
A Study on the Psychological Well-being of College Students

Grace Kim Khaute*
H. Malsawmi**

Abstract

The advancement in technology, changing patterns of family life and occupations, compulsory free and better access to education, modern society and complex human relationships are some of the important factors that often directly or indirectly affect the young adults of today especially those in the transitional stage of adolescence to adulthood. The objective of this study is to examine the psychological well-being of college students taking into account the pandemic situation that has affected the whole world. Well-being comprises of both the physical as well as the mental aspects of individuals. Findings of the study indicates that majority of the college students have moderate psychological well-being. Since high psychological well-being is considered a precursor to good life and happiness, the researchers feel that it is essential to provide students with activities and opportunities to improve their bearings in life.

Key words- Psychological well-being (PWB), college, students

Introduction

Psychological well-being basically refers to positive mental states, such as happiness or satisfaction. It is also used to describe an individual's emotional health and overall functioning. Simply put it is about lives going well. It is the amalgamation of feeling good and being able to function efficiently. Well-being should not be misinterpreted as a state of mind which is always blissful or perfect. It does not necessitate individuals to feel good all the time; the occurrence of agonizing emotions (e.g. disappointment, failure, grief) is a normal part of life, and being able to manage these negative or painful emotions is vital for long-term well-being. Psychological well-being is, however, compromised when negative emotions are extreme or very long lasting and obstruct with a person's ability to function in his or her daily life.

*Dr. Grace Kim Khaute, Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Churachandpur Govt. College, Manipur. Ph-7005528100, Email: gkkhaute@gmail.com

**Prof. H. Malsawmi, Professor, Department of Education, Mizoram University, Ph-9436360683, Email: drmalsawmi@yahoo.co.in

The notion of feeling good or stability also incorporates not only the positive emotions of happiness and contentment, but also other emotions such as interest, engagement, confidence, perseverance, humility and affection. The concept of functioning effectively (in a psychological sense) involves the development of one's potential, having some control over one's life, having a sense of purpose (e.g. working towards valued goals), and experiencing positive relationships. The World Health Organization in "2001" has defined positive mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community".

The Six-factor Model of Psychological Well-being is a theory developed by psychologist Carol D. Ryff, which determines six aspects of wellbeing and happiness: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (adapted from Ryff, 1989)

The Ryff Scale of Measurement is a psychometric inventory in which respondents rate statements on a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 indicates strong disagreement and 6 indicates strong agreement. Ryff's model is not based on merely feeling happy, but is based on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, "where the goal of life isn't feeling good, but is instead about living virtuously".

Although baseline psychological wellbeing may be reasonably stable, day to day events and experiences can also exert an impact. For instance, sometimes the toughest people may possibly turn into miserable and depressed, if their daily experiences are always upsetting or without much scope for progress. Research studies show that exposure to work-related stressors over long periods of time tends to have a negative impact on Psychological well-being, so, although short periods of adversity may be helpful in building resilience, it may not be good in the long run. Another study by (*Chandola et al, 2008*) indicated that lower level of psychological well-being may lead to serious illness, including cardiovascular disease, problems with blood sugar control, such as diabetes and immune system malfunctions.

Psychological well-being (PWB) theory proposes that early experience and underlying personality create a platform for psychological well-being but everyday experiences can help to maintain a good level of PWB (if they are positive) or, if they are negative, reduce levels of PWB, leading, in turn, to poor health outcomes both physiological as well as mental.

The significance of Psychological well-being lies in the fact that it can be attained by achieving a state of balance affected by both challenging and rewarding life events. Individuals who are successful in doing so are generally more healthy and adaptable, understanding, patient, forward thinking, responsible, empathetic, and reasonable.

Rationale of the Study

The recent developments in science and technology has enabled humans to reach unfathomable heights by granting us the ability to access information at the click of the mouse, the possibility of sharing and transferring data by swiping one's fingers across a

smart phone or tablet, travel one corner of the earth to another in a matter of hours and many more, has indeed made the world nothing but a small village. While globalization has improved the lives of people in general, yet it has brought about a lot of changes and innovations that has resulted in alienation of some sections of the society who cannot move as fast as others. Similarly even the educational institutions and students are facing the same problems everywhere because of a lot of competition and stress owing to the demands of the fast moving world. Many a times students are the ones who have to face all the challenges that are bombarded to them from every direction; be it their personal, social or community life, they have to take everything in their stride without compromising their mental and physical health. With these in mind and all the obstacles that may affect the ordinary lives of students, the study was undertaken to assess the psychological well-being of college students.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To reveal the Psychological well-being of college students in Churachandpur District of Manipur.
2. To suggest measures to improve the Psychological well-being of college students in Churachandpur District of Manipur.

Delimitation of the Study:

1. The study is delimited to the 5 colleges in Churachandpur district of Manipur.
2. The study includes only Arts and Science students admitted in under-graduate degree.

Research Methods:

The present study employs descriptive survey approach as the research paper tries to find out the Psychological well-being of college students in Churachandpur district of Manipur.

Population and Sample:

The population in the present study consists of all the students admitted in the under-graduate courses in 5 colleges of Churachandpur district of Manipur. In the first stage, purposive sampling technique was followed and the selection of sample students was restricted to 3rd Semester as students at this stage were the worst hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, out of 2080 students of 3rd semester, a sample of 500 students comprising of 50 each from arts and science streams from each college was selected by following random sampling technique.

Tools Used:

In the present study “Ryff’s Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWB), 42 Item version” by Carol D. Ryff has been used for data collection.

Analysis of the Data:

The Ryff Scale of Measurement is a psychometric inventory consisting of 42 items in which respondents rate statements on a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 indicates strong disagreement and 6 indicates strong agreement. The Scale is based on six factors: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Higher total scores indicate higher psychological well-being.

Analysis of data for the present study has been done by calculating the percentage(s) of the responses for each item which is presented and interpreted in the following tables.

Table 1: AUTONOMY

Items nos.	Category						Responses
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
1	36	28	64	52	216	104	500
7	30	50	54	38	108	220	500
13	128	138	54	70	50	70	500
19	184	102	92	54	32	36	500
25	38	36	44	40	176	166	500
31	54	160	88	90	54	54	500
37	32	44	32	64	140	188	500
No. of responses	502	558	428	408	776	838	3500
%	14.30%	15.90%	12.20%	11.60%	22.10%	23.90%	100%

From Table 1 it can be seen that out of the total population, 23.9% of the respondents strongly agree that they are independent and they regulate their behaviour independent of social pressures. While 14.3% strongly disagree that they have autonomy.

Table 2: ENVIRONMENTAL MASTERY

Items nos.	Category						Responses
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
2	40	54	44	70	46	246	500
8	52	54	72	60	58	204	500
14	38	60	50	60	66	226	500
20	20	36	50	66	48	280	500

A Study on the Psychological Well-being of College Students

26	82	126	140	40	38	74	500
32	86	164	120	32	40	58	500
38	38	44	32	38	46	302	500
No. of responses	356	538	508	366	342	1390	3500
%	10.20%	15.40%	14.50%	10.40%	9.80%	39.70%	100%

Table 2 reveals 39.7% respondents strongly agree that they make effective use of opportunities and have a sense of mastery in managing environmental factors and activities, including managing everyday affairs and creating situations to benefit personal needs. On the other hand, 10.2% strongly disagree that they have mastery over environmental factors and activities.

Table 3: PERSONAL GROWTH

LEVELS Items nos.	Category						Responses
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
3	20	40	70	58	216	96	500
9	36	40	6	18	72	328	500
15	40	72	60	160	130	38	500
21	48	38	72	38	194	110	500
27	74	92	64	60	106	104	500
33	12	20	18	40	92	318	500
39	80	58	60	60	82	160	500
No. of responses	310	360	350	434	892	1154	3500
%	8.90%	10.20%	10%	12.40%	25.50%	33%	100%

Table 3 demonstrates that 33% of the respondents strongly agree that they continue to develop, and are welcome to new experiences, and also recognizes their improvement in behavior and self over time. From the table it can be seen that 8.9% of the respondents strongly disagree that they should grow and improve upon themselves.

Table 4: POSITIVE RELATIONS

Items nos.	Category						Responses
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
4	36	48	40	130	178	78	500
10	54	88	56	72	68	162	500
16	124	66	40	38	166	64	500
22	8	18	28	20	90	336	500
28	24	30	60	88	82	216	500
34	58	110	102	36	58	136	500
40	36	40	54	38	92	240	500
No. of responses	340	400	380	422	724	1232	3500
%	9.70%	11.40%	10.90%	12.10%	20.70%	35.20%	100%

Table 4 reflects that 35.2% of the respondents strongly agree in having positive relations with others. It is also reflected from the table that 9.7% of the respondents strongly disagree that they should have positive relations with others.

Table 5: PURPOSE IN LIFE

Items nos.	Category						Responses
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
5	54	36	54	46	90	220	500
11	32	40	80	50	120	178	500
17	40	36	44	68	108	204	500
23	20	80	24	36	86	254	500
29	32	36	38	42	122	230	500
35	40	48	40	74	58	240	500
41	38	50	42	28	116	236	500
No. of responses	246	326	322	344	700	1562	3500
%	7.10%	9.30%	9.20%	9.80%	20%	44.60%	100%

Table 5 shows 44.6% of the respondents as having strong goal orientations and convictions that life holds meaning. The table also reflects that 7.1% of the respondents are not aware or recognize the importance of having a purpose in life.

Table 6: SELF-ACCEPTANCE

Items nos.	Category						Responses
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
6	4	30	72	44	140	210	500
12	38	28	38	48	132	208	500
18	76	110	64	50	40	160	500
24	20	40	90	60	60	230	500
30	48	64	92	104	12	180	500
36	58	38	54	60	72	198	500
42	36	38	48	74	124	160	500
No. of responses	280	388	458	440	580	1354	3500
%	8%	11.10%	13.10%	12.60%	16.60%	38.60%	100%

From Table 6 it can be observed that out of the total number of respondents 38.6% have positive attitude about themselves. 8% of the respondents are observed to have negative self concepts.

Major findings:

- The dimension on Autonomy has 7 items to study the psychological well-being of an individual with respect to his/her autonomy. From Table 1 it can be seen that only 23.9% of the respondents have high psychological-well being. However, while this figure is a majority yet it can be concluded that the psychological well-being of college students under this dimension is relatively low when the total population of respondents is taken into consideration.
- The dimension on Environmental Mastery in the psychological well-being scale also has 7 items. Table 2 reveals that 39.7% respondents have high psychological well-being. However, it is interesting to observe that out of the total population of respondents the percentage is not very high. Therefore it can be concluded that the psychological well-being of college students under this dimension is relatively moderate.
- The third dimension on Personal Growth also has 7 items. Table 3 demonstrates that 33% of the respondents have high psychological well-being. When the total population of respondents is taken into consideration it can be concluded that majority of college students do not have high psychological well-being under this dimension.

- The dimension on Positive Relations also has 7 items to test the psychological well-being of under-graduate students. Table 4 reflects 35.2% of the respondents have high psychological well-being.
- Similarly the dimension on Purpose in Life also has 7 items and it is observed from Table 5 that 44.6% of the respondents have high psychological well-being. In comparison to the other dimensions it is interesting to observe that majority of the respondents believe in having purpose in life.
- The last dimension is Self-Acceptance and like the other dimensions there are also 7 items to test the psychological well-being of college students. From Table 6 it can be concluded that 38.6% have positive attitude about themselves. However, this percentage is not good enough when the total population of respondents is taken into account.
- On the whole it can be concluded that the overall psychological well-being of college students is neither high nor low, but relatively moderate.

Suggestions:

From the study it can be concluded that majority of students have moderate psychological well-being, which means that they are sufficiently satisfied with their lives and can perform their normal duties and activities in general. However, moderate does not necessarily indicate good or desirable psychological well-being. Studies have shown people with higher psychological well-being are more likely to live healthier and longer lives. They are also more likely to enjoy a better quality of life with fewer social problems. As such following are some of the suggestions made to improve the psychological well-being of students in colleges.

- Encouraging students and teaching them the importance of having a purpose in life because living a life with meaning and purpose is key to improving one's psychological well-being.
- Encouraging Positive Thinking among students
- Encouraging students to participate in games and sports and other cultural and social activities that make them happy.
- Applaud and encourage acts of kindness such as doing nice things for other people, helping a neighbor in need, volunteering for a community activity, or raising money for a charity.
- Encouraging students to practice mindfulness because it helps people manage stress, cope with serious illnesses, and reduce anxiety and depression.
- Encourage good habits; identify negative thoughts, learning to relax in stressful situations, self-esteem, and enthusiasm over life.
- Expressing and encouraging gratitude by setting examples for students to emulate.

- Help students to identify their strengths, avoid alcohol, drugs and other repulsive behaviors.
- Practice forgiveness and put one's energy into more positive things rather than ruminating on past hurts and offenses.
- Fostering and building relationships by encouraging students to participate and join community activities, getting acquainted with neighbors, reaching out to old friends etc.
- Creating special intervention classes on mental health and related topics in the college routines, special student cells for providing awareness programs, workshops and counseling sessions.

Conclusions:

Psychological well-being is associated with flexible and creative thinking, pro-social behaviour, and good physical health. Individuals' level of mental capital and psychological well-being is powerfully influenced by their environment. The study revealed that students in colleges belong to moderate level of psychological well-being. It is imperative to understand that this is not an ideal situation hence interventions which encourages positive actions and attitudes should be encouraged in the colleges because of its important role in enhancing well-being. There should be serious efforts by the educational institutions to provide a congenial and happy environment to the students and to maintain a close relationship with the parents-guardians, counselors, teachers and staffs who are one way or the other concerned with the psychological well-being of the students.

References

- Chandola, T., _____ Britton, A., _____ Brunner, E.,
Hemingway, H., Malik, M., Kumari, M., Badrick, E., Kivimaki, M., and Marmot, M. (2008). Work stress and coronary heart disease: what are the mechanisms? *European Heart Journal*. Vol. 29, Issue 5, 579-580.
- Kilgo, C.A., Mollet, A.L., and Pascarella, E.T. (2016). The estimated effects of college student involvement on psychological well-being. *Journal of College Student Development*, 57(8), 1043-1049
- Ryff, C.D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 57 (6), 1069–1081.
- Ryff, C.D., and Singer, B. (1998). The contours of positive human health. *Psychological Inquiry*, 9, 1-28.
- Ryff, C.D. (1995). Psychological well-being in Adult life. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 4, 99-104.
- Ryff, C.D., and Keyes, C.L.M. (1995). The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69, 719-727