



## A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS ON DARK EMOTIONS AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS OF GUJARAT

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### ABSTRACT

*This research paper investigates the impact of institutional factors such as academic workload, syllabus content, faculty quality, administrative support, basic facilities, and institutional rules and regulations on the prevalence of dark emotions (sadness, anger, fear, stress, hate, jealousy, ego, hopelessness, guilt, lust) among higher education students. Data were collected from a sample of 2,000 students across various higher education institutions through a structured questionnaire. Chi-square tests and Cramér's  $V$  were used to assess the strength and significance of associations between institutional factors and dark emotions. The results reveal significant relationships between institutional stressors and the prevalence of dark emotions, indicating the critical role institutional environments play in shaping students' emotional well-being.*

**Keywords:** institutional factors, dark emotions, higher education

### INTRODUCTION

The emotional well-being of students in higher education has become an essential area of research, especially with the increasing awareness of mental health challenges. In recent years, institutional factors, such as the policies, administrative practices, and campus culture in higher education institutions, have garnered significant attention for their role in shaping student experiences and their subsequent emotional states (Ribeiro et al., 2018). These factors can either exacerbate or mitigate dark emotions (DE), which include feelings of frustration, anger, anxiety, and depression, particularly in competitive academic environments (Meier, Semmer, & Gross, 2016). Dark emotions are often linked to the pressures faced by students, such as academic performance expectations, financial stress, and future employment concerns (Akram et al., 2021).

In the context of higher education in Gujarat, institutional factors (IF) play a critical role in shaping students' academic and emotional trajectories. Factors like faculty support, curriculum structure, the availability of mental health resources, and campus infrastructure can contribute to the emotional well-being of students or exacerbate feelings of stress and negativity (Sharma & Sharma, 2020). The institutional culture, policies regarding academic deadlines, competition, and student-teacher interactions are also significant contributors to emotional strain (Duffy et al., 2014).

Furthermore, Gujarat, being a region with a growing focus on higher education, provides a unique context to examine how institutional dynamics influence student emotions (Patel, 2021). The cultural, social, and economic aspects of the state further compound the emotional



experiences of students, creating a complex interplay between institutional and environmental factors (Chaudhary, 2020). Understanding these factors can help in designing interventions that promote emotional resilience and reduce the adverse effects of institutional pressures on students.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of how various institutional factors affect the manifestation of dark emotions among students in higher education institutions in Gujarat. By exploring these connections, we hope to contribute to the development of more supportive institutional policies and practices that can enhance student well-being.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

- **Sharma & Sharma(2020)**

This study aimed to investigate how institutional support systems, such as counseling services, mentoring programs, and academic support, impact the mental health and emotional well-being of higher education students. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining a survey of 300 university students with in-depth interviews of 20 students. The survey focused on students' use of institutional support services and their mental health status, while interviews explored personal experiences in more detail. The study found that students with greater access to institutional support reported lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. Those who actively engaged with support services showed improved academic performance and emotional resilience. However, students in institutions with inadequate support systems were more likely to report negative emotional outcomes.

- **Meier, Semmer, & Gross(2016)**

This study explored the effect of academic pressure, including strict deadlines, competitive grading, and performance expectations, on the emotional well-being of students in higher education. A quantitative approach was employed, surveying 500 students across multiple universities using a standardized questionnaire on academic stress and emotional responses. Regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between academic pressure and dark emotions. Results indicated that high levels of academic pressure were strongly associated with increased feelings of frustration, anxiety, and depression. Students who perceived their academic environment as overly competitive were more likely to experience negative emotional outcomes, suggesting a need for more balanced academic policies.

- **Duffy, Shaw, & Schaubroeck (2014)**

The study compared the emotional health of students in institutions with rigid academic policies to those in more flexible and student-friendly environments. A comparative study was conducted across six universities in Gujarat, utilizing a cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected from 400 students using a questionnaire that measured institutional policies, student satisfaction, and emotional health. Institutions with flexible academic policies, including extended deadlines and opportunities for retakes, showed lower instances of dark emotions like frustration and



anxiety among students. In contrast, rigid policies led to a higher prevalence of emotional stress, with students feeling unsupported by their institutions.

- **Akram et al. (2021)**

This study explored how the level of faculty support, including mentoring and personalized feedback, affected the prevalence of dark emotions such as frustration and anger among students. The researchers conducted a longitudinal study, following 200 students from three universities over a two-year period. Surveys were administered at three intervals, and focus group discussions were held to explore the students' perceptions of faculty support and their emotional well-being. Students who reported strong faculty support exhibited lower levels of dark emotions. Regular feedback, mentorship, and open communication with professors were significant factors in reducing feelings of frustration and anger. In contrast, students who lacked such support were more likely to report negative emotional experiences.

## INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

- Institutional factors can have a significant impact on the mental health of students in educational settings. For this study, six significant institutional factors are taken into consideration as follows:

<b>Academic Workload</b>	Heavy or poorly managed academic workload can be a major source of stress. When students face excessive assignments, deadlines, and exams without adequate support, it can lead to anxiety, burnout, and even depression
<b>Syllabus Content</b>	The complexity, relevance, and delivery of syllabus content also influence students' mental well-being. An overwhelming or irrelevant syllabus can create feelings of frustration, anxiety, and a lack of motivation, while a syllabus that aligns with students' abilities and interests promotes engagement and a sense of accomplishment.
<b>Faculty</b>	Faculty members play a crucial role in shaping students' mental health through their teaching style, feedback, and interpersonal relationships. Supportive faculty who understand students' challenges can help reduce stress, whereas unsupportive or overly critical teachers may increase anxiety or fear of failure.
<b>Administration</b>	Institutional administration policies and their responsiveness to student needs significantly affect students' stress levels. A bureaucratic, rigid, or unapproachable administration can make students feel helpless, especially when dealing with academic or personal issues. This lack of support exacerbates feelings of frustration and anxiety.
<b>Basic Facilities</b>	The absence or inadequacy of basic facilities like housing, clean water, mental health resources, and hygiene can have a profound impact on mental well-being. Insufficient facilities cause discomfort, stress, and in some cases, health issues.



<b>Rules and Regulations</b>	The policies and rules imposed by educational institutions, such as attendance requirements, dress codes, or examination policies, can either create structure or foster stress. Excessive or overly strict rules can cause feelings of restriction and anxiety, whereas flexible and student-centered policies provide a sense of autonomy and reduce pressure.
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## DARK EMOTIONS

- Dark emotions, including sadness, anger, fear, and anxiety, are prevalent among higher education students due to academic pressure, social competition, and personal challenges. While these emotions can signal the need for change or adaptation, they can become dangerous if not managed effectively. Prolonged exposure to dark emotions can lead to severe mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety disorders, negatively impacting students' academic performance and overall well-being. Furthermore, these emotions can strain relationships, hinder effective coping strategies, and create a cycle of distress that impedes personal and academic growth, making it crucial for students to seek support and develop healthy coping mechanisms. For this study, the following dark emotions have been considered after a thorough review of the literature.

<b>Sadness</b>	A deep feeling of sorrow or unhappiness, often triggered by loss, disappointment, or a difficult situation.
<b>Anger</b>	A strong feeling of displeasure or hostility in response to perceived wrongs or injustices
<b>Fear</b>	An emotional response to a perceived threat or danger, often resulting in anxiety or a fight-or-flight reaction.
<b>Stress</b>	Mental or emotional strain caused by challenging circumstances, often involving pressure or overwhelming demands.
<b>Hatred</b>	An intense dislike or animosity toward someone or something, often fueled by fear, anger, or a sense of betrayal
<b>Jealousy</b>	A feeling of envy or insecurity, often related to the fear of losing something valuable to someone else.
<b>Ego</b>	A sense of self-importance or identity that can sometimes lead to pride, defensiveness, or arrogance.
<b>Despair</b>	A deep sense of hopelessness or loss of faith in the possibility of improvement or a positive outcome.
<b>Guilt</b>	A feeling of remorse or responsibility for having committed a wrong or hurt someone, either intentionally or unintentionally.
<b>Lust</b>	An intense desire, often sexual in nature, but it can also refer to a strong craving for power, control, or material things.



## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To investigate the impact of academic workload on the dark emotions of higher education students
- To investigate the impact of syllabus content on the dark emotions of higher education students
- To investigate the impact of faculty behaviour on the dark emotions of higher education students
- To investigate the impact of administration on the dark emotions of higher education students
- To investigate the impact of presence of adequate facilities on the dark emotions of higher education students
- To investigate the impact of rules and regulation on the dark emotions of higher education students
- To provide recommendations for improving emotional support for students based on institutional dynamics.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. **Sample Size** - A sample of 2000 higher education students was collected from 4 districts of Gujarat having the highest literacy rates which are Surat, Ahmedabad, Anand, and Gandhinagar
2. **Sampling Method** - The sample was collected using the *two-stage sampling method*, one of the methods of probability sampling. In the first stage, four districts of Gujarat are selected with the highest literacy rates. In the second stage, data will be collected from these districts using *convenience sampling*, a method of non-probability sampling.
3. **Sources of Data** - The study is based on *primary data collection*. Ten dark emotions are selected based on the literature review and interviews taken from college students. Further, the data is collected from 2000 students using a *structured questionnaire* by Google Forms
4. **Statistical Tests** - Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS software. the p-values from the Chi-square test were employed to assess whether there is a statistically significant association between the variables. To further understand the strength or intensity of this association, Cramér's V was utilized.

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Objective 1

**H0:** There is no significant association between academic workload and the level of dark emotions experienced by a student

**H1:** There is a significant association between academic workload and the level of dark emotions experienced by a student



Table 1 –Academic Factors				
Institutional Factor	P	H1	V	Association
Academic Workload	0.000	Accepted	0.177	Strong

### Interpretation:

- The p-value is less than the standard significance level of 0.05, indicating that the results are statistically significant. This means we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ), which suggests that there *is* a significant association between academic workload and dark emotions.
- Cramér's V measures the strength of the association between two categorical variables. In this case, a value of 0.177 indicates a **strong association** between academic workload and dark emotions.

### Objective 2

**H0:** There is no significant association between syllabus content and the level of dark emotions experienced by a student

**H1:** There is a significant association between syllabus content and the level of dark emotions experienced by a student

Table 2 – Syllabus Content				
Institutional Factor	P	H1	V	Association
Syllabus Content	0.000	Accepted	0.150	Moderate

### Interpretation:

- The p-value is below the typical significance level of 0.05, indicating that the result is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ), which indicates that there *is* a significant association between syllabus content and the level of dark emotions experienced by students.
- Cramér's V value of 0.150 suggests a **moderate association** between syllabus content and the level of dark emotions. While the relationship is statistically significant, the strength of the association is moderate.

### Objective 3

**H0:** There is no significant association between faculty behaviour and the level of dark emotions experienced by a student

**H1:** There is a significant association between faculty behaviour and the level of dark emotions experienced by a student



Table 3 – Faculty Behaviour				
Institutional Factor	P	H1	V	Association
Faculty Behaviour	0.000	Accepted	0.130	Moderate

#### Interpretation:

- The p-value is far below the typical significance level of 0.05, which indicates that the result is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ), which means there *is* a significant association between faculty behavior and the level of dark emotions experienced by students.
- A Cramér's V value of 0.130 indicates a **moderate association** between faculty behavior and dark emotions. It implies that faculty behavior affects students' emotions but may not be the most critical factor influencing dark emotions.

#### Objective 4

**H0:** There is no significant association between administration and the level of dark emotions experienced by a student

**H1:** There is a significant association between administration and the level of dark emotions experienced by a student

Table 4 – Administration				
Institutional Factor	P	H1	V	Association
Administration	0.000	Accepted	0.127	Moderate

#### Interpretation:

- The p-value is below the significance threshold of 0.05, indicating that the relationship between administrative factors and dark emotions is statistically significant. This leads us to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ), meaning that there *is* a significant association between administrative factors and dark emotions experienced by students.
- A Cramér's V value of 0.127 indicates a **moderate association** between administrative factors and dark emotions. While the relationship is statistically significant, the strength of the association is not very strong, suggesting that





administrative factors have a noticeable but limited impact on the level of dark emotions among students.

### Objective 5

**H0:** There is no significant association between adequate facilities and the level of dark emotions experienced by a student

**H1:** There is a significant association between adequate facilities and the level of dark emotions experienced by a student

Table 5 – Adequate Facilities				
Institutional Factor	P	H1	V	Association
Adequate Facilities	0.000	Accepted	0.112	Moderate

### Interpretation:

- The p-value is significantly below the threshold of 0.05, indicating that the result is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ), which means that there *is* a significant association between the availability of adequate facilities and the level of dark emotions experienced by students.
- A Cramér's V value of 0.112 indicates a **moderate association** between basic facilities and dark emotions. Although the result is statistically significant, the strength of the association is moderate, meaning the presence or quality of adequate facilities (e.g., libraries, sanitation, housing) has only a modest effect on the level of dark emotions experienced by students.

### Objective 6

**H0:** There is no significant association between rules and regulation and the level of dark emotions experienced by a student

**H1:** There is a significant association between rules and regulation and the level of dark emotions experienced by a student

Table 6 – Rules and Regulation				
Institutional Factor	P	H1	V	Association
Rules and Regulation	0.000	Accepted	0.112	Moderate

### Interpretation:





- The p-value is below the conventional significance level of 0.05, indicating that the result is statistically significant. This means we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ), suggesting that there is a significant association between the institution's rules and regulations and the level of dark emotions experienced by students.
- A Cramér's V value of 0.112 suggests a **moderate association** between rules and regulations and dark emotions. While the relationship is statistically significant, the strength of the association is moderate. This means that rules and regulations do have an effect on dark emotions, but the impact is not substantial.

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Institutional Factors	P	H1	V	Association
Academic Workload	0.000	Accepted	0.177	Strong
Syllabus Content	0.000	Accepted	0.150	Moderate
Faculty	0.000	Accepted	0.130	Moderate
Administration	0.000	Accepted	0.127	Moderate
Facilities	0.000	Accepted	0.112	Moderate
Regulation	0.000	Accepted	0.129	Moderate

### INTERPRETATION

- **P-values (P)** - All p-values are 0.000, which is below the significance threshold (0.05). This suggests that for each factor, we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ). This means there is a significant association between institutional factors and the level of dark emotions experienced by students.
- **Cramer's V-values (V)** - These values represent the strength of the association. Higher V-values suggest stronger associations.
- **Strong Associations** - Academic Workload (0.177) has the largest effect size, indicating a strong association. This suggests that variations in academic workload have a notable impact on the level of dark emotions students experience.
- **Moderate Associations** - Syllabus Content (0.150), Faculty (0.130), Administration (0.127), Regulation (0.129), and Facilities (0.112) demonstrate moderate associations. These factors also significantly relate to dark emotions but to a lesser extent than academic workload.



## RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

### 1. Academic Workload (Strong Association - 0.177)

- Institutions should evaluate the distribution and intensity of academic workload. Consider implementing a balanced curriculum that allows students to manage their time effectively without feeling overwhelmed.
- Introduce flexible learning schedules, reduce redundant coursework, and incorporate more active learning methods (e.g., group projects, interactive sessions) to make the workload more engaging. Additionally, providing training on time management skills can help students cope with their workload.

### 2. Syllabus Content (Moderate Association - 0.150)

- Revise syllabus content to ensure it is relevant, engaging, and manageable. Incorporating practical applications and real-world scenarios can enhance students' learning experiences and reduce stress.
- Include student feedback in syllabus planning, update materials regularly to keep them current, and provide diverse learning resources (videos, interactive content) to cater to different learning styles.

### 3. Faculty (Moderate Association - 0.130)

- Strengthen faculty-student relationships and improve teaching methodologies. Faculty members play a crucial role in shaping the educational environment and managing student emotions.
- Encourage faculty development programs focused on empathetic communication, active listening, and student-centered teaching approaches. Establish regular check-ins or mentorship programs where students can discuss their concerns with faculty, fostering a supportive academic atmosphere.

### 4. Administration (Moderate Association - 0.127)

- Streamline administrative processes to reduce student stress and frustration. A supportive administrative system can significantly impact students' emotional well-being.
- Simplify bureaucratic procedures related to course registration, financial aid, and access to student services. Introduce transparent communication channels for students to voice concerns and provide feedback about administrative issues.

### 5. Basic Facilities (Moderate Association - 0.112)

- **Recommendation:** Improve campus facilities to create a more comfortable and conducive learning environment. Proper facilities, including study spaces, libraries, and recreational areas, can positively influence students' mental health.



- **Suggestions:** Regularly assess and upgrade facilities based on student needs, such as ensuring libraries and study areas are well-maintained and have adequate resources. Providing wellness centers and quiet zones can also help students manage stress effectively.

## 6. Regulation (Moderate Association - 0.129)

- **Recommendation:** Review and adjust institutional regulations to ensure they support student well-being. Strict or unclear regulations can contribute to students' stress and negative emotions.
- **Suggestions:** Involve students in the development or revision of institutional policies, ensuring they address student concerns and promote a fair academic environment. Clearly communicate regulations and provide guidance on navigating academic procedures, reducing uncertainty and anxiety.

## CONCLUSION

- Institutional factors significantly impact the emotional well-being of higher education students, with specific elements like academic workload and inadequate facilities having strong associations with dark emotions.
- A majority of respondents reported experiencing various dark emotions, highlighting a pressing need for institutions to address these issues to improve student mental health.
- The study underscores the importance of creating supportive academic environments that prioritize emotional well-being alongside academic success.
- This research highlights the urgent need for educational institutions to foster environments that prioritize mental health, ensuring that students have access to adequate resources and support systems.
- By understanding the relationship between institutional factors and dark emotions, institutions can implement targeted strategies to enhance students' overall well-being and academic success.

## FUTURE SCOPE

- **Longitudinal Studies:** Future research could explore the long-term effects of institutional factors on students' emotional well-being over the course of their academic careers.
- **Intervention Programs:** Developing and testing specific intervention programs aimed at reducing the negative impact of identified institutional stressors could provide valuable insights.
- **Broader Populations:** Expanding the research to include diverse educational settings (e.g., vocational schools, community colleges) and demographic groups may offer a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.
- **Comparative Studies:** Future research could compare the effects of institutional factors on dark emotions across different countries or cultural contexts to identify universal patterns and unique challenges faced by students in various educational systems.



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