

Chapter 13

Psychological Well-Being of Students in Higher Education Institutions: A Theoretical Review

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ABSTRACT

Psychological well-being is a multifaceted and multidimensional concept. It includes essential elements such as happy emotions, autonomy, satisfying relationships, little negative emotion, a sense of meaning in life, and personal development. Psychological well-being is essential for overall health and happiness and has been associated with greater physical and mental health as well as a longer life span. This study attempts to gain theoretical knowledge about psychological well-being and knowledge of the various studies conducted in the area of psychological well-being. To alleviate stress and enhance students' psychological well-being, higher institutions of learning must prioritize proactive, resilience-focused, and mental health promotion efforts to assist students.

INTRODUCTION

Health is considered the greatest wealth and people are expected to maintain the highest possible level of health. Psychological well-being is an integral part of life. As stated by Tang et al. (2019), psychological well-being is a key component of mental health that can be described as resilience, coping, emotion control, problem-solving, enjoyment, pleasure, fulfilment, and happiness. It is beneficial for the higher

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institution management to comprehend the underlying mechanisms linked to this construct to create specialised university training programs that would increase psychological well-being among students. According to research, self-compassion is closely linked to psychological health, including higher levels of enjoyment, optimism, initiative, and connection as well as lower levels of anxiety, depressive disorders, neurotic perfectionism, and ruminating (Neff & Dahm, 2015). Self-compassion is thought to offer similar psychological advantages to self-esteem but fewer drawbacks like egotism or narcissism. This chapter looked at the aspects of students' well-being, particularly, the psychological well-being of students in higher institutions of learning. Institutions of higher learning should find appropriate strategies to maximise the psychological well-being of their students, achieve healthy self-actualization, and develop strong future generations capable of meeting life's adversities. The next section discusses the background of the study.

BACKGROUND

The prevalence of psychological problems among university students is extremely high, with depression (76%), anxiety (88.4%), stress (84.4%), and other mental disorders (45.5%) leading (Asif et al., 2020; Lipson et al., 2019; & Auerbach et al., 2018). Teh et al. (2015) claim that such problems affect students' psychological well-being (PWB). In the literature, psychological well-being has been defined in two different ways: (a) subjective well-being that includes happiness, positive affect, and life satisfaction (Thanoi et al., 2023; Sharma & Shara, 2018; He et al., 2018) and (b) eudaemonic well-being, including autonomy, self-acceptance, purpose in life, personal growth, positive relations with others, and environmental mastery (Ryff, 2018).

Ryff had introduced six core dimensions of PWB, specifically:

1. Self-acceptance (state of having positive thoughts and feelings about oneself);
2. Positive relations with others (ability to engage in a warm and trusting relationship with others);
3. Autonomy (ability to be independent and cope with social pressure);
4. Environmental mastery (ability to adapt, change, or create one's environment according to one's needs through physical and mental activities);
5. Purpose in life (state of having objectives and goals in life and working toward achieving goal-oriented);
6. Personal growth (continuously growing and developing as oneself) (Sharma et al., 2022, p.47).

As public knowledge and understanding have increased over the past few decades, it is now known that psychological well-being and the absence of mental illness are both components of mental health. A complex concept, psychological well-being refers to the best possible psychological experience and functioning (Christner et al., 2021). In addition to resilience coping, emotion regulation and healthy problem solving, Community Translational Science Team (CTST) (2016), NIH Report (2018) and Tang (2021) added that it may be defined as enjoyment, pleasure, fulfilment and happiness.

In light of the above, other scholars have also conceptualised PWB, for instance, White (2004) and Diener et al. (2010) define psychological well-being as a subjective evaluation of one's life or a healthy emotion based on high self-esteem and positive relationships with others, less anxiety, less depression and less delinquent. This definition encompasses a broad range of positive experiences, including happiness, satisfaction, and a sense of fulfilment. Similar to this, Seligman (2002, cited in Dhanabhakyan

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