

# RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OPTIMISM AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING AMONG STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

*Students' life is full of stressful situations that can lead to mental anguish and worse performance. University students deal with additional stresses such as shifting social networks, financial adjustments, and adjusting to new social and familial obligations in addition to the demands of their studies, all of which can be detrimental to their mental health (Pidgeon & Pickett, 2017). Potentially because of mechanisms that support and preserve psychological well-being, optimism is linked to favourable results in relationships generally. Likewise, Psychological well-being, which encompasses mental health, high life satisfaction, a feeling of purpose and meaning, and stress management skills, is one of the positive psychology requirements for life. Since the condition has an impact on people's health in the twenty-first century, optimism and thankfulness can be crucial in fostering psychological well-being, and making an investment in this topic can pay off. The present study highlights the relationship between Optimism and Psychological well-being among students. It is revealed that optimism plays a key role in psychological well-being. It has been observed the relation of optimism, and well-being not only increases our understanding of the well-being itself but also contributes to the promotion of PWB among individuals. Furthermore, it improves the calibre of their studies, PWB is a desirable state for college students. Low psychological well-being, on the other hand, may hinder their ability to learn.*

**Keywords:** Optimism, Psychological Well-Being (PWB),

## INTRODUCTION

College students are more susceptible to psychological issues when they are transitioning from childhood to maturity (Santrock, 2019). They must adjust to a new social setting, do school assignments, and consider their identities and aspirations in life. Students frequently struggle with psychological issues such as eating disorders, internet addiction, stress, anxiety, and depression (Dinis & Bragança, 2018; C. Liu et al., 2007; Vijay Mahadeo Rao Bhujade, 2017). Financial difficulties, disputes with friends or family, and intense academic pressure can all lead to stress (Peters, McEwen, & Friston, 2017). Fear of being judged by others and feelings of insecurity or uncertainty about the future can both lead to anxiety (Bandelow, Michaelis, & Wedekind, 2017).

Students' mental health may suffer because of the academic pressure they face at university (Pidgeon et al., 2014). Along with the demands of the classroom, university students also face other stresses such as housing and financial instability, forming new social networks, and adjusting to new responsibilities in the family and society (Tavolacci, 2011, Pidgeon and Pickett, 2017). At order to enhance academic achievement, well-being, and the permanency rate at universities, it is critical to identify the elements that may facilitate an acceptable transition to the new university environment (Pigeon and Pickett, 2017).

Psychological issues can significantly affect students' capacity to perform effectively both on school and in daily life. Academic performance decline is one risk of psychological issues in students (Hyseni Duraku & Hoxha, 2018). Stress, worry, and sadness are examples of psychological issues that might impair pupils' capacity to focus and study. They can so perform poorly and see a drop in their academic quality. Student motivation may also decline (Pascoe, Hetrick, & Parker, 2020). Students that struggle psychologically may become less motivated to learn and succeed academically. This may prevent them from continuing their education in college or perhaps lead to their abandonment. Additionally, they are susceptible to physical health issues (Poms, Fleming, & Jacobsen, 2016). Psychological illnesses can impact suicidal thoughts and actions in more severe phases (Furr, Westefeld, McConnell, & Jenkins, 2001).

## **OPTIMISM**

The degree to which people have broadly positive expectations for the future is reflected in optimism, which seems to be an individual difference variable (Carver, Scheier, and Segerstrom, 2010). The overall expectation of achieving favourable results in the future is known as optimism, and it is one of the elements associated with life adaptation (Scheier & Carver, 1985). One aspect of personality that is characterized by the anticipation that positive or negative things will happen to oneself in significant areas of life is optimism (as opposed to pessimism) (Scheier & Carver, 2009). Generalized optimism is not specific to any one area of a person's life, but rather to their whole existence. As stated by Reker (1997), optimism also represents people's ability to see the bright side of things. In this way, optimists are typically self-assured and tenacious when confronted with demanding and stressful circumstances.

The perspective of general expectancy-incentive models of motivation provides a better understanding of optimism. The theories make the assumption that behavior happens to achieve intended states or activities. People attempt to modify their actions to conform to what they consider to be desirable. A goal that is important enough to strive to achieve and expectancy, or the degree of confidence against uncertainty that the objective can be achieved, are the two factors that determine whether effort is engaged (Carver, 2014). During adolescence, optimism is crucial because the pursuit of worthwhile objectives and achieving them are essential elements of young people's adaptive self-regulation processes.

An individual's propensity to see the future with optimism and to anticipate favourable results from conditions they encounter is known as optimism. High hopes, self-belief, and a positive outlook are characteristics of optimistic people. Physical health and improved PWB are frequently linked to this idea (Carver et al., 2010). PWB, including happiness, life satisfaction, and mental health, are often better for those who are more optimistic (M. E. Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

An optimistic individual anticipates success and pleasure. He or she typically achieves social and psychological compatibility and adopts a pleasant outlook on life (Sakarneh, 2014a). Additionally, he or she has a more positive outlook on the future and the surrounding environment (De Meza & Dawson, 2021).

One of the factors that affect psychological well-being (the propensity for positive experiences to happen in life) is optimism, which is characterized as a stable personality trait that determines a person's behavior with an optimistic outlook on the future, assesses stressful and dangerous situations with a positive outlook (having generalized expectations for positive outcomes), and applies these skills to overcome obstacles.

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING**

These days, we observe a different situation between male and female students. Numerous concerns surround them, ranging from personal problems that result in psychological as well as physical deficiencies to the incredibly fast-paced nature of the constant rivalry. In such interactions and circumstances, the pupils' psychological health is impacted. Psychological well-being—which is characterized by happiness, life satisfaction, and personal development—is one of the most crucial components of effective psychological functioning. In fact, a wealth of studies shows that a happy person has several advantages, such as improved relationships, physical health, and high performance (e.g., Huppert 2009; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005). A combination of positive affective experiences, such as happiness (the hedonic perspective) and operating with maximum efficacy in one's social and personal life (the eudemonics perspective), is commonly thought of as psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan 2008).

It has been assumed to be caused by any disruption of mental processes as well as discomfort or desirability. This idea is rather flexible and relates to how people feel about things that they conduct daily. These emotions can vary from psychological stresses or negative mental states like anxiety, despair, frustration, emotional tiredness, discontent, and dissatisfaction to a condition known as positive mental health (Jahoda, 1958; Warr, 1978).

While there is a wealth of research on the characteristics of positive functioning, Ryff (2005) found that measures of psychological well-being lack theoretical foundations. Three hundred and twenty-one men and women, who were split up into young, middle-aged, and older individuals, evaluated themselves using these metrics in addition to six tools that were used in previous research. The findings showed that earlier assessment indices were not significantly correlated with autonomy, personal growth, positive relationships with others, or life purpose.

A sense of belonging, good emotions, self-worth, self-confidence, life objectives, and involvement are all components of psychological well-being (Su et al., 2014).

The characteristics of PWB include coherence, integration with others, acceptance, actualization, and contribution (Keyes & Ryff, 1995). PWB is different from SWB, based on Ryff (1989), who also proposed that PWB has six dimensions: autonomy, positive relatedness, self-acceptance, life purpose, mastery, and personal progress.

There are disturbances in the psychological well-being (PWB) of pupils. A person's mental and emotional state because of how they view their entire existence is referred to as PWB (Holman, Johnson, & O'Connor, 2018). Life satisfaction, happiness, good emotions, and the capacity to handle stress are some of the components that make up this idea (Weiss et al., 2016). The capacity to make use of the environment and organize efficient plans of action to accomplish objectives is known as environmental mastery. Personal growth is the process of evolving personally, growing, and moving forward in life. Good interactions with Others: good and constructive interpersonal interactions. Life Purpose: living with a sense of direction and significance.

There are still some pupils that struggle with PWB. Financial strain may increase the likelihood of dropping out of college, per a study. Additionally, students are more likely to drop out of college if they report having student loan debt (Britt, Ammerman, Barrett, & Jones, 2017). Students may feel anxious about their academic achievement, future careers, interpersonal connections, and financial concerns, according to another study (Yang, Asbury, & Griffiths, 2019). 10% of students have behaviourally induced inadequate sleep syndrome (BISS), whereas 22% of students suffer from insomnia, as per a survey of 989 students (Yang et al., 2019). An association between their sadness and sleep disruptions was also discovered by further investigation (Yang et al., 2019). Furthermore, according to a survey by Schlarb et al., 7.7% of students fit all the criteria for insomnia disorder, and up to 60% of all students have poor sleep quality (Schlarb, Friedrich, & Claßen, 2017).

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OPTIMISM AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING**

Both case studies and longitudinal research have shown the connections between psychological well-being and optimism (Wrosch and Scheier, 2003). The definition of psychological well-being, defined by Coward and Reed (1996), is a sensation of health that results in a full understanding of one's own integrity, which encompasses spiritual aspects of life. A study by Ryff and Singer (2003), resilient people can often retain their psychological and physical well-being and bounce back from stressful situations faster. Fredrickson (2001) stated that there are indications that resilience can effectively enhance psychological well-being.

There is substantial evidence that optimism and contentment are related. As an example, optimism was a strong predictor of middle-aged individuals' psychological adjustment and good affective components of their personal fulfillment (Chang et al., 2001). Adolescent optimism is inversely associated to negative affect and positively associated with good impact (Ben-Zur, 2003). Based on research, late teenage optimism may be connected to measures of wellbeing.

## **DISCUSSION**

It is generally accepted that university students are more likely to experience psychological anguish than other pupils. Concerns about university students' mental health and the effects of undiagnosed and untreated mental illness have grown among the global public. This study aims to determine the psychological well-being of students at University Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA). The results showed a comparatively significant propensity for anxiety, stress, and depression in students who experienced psychological discomfort.

Psychological anguish has detrimental effects on one's physical, mental, and intellectual well-being, (Shahira et al., 2018).

The study discovered that college students' hope, optimism, and general well-being were negatively impacted by COVID-19. Asanjarani et al. (2021) investigated the relationship between COVID-19-induced stress and issues facing Iranian adolescents by examining the impact of optimism and pessimism. As demonstrated by the findings, the stress of COVID-19 was a significant predictor of pessimism and internalizing difficulties and a predictor of optimism. Nu'man (2020) investigated how Iraqi university students' outlook on life and optimism related to one another. Optimism and life orientation were shown to be significantly correlated, and both were determined to be typical. Regarding the factors "gender" and "specialization," the results similarly showed no variations in optimism levels. The association between COVID-19-induced stress and psychological problems with optimism, pessimism, and limited psychological flexibility was investigated by Arslan et al. (2020).

The impact of optimism on psychological well-being and the cognitive bias associated with optimism were both examined. Higher correlations were found for positive future expectations than for negative ones. The Social Optimism measure and the Life Orientation Test both contributed to the strong multiple correlation ( $R = .52$ ) with psychological well-being, (Schweizer & Schneideiz, 1999).

sought to investigate college students' psychological well-being in connection to their gender and positive outlook. One hundred male and one hundred female first-year students from various institutions studying the arts, sciences, and commerce Results also showed that the optimistic attitude was associated with both the first major axis element of psychological well-being ( $r = .18, p < .01$ ) and total psychological well-being ( $r = .16, p < .05$ ). Hopkins' classification (quoted in Kotrlík and Williams, 2003) indicates that these two correlations are rather "small," even though they are statistically significant and support the premise, (Honmore & Jadhav, n.d.)

This study looked at how parents' educational attainment affected their kids' levels of optimism and pessimism. 240 undergraduate students, aged 19 to 22, from both public and private institutions in Mysore city, were chosen at random using an explanatory survey of undergraduate students, both male and female. The findings showed that parents' educational attainment affected how optimistic and pessimistic their kids were. In other words, parents with higher levels of education were associated with students who were more optimistic, (Daraei & Ghaderi, n.d.).

## CONCLUSION

Scheier, Carver, and Weintraub (1989) assert that optimists are healthier because they are more inclined to plan and establish recovery objectives both during and after therapy. But as this study is not primarily focused on clinical initiatives of optimism, we do not discuss the specifics of such trials. When Carver et al. (1993) evaluated research on optimism and pessimism, they found that optimists are more self-assured and persistent while pessimists are more reluctant and uncertain. This might result in disparities in dangerous situations that need coping skills.

In our religiously oriented society, religion and faith seem to be the main components of optimism. These individuals have a strong sense that life has purpose. Their ideals frequently lend credence to this view. Their ability to swiftly adapt to significant changes is impressive. The findings of the investigations by Schumann (2002), Pargament and Cummings (2010), Masten and Wright (2010), and Werner and Smith (2001) are all in agreement with this outcome.

Yu and Zhang (2007) regard optimism to be a crucial component of resilience because they contend that it represents people's positive attitudes about challenging circumstances. Consistent with this study, earlier research has suggested that optimism and well-being seem to be positively correlated (Scheier and Carver, 1985).

Positive outlooks on the future will help kids deal with hardship more skilfully. In addition, hopeful undergraduates will be better able to handle the additional pressures they will face throughout this phase of transition, such as mounting debt and academic obligations.

Adapting to difficult or traumatic events also heavily depends on having positive aspirations for the future. Snyder, Lopez, and Pedrotti (2002) claim that when faced with difficult circumstances, optimistic people exhibit greater levels of resilience. Furthermore, the most important teenage cognitive characteristic that lessens the consequences of life pressures is optimism (Tusaie Mumford, 2001).

Correlational findings supported earlier studies by demonstrating a substantial association between late adolescents' subjective and psychological well-being and their feeling of coherence and optimism (Nygren et al., 2005; Wrosch & Scheier, 2003).

It has been demonstrated that optimism positively affects a person's PWB.

Numerous studies have shown that those who are more optimistic tend to be happier, have less stress, and have better mental health. Furthermore, it has been discovered that resilience is a strong predictor of PWB, and optimism is thought to moderately mediate the association between resilience and PWB. According to these results, personal characteristics like optimism may influence PWB, (Hasanirad & Hosein Souri, 2011).

PWB is crucial for a person to lead a contented, healthy, and happy life. Good PWB is necessary for kids to succeed academically in the population environment. A vital part of preserving mental wellness is PWB. People who have high PWB have a lower likelihood of experiencing psychological conditions such as sadness, anxiety, and pressure (Q. Liu, Shino, & Kitamura, 2009).

People's optimism and optimistic expectations may be greatly altered, according to Snyder's theory of hope, which defined hope as the drive to strive for the crucial goals. Thus, goal-setting and having good views about achieving those objectives, being motivated to develop plans to accomplish these goals, and feeling of agency in these processes are ways that people might stay hopeful and optimistic. Someone's ambitions will be easier to accomplish as a result. Hope is also a component that is strongly linked to people's degree of well-being, according to research (Dursun, 2012).

When Harju and Bolen (1998) investigated the relationship between optimism and college students' quality of life, they discovered that those with higher levels of optimism also had the best quality of life. A study by Aspinwall and Taylor (1990) that looked at the degree of adjustment during the first semester of college and optimism revealed that higher levels of optimism had an impact on psychological distress, supporting the idea that optimists are psychologically healthier and should be included in discussions of effective problem-solving techniques. Optimists have greater levels of well-being than pessimists. One key characteristic of dispositional optimists is that they successfully pursue their objectives, which increases their likelihood of amassing assets like cash, friendships, and skills (cited in Segerstrom, 2007, p.773).

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