in oneself. People anyway start prioritising themselves when it comes to clothing, skincare, body care etc. Although it

might have a bad influence on people who would somewhat lay back and overthink about their social and physical blemishes rather than working on them.

6. How frequently one gets embarrassed – Only around 19.5 % of the responses state that they are embarrassed much frequently, rest state that they somewhat do get embarrassed, but at times and not very frequently. We can presume that the generation we are talking about are a little clumsy, but not to an extent that they might be a cause of an embarrassment.

## 7. FINDINGS

More than 70% of the students wish to continue their education and narrow down their specialisation, according to their interests after their bachelor's degree.

Considering the fact that the internet has made it easier to connect with your friends and loved ones, most of the responses claim that they would keep in touch with their college buddies through the various social media platforms.

Social media websites like snapchat where people maintain 'snapchat streaks' to keep in touch socially (<https://www.childnet.com/blog/what-is-a-snapchat-streak>). Moreover, other social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook also adds to the list.

Comparing the emotional health and academic performance at a micro level, it has been found that individuals with unhealthy emotional states are somewhat not doing adequately well in their academics as well. On the other hand, respondents with a well maintained and pleasant emotional state tend to do well, as per one's capability is concerned.

Moreover, while comparing physical maintenance of health with emotional health, it was found that people who exercise regularly carry a healthy emotional balance and state of mind; which stands true with respect to the scientifically proven fact that exercising releases 'dopamine – the feel good hormone', the same hormone which makes one feel positive and cheerful.

Talking about the adaptability to emerging fashion trends and ability to get influenced stands pretty high. The YouTube lifestyle channels and online influencers hold a major role in this and emerge victorious in swaying the audiences as per what they feel would work best among the masses.

## 8. CONCLUSION

By developing a measure of the outcomes of self-awareness on the academic and non-academic life of the students through correlation and other tools and studying different types of students in a stratified sample, this study has contributed to extending our understanding of the self-awareness concept and its effects in everyday life.

The paper effectively reasoned the relationship between 'self-awareness' and the 'academic and non-academic performance' of the students. The findings from the study states that students with higher levels of self-awareness were found to perform well in their academics and extracurriculars, subject to the person's capability.

The research paper can be further used by both the stakeholders – the university and the students, in order to identify ways of improving self-awareness that can enhance reflective self-development, acceptance and proactivity while minimizing related emotional costs. The questionnaire in the research paper can be used as an effective tool for self-disclosure, which would help to further enhance self-awareness in both the stakeholders.

The following other tips can be practiced to improve self-awareness and reduce the stress levels in university students:

- Adopting a Daily Mindfulness Practice
- Taking Regular Breaks
- Paying Real Attention to What Others Say
- And finally being open, curious and questioning one's assumptions at all times.

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