

# Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor of Mental Resilience among Higher Education Students: A PLS-SEM Approach

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**Abstract:** University students are increasingly suffering from academic stress as well as emotional and mental health issues therefore, the determinants that enhance the students' coping capability to adversity have become more important. Mental resilience is the capacity to cope with unanticipated change, adversity or challenge is a key driver for both academic and personal success. Emotional Intelligence (EI) which facilitates emotional awareness, emotion regulation and adaptive coping behaviour has gained a lot of attention. This study investigates the role of Emotional Intelligence dimensions on Mental Resilience of students at higher education level. Based on Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), emotional intelligence was theorized through four factors namely: Self-Emotion Appraisal, Others' Emotion Appraisal, Regulation of Emotions & Use of emotions. Mental resilience, by adapted items from the Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC). Data was collected which includes questionnaires (online and offline) from 254 students enrolled in higher educational institutions and analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). Results indicated that Self-Emotion Appraisal (SEA), Regulation of Emotion (RE) and Use of Emotion (UE) had positive and significant effects on Mental Resilience, while Others' Emotion Appraisal (OEA) had non-significant effect. In terms of the Emotional Intelligence, Regulation of Emotion was the best predictor of resilience. The present study adds to the existing body of literature by investigating and providing empirical evidence for the role of emotional competencies in building student resilience as well as an underlying factor (emotional intelligence) that educational institutions can use to promote efforts focused on developing emotionally competent students.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence; Mental Resilience; Higher Education Students; Self-Emotion Appraisal; Regulation of Emotion; Use of Emotion

## 1. Introduction

Globally, there is a growing concern among higher education institutions regarding students' psychological health, the stress around academic work and coping with rapid changes to academic and social environments. University students often face several challenges, including academic workload, exam pressure, career uncertainty, interpersonal conflict and adjustment to a new learning environment. These obstacles can have a negative impact on their mental health and may be detrimental to performing at their full potential

academically. Thus, building psychological resources that help students cope with adversity and preserve well-being has become a major area of research in higher education.

Mental resilience enables individuals to withstand stress, recover from setbacks and adapt positively to adverse circumstances. According to Connor and Davidson (2003), "resilience is an individual's capacity to cope successfully with challenges, maintain psychological stability and recover from difficult experiences". In the educational context, resilient students are able to better manage the academic demands, to maintain motivation and to

achieve positive educational outcomes despite encountering obstacles. Previous research has demonstrated that resilience is associated with improved psychological well-being, academic persistence, reduced stress and enhanced life satisfaction (Hartley, 2011; Smith et al., 2008). Given the increasing prevalence of stress and mental health concerns among students, understanding the factors that contribute to resilience development has become particularly important.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has received considerable scholarly attention with respect to resilience. Emotional Intelligence refers to “the ability to perceive, understand, regulate and utilize emotions effectively in oneself and others” (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Individuals with higher emotional intelligence are found to be more capable of managing emotional challenges, maintaining interpersonal relationships and responding adaptively to stressful situations. According to Goleman (1995) emotional intelligence plays a vital role in personal effectiveness, psychological adjustment and overall success. Emotional intelligence has been linked to better academic achievement, better psychological well-being, better stress management and better student engagement (MacCann et al., 2020; Shaikh et al., 2026).

Emotional Intelligence framework proposed by Wong and Law (2002) conceptualizes Emotional Intelligence through four dimensions: Self-Emotion Appraisal, Others' Emotion Appraisal, Regulation of Emotion and Use of Emotion. “Self-Emotion Appraisal reflects an individual's ability to understand personal emotions, whereas Others' Emotion Appraisal represents the ability to recognize and interpret the emotions of others. Regulation of Emotion refers to the capability to manage emotional responses effectively, while Use of Emotion captures the ability to employ emotions constructively for motivation, problem-solving and goal attainment.” These dimensions collectively have an impact on how individuals respond to challenges and stressful situations.

Past literatures suggest that the Emotional Intelligence contributes positively to resilience and higher emotionally intelligent individuals

demonstrate greater adaptability, effective coping mechanisms and enhanced psychological well-being (Armstrong et al., 2011; Magnano et al., 2016; Jani et al., 2026). Emotional competencies such as self-awareness, emotional regulation and emotional utilization have been found to strengthen individuals' ability to recover from adversity and maintain positive functioning during stressful circumstances. However, despite the growing interest in Emotional Intelligence and resilience, empirical evidence examining the individual contribution of each Emotional Intelligence dimension toward Mental Resilience remains limited, particularly within the context of higher education students in India.

Furthermore, the Indian higher education environment presents unique challenges arising from intense academic competition, changing employment expectations, technological disruption and increasing concerns regarding student mental health. While previous studies have examined Emotional Intelligence and resilience independently, relatively few investigations have explored how specific dimensions of Emotional Intelligence influence Mental Resilience among Indian university students. Understanding these relationships is important for designing targeted interventions aimed at strengthening students' emotional competencies and psychological adaptability.

The present study investigates the influence of Self-Emotion Appraisal, Others' Emotion Appraisal, Regulation of Emotion and Use of Emotion on Mental Resilience among higher education students in Gujarat, India. By examining the predictive role of Emotional Intelligence dimensions, the study contributes to the growing literature on student well-being and provides practical insights for educators, counsellors and policymakers seeking to foster resilience among students. The findings are expected to support the development of emotional intelligence-based interventions that can enhance students' ability to cope with academic and personal challenges, thereby promoting their overall psychological well-being and educational success.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) explains individuals' ability to perceive, understand, regulate and utilize emotions effectively. The concept was initially introduced by Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer (1990), who defined emotional intelligence as “the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, discriminate among them and use this information to guide thinking and actions”. Subsequently, Daniel Goleman (1995) popularized the concept and emphasized its importance in personal effectiveness, academic achievement, leadership and workplace performance. The Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) developed by Wong Chi-Sum and Law Kenneth S. (2002) is widely used in educational and organizational research. The scale conceptualizes emotional intelligence through four dimensions: Self-Emotion Appraisal, Others' Emotion Appraisal, Regulation of Emotion and Use of Emotion. These dimensions collectively capture an individual's ability to understand emotions, manage emotional responses, perceive others' feelings and utilize emotions constructively.

Previous studies have consistently reported positive outcomes associated with emotional intelligence. Research has shown that emotionally intelligent individuals demonstrate superior coping abilities, higher psychological well-being, better interpersonal relationships and greater adaptability to stressful situations (Brackett et al., 2011; Schutte & Malouff, 2011). Within educational settings, emotional intelligence has been found to contribute positively to academic engagement, stress management, academic achievement and overall student well-being (MacCann et al., 2020). Consequently, emotional intelligence has increasingly been recognized as a critical psychological resource that facilitates successful adaptation to the challenges encountered in higher education.

### 2.2 Mental Resilience

Mental resilience refers to “an individual's ability to adapt successfully to adversity, stress, uncertainty and challenging life circumstances.” It reflects the

capacity to recover from setbacks, maintain psychological stability and continue functioning effectively despite experiencing difficulties. Kathryn M. Connor and Jonathan R. T. Davidson (2003), developed the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) to measure resilience.

In the context of higher education, resilience has become increasingly important due to rising academic pressures, competition, uncertainty regarding future careers and mental health challenges among students. Research indicates that resilient students are more capable of coping with academic stress, maintaining motivation, achieving academic success and protecting their psychological well-being (Hartley, 2011; Bhambhani et al., 2025). Resilience has also been associated with lower levels of anxiety, depression, burnout and emotional exhaustion (Smith et al., 2008).

Contemporary resilience theory suggests that resilience is not merely an inherent personality trait but rather a dynamic process that can be strengthened through the development of psychological resources and coping mechanisms. Consequently, researchers have increasingly explored factors that contribute to resilience development, among which emotional intelligence has emerged as one of the most influential predictors.

### 2.3 Self-Emotion Appraisal and Mental Resilience

Self-Emotion Appraisal refers to “an individual's ability to recognize, understand and accurately evaluate personal emotional states.” Individuals with strong self-emotional awareness are generally better able to identify emotional triggers, manage emotional reactions and adopt adaptive coping strategies when facing adversity.

Several studies have demonstrated that emotional self-awareness contributes significantly to resilience (Gupta et al., 2025). Schneider et al. (2013) reported that individuals who possess greater awareness of their emotional experiences exhibit stronger resilience and adaptive functioning. Similarly, Armstrong et al. (2011) found that emotional self-awareness enhances individuals' ability to recover

from stressful events and maintain psychological well-being. Students who understand their emotions are therefore more likely to manage academic pressures effectively and maintain resilience in challenging circumstances.

**H1: Self-Emotion Appraisal positively influences Mental Resilience among higher education students.**

## 2.4 Others' Emotion Appraisal and Mental Resilience

Others' Emotion Appraisal refers to “the ability to perceive, interpret and understand the emotions of other individuals. This competency facilitates empathy, effective communication and the development of supportive interpersonal relationships”

Research suggests that individuals who accurately recognize others' emotions have stronger social networks and better interpersonal support systems, which may contribute to resilience. Di Fabio and Saklofske (2014) reported that emotional competencies are positively associated with resilience and well-being. Similarly, Chaudhary (2019) found that interpersonal emotional skills contribute to psychological adaptation among students.

Since supportive social interactions frequently act as protective factors against stress and adversity, understanding others' emotions may indirectly strengthen resilience through enhanced interpersonal functioning.

**H2: Others' Emotion Appraisal positively influences Mental Resilience among higher education students.**

## 2.5 Regulation of Emotion and Mental Resilience

Regulation of Emotion refers to “the ability to manage, control and modify emotional responses in ways that facilitate adaptive functioning.” Individuals possessing strong emotional regulation skills are generally better able to cope with stress, maintain emotional stability and respond constructively to challenging situations.

Previous studies consistently identify emotional regulation as one of the strongest predictors of

resilience. Armstrong et al. (2011) demonstrated that effective emotional regulation significantly enhances resilience by reducing risk to stress and negative emotional experiences. Similarly, Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) found that resilient individuals recover more quickly from adversity. Research by Chaudhary (2019) further supports the positive association between emotional regulation and resilience among students.

**H3: Regulation of Emotion positively influences Mental Resilience among higher education students.**

## 2.6 Use of Emotion and Mental Resilience

Use of Emotion refers to “the ability to utilize emotional experiences to facilitate motivation, problem-solving, decision-making and goal attainment.” Individuals who effectively use their emotions reap the benefit of constructive outcomes and are generally more capable of overcoming obstacles and maintaining perseverance during difficult circumstances.

According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), emotionally intelligent individuals can use emotions to enhance cognitive processes and facilitate adaptive behaviour. Magnano et al. (2016) reported that the constructive utilization of emotions contributes positively to resilience, achievement motivation and psychological well-being. Similarly, studies have demonstrated that emotionally motivated individuals display greater persistence and adaptability when confronting challenges.

As resilience requires perseverance and adaptive responses to adversity, the effective use of emotions is expected to contribute positively to resilience among students.

**H4: Use of Emotion positively influences Mental Resilience among higher education students.**

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

The present study employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine the influence of Emotional Intelligence on Mental Resilience among higher education students. The study was based on the premise that individuals possessing higher levels

of emotional intelligence are better equipped to understand, regulate and utilize emotions, thereby enhancing their ability to cope with adversity and stressful situations. A survey-based approach was adopted to collect primary data from students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

### 3.2 Study Area and Sampling

The study was conducted across higher educational institutions situated in major educational centres of Gujarat, including Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat, Bharuch, Vapi, Valsad, Rajkot, Jamnagar and Surendranagar. The inclusion of institutions from different regions of the state was intended to ensure broader representation of students from diverse educational and socio-economic backgrounds. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was employed owing to the accessibility of respondents. Data collection was carried out between October 2025 and April 2026 through a combination of physical and online questionnaires. Initially, 312 responses were collected. Following data screening for incomplete responses, missing values and inconsistencies, 254 responses were found suitable for analysis, yielding an effective response rate of 81.41 percent. The final sample comprised students from different academic programmes, institutional categories and levels of study, thereby providing a heterogeneous dataset for examining the proposed relationships.

### 3.3 Measurement Instrument

Measurement Instrument Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed from previously validated scales reported in the literature. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section gathered demographic information relating to respondents' age, gender, programme of study, year of study, academic discipline, type of institution, academic performance, residence status, participation in extracurricular activities and prior exposure to emotional intelligence or personality development training. The second section measured the latent constructs included in the study. Emotional Intelligence was assessed using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) developed by Wong and Law (2002). Consistent with the

original scale, Emotional Intelligence was conceptualized comprising Self-Emotion Appraisal, Others' Emotion Appraisal, Regulation of Emotion and Use of Emotion. Self-Emotion Appraisal refers to an individual's ability to understand and recognize personal emotions, whereas Others' Emotion Appraisal reflects the ability to perceive and interpret the emotions of others. Regulation of Emotion captures the capability to manage and control emotional responses effectively, while Use of Emotion reflects the extent to which emotions are utilized to facilitate motivation, decision-making and goal attainment. These four dimensions were measured using reflective indicators adapted from the original WLEIS instrument. Mental Resilience was measured using adapted items from the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) developed by Connor and Davidson (2003). The construct captures an individual's capacity to adapt to change, overcome adversity, remain focused under pressure and recover from challenging situations. The selected indicators assessed students' ability to manage stress, maintain confidence, persevere through difficulties and respond effectively to academic and personal challenges. All measurement items were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 representing "Strongly Disagree" to 5 representing "Strongly Agree".

### 3.4 Hypotheses Development

The theoretical foundation of the study is rooted in emotional intelligence theory, which suggests that individuals who possess stronger emotional competencies are more capable of coping with adversity and maintaining psychological stability in demanding situations. Prior studies have consistently demonstrated that the ability to recognize, understand, regulate and effectively utilize emotions contributes significantly to resilience and adaptive functioning. Based on this theoretical perspective, Self-Emotion Appraisal is expected to enhance Mental Resilience by enabling individuals to recognize their emotional states and respond appropriately to stressful circumstances. Similarly, Others' Emotion Appraisal may strengthen resilience through improved interpersonal understanding and social support. Regulation of Emotion is anticipated to contribute

positively to resilience by facilitating emotional control during adverse situations, while Use of Emotion is expected to enhance resilience by enabling individuals to channel emotions toward motivation, problem-solving and goal achievement. Accordingly, the study proposes that Self-Emotion Appraisal, Others' Emotion Appraisal, Regulation of Emotion and Use of Emotion exert significant positive influences on Mental Resilience among higher education students. The conceptual framework therefore positions the four dimensions of Emotional Intelligence as exogenous constructs and Mental Resilience as the endogenous construct.

### 3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The collected data were analysed using SmartPLS Version 4.1.1.6. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed.

First, the measurement model was evaluated to assess reliability and validity. Indicator reliability was examined through outer loadings, while internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Convergent validity was evaluated through Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.50 considered acceptable. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), ensuring adequate distinction among the latent constructs.

In the second stage, the structural model was evaluated to test the proposed hypotheses. Path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values and coefficients of determination ( $R^2$ ) were examined using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples. The predictive relevance of the model was further assessed through effect size ( $f^2$ ) and predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) statistics where applicable.

### 3.6 Measurement Model Assessment

Prior to testing the proposed hypotheses, the measurement model was evaluated to establish the reliability and validity of the constructs included in the study. Following the recommended procedures for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, indicator reliability

and discriminant validity were assessed using SmartPLS Version 4.1.1.6.

The reliability assessment indicated satisfactory internal consistency across all constructs. Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.794 to 0.897, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Similarly, Composite Reliability values ranged between 0.857 and 0.924, demonstrating strong reliability of the measurement scales. Among the constructs, Use of Emotion exhibited the highest reliability ( $\alpha = 0.897$ ,  $CR = 0.924$ ), followed by Regulation of Emotions ( $\alpha = 0.859$ ,  $CR = 0.899$ ), Mental Resilience ( $\alpha = 0.840$ ,  $CR = 0.888$ ), Others' Emotion Appraisal ( $\alpha = 0.831$ ,  $CR = 0.879$ ) and Self-Emotion Appraisal ( $\alpha = 0.794$ ,  $CR = 0.857$ ). These results confirm that the measurement instrument consistently captured the intended constructs.

Convergent validity was assessed through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The AVE values for Mental Resilience (0.617), Others' Emotion Appraisal (0.595), Regulation of Emotions (0.639), Self-Emotion Appraisal (0.557) and Use of Emotion (0.709) all exceeded the recommended minimum value of 0.50. This indicates that each construct explained more than half of the variance of its indicators, thereby establishing satisfactory convergent validity.

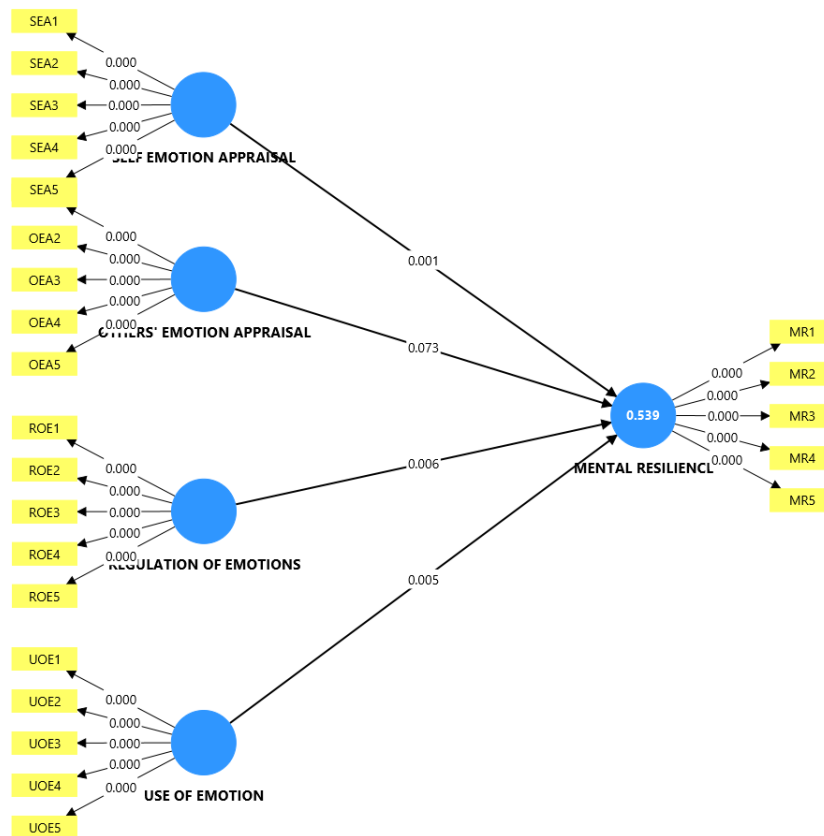
Indicator reliability was further examined through the factor loadings obtained from the confirmatory factor analysis conducted within the PLS-SEM framework. The majority of indicators demonstrated strong loadings above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating substantial contributions to their respective constructs. For Mental Resilience, factor loadings ranged from 0.575 to 0.850, with MR2 exhibiting the highest loading. The indicators of Others' Emotion Appraisal recorded loadings between 0.594 and 0.840, while Regulation of Emotions showed consistently strong loadings ranging from 0.777 to 0.841. Self-Emotion Appraisal demonstrated loadings between 0.450 and 0.863, whereas the indicators measuring Use of Emotion ranged from 0.747 to 0.870. Although a few indicators, particularly SEA5 (0.450), MR5 (0.575) and OEA1 (0.594), exhibited comparatively lower loadings, the constructs maintained acceptable

levels of composite reliability and convergent validity. Consequently, these indicators were retained for subsequent analysis.

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criterion. The HTMT values among the constructs ranged from 0.610 to 0.840, all of which were below the recommended threshold value of 0.90. Specifically, the relationship between Mental Resilience and Others' Emotion Appraisal yielded an HTMT value

of 0.610, while the highest HTMT value of 0.840 was observed between Regulation of Emotions and Use of Emotion. Since all values remained within the acceptable limits, the findings confirm that the constructs were empirically distinct and measured different conceptual dimensions.

Overall, the results of the measurement model assessment provide strong evidence regarding the reliability and validity of the research instrument.



*Structural Equation Modelling done through SmartPLS Version 4.1.1.6*

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Multicollinearity Assessment

Prior to evaluating the structural model, multicollinearity among the indicators was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). According to established guidelines, VIF values below 5.0 indicate the absence of critical multicollinearity issues. The VIF values obtained in the present study ranged from 1.167 to 3.815 across all indicators. The

highest VIF value was observed for UOE2 (3.815), followed by UOE3 (3.572) and OEA3 (3.258), while the lowest value was recorded for SEA5 (1.167). Since all values were substantially below the threshold of 5.0, multicollinearity was not considered a concern. These findings suggest that the indicators contributed unique information to their respective constructs and that the estimates generated by the structural model were stable and reliable.

## 4.2 Structural Model Assessment

Following the establishment of satisfactory reliability and validity of the measurement model, the structural model was evaluated using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS Version 4.1.1.6. The assessment focused on examining the path coefficients, t-statistics and p-values to determine the significance of the hypothesized relationships between the dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and Mental Resilience (Raghuwanshi et al., 2026).

The results revealed that Self-Emotion Appraisal exerted a significant positive influence on Mental Resilience ( $\beta = 0.233$ ,  $t = 3.250$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). The finding suggests that students who possess a greater understanding of their own emotions are more capable of adapting to challenges, managing stress and recovering from adverse situations. Therefore, Hypothesis H1 was supported.

Similarly, Regulation of Emotions demonstrated a significant positive effect on Mental Resilience ( $\beta = 0.255$ ,  $t = 2.773$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ). This result indicates that students who are capable of effectively controlling and regulating their emotional responses are more likely to exhibit resilient behaviour when confronted with academic and personal difficulties. Consequently, Hypothesis H3 was supported.

The analysis further revealed that Use of Emotion had a significant positive impact on Mental Resilience ( $\beta = 0.248$ ,  $t = 2.788$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ). The positive relationship suggests that students who effectively channel their emotions toward motivation, goal attainment and problem-solving tend to demonstrate higher levels of resilience. Therefore, Hypothesis H4 was also supported.

In contrast, Others' Emotion Appraisal did not exhibit a statistically significant influence on Mental Resilience ( $\beta = 0.098$ ,  $t = 1.794$ ,  $p = 0.073$ ). Although the relationship was positive, the p-value exceeded the recommended significance level of 0.05. Accordingly, Hypothesis H2 was not supported. This finding suggests that while the ability to understand the emotions of others may contribute to interpersonal effectiveness, it may not

directly strengthen an individual's capacity to cope with adversity and recover from stressful situations.

Among the four dimensions of Emotional Intelligence, Regulation of Emotions emerged as the strongest predictor of Mental Resilience ( $\beta = 0.255$ ), followed closely by Use of Emotion ( $\beta = 0.248$ ) and Self-Emotion Appraisal ( $\beta = 0.233$ ). These findings highlight the importance of emotional self-management and constructive utilization of emotions in fostering resilience among higher education students.

Overall, the structural model findings provide empirical support for the proposition that Emotional Intelligence serves as an important psychological resource for enhancing Mental Resilience. Specifically, the abilities to understand one's own emotions, regulate emotional reactions and utilize emotions constructively appear to play a significant role in strengthening students' resilience. The findings are consistent with emotional intelligence theory and prior empirical studies that emphasize the role of emotional competencies in promoting adaptive coping mechanisms, psychological adjustment and resilience in educational settings.

## 5. Discussion and Practical Implications

The present study examined the influence of Emotional Intelligence dimensions on Mental Resilience among higher education students in Gujarat. The findings provide empirical evidence that emotional competencies play a significant role in enhancing students' ability to cope with adversity, academic pressure and everyday challenges.

The results indicate that Self-Emotion Appraisal significantly and positively influences Mental Resilience. This finding suggests that students who possess a clear understanding of their emotions are better equipped to manage stressful situations and recover from setbacks. The ability to recognize and interpret one's emotional state enables individuals to respond more effectively to adverse circumstances, thereby strengthening resilience. This finding is consistent with the work of Wong and Law (2002), who argued that emotional self-awareness serves as a fundamental component of emotional intelligence and facilitates adaptive behaviour. The result also

aligns with the findings of Schneider et al. (2013), who reported that emotional self-awareness contributes positively to resilience and psychological adjustment among young adults. The present finding reinforces the view that self-awareness functions as a psychological resource that enables students to navigate academic and personal challenges more effectively.

Regulation of Emotions emerged as the strongest predictor of Mental Resilience. The significant positive relationship indicates that students capable of controlling and managing their emotional responses are more resilient when confronted with pressure, uncertainty and setbacks. Emotional regulation enables individuals to maintain composure, remain focused on goals and adopt constructive coping strategies during difficult situations. This finding corroborates the studies of Armstrong et al. (2011) and Choudhary (2019) which demonstrated that emotional regulation is strongly associated with resilience, psychological well-being and adaptive coping behaviour. The result is also consistent with the theoretical framework proposed by Goleman (1998), which identifies self-regulation as a critical competency for effective personal functioning and long-term success. The findings suggest that resilience among students is substantially strengthened when they develop the capacity to regulate negative emotions and maintain emotional balance.

The study further revealed that Use of Emotion significantly influences Mental Resilience. Students who effectively channel emotions towards motivation, problem-solving and goal achievement were found to exhibit higher levels of resilience. This finding supports the proposition that emotions can function as valuable psychological resources when utilized constructively. The result is in line with the findings of Salovey and Mayer (1990), who emphasized that emotionally intelligent individuals are capable of employing emotions to facilitate thinking and enhance performance. Similarly, Magnano et al. (2016) reported that the constructive utilization of emotions contributes significantly to resilience and personal growth among university students. The findings therefore suggest that students who use emotions as a source of motivation

are better positioned to overcome academic and personal obstacles.

Contrary to expectations, Others' Emotion Appraisal did not demonstrate a statistically significant influence on Mental Resilience. Although the relationship was positive, it failed to reach the threshold for statistical significance. This finding suggests that the ability to understand and interpret the emotions of others may not directly enhance an individual's capacity to recover from adversity or cope with stress. The result partially contradicts the findings of Di Fabio and Saklofske (2014), who reported that interpersonal emotional competencies contribute to resilience and well-being. However, the present finding is consistent with research suggesting that resilience is predominantly driven by intrapersonal factors such as self-awareness, self-control and self-efficacy rather than interpersonal sensitivity alone (Connor & Davidson, 2003). One possible explanation is that resilience among higher education students is more strongly influenced by internal emotional management processes than by social-emotional perception.

Thus, the findings indicate that self-focused dimensions of Emotional Intelligence, namely Self-Emotion Appraisal, Regulation of Emotions and Use of Emotion, play a more substantial role in fostering resilience than interpersonal emotional competencies. The findings also support emotional intelligence theory by demonstrating that emotional competencies facilitate resilience through improved emotional awareness, emotional control and motivational functioning.

### **Practical Implications**

The findings of the study offer important implications for higher education institutions, educators, counsellors and policymakers. Since Self-Emotion Appraisal, Regulation of Emotions and Use of Emotion were found to significantly enhance Mental Resilience, universities should incorporate emotional intelligence development initiatives within student support systems and academic programmes. Workshops focusing on emotional awareness, emotional regulation, stress management, mindfulness and self-reflection may

help students develop stronger coping mechanisms and resilience.

Furthermore, counselling centres and student development departments can design intervention programmes aimed at improving emotional competencies to address rising concerns related to academic stress, burnout and psychological distress among students. Educational institutions may also integrate emotional intelligence training into orientation programmes, personality development courses and leadership development activities to strengthen students' overall well-being and adaptability. By fostering emotional intelligence, institutions can contribute to the development of resilient graduates who are better prepared to manage academic challenges and future workplace demands.

## 6. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite its contributions, the present study has certain limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study employed a cross-sectional research design, which restricts the ability to establish causal relationships among the constructs. Future studies may adopt longitudinal designs to examine how Emotional Intelligence influences Mental Resilience over time. Second, the data were collected from students belonging to selected higher educational institutions in Gujarat, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to students from other states or countries. Future research may expand the geographical scope by incorporating respondents from different educational and cultural contexts.

Third, the study relied on self-reported measures, which may be susceptible to common method bias and social desirability bias. Future studies may combine self-reported responses with behavioural assessments or qualitative methods to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of emotional competencies and resilience. Finally, the present study examined only the direct effects of Emotional Intelligence dimensions on Mental Resilience. Future researchers may explore the mediating or moderating role of variables such as academic stress, psychological well-being, self-efficacy, social

support and mindfulness to develop a more comprehensive explanatory framework.

## 7. Conclusion

The present study investigated the influence of Emotional Intelligence on Mental Resilience among higher education students in Gujarat. The study found that Self-Emotion Appraisal, Regulation of Emotions and Use of Emotion significantly and positively influence Mental Resilience. Among these dimensions, Regulation of Emotions emerged as the strongest predictor of resilience. Conversely, Others' Emotion Appraisal did not exhibit a significant effect on Mental Resilience.

The findings highlight the importance of emotional competencies in enhancing students' ability to cope with academic and personal challenges. Specifically, the ability to understand one's emotions, regulate emotional responses and utilize emotions constructively contributes significantly to resilience development. The study contributes to the growing literature on Emotional Intelligence and resilience by providing empirical evidence from the Indian higher education context.

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