Predicting Psychological Well-Being Based on Digital Self-Efficacy and Emotional Intelligence in Students

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A B S T R A C T

Objective: This study aimed to investigate the prediction of psychological well-being based on digital self-efficacy and emotional intelligence among students at the Islamic Azad University, South Tehran Branch.

Methods and Materials: The study type is correlational-descriptive and cross-sectional. The statistical population includes all students of the Islamic Azad University, South Tehran Branch, in the academic year 2023-2024. Sampling was conducted using the convenience method, and 200 individuals were selected based on the Morgan table, considering the possibility of statistical attrition. Data collection tools included standardized questionnaires on psychological well-being, digital self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression methods.

Findings: Results showed that all components of digital self-efficacy and emotional intelligence have a significant relationship with psychological well-being. The highest correlation coefficient was related to the security component in digital self-efficacy (p<0.05, 0.64) and the emotional awareness component in emotional intelligence (p<0.05, 0.69). Multiple regression analysis showed that both independent variables significantly predict psychological well-being. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.30 for digital self-efficacy and 0.48 for emotional intelligence, indicating significant variance explained in psychological well-being by these variables.

Conclusion: Based on the results of this study, increasing digital self-efficacy and emotional intelligence skills can help improve students' psychological well-being. Universities and educational institutions can help students enhance their abilities and, consequently, achieve better quality of life and mental health by designing and implementing special educational programs in this area.

Keywords: Psychological well-being, Digital self-efficacy, Emotional intelligence, Students.

1. Introduction

Psychological well-being is one of the significant and emphasized topics in psychology and educational sciences. Psychological well-being refers to the sense of satisfaction, happiness, and mental health that individuals experience in their daily lives (Hosseini et al., 2022; Jarsozeh et al., 2023). As one of the main dimensions of mental health, psychological well-being plays a crucial role in individuals' quality of life. Research has shown that psychological well-being can impact academic performance, social relationships, and even physical health (Rajabi & Valadbeigi, 2016; Salajegheh et al., 2019). Therefore, identifying and strengthening the factors that affect psychological well-being can lead to overall improvement in individuals' mental and physical conditions.

Digital self-efficacy refers to an individual's ability to effectively use digital technologies. This concept includes confidence in using digital tools, problem-solving abilities related to technology, and the ability to learn and apply new digital skills (Ulfert et al., 2022). In the digital age, digital self-efficacy has become one of the essential skills for academic and professional success. Research has shown that digital self-efficacy can positively impact psychological well-being, as individuals with high digital self-efficacy can easily face technological challenges and leverage digital opportunities to improve their lives (Parsakia et al., 2023).

In this context, emotional intelligence refers to an individual's ability to recognize, understand, and manage their own and others' emotions. This concept includes components such as emotional self-awareness, emotional self-regulation, empathy, and social skills (Bar-On, 2010). Emotional intelligence can play an important role in psychological well-being, as individuals with high emotional intelligence are better able to manage stress and life's challenges and establish more effective social relationships (Afsharinia & Soozani, 2018). Research has shown that both digital self-efficacy and emotional intelligence can independently and interactively impact psychological well-being. For instance, individuals with high digital self-efficacy and strong emotional intelligence are more likely to succeed in facing life's problems and challenges and, consequently, experience higher levels of psychological well-being (Geßler et al., 2021; Guerra-Bustamante et al., 2019; Shenaar-Golan et al., 2020).

Additionally, previous studies have shown that emotional intelligence can enhance psychological well-being. For example, a study by Hosseini et al. (2022) demonstrated that emotional intelligence is positively related to psychological well-being among military athletes and non-athletes (Hosseini et al., 2022). Furthermore, Rajabi and Valdbeigi (2016) concluded that emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence could be good predictors of psychological well-being among students (Rajabi & Valadbeigi, 2016). On the other hand, recent studies suggest that digital self-efficacy can also play a significant role in psychological well-being (Parsakia et al., 2023; Ulfert-Blank & Schmidt, 2022). Overall, given the importance of psychological well-being in individual and social life, identifying and strengthening the factors affecting it, including digital self-efficacy and emotional intelligence, can play a crucial role in improving individuals' quality of life.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study is a correlational-descriptive research. The target statistical population of this research included all students enrolled in the academic year 2023-2024 at the Islamic Azad University, South Tehran Branch (Valiasr Complex). The research sample was determined to be 200 individuals based on the Morgan table, considering the need for greater assurance and the possibility of statistical attrition. Furthermore, the convenience sampling method was employed.

In this study, after obtaining the necessary permits from the university and securing the cooperation of the Islamic Azad University, South Tehran Branch (Valiasr Complex), sampling was conducted using the convenience method. The questionnaires, as quantitative data collection tools, were distributed, and after completion by 200 participants, the collected data were entered into software for analysis. Ethical considerations included explaining the study procedure and intervention process to participants, obtaining consent to participate, ensuring participants could withdraw from the study, maintaining confidentiality of participants' names and information, and avoiding any bias.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Psychological Well-Being

This scale, designed by Ryff (1989) and revised in 2002, consists of 84 items derived from the original 120-item form. It measures six factors: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Participants respond to items on a

6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The total score of these six factors is calculated as the overall psychological well-being score. Eight items are reverse-scored, and the total scores range from 84 to 504. Ryff and Singer (2006) reported the correlation of this scale with the 120-item scale to be between 0.79 and 0.89. Akbarati and Beshardoust (2016) evaluated the content, face, and criterion validity of this questionnaire as appropriate (Hosseini et al., 2022).

2.2.2. Emotional Intelligence

This 90-item questionnaire measures 15 components of emotional intelligence. Initially developed by Bar-On to highlight its importance over cognitive intelligence tests, it divides emotional intelligence into five subscales: intrapersonal skills (including emotional self-awareness, self-expression, self-regard, self-actualization, and independence), interpersonal skills (including empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationships), stress management (including stress tolerance and impulse control), adaptability (including flexibility, problem-solving, and reality testing), and general mood (including happiness and optimism). Participants respond using a 5-point Likert scale (1 to 5). Rakibi and Ghareh Chahi (2013) reported a test-retest reliability of 0.88 for 95 participants, and the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was 0.88 (Abedini Velamdehy & Ravanbakhsh, 2021).

2.2.3. Digital Self-Efficacy

This scale was developed by Ulfert and Schmidt in 2022 to measure individuals' digital competencies in using digital technologies and was translated and standardized in Iran by Parsakia et al. (2023). The 25-item questionnaire assesses digital self-efficacy across five dimensions: 1) information and data literacy (3 items); 2) communication and collaboration (8 items); 3) digital content creation (4 items); 4) safety (5 items); 5) problem-solving (5 items). Items are scored on a 6-point Likert scale, with total scores ranging from 25 to 150. The subscale scores range from 3 to 18 for information and data literacy, 8 to 48 for communication and collaboration, 4 to 24 for digital content creation, and 5 to 30

for safety and problem-solving. The validity of this questionnaire was confirmed by the developers using face validity, convergent validity, divergent validity, and confirmatory factor analysis. Test-retest reliability was also confirmed, with correlation coefficients reported as 0.59 for information and data literacy, 0.59 for communication and collaboration, 0.77 for digital content creation, 0.68 for safety, and 0.71 for problem-solving. In Iran, Parsakia et al. (2023) confirmed the face validity, identifying five factors with eigenvalues greater than one through exploratory factor analysis, which collectively explained 70.55% of digital self-efficacy. Confirmatory factor analysis also indicated significant item loadings for each factor, with all reliability coefficients for convergent validity, test-retest reliability, Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability exceeding 0.70, indicating adequate reliability for this questionnaire (Parsakia et al., 2023; Ulfert-Blank & Schmidt, 2022).

2.3. Data analysis

Given the quantitative nature of the study data, SPSS version 25 was used for statistical analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed, using measures of central tendency and dispersion (mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, etc.) in the descriptive section, and Pearson correlation and single-variable and multivariable linear regression in the inferential section.

3. Findings and Results

Regarding gender, 82 participants (41%) were male, and 118 participants (59%) were female. Additionally, concerning academic level, 114 participants (57%) were undergraduate students, 62 participants (31%) were master's students, and 24 participants (12%) were doctoral students. Finally, regarding economic status, 60 participants (30%) were in poor conditions, 93 participants (46.5%) were in average conditions, and 47 participants (23.5%) were in good economic conditions. The data related to the mean and standard deviation of participants' scores in the research variables (psychological well-being, digital self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence) are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Analysis of Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Psychological Well-being	487.21	11.72
Digital Self-efficacy	143.02	13.33
Information and Data Literacy	15.15	2.04
Communication and Collaboration	8.55	2.38
Digital Content Creation	11.04	2.44
Safety	17.30	4.57
Problem-solving	18.73	4.91
Emotional Intelligence	118.35	36.15
Intrapersonal Skills	74.01	8.14
Emotional Awareness	3.93	0.26
Self-expression	2.01	1.57
Self-respect	4.28	1.24
Self-actualization	1.86	1.07
Independence	1.31	1.28

To examine the normality of the variable distributions, Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were used. The results indicate that the p-values for all variables in both tests were greater than 0.05, indicating the normality of these variables' distributions. Therefore, it can be concluded that the assumption of normal distribution for the variables in the regression model is met. First, the correlation between the research variables was examined, followed by the results of the multiple regression analysis.

Table 2

Pearson Correlation Test Results Between Psychological Well-being, Digital Self-efficacy, and Emotional Intelligence

Variable	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	p-value
Information and Data Literacy	0.36	0.023
Communication and Collaboration	0.43	0.049
Digital Content Creation	0.60	0.011
Safety	0.64	0.038
Problem-solving	0.46	0.003
Emotional Awareness	0.69	0.010
Self-expression	0.61	0.049
Self-respect	0.45	0.016
Self-actualization	0.44	0.024
Independence	0.35	0.008

Table 2 results indicate that all components of digital self-efficacy have a significant relationship with psychological well-being (p < 0.05). The highest correlation coefficient was related to the safety component with a value of 0.64 and a p-value of 0.038. Also, the digital content creation component had a correlation coefficient of 0.60 and a p-value of 0.011, indicating a significant relationship with psychological well-being. The correlation results also show that all components of emotional intelligence have a significant relationship with psychological well-being. The highest correlation coefficient was related to the emotional awareness component with a value of 0.69 and a p-value of 0.010. The self-expression component also had a correlation coefficient of 0.61 and a p-value of 0.049, indicating a significant relationship with psychological well-being.

Table 3

Summary of Regression Model Results for Predicting Psychological Well-being Based on Digital Self-efficacy and Emotional Intelligence

Variable	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value	R	R²	R²adj
Digital Self-efficacy	Regression	18116.09	5	3265.26	9.87	0.038	0.65	0.30	0.28
	Residual	39994.69	194	169.51					
	Total	50168.99	199						
Emotional Intelligence	Regression	21461.33	5	4130.79	11.55	0.019	0.54	0.48	0.46
	Residual	41663.10	194	215.62					
	Total	63557.10	199						

The regression analysis summary results indicate that the regression model significantly predicts psychological well-being (F = 9.87, p-value = 0.038). The coefficient of determination (R²) is 0.30, indicating that 30% of the variance in psychological well-being is explained by the components of digital self-efficacy. The adjusted coefficient of determination (R²adj) is 0.28, indicating the actual variance explained by the model. Similarly, the regression analysis summary results indicate that the regression model significantly predicts psychological well-being (F = 11.55, p-value = 0.019). The coefficient of determination (R²) is 0.48, indicating that 48% of the variance in psychological well-being is explained by the components of emotional intelligence. The adjusted coefficient of determination (R²adj) is 0.46, indicating the actual variance explained by the model.

Table 4

Results of Multiple Regression Analysis for Examining the Impact of Digital Self-efficacy and Emotional Intelligence Components on Predicting Psychological Well-being

Variable	Component	B	Standard Error	β	t	p-value
Digital Self-efficacy	Constant	2.34	1.54		1.52	0.130
	Information and Data Literacy	4.53	2.00	0.37	2.27	0.023
	Communication and Collaboration	7.50	0.90	0.36	8.33	0.000
	Digital Content Creation	7.41	1.65	0.30	4.49	0.037
	Safety	5.17	0.57	0.26	9.07	0.000
	Problem-solving	5.82	1.37	0.39	4.25	0.048
Emotional Intelligence	Constant	2.19	1.36		8.24	0.017
	Emotional Awareness	5.26	1.31	0.15	8.99	0.035
	Self-expression	6.93	1.59	0.22	5.48	0.049
	Self-respect	7.81	0.64	0.24	6.27	0.001
	Self-actualization	9.01	1.29	0.26	2.29	0.002
	Independence	1.34	1.55	0.35	8.57	0.041

The multiple regression analysis results indicate that all components of digital self-efficacy significantly predict psychological well-being. The highest beta coefficient (β) was related to the communication and collaboration component with a value of 0.36 and a p-value of 0.000. The information and data literacy and safety components also significantly predict psychological well-being with beta coefficients of 0.37 and 0.26 and p-values of 0.023 and 0.000, respectively. The digital content creation and problem-solving components also have significant effects on psychological well-being with beta coefficients of 0.30 and 0.39 and p-values of 0.037 and 0.048, respectively. Similarly, the multiple regression analysis results indicate that all components of emotional intelligence significantly predict psychological well-being. The highest beta coefficient (β) was related to the independence component with a value of 0.35 and a p-value of 0.041. The self-respect and self-actualization components also significantly predict psychological well-being with beta coefficients of 0.24 and 0.26 and p-values of 0.001 and 0.002, respectively. The emotional awareness and self-expression components also significantly affect psychological well-being with beta coefficients of 0.15 and 0.22 and p-values of 0.035 and 0.049, respectively.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to predict psychological well-being based on digital self-efficacy and emotional intelligence among students of the Islamic Azad University, South Tehran Branch. The research findings showed that digital self-efficacy and emotional intelligence significantly predict students' psychological well-being. Similar studies have provided consistent results with this research (Chang & Tsai, 2022; Fino & Sun, 2022; Jarsozeh et al., 2023; Mahmoodi & Sajadinezhad, 2022; Shenaar-Golan et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2023). Based on previous research, it can be explained that digital self-efficacy as an essential skill in today's world plays a crucial role in improving psychological well-being. These skills help individuals better face everyday challenges and have a greater sense of control over their lives (Rajabi & Valadbeigi, 2016). Additionally, effective communication and collaboration in digital environments can lead to increased social support and reduced feelings of loneliness, ultimately contributing to individual psychological well-being (Hosseini et al., 2022).

The security component also plays a vital role in psychological well-being. Individuals who feel more secure using digital technologies are less exposed to stress and anxiety and can engage more calmly in their daily activities (Naderi & Akbari, 2018). Problem-solving ability in digital environments also helps individuals face more complex problems and challenges effectively, which contributes to their psychological well-being (Mahmoodi & Sajadinezhad, 2022; Zysberg & Raz, 2019). Increasing digital self-efficacy leads to increased self-confidence and individual capabilities in facing digital and technological environments. These capabilities help individuals to engage more successfully in various life and work environments, which in turn leads to increased psychological well-being (Abdelaziz, 2021; Parsakia et al., 2023). These capabilities also reduce negative emotions such as anxiety and depression, allowing individuals to pursue their goals and aspirations with more motivation.

The digital self-efficacy theory also confirms the positive impact of digital self-efficacy on psychological well-being. According to this theory, individuals with higher digital self-efficacy are more capable of using new technologies and facing digital challenges. These capabilities help individuals face less stress and anxiety and easily adapt to technological changes and transformations. This adaptability, in turn, leads to increased psychological well-being (Parsakia et al., 2023). Positive psychology models also point to the positive impact

of digital self-efficacy on psychological well-being. According to these models, increasing digital skills and individual capabilities in this area can lead to increased happiness and life satisfaction. These models emphasize that individual empowerment and increasing digital skills can improve psychological status and enhance individual well-being (Extremera et al., 2020; Mohammadi et al., 2021; Saadati & Parsakia, 2023; Zysberg & Raz, 2019). In general, it can be concluded that improving digital self-efficacy skills plays an essential role in enhancing students' psychological well-being, and educational programs in this area can have significant positive effects. These programs can help students pursue their goals and aspirations with more motivation and confidence and engage more successfully in life.

Additionally, the results showed that psychological well-being is significantly predicted based on emotional intelligence components. The study findings indicated that all components of emotional intelligence have a significant relationship with psychological well-being. Similar studies have provided consistent results with this research. For instance, Hosseini et al. (2022) pointed to a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being (Hosseini et al., 2022). Similarly, Afsharinia and Souzani (2018) and Abedini, Valemdehy, and Ravanbakhsh (2021) also discussed the positive impact of emotional intelligence on psychological well-being (Abedini Velamdehy & Ravanbakhsh, 2021; Afsharinia & Soozani, 2018). Additionally, research reported a significant impact of emotional intelligence on psychological well-being (Extremera et al., 2020; Guerra-Bustamante et al., 2019).

Based on previous research, it can be explained that emotional intelligence as an essential skill in daily life plays a crucial role in improving psychological well-being. These skills help individuals better manage their emotions and face everyday challenges more effectively. Individuals with high emotional intelligence can understand their own and others' emotions and communicate effectively (Hosseini et al., 2022). These abilities lead to reduced stress and anxiety and increased life satisfaction. The emotional awareness component also plays a vital role in psychological well-being. Individuals with high emotional awareness can identify and manage their emotions well, leading to reduced negative emotions such as anxiety and depression and increased psychological well-being (Abedini Velamdehy & Ravanbakhsh, 2021; Afsharinia & Soozani, 2018). Additionally, self-expression and the ability to express

emotions help individuals establish more effective connections with others and receive more social support, which also contributes to psychological well-being (Rajabi & Valadbeigi, 2016).

Self-expression ability also helps individuals express their feelings and needs effectively, leading to positive interactions and social support. Individuals with high self-expression can communicate their needs and desires positively and constructively, reducing tensions and conflicts and increasing life satisfaction (Naderi & Akbari, 2018; Zysberg & Raz, 2019). Additionally, the independence component helps individuals make decisions with greater confidence and have more control over their lives, contributing to their psychological well-being. According to various theoretical models, emotional intelligence is recognized as one of the most important predictors of psychological well-being. Goleman's emotional intelligence theory (1995) states that individuals with high emotional intelligence can manage their own and others' emotions well and use these abilities to improve their quality of life. These individuals can face less stress and anxiety and have greater life satisfaction. Bar-On's theory also points to the positive impact of emotional intelligence on psychological well-being. This theory states that individuals with high emotional intelligence can manage their emotions well and establish positive relationships with others. These abilities help individuals perform more successfully in life and have greater satisfaction and happiness (Bar-On, 2010).

In general, the results of the present study and previous research indicate that emotional intelligence is one of the important and influential factors on psychological well-being. Increasing emotional intelligence skills can lead to improved social relationships, reduced stress and anxiety, and increased life satisfaction. The analysis results indicated that various components of digital self-efficacy, including safety, digital content creation, communication and collaboration, information and data literacy, and problem-solving, are significantly related to students' psychological well-being. The highest correlation coefficient was related to the safety component, indicating the importance of feeling secure in digital environments for improving psychological well-being. Additionally, the analysis related to emotional intelligence showed that various components of emotional intelligence, including emotional awareness, self-expression, self-respect, self-actualization, and independence, significantly impact psychological well-being. The highest correlation coefficient was related to the emotional awareness component, indicating the importance of the ability to identify and manage emotions for improving psychological well-being. Based on the results of this research and previous studies, it can be concluded that increasing digital self-efficacy and emotional intelligence skills play a crucial role in improving students' psychological well-being. Empowering students in digital and emotional domains can lead to reduced stress and anxiety, increased life satisfaction, and improved social relationships.

5. Limitations & Suggestions

One of the main limitations of this study is the use of the correlational-descriptive method. Although this method allows examining the relationship between variables, it cannot determine causality between them. In other words, it cannot be concluded that increasing or decreasing one variable leads to a change in another variable. This limitation necessitates more cautious interpretation of the study results and highlights the need for more experimental and intervention research. Another limitation of this study is the use of convenience sampling. This method was chosen for its ease and convenience but may not represent the target statistical population adequately. This issue can reduce the generalizability of the research results to the entire statistical population of the Islamic Azad University, South Tehran Branch students. The statistical population of this study includes students from a specific university in Tehran, which may lack sufficient cultural and social diversity. This limitation can affect the generalizability of the results to other universities and communities with different cultural and social characteristics. Future research can provide more comprehensive results by expanding the statistical population to various universities and regions. To examine the causal relationships between the studied variables more precisely, it is suggested that future research use experimental and intervention methods. These methods can provide more accurate information about causal relationships between variables by offering specific interventions and observing changes in variables before and after the intervention. To investigate long-term changes and trends in psychological well-being, digital self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence, it is suggested that future research be conducted longitudinally. This type of research can provide a more comprehensive view of these variables' dynamics by collecting data at different time intervals. To increase the generalizability of the results, it is suggested that future

research's statistical population include students from various universities and regions of the country. This can cover more cultural and social diversity and make the research results more generalizable to other universities and regions of the country. Universities and educational institutions can help students improve their digital self-efficacy skills by designing and implementing special educational programs. These programs can include workshops, online courses, and diverse educational resources that help students enhance their digital capabilities. Educational institutions can help students improve their emotional intelligence abilities by integrating emotional intelligence skills into their curricula and educational programs. This can be achieved through educational courses, workshops, and group activities.

Acknowledgments

Declaration of Interest

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed in this article.

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