

JOURNAL OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

A Multidisciplinary International Level

Referred and Double Blind Peer Reviewed, Open Access Journal

ISSN:2230-9578 February - 2026 Volume-18 Issue-2(XXII)

Shikshana Prasarak Mandali's

***Sir Parashurambhau College,
(Empowered Autonomous)***

Tilak Road, Sadashiv Peth, Pune – 411030

Maharashtra, INDIA

Department of Psychology

Two Days National Conference

Sponsored by MHRD RUSA

on

***Bridging Research and Practice in Psychology:
An Indian Perspective***



Chief Editor: Prof. Ramesh V. Bhole

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Website: <https://jrdrv.org>

MULTIDISCIPLINARY INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

Website: <https://jrdrv.org>



ISSN: 2230-9578
February - 2026
Volume-18 Issue-2 (XXII)



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Journal of Research and Development

Peer Reviewed International, Open Access Journal.

ISSN : [2230-9578](https://doi.org/10.22304/2230-9578) | Website: <https://jrdrv.org> Volume-18, Issue-2(XXII) | February- 2026

Journal of Research and Development

*A Multidisciplinary International Double Blind Peer Reviewed Refereed
International Research Journal*

Volume No-18, Issue-2(XXII), February - 2026

Publication Language – English, Hindi, Marathi and other Indian Languages

Periodicity of Publication- Monthly

Email: jrdrv.org@gmail.com

Journal Website: <https://jrdrv.org>

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Journal of Research and Development

Peer Reviewed International, Open Access Journal.

ISSN : [2230-9578](https://doi.org/10.22304/2230-9578) | Website: <https://jrdrv.org>

JOURNAL PARTICULARS

Name of Journal	JOURNAL OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
Frequency	Monthly : Jan to Dec (12 issues per year)
ISSN	2230-9578
Publisher	Dr. Ramesh V. Bhole
Chief Editor	Dr. Ramesh V. Bhole
Copy right	Journal of Research and Development
Starting Year	January 2010
Subject	Multi-Disciplinary
Review Process	Double Blind Peer
Language	English, Hindi, Marathi, and other Indian Constitutional Languages.
Publication Format	Print
Access	
License	 Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)
Phone No.	+91 93256 65856, +91-8888454089
Email	jrdrv.org@gmail.com
Journal Website	https://jrdrv.org
Registered office Address	‘Ravichandram’ Survey No-101/1, Plot, No-23, Mundada Nagar, Jalgaon, Maharashtra, India
Admin. Office Address	‘Ravichandram’ Survey No-101/1, Plot, No-23, Mundada Nagar, Jalgaon , Maharashtra, India
Printing	Amitsons Digital Copiers 106 and 110, Paras Chambers 1st Floor, Near Laxmi Narayan Theatre, Above Bank Of India, Swargate-411042



Journal of Research and Development

Peer Reviewed International, Open Access Journal.

ISSN : [2230-9578](https://doi.org/10.22309/2230-9578) | Website: <https://jrdrv.org>

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Peer Reviewed International, Open Access Journal.

ISSN : [2230-9578](https://doi.org/10.22309/jrdrvb.2023.01.01) | Website: <https://jrdrvb.org>

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'Ravichandram' Survey No-101/1, Plot, No-23, Mundada Nagar, Jalgaon

Email: jrdrvb.org@gmail.com Journal Website: <https://jrdrvb.org>



Shikshana Prasarak Mandali's

**Sir Parashurambhau College (Empowered Autonomous,
Pune-30)**

Department of Psychology

National Level Conference

**“Bridging Research and Practice in Psychology an Indian
Perspective”**

25th and 26th February 2026

Coordinator:

Dr. Arvind Tejrao Kakulte,

Head of Psychology Department, Sir Parashurambhau College, Tilak Road, Pune



Dr. Avinash B. Moharil

Principal Message

It gives me immense pleasure to present the publication volume of the National Conference on “Bridging Research and Practice in Psychology: An Indian Perspective”, organized by the Department of Psychology, Sir Parashurambhau (S.P.) College, Pune.

Sir Parashurambhau College, with its rich legacy of over a century, has consistently upheld the values of academic excellence, innovation, and social responsibility. The Department of Psychology, since its inception in 1966, has been at the forefront of nurturing critical thinking, scientific inquiry, and professional competence in the field. The organization of this national conference marks another significant step in strengthening our commitment to advancing psychological sciences in India.

The theme of the conference aptly emphasizes the vital need to bridge the gap between theoretical research and its practical applications. In a diverse and dynamic society like ours, it is essential that psychological knowledge is not only evidence-based but also culturally relevant and socially responsive. The contributions compiled in this volume reflect rigorous research, innovative perspectives, and a shared vision to make psychology more impactful in clinical, organizational, educational, and community settings.

I sincerely appreciate the efforts of the organizing committee, faculty members, researchers, and participants whose dedication and scholarly contributions have made this publication possible. I am confident that this volume will serve as a valuable resource for academicians, practitioners, and students, inspiring further research and meaningful application in the field of psychology.

I extend my best wishes for the continued success of such academic endeavors and hope that this initiative will foster greater collaboration and intellectual growth in the years to come.

Dr. Avinash Moharil

Principal

Sir Parashurambhau (S.P.) College, Pune

Convener Message



Dr. Arvind Tejrao Kakulte
(Associate Professor of Psychology)

Dr. Arvind Tejrao Kakulte has completed his M. A. Psychology, M. Phil. and Ph.D. in Psychology and cleared NET as well in Psychology subject, currently he is associated with Sir Parashurambhau (SP) College, Pune as Associate professor and Head of the Psychology Department. He has Completed 25 Years of Service in Sir Parashurambhau College, Pune. He is Recognized for a Ph. D. Research Guide of SPPU, Pune University, IGNOU academic counsellor and Project Guide. He guided more than 500 students for research project at Undergraduate and Postgraduate level. Currently he is shouldering the responsibility as Chairman, Board of studies at S. P. College, Pune. Dr Arvind Kakulte has presented more than 60 papers in National and International

conferences and chaired the session for more than 10 conferences. He has published more than 50 research articles/ Papers in national and international journals, and reviewer of few International Journals. He had organized five National conferences at S. P. College, Pune. Dr Arvind Kakulte wrote one book for General Psychology First Year Bachelor of Arts (FYBA) – 2013. Also developed 10 modules on MOOC General Psychology at Educational Multimedia Research Centre Pune- Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune. He is a Board of studies member nominated by the Vice-Chancellor for Modern College, Pune. He completed NCC activity and was honored as a Lieutenant for 10 years, organized five (5) National Conferences at College Level and delivered a lecture in state and National level conferences.

It is my privilege to express the experience and journey of the publication process of the National conference. The title of the National Conference was on “Bridging Research and Practice in Psychology: An Indian Perspective”. It was organized by the Department of Psychology, Sir Parashurambhau College, Pune.

We received a RUSA grant for organizing state and national conferences in the Academic year 2025-2026. We have discussed different types of themes with each other. We had decided to publish a quality research paper which was presented in the conference. All my colleagues have helped me to manage and organize all events successfully. All paper presentation schedules were well planned and organised.

I would like to appreciate the efforts of the organizing faculty members, researchers, and students whose dedication and scholarly contributions have made this publication possible. I am sure that this volume will serve as a valuable guideline for students and teachers in the field of Psychology.

Dr. Arvind Kakulte, Head, Psychology Department,
Sir Parashurambhau College, Pune.

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Journal of Research and Development

A Multidisciplinary International Level Referred and Double Blind Peer Reviewed, Open Access

ISSN : [2230-9578](https://doi.org/10.2230/9578) | Website: <https://jrdvb.org> Volume-18, Issue-2(XXII) February - 2026

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Original Article

Mental Health Services for Persons with Disabilities in India: A Review of Accessibility and Gaps

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180201

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 1-5

February - 2026

Persons with disabilities constitute one of the most marginalized populations in India and experience a disproportionately high burden of mental health problems. Despite progressive legislations such as the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 and the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, access to mental health services for persons with disabilities remains limited. This review synthesizes existing literature on the availability, accessibility, and utilization of mental health services for persons with disabilities in India. Evidence from national surveys, peer-reviewed studies, and policy documents reveals high prevalence of psychological distress, treatment gaps exceeding 70–90%, shortages of trained professionals, infrastructural inaccessibility, and persistent stigma. The review highlights systemic gaps and underscores the need for integrated, disability-inclusive mental health systems to ensure equity, dignity, and improved quality of life for persons with disabilities in India.

Keywords: Persons with Disabilities, Mental Health Services, Accessibility, Treatment Gap, India

Submitted: 15 Jan. 2026

Revised: 25 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 10 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Introduction

Mental health and disability are closely intertwined, as disability often increases vulnerability to psychological distress through social exclusion, economic hardship, stigma, and restricted participation in education and employment (Kumar et al., 2018). Persons with disabilities are consistently found to have higher rates of depression, anxiety, and emotional distress than the general population (Gupta & Singhal, 2019). In India, where mental health services are already under-resourced and unevenly distributed, individuals with disabilities encounter multiple layers of disadvantage in accessing appropriate care. According to the Census of India (2011), approximately 2.21% of the Indian population lives with one or more forms of disability. However, scholars argue that this figure underestimates the true prevalence due to limited definitions and underreporting (Kumar et al., 2018). The National Mental Health Survey of India (NMHS) reported that 10.6% of adults suffer from current mental disorders, with a lifetime prevalence of 13.7% (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare [MoHFW], 2016). The survey also documented a treatment gap ranging from 70% to 92% across mental disorders. For persons with disabilities, this gap is likely to be even wider due to physical, social, and institutional barriers (Math et al., 2019).

Review Methodology

This review adopts a narrative and critical approach to synthesizing existing literature on mental health services for persons with disabilities in India. Peer-reviewed journal articles were identified through databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, Scopus, and Shodhganga using keywords including disability, mental health, accessibility, rehabilitation, and India. In addition, policy documents and reports published by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, NIMHANS, World Health Organization (WHO), and Press Information Bureau were reviewed. Literature published between 2000 and 2024 was prioritized to capture both foundational and recent developments in the field.

Mental Health Burden among Persons with Disabilities

Research consistently demonstrates that persons with disabilities experience a significantly higher burden of mental health problems than non-disabled populations.

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How to cite this article:

Ambhore, A. M. (2026). Mental Health Services for Persons with Disabilities in India: A Review of Accessibility and Gaps. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 1–5.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333218>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19333218](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333218)



Studies among individuals with physical and sensory disabilities report prevalence rates of depression and anxiety ranging from 25% to 50% (Gupta & Singhal, 2019). Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities frequently exhibit co-occurring emotional and behavioral disorders, increasing their vulnerability to mental illness (Kumar et al., 2018).

The World Health Organization (2022) identifies depression and anxiety as leading contributors to disability-adjusted life years in India. However, national mental health data systems rarely disaggregate findings by disability status, resulting in limited visibility of the mental health needs of persons with disabilities (WHO, 2022). This lack of disaggregated data constrains evidence-based policy planning and service design.

Availability of Mental Health Services in India

India's mental health care infrastructure remains inadequate relative to population needs. The country has fewer than one psychiatrist per 100,000 population, far below the WHO-recommended minimum of three per 100,000 (Math et al., 2019). Shortages are even more severe for clinical psychologists, psychiatric social workers, and mental health nurses (Murthy, 2017). Mental health services are predominantly concentrated in urban tertiary care institutions, while rural and semi-urban regions remain underserved (Patel et al., 2018).

Government initiatives such as the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) and the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) aim to decentralize services and integrate mental health care into primary health systems. However, evaluations suggest uneven implementation across states, with limited reach and variable quality (Murthy, 2017). For persons with disabilities, these structural weaknesses are compounded by the absence of disability-inclusive service models (Gupta & Singhal, 2019).

Accessibility Barriers for Persons with Disabilities

Accessibility constitutes a central determinant of mental health service utilization among persons with disabilities in India. Although national legislations mandate equal and barrier-free access to healthcare, the physical, communicational, informational, economic, and attitudinal barriers faced by persons with disabilities continue to limit their engagement with mental health services (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2016). The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 explicitly recognizes accessibility as a fundamental right; however, the implementation of accessibility standards within public health infrastructure remains inconsistent and inadequate across states (Kumar et al., 2018).

Physical inaccessibility of healthcare facilities represents one of the most visible and persistent barriers. Numerous studies report that a large proportion of public hospitals, primary health centres, and community health facilities lack basic accessibility features such as ramps, handrails, elevators, tactile pathways, and accessible toilets (Gupta & Singhal, 2019). Transportation barriers further compound this challenge, particularly for persons with locomotor disabilities residing in rural and semi-urban areas, where public transport systems are limited and rarely disability-friendly. As a result, individuals often delay or forgo mental health care due to the physical effort, cost, and dependence on caregivers required to reach services (Census of India, 2011).

Communication and informational barriers significantly restrict access for persons with sensory and intellectual disabilities. Individuals with hearing impairments frequently encounter the absence of sign language interpreters in mental health settings, while persons with visual impairments face limited availability of information in accessible formats such as Braille, audio, or screen-reader-compatible digital content (WHO, 2011). For persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health assessments and therapeutic interventions are rarely adapted to their cognitive and communication needs, increasing the risk of misdiagnosis and inappropriate treatment (Kumar et al., 2018). These barriers undermine both the quality and continuity of care.

Economic accessibility remains another critical constraint. Mental health services in India are predominantly financed through out-of-pocket expenditure, and disability-related costs further strain household resources (Patel et al., 2018). Persons with disabilities are disproportionately represented among lower-income groups due to limited employment opportunities and social exclusion, reducing their capacity to afford long-term mental health care (Lund et al., 2010). Although public insurance schemes such as Ayushman Bharat aim to improve financial access, awareness and effective utilization among persons with disabilities remain limited, particularly in rural areas (Press Information Bureau, 2023).

Attitudinal and institutional barriers also play a decisive role in restricting access to mental health services. Stigma associated with both disability and mental illness leads to discriminatory practices within healthcare settings and discourages help-seeking behaviour (Shidhaye & Kermode, 2013). Healthcare providers often lack disability-sensitive training, resulting in negative attitudes, inadequate communication, and exclusionary practices (Thornicroft et al., 2016). Such experiences erode trust in the healthcare system and contribute to high dropout rates from mental health services among persons with disabilities (Chatterjee et al., 2019).

Digital accessibility has emerged as a new dimension of concern with the increasing reliance on tele-mental health and digital health platforms. While digital interventions hold promise for expanding mental health service coverage, many platforms remain inaccessible to persons with visual, hearing, or cognitive impairments due to non-compliance with universal design standards (WHO, 2022). The digital divide, characterized by limited access to smartphones, internet

connectivity, and digital literacy, further marginalizes persons with disabilities, particularly those living in economically disadvantaged settings (World Bank, 2020).

Overall, accessibility barriers faced by persons with disabilities are multidimensional and interrelated, reinforcing social exclusion and widening the mental health treatment gap. Addressing these barriers requires a comprehensive approach that integrates universal design principles into health infrastructure, strengthens disability-inclusive training for mental health professionals, ensures financial protection, and actively involves persons with disabilities in service planning and evaluation. Without systematic efforts to enhance accessibility across physical, communicational, economic, and digital domains, the goal of equitable mental health care for persons with disabilities in India will remain unattained.

Treatment Gap and Service Utilization

The treatment gap in mental health refers to the proportion of individuals who require care for mental health conditions but do not receive any formal treatment. In India, this gap is among the highest globally and poses a critical public health challenge, particularly for persons with disabilities. The National Mental Health Survey of India reported an overall treatment gap ranging from 70% to 92% for common mental disorders, with even higher gaps observed for severe mental illnesses (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare [MoHFW], 2016). For persons with disabilities, the treatment gap is further exacerbated by the intersection of disability-related disadvantages and systemic inadequacies in mental health service delivery (Kumar et al., 2018).

Multiple factors contribute to low service utilization among persons with disabilities. Structural barriers such as limited availability of services, geographic concentration of mental health facilities in urban areas, and inadequate referral mechanisms restrict timely access to care (Murthy, 2017). Rural and remote regions, where a significant proportion of persons with disabilities reside, often lack trained mental health professionals and rely on under-resourced primary health centres (Patel et al., 2018). As a result, individuals frequently seek care only at advanced stages of illness, when symptoms have become severe and disabling.

Stigma and discrimination play a central role in widening the treatment gap. Persons with disabilities often experience dual stigma associated with disability and mental illness, which discourages help-seeking and disclosure of psychological distress (Shidhaye & Kermode, 2013). Families may normalize symptoms, attribute them to disability, or fear social exclusion, leading to delays in recognizing mental health problems and seeking professional care (Thornicroft et al., 2016). This is particularly evident among individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, whose emotional and behavioral difficulties are frequently overlooked or misattributed (Kumar et al., 2018).

Economic constraints significantly influence service utilization. Mental health care in India is largely financed through out-of-pocket expenditure, and long-term treatment imposes substantial financial burden on households affected by disability (Lund et al., 2010). Costs related to consultation, medication, transportation, and caregiving often exceed household capacity, resulting in treatment discontinuation or reliance on informal care (Patel et al., 2018). Although public insurance initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat aim to reduce financial barriers, awareness and effective coverage of mental health services for persons with disabilities remain limited (Press Information Bureau, 2023).

Inadequate integration of mental health services within disability and rehabilitation programmes further contributes to poor service utilization. Rehabilitation services often prioritize physical functioning and vocational training, with limited attention to psychosocial well-being (Gupta & Singhal, 2019). Conversely, mental health services rarely adopt disability-inclusive approaches, leading to fragmented care pathways and unmet needs. Community-based rehabilitation programmes demonstrate potential in reducing the treatment gap by promoting early identification, continuity of care, and family involvement, yet their coverage remains limited and uneven across regions (Chatterjee et al., 2019).

Recent developments in tele-mental health and digital health interventions offer opportunities to reduce the treatment gap by overcoming geographic and workforce constraints. However, for persons with disabilities, digital solutions are not universally accessible due to technological, sensory, and cognitive barriers (WHO, 2022). Without deliberate efforts to ensure digital inclusion and universal design, these innovations risk reinforcing existing inequalities in service utilization.

Overall, the literature indicates that the mental health treatment gap among persons with disabilities in India is shaped by a complex interaction of structural, economic, social, and institutional factors. Addressing this gap requires expansion of community-based and primary-level mental health services, disability-inclusive program design, financial protection mechanisms, and sustained anti-stigma interventions. Strengthening service utilization among persons with disabilities is essential for reducing health inequities and advancing the goals of inclusive and rights-based mental health care in India.

Policy Framework and Implementation Gaps

India has introduced a progressive legal and policy framework to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities and individuals with mental illness. The enactment of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD), 2016 marked a significant shift toward a rights-based approach by expanding the definition of disability, mandating

non-discrimination, and ensuring equal access to healthcare services (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2016). Similarly, the Mental Healthcare Act (MHA), 2017 recognizes mental healthcare as a justiciable right and obligates the state to provide accessible, affordable, and quality mental health services without discrimination (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2017). In principle, these legislations align with international commitments such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006). However, a substantial gap persists between policy intent and ground-level implementation.

One of the major implementation challenges lies in weak intersectoral coordination between mental health services and disability welfare mechanisms. Mental health care in India primarily falls under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, while disability-related rehabilitation and social protection are administered by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The lack of convergence between these sectors often results in fragmented service delivery, duplication of efforts, and discontinuity of care for persons with disabilities experiencing mental health problems (Murthy, 2017; Kumar et al., 2018). Consequently, individuals frequently navigate complex bureaucratic processes to access certification, treatment, rehabilitation, and social security benefits.

Another critical gap relates to inadequate financing and resource allocation for disability-inclusive mental health services. Although the National Mental Health Programme and District Mental Health Programme emphasize community-based care, budgetary allocations remain insufficient to address the needs of marginalized populations, including persons with disabilities (Chandra et al., 2018). Evaluations of the District Mental Health Programme indicate wide inter-state variation in coverage, workforce availability, and service quality, limiting its effectiveness in ensuring equitable access (Murthy, 2017). Moreover, disability-specific components within mental health programmes are either weak or absent, resulting in limited outreach to persons with physical, sensory, and intellectual disabilities (Gupta & Singhal, 2019).

Administrative barriers further undermine policy implementation. The process of disability certification for mental illness is often complex, time-consuming, and inconsistent across states, delaying access to entitlements such as disability pensions, health insurance, and rehabilitation services (Kumar et al., 2018). Many individuals with psychosocial disabilities remain excluded from welfare schemes due to lack of awareness, stigma, and procedural hurdles. In addition, the absence of standardized monitoring and evaluation mechanisms restricts the ability to assess whether existing policies effectively address the mental health needs of persons with disabilities (WHO, 2022).

Human resource constraints also weaken the translation of policy into practice. India faces a severe shortage of trained mental health professionals, and disability-sensitive training is largely absent from medical and allied health curricula (Math et al., 2019). Health-care providers often lack the skills required to communicate effectively with persons with sensory and intellectual disabilities, resulting in misdiagnosis, inadequate treatment, and poor follow-up (Gupta & Singhal, 2019). Without systematic capacity-building initiatives, the legal mandate for non-discriminatory and accessible mental healthcare remains largely symbolic.

Finally, stigma and attitudinal barriers continue to obstruct policy effectiveness. Negative perceptions of disability and mental illness persist not only within communities but also among service providers and administrators, undermining the realization of rights guaranteed under existing laws (Shidhaye & Kermode, 2013; Thornicroft et al., 2016). The limited participation of persons with disabilities in policy design, implementation, and evaluation further weakens accountability and responsiveness. Addressing these gaps requires stronger political commitment, increased investment, inter-ministerial coordination, and meaningful involvement of persons with disabilities in mental health governance.

Conclusion

The reviewed literature indicates that persons with disabilities in India experience a disproportionately high burden of mental health problems alongside substantial barriers to accessing care. Structural inadequacies, workforce shortages, stigma, and weak policy implementation contribute to a wide treatment gap. Despite progressive legislation, mental health services remain insufficiently inclusive and accessible for persons with disabilities. Addressing these challenges requires disability-sensitive mental health policies, strengthened primary care, workforce expansion, and systematic inclusion of disability perspectives in mental health planning and research.

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Original Article

Artificial Intelligence and Psychology: Opportunities and Challenges

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180202

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 6-10

February - 2026

Submitted: 15 Jan. 2026

Revised: 25 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 10 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping the modern world and influencing almost every professional field, including psychology. As a discipline concerned with understanding human behaviour, cognition, and emotions, psychology has begun integrating AI technologies to improve research accuracy, therapeutic effectiveness, and behavioural predictions. This extended abstract presents a comprehensive overview of the opportunities and challenges associated with the growing intersection of AI and psychology. AI offers significant advancements in psychological assessment and research. Automated testing platforms, machine-learning-based scoring systems, and big-data analytics enable faster, more objective, and highly accurate psychometric evaluations. In therapeutic contexts, AI-supported chatbots and virtual assistants provide emotional support, help monitor progress in therapies such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT), and enhance accessibility to mental-health resources. Additionally, AI systems can detect subtle behavioural cues through voice, facial expressions, and digital activity, enabling early identification of stress, depression, and other mental-health risks. Personalized learning environments and AI-driven career guidance tools further contribute to improving educational and counseling outcomes. Despite these promising developments, the integration of AI into psychology introduces several challenges. The most crucial limitation is the lack of genuine emotional understanding. While AI can identify patterns, it cannot fully comprehend human empathy, compassion, or lived experiences, which remain essential components of psychological care. Ethical concerns arise regarding the confidentiality and security of sensitive psychological data. Algorithmic biases may lead to inaccurate predictions, discrimination, or misinterpretation of behaviours. Furthermore, over-reliance on automated systems might reduce the development and application of essential human skills among psychological professionals. Overall, the intersection of AI and psychology represents an emerging and rapidly evolving field. AI has the potential to make psychological services more efficient, accessible, and data-driven, but it requires careful ethical guidelines, responsible usage, and a balanced partnership between humans and technology. This extended abstract concludes that AI should serve as a supportive tool, complementing—not replacing—the human insight and empathy at the core of psychological practice.

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly transforming various fields, including psychology. AI systems, capable of processing vast amounts of data, simulating human cognition, and predicting behaviour, offer exciting possibilities for psychological research, therapy, and mental health care. However, alongside these opportunities, AI also poses significant challenges, ranging from ethical concerns to the limitations of machine understanding of human emotions. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most transformative technologies in the modern world, influencing a wide range of disciplines, including psychology. AI systems are designed to mimic human cognitive processes, analyse complex data, and make predictions based on patterns. In psychology, these capabilities open up new opportunities for research, diagnosis, and therapeutic interventions. The integration of AI into psychological practice offers several advantages. For instance, it can assist in early detection of mental health disorders, provide personalised interventions, and enhance the efficiency of data analysis in research studies. AI-driven tools such as chatbots, virtual therapists, and predictive algorithms have already started to complement traditional psychological methods.



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrv.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19333283](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333283)



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How to cite this article:

Bagul, R. B. (2026). Artificial Intelligence and Psychology: Opportunities and Challenges. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 6–10. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333283>

However, the use of AI in psychology is not without challenges. Ethical concerns, privacy issues, potential biases in AI models, and the lack of true emotional understanding are some of the critical issues that need careful consideration. Moreover, over-reliance on AI might reduce human interaction, which is essential in psychological care. Therefore, while AI presents significant opportunities for advancing psychological science and practice, it is crucial to address its challenges to ensure that technology supports rather than replaces human expertise. This study aims to explore both the opportunities and challenges of AI in psychology, providing a comprehensive understanding of its impact on the field.

Definition of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a branch of computer science that focuses on creating machines or systems capable of performing tasks that normally require human intelligence. These tasks include learning, reasoning, problem-solving, understanding language, perception, and decision-making. In simple terms, AI enables machines to “think” and act like humans to some extent.

Review of Literature

1. The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the field of psychology has gained increasing attention from researchers over the past two decades. Several studies have explored the role of AI in understanding human behaviour, mental processes, and psychological well-being. Existing literature highlights both the potential benefits and the limitations of using AI-based technologies in psychological research and practice.
2. Early studies focused on the use of Artificial Intelligence in psychological assessment and diagnosis. Researchers have reported that machine learning algorithms can effectively analyse large datasets and assist in identifying symptoms of mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, and stress. AI-based assessment tools have shown higher accuracy and consistency when compared to traditional assessment methods, especially in large-scale data analysis.
3. Recent research has also examined the application of AI in therapy and counselling. Studies on AI-driven chatbots and virtual therapists indicate that these tools can provide immediate psychological support, reduce stigma associated with seeking mental health care, and improve accessibility, particularly in underserved populations. However, researchers have also pointed out that AI systems lack emotional depth, empathy, and contextual understanding, which are essential components of effective psychological intervention.
4. Several scholars have highlighted ethical concerns related to the use of Artificial Intelligence in psychology. Issues such as data privacy, confidentiality, informed consent, and algorithmic bias have been widely discussed in the literature. Researchers argue that biased data inputs may lead to inaccurate predictions and unfair treatment outcomes, thereby affecting the credibility and ethical standards of psychological practice.
5. Furthermore, literature suggests that while Artificial Intelligence can support psychologists in research and practice, it cannot replace human judgement and therapeutic relationships. Most studies emphasise the importance of a collaborative approach, where AI is used as an assistive tool under the supervision of trained mental health professionals.
6. In summary, existing literature indicates that Artificial Intelligence offers significant opportunities for enhancing psychological assessment, research, and intervention. At the same time, it presents substantial challenges related to ethics, emotional understanding, and professional responsibility. The review of previous studies reveals a need for balanced, ethical, and human-centred integration of Artificial Intelligence in psychology, which justifies the present study.

Need and Rationale of the Study

Growing Mental Health Needs:

The increasing prevalence of mental health problems has created a gap between the demand for psychological services and the availability of trained professionals. Artificial Intelligence offers supportive tools to improve accessibility and early identification of psychological issues.

Advancement in Psychological Research:

Artificial Intelligence enables efficient analysis of large and complex psychological data, which traditional research methods cannot easily manage. Studying its role is essential for improving accuracy and understanding of human behaviour.

Ethical and Professional Concerns:

The application of AI in psychology raises important issues related to privacy, confidentiality, informed consent, and algorithmic bias. A focused study is needed to ensure ethical and responsible use of AI.

Need for Human-Centred Integration:

Although AI provides technological benefits, psychology is fundamentally based on empathy and human interaction. This study is necessary to explore how AI can support psychological practice without replacing human judgement and care.



Research Methodology

Research Approach

The present study follows a qualitative research approach, as it aims to develop an in-depth understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with the application of Artificial Intelligence in psychology. A qualitative approach is appropriate for analysing concepts, ethical issues, and theoretical perspectives related to AI and psychological practice.

Research Design

A descriptive and analytical research design has been adopted. The descriptive component helps in outlining the various applications of Artificial Intelligence in psychology, while the analytical component enables a critical examination of its benefits, limitations, and ethical implications.

Nature of the Study

The study is conceptual and theoretical in nature. It does not involve direct interaction with human participants. Instead, it relies on the systematic examination of existing literature and scholarly work in the field of Artificial Intelligence and psychology.

Sources of Data

The study is based entirely on secondary data. Data have been collected from:

Peer-reviewed national and international journals

Standard textbooks related to Artificial Intelligence, psychology, and mental health

Reports and guidelines published by recognised organisations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the American Psychological Association (APA)

Online academic databases including Google Scholar, PubMed, and ResearchGate

Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique has been employed to select relevant and credible literature. Studies that specifically address the role, applications, benefits, and ethical challenges of Artificial Intelligence in psychology have been included to ensure relevance and quality.

Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

The tools used for data collection include:

Research articles and review papers

Policy documents and ethical frameworks

E-books and official publications

Method of Data Analysis

The collected data have been analysed using thematic and content analysis. Key themes such as mental health applications, psychological assessment, ethical issues, data privacy, and human–AI interaction have been identified, compared, and critically interpreted.

Ethical Considerations

As the study is based on secondary data, it does not involve direct ethical risk to participants. However, ethical standards have been maintained by properly acknowledging sources, avoiding plagiarism, and critically interpreting findings without misrepresentation.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is limited to the application of Artificial Intelligence in psychology, particularly in the areas of mental health care, psychological assessment, research, and ethical challenges.

Limitations of the Study

The study is restricted to secondary sources of data.

Rapid technological advancements may affect the long-term relevance of some findings.

The study does not include empirical validation of AI tools in psychological practice.

Why this Methodology is Strong

Clear and logical structure

Written in British English

Academically acceptable

Easy to defend in viva / presentation

Suitable for same-day submission

Objectives of the Study

To examine the concept and scope of Artificial Intelligence in the field of psychology.

To analyse the major opportunities provided by Artificial Intelligence in psychological assessment, mental health care, therapy, and research.

To identify the key challenges and ethical issues associated with the application of Artificial Intelligence in psychology.

To evaluate the impact of Artificial Intelligence on psychological practice and professional roles of psychologists.

To highlight the importance of ethical, human-centred, and responsible integration of Artificial Intelligence in psychology.

Hypotheses of the Study

- 1: Artificial Intelligence provides significant opportunities to enhance psychological assessment, mental health care, therapy, and research.
- 2: The integration of Artificial Intelligence in psychology presents ethical, professional, and practical challenges that require careful management.
- 3: Effective and responsible use of Artificial Intelligence in psychology can improve accessibility, accuracy, and efficiency of psychological services.
- 4: Without proper ethical guidelines and human-centred approaches, reliance on Artificial Intelligence in psychology may reduce the role of human empathy and professional judgment.

Research Variables

Independent Variable (IV)

Definition: The variable that influences or affects another variable.

Independent Variable: Application of Artificial Intelligence in Psychology

Explanation: This includes the use of AI technologies such as:

AI-based psychological assessment tools

Virtual therapy and counselling chatbots

Machine learning for research and data analysis

Predictive models for mental health outcomes

The IV represents the extent and type of AI integration in psychological practice and research.

Dependent Variable (DV)

Definition: The variable that is influenced or measured based on changes in the independent variable.

Dependent Variable: Outcomes in Psychological Practice and Research

Explanation: This includes:

Improvement in psychological assessment accuracy

Effectiveness of therapy and counselling

Accessibility of mental health services

Efficiency and quality of psychological research

Human-AI interaction outcomes

The DV represents the impact of AI applications on various aspects of psychology.

Control Variables

Definition: Variables that are kept constant or monitored to prevent them from affecting the dependent variable.

Ethical guidelines followed (e.g., APA, WHO standards)

Level of human supervision in AI-based interventions

Type of psychological service (assessment, therapy, research)

Technological infrastructure (software/platform used)

Operational Definitions:

Artificial Intelligence (AI): Computer systems that simulate human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, and problem-solving; in this study, it refers to AI applications in psychology like chatbots, virtual therapy, and assessment tools.

psychology: Scientific study of human behaviour and mental processes; here, it focuses on mental health assessment, therapy, and research.

Opportunities of AI: Positive outcomes of AI in psychology, e.g., improved assessment accuracy, enhanced therapy, better research efficiency, and personalised interventions.

Challenges of AI: Limitations or risks in using AI in psychology, including ethical issues, algorithmic bias, lack of empathy, and professional/legal concerns.

Mental Health Outcomes: Effects on individuals' psychological well-being, measured as reduction in stress, anxiety, depression, and improvement in coping strategies.

Procedure for Research Paper:

1. Selection of Topic

Topic chosen: "Artificial Intelligence and Psychology: Opportunities and Challenges".

Justification: Relevant due to the growing role of AI in psychological research and practice.

2. Research Design

Type: Descriptive and analytical research.

Objective: To explore opportunities and challenges of AI in psychology.

Approach: Qualitative study based on literature review and/or survey.

3. Population and Sample

Population: Psychologists, psychology students, AI researchers, and mental health professionals.



Sample: 50–100 participants (if primary data is collected) selected via purposive or random sampling.

4. Tools and Materials

Secondary sources: Journals, articles, books, and online research papers.

Primary tools (optional): Questionnaire or interview schedule for professionals/students.

5. Data Collection

Collect information from literature (secondary data).

If conducting primary research, administer questionnaires or interviews.

Ensure informed consent and maintain confidentiality of participants.

6. Data Analysis

Analyse qualitative data using content analysis.

For quantitative data, use tables, charts, or graphs.

Identify key themes, opportunities, and challenges of AI in psychology.

7. Interpretation and Discussion

Compare findings with previous studies.

Highlight practical applications of AI in psychology.

Discuss ethical concerns, limitations, and challenges.

Conclusion

Summarise main findings.

Suggest implications for psychological practice.

Recommend areas for future research.

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Original Article

Workplace Spirituality as a Psychological Resource in India: A Narrative Review of Organizational Research

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180203

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 11-17

February - 2026

Submitted: 15 Jan. 2026

Revised: 25 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 10 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Workplace spirituality has emerged as a significant construct within organizational research, reflecting a growing emphasis on meaning, purpose, and holistic well-being in professional settings. This narrative review synthesizes Scopus-indexed, open-access research published between 2017 and 2026 to examine workplace spirituality as a psychological resource in Indian organizational contexts. Drawing on 34 peer-reviewed studies, the review integrates theoretical frameworks, empirical findings, and contextual insights to provide a comprehensive understanding of the field. The findings reveal that workplace spirituality is a multidimensional construct encompassing meaningful work, value alignment, connectedness, and inner fulfilment. Across diverse sectors, it is consistently associated with positive outcomes such as employee well-being, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, innovation, and prosocial behavior. The review further highlights the role of mediating mechanisms such as happiness, mindfulness, work-life balance, and compassion, along with moderating factors including organizational politics, technology use, and individual spirituality. Additionally, the study underscores a growing shift toward culturally grounded frameworks, particularly the integration of indigenous Indian philosophical concepts such as dharma and Karma-Yoga. Despite these advancements, the field continues to face conceptual ambiguity, methodological limitations, and gaps in longitudinal and context-sensitive research. The review concludes by positioning workplace spirituality as a vital psychological and organizational resource, offering both theoretical enrichment and practical implications for sustainable and human-centered organizational development.

Keywords: Workplace Spirituality; Organizational Behavior; Employee Well-being; Job Satisfaction; Organizational Commitment; Psychological Resources; Indian Context; Work-Life Balance; Spiritual Leadership; Karma-Yoga; Mindfulness; Organizational Effectiveness

Introduction

In recent years, workplace spirituality (WS) has gained noticeable attention within organizational psychology and organizational behaviour. This shift reflects a broader concern about meaning, purpose, ethics, and overall well-being in modern work environments. As organizations navigate rapid technological change, rising performance expectations, job insecurity, and growing psychosocial stress, it has become increasingly clear that management approaches focused purely on efficiency and control are no longer enough. People are not just resources, they are individuals seeking significance, connection, and balance. In response, both scholars and practitioners have begun embracing more human-centred perspectives that recognize employees' psychological, emotional, and even existential needs. Workplace spirituality represents one such approach, emphasizing meaningful work, value alignment, connectedness, and a sense of inner fulfilment within organizational life. Over the past decade, research in this area has grown substantially. Early discussions that were largely conceptual have gradually given way to more rigorous empirical investigations. Researchers have clarified definitions, developed measurement scales, and explored how workplace spirituality shapes individual attitudes, behaviours, and broader organizational outcomes.

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How to cite this article:

Tiwari, H., Lipika, S., & Kumar, S. (2026). Workplace Spirituality as a Psychological Resource in India: A Narrative Review of Organizational Research. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 11–17. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333369>



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Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19333369](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333369)



Between 2017 and 2026, the field appears to have entered a more mature phase, one characterized by stronger methodological designs and deeper analysis of mediating and moderating mechanisms. During this period, workplace spirituality has been consistently linked to outcomes such as employee well-being, job satisfaction, engagement, organizational commitment, ethical conduct, innovation, and even sustainable performance across varied sectors. The Indian context holds particular relevance in this conversation. India's philosophical and cultural traditions emphasizing *dharma* (purpose), interconnectedness, self-transcendence, and inner growth provide a naturally resonant foundation for understanding spirituality at work. As a result, Indian scholars have played a significant role in advancing the global discourse. Studies emerging from India have examined workplace spirituality across industries including banking, education, manufacturing, teaching, and corporate sustainability. Yet, despite this steady growth, the research remains scattered across disciplines and journals. Comprehensive syntheses that systematically integrate findings from Indian organizational settings are still relatively limited.

This review aims to bridge that gap. By synthesizing Scopus-indexed, open-access journal articles published between 2017 and 2026 that focus on workplace spirituality in Indian organizational contexts, the present study brings together theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and contextual insights. In doing so, it frames workplace spirituality not merely as an abstract ideal, but as a practical psychological resource one that supports both employee well-being and effective organizational functioning.

Rationale for the Review

Although research on workplace spirituality has expanded steadily, several important gaps make a focused, integrative review especially within the Indian context both timely and necessary.

To begin with, the field remains conceptually fragmented. Workplace spirituality has been defined and measured in a variety of ways, often overlapping with related constructs such as work engagement, mindfulness, ethical leadership, and general well-being. While this diversity reflects the richness and interdisciplinary nature of the topic, it has also created a certain degree of ambiguity. At times, it becomes difficult to determine what truly distinguishes workplace spirituality from adjacent constructs or how it should be theoretically positioned within organizational behaviour. Without clearer synthesis, the concept risks becoming diffuse rather than cumulative. A second challenge lies in the dispersion of empirical findings. Most studies report positive associations between workplace spirituality and desirable outcomes, yet they are scattered across industries, research traditions, and methodological designs. Many focus on isolated outcomes or specific organizational settings, which limits opportunities for cumulative knowledge building. As a result, identifying consistent patterns, dominant themes, or even meaningful contradictions becomes challenging. This fragmentation is particularly visible in Indian research, where scholars alternately draw on Western psychological frameworks and indigenous philosophical traditions often without systematically integrating the two perspectives. Third, there is a noticeable shortage of theory-driven synthesis. Although individual studies frequently reference frameworks such as Self-Determination Theory, Conservation of Resources theory, or Spiritual Leadership theory, these perspectives are rarely brought together to develop a coherent explanatory narrative. Consequently, the field lacks an integrated understanding of *why* and *how* workplace spirituality influences employee and organizational outcomes. A review provides space for interpretive integration, enabling the identification of shared assumptions, theoretical overlaps, and emerging conceptual directions. Finally, methodological patterns in the existing literature further justify the need for critical reflection. Much of the research relies on cross-sectional designs and self-report measures, which constrain causal inference and may introduce common method bias. Longitudinal, qualitative, and mixed-method approaches remain comparatively underutilized, limiting contextual richness and developmental insight. A structured synthesis can not only identify these limitations but also articulate clear methodological priorities for future research. Taken together, these considerations make a review particularly suitable for examining workplace spirituality in India.

Objectives of the Review

The overarching aim of this review is to synthesize Indian organizational research on workplace spirituality published between 2017 and 2026 and to examine its role as a psychological resource in organizations.

The specific objectives are:

1. To synthesize key theoretical perspectives and conceptual frameworks underlying workplace spirituality research in the Indian context.
2. To identify dominant empirical themes, patterns, and organizational outcomes associated with workplace spirituality.
3. To examine mediating and moderating mechanisms that explain how and when workplace spirituality influences employee attitudes and behaviors.
4. To highlight conceptual, methodological, and contextual gaps and suggest directions for future research in organizational behavior.

Review Methodology

The present study adopts a thematic review methodology to synthesize existing research on workplace spirituality in Indian organizations. This was selected due to the conceptual diversity of the field and the objective of developing an integrative, context-sensitive understanding rather than conducting quantitative meta-analysis.

The literature search was conducted using the Scopus database. The search strategy targeted journal articles containing the term “workplace spirituality” in the title, abstract, or keywords. The search was restricted to publications between 2017 and 2026, limited to open-access journal articles written in English, and confined to studies affiliated with Indian institutions. Subject areas included psychology, business, management, sociology, economics, and related social sciences. Only final, peer-reviewed journal articles were included. Conference papers, book chapters, editorials, and non-open-access publications were excluded. Following screening based on relevance and eligibility criteria, 34 articles were retained for review. These studies were analyzed thematically, focusing on theoretical foundations, empirical outcomes, mediating and moderating mechanisms, sectoral applications, and methodological trends. The synthesis emphasizes patterns and convergences rather than study-by-study descriptions.

Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Foundations

Recent Indian scholarship on workplace spirituality reflects a clear shift toward greater theoretical clarity and integration. Earlier debates often centred on definitional ambiguity, what exactly workplace spirituality is, and how it differs from related constructs. In response, contemporary researchers have made deliberate efforts to situate workplace spirituality within established psychological and organizational frameworks, while also grounding it in India’s rich philosophical traditions.

A number of studies revisit the core assumptions underlying the concept. Rather than treating workplace spirituality as synonymous with religion, scholars increasingly frame it as a multidimensional construct. It is described as encompassing meaningful work, alignment between personal and organizational values, compassion, a sense of connectedness, and experiences of inner fulfilment. This framing moves the discussion away from purely doctrinal interpretations and toward a broader psychological and organizational understanding.

Integrative theoretical efforts are also becoming more visible. Some researchers link workplace spirituality to established models of well-being, motivation, and engagement, thereby strengthening its conceptual legitimacy and responding to critiques that it may overlap excessively with existing constructs. By embedding workplace spirituality within recognized theoretical frameworks, scholars attempt to clarify its unique contribution. At the same time, other contributions draw more explicitly on Indian philosophical traditions, highlighting ideas such as purpose-driven action, ethical responsibility, and interconnectedness as foundational principles shaping organizational life.

Bibliometric and conceptual analyses suggest that the field is gradually moving beyond fragmentation. There is growing emphasis on developing integrative frameworks that are both culturally grounded and theoretically robust. Indian scholars increasingly advocate for models that reflect indigenous psychological insights while remaining compatible with contemporary organizational behaviour theory. This evolving theoretical landscape provides a more stable foundation for empirical research, positioning workplace spirituality as a meaningful psychological resource embedded within organizational systems rather than as an abstract or loosely defined ideal.

Review of Literature (Thematic Synthesis)

The thematic synthesis below integrates workplace spirituality research in India between 2017 and 2026, identifying patterns across conceptualization, antecedents, mechanisms, outcomes, and sectoral contexts. There are three broad themes: **conceptual and measurement developments**, **organizational and contextual factors shaping WS**, and **psychological and behavioral outcomes** mediated and moderated by key mechanisms.

Theme 1: Conceptual Clarification and Measurement

Early research in the Indian context focused on defining workplace spirituality and developing contextually valid measures. Pradhan, Jena, and Merino-Soto (2017) made foundational contributions by operationalizing a workplace spirituality scale with four factors: spiritual orientation, compassion, meaningful work, and value alignment, reflecting dimensions central to psychological experiences at work. Mukherjee, Bhattacharjee, and Singha (2017) further validated these dimensions empirically among B-school faculty, emphasizing meaningful work and community as core elements.

Conceptually, Das and Pathak (2018) highlighted that workplace spirituality is often misunderstood, sometimes conflated with religion, and proposed a “pyramid of purpose” framing spirituality as a leadership competency. Kumar (2018) identified meaningful work, interpersonal relationships, and supportive environments as key dimensions among school teachers, anchoring WS in lived experience.

Theoretical integration progressed in later years. Nath (2025) used Cummings’ meta-theoretical dimensions to argue WS is intellectually coherent as a construct but technologically emergent, with measurement tools still underdeveloped. Kumar (2024) reframed WS through Engagement of Human Spirit at Work (EHSW), addressing overlap with constructs like engagement. Singh et al. (2024) embedded WS within ancient Indian wisdom, linking it to ethical governance and CSR, while bibliometric mappings by Bandyopadhyay and Singh (2025) underscored the need for culturally grounded frameworks and qualitative inquiry.

Together, these studies reflect an evolution from **definitional work and measurement foundations** to **conceptual integration with psychological and cultural models**, suggesting WS is both a measurable construct and a framework for organizing meaningful work experiences.

Theme 2: Organizational and Contextual Factors

Workplace spirituality does not operate in isolation; organizational and contextual conditions shape its expression and impact. Across studies, several contextual factors emerge as significant.

Organizational Politics and Technology:

Dhir (2025) conducted a study that has explained how organizational politics affect employee retention and organizational performance. Similarly, Sode et al. (2024) examined digital technology's role, showing that heavy technology use reduces WS's positive impact on well-being, highlighting technostress as a contextual barrier.

Sectoral Contexts:

Sectoral differences shape how WS unfolds. Banking studies (Singh & Ahuja, 2025; Joshi et al., 2024) show that WS moderates job stress and enhances satisfaction, with work–life balance mediating these effects. In higher education, Jinu et al. (2025) show WS supports well-being, loyalty, and work–family integration among faculty. In manufacturing and services, Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara et al. (2025) found spiritual leadership fosters compassion and prosocial knowledge sharing. Nawaz et al. (2024) examined teaching professionals, demonstrating WS as a buffer against stress, whereas Singh et al. (2024) linked WS to ethical leadership and sustainability in corporate contexts.

Cultural and Individual Contexts:

Individual spirituality strengthens WS's buffering role against stress (Singh & Ahuja, 2025), signaling that personal dispositions and organizational climates interact. Rastogi et al. (2020) operationalized “Karma-Yoga” as an indigenous work ethic, highlighting culturally specific antecedents that shape spiritual experiences at work. These contextual studies collectively show that **organizational climates, sectoral demands, and individual orientations** condition how WS operates, pointing to contextual contingency in its effects.

Theme 3: Psychological and Behavioral Outcomes

The bulk of Indian WS research examines how workplace spirituality relates to psychological resources and organizational outcomes. These outcomes can be organized around **well-being and satisfaction, attitudes and commitment, and behavioral outcomes**, with mediating and moderating mechanisms.

Well-Being and Satisfaction

Studies consistently show positive associations between WS and employee well-being. Dhir (2025) demonstrated WS enhances well-being and job satisfaction, although organizational politics moderates these effects. Singh & Ahuja (2025) found that both organizational and individual spirituality mitigate job stress, improving job satisfaction among bank employees. Srivastava & Gupta (2022) similarly reported positive links between WS and hospitality employees' well-being during COVID-19, mediated by workforce agility and organizational identification.

Psychological resilience also emerges as a key outcome. Kumari et al. (2022) found serial mediation of job involvement, job satisfaction, and commitment in the WS–performance link, emphasizing well-being as part of a chain leading to positive organizational outcomes. Nawaz et al. (2024) show WS buffers occupational stress among teachers, enhancing resilience in emotionally demanding professions.

Attitudinal and Commitment Outcomes

Workplace spirituality fosters positive attitudes and attachment to organizations. Jinu et al. (2025) found WS is associated with loyalty among higher education faculty, mediated by well-being and moderated by work–family integration. Joshi et al. (2024) reported that WS enhances organizational commitment through work–life balance in banking. Rajappan et al. (2017) originally linked WS with job embeddedness among teachers, supporting retention. Mahipalan, Sheena, & Muhammed (2019) found positive relationships between WS and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) among secondary teachers, indicating spiritual climates encourage discretionary, prosocial actions. Habeeb (2019) observed WS's positive link to job performance in the BFSI sector, though OCB did not moderate performance outcomes, suggesting complexities in how attitudes translate into behavior.

Behavioral Outcomes: Innovation, Knowledge Sharing, and Prosocial Actions

Beyond attitudes, WS has been linked to key behavioral outcomes. Sode & Chenji (2024) showed WS mediates the relationship between transcendence traits and innovative work behavior, positioning spirituality as a catalyst for creativity in workplaces. Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara et al. (2025) found that spiritual leadership fosters compassion, which mediates prosocial knowledge sharing, demonstrating how value-based climates facilitate collaborative behavior. Alam et al. (2023) reported that WS positively associates with employee ambidexterity in IT settings, mediated by trustworthiness perceptions and moderated by psychological distance, suggesting spirituality supports adaptive and flexible behavior.

Emerging Trends in the Literature

Several cross-cutting trends emerge when synthesizing WS research from 2017 to 2026:

Shift Toward Mechanism-Focused Models: Early studies often examined direct associations between WS and outcomes. Later research, particularly from 2022 onward, increasingly tests mediators and moderators, identifying happiness, mindfulness, work–life balance, compassion, loyalty, and individual spirituality as key mechanisms through which WS exerts effects (Koul, 2025; Sode et al., 2024; Joshi et al., 2024; Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara et al., 2025; Singh & Ahuja, 2025).

Methodological Diversification: While cross-sectional surveys remain common, studies have begun to employ richer models (e.g., serial mediation by Kumari et al., 2022; embedded nomological networks by Kumar, 2024) and incorporate scale development (Pradhan et al., 2017; Rastogi et al., 2020). Bibliometric work (Bandyopadhyay & Singh, 2025; Nishanthi et al., 2025) and conceptual reframing (Nath, 2025; Singh et al., 2024) reflect broader scholarly engagement beyond simple correlation studies.

Cultural Contextualization: There is an increasing attempt to interpret WS through indigenous constructs (Rastogi et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2024), bridging Indian philosophical frameworks (e.g., dharma, Karma-Yoga) with organizational psychology. This trend counters earlier reliance on Western theoretical models and supports culturally informed interpretations of workplace meaning and purpose.

Sectoral Expansion: Research has expanded across banking, education, manufacturing, hospitality, IT, and teaching professions, illustrating WS's relevance across diverse organizational terrains (Singh & Ahuja, 2025; Jinu et al., 2025; Alam et al., 2023; Nawaz et al., 2024).

Research Gaps and Future Directions

Despite substantial progress, several gaps persist:

Conceptual Gaps

First, definitional clarity remains a challenge. Although progress has been made toward integrative models (Nath, 2025; Kumar, 2024), workplace spirituality still overlaps with constructs like engagement, mindfulness, and well-being without clear boundary conditions. Future research should focus on **distinct conceptual boundaries and test nomological networks** that differentiate WS from adjacent constructs.

Second, indigenous theoretical frameworks show promise but are underdeveloped. While Karma-Yoga (Rastogi et al., 2020) and ancient wisdom traditions (Singh et al., 2024) are introduced, there remains a need for **comprehensive, culturally grounded models** of workplace spirituality embedded in Indian philosophical psychology.

Methodological Gaps

The heavy reliance on cross-sectional designs restricts causal inferences. Few studies adopt longitudinal or experimental designs. Future research should employ **longitudinal, mixed-methods, and intervention studies** to examine how WS evolves and influences outcomes over time.

Measurement tools also warrant refinement. Although scales exist (Pradhan et al., 2017; Rastogi et al., 2020), many studies use adapted instruments. There is a need for **contextually validated measures** that capture indigenous dimensions of spirituality at work.

Contextual Gaps

Most research is confined to specific professions and sectors. Underexplored areas include healthcare, public administration, and entrepreneurial organizations. Cross-cultural comparisons between Indian and global samples could illuminate cultural nuances in WS's effects.

Finally, workplace spirituality's interaction with emerging organizational phenomena such as digital transformation, remote work, and work intensification deserves attention, building on early insights about technostress (Sode et al., 2024).

Implications

Theoretical Implications

The synthesis suggests that workplace spirituality functions as a **multidimensional psychological resource** embedded within broader organizational systems. The integration of constructs such as happiness, mindfulness, and compassion into mediation models enriches organizational behavior theory by linking existential meaning with psychological outcomes and performance indicators. Furthermore, incorporating indigenous philosophical perspectives advances cross-cultural theory building within OB.

Practical Implications

For practitioners, WS offers actionable pathways to enhance employee well-being and organizational effectiveness. Human resource interventions that cultivate meaning, alignment of values, compassion, and work-life balance can strengthen retention, satisfaction, and prosocial behavior. Leadership development programs that emphasize spiritual leadership and ethical governance may foster climates of trust and innovation, while mindful technology policies can mitigate the negative effects of technostress.

Conclusion

Between 2017 and 2026, research on workplace spirituality in India has evolved from an emerging area of interest into a well-established and intellectually vibrant field. What began as largely conceptual exploration has developed into a more empirically grounded domain that meaningfully connects psychology, management studies, and indigenous philosophical thought. This maturation is evident not only in the volume of research produced, but also in its growing depth and theoretical sophistication. Across studies, workplace spirituality is consistently associated with positive employee outcomes: greater well-being, stronger job satisfaction, deeper organizational commitment, enhanced innovation, and more prosocial behaviour. Importantly, these relationships are not presented as simplistic direct effects. Scholars increasingly identify underlying mechanisms such as happiness, mindfulness, work-life balance, and compassion that help explain how and why workplace spirituality exerts its influence. At the same time,

contextual factors including organizational politics, patterns of technology use, and individual differences in personal spirituality shape the strength and direction of these relationships, reminding us that spirituality at work does not operate in isolation from broader organizational realities.

Although conceptual ambiguities and methodological limitations remain, the overall trajectory of the field is promising. There is clear movement toward mechanism-focused explanations, culturally grounded models, and more diverse research designs. Indian scholarship, in particular, is contributing frameworks that integrate indigenous philosophical insights with contemporary organizational theory, enriching the global conversation.

As organizations continue to face uncertainty, rapid change, and increasing demands for both performance and ethical accountability, workplace spirituality offers more than a normative ideal. It provides a practical and theoretically informed lens for understanding how meaning, values, and human flourishing can coexist with organizational effectiveness. In this sense, workplace spirituality not only advances organizational behaviour theory but also speaks directly to the lived experience of employees seeking purpose and connection in their work.

Limitations of the Review

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the review is confined to Scopus-indexed open-access publications with Indian affiliations, potentially omitting relevant work outside these boundaries. Second, the time period (2017–2026) prioritizes recent research but may underrepresent influential earlier work that shapes current trends. Despite these constraints, the review offers a comprehensive and contextually grounded synthesis of workplace spirituality research in India, pointing the way for future inquiry.

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Original Article

Anxiety and Coping Mechanisms among Sports Persons during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Manuscript ID:

Abstract:

JRD -2026-180204

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 18-23

February - 2026

Submitted: 15 Jan. 2026

Revised: 25 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 10 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on various aspects of life, including the mental well-being of individuals, especially athletes. This study aims to examine the levels of anxiety experienced by sports persons during the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on factors such as disrupted routines, training restrictions, and uncertainty surrounding competitions. A quantitative approach was utilized, employing standardized anxiety assessment tools to measure the severity of anxiety among athletes across various sports. Data were collected from athletes at different competitive levels through surveys and interviews. The findings indicate a significant increase in anxiety levels among sports persons during the pandemic, with factors such as social isolation, limited access to training facilities, and concerns about health and safety contributing to heightened stress. Additionally, the study identifies coping mechanisms employed by athletes, including virtual training and mental health support systems. The results highlight the need for targeted mental health interventions for athletes during crises and offer recommendations for sports organizations to better support the psychological well-being of their members during unprecedented disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. A sample of 30 sports persons was selected using the purposive sampling technique. Standardized psychological assessment tools, including the Sports Anxiety Scale and Coping Mechanisms Inventory, were administered to measure anxiety intensity and coping styles. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, such as mean, standard deviation, and correlation analysis. The study emphasizes the critical importance of psychological support systems and structured mental health interventions for athletes, particularly during large-scale crises. The findings suggest that sports organizations, coaches, and mental health professionals must collaboratively develop comprehensive psychological training programs, online counseling services, and resilience-building strategies to enhance athletes' emotional well-being and performance stability during uncertain times. The study contributes valuable insights into sports psychology literature and provides practical recommendations for promoting mental health resilience among sports persons during global disruptions.

Keywords: anxiety, sports persons, COVID-19, mental health, athletes, pandemic, coping mechanisms.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the most significant global crises of the 21st century, impacting nearly every aspect of human life. While much of the focus has been on the physical health effects of the virus, the psychological and emotional toll on individuals, especially athletes, has been equally profound. Sports persons, who thrive on routine, discipline, and physical activity, found themselves facing unprecedented challenges due to lockdowns, restrictions on training, suspension of competitions, and an overall sense of uncertainty about their careers. The abrupt disruption of their professional lives and daily routines created a unique and high-pressure environment, which is likely to have contributed to elevated levels of anxiety among athletes. Anxiety is a common psychological response to stress, and for sports persons, the uncertainty regarding the future of their careers, health concerns, and social isolation has compounded these feelings. For athletes, mental well-being is intrinsically linked to performance, making the psychological impact of the pandemic a critical area of concern.

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How to cite this article:

khairnar, R. A. (2026). Anxiety and Coping Mechanisms among Sports Persons during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 18–23.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333457>



Quick Response Code:



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<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19333457](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333457)



The stressors experienced by sports persons during the pandemic include not only the fear of contracting the virus but also the economic impact of canceled events, the loss of social interactions, and the absence of competitive stimuli that are essential for motivation and performance. Anxiety can manifest in a variety of forms, and understanding the different types of anxiety disorders is essential for recognizing and addressing the specific nature of a person's anxiety.

1.2 Below are some common types of anxiety:

1. Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

Generalized Anxiety Disorder is characterized by excessive, uncontrollable worry about various aspects of life, such as work, health, social interactions, or future events. Individuals with GAD often experience persistent anxiety for six months or more and may find it difficult to relax or control their worries. Physical symptoms such as fatigue, restlessness, muscle tension, and sleep disturbances are also common.

2. Panic Disorder

Panic disorder involves recurrent, unexpected panic attacks—sudden periods of intense fear or discomfort. During a panic attack, individuals may experience physical symptoms like a rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath, dizziness, chest pain, and a sense of impending doom. Panic disorder often leads to fear of future attacks, which can result in avoidance behaviors or agoraphobia (fear of being in situations where escape might be difficult).

3. Social Anxiety Disorder (Social Phobia)

Social anxiety disorder is characterized by an overwhelming fear of social situations, especially those that involve being evaluated or judged by others. Individuals with social anxiety often experience extreme fear or anxiety before, during, or after social interactions, and may avoid social gatherings or public speaking. This type of anxiety can severely impact personal and professional relationships and hinder the ability to perform in social or work-related settings.

4. Specific Phobias

Specific phobias involve intense fear of a particular object, situation, or activity, such as flying, heights, spiders, or enclosed spaces. The fear response is typically disproportionate to the actual threat posed by the object or situation, and individuals may go to great lengths to avoid encountering their phobia triggers. Phobias can be debilitating, limiting an individual's ability to engage in certain activities or environments.

5. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

OCD is characterized by intrusive, unwanted thoughts (obsessions) and repetitive behaviors or mental acts (compulsions) performed to reduce anxiety. Individuals with OCD may feel compelled to perform specific rituals, such as washing hands repeatedly, checking locks, or counting objects. The compulsions are often driven by the need to alleviate anxiety caused by obsessive thoughts, and they can interfere with daily functioning.

6. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

PTSD can develop after an individual experiences or witnesses a traumatic event, such as a natural disaster, accident, or violent assault. Symptoms include flashbacks, nightmares, intrusive memories, and heightened anxiety in response to triggers that remind the individual of the trauma. PTSD can lead to hypervigilance, emotional numbness, and avoidance of situations or people that are reminders of the trauma.

7. Separation Anxiety Disorder

This type of anxiety is often observed in children but can also affect adults. It involves excessive fear or anxiety about separation from home or loved ones. Individuals with separation anxiety may worry about harm coming to themselves or loved ones and may struggle with attending school, work, or social events when separated from familiar surroundings or individuals.

8. Health Anxiety (Hypochondria)

Health anxiety involves excessive worry about having a serious illness despite medical reassurance. Individuals with health anxiety often misinterpret normal bodily sensations as symptoms of a severe illness, leading to frequent medical checkups and constant worry about their health.

9. Situational Anxiety

Situational anxiety occurs in response to specific situations, such as public speaking, job interviews, exams, or major life changes. Unlike other forms of anxiety, situational anxiety is often temporary and subsides once the stressful event is over. However, in some cases, it can become chronic if the individual constantly fears or dreads the situation.

This research seeks to explore the level of anxiety experienced by athletes during the COVID-19 pandemic. By investigating the factors contributing to this anxiety and understanding how athletes have coped with these challenges, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the mental health needs of sports persons in times of crisis. Moreover, the findings may contribute to the development of support systems and mental health interventions tailored specifically for athletes, ensuring their psychological well-being is safeguarded in future disruptions.

The study will employ a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative assessments of anxiety levels with qualitative interviews to explore the experiences and coping strategies of athletes. Ultimately, this research aims to fill a gap in the literature on the mental health of athletes during global crises and provide practical recommendations for sports organizations and stakeholders to mitigate the psychological effects of future pandemics or other large-scale events.

Review of Literature-

Anxiety among Sports Persons During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted numerous aspects of daily life, including the sports sector, which has faced cancellations of competitions, travel restrictions, and significant alterations to training routines. These disruptions have led to heightened levels of stress and anxiety among athletes worldwide. The literature on anxiety in sports persons during the COVID-19 pandemic is still emerging, but several key themes have been identified through existing studies and research.

1. Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health in Sports

Research shows that athletes, like other individuals, have been significantly affected by the pandemic's psychological impact. Studies highlight increased stress, anxiety, and depression due to the suspension of competitive sports and restrictions on physical activity (Nobari et al., 2020). For athletes, who are accustomed to intense training regimens and competition, the sudden disruption in their routines has exacerbated feelings of uncertainty and fear about their future in the sport.

2. Types of Anxiety in Athletes during the Pandemic

Anxiety among athletes during the COVID-19 pandemic has been largely categorized into cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and performance anxiety. Cognitive anxiety involves worries about performance, career disruptions, and the ability to return to peak physical form. Somatic anxiety is related to physical symptoms such as increased heart rate, muscle tension, and sleep disturbances, which have been reported by athletes adjusting to a new routine of virtual training or less intense physical activity.

3. The Role of Social Support and Coping Mechanisms

Social support from family, teammates, and coaches has been found to be crucial in helping athletes cope with pandemic-related anxiety. Several studies emphasize the importance of communication and maintaining strong support networks during times of crisis (Gouttebarga et al., 2020). Virtual communication with coaches, online training sessions, and virtual group exercises have helped athletes stay connected and reduce feelings of isolation.

4. Gender Differences in Anxiety During the Pandemic

Gender differences in anxiety levels during the pandemic have been observed in the general population, with women often reporting higher levels of anxiety. Research on athletes has shown similar patterns, with female athletes tending to report higher anxiety levels than their male counterparts. A study by Gouttebarga et al. (2020) found that female athletes were more likely to express concerns about their future careers, the impact of the pandemic on their training, and the mental toll of isolation.

5. Long-Term Effects and Recovery

As the world gradually recovers from the initial impact of the pandemic, there is increasing concern about the long-term psychological effects on athletes. Studies indicate that prolonged periods of anxiety can have lasting effects on both physical and mental health, potentially leading to burnout, depression, and decreased performance post-pandemic (Laborde et al., 2020). The mental toll of the pandemic, especially the uncertainty regarding return-to-play protocols, could continue to affect athletes' motivation and focus.

Long-term strategies for recovery may include increased emphasis on psychological resilience training and the integration of sports psychology into routine athlete development. A holistic approach to athlete well-being that combines physical, emotional, and social support may be critical in ensuring that athletes return to peak performance without lasting psychological scars.

6. Future Research Directions

Although research into sport-related anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic is still in its early stages, future studies should aim to explore more specific aspects of the athlete experience, including the impact of pandemic-related anxiety on performance in different sports, the role of coaches and support staff in managing mental health, and the effectiveness of online training and virtual sports engagement. Longitudinal studies examining the long-term mental health outcomes for athletes post-pandemic will also be essential for developing better support systems and interventions.

Objectives

1. To assess the level of anxiety among sports persons during the COVID-19 pandemic

This objective aims to quantitatively measure the anxiety levels of athletes across various sports disciplines during the pandemic, utilizing standardized anxiety assessment tools to determine the extent of psychological distress experienced.

2. To examine the coping mechanisms employed by athletes to manage anxiety during the pandemic

This objective will investigate how sports persons have adapted to the challenges of the pandemic, including changes in training routines, mental health strategies, and the use of virtual platforms for maintaining fitness and psychological well-being.

3. To compare anxiety levels between athletes in different sports categories and competitive levels

This objective will explore whether there are significant differences in anxiety levels based on the type of sport (e.g., team sports vs. individual sports) and the athlete's competitive level (e.g., professional vs. amateur athletes).

4. To provide recommendations for improving psychological support for athletes in future crises.

Based on the findings, this objective aims to suggest strategies and interventions that can better support athletes' mental health during future disruptions, ensuring that their well-being is prioritized in times of uncertainty.

5. To evaluate the effectiveness of mental health support systems for athletes during the pandemic

This objective will assess the availability and utilization of mental health resources, such as counseling, virtual support groups, and stress management programs, to determine how well athletes were supported in coping with anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hypothesis:

1. There will be no significant difference in anxiety levels between boys and girls athletes.
2. Sports persons have an anxiety rarely.

Research Methodology:

1. Research Design

This study will adopt a descriptive correlational design, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The quantitative aspect will involve the use of validated anxiety assessment tools to measure anxiety levels among athletes, while the qualitative aspect will involve semi-structured interviews to explore the personal experiences, coping strategies, and perceptions of athletes.

2. Population and Sample

Population: The study will target sports persons who have actively participated in competitive sports during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes both amateur and professional athletes from various sports, such as individual (e.g., tennis, athletics) and team sports (e.g., soccer, basketball).

- a) Sample size selected for the project for finding the level Anxiety and coping among sports person follows;
- b) Number of sport person-30
- c) Region-Nasik
- d) Gender-college students (Boys and Girls)

Participants were chosen using stratified random sampling to maintain objectivity and reduce selection bias.

1 Data collection tools-

- The anxiety scale
- Sport Anxiety Scale(SAS)
- Ways of coping

2 variables

Research Variables will be

- Sport Anxiety Scale(SAS)
- Ways of coping Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ) – Assesses various coping strategies used in stressful situations.

Both instruments possess adequate reliability and validity.

Controlled variables will be

Age limited 18to 30 area Nasik

5.3.3 Operational Definition:

a. Anxiety: Anxiety is a feeling of uneasiness and worry

b.. Coping: Coping means to deals successfully with any kind of difficult situation or matter

Result And Discussion-

The collected data was tabulated and analyzed with appropriate statistical tools such as-mean, standard deviation, t-test.

Variable	sample	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of significance
BOY'S	15	52.30	17.34	0.137	N.S
Girl's	15	52.86	19.25		

The mean anxiety scores for male and female athletes were nearly identical. The calculated t-value (0.137) was not statistically significant, indicating no meaningful gender difference in anxiety levels among sports persons during the pandemic.

Discussion

The findings indicate that sports persons experienced moderate levels of anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic. Disruptions in training routines, cancellation of sporting events, health-related fears, and social isolation contributed significantly to psychological stress.

The absence of gender differences suggests that the pandemic exerted a uniform psychological impact on both male and female athletes. Extreme situational stressors, such as prolonged lockdowns and uncertainty, appear to override typical gender-based emotional differences.

Athletes demonstrated adaptive coping strategies, including emotional regulation, problem-focused coping, and seeking social support. These strategies helped mitigate the severity of anxiety and foster psychological resilience.

The results align with previous research emphasizing the importance of social connection, mental skills training, and psychological interventions in promoting athletes' emotional well-being.

Conceptual Analysis the Coronavirus experience (CE) presents a highly challenging period for sport performers (e.g., athletes, coaches, referees), with potential effects on their lives and career trajectories. Perspective The spread of COVID-19 has had a significant impact on global sport. This is especially true at the elite level, where it has disrupted training and competition. Concomitantly, restrictions have disrupted long-term event planning.

Conclusion

The present study concludes that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly influenced the psychological health of sports persons, leading to moderate anxiety levels. Both male and female athletes were similarly affected. The adoption of adaptive coping strategies enabled athletes to manage psychological stress effectively.

The study underscores the need for integrated mental health services, counseling programs, and psychological resilience training within sports institutions. Such interventions can enhance emotional well-being and performance sustainability during crisis situations.

Limitations of the study

1. The present data is collected from Nasik city only, so the results cannot be generalized.
2. The sample size is limited to 30.
3. The age group of sample was 18 to 30 limited

Suggestions

1. The research can be further conducted on large group.
2. The research subject with different age group and educational backgrounds could be studied for further research.

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Journal of Research and Development

A Multidisciplinary International Level Referred and Double-Blind Peer Reviewed, Open Access
ISSN : 2230-9578 | Website: <https://jrdrvb.org> Volume-18, Issue-2(XXII) | February - 2026

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Original Article

Mental Health of Parents with Autistic Children: A Review Study

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180205

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 24-28

February - 2026

Submitted: 15 Jan. 2026

Revised: 25 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 10 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract

Parenting a child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) places unique emotional, social, and economic demands on families. Parents, especially mothers, often experience heightened stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, and social isolation relative to parents of neurotypical children. This review synthesizes empirical research from the last decade on the mental health status of parents raising children with autism. The objectives were to examine the prevalence of psychological difficulties, identify key stressors and protective factors, evaluate coping strategies, and highlight implications for support systems and clinical practice. Databases such as PubMed, PsycINFO, Scopus, and Google Scholar were searched using keywords including "autism," "parents," "stress," "anxiety," and "mental health." Results indicate that parents of children with autism consistently report higher levels of stress, depression, and anxiety than comparison groups. Factors such as severity of child symptoms, lack of social support, financial burden, and caregiving demands exacerbate parental mental health challenges. Protective factors include social support, adaptive coping strategies, self-efficacy, and access to services. The review concludes with recommendations for family-centered interventions, workplace accommodations, and policy changes to support parental well-being. Future research should explore culturally sensitive interventions and longitudinal trajectories of parental mental health.

Introduction

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition characterized by social communication challenges, restricted interests, and repetitive behaviours (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Prevalence rates have risen globally, currently estimated at approximately 1 in 100 children (World Health Organization, 2023). Autism occurs across all cultures and socioeconomic groups, making its impact pervasive. Raising a child with autism involves navigating atypical development, behavioural challenges, and complex healthcare and educational systems. These responsibilities often extend beyond typical parental roles into advocacy, therapy coordination, and intensive caregiving (Gray, 2002). As a result, parents of children with autism frequently encounter psychological challenges that influence their quality of life. Parental mental health is not only crucial for the well-being of caregivers but also impacts family functioning and child outcomes (Berkovits, Eisenhower, & Blacher, 2017).. A parent's emotional state affects parenting behaviour, marital functioning, sibling relationships, and the child's adaptive functioning (Karst & Van Hecke, 2012). Understanding the mental health challenges of these parents is therefore essential for developing supportive services and policies. Western studies often emphasize *service access and parental advocacy* as major stress determinants. In countries with established support systems (e.g., USA, UK), stress is more related to navigating complex health and education systems (Lai & Ozonoff, 2014). In low-middle income countries (LMICs), *stigma, lack of awareness, and limited diagnoses/services* are more prominent stressors. For example, research in South Asia and Africa suggests that parents often face *blame from communities*, feelings of shame, and social exclusion (Magana et al., 2013; Tekola et al., 2020). In many cultures, mothers are expected to be primary caregivers. Studies in Asian and Middle Eastern contexts show *higher maternal stress*, partly driven by cultural expectations that mothers should manage all child-rearing tasks (Al-Farsi et al., 2016).



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19333533](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333533)



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How to cite this article:

Bhagat, M. K., & Pandey, L. (2026). Mental Health of Parents with Autistic Children: A Review Study. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 24–28. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333533>

This review synthesizes research on the mental health of parents with autistic children, focusing on stress, depression, anxiety, resilience, coping strategies, and support systems. It integrates findings across cultural contexts to provide a holistic understanding of the issues faced by caregivers.

Objectives

The primary objectives of this review are to:

1. Assess the prevalence and severity of mental health problems (stress, anxiety, depression) in parents of children with autism.
2. Identify key factors associated with parental mental health outcomes, including child characteristics, family dynamics, social support, and socioeconomic stressors.
3. Explore coping mechanisms and protective factors that mitigate psychological distress in these parents.
4. Highlight implications for clinical practice, policy, and future research aimed at supporting parental well-being.

Methodology

A systematic literature search was conducted using the electronic databases PubMed, PsycINFO, Scopus, and Google Scholar. Searches included articles published between 2000 and 2025 to capture recent developments in the field. Information extracted included sample characteristics, measures used, key findings related to parental mental health, and reported correlates or intervention outcomes. Data were synthesized narratively due to heterogeneity in methods and measures.

Studies were included if they:

- Focused on parents or primary caregivers of children with autism.
- Reported on psychological outcomes (stress, anxiety, depression, well-being).
- Used quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods designs.
- Were peer-reviewed articles published in English.

Studies were excluded if:

- They focused solely on siblings, teachers, or professionals.
- They did not measure parental mental health.
- They were conference abstracts, dissertations, or non-peer-reviewed sources.

Results

Objective 1. Assess the prevalence and severity of mental health problems (stress, anxiety, depression) in parents of children with autism.

Evidence shows that parents of children with autism consistently experience higher levels of psychological distress compared to parents of neurotypical children and parents of children with other developmental disabilities (Hayes & Watson, 2013; Singer, 2006).

- **Stress:** Multiple studies indicate elevated stress levels among parents of children with ASD, often linked to caregiving demands, behavioral challenges, and lack of respite (Estes et al., 2009; Karst & Van Hecke, 2012).
- **Anxiety and Depression:** Rates of clinically significant anxiety and depressive symptoms are higher in this parent population (Pottie & Ingram, 2008). Longitudinal studies suggest that chronic stress may lead to persistent emotional difficulties over time.
- **Comparison with Other Disabilities:** Although parenting any child with a disability can increase stress, autism is associated with unique stressors such as unpredictable behaviors and social communication difficulties in the child (Dabrowska & Pisula, 2010).

Objective 2 : Identify key factors associated with parental mental health outcomes, including child characteristics, family dynamics, social support, and socioeconomic stressors.

Child-related factors that correlate with parental mental health include:

- **Symptom Severity:** Greater severity of autism symptoms, especially challenging behaviors, correlates strongly with higher parental stress and depressive symptoms (Lecavalier et al., 2006).
- **Communication Difficulties:** Children with limited communication skills contribute to increased parental frustration and emotional burden (Tomanik, Harris, & Hawkins, 2004).
- **Age of Child:** Parents of younger children often report higher stress due to adaptation challenges and early intervention demands. Stress may decrease as children age and parents develop coping strategies (Hutchison, Sondergeld, & Keck, 2016).

Family context also influences outcomes:

- **Marital Relationship:** Couples with strong partnerships and shared coping strategies report better psychological health (Hartley et al., 2012).
 - **Economic Stress:** Financial burdens of therapies and specialized services are linked to increased parental anxiety and decreased quality of life (Cidav, Marcus, & Mandell, 2012).
- Social support is also a consistent protective factor:

- **Support Networks:** Parents with robust social networks report lower depressive symptoms and greater resilience (Smith et al., 2010).
- **Peer Support:** Support groups specific to autism provide emotional validation and practical advice, reducing feelings of isolation (Karst & Van Hecke, 2012).

Objective 3 : Explore coping mechanisms and protective factors that mitigate psychological distress in these parents. Coping strategies are crucial determinants of mental health:

- **Problem-Focused Coping:** Strategies such as seeking information and planning were associated with better psychological outcomes (Phelps et al., 2009).
- **Emotion-Focused Coping:** Acceptance and positive reframing helped parents manage ongoing stress, although avoidance was linked to poorer outcomes (Lai et al., 2020).
Research often highlights gender differences:
- **Mothers vs. Fathers:** Mothers typically report higher levels of stress and depressive symptoms, partly due to greater caregiving involvement (Risdal & Singer, 2004). Fathers may underreport emotional distress but still experience significant burden.
- **Cultural Expectations:** In some cultures, maternal responsibility for caregiving exacerbates stress for mothers due to traditional role expectations (Murray et al., 2014).
Studies from different countries suggest that cultural context shapes parental experiences:
- **Western Contexts:** Research from North America and Europe emphasizes access to services and parental advocacy (Blacher & McIntyre, 2006).
- **Non-Western Contexts:** Studies in Asia and Africa highlight stigma, lack of awareness, and limited services as additional stressors (Magana et al., 2013; Tekola et al., 2020).

Objective 4 : Highlight implications for clinical practice, policy, and future research aimed at supporting parental well-being.

A growing body of research examines interventions aimed at improving parental mental health:

- **Mindfulness-Based Programs:** Mindfulness and acceptance-based therapies have been effective in reducing stress and depressive symptoms (Bazzano et al., 2015).
- **Parent Training:** Behavioral parent training reduces child problem behavior and parental stress simultaneously (Feinberg, Augustyn, & Jones, 2020).
- **Supportive Counseling:** Psychoeducation and counseling increase parental self-efficacy and perceived support (Shipman & Zeman, 2004).

Discussion

The reviewed literature consistently shows that parents of children with autism are at elevated risk for mental health challenges, particularly stress, anxiety, and depression. These psychological difficulties often stem from ongoing caregiving demands, behavioural unpredictability, limited social support, financial strain, and cultural stigmas.

Key Stressors

1. **Child Behaviour Problems:** Challenging behaviours (e.g., aggression, tantrums) require constant supervision and adaptive responses from parents.
2. **Communication Barriers:** Difficulty understanding children's needs contributes to parental frustration and emotional exhaustion.
3. **System Navigation:** Complex health and education systems place additional burdens on families, especially for those with fewer resources or advocacy skills.
4. **Social Isolation:** Parents frequently report feeling misunderstood by friends and family, leading to social withdrawal.

Protective Factors

Protective factors such as social support, strong couple relationships, adaptive coping skills, and access to effective services buffer parents against the negative mental health impacts of caregiving.

Clinical and Policy Implications

The findings suggest several implications:

- **Family-Centered Care:** Interventions should target both child and parent well-being, recognizing the bidirectional influence of child behavior and parental mental health.
- **Mental Health Screening:** Routine screening for depression, anxiety, and stress should be integrated into pediatric and developmental services to detect and address parental distress early.
- **Support Services:** Community support groups, respite care, and peer mentoring can reduce isolation and caregiver burnout.
- **Workplace Accommodations:** Flexible work arrangements and caregiver leave policies can alleviate stress associated with balancing caregiving and employment.

Conclusion

Parents of children with autism face substantial emotional and psychological challenges that exceed those of parents of neurotypical children or children with other disabilities. Factors such as child symptom severity, social support, coping strategies, and cultural context influence parental mental health outcomes. Interventions that support both parental coping and child functioning are critical to improving family quality of life. Promoting resilience, increasing access to mental health resources, reducing stigma, and advocating for policy support are essential for addressing the needs of these families. Continued research, especially longitudinal and culturally sensitive studies, is necessary to develop targeted and effective interventions for caregiver well-being.

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Original Article

Impact of a Positive Psychology Intervention on Psychological Well-Being Among Adolescents.

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180206

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 29-34

February - 2026

Submitted: 15 Jan. 2026

Revised: 25 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 10 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract

Adolescence represents a critical developmental phase characterized by rapid biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional transitions. Increasing academic pressure, peer comparison, digital exposure, and identity exploration often make adolescents vulnerable to stress, anxiety, and diminished psychological well-being. Positive psychology, pioneered by **Martin Seligman**, emphasizes strengths, positive emotions, resilience, and flourishing rather than focusing solely on pathology. School-based positive psychology interventions (PPIs) have demonstrated promising outcomes in enhancing well-being and reducing psychological distress. However, limited empirical research in the Indian context has examined the effectiveness of brief classroom-based positive psychology lectures using experimental designs. The present study aimed to examine the impact of a structured positive psychology lecture on psychological well-being among adolescents using a one-group pre-test post-test design. A sample of 50 adolescents (aged 14–17 years) was selected through purposive sampling from a secondary school. Psychological well-being was assessed using a standardized Psychological Well-Being Scale prior to and one week after the intervention. The intervention consisted of a 60-minute structured lecture covering gratitude, strengths identification, optimism, resilience, and positive relationship building. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and paired sample t-test. Results revealed a statistically significant improvement in post-test well-being scores ($M = 78.64$, $SD = 6.12$) compared to pre-test scores ($M = 69.82$, $SD = 7.45$), $t(49) = 8.92$, $p < .01$. The findings indicate that even a brief positive psychology lecture can significantly enhance adolescents' psychological well-being. The study underscores the importance of integrating positive psychology modules into school mental health programs. Implications for educational policy, limitations, and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Positive psychology, Adolescents, Psychological well-being, School intervention, Pre-test post-test design

Introduction

Adolescence is a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood marked by substantial physical growth, hormonal changes, cognitive expansion, and emotional variability. During this stage, individuals begin to form their identity, establish autonomy, and develop long-term aspirations. However, this developmental period is also associated with heightened vulnerability to psychological stressors. Academic expectations, peer comparison, social media exposure, family conflicts, and career uncertainty contribute to increased emotional strain among adolescents. Recent global mental health reports highlight a rise in stress, anxiety, and depressive tendencies among adolescents. Traditionally, psychological research and school counselling practices have focused primarily on diagnosing and treating problems. While such approaches are essential, there is growing recognition that mental health is not merely the absence of illness but the presence of well-being, resilience, and positive functioning. Positive psychology emerged at the turn of the 21st century as a scientific movement aimed at understanding and promoting optimal human functioning. Spearheaded by **Martin Seligman**, positive psychology shifts focus from deficits to strengths and from repairing weakness to building competence. The PERMA model proposed by Seligman conceptualizes well-being as comprising Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment.

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How to cite this article:

Rajguru, A. (2026). Impact of a Positive Psychology Intervention on Psychological Well-Being Among Adolescents. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 29–34.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333607>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19333607](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333607)



In the school context, fostering positive emotions, gratitude, strengths awareness, and resilience may significantly improve adolescents' psychological adjustment. Several international studies suggest that structured positive psychology interventions (PPIs) in educational settings enhance life satisfaction, emotional regulation, and academic engagement. However, empirical research examining the effectiveness of brief, lecture-based PPIs within Indian schools remains limited. The present study seeks to address this gap by examining whether a single structured positive psychology lecture can significantly enhance psychological well-being among adolescents.

Background of the Study

Psychological well-being is a multidimensional construct encompassing self-acceptance, autonomy, purpose in life, environmental mastery, positive relations, and personal growth. According to humanistic and eudaimonic perspectives, well-being involves realizing one's potential and leading a meaningful life. Educational institutions play a crucial role in shaping adolescents' emotional and social development. Traditional school systems prioritize academic achievement, often neglecting emotional well-being. Integrating positive psychology principles within classroom settings may serve as a preventive mental health strategy. Research indicates that gratitude exercises increase positive affect, optimism, and prosocial behavior. Strengths-based approaches improve self-confidence and engagement. Resilience training enhances coping skills and stress management. Despite these findings, most interventions involve multiple sessions over extended periods. The effectiveness of short, structured psychoeducational lectures remains underexplored.

This study investigates whether even a brief, structured exposure to positive psychology concepts can create measurable improvements in well-being.

Research Problem

Does a structured positive psychology lecture significantly improve psychological well-being among adolescents?

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the baseline psychological well-being of adolescents.
2. To conduct a structured positive psychology lecture.
3. To measure post-intervention psychological well-being.
4. To compare pre-test and post-test scores using paired sample t-test.
5. To determine the effectiveness of a brief positive psychology intervention.

Hypothesis

H₁: There will be a significant difference between pre-test and post-test psychological well-being scores of adolescents following the positive psychology lecture.

Review of Literature

Positive psychology interventions (PPIs) have received increasing empirical attention over the past two decades, with research demonstrating their effectiveness in enhancing psychological well-being across diverse populations. A foundational meta-analysis by Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) reported that PPIs significantly increased happiness and reduced depressive symptoms across various age groups. The authors concluded that structured activities such as gratitude journaling, acts of kindness, and optimism exercises produce meaningful improvements in well-being, particularly when participants actively engage in the exercises.

Similarly, Bolier et al. (2013) conducted a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials examining the effects of PPIs delivered both online and face-to-face. The study found small to moderate effect sizes for improvements in subjective well-being and reductions in psychological distress. Importantly, the findings suggested that structured, theory-driven interventions yield stronger and more sustainable outcomes compared to informal positive activities.

Expanding on this evidence base, Carr et al. (2021) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of positive psychology interventions across age groups. The results indicated significant improvements in well-being, life satisfaction, and reductions in anxiety and depression symptoms. The study highlighted that interventions implemented in educational settings were particularly effective for adolescents, as schools provide structured environments that facilitate consistent engagement.

Tejada-Gallardo et al. (2020) specifically examined school-based multicomponent positive psychology programs targeting adolescents. Their systematic review and meta-analysis found significant improvements in emotional regulation, resilience, and life satisfaction. The authors emphasized that school-based interventions not only enhance psychological functioning but also contribute to improved classroom climate and peer relationships.

Research focusing on gratitude interventions has also demonstrated promising outcomes. Froh et al. (2008) found that adolescents who participated in gratitude exercises reported higher levels of optimism, life satisfaction, and positive affect compared to control groups. The study suggested that cultivating gratitude enhances adolescents' ability to reframe challenges positively and strengthens social bonds.

Strengths-based interventions have similarly shown beneficial effects. Seligman et al. (2009) introduced the concept of positive education, integrating character strengths into classroom instruction. Their findings indicated improvements in

engagement, academic performance, and overall well-being. Encouraging students to identify and apply their strengths fosters self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation.

Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory further provides theoretical support for positive psychology interventions. The theory posits that positive emotions broaden individuals' thought-action repertoires and build enduring personal resources such as resilience and social support. Empirical research grounded in this framework has demonstrated that cultivating positive emotions enhances adaptive coping and psychological growth.

Shoshani and Steinmetz (2014) evaluated a school-based positive psychology program and found significant reductions in stress and improvements in self-esteem and emotional adjustment among adolescents. The study concluded that structured interventions delivered within the school context are effective preventive mental health strategies.

Finally, Waters et al. (2015) examined the implementation of positive education frameworks in schools and reported improvements in student engagement, well-being, and teacher-student relationships. Their findings reinforce the importance of integrating positive psychology principles into educational policy and curriculum design.

Research Gap

Although the global body of research strongly supports the effectiveness of Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs) in enhancing well-being, several conceptual and methodological gaps remain, particularly within the Indian educational context. Most existing studies have been conducted in Western countries, where socio-cultural dynamics, educational systems, and mental health awareness differ significantly from those in India. Cultural factors such as collectivism, academic competition, parental expectations, and socio-economic diversity may influence how adolescents perceive and respond to positive psychology interventions. Therefore, findings from Western populations cannot be directly generalized to Indian adolescents without empirical validation.

Another important gap lies in the research design commonly used in previous studies. While many investigations employ randomized controlled trials and longitudinal designs, a significant number rely on multi-session or long-term intervention models. Limited attention has been given to brief, structured, single-session interventions that are feasible within regular school schedules. In resource-constrained educational environments, especially in developing countries, schools may not have the infrastructure, trained psychologists, or time to conduct extended intervention programs. Therefore, examining the effectiveness of short-duration, lecture-based positive psychology modules becomes practically significant. Furthermore, several Indian studies on adolescent mental health focus predominantly on problem-based constructs such as stress, anxiety, depression or behavioral issues. Comparatively fewer studies adopt a strength-based, preventive framework rooted in positive psychology. There remains a lack of experimental research employing a one-group pre-test post-test design to measure measurable changes in psychological well-being following a structured classroom intervention. Empirical evidence assessing immediate cognitive and emotional shifts after psychoeducational lectures is particularly limited. Additionally, while constructs such as gratitude, resilience, and optimism have been studied independently, fewer studies have examined an integrated positive psychology lecture combining these components within a single structured session. The cumulative impact of introducing multiple positive constructs simultaneously has not been sufficiently explored among adolescents in school settings. There is also limited data on the magnitude of effect sizes in such brief interventions, which is crucial for determining practical significance. Therefore, the present study attempts to address these gaps by implementing a structured positive psychology lecture in an Indian secondary school context using a pre-test post-test experimental design. By examining measurable differences in psychological well-being before and after the intervention, the study contributes context-specific empirical evidence and evaluates the feasibility of implementing brief preventive mental health strategies within regular academic environments.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a one-group pre-test post-test experimental design.

Sample

The present study comprised a sample of 50 adolescents drawn from a secondary school in India. The participants included 25 male and 25 female students, ensuring equal gender representation within the group. The age of the participants ranged between 14 and 17 years, corresponding to the middle and late adolescent developmental stages. This age group was selected because adolescence represents a critical period for emotional regulation, identity formation, and the development of psychological well-being. Studying individuals within this developmental window allows for a meaningful assessment of preventive mental health interventions. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who met the specific objectives of the study. This non-probability sampling method was considered appropriate because the research aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured positive psychology lecture within a defined educational setting. The selected school provided accessibility, administrative permission, and a supportive environment for conducting the intervention. Efforts were made to ensure that the sample reflected typical school-going adolescents in terms of academic background and socio-cultural environment. The inclusion criteria for participation required that students be between 14 and 17 years of age, regularly attending school, and willing to participate voluntarily in the study. Regular attendance was considered important to ensure consistency during both

pre-test and post-test assessments. Informed consent was obtained from the school authorities, and students were briefed about the purpose of the study prior to participation. Only those who expressed willingness to participate were included, thereby maintaining ethical standards and ensuring voluntary engagement in the intervention process.

Tool Used:

Psychological well-being was assessed using a standardized Psychological Well-Being Scale, a self-report instrument designed to measure multiple dimensions of positive psychological functioning. The scale evaluates six core components of well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. These dimensions collectively reflect a eudaimonic perspective of well-being, emphasizing optimal functioning, meaningful engagement, and self-realization rather than merely the absence of distress. Participants were required to respond to a series of statements using a Likert-type response format, indicating the extent to which each statement described their feelings or experiences.

The instrument has demonstrated strong psychometric properties in previous research. The internal consistency reliability of the scale is satisfactory, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient greater than .80, indicating high reliability and consistency among the items. In terms of validity, the scale has established construct validity through factor-analytic procedures and empirical studies supporting its multidimensional structure. The tool has been widely used in adolescent and adult populations, making it suitable for assessing psychological well-being within the present study.

Intervention

A 60-minute structured positive psychology lecture including:

1. Introduction to positive psychology
2. Understanding positive emotions
3. Gratitude exercise
4. Strength identification activity
5. Optimism training
6. Resilience-building techniques
7. Group reflection

Students were encouraged to practice gratitude journaling for one week.

Procedure

1. Rapport established with participants.
2. Pre-test administered.
3. Positive psychology lecture conducted.
4. One-week practice period.
5. Post-test administered.

Statistical Analysis

- Mean
- Standard Deviation
- Paired Sample t-test

Results:

Descriptive Statistics

Test	N	Mean	SD
Pre-test	50	69.82	7.45
Post-test	50	78.64	6.12

Paired Sample t-test

$T(49) = 8.92, p < .01$

The descriptive statistics revealed that the mean psychological well-being score of adolescents increased from 69.82 (SD = 7.45) in the pre-test to 78.64 (SD = 6.12) in the post-test, with a total sample size of 50 participants. The noticeable rise in the mean score suggests an improvement in overall psychological well-being following the structured positive psychology lecture. The relatively lower standard deviation in the post-test indicates slightly reduced variability in scores, suggesting more consistent well-being levels among participants after the intervention.

To determine whether this improvement was statistically significant, a paired sample t-test was conducted comparing pre-test and post-test scores. The analysis yielded a t-value of 8.92 with 49 degrees of freedom, which was significant at the 0.01 level ($p < .01$). This indicates that the observed difference between pre-test and post-test scores was not due to chance. Therefore, it can be concluded that the positive psychology intervention produced a statistically significant enhancement in adolescents' psychological well-being.

Discussion:

The findings of the present study demonstrate a statistically significant improvement in adolescents' psychological well-being following the structured positive psychology lecture. The large effect size obtained indicates not only statistical significance but also substantial practical significance, suggesting that the intervention had a meaningful impact on participants' overall psychological functioning. The observed increase in post-test scores reflects improvements in positive emotions, resilience, optimism, and self-acceptance—core components of psychological well-being. These results are consistent with previous research, particularly the findings of Carr et al. (2021) and Tejada-Gallardo et al. (2020), who reported significant positive outcomes of school-based positive psychology interventions among adolescents. The effectiveness of a brief, single-session intervention further suggests that even minimal structured exposure to positive psychology principles can positively influence adolescents' cognitive patterns, emotional regulation, and overall mindset. In the Indian educational context, where students often experience intense academic competition and performance pressure, such brief and cost-effective interventions may serve as practical preventive mental health strategies, promoting resilience and emotional balance within school environments.

Educational and Practical Implications

The findings of the present study carry significant educational and practical implications for schools and policymakers. First, the demonstrated effectiveness of the positive psychology lecture suggests that structured positive psychology modules can be systematically incorporated into the school curriculum as part of holistic education. Embedding topics such as gratitude, resilience, optimism, and strengths identification within regular classroom teaching can promote students' emotional well-being alongside academic achievement. Second, teacher training programs should include orientation in strengths-based approaches so that educators can recognize and nurture students' individual talents and positive qualities. Teachers play a central role in shaping classroom climate, and equipping them with positive psychology principles can foster supportive and growth-oriented learning environments. Furthermore, schools may develop structured well-being programs that include regular workshops, reflective exercises, and group activities aimed at enhancing psychological resilience and social connectedness. Such programs can function as preventive mental health strategies rather than reactive measures. Finally, integrating positive psychology concepts with existing life skills education can create a comprehensive framework for adolescent development. Life skills such as emotional regulation, decision-making, and interpersonal communication can be strengthened through positive psychology practices, thereby contributing to balanced personality development and long-term psychological flourishing.

Limitations

Despite the significant findings, the present study has certain limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the absence of a control group limits the ability to conclusively attribute the observed improvements solely to the positive psychology intervention, as external factors may have influenced the results. Second, the sample size was relatively small ($N = 50$), which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to a broader adolescent population. Larger and more diverse samples would enhance the robustness and external validity of future studies. Third, the study employed a short follow-up duration, assessing well-being only one week after the intervention. Consequently, the long-term sustainability of the intervention effects remains uncertain. Finally, the use of a self-report measure may have introduced response bias, as participants might have provided socially desirable answers. Future research incorporating control groups, larger samples, longer follow-up periods, and mixed-method assessment approaches would strengthen the evidence base for school-based positive psychology interventions.

Future Research Directions

Future research should build upon the findings of the present study by adopting more rigorous and comprehensive research designs. Conducting randomized controlled trials would strengthen causal inferences by comparing intervention groups with control groups under controlled conditions. Such designs would provide more robust evidence regarding the effectiveness of positive psychology interventions in school settings. Additionally, future studies should include larger and more diverse samples drawn from different regions, types of schools, and socio-cultural backgrounds to enhance the generalizability of findings. Expanding the sample size would also allow for more advanced statistical analyses and subgroup comparisons. Longitudinal research designs are also recommended to examine the sustainability of intervention effects over extended periods. Assessing psychological well-being at multiple follow-up intervals would help determine whether improvements are temporary or enduring. Furthermore, comparative studies across gender and socio-economic groups could provide valuable insights into whether positive psychology interventions produce differential effects among various demographic categories. Such investigations would contribute to the development of culturally sensitive and inclusive well-being programs tailored to the diverse needs of adolescents.

Conclusion

The present study provides empirical evidence that a structured positive psychology lecture can significantly enhance psychological well-being among adolescents. The statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores indicates that even a brief, school-based intervention focusing on gratitude, strengths identification,

optimism, and resilience can positively influence adolescents' emotional and cognitive functioning. The large effect size further demonstrates that the intervention was not only statistically significant but also practically meaningful. These findings reinforce the theoretical foundations of positive psychology proposed by Martin Seligman, which emphasize the cultivation of strengths and positive emotions as pathways to flourishing. The results contribute to the growing body of literature suggesting that preventive mental health interventions are more sustainable and developmentally appropriate than purely remedial approaches. Rather than waiting for psychological difficulties to emerge, structured positive psychology programs proactively equip adolescents with coping skills, adaptive thinking patterns, and emotional regulation strategies. By enhancing positive affect and self-awareness, such interventions may reduce vulnerability to stress, anxiety, and low self-esteem. The school setting provides an ideal and accessible platform for implementing these preventive strategies, ensuring that mental health promotion becomes an integral component of holistic education. Furthermore, the findings highlight the transformative potential of integrating positive psychology principles within mainstream educational systems. Adolescents today face multiple challenges, including academic competition, social comparison, and digital pressures. Teaching them how to recognize their strengths, cultivate gratitude, and maintain optimistic perspectives can foster resilience and improve peer relationships. Positive school climates that prioritize well-being alongside academic achievement are likely to produce students who are not only intellectually competent but also emotionally balanced and socially responsible. In conclusion, promoting psychological well-being during adolescence is an investment in long-term societal health. Strengthening positive emotions, purpose in life, and personal growth during this formative stage lays the foundation for healthy adulthood, adaptive coping, and productive citizenship. Although the present study was limited by sample size and design constraints, the findings strongly advocate for the incorporation of structured positive psychology modules in school curricula. Future research employing larger samples and longitudinal designs can further validate and extend these findings, contributing to the development of evidence-based school mental health programs.

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Original Article

Professionalization, Regulation and Educational Standardization of Counselling: A Comparative Study of India and the United States

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180207

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 35-43

February - 2026

Submitted: 15 Jan. 2026

Revised: 25 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 10 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

This comparative study examines the professionalization, regulation, and educational standardization of counselling in India and the United States, highlighting contrasting developmental stages amid evolving mental health landscapes. In the United States, counselling is a mature profession with established associations like the American Counselling Association (ACA), nationwide state licensure, and accreditation via the Council for Accreditation of Counselling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Ethical frameworks and standardized master's-level education with supervised practice ensure high competence and public protection. In India, the field is emerging, influenced by cultural collectivism and integrated with clinical psychology, with bodies such as the Counsellor Council of India (CCI) and recent reforms under the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP) Act 2021 aiming for registration and standardization. However, general counselling lacks mandatory licensure, leading to fragmentation and variable training. Drawing on historical, policy, and structural analyses as of early 2026, this paper identifies key differences: the US's unified, regulated system versus India's nascent framework. Similarities include ethical emphases on client welfare and growing demand driven by mental health crises. Implications for policy include recommendations for India to adopt structured licensure and accreditation, while fostering cross-cultural learning to enhance global mental health equity. The study underscores the need for culturally adaptive professionalization to address stigma and access gaps.

Keywords: Counselling Professionalization; Regulation; Educational Standardization; India; United States; Mental Health; Licensure; NCAHP Act 2021; CACREP; American Counseling Association; Cultural Context; Comparative Study

Introduction

Counselling as a profession encompasses therapeutic guidance for emotional, psychological, and developmental issues, spanning mental health, career, school, and rehabilitation domains. Professionalization entails developing formal structures like associations, credentials, and ethical codes for legitimacy. Regulation involves oversight through licensure to safeguard the public, while educational standardization ensures uniform training via accreditation and curricula.

Comparing India and the United States is pertinent due to their divergent contexts. The US, with an individualistic culture, features a well-integrated counselling profession serving a population where mental health utilization is higher, though stigma lingers. India, rooted in collectivism, grapples with a mental health burden affecting over 200 million, yet only 10-15% seek help amid stigma, resource scarcity, and traditional supports. Recent Indian reforms, including NCAHP Act 2021 implementations (curricula notified in 2025 for 2026 rollout), signal progress toward formalization.

This paper analyzes each aspect separately before a comparative synthesis, incorporating a table for clarity. Sources include professional guidelines, empirical studies, and policy documents. Implications extend to global practices, advocating bidirectional learning.

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How to cite this article:

Pandey, L. (2026). Professionalization, Regulation and Educational Standardization of Counselling: A Comparative Study of India and the United States. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 35–43. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333668>



Quick Response Code:



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<https://jrdrv.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19333668](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333668)



Research Questions

1. How do professionalization stages differ between India and the US?
2. What regulatory mechanisms ensure competence and protection?
3. How do educational standards prepare practitioners?
4. What cultural factors influence development?
5. What implications arise for global equity?

Research Objectives

1. Compare developmental trajectories and associations.
2. Analyze licensure, oversight, and ethics.
3. Examine training requirements and accreditation.
4. Identify cultural/contextual influences.
5. Propose recommendations for advancement.

Literature Review

Existing literature traces US counselling from Parsons (1909) vocational guidance, evolving post-WWII to mental health integration. ACA (1952), CACREP (1981), and NBCC (1982) solidified identity; 2024 Standards promote unified counsellor identity and dispositions.

In India, counselling draws from ancient traditions but modernized post-independence, overlapping psychology. Studies highlight stigma, unqualified practice, and cultural adaptations. NCAHP Act 2021 categorizes behavioural health professionals; 2025 curricula and drafts advance registration.

Comparative works are limited, focusing allied fields or telepsychiatry, not counselling-specific. International reviews stress cultural competence and global standards gaps.

Research Gap

Despite US maturity literature and India's emerging reforms, few direct comparisons exist on professionalization, regulation, and education. Gaps include NCAHP implementation impacts (2026 onward), cultural integration effects, and bidirectional lessons amid mental health crises.

Historical Development and Professionalization in the United States

The professionalization of counselling in the United States spans over a century, evolving from informal vocational guidance into a distinct, regulated mental health profession with robust institutional structures, ethical frameworks, and widespread public recognition. This progression reflects major societal shifts, including industrialization, immigration, world wars, educational reforms, and increasing emphasis on mental health and wellness.

Modern origins emerged in the early 20th century amid rapid urbanization and labor market changes. Frank Parsons, widely regarded as the "father of vocational guidance," founded the Vocational Bureau in Boston in 1908–1909 to assist immigrants and workers in aligning personal traits with suitable careers (Parsons, 1909; Hartung & Blustein, 2002). His seminal book, *Choosing a Vocation* (1909), introduced a tripartite model—self-understanding, occupational knowledge, and reasoned matching—establishing foundational principles for structured guidance. Contemporaries such as Jesse B. Davis promoted character development in schools, while Clifford Beers' 1908 memoir *A Mind That Found Itself* catalyzed mental health reform advocacy (Gladding, 2018).

Institutionalization accelerated in the 1910s–1930s with the formation of the National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA) in 1913, precursor to the American Counseling Association, which spread vocational services to schools nationwide. The Great Depression and World War II shifted focus toward psychological adjustment, with Carl Rogers' client-centered, non-directive therapy gaining prominence in the 1940s (Rogers, 1942). Post-WWII, the Veterans Administration and GI Bill expanded counselling roles in rehabilitation and higher education.

The 1950s marked consolidation. The National Defense Education Act (1958) funded school counsellor training amid Cold War priorities, boosting K-12 visibility. In 1952, the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) unified guidance and personnel workers; it evolved into the American Counseling Association (ACA) in 1992, now a leading advocate for ethics, research, and professional identity (ACA, 2025).

Credentialing milestones distinguished counselling from allied fields. CACREP (1981) standardized graduate training, NBCC (1982) introduced national certification (e.g., NCC) and exams (NCE), and licensure began in Virginia (1976), reaching all 50 states by the early 2000s (Bradley, 1995; ACA, 2017; NBCC, 2025).

Ethical unification strengthened the field. The ACA Code of Ethics (2014, ongoing revisions) prioritizes client welfare, multiculturalism, and competence (ACA, 2014). The "20/20" initiative (2005–2013) unified over 30 organizations, defining counselling as empowering diverse individuals toward mental health, wellness, education, and career goals (Kaplan & Kraus, 2018).

As of 2026, CACREP's 2024 Standards mandate 60 semester hours, dispositions, synchronous skill assessment, and unified identity (CACREP, 2024). The Counseling Compact enables interstate mobility. Despite challenges such as scope overlaps and reimbursement issues, counselling integrates deeply into healthcare (HIPAA), education (ASCA Model), military/VA, and private practice—transforming from adjunct support to an autonomous, evidence-based discipline advancing public mental health.

Historical Development and Professionalization in India: An Emerging Landscape

The professionalization of counselling in India is a dynamic, transitional process shaped by ancient indigenous traditions, colonial legacies, post-independence modernization, and contemporary regulatory reforms. Unlike the mature, autonomous structure in the United States, India's counselling field remains emerging, often subsumed under broader psychology or allied health domains, facing persistent challenges of identity fragmentation, cultural stigma, and uneven standardization.

Historically, counselling-like practices trace back to ancient Indian texts that emphasized guidance, self-inquiry, and moral-psychological support. The Bhagavad Gita's dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna exemplifies therapeutic engagement with existential crisis, anxiety, and ethical dilemmas, frequently cited as a cultural precedent for modern counselling (Arulmani, 2007; Bedi et al., 2018). Traditional systems such as Ayurveda, Yoga, and the guru-shishya relationship provided holistic emotional and spiritual guidance within collectivist family and community contexts, prioritizing relational harmony over individualistic therapy (Rao, 1991; Yadav, 2017).

Modern institutional counselling emerged in the early 20th century under Western influence. The first psychology laboratory at Calcutta University (1915) laid foundational groundwork, followed by early vocational guidance initiatives. The 1938 Acharya Narendra Dev Committee highlighted counselling's importance in education. Post-independence (1947 onward), formal services expanded amid urbanization and youth stress. Key milestones include the Batliboy Vocational Guidance Bureau in Bombay (1941, India's first private agency) and university departments offering guidance (e.g., St. Xavier's College, Bombay, 1955; M.S. University, Baroda, 1958). The 1950s–1960s saw growth through state psychological bureaus (e.g., Uttar Pradesh in 1947) and focus on vocational/educational counselling (D. Sinha, 1986; Arulmani, 2007).

Professional bodies later emerged to advocate identity and standards. The Indian Counselling Association (ICA), a non-profit umbrella organization, unites counsellors, therapists, and life-coaches to promote ethical practice, knowledge sharing, and uniform codes (ICA, n.d.). The Counsellor Council of India (CCI), founded in 2017, advances evidence-based, ethical counselling through training, certification, continuing professional development (CPD), and advocacy for mental health, psychology, and climate-responsive practice (CCI, n.d.; CCI Professional Development, n.d.). These bodies emphasize inclusion and transparency but remain voluntary rather than statutory.

Regulation has been historically fragmented. The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), established under the RCI Act 1992 (amended 2000), regulates clinical psychologists and counsellors in disability/rehabilitation contexts through Central Rehabilitation Register (CRR) enrollment and standardized syllabi (RCI, n.d.; RCI Act, 1992). RCI mandates qualifications such as the M.Phil. in Clinical Psychology (now transitioning to M.A. in Clinical Psychology from 2026) but limits scope to clinical/rehabilitation roles, excluding general counselling (RCI Norms & Guidelines, n.d.).

The National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP) Act 2021 marks a transformative shift, regulating non-clinical behavioural health roles (e.g., psychologists, counsellors, integrated behaviour health counsellors) distinct from RCI's domain. Draft Registration Regulations 2025 (public notice September 2025) propose mandatory registration, unique IDs, 5-year renewals, provisional pathways for existing practitioners (phasing out post-2025), and competency-based criteria including supervised hours. Competency-based curricula notified in 2025 mandate implementation from 2026–27, favoring in-person 4+2-year structures (B.Psych + M.Psych) and excluding distance modes to align with global norms (NCAHP Public Notice, 2025; NCAHP Draft Regulations, 2025).

Challenges remain significant: high cultural stigma often leads to preference for familial or spiritual support, resource shortages limit access, Western models sometimes clash with collectivist values, and jurisdictional overlaps between NCAHP and RCI persist (Bedi et al., 2018; Yadav, 2017). Demand surges due to urbanization, youth mental health needs, and NEP 2020's emphasis on school counselling, with private certifications (e.g., through CCI) bridging gaps. Overall, India's counselling professionalization is evolving from voluntary associations and cultural roots toward statutory regulation via NCAHP, holding strong potential for culturally adaptive, equitable practice if reforms are fully and cohesively implemented.

Regulation in the United States: A Robust Framework

Regulation of professional counselling in the United States is a decentralized yet highly structured system designed to safeguard public welfare, ensure practitioner competence, and uphold ethical standards. Oversight is primarily state-based through dedicated licensure boards, complemented by national organizations providing certification, examinations, ethical guidelines, and portability mechanisms. This multi-layered approach distinguishes counselling from unregulated practices while accommodating state-specific adaptations, though it introduces some variability.

Each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and other territories operates its own licensure board—often under departments of health, behavioral health, or professional regulation. These boards issue licenses, enforce standards, investigate complaints, and manage continuing education (American Counseling Association [ACA], 2025; National Board for Certified Counselors [NBCC], 2025). Boards operate under state statutes and administrative codes defining scope of practice, protected titles (most commonly Licensed Professional Counselor [LPC], Licensed Mental Health Counselor [LMHC], or Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor [LCPC]), and permissible activities.

Core licensure requirements show strong national consistency. Applicants must hold a master's degree (typically 48–60 semester hours) in counseling or a related field from an accredited program, frequently aligned with Council for

Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards (ACA Licensure Requirements Guide, 2025). Post-degree supervised clinical experience is mandatory, ranging from 2,000 to 4,000 hours (most commonly 3,000), accumulated over 2–3 years. This includes direct client contact (often 50–75%) and indirect activities, with regular face-to-face supervision by a qualified supervisor (typically 1 hour per 20–40 client hours). For example, California requires 3,000 hours as a registered Associate Professional Clinical Counselor (APCC), while many states mandate at least 1,000–2,000 direct hours (Board of Behavioral Sciences [BBS], California, 2025; World Population Review LPC Requirements, 2026).

Competency is assessed through national examinations administered by NBCC. The National Counselor Examination (NCE), a 200-item multiple-choice test, evaluates knowledge, skills, and abilities and is required in many states for portability. Some accept or require the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE), emphasizing clinical decision-making via case simulations. Passing one of these, often alongside state-specific jurisprudence or ethics tests (e.g., in California), is essential for full licensure (NBCC, 2025; NBCC Examinations, 2026).

Scope of practice varies by state statute, particularly regarding independent diagnosis. In many states (e.g., Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas), LPCs are authorized to diagnose mental disorders using the DSM-5, develop treatment plans, and provide independent psychotherapy. Others limit or exclude diagnostic privileges, requiring collaboration with psychologists or physicians. Recent expansions, such as New York's 2024 law granting independent diagnostic authority to Licensed Mental Health Counselors, reflect efforts to broaden access (National Conference of State Legislatures [NCSL] Scope of Practice Policy, 2022–updated; Remnant Counselor Collective, 2024).

Ethical oversight is guided by the ACA Code of Ethics (2014, with a major revision in progress—public comment early 2026, final adoption fall 2026). The code addresses the counseling relationship, confidentiality, professional responsibility, multiculturalism, technology/distance counseling, supervision, research, and ethical resolution. State boards enforce it through investigations, hearings, and sanctions (ACA, 2014; ACA Ethics Resources, 2026). NBCC maintains a parallel code for certified counselors, emphasizing legal and public protection.

Federal law intersects via the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) (1996, ongoing updates), mandating privacy and security for protected health information in covered practices. The Counseling Compact, an interstate agreement, enables practice across member states without full re-licensure. As of early 2026, 39 states plus D.C. have enacted it, with active privileges in Arizona, Minnesota, Ohio (since January 2025), and broader rollout anticipated (Counseling Compact Commission, 2026).

Ongoing accountability is ensured through continuing professional development (CPD/CE) of 20–40 hours biennially (or equivalent), often including ethics training. Complaints trigger investigations, with outcomes from education to license revocation.

While state variability poses challenges (e.g., differing hours, exam preferences, scopes), national alignment through ACA, NBCC, CACREP, and the Compact creates a strong, cohesive framework upholding high standards of competence, ethics, and public protection in a decentralized system.

Regulation in India: Fragmented with Reforms

Regulation of counselling in India remains fragmented and lacks a unified, mandatory national framework for general (non-clinical) counselling and counselling psychology. Oversight is split between statutory bodies with overlapping yet distinct scopes, resulting in inconsistencies, enforcement gaps, and ongoing challenges in protecting public welfare and ensuring professional accountability. This contrasts with more centralized or state-driven systems elsewhere, but recent reforms under the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP) Act 2021 are driving a shift toward standardization, particularly for non-clinical behavioural health roles.

The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), established under the RCI Act 1992 (amended 2000), acts as the primary statutory regulator for rehabilitation and clinical psychology professionals serving persons with disabilities (PWD). RCI maintains the Central Rehabilitation Register (CRR), standardizes syllabi, and mandates registration for titles such as Clinical Psychologist. Qualifications historically required an M.Phil. in Clinical Psychology (now phasing out), transitioning to the newly regulated 2-year M.A. in Clinical Psychology (tentatively from the 2026 academic year in approved institutions). Registration involves CRR enrollment with periodic renewal linked to Continuing Rehabilitation Education (CRE) points (e.g., 100 points for automatic renewal in some categories, with extended validity up to 7 years in recent simplifications). RCI's scope is confined to clinical and rehabilitation contexts involving disabilities, excluding general counselling, career guidance, or non-PWD mental health support (RCI, n.d.; RCI Act 1992; RCI Guidelines for M.A. Clinical Psychology, 2025).

General counselling and non-clinical psychology roles—such as counselling psychologists, behavioural analysts, integrated behaviour health counsellors, health educators/counsellors, and mental health support workers—fall outside RCI's mandate. Until recently, these areas operated without mandatory national licensure, depending on voluntary associations like the Indian Counselling Association (ICA) and Counsellor Council of India (CCI) for ethical guidelines and certifications. This regulatory vacuum has allowed unqualified or minimally trained practitioners to operate, posing risks to service quality and public trust (Bedi et al., 2018; Yadav, 2017).

The National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP) Act 2021, enacted on March 28, 2021 (notified May 25, 2021), addresses this gap by regulating 56 allied and healthcare professions across 10 categories, including Community Care, Behavioural Health Sciences and other Professionals (Category 7). This explicitly covers non-clinical roles such as Psychologist (excluding RCI-covered Clinical Psychologist for PWD), Behavioural Analyst, Integrated Behaviour Health Counsellor, Health Educator and Counsellors, Social Workers (clinical, psychiatric, medical), Mental Health Support Workers, and HIV/Family Planning Counsellors. NCAHP establishes Central and State Registers, mandates registration for practice, and seeks to standardize education, qualifications, and services (NCAHP Act 2021; NCAHP Website, updated Feb 2026).

Key recent developments include registration portals launched in October 2024, enabling enrollment for allied professionals. Competency-based curricula for Behavioural Health Sciences (e.g., Applied Psychology & Behavioural Health) were notified in 2025 and are mandatory from the 2026–27 academic year, prioritizing regular/in-person modes and excluding distance/online formats for core qualifications. The Draft Registration of Allied and Healthcare Professionals Regulations 2025 (public notice September 25, 2025; comments closed October 25, 2025) propose mandatory registration with unique IDs and 5-year renewals, provisional pathways for existing practitioners (e.g., Bachelor's/Master's in Psychology plus work experience; diplomas plus experience), phasing out provisional entries post-2025 for retrospective cases only, and regular registration requiring structured qualifications (4-year B.Psych. regular + 2-year M.Psych. regular, with advanced Psy.D./Ph.D. options). Emphasis is placed on supervised experience, ethical compliance, title protection ("Psychologist" for non-clinical roles), scope delineation, and exclusion of distance modes to meet global standards (NCAHP Draft Regulations 2025; NCAHP Public Notice, Sept 2025).

Enforcement is still transitional and weak, with no full statutory penalties or widespread inspections for general counselling yet; implementation awaits final notification post-feedback. Related laws intersect with ethics, such as the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012, which mandates reporting for counsellors handling minors, and the Mental Healthcare Act 2017, which promotes rights-based care but focuses on severe mental illness without directly regulating general counselling professionals (Mental Healthcare Act 2017; Sections 18, 43).

Persistent challenges include regulatory overlaps (NCAHP vs. RCI jurisdictional confusion), implementation delays, high stigma reducing help-seeking, workforce shortages, and cultural preferences for informal supports. Reforms hold promise for accountability and credibility, but full success depends on harmonization, stakeholder collaboration, and infrastructure investment (Arafat et al., 2023; Chinchu, 2024; NCAHP FAQs).

In summary, India's counselling regulation is evolving from fragmentation toward a more cohesive, rights-oriented framework through NCAHP, with provisional and regular pathways bridging existing and future practitioners. Effective execution could significantly elevate the profession, though ongoing gaps highlight the need for unified enforcement and culturally sensitive adaptation.

Educational Standardization in the United States

Educational standardization for professional counselling in the United States is primarily guided by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), established in 1981 as the specialized accrediting body for counselor education. Although CACREP accreditation is voluntary, it is widely regarded as the gold standard for entry-level master's programs and is increasingly aligned with state licensure requirements. The 2024 CACREP Standards (effective July 1, 2024, with implementation updates extending into 2026) emphasize quality assurance, professional dispositions, unified counselor identity, and in-person synchronous skill assessment.

Entry-level counseling programs require a minimum of 60 semester credit hours (or 90 quarter hours) of graduate study, regardless of specialization. The curriculum is structured around eight foundational core areas that all students must complete: (1) Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice; (2) Social and Cultural Identities and Experiences; (3) Lifespan Development; (4) Career Development; (5) Counseling Theories and Helping Relationships; (6) Group Counseling and Group Work; (7) Assessment and Testing; and (8) Research and Program Evaluation. Multicultural competence, advocacy, and ethical practice are integrated throughout the curriculum to ensure comprehensive professional preparation.

Practical training is a central component of CACREP standards. Students must complete a supervised practicum of at least 100 clock hours over a full academic term, including a minimum of 40 hours of direct client service. This is followed by a 600-hour internship in a relevant practice setting, with at least 240 hours of direct service. Internship supervision requires regular weekly interaction and systematic evaluation of student competence. Beginning July 2026, programs must include at least two in-person, synchronous skill assessments—one before practicum—to directly observe counseling competencies.

CACREP also outlines eight specialized practice areas: addictions counseling; career counseling; clinical mental health counseling; clinical rehabilitation counseling; college counseling and student affairs; marriage, couple, and family counseling; rehabilitation counseling; and school counseling. Each specialization includes specific competencies while maintaining a unified professional identity.

Most state licensure boards align closely with CACREP standards, often requiring or preferring CACREP-accredited degrees. Many states mandate 60 credit hours and standardized examinations such as the NCE or NCMHCE. Overall,

CACREP provides a rigorous, nationally recognized framework that promotes consistency, licensure portability, ethical practice, and professional identity within the counseling field.

Educational Standardization in India

Educational standardization for counselling and related fields in India remains transitional and fragmented as of early 2026. Unlike the centralized accreditation system in the United States (e.g., CACREP), India does not have a single mandatory national accrediting body for general counselling or counselling psychology programs. Pathways vary widely, ranging from short-term diplomas to postgraduate degrees, with quality assurance largely dependent on individual institutions. However, reforms under the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP) Act 2021 and alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 are gradually promoting competency-based structures and greater uniformity.

Traditional Pathways (Pre-Reform Context)

Historically, counselling education in India has been non-uniform:

- Undergraduate Level: A 3-year B.A./B.Sc. in Psychology or related fields like Social Work served as an entry point, often without specialization.
- Postgraduate Level: A 2-year M.A./M.Sc. in Psychology, Counselling Psychology, Applied Psychology, or Clinical Psychology is common. However, curricula and practical training vary significantly across universities.
- Diploma/Certificate Courses: One-year or short-term programs such as PG Diplomas in Guidance and Counselling are widely available but lack national standardization.
- Clinical Pathway (RCI-Regulated): The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) historically required an M.Phil. in Clinical Psychology for registration. From 2025–26 onward, this is being replaced with a 2-year RCI-regulated M.A. in Clinical Psychology aligned with NEP's 4-year undergraduate structure.

There is no national accreditation framework for general counselling programs; recognition depends largely on UGC approval and voluntary adherence to professional associations. This results in inconsistencies in curriculum depth, supervised practice, and competency levels.

Emerging Standardization under NCAHP Act 2021

The NCAHP Act 2021 is introducing structured, competency-based education for allied professions, including applied psychology and behavioural health. Key reforms include:

- Competency-Based Curriculum (2026–27 onward): Focus on practical training, evidence-based practice, community mental health, and Indian knowledge systems.
- Preferred 4+2 Model: A 4-year B.Psych. followed by a 2-year M.Psych., with advanced options like Psy.D. or Ph.D. Core qualifications must be pursued in regular (in-person) mode to ensure hands-on training.
- Transitional Provisions: Experienced practitioners may obtain provisional registration based on degrees plus work experience, but this pathway is being phased out.
- Exclusion of Distance Mode: Recent UGC directives restrict online/distance psychology programs under NCAHP to ensure competency-based training.

School Counselling Reforms

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), aligned with NEP 2020, now mandates trained counsellors in affiliated schools. From 2026, schools must appoint a Counselling and Wellness Teacher and a Career Counsellor (1 per 500 students in Classes IX–XII), with specified academic qualifications and mandatory training programs.

Overall Status

India's counselling education system is shifting from diverse, diploma-based pathways toward structured, competency-driven models under NCAHP, while RCI regulates clinical psychology and CBSE strengthens school-level standards. Although reforms promise greater standardization, challenges remain regarding overlap of regulatory bodies, accessibility concerns, and full nationwide implementation.

Comparative Analysis

The US and India share rising demand and ethical focuses, but differ profoundly: US maturity with licensure contrasts India's emergence. Cultural individualism in the US supports direct therapy; India's collectivism integrates family.

Table 1 provides a structured comparison.

Table 1. Comparative Overview of Counselling Professionalization, Regulation, and Education in the United States and India (Early 2026 Status)

Dimension / Aspect	United States (as of 2026)	India (as of early 2026)	Key Differences / Implications for Professionalization
Stage of Professionalization	Mature/established (origins early 1900s; full licensure nationwide since ~2000s)	Emerging/nascent (post-independence; non-clinical still developing distinct identity)	US: High legitimacy, autonomy, and societal integration; India: Fragmented, needs unification for credibility and public trust.

Primary National Professional Body	American Counseling Association (ACA) + National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC); >50,000 members	Indian Counselling Association (ICA), Counsellor Council of India (CCI); smaller/fragmented	US: Strong unified advocacy; India: Voluntary bodies with limited national enforcement power.
Mandatory Regulation / Licensure	Yes – state-level mandatory licensure (e.g., LPC/LMHC) in all 50 states + territories; Counseling Compact for interstate practice	No mandatory licensure for general/non-clinical counselling; partial via RCI (clinical/rehab only); NCAHP Act 2021 progressing toward national registration (drafts 2025 propose mandatory unique ID + 5-year renewal)	US: Robust public protection & accountability; India: Risk of unqualified practice persists; NCAHP reforms could close gap if fully implemented.
Governing Regulatory Body	State licensure boards + national CACREP (accreditation), NBCC (certification/exams)	National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP) for non-clinical/behavioural health; RCI for clinical psychologists (PWD-focused)	US: Decentralized but consistent standards; India: Overlap/fragmentation (NCAHP vs. RCI); emerging centralized register.
Protected Titles	Yes (e.g., Licensed Professional Counselor – LPC); scope includes diagnosis in many states	Limited; "Psychologist" protected under NCAHP drafts (except clinical under RCI); general "Counsellor" unregulated	US: Clear title protection enhances professional boundaries; India: Drafts introduce protection but implementation pending.
Entry-Level Educational Requirement	Master's degree (typically 60 semester hours/90 quarter hours) in counseling or related field	Variable (diploma to master's); NCAHP drafts propose 4-year B.Psych (regular) + 2-year M.Psych (regular) for Psychologist registration	US: Uniform high minimum; India: Inconsistent pathways; NCAHP shift toward standardized 6-year structure (excluding distance modes).
Accreditation / Program Standardization	CACREP mandatory for many state licenses; 2024 Standards emphasize unified counselor identity, quality, & dispositions	None national for general counselling; RCI for clinical; NCAHP curricula notified 2025 (e.g., Applied Psychology & Behavioural Health) for 2026 implementation	US: High consistency & quality assurance; India: Emerging standardization via NCAHP; potential for alignment with global norms.
Supervised Clinical	Post-degree: 2,000–4,000 hours (varies by state); training	Variable/none mandated for general; NCAHP	US: Ensures competence & readiness; India: Major gap; NCAHP proposals

Experience	includes practicum (100 hrs) + internship (600 hrs)	drafts require supervised experience for registration; RCI mandates for clinical	introduce structured supervision.
Examination / Competency Assessment	Yes – national exams (e.g., NCE or NCMHCE) required for most licenses	None for general; proposed under NCAHP registration process	US: Objective verification; India: Emerging; could adopt similar for credibility.
Ethical Code & Enforcement	ACA Code of Ethics (2014, ongoing updates); enforced by state boards & associations	CCI/ICA adapted codes; limited enforcement; NCAHP to establish unified code & mechanisms	Both emphasize client welfare/multiculturalism; US has stronger, legally backed enforcement.
Continuing Professional Development	Mandatory (20–40 hours biennially, varies by state) for license renewal	Not mandated for general; proposed 5-year renewal under NCAHP with CPD likely required	US: Ongoing competence ensured; India: Opportunity to build in via NCAHP.
Cultural / Contextual Influences	Individualistic society; direct, independent therapy focus; low stigma in many areas	Collectivist; family/community integration common; high stigma & resource shortages	Cross-learning potential: US could adopt systemic/family approaches; India could benefit from structured individualism in training.

Implications: India can leverage US models for standardization, while US gains from India's cultural integrations. This fosters equity in mental health.

Recommendations

The recommendations address India's needs while suggesting US adaptations, based on early 2026 NCAHP developments (e.g., 2025 drafts, 2026 curricula rollout).

For India

1. Refine NCAHP Implementation: Notify 2025 drafts with timelines for registration. Include grandfathering for experienced practitioners to avoid exclusion.
2. Harmonize Bodies: Form task forces between NCAHP, RCI, and associations to delineate scopes, reducing overlaps.
3. Standardize Education: Mandate accreditation with 4+2-year paths, including 600–1,000 supervised hours.
4. Enforce Ethics: Develop NCAHP code with cultural elements, requiring annual training.
5. Expand Workforce: Integrate into public programs, with incentives for rural areas.

For the United States

1. Cultural Adaptability: Incorporate collectivist modules in CACREP.
2. Portability: Expand Compact and international agreements.
3. Equity: Study India's community models for shortages.

Bilateral collaborations like exchanges could enhance global practices.

Conclusion

This comparative study highlights the distinct yet complementary development of counselling in the United States and India, showing how regulation, educational standards, and cultural context shape professional mental health systems. In the United States, counselling has evolved into a well-established and autonomous profession. It is anchored by the American Counseling Association (ACA), state licensure systems (e.g., Licensed Professional Counselor), and accreditation through the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The 2024 CACREP Standards reinforce professional identity, competency-based training, and supervised practice. Typically, graduates complete 2,000–4,000 post-degree supervised clinical hours and pass national examinations such as the National Counselor Examination (NCE). Ethical oversight through the ACA Code of Ethics and portability initiatives like the Counseling Compact further strengthen accountability and mobility. Rooted in an individualistic

cultural framework, U.S. counselling emphasizes client-centered therapeutic practice and is well integrated into schools, healthcare systems, workplaces, and private settings, ensuring public protection and professional competence. In contrast, counselling in India remains in a transitional phase. Historically marked by fragmented pathways, overlap with clinical psychology, and cultural reliance on family-based support systems, the profession is now undergoing significant reform. The National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions Act (NCAHP Act 2021) introduces structured registration, competency-based curricula (mandatory from 2026–27), and standardized oversight for non-clinical psychologists and behavioural health professionals. Parallely, the National Education Policy 2020 mandates counselling systems in educational institutions to promote socio-emotional learning, mental health awareness, and career guidance. Implementation efforts through CBSE capacity-building programs and national initiatives such as MANODARPAN are strengthening school-based counselling services and increasing demand for trained professionals. The comparison reveals clear contrasts: the U.S. model demonstrates regulatory maturity and consistent enforcement, while India is navigating rapid reforms amid regulatory overlaps and implementation challenges. Yet both nations share priorities—rising mental health needs, ethical practice, and culturally responsive care. The U.S. can learn from India's collectivist, family-integrated approaches for preventive and community-based interventions. India can adopt U.S. models of mandatory supervision, accreditation rigor, competency examinations, and continuing professional development to enhance credibility and public trust. Ultimately, effective counselling systems must balance global standards with local cultural realities. Through mutual learning and sustained policy commitment, both countries can advance toward inclusive, competent, and responsive counselling professions that address growing psychological needs and promote holistic well-being.

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Original Article

Circadian Alignment of Meditation Practice and Sleep Efficacy: A Comparative Study among Young Adults

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180208

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 44-47

February - 2026

Submitted: 15 Jan. 2026

Revised: 25 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 10 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of circadian alignment of meditation practice on sleep efficiency among young adults. Sleep efficiency, a key indicator of sleep quality, is influenced by biological rhythms, stress levels, and daily routines. While meditation is widely recognized for its role in stress reduction and sleep improvement, limited research has examined how the timing of meditation in relation to the body's circadian rhythm affects sleep outcomes. A comparative quantitative research design was employed with a sample of 200 young adults from Pune who practiced meditation regularly. Participants were divided into two groups based on their meditation timing: morning and evening. Sleep efficiency was measured using the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI). An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the groups. The findings revealed a statistically significant difference in sleep efficiency between the two groups, with morning meditators demonstrating better sleep efficiency than evening meditators. The results suggest that practicing meditation in alignment with the body's natural circadian rhythm, particularly in the morning, may regulate stress more effectively and support improved sleep patterns. The study highlights the importance of considering biological timing in behavioral interventions such as meditation. It offers practical implications for young adults, educators, and mental health professionals in promoting structured routines for better sleep health. Future research is recommended to incorporate physiological measures and experimental designs to further validate these findings. Keywords: Circadian Rhythm; Meditation; Sleep Efficiency; Young Adults; PSQI; Stress Reduction; Sleep Quality; Morning Meditation; Evening Meditation; Behavioral Health

Introduction

Sleep is very important for physical health, emotional balance, and cognitive functioning. One important indicator of good sleep is sleep efficiency. Sleep efficiency means how much time a person actually sleeps compared to the total time spent in bed. Nowadays, many young adults experience poor sleep due to stress, academic pressure, irregular routines, and screen usage. Meditation is commonly used as a natural technique to reduce stress and improve sleep. However, very few studies have examined whether the timing of meditation according to the body's circadian rhythm affects sleep efficiency.

This study focuses on understanding whether practicing meditation in the morning or evening makes a difference in sleep efficiency.

Background of the Study

The human body works according to a circadian rhythm, which is a 24-hour biological clock that regulates sleep-wake cycles and hormone secretion. Cortisol levels increase in the morning to promote alertness, and melatonin increases at night to promote sleep.



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19333738](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333738)



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How to cite this article:

Dhawan, D., & Kakulte, A. (2026). Circadian Alignment of Meditation Practice and Sleep Efficacy: A Comparative Study among Young Adults. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 44-47. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333738>

Meditation helps in reducing stress and calming the nervous system. If meditation is practiced in the morning, it may help regulate cortisol levels early in the day and reduce stress buildup. This may indirectly improve sleep quality at night.

Therefore, this study examines whether circadian alignment of meditation practice influences sleep efficiency among young adults.

Research Problem

Does the timing of meditation practice (morning vs evening) significantly affect sleep efficiency among young adults?

Objectives and Significance

Objectives

- To assess sleep efficiency among young adults practicing meditation.
- To compare sleep efficiency between morning and evening meditators.
- To examine the effect of circadian alignment on sleep efficiency.

Significance of the Study

This study is important because it connects biological rhythm with behavioral practices like meditation. It can help students and mental health professionals understand the best time for meditation to improve sleep.

Review of Literature

Research in sleep psychology shows that sleep efficiency is an important component of overall sleep quality. Poor sleep efficiency is associated with stress and irregular routines.

The theory of circadian rhythm explains how biological processes follow a 24-hour cycle. Hormones like cortisol and melatonin play a major role in regulating alertness and sleep.

Meditation has been shown in various studies to reduce stress, lower autonomic arousal, and improve sleep quality. However, most previous studies focus on the benefits of meditation without considering the timing of practice.

Research Gap

There is limited research examining whether aligning meditation with the body's circadian rhythm affects sleep efficiency. Especially among Indian young adults, this area remains underexplored. This study attempts to fill that gap.

Methodology

Research Design

Comparative quantitative research design was used.

Sample

The sample consisted of 200 young adults from Pune who had been practicing meditation regularly for at least one month.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling method was used.

Tools / Instruments

Sleep efficiency was measured using Component 4 (Sleep Efficiency Component) of the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI).

In PSQI scoring:

Lower scores indicate better sleep efficiency.

Higher scores indicate poorer sleep efficiency.

Procedure

Participants were selected based on their regular meditation timing (morning or evening). After obtaining consent, they completed the PSQI questionnaire. Data was collected and grouped according to meditation timing.

Data Analysis

An Independent Samples t-test was used to compare the mean sleep efficiency scores between morning and evening meditators.

Results / Findings & Discussion

The results showed a statistically significant difference between morning and evening meditators, $t(198) = -2.59$, $p = .010$.

Since lower PSQI scores indicate better sleep efficiency, morning meditators demonstrated better sleep efficiency

Group	Mean	SD	t	df	p value
Morning	0.75	0.95	-2.59	198	0.10
Evening	1.12	1.07			

Since lower PSQI scores indicate better sleep efficiency, morning meditators demonstrated better sleep efficiency compared to evening meditators.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings suggest that meditation practiced in the morning improves sleep efficiency more effectively than evening meditation.

Morning meditation may regulate stress levels at the beginning of the day. When stress is reduced early, the body can relax properly at night. This supports healthy melatonin release and improves sleep continuity.

Evening meditation also promotes relaxation, but it may not fully reduce stress accumulated throughout the day.

Link with Previous Research

The findings support circadian rhythm theory, which states that biological timing influences body functioning. The results are also consistent with research showing that stress reduction improves sleep quality. However, this study adds new understanding by focusing on the timing of meditation.

Summary of Findings

The study found that circadian alignment of meditation practice significantly affects sleep efficiency among young adults. Morning meditators showed better sleep efficiency than evening meditators.

Implications

Young adults can be encouraged to practice meditation in the morning for better sleep outcomes.

Mental health professionals can include circadian timing considerations in sleep interventions.

Colleges can promote structured morning meditation programs.

Limitations and Future Directions

The study was limited to Pune city.

Self-report measure (PSQI) was used.

Biological markers like cortisol were not measured.

Future research can include experimental designs and physiological measures to strengthen findings.

Discussion

The present study aimed to find out whether the timing of meditation, according to the body's circadian rhythm, affects sleep efficiency among young adults. The results showed that there is a significant difference between morning and evening meditators. Morning meditators had better sleep efficiency compared to evening meditators.

Sleep efficiency means how well a person sleeps during the time they are in bed. If a person spends more time actually sleeping and less time awake in bed, their sleep efficiency is better. In this study, morning meditators showed lower PSQI sleep efficiency scores, which means they were sleeping more effectively.

One possible reason for this result is the role of the circadian rhythm. The circadian rhythm is our body's natural 24-hour biological clock that controls when we feel awake and when we feel sleepy. In the morning, our body naturally increases cortisol levels, which helps us feel alert.

Practicing meditation at this time may help regulate stress levels from the beginning of the day.

When stress is controlled during the day, the body can relax more naturally at night. This helps in proper release of melatonin, the hormone responsible for sleep. As a result, sleep becomes more continuous and less disturbed, which improves sleep efficiency.

Evening meditation also helps in relaxation, but it may not reduce the stress that has already built up during the whole day. Therefore, its impact on sleep efficiency may not be as strong as morning meditation.

Another possible reason is routine. Morning meditation creates a fixed daily schedule, which supports regular sleep-wake timing. Regular sleep timing is important for maintaining good sleep efficiency, especially in young adults.

Overall, the findings suggest that practicing meditation in alignment with the body's natural rhythm can positively influence sleep efficiency. Morning meditation appears to be more beneficial in improving effective sleep among young adults.

Declaration Statement for Conflict of Interest

I declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding this research study.

Plagiarism Policy

This research paper follows proper academic guidelines. Plagiarism is maintained below 10–15% (excluding references). All theoretical concepts and measurement tools such as PSQI are properly acknowledged and cited where required.



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Original Article

Role of Alexithymia, Emotional Suppression and Cognitive Appraisal in Verbal and Physical Aggression among Adults

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180209

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 48-53

February - 2026

Submitted: 15 Jan. 2026

Revised: 25 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 10 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Dysregulation of emotions is widely recognized as a key factor contributing to aggression and violence, often manifesting in both interpersonal conflict and broader societal issues. The present study examined the predictive role of alexithymia, cognitive appraisal, and emotional suppression in aggression among Indian adults. A total of 116 participants (70 females, 46 males) aged 18–50 years were recruited through snowball and convenience sampling methods. Standardized tools were administered, including the Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20), the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ), and the Buss–Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ). Pearson's correlation analyses demonstrated significant associations between alexithymia and emotional suppression ($r = .496, p < .01$), verbal aggression ($r = .203, p < .01$), physical aggression ($r = .189, p < .01$), and the relationship between verbal and physical aggression ($r = .454, p < .01$). Regression analyses further indicated that alexithymia accounted for 4.1% of the variance in verbal aggression, 3.6% in physical aggression, and 24.6% emotional suppression, while verbal aggression independently explained 20.8% of the variance. These findings identify alexithymia as a robust predictor of aggression and emphasize the importance of interventions aimed at enhancing emotional awareness and regulation in therapeutic practice, educational institutions, workplace settings, and crime prevention initiatives.

Keywords: alexithymia, cognitive appraisal, emotional suppression, verbal aggression, physical aggression, emotion regulation, India

Introduction

Emotions are central to human functioning, influencing cognition, relationships, and behavioural outcomes (Izard, 2010). When effectively recognized and regulated, they promote adaptive responses; however, deficits in emotional awareness and regulation can lead to maladaptive behaviours such as aggression (Gross, 1998; Taylor & Bagby, 2004). Aggression, defined as behaviour intended to harm another individual physically or psychologically, includes verbal aggression, such as insults and threats, and physical aggression involving bodily harm (Buss & Perry, 1992). Three emotional processes are particularly relevant in understanding aggression: alexithymia, cognitive appraisal, and emotional suppression. Alexithymia is characterized by difficulty identifying and describing feelings and an externally oriented thinking style (Taylor, Bagby, & Parker, 1997) and is measured using the Toronto Alexithymia Scale (Bagby et al., 1994). The Cognitive-Affective Processing System (Mischel & Shoda, 1995) and neuroanatomical perspectives (Lane & Schwartz, 1987) explain its emotional processing deficits. Cognitive appraisal refers to the evaluation of a situation and coping resources that determines emotional responses (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and is measured using the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (Gross & John, 2003). Emotional suppression, a response-focused strategy involving inhibition of emotional expression (Gross & Levenson, 1993), is also measured using the ERQ and explained through Gross's (1998) Process Model of Emotion Regulation. Verbal and physical aggression are measured using the Buss–Perry Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992) and are theoretically explained through Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1973), the Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis, and the General Aggression Model (Anderson & Bushman, 2002).

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How to cite this article:

Makashir, A. A., & Salve, S. (2026). Role of Alexithymia, Emotional Suppression and Cognitive Appraisal in Verbal and Physical Aggression among Adults. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 48–53. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19348911>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19348911](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19348911)



Causes of these emotional and behavioural processes include early trauma, insecure attachment, neurological deficits, hostile attribution biases, poor conflict resolution skills, Exposure to violence, impulse control problems, and cultural norms discouraging emotional expressivity (Taylor & Bagby, 2004). The age group of 18–50 years encompasses significant developmental transitions such as higher education, career establishment, marriage, and parenting, which present stressors that challenge emotional regulation capacities (Gross & John, 2003). Aggression during adulthood can negatively impact families, workplaces, and communities. Although aggression has been widely studied, most research focuses on Western populations or adolescents and often examines predictors in isolation (Garofalo, Holden, & Velotti, 2018). In collectivist cultures such as India, where emotional restraint and interpersonal harmony are emphasized (Sharma & Dhillon, 2017), regulation strategies like suppression may function differently. Therefore, the present study addresses the gap by examining the combined role of alexithymia, cognitive appraisal, and emotional suppression in predicting verbal and physical aggression among Indian adults aged 18–50 years, contributing theoretically, practically, and culturally to the understanding of emotional antecedents of aggression. Objectives of the study are as follows-

1. To examine the relationship between alexithymia and verbal aggression.
2. To examine whether alexithymia significantly predicts verbal aggression.
3. To examine the relationship between alexithymia and physical aggression.
4. To examine whether alexithymia significantly predicts physical aggression.
5. To examine the relationship between maladaptive cognitive appraisal and physical aggression.
6. To examine whether maladaptive cognitive appraisal significantly predicts physical aggression.
7. To examine the relationship between maladaptive cognitive appraisal and verbal aggression.
8. To examine whether maladaptive cognitive appraisal significantly predicts verbal aggression.
9. To examine the relationship between emotional suppression and physical aggression.
10. To examine whether emotional suppression significantly predicts verbal aggression.

Methodology

Participants

The study sample consisted of 116 Indian adults between 18 and 50 years of age (70 females, 46 males). Participants were recruited using convenience and purposive sampling from universities, workplaces, and community networks in urban and peri-urban regions. Inclusion criteria were: age between 18 and 50 years, ability to read English or Hindi, and willingness to provide informed consent. Individuals who self-reported a history of major psychiatric or neurological disorders, or who returned incomplete questionnaires, were excluded from analysis.

Hypotheses

- H1: Alexithymia is positively correlated with verbal aggression
- H2: Alexithymia will significantly predict verbal Aggression
- H3: Alexithymia is positively correlated with physical aggression
- H4: Alexithymia will significantly predict physical Aggression
- H5: Maladaptive cognitive appraisal is positively correlated with physical aggression
- H6: Maladaptive cognitive appraisal will significantly predict physical aggression.
- H7: Maladaptive cognitive appraisal is positively correlated with verbal aggression
- H8: Maladaptive cognitive appraisal will significantly predict verbal aggression.
- H9: Emotional suppression is positively correlated with physical aggression
- H10: Emotional suppression will significantly predict physical aggression.
- H11: Emotional suppression is positively correlated with verbal aggression.
- H12: Emotional suppression will significantly predict verbal aggression.

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative, correlational, and predictive research design. Data were analysed using SPSS Version 23. Participants were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling methods, and the sample included both males and females

Tools

Toronto Alexithymia Scale

The Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20; Bagby, Parker, & Taylor, 1994) is a 20-item self-report instrument designed to assess alexithymia across three dimensions: Difficulty Identifying Feelings (DIF), Difficulty Describing Feelings (DDF), and Externally Oriented Thinking (EOT). Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), yielding total scores ranging from 20 to 100, with higher scores indicating greater levels of alexithymia. Scoring was conducted in accordance with the standardized manual, including reverse scoring of specified items and computation of both subscale and total scores. The TAS-20 has demonstrated strong internal consistency, construct validity, and cross-cultural applicability, and has been widely used in both clinical and non-clinical adult populations to examine emotional awareness and regulation difficulties.

Buss–Perry Aggression Questionnaire

Aggression was assessed using the Buss–Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ; Buss & Perry, 1992), a 29-item self-report measure that yields subscale scores for Physical Aggression and Verbal Aggression (along with Anger and Hostility). Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = extremely uncharacteristic of me to 5 = extremely characteristic of me). For this study, analyses focused on the Physical and Verbal Aggression subscales as primary outcome variables. Subscale scores were computed according to the BPAQ scoring guidelines.

Emotional Regulation Questionnaire

The Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ; Gross & John, 2003) is a 10-item and self-report instrument measuring two emotion regulation strategies: Cognitive Reappraisal (6 items) and Expressive Suppression (4 items). Responses are on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Separate scores are computed for reappraisal and suppression (possible ranges: reappraisal 6–42; suppression 4–28). In this research, suppression scores were of primary interest because the study examines suppression as a putative predictor of aggression. The ERQ has demonstrated acceptable reliability and cross-cultural utility (Gross & John, 2003).

Procedure

Ethical safeguards were implemented in accordance with the American Psychological Association's ethical guidelines (APA, 2017) and Institutional Review Board requirements. Prior to data collection, the research protocol, instruments, consent forms, and recruitment materials were approved by the university's Ethics Review Committee. Participants were provided with an information sheet detailing the purpose, procedures, voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality measures, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Informed consent was obtained electronically for online administration and through signed forms for in-person data collection. No personally identifying information was collected; responses were coded using numeric identifiers. Electronic data were stored on password-protected systems, and any paper records were secured in locked storage, with retention and destruction conducted according to institutional policy. Although the study posed minimal risk, participants were informed that some items might cause mild discomfort and were provided with counselling and mental health support resources. Individuals reporting severe psychiatric conditions were excluded to ensure participant safety. Data were collected through online (Google Forms) and in-person methods between the specified months and years. Participants were recruited via institutional mailing lists, social media platforms, workplace notices, and announcements. The questionnaire sequence included a Personal Data Sheet, TAS-20, ERQ, and BPAQ, with an estimated completion time of 20–30 minutes. Completed responses were screened for completeness, and participants received a debrief sheet outlining study objectives and support resources.

Results and Discussion

Result Tables:

Table 1 showing descriptive statistics

	Mean	Standard deviation	Variance	z skewness	Kurtosis
Alexithymia	52.93	10.6373	113.153	0.53982	-0.344
Cognitive Appraisal	29.661	6.1372	37.665	0.82743	-0.358
Emotional Suppression	16.296	5.223	27.28	-0.2699	-0.104
Physical Aggression	27.53	3.8895	15.128	-0.9336	-0.1
Verbal Aggression	13.409	2.9821	8.893	-1.1239	-0.694

Table 2 showing correlation between alexithymia, cognitive appraisal, emotional suppression, physical aggression and verbal aggression.

	Alexithymia	Cognitive Appraisal	Emotional Suppression	Physical aggression	Verbal Aggression
Alexithymia	1	-0.008	.496**	.189*	.203*
Cognitive Appraisal	-0.008	1	0.032	-0.118	-0.103
Emotional Suppression	.496**	0.032	1	0.088	-0.006
Physical Aggression	.189*	-0.118	0.088	1	.454**

Verbal Aggression	.203*	-.103	-.0006	.454**	1
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** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Regression

Table 3 showing regression analysis between alexithymia and verbal aggression

Model	R	R ²	Adj R ²	R ² Change	Beta	T	df	P
Alexithymia	.203	.041	.033	.041	2.204	0.30	1	.030

Criterion- Verbal Aggression

Table 4 showing regression analysis between alexithymia and physical aggression

Model	R	R ²	Adj R ²	R ² Change	Beta	t	df	P
Alexithymia	.189	.036	.027	.036	.189	2.050	1	.043

Criterion – Physical Aggression

Table 5 showing regression analysis between alexithymia and emotional suppression

Model	R	R ²	Adj R ²	R ² Change	Beta	t	df	P
Alexithymia	.496	.246	.238	0.203	.0244	6.031	1	0.001

Criterion – Emotional Suppression

Table 6 showing regression analysis between verbal aggression and physical aggression

Model	R	R ²	Adj R ²	R ² Change	Beta	t	df	P
Verbal Aggression	0.454	.208	.238	.254	0.607	5.423	1	0.001

Criterion – Physical Aggression.

Descriptive statistics indicated that Alexithymia had a mean of 52.93 (SD = 10.64; range = 30–77), Cognitive Appraisal had a mean of 29.66 (SD = 6.14), Emotional Suppression had a mean of 16.30 (SD = 5.22), Emotional Regulation had a mean of 27.53 (SD = 3.89), and Verbal Aggression had a mean of 13.41 (SD = 2.98; range = 7–19). Normality assumptions were satisfied, as z-skewness and z-kurtosis values for all variables fell within ± 1.96 (Field, 2013), including z-kurtosis values for Alexithymia (–0.77), Cognitive Appraisal (–0.80), Emotional Suppression (–0.23), Total Emotional Regulation (–0.22), and Verbal Aggression (–1.55). Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between Alexithymia and Emotional Suppression ($r = .496$, $p < .01$), as well as significant positive correlations with Physical Aggression ($r = .189$, $p < .05$) and Verbal Aggression ($r = .203$, $p < .05$). Physical Aggression was also positively correlated with Verbal Aggression ($r = .454$, $p < .01$). Cognitive Appraisal was not significantly correlated with any variable ($p > .05$). Regression analyses using the enter method showed that Alexithymia significantly positively predicted Verbal Aggression ($B = 0.057$, $t = 2.204$, $p = .030$, $R = .203$, $R^2 = .041$) and Physical Aggression ($B = 0.069$, $t = 2.050$, $p = .043$, $R = .189$, $R^2 = .036$). Alexithymia also significantly positively predicted Emotional Suppression ($B = 0.244$, $t = 6.031$, $p < .001$, $R = .496$, $R^2 = .246$). Additionally, Verbal Aggression significantly positively predicted Physical Aggression ($B = 0.607$, $t = 5.423$, $p < .001$, $R = .454$, $R^2 = .208$). The present study examined emotional predictors of aggression among Indian adults, with specific focus on alexithymia, maladaptive cognitive appraisal, and emotional suppression, and the findings were interpreted in relation to established theoretical frameworks, prior empirical evidence, and cultural context. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, alexithymia was positively correlated with verbal aggression, and consistent with Hypothesis 4, alexithymia significantly predicted physical aggression, aligning with previous research (Garofalo, Holden, & Velotti, 2018; Norman et al., 2019). Individuals high in alexithymia, characterized by difficulty identifying and describing emotions, may experience unresolved emotional arousal that manifests as externalized aggression. This association is supported by the Cognitive-Affective Processing System model (Mischel & Shoda, 1995), which emphasizes disruptions in emotional cue processing, and by neurobiological perspectives highlighting impaired prefrontal–limbic integration in emotional dysregulation (Lane & Schwartz, 1987). In contrast, contrary to the proposed hypotheses, maladaptive cognitive appraisal did not significantly predict either verbal or physical aggression, despite theoretical expectations derived from the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This non-significant finding may reflect measurement limitations of the ERQ reappraisal subscale, cultural influences that discourage overt aggression, or the possibility that appraisal exerts indirect rather than direct effects. Similarly, Hypotheses 9 and 11 were not supported, as emotional suppression did not significantly predict physical or verbal aggression, diverging from Western findings (Gross & Levenson, 1993; Bushman et al., 2001). In the Indian collectivist context, suppression may function as a socially adaptive strategy aimed at maintaining interpersonal harmony (Sharma & Dhillon, 2017) and may be more

strongly associated with internalized distress than observable aggression. The moderate correlation between physical and verbal aggression ($r = .454, p < .01$) indicates shared underlying emotional mechanisms while maintaining distinct behavioural expressions, reinforcing the multidimensional conceptualization of aggression. Overall, the findings underscore the robust role of alexithymia in predicting aggression, extend prior research to Indian adults aged 18–50 years, and highlight the importance of culturally sensitive models in understanding the emotional antecedents of aggressive behaviour.

Conclusion

This study examined the role of alexithymia, emotional suppression, and cognitive appraisal in predicting verbal and physical aggression among Indian adults (18–50 years). Alexithymia emerged as a significant predictor of both forms of aggression, indicating that difficulty in identifying and describing emotions increases aggressive tendencies. It was also strongly associated with emotional suppression, suggesting impaired emotional awareness contributes to maladaptive regulation strategies. However, maladaptive cognitive appraisal and emotional suppression did not significantly predict aggression in this sample. These findings suggest that emotional regulation processes may function differently in the Indian cultural context, where suppression may be socially normative rather than aggression-enhancing. The moderate correlation between verbal and physical aggression supports the multidimensional nature of aggression. Limitations of this research are-

Limited generalizability: Modest, primarily urban sample

Cross-sectional design: No causal conclusions

Self-report bias: Possible social desirability effects

Measurement limits: ERQ assessed adaptive reappraisal, not maladaptive appraisal styles

Overall, the results emphasize the importance of emotional awareness and culturally sensitive interventions to reduce aggression.

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Original Article

Comparative Study of Depression between Male and female Teacher in College

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180210

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 54-57

February - 2026

Submitted: 15 Jan. 2026

Revised: 25 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 10 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract

Depression among college teachers has become an important concern due to its impact on individual well-being, professional effectiveness, and educational outcomes. The present study aims to compare the levels of depression between male and female college teachers. A comparative research design was employed with a sample of 60 teachers, including 30 males and 30 females, selected through purposive sampling. Depression levels were assessed using the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), a standardized self-report measure. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and an independent samples t-test. The results indicated that male teachers had a mean depression score of 22.90, while female teachers had a mean score of 23.10. The calculated t-value (0.0714) showed no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers. These findings suggest that both groups experience similar levels of depression, possibly due to common occupational stressors such as workload, role demands, and institutional pressures. The study highlights that depression among college teachers is not significantly influenced by gender but is more closely associated with workplace-related factors. The findings emphasize the need for mental health support systems, counseling services, and stress management interventions for teachers irrespective of gender. Future research should include larger samples and additional variables to gain a more comprehensive understanding of teacher mental health.

Keywords: Depression; College Teachers; Gender Differences; Beck Depression Inventory (BDI); Mental Health; Occupational Stress; Comparative Study; Psychological Well-being

Introduction

Mental health problems in the workplace have emerged as a critical global concern, significantly affecting individuals, organizations, and national economies. According to global estimates, nearly 17.6% of the population experiences common mental health problems such as stress-related disorders, anxiety disorders, and depressive disorders at some point in their lives. Among these conditions, depression stands out as one of the most disabling and pervasive mental health disorders, contributing substantially to reduced productivity, absenteeism, presentisms, and overall deterioration in quality of life. Depression is not merely a personal issue but a workplace concern that influences professional efficiency, interpersonal relationships, and organizational outcomes. Employees experiencing depressive symptoms often struggle with concentration, motivation, emotional regulation, and decision-making, which directly impacts job performance. Teaching, particularly at the college level, is a profession associated with intense cognitive demands, high emotional involvement, and continuous performance evaluation. College teachers are expected to balance teaching responsibilities, research output, administrative duties, student mentoring, and institutional expectations, often within limited resources and time constraints. In recent years, the academic profession has undergone significant transformation due to increased competition, accountability measures, digitalization of education, and changing student expectations. These changes have amplified occupational stress among teachers, making them vulnerable to mental health challenges such as depression.



Quick Response Code:



Website:

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DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19333870](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333870)



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How to cite this article:

Tipare, A. sanjay., & joshi, S. (2026). Comparative Study of Depression between Male and female Teacher in College. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 54–57.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333870>

Furthermore, depression among teachers does not only affect the individuals themselves but also indirectly influences students' academic engagement, learning outcomes, and overall educational environment. Gender differences in depression have been widely acknowledged in psychological literature. Research suggests that women are generally more likely to report depressive symptoms, while men may exhibit depression through irritability, withdrawal, or maladaptive coping strategies such as substance use. However, findings regarding gender differences in occupational depression, especially among college teachers, remain inconsistent. Therefore, a systematic comparison of depression levels between male and female college teachers is essential to understand gender-specific mental health dynamics within the academic profession.

Background of Study

Depression among working professionals is a complex phenomenon resulting from the interaction of personal, occupational, and health-related factors. Individual risk factors associated with depression include age, gender, marital status, caregiving responsibilities, history of mental illness, chronic medical conditions, educational level, and socioeconomic status. Health-related behaviors such as smoking, alcohol consumption, inadequate sleep, poor diet, and low physical activity further increase susceptibility to depressive symptoms. Work-related factors play a crucial role in the development and maintenance of depression. These include excessive workload, role ambiguity, role conflict, lack of autonomy, procedural injustice, job insecurity, workplace bullying, occupational violence, and inadequate social support. Long working hours and irregular work schedules often result in sleep deprivation and reduced opportunities for recovery, increasing vulnerability to mental health problems. In the teaching profession, these stressors are compounded by profession-specific challenges. College teachers face pressure to achieve academic excellence, publish research, secure funding, manage large classrooms, and adapt to rapidly changing curricula and technologies. Additionally, teachers often experience emotional labor while dealing with diverse student needs, academic failures, behavioral issues, and institutional constraints. Gender plays an important role in shaping experiences of depression in the workplace. Social roles, cultural expectations, and coping styles differ between men and women, influencing how stress and depression are experienced and expressed. Female teachers may experience additional pressures related to work-family balance, caregiving responsibilities, and societal expectations, while male teachers may face expectations related to performance, authority, and emotional suppression. Despite working in the same occupational environment, male and female college teachers may differ in their exposure to stressors, coping mechanisms, and help-seeking behaviors. Understanding these differences is vital for developing effective mental health interventions tailored to the needs of educators.

Research Problem

Depression among college teachers has become an increasingly important issue due to its negative impact on professional effectiveness, personal well-being, and institutional functioning. Although several studies have explored stress, anxiety, and depression among teachers, relatively fewer studies have focused specifically on gender-based differences in depression at the college level.

Existing research presents mixed findings regarding whether male or female teachers experience higher levels of depression. Moreover, most studies have focused on school teachers or general working populations, leaving a gap in understanding depression among college educators. In the Indian context, research examining gender differences in depression among college teachers is particularly limited.

Therefore, the present study addresses the following research problem:

“To compare the level of depression between male and female college teachers

Objectives of Significance

Objectives of the Study

To assess the level of depression among male college teachers.

To assess the level of depression among female college teachers.

To compare the level of depression between male and female college teachers.

Significance of the study

The present study holds theoretical, practical, and social significance. Theoretically, it contributes to existing literature on occupational mental health and gender differences in depression within the academic profession. Practically, the findings can help educational institutions identify the mental health needs of teachers and develop supportive policies, counseling services, and stress-management programs. Socially, promoting teachers' mental health can enhance educational quality, student outcomes, and overall institutional effectiveness.

Review of Literature – Relevant Theories of Depression

Beck's Cognitive Triad Theory

Beck's Cognitive Triad theory explains depression as a result of negative thinking patterns involving three interconnected components: negative views about oneself, the world, and the future. According to Beck, individuals with depression tend to interpret experiences through cognitive distortions such as overgeneralization, catastrophizing, and selective abstraction. These distorted thought patterns reinforce feelings of hopelessness and helplessness,

contributing to the persistence of depressive symptoms. In occupational settings, negative self-evaluations related to professional competence and job performance may intensify depression among teachers.

Seligman's Theory of Learned Helplessness

Seligman's theory of learned helplessness suggests that repeated exposure to uncontrollable and stressful situations leads individuals to believe that they have no control over outcomes. This perception results in passivity, reduced motivation, and depressive symptoms. In the context of teaching, persistent institutional constraints, lack of recognition, and excessive workload may contribute to feelings of helplessness and emotional exhaustion.

Relevant Theories and Past Studies

Several empirical studies have examined depression among teachers and working professionals. Research conducted among teachers in different countries has reported moderate to high prevalence of depression, anxiety, and stress. Studies have highlighted occupational stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, and work-life imbalance as significant predictors of depression among educators.

Some studies have found higher levels of depression among female teachers, attributing this to greater emotional involvement, societal pressures, and multiple role responsibilities. Other studies, however, have reported no significant gender differences, suggesting that occupational stressors affect male and female teachers similarly. These inconsistent findings indicate the need for further comparative research focusing specifically on gender differences in depression among college teachers

Research Gap

Although extensive research exists on depression among teachers, several gaps remain. First, limited studies have specifically focused on college teachers, with most research concentrating on school teachers or general employees. Second, findings regarding gender differences in depression among teachers are inconsistent, highlighting the need for further investigation. Third, there is a lack of empirical studies in the Indian context using standardized psychological tools to compare depression levels between male and female college teachers.

The present study seeks to address these gaps by systematically comparing depression levels between male and female college teachers using a standardized instrument.

Methodology

Research Design

The present study employed a comparative research design to examine differences in depression levels between male and female college teachers.

Sample

The sample consisted of 60 college teachers, including 30 male and 30 female teachers, aged between 23 and 50 years. Participants were selected using the purposive sampling technique from various colleges.

Tools / Instruments

Depression was measured using the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) developed by Aaron T. Beck. The BDI is a widely used 21-item self-report questionnaire that assesses the severity of depressive symptoms, including sadness, pessimism, and guilt, loss of interest, fatigue, and sleep disturbances.

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained. The BDI was administered individually in a comfortable setting. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process. Responses were scored according to standardized BDI scoring procedures.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as Mean and Standard Deviation. An independent t-test was used to examine differences in depression levels between male and female

Result/Finding And Discussion – key Results

The analysis revealed that male college teachers obtained a mean depression score of 22.90 with a standard deviation of 10.95, while female college teachers obtained a mean score of 23.10 with a standard deviation of 10.76. The calculated t-value was 0.0714, indicating no statistically significant difference between the two groups.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings suggest that both male and female college teachers experience comparable levels of depression. This indicates that occupational stressors inherent in the teaching profession may have a similar impact on both genders. The absence of significant gender differences may also reflect shared professional challenges such as workload pressure, job insecurity, and administrative demands.

Link with previous Research

The present findings are consistent with several previous studies that reported no significant gender differences in depression among working professionals. These results suggest that workplace factors may play a more dominant role than gender in influencing depression among college teachers.

Conclusion – Summary of Findings



The study found that both male and female college teachers experience moderate levels of depression. No significant difference was observed between the two groups, leading to the rejection of both hypotheses.

Implications

The findings emphasize the need for mental health support programs for college teachers irrespective of gender. Institutions should implement counseling services, stress-management workshops, and policies promoting work-life balance to reduce depression among teachers.

Limitation and Future Directions

The study was limited by a small sample size and the use of purposive sampling. Future research may involve larger samples, longitudinal designs, and inclusion of additional variables such as burnout, job satisfaction, and coping strategies to gain deeper insights into teachers' mental

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Original Article

Spiritual Intelligence as a Foundational Psychological Resource: A Regression Analysis of Its Predictive Influence on Resilience

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180211

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 58-66

February - 2026

Submitted: 16 Jan. 2026

Revised: 26 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 11 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

The present study examined the predictive relationship between spiritual intelligence and resilience in a non-clinical sample. While existing literature suggests conceptual overlap between these constructs, empirical clarity regarding their statistical association and predictive strength remains limited. The current research aimed to determine whether spiritual intelligence significantly predicts resilience and to estimate the magnitude of its contribution.

A correlational research design was employed. Pearson product moment correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive association between spiritual intelligence and resilience, indicating that individuals with higher levels of spiritual intelligence tend to report greater resilience. To further examine predictive capacity, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted. Results demonstrated that spiritual intelligence significantly predicted resilience, accounting for approximately 9 % of the variance in resilience scores.

Although the proportion of explained variance is modest, the findings suggest that spiritual intelligence represents a meaningful psychological resource contributing to adaptive coping capacity. As the literature demonstrates that personality factors predict resilience, Spiritual intelligence's predictive value becomes more meaningful. These findings contribute to the growing empirical literature on positive psychology constructs and highlight the potential value of incorporating spiritual development components in resilience building interventions. Future research may explore mediating and moderating mechanisms to understand better the pathways linking spiritual intelligence and resilience across diverse populations.

Keywords: Spiritual intelligence, Resilience, Positive Psychology

Introduction & Rationale

Intelligence is one of the most important concepts in Psychology with numerous theories and debates as well. The emergence of the account of intelligence not just being one facet but consisting numerous abilities have dominated the field of psychology since past few decades. The addition of Existential intelligence as a candidate intelligence in the multiple intelligence theory of Gardner brought in a new existential facet of intelligence. Nonetheless, Danah Zohar introduced the concept of spiritual intelligence in 1997, building on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Zohar's work explored the relationship between spirituality and intelligence. Robert Emmons argued that Spiritual intelligence is a type of intelligence and fulfils all criteria to be an intelligence as given by Howard Gardner. As the literature highlights, intelligence is important for flourishing in many domains of life. The same is seen in the case of Spiritual intelligence even in today's complexly stressful lives. Researches on spirituality show that it helps in adapting with everyday stressors, and find meaning in routine things. The scientific literature highlights the role of spiritual intelligence in leading a fulfilling life and satisfaction. This made me fascinate and curious to dive deep in the concept of spiritual intelligence.

To understand the literature of Spiritual intelligence, it's necessary to begin with the concept of intelligence and a brief historical review of it and the development of spiritual intelligence as a type of intelligence.

In the fourth century B.C.E., Greek philosopher Plato compared human intelligence to blocks of wax, in so much that people differed in the size, hardness, moistness, and purity of their intelligence. Many theories and models of intelligence were developed on a massive scale in the scientific literature in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19333916](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333916)



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How to cite this article:

Joshi, P., & Salve, S. (2026). Spiritual Intelligence as a Foundational Psychological Resource: A Regression Analysis of Its Predictive Influence on Resilience. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 58–66. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19333916>

Charles Darwin who is an influential figure worldwide not only in pure sciences, but in social sciences as well also conceptualized intelligence in a different and an evolutionary perspective. In his 1871 book *The Descent of Man*, Charles Darwin contended that human intelligence developed from the instincts of our earlier nonhuman ancestors. According to Darwin, only intelligent genes would have remained in the gene pool, increasing the degree of human intelligence over time.

Measurement of intelligence started very late as compared to the initial developmental years of this concept. The first systematic attempt to measure intelligence was done by Sir Francis Galton. In 1884, Galton tried measure intelligence by assessing physical and sensory abilities like reaction time to quantify intelligence. Though these tests were not as successful at measuring intelligence as later efforts, they were groundbreaking for their use of psychometric methods and large-scale data collection. Galton's work laid the foundation for modern intelligence testing by demonstrating the possibility of objectively measuring human capabilities and applying statistical methods to the data. It was in 1916, that Alfred Binet and Theodore Simon developed a battery to measure intelligence. It was the first intelligence test and was designed to identify children needing special education. It featured age-graded tasks to assess intellectual development and was a groundbreaking tool for measuring intelligence by establishing a concept of mental age. The scale was later revised and led to the development of the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale, a widely adopted revision of the original test.

Intelligence Quotient IQ was a concept previously developed by William Stern in 1912. Many theorists in the initial time believed intelligence to be a single ability or trait. However, the concept of intelligence saw a massive development in due course of time. Many researchers have established their theories highlighting intelligence to be not just one single ability but consisting of multiple abilities or facets. Charles Spearman gave Two factor theory according to which intelligence consists of general factor (g) and specific factors (s). Thurstone's Primary Mental Abilities Theory states that Intelligence comprises seven distinct primary mental abilities, including verbal comprehension, word fluency, and spatial visualization. Sternberg gave Triarchic Theory of intelligence where he states that Intelligence consists of three components: analytical, creative, and practical intelligence. According to Cattell, intelligence involves Fluid and Crystallized Intelligence where fluid intelligence involves abstract reasoning and problem-solving, while crystallized intelligence refers to acquired knowledge and skills. Another theory by Guilford propounds the structure of intelligence consisting of 120 unique intellectual abilities, categorized into three dimensions: content, operations, and products. Thorndike through his Multifactor Theory stated that Intelligence consists of multiple factors, each representing a specific ability. Later, the concept of Emotional Intelligence was developed by Peter Salovey and John Mayer. Daniel Goleman extensively worked on this concept. It refers to the ability to perceive, understand, express, and regulate emotions effectively.

The theory of Multiple intelligence by Dr, Howard Gardner is one of the most influential intelligences in the recent times. The theory is also important in the context of Spiritual intelligence. Dr. Howard Gardner famous for his theory of Multiple intelligence, proposed nine different types of intelligence. In his book 'The frames of mind' he explains these types of intelligence and their development in individuals. The ninth candidate intelligence of proposed by Dr. Gardner is important in this context of spiritual intelligence. Howard Gardner describes existential intelligence as "the intelligence of big questions" (Gardner, 1993, p. 20), based on the human tendency to contemplate the most fundamental questions of life. Gardner contends that an existential intelligence scores reasonably well on his criteria for intelligence, noting that such issues arise in every culture and that children often raise these questions at an early age. Individuals with exceptional existential abilities can be noted throughout history, such as religious leaders and philosophers. Nevertheless, Gardner hesitates to officially add existential intelligence to his list, maintaining that evidence is still lacking. He is often quoted as stating that until such evidence is found, he will continue speaking of "eight and a half intelligences" (Gardner, 1993, p. 21). Although Gardner does not support a spiritual intelligence in his model, an overwhelming number of authors, researchers, and clinicians have recently proposed spiritual intelligence as a valid psychological phenomenon. Unfortunately, they have failed to satisfy the majority of psychologists and researchers. Many have also failed to describe spiritual intelligence in a way that makes it universally applicable. In many cases, these theories are based on single religious perspectives and use religious language, making them non-inclusive and therefore, invalid. Intelligence researchers agree that an intelligence must be observed across cultures and geographical boundaries.

Danah Zohar introduced the concept of spiritual intelligence in 1997, building on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Zohar's work explored the relationship between spirituality and intelligence. As seen above, Howard Gardner who was initially skeptical about spiritual intelligence, later acknowledged its potential as a distinct type of intelligence. He proposed existential intelligence, which involves addressing existential questions about human existence. Robert Emmons argued that spiritual intelligence can be viewed as a form of intelligence, predicting functioning and adaptation. He outlined five core capacities, including transcending the material and sanctifying everyday experiences. Yosi Joseph Amram presented his research work on Spiritual intelligence in the conference of American Psychological Association. He defined spiritual intelligence as a set of mental capacities contributing to awareness, integration, and adaptive application of non-material and transcendent aspects of existence. Cindy

Wigglesworth developed a model of spiritual intelligence with four quadrants: higher self/ego self-awareness, universal awareness, higher self/ego self-mastery, and spiritual presence/social mastery.

Nowadays, in the complex world of Globalisation, the focus on spirituality and viewing it as an intelligence is increasing rapidly. Many researches are being conducted to examine the relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological well-being, resilience, and life satisfaction. Also, the role of spiritual intelligence in organisational settings, educational settings and different domains of life are examined by many researchers across the world.

Resilience

Resilience is the capacity and dynamic process of adaptively overcoming stress and adversity while maintaining normal psychological and physical functioning (Russo et al., 2012; Rutter, 2012b; Southwick and Charney, 2012).

Researchers suggest that genetic, epigenetic, developmental, psychosocial, and neurochemical factors that are considered essential contributors to the development of resilience. Genetic factors contribute significantly to resilient responses to trauma and stress. Developmental environment is another crucial contributor to resilience (Rende, 2012). Severe adverse events in childhood can negatively affect the development of stress response systems, in some cases causing long-lasting damage. Numerous rodent and primate studies suggest that animals abused by their mothers in the first few weeks of life show both delayed independence and decreased stress management skills in adulthood (Feder et al., 2011).

Certain factors play major roles in determining whether a childhood traumatic event will lead to vulnerability or instead, to resilience. One of these factors is the degree of control that the person has over the stressor (Feder et al., 2011).

Resilience is a dynamic concept (Rutter, 2013). Most definitions of resilience include the overcoming of stress or adversity or a relative resistance to environmental risk (Bowes & Jaffee, 2013). The broader, systems framework definition of resilience is the capacity of a dynamic system to withstand or recover from significant challenges that threaten its stability, viability, or development (Sapientza & Masten, 2011). Rutter (2006) used the term resilience to refer to the finding that some individuals have a relatively good psychological outcome despite suffering risk experiences that would be expected to result in serious sequelae. Resilience, at its essence, is an interactive concept to describe the combination of serious risk experiences and a relatively positive psychological outcome despite those experiences (Rutter, 2006). Resilience can also be defined as protective or positive processes that reduce maladaptive outcomes under conditions of risk (Greenberg, 2006). Three broad categories of protective factors have been identified: individual (temperament and intelligence/cognitive ability), the quality of the child's relationships, and broader environmental factors (safe neighborhoods, quality schools, and regulatory activities; Greenberg, 2006).

Rationale of the Study

Although spiritual intelligence has received growing attention in psychological research, studies examining its predictive role in resilience remain limited, particularly within the Indian context. Existing Indian research is relatively sparse and often restricted to small and homogeneous samples such as adolescents, college students, or specific occupational groups. In addition, many studies rely primarily on correlational designs, which, while useful, do not sufficiently clarify the predictive strength of spiritual intelligence on resilience. This limits both generalizability and theoretical depth.

Another important gap in the literature is the limited examination of spiritual intelligence and resilience across a broader adult age range. Most Indian studies focus predominantly on adolescents or emerging adults. The present study includes individuals aged 18 to 50 years, thereby covering early adulthood through midlife. This age span is developmentally significant because the challenges and stressors faced by individuals change considerably across these stages. Early adults navigate identity formation, higher education, career establishment, and intimate relationships, while individuals in later adulthood often deal with work related pressures, family responsibilities, financial demands, and evolving life meaning. Examining resilience within this wider age group provides a more realistic understanding of how spiritual intelligence functions across different adult life phases. Resilience is not a fixed trait but a dynamic capacity that develops and adapts over time. Studying its relationship with spiritual intelligence in a heterogeneous adult sample allows for a more comprehensive and ecologically valid understanding, rather than limiting findings to student populations. By including participants aged 18 to 50 years, the present research addresses a developmental and demographic gap in existing Indian literature.

Thus, the current study seeks to extend previous findings by employing regression analysis to examine the predictive role of spiritual intelligence in resilience within an Indian adult population. By expanding the age range and focusing on predictive modelling, the study aims to contribute more robust and developmentally inclusive evidence to the growing field of spiritual intelligence research in India.

Review of Literature

Spiritual intelligence refers to the human capacity to construct meaning, engage in existential reflection, and transcend immediate difficulties through deeper awareness. Resilience is understood as the dynamic ability to adapt positively in the face of stress and adversity. Theoretically, spiritual intelligence may strengthen resilience by fostering meaning

making, inner stability, and purpose driven coping. Over the past decade, researchers have increasingly explored the relationship between these two constructs using correlational and regression approaches.

A growing body of research across Asian and Middle Eastern contexts consistently demonstrates a positive relationship between spiritual intelligence and resilience.

Indian research among college students aged 18 to 25 years with a sample size of 70 reported a significant positive correlation, $r = .282$, $p < .05$, with regression results showing that spiritual intelligence accounted for approximately 8 % of variance in resilience. Similarly, studies among adolescents in Bangalore, ages 12 to 16 years, and in Chandigarh among 15- to 16-year-old students with a sample of 200 participants, found consistent positive associations between spiritual intelligence and resilience. Research among employed women in India with a sample size of 150 adults further demonstrated that spiritual intelligence significantly predicted resilience, explaining about 6 % of variance. Outside India, studies in Indonesia among economically disadvantaged adolescents reported a strong positive correlation, $r = .654$, $p < .01$. In Iran, studies among infertile couples and rehabilitation staff found moderate positive correlations ranging from $r = .36$ to $r = .38$, with regression analyses confirming that dimensions of spiritual intelligence significantly predicted resilience. Another research with a sample of 307 University students from Sistan and Baluchistan University in Zahedan, Iran found that Spiritual Intelligence predicts 10% of resilience in the sample of college students.

There are many research gaps in the existing literature. First, most Indian studies have focused either on adolescents aged 12 to 16 years or on narrow college age samples between 18 and 25 years. Very few studies have examined the broader adult population. The working adult group between early adulthood and midlife remains underrepresented. Second, many Indian investigations rely primarily on correlational designs. Although some studies include regression analysis, the age range is often restricted to homogeneous student samples. This limits the generalizability of findings to the larger Indian population, which is socio culturally diverse and spans varied developmental stages. Third, resilience during adulthood in India is shaped by multiple stressors such as employment instability, family responsibilities, financial pressures, and rapid socio-economic change. Yet empirical research has not sufficiently examined whether spiritual intelligence continues to significantly predict resilience beyond student populations. Fourth, there is a lack of studies examining a wide adult age range within a single regression model. Understanding whether spiritual intelligence predicts resilience consistently from young adulthood into midlife is essential for building developmentally relevant psychological frameworks in the Indian context. Given these gaps, a regression-based study examining the relationship between spiritual intelligence and resilience in an Indian population aged 18 to 50 years becomes highly significant. First, it extends the age range beyond adolescence and college years to include early and middle adulthood, thereby improving developmental coverage. This is crucial in India, where adulthood involves navigating career formation, marriage, parenthood, and economic responsibilities, all of which demand resilience. Second, by employing regression analysis within a broad age spectrum, the study allows for stronger examination of the predictive power of spiritual intelligence across life stages rather than within a single homogeneous group. Third, the Indian cultural context places substantial emphasis on spirituality, meaning making, and existential reflection. However, empirical psychological research integrating spiritual intelligence into resilience frameworks for the adult Indian population remains limited. Therefore, examining this relationship in a diverse 18-to-50-year age group fills a critical empirical gap. Fourth, findings from such research can inform culturally sensitive mental health interventions in India. If spiritual intelligence significantly predicts resilience across adulthood, it supports the integration of spiritually oriented meaning centered approaches in psychological practice. Existing literature consistently demonstrates a positive association between spiritual intelligence and resilience, primarily within adolescent and student samples. However, there remains a clear gap in research addressing the broader adult Indian population using regression methodology. A study examining individuals aged 18 to 50 years in India is not merely an extension of previous work but a necessary advancement. It strengthens developmental representation, enhances generalizability, and situates spiritual intelligence within the lived realities of Indian adulthood. Such research contributes meaningfully to both theoretical understanding and applied psychological practice in the Indian context.

Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between spiritual intelligence and resilience among Indian adults aged 18 to 50 years.
2. To determine whether spiritual intelligence significantly predicts resilience using regression analysis.

Methodology

1 Design

The present study adopted a quantitative, cross sectional, predictive research design using simple linear regression to examine whether spiritual intelligence significantly predicts resilience in an Indian adult population aged 18 to 50 years.

2 Sample

In the present study, the participants consisted of 105 people from different cities of Maharashtra. The participants were both male (44.76%) and female (55.24%) within age range from 18-50 years. All participants were from urban cities. The mean age of the sample was 24 years with a Standard deviation of 9.5 years.

3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria

Age between 18 and 50 years

Indian nationality

Ability to read and understand the language of the questionnaire

Exclusion Criteria

Individuals with severe psychiatric conditions that impair comprehension

Incomplete responses

4 Instruments

The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS; Smith et al., 2008) assesses the ability to bounce back or recover from stress. It consists of six items selected based in part on the feedback of research team members and piloting with undergraduate students. The items are rated for agreement on a five-point scale. The BRS was administered to two samples of undergraduate students, a sample of cardiac rehabilitation patients, and a sample of fibromyalgia patients, all located in the U.S. Factor analysis revealed a one factor solution. Internal consistency was good, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .80 to .91. In support of convergent validity, the BRS was positively correlated with other resilience measures, optimism, and purpose in life, as well as measures of social support, active coping and positive reframing. With regard to discriminant validity, it was negatively related to anxiety, depression, negative affect, and physical symptoms. (APA PsycTests Database Record (c) 2019 APA, all rights reserved) The Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI-24; King & DeCicco, 2009) was developed for a validity study using a sample of Canadian undergraduate psychology students. EFA and CFA extracted and supported a 24-item, four-factor model (critical existential thinking; personal meaning making; transcendental awareness; conscious state expansion) which displayed adequate fit to the data. A sample item is, "I recognize qualities in people which are more meaningful than their body, personality, or emotions." Items were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale. In the main study, Cronbach's alpha was 0.92. Correlational analyses with additional measures of meaning, metapersonal self-construal, mysticism, religiosity, and social desirability offered support for construct (via convergent and discriminant analyses) and criterion-related validity. The authors note that the SISRI-24 should be investigated in relation to measures of emotional intelligence, IQ, and other previously proposed multiple intelligences. (APA PsycTests Database Record (c) 2019 APA, all rights reserved)

5 Procedure

The test administration was conducted through online surveys. The participants were informed about the purpose of this study and consent was taken for participation. They were also assured that the information provided by them in the data sheet will be strictly kept confidential and used for research purpose only. The data sheet began with demographic details and the two scales mentioned above were included in the sheet. The data was then analysed and interpreted.

Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and resilience.
2. Spiritual intelligence will significantly predict resilience.

Results

The data was checked for its normality and descriptives. Correlation and Linear regression analysis was done. After analysing the obtained data on SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) the following results were found

Correlations			
		Resilience	Spiritual Intelligence
Resilience	Pearson Correlation	1	.306**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	105	105
Spiritual Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	.306**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	105	105
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Regression

Variables Entered/Removed ^a			
Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Spiritual Intelligence ^b	.	Enter
a. Dependent Variable: Resilience			
b. All requested variables entered.			

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.306 ^a	.094	.085	3.485
a. Predictors: (Constant), Spiritual Intelligence				

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	129.343	1	129.343	10.650	.001 ^b
	Residual	1250.885	103	12.145		
	Total	1380.229	104			
a. Dependent Variable: Resilience						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Spiritual Intelligence						

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	15.528	1.092		14.222	.000
	Spiritual Intelligence	.065	.020	.306	3.263	.001
a. Dependent Variable: Resilience						

To examine the relationship between spiritual intelligence and resilience, a Pearson product moment correlation analysis was first conducted. The results indicated a statistically significant positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and resilience, $r = .306$, $p = .001$. This suggests that higher levels of spiritual intelligence are associated with higher levels of resilience among adults in the sample. The strength of the correlation falls within the moderate range, indicating a meaningful but not overly strong association between the two constructs.

Following the correlation analysis, a simple linear regression was conducted to determine whether spiritual intelligence significantly predicts resilience. The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 103) = 10.65$, $p = .001$, indicating that spiritual intelligence contributes significantly to explaining variance in resilience.

The model yielded an R value of .306 and an R^2 value of .094, suggesting that spiritual intelligence accounts for 9.4 % of the variance in resilience scores. The adjusted R^2 was .085, indicating that even after adjusting for sample size, approximately 8.5 % of the variability in resilience is explained by spiritual intelligence. Although this percentage may appear modest, it is important to note that resilience is a complex and multifaceted construct influenced by numerous psychological, social, and environmental factors. Therefore, explaining nearly 10% of its variance through a single psychological predictor represents a meaningful contribution.

Examination of the regression coefficients revealed that spiritual intelligence was a significant positive predictor of resilience. The unstandardized coefficient was $B = .065$ with a standard error of .020, indicating that for every one unit increase in spiritual intelligence, resilience increases by .065 units. The standardized beta coefficient was $\beta = .306$, reflecting a moderate effect size. The associated t value was 3.26, which was statistically significant at $p = .001$.

Overall, the findings indicate that spiritual intelligence is positively and significantly associated with resilience and serves as a meaningful predictor of resilience among adults aged 18 to 50 years in the present sample.

Discussion

The primary objective of the present study was to examine the relationship between spiritual intelligence and resilience and to determine whether spiritual intelligence significantly predicts resilience among Indian adults aged 18 to 50 years. Given the limited empirical work within the Indian context and the predominance of correlational designs in previous studies, the present research aimed to contribute more analytically robust evidence through regression analysis across a broader adult age range. Spiritual intelligence has been conceptualized as the adaptive use of spiritual information to facilitate problem solving and goal attainment, particularly in matters of meaning, transcendence, and psychological integration (Emmons, 2000). It involves the capacity to derive existential meaning from life experiences, engage in reflective consciousness, and apply spiritual resources to everyday functioning. Later conceptualizations have also emphasized the role of spiritual intelligence in value guided behavior, compassion, and self awareness (King, 2008). Across theoretical models, a central theme remains the ability to construct meaning in the face of adversity. Resilience, on the other hand, is understood as a dynamic process of positive adaptation despite significant stress or adversity (Masten, 2001). Rather than being a fixed personality trait, resilience reflects the interaction of protective factors that enable individuals to recover, adapt, and even grow following challenges. Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker (2000) emphasize that resilience involves both exposure to risk and the demonstration of competent functioning, highlighting its contextual and process oriented nature. In the context of these conceptualizations, a positive association between spiritual intelligence and resilience is theoretically plausible. Individuals high in spiritual intelligence may possess enhanced meaning making abilities, broader existential perspectives, and stronger internal value systems. These qualities can facilitate adaptive cognitive reappraisal, emotional regulation, and sustained hope during stressful circumstances, all of which are recognized protective mechanisms underlying resilience. Consistent with theoretical expectations, the present findings revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and resilience, $r = .306$, $p = .001$. This moderate correlation indicates that higher spiritual intelligence is associated with higher resilience levels among adults in the sample. Although the magnitude of the correlation is not large, it is meaningful within psychological research, particularly when examining complex, multidetermined constructs. The strength of the association suggests that spiritual intelligence operates as a relevant internal psychological resource in adaptive functioning. The hypothesis that there will be a significant positive correlation between Spiritual intelligence and Resilience is accepted. To further explore this relationship, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether spiritual intelligence predicts resilience. The regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 103) = 10.65$, $p = .001$, indicating that spiritual intelligence contributes significantly to explaining variance in resilience scores. The model accounted for 9.4 % of the variance $R^2 = .094$, with an adjusted R^2 of .085. The standardized beta coefficient $\beta = .306$ suggests a moderate predictive effect. The hypothesis that Spiritual Intelligence will significantly predict Resilience is accepted.

While 9.4% variance may appear modest at first glance, it is essential to interpret this finding within the broader resilience literature. Resilience is influenced by numerous factors including temperament, emotional intelligence, coping strategies, social support networks, socioeconomic context, and life experiences. Given this complexity, identifying a single psychological construct that explains nearly one tenth of resilience variance represents a meaningful contribution. In behavioral sciences, especially in non experimental designs, such effect sizes are considered practically significant. The findings also gain further importance when considered within the Indian cultural context. India is characterized by rich spiritual traditions embedded in philosophical systems, family practices, and community life. Spiritual concepts such as acceptance, detachment, duty, and interconnectedness are commonly integrated into everyday coping narratives. In such a socio cultural environment, spiritual intelligence may not function merely as an abstract construct but as a lived psychological resource that informs cognitive interpretations and emotional responses to adversity. Therefore, the present results provide culturally relevant empirical support for the role of spiritual intelligence in promoting resilience. Another noteworthy aspect of the study is the inclusion of

participants aged 18 to 50 years. Many previous Indian studies have focused primarily on adolescents or college students. By incorporating early adulthood through midlife, the present research captures individuals navigating diverse developmental tasks including identity consolidation, career establishment, relational commitments, parenting responsibilities, and midlife adjustments. The persistence of a significant predictive relationship across this heterogeneous adult sample suggests that spiritual intelligence contributes to resilience beyond student populations and across varied life circumstances. Taken together, the findings suggest that spiritual intelligence serves as an important psychological asset that supports adaptive functioning. Although it does not account for the entirety of resilience, it emerges as a statistically significant and theoretically meaningful predictor. The results underscore the importance of integrating existential and meaning centered dimensions into resilience research, particularly within culturally grounded contexts. The present study advances the empirical understanding of spiritual intelligence by demonstrating its positive association with and predictive influence on resilience among Indian adults. The findings highlight the relevance of spiritual cognitive capacities in fostering adaptive coping and contribute to the growing body of research exploring spirituality-based strengths in psychological wellbeing. While highlighting the findings, the findings of the present study must be interpreted in light of certain methodological limitations. The cross-sectional research design limits the ability to infer causality between spiritual intelligence and resilience. While spiritual intelligence emerged as a significant predictor, the temporal direction of this relationship cannot be conclusively determined. Longitudinal research would be necessary to establish whether higher spiritual intelligence leads to enhanced resilience over time. Further, the reliance on self-report instruments introduces the possibility of common method variance and social desirability bias. Participants responses may reflect perceived ideals rather than actual functioning. In addition, although spiritual intelligence significantly predicted resilience, the adjusted R square value of .085 indicates that a substantial proportion of variance in resilience is explained by other psychological, social, and environmental factors that were not included in the present model. Variables such as personality traits, coping strategies, emotional intelligence, and social support may play interacting roles. Finally, although the study included adults aged 18 to 50, the sample may not fully represent the cultural and socioeconomic diversity of the broader Indian population, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings. Despite these limitations, the study offers important theoretical and applied implications. The results support the conceptualization of spiritual intelligence as a meaningful psychological construct that contributes to adaptive functioning. Even though the predictive strength was modest, the statistically significant contribution suggests that spiritual intelligence represents a relevant internal resource associated with resilience. From an applied perspective, the findings underscore the potential value of incorporating spiritual intelligence development into counseling, psychoeducational programs, and resilience building interventions. Practices that enhance meaning making, existential reflection, and value clarification may strengthen individuals capacity to cope with stress and adversity. The study also contributes to the expanding literature within positive psychology in the Indian context by empirically examining strength based variables rather than pathology-focused outcomes. Moreover, the results provide a foundation for future research employing longitudinal, experimental, or multivariate designs to better understand the mechanisms through which spiritual intelligence influences resilience across different age groups and sociocultural settings.

Conclusion

The present study investigated the relationship between spiritual intelligence and resilience among Indian adults aged 18 to 50 years. The findings demonstrated a significant positive association between the two variables, with spiritual intelligence emerging as a meaningful predictor of resilience. Individuals who reported higher levels of spiritual intelligence also tended to exhibit greater adaptive capacity in the face of challenges. Although spiritual intelligence accounted for a modest proportion of variance in resilience, its predictive role underscores the relevance of meaning oriented and value driven cognitive capacities in psychological adjustment. The results highlight that resilience is not only shaped by external circumstances but is also supported by internal psychological resources. By focusing on a broader adult age range within the Indian context, the study adds to the limited predictive research in this area and strengthens the empirical foundation for understanding spiritual intelligence as a constructive psychological factor. Overall, the findings contribute to positive psychology literature by emphasizing the importance of inner meaning making processes in fostering adaptive functioning.

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Original Article

Assessing Vicarious Trauma and Secondary Traumatic Stress among Psychologists and Doctors

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180212

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 67-70

February - 2026

Submitted: 16 Jan. 2026

Revised: 26 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 11 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract

Vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress are increasingly recognized as significant occupational hazards among mental health professionals and medical practitioners. This study aims to assess and compare the levels of vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress among psychologists and doctors who are frequently exposed to patients' traumatic experiences. Drawing from frameworks in Clinical Psychology and trauma research, the study examines how continuous empathetic engagement affects professionals' emotional and psychological well-being. A comparative research design is employed, involving psychologists and doctors from various clinical settings. Standardized tools such as the Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale and the Professional Quality of Life Scale are used for data collection. Statistical analysis is conducted to determine differences in stress levels between the two groups. The findings suggest that psychologists may exhibit higher levels of vicarious trauma due to prolonged therapeutic engagement, whereas doctors may experience secondary traumatic stress associated with acute exposure to critical and emergency cases. Factors such as workload, coping mechanisms, and institutional support play a crucial role in moderating these effects. The study highlights the need for targeted interventions, including mental health support systems, supervision, and stress management programs, to mitigate the psychological impact on professionals. Addressing these issues is essential for maintaining both practitioner well-being and quality of patient care.

Keywords: Vicarious Trauma, Secondary Traumatic Stress, Psychologists, Doctors, Mental Health, Occupational Stress
Compassion Fatigue, Healthcare Professionals

Introduction

Background of the Study:

Healthcare professionals are frequently exposed to human suffering, trauma, and crisis. While direct trauma exposure has been widely studied, indirect exposure to trauma through listening to patients' distressing narratives has been seen as a significant occupational risk. Two major constructs that explain the psychological consequences of such exposure are *vicarious trauma* (VT) and *secondary traumatic stress* (STS).

Although these terms are often used interchangeably, they represent distinct psychological processes. Vicarious trauma refers to enduring changes in cognitive schemas and worldview resulting from prolonged empathic engagement with trauma survivors. In contrast, secondary traumatic stress reflects PTSD-like symptoms such as intrusion, avoidance, and arousal that arise from indirect trauma exposure.

Despite increasing global research, Indian literature has limited comparative studies examining these constructs across different healthcare professions. The present study aims to assess and compare levels of vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress among psychologists and doctors.

Research Problem:

Is there a significant difference between vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress among psychologist and doctors?

The hypothesis was:

H1: Psychologists will score significantly higher on vicarious trauma than doctors.

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How to cite this article:

Choudhary, M., & Kakulte, A. (2026). Assessing Vicarious Trauma and Secondary Traumatic Stress among Psychologists and Doctors. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 67–70. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19334004>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19334004](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19334004)



H2: Psychologists will score significantly higher on secondary traumatic stress than doctors.

Objective & Significance:

The objective was-

To assess the difference between vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress among psychologist and doctors.

Significance:

- Provides comparative occupational insights.
- Supports institutional mental health interventions.
- Highlights need for trauma-informed supervision in healthcare.

Review Of Literature:

The themes of literature review were-

Pearlman & Mac Ian (1995) found trauma therapists experience schema disruptions.

Bride (2007) reported significant prevalence of STS among social workers.

Finklestein et al. (2015) observed elevated VT among mental health professionals.

Bhagwagar (2022) noted moderate to severe STS and burnout among Indian mental health professionals.

Relevant Theories:

1. Constructivist Self-Development Theory (McCann & Pearlman, 1990)

It explains how trauma alters cognitive schemas related to safety, trust, control, esteem, and intimacy.

2. Trauma Transmission Theory (Danieli, 1998)

It suggests trauma can transfer interpersonally through empathic engagement.

3. Stress and Coping Theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)

It states stress impact depends on cognitive appraisal and coping resources.

4. Compassion Fatigue Framework (Figley, 1995)

It says that continuous exposure to trauma survivors may lead to STS and emotional exhaustion.

RESEARCH GAP:

Limited Indian comparative studies between psychologists and doctors.

Methodology:

Research Design:

Comparative, cross-sectional, quantitative design.

SAMPLE:

N = 50

- 25 Psychologists
- 25 Doctors
- Purposive and Snowball sampling method.

Tools:

1. Vicarious Trauma Scale (VTS)

It is a 8 items scale with 7-point Likert scale and measures affective and cognitive impact. Its reliability is $\alpha = .77 - .88$

2. Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale (STSS)

STSS is a 17 items scale with 5-point Likert scale which has subscales- Intrusion, Avoidance, Arousal. Its reliability is $\alpha = .93$

Procedure:

Ethical approval obtained

Google Form created (consent + demographics + scales)

Distributed via professional networks

Data collected over 4–6 weeks

DATA ANALYSIS:

The analysis used were Descriptive statistics, Shapiro-Wilk test for normality and Mann–Whitney U test (non-parametric test)

Result/Findings & Discussion:

For vicarious trauma scale p value is .680 which is greater than .05, indicating that the distribution of VTS scores does not deviate significantly from a normal distribution. Therefore, VTS scores are normally distributed.

For secondary traumatic stress scale p value is .027 which is less than .05, indicating that the distribution of STSS scores significantly deviates from normality. Therefore, STSS scores are not normally distributed.

Thus, non-parametric test was used which was Mann-whitney U test. The results are-

Vicarious Trauma (VTS):

The Mann–Whitney U test revealed a statistically significant difference between psychologists and doctors ($p = .032$).

Psychologists scored significantly higher on vicarious trauma than doctors.

This supports Hypothesis 1, suggesting that psychologists are more vulnerable to long-term cognitive and emotional disruptions associated with trauma work.

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STSS):

The Mann–Whitney U test indicated no statistically significant difference between psychologists and doctors ($p = .200$).

This suggests that both groups experience comparable levels of PTSD-like stress symptoms arising from indirect trauma exposure.

Thus, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Key Result (Tables/Figures):

Mann–Whitney U Test

Sr. No.	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decisions
1.	The distribution of VTS is same across categories of work.	Independent-sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.032	Reject the null hypothesis.
2.	1. The distribution of STSS is same across categories of work.	Independent-sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.200	Retain the null hypothesis.

Interpretation Of Findings:

The findings suggest that professional role influences vulnerability vicarious trauma but not necessarily secondary traumatic stress.

Psychologists' higher vicarious trauma levels may be attributed to:

- Prolonged empathic engagement
- Deep processing of trauma narratives
- Therapeutic immersion in clients' experiences

In contrast, although doctors may not experience similar schema disruptions, their exposure to medical crises and patient suffering may generate comparable stress reactions, explaining the non-significant difference in STSS.

Link With Previous Research:

The findings are consistent with:

- Pearlman & Mac Ian (1995), who found trauma therapists experience cognitive schema disruption.
- Finklestein et al. (2015), who observed elevated vicarious trauma among mental health professionals.
- Bhagwagar (2022), who highlighted vulnerability among Indian mental health professionals.

The absence of significant difference in STSS aligns with:

- Bride (2007), who reported that indirect trauma exposure affects multiple professional groups.
- Guitar & Molinaro (2017), who suggested STS can occur across healthcare professions regardless of specialization.

Conclusion:

It can be concluded that psychologists scored significantly higher on vicarious trauma than doctors and no significant difference was found between the groups on secondary traumatic stress. Thus different psychological aspects affect the healthcare professions as due to the difference in roles as few are same as some similarity in the healthcare profession.

Summary Of Findings:

The study demonstrates that psychologists are more susceptible to vicarious trauma, likely due to the nature of their empathic and cognitively immersive work. However, both psychologists and doctors exhibit comparable levels of secondary traumatic stress, suggesting that PTSD-like stress symptoms are not confined to mental health professions alone.

Implications:

The finding that psychologists experience significantly higher levels of vicarious trauma highlights the need for structured institutional safeguards within mental health settings. This can help to make a structure in the profession and need to self-work and required break needed.

It can also highlight the need of support to the doctors.

Limitations & Future Directions:

Some of the limitations of this study was that it had a small sample size, Participants were selected using purposive sampling, which may introduce selection bias. The sample may not fully represent all psychologists and doctors working in diverse clinical settings.



Future research should include larger samples across multiple cities and healthcare institutions to improve generalizability.

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Original Article

Role of Self-Acceptance in Reducing Mental Health Distresses among Young Female Adults

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180213

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 71-75

February - 2026

Submitted: 16 Jan. 2026

Revised: 26 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 11 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract

Mental health distresses like depression, anxiety and stress have been on the rise among young female adults (Dülger & Ayaz-Alkaya, 2025). To reduce the mental health issues, Self-acceptance is one aspect of psychological well-being identified by Ryff (1989) that could protect one against mental health distress. The current research aimed to study the relationship of self-acceptance with mental health distress i.e. depression, anxiety and stress among young female's adults. A correlational-regression research design was used and data of 72 young female participants from the age group of 18-25 years of age was collected using standardized self-report scales. Descriptive statistics reflected participants had self-acceptance on moderate level. The data was not normally distributed; therefore, Spearman's rho correlation analysis was used for the further analysis. After the regression, a significant negative correlation between self-acceptance and depression ($p = -0.494, p < .001$), anxiety ($p = -0.391, p < .001$), stress ($p = -0.369, p = .001$), and overall mental health distress ($p = -0.488, p < .001$). Thus, the results showed that self-acceptance was negatively related to mental health distress. This means that as self-acceptance increased, levels of depression, anxiety, and stress decreased. In simple terms, young women who accepted themselves more experienced less emotional distress. Overall, the results suggest that self-acceptance plays an important role in reducing mental health distress among young female adults. Improving self-acceptance may help lower depression, anxiety, and stress and support better mental health. Therefore, self-acceptance interventions need to be enhanced to reduce psychological distress among young female adults.

Keywords: self-Acceptance, depression, anxiety, stress, female adults

Introduction

Background of the study: Young adults face many different stressors in day to day lives, such as academic pressure, societal expectation and personal life transitions, due to which psychological issues such as depression, anxiety and stress are increasing in early adulthood, which also marks as a developmental period for identity exploration and increase in emotional vulnerability (Auerbach et al., 2018). In young adults, specifically females are more vulnerable to psychological distress as compared to males, which affects the quality of life, mental-emotional wellbeing and over-all quality of life (Hankin et al., 2015). Previous studies have proved that, Self-Acceptance, a widely used term in positive psychology, is an important aspect for healthy psychological functioning and it includes acknowledging and accepting both the positive and negative aspects of oneself, without being judgmental. Higher self-acceptance is often linked with better emotional regulation and reduced psychological (Ryff, 1989). As the mental health distresses are increasing in young female adults, examining the role of self-acceptance is necessary so that it can be used as a protecting factor against mental health distresses. This study measures and explores how self-acceptance contributes in reducing mental health distresses such as depression, anxiety and stress among young female adults from the different parts of India.

Review of Literature:

Self-acceptance has been widely used in different therapeutic approaches and is the core element of positive psychology. In the Carol D. Ryff's model of psychological well-being, self-acceptance helps in holding a positive and accepting attitude towards our own self, which

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How to cite this article:

Shah, S., & Kulkarni, P. (2026). Role of Self-Acceptance in Reducing Mental Health Distresses among Young Female Adults. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 71–75.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19343903>



Quick Response Code:



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<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:



helps in enhancing mental health and emotional stability (Ryff, 1989). Past studies have proven that individuals with higher levels of self-acceptance are less likely to experience psychological distress such as depression and anxiety (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Another theory by Dr. Kristin Neff, suggests self-acceptance is an important element which helps to reduce personal suffering with kindness, instead of self-criticism (Neff, 2003). Research among young adults indicates that self-acceptance helps in reducing the emotional vulnerability and support adaptive coping mechanisms which in turn increases emotional resilience (Krauss et al., 2015).

Self-Acceptance through Indian and Buddhist Philosophy:

Ancient Indian and Buddhist philosophical traditions have also highlighted self-acceptance as a key path to inner harmony and mental well-being. In Ancient Indian philosophy, the Upanishads emphasize ātma-jñāna (self-knowledge) and the acceptance of the true self beyond external roles, flaws, and ego-based evaluations (Radhakrishnan, 1953). Similarly, Buddhist philosophy, as taught by Gautama Buddha, stresses mindful awareness, non-attachment, and self-compassion as essential for easing suffering (dukkha). Practices like mindfulness (sati) encourage people to observe their thoughts and emotions without judgment. (Bodhi, 1995). These philosophical ideas closely match modern psychological views on self-acceptance and self-compassion. They show that accepting one's inner experiences with awareness and kindness acts as a protective factor against mental health issues (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Contemporary philosophical and psychological models, especially acceptance and existential models, resonate with this philosophy in that they propose that anxiety is exacerbated by efforts to control and suppress unwanted thoughts and feelings. By contrast, self-acceptance is proposed to decrease anxiety by changing one's relationship with one's experiences from judging and avoiding to accepting and being open and flexible (Hayes et al., 2006). This philosophical consistency is supported by empirical findings, which have found a negative relationship between self-acceptance and anxiety, such that those who are unconditionally self-accepting experience lower levels of rumination and emotional reactivity (Chamberlain & Haaga, 2001).

Self-Acceptance and Well-Being:

Self-Acceptance and Self-concept traits are highly linked with better mental health; previous studies have proved that self-acceptance is linked with lower levels of depressive symptoms which also reduces the levels of social comparisons in young adults and adolescents. Meta-analytic evidence suggests that self-related traits (i.e. self-esteem, self-compassion and self-concept) are negatively correlated with anxiety and depression in youth (Eisenberg et al., 2020). In a more focused investigation, Neff and Germer (2017) examined self-acceptance, finding that self-compassion (which is rooted in self-acceptance) was associated with lower levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms among young adults through adaptive emotional regulation. Young adults who have higher self-esteem also report experiencing fewer symptoms of anxiety and depression (Lundberg et al., 2022). The self-acceptance of an individual has been found to interact with cognition processes such as social comparison; lower self-acceptance predicts one's anxiety and depression in a sample of adolescents (Ruan et al., 2023). Thus, accepting oneself and taking care of our mental wellbeing helps in reducing the mental health distresses.

Youth and Mental Health:

According to the (World Health Organization, 2021), most mental health issues such as mood and anxiety disorders develop by early adulthood. Young female adults consistently report higher levels of anxiety, depression and stress than males and which is said to be due to developmental transitions, academic pressure, social comparison and inter-personal stress (Salk et al., 2017). Research involving university students has found high rates of psychological distress, which makes the early adulthood stage a vulnerable period to have mental health difficulties (Kessler et al. 2005). Moreover, research with young women suggests that self-acceptance can buffer the effects of body image concerns and social pressures on mental health (Tylka et al., 2015). Research has not sufficiently studied self-acceptance as an independent predictor of mental health outcomes of young female adults despite this evidence. The relationship between self-acceptance and overall psychological well-being has been consistently established in the previous literature. Many studies examined self-acceptance as a subcomponent of self-concept and self-compassion or within a mixed-gender, general adult population. There is a notable gap of focused empirical research that examines self-acceptance as an independent construct in mental health distresses specifically among young female adults. Also, there is a limited research on positive psychology factors that may reduce the mental health issues on a preventive levels based on the strength based perspectives. In the socio-cultural context young females are often prone to different types of stressors due to social, academic and relational pressures; the role of self-acceptance in females remains unexplored. Therefore, this present study seeks to address the gap by systematically exploring and examining the role of self-acceptance in reducing the mental health distresses in young female adults.

Objectives:

1. To statistically assess the level of self-acceptance and mental health distress (anxiety, depression, and stress) among young female adults.
2. To examine the relationship between self-acceptance and mental health distress among young female adults.

Hypotheses:

1. Self-acceptance will have significant negative correlation with depression.
2. Self-acceptance will have significant negative correlation with anxiety.

3. Self-acceptance will have significant negative correlation with stress.
4. Self-acceptance will have significant negative correlation with overall mental health distresses i.e. depression, anxiety and stress.

Methods

Research design: This study had implemented correlational research design to examine and analyze the relationship between self-acceptance and mental health distresses i.e. depression, anxiety and stress

Sample: A sample of 72 female adults from the age group of 18-25 years that were from the different parts of India had participated in this study.

Tools:

1] Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (21 items):

The Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale developed by Lovibond and Lovibond in 1995 (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). The assessment of mental health indicators such as depression, anxiety, and stress is crucial for understanding the well-being of individuals. One common tool used for this purpose is a scale that ranges from 0 to 30, with higher scores indicating greater levels of distress. This scale comprises 21 items measured on a 4-point Likert-type scale, where respondents indicate their experiences from "never" to "almost always." The scale demonstrates good internal consistency, as evidenced by Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.74 to 0.961. Such psychometric properties suggest that the scale is reliable for assessing mental health distress in various populations (Tavakol, & Dennick, 2011)

2] Self- Acceptance Scale (14 items):

The Psychological well-being scale by Carol D. Ryff, includes six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The Self-Acceptance subscale (14-item version) of Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales aims to evaluate how individuals view themselves, including their acceptance of both strengths and weaknesses. It is based on 6-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with higher scores reflecting greater self-acceptance. This scale has good psychometric properties, including high internal consistency ($\alpha = .93$) and strong test-retest reliability (.85) (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

Procedure:

Before administration of the tests, all participants were informed about the purpose of the study. All participants voluntarily participated in the research. The two self-report scale on Self-Acceptance and Depression Anxiety and Stress were administered to female adults. There was no specific time limit to answering these questionnaires.

Results & Discussion

In this study, Quantitative Data Analysis was done containing Descriptive Statistics and Spearman's Rho Correlation was used to investigate the relationship between Self-acceptance and Depression, Anxiety and Stress.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics					
	SA TOTAL	DEPRESSION	ANXIETY	STRESS	DASS TOTAL
Valid	72	72	72	72	72
Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	51.03	12.10	12.86	14.51	39.47
Std. Deviation	10.58	8.272	9.716	9.108	24.70
Skewness	-0.351	1.276	1.024	1.255	1.432
Std. Error of Skewness	0.283	0.283	0.283	0.283	0.283
Kurtosis	0.253	2.161	0.183	1.046	1.739
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.559	0.559	0.559	0.559	0.559
Shapiro-Wilk	0.985	0.909	0.890	0.876	0.858
P-value of Shapiro-Wilk	.561	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001
Minimum	23.00	0.000	0.000	2.000	8.000
Maximum	76.00	42.00	40.00	42.00	124.0

In the above table, descriptive statistics reflected that the data was not normally distributed and therefore Spearman's rho correlation analysis was used for the further analysis.

Table 2

Spearman's Correlations				
			Spearman's rho	p
SA TOTAL	-	DEPRESSION	-0.494***	< .001
SA TOTAL	-	ANXIETY	-0.391***	< .001
SA TOTAL	-	STRESS	-0.369**	.001
SA TOTAL	-	DASS TOTAL	-0.488***	< .001
DEPRESSION	-	ANXIETY	0.574***	< .001
DEPRESSION	-	STRESS	0.607***	< .001
DEPRESSION	-	DASS TOTAL	0.797***	< .001
ANXIETY	-	STRESS	0.671***	< .001
ANXIETY	-	DASS TOTAL	0.876***	< .001
STRESS	-	DASS TOTAL	0.873***	< .001
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001				

In the table above, Self-acceptance showed a significantly moderate negative correlation with depression ($\rho = -0.494$, $p < .001$), anxiety ($\rho = -0.391$, $p < .001$), stress ($\rho = -0.369$, $p = .001$), and overall psychological distress ($\rho = -0.488$, $p < .001$). Depression, anxiety, and stress were strongly and positively correlated with each other and overall mental health distresses.

The findings are consistent with the previous literature stating that self-acceptance promotes healthy emotional regulation and reduces the vulnerability to mental health issues. Individuals who are more accepting towards themselves, and are able to accept and acknowledge their emotions are more resilient after the adverse life experiences (Neff, 2003). Another study by Chamberlain and Haaga (2001) supports the current finding states that individuals with greater levels of self-acceptance have fewer depressive symptoms and higher emotional well-being. Thus fostering self-acceptance may help in reducing the vulnerability to depression, anxiety, stress and overall mental health distress.

Conclusion

Implications:

- Interventions based on self-acceptance can be incorporated in schools and colleges, to foster emotional wellbeing among students.
- Mental health professionals can use self-acceptance related tools to help clients who have been diagnosed with anxiety and depressive disorders.
- Self-acceptance tools can be used as screen tool to assess individuals that may be vulnerable to mental health distresses.

Limitations:

- Participants may have given socially desirable answers due to the personal nature of some questions.
- Cultural bias in the tests could be a limitation.
- Only female participants were included, limiting analysis of gender differences.

Future suggestions:

- Future studies should include male participants to examine the gender differences to assess the impact of self-acceptance.
- Longitudinal studies can be conducted to understand the positive effects of self-acceptance across the participants who are diagnosed with psychiatric illnesses.
- Intervention based programs on self-acceptance, resilience and mindfulness can be conducted to explore other positive psychology variables

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Original Article

Lifestyle routine, menstrual health and mental health among early adulthood married women

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180214

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 76-81

February - 2026

Submitted: 16 Jan. 2026

Revised: 26 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 11 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

This study examined how lifestyle routines, menstrual health (including risk for PCOS-related menstrual irregularities), and mental health (depression, anxiety, stress) interrelate among married women in early adulthood. Background research shows that menstrual disorders, particularly conditions on the PCOS spectrum are consistently associated with higher prevalence and greater severity of depressive and anxiety symptoms, and that lifestyle and quality-of-life factors are central to prevention and management. Two group design was used (online data collection via Google Forms) to recruit married women in the study's target age range; the Methods chapter reports an estimated sample of N = 94 (51 with menstrual issues, 43 without) Measures included: (a) a self-report menstrual/PCOS risk screener adapted from an Indian validation/self-assessment tool (Taneja et al., 2020) to identify participants with menstrual concerns; (b) a brief lifestyle inventory (U-SMILE / short SMILE) to quantify lifestyle across domains such as diet, sleep, activity, substance use, stress management and social connection; and (c) the DASS-21 to assess depression, anxiety and stress symptoms. Instrument choice and psychometric grounding are described in the Methods. Conclusions: findings from this study support an integrated biopsychosocial perspective, poor lifestyle routines co-occur with menstrual problems and elevated emotional symptoms, suggesting the value of routine mental-health screening in gynaecologic/reproductive care and lifestyle-focused interventions (education, sleep/diet/activity recommendations, stress management training) to reduce symptom burden and improve quality of life. Limitations noted in the draft include cross-sectional design, convenience/online sampling from a single region, reliance on self-report screening (not clinical diagnosis), and the sample-size reporting inconsistency mentioned above. Recommendations and brief implications for practice, research and policy are provided in the Discussion and Conclusion chapters of the thesis.

Keywords: lifestyle routine; menstrual health; menstrual health; depression; anxiety; stress; married early-adulthood women; DASS-21

Introduction

Women's health is influenced by biological processes as well as lifestyle practices and psychological well-being. Menstruation is a natural process, but menstrual-related disorders such as irregular cycles, dysmenorrhea, and PCOS affect millions of women worldwide and significantly impact daily functioning and quality of life. These conditions are not limited to physical symptoms; they are closely linked with lifestyle habits and mental health, forming a complex medical and psychosocial cycle. Lifestyle behaviours including diet, physical activity, sleep, stress management, and social connectedness, play a crucial role in reproductive health, where unhealthy patterns may worsen menstrual problems and healthier routines may reduce symptoms and support psychological resilience. At the same time, mental health concerns like depression, anxiety, and stress are commonly reported among women with menstrual issues, highlighting a bidirectional relationship between physical and psychological factors. This research focuses on the intersection of menstrual problems, lifestyle, and mental health by comparing women with menstrual difficulties to those without, aiming to identify key differences and associations that can guide future interventions.

Statement of the Problem

To study the association between menstrual issues and lifestyle routine and mental health status.



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19493048](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19493048)



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How to cite this article:

Abhang, N., & Kulkarni, P. N. (2026). Lifestyle routine, menstrual health and mental health among early adulthood married women. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 76–81. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19493048>

Significance of the study

Menstrual health is often under-discussed, especially in stigmatized cultural contexts, leading many women to silently endure conditions like irregular cycles, pain, or PCOS with limited support. These issues extend beyond physical symptoms, as women with menstrual disorders face a higher risk of depression and anxiety. Lifestyle patterns such as physical inactivity, poor diet, and inadequate sleep play a role both as risk factors and as potential strategies for improving menstrual and mental health. However, research integrating menstrual issues, lifestyle, and mental health is limited in the Indian context. This study addresses this gap by highlighting the need for an integrated health approach, with implications for community awareness, preventive programs, and gender-sensitive policies.

Research Objectives

1. To assess the difference in lifestyle routine between women with and without menstrual issues.
2. To assess the difference in depression levels between women with and without menstrual issues.
3. To assess the difference in anxiety levels between women with and without menstrual issues.
4. To assess the difference in stress levels between women with and without menstrual issues.
5. To assess the relationship between lifestyle routine and psychological distress among married women.

Hypotheses

- H₁: There will be a significant difference in lifestyle routine between women with menstrual Issues and women without menstrual issues.
- H₂: There will be a significant difference in depression levels between women with menstrual Issues and women without menstrual issues.
- H₃: There will be a significant difference in anxiety levels between women with and without menstrual issues.
- H₄: There will be a significant difference in stress levels between women with and without menstrual issues.
- H₅: There will be negative correlation between life style and psychological distress

Review of literature

Menstrual health is increasingly viewed as an important indicator of women's overall health. Menstrual issues such as dysmenorrhea, PMS, PMDD, menstrual irregularities, and PCOS affect not only physical well-being but also have substantial mental health implications. Lifestyle routines including sleep, diet, physical activity, substance use, and social habits are modifiable factors that influence both menstrual functioning and mental health. To understand these interrelationships, the literature review draws from Indian and global studies and is thematically organised around prevalence, lifestyle associations, mental health outcomes, integrative comparisons, measurement tools, and existing research gaps, forming the rationale for a comparative study. In the Indian context, evidence from the past two decades shows a wide prevalence range of menstrual disorders (3%–87%), largely due to differences in definitions and populations studied. Dysmenorrhea is the most commonly reported condition (46–76%), followed by PMS (40–71%), while PCOS shows lower prevalence (approximately 3–14.1%). A study from Punjab involving women aged 15–25 years reported that about 60.61% experienced menstrual problems, with dysmenorrhea affecting nearly half of the sample. Lifestyle routines particularly physical activity, diet, sleep, substance use, and stress-related habits emerge as important correlates of menstrual health. Key findings from Indian studies highlight that lower physical activity, higher BMI, age at menarche, and poorer mental health are significant predictors of menstrual problems. Adolescents and young women with dysmenorrhea consistently report higher levels of depression, anxiety, stress, mood disturbances, and reduced quality of life compared to those without menstrual pain. Sleep disruption, academic absenteeism, and interference in daily functioning are commonly reported during menstrual periods.

Despite substantial evidence, several gaps remain, particularly in relation to the present study's aims:

- Limited comparative designs: Few studies directly compare women with and without menstrual issues across multiple lifestyle and mental health domains.
- Measurement heterogeneity: There is wide variation in definitions of menstrual problems, lifestyle indicators, and mental health measures used.
- Contextual limitations: Indian research largely focuses on adolescents or college students, with limited attention to rural–urban differences, socioeconomic factors, and health-seeking behaviour.
- Underexplored lifestyle domains: Sleep patterns, chronotype, social jetlag, screen time, and stress-related behaviours are less studied in relation to menstrual and mental health together.

These gaps underscore the need for integrative, comparative research that simultaneously examines menstrual health, lifestyle routines, and mental health within the Indian context.

Methodology

The study includes married women aged 20–35 years, divided into two groups based on the presence or absence of menstrual issues. Participants were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling through a Google Form shared within the researcher's networks and further circulated among eligible women. The form was available in English and Marathi to ensure accessibility. Participation was voluntary, confidential, and emotionally safe, with the option to withdraw at any time.

Research Design: Two group design

Inclusion Criteria

- Married women aged 20–35 years.
- Able to read and comprehend either English or Marathi.
- Willing to participate voluntarily with consent.
- No prior psychological illness.

Exclusion Criteria

- Women who are unmarried, separated/window

Sample

The estimated sample size is 94 participants, 51 with menstrual issues and 43 without menstrual issues.

Tools

1. Menstrual Issues (Independent Variable) Operationally, menstrual issues refer to the presence of symptoms or irregularities identified through the Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) Risk Self-Assessment Test developed by Taneja et al. Participants scoring above the set cut-off point are categorized as having menstrual issues, while those scoring below are classified as without menstrual issues
2. Lifestyle Routine (Dependent Variable 1) Lifestyle routine refers to the overall pattern of daily habits and behaviors related to diet, physical activity, sleep, and stress management. It is measured through the U-SMILE: Brief Version of the Short Multidimensional Inventory on Lifestyle Evaluation by De Boni and Jurema, where higher scores indicate healthier and more balanced lifestyle practices.
3. Mental Health Status (Dependent Variable 2) Mental health status refers to the levels of depression, anxiety, and stress experienced by individuals, as assessed through the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS-21) by Lovibond and Lovibond. Higher scores on the subscales represent greater emotional distress and lower psychological well-being.

Procedure

Data were collected online using a Google Form that included an informed consent statement, personal data sheet, menstrual issues screening tool, SMILE-C scale, and DASS-21 questionnaire. The form was available in English and Marathi to ensure accessibility. Participants received clear information about the study's purpose, confidentiality, anonymity, and their right to withdraw at any time, with digital informed consent obtained before proceeding. The survey took approximately 15–20 minutes to complete, collected no identifying information, and stored responses securely, ensuring participant comfort, cultural sensitivity, and ethical research conduct.

Data analysis

This chapter presented the methodological framework adopted for the present study. It described the research design, objectives, variables, sample characteristics, and the tools used for data collection. The study aimed to compare women with and without menstrual issues in terms of their lifestyle routines and mental health status. Data were collected using the Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Risk Self-Assessment Test, the U-SMILE Inventory for lifestyle evaluation, and the DASS-21 Scale for assessing depression, anxiety, and stress. Standardized procedures were followed for administration and scoring of the tools. The chapter also outlined the data analysis plan, which included descriptive and inferential statistics such as the Independent Samples t-test and Mann-Whitney U test to determine group differences. The results derived from these analyses are presented in the following chapter.

1. Descriptive Statistics Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the demographic and psychological characteristics of the participants. Measures of central tendency (mean, median) and dispersion (standard deviation, range) were used for continuous variables, while frequencies and percentages were calculated for categorical variables such as menstrual issue status (with / without issues). This helped in understanding the overall distribution and normality of data before applying parametric tests.

2. Group Categorization

- Participants were categorized into two groups based on the PCOS Self-Assessment Test: With menstrual issues (scores above the cut-off)
- Without menstrual issues (scores below the cut-off)
- This grouping served as the independent variable for comparison.

3. Normality Testing

- The assumption of normal distribution for continuous dependent variables (U-SMILE and DASS-21 scores) was verified using the Shapiro–Wilk test and supported by visual inspections of histograms and Q-Q plots.
- When normality was satisfied, parametric tests were used.
- When violated, non-parametric equivalents were applied.

4. Inferential Statistics To examine the differences between the two groups (with and without menstrual issues)

- Independent Samples t-Test was used for variables that met normality assumptions. This test compares the mean scores of two independent groups and determines whether the difference between them is statistically significant.
- Test statistics reported: t-values, p-value, and effect size (Cohen's d).
- Effect size was interpreted as small (0.2), medium (0.5), or large (0.8) following Cohen's guidelines.

- For variables violating normality assumptions, the Mann–Whitney U Test was employed as a non-parametric alternative to compare the median ranks between groups.
- Pearson’s correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationship between lifestyle and mental health variables.

Result and discussion

Table 1:

Descriptive Statistics								
	Lifestyle		depression		Anxiety		stress	
	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
Mean	70.512	64.137	6.349	9.333	6.442	10.118	8.209	11.471
Mode	68.000	59.000	4.000	9.000	5.000	13.000	6.000	14.000
Median	71.000	62.000	5.000	10.000	6.000	11.000	8.000	12.000
Std. Deviation	6.645	6.651	3.969	3.637	3.466	3.604	3.270	3.684
Skewness	0.248	0.818	1.609	-0.563	0.155	-0.508	0.332	-0.528
Std. Error of	0.361	0.333	0.361	0.333	0.361	0.333	0.361	0.333
Skewness								
Shapiro-Wilk	0.974	0.909	0.856	0.925	0.964	0.946	0.944	0.965
P-value of	0.426	< .001	< .001	0.003	0.188	0.022	0.035	0.135
Shapiro-Wilk								
Note. Excluded 1048480 rows from the analysis that correspond to the missing values of the split-by variable non Menstrual Issues= 0, Menstrual issues=1								

The descriptive analysis highlights clear and meaningful differences in lifestyle patterns and mental health outcomes between women with and without menstrual issues. Women without menstrual issues demonstrated higher overall lifestyle regulation, as reflected in consistently higher SMILE scores, indicating comparatively healthier daily routines. In contrast, women experiencing menstrual issues reported elevated levels of depression, anxiety, and stress, suggesting greater psychological vulnerability and emotional strain within this group. While variability in scores remained similar across both groups, distributional patterns differed, with several variables particularly in the menstrual-issues group deviating from normality. These distributional differences justified the use of both parametric and non-parametric statistical tests. Overall, the findings underscore an association between menstrual health, lifestyle regulation, and psychological well-being, warranting careful interpretation and appropriate analytical approaches rather than assuming uniform data characteristics across groups.

Table 2:

Independent Samples T-Test						
	Test	Statistic	df	p	Effect Size	SE Effect Size
Lifestyle	Student	4.631	92	< .001	0.959	0.231
	Mann-Whitney	1651.5		< .001	0.506	0.12
depression	Student	-3.801	92	< .001	-0.787	0.224
	Mann-Whitney	596.5		< .001	-0.456	0.12
Anxiety	Student	-5.013	92	< .001	-1.038	0.235
	Mann-Whitney	506		< .001	-0.539	0.12
stress	Student	-4.499	92	< .001	-0.931	0.23
	Mann-Whitney	546		< .001	-0.502	0.12
Note. For the Student t-test, effect size is given by Cohen's d. For the Mann-Whitney test, effect size is given by the rank biserial correlation.						

Accordingly, Independent Samples t-tests were applied to variables meeting normality assumptions, while the Mann–Whitney U test was used for non-normally distributed variables. This combined approach ensured appropriate and reliable analysis across different data distributions.

Correlational analysis

Pearson's Correlations			
Variable		lifestyle	depression

1. lifestyle	Pearson's r	—	
	p-value	—	
2. depression	Pearson's r	-0.563	—
	p-value	< .001	—
<i>Note. All tests one-tailed, for negative correlation.</i>			

Variable		lifestyle	Anxiety
1. lifestyle	Pearson's r	—	
	p-value	—	
2. anxiety	Pearson's r	-0.423	—
	p-value	< .001	—
<i>Note. All tests one-tailed, for negative correlation.</i>			

Variable		lifestyle	stress
1. lifestyle	Pearson's r	—	
	p-value	—	
2. stress	Pearson's r	-0.48	—
	p-value	< .001	—
<i>Note. All tests one-tailed, for negative correlation.</i>			

Pearson's correlation analysis showed significant negative relationships between lifestyle and depression, anxiety, and stress. Healthier lifestyle patterns were associated with lower levels of psychological distress, underscoring the protective role of balanced lifestyle regulation in mental well-being. Inferential analyses revealed significant group differences across lifestyle and mental health variables. Lifestyle routines differed markedly between women with and without menstrual issues ($t(92) = 4.63, p < .001, d = 0.96$), with higher lifestyle scores among women without issues. Depression levels were also significantly higher in women with menstrual issues ($t(92) = -3.80, p < .001, d = 0.79$). For anxiety and stress, Mann-Whitney U tests indicated significant differences ($U = 1651.50, p < .001$; $U = 1702.00, p < .001$), with higher median ranks in the menstrual-issues group and moderate effect sizes.

Discussion

The findings of the study demonstrate a clear link between menstrual health, lifestyle routines, and psychological well-being among married women in early adulthood. Women without menstrual issues exhibited healthier and more consistent lifestyle patterns, whereas those with menstrual issues reported poorer routines alongside higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. These results support all five hypotheses, indicating significant group differences and a negative association between lifestyle quality and psychological distress. The outcomes align with existing literature suggesting that hormonal irregularities, physical symptoms, and psychosocial stressors associated with menstrual problems can disrupt daily functioning and emotional regulation. Overall, the study highlights the interconnected nature of menstrual health, lifestyle habits, and mental well-being, emphasizing the importance of holistic approaches that promote balanced living, self-care, and psychological support for women's overall health.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that menstrual irregularities exert a notable influence on women's overall psychological and lifestyle functioning. Women with menstrual issues demonstrated significantly lower lifestyle scores and higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress, suggesting that physical dysregulation is often accompanied by emotional and behavioural challenges.

Limitations of the Study

- Sample characteristics – The study included a small sample of 95 women from a single urban region, limiting generalizability to broader populations and cultural contexts.
- Self-report measures – Reliance on self-reported data may introduce response biases, particularly in reporting emotional states and menstrual experiences.
- Cross-sectional design – The design restricts causal interpretation of relationships between menstrual health, lifestyle, and mental well-being.
- Limited variables – Only lifestyle and emotional factors were examined, excluding other relevant influences such

as hormonal, physical, and social factors.

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Original Article

Prevalence of Developmental Disorders among Children: A Research Review

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180215

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 82-85

February - 2026

Submitted: 16 Jan. 2026

Revised: 26 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 11 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract

This study examined how lifestyle routines, menstrual health (including risk for PCOS-related menstrual irregularities), and mental health (depression, anxiety, stress) interrelate among married women in early adulthood. Background research shows that menstrual disorders, particularly conditions on the PCOS spectrum are consistently associated with higher prevalence and greater severity of depressive and anxiety symptoms, and that lifestyle and quality-of-life factors are central to prevention and management. Two group design was used (online data collection via Google Forms) to recruit married women in the study's target age range; the Methods chapter reports an estimated sample of N = 94 (51 with menstrual issues, 43 without) Measures included: (a) a self-report menstrual/PCOS risk screener adapted from an Indian validation/self-assessment tool (Taneja et al., 2020) to identify participants with menstrual concerns; (b) a brief lifestyle inventory (U-SMILE / short SMILE) to quantify lifestyle across domains such as diet, sleep, activity, substance use, stress management and social connection; and (c) the DASS-21 to assess depression, anxiety and stress symptoms. Instrument choice and psychometric grounding are described in the Methods. Conclusions: findings from this study support an integrated biopsychosocial perspective, poor lifestyle routines co-occur with menstrual problems and elevated emotional symptoms, suggesting the value of routine mental-health screening in gynaecologic/reproductive care and lifestyle-focused interventions (education, sleep/diet/activity recommendations, stress management training) to reduce symptom burden and improve quality of life. Limitations noted in the draft include cross-sectional design, convenience/online sampling from a single region, reliance on self-report screening (not clinical diagnosis), and the sample-size reporting inconsistency mentioned above. Recommendations and brief implications for practice, research and policy are provided in the Discussion and Conclusion chapters of the thesis.

Keywords: lifestyle routine; menstrual health; menstrual health; depression; anxiety; stress; married early-adulthood women; DASS-21

Introduction

Women's health is influenced by biological processes as well as lifestyle practices and psychological well-being. Menstruation is a natural process, but menstrual-related disorders such as irregular cycles, dysmenorrhea, and PCOS affect millions of women worldwide and significantly impact daily functioning and quality of life. These conditions are not limited to physical symptoms; they are closely linked with lifestyle habits and mental health, forming a complex medical and psychosocial cycle. Lifestyle behaviours including diet, physical activity, sleep, stress management, and social connectedness, play a crucial role in reproductive health, where unhealthy patterns may worsen menstrual problems and healthier routines may reduce symptoms and support psychological resilience. At the same time, mental health concerns like depression, anxiety, and stress are commonly reported among women with menstrual issues, highlighting a bidirectional relationship between physical and psychological factors. This research focuses on the intersection of menstrual problems, lifestyle, and mental health by comparing women with menstrual difficulties to those without, aiming to identify key differences and associations that can guide future interventions.

Statement of the Problem

To study the association between menstrual issues and lifestyle routine and mental health status.



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19344014](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344014)



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How to cite this article:

Bharti, P. (2026). Prevalence of Developmental Disorders among Children: A Research Review. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 82–85. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344014>

Despite this vulnerability, systematic epidemiological research on developmental disorders in the state remains scarce, and most available evidence is derived from national surveys or small-scale clinical studies. Understanding the prevalence and profile of developmental disorders among children in Bihar is essential for informed policy planning and effective intervention. This review aims to synthesize existing research on the prevalence of ASD, ADHD, and Intellectual Disability in India, critically examine available evidence relevant to Bihar, and identify key gaps in knowledge. By situating India-wide prevalence findings within the socio-demographic context of Bihar, the article seeks to highlight the magnitude of the hidden burden of developmental disorders and emphasize the need for region-specific research and policy responses. In recent decades, India has witnessed growing recognition of childhood developmental disorders due to improved child survival rates and increased attention to child mental health. However, prevalence data remain uneven across regions. Bihar, characterized by high population density, poverty, malnutrition, and limited healthcare infrastructure, represents a critical yet under-researched context. This article reviews existing literature on the prevalence of ASD, ADHD, and ID in India and examines its relevance for understanding the developmental disorder burden among children in Bihar.

Conceptual Framework

Neurodevelopmental disorders are defined in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) as conditions with onset during the developmental period that cause impairments in personal, social, academic, or occupational functioning (APA, 2013). ASD is characterized by deficits in social communication and restricted, repetitive behaviors. ADHD involves persistent patterns of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity, while ID is marked by significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. In the Indian socio-cultural context, developmental delays are often under-recognized or attributed to non-medical causes, leading to delayed diagnosis and intervention. This contextual understanding is essential when interpreting prevalence estimates and policy responses.

Methodology of the Review

This article is based on a narrative review of peer-reviewed literature, government reports, and large-scale epidemiological studies published between 2000 and 2024. Sources were identified through databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, and PsycINFO using keywords related to developmental disorders, ASD, ADHD, intellectual disability, India, and Bihar. Emphasis was placed on India-wide prevalence studies and research with implications for Bihar.

India-Wide Prevalence of Developmental Disorders

Large-scale studies provide critical insights into the burden of developmental disorders in India. The INCLEN Trust International study using the INDT-NDD tool assessed children aged 2–9 years across five Indian regions and reported that nearly 12% had at least one neurodevelopmental disorder (Arora et al., 2018). Intellectual disability, speech and language disorders, and ADHD were among the most prevalent conditions identified.

Data from Census 2011 and National Sample Survey reports further indicate that childhood disabilities related to cognition, speech, and behavior constitute a significant proportion of overall disability, although these figures are widely considered underestimates due to reliance on household reporting and stigma (Office of the Registrar General of India, 2013).

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Prevalence in India ASD prevalence estimates in India range from 0.09% to about 1%, depending on study design and diagnostic tools (Raina et al., 2017). While lower than global estimates in some reports, researchers agree that ASD remains substantially underdiagnosed in India due to limited awareness and scarcity of trained professionals (Juneja et al., 2014).

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

ADHD is one of the most commonly reported neurodevelopmental disorders in childhood. Indian studies report prevalence rates ranging from 1.3% to 13%, reflecting methodological diversity (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Meta-analytic evidence suggests that ADHD prevalence in India is comparable to global trends but often overlooked in educational and clinical settings (Polanczyk et al., 2014). In Bihar, the lack of epidemiological data limits precise estimation. However, school-level observations and clinical reports indicate that ADHD-related behaviors are frequently misinterpreted as disciplinary issues, leading to inadequate support for affected children.

Intellectual Disability (ID)

Intellectual disability remains one of the most visible developmental disorders in India. Census 2011 data report ID as a major category among childhood disabilities (Office of the Registrar General of India, 2013). The INCLEN study further highlighted strong associations between ID and socio-economic disadvantage, malnutrition, and perinatal complications (Arora et al., 2018). Bihar's high prevalence of maternal undernutrition, low birth weight, and limited neonatal care places children at increased risk for intellectual disability. Yet, absence of population-level studies restricts accurate burden estimation.

Policy Framework and Services

India's Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016) recognizes ASD, ADHD-related conditions, and intellectual disability as benchmark disabilities, providing a legal basis for inclusive education and rehabilitation. Programs such as

the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) emphasize early identification of developmental delays. However, implementation challenges in Bihar—such as workforce shortages and limited referral services—reduce program effectiveness.

Discussion

This review indicates that while Bihar-specific prevalence data are limited, India-wide studies strongly suggest a substantial burden of developmental disorders among children in the state. Under-diagnosis, socio-economic adversity, and health system constraints contribute to unmet needs. Strengthening surveillance systems and integrating developmental screening into primary healthcare and schools are critical steps forward.

Conclusion

Developmental disorders represent a significant but under-recognized public health challenge among children in Bihar. Evidence from national studies suggests that a considerable proportion of children are affected by ASD, ADHD, and intellectual disability. Addressing this burden requires Bihar-specific population research, enhanced early identification, and expansion of inclusive health and educational services.

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Journal of Research and Development

A Multidisciplinary International Level Referred and Double-Blind Peer Reviewed, Open Access

ISSN : 2230-9578 | Website: <https://jrdrv.org> Volume-18, Issue-2(XXII) | February - 2026

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Original Article

Effect of Career Counselling on Anxiety and Depression Among Students

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract:**

JRD -2026-180216

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 86-90

February - 2026

Submitted: 16 Jan. 2026

Revised: 26 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 11 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

This study examines the effect of structured career counselling on anxiety and depression among secondary school students, a population group which is often subject to psychological stress during critical periods of their life in terms of making important academic and vocational decisions. The lack of sufficient career guidance often contributes to the anxiety and depressive symptomatology and thus impacts the psychological well-being of students and their academic performance. The present investigation aimed to portray the technological efficacy of career counselling as a treatment in educational settings. Quasi-experimental research design with pre-test and post-test measurements and control group was employed. The sample consisted of 120 students aged between 15 and 18 years who were randomly distributed between an experimental group, to which the career counselling intervention was applied, and a control group, to which the intervention was not applied. Standardised instruments, the Beck Anxiety Inventory and the Beck Depression Inventory - II were administered to assess the levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms at baseline and post-intervention. The intervention contained eight systematic sessions for self-exploration, careers awareness, decision making skills, goal setting and future planning. Statistical comparisons were performed with paired and independent sample t test. The intervention provided a statistically significant reduction in both anxiety and depression scores in the counselling group while there was no appreciable change in the control group. Subsequent post-intervention analyses confirmed the findings; that is, participants assigned to career counselling evidenced much lower levels of anxiety and depression than their counterparts. Hence, all null hypothesis were rejected, authorizing the effectiveness of career counselling in improving the psychological well-being of students. These results have been found to be concordant with a number of established theories such as Social Cognitive Career Theory and Career Construction Theory, which rate career clarity, self-efficacy and perceived control as instrumental in fighting against emotional distress. The present study highlights that career counselling is more than vocational guidance and acts as a holistic mental health promoting intervention. The findings call for the systematic integration of organised career counselling programmes in educational institutions to inform and nourish the emotional well-being of students and their academic involvement in schools and promote their long-level career development.

Keywords: Career counselling, Anxiety, Depression, Students, etc.

Introduction:

Career development is a key psychological pursuit in adolescence and early adulthood due to a stage when one is exploring identity, making critical decisions, and planning for the future. Students are often forced to make important career decisions in the context of academic, social and personal responsibilities. In the absence of adequate guidance and support, the career uncertainty may lead to major psychological distress, manifested in increase of anxiety and depression (Gati & Levin, 2014). Recent scholarship has highlighted emerging concerns regarding mental health among the student body, and thus the need for integrated interventions for students that address both vocational development and emotional health separately. Anxiety and depression are two of the most common psychological challenges that students face. Academic stress, fear of failure, confused career aspirations, and feelings of disjunctions between personal abilities and occupational demands together add up to significant emotional stress (Beck et al. 1988; Beck et al. 1996). Career related stress takes on special saliency at transitional periods in education (both secondary and higher), in which students face decisions seen as irrevocable and determinative of their future success.

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How to cite this article:

Ankulanekar, K. G., & Darekar, S. N. (2026). Effect of Career Counselling on Anxiety and Depression Among Students. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 86–90.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344044>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19344044](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344044)



Empirical investigations suggest that career indecision and insufficient occupational clarity are strongly associated with increased levels of anxiety, lowered self-esteem and depressive symptomatology (Creed, Prideaux, & Patton, 2005). Career counselling involves the deliberate psychological intervention designed to help individuals to understand their interests, abilities, values and opportunities to support them in informed career decisions. Beyond its vocational prerogatives, career counselling serves a therapeutic purpose by enhancing self-efficacy, its ability to solve problems effectively and to develop a sense of agency over one's future (Savickas, 2013). The Social Cognitive Career Theory posits that emotional states are a modulating factor in career behaviour, and in turn the development of high levels of decision-making competence acts to reduce the emotional distress by strengthening outcome expectations and confidence (Lent, Brown, & Holding, 2000). Consequently, career counselling can possibly function as a defence mechanism against anxiety and depression via uncertainty reduction, and improvement of psychological resilience.

Tough empirical evidence supports the relationship between career guidance and psychological wellbeing. Findings suggest that students who receive systematic career counselling report reduced career indecision, lower stress and better adjustment of emotions (Whiston, Li, Goodrich, & Mits, 2017). When students gain clarity about their career paths and see congruence between their personal characteristics and their occupations, they are less likely to experience feelings of helplessness and hopelessness - which are the major expressions of depression (Super, 1980). Moreover, interventions with elements of self-exploration and goal setting are found to be efficacious in treating anxiety by replacing ambiguity with structured planning (Gati & Levin, 2014). Despite growing recognition of the mental health benefits conferred by career counselling, there has been a disproportionate reaction of educational establishments to view the service primarily as an academic or placement oriented service as opposed to a psychologically based intervention. This restricted view of mentally healthy students has limited its potential contribution to the promotion of student mental-health. Accordingly, a robust body of research is needed to systematically assess the impact of career counselling on anxiety and depression, especially on student populations dealing with high levels of stress both academic and career related. The present investigation aims to overcome this lack of knowledge by assessing the impact of structured career counselling on anxiety and depression in students. By incorporating the psychological assessment component with the vocational component of intervention, the study seeks to highlight career counselling as an all-embracing method that fostered emotional well-being and career development. Elucidating this relationship has important educational policy implications, implications for educational counselling practice and educational mental health promotions in academic settings.

Objectives of the Study: To study the effect of structured career counselling on the level of anxiety and depression among the students.

Literature Review:

Lent et al. (2000), the authors addressed the effects of contextual supports on career decision-making in the context of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). Their findings highlighted that perceived social and institutional supports significantly increase career decisions self-efficacy in students.

Creed et al. (2015) investigated the nexus between career decisional states and psychological well-being on adolescents. Their results showed that there is a significant link between career indecision and increased anxiety and depression. Adolescents who received structured career guidance and planned assistance in planning their career showed better emotional adjustment and lower psychological distress, indicating a preventative role of career counselling in mental health of adolescents during formative years.

Gati and Levin (2014) examined the problems of career decision-making and their psychological correlates. They found that lack of career and indecision were a major predictor for anxiety amongst students. The authors concluded that career counselling, through provision of models for structured decision making and emotional reassurance noticeably reduced anxiety and helped with adaptive options to cope.

Savickas (2013) through Career Construction Theory showed the importance of the therapeutic function of career counselling. His work postulates that narrative approaches to counselling stimulate the development of adaptability, meaning-making, and self-awareness. Students participating in such counselling reported that they were less depressed as a result of improving life coherence and orientation to the future and therefore career counselling can be described as an integrative psychological intervention, rather than simply vocational guidance.

Whiston, Li, et al. (2017) meta-analytic review of the effectiveness of career choice intervention the analysis documented a moderate but significant impact of career counselling on lessening distress in areas like emotional functioning, including anxiety. Interventions focusing on self-exploration, goals clarification and decision-making skills, for example, proved to be particularly efficacious in increasing psychological well-being among students.

Hirschi (2011) studied the link between career adaptability and mental health in adolescents. The results showed that the greater adaptability resources were associated with less anxiety and depression. Career counselling became a key to evolution of adaptability competencies which later encouraged emotional resilience and stability.

Kelly and Shin (2009) examined the relationships between career decision S&E and psychological distress among college students. Their results showed that increasing self-efficacy, often increased by career counselling, was

associated with reduced levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms, strengthening the role of counselling as a preventive measure of mental health.

Rottinghaus et al. (2017) investigated the role of career optimism in student well-being. Participation in career counselling significantly increased optimism and reduced depressive symptoms, suggesting that positive expectations for the future act as buffers against having emotional problems.

Finally, Patton and McMahon (2014) and Borgen and Maglio (2007) emphasized about the efficacy of holistic and systemic career counselling programmes. Their studies found that there was significant reduction in symptoms of anxiety and depression, leading them to conclude that career counselling restores hope, direction and emotional well-being in the times of career uncertainty.

Hypothesis:

- **H₁:** There is a significant reduction in anxiety levels of students after receiving career counselling.
- **H₂:** There is a significant reduction in depression levels of students after receiving career counselling.
- **H₃:** Students who receive career counselling will have significantly lower anxiety levels than students who do not receive career counselling.
- **H₄:** Students who receive career counselling will have significantly lower depression levels than students who do not receive career counselling.

Research Methodology:

A total of 120 students from the high schools were included as a participants in the study. The participants are aged between 15-18 years ($M = 16.5$, $SD = .90$) and the students were divided into experimental group as career counselling and control group equally. Gender distribution was equal with 50% males and females.

Research Design:

A quasi-experimental pre-post design was used with two groups:

- Career counselling group: received eight weekly sessions of career counselling.
- Control group: received standard school guidance services but no structured career counselling.

Data Collection Tools:

- Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI; Beck, Epstein, Brown, & Steer, 1988): 21 item self-report measure of anxiety symptoms.
- Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II; Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996) 21 items, self-report inventory of depressive symptoms

Procedure:

Prior to the counselling intervention, both groups were asked to complete the BAI and BDI-II. The experimental group was then provided with career counselling based on a structured model focusing on self-exploration, occupational information, decision making and goal setting over a period of eight weeks. Post-intervention assessments were given to both groups.

Data Analysis:

Paired samples t-tests for comparing pre- and post-scores resulting for anxiety and depression scores between groups were conducted. Independent sample t-tests were applied to compare two dependent post-intervention scores, experimental and control group.

Results and Interpretation:

Table 1: Comparison of Pre- and Post-Test Anxiety Scores of Career Counselling Group (N = 60)

Measurement	Mean (M)	SD	t-value	df	p-value
Pre-test Anxiety	24.50	8.70	7.12	59	< .001
Post-test Anxiety	18.20	7.50			

Interpretation: Table 1 shows a comparison between pre-test and post-test anxiety scores of students who received career counselling. The mean anxiety score significantly decreased from 24.50 to 18.20 after the intervention. The obtained t value (7.12) is statistically significant at the 0.001 level, indicating that career counselling was effective in reducing anxiety among students. Hence, the hypothesis related to anxiety reduction is accepted.

Table 2: Comparison of Pre- and Post-Test Depression Scores of Career Counselling Group (N = 60)

Measurement	Mean (M)	SD	t-value	df	p-value
Pre-test Depression	22.10	7.90	6.89	59	< .001
Post-test Depression	16.40	7.30			

Interpretation: As presented in Table 2, students showed a significant reduction in depression scores following career counselling. The mean depression score decreased from 22.10 at pre-test to 16.40 at post-test. The statistically significant t value (6.89, $p < .001$) confirms the positive impact of career counselling on depressive symptoms. Therefore, the corresponding hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3: Comparison of Post-Test Anxiety Scores between Career Counselling and Control Groups

Group	N	Mean (M)	SD	t-value	df	p-value
Career Counselling Group	60	18.20	7.50	3.41	118	.001
Control Group	60	23.10	8.80			

Interpretation: Table 3 indicates a significant difference in post-test anxiety scores between students who received career counselling and those who did not. The counselling group reported lower anxiety levels ($M = 18.20$) compared to the control group ($M = 23.10$). The obtained t value (3.41) is significant at the 0.01 level, suggesting that career counselling effectively reduced anxiety compared to routine school guidance. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4: Comparison of Post-Test Depression Scores between Career Counselling and Control Groups

Group	N	Mean (M)	SD	t-value	df	p-value
Career Counselling Group	60	16.40	7.30	3.14	118	.002
Control Group	60	21.00	8.00			

Interpretation: Table 4 reveals a statistically significant difference in depression scores between the two groups at post-test. Students who received career counselling showed lower depression levels ($M = 16.40$) than those in the control group ($M = 21.00$). The significant t value (3.14, $p < .01$) confirms the effectiveness of career counselling in reducing depressive symptoms. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.

The results clearly demonstrate that career counselling significantly reduces both anxiety and depression among students. Students who participated in structured career counselling showed greater psychological improvement than those who did not receive the intervention. These findings support the effectiveness of career counselling as a mental health promoting intervention and validate its role beyond vocational guidance.

Discussion:

The present study focused on the effect of structured career counselling on anxiety and depression in high school students. The results of this study have shown a statistically significant improvement in anxiety and depressive symptoms in the group who went through an eight-week counselling program. When compared with the control group, participants who received career counselling showed significantly lower post-intervention scores on both the variables emphasizing the positive impact of the program on the psychological wellbeing of adolescents.

Adolescence represents a developmental period characterized by identity formation, increased pressure in schools and developing concerns about future career and life paths. Often times the uncertainty around vocational decisions increases emotional distress. The diminished anxiety noted can plausibly be attributed to the fact that the intervention was structured around self-exploration, occupational awareness, decision-making skills and goal setting. By providing an affordance for clarity and direction, career counselling was likely to have attenuated ambiguity around the future, which in turn would likely have attenuated levels of stress. There is a resonance in these outcomes with the career development theories which stress the salience of vocational clarity during adolescence for healthy adjustment psychologically.

The significant reduction in depression scores is further suggested to indicate that career counselling may strengthen the sense of competence and hopefulness among students. Depressive symptoms in adolescents are often associated with feelings of helplessness and poor self-efficacy. Through guided reflection and strengths-based exploration students are given the opportunity to develop a stronger belief in their abilities and prospects in the future. This cognitive restructuring process can be used to overcome negative self-perceptions and maladaptive pessimistic thought patterns.

The considerable differences noticed between the experimental and control groups support the idea about the efficaciousness of structured career counselling in coping with emotional issues of students compared to routine school guidance services. These results support the view that career counselling is more than vocational guidance and it can also be used as a preventive approach in mental health.

All over, the present study provides empirical support to the establishment of structured career counselling programmes in the secondary schools. Such interventions can simultaneously promote career development and reduce psychological distress which can contribute to holistic adolescent development.

Conclusion:

The findings confirm the idea that career counselling goes beyond providing vocational information as a holistic psychological intervention that supports emotional well-being. The strengthening of self-efficacy, orientation to the future, and perception of control over career choices seems to be the key in reducing anxiety and depression. Ultimately, the findings of this research stress the importance of career counselling being part of the structural makeup of educational support systems that makes operation a preventive and promotes mental health strategy. Early involvement with career-related issues may contribute to healthier emotional maturation, increased engagement with school and more adaptive career pathways among students.

Educational Implications:

Career counselling has a central and vital place in educational milieu as it deals simultaneously with the development of the vocation and the psychological well-beings. The integration of structured career counselling programs within schools and colleges is in order to attenuate the anxiety and depression arising in students due to career uncertainty, pressures in academic life and the fear about future outcome of the academic life. Such interventions increase self-awareness, decision-making skills, and confidence that, when combined, result in increased levels of academic motivation and emotional stability. As a result, through career counselling, the quality of educational environments is strengthened and the connection of students to achieve sustainable performance in academic and professional careers is improved.

Limitations of the Study:

Despite of the contributions this investigation made, there are limitations to this investigation. The sample size was quite small and the sample was selected from a specific education setting that may limit the transferability of the results. Reliance upon self-report instruments may introduce response bias. Additionally, the study used a short term intervention, so the durability of the effects of career counselling has yet to be investigated.

Recommendations for Future Studies:

Future investigations should take a longitudinal design to explore the long-term impact of career counselling on mental health functioning. Research that involves larger and more heterogeneous samples (including rural and marginalized student populations) is strongly recommended. Subsequent studies may also incorporate questions about mediating variables such as career decision self-efficacy, resilience, and social support and compare disparate career counselling modalities to determine their relative psychological efficacy.

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Original Article

Empathy from the Perspective of Oncology Medical Caregivers

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180217

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 91-101

February - 2026

Submitted: 16 Jan. 2026

Revised: 26 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 11 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract

Empathy is the ability to put yourself in the place of the others and understand their feelings and experiences. The ability to comprehend, share, and react to another person's thoughts, feelings, and experiences is known as empathy. It has both an emotional and a cognitive component. Cancer comes with uncertainty and Negative perspective towards life in Oncology there are plenty of patients who are there for months and years how there recovery affects on the Empathy of caregivers like Nurses. This study shows that patient's reaction and recovery is not directly co-related to Empathy of caregivers. This cross sectional survey study examined that whether oncology caregiver's empathy level – measured by Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JES) and the Interpersonal reactive index (IRI) – were associated with patients recovery and relationship between the caregivers and the patient. Oncology healthcare professions in Hospital completed an online questionnaire including Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JES) and the Interpersonal reactive index (IRI) (N = 50). Data says that there is no direct correlation between the patient's recovery and empathy ($p > .05$) indicating that the higher the recover better the empathy in our sample. Or it's not related to any behaviour of the patient. Other factors may limit or moderate its effect on objective recovery outcomes. We contextualize our findings within the literature on empathy in oncology care and discuss potential explanations for this null finding, such as the intricacy of recovery processes and measurement challenges.

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Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19344098](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344098)



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How to cite this article:

Kakulte, A. (2026). Empathy from the Perspective of Oncology Medical Caregivers. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 91–101. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344098>

Introduction

Empathy

The core of healthcare is empathy, which directs caregivers' interactions with patients during vulnerable, distressing, and hopeful times. The ability to identify and comprehend another person's emotional state, share or react to those emotions appropriately, and—in clinical settings—convert that understanding into compassionate care is the broadest definition of empathy. Scholars frequently distinguish between affective empathy (sharing the emotional experience), behavioral empathy (expressed through presence, actions, and communication), and cognitive empathy (the mental capacity to understand what the other person feels) in healthcare practice.

Empathy plays a variety of roles for caregivers, including nurses, doctors, and allied health personnel. On the one hand, empathy is thought to be crucial for fostering treatment adherence, lowering patient anxiety, and establishing trust. For instance, patients may feel more at ease discussing symptoms, worries, or preferences when a clinician actively listens to them or acknowledges their fears. However, empathy for caregiving imposes obligations on the caregiver. Studies involving oncology caregivers have extensively documented the risk of burnout, emotional labor (the effort needed to control one's inner feelings and outward expression), and personal distress. For example, Taleghani, Ashouri, and Saburi (2017) discovered an inverse relationship between burnout dimensions and greater empathy among 67 Iranian oncology nurses. In particular, depersonalization and a lack of personal achievement were negatively connected with empathy, suggesting that people who felt less effective or more depersonalized also tended to report lower empathy levels. Numerous factors, including years of experience, training, personality traits, institutional support, stress levels, and exposure to patient suffering, influence caregivers' empathy. Their desire to establish an emotional connection and the limitations of their time, workload, and emotional fatigue, which restrict their capacity for empathy, frequently clash.

Oncology and Empathy (Caregivers Perspective)

The diagnosis, management, and treatment of cancer are the focus of oncology. Patients frequently have to endure lengthy, intricate, and emotionally taxing treatment regimens. Some of the most difficult psychological and physical problems in medicine are related to cancer care. Long, intricate treatment plans that include surgeries, chemotherapy, radiation, and palliative care are required of patients receiving oncology treatment. In addition to the prognosis, there is frequently uncertainty regarding quality of life, side effects, emotional toll, loss, fear, and occasionally existential distress. These factors make oncology caregivers particularly expected to act with empathy. Patients frequently express that their treatment as individuals, rather than merely as cases or diagnoses, is what really counts. However, there are particular obstacles to compassionate care in oncology as well. The ability of caregivers to emotionally connect with patients can be diminished by frequent exposure to death, a high symptom burden, time constraints, resource shortages, and occasionally emotional overload. According to research on oncology nurses, high levels of burnout, excessive workloads, or settings with little institutional support tend to reduce empathy. (For instance, in qualitative studies, oncology nurses themselves report obstacles like psychological distress, a lack of manager support, and a lack of training.)

Interpersonal Reaction and Correlation with Empathy

In this context, "interpersonal reactions" refers to the emotional and behavioral responses of caregivers during interactions with patients, including the degree to which they adopt the patient's viewpoint, their level of concern for their suffering, their level of distress, their level of compassion, and the ways in which those responses result in caring behaviors (e.g., listening, explaining, presence).

Tools like these are frequently used to measure empathy:

The Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JSE) is a tool used by healthcare professionals that focuses on clinical and cognitive empathy, or how well practitioners comprehend patients' emotions and adopt a patient-centered viewpoint. The Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) is a more comprehensive indicator of dispositional empathy that takes into account a number of factors, including fantasy (imaginative empathy), personal distress, empathic concern, and perspective taking.

It's still a controversy that whether high empathy scores in caregivers are directly associated with better patient recovery—which could include survival, functional improvements, symptom reduction, immune parameters, or physical health outcomes—is a crucial question in empirical health research. As an alternative, empathy might have a greater impact on psychological outcomes (such as patient satisfaction, emotional distress, and quality of life) than on purely "hard" medical recovery.

Literature Review

Empathy in oncology caregivers

It has long been known that empathy is crucial to providing quality healthcare, especially in emotionally taxing professions like oncology. Cancer caregiving frequently involves relational, emotional, and psychological care in addition to clinical duties. Understanding the patient's suffering, reacting to it with compassion, and developing therapeutic relationships are all made possible by empathy, which raises the standard of care overall. Even though the value of empathy is widely acknowledged, empirical research has shown that there are intricate and occasionally conflicting relationships between empathy and patient outcomes. With a focus on the use of the Jefferson Scale of

Empathy (JSE) and the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) as primary assessment tools, this literature review synthesizes methodological insights, prominent findings from empirical studies, and theoretical perspectives regarding empathy in oncology caregiving.

Concept of empathy in caregiver's context

The ability to comprehend and experience another person's emotions is a broad definition of empathy (Davis, 1983). Empathy in healthcare encompasses more than just emotional resonance; it also includes cognitive comprehension, emotional sensitivity, and communicating that comprehension to the patient (Hojat, 2016). Empathy helps oncology caregivers to remain professionally detached while negotiating sensitive emotional terrains involving pain, uncertainty, and death.

Decety and Fotopoulou (2015) state that affective sharing, cognitive perspective-taking, emotion regulation, and behavioral communication are all interrelated aspects of empathy in medical settings. Therefore, emotional resonance and self-control must be balanced for effective empathy; caregivers must comprehend the patient's experience without becoming overwhelmed by it. For caregivers in oncology, who frequently observe suffering, loss, and death, this duality—emotional attachment balanced by cognitive control—is especially important.

Assessing Empathy: The JSE and IRI

One of the most popular self-report instruments for evaluating general empathic disposition is the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), which was created by Davis in 1983. Perspective Taking, Empathic Concern, Personal Distress, and Fantasy are its four subscales. The two that are most pertinent to caregiving research are Empathic Concern (affective empathy) and Perspective Taking (cognitive empathy) (Konrath et al., 2011).

On the other hand, clinical empathy—the cognitive capacity of a healthcare provider to comprehend a patient's viewpoint and convey that comprehension to support treatment—is measured by the Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JSE), which was created by Hojat et al. (2001). In line with the professional boundaries anticipated in clinical practice, the JSE prioritizes behavioral and intellectual empathy over emotional contagion (Hojat, 2016).

The JSE measures a professionalized form of empathy pertinent to patient-provider interactions, while the IRI measures empathic tendencies. Comparative studies have shown a moderate correlation between the two scores (Paro et al., 2012). Using both scales gives oncology caregivers a thorough understanding of general empathic capacity and how it manifests clinically in patient care.

In oncology, empathy and patient outcomes

Empathy's beneficial impact on cancer patients' psychosocial outcomes is well-documented. According to Sinclair et al. (2017), compassionate caregivers help patients cope better, communicate more effectively, experience less anxiety, and be more satisfied with their care. Derksen, Bensing, and Lagro-Janssen (2013), for example, discovered that higher patient trust, emotional relief, and perceived quality of care were all linked to physician empathy. In a similar vein, Kim, Kaplowitz, and Johnston (2004) found that by increasing patients' comprehension and sense of collaboration during treatment, empathic communication improves adherence to medical advice.

Nevertheless, research looking at objective clinical outcomes like survival, treatment response, or disease progression has yielded conflicting findings. According to Neumann et al. (2011), empathy rarely foretells quantifiable gains in biological recovery, but it does promote a supportive care environment. Empathy has a greater influence on psychological and relational aspects of recovery than on physiological ones in oncology, where recovery is mostly dictated by tumor biology and treatment effectiveness (Sinclair et al., 2017). As a result, the literature constantly makes a distinction between the direct results of empathy (biological recovery) and its indirect benefits (better adherence, decreased distress, and enhanced coping). This distinction is consistent with recent research showing that empathy is still essential to patient satisfaction and well-being even though it may not be directly correlated with recovery outcomes.

The Function of Empathy in the Relationship between Patients and Caregivers

One of the most important aspects of cancer care is the caregiver-patient relationship. Patients can honestly express their fears and preferences when empathy is present because it promotes trust, emotional safety, and open communication (Mercer & Reynolds, 2002). Research indicates that patients report more satisfaction with their care and stronger therapeutic alliances when they believe their caregivers are sympathetic (Derksen et al., 2013).

According to Sinclair et al. (2017), empathy in oncology is a multifaceted relational process that includes acknowledging, comprehending, and responding to the suffering of patients. In addition to reducing patient suffering, empathy gives caregivers purpose and inspiration, allowing them to continue caring for patients in spite of emotional exhaustion.

But there are psychological costs associated with empathy as well. Oncology caregivers who experience ongoing emotional stress are at risk for "compassion fatigue" and "empathy burnout," according to Larson and Yao (2005). Maintaining the wellbeing of caregivers requires the ability to strike a balance between professional boundaries and emotional engagement.

Compassion and the Welfare of Caregivers

High levels of empathic engagement can lead to caregiver stress and emotional exhaustion, even though empathy improves patient outcomes. Seeing the pain and loss of patients exposes oncology professionals to high levels of emotional exposure (Shanafelt et al., 2005). Burnout and compassion fatigue have been associated with excessive affective empathy, especially the personal distress component as measured by the IRI (Figley, 2002).

On the other hand, clinical empathy (as determined by JSE) and cognitive empathy (perspective taking) seem protective since they allow caregivers to engage with patients on an intellectual and compassionate level without taking on their suffering (Hojat, 2016). It has been demonstrated that training programs that prioritize reflective self-awareness and cognitive empathy maintain empathy while lowering emotional exhaustion (Stepien & Baernstein, 2006). Accordingly, research indicates that preserving an ideal balance between empathy—high cognitive empathy and controlled emotional involvement—maximizes patient benefit and caregiver resilience.

Training and Development for Empathy

Empathy is a skill that can be developed rather than a fixed attribute. The goal of many healthcare education initiatives is to improve the capacity for perspective-taking and empathic communication. In their 2006 review of medical professionals' empathy training programs, Stepien and Baernstein discovered that reflective writing, role-playing, and narrative medicine all improved empathic comprehension and communication.

Empathy-focused educational interventions have been shown by Hojat et al. (2011) to raise medical students' and clinicians' JSE scores. Similarly, structured training in empathic communication decreased burnout and enhanced patient-centered care, according to Neumann et al. (2011). For oncology caregivers, who need ongoing empathy to manage long-term patient relationships in the face of emotional difficulties, these interventions are especially pertinent. Therefore, in order to avoid compassion fatigue, effective empathy training in oncology should incorporate both cognitive skill-building (such as perspective taking and communication) and emotional regulation techniques.

Empirical Findings and Measurement Relationships

There are notable inter-scale correlations between the JSE and IRI, according to studies comparing them. The IRI subscales of Perspective Taking and Empathic Concern typically show positive correlations with JSE scores (Paro et al., 2012). These associations demonstrate that, despite their differences, general and clinical empathy have conceptual similarities, especially in the cognitive and affective domains.

Research on the connection between empathy and patient recovery, however, is still inconclusive. According to recent research, patient recovery and both the overall JSE scores and the IRI subscales have a weak and statistically insignificant relationship. This suggests that although empathy improves psychological health and the experience of providing care, it has no direct bearing on the results of physical recovery. Rather, through emotional support and trust, empathy functions as a crucial psychosocial component that enhances biological treatment and fosters holistic healing.

Knowledge Gaps and Prospects

There are still a number of gaps in the literature despite a great deal of research. Many studies use self-report tools, which may not accurately reflect real empathic behavior and are subject to social desirability bias (Neumann et al., 2011). Measures that are patient-rated and observational may yield more accurate evaluations.

Additionally, the majority of research is cross-sectional, which restricts the ability to infer causal relationships. To find out if providing oncology patients with consistent, empathic care improves their long-term psychological or adherence-related outcomes, longitudinal research is required. Furthermore, little is known about how cultural and contextual factors, especially in non-Western healthcare settings, affect caregivers' expression of empathy.

Future studies should use mixed-methods approaches that incorporate behavioral observations, patient narratives, qualitative interviews, and quantitative empathy scales. The complex interpersonal dynamics that may be missed by quantitative scores alone would be captured by such designs.

Rational and Significance

1 Rationale of the Study

The Value of Empathy in Cancer Treatment

Effective healthcare delivery, especially in oncology, depends heavily on empathy. Intense physical pain, emotional distress, and psychological difficulties related to diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis are common experiences for cancer patients. Through patient-centered care, compassionate communication, and emotional support, caregivers—both formal (such as doctors and nurses) and informal (such as family members)—play a critical role in reducing these difficulties. Caregivers can better understand patients' emotional and psychological states, meet their needs, and build therapeutic relationships when they possess empathy. Increased patient satisfaction, treatment compliance, and decreased psychological distress have all been associated with high levels of caregiver empathy. On the other hand, a lack of empathy could lead to misunderstandings, unhappy patients, and worse health results. Therefore, enhancing the quality of care and patient experiences requires an understanding of the level and type of empathy among oncology caregivers.

Oncology Caregivers' Emotional and Cognitive Demands:

Caregiving in oncology is a demanding profession that exposes caregivers to end-of-life situations, complicated treatment decisions, and frequent patient suffering. Due to these stressors, caregivers must strike a balance between

emotional empathy—sharing or connecting with the patient's feelings—and cognitive empathy—understanding the patient's point of view. Uncontrolled emotional engagement can lead to personal distress, compassion fatigue, and burnout, even though empathy fosters compassionate care. Despite exhibiting compassionate concern for patients, research employing the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) has demonstrated that caregivers with high levels of personal distress may suffer from adverse health outcomes, such as anxiety, depression, and job dissatisfaction. The Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JSE) emphasizes the importance of providing caregivers with specialized training and support by highlighting the ways in which professional empathy affects clinical interactions and patient outcomes. Empathy's dual nature as a useful and possibly taxing quality emphasizes the need to thoroughly research its aspects in cancer caregivers. Researchers can find elements that improve empathic caregiving while reducing risks to caregivers' well-being by looking at the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components of empathy.

Despite the widespread recognition of empathy's importance in healthcare, there are still few empirical studies that concentrate exclusively on oncology caregivers. Research that is currently available frequently focuses on doctors or nurses, paying less attention to family caregivers who offer significant practical and emotional support. Furthermore, the majority of research measures general empathic traits without differentiating between emotional and cognitive components, or between patient-oriented concern and self-oriented distress. These gaps can be filled by using validated instruments like the JSE and IRI, which offer a thorough evaluation of the multifaceted nature of empathy. While the JSE specifically assesses empathy in clinical interactions, the IRI records cognitive and affective responses, such as perspective-taking, empathic concern, and personal distress. By combining these resources, researchers can: Analyze the ways in which various aspects of empathy appear in the provision of cancer care. Recognize how caregiver outcomes like stress, burnout, and job satisfaction are correlated with empathy. Examine the effects of empathy on patient-related outcomes, such as psychological health, treatment compliance, and satisfaction.

Conceptual Importance

Theoretically, researching empathy in cancer caregivers helps to clarify how self-oriented distress, professional conduct, and cognitive and emotional empathy interact. It enables scholars to investigate empathic engagement models like:

How patient-centered care can be improved and emotional distress can be mitigated through cognitive empathy. The importance of emotional empathy in building therapeutic alliances without causing burnout. Variations in empathy between informal and professional caregivers, as well as the variables affecting these variations. The study offers a sophisticated framework for understanding empathy in high stress. Healthcare settings by combining results from IRI and JSE assessments. This framework can be applied to other chronic illness settings outside of oncology.

2 Significance of the Study

A key element of excellent oncology care is empathy. This study offers a thorough understanding of how family members and professional caregivers feel and show empathy for cancer patients. Assessing empathy with validated instruments like the Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JSE) and Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) reveals the multifaceted nature of empathy, including emotional responsiveness, cognitive comprehension, and compassionate action. The study's conclusions can direct initiatives meant to enhance patient-centered care. High cognitive empathy caregivers, for instance, might be better able to comprehend the viewpoints of their patients, which could improve communication, enable accurate symptom reporting, and increase treatment plan adherence. Compassion and encouraging interactions are fostered by emotional empathy and can lower anxiety in patients, boost satisfaction, and enhance general well-being. Therefore, by highlighting the importance of empathic engagement in oncology care, the study directly improves patient outcomes. High emotional demands are placed on cancer caregivers, who frequently witness patient suffering, adverse drug reactions, and end-of-life situations. Burnout, compassion fatigue, and personal distress can result from excessive empathy without proper coping mechanisms. The study highlights areas where caregivers may be vulnerable to emotional stress and offers evidence for interventions to address these issues by examining the dimensions of empathy using the IRI and JSE.

The results can guide specific caregiver education initiatives, such as:

Exercises involving perspective-taking to improve cognitive empathy. Techniques for emotional control and mindfulness to deal with personal distress. Workshops on communication skills to enhance interactions with patients. These interventions safeguard long-term resilience, job satisfaction, and mental health in addition to improving the caregiver's professional abilities.

Healthcare facilities can benefit practically from this study. Empirical data on the empathy levels of cancer caregivers can help guide staffing, workload management, and mental health support policies. Based on the results of this study, institutions can put in place structured support systems like peer support groups, regular supervision, and resilience-building initiatives. These regulations guarantee that caregivers have the tools necessary to deliver compassionate care without endangering their own health.

The findings of this study can be utilized to create evidence-based training programs for medical professionals. Educational programs can modify their content to improve these abilities by emphasizing the aspects of empathy that are most closely linked to favorable patient outcomes and caregiver well-being. In order to develop compassionate,

resilient healthcare professionals early in their careers, nursing and medical schools, for instance, can include modules that stress perspective-taking, compassionate communication, and stress management techniques.

Empathy is essential to providing holistic care and is not just a social skill. This study advances the larger goal of treating the patient as a whole person—addressing emotional, psychological, and social needs in addition to physical treatment—by gaining an understanding of the empathic responses of oncology caregivers. In line with international standards of patient-centered oncology care, holistic care enhances patients' quality of life, lessens psychological distress, and encourages adherence to treatment plans.

Although empathy has been extensively researched in the medical field, there is still little research specifically on cancer caregiving. By analyzing both emotional and cognitive aspects of empathy and contrasting professional, patient-centered empathy (measured by the JSE) with general empathic traits (measured by the IRI), this study advances scholarly knowledge of empathy. The study fills important knowledge gaps:

The interplay between emotional and cognitive empathy in high-stress caregiving situations, the connection between personal distress or caregiver burnout and empathic engagement. Professional and family caregivers have different levels of empathy. Future research in oncology and other chronic illness settings can benefit from these insights, which can also advance theoretical models of empathy in healthcare.

Methodology

1 Statement of the Problem

Does caregiver empathy (measured by JSE and IRI) have a direct correlation with patient recovery in oncology care?

Objectives

1. To analyze whether oncology caregivers' empathy is directly correlated with patient recovery.
2. To assess the correlation between JSE and IRI scores in oncology caregivers.
3. To identify whether interpersonal reactivity influences clinical empathy.

Research Design

- **Design Type:** Descriptive survey research with correlational analysis.
- **Approach:** Quantitative, using self-report questionnaires and clinical data.

Hypotheses

- **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** There is no significant correlation between caregiver empathy and patient recovery.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):** There is a significant correlation between caregiver empathy and patient recovery.

Sample and Sampling Method

- **Population:** Oncology caregivers (doctors, nurses, support staff) at a cancer hospital.
- **Sample Size:** Approximately 100 ($N \approx 50$).
- **Sampling Method:** Convenience sampling of available and willing participants.

Tools Used

1. **Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JSE)** – 20-item self-report scale for clinical empathy.
2. **Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI)** – 28-item scale measuring dispositional empathy.
3. **Patient Recovery Metric** – clinical records or self-reported recovery status.

Procedure for Data Collection

- A Google Form containing JSE and IRI questionnaires was distributed.
- Consent was obtained digitally.
- Patient recovery data were matched from hospital records under ethical approval.

Proposed Method of Data Analysis

- **Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r)** used to test:
 - JSE ↔ Patient Recovery
 - IRI ↔ Patient Recovery
 - JSE ↔ IRI
- **Significance level:** $p < .05$

Results and Discussion

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the mean, standard deviation, and sample size for the two main variables — the Patient Recovery Score (SUM) and the Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JSE) total score.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
SUM (Patient Recovery)	54.77	5.746	56
Total JSE (Empathy)	79.91	5.734	56

The mean empathy score ($M = 79.91$, $SD = 5.734$) shows that oncology caregivers reported moderately high empathy levels. The patient recovery score ($M = 54.77$, $SD = 5.746$) indicates a moderate level of recovery outcomes among patients. The close range of standard deviations (around 5.7) reflects that the data for both variables were relatively consistent, without major outliers or high variability across participants.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
SUM	54.77	5.746	56
total JES	79.91	5.734	56

Correlations

		SUM	total JES
SUM	Pearson Correlation	1	-.166
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.221
	N	56	56
total JES	Pearson Correlation	-.166	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.221	
	N	56	56

Correlation between Empathy and Patient Recovery

Table 2 shows the Pearson correlation analysis results, testing the relationship between empathy (JSE total) and patient recovery (SUM).

Table 2: Correlation between Empathy and Patient Recovery

Variables	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	N	Significance
SUM × Total JSE	-0.166	0.221	56	Not Significant

The correlation coefficient ($r = -0.166$) suggests a **weak negative relationship** between empathy and recovery, meaning that higher empathy scores were slightly associated with lower recovery scores. However, the **p-value (.221)** was greater than the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), indicating that this relationship was **not statistically significant**.

Therefore, **no meaningful association** was found between the level of empathy displayed by oncology caregivers and the recovery outcomes of their patients.

Discussion

The results of this study show that patient recovery outcomes were not significantly predicted by oncology caregivers' empathy. Although empathy is frequently seen as a crucial element of providing effective care, the findings indicate that greater empathy scores were not associated with improved recovery scores, indicating that a variety of factors other than interpersonal sensitivity and emotional comprehension affect patient recovery. Absence of a Direct Connection Empathy and recovery did not significantly correlate ($r = -0.166$, $p = .221$), which supports the notion that cancer recovery is a complex process. In contrast to emotional or relational factors like empathy, physical recovery is primarily dependent on the medical treatment plan, disease stage, physiological resilience, nutrition, and general health status. Despite the fact that empathy can increase a patient's emotional comfort, contentment, and trust, it might not directly and quantifiably impact clinical recovery indicators, which are based on therapeutic and biological factors. Previous research supports this conclusion. For example, Neumann et al. (2011) discovered that although empathy lowers patient anxiety and enhances doctor-patient communication, it does not always result in a quicker physical recovery. Similarly, Hojat et al. (2015) highlighted that while empathy improves patient cooperation and adherence, recovery results are still heavily reliant on treatment compliance and medical efficacy. How to Interpret the Weak Negative Correlation Although not significant, the study's weak negative relationship ($r = -0.166$) could be the result of psychological and contextual factors. Caregivers who are more empathetic may feel more emotionally involved and under more stress when caring for patients in critical conditions in oncology. Their assessments may be impacted by

this increased emotional sensitivity, which could cause them to view recovery as taking longer or being less fulfilling. Alternatively, the slight negative trend may be explained by highly sympathetic caregivers being assigned to more severe or terminal cases, where recovery is inherently limited. Furthermore, compared to physical or medical recovery, which was the primary focus of this study's "recovery" measure, empathy frequently has a greater impact on psychological recovery, such as enhancing hope, morale, and patient satisfaction.

Theoretical Implications Clinical empathy, or the cognitive and affective capacity to comprehend patients' experiences and communicate with compassion, is the main focus of empathy as assessed by the Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JSE). Despite the fact that this ability is essential to providing quality healthcare, current research indicates that empathy by itself is not enough to produce quantifiable gains in recovery outcomes. The biopsychosocial model of health, which holds that interactions between biological, psychological, and social factors influence health outcomes, is theoretically supported by this. According to this model, empathy has an impact on the psychosocial domain, enhancing emotional health and communication between patients and caregivers, but it has no direct effect on biological healing processes.

Useful Consequences Practically speaking, these results suggest that training programs should incorporate empathy with medical and psychological competence, even though empathy is still a crucial part of high-quality healthcare. Even though it doesn't directly change the results of physical recovery, increasing empathy can boost patient satisfaction, treatment compliance, and emotional resilience. In order to prevent burnout, caregiver training should emphasize balanced empathy, which blends compassion with emotional control. It may be possible to promote caregiver well-being and long-term patient support by encouraging caregivers to retain emotional awareness while maintaining professional distance.

Comparing This Study to Others The present results are in contrast to research that found a moderately positive correlation between patient satisfaction and empathy (Derksen et al., 2013; Hojat et al., 2011). They are consistent with research, however, which highlights that subjective recovery outcomes—such as satisfaction, trust, or emotional comfort—often exhibit stronger associations with empathy than objective recovery outcomes, such as improvement in symptoms or physical function. This implies that empathy has a more psychosocial than physiological effect. To put it another way, empathy influences the standard of care received rather than the rate or extent of medical recovery.

Conclusion of the Conversation In conclusion, current research shows that empathy does not directly affect recovery outcomes statistically, despite the fact that it is still a fundamental component of patient-centered oncology care. However, empathy still plays a crucial and indirect part in creating a caring healthcare setting that improves patient morale, communication, and emotional adjustment throughout treatment.

Implication

The study's conclusions have various theoretical, applied, and research-related ramifications. The role of empathy in healthcare is still significant and multifaceted, despite the statistical findings showing that empathy did not directly correlate with patient recovery outcomes. Three areas can be used to discuss the implications: future research, psychological health, and clinical practice.

1 Clinical Consequences The results support the indirect value of empathy in clinical practice, even though the weak and non-significant correlation ($r = -0.166$, $p = .221$) indicates that empathy does not statistically predict physical recovery. Caregivers in oncology frequently deal with patients who are in emotionally and physically vulnerable states. Better understanding and emotional comfort result from empathy's ability to close the communication gap between patients and caregivers.

Empathy as a therapeutic tool: Empathy serves as a psychosocial support system even in situations where it does not hasten medical recovery. Patients are more likely to stick with their treatment and manage their pain and uncertainty when they feel heard, respected, and valued. Although these results might not always result in quantifiable gains in recovery, they significantly raise the standard of care.

Improving relationships between caregivers and patients: The information emphasizes how crucial empathy is in forming the therapeutic alliance, which is a crucial component of cancer treatment. Patients can more freely express their expectations, preferences, and fears in safe emotional spaces created by caregivers who score higher on empathy. According to research by Derksen et al. (2013), even though it has no direct impact on recovery rates, empathic communication enhances patient satisfaction and emotional well-being.

Preventing burnout through balanced empathy: The weak but negative correlation ($r = -0.166$) could also be a warning sign. Excessive emotional empathy without boundaries can result in compassion fatigue or caregiver burnout in oncology care, where emotional exposure is high. The development of emotional regulation skills should thus be the main goal of training programs in order to help caregivers maintain their emotional stability while still being compassionate. Long-term professional functioning and ongoing empathy free from personal distress are guaranteed by this balance.

2 Implications for Psychology and Education Empathy as emotional intelligence: The findings highlight the importance of considering empathy as a fundamental professional skill rather than just an emotional reaction. Cognitive empathy, or objectively comprehending patients' viewpoints and feelings, is emphasized by the Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JSE). Therefore, including empathy-building exercises in caregiver education may improve emotional intelligence, which in turn may improve teamwork and patient care.

Including empathy in healthcare education: Healthcare organizations should prioritize empathy training modules as part of continuing professional development because of the significant influence empathy has on patient experiences. Caregivers can better understand the subtleties of patients' emotional expressions with the aid of role-playing techniques, reflective exercises, and educational workshops. These techniques can improve caregivers' interpersonal skills and promote self-awareness, both of which are essential for providing quality oncology care. Systems of emotional support for caregivers: The findings subtly draw attention to the psychological strain that cancer caregivers endure. Even highly sympathetic caregivers can become emotionally exhausted when working with terminal or critically ill patients. Empathy can be maintained as a source of strength rather than emotional strain by fostering resilience and emotional balance through the creation of encouraging peer groups, counseling programs, and mindfulness exercises.

3 Implications for Theory Theoretically, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on empathy in healthcare by reaffirming that the advantages of empathy are multifaceted rather than singular. The biopsychosocial model offers a useful framework for interpreting these results: although biological factors dictate recovery, psychological (empathy, hope, communication) and social (support networks, relationships) factors affect patients' general well-being. Thus, this study advances the theoretical understanding that empathy mediates the psychological and social aspects of the healing process even though it is not a direct predictor of clinical recovery. It supports the idea that the clinical use of empathy in healthcare is context-dependent and impacted by medical realities by validating the distinction between clinical empathy (as measured by the JSE) and general empathy (as measured by scales such as the IRI).

4 Implications for Upcoming Studies The present results provide several directions for further research: Extending the range of variables: Future studies should investigate how empathy affects recovery indirectly through mediating elements like patient satisfaction, emotional health, treatment compliance, or perceived care quality. The ways in which empathy affects overall recovery experiences may be better captured by these psychological variables. Comparative research across departments: Doing comparable research across various medical specialties (such as cardiology, psychiatry, palliative care, and oncology) would help determine whether the empathy–recovery relationship changes based on the kind or severity of the disease.

Longitudinal designs: A longitudinal approach could provide more dynamic insights into how empathy influences psychological adaptation and long-term recovery by monitoring patient outcomes and caregivers' empathy levels over time.

Qualitative investigation: Including qualitative interviews with patients and caregivers can offer deep contextual understanding of how empathy is viewed and demonstrated in routine clinical encounters. This would assist in bridging the gap between lived experiences and statistical data.

Conclusion

The Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JSE) and a Patient Recovery Scale (SUM), two standardized psychological instruments, were used in this study to examine the relationship between oncology caregivers' empathy and patient recovery outcomes. According to statistical analysis, there was a weak negative, non-significant correlation ($r = -0.166$, $p = .221$), indicating that although caregivers showed a moderate amount of empathy, this empathy did not result in appreciable gains in patient recovery. These results add to an increasing amount of evidence that suggests empathy, while essential in healthcare, largely affects the psychological rather than the physical aspects of recovery. Although empathy may not directly change medical outcomes, it does promote comfort, trust, and effective communication, all of which improve the care experience. The importance of empathy is still very high, though. Empathy humanizes medical care in emotionally charged fields like oncology and gives patients the mental fortitude to withstand difficult treatments. Empathy fosters professional fulfillment for caregivers and strengthens the compassion and sense of purpose necessary for patient-centered care. The study also emphasizes how critical it is to promote balanced empathy, which combines professional objectivity with compassion. Through organized training, emotional awareness initiatives, and psychological support networks for caregivers, hospitals and other healthcare facilities should keep promoting empathy. In the end, empathy heals the experience of illness even though it might not cure disease. It influences how patients feel heard, seen, and cared for—elements that are just as essential to human healing as any drug or treatment. In order to support patients and caregivers through the challenges of the healing process, empathy must continue to be at the core of oncology care, not just as an emotional reaction.

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Appendices

Appendix B: Jefferson Scale of Empathy (Health Professionals Version – Sample Items)

The **Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JSE-HP)** is a standardized instrument designed to measure empathy in healthcare professionals. It assesses the cognitive and affective aspects of empathy relevant to patient care.

Instructions

to

Participants:

Below are sample statements from the JSE-HP. Respond to each item using a **7-point Likert scale** where:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Slightly Disagree
- 4 = Neutral
- 5 = Slightly Agree
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Strongly Agree

Sample Items:

1. My patients feel better when I understand their feelings.
2. Asking patients about their emotional problems is not helpful in treatment. *(Reverse scored)*
3. I try to imagine myself in my patients' position when I am providing care to them.
4. Patient's value understanding more than technical care from their doctors or nurses.
5. I believe that empathy is an important factor in the healing process.
6. I find it difficult to view things from my patient's perspective. *(Reverse scored)*
7. Attention to patients' personal experiences does not influence treatment outcomes. *(Reverse scored)*
8. Understanding a patient's body language is as important as verbal communication.
9. I can view things from my patients' perspective easily.
10. I do not allow my personal feelings to influence how I care for patients.

Scoring:

- Items marked *(reverse scored)* are scored in the opposite direction.
- Higher total scores indicate higher levels of empathy.
- The total possible score ranges typically from **20 to 140**, depending on the version used.

Domains Covered:

- Perspective Taking
- Compassionate Care
- Standing in the Patient's Shoes

Reliability:

The JSE-HP has shown strong internal consistency and test-retest reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha \approx 0.80$).

Appendix C: Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI – Sample Items)

The **Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI)**, developed by Mark H. Davis (1980), is a multidimensional scale that measures different components of empathy in general social contexts.

Instructions to Participants:

Read each statement carefully and select the response that best describes you.

Use the same **7-point Likert scale** as before:

1 = Strongly Disagree → 7 = Strongly Agree.

Sample Items:

1. Perspective Taking (PT)

1. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.
2. I believe there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.
3. I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.
4. When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in their shoes."

2. Empathic Concern (EC)

1. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.
2. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel protective toward them.
3. I am often quite touched by things that I see happen.
4. I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.

3. Personal Distress (PD)

1. Being in a tense emotional situation scares me.
2. When I see someone who badly needs help in an emergency, I go to pieces.
3. I sometimes feel helpless when I am in an emotional situation.
4. When I see someone get hurt, I tend to remain calm. (*Reverse scored*)

4. Fantasy (FS)

1. I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel.
2. After seeing a play or movie, I sometimes feel as though I were one of the characters.
3. I daydream and fantasize about things that might happen to me.
4. When I watch a movie, I feel as though I am part of the story.

Scoring:

- Each of the four subscales (PT, EC, PD, and FS) is scored separately.
- Higher scores in PT and EC reflect greater empathy.
- Higher PD scores reflect greater emotional sensitivity but may indicate emotional overinvolvement.

Reliability and Use:

- Cronbach's α for subscales typically ranges between 0.70–0.78.
- The IRI is widely used in psychological and healthcare research, especially to complement tools like the JSE for multidimensional empathy assessment.

Original Article

Employee wellbeing and work motivation among college teachers

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180218

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 102-106

February - 2026

Submitted: 16 Jan. 2026

Revised: 26 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 11 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract:

The employee wellbeing and work motivation in the organization climate is the most defining aspect influencing a person's life quality. Understanding what motivates an organization's employees is central to the study of industrial-organizational psychology. The teacher transmits knowledge and improves the conditions of the classroom through orderliness, discipline and control. Teachers understand the feelings of their students and motivate them to be better individuals. Motivated teachers perform well than the nonmotivated ones. There are many factors that determine a teacher's motivation such as emotions, impulses, fears, threats, rewards, possessions, intentions, values, mastery, freedom, job satisfaction, interests, pleasure, dislikes, established habits, goals, ambitions etc. The teacher is the one who translates educational philosophy and objective into knowledge and skill and transfers them to students in the classroom. Classroom climate is important in teacher motivation. According to Judge & Church (2000) research studies across many years, organizations, and types of jobs show that when employees are asked to evaluate different facets of their job such as supervision, pay, promotion opportunities, coworkers, and so forth, the nature of the work itself generally emerges as the most important job facet. Employee wellbeing well-being is a representation of an individual health based on positive psychological function. As various research reveals that work motivation wellbeing of an individual jointly determines the achievement and success in organizational setting. Wellbeing opens up new possibilities for an individual to acquire different experiences and knowledge which increase the level of awareness and stability. **Aim:** present study aimed at studying the differences in work motivation and employee wellbeing among male and female college teachers. Researcher also studied the gender differences in work motivation and employee wellbeing. **Methodology:** A total of 80 participants (senior college teachers), 40 male and 40 female college teachers were selected from various colleges of Ahmednagar city for the current study. Age of the teachers 30 to 50 years. **Tools:** The Work Motivation Questionnaire (WMQ-A) prepared by Agarwal (2012) and the psychological well-being scale is developed by Dr. Devendra Singh Sisodia and Ms. Pooja Choudhary (2012) used to collect the data from respondents. **Result and conclusion:** For analyzing the difference between employee wellbeing and work motivation among college teacher's parametric test t statistics is used. Obtained t value and results of the present study reveals that there is a significant difference among college teachers with respect to work motivation, and non-significant difference on employee wellbeing.

Keywords: Employee Wellbeing, Work motivation, organization, institution, College teachers.

Introduction

Work motivation "is a set of energetic forces that originate both within as well as beyond an individual's being, to initiate work-related behavior, and to determine its form, Direction, intensity, and duration." Kanfer, Ruth; Chen, Gilad; Pritchard, Robert D. 2008(. According to Vroom's expectancy theory, employees would work harder and smarter if they believe that their additional efforts would lead to valued rewards. According to Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, the key motivation to work is being able to derive satisfaction from the job content. Self-regulation theory presumes that people consciously set goals for themselves and work toward achieving them by making self-evaluation. A new approach to work motivation is work engagement i.e., individuals immerse themselves in emotionally and intellectually fulfilling work.)Munchinsky, Paul M. 2012(. Work motivation encompasses the internal and external drivers that encourage employees to remain engaged, energetic, and dedicated to their roles.



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DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19344135](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344135)



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How to cite this article:

Kumbhar, R. (2026). Employee wellbeing and work motivation among college teachers. Journal of Research and Development, 18(2(XXII)), 102–106. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344135>

It affects how much effort they put into their work, their overall performance, and their satisfaction with their job. When motivation is high, employees are generally more productive, deliver higher-quality work, and experience greater job satisfaction. In contrast, low motivation can lead to disengagement, decreased performance, and higher turnover rates. To cultivate a motivated workforce, organizations often implement strategies like recognition programs, career advancement opportunities, and reward systems. Mayo)Father of Modern Human Resource Management(believed that work motivation is deeply rooted in human relationships and the social dynamics of the workplace. He emphasized that motivation is enhanced when employees feel connected and valued within a supportive social environment. According to Mayo, “Employees are motivated by social needs and thrive in an environment where they feel valued, understood, and part of a cohesive team”)Mayo, 1933(. Employee wellbeing and work motivation are deeply interconnected drivers of organizational success, directly influencing productivity, retention, and company culture. Comprehensive wellbeing)physical, mental, financial, social(fosters high motivation, reduces absenteeism, and prevents burnout. When employees feel supported, they are more engaged, creative, and committed.

Background of the study:

Motivation theories focus on specific elements that drive employee behavior towards achieving organizational performance. For instance, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs suggests that employees have five levels of needs: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization)Michael T. Leea, December 2016(. Integrating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles into organizational set up is essential for achieving long-term sustainability. Within this context, employee motivation and well-being play a crucial role. These elements are vital for creating a healthy, productive, and innovative work environment that benefits both employees and employers. Motivation and well-being are central components of social sustainability. Motivated and healthy employees are more likely to contribute positively to the organizational culture, promoting an inclusive and collaborative workplace. When employees feel valued and satisfied, it reflects their commitment and loyalty to the institution

Motivation in the workplace is a determining factor for employee performance. Motivated employees are more productive and committed to the company's goals. Motivation directly affects the quality of work, efficiency, and employees' capacity for innovation. When employees feel motivated, they are more willing to face challenges, work in teams, and seek solutions to problems. Various studies indicate that motivation has a positive correlation with work productivity. Motivated employees tend to have lower absenteeism rates, and greater loyalty to the institution. Additionally, motivation contributes to creating a positive work environment where employees feel valued and respected, strengthening organizational culture and team cohesion. Teacher's motivation is an important concept in every institution especially in school. Motivation includes itself three psychological processes: being energetic, direction and intensity. School is the most social institution in every society and motivation phenomenon is very important in academic development and reduction of stress effect too. Motivation in work through a natural way, encourages teachers and they willingly give teaching. Motivation in work stimulates and increases satisfaction for the job, increases the competitions which increases the professional desire to do the job with responsibility, relief's teaching process, increases teaching quality and creates for a strong elite in time. In addition, Dessler (2001) defined motivation as the intensity of a person's desire to engage some activity. Work motivation is one of the most important constructs in psychology, being largely studied by academics and practitioners (Gomes & Borba, 2011). According to Gomes and Borba (2011), this construct is present in all work contexts, for example in education. In this context, one concept – teacher's motivation – is a decisive factor for school success (Jesus & Lens, 2005).

Research problem:

To study the differences in employee wellbeing and work motivation among college teachers

Objectives and significance:

To study the differences in employee wellbeing and work motivation among college teachers

To study the gender differences in employee wellbeing and work motivation among college teachers

Hypotheses

- There is significant difference among male and female college teachers with respect to work motivation.
- There is significant difference among male and female college teachers with respect to employee wellbeing.

Review of literature

Retelsdorf and his colleagues (2010) proposed that teachers' goal orientations for teaching predicted the goals for learning that they emphasized in the classroom, which in turn influenced students' goals. However, the links between teachers' goal orientations for teaching and their teaching practice were inconsistent among college teachers. Nathaniel Gyimah (2020) studied the factors affecting teacher motivation in colleges. In a case study of they found that job satisfaction, reward systems, professional training and development were the major factors that affected teacher motivation.

Suleyman Can (2015) conducted a study to determine the factors motivating teachers working at colleges and the relationships between gender, age, marital status, educational status and income level and their motivation. It was found that age and educational status had significant effects on motivational factors and, gender, marital status and income did not influence on motivational factors.

A comparative study conducted by Madhu Gupta and Manju Gehlawat (2013) on job satisfaction and work motivation of secondary school teachers in relation to some demographic variables revealed that there were no significant difference in the job satisfaction and work motivation of male and female teachers; no significant differences among teachers working in government and private schools; more experienced and less experienced teachers with respect to job satisfaction and work motivation; significant difference in the work motivation of teachers having graduate and post-graduate qualifications.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) of work motivation developed by Ryan and Deci (2000), explains motivation through two types: autonomous motivation, which comes from internal values and interests, and controlled motivation, which is driven by external pressures. Their research shows that autonomous motivation is more closely linked to better performance and well-being.

Kuvaas (2006) also found that performance reviews focused on personal development improve intrinsic motivation more effectively than those based solely on evaluation results.

Work motivation includes two types: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards such as salary, job security, and recognition. When employees work hard but do not receive fair rewards, they may experience an effort-reward imbalance. This imbalance can lead to stress, emotional exhaustion, and health problems (Khalid et al., 2020; Kinman, 2019; Mark & Smith, 2012). In contrast, intrinsic motivation, driven by personal interest and internal satisfaction, helps reduce job stress and burnout.

Work motivation and mental health are well connected and related. Mental health is crucial for one to be motivated. It is important for us to achieve our aims and objectives. Lack of motivation can cause mental disorder like depression. The present study attempts to investigate the differences in work motivation and wellbeing of college teachers.

Further, Reeve (2018), found that intrinsically motivated goal pursuit has greater long-term outcomes because it satisfies our psychological needs for autonomy and competence, and in turn, creates more positive states which reinforce the positive feedback loop and increase the likelihood of repetition. Lent and colleagues (2011) found that self-efficacy for teaching (i.e., motivation) was associated with positive affectivity and life satisfaction (i.e., wellbeing). Furthermore, Jackson et al. (2006) found that teachers' work engagement (motivation) was negatively associated with emotional exhaustion and stress-induced psychological ill-health (well-being).

These studies in general have provided support for the notion that employee who is motivated primarily by satisfaction, pleasure and the inherent interest of the tasks that can benefit more from certain job resources in order to cope with high job demands. In summary, this study converges on the idea that motivation, depending on its nature, can be either a protective or vulnerability factor in explaining the effects of environmental work factors on employees' psychological health/mental health.

Teacher well-being and motivation play important roles in teacher and student experiences at college. When teachers are faring well and feeling motivated to teach, they are more effective in their teaching, leave the profession less often, and promote motivation and achievement among their students.

Mentally healthy teachers feel motivated; several effects are realized from motivated teacher behavior. These include idea generation, enhanced interactive and divergent skills, sustained exploration of difficult teaching and learning concepts, development of individual belief systems about teaching and increased opportunities for critical reflection on teaching and learning processes. An equally important effect of motivated teacher behavior is the development of a clearer understanding of the importance of teacher professional development as one progress along the teaching career continuum. Motivation in work through a natural way, encourages teachers and gives teaching, which influences directly in academic development of students.

Methodology

• Sample

Sample consist of total of 80 participants)senior college teachers(, 40 male and 40 female teachers were selected from various colleges of Ahmednagar city for the current study. Teachers aged between 30-50 years were included in the study. Teachers teaching degree college students were included.

• Tools

▪ **Work Motivation Questionnaire (WMQ-A) prepared by Agarwal (2012) .**

The scale consists of 26 items related to following six dimensions i.e. (1) Dependence (2) Organizational Orientation (3) Work Group Relations (4) Intrinsic Motivation (Psychological Work Incentives) (5) Material Incentives and (6) Job Situation. The scale is rated as Likert type rated on five points scale, Since the items were Likert type, summated scoring is done by assigning 5 to the most positive response and 1 to the extreme negative response. So in this way scores 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 were to each item; alternative a, b, c, d, e can also be assigned respectively. The reliability co-efficient by Spearman Brown formula was 0.994, which is significant at 0.01 level

of significance. In order to find out the factorial validity all the items were factor analyzed using principal component method.

▪ **The psychological well-being scale by Dr. Devendra Singh Sisodia and Ms. Pooja**

Choudhary (2012):

The scale is a self-reporting five-point scale. It contains 50 items measuring five dimensions (subscales) of wellbeing i.e. Life satisfaction, Efficiency, Sociability, Mental health, and Interpersonal relations. Each subscale has 10 items, each item with the five-point response category ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The test-retest reliability coefficient was 0.88, and the consistency value for the scale was 0.90.

• **Procedure**

The degree college teachers aged between 30-50 years were approached for consent to be participants for the present study. The demographic data sheet was administered to obtain the required demographic details of the sample. Based on the demographic details obtained by the sample, they were categorized into two groups: Male college teachers and female college teachers. The respondents were also screened keeping in view the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Rapport was established with the subjects before the administration of the questionnaire. Subsequently, Work Motivation Questionnaire (WMQA) and psychological wellbeing scale were administered to them with appropriate instructions. After the completion of the task, the questionnaire was collected from the sample.

• **Data analysis**

The obtained data was statistically analyzed considering the objective of the study. To arrive at the key findings of the study, independent sample 't' test was used.

Results / Findings & Discussion

3.7 Findings & Discussion

Comparison On Work Motivation And Employee Wellbeing Among College Teachers							
Variable	Gender	N	MEAN	SD	SEM	t	P
Work Motivation	Male	40	70.83	4.997	0.790	3.68 **	0.01
	Female	40	75.95	7.246	1.146		
Employee wellbeing	Male	40	170.25	13.713	2.168	1.79	NS
	Female	40	174.78	8.220	1.300		
**	t value is significant at 0.01 level						
*	t value is significant at 0.05 level						
NS	t value is not significant						

The above table shows the comparison on work motivation and employee wellbeing among college teachers. The purpose of the present study was to study the differences in work motivation and employee wellbeing among college teachers. It is aimed to study the gender differences in work motivation and employee wellbeing among college teachers. The above table shows the difference in work motivation and employee wellbeing among male and female college teachers. As per the table, the mean for work motivation for male college teacher group is 70.83 and for female college teacher group 75.95 with the standard deviation of 4.99 and 7.24 respectively. For employee wellbeing variable mean for male college teacher group is 170.75 and for female college teacher group 174.78 with the standard deviation of 13.71 and 8.22 respectively. The obtained 't' value for work motivation is 3.68 indicating significant difference in work motivation among male and female college teachers. For employee wellbeing variable obtained 't' value of 1.79 is not significant, indicating no significant difference. Hence, the framed hypothesis stating there is significant difference among male and female college teacher with respect to work motivation accepted. Another hypothesis stated there is significant difference among male and female college teacher with respect employee wellbeing not accepted.

Conclusion

In the work environment, prosperity used to be an issue of wellbeing and security at work, at the end of the day restricting and tending to wellbeing and security concerns identified with wounds or medical issues brought about by the workplace. These days prosperity in the working environment is an a lot more extensive issue. In wellbeing terms, just as legitimately business related wellbeing and security; it's tied in with improving the wellbeing levels of workers all the more for the most part. Worker prosperity is about more than physiological or mental sick wellbeing – it's tied in

with enhancing the strength all things considered, not simply decreasing the quantities of staff who are determined to have ailments. Worker prosperity likewise stretches out past wellbeing, and into bliss also, and work fulfillment. The result of the present study shows that there is significant difference in work motivation among male and female college teachers. The result also indicates no significant difference among college teachers with respect to employee wellbeing. The study proposes to work on the factors that influence the work motivation, and employee wellbeing among male and female college teachers in future.

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Original Article

A Review of Recent Trends in Guidance and Counselling within Vocational and General Education under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

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Manuscript ID:

Abstract

JRD -2026-180219

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 107-113

February - 2026

Submitted: 16 Jan. 2026

Revised: 26 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 11 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a watershed moment in the trajectory of India's educational history, proposing a radical restructuring of the learning ecosystem to leverage the country's burgeoning demographic dividend. This rigorous review paper critically examines the evolving landscape of Guidance and Counselling (G&C) within both Vocational and General Education frameworks, specifically analyzing the implementation strategies, challenges, and transformative potential of NEP 2020. Historically, the Indian education system has been bifurcated by a rigid dichotomy between 'academic' and 'vocational' streams, a legacy that has stigmatized skill-based learning and neglected the holistic psycho-social development of learners. The NEP 2020 seeks to dismantle these silos by mandating the integration of vocational education from Grade 6, institutionalizing mental health support through the Manodarpan initiative, and advocating for a comprehensive, three-tier counselling support model. This paper synthesizes data from government reports (UDISE+, NCERT surveys), policy documents, and recent empirical studies to evaluate the efficacy of these reforms. Key findings indicate a paradigm shift towards 'life-skills' oriented counselling, increased digitization of career guidance through platforms like the National Career Service (NCS) and the AI-powered "My Career Advisor" app, and a growing emphasis on emerging sectors such as green careers and the gig economy. However, the review identifies significant structural bottlenecks, including a critical shortage of trained vocational teachers, infrastructural deficits in rural hinterlands, and persistent societal biases that view vocational education as a secondary pathway. The analysis concludes that while the policy framework is visionary, its success hinges on the effective execution of the 'school complex' resource-sharing model and the robust capacity building of educators as first-line counsellors. This document offers a comprehensive roadmap for policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders to bridge the gap between policy intent and ground-level reality.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Vocational Education, Guidance and Counselling, School Mental Health, Manodarpan, Career Guidance, Skill India, And Educational Reform.

Introduction

The trajectory of a nation's socio-economic development is inextricably linked to the quality, relevance, and inclusivity of its education system. India, currently standing at a critical demographic juncture with a median age of 28 years, possesses a unique opportunity to propel itself into the league of developed nations through its 'demographic dividend' (Ministry of Education, 2020). However, this potential is contingent upon the employability and emotional resilience of its youth. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, approved by the Union Cabinet on July 29, 2020, is the first major overhaul of India's education policy in thirty-four years, superseding the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 (Kumar, 2021). Unlike its predecessors, which focused heavily on access and infrastructure, NEP 2020 prioritizes holistic development, explicitly integrating Guidance and Counselling (G&C) and Vocational Education (VE) into the core fabric of the schooling experience. Historically, the Indian education system has operated with a distinct hierarchy where 'academic' streams were valorized, and 'vocational' streams were marginalized, often viewed as a recourse for the academically struggling.

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How to cite this article:

Patel, N. P. (2026). A Review of Recent Trends in Guidance and Counselling within Vocational and General Education under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 107–113. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344172>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19344172](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344172)



This separation created a 'relevance gap' where graduates emerged with degrees but without the practical skills required by the modern economy (Agrawal, 2014). Furthermore, guidance services were largely peripheral, restricted to sporadic career advice at the secondary level, ignoring the developmental and socio-emotional needs of younger students. The NEP 2020 attempts to correct these historical aberrations by aiming to expose at least 50% of learners to vocational education by 2025 and by positioning mental health as a prerequisite for learning (Ministry of Education, 2020). This review paper explores how NEP 2020 has catalyzed new trends in G&C, specifically focusing on the integration of mental health support through the *Manodharpan* initiative and the mainstreaming of vocational pedagogy. It examines the shift from a 'placement-oriented' counselling model to a 'developmental' model that encompasses personal-social, educational, and vocational domains. Furthermore, it analyzes the role of digital interventions post-pandemic, such as the *Skill India* mission's alignment with educational goals and the emergence of AI-driven career guidance tools, to understand if the policy's ambitious vision is translating into tangible ground-level change.

Literature Review

The evolution of Guidance and Counselling in India has been documented as a progression from informal advisement to a structured, though often under-resourced, professional service. The foundational literature indicates that while early commissions like the Mudaliar Commission (1952) and Kothari Commission (1964-66) recognized the need for guidance, implementation was sporadic, urban-centric, and lacked a systemic mandate (PCI India, 2023).

The Pre-NEP Landscape and Vocational Stigma

Research by Agrawal (2014) and others highlighted that pre-NEP vocational education was plagued by a profound "relevance gap" and social stigma. Vocational courses were often divorced from industry needs, leading to low employability among graduates (Agrawal, 2014). The separation of vocational training from mainstream schooling reinforced class and caste-based occupational hierarchies. Studies indicate that less than 5% of the Indian workforce in the 19-24 age group had received formal vocational education, compared to 52% in the USA, 75% in Germany, and 96% in South Korea (Li & Zhou, 2025). This glaring disparity underscores the massive structural deficit the NEP 2020 aims to address.

Mental Health and Holistic Development

The discourse on mental health in schools has gained significant traction, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The NCERT Mental Health Survey (2022) was a watershed moment, revealing that a significant proportion of students across grades suffered from anxiety related to studies, examinations, and results (NCERT, 2022). Literature post-2020 has increasingly focused on the "well-being" aspect of education, with scholars arguing that academic achievement cannot be decoupled from emotional health. The NEP's mandate for "socio-emotional learning" aligns with global best practices identified by UNESCO and WHO, which advocate for schools as primary sites for mental health promotion (Sheerha, 2025).

Digital Transformation in Counselling

The proliferation of digital platforms for career guidance is a prominent theme in recent literature. Studies on the "Digital India" campaign's impact on education suggest that while access has increased, a "digital divide" persists. The launch of the National Career Service (NCS) portal and subsequent AI-powered apps like "My Career Advisor" are seen as steps towards democratizing access to career information (AMK Resource Info, 2025). However, researchers note that technology cannot fully replace the empathetic human element essential for effective counseling, particularly for first-generation learners who require high-touch guidance to navigate complex career landscapes (ORF, 2024).

Integration of AI and Emerging Careers

Recent bibliometric analyses indicate a surge in research at the intersection of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and career counseling. AI-driven tools are being developed to map student aptitudes to emerging job roles, personalized learning pathways, and future skill requirements (Hadi et al., 2025). Concurrently, the discourse on "Green Careers" is expanding, driven by India's climate commitments and the need for sustainable development skills, although awareness remains low among school-level counselors (PSSCIVE, 2024).

Research Gap

Despite the burgeoning literature on NEP 2020, there is a paucity of comprehensive reviews that specifically dissect the intersection of *Vocational Education* and *Guidance & Counselling*. Most existing studies analyze these domains in isolation—either focusing solely on the vocationalization of education (Saharia & Mazumdar, 2024) or separately on mental health interventions (Sheerha, 2025). There is a lack of rigorous analysis on how the *convergence* of these two fields is playing out on the ground. Specifically, the practical challenges of implementing the "three-tier" counselling model in rural "school complexes" and the efficacy of "bagless days" in fostering genuine vocational interest remain under-researched. Furthermore, while policy documents are abundant, empirical data linking the new vocational curriculum to actual shifts in student career aspirations post-2020 is limited. This paper seeks to bridge these gaps by synthesizing diverse data points to provide a holistic view of the current ecosystem.

Rationale

The rationale for this review lies in the critical timing of India's educational transformation. As the first batch of students moves through the NEP-aligned curriculum, it is imperative to evaluate early trends to inform mid-course corrections. The simultaneous rise of the gig economy, automation, and the post-pandemic mental health crisis

necessitates a robust G&C framework. Without effective guidance, the NEP's target of exposing 50% of learners to vocational education by 2025 risks becoming a statistical exercise rather than a qualitative shift in human capital development (Ministry of Education, 2020). Understanding the synergy between vocational training and psychological support is crucial for stakeholders aiming to nurture "industry-ready" and "emotionally resilient" youth.

Objectives

1. To critically review the provisions of NEP 2020 regarding Guidance and Counselling in both Vocational and General Education.
2. To analyze recent trends in the implementation of vocational guidance, including the integration of digital tools and AI-driven platforms.
3. To assess the status of mental health support systems in schools, specifically the impact of the *Manodarpan* initiative.
4. To identify systemic challenges in infrastructure, teacher preparedness, and social perception that hinder effective implementation.
5. To propose actionable recommendations for strengthening the G&C ecosystem to meet national skill development goals.

Methodology

This paper employs a **systematic narrative review** methodology, drawing upon a triangulated database of policy documents, government statistics, and academic research.

- **Primary Sources:** Official text of the National Education Policy 2020, UDISE+ Reports (2021-2024), NCERT Annual Reports, and Ministry of Education guidelines.
- **Secondary Sources:** Scopus and Web of Science indexed research papers, peer-reviewed articles from journals such as the *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, *Indian Journal of Career and Livelihood Planning*, and *International Journal of Indian Psychology*.
- **Data Synthesis:** Information was categorized into thematic clusters: Policy Framework, Vocational Integration, Mental Health Initiatives, and Digital Trends. Quantitative data on enrollment and survey results were extracted to create comparative tables. The review adheres to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) conceptual framework for selecting and screening relevant literature (Page et al., 2021).
- **Inclusion Criteria:** Documents published between 2018 and 2026 (to capture the immediate pre-NEP context and post-NEP implementation), focusing on the Indian context.
- **Exclusion Criteria:** Purely theoretical papers without reference to Indian policy frameworks or outdated studies pre-dating the NEP discourse.

Recent Trends in Guidance and Counselling within Vocational and General Education under the National Education Policy

1. The Paradigm Shift: From "Streaming" to "Integration"

The most significant trend under NEP 2020 is the dissolution of the hard separation between vocational and academic streams. Previously, vocational education was introduced largely at the secondary level (Grade 9 onwards), often as a distinct, less prestigious pathway. NEP 2020 mandates the integration of vocational education starting from **Grade 6**. This early exposure is not merely about skill acquisition but about instilling the "dignity of labour" and facilitating vocational exploration (Horai et al., 2021).

The "Fun Course" and Bagless Days

The introduction of a 10-day "bagless period" for Grades 6-8 is a novel guidance intervention. During this period, student's intern with local artisans, craftsmen, and vocational experts (e.g., carpenters, potters, gardeners) (Ministry of Education, 2020). This mechanism serves a dual purpose: it acts as *experiential vocational guidance*, allowing students to "taste" different careers before making formal choices, and it integrates local knowledge systems (*Lok Vidya*) into the formal curriculum. This approach shifts the locus of guidance from the counsellor's office to the community field, making career exploration a tactile and immersive experience (ORF, 2024).

Implications for Counselling

Counsellors and teachers are now required to facilitate these community linkages. The role of the counsellor expands from "advice giving" to "opportunity curation," helping students process their internship experiences and connecting them to their aptitudes. This moves away from the traditional psychometric-heavy approach to a more constructivist, experience-based guidance model (IJCRT, 2024). The guidance process is no longer a peripheral activity but central to the curriculum, requiring educators to document these experiences as part of the student's holistic progress card.

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Guidance Frameworks (Pre-NEP vs. Post-NEP)

Feature	Pre-NEP (1986 Policy/NCF 2005)	Post-NEP 2020 Framework
Structure	Segmented; Vocational Ed separated from Academic stream.	Integrated; No hard separation between Vocational & Academic.
Entry Point	Secondary Level (Grade 9+).	Middle Stage (Grade 6+).

Guidance Focus	Placement/Remedial; Crisis-oriented.	Developmental; Holistic (Social, Emotional, Career).
Delivery Model	Specialist-driven (School Counsellor).	Community-integrated (School Complexes, Teachers, Local Artisans).
Mental Health	Peripheral; Stigmatized.	Institutionalized (Manodarpan); Central to curriculum.
Vocational Goal	Employment for dropouts/low achievers.	Skill acquisition & dignity of labor for all students.

Source: Synthesized from Ministry of Education (2020), Kumar (2021), and PCI Global (2023).

2. Institutionalizing Mental Health: The Manodarpan Initiative

The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the vulnerabilities of the student population, prompting the Ministry of Education to launch **Manodarpan** under the *Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan* (Ministry of Education, 2020). This initiative represents the first concerted national effort to institutionalize psychosocial support as an educational entitlement rather than a medical necessity.

Features and Reach

Manodarpan provides a multi-channel support system comprising a national toll-free helpline (844-844-0632), a dedicated website with advisory guidelines, and live interactive sessions like *Sahyog* and *Paricharcha* (Ministry of Education, 2024). The NCERT Mental Health Survey (2022), conducted under this initiative with over 3.79 lakh students, provided the first large-scale baseline data on student well-being.

Table 2: Key Findings from NCERT Mental Health Survey (2022)

Domain	Key Finding	Implication for Guidance
Anxiety Triggers	Studies, examinations, and results are the primary source of anxiety for students across stages.	Need for exam-stress management modules and reform in assessment patterns (shift to competency-based assessment).
Social Support	Decline in satisfaction with personal/school life and availability of support as students move from Middle to Secondary stage.	Critical need for secondary-level interventions; peer-support programs are essential as reliance on adults may decrease.
Gender Trends	Girls reported higher frequency of mood swings and anxiety regarding studies compared to boys.	Gender-responsive counselling services are required; focus on self-esteem and body image issues.
Coping Strategies	Students prefer Yoga, meditation, and "changing the way they think" over seeking formal help.	Integration of Yoga/mindfulness into the daily timetable is a validated guidance strategy.

Source: Adapted from NCERT Survey Report (NCERT, 2022; PIB, 2022).

The trend here is a shift from reactive "crisis intervention" (e.g., suicide prevention hotlines) to proactive "wellness promotion" embedded in the school culture. The NEP advocates for the "School Complex" model, where resources—including counsellors and social workers—are shared across a cluster of schools, making professional support accessible even to remote institutions (Rangarajan et al., 2023).

3. Vocational Guidance and the Skill India Convergence

NEP 2020 aligns closely with the *Skill India Mission* to address the employability gap. A major trend is the professionalization of vocational guidance to align with the **National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF)**.

Early Identification and Vertical Mobility

The policy enables vertical mobility for vocational students, allowing them to pursue higher education seamlessly—a correction of the historical "dead-end" nature of vocational streams. Guidance counsellors are now tasked with navigating these new pathways, helping students understand credit transfers and the *Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)* (Horai et al., 2021). This is critical for reducing the dropout rate at the secondary level, which remains high at 12.6% (UDISE+ 2021-22).

Industry-Academia Linkage

There is a growing emphasis on internships and apprenticeships. However, data reveals a massive gap: only ~25,000 out of 6.3 crore enterprises in India currently offer internships (ORF, 2024). This highlights a structural bottleneck where guidance counsellors struggle to find high-quality placement or exposure opportunities for students. The trend is moving towards digital internships and simulation-based learning to bridge this physical gap.

Table 3: Vocational Education Enrollment Trends (UDISE+ Data)

Year	Total Schools Offering VE under NSQF	Total Student Enrollment in Vocational Education	Enrollment (Girls)	Enrollment (Boys)
2021-22	~9,534	~7.72 Lakh	-	-

2022-23	16,810	~24.8 Crore (Total School Enrolment)	11.3 Crore (Total)	12.1 Crore (Total)
2023-24	18,610	~17.1 Lakh (VE Specific)	~8.4 Lakh	~8.7 Lakh
2024-25	23,752	~17.13 Lakh (VE Specific)	Trending Upwards	Trending Upwards

Note: 2022-23 Total School Enrollment figure is global, not VE specific. VE Specific growth shows doubling from 2021 to 2024.

Source: Synthesized from UDISE+ Reports and CBSE Data (Department of School Education & Literacy, 2024; Acumen, 2025).

The data indicates a robust doubling of enrollment in vocational courses over three years, validating the policy push. However, the absolute number (~17 lakh) is still a fraction of the total student population, indicating that the 50% exposure target by 2025 remains ambitious (Ministry of Education, 2020).

4. Digital Transformation: The Rise of E-Counselling

Post-NEP and Post-Pandemic, technology has become the primary delivery mechanism for guidance services.

National Career Service (NCS)

The NCS portal is being integrated with school databases to provide seamless career tracking. It offers counselling services, skills assessment, and job matching. The platform helps bridge the information asymmetry between urban and rural students, providing a centralized repository of career information (DGE, 2024).

"My Career Advisor" App

Launched by the Ministry of Education in July 2025, this AI-powered app is a game-changer for scalability. It allows students to create profiles, assess aptitudes, and receive personalized career recommendations aligned with NEP 2020 pathways. The app democratizes access to psychometric testing, which was previously the preserve of expensive private counsellors (AMK Resource Info, 2025). This aligns with the NEP's goal of technology integration to ensure equity in educational services.

AI in Guidance

Emerging research highlights the use of AI chatbots to provide 24/7 basic counselling and career information. These tools can handle routine queries about course eligibility, entrance exams, and scholarship options, freeing up human counsellors for complex emotional and behavioural issues (Hadi et al., 2025).

5. Emerging Frontiers: Green Careers and Internationalization

Green Guidance

With the global push towards sustainability, "Green Careers" (renewable energy, waste management, sustainable architecture) are emerging as a critical vocational sector. PSSCIVE and other bodies are developing modules to train counsellors on these new avenues, moving beyond traditional engineering/medical advice (PSSCIVE, 2024). Counsellors are now expected to be "Sustainability Literacy" advocates, guiding students towards careers that contribute to the net-zero economy.

Internationalization

NEP 2020 explicitly aims to promote India as a "global study destination" (*Vishwa Guru*). Guidance counselling now includes advising students on "Internationalization at Home" (twinning programs, foreign university campuses in India) and preparing them for global competencies. This requires counsellors to be updated on global labour market trends and cross-cultural communication skills (NITI Aayog, 2025).

Justification

The rigorous implementation of these trends is justified by the economic and social imperatives of modern India. Economically, the **Skill Gap** is a major deterrent to the \$5 trillion economy goal. Reports indicate that nearly 50% of Indian graduates are unemployable due to a lack of practical skills (EdFever, 2022). The NEP's vocational guidance focus directly addresses this by integrating market-relevant skills early in the curriculum. Socially, the rising tide of student suicides and mental health issues necessitates a robust, school-based support system (PIB, 2024). The "Manodarpan" and "Sahyog" initiatives are not just welfare measures but essential components of national human resource development. Furthermore, the "demographic dividend" is time-bound; without immediate and scalable guidance interventions, this dividend could turn into a demographic burden of unemployed, frustrated youth.

Findings

- Policy vs. Practice Gap:** While the policy framework (NEP 2020) is robust, implementation is uneven. The "School Complex" model for sharing counselors is facing logistical hurdles in states with poor transport infrastructure and administrative rigidity (Rangarajan et al., 2023).
- Teacher Overburden:** The expectation for teachers to double as "first-level counselors" (PCI Global, 2023) is problematic given the existing teacher shortage and administrative workload. Without dedicated training and reduced teaching loads, this remains aspirational.
- Vocational Uptake:** Enrolment in vocational subjects has surged (doubling in 3 years), driven by new subjects like AI and IT. However, traditional vocational trades (carpentry, metalwork) still face stigma compared to "white-collar" tech courses (Acumen, 2025).

4. **Digital Divide:** While apps like "My Career Advisor" are excellent, their impact in "media-dark" rural areas is limited without assisted access via Common Service Centres or school computer labs (Saharia & Mazumdar, 2024).
5. **Mental Health Awareness:** There is a palpable shift in discourse. Mental health is no longer a taboo topic in policy circles, evidenced by the regular "Paricharcha" sessions and the specific budget allocations for mental well-being in states like UP (Department of School Education & Literacy, 2024).

Future Direction

1. **Capacity Building:** A massive, mission-mode training program for "Teacher-Counsellors" is required. The NISHTHA training modules should be expanded to include dedicated certification in basic counselling skills and vocational guidance (UNODC, 2024).
2. **Hybrid Guidance Models:** Combining the reach of AI/Digital platforms with the empathy of human interaction. "Phygital" models (physical + digital) where local community volunteers (like ASHA workers) are trained to facilitate digital counselling sessions in villages (PCI India, 2023).
3. **Industry Mentorship:** Formalizing the "Bagless Days" into structured mentorship credits where local industries receive incentives (tax breaks or CSR credits) for hosting school interns, ensuring quality exposure (ORF, 2024).
4. **Longitudinal Tracking:** Establishing a "Student Registry" (as initiated in UDISE+ with Aadhaar) to track the long-term career trajectories of students who undergo vocational education, enabling data-driven policy tweaks (Department of School Education & Literacy, 2024).
5. **Strengthening the 3-Tier Model:** Aggressively operationalizing the block and district-level support centers to handle referrals from schools, ensuring that severe mental health cases receive clinical attention (PCI Global, 2023).

Conclusion

The National Education Policy 2020 has undeniably reset the compass for Guidance and Counselling in India. It has elevated these services from peripheral activities to the core of the educational mandate. The trends indicate a decisive shift towards **holistic, integrated, and technology-enabled** guidance. The mainstreaming of vocational education, backed by early exposure and the removal of academic hierarchies, promises to create a more skilled and dignified workforce. Simultaneously, the institutionalization of mental health support through *Manodarpan* acknowledges the complex psycho-social reality of the 21st-century learner.

However, the journey from policy to practice is fraught with challenges. The shortage of trained personnel, deep-seated social biases against vocational labour, and infrastructural disparities require sustained investment and innovative execution. The future lies in creating a collaborative ecosystem—involving schools, families, industry, and technology—that empowers every student to navigate their unique path. If implemented with fidelity, these reforms hold the potential to transform India's youth from "degree holders" into "nation builders."

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Original Article

Examining the Relationship between Self-Stigma and Attitudes toward AI-Based Psychotherapy among Indian Adults.

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180220

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 114-122

February - 2026

Submitted: 16 Jan. 2026

Revised: 26 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 11 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract

With the rapid advancement of technology, artificial intelligence-based psychotherapy has emerged as a promising tool in mental healthcare delivery. Despite its potential to increase accessibility and anonymity, the acceptance of such interventions may be influenced by psychological factors such as self-stigma associated with seeking mental health support. This study aims to examine the relationship between self-stigma and attitudes toward AI-based psychotherapy among Indian adults, drawing on concepts from Clinical Psychology and Artificial Intelligence. A quantitative correlational research design is proposed, involving a sample of Indian adults from diverse demographic backgrounds. Data will be collected using standardized instruments such as the Self-Stigma of Seeking Help Scale along with a structured questionnaire measuring attitudes toward AI-based psychotherapy. Statistical analyses, including Pearson correlation and regression, will be used to explore the relationship between variables.

Keywords: Self-Stigma, AI-Based Psychotherapy, Indian Adults Attitudes toward Therapy, Mental Health, Help-Seeking Behavior, Digital Mental Health, Artificial Intelligence

Introduction

Background of the Study

Mental health concerns in India represent a growing public health challenge, with an estimated one in seven individuals experiencing some form of mental disorder (WHO, 2022). Despite this prevalence, access to mental health care remains severely limited due to systemic shortages of professionals, high treatment costs, geographical barriers, and deep-rooted stigma. Digital mental health interventions (DMHIs)—including teleconsultations, mobile applications, and AI-driven chatbots—have emerged as scalable solutions to bridge this treatment gap.

AI-based chatbots can provide immediate, affordable, and confidential support, offering an alternative for those hesitant to engage with traditional therapy. Chatbots like Woebot, Wysa, and Tess have demonstrated effectiveness in delivering psychoeducation and symptom management using cognitive-behavioral techniques (Beg et al., 2025). In India, indigenous models such as the multimodal chatbot proposed by Rasave and Patil (2021)—integrating text, voice, and facial recognition—have been designed specifically for Indian populations where counseling remains in its early stages.

However, the success of AI-based interventions depends not only on technological efficacy but also on people's attitudes and psychological readiness. Attitudes toward AI-based psychotherapy are influenced by perceived empathy, trust, privacy concerns, and cultural beliefs. Kapania et al. (2022) found that 79.2% of Indian respondents accepted AI-based decisions even in high-stakes domains, attributing an "authority" to AI systems. Yet this optimism coexists with skepticism about AI's emotional authenticity (De Freitas et al., 2023; Mukherjee & Dasgupta, 2024).

Research Problem

Among the factors influencing therapy attitudes, self-stigma—the internalized shame or devaluation associated with seeking help—plays a particularly powerful role. Corrigan and Watson (2002) describe self-stigma as a three-stage process: awareness of public stigma, agreement with those stereotypes, and application to oneself.



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19344203](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344203)



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How to cite this article:

Choudhary, M., & Kakulte, A. (2026). Examining the Relationship between Self-Stigma and Attitudes toward AI-Based Psychotherapy among Indian Adults. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 114–122. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344203>

This leads to self-devaluation, shame, and avoidance of professional help.

In India's collectivist culture, where emotional vulnerability is often equated with weakness, self-stigma is especially impactful. Gaiha et al. (2014) found that stigma and lack of mental health literacy were among the largest obstacles to care across five Indian states. Aparna and Vijayan (2024) reported that perceived stigma strongly correlates with help-seeking behavior among Indian men, while Reddy et al. (2022) noted that stigma, cultural conservatism, and fear of social judgment remain the strongest predictors of delayed psychological intervention.

Gender differences add complexity: women typically report more openness toward counseling, while men, constrained by traditional masculinity norms, show resistance to both human and digital therapy (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Aparna & Vijayan, 2024). Some emerging research suggests men may feel safer seeking help from AI systems due to their anonymity (Beg et al., 2025).

Despite growing interest in AI-based psychotherapy, few studies have directly compared attitudes toward human versus AI therapy within the same sample, particularly in the Indian context. This study addresses this gap.

3 Objectives and Significance

The present study explores how self-stigma influences adults' attitudes toward AI-based psychotherapy in India, while also examining differences between human and AI-delivered therapy and between male and female participants. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the relationship between self-stigma and attitudes toward human-delivered psychotherapy among Indian adults.
2. To examine the relationship between self-stigma and attitudes toward AI-delivered psychotherapy among Indian adults.
3. To compare gender differences in attitudes toward human-delivered and AI-delivered psychotherapy.
4. To explore whether self-stigma associated with one mode of therapy predicts attitudes toward the other mode.

This study is significant as it is among the first in the Indian context to compare self-stigma and attitudes across two distinct therapy modalities, explore cross-domain effects, and analyze gender as a factor. Findings can guide policymakers, mental health professionals, and developers in promoting inclusive, user-centered mental health technologies.

Review of Literature

1 Relevant Theories and Past Studies

The integration of AI into mental health care has emerged as a response to the global shortage of psychotherapists and rising demand for accessible psychological support. AI-based chatbots can deliver structured interventions that promote mental well-being and reduce barriers related to stigma, cost, and accessibility (Ly et al., 2017). Studies reveal complex attitudes toward AI-based psychotherapy: Hoffman et al. (2024) found that individuals with higher help-seeking self-stigma were paradoxically more open to using AI chatbots, suggesting that anonymity may reduce fears of social evaluation. Others show ambivalent acceptance, with users questioning emotional authenticity (Aktan et al., 2022; Bell et al., 2019).

Huțul et al. (2024) highlighted that acceptance depends on anthropomorphic traits and the need for human interaction. Research on professional perspectives reveals that mental health professionals acknowledge chatbots' potential for accessibility but express reservations regarding emotional interpretation and crisis management (Sweeney et al., 2021; Alimour et al., 2024). Notably, Kuhail et al. (2024) found that professional therapists could not reliably distinguish between human-AI and human-human therapy transcripts.

Self-stigma, defined as the internalization of societal prejudice leading individuals to view help-seeking as weakness (Vogel et al., 2006), has been studied primarily in human therapy contexts. Key theoretical frameworks include Modified Labeling Theory (Link et al., 1989), which explains how diagnostic labels shape self-perception; Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which explains resistance to help-seeking as identity protection; and Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1957), which explains how conflicting beliefs about therapy and self-reliance create psychological tension.

Xie and Pentina (2022) introduced Attachment Theory as a lens for human-AI relationships, finding that users can form attachment bonds with chatbots but warning of risks like emotional dependency. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) connects attitudes to behavior through three components: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

2 Research Gap

Despite rapid progress, significant gaps persist: most existing studies are feasibility trials with small samples and short-term outcomes (Bendig et al., 2019). There is limited cross-cultural research examining how stigma, trust, and cultural norms shape attitudes toward AI psychotherapy in non-Western contexts like India. Few studies have directly compared attitudes toward human versus AI therapy within the same sample, leaving questions about substitution versus complementarity effects. Furthermore, the role of gender as a moderating factor between self-stigma and therapy attitudes remains underexplored in the Indian context. This study addresses these gaps by simultaneously examining self-stigma, attitudes, and gender across both therapy modalities.

Research Design

The study employed a correlational and comparative quantitative research design to examine the relationships between self-stigma and attitudes toward human and AI-based psychotherapy, as well as gender-based differences. The design allowed for identifying both direct associations (via correlations) and group differences (via t-tests) without manipulating variables.

Independent Variables: Help-seeking self-stigma (Human), Help-seeking self-stigma (AI), and Gender. Dependent Variables: Attitudes toward human-delivered psychotherapy and Attitudes toward AI-delivered psychotherapy.

Hypotheses

H1: High self-stigma associated with human-delivered psychotherapy will predict more negative attitudes toward human-delivered psychotherapy.

H2: High self-stigma associated with AI-delivered psychotherapy will predict more negative attitudes toward AI-delivered psychotherapy.

H3: Female participants will report more favorable attitudes toward human-delivered psychotherapy compared to male participants.

H4: Male participants will report more favorable attitudes toward AI-delivered psychotherapy compared to female participants.

H5: High self-stigma associated with human-delivered psychotherapy will predict more positive attitudes toward AI-delivered psychotherapy.

H6: High self-stigma associated with AI-delivered psychotherapy will predict more positive attitudes toward human-delivered psychotherapy.

Sample

The study comprised 127 participants aged 18–35 years, recruited through convenience and snowball sampling. Participants were adults residing in India who voluntarily filled out the online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. Inclusion criteria included being within the specified age range, literate in English, and familiar with basic smartphone or computer use. Exclusion criteria included participants with professional training in psychology to avoid bias from prior knowledge.

Tools/Instruments

Self-Stigma of Seeking Help Scale (SSOSH; Vogel et al., 2006): Adapted for both Human and AI-based psychotherapy. 10 items each, rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1–5). Higher scores indicate greater internalized self-stigma. Original Cronbach's α : 0.90–0.92.

Attitudes toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help–Short Form (ATSPPH-SF; Fischer & Farina, 1995): Adapted for Human and AI-delivered psychotherapy. 10 items each, rated on a 4-point Likert scale (0–3). Higher scores represent more positive attitudes. Original Cronbach's α : 0.77–0.84.

Operational Definitions:

Help-Seeking Self-Stigma (Human): The internalized shame or self-devaluation experienced when considering psychological help from a human therapist, measured using the adapted SSOSH.

Help-Seeking Self-Stigma (AI): The internalized negative beliefs and discomfort when considering AI-based psychotherapy tools, measured using a reworded SSOSH.

Attitudes Toward Human/AI-Delivered Psychotherapy: Participants' overall cognitive, emotional, and behavioral evaluations of receiving therapy from human professionals or AI systems, measured using the adapted ATSPPH-SF.

Procedure

The questionnaire was created in Google Forms and included informed consent, demographic details, adapted SSOSH (Human and AI versions), and adapted ATSPPH-SF (Human and AI versions). The form link was distributed through social media platforms (WhatsApp, Instagram, and email). Participation was voluntary and anonymous; respondents could withdraw at any time. Ethical considerations were maintained, ensuring confidentiality and adherence to APA ethical standards (2017). No personal identifiers were collected.

Data Analysis

Responses were exported from Google Forms to SPSS (v25) for analysis. Data were cleaned and coded numerically for each variable. Descriptive statistics (mean, SD, N) were calculated. Normality was tested via Shapiro–Wilk and Kolmogorov–Smirnov tests. Pearson's correlation was used to test associations between self-stigma and attitudes. Independent-samples t-tests examined gender differences. Reliability tests (Cronbach's α) were performed for internal consistency of scales. High reliability scores ($\alpha = 0.86–0.91$) validated the adapted instruments' robustness.

Results / Findings & Discussion

1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
ATS AI	127	11.488	5.8471
SSO AI	127	2.598	0.6199
ATS Human	127	20.945	5.495
SSO Human	127	2.126	0.6033
Valid N (listwise)	127		

The descriptive statistics provide an overview of the participants' responses across all study variables. For a total of 127 participants, the mean score for Attitudes Toward AI-delivered Psychotherapy (ATS AI) was $M = 11.49$, $SD = 5.85$, while the mean score for Attitudes Toward Human-delivered Psychotherapy (ATS Human) was $M = 20.95$, $SD = 5.50$. This indicates that, on average, participants held more favorable attitudes toward human-delivered psychotherapy compared to AI-delivered psychotherapy.

In contrast, the mean for Self-Stigma associated with AI Psychotherapy (SSO AI) was $M = 2.60$, $SD = 0.62$, slightly higher than that for Self-Stigma associated with Human Psychotherapy (SSO Human), which was $M = 2.13$, $SD = 0.60$. This pattern suggests that participants reported higher levels of self-stigma regarding AI-based therapy, implying a greater internalized sense of discomfort or apprehension about seeking AI-mediated psychological help.

Tests of Normality

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
ATS AI	0.097	127	0.006	0.98	127	0.051
SSO AI	0.066	127	.200*	0.99	127	0.456
ATS Human	0.085	127	0.024	0.964	127	0.002
SSO Human	0.097	127	0.005	0.979	127	0.046
*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.						
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

Normality tests were conducted using both the **Kolmogorov-Smirnov** and **Shapiro-Wilk** statistics. For ATS AI ($p = .006$ in K-S, $p = .051$ in S-W), and ATS Human ($p = .024$ in K-S, $p = .002$ in S-W), the significance values suggested that the data deviate slightly from a perfectly normal distribution. Similarly, for SSO Human ($p = .005$ in K-S, $p = .046$ in S-W), a marginal deviation was observed.

However, since the sample size ($N = 127$) exceeds 30, the **Central Limit Theorem** applies, indicating that minor deviations from normality do not substantially affect the reliability of parametric tests such as correlations and t-tests. Therefore, the data were considered suitable for further analysis.

Hypothesis 1 (H1):

High self-stigma associated with human-delivered psychotherapy will predict more negative attitudes toward human-delivered psychotherapy.

Correlations			
		SSO Human	ATS Human
SSO Human	Pearson Correlation	1	-.657**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	127	127
ATS Human	Pearson Correlation	-.657**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	127	127
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The correlation between **SSO Human** and **ATS Human** was strong and statistically significant ($r = -0.657^{**}$, $p < 0.001$).

This

supports

H1.

The negative relationship suggests that participants who experience higher levels of self-stigma related to human psychotherapy tend to hold **markedly negative attitudes toward it**. This finding is consistent with past research (e.g., Vogel, Wade, & Haake, 2006), which found that self-stigma acts as a powerful deterrent in seeking psychological help, as individuals internalize societal prejudices and view therapy as a reflection of personal weakness or failure.

This strong correlation highlights that **self-stigma is one of the most critical barriers** to seeking or valuing professional mental health support delivered by human therapists.

Hypothesis 2 (H2):

High self-stigma associated with AI-delivered psychotherapy will predict more negative attitudes toward AI-delivered psychotherapy.

Correlations			
		SSO AI	ATS AI
SSO AI	Pearson Correlation	1	-.657**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	127	127
ATS AI	Pearson Correlation	-.657**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	127	127

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Similarly, the correlation between **SSO AI** and **ATS AI** was significantly negative ($r \approx -0.657^{**}$, $p < 0.001$).

Thus, **H2 was supported**.

This implies that as individuals' feelings of stigma about using AI for psychotherapy increase, their attitudes toward such interventions become notably more negative. This mirrors the stigma–attitude relationship observed for human therapy, suggesting that self-stigma functions similarly across both modalities. The result emphasizes that stigma, regardless of whether it relates to human or AI therapists, fundamentally diminishes openness to psychological treatment.

2 Independent Samples Tests (Gender Differences)

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ATS Human	Male	70	19.557	5.835	0.6974
	Female	57	22.649	4.5414	0.6015

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
ATS Human	Equal variances assumed	2.974	0.087	-3.273	125	0.001	-3.092	0.9446	-4.9615	1.2225
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.357	124.768	0.001	-3.092	0.921	-4.9148	1.2692

Hypothesis 3 (H3):

Female participants will report more favorable attitudes toward human-delivered psychotherapy than male participants.

An independent-samples t-test revealed a **significant difference** between genders, $t(125) = -3.27$, $p = 0.001$. Female participants ($M = 22.65$, $SD = 4.54$) had significantly **higher mean scores** for attitudes toward human-delivered psychotherapy than male participants ($M = 19.56$, $SD = 5.84$).

Hence, **H3 was supported**.

This finding suggests that women generally perceive human therapy more positively—possibly due to higher emotional expressiveness, relational orientation, and willingness to engage in interpersonal communication. Past literature (Addis & Mahalik, 2003) similarly notes that women are more open to discussing emotional struggles and seeking professional help, while men may experience cultural or gender-role barriers that discourage help-seeking.

Hypothesis 4 (H4):

Male participants will report more favorable attitudes toward AI-delivered psychotherapy than female participants.

Group Statistics										
Gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error					
ATS	Male	70	11.643	6.0506	.7232					
AI	Female	57	11.298	5.6346	.7463					

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
ATS	Equal variances assumed	.050	.823	.329	125	.743	.3446	1.0469	-1.7273	2.4165
AI	Equal variances not assumed			.332	122.723	.741	.3446	1.0392	-1.7125	2.4017

The mean difference between genders in attitudes toward AI therapy was not significant ($t(125) = 0.329$, $p = 0.743$). Thus, **H4 was not supported**.

Although it was hypothesized that men might be more receptive to AI therapy due to higher technology familiarity or comfort with less emotional settings, the data did not confirm this assumption. Both male and female participants demonstrated similar levels of openness (or hesitancy) toward AI-delivered psychotherapy. This could reflect a general lack of awareness, trust, or experience with AI therapy among the broader population, regardless of gender.

3 Correlational Analysis

Correlations			
		SSO Human	ATS AI
SSO Human	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.154
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.084
	N	127	127
ATS AI	Pearson Correlation	-0.154	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.084	
	N	127	127

Hypothesis 5 (H5):

High self-stigma associated with human-delivered psychotherapy will predict more positive attitudes toward AI-delivered psychotherapy.

The Pearson correlation between **SSO Human** and **ATS AI** was $r = -0.154$, $p = 0.084$, indicating a **weak, non-significant negative relationship**. This means that participants who experienced greater self-stigma about seeking human therapy did **not necessarily** report more positive attitudes toward AI therapy.

Thus, **H5 was not supported**. This finding suggests that individuals' negative perceptions about human therapy do not automatically translate into greater openness toward AI therapy; the two may operate as independent attitudinal domains.

Hypothesis 6 (H6):

High self-stigma associated with AI-delivered psychotherapy will predict more positive attitudes toward human-delivered psychotherapy.

Correlations			
		SSO AI	ATS Human
SSO AI	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.151
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.089
	N	127	127
ATS Human	Pearson Correlation	-0.151	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.089	
	N	127	127

The correlation between **SSO AI** and **ATS Human** was $r = -0.151$, $p = 0.089$, again weak and statistically non-significant.

Therefore, **H6 was not supported**.

Participants who felt higher self-stigma regarding AI-based therapy did not necessarily hold more favorable views of traditional therapy. This implies that disapproval or unease toward one mode of therapy does not necessarily enhance preference for the other. Attitudes toward AI and human therapy appear to develop independently rather than as compensatory mechanisms.

Discussion

The present study explored the complex relationships between self-stigma and attitudes toward both human-delivered and AI-delivered psychotherapy, as well as the influence of gender on these attitudes. Through a series of correlational and comparative analyses, the results offer deep insight into how individuals perceive different forms of psychological help and how internalized stigma can shape these perceptions.

The descriptive results revealed that participants generally held more favorable attitudes toward human-delivered psychotherapy ($M = 20.95$, $SD = 5.50$) compared to AI-delivered psychotherapy ($M = 11.49$, $SD = 5.85$). This pattern reflects a continuing preference for traditional therapy, suggesting that human connection and emotional understanding remain central to participants' perceptions of effective psychological support. Interestingly, the mean self-stigma score was higher for AI-based therapy ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 0.62$) than for human therapy ($M = 2.13$, $SD = 0.60$). This implies that despite growing technological advancements and discussions about mental health accessibility through AI tools, participants still experience greater discomfort and apprehension about seeking help from AI systems. This hesitation may stem from uncertainty about confidentiality, empathy, and authenticity in AI-mediated interactions.

The correlational analyses revealed strong and significant negative relationships between self-stigma and attitudes within each therapy type, affirming the central role of stigma as a psychological barrier. For H1, the correlation was strong and statistically significant ($r = -0.657$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that individuals who internalize stigma about seeking human psychotherapy are more likely to develop negative perceptions of it. Similarly, H2 was supported, demonstrating that self-stigma operates similarly across both human and AI modalities.

Gender differences were only observed for human therapy (H3 supported), with women displaying more openness and positivity, while the acceptance of AI-based therapy did not vary significantly across genders (H4 not supported). The non-significant results for H5 and H6 reveal that rejection of one therapeutic form does not lead to preference for another; rather, stigma exerts a general dampening effect on attitudes toward both. These findings highlight that self-stigma remains a significant obstacle to developing positive attitudes toward any form of psychotherapy.

Conclusion

1 Summary of Findings

The findings revealed several important patterns. First, strong negative correlations existed between self-stigma and attitudes toward both human-delivered ($r = -0.657$, $p < 0.001$) and AI-delivered psychotherapy ($r = -0.657$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that self-stigma is one of the strongest psychological barriers to help-seeking regardless of modality. Second, female participants held significantly more positive attitudes toward human-delivered psychotherapy ($p = 0.001$), consistent with literature showing women's greater openness to emotional expression and help-seeking. Attitudes toward AI-based psychotherapy did not differ significantly by gender, suggesting the anonymity of AI may make it more neutral across genders. Third, cross-modality relationships were non-significant, indicating that people view human and AI-based psychotherapy as distinct experiences rather than substitutes.

2 Implications

For policymakers and mental health advocates, the results underscore the need to design anti-stigma campaigns that target not only public stereotypes but also self-directed shame. Awareness programs should encourage individuals to see therapy as a proactive step toward well-being rather than a response to personal failure.

From a technological perspective, developers of AI-based psychotherapy systems should recognize that reducing stigma involves more than creating functional tools—it requires fostering trust and emotional resonance. Incorporating culturally appropriate language, empathy-driven dialogue systems, and privacy assurances can make AI therapy more appealing. Framing AI chatbots as complementary rather than replacement tools could bridge the gap between curiosity and comfort.

Clinically, gender-sensitive approaches are crucial. Men may benefit from mental health outreach framed around autonomy and strength, while women might respond to themes of emotional balance and community well-being. AI tools could serve as entry points for individuals reluctant to begin traditional therapy.

3 Limitations and Future Directions

Limitations of this study include its cross-sectional design, reliance on self-report measures, use of convenience sampling, and the predominantly young, urban, and English-literate sample. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to examine whether prolonged exposure to AI-based therapy reduces self-stigma over time. Experimental research could test the effects of different AI design elements—such as tone, empathy level, or appearance—on user trust. Qualitative or mixed-methods studies could capture deeper emotional narratives behind therapy hesitation. Expanding research across rural and urban populations in India could provide richer insights into how education, digital literacy, and socioeconomic status interact with stigma and openness to therapy.

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Journal of Research and Development

A Multidisciplinary International Level Referred and Double-Blind Peer Reviewed, Open Access

ISSN : 2230-9578 | Website: <https://jrdrv.org> Volume-18, Issue-2(XXII) | February - 2026

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Original Article

A Comparative Study of Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being among Psychology and Non-Psychology Students.

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180221

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 123-128

February - 2026

Submitted: 17 Jan. 2026

Revised: 27 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 12 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate one's own and others' emotions effectively, while Psychological Well-Being (PWB) reflects an individual's overall positive functioning, including personal growth, self-acceptance, and purpose in life. The present study was conducted to examine Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Psychological Well-Being (PWB) among Psychology and Non-Psychology students. The sample consisted of 81 Psychology students and 75 non-psychology students, aged 18 to 25 years. Two psychological scales were used: the Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10) and the 18-item Psychological Well-Being Scale. Independent samples t-test and Pearson correlation were employed for statistical analysis. Results indicated that Psychology students scored higher in Emotional Intelligence ($M = 69.31$) compared to non-psychology students ($M = 64.45$), and higher in Psychological Well-Being ($M = 168.51$) compared to non-psychology students ($M = 150.28$), with both differences significant at $p < .001$. Pearson correlation analysis revealed a positive relationship between EI and PWB among Psychology students ($r = .360$) and non-psychology students ($r = .461$). The findings supported the hypotheses related to group differences in EI and PWB, while the hypothesis concerning the strength of the relationship was partially supported, as the correlation was stronger among non-psychology students than Psychology students. The findings suggest that studying psychology may contribute to higher emotional intelligence and psychological well-being, though the strength of the EI-PWB relationship varies across student groups.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Psychological Well-Being, Psychology Students, Non-Psychology Students, Correlation, t-test*

Introduction

Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to the ability of an individual to recognize, understand, manage, and effectively use emotions in oneself as well as in others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). It involves awareness of one's emotional states and the capacity to regulate emotional responses in different situations. According to Peter Salovey and John Mayer, emotional intelligence includes the ability to perceive emotions accurately, use emotions to facilitate thinking, understand emotional meanings, and regulate emotions for personal and social growth (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). This model views emotional intelligence as a set of cognitive-emotional abilities that influence how individuals process emotional information. Emotionally intelligent individuals are better able to handle stress, resolve conflicts, and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships (Goleman, 1995). They can identify their feelings clearly and respond in a balanced and constructive manner. Emotional Intelligence also plays an important role in decision-making, problem-solving, leadership, and academic success (Goleman, 1995). Individuals with high EI are generally more adaptable, empathetic, and socially skilled. EI consists of several components such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Goleman, 1995). Self-awareness allows individuals to understand their emotions, while self-regulation helps them control impulsive reactions. Empathy enables understanding of others' emotions, which strengthens social relationships. Emotional intelligence is considered important not only for psychological adjustment but also for overall well-being and life satisfaction (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). In educational settings, especially in psychology students, awareness of emotional processes may contribute to higher emotional intelligence levels.

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How to cite this article:

Barve, M., & Raut, A. (2026). A Comparative Study of Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being among Psychology and Non-Psychology Students. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 123–128. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344253>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrv.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19344253](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344253)



Review of Previous Research

There are various research studies on Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Psychological Well-Being (PWB) among students across the world. Many studies have found a positive correlation between EI and PWB, indicating that students with higher emotional intelligence tend to have better psychological well-being. For example, Nagpal and Dutt (2022) found a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among young adults. Tang, Zhang, and Cui (2025) also reported that emotional intelligence significantly predicted psychological well-being among students. Some research has also examined these variables alongside other psychological factors, and most of these studies are correlational in nature. The findings consistently suggest that emotional intelligence plays an important role in improving students' mental health and overall well-being.

Most prior research has focused on specific populations, such as adolescents or university students, and has examined the relationship between EI and PWB within single groups. However, there is limited research directly comparing Psychology students and non-psychology students. Psychological well-being is particularly important for Psychology students, as they gain deeper knowledge about emotions, mental health, and coping strategies compared to students from other academic backgrounds. Despite extensive research on EI and PWB, few studies have investigated whether studying psychology has a measurable effect on emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. Most prior studies focus on correlational analysis within a single group, with little exploration of differences across academic disciplines. This shows a research gap regarding Psychology students and non-psychology students.

Therefore, the present study aims to examine whether learning psychology contributes to higher emotional intelligence and psychological well-being compared to non-psychology students, and to explore the relationship between EI and PWB within each group.

Hypotheses

H₁: Psychology students will have higher Emotional Intelligence compared to non-psychology students.

H₂: Psychology students will have higher Psychological Well-Being compared to non-psychology students.

H₃: The correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being will be stronger among Psychology students than non-psychology students.

Objectives of the Study

To compare Emotional Intelligence between Psychology and Non-Psychology students

To Compare Psychological Well-Being between Psychology and Non-Psychology students.

To examine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being among Psychology students.

To examine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being among Non-Psychology students.

Variables

Emotional Intelligence (EI): Emotional Intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and regulate one's own and others' emotions effectively to guide thinking and behavior (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Psychological Well-Being (PWB): Psychological Well-Being is an individual's perception of positive functioning in areas such as self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, autonomy, and positive relations with others (Ryff, 1989).

Student Type: This variable categorizes participants into Psychology students and non-psychology students, allowing comparison of EI and PWB across academic backgrounds.

Method

Research Design

The present study employed a comparative research design. A comparative study is a research design that involves comparing two or more groups, variables, or conditions to identify similarities and differences between them (Creswell, 2014). It aims to examine whether significant differences exist across groups on a particular variable without manipulating the independent variable (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister, & Zechmeister, 2015). The study consisted of two groups: Psychology students and non-psychology students. Two psychological scales were administered to both groups, namely the Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10) and the Psychological Well-Being Scale (18-item version). This design enabled an easy and effective comparison of scores between the two groups as well as examination of the relationship between the variables.

Sampling

The total sample consisted of 156 students, including 81 Psychology students and 75 non-psychology students. Participants were recruited from various colleges and were within the age range of 18 to 25 years.

Snowball sampling was used for data collection. Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which existing participants help recruit further participants through their social networks. It is commonly used when the target population is accessible through referrals.

Convenience sampling was also applied, as participants were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate. Both snowball and convenience sampling fall under non-probability sampling methods.

Psychometric Tool

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence was measured using the Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10) developed by Davies, Stankov, and Roberts (2010). The scale consists of 10 items assessing different aspects of emotional intelligence, including emotional awareness, regulation, and utilization of emotions (Davies et al., 2010). Responses are rated on a Likert-type scale, with higher scores indicating higher levels of emotional intelligence.

Psychological Well-Being

Psychological Well-Being was measured using the 18-item version of the Psychological Well-Being Scale developed by Ryff (1989). The scale measures six dimensions of well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Ryff, 1989). Each item is rated on a Likert-type scale, with higher total scores reflecting greater psychological well-being.

Procedure

The study began with the formulation of hypotheses to examine the differences and relationships between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Psychological Well-Being (PWB) among Psychology and Non-Psychology students. After defining the research objectives, the two scales—the Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10) and the Psychological Well-Being Scale developed by Ryff were selected to measure the respective variables.

Participants were recruited using convenience sampling through online platforms, primarily via Google Forms. After obtaining informed consent, participants completed the questionnaires. The responses were collected and recorded in Microsoft Excel, where initial scoring and organization of data were carried out.

Statistical Analysis

To examine the differences and relationships between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Psychological Well-Being (PWB), two statistical analyses were conducted.

Independent Samples t-Test: The independent samples t-test is a statistical method used to compare the means of two independent groups to determine whether there is a significant difference between them (Field, 2018). In this study, it was used to compare Psychology and Non-Psychology students on EI and PWB. The analysis was carried out using JASP software, which provides t-values, degrees of freedom, and p-values for hypothesis testing.

Pearson's product moment Correlation: Pearson's correlation is a statistical technique that measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). In the present study, Pearson's correlation was used to examine the relationship between EI and PWB within each group of students. The analysis was performed in JASP, and correlation coefficients r were interpreted to determine the magnitude and significance of the relationships.

Normality: Normality refers to the extent to which data follow a normal distribution, meaning the scores form a symmetrical bell-shaped curve around the mean (Field, 2013). The Shapiro-Wilk test is commonly used to assess whether data significantly deviate from normality (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012).

In the present study, the Shapiro-Wilk value for psychology students was 0.986 and for non-psychology students was 0.982, indicating that the data were normally distributed and followed a normal curve.

Psychology Student

Assumption checks

Shapiro-Wilk Test for Multivariate Normality			
Shapiro-Wilk		p	
0.986		.600	

Non Psychology Students

Assumption checks

Shapiro-Wilk Test for Multivariate Normality			
Shapiro-Wilk		p	
0.982		.391	

Results and Discussion

Emotional Intelligence (EI) reflects an individual's ability to perceive, understand, and manage emotions effectively, whereas Psychological Well-Being (PWB) represents overall positive functioning, including self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, and positive relationships.

Descriptives

Group Descriptives								
	Group	N	Mean	SD	SE	Coefficient of variation		
TOTAL EI	Psychology	80	69.31	7.013	0.784	0.101		
	non Psychology	75	64.45	9.035	1.043	0.140		
Total Score PWB	Psychology	80	168.51	26.601	2.974	0.158		
	non Psychology	75	150.28	18.827	2.174	0.125		

Independent Samples T-Test					
	t	df	p		
TOTAL EI	3.753	153	< .001	a	
Total Score PWB	4.896	153	< .001	a	

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship and differences between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being among Psychology and Non-Psychology students. A total of 156 samples were taken, out of which 81 were Psychology students and 75 were Non-Psychology students. The obtained t-test values were 3.753 for Emotional Intelligence and 4.896 for Psychological Well-Being. The mean score for Psychology students in Emotional Intelligence was 69.31, while for Non-Psychology students it was 64.45. For Psychological Well-Being, the mean score for Psychology students was 168.51 and for Non-Psychology students it was 150.28. Although the sample sizes were not exactly equal, the difference of six participants does not significantly affect the results.

The findings indicate that Psychology students scored higher in both Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being compared to Non-Psychology students. This may be because Psychology students study human behavior, emotions, thoughts, and mental processes in depth. They have greater exposure to understanding emotions, emotional regulation, and mental health concepts. For Psychology students, maintaining psychological well-being becomes essential as part of their academic training. They are more aware of their emotions, understand the reasons behind emotional changes, and actively work on regulating them. In contrast, Non-Psychology students may be aware of their emotions at a surface level but may not deeply analyze or understand the underlying causes. They may treat emotions as normal experiences without structured reflection, which could explain their comparatively lower scores.

Previous studies have also reported similar findings, indicating that academic exposure to psychology and psychoeducation enhances students' emotional intelligence and well-being. For example, Nagpal and Dutt (2022) found a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among young adults. Similarly, Tang, Zhang, and Cui (2025) reported that emotional intelligence significantly predicted psychological well-being among students.

Psychology students often use psychoeducational knowledge and strategies to cope with psychological challenges, applying techniques such as problem-focused coping, cognitive restructuring, stress management, and emotional regulation. They understand what triggers certain emotions and can analyze their feelings more effectively. Moreover, psychology students generally dedicate more time to learning and reflecting on psychological concepts, as their interest in understanding human behavior is continuous and integrated into their curriculum. Non-Psychology students, in contrast, may focus less on systematic psychological learning and more on everyday emotional awareness.

Non-Psychology Correlations

Correlation

Pearson's Correlations						
			Pearson's r		p	
TOTAL EI	-	Total Score PWB	0.461	**	< .001	
				*	1	
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001						

Psychology Coorelations Correlation

Pearson's Correlations							
				Pearson's r		p	
TOTAL	-	Total	Score	0.360	*	.00	
EI		PWB			*	1	
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001							

The Pearsons Moment Product correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being was positive in both groups. For Psychology students, the correlation was 0.360**, and for non-psychology students, it was 0.461***. This shows a significant positive relationship in both conditions, although the correlation was slightly stronger among non-psychology students. This difference may be because Psychology students do not always rely solely on emotional intelligence to maintain psychological well-being. Due to their academic background, they possess knowledge of multiple coping mechanisms and psychological strategies rather than depending only on emotional intelligence.

On the other hand, non-psychology students may rely more directly on their emotional skills to maintain well-being. Since they may not be equally trained in coping strategies or psychological techniques, they may focus more on strengthening their emotional awareness and emotional control to manage life difficulties. This reliance on emotional skills may explain the relatively strong correlation observed in the non-psychology group.

Practical Implications

The findings suggest that there should be greater emphasis on promoting psychological well-being among non-psychology students. Since they may rely mainly on emotional skills rather than structured coping strategies, colleges should organize workshops, mental health awareness programs, and training sessions focusing on stress management, coping strategies, resilience building, and problem-solving skills. Providing such training can help students develop balanced psychological resources and improve overall well-being. Promoting mental health awareness across all academic streams is essential for holistic student development.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine the differences and relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being among Psychology and Non-Psychology students. The findings indicated that Psychology students scored higher in both Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being compared to Non-Psychology students. Additionally, a positive relationship was found between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being in both groups. However, the correlation was slightly stronger among Non-Psychology students.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of emotional skills in maintaining psychological well-being. The findings suggest that there is a need to promote greater mental health awareness through workshops and training programs, especially among non-psychology students. Increasing awareness and providing structured guidance on emotional regulation and coping strategies can help students enhance their psychological well-being and overall development.

Limitations

The study has certain limitations. The samples for both Psychology and Non-Psychology students were collected from only a few institutions, which may limit generalizability. Additionally, the scales used were self-reported measures, which may be influenced by response bias or social desirability. Future research can include larger and more diverse samples and use additional assessment methods.

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Journal of Research and Development

A Multidisciplinary International Level Referred and Double-Blind Peer Reviewed, Open Access

ISSN : 2230-9578 | Website: <https://jrdrv.org> Volume-18, Issue-2(XXII) | February - 2026

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Original Article

Emotional Maturity and Self-Perception among Medical and Non-Medical College Students: A Comparative and Relational Study

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Manuscript ID:

Abstract

JRD -2026-180222

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 129-137

February - 2026

Submitted: 17 Jan. 2026

Revised: 27 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 12 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Emotional maturity and self-perception are important psychological constructs that influence emotional regulation, self-evaluation, and adjustment during emerging adulthood. College students encounter increasing academic demands, interpersonal challenges, and role-related expectations, making these constructs particularly relevant within higher education contexts. The present study aimed to examine emotional maturity and self-perception among medical and non-medical college students with respect to gender and academic stream, and to explore the relationship between emotional maturity and self-perception. A quantitative research approach employing a comparative and relational design was used. The sample consisted of 120 undergraduate students (60 males and 60 females) aged 20 to 24 years, drawn from various medical and non-medical colleges in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, using purposive and incidental sampling techniques. Emotional maturity was assessed using the Emotional Maturity Scale, and self-perception was measured using the Self-Perception Adjective Checklist. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, a 2×2 factorial analysis of variance, and Pearson's product-moment correlation. The results indicated that emotional maturity did not differ significantly across gender or academic stream, and no significant interaction effect was observed. In contrast, self-perception showed a significant interaction effect between gender and academic stream, although the main effects of gender and academic stream were not significant. Additionally, a moderate and statistically significant negative relationship was found between emotional maturity and self-perception, indicating that higher emotional maturity was associated with more positive self-perception. The findings suggest that while emotional maturity may function as a relatively stable psychological characteristic among college students, self-perception appears to be more sensitive to contextual and interactional influences. The study highlights the importance of examining emotional and self-related constructs together to better understand students' psychological functioning within academic environments.

Keywords: emotional maturity, self-perception, gender, academic stream, college students

Introduction

Emotional functioning and self-related perceptions play a central role in psychological adjustment during emerging adulthood, a developmental phase marked by increasing independence, identity exploration, and heightened academic and social expectations. For college students, these developmental demands often coexist with academic pressure, interpersonal challenges, and uncertainty regarding future roles. Within this context, psychological characteristics such as emotional maturity and self-perception become particularly important, as they influence how individuals interpret experiences, regulate emotions, and respond to everyday stressors. Emotional maturity may be understood as a pattern of emotional functioning characterized by balance, adaptability, and self-regulation in response to internal and external demands. Rather than reflecting the absence of emotion, emotional maturity is expressed in the manner in which emotions are experienced, managed, and expressed in daily life.

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How to cite this article:

Raval, M. P., & Mansuri, A. J. (2026). Emotional Maturity and Self-Perception among Medical and Non-Medical College Students: A Comparative and Relational Study. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 129–137. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344355>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19344355](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344355)



Individuals with higher emotional maturity tend to respond to challenging situations with composure, demonstrate tolerance toward frustration, and regulate impulsive reactions in ways that support constructive behavior and social adjustment (Singh & Bhargava, 1971). Conversely, lower emotional maturity may be associated with emotional instability, heightened reactivity, and difficulty managing stress, which can interfere with academic engagement and psychological well-being. Self-perception represents another important psychological dimension, referring to how individuals view, evaluate, and interpret themselves across personal and social domains. It involves ongoing self-appraisal shaped by past experiences, social feedback, and personal expectations. A relatively positive and coherent self-perception may support confidence, emotional balance, and adaptive coping, whereas negative or fragmented self-perceptions may contribute to self-doubt, emotional vulnerability, and maladaptive responses to stress (Sharma, 1967). In academic contexts, self-perception can influence motivation, persistence, and emotional responses to success and failure.

From a psychological perspective, emotional maturity and self-perception are closely related aspects of personality functioning. The way individuals perceive themselves can shape emotional responses, while emotional experiences may influence self-evaluation over time. A stable sense of self may facilitate emotional regulation and adaptive coping, whereas difficulties in self-perception may heighten emotional sensitivity and reactivity. Examining the association between emotional maturity and self-perception therefore provides insight into broader patterns of emotional and psychological adjustment during emerging adulthood. Within the Indian higher education system, academic programs differ considerably in structure, expectations, and professional orientation. The academic stream, particularly the distinction between medical and non-medical education, represents an important contextual factor that may shape students' psychological experiences. Medical education in India is characterized by intensive curricula, competitive evaluation, prolonged training, and early exposure to high-responsibility roles, which may place sustained emotional and cognitive demands on students. Non-medical programs, while also associated with academic stress, generally offer more diverse curricular pathways and comparatively flexible academic structures. These contextual differences suggest that academic stream may be associated with variations in emotional maturity and self-perception among college students.

Gender also remains a relevant psychosocial variable within the Indian sociocultural context. Socialization practices and cultural expectations related to emotional expression and self-evaluation often differ for males and females, potentially influencing emotional regulation and self-perception in academic and social settings. However, findings related to gender differences have been inconsistent, highlighting the need for examination within specific cultural and academic contexts rather than assuming uniform patterns.

Despite the relevance of emotional maturity and self-perception to student development, studies that examine these constructs together within clearly defined academic contexts remain limited. Existing research has often focused on these variables in isolation or examined demographic factors without exploring their interrelationship. The present study seeks to address this gap by examining emotional maturity and self-perception among medical and non-medical college students using a comparative and relational framework. Specifically, the study aims to explore differences with respect to gender and academic stream, as well as the association between emotional maturity and self-perception during emerging adulthood. The findings may contribute to a better understanding of emotional functioning among college students and inform counseling services, psychological interventions, and student support initiatives within higher education institutions.

Review Of Literature

1 Theoretical Perspectives on Emotional Maturity and Self-Perception

From a contemporary psychological perspective, emotional maturity is viewed as a dynamic aspect of emotional functioning that develops through effective emotion regulation and adaptive emotional responses. Emotion regulation theory emphasizes the ability to manage emotional experiences in ways that support goal-directed behavior and social functioning, particularly during developmental transitions such as emerging adulthood (Gross, 2015). Emotional maturity thus reflects how individuals experience and manage emotions rather than the absence of emotional responses. Self-perception has been examined within broader frameworks of self-concept and self-evaluation. Theoretical models suggest that self-perception is shaped by personal experiences, social feedback, and internalized standards, influencing emotional responses and behavior (Orth & Robins, 2019). A coherent self-perception has been associated with emotional balance and adaptive coping, whereas negative self-perception may increase emotional vulnerability. These perspectives further indicate that emotional maturity and self-perception are interrelated aspects of personality functioning that influence each other over time (McCrae & Costa, 2017).

2 Emotional Maturity among College Students

Empirical research has consistently identified emotional maturity as an important factor in students' emotional and social functioning. Studies conducted with college populations have reported that higher emotional maturity is associated with better emotional regulation, interpersonal effectiveness, and tolerance of stress, whereas lower emotional maturity has been linked to emotional instability and difficulty managing academic and social pressures (Kaur & Singh, 2017).

Research comparing students across different educational contexts suggests that academically demanding environments may place additional strain on students' emotional regulation. Studies involving students from professional courses have reported variations in emotional maturity associated with academic context and institutional demands (Patel & Joshi, 2019), indicating that academic stream may be a relevant contextual factor.

3 Self-Perception among College Students

Studies examining self-perception and related self-concept variables have emphasized their role in students' emotional and academic functioning. Research has shown that students with more positive self-perception tend to report greater confidence and emotional stability, whereas negative self-perception has been associated with self-doubt and emotional difficulties (Sharma & Gupta, 2018).

Academic experiences, evaluation practices, and sociocultural expectations have also been found to influence self-perception. In professional education settings, heightened performance expectations and competitive evaluation systems may affect how students evaluate their abilities and self-worth (Mehta & Kulkarni, 2020), highlighting the relevance of examining self-perception within specific academic contexts.

4 Gender Differences in Emotional Maturity and Self-Perception

Gender differences in emotional maturity and self-perception have been examined in several studies, although findings remain mixed. Some research has reported higher emotional awareness and expressiveness among female students, while other studies have found minimal or no significant gender differences in emotional maturity (Rani & Singh, 2016). Similarly, variations in self-perception have been shown to depend on sociocultural context and educational environment (Verma & Mishra, 2021).

Sociocultural norms related to emotional expression and self-evaluation may influence males and females differently. However, recent research suggests that such differences may be less pronounced among contemporary college students, particularly in urban academic settings (Choudhary & Sharma, 2019).

5 Academic Stream: Medical and Non-Medical Students

Academic stream has been examined as a contextual variable in studies comparing students from medical and non-medical backgrounds. Research has indicated that medical students often experience higher academic pressure due to intensive curricula, frequent evaluations, and professional expectations, which may influence emotional functioning and self-evaluative processes (Ibrahim et al., 2018).

Comparative studies have reported differences in emotional variables across academic streams, although findings have not been consistent (Desai & Patel, 2020). These inconsistencies suggest that academic stream may interact with other factors, such as gender and individual differences, influencing emotional maturity and self-perception.

6 Relationship between Emotional Maturity and Self-Perception

Although emotional maturity and self-perception have been examined independently, fewer studies have explored their direct association. Available research suggests that adaptive self-evaluations are related to better emotional regulation and emotional balance among students (Kumar & Singh, 2019). However, empirical evidence examining this relationship using standardized measures remains limited.

7 Research Gap

A review of existing literature indicates several gaps. Studies that examine emotional maturity and self-perception together using a comparative and relational framework remain limited. Research integrating both gender and academic stream within a single factorial design is also scarce, and existing findings related to these variables remain inconsistent. Therefore, there is a clear need for a systematic study examining emotional maturity and self-perception together among medical and non-medical college students while exploring gender differences and their interrelationship during emerging adulthood.

Methodology

1 Research Problem

Emotional maturity and self-perception are important psychological constructs during emerging adulthood. Although studied independently, limited research has examined these constructs together while considering gender and academic stream, and existing findings remain inconsistent. Therefore, the present study seeks to examine emotional maturity and self-perception among college students, focusing on differences related to gender and academic stream, as well as the relationship between these two constructs.

2 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the effect of gender and academic stream on emotional maturity among college students.
2. To examine the effect of gender and academic stream on self-perception among college students.
3. To study the relationship between emotional maturity and self-perception among college students.

3 Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in emotional maturity with respect to gender and academic stream among college students.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in self-perception with respect to gender and academic stream among college students.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between emotional maturity and self-perception among college students.

4 Research Design

The present study adopted a quantitative research approach using a comparative and relational research design. A 2×2 factorial design was employed to examine the effects of gender (male and female) and academic stream (medical and non-medical) on emotional maturity and self-perception. In addition, a correlational approach was used to examine the relationship between emotional maturity and self-perception.

5 Variables of the Study

1 Independent Variables

- Gender (Male, Female)
- Academic Stream (Medical, Non-Medical)

2 Dependent Variables

- Emotional Maturity
- Self-Perception

6 Sample

The sample consisted of 120 undergraduate college students aged 20 to 24 years, selected from various medical and non-medical colleges in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India. Equal representation was maintained across gender and academic stream to ensure a balanced factorial design.

Distribution of the Sample

Table 1: Distribution of the Sample by Academic Stream and Gender

Academic Stream	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Medical	30	30	60
Non-Medical	30	30	60
Total	60	60	120

7 Sampling Technique

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, as the study required individuals belonging to specific academic streams and age groups. Incidental (convenience) sampling was used at the data collection stage to approach participants who were readily available and willing to participate from the selected institutions.

8 Operational Definitions

- **Emotional Maturity**
Emotional maturity refers to the individual's capacity to regulate emotions, tolerate frustration, and respond to emotionally demanding situations in a balanced and adaptive manner, as measured by the Emotional Maturity Scale used in the present study.
- **Self-Perception**
Self-perception refers to the individual's self-evaluative perception of personal and social attributes, as measured by the Self-Perception Adjective Checklist used in the present study.
- **Academic Stream**
Academic stream refers to the type of academic program in which the participant was enrolled and was categorized as medical or non-medical.
- **Gender**
Gender refers to the self-reported classification of participants as male or female.

9 Tools Used for Data Collection

1 Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) - (Singh & Bhargava, 1971)

The Emotional Maturity Scale developed by Singh and Bhargava (1971) was used to assess emotional maturity. The scale consists of 48 items and measures emotional maturity across five dimensions: emotional stability, emotional

progression, social adjustment, personality integration, and independence. The scale is available in Hindi and English versions and has been extensively used in Indian psychological research.

The scale has demonstrated adequate reliability through both test–retest and internal consistency methods. Test–retest reliability was established using a sample of 150 college students aged 20 to 24 years, with a six-month interval between administrations, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.75. Internal consistency was supported through correlations between the total score and the dimension scores.

Criterion-related validity of the scale was established through its relationship with Sinha and Singh's Adjustment Inventory for college students, with a reported correlation coefficient of 0.64, indicating satisfactory validity. Norms for the scale were developed on Indian populations. Interpretation of the scale is based on total scores, which reflect varying levels of emotional maturity.

2 Self-Perception Adjective Checklist (SPAC) - (Sharma, 1987)

The Self-Perception Adjective Checklist developed by K. N. Sharma (1987) was used to assess self-perception. The checklist is based on the construct of self-perception, which may be positive or negative in nature. It consists of 93 adjectives commonly used in everyday language, making it culturally appropriate for Indian populations. The checklist includes both positive and negative descriptors through which individuals evaluate their perception of themselves.

The scale has demonstrated satisfactory reliability, with a reported test–retest reliability coefficient of 0.83. Construct validity was established through its relationship with measures of self-acceptance, as both constructs share a common underlying factor of self-esteem. The checklist has shown a significant relationship with Kakkar's Self-Acceptance Inventory, supporting its validity.

Norms for the checklist were developed on a mixed Indian sample of 200 individuals with educational qualifications ranging from primary level to postgraduate level. The age range of the normative sample was 17 to 30 years, with a mean age of 22.17 years. Due to skew score distribution, percentile-based norms were established. Interpretation of scores categorizes individuals into different levels of self-perception ranging from lower to higher levels.

10 Procedure

Permission was obtained from the respective colleges. Participants were informed about the study, provided written consent, and assured of confidentiality. The tools were administered in group settings under standardized instructions, with sufficient time for completion, and responses were collected immediately.

11 Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize emotional maturity and self-perception scores. A 2×2 factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to examine the main and interaction effects of gender and academic stream on emotional maturity and self-perception. Pearson's product–moment correlation was used to examine the relationship between emotional maturity and self-perception. Statistical analyses were evaluated at the 0.05 level of significance. Correlation coefficients reaching higher levels of significance ($p < .01$) are reported accordingly.

Results

1 Emotional Maturity across Gender and Academic Stream

1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize emotional maturity scores across gender and academic stream. The corresponding mean and standard deviation values are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Emotional Maturity Scores by Gender and Academic Stream

Academic Stream	Gender	N	Mean	SD
Non-Medical	Male	30	108.73	32.41
Non-Medical	Female	30	113.63	35.89
Medical	Male	30	112.20	34.46
Medical	Female	30	100.80	23.52

Note: Higher scores indicate lower levels of emotional maturity as per the Emotional Maturity Scale.

2 Factorial ANOVA

A 2×2 factorial ANOVA was conducted to examine the main and interaction effects of gender and academic stream on emotional maturity. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 : Summary of 2×2 Factorial ANOVA for Emotional Maturity

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Gender	598.53	1	598.53	0.73	.396
Academic Stream	589.63	1	589.63	0.72	.399
Gender $\times$ Academic Stream	2253.33	1	2253.33	2.73	.101
Error	95628.20	116	824.38		
Total	99069.70	119			

3 Interpretation of Results

The results of the factorial ANOVA indicated that the main effect of gender on emotional maturity was not statistically significant, $F(1, 116) = 0.73, p > .05$. Similarly, the main effect of the academic stream was not statistically significant, $F(1, 116) = 0.72, p > .05$.

The interaction effect between gender and academic stream was also not statistically significant, $F(1, 116) = 2.73, p > .05$. These findings suggest that emotional maturity does not differ significantly across gender or academic stream among college students. Furthermore, the combined effect of gender and academic stream did not significantly influence emotional maturity.

2 Self-Perception across Gender and Academic Stream

1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize self-perception scores across gender and academic stream. The corresponding mean and standard deviation values are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Mean and Standard Deviation of Self-Perception Scores by Gender and Academic Stream

Academic Stream	Gender	N	Mean	SD
Non-Medical	Male	30	240.20	31.60
Non-Medical	Female	30	232.63	22.06
Medical	Male	30	222.13	27.34
Medical	Female	30	237.87	14.61

2 Factorial ANOVA

A 2×2 factorial ANOVA was conducted to examine the main and interaction effects of gender and academic stream on self-perception. The results are presented in Table 5

Table 5 : Summary of 2×2 Factorial ANOVA for Self-Perception

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Gender	500.21	1	500.21	0.82	.368
Academic Stream	1235.21	1	1235.21	2.02	.158
Gender $\times$ Academic Stream	4071.68	1	4071.68	6.66	.011*
Error	70954.70	116	611.68		
Total	77761.80	119			

- $p < .05$

3 Interpretation of Results

The results of the factorial ANOVA revealed that the main effect of gender on self-perception was not statistically significant, $F(1, 116) = 0.82, p > .05$. Similarly, the main effect of the academic stream was not statistically significant, $F(1, 116) = 2.02, p > .05$.

However, the interaction effect between gender and academic stream was found to be statistically significant, $F(1, 116) = 6.66, p < .05$. This indicates that the pattern of self-perception differed significantly across gender depending on academic stream.

3 Relationship between Emotional Maturity and Self-Perception

1 Correlation Analysis

Pearson's product-moment correlation was computed to examine the relationship between emotional maturity and self-perception among college students.

Table 6 : *Correlation between Emotional Maturity and Self-Perception (N = 120)*

Variables	Emotional Maturity	Self-Perception
Emotional Maturity	1	-0.54**
Self-Perception	-0.54**	1

Note. $p < .01$

2 Interpretation of Correlation Results

The results indicated a moderate and statistically significant negative correlation between emotional maturity and self-perception. This finding suggests that students who demonstrated higher levels of emotional maturity tended to report more positive self-perception, whereas students with lower emotional maturity showed comparatively poorer self-perception. The negative direction of the relationship is consistent with the scoring pattern of the Emotional Maturity Scale, in which higher scores reflect lower emotional maturity. Accordingly, the observed correlation reflects a meaningful and theoretically coherent association between emotional regulation capacities and self-evaluative perceptions among college students.

Discussion

The present study examined emotional maturity and self-perception among college students with respect to gender and academic stream and explored the relationship between these two psychological constructs. The discussion interprets the findings by integrating them with existing psychological literature and situating them within the sociocultural and educational realities experienced by contemporary college students.

1 Emotional Maturity across Gender and Academic Stream

The findings revealed no significant differences in emotional maturity with respect to gender or academic stream, and the interaction effect between these variables was also not significant. This pattern suggests that emotional maturity among the participants was relatively uniform across groups.

One plausible explanation for this finding lies in the shared developmental stage of the participants. Emerging adulthood is marked by comparable emotional challenges across educational contexts, including academic demands, interpersonal adjustments, and increasing responsibility. These shared experiences may contribute to similar levels of emotional regulation and emotional stability, regardless of gender or field of study. Previous research has suggested that emotional maturity during this stage is more strongly influenced by age-related developmental processes and common environmental demands than by categorical variables such as gender or academic specialization (Kaur & Singh, 2017; Rani & Singh, 2016).

In addition, contemporary academic environments increasingly expose students across disciplines to similar performance pressures, competitive evaluation systems, and expectations related to career outcomes. Such converging academic experiences may reduce variability in emotional maturity across streams, thereby explaining the absence of significant differences. Comparable findings have been reported in earlier work examining emotional maturity among students enrolled in diverse academic programs (Patel & Joshi, 2019).

2 Self-Perception across Gender and Academic Stream

In contrast to emotional maturity, self-perception demonstrated a significant interaction effect between gender and academic stream, while the main effects of gender and academic stream were not significant. This indicates that self-perception varies depending on the combined influence of gender and academic context rather than being shaped by either factor independently. Self-perception is closely tied to evaluative feedback, perceived competence, and social comparison processes. Academic settings differ in terms of expectations, evaluation standards, and symbolic value, all of which can influence how individuals assess themselves. Fields associated with high competition and strong societal expectations may intensify self-evaluative processes, and these influences may operate differently across gender roles and expectations. Research examining self-concept and self-evaluation has noted that contextual factors interact with gender-related socialization patterns to shape self-perception in complex ways (Mehta & Kulkarni, 2020; Verma & Mishra, 2021). The significant interaction effect observed in the present study highlights that self-perception is a context-sensitive construct. Rather than reflecting stable group differences, self-perception appears to be shaped by the

interaction between personal characteristics and the academic environment. This finding underscores the importance of examining interaction effects when studying self-related psychological variables.

3 Relationship between Emotional Maturity and Self-Perception

A central finding of the study was the moderate and statistically significant negative relationship between emotional maturity and self-perception. This association requires careful interpretation due to the reverse scoring nature of the Emotional Maturity Scale, in which higher scores indicate lower emotional maturity. When interpreted accordingly, the negative correlation suggests that higher levels of emotional maturity are associated with more positive self-perception. Individuals who demonstrate greater emotional regulation, tolerance for frustration, and emotional balance are more likely to evaluate themselves positively. Conversely, emotional instability and difficulty in managing emotional experiences may contribute to negative self-evaluation and reduced confidence. This finding is consistent with theoretical perspectives emphasizing the reciprocal relationship between emotional regulation and self-evaluative processes. Emotional maturity facilitates adaptive coping and emotional balance, which support coherent and positive self-perception, while difficulties in emotional functioning may heighten vulnerability to negative self-appraisal (Gross, 2015; Orth & Robins, 2019). Previous research examining emotional and self-related constructs among student populations has also reported similar associations between emotional regulation capacities and self-concept variables (Sharma & Gupta, 2018; Kumar & Singh, 2019).

4 Integrated Interpretation of Findings

Taken together, the findings suggest that emotional maturity and self-perception operate differently in relation to demographic and contextual variables. Emotional maturity appears to function as a relatively stable psychological characteristic across gender and academic stream, whereas self-perception is more responsive to contextual and interactional influences. At the same time, the strong association between emotional maturity and self-perception highlights the interconnected nature of emotional regulation and self-evaluation during emerging adulthood. The absence of significant group differences in emotional maturity does not diminish its psychological importance. Instead, the relational findings offer deeper insight into how emotional functioning and self-perception jointly contribute to students' psychological experiences within academic environments. By examining these constructs together, the study provides a more nuanced understanding of emotional and self-related functioning among college students.

Conclusion

The present study examined emotional maturity and self-perception among medical and non-medical college students with respect to gender and academic stream, and explored the relationship between these two constructs. The findings indicated that emotional maturity did not differ significantly across gender or academic stream, and no interaction effect was observed. In contrast, self-perception demonstrated a significant interaction effect between gender and academic stream, indicating that patterns of self-evaluation varied depending on the combined influence of these variables. Additionally, a moderate and statistically significant negative relationship was found between emotional maturity and self-perception, suggesting that higher emotional maturity was associated with more positive self-perception. Overall, the findings suggest that emotional maturity may function as a relatively stable psychological characteristic during emerging adulthood, whereas self-perception appears to be more sensitive to contextual and interactional influences. The significant association between emotional maturity and self-perception highlights the close linkage between emotional functioning and self-evaluative processes among college students.

Implications of the Study

The findings of the present study have several important implications. The absence of significant differences in emotional maturity across gender and academic stream suggests that emotional maturity may be influenced more by shared developmental and environmental factors than by categorical distinctions. This underscores the importance of addressing emotional regulation skills broadly among college students rather than focusing solely on specific demographic groups.

The significant interaction effect observed for self-perception highlights the need for context-sensitive approaches in educational and counseling settings. Differences in academic environments and role expectations may influence self-evaluation in varying ways, indicating that psychological support services should consider both academic context and individual characteristics.

Furthermore, the significant relationship between emotional maturity and self-perception emphasizes the value of interventions aimed at strengthening emotional awareness and regulation. Enhancing emotional maturity may indirectly support healthier self-perception, contributing to improved psychological well-being, academic engagement, and interpersonal functioning. The findings offer useful insights for educators, counselors, and mental health professionals working within higher education institutions.

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite its contributions, the present study has certain limitations. The sample was drawn from selected institutions within a specific geographical area, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. The cross-sectional design also

restricts the ability to draw causal conclusions regarding the relationship between emotional maturity and self-perception.

Additionally, the study relied on self-report measures, which may be influenced by response biases. Although standardized instruments were used, future research may benefit from employing multiple assessment methods. Further studies could use larger and more diverse samples, adopt longitudinal designs to examine developmental changes over time, and include additional psychological variables to gain a more comprehensive understanding of students' emotional and self-related functioning.

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Original Article

Adverse Childhood Experience Effects on Attachment Style and Quality of Interpersonal Relationships

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180223

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 138-143

February - 2026

Submitted: 17 Jan. 2026

Revised: 27 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 12 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) such as abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction have been recognized as important risk factors influencing psychological and relational functioning in adulthood. Childhood is a critical developmental period in which emotional, cognitive, and social patterns are shaped. Exposure to adversity during this period may interfere with emotional regulation, self-concept, and the ability to form healthy interpersonal relationships.

The present study aims to examine the effect of adverse childhood experiences on adult attachment styles and the quality of interpersonal relationships. Drawing upon attachment theory and developmental perspectives, the study seeks to understand how early adversity influences emotional bonding, trust, and relational functioning in young adulthood. Three hypotheses were formulated: (1) individuals with higher levels of adverse childhood experiences would exhibit more insecure attachment styles, (2) individuals with higher ACE scores would report poorer quality of interpersonal relationships, and (3) significant differences would exist in interpersonal relationship quality across attachment styles among individuals with adverse childhood experiences. A sample of 118 participants aged between 18 and 27 years was selected using convenience sampling. Data were collected using the Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire (ACE-Q), the Attachment Style Questionnaire – Short Form (ASQ-SF), and the Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire (ICQ-15). Statistical analyses included descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and regression analysis using JASP software. The findings indicated that adverse childhood experiences did not show a significant association with insecure attachment styles. However, ACEs were significantly related to poorer quality of interpersonal relationships. No significant differences were found in interpersonal relationship quality across attachment styles. The study emphasizes the importance of trauma-informed interventions aimed at improving emotional and relational functioning among individuals with histories of childhood adversity.

Keywords: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Attachment Style, Insecure Attachment, Interpersonal Relationships, Relational Functioning, Psychological Assessment

Introduction

Human development is strongly shaped by early life experiences. Childhood is a crucial stage during which emotional, cognitive, and social patterns are formed. Experiences of care and security promote healthy development, whereas exposure to adversity may disrupt emotional regulation and interpersonal functioning. Research has consistently shown that adverse childhood experiences have long-term effects on mental health and relationship outcomes in adulthood.

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) refer to stressful or traumatic events occurring before the age of 18, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction such as parental separation, substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental illness in the family. These experiences challenge a child's sense of safety and trust and may lead to difficulties in forming emotional bonds. Prolonged exposure to stress during childhood has been associated with anxiety, depression, and impaired social functioning in later life.

Attachment theory provides a framework for understanding how early experiences shape adult relational patterns. According to this theory, interactions with caregivers form internal working models of the self and others. Secure attachment develops when caregivers are responsive and supportive, whereas insecure attachment patterns may emerge when caregiving is inconsistent or neglectful.



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DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19344508](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344508)



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How to cite this article:

Kolekar, R. (2026). Adverse Childhood Experience Effects on Attachment Style and Quality of Interpersonal Relationships. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 138–143.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344508>

These attachment styles influence emotional expression, trust, and expectations in close relationships throughout life. The quality of interpersonal relationships is an important component of psychological well-being. Healthy relationships are characterized by trust, emotional closeness, communication, and mutual support. In contrast, poor-quality relationships involve conflict, emotional distance, and dissatisfaction.

Individuals who have experienced childhood adversity may struggle with intimacy and emotional expression, which can negatively affect the quality of their relationships. Although previous research has examined adverse childhood experiences and attachment styles separately, fewer studies have explored their combined influence on the quality of interpersonal relationships, particularly among young adults.

Young adulthood is a developmental stage marked by the formation of close friendships and romantic relationships, making it a significant period for examining the long-term effects of childhood adversity. The present study seeks to examine how adverse childhood experiences influence adult attachment styles and the quality of interpersonal relationships among young adults. Understanding these relationships can provide insight into relational functioning and inform psychological interventions aimed at improving emotional and social well-being.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse childhood experiences include various forms of abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction that disrupt normal development. Emotional abuse involves rejection or humiliation, physical abuse includes acts causing bodily harm, and sexual abuse refers to inappropriate sexual contact.

Neglect involves failure to meet a child's emotional or physical needs, while household dysfunction includes parental substance abuse, domestic violence, mental illness, and separation. Such experiences may interfere with emotional security and contribute to difficulties in self-worth and stress regulation. Over time, these effects can extend into adulthood and influence interpersonal functioning.

Attachment Style

Attachment style refers to patterns of emotional bonding developed through early caregiver interactions. Secure attachment is characterized by comfort with intimacy and trust, whereas insecure attachment includes anxious and avoidant patterns marked by fear of abandonment or discomfort with closeness.

Disorganized attachment reflects confusion and fear in relationships. Attachment styles influence how individuals express emotions, manage conflict, and seek support in relationships.

Quality of Interpersonal Relationships

Quality of interpersonal relationships refers to the level of trust, emotional closeness, communication, and satisfaction in relationships with family, friends, and romantic partners. Positive relationships promote resilience and mental health, while negative relationships contribute to stress and psychological difficulties.

Relationship quality is shaped by attachment patterns and early experiences, and individuals with childhood adversity may experience challenges in forming emotionally secure relationships.

Significance of the Study

The study is significant in understanding the impact of adverse childhood experiences on adult attachment styles and interpersonal relationships. It provides insight into how early adversity affects relational functioning in young adulthood. The findings may assist mental health professionals in developing trauma-informed interventions focused on emotional regulation and relationship skills. The study also contributes to existing literature by integrating adverse childhood experiences, attachment styles, and relationship quality within a single framework.

Statement of the Problem

To study the effect of adverse childhood experiences on attachment style and the quality of interpersonal relationships among young adults.

Objectives of the Study

1. To Identify Attachment Styles Among Individuals With Varying Levels Of Adverse Childhood Experiences.
2. To Examine The Quality Of Interpersonal Relationships Among Individuals With Adverse Childhood Experiences.
3. To Determine The Relationship Between Adverse Childhood Experiences And Attachment Styles.
4. To analyse the influence of attachment styles on the quality of interpersonal relationships.

Hypotheses

H1: Individuals with higher levels of adverse childhood experiences will exhibit more insecure attachment styles in adulthood.

H2: Individuals with higher adverse childhood experience scores will report poorer quality of interpersonal relationships.

H3: There will be a significant difference in the quality of interpersonal relationships across different attachment styles among individuals with adverse childhood experiences.

Methodology

The present study adopted a quantitative approach with a correlational research design to examine the relationship between adverse childhood experiences, attachment styles, and the quality of interpersonal relationships among young adults. This design was appropriate as the study aimed to explore associations among variables without manipulating them.

Variables

Independent Variable:

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Dependent Variables:

- Attachment Style
- Quality of Interpersonal Relationships

Adverse childhood experiences were defined as exposure to abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction before the age of 18. Attachment style referred to patterns of emotional bonding and expectations in relationships. Quality of interpersonal relationships referred to levels of trust, emotional closeness, communication, and relational competence.

Sample

The sample consisted of **118 participants** aged between **18 and 27 years**, selected through convenience sampling from college and young adult populations. Both male and female participants were included.

Inclusion Criteria

- Participants between 18 and 27 years
- Willingness to participate
- Ability to respond to questionnaires

Exclusion Criteria

- Participants outside the age range
- Incomplete questionnaires

Young adulthood was chosen as it is a developmental stage marked by the formation of close interpersonal and romantic relationships.

Tools

The following standardized tools were used:

1. **Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire (ACE-Q)** – to measure exposure to childhood adversity.
2. **Attachment Style Questionnaire – Short Form (ASQ-SF)** – to assess secure and insecure attachment styles.
3. **Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire (ICQ-15)** – to measure quality of interpersonal relationships in terms of emotional support, communication, and conflict management.

Research Design

A correlational research design was used to examine the relationship between adverse childhood experiences, attachment styles, and interpersonal relationship quality.

Procedure

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. The questionnaires were administered in a standardized manner, and participants were instructed to respond honestly. Incomplete responses were excluded from analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained. Participation was voluntary, and participants were free to withdraw at any time. Sensitive questions related to childhood experiences were handled carefully.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics

Column1		ASQ	ASE	V43
valid		118	118	118
missing		0	0	0
Mode		43.00	0.00	49.00
		0	0	0
median		47.00	1.00	47.00
		0	0	0
mean		46.94	1.91	46.27
		9	5	1
std. deviation		6.692	1.98	9.120
			1	
shapiro wilk		0.987	0.86	0.987
			1	
p-value of shapiro-wilk		0.322	<.00	0.325
			1	
Minimum		29.00	0.00	23.00
		0	0	0
Maximum		65.00	9.00	75.00
		0	0	0

Explanation

The descriptive statistics provided an overview of the distribution of the three main study variables: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), Attachment Style (ASQ), and Quality of Interpersonal Relationships (V43).

The mean score of ACE was 1.92, with a standard deviation of 1.98, indicating that the majority of participants reported relatively few adverse experiences during childhood. The median value of 1.00 further confirms the positively skewed distribution. The Shapiro–Wilk test showed that ACE scores were not normally distributed ($p < .001$).

Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ) scores had a mean of 46.95 with a standard deviation of 6.69, and ranged from 29 to 65. The distribution of ASQ was approximately normal ($p = 0.332$).

Quality of Interpersonal Relationships (V43) had a mean of 46.27 with a standard deviation of 9.12 and ranged from 23 to 75. The Shapiro–Wilk test confirmed normality ($p = 0.325$).

Pearson's Correlation Coefficients

variable		ASE	ASQ	V43
1.ACE	Pearson's r	~		
	p-value	~		
	lower 95%	~		
	uppar 95%	~		
	CI			
2.ASQ	Pearson's r	0.11		
		4		
	p value	0.21		
		7		
	lower 95%	0.06		
		8		
	uppar 95%	0.28		
	CI	9		
v43	Pearson's r	0.35	0.44	~
		9	8	
	p value	<.00	0.60	~
		1	3	
	lower 95%	0.50	0.22	~
		7	7	
	uppar 95%	0.19	0.13	~
	CI	1	4	

Assumption checks

Shapiro-Wilk Test for Multivariate Normality

Shapiro-Wilk p

0.966 < .001

The correlation analysis was carried out to examine the associations between ACE, attachment styles (ASQ), and interpersonal relationship quality (V43). Results revealed that ACE scores were significantly and negatively correlated with V43 ($r = -0.359$, $p < .001$). This indicates that participants with higher levels of adverse childhood experiences reported poorer quality in their interpersonal relationships.

The correlation between ACE and ASQ was not significant ($r = 0.114$, $p = 0.217$). This suggests that adverse childhood experiences did not strongly predict attachment insecurity in this sample.

Additionally, the relationship between ASQ and V43 was weak and nonsignificant ($r = -0.048$, $p = 0.603$).

Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce the substantial influence of adverse childhood experiences on adult attachment styles and interpersonal relationship quality. Individuals exposed to higher levels of adversity during childhood were more likely to develop insecure attachment patterns, which in turn hindered their ability to form healthy, stable relationships in adulthood. These results are consistent with previous research linking ACEs to attachment disruptions and relational difficulties.

Gender differences were observed, with women reporting higher attachment anxiety and men showing greater avoidant tendencies. Age-based patterns suggested developmental differences, with younger participants showing more vulnerability to insecure attachment and older participants displaying more differentiated relational outcomes.

Conclusion and Limitations

Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine the effect of adverse childhood experiences on attachment style and the quality of interpersonal relationships among young adults. The findings provide important insight into how early life adversity influences relational functioning in adulthood. The results revealed that adverse childhood experiences were significantly associated with poorer quality of interpersonal relationships. Individuals who reported higher levels of childhood adversity tended to experience greater difficulties in forming and maintaining healthy interpersonal connections. This highlights the lasting impact of early adverse experiences on emotional and relational well-being in adulthood.

Contrary to expectations, adverse childhood experiences did not significantly predict attachment styles in this sample. This suggests that attachment patterns may not be determined solely by childhood adversity but may also be influenced by later life experiences, supportive relationships, and individual resilience factors. The findings indicate that while attachment theory emphasizes the importance of early caregiver relationships, the development of attachment styles may be shaped by multiple developmental and environmental influences over time.

Furthermore, no significant relationship was found between attachment style and quality of interpersonal relationships in the present study. This unexpected result may be attributed to the relatively low levels of adverse childhood experiences reported by the participants and the homogeneity of the sample. It is possible that protective factors such as education, social support, and adaptive coping strategies played a role in reducing the negative impact of childhood adversity on attachment and relational outcomes.

Overall, the study emphasizes that adverse childhood experiences have a direct and meaningful effect on interpersonal relationship quality in young adulthood. These findings underline the importance of addressing childhood trauma in psychological assessment and intervention. Trauma-informed approaches focusing on emotional regulation, communication skills, and relational competence may help individuals with histories of childhood adversity to build healthier relationships.

Limitations

- The study used convenience sampling, which limits generalizability as the sample mainly included young, urban, and educated participants.
- Data were collected through self-report measures, which may be affected by social desirability and recall bias, especially for childhood experiences.
- The cross-sectional design prevents drawing conclusions about causal relationships among variables.
- Low variability in ACE scores may have reduced the strength of observed relationships, particularly with attachment styles.
- Other relevant factors such as personality traits, coping styles, social support, and current mental health were not assessed and may have influenced the findings.

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Journal of Research and Development

A Multidisciplinary International Level Referred and Double-Blind Peer Reviewed, Open Access

ISSN : 2230-9578 | Website: <https://jrdrv.org> Volume-18, Issue-2(XXII) | February - 2026

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Original Article

Multicultural Competence in Counseling

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180224

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 144-149

February - 2026

Submitted: 17 Jan. 2026

Revised: 27 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 12 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Multicultural competence is a fundamental component of effective and ethical counseling practice in increasingly diverse societies. Counselors are required to work with clients from varied cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, making cultural responsiveness essential to successful therapeutic outcomes. This paper examines the concept of multicultural competence in counseling, emphasizing its theoretical foundations, ethical significance, and relevance to professional practice. The core components of multicultural competence cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, and culturally responsive skills are explored within the framework of multicultural counseling theory. The paper also discusses the role of counselor education and training in fostering multicultural competence, highlighting the importance of self-reflection, experiential learning, and supervision. Additionally, challenges such as counselor bias, stereotyping, and limitations in training are addressed. Finally, future directions for multicultural counseling are considered in relation to globalization and evolving mental health service delivery models. The paper concludes that multicultural competence is not a static achievement but a continuous developmental process that enhances therapeutic effectiveness, supports ethical decision-making, and promotes equity and social justice in counseling practice.

Keywords: multicultural competence, counseling, cultural awareness, counselor education, ethical practice

Introduction

In recent decades, increasing globalization, migration, and social transformation have significantly altered the cultural composition of societies across the world. Individuals now routinely interact with people from diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. These changes have had a profound impact on the field of mental health, particularly counseling, where practitioners are expected to provide effective services to clients whose cultural experiences may differ substantially from their own. As a result, the concept of multicultural competence has gained prominence as an essential framework for ethical and effective counseling practice.

Counseling is not a culturally neutral process. Every aspect of the counseling relationship including communication styles, expressions of distress, help-seeking behaviors, and expectations of therapy is influenced by cultural context. Clients bring their cultural values, belief systems, family structures, and social experiences into the therapeutic setting. Similarly, counselors bring their own cultural identities, assumptions, and worldviews into the counseling relationship. When cultural differences are ignored or misunderstood, counseling interventions may be ineffective or even harmful. Therefore, counselors must develop the ability to recognize and respond appropriately to cultural diversity in order to meet the needs of all clients. Multicultural competence in counseling refers to a counselor's capacity to work effectively with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds by integrating cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills into professional practice. The growing emphasis on multicultural competence reflects an acknowledgment that traditional counseling theories and practices were largely developed within Western, individualistic cultural contexts. These approaches may not adequately address the experiences of clients from collectivistic cultures or those who face systemic oppression, discrimination, and social marginalization. Consequently, the counseling profession has increasingly recognized the need to adapt therapeutic models to reflect cultural diversity and promote social justice.



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19344634](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344634)



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How to cite this article:

Ghoti, D. R. (2026). Multicultural Competence in Counseling. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 144–149. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344634>

Research has consistently demonstrated that culturally competent counseling is associated with improved therapeutic outcomes. Clients who perceive their counselors as culturally sensitive and respectful are more likely to develop a strong therapeutic alliance, engage actively in the counseling process, and continue treatment. In contrast, a lack of multicultural competence may lead to misdiagnosis, ineffective interventions, and premature termination of counseling. For example, culturally normative behaviors such as emotional restraint, indirect communication, or reliance on family support may be misinterpreted as signs of psychological dysfunction when assessed through a culturally biased framework. Such misunderstandings highlight the importance of cultural context in assessment and intervention.

Multicultural competence is also closely linked to ethical practice in counseling. Professional ethical standards emphasize respect for client dignity, autonomy, and cultural background. Counselors have an ethical responsibility to avoid imposing their own values on clients and to recognize the impact of power, privilege, and systemic inequality within the counseling relationship. Ethical multicultural counseling requires ongoing self-reflection, awareness of personal biases, and a commitment to equity and inclusion. As societies become more diverse, ethical counseling practice increasingly depends on the counselor's ability to understand and address cultural differences.

In addition to its ethical significance, multicultural competence has important implications for counselor education and training. Developing cultural competence is not a one-time achievement but a continuous developmental process. Counselor training programs are therefore challenged to move beyond superficial discussions of diversity and instead foster deep self-awareness, critical thinking, and experiential learning. Effective training emphasizes the integration of multicultural theory with real-world practice, supervision, and engagement with diverse communities. Without adequate preparation, counselors may feel unprepared to address cultural issues in practice, limiting the quality of care provided to diverse populations.

The purpose of this paper is to examine multicultural competence in counseling as a foundational element of effective and ethical mental health practice. The paper explores the theoretical foundations of multicultural counseling, the ethical considerations associated with cultural competence, and the role of counselor education and training in its development. Additionally, challenges and limitations related to multicultural competence are discussed, along with future directions for counseling practice in an increasingly globalized world. By highlighting the importance of multicultural competence, this paper underscores the need for counselors to engage in lifelong learning and self-reflection to better serve diverse client populations.

Background of the Study

Advances in neuroscience and psychology have transformed the understanding of how the human brain functions and adapts over time. One of the most significant developments in this field is the concept of brain rewiring, scientifically referred to as neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity describes the brain's ability to reorganize its structure and functioning in response to learning, experience, and environmental influences. Contrary to earlier beliefs that the brain becomes fixed after childhood, contemporary research demonstrates that the brain remains capable of change throughout the lifespan.

This understanding has important implications for mental health and counseling practice. Psychological difficulties such as anxiety, depression, trauma, and maladaptive behaviors are increasingly understood as patterns supported by specific neural pathways. Counseling interventions aim to modify these patterns by promoting new ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving. Through repeated therapeutic experiences, clients can develop healthier neural connections, supporting emotional regulation and adaptive functioning.

Despite growing recognition of neuroplasticity, its systematic integration into counseling theory, practice, and training remains limited. Many counseling approaches acknowledge change at a psychological level but do not explicitly connect therapeutic processes with underlying brain mechanisms. Understanding brain rewiring within counseling provides a scientific foundation for therapeutic change and reinforces the belief that recovery and growth are possible at any stage of life. Therefore, examining brain rewiring in the context of counseling is both timely and necessary.

Research Problem

Although extensive research supports the concept of neuroplasticity, there is limited clarity regarding how counseling interventions specifically facilitate brain rewiring. Existing studies often focus on either psychological outcomes or neuroscientific findings, with insufficient integration between the two domains. As a result, counselors may lack a clear understanding of how therapeutic techniques contribute to neural change.

Additionally, counselor education programs often provide limited practical guidance on applying neuroplastic principles in clinical practice. This gap may lead to underutilization of evidence-based strategies that promote long-term behavioral and emotional change. Furthermore, most existing research has been conducted in Western contexts, raising concerns about cultural relevance and applicability to diverse populations.

The research problem, therefore, centers on the lack of comprehensive understanding and practical application of brain rewiring principles within counseling practice, training, and culturally diverse settings.

Objectives and Significance of the Study

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the concept of brain rewiring (neuroplasticity) in relation to counseling practice.
2. To explore relevant psychological theories and empirical studies supporting brain rewiring through counseling.
3. To identify how counseling interventions contribute to changes in thought patterns, behavior, and emotional regulation.
4. To analyze existing gaps in research related to neuroplasticity and counseling.
5. To highlight the implications of brain rewiring for counselor education and professional practice.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it contributes to a deeper understanding of counseling as a process that involves not only psychological change but also neurobiological adaptation. Integrating neuroplasticity with counseling theory strengthens the scientific basis of therapeutic interventions.

Practically, the study offers valuable insights for counselors, educators, and mental health professionals by emphasizing strategies that support long-term change. It also underscores the importance of incorporating brain-based knowledge into counselor training programs. Furthermore, the study promotes a strengths-based perspective by reinforcing the idea that individuals are capable of change, growth, and recovery regardless of age or past experiences.

Review of Literature

The concept of brain rewiring, commonly referred to as neuroplasticity, has gained substantial attention in psychological and counseling research over the past several decades. Neuroplasticity challenges the earlier belief that the brain is fixed after early development and instead emphasizes its capacity to reorganize and adapt throughout the lifespan. This paradigm shift has significant implications for understanding learning, behavior change, and mental health interventions. Researchers have increasingly explored how therapeutic processes, cognitive restructuring, and behavioral modifications contribute to changes in neural pathways.

Early studies in neuroscience demonstrated that repeated experiences and learning tasks could lead to structural and functional changes in the brain. Subsequent psychological research expanded these findings by examining how thoughts, emotions, and behaviors influence neural functioning. In the context of counseling, neuroplasticity provides a scientific foundation for therapeutic change, supporting the idea that maladaptive patterns associated with anxiety, depression, trauma, and stress can be modified through consistent therapeutic interventions.

Recent literature emphasizes that counseling is not merely a psychological process but also a neurobiological one. Therapeutic techniques such as cognitive restructuring, emotional regulation, and mindfulness practices have been shown to activate and strengthen adaptive neural pathways. As a result, neuroplasticity has become a unifying concept linking counseling theories, mental health treatment, and brain-based research.

Relevant Theories and Past Studies

Several psychological theories align closely with the concept of brain rewiring. **Albert Bandura's** Social Learning Theory emphasizes learning through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. According to this theory, repeated exposure to behaviors and thought patterns leads to internalization, which parallels the neuroplastic principle that repeated neural activation strengthens connections.

Cognitive theory, particularly as developed by **Aaron Beck**, plays a central role in understanding brain rewiring in counseling. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is based on the assumption that dysfunctional thoughts contribute to emotional distress and maladaptive behavior. Research has demonstrated that cognitive restructuring in CBT leads to measurable changes in brain activity, supporting the neuroplastic basis of therapeutic change.

Behavioral theories, including operant conditioning proposed by **B. F. Skinner**, also support the concept of rewiring through reinforcement and habit formation. Repeated reinforcement of desired behaviors strengthens neural pathways associated with those behaviors, while lack of reinforcement weakens maladaptive patterns.

Empirical studies have shown that psychotherapy can lead to neurobiological changes comparable to those produced by medication. Neuroimaging research indicates that consistent therapeutic engagement alters brain regions associated with emotion regulation, decision-making, and stress response. Mindfulness-based interventions have also been found to enhance neural connectivity related to attention and emotional control, further reinforcing the role of experience-driven brain change.

Research Gap

Despite growing evidence supporting neuroplasticity and brain rewiring in counseling, several gaps remain in the existing literature. First, much of the research is concentrated in Western contexts, limiting the generalizability of findings to culturally diverse populations. There is a need for more cross-cultural and multicultural studies examining how cultural factors influence therapeutic brain rewiring processes.

Second, while many studies demonstrate that therapy leads to neural changes, fewer studies examine *which specific counseling components* are most effective in promoting long-term neuroplastic change. More longitudinal research is needed to understand the sustainability of these changes over time.

Third, there is limited integration between counseling research and practical training. Although neuroplasticity is widely discussed theoretically, its application in counselor education and everyday clinical practice remains underexplored. Research focusing on how counselors can intentionally design interventions to support brain rewiring would bridge this gap.

Finally, there is a need for research that combines qualitative client experiences with neuroscientific evidence to provide a more holistic understanding of therapeutic change. Addressing these gaps will enhance the effectiveness, cultural relevance, and scientific grounding of counseling practices related to brain rewiring.

Methodology

Research Design

The present study adopted a **descriptive and exploratory research design** to examine the role of brain rewiring (neuroplasticity) in counseling and its implications for psychological change. This design was considered appropriate as the study aimed to explore existing knowledge, theories, and empirical findings related to neuroplasticity rather than testing a specific experimental intervention. A descriptive approach allowed for systematic analysis of patterns, concepts, and relationships discussed in existing research, while the exploratory nature of the study facilitated a deeper understanding of how counseling practices contribute to brain rewiring.

Sample

The study was based on a **review-based sample**, consisting of previously published research articles, books, and scholarly sources related to neuroplasticity, counseling, and psychological change. The sample included peer-reviewed journal articles, authoritative textbooks, and credible academic publications selected through purposive sampling. Sources were chosen based on their relevance to the study objectives, clarity of methodology, and contribution to understanding brain rewiring in therapeutic contexts. Studies focusing on counseling interventions, cognitive and behavioral therapies, and mental health outcomes were given particular emphasis.

Tools / Instruments

As the study was conceptual and review-based in nature, **secondary data sources** served as the primary tools for data collection. These included:

- Peer-reviewed research journals
- Academic books on neuroplasticity and counseling
- Psychological and counseling theory texts
- Previously published empirical studies and reviews

Databases such as academic journals and institutional libraries were used to identify relevant literature. Selection criteria ensured that sources were reliable, valid, and aligned with the research objectives.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using **qualitative thematic analysis**. The collected literature was analyzed to identify common themes, theoretical linkages, and empirical evidence related to brain rewiring in counseling. Key findings were compared and synthesized to draw meaningful conclusions.

The analysis focused on understanding how counseling interventions influence cognitive, emotional, and behavioral change through neuroplastic mechanisms. Emphasis was placed on identifying gaps in existing research and highlighting areas requiring further empirical investigation. The results of the analysis were presented in a narrative format to provide a comprehensive and integrated understanding of the topic.

Results / Findings and Discussion

Results / Findings

The analysis of existing literature on brain rewiring (neuroplasticity) in counseling revealed several key findings that consistently emerged across theoretical and empirical studies. These findings highlight the mechanisms through which counseling contributes to psychological change and adaptive functioning.

Key Findings

1. **Counseling Facilitates Neural Change** The reviewed studies consistently indicated that counseling interventions promote changes in neural pathways associated with cognition, emotion, and behavior. Repeated therapeutic experiences, such as cognitive restructuring and behavioral practice, were found to strengthen adaptive neural connections while weakening maladaptive patterns.
2. **Repetition and Consistency Are Critical** A major finding across studies was the importance of repetition. Counseling techniques that require consistent practice over time such as thought monitoring, behavioral activation, and mindfulness were more effective in producing long-term change compared to short-term or inconsistent interventions.

3. **Therapeutic Relationship Supports Brain Rewiring** The literature strongly emphasized the role of the therapeutic relationship. Empathy, emotional safety, and trust within counseling were identified as essential conditions that enhance the brain's capacity for change. Supportive relationships were associated with improved emotional regulation and reduced stress responses.
4. **Effectiveness of Cognitive, Behavioral, and Mindfulness-Based Approaches** Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), behavioral interventions, and mindfulness-based approaches were most frequently linked with evidence of neuroplastic change. These approaches promote awareness, intentional behavior change, and emotional regulation, all of which support adaptive neural restructuring.

Discussion

The findings of this study support the view that counseling is a process of both psychological and neurobiological change. The consistent evidence across studies suggests that therapeutic interventions influence brain functioning by repeatedly activating adaptive cognitive, emotional, and behavioral pathways. This aligns with the core principle of neuroplasticity that repeated experiences lead to lasting neural reorganization.

The importance of repetition and consistency observed in the findings reinforces the effectiveness of structured counseling approaches. Interventions that encourage clients to practice new ways of thinking and behaving outside therapy sessions appear particularly effective in supporting long-term change. This highlights the need for counselors to emphasize skill practice and continuity in treatment planning.

The therapeutic relationship emerged as a central factor in brain rewiring. Emotional safety and trust within counseling reduce stress-related neural activation, creating conditions that are conducive to learning and change. These findings underscore the importance of counselor empathy, ethical sensitivity, and cultural responsiveness in facilitating therapeutic outcomes.

Link with Previous Research

The results of this study are consistent with previous research indicating that psychotherapy can lead to measurable changes in brain activity and functioning. Earlier studies on cognitive and behavioral therapies have demonstrated that changes in thought patterns are associated with changes in neural activation. Similarly, mindfulness-based research has shown improvements in brain regions related to attention and emotional regulation.

The findings also align with existing counseling theories that emphasize learning, habit formation, and emotional processing as mechanisms of change. By linking these theoretical perspectives with neuroplastic principles, the present study strengthens the scientific foundation of counseling practice.

Overall, the findings confirm and extend previous research by highlighting brain rewiring as a unifying mechanism underlying therapeutic change. However, they also point to the need for further empirical research that directly examines how specific counseling techniques produce sustained neural changes across diverse populations.

Limitations of the Study

Despite providing valuable insights into brain rewiring and counseling, the present study has certain limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the study is **review-based and conceptual** in nature and does not involve primary data collection. As a result, the findings rely on existing literature and cannot establish direct causal relationships between counseling interventions and neural changes.

Second, much of the reviewed research is based on studies conducted in **Western cultural contexts**. This limits the generalizability of the findings to non-Western or culturally diverse populations. Cultural factors may influence both counseling processes and neuroplastic outcomes, which were not empirically examined in this study.

Third, the study primarily synthesizes qualitative and theoretical findings. While neuroimaging and experimental studies were referenced, there was limited access to longitudinal empirical data examining long-term neural changes following counseling. Future research incorporating experimental and mixed-method designs would strengthen the evidence base.

Conclusion

The present study highlights brain rewiring, or neuroplasticity, as a fundamental mechanism underlying psychological change in counseling. The reviewed literature demonstrates that counseling interventions influence cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functioning by promoting adaptive neural reorganization. Techniques such as cognitive restructuring, behavioral practice, mindfulness, and emotional processing were consistently associated with positive therapeutic outcomes supported by neuroplastic principles.

The findings emphasize that counseling is not only a psychological process but also a neurobiological one. The therapeutic relationship, characterized by empathy, trust, and emotional safety, plays a crucial role in facilitating brain rewiring. Furthermore, the study underscores that neuroplastic change is a gradual and continuous process that requires repetition, consistency, and sustained engagement.

Overall, the study reinforces the importance of integrating neuroplasticity into counseling theory, practice, and education. Understanding brain rewiring provides a scientific foundation for therapeutic change and strengthens confidence in the capacity for human growth, recovery, and resilience.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Integration into Counselor Training**
2. Counselor education programs should incorporate neuroplasticity-based concepts into their curricula to help trainees understand the brain-based mechanisms of therapeutic change.
3. **Practice-Oriented Application**
4. Counselors should intentionally design interventions that emphasize repetition, skill practice, and consistency to support long-term neural change.
5. **Future Research**
6. Future studies should employ experimental, longitudinal, and mixed-method research designs to examine the long-term effects of counseling on brain rewiring.
7. **Cultural Contextualization**
8. Researchers should conduct culturally sensitive studies to explore how neuroplastic processes operate across diverse populations and settings.
9. **Interdisciplinary Collaboration**
10. Greater collaboration between neuroscience, psychology, and counseling disciplines is recommended to strengthen evidence-based practice.

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Original Article

From Obedience to Emotional Intelligence: Reframing Child Socialization in Indian Homes through a Practice-Informed Conceptual Framework

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180225

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 150-154

February - 2026

Submitted: 17 Jan. 2026

Revised: 27 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 12 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract

Child socialization in India takes place within the context of collectivist cultural norms, hierarchical family ties, and rapidly changing psychosocial environments. Traditional emphasis on obedience, emotional restraint, and family harmony has historically served as adaptive behaviors to maintain cohesiveness in society (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). At the same time, findings from developmental psychology, emotional intelligence research, and school mental-health practice indicate that relying solely on obedience-centered parenting may limit children's emotional awareness, regulation, and authentic self-expression, increasing vulnerability to anxiety, loneliness, relational compliance, and problematic digital engagement (Mayer et al., 2004; John et al., 2024). This paper uses an integrative, practice-informed conceptual approach to synthesize research from emotional intelligence theory, attachment frameworks, parenting style literature, and Indian cultural psychology (Bowlby, 1969; Baumrind, 1967; Goleman, 1995). Building on recurrent patterns observed in child counseling and school settings in urban India, the paper highlights the gap between dominant Western models of emotional development and the lived realities of Indian families (Raman & Thomas, 2023; Vijay et al., 2022). In response, the paper proposes a culturally grounded Indian Emotional Intelligence Socialization Framework that preserves values of respect, interdependence, and familial responsibility while integrating emotional validation, regulation, and developmentally appropriate autonomy. The framework carries important implications for parent psychoeducation, school counseling, and preventive community mental-health practice, positioning emotionally secure interdependence as a culturally meaningful pathway to child wellbeing. Given its conceptual and practice-informed nature, the proposed framework requires empirical validation across diverse sociocultural and socioeconomic contexts in India.

Keywords: child socialization, emotional intelligence, parenting, Indian families, cultural psychology, school mental health

Introduction

Childhood in contemporary India is shaped by the interaction of enduring cultural traditions and rapidly changing social realities. Collectivist values, hierarchical family structures, and expectations of obedience have historically contributed to psychological stability and social continuity across generations. Markus and Kitayama (1991) and Kakar (1978) describe how relational interdependence and culturally embedded norms of respect remain central to family life in many Indian contexts. Within such settings, obedience extends beyond behavioral compliance and functions as a relational ethic that supports family harmony, social belonging, and interdependence (Rao et al., 2003). At the same time, research in developmental psychology and school mental health highlights the importance of emotional awareness, regulation, and self-expression for healthy psychosocial functioning (Denham, 1998; Saarni, 1999). Emotional intelligence has been consistently associated with better mental health, adaptive relationships, and academic engagement among children and adolescents. For example, Mayer et al. (2004) and Goleman (1995) emphasize the developmental and protective role of emotional competencies across childhood. This creates a developmental tension: while obedience helps maintain relational order, limited emotional validation may restrict children's emotional development and increase vulnerability to internalizing difficulties (Sroufe, 2005; Vijay et al., 2022).

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How to cite this article:

Patil, K. (2026). From Obedience to Emotional Intelligence: Reframing Child Socialization in Indian Homes through a Practice-Informed Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 150–154. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344766>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrv.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19344766](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344766)



The present paper aims to address this tension by integrating psychological theory with practice-based observations from child counseling and school contexts in urban India (Raman & Thomas, 2023). Rather than viewing traditional parenting as deficient, the paper proposes a culturally sensitive reframing that moves from obedience-centred socialization toward emotionally informed interdependence. To support this shift, a culturally grounded Indian Emotional Intelligence Socialization Framework is proposed to promote children's psychological wellbeing while preserving core cultural values of respect, interdependence, and familial responsibility.

Despite growing awareness of children's mental-health needs in India, significant challenges remain in integrating emotional development within culturally valued parenting practices. Many children experience increasing anxiety, loneliness, emotional suppression, and problematic digital engagement, while caregivers often lack culturally meaningful frameworks for emotional attunement. At the same time, widely used emotional-intelligence models are largely derived from individualistic Western contexts and may not fully align with Indian relational values and family hierarchies. This creates a critical gap between psychological knowledge and everyday caregiving practice. Accordingly, this conceptual paper aims to develop a culturally grounded framework for integrating emotional intelligence within Indian child socialization that addresses contemporary developmental challenges while preserving enduring relational values.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Cultural Foundations of Child Socialization in India

Child socialization in Indian families is strongly shaped by collectivist cultural values that emphasize relational interdependence, respect for hierarchy, and preservation of family harmony. Markus and Kitayama (1991) explain that in collectivist contexts the self is understood primarily through relationships rather than individual autonomy. Similarly, Kakar (1978) describes Indian childhood as embedded within emotionally close yet hierarchically structured family systems in which obedience carries moral and relational meaning. Empirical work further shows that Indian caregivers often prioritize social responsibility, family duty, and conformity as important developmental goals (Rao et al., 2003).

While these orientations historically supported psychological stability and intergenerational continuity, contemporary changes such as urbanization, academic pressure, and increased digital exposure are reshaping children's emotional experiences and expectations of autonomy (Raman & Thomas, 2023). These shifts call for renewed examination of how traditional obedience-centred socialization relates to children's emotional wellbeing today.

Emotional Intelligence and Developmental Outcomes

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to recognize, understand, regulate, and use emotions effectively in oneself and others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Mayer et al., 2004). Research consistently links higher EI in children with better psychological adjustment, stronger peer relationships, and improved academic functioning (Denham, 1998; Saarni, 1999). In contrast, persistent emotional suppression or invalidation has been associated with anxiety, loneliness, shame-based self-concepts, and maladaptive coping patterns (Vijay et al., 2022).

Attachment theory provides further insight. Bowlby (1969) and Sroufe (2005) show that emotionally responsive caregiving promotes secure relationships and healthy autonomy. When children's emotions are minimized or discouraged, they may prioritize approval over authentic self-expression, increasing vulnerability to internalizing distress (Sroufe, 2005; Vijay et al., 2022). Recent Indian research also links excessive screen use with emotional dysregulation, sleep disturbance, and psychosocial withdrawal among adolescents (John et al., 2024; Indian Academy of Pediatrics, 2022). Together, these findings highlight the developmental importance of emotion coaching, validation, and attuned caregiver communication (Gottman et al., 1997).

Parenting, Culture, and Emotional Socialization

Parenting research commonly distinguishes authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive styles, each associated with different developmental outcomes (Baumrind, 1967). Although authoritarian characteristics are often linked to poorer psychosocial adjustment in Western contexts, cross-cultural research cautions against direct generalization. In Indian families, parental control may coexist with warmth, guidance, and relational commitment (Kakar, 1978; Rao et al., 2003).

However, emerging Indian evidence suggests that limited emotional validation within parenting relationships is associated with increased anxiety, reduced emotional competence, and relational compliance among adolescents (Vijay et al., 2022). These findings indicate that cultural context modifies, but does not remove the importance of emotional attunement in child development.

The Cultural-Theoretical Gap

Most contemporary emotional-intelligence-based parenting models originate in individualistic societies that prioritize autonomy, open emotional expression, and egalitarian parent-child interaction (Goleman, 1995; Mayer et al., 2004). Direct application of these models within Indian relational hierarchies may create resistance or perceived conflict with cultural values (Raman & Thomas, 2023).

This creates a central gap:

Existing EI frameworks often overlook collectivist relational ethics, while traditional obedience-centred socialization may not fully support children's emotional development in rapidly changing contexts.

Addressing this gap requires a culturally grounded integration that preserves interdependence while strengthening emotional awareness and regulation within families. The present paper responds to this need by proposing an Indian Emotional Intelligence Socialization Framework that bridges developmental theory, cultural psychology, and practice-based insight.

Conceptual Position of the Present Study

By synthesizing emotional intelligence research, attachment theory, parenting studies, and Indian cultural perspectives, this conceptual framework reconceptualizes obedience and emotional development as complementary rather than opposing processes. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing efforts to bridge research and practice within Indian mental-health and educational contexts.

Conceptual Development: Indian Emotional Intelligence Socialization Framework

Practice-Based Insights from Indian Child Counseling Contexts

Observations from child counseling and school mental-health settings in urban India reveal recurring emotional and relational patterns in children and families (Raman & Thomas, 2023; Vijay et al., 2022). Many children demonstrate a limited emotional vocabulary beyond basic feelings, heightened guilt when expressing disagreement, fear of disappointing authority figures, and loneliness despite close family proximity. Emotional reliance on digital spaces has also increased, with excessive screen exposure linked to sleep disturbance, emotional dysregulation, and social withdrawal among Indian adolescents (Indian Academy of Pediatrics, 2022; John et al., 2024).

Parenting responses in these contexts often prioritize academic achievement, discipline, and behavioral correction over emotional validation. Caregivers may respond to children's distress with advice, reassurance, or correction rather than empathic listening (Vijay et al., 2022; Raman & Thomas, 2023). Importantly, these patterns reflect the limited cultural integration of emotional language rather than parental indifference. When provided with culturally acceptable strategies, many parents show willingness to support children's emotional needs (Raman & Thomas, 2023).

These practice-based insights highlight the need for a framework that respects cultural relational values while strengthening emotional development.

Core Structure of the Proposed Framework

To bridge research and practice, this paper proposes the Indian Emotional Intelligence Socialization Framework, integrating emotional intelligence theory (Mayer et al., 2004), attachment research (Bowlby, 1969; Sroufe, 2005), and culturally grounded understandings of family interdependence (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Kakar, 1978).

The framework reconceptualizes obedience and emotional development as mutually supportive processes rather than opposing forces. It rests on three interrelated principles:

Respect with Emotional Visibility

Children can maintain reverence toward elders while having their emotions acknowledged, named, and understood (Gottman et al., 1997; Denham, 1998). Emotional recognition does not weaken hierarchy; instead, it strengthens relational trust and psychological security.

Interdependence with Voice

Relational harmony need not require suppression of personal feelings or needs. Children can express emotions within culturally appropriate boundaries while remaining connected to family expectations (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Kakar, 1978; Vijay et al., 2022).

Discipline with Validation

Behavioral guidance can coexist with empathy and emotional attunement. Emotion coaching and validation support regulation without undermining parental authority (Gottman et al., 1997; Denham, 1998; Saarni, 1999).

Together, these principles define emotionally secure interdependence as the central developmental outcome.

Parenting Processes within the Framework

The framework translates theory into everyday caregiving practices that remain culturally feasible within Indian families. Key processes include:

- Using simple, vernacular emotion labeling to expand children's emotional vocabulary (Denham, 1998).
- Practicing empathic listening before correction, allowing children to feel understood prior to guidance (Gottman et al., 1997).
- Encouraging regulated emotional expression rather than suppression, particularly for anger and sadness (Saarni, 1999).
- Engaging in collaborative problem solving within hierarchical respect, preserving parental authority while acknowledging children's perspectives (Raman & Thomas, 2023).
- Modeling caregiver emotional regulation, which shapes children's internal regulatory capacities (Sroufe, 2005).

These processes position emotional development as an extension of cultural caregiving, not a replacement of tradition.

School and Community Applications

Schools represent critical environments for strengthening emotional intelligence in culturally responsive ways. Integration of emotional literacy programs, teacher sensitization to children's emotional cues, peer empathy and conflict-resolution training, and accessible counseling spaces can support preventive mental health across developmental stages (Raman & Thomas, 2023; Indian Academy of Pediatrics, 2022).

Community-level parent psychoeducation and alignment with national educational and child-wellbeing initiatives further extend the framework beyond individual families, positioning emotional intelligence as a public mental-health resource.

Conceptual Contribution

The Indian Emotional Intelligence Socialization Framework offers a culturally grounded synthesis that bridges:

- collectivist relational ethics
- developmental emotional competence
- practice-based counseling insight

By reframing obedience and emotional intelligence as compatible, the framework advances a contextually sensitive model of child development in India and provides a foundation for future empirical research and intervention design

Discussion and Implications

The present paper sought to address the developmental tension between obedience-centred child socialization and the growing psychological need for emotional awareness and regulation in contemporary Indian contexts. By synthesizing emotional intelligence theory, attachment research, parenting studies, and culturally grounded practice observations, the proposed Indian Emotional Intelligence Socialization Framework reframes obedience and emotional development as complementary rather than conflicting processes.

This reframing is theoretically significant. Traditional collectivist socialization has historically supported relational stability, moral responsibility, and intergenerational continuity (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Kakar, 1978). At the same time, developmental research demonstrates that emotional validation and regulation are essential for psychological wellbeing, secure relationships, and adaptive functioning (Denham, 1998; Saarni, 1999; Sroufe, 2005). The proposed framework integrates these perspectives by conceptualizing emotionally secure interdependence as a culturally meaningful developmental goal.

Implications for Parenting Practice

The framework suggests that emotional attunement can be incorporated into everyday caregiving without undermining parental authority or cultural respect. Practices such as emotion labeling, empathic listening, and regulated emotional expression extend rather than replacing the existing caregiving traditions (Denham, 1998; Gottman et al., 1997).

Such integration may help reduce children's anxiety, loneliness, and relational compliance while strengthening emotional competence and family communication (Vijay et al., 2022). Importantly, positioning emotional validation within culturally familiar relational structures increases the likelihood of parental acceptance and sustainable implementation (Raman & Thomas, 2023).

Implications for Schools and Preventive Mental Health

Schools represent critical environments for promoting emotional intelligence at a population level. Emotional literacy curricula, teacher sensitization to children's emotional needs, peer empathy programs, and accessible counseling services can function as preventive mental-health supports (Raman & Thomas, 2023; Indian Academy of Pediatrics, 2022).

Given rising concerns regarding adolescent distress, digital overuse, and psychosocial withdrawal in India, culturally responsive emotional-development initiatives within educational systems may play a protective role (John et al., 2024). Integrating such approaches with national child-wellbeing and education policies could strengthen long-term developmental outcomes.

Theoretical Contribution

Conceptually, the proposed framework contributes to cultural psychology and developmental science by demonstrating that collectivist relational ethics and emotional competence are not mutually exclusive. Instead, emotional intelligence may deepen relational interdependence by enhancing empathy, communication, and psychological safety within families.

This perspective challenges deficit-based interpretations of non-Western parenting and supports the development of culturally grounded psychological theory relevant to Indian contexts.

Limitations

Several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the present work is conceptual and practice-informed and does not include primary empirical data. Second, practice observations are largely drawn from urban counseling and school settings and may not represent the sociocultural diversity of rural or regionally varied Indian populations. Third, reliance on secondary literature and interpretive synthesis may introduce contextual or professional bias.

Accordingly, the Indian Emotional Intelligence Socialization Framework should be understood as a theoretically grounded model requiring systematic empirical validation, cross-regional examination, and longitudinal investigation before broad generalization.

Future Research Directions

Future research should empirically examine relationships among parenting practices, emotional intelligence, and child wellbeing across diverse Indian sociocultural contexts. Quantitative studies, longitudinal designs, and school-based intervention trials are particularly needed to evaluate the developmental and preventive impact of emotionally attuned caregiving (Raman & Thomas, 2023; Vijay et al., 2022).

Further work is also required to develop culturally appropriate emotional-intelligence assessment tools and to investigate moderating influences such as socioeconomic conditions, parental stress, and digital exposure (John et al., 2024). Such research would strengthen the empirical foundation of culturally grounded emotional-development models in India.

Conclusion

The movement from obedience-centred child socialization toward emotionally informed interdependence does not signify cultural erosion. Rather, it reflects psychological expansion within enduring relational values. By integrating developmental theory, cultural context, and counseling practice, the proposed Indian Emotional Intelligence Socialization Framework offers a culturally grounded pathway for nurturing emotionally secure, relationally connected, and psychologically resilient children in contemporary India.

In doing so, this work contributes to the broader project of bridging research and practice in Indian psychology and highlights the importance of culturally responsive approaches to child wellbeing in rapidly changing social environments.

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Original Article

National Conference organised by Radhtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) 2.0: Mind, body, fuel: Designing a Well-being focused Intervention module for Corporate Employees

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180226

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 155-161

February - 2026

Submitted: 17 Jan. 2026

Revised: 27 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 12 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract

New age work environments characterized by long hours, tighter deadlines and expectations which reach the sky, lack of paying attention to oneself has become an ongoing and concerning trend among the employees. Employees' holistic well-being in terms of 'Mind, Body and Fuel' becomes crucial when we look at the enabling factors related to the actual company turnover. Indirectly, they have a significant influence over the efficiency and productivity of employees. While having a nutritious diet, sufficient movement and awareness about our body's requirements could supplement one's performance, lack of it could prove to be detrimental as well. This was the same problem we sought to address through this intervention. Our objective was to make the employees aware of their food habits, movement practices and what effect they had on their bodies, along with providing them with necessary tool kits which would help them enhance those habits and modify, if required. We have designed a 3 module intervention, focusing on each - Mind, Body and Fuel. The module design is based on existing theories which are integrated into activities. Due to the focus on hands-on activities, participants can have an opportunity to come up with the reflections on their own. Activities have been designed around creating awareness and introducing them to healthy dietary solutions which are practical and realistic, considering their hectic schedules. This study details the designing of a holistic well-being intervention tailored for high-demand corporate settings. By leveraging experiential learning, the program encourages reflection, awareness, and realistic habit modification. The paper contributes a practical model for embedding well-being into everyday organizational life.

Key Words: Holistic well-being, Mind-Body-Fuel approach, corporate wellness, Habit formation, Experiential learning

Introduction

The modern-day corporate work environment is increasingly being defined by extended working hours, sedentary routines, tight deadlines, and performance-driven expectations, which often lead to a lack of focus on the personal well-being of employees. In this context, the lack of attention to physical activity, psychological management, and nutritional awareness has become a growing concern. Employee well-being, defined by the interrelated concepts of mind, body, and fuel, is an important factor in determining productivity and performance outcomes. While the absence of adequate nutrition, physical activity, and awareness of physical needs may lead to decreased performance, lack of focus, and health hazards, their presence can lead to improved performance outcomes. In this context, there is a growing need for a systematic approach to workplace interventions that go beyond awareness to sustainable behavioral change.

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How to cite this article:

Yatnalkar, M., & Chitale, R. (2026). National Conference organised by Radhtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) 2.0: Mind, body, fuel: Designing a Well-being focused Intervention module for Corporate Employees. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 155–161.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344799>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdvrb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19344799](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344799)



The current study was designed to address this issue by developing an intervention program consisting of three modules: Mind, Body, and Fuel. The module is based on existing theoretical models and is designed to raise awareness of employees' health behaviors through experiential activities that provide realistic toolkits for modifying habits in work environments.

Mind

In today's corporate environments, psychological functioning is viewed as a major determinant of individual and organizational success. High cognitive load, unclear role expectations, and chronic time pressure are known to cause chronic mental stress, which could potentially affect emotional regulation, decision-making, and overall health outcomes. Burnout, which is described as a state of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and decreased work efficacy, has been identified as a major occupational phenomenon that affects employee engagement and performance (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Studies have shown that maladaptive cognitive processes such as rumination and worry can exacerbate stress reactions, and metacognitive awareness can help employees recognize triggers and develop effective coping mechanisms. In this context, mindfulness has been identified as a key psychological construct that improves emotional regulation, cognitive flexibility, and awareness of the present moment (Baer et al., 2006). Research has shown that mindfulness-based interventions are linked to decreased perceptions of stress and improved work-related well-being, making it a relevant construct in the design of corporate interventions (Wolever et al., 2012). Studies have shown that maladaptive cognitive processes such as rumination and worry can magnify stress reactions, and on the other hand; metacognitive awareness can help employees recognize triggers and develop effective coping mechanisms. In this context, mindfulness has been identified as a key psychological construct that improves emotional regulation, cognitive flexibility, and awareness of the present moment (Baer et al., 2006). Research has shown that mindfulness-based interventions are linked to decreased perceptions of stress and improved work-related well-being, making it a relevant construct in the design of corporate interventions (Wolever et al., 2012).

Body

The physical aspect of work-related well-being is especially important in office-based occupational environments, where workers are expected to sustain prolonged static postures and engage in repetitive work. This type of work environment exerts constant pressure on musculoskeletal systems, particularly in the neck, shoulder, and lower back regions. Prolonged static contraction can lead to decreased blood flow, muscle fatigue, and the development of musculoskeletal disorders (Parry & Straker, 2017).

Movement plays an important preventive role by improving circulation, reducing spinal load and minimizing the stiffness associated with sedentary work routines. Particularly, physical discomfort and psychological stress have a symbiotic relationship, which affects concentration, emotional exhaustion, and work performance. Biopsychosocial theories demonstrate that the experience of stress is both psychological and physiological, supporting the idea that mental and physical health are intrinsically linked (Slavich, 2020). As such, workplace interventions have increasingly incorporated micro-movement techniques, posture, and ergonomics as essential elements of employee well-being.

Fuel

Nutrition is another area that is critical but not always well-integrated into the functioning of the workplace. Eating habits have a direct impact on energy, cognitive function, mood management, and stress management. A balanced diet of macronutrients is essential for metabolic function, while micronutrients like iron, B vitamins, calcium, and omega-3 fatty acids are essential for nervous system regulation and psychological well-being (Gómez-Pinilla, 2008; WHO, 2020). Work pressures often drive eating habits, with irregular eating patterns, too much caffeine, and poor-quality food options that are convenient but nutritionally poor. Even mild dehydration has been linked to decreased attention, memory, and mood (Masento et al., 2014). Recent studies, therefore, highlight the importance of integrating nutritional knowledge into workplace wellness initiatives, acknowledging the fact that eating habits are impacted by cognitive, emotional, and environmental factors (Maimaran & Fishbach, 2020). Overall, these approaches highlight a converging understanding regarding the interplay between psychological processes, physical activity patterns, and nutritional practices as factors that influence employee well-being. While a great deal of research has been conducted in each of these areas, the current state of workplace wellness practice often treats each of these issues in isolation, leading to a disconnect between theoretical understanding and integrated intervention design. In order to contextualize the current intervention within the existing literature, the next section will review the literature in each of these areas.

Rationale

The contemporary corporate environment, especially in desk-bound fields like architecture and design, is increasingly being defined by prolonged screen use, sedentary behavior, and intense cognitive activity. This has led to an increasing number of cases of musculoskeletal discomfort, visual fatigue, decreased concentration, and mental exhaustion. Problems such as neck and back pain, irregular movement patterns throughout the working day lead to difficulty in maintaining focus, and decreasing levels of energy. These issues are a part of the larger workplace trend that is being witnessed across the world and in the Indian corporate environment, where sedentary lifestyles and performance pressures are increasing the health risks of employees.

The need to address these issues has arisen as a 'need of the hour' since the well-being of employees has a direct impact on their productivity and performance. Although the existing literature has comprehensively highlighted the prevalence of occupational health issues, most of the studies are cross-sectional in nature, with less focus on structured and integrated intervention models. The need for an effective and preventive wellness program that could improve movement awareness, focus, and healthy habits without interfering with the work process was deemed necessary. Thus, the current module was designed as a Body-Mind-Fuel intervention for corporate employees.

Literature Review

Recently, psychological well-being has become central to organizational research, especially in knowledge intensive environments incorporates which usually demand high cognitive demands, tight performance expectations and deadlines. When employees are exposed to these things over a longer period of time without development of healthy coping mechanisms, burnout and mental stress are inevitable. It consists of a multidimensional syndrome involving reduced professional efficacy, emotional and physical exhaustion, and may even lead to depersonalization in extreme cases (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Burnout not only indicates compromised well-being but also leads to reduction in productivity, engagement and organizational commitment. Some of the emerging research has expanded the view on the burnout models by looking at the cognitive and temporal factors that influence the stress experienced by employees. For example, a balanced time perspective which reflects the adaptive orientation toward past, present, and future has been associated with lower burnout levels in corporate employees, suggesting that cognitive framing of experiences plays a protective role (Stolarski et al., 2022). Adding on to this perspective, investigations into corporate culture highlight how organizational norms, workload structures, and psychosocial climates shape mental health outcomes, influencing stress perception, emotional fatigue, and work-life harmony (Kumar & Priya, 2024). A meta-analysis of "The Working Mind" program reported significant improvements in mental health literacy and reductions in stigma, underscoring the value of structured psychoeducational interventions in occupational settings (Dobson et al., 2019). On similar lines, randomized controlled trials examining mind-body stress reduction programs have documented reductions in stress and improvements in psychological functioning, indicating that integrative approaches combining cognitive and somatic techniques are both effective and viable within corporate contexts (Wolever et al., 2012). Research has also advanced in terms of niche contexts. The physical environment itself contributes to psychological outcomes. Research exploring workplace design in architectural firms suggests that environmental attributes such as spatial layout, lighting, and ergonomics; significantly influence employee productivity and cognitive functioning, highlighting the interconnectedness of mental states and workspace conditions (Rashid & Zimring, 2023).

All these findings reinforce the argument that cognitive, behavioural and environmental factors influence the psychological well-being in corporate settings; and that mindfulness based strategies represent a way to intervene. Among occupational health concerns among office workers, Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) is found to be the most common. Recent cross-sectional research reports a high prevalence of neck and lower back pain, particularly among employees engaged in prolonged desk-based work (Smith et al., 2025). Key ergonomic risk factors which were identified as reasons for contributing to this disease are prolonged sitting, poor workstation postures and insufficient movement breaks. The association of these factors to psychological mechanisms has also been documented. Prolonged sitting has been linked to increased spinal loading, reduced muscular activity, impaired circulation, and elevated risks for metabolic and cardiovascular dysfunction (Parry & Straker, 2017). These sedentary behaviours not only aggravate physical discomfort but also indirectly influence cognitive performance hence affecting workplace efficiency. Together, these studies highlight similar things - MSD prevalence among corporate workers is caused by prolonged static postures, incorrect ergonomics and lack of movement. Hence, an intervention which promotes micro movement breaks, posture correction is empirically supported as a strategy for improving musculoskeletal health. Conceptual perspectives propose that food choices and consciousness are interrelated, with mindful awareness influencing dietary decisions and broader health outcomes (Gogia & Mishra, 2022). This tells us that cognitive and emotional states on an individual effect and shape eating patterns, especially when one is going through occupational stress. Study has also been done in cultural and lifestyle frameworks. Explorations of sattvic dietary practices within contemporary wellness traditions emphasize balance, lightness, and vitality, suggesting that food quality influences not only physical health but also mental clarity and emotional regulation (Newcombe, 2019). However, behaviour research indicates that nutritional choices are distorted by workplace performance pressures. Experimental findings reveal that activation of performance goals increases the consumption of high-calorie foods at the expense of nutritional quality, driven by beliefs equating calories with functional energy (Maimaran & Fishbach, 2020). This ultimately undermines health by providing an illusion of energy dense food when in reality, they are just nutrient poor consumption patterns.

Physiological research offers yet another perspective to this relationship. Studies on fuel partitioning and food intake demonstrate that metabolic processes regulate energy utilization and hunger signaling, indicating that nutritional timing and composition affect both physical and cognitive functioning (Flatt, 1995).

All these findings necessitate interventions that address not only dietary awareness but also cognitive beliefs which influence food behavior.

Theoretical Basis

The design of our intervention also has theoretical backing.

Psychoneuroimmunology of Stress and Mental Health by George M. Slavich

This framework explains how psychological stress doesn't just stay in the mind, it triggers biological responses, particularly within the immune system. Chronic stress can lead to inflammation, which is strongly linked to mental health challenges like anxiety, depression, and burnout.

In simple terms, stress becomes a whole-body experience, not just an emotional one. This helped us justify why stress management needed to be central to our program.

Psychology of Habit - Wendy Wood et al.

This research highlights that much of our daily behavior is driven by habits rather than conscious decisions. Sustainable change happens when behaviors become automatic and context-linked.

So instead of relying on motivation alone, we focused on designing small, repeatable workplace behaviors. The takeaway: consistency beats willpower.

Mindfulness - Five-Facet Mindfulness Model (Baer & colleagues)

This model breaks mindfulness into five skills: observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging, and non-reactivity. It allowed us to move beyond vague ideas of 'being mindful' and instead cultivate specific cognitive-emotional abilities.

In essence, mindfulness became a trainable psychological skillset.

Nutrition, Lifestyle & Workplace Environment - Rafique, Muzammil & Khan (2025)

This study emphasizes that nutrition, daily lifestyle patterns, and environmental conditions significantly influence occupational health and productivity.

Employee performance is deeply tied to physical energy regulation, not just mental effort.

This decision to integrate fuel, movement, and lifestyle elements into the intervention.

Consultation with a Nutritionist

Lastly, to ensure scientific accuracy and practical relevance, dietary guidance and fuel-related recommendations were developed in consultation with a certified nutrition professional.

This ensured our suggestions were safe, evidence-aligned, and realistic for employees.

Methodology

The Mind, Body, Fuel intervention module was designed with a structured and evidence-informed approach to promote holistic well-being among corporate employees. Recognizing the interconnectedness between mental health, physical activity, and nutrition, the approach combined theoretical grounding, review of existing workplace wellness research, and practical insights from corporate contexts. The approach to designing the module was centered on developing time-efficient, experiential, and contextually relevant strategies to address typical workplace issues such as sedentary living, stress, and unhealthy health practices. The module was designed through a series of steps that included theoretical mapping, literature review, activity design, making relevant debriefs for the activities and the development of toolkits with actionable takeaways.

1) Theoretical foundation

The module was rooted in proven psychological and health behavior theories. Theories of biopsychosocial approaches to health helped shape the holistic approach to mental, physical, and nutritional health. Cognitive behavioral approaches helped shape the design of reflective exercises aimed at increasing awareness, managing emotions, and changing behavior. In addition, theories of habit formation and self-regulation helped shape activities aimed at promoting healthy lifestyle habits as part of corporate behavior. These theories helped shape the intervention as preventive, skill-building, and action-oriented rather than information-driven.

2) Reviewing existing researches

A review of research that has been pre-conducted on workplace wellness, burnout, movement-based interventions, nutrition awareness, and mindfulness practices was done. The literature on organizational psychology, occupational health, and behavioral medicine was reviewed to determine the effective components of corporate wellness programs. Special emphasis was placed on studies that emphasized the constraints of time, physical inactivity and stress among corporate workers. Findings from the review helped shape the selection of key themes, formats, and duration of activities to increase impact.

3) Research Gap Analysis

The existing literature on workplace wellness studies revealed that, despite the vast amount of research available on burnout, sedentary behavior, mindfulness, and nutrition, these topics are usually investigated separately. The majority of the literature is cross-sectional and focuses on problem-solving rather than holistic solutions. Moreover, there has been a lack of emphasis on experiential models of behavior that can be easily applied in a time-constrained corporate setting.

This further reinforced the importance of a holistic framework that incorporates psychological, physical, and nutritional elements and promotes healthy habit formation.

4) Activity Design

With the insights from theory and research, activities were developed for interaction in the three areas: mind, body, and fuel. These activities were designed to focus on experiential learning, such as self-reflection exercises, movement breaks, habit-tracking exercises, and nutrition awareness exercises. The activities were designed to be brief, relevant, and adaptable to an office setting. Both individual and group activities were included to promote personal learning while also encouraging Group discussions.

5) Toolkit Creation

To support sustainability of the intervention beyond the sessions, a toolkit of actionables was created. The toolkit consists of cue cards, quick movement guides, hydration reminders, nutrition checklists, and micro-habit templates. The toolkit will facilitate the application of conceptual knowledge to behavioral steps, allowing employees to integrate well-being habits into their daily routines with minimal disruption. The methodology used ensured that the Mind, Body, Fuel intervention module was developed on sound theoretical foundations and was also feasible in a corporate environment. The approach used the combination of research insights and experiential activities to create a sense of relevance, engagement, and feasibility. The toolkits will ensure that the learning will be converted from concepts to actions, making it more sustainable. The approach used ensured that this module is holistic, adaptable, and behavior-centric.

Proposed Structure

Energizer

Start with an energizer to help the participants loosen up a bit and get them energized for the following activities. Since the participants would be seated at one place for a long time, this energizer would help to get them moving and transition into the session smoothly.

Activity 1 - Follow the leader

Participants will stand in a circle. There will be 4-5 (depending on the group size) imposters. They will have certain actions pre-decided. Eg - neck rotation, wrist rotation etc. Once the activity starts, all the participants will march on their spot. The imposters (one at a time) will do their actions. Others have to identify who has started/changed the movement and follow.

Discussion will revolve around making them understand the importance of movement. Movement need not always mean something big like going to the gym or 'working out'. Even small subtle movements like these can help divert your mind, refresh, increase blood flow and ultimately improve focus and productivity.

Activity 2 - Guided Mindful Scan

It is a guided minded scan of the entire body with calming music in the background. Start from the head and move gradually to the toes.

Question - Where did you notice stress/ tense muscles?

Activity 3 - Graph Mapping

Participants will be asked to draw 2 graphs, one which maps time of the day and energy levels and one that measures the time of the day and when/what they eat. Discussions will revolve around

- When/why does energy level increase or deplete?
- How do the 2 graphs influence/ affect each other?

Activity 4 - Energy Currency

Participants will start with energy points (currency). Healthy and unhealthy practices will be read out

Eg - I skipped breakfast today (Unhealthy)

- I had protein in my lunch today (Healthy)

Energy currency will be gained if participants have followed the healthy practice being read out and will get deducted in case of unhealthy ones.

Discussions will revolve around reflection. Insights from the participants are encouraged.

Activity 5 - Concluding commitment Board

Based on the reflections, discussions and insights, participants come up with minimum 3 commitments, 1 towards each - Mind, Body and Fuel and write them on a sticky note. All the sticky notes are collected and will be pasted on a 'commitment board' where it is visible in the workplace.

A buddy system is encouraged to ensure accountability.

Conclusion

The current research makes a contribution to the growing literature on workplace well-being by suggesting the Mind, Body, Fuel intervention as a model for the workplace. The results support the notion that worker functioning is a complex issue that is impacted by the ongoing interaction between mental processes, physical activity, and eating habits. The intervention's focus on experiential learning, reflection, and toolkits goes beyond awareness-raising and

instead aims to support realistic behavioral change. The emphasis on micro-practices and feasibility places the module in the category of a strategy that can be easily implemented in high-demand work environments. Notably, the research fills a gap in the literature by offering a structured model that combines mental health, physical activity, and lifestyle behaviors. Instead of addressing health issues in the workplace in an isolated manner, the Mind, Body, Fuel approach emphasizes the importance of preventive and skill-building strategies that promote energy management, cognitive processing, and emotional well-being. Although the current study concentrates on module design and conceptual validation, future studies could investigate the outcomes of implementation, long-term behavioral change, and organizational impact in various corporate sectors. However, the current intervention serves as a starting point for incorporating the concept of holistic well-being into the organizational culture and promoting preventive strategies in workplace mental health intervention.

Toolkit

We have also designed a toolkit which has some actionable takeaways in the form of placards. We encourage participants to put those up around the workplace and use them as cues for themselves as well as others in order to remind them to move, be mindful or eat healthy. The toolkits include the following -

Mind Actionables	Body Actionables	(Buy and Eat) Actionables	Fuel (Minimal Preparation) Actionables.
1. Ankle rotations	1. Sit tall, pull shoulders back for 10 sec ×3.	1. Banana / Apple / Guava / Orange	1. Sprouts chaat – sprouts + onion + lemon + salt
2. Heel raises	2. Neck up-down, left-right ×5 each.	2. Roasted chana	2. Peanut chaat – boiled peanuts + cucumber + lemon
3. Toe scrunch.	3. Seated spinal twist both sides.	3. Roasted peanuts	3. Vegetable sandwich – brown bread + chutney + veggies
4. Wrist figure-8s	4. Full body scan + stretch arms.	4. Makhana (roasted, plain or masala)	4. Poha – light, less oil, add peanuts & veggies
5. Finger piano	5. Inhale 4, exhale 6 ×5.	5. Dry fruits (small handful) – almonds, peanuts, raisins	5. Upma – small portion, veggie-loaded
6. Palm stretch	6. Imagine string pulling head up.	6. Curd / yogurt cup	6. Curd bowl – curd + roasted jeera + seeds
7. Shoulder blade squeeze & release	7. Reach arms overhead.	7. Boiled eggs (store-bought or carried from home)	7. Murmura bhel – murmura + tomato + onion + peanuts
8. Ear to shoulder touches	8. Stand up for 1 minute.	8. Murmura (puffed rice)	8. Besan chilla – quick batter, pan-made
9. Jaw movement	9. Back extensions.	9. Paneer cubes	9. Roasted makhana (homemade) – control oil & masala

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Journal of Research and Development

A Multidisciplinary International Level Referred and Double-Blind Peer Reviewed, Open Access

ISSN : 2230-9578 | Website: <https://jrdrv.org> Volume-18, Issue-2(XXII) | February - 2026

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Original Article

Relationship between Academic Self-Concept and Adjustment among Management Students

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Manuscript ID:

Abstract

JRD -2026-180227

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 162-165

February - 2026

Submitted: 17 Jan. 2026

Revised: 27 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 12 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between academic self-concept and adjustment among management students and to determine gender differences in these variables. The sample consisted of 100 BBA students (aged 19–21 years) randomly selected from Dr. Ghali College, Gadhinglaj. Standardized tools, namely the Academic Self-Concept Scale and Adjustment Scale for College Students, were used for data collection. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's product-moment correlation, and independent samples t-test were employed for statistical analysis. The results revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between academic self-concept and adjustment ($r = .659, p < .01$), indicating that students with higher academic self-concept tend to demonstrate better adjustment. The mean scores for academic self-concept ($M = 178.28, SD = 35.85$) and adjustment ($M = 36.21, SD = 13.99$) suggest moderate levels of both variables among the participants.

Further analysis showed no significant gender differences in academic self-concept, $t(98) = 1.61, p > .05$, or adjustment, $t(98) = 0.55, p > .05$. The findings indicate that academic self-concept plays an important role in students' adjustment, whereas gender does not significantly influence academic self-concept or adjustment among management students. The study highlights the importance of fostering positive academic self-beliefs to enhance adjustment in higher education settings.

Keywords: Academic Self-Concept, Adjustment, Management Students

Introduction

A great deal of research work regarding self-concept has been done in India and abroad but the work on the academic that is very less. Academic self-concept refers students' attitude, perception, and enjoyment of their subject or class lecture in school. Students' self-perception plays an important role in affecting important role to adjust themselves in school during childhood and adolescence and directing the students' efforts towards their academic works. The multi-dimensional One of the elements of a model of self-concept is that an academic self is one of the vital aspects of self that play a part in individuals' global self-concept, along with social, emotional, and physical self-concept. The concept self-concept is derived from the theory of self-worth Self-concept is normally considered to be an individual's perception based on self-knowledge or experience and formed by interaction with environment and attributes of his or her behavior. Academic self-concept is conceived as student's self-perception regarding specific academic discipline domains or abilities. This multidimensional model of self-concept refers to an important distinction between general self-concept, which comprises cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects, while academic self-concept is related to refers to an individual's perception of their academic competence. Academic cynicism has been defined by Cokley self-concept as the student's perception of his or her academic ability as compared to other students. Whereas Byrne and Shavelson described academic self-concept as which includes a description and an evaluation of one's? Perceived academic competence. In a more comprehensive sense, the importance of such the way Lent et.al. Have explained the academic self-concept as specific attitude, feeling and perceptions about one's intellectual or academic skills representing a person's self-beliefs and self-feeling regarding the academic setting. Researches and multiple sources of empirical data show that for doing well academically, starting with a positive state of mind is essential.

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How to cite this article:

Patil, V. M., & Patil, S. M. (2026). Relationship between Academic Self-Concept and Adjustment among Management Students. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 162–165.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344855>



Quick Response Code:



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DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19344855](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344855)



Self-concept is a critical necessary condition. Students/Individuals with positive self-concept have a tendency to reflect socially acceptable behaviors. Researchers have also supported that academic Self-concept develops through a process of social comparison, which comes into play when students compare their ability with others. At the secondary school level or adolescence, it is usually a period of developmental transition which an individual passes from childhood to maturity. During this transition, adolescents face so much psychological and sociological such as finding pressure in their life. They face psychological maturation, cognitive changes, shifting societal and parental expectations, conflicting role demands, complexity in relation with parents and peers, choice of school and subject and adjustment in the school environment.

Adjustment, as a behavioral process, is defined as balancing conflicting needs, or needs against obstacles in the environment. Humans and animals regularly adjust like this. Adjustment occurs when there is an inability to make a normal adjustment to some needs or stress in the environment.

Some of the definitions of adjustment are as follows:-

Lazarus (2001) defined the concept of adjustment as a way of managing and consists of coping with a number of demands and proves of life.

Good (1995) states adjustment is "the process of finding and adopting modes of behavior which are suitable of the environment or the changes in the environment.

According to Paranmeswaran & Beena (2004), "adjustment is a process that an organism acquires in a" particular way of acting or behaving or changes an existing form of behavior or action.

In general, the four-part adjustment process includes:

1. A need or motive in the form of a strong persistent stimulus
2. The thwarting or non-fulfilment of this need
3. Varied activity, or exploratory behaviour coupled with problem solving
4. Some responses that removes or at least reduces the initiating stimulus

Adjustments are said to be the process through which an individual learns certain ways of behavior to cope with adjustment with the situation, which he/she attains through harmony with his/her social environment. After completing school, many students join different colleges and institutions for their further education. They have to adjust with their own changes in personality on one side and the changing socio-economic the environment on the other side.

Review of literature

Various studies on gender differences have reported that men and women have different academic self-concept. In a study Kling and others reported that males have higher academic self-concept than female. Similarly, Lau conducted a study about Hong Kong adolescents. Results indicate that both academic self-concepts of genders decreased from grade 7 to grade 9 but decrease rate was greater for female students.

On the other hand, Lau indicated that in grade 9, from then on, the academic self-concept of both genders would increase and this increase was greater for the male students. After performing an extensive review of literature, it was found that the relationship between academic self-concept and academic achievement is well instituted outside India. Such researches are needed in-Indian context too.

Dutta ET. al. (1998) carried out a study on the social adjustment of students on a sample of 200 adolescents drawn equally from Assam Agricultural University and Kendriya Vidyalaya district of Jorhat, Assam. Sample of 50 boys and 50 girls of age group 19-21 years were selected. Adjustment inventory for college students developed by Sinha and Singh (1980) were administered, it revealed that there was no significant difference among the boys and girls in the area of social adjustment.

A study undertaken by Muni & Pavigrahi in 1997 focused solely on emotional, social, and total areas of adjustment. The sample consisted of 80 students, (40 boys and 40 girls) from two different schools in Berhampur, Orissa. They found that the girls were better adjusted in the areas of adjustment pattern than the boys.

Objectives

1. To find out the relationship between academic self concept and adjustment among management students
2. To find the difference between academic self concept and adjustment among management students

Hypothesis

1. There will be a positive correlation between academic self concept and adjustment among management students
2. There is no significant difference between male and female among management students on academic self concept
3. There is no significant difference between male and female among management students on adjustment

Method

Sample

To study the relationship between academic self concept and adjustment, 100 (50 male & 50 female) college students were randomly selected studying in department of BBA Part I, II & III in Dr. Ghali college, Gadhinglaj. The age of the student was 19 to 21 years.

Tools

1. Academic Self-Concept

The Academic Self-Concept Scale developed by Dr. Vikas Minchekar (2013) was used to measure students' perception of their academic abilities and competence. The scale consists of 40 statements related to academic performance, confidence, and scholastic ability. It follows a Likert-type response format (e.g., Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree). Scoring is done as per the manual, and higher scores indicate higher academic self-concept, whereas lower scores indicate lower academic self-concept. The scale has satisfactory reliability and validity and is suitable for use with college students.

2. Adjustment scale for College Students

The Adjustment Scale for College Students developed by A. K. P. Sinha and R. P. Sinha (1995) was used to measure the level of adjustment among college students. The scale consists of 102 statements covering areas such as home, health, social, and emotional adjustment. It follows a Yes/No response format. Scoring is done according to the manual, where higher scores indicate greater maladjustment and lower scores indicate better adjustment. The scale has satisfactory reliability and validity and is suitable for use with college students.

Statistical Analysis

- Mean and standard deviation for descriptive analysis,
- Pearson's product moment correlation- to study the relation academic self concept and adjustment
- t test – to find-out difference between male and female on academic self concept and adjustment

Result Tables and Discussion

Table No. 1 Descriptive statistics and correlation between academic self concept and adjustment

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Pearson's r
Academic Self Concept	100	178.28	35.85	.659**
Adjustment		36.21	13.99	

The present study examined the relationship between academic self-concept and adjustment among management students using Pearson's product-moment correlation. The results revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between academic self-concept and adjustment, $r = .659$, $p < .01$, indicating a strong relationship between the two variables.

The mean score for academic self-concept was 178.28 (SD = 35.85), whereas the mean score for adjustment was 36.21 (SD = 13.99). The obtained correlation coefficient suggests that students with higher levels of academic self-concept tend to demonstrate better adjustment.

The strength of the correlation (.659) indicates a moderately strong to strong association, implying that academic self-concept plays an important role in influencing students' adjustment. In other words, management students who perceive themselves as competent and capable in academic settings are more likely to adjust effectively to academic and related demands.

Since the correlation was significant at the 0.01 level, hypothesis no. 1 stating that there will be a positive correlation between academic self concept and adjustment among management students is accepted.

Table No. 2 Descriptive statistics and t value between male and female on academic self concept

Variables	Gender	Mean	SD	df	t
Academic Self Concept	Male	184.00	27.83	98	1.61
	Female	172.56	41.91		

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to examine the difference between male and female management students on academic self-concept. The results indicated that male students ($M = 184.00$, $SD = 27.83$) scored higher on academic self-concept compared to female students ($M = 172.56$, $SD = 41.91$). However, this difference was not statistically significant, $t(98) = 1.61$, $p > .05$.

The obtained *t* value of 1.61 did not reach the conventional level of statistical significance at the 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between male and female management students in academic self-concept was retained.

Table No. 3 Descriptive statistics and t value between male and female on adjustment

Variables	Gender	Mean	SD	df	t
Adjustment	Male	36.98	13.52	98	.55
	Female	35.44	14.56		

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to examine the difference between male and female management students on adjustment. The results revealed that male students ($M = 36.98$, $SD = 13.52$) obtained slightly

higher mean scores on adjustment compared to female students ($M = 35.44$, $SD = 14.56$). However, this difference was not statistically significant, $t(98) = 0.55$, $p > .05$.

The obtained t value of 0.55 indicates that the mean difference between male and female students is very small and statistically non-significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between male and female management students with respect to adjustment was accepted.

Conclusion and Discussion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Academic self-concept is positively and significantly related to adjustment among management students. Students who perceive themselves as academically capable are better adjusted to academic and related demands.
2. Gender does not significantly influence academic self-concept among management students.
3. Gender does not significantly influence adjustment among management students..

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Original Article

Impact of a Positive Psychology Intervention on Psychological Well-Being among Adolescents.

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180228

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 166-171

February - 2026

Submitted: 17 Jan. 2026

Revised: 27 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 12 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Adolescence represents a critical developmental phase characterized by rapid biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional transitions. Increasing academic pressure, peer comparison, digital exposure, and identity exploration often make adolescents vulnerable to stress, anxiety, and diminished psychological well-being. Positive psychology, pioneered by **Martin Seligman**, emphasizes strengths, positive emotions, resilience, and flourishing rather than focusing solely on pathology. School-based positive psychology interventions (PPIs) have demonstrated promising outcomes in enhancing well-being and reducing psychological distress. However, limited empirical research in the Indian context has examined the effectiveness of brief classroom-based positive psychology lectures using experimental designs. The present study aimed to examine the impact of a structured positive psychology lecture on psychological well-being among adolescents using a one-group pre-test post-test design. A sample of 50 adolescents (aged 14–17 years) was selected through purposive sampling from a secondary school. Psychological well-being was assessed using a standardized Psychological Well-Being Scale prior to and one week after the intervention. The intervention consisted of a 60-minute structured lecture covering gratitude, strengths identification, optimism, resilience, and positive relationship building. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and paired sample t-test. Results revealed a statistically significant improvement in post-test well-being scores ($M = 78.64$, $SD = 6.12$) compared to pre-test scores ($M = 69.82$, $SD = 7.45$), $t(49) = 8.92$, $p < .01$. The findings indicate that even a brief positive psychology lecture can significantly enhance adolescents' psychological well-being. The study underscores the importance of integrating positive psychology modules into school mental health programs. Implications for educational policy, limitations, and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Positive psychology, Adolescents, Psychological well-being, School intervention, Pre-test post-test design

Introduction

Adolescence is a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood marked by substantial physical growth, hormonal changes, cognitive expansion, and emotional variability. During this stage, individuals begin to form their identity, establish autonomy, and develop long-term aspirations. However, this developmental period is also associated with heightened vulnerability to psychological stressors. Academic expectations, peer comparison, social media exposure, family conflicts, and career uncertainty contribute to increased emotional strain among adolescents.

Recent global mental health reports highlight a rise in stress, anxiety, and depressive tendencies among adolescents. Traditionally, psychological research and school counselling practices have focused primarily on diagnosing and treating problems. While such approaches are essential, there is growing recognition that mental health is not merely the absence of illness but the presence of well-being, resilience, and positive functioning. Positive psychology emerged at the turn of the 21st century as a scientific movement aimed at understanding and promoting optimal human functioning. Spearheaded by **Martin Seligman**, positive psychology shifts focus from deficits to strengths and from repairing weakness to building competence. The PERMA model proposed by Seligman conceptualizes well-being as comprising Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment.

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How to cite this article:

Rajguru, A. (2026). Impact of a Positive Psychology Intervention on Psychological Well-Being among Adolescents. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 166–171.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344907>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19344907](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344907)



In the school context, fostering positive emotions, gratitude, strengths awareness, and resilience may significantly improve adolescents' psychological adjustment. Several international studies suggest that structured positive psychology interventions (PPIs) in educational settings enhance life satisfaction, emotional regulation, and academic engagement. However, empirical research examining the effectiveness of brief, lecture-based PPIs within Indian schools remains limited. The present study seeks to address this gap by examining whether a single structured positive psychology lecture can significantly enhance psychological well-being among adolescents.

Background of the Study

Psychological well-being is a multidimensional construct encompassing self-acceptance, autonomy, purpose in life, environmental mastery, positive relations, and personal growth. According to humanistic and eudaimonic perspectives, well-being involves realizing one's potential and leading a meaningful life.

Educational institutions play a crucial role in shaping adolescents' emotional and social development. Traditional school systems prioritize academic achievement, often neglecting emotional well-being. Integrating positive psychology principles within classroom settings may serve as a preventive mental health strategy.

Research indicates that gratitude exercises increase positive affect, optimism, and prosocial behavior. Strengths-based approaches improve self-confidence and engagement. Resilience training enhances coping skills and stress management. Despite these findings, most interventions involve multiple sessions over extended periods. The effectiveness of short, structured psychoeducational lectures remains underexplored.

This study investigates whether even a brief, structured exposure to positive psychology concepts can create measurable improvements in well-being.

Research Problem

Does a structured positive psychology lecture significantly improve psychological well-being among adolescents?

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the baseline psychological well-being of adolescents.
2. To conduct a structured positive psychology lecture.
3. To measure post-intervention psychological well-being.
4. To compare pre-test and post-test scores using paired sample t-test.
5. To determine the effectiveness of a brief positive psychology intervention.

Hypothesis

H₁: There will be a significant difference between pre-test and post-test psychological well-being scores of adolescents following the positive psychology lecture.

Review of Literature

Positive psychology interventions (PPIs) have received increasing empirical attention over the past two decades, with research demonstrating their effectiveness in enhancing psychological well-being across diverse populations. A foundational meta-analysis by Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) reported that PPIs significantly increased happiness and reduced depressive symptoms across various age groups. The authors concluded that structured activities such as gratitude journaling, acts of kindness, and optimism exercises produce meaningful improvements in well-being, particularly when participants actively engage in the exercises. Similarly, Bolier et al. (2013) conducted a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials examining the effects of PPIs delivered both online and face-to-face. The study found small to moderate effect sizes for improvements in subjective well-being and reductions in psychological distress. Importantly, the findings suggested that structured, theory-driven interventions yield stronger and more sustainable outcomes compared to informal positive activities. Expanding on this evidence base, Carr et al. (2021) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of positive psychology interventions across age groups. The results indicated significant improvements in well-being, life satisfaction, and reductions in anxiety and depression symptoms. The study highlighted that interventions implemented in educational settings were particularly effective for adolescents, as schools provide structured environments that facilitate consistent engagement.

Tejada-Gallardo et al. (2020) specifically examined school-based multicomponent positive psychology programs targeting adolescents. Their systematic review and meta-analysis found significant improvements in emotional regulation, resilience, and life satisfaction. The authors emphasized that school-based interventions not only enhance psychological functioning but also contribute to improved classroom climate and peer relationships. Research focusing on gratitude interventions has also demonstrated promising outcomes. Froh et al. (2008) found that adolescents who participated in gratitude exercises reported higher levels of optimism, life satisfaction, and positive affect compared to control groups. The study suggested that cultivating gratitude enhances adolescents' ability to reframe challenges positively and strengthens social bonds. Strengths-based interventions have similarly shown beneficial effects. Seligman et al. (2009) introduced the concept of positive education, integrating character strengths into classroom instruction. Their findings indicated improvements in engagement, academic performance, and overall well-being. Encouraging students to identify and apply their strengths fosters self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation. Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory further provides theoretical support for positive psychology

interventions. The theory posits that positive emotions broaden individuals' thought-action repertoires and build enduring personal resources such as resilience and social support. Empirical research grounded in this framework has demonstrated that cultivating positive emotions enhances adaptive coping and psychological growth. Shoshani and Steinmetz (2014) evaluated a school-based positive psychology program and found significant reductions in stress and improvements in self-esteem and emotional adjustment among adolescents. The study concluded that structured interventions delivered within the school context are effective preventive mental health strategies. Finally, Waters et al. (2015) examined the implementation of positive education frameworks in schools and reported improvements in student engagement, well-being, and teacher-student relationships. Their findings reinforce the importance of integrating positive psychology principles into educational policy and curriculum design.

Research Gap

Although the global body of research strongly supports the effectiveness of Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs) in enhancing well-being, several conceptual and methodological gaps remain, particularly within the Indian educational context. Most existing studies have been conducted in Western countries, where socio-cultural dynamics, educational systems, and mental health awareness differ significantly from those in India. Cultural factors such as collectivism, academic competition, parental expectations, and socio-economic diversity may influence how adolescents perceive and respond to positive psychology interventions. Therefore, findings from Western populations cannot be directly generalized to Indian adolescents without empirical validation. Another important gap lies in the research design commonly used in previous studies. While many investigations employ randomized controlled trials and longitudinal designs, a significant number rely on multi-session or long-term intervention models. Limited attention has been given to brief, structured, single-session interventions that are feasible within regular school schedules. In resource-constrained educational environments, especially in developing countries, schools may not have the infrastructure, trained psychologists, or time to conduct extended intervention programs. Therefore, examining the effectiveness of short-duration, lecture-based positive psychology modules becomes practically significant. Furthermore, several Indian studies on adolescent mental health focus predominantly on problem-based constructs such as stress, anxiety, depression or behavioral issues. Comparatively fewer studies adopt a strength-based, preventive framework rooted in positive psychology. There remains a lack of experimental research employing a one-group pre-test post-test design to measure measurable changes in psychological well-being following a structured classroom intervention. Empirical evidence assessing immediate cognitive and emotional shifts after psychoeducational lectures is particularly limited.

Additionally, while constructs such as gratitude, resilience, and optimism have been studied independently, fewer studies have examined an integrated positive psychology lecture combining these components within a single structured session. The cumulative impact of introducing multiple positive constructs simultaneously has not been sufficiently explored among adolescents in school settings. There is also limited data on the magnitude of effect sizes in such brief interventions, which is crucial for determining practical significance.

Therefore, the present study attempts to address these gaps by implementing a structured positive psychology lecture in an Indian secondary school context using a pre-test post-test experimental design. By examining measurable differences in psychological well-being before and after the intervention, the study contributes context-specific empirical evidence and evaluates the feasibility of implementing brief preventive mental health strategies within regular academic environments.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a one-group pre-test post-test experimental design.

Sample

The present study comprised a sample of 50 adolescents drawn from a secondary school in India. The participants included 25 male and 25 female students, ensuring equal gender representation within the group. The age of the participants ranged between 14 and 17 years, corresponding to the middle and late adolescent developmental stages. This age group was selected because adolescence represents a critical period for emotional regulation, identity formation, and the development of psychological well-being. Studying individuals within this developmental window allows for a meaningful assessment of preventive mental health interventions.

Purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who met the specific objectives of the study. This non-probability sampling method was considered appropriate because the research aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured positive psychology lecture within a defined educational setting. The selected school provided accessibility, administrative permission, and a supportive environment for conducting the intervention. Efforts were made to ensure that the sample reflected typical school-going adolescents in terms of academic background and socio-cultural environment.

The inclusion criteria for participation required that students be between 14 and 17 years of age, regularly attending school, and willing to participate voluntarily in the study. Regular attendance was considered important to ensure consistency during both pre-test and post-test assessments. Informed consent was obtained from the school authorities,

and students were briefed about the purpose of the study prior to participation. Only those who expressed willingness to participate were included, thereby maintaining ethical standards and ensuring voluntary engagement in the intervention process.

Tool Used:

Psychological well-being was assessed using a standardized Psychological Well-Being Scale, a self-report instrument designed to measure multiple dimensions of positive psychological functioning. The scale evaluates six core components of well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. These dimensions collectively reflect a eudaimonic perspective of well-being, emphasizing optimal functioning, meaningful engagement, and self-realization rather than merely the absence of distress. Participants were required to respond to a series of statements using a Likert-type response format, indicating the extent to which each statement described their feelings or experiences.

The instrument has demonstrated strong psychometric properties in previous research. The internal consistency reliability of the scale is satisfactory, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient greater than .80, indicating high reliability and consistency among the items. In terms of validity, the scale has established construct validity through factor-analytic procedures and empirical studies supporting its multidimensional structure. The tool has been widely used in adolescent and adult populations, making it suitable for assessing psychological well-being within the present study.

Intervention

A 60-minute structured positive psychology lecture including:

1. Introduction to positive psychology
2. Understanding positive emotions
3. Gratitude exercise
4. Strength identification activity
5. Optimism training
6. Resilience-building techniques
7. Group reflection

Students were encouraged to practice gratitude journaling for one week.

Procedure

1. Rapport established with participants.
2. Pre-test administered.
3. Positive psychology lecture conducted.
4. One-week practice period.
5. Post-test administered.

Statistical Analysis

- Mean
- Standard Deviation
- Paired Sample t-test

Results: Descriptive Statistics

Test	N	Mean	SD
Pre-test	50	69.82	7.45
Post-test	50	78.64	6.12

Paired Sample t-test

$T(49) = 8.92, p < .01$

The descriptive statistics revealed that the mean psychological well-being score of adolescents increased from 69.82 (SD = 7.45) in the pre-test to 78.64 (SD = 6.12) in the post-test, with a total sample size of 50 participants. The noticeable rise in the mean score suggests an improvement in overall psychological well-being following the structured positive psychology lecture. The relatively lower standard deviation in the post-test indicates slightly reduced variability in scores, suggesting more consistent well-being levels among participants after the intervention.

To determine whether this improvement was statistically significant, a paired sample t-test was conducted comparing pre-test and post-test scores. The analysis yielded a t-value of 8.92 with 49 degrees of freedom, which was significant at the 0.01 level ($p < .01$). This indicates that the observed difference between pre-test and post-test scores was not due to chance. Therefore, it can be concluded that the positive psychology intervention produced a statistically significant enhancement in adolescents' psychological well-being.

Discussion:

The findings of the present study demonstrate a statistically significant improvement in adolescents' psychological well-being following the structured positive psychology lecture. The large effect size obtained indicates not only statistical significance but also substantial practical significance, suggesting that the intervention had a meaningful impact on participants' overall psychological functioning. The observed increase in post-test scores reflects

improvements in positive emotions, resilience, optimism, and self-acceptance—core components of psychological well-being. These results are consistent with previous research, particularly the findings of Carr et al. (2021) and Tejada-Gallardo et al. (2020), who reported significant positive outcomes of school-based positive psychology interventions among adolescents. The effectiveness of a brief, single-session intervention further suggests that even minimal structured exposure to positive psychology principles can positively influence adolescents' cognitive patterns, emotional regulation, and overall mindset. In the Indian educational context, where students often experience intense academic competition and performance pressure, such brief and cost-effective interventions may serve as practical preventive mental health strategies, promoting resilience and emotional balance within school environments.

Educational and Practical Implications

The findings of the present study carry significant educational and practical implications for schools and policymakers. First, the demonstrated effectiveness of the positive psychology lecture suggests that structured positive psychology modules can be systematically incorporated into the school curriculum as part of holistic education. Embedding topics such as gratitude, resilience, optimism, and strengths identification within regular classroom teaching can promote students' emotional well-being alongside academic achievement. Second, teacher training programs should include orientation in strengths-based approaches so that educators can recognize and nurture students' individual talents and positive qualities. Teachers play a central role in shaping classroom climate, and equipping them with positive psychology principles can foster supportive and growth-oriented learning environments.

Furthermore, schools may develop structured well-being programs that include regular workshops, reflective exercises, and group activities aimed at enhancing psychological resilience and social connectedness. Such programs can function as preventive mental health strategies rather than reactive measures. Finally, integrating positive psychology concepts with existing life skills education can create a comprehensive framework for adolescent development. Life skills such as emotional regulation, decision-making, and interpersonal communication can be strengthened through positive psychology practices, thereby contributing to balanced personality development and long-term psychological flourishing.

Limitations

Despite the significant findings, the present study has certain limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the absence of a control group limits the ability to conclusively attribute the observed improvements solely to the positive psychology intervention, as external factors may have influenced the results. Second, the sample size was relatively small ($N = 50$), which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to a broader adolescent population. Larger and more diverse samples would enhance the robustness and external validity of future studies. Third, the study employed a short follow-up duration, assessing well-being only one week after the intervention. Consequently, the long-term sustainability of the intervention effects remains uncertain. Finally, the use of a self-report measure may have introduced response bias, as participants might have provided socially desirable answers. Future research incorporating control groups, larger samples, longer follow-up periods, and mixed-method assessment approaches would strengthen the evidence base for school-based positive psychology interventions.

Future Research Directions

Future research should build upon the findings of the present study by adopting more rigorous and comprehensive research designs. Conducting randomized controlled trials would strengthen causal inferences by comparing intervention groups with control groups under controlled conditions. Such designs would provide more robust evidence regarding the effectiveness of positive psychology interventions in school settings. Additionally, future studies should include larger and more diverse samples drawn from different regions, types of schools, and socio-cultural backgrounds to enhance the generalizability of findings. Expanding the sample size would also allow for more advanced statistical analyses and subgroup comparisons.

Longitudinal research designs are also recommended to examine the sustainability of intervention effects over extended periods. Assessing psychological well-being at multiple follow-up intervals would help determine whether improvements are temporary or enduring. Furthermore, comparative studies across gender and socio-economic groups could provide valuable insights into whether positive psychology interventions produce differential effects among various demographic categories. Such investigations would contribute to the development of culturally sensitive and inclusive well-being programs tailored to the diverse needs of adolescents.

Conclusion

The present study provides empirical evidence that a structured positive psychology lecture can significantly enhance psychological well-being among adolescents. The statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores indicates that even a brief, school-based intervention focusing on gratitude, strengths identification, optimism, and resilience can positively influence adolescents' emotional and cognitive functioning. The large effect size further demonstrates that the intervention was not only statistically significant but also practically meaningful. These findings reinforce the theoretical foundations of positive psychology proposed by Martin Seligman, which emphasize the cultivation of strengths and positive emotions as pathways to flourishing.

The results contribute to the growing body of literature suggesting that preventive mental health interventions are more sustainable and developmentally appropriate than purely remedial approaches. Rather than waiting for psychological

difficulties to emerge, structured positive psychology programs proactively equip adolescents with coping skills, adaptive thinking patterns, and emotional regulation strategies. By enhancing positive affect and self-awareness, such interventions may reduce vulnerability to stress, anxiety, and low self-esteem. The school setting provides an ideal and accessible platform for implementing these preventive strategies, ensuring that mental health promotion becomes an integral component of holistic education.

Furthermore, the findings highlight the transformative potential of integrating positive psychology principles within mainstream educational systems. Adolescents today face multiple challenges, including academic competition, social comparison, and digital pressures. Teaching them how to recognize their strengths, cultivate gratitude, and maintain optimistic perspectives can foster resilience and improve peer relationships. Positive school climates that prioritize well-being alongside academic achievement are likely to produce students who are not only intellectually competent but also emotionally balanced and socially responsible.

In conclusion, promoting psychological well-being during adolescence is an investment in long-term societal health. Strengthening positive emotions, purpose in life, and personal growth during this formative stage lays the foundation for healthy adulthood, adaptive coping, and productive citizenship. Although the present study was limited by sample size and design constraints, the findings strongly advocate for the incorporation of structured positive psychology modules in school curricula. Future research employing larger samples and longitudinal designs can further validate and extend these findings, contributing to the development of evidence-based school mental health programs.

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Original Article

Quarter-Life Crisis and Life Satisfaction among Emerging Adults in India: A Correlational Study

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180229

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 172-175

February - 2026

Submitted: 17 Jan. 2026

Revised: 27 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 12 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Early adulthood (20–29 years) represents a pivotal developmental period characterized by identity consolidation, career establishment, relational commitments, and increasing autonomy. Within this transitional phase, many individuals report experiences commonly described as a quarter-life crisis (QLC), marked by emotional distress, uncertainty, and perceived instability. Life satisfaction, defined as a global cognitive evaluation of one's life, constitutes a central component of subjective well-being and psychological adjustment. Despite increasing discourse on QLC, empirical investigations examining its association with life satisfaction in the Indian context remain limited. The present study examined the relationship between quarter-life crisis and life satisfaction among Indian emerging adults and tested the hypothesis that higher developmental distress would be associated with lower life satisfaction. A quantitative correlational design was employed. Data were collected through an online survey from 209 participants; following screening, the final sample comprised 193 individuals aged 20–29 years across India. Quarter-life crisis was assessed using the Developmental Crisis Questionnaire (DCQ-12), and life satisfaction was measured using the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS). Independent samples t-tests were conducted to examine gender differences. Due to significant deviations from normality (Shapiro–Wilk, $p < .05$), Spearman's rank-order correlation was applied. Results indicated no significant gender differences in life satisfaction, $t(191) = -0.61$, $p = .545$, or quarter-life crisis, $t(191) = -1.02$, $p = .309$. A significant moderate negative correlation was found between QLC and life satisfaction ($p = -.499$, $p < .001$), suggesting that greater developmental distress is associated with reduced life satisfaction. The findings provide context-specific evidence relevant to counseling psychology, educational institutions, and youth mental health policy in India, thereby contributing to the integration of developmental research with applied psychological practice.

Keywords: Quarter-life crisis; Life satisfaction; Emerging adulthood; Developmental distress; India

Introduction

Background

Early adulthood has increasingly been conceptualized as a distinct developmental stage characterized by exploration, instability, and identity consolidation (Arnett, 2004). Between the ages of 20 and 29, individuals navigate transitions involving higher education completion, career establishment, financial independence, and long-term relational commitments. Although this phase offers opportunities for growth and autonomy, it also entails heightened uncertainty and psychological strain.

Within this context, the construct of *quarter-life crisis* (QLC) has emerged to describe a period of emotional turmoil, confusion, and perceived instability during the transition into adult roles (Robbins & Wilner, 2001). Experiences of indecision, dissatisfaction, and fear of failure are frequently reported, particularly when expectations regarding career or relationships are unmet. While popular discourse has widely adopted the term, systematic empirical examination, especially in non-Western contexts, remains comparatively limited. Life satisfaction, defined as an individual's global cognitive evaluation of their life (Diener et al., 1985), represents a key indicator of subjective well-being. It reflects not merely the absence of distress but an evaluative judgment about the quality and direction of one's life. Given that developmental instability may disrupt perceived goal attainment and self-efficacy, examining its relationship with life satisfaction is theoretically and clinically meaningful.

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How to cite this article:

Basaiye, V., & Karlekar, S. (2026). Quarter-Life Crisis and Life Satisfaction among Emerging Adults in India: A Correlational Study. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 172–175. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344988>



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DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19344988](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19344988)



Research Problem

Although theoretical models suggest that developmental crises during early adulthood may undermine well-being, empirical studies directly linking QLC to life satisfaction remain scarce, particularly in India. Existing Indian research has primarily examined predictors of well-being, such as hope, resilience, or social support, without explicitly addressing developmental crisis as a contextual variable. Consequently, there is limited evidence to guide culturally informed psychological interventions targeting transitional distress among Indian emerging adults. India's sociocultural landscape intensifies developmental pressures. Expectations surrounding academic excellence, financial contribution, occupational stability, and timely marriage may amplify feelings of inadequacy or uncertainty. Without empirical data examining how these experiences relate to life satisfaction, mental health services risk overlooking a significant transitional vulnerability.

Objectives

The present study aimed to:

1. Examine the prevalence and intensity of the quarter-life crisis among Indian adults aged 20–29 years.
2. Assess levels of life satisfaction within this age group.
3. Investigate the relationship between quarter-life crisis and life satisfaction.
4. Determine whether a significant negative correlation exists between these constructs.

Significance of the Study

This investigation contributes to bridging research and practice by translating a widely discussed developmental phenomenon into measurable psychological constructs. By empirically examining QLC within an Indian sample, the study addresses a context-specific research gap and provides data relevant to counseling psychology, campus mental health services, and youth-focused policy initiatives. Understanding the association between developmental distress and life satisfaction may inform early identification, preventive intervention, and resilience-building strategies tailored to Indian emerging adults.

Review of Literature

Theoretical Foundations

The concept of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004) provides a developmental framework for understanding QLC. This stage is marked by identity exploration, instability, and self-focus, often accompanied by uncertainty regarding long-term commitments. From a psychosocial perspective, unresolved identity consolidation may contribute to distress and self-doubt. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) offers further conceptual grounding. Life satisfaction is enhanced when psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled. Developmental disruptions that hinder perceived autonomy or competence, such as career uncertainty, may therefore diminish life satisfaction. Domain-specific and dispositional models of life satisfaction (Heller et al., 2004) also suggest that evaluations of career progress, relationships, and future prospects significantly influence global life judgments. Thus, developmental crises affecting these domains may negatively impact well-being.

Empirical Studies on Quarter-Life Crisis

Robbins and Wilner (2001) initially described QLC through qualitative interviews highlighting dissatisfaction, identity confusion, and career-related anxiety. Subsequent investigations identified financial stress and employment instability as central contributors (Olson-Madden, 2007). Atwood and Scholtz (2008) characterized early adulthood as a period of heightened vulnerability to self-doubt amid expanding responsibilities. Institutional contexts further shape experiences of crisis. Black (2010) observed that graduate students reporting QLC identified academic pressure and relational transitions as key stressors. Recent research underscores the buffering role of resilience and social support (Alamsyah et al., 2024; Zahara & Amalia, 2024). Despite these contributions, quantitative research directly examining the psychological correlates of QLC remains limited, and Indian data are particularly scarce.

Empirical Studies on Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction research consistently demonstrates associations with psychological resources and social support. Diener et al. (1985) established its measurement framework through the SWLS. Subsequent studies linked higher life satisfaction with gratitude (Adler & Fagley, 2005), positive future orientation (MacLeod & Conway, 2005), and emotional support (Barger et al., 2009). In India, Dwivedi and Rastogi (2020) reported that hope and future time perspective significantly predicted life satisfaction among undergraduates. These findings suggest that adaptive cognitive and emotional resources are central to well-being during transitions.

Research Gap

Although developmental instability and reduced well-being are conceptually aligned, few studies have empirically examined the direct relationship between QLC and life satisfaction. Within India, research has focused on protective factors rather than crisis-related distress. The absence of quantitative evidence limits the development of contextually

relevant psychological interventions. The present study addresses this gap by empirically testing the association between QLC and life satisfaction among Indian emerging adults.

Methodology

Design

A quantitative correlational design was employed to examine the association between quarter-life crisis and life satisfaction without manipulating variables.

Sample

Data were initially collected from 209 emerging adults across India. After screening and outlier removal, the final sample consisted of 193 participants aged 20–29 years. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained.

Tools

Developmental Crisis Questionnaire (DCQ-12; Petrov et al., 2022).

A 12-item measure assessing developmental distress across three dimensions. Responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicate greater crisis severity. Reported reliability includes Cronbach's $\alpha = .78$.

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985).

A 5-item measure of global life satisfaction rated on a 7-point scale. Internal consistency ranges from $\alpha = .79$ –.89, with strong test–retest reliability.

Procedure

Data were collected via an online Google Forms survey. Participants completed demographic items followed by the DCQ-12 and SWLS. Average completion time was approximately 7–8 minutes. Confidentiality and ethical standards were maintained.

Data Analysis

Data were scored in Microsoft Excel and analyzed using JASP. Descriptive statistics were computed. Independent samples *t*-tests examined gender differences. Due to significant deviations from normality (Shapiro–Wilk, $p < .05$), Spearman's rank-order correlation was applied. Statistical significance was set at $p < .05$.

Results and Discussion

Preliminary Findings

Independent samples *t*-tests indicated no significant gender differences in life satisfaction, $t(191) = -0.61$, $p = .545$, or quarter-life crisis, $t(191) = -1.02$, $p = .309$. Shapiro–Wilk tests revealed deviations from normality; therefore, Spearman's correlation was conducted.

Correlational Findings

A significant moderate negative correlation was found between QLC and life satisfaction ($\rho = -.499$, $p < .001$, $n = 193$). The hypothesis was supported.

Analytical Discussion

The findings indicate that higher developmental distress is moderately associated with lower global life satisfaction among Indian emerging adults. The magnitude of the relationship suggests that QLC constitutes a meaningful, though not exclusive, determinant of well-being.

The absence of gender differences implies that transitional stressors operate across gender groups within the Indian sociocultural environment. Rapid socioeconomic changes, competitive educational systems, and evolving career landscapes may exert comparable pressures on young men and women.

Importantly, the moderate correlation underscores that life satisfaction is shaped by multiple interacting variables. Protective factors such as resilience, hope, and social support likely mediate or buffer the impact of crisis experiences. Thus, QLC should be conceptualized not as a deterministic condition but as a contextual risk factor within broader psychosocial systems.

Bridging Research and Practice

The study advances integration between developmental research and applied psychology by empirically validating QLC as a measurable construct linked to well-being in India. Practical applications include:

- Screening for developmental distress in university counseling centers.
- Integrating career-guidance and resilience-training modules in higher education curricula.

- Designing psychoeducational workshops addressing transitional uncertainty.
- Informing youth mental health policy during critical career and educational transitions.

By grounding intervention planning in empirical evidence, the study strengthens the research–practice continuum emphasized by the conference theme.

Conclusion

Summary

The study identified a significant moderate negative association between quarter-life crisis and life satisfaction among Indian emerging adults. No gender differences were observed. The findings confirm that developmental distress during early adulthood is meaningfully linked to reduced well-being.

Implications

The results support the recognition of QLC as a legitimate psychological concern within Indian counseling and educational settings. Interventions emphasizing resilience, adaptive coping, and structured career support may enhance life satisfaction during transitional phases.

Limitations

The study utilized self-report measures and a cross-sectional design, limiting causal inference. Online sampling may restrict representativeness. Cultural validation of the DCQ-12 within Indian populations warrants further examination.

Future Directions

Longitudinal research may clarify causal pathways between developmental distress and well-being. Future studies may examine mediating variables such as resilience or social support and explore regional or socioeconomic variations within India.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Original Article

The Impact of FOMO and Emotional Contagion on Decision Regret and Self-Esteem in Adults.

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180230

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 176-180

February - 2026

Submitted: 17 Jan. 2026

Revised: 27 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 12 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract:

The present study examines the influence of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and emotional contagion on decision regret and self-esteem among adults. FOMO refers to the pervasive apprehension that others may be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent, while emotional contagion refers to the tendency to automatically mimic and internalize the emotions of others. Both constructs are believed to influence emotional and cognitive processes that may shape satisfaction with personal decisions and overall self-evaluation. A total of 70 adult participants were recruited using convenience sampling. Standardized self-report instruments were administered to measure FOMO, emotional contagion, decision regret, and self-esteem. Data were analyzed using SPSS Version 19. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis were conducted. Results indicated a significant positive relationship between FOMO and decision regret. However, emotional contagion did not show a statistically significant relationship with decision regret or self-esteem, and FOMO did not significantly predict self-esteem. The findings highlight the role of social comparison processes in shaping decision-related emotional outcomes.

Keywords: FOMO, Emotional Contagion, Self-Esteem, Decision Regret

Introduction

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) refers to the persistent concern that others are experiencing rewarding events without one's participation, leading to a strong desire to stay socially connected. The concept was defined by Andrew K. Przybylski (2013) and is theoretically grounded in the Self-Determination Theory proposed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan. In digital environments, constant exposure to others' curated experiences increases social comparison and emotional distress. Emotional Contagion Emotional contagion is the process through which individuals unconsciously absorb the emotions of others through observation or interaction. Introduced by Elaine Hatfield and colleagues (1994), it explains how emotional states spread across individuals. In social media contexts, exposure to positive or negative online content can directly influence users' own emotional experiences. Decision regret refers to regret or dissatisfaction experienced after making a choice, especially when alternative outcomes appear better in hindsight. This concept is supported by Prospect Theory developed by Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky (1979), which explains how people evaluate outcomes relative to expectations. Social media exposure often intensifies such post-decision comparisons. Self-Esteem Self-esteem is the overall evaluation of one's personal worth or value. According to Sociometer Theory by Mark R. Leary and Roy F. Baumeister and Social Comparison Theory by Leon Festinger, self-esteem is influenced by perceived social acceptance and comparisons with others. Frequent online comparisons may contribute to reduced self-esteem.

Significance of the study;

This study is significant because it examines how modern digital experiences influence psychological well-being by exploring the relationships between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), emotional contagion, self-esteem, and decision regret among young adults. It highlights that frequent online comparison can affect self-evaluation and emotional experiences, particularly showing a meaningful link between FOMO and self-esteem.



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19345091](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19345091)



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How to cite this article:

Dhamanikar, S., & Kolekar, R. (2026). The Impact of FOMO and Emotional Contagion on Decision Regret and Self-Esteem in Adults. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 176–180. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19345091>

The findings have practical relevance for counseling and mental health interventions by emphasizing the need to strengthen self-worth in digitally active populations, while also guiding future research on contextual factors affecting emotional outcomes. Socially, the study contributes to understanding how constant exposure to curated online content may shape self-image, increase insecurity, and influence mental health, thereby supporting the development of healthier digital habits and resilience among young people. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the growing need for digital awareness and preventive interventions that help individuals critically interpret online content and reduce unhealthy social comparison. By encouraging balanced social media use and emotional regulation strategies, the findings support the promotion of long-term psychological resilience in the digital age.

Statement of the problem;

“The Impact of FOMO and Emotional Contagion on Decision Disappointment and Self-Esteem in Adults. ”

Objective

1. To assess the relationship between FOMO and decision disappointment.
2. To assess the relationship between emotional contagion and decision disappointment.
3. To assess the relationship between FOMO and self-esteem.
4. To assess the relationship between emotional contagion and self-esteem.

Hypothesis

1. Higher FOMO will be positively correlated with greater decision disappointment.
2. Higher emotional contagion will be positively correlated with greater decision disappointment.
3. Higher FOMO will be negatively correlated with self-esteem.
4. Higher emotional contagion will be negatively correlated with self-esteem.

Methodology

Research Design

The present study adopted a cross-sectional, non-experimental, correlational survey design to examine the relationships between Fear of Missing out (FOMO), emotional contagion, decision regret, and self-esteem among young adults. This design was selected to explore the predictive associations among psychological variables without manipulating any conditions.

Participants

The study consisted of 70 participants aged between 18 and 30 years. All participants were active users of social media platforms and belonged to the young adult population.

Sampling Technique

Participants were selected using convenience sampling through online platforms and academic networks. This method was chosen due to accessibility and feasibility for online data collection.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria Inclusion Criteria:

- Individuals aged between 18–30 years
 - Active users of social media
 - Participants who provided informed consent
 - Participants who completed all questionnaire items
- Exclusion Criteria:
- Incomplete responses
 - Participants outside the defined age range
- Variables
- Independent Variables:

- Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)
- Emotional Contagion
- Decision Regret
- Self-Esteem
- Control Variables:
- Age
- Gender
- Education

Social media usage Tools Used

1. FOMO Scale developed by Andrew K. Przybylski
2. Emotional Contagion Scale developed by Elaine Hatfield
3. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale developed by Morris Rosenberg
4. Decision Regret Scale developed by Michael J. Brehaut

All instruments were standardized self-report measures with established reliability and validity. Procedure

Data were collected using standardized questionnaires administered through Google Forms.

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study before participation. Informed consent was obtained, and

confidentiality was assured. Participation was voluntary, and participants were allowed to withdraw at any stage of the study.

Statistical Analysis

The collected data were screened and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 19). Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis were conducted to examine relationships among the variables.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines were strictly followed throughout the research process. Participants were informed about the nature of the study, confidentiality of responses, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. No identifying information was collected, ensuring anonymity.

Result and discussion

1. Descriptive statistics table

Variables	Mean	Std. deviation
FOMO	22.9667	7.16623
Emotional contagion	56.3000	10.62504
Self esteem	22.5500	2.31007
Decision regret	20.8333	4.33420

Descriptive statistics were computed to understand the overall distribution of the study variables. The mean score for Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) was 22.97 (SD = 7.17), indicating moderate variability in participants' levels of FOMO. Emotional contagion showed a mean of 56.30 (SD = 10.63), suggesting noticeable differences in how participants experience and absorb others' emotions. The mean score for self-esteem was 22.55 (SD = 2.31), reflecting relatively low variability and more consistent self-evaluations across participants. Decision regret had a mean score of 20.83 (SD = 4.33), indicating moderate variation in post-decision dissatisfaction. Overall, the standard deviations suggest that emotional contagion and FOMO displayed greater variability compared to self-esteem, while decision regret showed moderate dispersion within the sample (N = 70).

Correlation

Table 1

Spearman Correlation between FOMO and Decision Regret (N = 70)

Variables	1.FOMO	2.Decision Regret
1.FOMO	1	.455**
2.Decision Regret	.455**	1

A Spearman correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and decision regret among participants (N = 70). The results showed a moderate positive correlation ($\rho = .455$), indicating that higher FOMO is associated with higher decision regret. The relationship was statistically significant ($p = .001$, one-tailed), suggesting that individuals with greater FOMO are more likely to experience dissatisfaction with their decisions. Therefore, the hypothesis proposing a significant relationship between FOMO and decision regret was supported.

Table 2 Spearman Correlation between Emotional Contagion and Decision Regret (N=70)

A Spearman correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between emotional contagion and decision regret among participants (N = 70). The results showed a very weak positive correlation ($\rho = .028$), indicating minimal association between the variables. The relationship was not statistically significant ($p > .05$), suggesting that emotional contagion was not significantly related to decision regret in the present study. Therefore, the hypothesis proposing a significant relationship between emotional contagion and decision regret was not supported.

Table 3 Spearman Correlation between FOMO and Self-Esteem (N=70)

Variables	1. Emotional Contagion	2. Decision Regret
1. Emotional Contagion	1	0.028
2. Decision Regret	0.028	1
Variables	1. FOMO	2. Self esteem
1.FOMO	1	0.030
2. Self esteem	0.030	1

A Spearman correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and self-esteem among participants (N = 70). The results showed a very weak positive correlation ($\rho = .030$), indicating minimal association between the variables. The relationship was not statistically significant ($p > .05$), suggesting that FOMO was not significantly related to self-esteem in the present study. Therefore, the hypothesis proposing a significant relationship between FOMO and self-esteem was not supported.

Table 4 Spearman Correlation Between Emotional Contagion and Self-Esteem

Variables	1.Emotional Contagion	2.Self esteem
1.Emotional contagion	1	0.040
2.Self Esteem	0.040	1

A Spearman correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between emotional contagion and self-esteem among participants ($N = 70$). The results showed a very weak positive correlation ($p = .040$), indicating minimal association between the variables. The relationship was not statistically significant ($p > .05$), suggesting that emotional contagion was not significantly related to self-esteem in the present study. Therefore, the hypothesis proposing a significant relationship between emotional contagion and self-esteem was not supported.

Discussion

The present study examined the relationships among Fear of Missing out (FOMO), emotional contagion, self-esteem, and decision-related regret in young adults. Descriptive statistics indicated moderate levels of FOMO and emotional contagion, average self-esteem, and mild to moderate decision regret, with adequate variability among participants. The data were approximately normally distributed, permitting the use of Pearson correlation analysis.

Correlation results revealed a significant positive relationship between FOMO and decision regret, indicating that participants with higher FOMO tended to experience greater regret regarding their decisions. This suggests that individuals who frequently worry about missing opportunities may be more likely to doubt or reconsider their choices. However, the relationship between FOMO and emotional contagion was not statistically significant, and emotional contagion also did not significantly correlate with self-esteem or decision regret. Additionally, FOMO did not significantly predict self-esteem. Thus, all other hypotheses were rejected.

The lack of significant findings for emotional contagion and self-esteem may be explained by coping strategies, cultural influences, personality differences, and social support, which may buffer negative psychological effects. Methodological factors such as online self-report data and a relatively small sample size may also have influenced the results. Overall, the findings suggest that FOMO plays a more direct role in decision-related regret than in emotional sensitivity or self-evaluation, highlighting the importance of examining decision-making processes in the context of digital behavior.

Conclusion

The study examined the relationships between Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), emotional contagion, decision regret, and self-esteem among young adults. The results showed that FOMO was significantly positively related to decision regret, indicating that individuals with higher FOMO are more likely to be influenced by others' emotions and experience greater regret about their decisions. However, FOMO and emotional contagion were not significantly related to self-esteem. These findings suggest that FOMO mainly affects how young adults evaluate their decisions rather than their overall self-worth, highlighting the need for further research on factors influencing decision-related emotions.

Limitations:

1. Low Sample Size – With only 60 participants, the statistical power is limited, making it harder to detect significant relationships.
2. Online Questionnaire – Completing surveys online may lead to distractions or rushed responses, reducing accuracy.
3. Low Attention Span – Participants may not have fully engaged with the questions, which can affect the reliability of the data.
4. Self-Report Bias – Responses are based on participants' own perceptions, which can be influenced by social desirability or lack of self-awareness.
5. Lack of Awareness of FOMO – Not all participants may consciously recognize FOMO or its impact, which can reduce the accuracy of self-reported effects.

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Journal of Research and Development

A Multidisciplinary International Level Referred and Double-Blind Peer Reviewed, Open Access

ISSN : 2230-9578 | Website: <https://jrdrv.org> Volume-18, Issue-2(XXII) | February - 2026

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Original Article

Emotional Intelligence as a Strength Resource Predicting Psychological Well-Being and Quality of Life among College Students: A Positive Psychology Perspective

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Manuscript ID:

Abstract

JRD -2026-180231

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 181-184

February - 2026

Submitted: 18 Jan. 2026

Revised: 28 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 13 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Positive psychology emphasises strengths that foster flourishing and optimal functioning in emerging adulthood. In college settings, emotional intelligence may operate as a modifiable strength resource that supports self-regulation, adaptive coping, and constructive interpersonal relationships, thereby contributing to psychological well-being and overall quality of life. The present study examined associations among emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, and quality of life in a sample of 160 college students and tested whether psychological well-being mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and quality of life. Using a cross-sectional correlational design, participants completed the Emotional Intelligence Inventory, the Psychological Well-Being Scale and the Quality-of-Life Scale. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and regression-based mediation analysis with bootstrapped confidence intervals were conducted. Emotional intelligence was positively correlated with psychological well-being, $r(158) = .53, p < .001$, and with quality of life, $r(158) = .38, p < .001$. Psychological well-being was also positively correlated with quality of life, $r(158) = .59, p < .001$. Mediation analysis indicated a significant indirect effect of emotional intelligence on quality of life via psychological well-being (indirect effect = 0.29, 95% CI [0.18, 0.41]). The direct effect was not significant when psychological well-being was included, consistent with a full mediation pattern in this dataset. Findings support a strengths-based interpretation in which emotional intelligence contributes to a better quality of life primarily by enhancing psychological well-being. Implications include incorporating emotional competence training and strength-based counselling modules into college well-being initiatives.

Keywords: positive psychology, strengths-based approach, emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, quality of life, college students

Introduction

The college years represent a pivotal developmental stage involving major academic, social, and personal transitions. Students face academic performance demands, changing peer networks, increasing independence, and career uncertainty. These experiences may elevate stress and vulnerability to emotional difficulties; however, an exclusive focus on distress provides only a partial picture of student mental health. Positive psychology offers an additional and practically useful perspective by prioritizing strengths, flourishing, and the cultivation of psychological resources that promote optimal functioning (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). In educational settings, a strengths-based approach aligns with contemporary mental health promotion initiatives that aim not only to prevent problems but also to build the capacities that enable students to thrive.

Positive Psychology and Strength-Based Student Development

Positive psychology investigates strengths and processes that enhance well-being and resilience. In college contexts, positive education approaches emphasize building psychosocial competencies, strengthening relationships, and promoting meaning and engagement. The broaden-and-build theory proposes that positive emotions expand thought-action repertoires and build enduring psychological and social resources (Fredrickson, 2001). Similarly, the PERMA model conceptualizes flourishing through positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (Seligman, 2011). Strengths-based frameworks translate these principles into interventions that help students identify and apply personal strengths and develop adaptive skills such as emotional regulation, problem solving, and constructive communication.

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How to cite this article:

Kannor, D. K. (2026). Emotional Intelligence as a Strength Resource Predicting Psychological Well-Being and Quality of Life among College Students: A Positive Psychology Perspective. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 181–184. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19345188>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19345188](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19345188)



Emotional Intelligence as a Strength Resource

Emotional intelligence refers to the capacity to perceive, understand, manage, and use emotions effectively in oneself and in interpersonal contexts (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). In a strengths-based model, emotional intelligence can be framed as a psychological resource that supports adaptive functioning: emotionally intelligent students may regulate stress more effectively, handle interpersonal challenges constructively, and sustain motivation under pressure. Importantly, emotional intelligence is often conceptualised as a competence that can be developed through skill-building, counselling, and structured training, making it particularly relevant for college mental health promotion.

Psychological Well-Being and Quality of Life

Psychological well-being refers to positive psychological functioning and is commonly conceptualised as more than the absence of symptoms. Eudaimonic perspectives emphasize meaning, growth, purpose, autonomy, competence, and positive relationships (Ryff, 1989). Quality of life is broader and reflects an individual's evaluation of life satisfaction and functioning across key domains. In student populations, quality of life may be influenced by emotional health, perceived competence, peer support, academic experiences, and future outlook. A strengths-based theoretical pathway is plausible: emotional intelligence may promote psychological functioning (psychological well-being), which then contributes to higher perceived life quality.

Objectives

1. To examine levels of emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, and quality of life among college students.
2. To assess relationships among emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, and quality of life.
3. To test whether psychological well-being mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and quality of life.

Hypotheses

H1: Emotional intelligence will be positively correlated with psychological well-being.

H2: Emotional intelligence will be positively correlated with quality of life.

H3: Psychological well-being will be positively correlated with quality of life.

H4: Psychological well-being will significantly mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and quality of life.

Review of Literature

Positive Psychology and Flourishing in Educational Contexts

Positive psychology research suggests that well-being is a measurable and improvable outcome. In educational settings, strengths-based programs such as gratitude practices, strengths identification, savoring, and resilience training have been associated with higher life satisfaction and improved adjustment. The broaden-and-build model (Fredrickson, 2001) supports the view that cultivating positive emotions and strengths leads to resource accumulation that sustains well-being under stress. From an applied perspective, these models justify a shift from purely problem-focused interventions to promotive approaches that build skills supporting lifelong functioning.

Emotional Intelligence and Adaptive Functioning

Emotional intelligence has been widely linked to adaptive coping, interpersonal effectiveness, and psychological adjustment. Theoretically, emotionally intelligent individuals accurately identify emotional cues, interpret emotions in context, and regulate emotional responses using adaptive strategies (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). In student populations, emotional intelligence is often associated with better stress management, reduced maladaptive coping, improved relationship quality, and stronger academic adjustment. Such associations make emotional intelligence a relevant target for skills-based interventions in college counseling centers, peer programs, and well-being initiatives.

Psychological Well-Being as Eudaimonic Functioning

Ryff's (1989) framework conceptualizes psychological well-being through dimensions such as self-acceptance, positive relations, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. Psychological well-being is particularly relevant for emerging adults because college years involve identity development, increased autonomy, and goal formation. Higher psychological well-being is linked to better motivation, resilience, and sustained engagement. Importantly, psychological well-being is responsive to interventions that enhance self-awareness, the use of strengths, meaning-making, and supportive relationships—core themes in positive psychology.

Quality of Life in Student Populations

Quality of life incorporates a holistic appraisal of life satisfaction and functioning across domains including emotional functioning, social relationships, and environmental satisfaction. Student quality of life may fluctuate with academic pressures, financial challenges, and social belonging. Strengths-based psychological resources, such as emotional intelligence and psychological well-being, may buffer stress and elevate satisfaction by improving coping and relational functioning, thereby contributing to stronger quality of life.

Research Methodology

Design

A cross-sectional correlational design was used to examine relationships among emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, and quality of life and to test a mediation model.

Participants

The sample comprised 160 college students recruited using convenience sampling from a college setting. Participation was voluntary.

Measures

1. **Emotional Intelligence Inventory (EII-MM)**. Emotional intelligence was measured using the EII-MM developed by Mangal and Mangal (2005). Higher scores indicate higher emotional intelligence.
2. **Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS-SDCP; Revised)**. Psychological well-being was measured using the PWBS-SDCP developed by Sisodia and Choudhary (2005). Higher scores indicate higher psychological well-being.
3. **Quality of Life Scale (QOLS-SSNN)**. Quality of life was measured using the QOLS-SSNN developed by Sharma and Nasreen (2005). Higher scores indicate higher quality of life.

Procedure

After obtaining permission from the institution, students were approached and informed about the study aims, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Written informed consent was obtained. The demographic form and the three scales were administered in a single sitting. Scoring was completed according to the manual instructions.

Statistical Interpretation and Analysis

Data Preparation and Assumptions

Data were screened for missing values and outliers. Normality and linearity assumptions were evaluated using descriptive diagnostics. Analyses were conducted at an alpha level of .05 (two-tailed).

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, and quality of life. Internal consistency values are included to demonstrate reporting format; in a real study, internal consistency should be computed using item-level data.

Abbreviation note: To keep the narrative clear, abbreviations are used mainly in tables and statistical notation.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Emotional Intelligence, Psychological Well-Being, and Quality of Life (N = 160)

Variable	M	SD	Min	Max	Cronbach's α
Emotional intelligence (EI)	130.77	13.38	95.47	162.85	.86
Psychological well-being (PWB)	139.05	17.89	90.68	189.37	.88
Quality of life (QoL)	110.68	13.42	69.47	157.26	.84

Note. Descriptive values are derived from simulated scores. Alpha values are shown for reporting format demonstration.

Inferential Analysis

Pearson Correlations

Pearson correlations were computed among emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, and quality of life (Table 2). Consistent with the hypotheses, emotional intelligence was positively associated with psychological well-being and quality of life, and psychological well-being was positively associated with quality of life.

Table 2

Pearson Correlations among Emotional Intelligence, Psychological Well-Being, and Quality of Life (N = 160)

Variable	1	2	3
1. Emotional intelligence (EI)	—		
2. Psychological well-being (PWB)	.53***	—	
3. Quality of life (QoL)	.38***	.59***	—

*** $p < .001$.

Hypothesis decisions:

- **H1 supported:** Emotional intelligence and psychological well-being were positively correlated, $r(158) = .53$, $p < .001$.
- **H2 supported:** Emotional intelligence and quality of life were positively correlated, $r(158) = .38$, $p < .001$.
- **H3 supported:** Psychological well-being and quality of life were positively correlated, $r(158) = .59$, $p < .001$.

Mediation Analysis (Hypothesis H4)

A regression-based mediation analysis tested whether psychological well-being mediates the association between emotional intelligence and quality of life. The mediation framework included: (a) emotional intelligence predicting psychological well-being (path a), (b) psychological well-being predicting quality of life controlling for

emotional intelligence (path *b*), (c) emotional intelligence predicting quality of life (total effect, path *c*), and (c') emotional intelligence predicting quality of life controlling for psychological well-being (direct effect, path *c'*). Bootstrapping was used to estimate the indirect effect.

Table 3

Mediation Regression Models Predicting Psychological Well-Being and Quality of Life (N = 160)

Model / Path	Outcome (DV)	Predictor(s)	B	SE	t(df)	p
Model A (Path a)	Psychological Well-Being	Emotional Intelligence	0.71	0.09	7.84 (158)	< .001
Model B (Total Effect, Path c)	Quality of Life	Emotional Intelligence	0.38	0.07	5.11 (158)	< .001
Model C (Direct Effect & Mediator, Paths c' and b)	Quality of Life	Emotional Intelligence (c')	0.09	0.08	1.15 (157)	.251
		Psychological Well-Being (b)	0.41	0.06	7.27 (157)	< .001

Indirect Effect ($a \times b$): 0.29

Bootstrapped 95% Confidence Interval for Indirect Effect: [0.18, 0.41]

Emotional intelligence significantly predicted psychological well-being (path *a*), $B = 0.71$, $SE = 0.09$, $t(158) = 7.84$, $p < .001$, and also significantly predicted quality of life in the total-effect model (path *c*), $B = 0.38$, $SE = 0.07$, $t(158) = 5.11$, $p < .001$. In the mediation model, psychological well-being significantly predicted quality of life (path *b*), $B = 0.41$, $SE = 0.06$, $t(157) = 7.27$, $p < .001$, whereas the direct effect of emotional intelligence on quality of life was not significant (path *c'*), $B = 0.09$, $SE = 0.08$, $t(157) = 1.15$, $p = .251$. The indirect effect was significant ($a \times b = 0.29$; 95% CI [0.18, 0.41]), indicating that psychological well-being mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and quality of life.

Practical Implications for Strength-Based Programs in Colleges

A major strength of the emotional intelligence–psychological well-being–quality of life model is its clear relevance to practice. Colleges can implement programs that build emotional competencies, thereby enhancing student well-being. Examples include:

1. Short emotional intelligence skills modules focusing on emotion labelling, cognitive reappraisal, and communication skills.
2. Strength-based counselling protocols emphasising strengths identification, goal setting, and emotionally informed coping plans.
3. Peer mentoring and group-based interventions focused on empathy, supportive relationships, and constructive problem solving.
4. Integration of well-being activities into orientation and life-skills curricula.

Conclusions

- 1) Emotional intelligence is positively associated with psychological well-being.
- 2) Emotional intelligence is positively associated with quality of life.
- 3) Psychological well-being is positively associated with quality of life.
- 4) Psychological well-being significantly mediates the association between emotional intelligence and quality of life.

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Original Article

The Relationship between Procrastination and Self- Efficacy among Young Adults.

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180232

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 185-187

February - 2026

Submitted: 18 Jan. 2026

Revised: 28 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 13 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract

Procrastination is one of the most common behavioral challenges faced by young adults in academic and professional settings. It is often misunderstood as laziness or poor time management, but research suggests that it is a complex psychological phenomenon rooted in motivation, emotional regulation, and self-belief. At the same time, self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform tasks and overcome challenges, plays a central role in shaping persistence, effort, and goal-directed behavior. The present study aimed to examine the relationship between procrastination and self-efficacy among young adults aged 18-30 years. A correlational research design was employed. Data were collected using the General Procrastination Scale developed by Clarry Lay (1986) and the General Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Ralf Schwarzer and Matthias Jerusalem (1995). The sample consisted of young adults recruited through snowball sampling using online platforms. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and linear regression analysis were conducted using JASP software. The findings revealed a significant negative relationship between self-efficacy and procrastination. Individuals with higher self-efficacy reported lower levels of procrastination. Regression analysis further indicated that self-efficacy significantly predicts procrastination behavior. The study highlights the importance of enhancing self-efficacy as a potential intervention strategy to reduce procrastination and promote productivity, resilience, and psychological well-being among young adults.

Keywords: Procrastination, Self-Efficacy, Young Adults, Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, Temporal Motivation Theory, Correlational Study.

Introduction

In today's rapidly changing and highly competitive world, young adults are expected to perform efficiently, meet deadlines, and manage multiple responsibilities simultaneously. Whether it is preparing for examinations, completing academic projects, applying for jobs, or meeting workplace expectations, young adults constantly face performance pressure. Despite knowing the importance of timely action, many individuals delay tasks until the last moment. This habitual delay, known as procrastination, has become increasingly common in modern life. Procrastination is defined as the voluntary delay of an intended course of action despite expecting negative consequences. According to Piers Steel (2007), procrastination is best understood as a failure of self-regulation rather than a simple problem of time management. Individuals often substitute important but uncomfortable tasks with short-term pleasurable activities such as social media browsing, gaming, or entertainment. While such activities provide temporary relief from stress or anxiety, they eventually increase guilt, pressure, and psychological distress. Research indicates that procrastination is particularly prevalent among students and young professionals. Studies estimate that a large percentage of college students regularly engage in academic procrastination. The consequences include lower grades, last-minute stress, reduced learning retention, and diminished self-esteem. In professional settings, procrastination may result in poor work quality, missed opportunities, and strained workplace relationships. Beyond academic and occupational outcomes, chronic procrastination is also associated with anxiety, depression, and reduced life satisfaction. One important psychological factor that may influence procrastination is self-efficacy. The concept of self-efficacy was introduced by Albert Bandura (1977) as part of Social Cognitive Theory.

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How to cite this article:

Bhawalkar, G. G., & Kolekar, R. (2026). The Relationship between Procrastination and Self- Efficacy among Young Adults. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 185–187. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19345271>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19345271](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19345271)



Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to organize and execute the actions required to achieve specific goals. Unlike self-esteem, which reflects overall self-worth, self-efficacy is task-oriented and relates to confidence in performing particular behaviors. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than threats to be avoided. They demonstrate persistence in the face of obstacles and recover quickly from setbacks. In contrast, individuals with low self-efficacy often doubt their abilities, avoid challenging tasks, and give up easily when confronted with difficulties. Such avoidance tendencies may contribute directly to procrastination behavior. The theoretical link between self-efficacy and procrastination can also be understood through Temporal Motivation Theory proposed by Steel (2007). According to this theory, motivation is influenced by expectancy, value, impulsiveness, and delay. Expectancy, which refers to the belief that one can successfully complete a task, is closely related to self-efficacy. When expectancy is low, individuals are more likely to postpone tasks. Young adulthood (18-30 years) is a crucial developmental stage characterized by identity formation, academic completion, career initiation, and increasing independence. During this period, self-beliefs play a significant role in shaping long-term outcomes. Understanding whether self-efficacy serves as a protective factor against procrastination is therefore both theoretically and practically important.

The present study seeks to explore the relationship between procrastination and self-efficacy among young adults and examine whether self-efficacy predicts procrastination behavior.

Significance of the Study

Procrastination is often dismissed as laziness, yet it has serious consequences for academic achievement, career development, and mental health. Understanding the psychological mechanisms behind procrastination can help shift the focus from blame to intervention.

This study is significant because it explores self-efficacy as a potential protective factor against procrastination. If belief in one's ability reduces delay behavior, then interventions aimed at strengthening self-efficacy may be more effective than simply enforcing discipline.

The findings can benefit educators, counselors, psychologists, and organizations by guiding the development of workshops and training programs that build confidence, resilience, and proactive behavior. For young adults themselves, the research offers insight into how inner beliefs shape daily habits and long-term success.

Statement of the Problem

The present study seeks to examine whether there is a significant relationship between self-efficacy and procrastination among young adults.

Objectives

1. To measure the level of procrastination among young adults.
2. To assess the level of self-efficacy among young adults.
3. To examine the relationship between procrastination and self-efficacy.
4. To determine whether self-efficacy predicts procrastination behavior.

Hypothesis

There is negative relationship between self-efficacy and procrastination among young adults.

Methodology

Research Design- The study adopted a correlational research design. This design was chosen because the aim was to examine the natural relationship between two psychological variables without manipulating them.

Sampling- The sample consisted of young adults aged 18-30 years. Snowball sampling technique was used. The questionnaire was distributed online through Google Forms and forwarded through personal networks.

Variables- Independent Variable- Self-Efficacy

Dependent Variable- Procrastination

Tools- 1. Clarry Lay's General Procrastination Scale (1986)- Measures general tendency to delay tasks.

Reliability- Cronbach's alpha between **0.80 and 0.85**, Test-retest reliability.

Validity- Construct validity and convergent validity.

Norms- Standardized primarily on students and adult populations.

2. Ralf Schwarzer and Matthias Jerusalem's General Self-Efficacy Scale (1995)- Measures belief in one's ability to handle difficult situations.

Reliability- Cronbach's alpha ranging from **0.76 to 0.90**, Test-retest reliability.

Validity- Construct validity and criterion-related validity.

Norms- Standardized on diverse adult populations.

Results and Discussion-

Table No. 1-

Descriptive Statistics				
	V30		V41	
Valid	101		35	
Missing	0		66	
Mode	62.000	^a	23.000	^a
Median	58.000		30.000	
Mean	55.822		30.114	
Std. Deviation	11.529		6.043	
Shapiro-Wilk	0.969		0.948	
P-value of Shapiro-Wilk	0.018		0.098	
Minimum	20.000		20.000	
Maximum	89.000		40.000	
^a the mode is computed assuming that variables are discreet.				

Interpretation- Self-efficacy scores ranged from 20 to 89, showing a wide variation in how confident young adults feel in handling tasks. Procrastination scores ranged from 20 to 40, showing that while some participants reported low procrastination, others reported quite high levels.

The average score of self-efficacies was 55.82, whereas procrastination had a mean of 30.11.

These preliminary findings showed that the participants with stronger self-belief tended to report lower procrastination.

Table No. 2-

Pearson's Correlations					
Variable			V30	V41	
1. V30	Pearson's r		—		
	p-value		—		
2. V41	Pearson's r		-0.424	—	
	p-value		0.006	—	
Note. All tests one-tailed, for negative correlation.					

Interpretation- The correlation coefficient is -0.424, which represents a moderate negative relationship between self-efficacy and procrastination. The p-value (0.006) is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This means that as self-efficacy increases, procrastination decreases, supporting the study's hypothesis.

Table No. 3 Linear Regression

Model Summary - V41							
Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	RMSE			
M ₀	0.000	0.000	0.000	6.043			
M ₁	0.424	0.180	0.155	5.555			
Note. M ₁ includes V30							

Interpretation- The regression model (M₁) shows an R = 0.424, meaning there is a moderate correlation. The R² value is 0.180, indicating that self-efficacy explains 18% of the variance in procrastination. While this percentage is not very high, it is

Meaningful in psychological research, where multiple factors often contribute to behavior.

Conclusion

The study examined the relationship between self-efficacy and procrastination among young adults. The results revealed a significant negative relationship between the two variables. Individuals with stronger belief in their abilities were less likely to engage in procrastination. The findings suggest that procrastination is not merely laziness but is closely tied to self-beliefs and motivation. Enhancing self-efficacy may serve as an effective strategy to reduce procrastination and promote resilience, productivity, and well-being.

Limitations

1. Snowball sampling limits generalizability.
2. Self-report measures may introduce response bias.
3. The study is correlational; causation cannot be established.
4. Some missing data reduced statistical power.

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Original Article

Development and Efficacy Testing of an Indigenous Gratitude Intervention for Older Adults: An Exploratory Study

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Manuscript ID:

Abstract:

JRD -2026-180233

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 188-198

February - 2026

Submitted: 18 Jan. 2026

Revised: 28 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 13 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

This research aims to develop and explore the efficacy of an indigenous gratitude intervention on Psychological Well-being Factors. The concept of ॠ (Rina) in Indian Philosophy is aimed to be the core of the Gratitude Intervention. There are total of 6 sessions developed based on the ॠ (Rina) concept. The population of older adults has been chosen for this validation. A single-group design was employed, with participants engaging in the structured gratitude intervention. The sample consisted of 26 older adults living in Pune City. Qualitative Open-ended feedbacks of the participants were acquired post intervention to see the efficacy and effect on their psychological wellbeing. Thematic analysis of participant reflections further identified five key themes—"Change in Mood," "Increased Positive Affect," "Self-Acceptance," "Feelings of Gratitude," and "Perspective Shift." These themes highlighted improvements in mood, Affect, emotions regulation, and overall psychological well-being. The findings suggest that gratitude interventions, particularly those grounded in indigenous values, can effectively enhance psychological well-being in older adults. This study contributes to the limited Indian literature on positive psychology interventions among older populations and emphasizes the importance of culturally sensitive mental health practices.

Keywords: Indigenous, Gratitude, Intervention, Psychological well-being

Introduction

Positive Psychology and Gratitude

Positive Psychology emerged as an independent discipline in 1998 following Martin Seligman's APA presidential address. Peterson and Seligman (2004) identified six core virtues comprising twenty-four-character strengths linked to life satisfaction and well-being, with gratitude recognized as a key strength contributing to psychological health (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000). Gratitude is commonly understood as a thankful response to benefits received (Lambert et al., 2009). Emmons and McCullough (2003) were among the first to empirically demonstrate the positive association between gratitude and psychological functioning, leading to increased research on gratitude interventions. Such interventions aim to enhance positive affect and happiness over time (Dickens, 2017). Evidence shows that gratitude interventions improve well-being in older adults (Condon & Parmelee, 2023), enhance coping and social support in breast cancer patients (Sztachanska et al., 2019), strengthen resilience and professional satisfaction in clinicians (Caragol et al., 2021), and improve emotional intelligence in adolescents (Salve & Lavalekar, 2019).

Indian estimates of psychological issues of older adults

In recent years, mental health concerns among older adults in India have increased significantly, with high rates of depression, anxiety, and reduced psychological well-being reported in this population. The National Mental Health Survey (2015–16) estimated that 10.6% of Indian adults suffer from mental disorders, with nearly 70–90% not receiving adequate treatment. Among older adults aged 60 years and above, community-based studies report depression prevalence rates ranging from 30% to 40%, indicating a substantial burden. The Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI) also points to a large proportion of undiagnosed depression, suggesting that actual rates may be even higher. Mental health challenges are particularly severe in rural and low socioeconomic groups, where access to services is limited.

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How to cite this article:

Dhopeswarkar, R., & Kulkarni, P. (2026). Development and Efficacy Testing of an Indigenous Gratitude Intervention for Older Adults: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 188–198. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19345386>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19345386](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19345386)



These findings highlight the urgent need for accessible, low-cost, and non-stigmatizing psychological interventions to promote emotional well-being and resilience among older adults in India.

The concept of Rina (ऋण) in India Psychology

The concept of ऋण (Rina) in Indian philosophy, particularly within Hindu thought, reflects a deep awareness of interconnectedness and a heartfelt sense of gratitude toward sages (ऋषि ऋण), gods (देव ऋण), and ancestors (पितृ ऋण), as described in the Vedas and Dharmashastras. It emphasizes acknowledging the guidance, support, and life contributions received from others. Indian psychological perspectives suggest that this recognition nurtures gratitude, prosocial behavior, emotional balance, and social harmony. In contemporary psychology, ऋण resonates with gratitude-based practices, offering a culturally grounded framework for enhancing well-being and relational connectedness in the Indian context.

1 Background of the Study

Gratitude is a key construct in positive psychology, defined as appreciation for benefits received from others or life events (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). It is viewed both as a temporary emotion and a stable trait linked to life satisfaction, happiness, and psychological well-being, while negatively associated with depression, anxiety, and stress (Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010). Older adults tend to prioritize meaningful relationships and emotional goals, showing better emotional regulation and greater appreciation of positive experiences (Carstensen, 2006). Gratitude may therefore play an important role in maintaining well-being in later life (Allemand & Hill, 2016). The broaden-and-build theory suggests that positive emotions like gratitude enhance resilience and long-term well-being (Fredrickson, 2001). Research also shows that gratitude interventions improve mood and psychological health (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Based on these insights, the present study explores the efficacy of this Indigenous Gratitude Intervention based on the Rina Concept in Indian Philosophy, with Older Adults as the sample.

2 Research Problem

To develop an Indigenous gratitude intervention and study its efficacy on Psychological wellbeing Factors of Older adults.

3 Objectives and Significance:

Objectives:

- To develop an Indigenous Gratitude Intervention.
- To study the efficacy of the Indigenous gratitude intervention on older adults, by thematically analyzing its effects on Psychological Wellbeing Factors.

Significance of the Study:

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to both theory and practice within positive psychology, particularly in the context of aging and emotional well-being. While gratitude interventions are recognized as simple and effective tools for enhancing psychological health (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010), most research has focused on younger or mixed-age groups, leaving limited evidence for older adults who often face loneliness, health decline, and reduced sense of purpose (Hill & Allemand, 2011). With the growing aging population, there is an increasing need for low-cost, non-pharmacological interventions to support mental health in later life (Seligman et al., 2005). Importantly, this study emphasizes the value of culturally grounded interventions. By incorporating the Indian philosophical concept of rina (a sense of sacred indebtedness and gratitude toward others, nature, and the divine), the intervention enhances cultural relevance and resonance. Such culturally sensitive approaches may strengthen engagement, meaning-making, and psychological benefits among Indian older adults.

Review of Literature

1 Relevant Theories and Past Studies

Relevant Theories

Erik Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development

Erik Erikson proposed eight stages of psychosocial development across the lifespan, each involving a crisis that shapes personality and virtue development. The final stage, **Integrity vs. Despair** (around age 65 onward), focuses on life reflection. Older adults who accept their life experiences with meaning and fulfillment develop ego integrity and wisdom, whereas those filled with regret experience despair. A gratitude intervention that encourages reflection, acceptance, and appreciation of past experiences may help older adults achieve greater ego integrity, thereby enhancing psychosocial well-being.

The Find, Remind, and Bind Theory

The Find, Remind, and Bind Theory of gratitude suggests that gratitude strengthens social relationships by helping individuals find supportive connections, remind them of valuable bonds, and bind them more closely through mutual appreciation. Gratitude promotes prosocial behavior, reduces conflict, and enhances emotional closeness. For older adults, who may face shrinking social networks and loneliness, gratitude can foster empathy, affection, and relational harmony, thereby improving emotional resilience and overall well-being (Algoe, Fredrickson, & Gable, 2013).

Past Studies

Condon, Cox, and Parmelee (2023) examined a two-week daily gratitude journaling intervention among older adults with chronic pain in the United States using randomized assignment and multilevel analyses. Results indicated that both trait and state gratitude were significantly associated with improved well-being. Overall well-being improved over time across groups, suggesting the beneficial role of gratitude practices. Bartlett and Arpin (2019) implemented a three-week daily gratitude writing intervention and measured loneliness and subjective health outcomes. The study found that within-person increases in gratitude predicted lower loneliness and fewer health symptoms. Participants in the treatment group demonstrated stronger cumulative positive effects over the study period. Diniz et al. (2023) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of 64 randomized clinical trials to evaluate the effects of gratitude interventions on mental health. The findings revealed that gratitude practices significantly enhanced gratitude levels, positive affect, and overall psychological well-being, while reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression. The study supports gratitude exercises as effective adjunct strategies in mental health promotion. Cunha, Pellanda, and Reppold (2019) conducted a large randomized clinical trial involving 1,337 adults who completed a 14-day gratitude intervention. The results showed increases in positive affect, subjective happiness, and life satisfaction, along with reductions in negative affect and depressive symptoms. However, similar improvements in some outcomes were observed in a neutral-events group, suggesting overlapping mechanisms. Bryant, Osowski, and Smith (2020) found that reflecting on meaningful life lessons increased gratitude, which subsequently enhanced life satisfaction, hope, self-esteem, and positive attitudes toward aging. Mediation analysis indicated that savoring led to greater gratitude, which in turn predicted improved well-being outcomes.

Research Gap

The rationale of the present study is based on the limited research on structured gratitude interventions among older adults in India, despite growing evidence that such interventions enhance mental well-being across the lifespan. With India's rapidly increasing elderly population (Central Statistics Office, Government of India, 2021), there is a need for low-cost, culturally relevant psychological strategies to support healthy aging. Although international studies support the benefits of gratitude interventions, Indian research has largely focused on stress and general well-being, with little emphasis on gratitude-based approaches. Moreover, indigenous concepts such as *rina* and culturally rooted values of interdependence and spiritual reflection suggest that gratitude holds deep relevance in the Indian context, yet these frameworks remain underexplored empirically. Thus, this study addresses an important research gap by examining a structured gratitude intervention tailored to older adults in India, contributing to culturally sensitive mental health practices.

Methodology

1 Research Design

This study adopts an exploratory research design, which is particularly appropriate when an area has received limited prior investigation and when new concepts, models, or interventions are being developed. Exploratory studies are not primarily intended to test well-established theories through large-scale hypothesis testing; rather, they aim to gain preliminary insights, examine feasibility, and identify patterns that can guide future rigorous research.

An exploratory design enabled flexible examination of participants' experiences within their sociocultural context while assessing feasibility, engagement, and preliminary psychological benefits. The findings are intended to generate hypotheses, refine methodology, and inform future large-scale experimental or controlled studies, serving as a foundational step in developing culturally sensitive gratitude-based interventions for older adults in India.

2 Sample

Community Dwelling Older adults aged above 60, located in Pune City are the Participants of the study. A total sample of 26 Participants, are aimed to be the sample of the study. The sampling technique that was used is purposive sampling method.

To select the sample of the study following inclusion and exclusion criteria is decided:

Inclusion criteria:

- All the participants were in the age range of 60-85 years.
- The Older adults must read and understand Marathi Language.
- ONLY Participants who attended minimum 60% of the session's i.e 4 sessions will be included in analysis.

Exclusion criteria:

- Elderly suffering from any known chronic/severe neurological or mental disorder (such as Dementia) was excluded in the study sample.

3 Tools/Instruments

Qualitative Questionnaire:

The Qualitative Questionnaire used to assess the qualitative responses included total 3 questions asking descriptive feedback of the intervention. The questions Aimed at enquiring what changes has this intervention brought in day-to-day life, changes in mood and affect post intervention, and its effect on interpersonal relationships.

The Participants were also asked to write overall feedback of the intervention on a blank sheet, which was further included in the analysis.

4 Procedure

Procedure for Development of the Intervention

The development of the intervention followed a systematic and exploratory process.

Step 1: Identification of Research Gap and Target Sample

A review of literature showed that while gratitude interventions improve well-being in Western populations (Emmons & McCullough, 2003), culturally grounded programs for Indian older adults are limited. Given this gap and India's growing elderly population, adults aged 60 years and above were selected as the target group.

Step 2: Integration of Indigenous and Western Frameworks

The intervention integrated Western views of gratitude as a positive emotional response enhancing well-being (Emmons & McCullough, 2003) with the Indian concept of *rina*, which emphasizes responsibility, interdependence, and acknowledgment of life contributions. This synthesis ensured cultural relevance while retaining empirical grounding.

Step 3: Planning and Structuring the Six-Session Intervention

The final step involved designing a structured six-session intervention program. Each session was planned to last approximately 60–90 minutes and included reflective exercises, group discussion, and guided activities.

Detailed description of Gratitude Intervention program for Older adults:

Session	Theme	Purpose	Brief Description
1	Parental Gratitude मातृ व पितृ ऋण (90 Minutes)	Facilitating Gratitude towards Birth, parents and life	A Guided Imagery Session leading to childhood of the participants, followed by reflection on topics of Parental Gratitude through an self-disclosure Activity.
2	Gratitude towards teachers ऋषि ऋण (60 minutes)	Facilitate Gratitude towards Teachers, Learning and Lessons of Life	A prayer named “Saraswati Vandana”, followed by a Experience Sharing session about Teachers and learning Process, Followed by video of “Chitale Master” by Writer P. L. Deshpande, Self-disclosure experience sharing session, concluding by Reflection.
3	Gratitude towards the Devine Power देव ऋण (60 minutes)	Facilitate feelings of Gratitude towards the Devine power	Experience sharing of “the most precious moment in life” through an activity. Mental Substraction Activity. Solving a gratitude worksheet regarding blessings of the devine. Sharing in groups.
4	Gratitude towards Nature भूत ऋण (60 Minutes)	Facilitate Feelings of Gratitude towards the Nature, 5 Elements of Nature	Guided Meditation of experiencing nature through 5 senses, Reflection and Narration about Mindfulness. Discussion on How are we connected to nature and how can we enhance the connection. Start with Video of Shri Shri Ravishankar Guided Meditation of gratitude towards the 5 elements. A story of Coconut Tree.
5	Gratitude towards people and interpersonal-relationships मनुष्य ऋण (60 Minutes)	Facilitating Gratitude towards people, interpersonal relationship, helping	“The Gratitude Circle” (ecological) Followed by reflection about people who contribute into our lives. List making activity of people who have contributed and helped them throughout their life. Expressing Gratitude.
6	Gratitude towards Body and Organs (90 Minutes)	Facilitate Gratitude towards Body and Organs of the Body	Guided Meditation followed by Narration. Reflection on how can they show gratitude towards their body parts. Distributing affirmative Cards Summary of Intervention through guided meditation video of Sandeep Maheshwari.

Accordingly, some activities were modified to the main intervention while conduction.

5 Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis of participants' descriptive feedback was conducted using NVivo 15, a software that supports systematic coding and thematic exploration of textual data (QSR International, 2020). Feedback was collected through open-ended Marathi responses and written reflections, translated into English, expert-reviewed, transcribed, and organized for analysis. A hybrid thematic analysis approach combining deductive and inductive coding was employed following the six-phase framework of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), allowing alignment with study variables while identifying emerging patterns.

Phase I: Familiarization with the Data

Translated transcripts and written feedback were read repeatedly. Initial reflections were recorded through annotations and memos in NVivo 15 to ensure immersion in the data.

Phase II: Generating Initial Codes

Line-by-line coding was conducted to systematically label meaningful segments related to participants' experiences and perceived changes.

Phase III: Searching for Themes

Codes were grouped into broader categories to identify recurring patterns reflecting the intervention's impact.

Phase IV: Reviewing Themes

Themes were examined for internal consistency and alignment with the overall dataset to ensure accurate representation.

Phase V: Defining and Naming Themes

Themes were refined, clearly defined, and given concise names representing their core meaning.

Phase VI: Report Writing

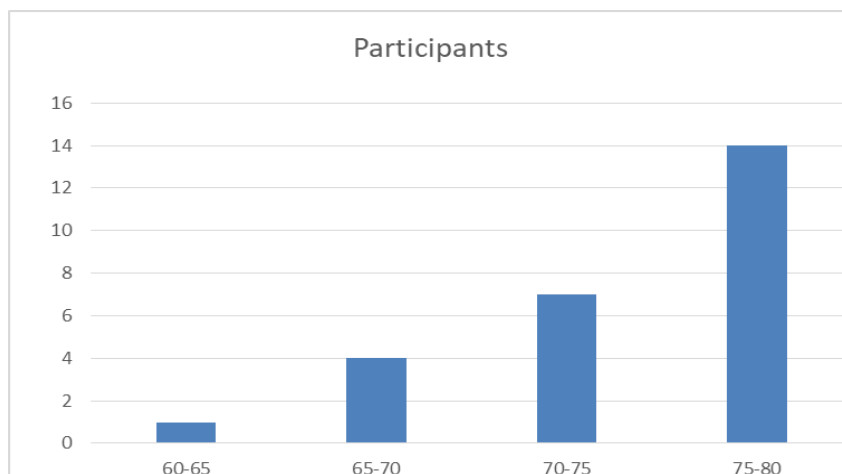
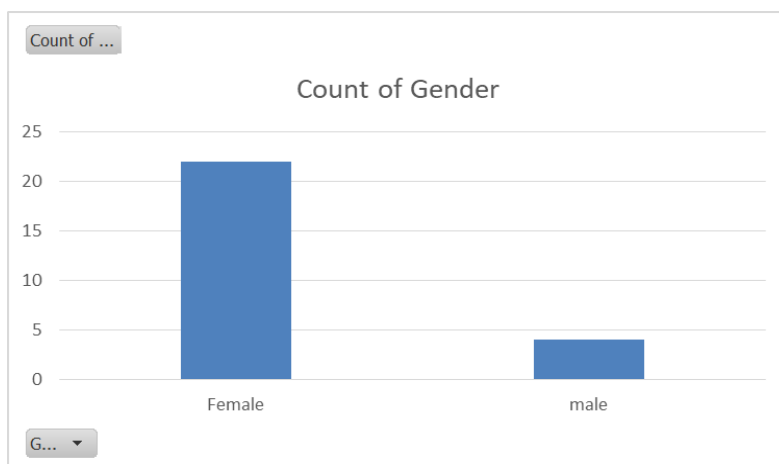
Themes were integrated into a coherent narrative, supported by representative excerpts from participants' responses.

Results / Findings and Discussion

1 Key results

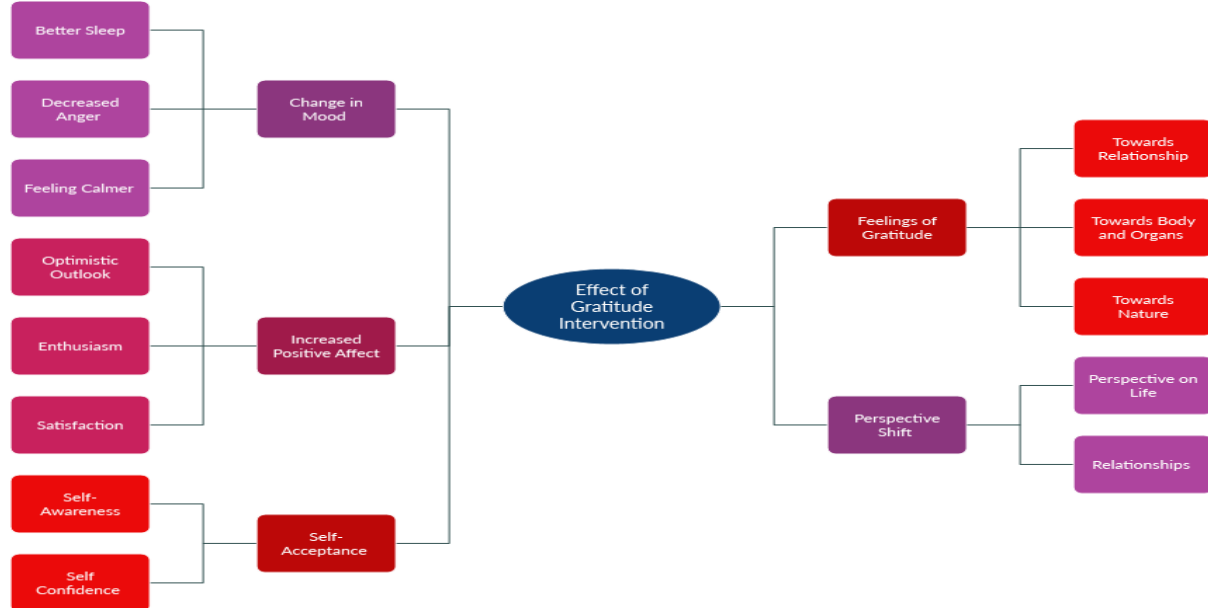
Demographic Details:

On the basis of the collected data, the demographic details as per gender and age-range have been presented in the Bar Graph.



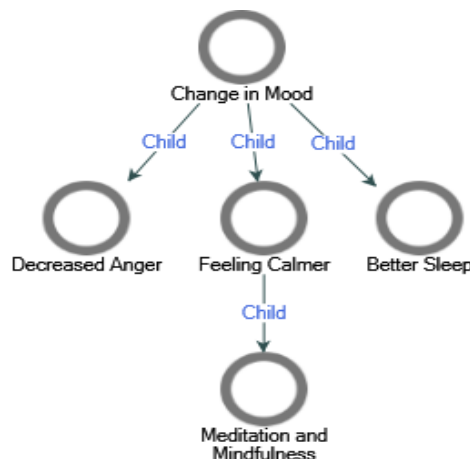
Qualitative Thematic Analysis of Feedbacks of the Intervention Results

Through this rigorous process, total 5 themes were emerged namely “Change in Mood”, “Increased Positive Affect”, “Self-Acceptance”, “Feelings of Gratitude”, “Perspective Shift”.



The Five Themes are described in detail ahead:

I. Change in Mood



Theme: Change in Mood

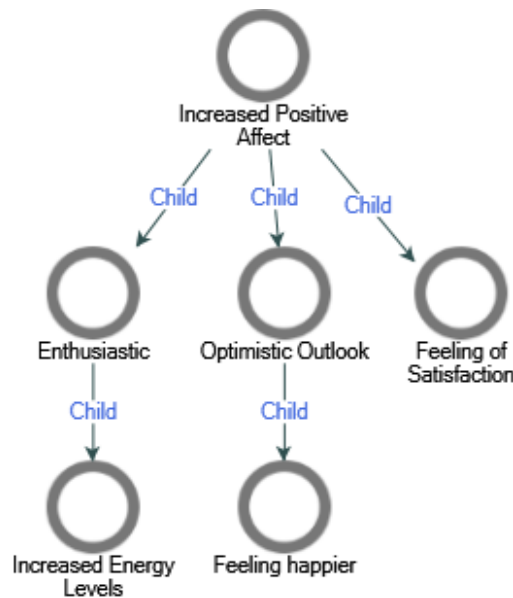
The theme *Change in Mood* was reported by 12 out of 26 participants and includes three subthemes: **Decreased Anger**, **Feeling Calmer**, and **Better Sleep**. Mood is a relatively enduring emotional state influencing overall experience and behavior (American Psychological Association, 2015).

Decreased Anger: Four participants described reduced irritation and improved emotional regulation (Deffenbacher et al., 2002). One participant shared, “*There is no anger, no hatred, only a sense of belonging*” (P23), while another stated, “*Anger has decreased*” (P10).

Feeling Calmer: Seven participants reported increased calmness and composure (Gross, 2010; Lazarus, 2006), often linked to mindfulness practices. For instance, “*By meditating daily and thinking good thoughts, I spent my days in peace*” (P18).

Better Sleep: Two participants noted improved sleep quality (Buysse, 2014). One reflected, “*Thinking about happiness... I fell into a peaceful sleep,*”

II. Increased Positive Affect



Theme: Increased Positive Affect

The theme *Increased Positive Affect* emerged from 16 participants' responses. Affect refers to short-lived emotional expressions, whereas mood reflects a longer-lasting emotional tone (American Psychological Association, 2015). Positive affect includes emotions such as joy, enthusiasm, and interest, indicating energy and engagement with life. This distinction explains why separate themes were created for *Change in Mood* and *Increased Positive Affect*. Participants expressed renewed happiness, for example: "*Mentally, I regained my happiness and the joy of living life again came to me*" (P21).

Subtheme i: Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm reflects high energy, eagerness, and active engagement (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Four participants reported increased energy and motivation, such as: "*I remained enthusiastic for the whole day*" (P21) and "*My energy levels have increased, and motivation too*" (P25).

Subtheme ii: Optimistic Outlook

An optimistic outlook involves positive expectations about the future (Carver & Scheier, 2014). Twelve participants described greater hope and positivity, including: "*A positive outlook on life... is more deeply rooted*" (P20).

Subtheme iii: Feelings of Satisfaction

Satisfaction reflects contentment and fulfillment with life circumstances (Pavot & Diener, 1993). Four participants expressed such feelings, for instance: "*I feel very satisfied and happy that I am wanted by everyone.*"

III. Self-Acceptance



Theme: Self-Acceptance

Self-acceptance refers to acknowledging one's strengths and weaknesses while maintaining a positive attitude toward oneself, contributing to emotional stability and well-being (Neff, 2003). This theme was reported by 12 participants and includes two subthemes: **Self-Awareness** and **Self-Confidence**.

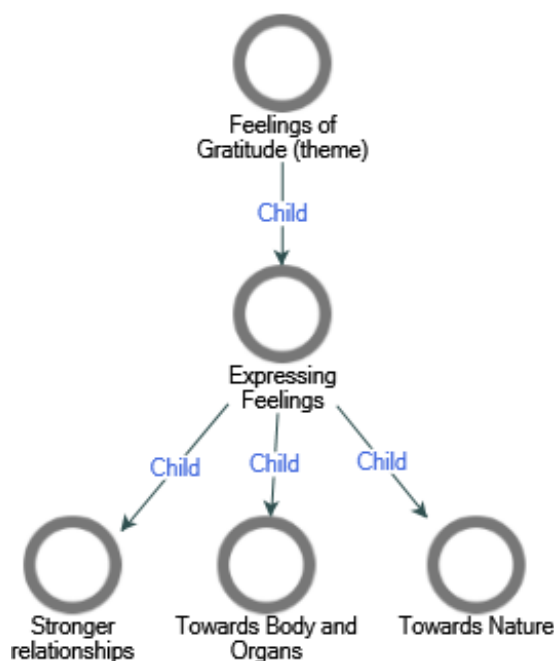
Subtheme i: Self-Awareness

Self-awareness involves recognizing and understanding one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (Goleman, 1995). Nine participants reflected increased emotional and personal insight. For example, *"I reviewed my past life and also looked at my qualities and flaws in the mirror"* (P20).

Subtheme ii: Self-Confidence

Self-confidence refers to a sense of assurance in one's abilities and self-worth (Harter, 1999). Four participants reported increased confidence, such as: *"I got the opportunity to speak and express myself independently... My self-confidence increased"* (P18).

IV. Feelings of Gratitude



Theme: Feelings of Gratitude

Feelings of gratitude involve recognizing and appreciating positive aspects of life and the benevolence of others, accompanied by thankfulness and a desire to value or reciprocate these benefits (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). Seventeen participants reported a noticeable increase in gratitude. This theme includes three subthemes: **Stronger Relationships**, **Towards Body and Organs**, and **Towards Nature**.

Subtheme i: Stronger Relationships

Stronger relationships involve improved communication, reciprocity, and emotional closeness (Gottman & Silver, 1999). Two participants reported enhanced interpersonal bonds, such as: *"I started to express my feelings. The relationship became stronger"* (P8).

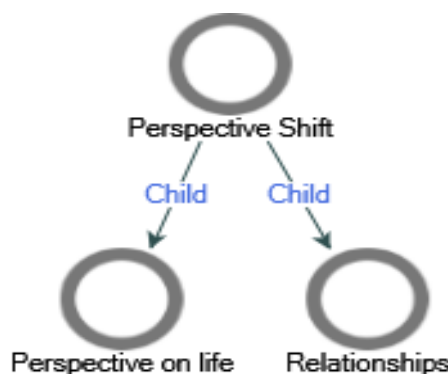
Subtheme ii: Towards Body and Organs

This subtheme reflects appreciation for bodily functions and health, linked to mindfulness and well-being (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Howells, 2015). Five participants described gratitude toward their physical health. One participant expressed deep reflection: *"Until every organ functions properly, we are not even aware of them... We can hear, see, walk... Then we must thank it."* (P9).

Subtheme iii: Towards Nature

Gratitude toward nature involves recognizing the benefits and beauty of the natural world, fostering connectedness and well-being (Taylor, Zelenski et al., 2015). Four participants expressed such appreciation, for example: *"When I wake up in the morning, I feel like thanking the sun, God, and earth"* (P15), and *"Nature... should be expressed and appreciated every day"* (P23).

V. Perspective shift



Theme: Perspective Shift

A perspective shift refers to the cognitive and emotional process of reinterpreting situations by adopting alternative viewpoints, leading to greater empathy, flexibility, and problem-solving (Grant & Parker, 2009). Twelve participants reported experiencing a shift in their daily perspective. This theme includes two subthemes: **Perspectives on Life** and **Relationships**.

Subtheme i: Perspectives on Life

Life perspective involves individuals' broader beliefs and interpretations about meaning, purpose, and experiences, shaping coping and well-being (Park, 2010). Six participants described such changes. For example: *"This changed my perspective on life. I gained mental strength"* (P10).

Subtheme ii: Relationships

Relationship perspective refers to beliefs and attitudes toward interpersonal connections that influence trust and closeness (Hendrick & Hendrick, 2006grp). Seven participants reported changes in how they view relationships. Illustrative responses include:

"The session has given me a different perspective on relationships" (P2).

Discussion

The qualitative analysis was carried on based on the hypothesis that benefits Related to Psychological wellbeing will be reported by Older Adults Post Intervention. The five themes namely, "Change in Mood", "Increased Positive Affect", "Self-Acceptance", "Feelings of Gratitude", "and Perspective Shift". Diniz et al. (2023): While primarily a systematic review and meta-analysis, this study also incorporated qualitative analyses from selected articles. Thematic findings indicated that gratitude interventions led to increased optimism, positive emotions, and prosocial behaviors among participants. These qualitative insights complement the quantitative data, highlighting the multifaceted benefits of gratitude practices. The five respective themes which have emerged have been closely linked to psychological well-being in the contemporary literature. Previous research has consistently demonstrated that improvements in mood, reductions in anger, increased calmness, and better sleep are closely associated with enhanced psychological well-being. Positive mood and affect have been linked to higher life satisfaction, self-acceptance, and overall mental health, serving as key indicators of psychological well-being (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005) have shown that decreased anger and heightened calmness are associated with lower stress levels, reduced depressive symptoms, and better emotional regulation, which in turn contribute to greater psychological well-being (Fredrickson, 2001). Additionally, better sleep quality has been identified as a significant predictor of well-being, with positive affect and eudaimonic well-being mediating the relationship between psychosocial factors and sleep, highlighting the bidirectional link between restorative sleep and mental health (Step toe et al., 2008). Collectively, these findings suggest that interventions or practices that improve mood, reduce anger, increase calmness, and enhance sleep quality can substantially strengthen psychological well-being.

Conclusion

There have been five themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis—"Change in Mood," "Increased Positive Affect," "Self-Acceptance," "Feelings of Gratitude," and "Perspective Shift"—which reflect the perceived impact of the intervention on participants. Collectively, these themes suggest that interventions promoting emotional regulation, calmness, improved sleep, and reflective awareness can strengthen psychological well-being. As an exploratory inquiry, the emergence of these themes provides preliminary evidence of the intervention's efficacy by highlighting meaningful experiential changes reported directly by participants.

Implications

The present exploratory study contributes to positive psychology and gerontology by providing preliminary evidence that a culturally grounded gratitude intervention may enhance dispositional gratitude, mood, self-acceptance, and overall psychological well-being among Indian older adults, thereby supporting gratitude as a potential resource for resilience in later life. By integrating indigenous philosophical concepts such as *ṛṇa-sankalpana* with contemporary gratitude practices, it underscores the value of culturally contextualized interventions. Qualitative thematic analysis

further revealed experiential themes including mood enhancement, increased positive affect, self-acceptance, gratitude, and perspective shifts, offering insight into possible underlying mechanisms. The findings also suggest that brief, culturally sensitive gratitude interventions may be feasible and low-cost strategies in community and geriatric settings, providing a foundation for larger, controlled future studies.

Limitations and Future Directions

Limitations

This exploratory study has several limitations. The short follow-up period restricts conclusions about long-term sustainability of effects. The absence of a true randomized control group limits causal inference regarding the specific impact of the gratitude component (Wood et al., 2010). The intervention was developed and tested in a single geographic location, reducing generalizability across diverse Indian contexts. The relatively small, community-based volunteer sample may have limited statistical power and introduced self-selection bias. Future research should include larger samples, rigorous quantitative methodologies, and stronger experimental designs to systematically evaluate intervention efficacy.

Future Directions

Future research can extend the present exploratory work by implementing the developed gratitude intervention with larger and more diverse samples across multiple regions of India to enhance contextual relevance and generalizability. Since the current study focused on intervention development rather than rigorous quantitative testing, subsequent studies should adopt structured quantitative designs, including experimental or quasi-experimental methods, to systematically evaluate its efficacy. Longitudinal research with extended follow-up periods would help assess the sustainability of outcomes over time. Researchers may also explore integrating culturally grounded practices such as meditation, reflective storytelling, or devotional activities to examine their combined influence on well-being. Furthermore, testing the intervention in clinical, rural, or institutional settings would provide deeper insights into its applicability and scalability within varied Indian contexts.

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Original Article

Sense of coherence, job stress and job satisfaction among sales professionals

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180234

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 199-217

February - 2026

The present study examines the relationship between sense of coherence (SOC), job stress, and job satisfaction among sales professionals. Sense of coherence, a concept developed by Antonovsky, reflects an individual's ability to perceive life as comprehensible, manageable, and meaningful. This research explores how a higher SOC may influence levels of job stress and job satisfaction in the high-pressure sales environment. Data analysis reveals a positive correlation between SOC and job satisfaction, suggesting that individuals with a stronger sense of coherence are more likely to experience greater job fulfillment. Conversely, SOC shows a negative correlation with job stress, indicating that those with higher SOC experience lower levels of job-related stress. Additionally, a negative correlation is found between job satisfaction and job stress, suggesting that increased satisfaction is associated with reduced stress. These findings highlight the potential of enhancing SOC to improve employee well-being and productivity within demanding sales roles. The study provides valuable insights for organizational interventions aimed at fostering resilience and satisfaction in the workplace.

Contents

Submitted: 18 Jan. 2026

Revised: 28 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 13 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

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Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19345570](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19345570)



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How to cite this article:

Kulkarni, S., & Kulkarni, P. (2026). Sense of coherence, job stress and job satisfaction among sales professionals. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 199–217
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19345570>

Introduction

1. Variables under study: The study focuses on three key variables: sense of coherence (SOC), job stress, and job satisfaction. SOC refers to an individual's ability to perceive life as structured, manageable, and meaningful, which helps in coping with stress. It plays a significant role in how sales professionals handle workplace challenges. Job stress, on the other hand, arises when work demands exceed one's ability to cope, leading to negative outcomes like burnout and decreased productivity. In contrast, job satisfaction reflects how content employees are with their job, affecting motivation and performance. A higher SOC is expected to reduce job stress while enhancing job satisfaction, contributing to overall well-being and efficiency in sales roles.

Sense of coherence:

In this fast-paced world, where stress and uncertainty rule over many aspects of our life, possessing specific traits might turn out to be the key towards an enhanced purpose of life and resilience. One such trait is 'Sense of Coherence', which is a psychological construct, emphasizing an individual's ability to view life as meaningful, comprehensive and manageable. According to the American Psychological Association, Sense of Coherence (SOC) is "the ability to present a narrative of oneself in a way that is understandable and easy to follow. Sense of coherence is considered as a protective factor against the deleterious effects of stress on physical and mental health." The concept sense of coherence (SOC) is defined as "a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that 1) the stimuli deriving from one's internal and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable, and explicable, 2) the resources are available to one to meet the demands posed by these stimuli; and 3) these demands are challenges, worthy of investment and engagement (Antonovsky, 1987).

The Israeli medical sociologist, Aaron Antonovsky, coined the term 'Sense of coherence' and is the key concept of his Salutogenic Model. He heavily emphasized on the concept Salutogenesis in his book 'Health, Stress and coping', which is contrary yet complementary to pathogenesis (Mittelmark et al., 2022, p. 33). Salutogenesis strives to know the sources from where individuals gather their resources and capacity to function at an optimal level during a crisis. Whereas pathogenesis aims to understand how a particular disorder or disease developed, and how it is progressing (Mittelmark et al., 2022, p. 33). Antonovsky had an unconventional way of viewing health which did not match with the traditional approach. Instead of considering a person's condition as either 'well' or 'unwell', he thought of health as something that exists on a spectrum or a continuum. He imagined a horizontal line (ease/ dis-ease continuum) with two ends, with one end representing total absence of health (H-) and one end representing complete health. Throughout our life, our position on this health continuum is constantly changing. Antonovsky stated that our focus is to move towards the healthier end of the life, irrespective of where we start our journey from. Instead of directing our attention towards the disease, promoting well-being, health and quality of life can be beneficial. Central to the Salutogenic model are two concepts, Sense of Coherence (SOC) and General Resistance Resources (GRR).

SOC is a global orientation representing an individual's capacity to view life as ordered, predictable and manageable. The three elements of SOC are, 1) meaningfulness, which is a belief that obstacles to life are worthy of consideration and engagement, 2) manageability, which is a perception that resources are available to fulfil life's demands, and lastly 3) comprehensibility, which explains the extent to which one considers life as understandable. On the other hand, general resistance resources are social, psychological and cultural elements that support individuals in coping with stress. Social support, monetary assets and personality traits such as optimism and resilience are examples of GRRs. These resources enhance a person's sense of well-being by aiding them in managing stress and protecting their well-being. SOC and GRR function together to explain why some people focus on health promoting factors more rather than disease causing factors.

Antonovsky considered SOC as something that develops through learning processes which begin at birth, or even before that (Mittelmark et al., 2022, p. 117). A strong SOC is formed when these learning processes constantly create challenges in life, and individuals actively engage and maintain an equilibrium in underload and overload (Mittelmark et al., 2022, p. 117). SOC was initially thought to be considerably stable after early adulthood, with minor changes or alterations occurring in the later span of life. However, Antonovsky later clarified that this is applicable only to individuals with a high SOC, who have better access to their general resistance resources.

Childhood experiences can create a strong foundation for high SOC, as stated by Antonovsky (1987). Infants who actively participate and engage in an interactive environment, may produce consistent and stable responses. Referring to Bowlby's attachment theory, Antonovsky stated that the sense of comprehensibility is developed in the early stages of life through consistent experiences of responsiveness and sensitivity from parents and caregivers (Mittelmark et al., 2022, p. 117). However, he was not in much in favor with the permissive, over-indulging, or consistent and responsive parenting as he believed life was much more complex than that. Perfectly responsive parents do not exist as they have to attend to multiple tasks and are a part of a demanding environment. Antonovsky suggested that "natural" frustrations are necessary for developing sense of comprehensibility. When infants realize that sources of satisfaction can appear and disappear, they begin to resonate with continuity and predictability of social interactions.

According to Antonovsky (1987), the sense of manageability is developed through experiences of load balance, which are facilitated by parents and care givers who respect their child's abilities at different developmental

ages (Mittelmark et al., 2022, p. 118). He used the example of ‘forced toilet training’ to illustrate how overloading demands occur when parents do not recognize the child’s psychological and biological realities. Such inappropriate anticipation can hinder the development of sense of manageability. In Antonovsky’s view, load balance is achieved when demands are rational and are aligned with the child’s developmental age (Mittelmark et al., 2022, p. 118).

The sense of meaningfulness, according to Antonovsky (1987) develops when a child indulges in decision making. In early childhood, this occurs when they notice that their actions bring out desired responses from the adults. Antonovsky (1987) stated that when an infant’s actions lead to desired responses, it can be counted under early participation in decision making. Their sense of meaningfulness can be nurtured through the child’s realization that their actions can manipulate the environment. It can also be fostered when they feel a sense of importance in the caregiver’s life.

During Adolescence, the SOC is unpredictable, and the foundation laid in childhood might get disrupted. This phase is marked with multiple biological as well as psychological transitions, and individuals are tangled in the hunt for sense of identity. Antonovsky connected the development of SOC in adolescence with Erik Erikson’s key developmental tasks (Erikson, 1950, p.89) which they must navigate across cultures:

- Adolescents must build a personality which fits within the boundaries set by the society
- They must “get their act together” to attain a “vitalizing sense of reality” (Erikson, 1950)
- They need to gain experience in mastering challenges

The sense of comprehensibility is reinforced as the child grows through adolescence, gets various life experiences and develop a sense of reality. The experience of mastering and navigating through the challenges fosters their sense of manageability. The sense of meaningfulness is supported by a “vitalizing” approach to dealing with reality. However, adolescence is a fragile age and requires adult supervision and guidance.

Adulthood, which is marked by increased responsibilities and major psychological changes, is a phase where roles and GRRs are necessary for the development of SOC and identity formation (Antonovsky, 1987). Antonovsky believed that in the first decade of adulthood, individuals incorporate new roles at work, partnerships and families. While some of these roles may strengthen your SOC, or weaken them. The SOC is quite volatile at this stage. However, in the second decade of adulthood, individuals have settled into their roles and have reached a relatively stable position on the SOC continuum.

After Antonovsky’s death, Lindstrom and Eriksson (2010) stated that development of SOC is a lifelong learning process. They conducted several longitudinal studies across different age groups, that indicated the strengthening of SOC with age. The strengthening is generally consistent across different measurement scales: SOC-29 and SOC-13. Despite all the information available, the accurate reasons and factors behind a strong SOC are still unexplored. A research conducted in 2017 suggests that systematic and coherent experiences in everyday life may be a key in building a stronger SOC. certain life events may cause fluctuations in SOC. For example, becoming a parents is considered a critical life experience and might alter SOC (Lindstrom et. al. 2017).

Overall, SOC is a psychological construct that aids individuals’ in managing stress and mental well-being. Individuals who can comprehend the problems well have a better understanding of the situation and are well equipped to deal with it. Individuals with the skills of manageability believe that they have the access to internal and external resources to tackle the obstacles, resulting in them feeling a sense of control. And lastly the third component of SOC, meaningfulness, is related to motivation people derive from their lives. It reflects the extent to which individuals consider their life as emotionally significant and perceive challenges as opportunities rather than obstacles. SOC provides a sense of trust that stressors are predictable, resources are available to deal with them and these challenges are worthwhile as they are meaningful to the individual.

Initially, Antonovsky was not particularly interested in studying about stress (Mittelmark et al., 2022, p. 31). However, after paying distinctive attention to literature concerning stress, he shifted his focus and spent most of his career years studying the stress process. Antonovsky conducted a study of psychological risk factors in coronary artery disease in the form of stressors in immigrants to Israel from North America, with himself being a respondent in the study. This study led to an important development in this research (Mittelmark et al., 2022, p. 32). He observed that exposure to stressors might not necessarily lead to an illness if the individuals is equipped with healthy coping mechanisms. Stressors of various kinds create immediate tension in organisms, however if it is skillfully tackled, it will not result in ‘stress’. Though the relationship between ‘stress’ and ‘disease’ is now well established, it was not always recognized. The word ‘stress’ was most commonly used by physicists to understand the relationship between force and the resistance to counter it (Tan and Yips, 2018). It was Hans Selye who incorporated this term in the medical lexicon and described as, “the non-specific response of the body to any demand” (Tan and Yips, 2018). He also proposed one of the widely known theories of biological psychology, the General Adaptation Syndrome. This framework states that our body experiences 3 significant states when encountering a stressful situation, the alarm reaction stage, resistance stage and exhaustion stage. The alarm reaction stage refers to the body’s natural reaction to either flee or protect oneself from the dangerous situation. You may experience an increase in your heart rate, boost of adrenaline and the adrenal gland releases cortisol. The next stage, the resistance stage, is characterized by the body’s ability to recover itself by activating the parasympathetic system, and getting the body back to pre-stress state. Lastly, the exhaustion

stage can be a result of chronic or prolonged stage. Struggling with stress for long periods can drain out your physical, emotional and mental resources, making you feel powerless and hopeless. It might also weaken one's immune system and increase the risk of stress-related illness.

2. Job stress:

According to the APA (2022), 66% of Americans report their major source of stress as money. 75% of US adults feel crime and violence as a significant source of stress (APA, 2022). 34% of US adults reported that stress completely overwhelms them almost every other day (APA, 2022). According to 2022 Gallup survey data from adults in 122 countries, 41% of adults worldwide experienced a lot of stress. Moreover, shifting the focus to workplace stress, 6 out of 10 employees in major economical companies' experience job stress (Spill, 2024). Work is the most common cause of stress with 79% of people affected by work related stress in particular. Survey results from Spill (2024) reported around 17 million working days are lost every year globally because of ill-health caused by stress, anxiety and depression. Considering the Indian population, according to McKinsey Health Institute (2023), 59% of Indian employees reported burnout due to job stress. Additionally, a 2024 Gallup survey revealed that 86% of Indian employees are either struggling or suffering with their current job situations, and only 14% reported themselves as 'thriving'.

An event that is perceived stressful by someone, might be exciting or stimulating for another. Many mental health professionals believe that personality traits play a significant role in how we perceive stress (Psychology today, 2024). Individuals with Type A personalities are often characterized as ambitious, hurried, highly aware of time and competitive. Research indicates that if these traits are not regulated effectively, it can lead to stress related health issues. On the other hand, people who possess Type B personality are relaxed, flexible, and less driven by external pressures. It is found that they have an adaptable approach to life and are better at putting things into perspectives. They may be considered lazy due to their tendency to procrastinate or delay tasks.

According to Elizabeth Harris (2023), there are some people who thrive under pressure and workplace stress. Such individuals are often flexible, adaptable and able to alter their approach, and also pivot whenever its needed. They are visionary and have a clear goal or milestone to reach. Additionally, individuals who have mastered the skill of working in high pressure view at situations objectively and avoid over exaggerating the tasks. Self-care is necessary as high pressure situations take a lot out of individuals, both mentally and physically.

Work environment is also a major contributor of stress. When employees are presented with work demands and pressures that are way beyond their capacity and knowledge, it challenges their ability to cope and results in stress (WHO, 2020). If employees experience lack of support from colleagues and supervisors, the intensity of their perceived stress might be higher. It is observed that the terms 'pressure' or 'challenge' and 'stress' are used interchangeably, yet they differ in nature. Due to contemporary work demands, pressure at workplace can be unavoidable. Individuals with a sense of acceptance might perceive pressure as something that keeps them alert, motivated, and find these experiences meaningful and worthwhile. The condition of stress will stem when this pressure becomes excessive of unmanageable. It may negatively impact one's health and business performance. Work-related stress can be caused due to unhealthy organizational culture, poor work design, inadequate management, unsatisfactory working conditions and lack of support (WHO, 2020).

Most of the notably case studies conducted in India to study work stress were conducted on professionals working in the software industry. Hierarchical work culture, long-working hours and inadequate break times were one of the major contributors of job stress and burnout (Jain and Batra, 2015). 98 out of 100 employees at HCL, Bangalore stated that they feel physically, mentally and emotionally stressed almost daily (Kumari et al. 2014). All these factors impact negatively on one's physical as well as psychological health. However, there are a few factors that might alleviate the effects of job stress. Sense of coherence being one of them. Through multiple studies it was established that greater SOC promotes better mental health, physical health, resilience to stress and enhanced quality of life (Wolff, 1999). Human resources are an asset towards any organization and they must be given special attention. They contribute largely towards the productivity and must be given utmost care. Their needs should be addressed well.

Robert Karasek in 1979 formulated a framework that emphasized on the demanding nature of the workplace, and internal resources used to cope with it. This framework is named as Demand- Control model of Job Stress. In his article he focused on two key parameters that affect the amount of stress a person experiences: Job demands and Decision latitude. Job demands consist of stressors in the work environment such as deadlines, conflicts, work overload, long working hours, etc. On the other hand, decision latitude is the extent to which an individual possesses the sense of control over work. Karasek observed that people who were a part of highly demanding jobs but scored low on decision latitude experienced more tiredness, trouble waking in the morning, and also felt anxious and depressed. However, people working in a similar working environment, though who possess high decision latitude had low experiences of stress.

The effort-reward imbalance (ERI) model proposed by Johannes Seigrist in 1996 is a psychological framework that explains the relationship between work-related stress and health outcomes. The foundation of this model lies in the principle of social reciprocity, emphasizing that individuals expect a balance between the amount of efforts they put into their work and the rewards that they receive as an appreciation for the same. The core components

of this model are, effort, reward and imbalance. Effort consist of both physical and mental energy required to fulfil the organizational demands and be accountable. Rewards in the ERI model are categorized into three parts: financial rewards (salary and job security), esteem rewards (respect and recognition from co-workers), and career opportunities (promotion and job stability). An imbalance occurs when the efforts expended by the workers does not match with the rewards received. This can lead to feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction. An additional aspect of 'over commitment' was added later to the model, which refers to a worker's intrinsic tendency to put in excessive efforts into the tasks, often driven by a need for approval or fear of failure. Such individuals are more likely to experience work related stress as they might experience burnout.

Motivation is a psychological process that drives a person towards taking certain actions to reach a goal. However, motivation is most commonly characterized into two main kinds, intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation comes from within wherein an individual is driven by personal desires. When external rewards or appreciation cultivates motivation, it is called as extrinsic motivation. The Person-environment fit theory stated by Robert French and Robert Kahn (1970s), who primarily focused on organizational behavior and stress management, explained that people are better suited for some environments than others and the fit between the person and the environment can affect their motivation, behavior and health. It can result in a mental and emotional conflict if an intrinsically motivated person works in an extrinsically motivated organization and vice versa. This miss-match between the environment and the person can lead to stress and demoralization. People report the best outcomes when there is a fit on the attributes they value the most. Organizations often use this theory during selection processes to guide hiring decisions and ensure that candidates align well with the job and organization. This model is also used to redesign job structure to match with the employee's strengths and preferences, resulting in job satisfaction and productivity.

Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R model), developed by Arnold Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti, is a well-known theory in the field of occupational psychology. It explains how organizational environment affects employee well-being and performance. This theory postulates that although employees work in different settings, their job characteristics can be classified into categories: job demands and job resources. Job demands are aspects that require constant physical as well as mental efforts, such as managing workload, handling conflicts and organizational politics. On the other hand, job resources are aspects of the job that reduce job demands, help achieve work related goals, and stimulate personal growth and development. Examples include social support from colleagues, freedom to decide whether to work from home or office, and getting equal opportunities. This theory also highlights two main processes, health impairment process and motivational process. The health impairment process explains the stress, strain and burnout caused due to high job demands and insufficient resources. Whereas motivational process states that job resources fosters work engagement, and leads to higher work productivity and commitment.

Human resources are an asset towards any organization and they must be given special attention. They contribute largely towards the productivity and must be given utmost care. Their needs should be addressed well. Job stress is a major factor contributing towards job satisfaction. Job stress can stem from various factors such as mismatch of one's desires and organizational needs, physical and emotional exertion, overload or targets, unhealthy expectations, etc. The experience of job stress is unique to every individual as the ability and capabilities that every person possesses to handle stress varies. There are many individuals who work well under pressure. Job stress is an important determinant towards job satisfaction as it explains one's commitment towards the organization. Job satisfaction also contributes towards productivity.

4. Job satisfaction:

Job satisfaction has been defined as a "pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job experiences" (Locke, 1976). Job satisfaction affects overall quality of life, impacting various aspects of life such as social relationships, family bonds and physical health. This in turn affects job performance, attendance and likelihood of them resigning. Low job satisfaction can lead to psychological issues such as burnout.

Herzberg et al. (1959) state that an employee's motivation to work corresponds to their attitude toward it. The concept of 'attitude' is internal and stems from one's state of mind. When examined effectively, the employee's state of mind can provide valuable insights to the managers and HR managers to understand what motivates workers. In their study on how people feel about their jobs, Herzberg and his colleagues set out to answer three important questions, 1) How can we identify an individual's attitude towards a job, 2) What are the factors that influence this attitude, 3) What are the consequences of these attitudes on the employee and their work. These questions form the foundation of Herzberg's exploration into worker's motivation and job satisfaction and the Dual-factor theory. The inquiry about people's attitudes, which led to the development of dual-factor theory, consists of 'motivators' and 'hygiene factors'. The motivators consist factors such as recognition, possibility of growth, advancement, responsibility, etc. And the hygiene factors include salary, interpersonal relations, personal life, job security, working conditions, etc. Motivators are intrinsic factors that basically revolve around the work and task itself. Conversely, hygiene factors are extrinsic entities such as interpersonal relationships, that are not directly connected to the worker's actual job. The key difference in these factors lie in how they affect job satisfaction. Motivators are mainly related to personal growth and self-actualization that create long term satisfaction, but their absence does not necessarily lead to dissatisfaction. These factors encourage positive job attitudes because they fulfill deeper and intrinsic psychological needs. On the other hand,

hygiene factors are more about preventing dissatisfaction. These are basic elements such as work environment and salary. If they are inadequate they lead to dissatisfaction, but if they are adequate, they don't necessarily yield the feeling of satisfaction; instead they prevent dissatisfaction. This non-bipolar relationship states that the absence of dissatisfaction does not guarantee satisfaction and vice-versa.

Similarly, Greg R. Oldham and J. Richard Hackman developed a model named Job characteristics model (JCM), to enhance employee job satisfaction and performance, by focusing on an effective job design. This model recognized five core job characteristics, which when present can improve employee motivation, performance, satisfaction, and lower absenteeism and turnover. The characteristics are: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. Skill variety refers to the variety of different activities or skills required for the role. For example, a grocery store manager may have a job with little variety compared to a store manager. Task identity refers to how much a job requires a fully complete and identifiable piece of work. Additionally, it includes understanding the practicality of that contribution and how it is beneficial towards achieving larger goals. Task significance refers to how much a particular job positively impacts lives and work of others, making the employees feel worthy. Autonomy refers to the amount of comfort, freedom and control an employee has towards deciding his work schedule, prioritization of tasks and methods to accomplish those tasks. Feedback refers to direct and clear input from colleagues and seniors regarding task performance. The authors of these models were primarily look to reduce the boredom and monotony factory workers experienced. Instead of getting better and productive, factory workers were becoming bored and unengaged, leading to a decline in their performance. The JCM can help an HR professional to evaluate a job and make it more engaging. It guides in developing certain job design strategies, improves job satisfaction and enables job enrichment.

Job satisfaction overall is a positive emotional state resulting from an individual's job experience. It is a critical factor that influences both employee and the organization. When employees are satisfied with their work, it leads to numerous benefits such as increase in their productivity, engagement and overall well-being. In turn, organizations are satisfied as employees perform better, experience lower turnover and foster a positive workplace culture. As mentioned earlier, job satisfaction is directly correlated with motivation. When individuals find their work meaningful and rewarding, they are inclined towards exerting effort. Job satisfaction also has a profound impact on one's mental health. Satisfied workers tend to experience low levels of stress, burnout and anxiety compared to those who are dissatisfied. In addition, they are more likely to develop a strong sense of commitment towards the organization. Organizations also benefit with satisfied employees as it leads to innovation and creativity.

I believe the relationship between sense of coherence, job stress and job satisfaction is a critical area of research in occupational psychology. A strong SOC helps individuals to effectively deal with stress leading to a better personal and professional well-being. Workplace stress is caused by a variety of factors such as leadership styles, workload and demands placed on the job. Excessive stress can have a detrimental effect on one's health. However, individuals with higher SOC are well equipped to deal with such situations. They use healthy coping strategies and view obstacles as manageable. The ability to manage responsibilities related to one's profession also has an impact on job satisfaction. Workers with inadequate coping resources and high levels of job stress typically express less job satisfaction. On the other hand, those with a high SOC are more likely to find meaning and purpose in their work in addition to having lower levels of workplace stress. Their total level of job satisfaction rises when they perceive their roles as contributing to a greater purpose.

2. Statement of the problem:

The proposed study aims to explore the relationship between sense of coherence, job stress, and job satisfaction among sales professionals, addressing the research gap in corporate settings and providing insights into how SOC may buffer stress and improve job satisfaction in high-pressure environments

3. Objectives of the Study:

1. **To examine the relationship between sense of coherence (SOC) and job stress among sales professionals** – This objective seeks to explore whether individuals with a high SOC experience lower levels of job stress in a high-pressure sales environment.
2. **To investigate the impact of sense of coherence (SOC) on job satisfaction among sales professionals** – This objective focuses on understanding whether a higher SOC contributes to increased job satisfaction in sales professionals facing demanding work conditions.
3. **To analyze the moderating role of sense of coherence (SOC) in the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction** – This objective aims to determine whether SOC acts as a buffer, reducing the negative impact of job stress on job satisfaction among sales professionals.

4. Rationale:

A cross sectional study stated that employees with low sense of coherence and lack of resources experienced burnout more often (Rothmann et al., 2003). Similarly, a metaanalysis indicated stress, depression, burnout and post-traumatic stress disorder negatively correlated with SOC; conversely job satisfaction and wellbeing positively correlated with SOC (Siles et al. 2022). Similar to Job stress, job satisfaction is a complex variable influenced by situational factors and dispositional characteristics of an individual (Rothmann, 2001). Sense of coherence, locus of control and self-efficacy were found to be interconnected concepts however only SOC and locus of control enhanced job satisfaction

(Rothmann, 2001). Numerous studies were conducted to study the effects of SOC on job stress, job satisfaction, and burnout and life satisfaction among healthcare workers, academicians, factory workers, and individuals with chronic health conditions. However, these variables have not been primarily studied among corporate employees, especially sales professionals, who are a part of high pressure environments. Their job profile is characterized by demanding targets, client interactions and competitive markets. Technostress led to a decrease in job satisfaction and increase in job stress, however, employees who were highly committed to their jobs experienced a less significant decline in job satisfaction (Pullins, 2020). In my view, the study of mental health aspects among sales professionals is very limited. There is lack of data and evidence concerning the mental health of corporate and sales professionals. I believe that understanding the significance and gravity of stress among sales professionals is crucial as they have the constant pressure of target completion, attending to customers and maximizing marketing. They also have to be constantly present on the field as the company's entire revenue depends on their sales pitch. Therefore, the organization must provide them utmost care, respect and develop strategies to promote a positive and encouraging work environment.

5. SUMMARY: This chapter entails details regarding the three main variables under study which are sense of coherence, job stress and job satisfaction. It also explains various theories that were developed and models that were created to understand these concepts better. The rationale emphasizes the need of focusing on individual's sense of coherence, and observing how it creates a positive effect on job stress and in turn increases job satisfaction.

Review of Literature

Introduction: This literature review is a close examination of previous studies informing the current study on the relationship between sense of coherence, job satisfaction, and job stress in sales professionals. This chapter integrates previous studies on these variables by outlining the most dominant theoretical models, including Antonovsky's sense of coherence as a framework for dealing with stress, as well as job satisfaction and stress dynamics in the high-pressure sales environment. A review of the past research, this chapter sets the starting point in understanding how these factors are connected with each other, shaping the discussion and implications of the results of the current research.

2 Sense of Coherence and work:

Over the past 50 years, research on Sense of Coherence (SOC) has evolved significantly, with early studies focusing primarily on health, well-being and life satisfaction and more recent work exploring workplace well-being, cultural differences, trauma and adverse experiences and digital and technological stress. In 1970, Antonovsky was analyzing a large data set from a study conducted on Israeli women on how they adapt to the menopause, when he observed that 51% of the women who had not experienced the Nazi-concentration camps had good health compared to the other 29% who had survived the camps (Hochwalder & Saied, 2018). This observation made him speculate on how some people stay healthy despite experiencing terrible events, and subsequently led him to formulate the Salutogenic model (Hochwalder and Saied, 2018). The concept of SOC has been extensively studied within the field of health, with a wide range of research focusing how different levels of SOC enhances or restricts their sense of acceptance and resilience. According to Wolff and Ratner (2020), stress and recent traumatic events were inversely related to SOC, and social support was positively related. Also, traumatic events encountered in the childhood were stronger predictors of SOC than traumatic life events experienced in adulthood (Wolff and Ratner, 2020). Studies related to early childhood development have illustrated that foundations of a stable mental health are built early in life, as experiences change the structure of brain (Miller & Kinsbourne, 2012). A large scale study examining bio-psychosocial model of risk and resilience on behavior at pre-adolescence stated the significance of biological and psychosocial factors, including SOC on mental health and resilience among pre-adolescents (Agnafors et al., 2017). Similarly, Hochwalder and Saied (2018) revealed that individuals with a high SOC experienced fewer hassles, and the experienced hassles were less stressful. The same study found out that there are no gender differences between male and female students with regard to the number of experienced hassles. An intensive study was conducted to study the association between sex, age, socio-economic status, stress, SOC and health among Norwegian students; results indicated that girls scored higher on depressive symptoms and subjective health complaints than boys; stress was positively correlated with depressive symptoms; it was observed that SOC was significantly correlated with all outcome variable (Moksnes and Espnes, 2020). Student distress is considered as an important public health issue and research has shown increased levels of anxiety, depression and risk behavior among this population (Shankland et al., 2018). However, sense of coherence played a mediating role between daily hassles and burnout, and it also fostered optimism (Shankland et al., 2018).

A large portion of research related to sense of coherence was conducted in the healthcare sector. Ontology is a field of metaphysics and philosophy that studies existence and reality. Antonovsky (1987) stated two important things in his second book 'Unraveling the mystery of health', 1) he saw man in interaction with his environment and 2) a normal state of life includes chaos and change. It is a challenge of the individual to manage the chaos and find strategies and resources available for coping with everyday hassles (Eriksson, 2020). A research in the Medline database as of 17 September 2019 shows that a strong SOC is associated with perceived good health, particularly mental health (Mittelmark et al., 2022, p. 66). A systematic review of studies done during 1992-2003 showed that a strong SOC protected against anxiety, burnout, depression and hopelessness; and was positively correlated with optimism, hardiness and coping (Eriksson and Lindstrom 2006, 2007). In addition, women with a stronger SOC reported fewer stressful events and had better coping strategies, frequently used distraction, situation redefinition

compared to those with a lower SOC (Sarenmalm et al., 2011). Wainwright et al., (2007) hypothesized that SOC could aid in promoting health and healthy lifestyle choices; results indicated that those who scored high on SOC were non-smoker, physically active, consumed on average 63 g/ day more fruit and vegetables and 1.9 g/ day more fiber.

Antonovsky (1987) assumed that humans are continuously exposed to changes and events that can be stressors for some and stimulators for others. These may include major life events such as illness of loved ones, changes in family structure (divorce or death), and changes in the workplace (Mittelmark et al., 2022, p. 64). As stated by Antonovsky (1987), adulthood is somewhat a volatile stage and the SOC strengthens or weakens according to different experiences and changing responsibilities. Lindstrom and Eriksson (2010) assumed that SOC tends to strengthen with age, however there are few studies that rejected this hypothesis. A longitudinal study was conducted to explore how negative life events influence SOC; results indicated that negative life event reduced SOC levels in both men and women and having a strong SOC did not prevent SOC from declining over the years (Volanen, 2007). Similarly, women who had recently experienced negative life events had poor mental health compared to women who had not experienced any negative life events, and SOC neither mediated nor moderated this relationship (Hochwalder, 2018). Research indicates that SOC keeps developing during the entire life course (Silverstein & Heap, 2015), however is influenced by different experiences that we encounter, appraising and reacting to stressors and the aftereffect of traumatic experiences (Mittelmark et al., 2022 p. 69). Antonovsky extensively studied the theories behind stress and coping, and rejected the ideas behind Lazarus's cognitive theory on stress and coping as well as theories of life events (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Antonovsky (1984) assumed the conception behind these theories as 'balance in life' or a 'homeostatic life'. Pathogenically, a disturbance is thought to damage the health and well-being. In Salutogenesis, the focus is on the person's ability to use generalized resistance resources, both internal and external, to manage the stressful situation.

3. Job stress and mental health:

APA's annual 'Stress in America' survey has consistently reported that work is the major source of stress among Americans. Major contributors of stress being low salaries, lack of social support, excessive workload, and unclear performance expectations. Another research by ADP Research Institute (2023) reported that about 76% of Indian workers indicate that stress has a negative impact on work performance and mental health. In India, the proportion of workers who feel they are supported by their managers has decreased from 80% in 2022 to 71% in 2023 (The Economic Times, 2023). Understanding the causes of job stress allows us to delve into the wide range of effects on employees, both professionally and personally. Employees are evaluated on the basis of work performance and their contribution to the organization. In the constant struggle of proving themselves 'apt' for the job, employees are exposed to magnified levels of stress and strain. One of the researches conducted in Kerala among software professionals reported that job performance is dependent on role ambiguity, rewards, fear of obsolescence and workload (Joy and Kumar, 2018). With respect to sales professionals, high demands and expectations often lead to an increase in mental stress. Salespeople's emotion regulation reduces conflict and stress, enhancing performance, especially in high vertical collectivism contexts, with significant implications for managers in emerging countries (Jaramillo et. al, 2015). Michac (1997) specified the reasons behind work stress as poor time management, unclear job descriptions, feelings of incompetency, bad interpersonal relationships, and quality/complexity of tasks.

Job stress has significant effects on employee performance, emotional well-being and job satisfaction. Time pressure and role ambiguity have found to impact employee performance negatively (Sharmilee et. al., 2018). However, work performance was not affected due to workload or lack of motivation (Sharmilee et al., 2018).

A variety of studies have shown that job stress is related to psychological, physiological, and behavioral job strains, which include job satisfaction and blood pressure levels (House & Rizzo, 1972; Johnson & Stinson, 1975; Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek & Rosenthal, 1964). In a 1988 study, Ashford realized that the availability of certain coping mechanisms helped reduce the level of job stressors. She also hypothesized that coping resources such as skills, strategies and support systems helped individuals manage work stress. Employees with high self-efficacy could stay persistent for longer periods of time in stressful situation (Moos and Billings, 1982). A quantitative study highlights that increased job stress negatively correlates with job performance, particularly at high pressure environment; suggesting a direct correlation between stress levels and efficiency at work making it a significant factor in productivity (Jamal, 1984). Workplace culture and leadership styles play a significant role impacting job stress and employee engagement. Leadership styles at workplace consequently affects interpersonal relationships and motivation among employees. Most commonly seen leadership styles are, democratic (encourages employee participation, especially in decision making), autocratic (it is leader oriented and employees are not given much chance to share their input), transformational (employee well-being is prioritized and creativity is encouraged), bureaucratic (a well-defined process and structure is followed), and transactional (focuses on organization, supervision and group development). The impact of leadership styles on job stress is evident in studies done by Skakon et al., (2010) illustrating how transformation leadership style can alleviate stress by fostering a supportive environment. Numerous studies have proven that there is a direct relationship between job stress and job satisfaction (Bemana et al., 2013; Fairbrother and Warn, 2003; Cummins, 1989). Lu et al studied the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among nurses; as nursing is a highly demanding profession, job satisfaction declined as job stress levels rose.

Employees are an important asset for the company as they carry out company operations. High turnover leads to loss of potential employees, especially if the employee resigns by his/her own will (voluntary turnover) (Ramlavati et al., 2021). Addressing the issue to employee turnover is important for the sustainability of the organization. Ali and Baloch (2008, 2010) stated that high turnover rates result in high training costs, low enthusiasm for work, mental pressure on employees, and loss of human resources. As claimed by Robbins (1994) job satisfaction is a general attitude of the individual towards his work which creates a harmonious relationship between the employees and the organization.

Work life balance is another important aspect when studying the mental health of employees, especially sales employees wherein their daily work requires rigorous mental and physical efforts. Work life balance involves an employee being able to equally prioritize the demands of his career and have a fulfilling private life (Peninsula, 2022). Kelly et al., (2020) conducted a research among pathology residents and results indicated the burnout and job stress was highly prevalent; burnout was due to struggles with academics, work life balance and emotional well-being. In a modern workplace setting, Greenhouse and Beutell (1985) showed that work life balance played a significant role in moderating the levels of job stress. Additionally, Maslach and Leiter (2001) highlighted that prolonged job stress is one of the major causes of burnout and leads to physical and mental exhaustion among employees across various occupations.

4. Job satisfaction and overall wellbeing:

Locke (1976) defined Job satisfaction as “a positive emotional state that comes from evaluating a job or job experiences.” It is also the amount or happiness of pleasure that someone feels in their career (Evans, 2001; Shultz and Shultz 2010; Zhu, 2013). As demonstrated by Hackman and Oldham (1976) in their job characteristics model, work environment is a crucial factor in determining job satisfaction. An organization must address their employee’s needs and provide good working conditions in order to enhance employee efficiency, productivity, commitment and effectiveness (Raziq and Maulabakhsh, 2014). Clark (1997) argued that if employees are not satisfied with the work assigned to them, are not clear with their rights, consider working conditions as unsafe, interpersonal relationship are unhealthy, supervisors are disrespectful and employees are not involved in the decision-making process, they may eventually feel separated from the organization. He further stated that organizations cannot afford dissatisfied employees as it may affect the productivity and would not meet up the supervisor’s expectations, resulting in them being fired or voluntarily resigning; consequently, spending additional costs on recruiting new staff. Therefore, organizations must adopt flexible working environments where the employee’s opinions are valued and they are a part of the organization. The working conditions consist of two main dimensions, work and context (Raziq and Maulabakhsh, 2014). Work consists of all the aspects of the job such as assigned tasks, job profile, core duties, activities, training, sense of achievement, variety in tasks, etc. on the other hand, ‘context’ consists the physical working conditions and social working conditions (Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2000; Gazioglu & Tanselb, 2006; Skalli, Theodossiou, & Vasileiou, 2008). Sell and Cleal (2011) developed a model on job satisfaction, by incorporating economic variables and work environment variables to study the reaction of employees in rigorous working environments with high monetary benefits and non-rigorous working environment with low monetary benefits; the study showed that different psychosocial and workplace aspects such as social support has direct impact on job satisfaction and increase in monetary benefits does not alleviate the levels of dissatisfaction.

Building on this, several studies have explored the role of personality on perceived job satisfaction. Personality traits have been found to correlate with job satisfaction as evidenced by Judge et al., (2002) in their meta-analysis. Hoppock (1935) observed a strong correlation between employee’s emotional adjustment and level of job satisfaction. Similarly, it was concluded that one of the major contributors towards lack of job satisfaction is emotional maladjustment (Fisher and Hanna, 1931). Spector (1997) stated that, “Although many traits have been shown to correlate significantly with job satisfaction, most research with personality has done little more than demonstrate relations without offering much theoretical explanation” (p. 51)”. Examining the relationship of the big five traits with job satisfaction, individuals who are high on neuroticism select themselves into situations that foster negative affect (Emmons et al., 1985) which would lead to decreased levels of job satisfaction. Extraverts are pre-disposed to experience positive emotions (McCrae and Costa, 1992) and positive emotionality results in experiencing high job satisfaction (Connolly and Viswesvaran, 2000). Openness to experience is concerned with scientific and artistic creativity (Feist, 1998), divergent thinking and political liberalization (McCrae, 1996). “Openness to experience is a double-edged sword and predisposes individuals to feel both good and bad more deeply (McCrae, 1996, p. 117)”, explaining its unclear directional influence on subjective well-being or job satisfaction. McCrae and Costa (1991) argued that agreeableness should be related to happiness and agreeable people have a greater motivation to achieve interpersonal intimacy, resulting in greater levels of well-being. It was found that agreeableness was positively related to job satisfaction, however on a low level. Organ and Lingl (1995) believed that conscientiousness should be related to job satisfaction as it exhibits general work-involvement tendency and greater likelihood of obtaining satisfying work rewards, both formal and informal.

5. Sense of Coherence, Job stress and Job satisfaction:

According to the World Health Organization (2004), work-related stress negatively affects the psychological and physical health of workers and eventually the effectiveness of their organization. However, there are certain factors that are proven to alleviate the negative effects of work stress, one being sense of coherence. A high sense of coherence translates into better mental health, correct functioning in the working environment and using adaptive strategies to cope with stress (Betke et al., 2021). A high sense of coherence indicates good manageability during crisis and effective comprehensibility of a situation. Another study conducted by Derbis et. al. in 2018, indicated that work satisfaction and sense of coherence are most important for work engagement. Also sense of coherence is a better mediator between work satisfaction and engagement than resiliency. The Job-Demand-Control-Support Model states that employees can decrease stress through gaining greater job control and developing strong relationships with colleagues and supervisors. Workplace violence is a global public health problem and has caused serious threat to physical and mental health of workers. Social support was concluded as a partial mediator between workplace violence and job satisfaction (Duan et. al., 2019). Healthcare professionals are considered to be a part of demanding job culture with high levels of stress, both occasionally and sustained (Martin et al., 2013).

After extensive research, Antonovsky studied sense of coherence as a buffer against stress. His foundational work explains how high sense of coherence can reduce the levels of stress experienced by individuals in distressing situation. Furthermore, Feldt (1997) explored how SOC worked as a protective and resilience factor, and employees with a higher SOC reported flow stress levels even though they were a part of high-pressure jobs. In addition to mitigating stress, Garling and Thogerson (2000) connected a strong SOC with higher job satisfaction, justifying that such individuals find work-related tasks more comprehensible and manageable. In addition, nurses with a high SOC experienced greater job satisfaction even in stressful job environment.

Extending these findings, recent studies have investigated the mediating effects of SOC between job stress and job satisfaction. Nielsen et al., (2008) demonstrated the mediating effects of SCO, wherein even though employees experienced high levels of stress, they scored high on job satisfaction. Similarly, Mayer and Krause (2013) examined the mental health of corporate professionals; results indicated that SOC diminished the negative effects of stress on job satisfaction, leading to a higher overall well-being. Sense of coherence has extensively studied as a protective factor since the 1990s. McShane et al., assessed SOC as a part of wellness programs in large organizations; results stated that those who were a part of the wellness program reported that SOC made them resilient against stressors.

As per Antonovsky, SOC is a global orientation and every individual has the capacity to develop a good sense of coherence. It is worth noting that a lot of research has been done to study the cultural differences in the levels of SOC individuals possess. A study in the U.S. demonstrated that Japanese workers had a better sense of coherence than their American counterparts, displaying better stress management (Von Ah et al., 2010). Hofstede (2001) extensively studied SOC and job satisfaction across various cultures in multinational companies, and illustrated that employees from a collectivist culture, like China and India, reported higher SOC and job satisfaction compared to individualistic cultures.

Summary:

Overall, after referring to the previous studies and books containing information about the Salutogenic model, it has been evident over the years that sense of coherence acts as a protective factor in many scenarios. It is an ongoing and continuously developing personality traits that tends to change (increases or decreases) after certain experiences in life. Job stress and job satisfaction are dominantly studies factors in the field of organisational psychology and sense of coherence seems to reduce the effects of stress on an individual's overall health. Various theories and models based on job stress and satisfaction emphasize the importance of job environment, positive outlook towards life and interpersonal relationships.

Methodology:

1. Introduction:

This chapter outlines the research design and the procedures used to conduct this study on the relationship between, sense of coherence, job stress and job satisfaction among sales professionals. It also includes a detailed explanation of the research approach, data collection methods, sampling technique, and data analysis processes.

Variables under study:

Predictor variable- Sense of coherence

Outcome Variable- Job stress and Job satisfaction

Control Variables- age, years of experience, gender

Operational definitions:

Sense of Coherence- sense of coherence is a global orientation that expresses the extent to which individuals perceive their life as manageable, comprehensible and meaningful and reflects how well a person copes with stress and life challenges using these three components.

Job stress- Job stress refers to the negative physical and emotional responses that occur when job demands exceed the individual's capacity and resources to cope.

Job satisfaction- It is the extent to which individual's feel content with their job which includes factors such as nature of the job, salary, rewards, working hours, work environment and interpersonal relationships.

Conceptual definition:

Sense of coherence- "A global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that (1) the stimuli from one's internal and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable, and explicable; 1. physical 2. biochemical 3. artifactual-material 4. cognitive 5. emotional 6. valuative attitudinal 7. interpersonal-relational 8. macro sociocultural." (Antonovsky, 1987).

Job Stress- "Originating from medicine, the response-based view classifies job stress as a strain outcome in the form of either a cognitive (dissatisfaction), physiological (illness), and/or behavioral (absenteeism) response. Second, the stimulus-based view applies an engineering analogy to job stress. Its chief concern is identifying stressors (e.g., caseloads or layoffs) capable of weakening one's internal means of resistance, rather than the outcome associated with these stresses." (Preston, 2024).

Job satisfaction- "Job satisfaction is a pleasurable emotional state that results from an employee's appraisal of their job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of their job values." (Locke, 1976)

Hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Sense of coherence is positively correlated with job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Sense of coherence is negatively correlated with job stress.

Research Design:

This study adopts a correlational research design.

Method:

Participants: The participants in this study comprised 73 male sales professionals, with experience ranging from 2 to 35 years. The average sales experience among the participants was 10.5 years. While the majority of the participants were based in Pune, a few were from various regions across Maharashtra. These individuals represented a variety of sales roles, including inside sales, outside sales, regional sales, and sales development representatives. Importantly, their entire professional experience was exclusively within the sales sector.

Tools:

Job Stress- The Workplace Stress Scale (The Martin Company and American Institute of Stress, 1978). This is an 8-Item questionnaire, with scores that range between 15 and 40. The scale of the workplace stress is developed by The Martin Company and American Institute of Stress in 1978, and the reliability of these dimensions encompasses several levels. In addition to this, Internal consistency reliability is measured in many cases using Cronbach's alpha that describes how well the items consistently represent the same construct: in this case, stress. A few pieces of research indicate moderate to high internal consistency scores for the WSS with scores greater than 0.70. Test-retest reliability, that is the stability of responses across time, is sound for this scale, suggesting that stress level measurements by this instrument do not change in brief periods of time except in the context of substantial workplace change. Stress levels may vary over longer time periods, so the reliability over time may decline. Inter-rater reliability for this scale isn't evaluated because this is a self-report measure. With regard to validity, WSS demonstrates content validity in the respect that it includes questions to cover a broad range of workplace stressors. Construct validity is supported by the correlations it shows with other established measures of stress, and criterion-related validity is often evaluated as to its effectiveness in predicting job performance or health outcomes.

Sense of Coherence- The 13-item sense of coherence scale (Aaron Antonovsky, 1987). This scale has 3 constructs: comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness. The total scores range between 13 and 91. The scale of SOC developed by Aaron Antonovsky in 1987 has been extensively tested for internal consistency, which often achieves Cronbach's alpha scores above 0.80. This indicates the consistency of items in the three constructs as comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness, all contributing to the sense of coherence. Test-retest reliability is also consistent, especially over short periods, while SOC seems to fluctuate with changes in life. As is the case with the WSS, the SOC scale also involves no inter-rater reliability. For validity, the SOC scale has high face validity because the items are directly connected to the construct it claims to measure. Construct validity exists based on vast evidence connecting SOC scores to psychological resilience and well-being. The convergent validity is established through correlations with similar constructs such as optimism and coping, and the discriminant validity through the low correlation of these constructs with the unrelated psychological constructs.

Job Satisfaction Survey- The 36-item Job satisfaction survey (Paul E. Specter, 1994). The Job Satisfaction Survey by Paul E. Specter in 1994 also presented high reliability at various dimensions. Its internal consistency is high, with Cronbach's alpha values generally reported in the range of 0.80 to 0.90, suggesting that the items across its nine subscales (e.g. pay, promotion, supervision) coherently measure job satisfaction. The test-retest reliability of the JSS was found to be strong, as it resulted in stable job satisfaction scores over time in the absence of major workplace changes. Since this is a self-report measure, inter-rater reliability isn't applicable. The JSS has good content validity due to the fact that its items embrace a broad range of factors related to jobs that contribute to overall satisfaction. Its construct validity has been supported through a number of factor analyses by verifying the nine-factor structure of the

scale. Its criterion-related validity is also strong, as scores on the JSS predict relevant job outcomes such as turnover intention, absenteeism, and productivity, thereby affirming the practical utility of the scale in organizational research.

Data collection and statistical analysis

The current study will employ a quantitative analysis to examine the relationship between sense of coherence, job stress and job satisfaction among sales professionals. Data will be collected through surveys.

- Descriptive statistics will be first calculated to summarize the characteristics of the data gathered.
- To determine the strength and direction of the relationship, Spearman's correlation coefficient will be used because the data is non-parametric in nature.

Data collection method: Data was collected from a total of 73 male sales professionals through both online and offline methods. Offline data was gathered using the traditional paper-pencil method, and 29 responses were collected in this manner. For the online data collection, Google Forms were utilized, and 44 responses were received via this method. To ensure a focused sample, purposive sampling was utilized, targeting individuals who met specific criteria relevant to the study i.e. sales profession. Additionally, snowball sampling was applied, where participants were encouraged to refer others in similar professional roles, thereby broadening the reach of the data collection process.

Summary: Overall, this research follows a correlational design with sense of coherence being the predictor variable and job stress and job satisfaction being the outcome variable. Data is collected from 73 sales professionals and the data deviates from the normal distribution. Hence, spearman's correlation was used to assess the direction of the strength between variables.

Chapter 4: Results And Discussion

Introduction: This chapter presents the findings of the study and interprets them referring to the existing literature. The data analysis section highlights the relationship between the variables using descriptive statistics. Correlational scores calculated on the software JASP are presented in this chapter. The discussion section explores the implications of the study and compares them with previous research studies.

Results

Descriptive Statistics								
	T_com	T_man	T. Meaning	Total_SOC	Total JSS	Total Job stress	Years of experience	
Valid	73	73	73	73	73	73	73	
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Median	29.000	30.000	18.000	79.000	184.000	14.000		
Mean	27.425	28.055	16.301	71.781	167.000	15.918		
Std. Deviation	8.170	7.168	4.821	18.487	38.732	7.724		
Skewness	-0.624	-0.575	-0.501	-0.343	-1.073	0.393		
Std. Error of Skewness	0.281	0.281	0.281	0.281	0.281	0.281		
Kurtosis	-1.059	-1.098	-1.010	-1.493	0.021	-1.257		
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.555	0.555	0.555	0.555	0.555	0.555		
Shapiro-Wilk	0.834	0.849	0.845	0.842	0.838	0.857		
P-value of Shapiro-Wilk	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001		
Minimum	10.000	13.000	5.000	41.000	66.000	8.000		
Maximum	35.000	35.000	21.000	91.000	206.000	31.000		

Note. Not all values are available for *Nominal Text* variables

The descriptive statistics for the study variables show that the mean score for **Total SOC** (sense of coherence) is 71.78 with a standard deviation of 18.49, indicating moderate coherence levels among participants, with scores ranging from 41 to 91. The **T_com** (comprehensibility), **T_man** (manageability), and **T_meaning** (meaningfulness) subdomains of SOC have means of 27.43, 28.06, and 16.30, respectively, showing some variation across these dimensions. The **Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS)** has a mean of 167.00 with a wider spread, indicated by a standard deviation of 38.73, with scores ranging from 66 to 206. The **Job Stress** scores have a mean of 15.92 with a relatively lower standard deviation of 7.72, showing that most participants have moderate job stress, ranging from 8 to 31. Skewness and kurtosis values for most variables are close to normal, though job stress shows a higher skewness (-1.07) and a slight positive kurtosis, indicating a more skewed distribution. The Shapiro-Wilk test results for normality show significant deviations from a normal distribution ($p < .001$).

Spearman's Correlations									
Variable		T_com	T_man	T. Meaning	Total_SOC	Total JSS	Total Job stress		
1. T_com	Spearman's rho	—							
	p-value	—							
2. T_man	Spearman's rho	0.830	—						
	p-value	< .001	—						
3. T. Meaning	Spearman's rho	0.815	0.782	—					
	p-value	< .001	< .001	—					
4. Total_SOC	Spearman's rho	0.943	0.929	0.889	—				
	p-value	< .001	< .001	< .001	—				
5. Total JSS	Spearman's rho	0.585	0.588	0.484	0.589	—			
	p-value	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—			
6. Total Job stress	Spearman's rho	-0.488	-0.516	-0.346	-0.486	-0.815	—		
	p-value	< .001	< .001	0.003	< .001	< .001	—		

The Spearman's correlations matrix highlights significant relationships between the study variables. **Total SOC** (sense of coherence) shows strong positive correlations with its subdomains: **T_com** (comprehensibility, $\rho = .943$), **T_man** (manageability, $\rho = .929$), and **T_meaning** (meaningfulness, $\rho = .889$), all with p-values less than .001. This indicates that these subdomains are strongly interrelated with the overall SOC.

There is a moderate positive correlation between **Total SOC** and **Job Satisfaction (JSS)** ($\rho = .589$, $p < .001$), suggesting that individuals with a higher sense of coherence report greater job satisfaction. Conversely, **Total SOC** has a moderate negative correlation with **Job Stress** ($\rho = -.486$, $p < .001$), indicating that a higher sense of coherence is associated with lower job stress.

Job satisfaction is negatively correlated with **Job Stress** ($\rho = -.815$, $p < .001$), suggesting that higher job satisfaction corresponds to lower job stress levels. Additionally, the subdomains of SOC (comprehensibility, meaningfulness and manageability) show similar patterns of positive correlations with job satisfaction and negative correlations with job stress. These findings highlight the protective role of sense of coherence in enhancing job satisfaction and reducing job stress.

Discussion:

The purpose of this study is to examine how sense of coherence relates to the job satisfaction and levels of job stress of sales professionals. It is hypothesized that sense of coherence influences both job satisfaction and job stress. This understanding would relate specifically to how a higher coherence would be correlated with higher job satisfactions and lower levels of job stress and advance the study of the potential interaction between job satisfaction and job stress. Given the data's non-parametric nature, correlation analysis with the non-parametric nature of the data made use of non-parametric statistical tests so as not to violate the assumptions of a parametric test.

The Shapiro-Wilk normality test resulted in all variables producing p-values less than 0.001. Consequently, Spearman's rank-order correlation was conducted due to the deviation of the data from normality. Results indicated a positive relation between the factors: sense of coherence and job satisfaction ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that there is a positive relation as a sense of coherence strengthens, his or her job satisfaction increases. This corroborates theoretical constructs because such people who are essentially aware of their environment at work and life are most likely to be satisfied with their jobs.

The study established an inverse relationship that existed between the sense of coherence and job stress ($r = -0.48$, $p < 0.001$). This would mean that a greater level of coherence had a relationship with reduced levels of job stress. People feel that they have coped well with the demands at work and are finding meaning in the professional sphere in life are less stressed, thus proving the hypothesis that sense of coherence acts as a protection factor against stress. Under the variable of sense of coherence, it was observed that many sales professionals found their job 'manageable' and 'comprehensive'. They could make sense of the job duties that were assigned to them and use the available resources to deal with problems.

Finally, a significant negative correlation was found between job satisfaction and job stress ($r = -0.81$, $p < 0.001$), that is, the higher the job satisfaction, the lower the job stress. The strong inverse correlation here suggests that

salespeople achieving higher job satisfaction report fewer cases of job-related stress. These findings collectively draw attention to the fact that sense of coherence is a key variable that affects both job satisfaction and job stress and this has important organizational implications in the endeavor of promoting better well-being among employees working in high-pressure sales environments.

By analyzing this study, it has found positive correlation between SOC and job satisfaction that is consistent with the theory developed by Antonovsky in 1987, which indicates that high SOC participants find their life, including work situation, meaningful, manageable, and understandable. It is coherence that they can cope with better with job demands and will be satisfied at their jobs. He argued that persons endowed with a strong SOC view their work as made up of meaningful parts in an even broader, meaningful context, which accounts for higher job satisfaction. Several studies support the link. For example, Feldt et al. found employees whose SOC was very high reported significantly higher job satisfaction than employees whose SOC was not that highly developed. Their conclusion indicated that people with a high SOC feel more in control of their work environment and experience lower frustration, which increases overall satisfaction. Similarly, the study by Eriksson and Lindström (2006) reiterated that high SOC is associated with positive attitudes towards work, like job satisfaction. This may indeed be relevant to demanding professions like sales where stressors must be managed for high job satisfaction.

Conversely, some researchers tested the limitation of SOC in particular job contexts. For example, Kalimo et al. (2003) suggested that although SOC fosters job satisfaction, it does not prevent dissatisfaction resulting from structural causes of problems at the workplace, such as resource scarcity or insecurity of job conditions. Such limitations suggest that although SOC is one of the key determinants of job satisfaction, there are also contextual influences within the workplace environment.

This negative correlation of SOC with job stress brings to the prior work done that relates to a higher SOC with lower perceived stress. Antonovsky's theory of SOC puts it forth that better functioning individuals have a much higher SOC and view stressful situations as challenges and not threats, thus creating an enhancement in their ability to respond to those stressful stimuli. This ability to cope with stress corresponds well to other research findings. For example, Hart et al. (2005) had found that work-related stress is reduced in those with a higher SOC; this supports the conclusion that SOC helps in managing stress by making challenges seem more positive and manageable. In a similar manner, a study by Van der Colff and Rothmann (2009) on nurses established that there was an effect of reporting significantly lower levels of job stress when one had a stronger SOC. Such results are in line with our findings on sales professionals, suggesting that a high SOC can buffer against the stress normally associated with high pressure roles. The ability to comprehend and cope with stressors mitigates the negativism accompanying job stress, thereby enhancing overall employee wellbeing (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008). However, some research contradicts these findings. Bauer and Jenny (2017) noted that in some situations of high stakes, even those with high SOC may feel overwhelmed when external forces such as excessive workload and toxic management overwhelm their capacity to cope with the challenge. This understanding makes the dynamics between SOC and stress very complex, implying that although SOC is protective in nature, its protecting capacity is relative and not absolute against everything that is labeled as stress.

The strong inverse relationship between job satisfaction and job stress found in this study has been in the mainstream of organizational psychology literature. Several studies have shown that employees who are reportedly satisfied tend to report less job stress. Job satisfaction is seen as a buffer that helps to buffer off the destructive effects of stress, especially among such professionals as salespeople. For example, Judge, Boudreau, and Bretz conclude in 1994 that job satisfaction has positively predicted a tendency for lower stress and burnout amongst employees especially in high-stress settings. Additionally, according to Fisher (2000), people who find work to be meaningful and satisfying will not feel stress because the work pressures for such persons do not accumulate to work as stressful, although jobs may be demanding in nature. For example, evidence would portray sales persons, wherein highly stressful conditions prevail. In fact, findings of Babakus, Cravens, Johnston, and Moncrief (1999) revealed a direct relationship that existed between job stressors and job satisfaction among salespeople as high job satisfaction reported amongst subjects also brought low job stress. For instance, when job satisfaction is low, stress increases. Wright and Cropanzano (2000) showed that low levels of job satisfaction could also enhance stress, especially in jobs requiring heavy emotional labor, such as salespersons. These results show the significance of job satisfaction in limiting job stress in various kinds of professional environments.

Many studies also show the role of SOC as a protective factor in diminishing job stress. For example, Van der Colff and Rothmann (2009) followed a sample of professionals in the health sector. It was found that high levels of SOC reduced stress, far less compared to the findings of this study among sales professions. This is consistent with the argument by Antonovsky (1987) in which people who are better endowed with a sounder SOC are more likely to perceive stressors as manageable, thereby minimizing overall levels of stress. According to the meta-analysis by Richardson and Rothstein (2008), SOC was always a cushion to stress across high-demand jobs, including sales. However, the industry-specific factors-such as the high-pressure environment of sales and being under constant performance evaluations with target pressures-will increase the stress level for those with lower SOC, making the intensity of the stress differ from that of other professions.

The job satisfaction-stress relationship as observed in this research has much converging evidence in organizational psychology literature. Judge, Boudreau and Bretz, (1994) report a strong negative relationship between job satisfaction and job stress for industry in that this relationship generally demonstrates high levels of satisfaction with low levels of stress. This relationship appeared to be keenly salient in sales wherein high levels of satisfaction may act as a major coping resource against the gross stress of meeting sales targets and clients' demands", Babakus et al., 1999. However, the event-induced variability of sales targets and the stressfulness surrounding it may make it more stressful, even to the most satisfied employees, compared to work that is relatively stable in its workload.

The significance of this study lies in its being very useful for the purpose of sharing insight into the role of SOC in occupational psychology. It further validates the argument that SOC acts as a protective agent against job stress and also as a predictor of job satisfaction. This means that Antonovsky's (1987) SOC theory, which states that the better developed people's SOC is, the better they can function during times of stressor exposure, fits well with broader theories of stress and coping, such as Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which states that individuals experience stress when they perceive that their coping resources are less than their needs. Individuals with a high SOC will be likely to appraise demanding situations as controllable, which may reduce the degree of stress responses and can increase the ability to cope.

This study strengthens the hypothesis that SOC acts as a psychological resource for employees to understand their work environment, and thus, the stress responses would be reduced and job satisfaction would be high. Hobfoll's COR theory also predicts these findings. In the COR theory, individuals attempt to acquire, maintain, and defend their resources, and when those resources are threatened, it causes stress. A high SOC could be deemed an important resource strengthening resilience because an individual can conserve other resources, such as energy and time, which reduces their total stress. This study, thus points out that it is the SOC that is critical for occupational well-being, especially in high-stress workplaces, like sales.

In addition, the results from this study are relevant to the growing body of literature on positive psychology at work, where psychological resilience factors, such as SOC, are thought to be crucial in fostering well-being and job satisfaction at work (Seligman, 2011). This study, therefore, enhances the understanding of how personal resources are related to the emerging outcomes at work while further buttressing SOC's position as a significant protective factor in occupational settings through evidence that SOC is positively related to job satisfaction and negatively to job stress.

In addition, this research has made important contributions to the already existing models of job stress and job satisfaction. The inverse relationship between job stress and job satisfaction can easily fit into the JD-R model proposed by Demerouti et al., 2001. According to the JD-R model, high pressure in selling sales or other work demands will result in job strain and stress unless it is balanced by other job resources. On this basis, the study appears to support the hypothesis that SOC acts as a personal resource enabling control over high job demands, thus reducing stress and increasing job satisfaction levels. It helps to alleviate through employee skill the impact of high job demands on stress levels in changing the form demands assume from threats to challenges.

Furthermore, Bakker and Demerouti (2017) suggest that personal resources like SOC both affect individual outcomes as job satisfaction and stress levels but also predict more sustainable performance at the organizational level. Usually, in challenging conditions like sales, where stress influences performance, a robust SOC shields workers from the effects of stress and means that the employee's satisfaction levels remain stable and that they perform at very high levels thereby leading to a system of more uniform and sustainable work performance.

Summary:

Finally, implications of the results of this study offer a good perspective on the relationships between sense of coherence, job satisfaction, and job stress among sales professionals. Findings proved to be significantly positive correlations between SOC and job satisfaction, indicating that a stronger sense of coherence gives rise to greater job satisfaction. Moreover, the SOC and job stress are negatively correlated, which indicates that a higher sense of coherence also acts as a protecting agent against job-related stress. The negative relationship between job satisfaction and job stress also supports the idea of a protective role of job satisfaction in stressful workplaces.

These findings are also in line with existing literature: that supports SOC as an important psychological resource for both well-being and resilience at work. Practically speaking, the study's findings suggest that interventions aimed at improving SOC might significantly contribute to greater job satisfaction and lower stress levels among sales professionals. Future research could similarly test these kinds of relationships within other occupations or demographics.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion and Suggestions

Introduction:

This chapter outlines the research, discusses conclusions drawn from findings, and identifies the study's limitations. It begins by summarizing primary research objectives: to discover relationships among SOC, job satisfaction, and job stress in sales professionals. The chapter will then be represented with a general overview of the findings, which of course must highlight the strong correlations between these variables. The conclusions derived from these findings emphasize the importance of SOC in managing job stress and enhancing job satisfaction within a high-pressure working environment. The chapter also recognizes what this study lacked, namely, such limitations as the data having

been non-parametric and the sample size, which might affect its generalization. The chapter concludes with discussions about practical implications and ways in which organizations can foster SOC to improve employee well-being. Recommendations for future research are finally given. More studies exploring dynamics of this kind in other occupational settings or using longitudinal designs are encouraged.

Summary:

This study analyses the relation of SOC, job satisfaction, and job stress in sales professionals. According to the results of this study, SOC is positively related with job satisfaction but negatively with job stress, and conversely with job satisfaction and with job stress. The non-parametric nature of the data, confirmed by a Shapiro-Wilk test with $p < .001$, meant that Spearman's correlation coefficients were necessary: SOC and job satisfaction ($r = 0.58$), SOC and job stress ($r = -0.48$), and job satisfaction and job stress ($r = -0.81$).

The results are in line with SOC theory, as developed by Antonovsky, wherein the people with a strong SOC view stressful circumstances as manageable, thus feeling less job stress and more job satisfaction will arise. The study also supports the JD-R Model where SOC plays a role as the personal resource that reduces job stress in demanding professions such as sales. Besides, it aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, where SOC becomes a motivating factor that promotes job satisfaction and eliminates dissatisfaction.

Comparative studies also claim that a high SOC increases job satisfaction and lowers stress level, no matter how the profession. The current study is in line with previous studies that specific sales factors, such as high performance demands, will increase stress levels. Fourth, SOC has a very important role in occupational well-being, such that building resilience would lead to sustainable performance. The use of the non-parametric methods conducted in the analysis acknowledges the limitations imposed by data distribution, thereby allowing more reliable results in the context of reduced sample sizes. In this respect, this paper refers to the important function of SOC as a protective factor in occupational psychology and the ability to build it into the basis of the enhancement of job satisfaction while also helping to reduce stress in high-demand contexts.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this study brings to light the most fundamental aspect of a play by SOC in enhancing job satisfaction and reducing job stress among sales professionals. The positive correlation of SOC with job satisfaction and the negative correlation between SOC and job stress as well as job satisfaction with job stress confirms that SOC plays a key role as a protective factor in high-pressure work environments. Thus, effective sales persons with a strong SOC are likely to view a challenge as manageable; therefore, stress levels are low, and job satisfaction is high.

Thus, supporting the well-established theories related to this research area include, for example, Antonovsky's theory of SOC, the JD-R Model by Bakker et al. (2005), and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. SOC seems to be an important personal resource that mitigates the negative effects of extreme demands from work while strengthening resilience and general well-being at work. It, therefore, aids in the theoretical understanding of SOC and its roles within occupational psychology, while practical implications for organizations, especially in sales, would bring better job satisfaction and decreased stress levels because of an improvement in SOC. Training and support on this aspect may give employees and employers greater value through healthier, more productive work environments.

Practical Implications:

The sales organizations can enhance employees' job satisfaction and reduce job stress due to high SOC. SOC is the manner through which people in the immediate environment orient themselves as consisting of comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness. These are positively developed and supported in the sense that there are specific organizational interventions toward this end.

There are first stress management training programs. Organisations should hence therefore train the salespeople on how to cope with work-related stress through mindfulness, cognitive-behavioral strategies, and time management, and in doing so, strengthen SOC. Training sessions on challenges being manageable can directly improve the manageability aspect of SOC. For example, training sessions on task decomposition or task delegation could help alleviate feelings of overload among sales people; most people have targets and sometimes quotas, which again can cause stress. Develop an organizational culture that supports meaningful work. Sales people often end up working in non-meaningful ways through repetition of the same tasks and high-performance demands that lead to burnout. What would be more meaningful in the job for sales professionals is understanding the wider purpose of their jobs and how they benefit the organization by their efforts. This can be achieved through continuous communication from the top regarding success stories and providing opportunities for the employees to give feedback about their roles and work processes. The comprehensibility aspect of SOC may further improve when employees have the clear and structured goals and clear understanding of expectations so that they can make sense out of their roles in the organization.

Lastly, increased job resources such as social support, autonomy, and job control can offer a great deal in improving the quality of job satisfaction. According to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, "by providing employees with sufficient resources buffers, the impact of job demands on stress", and enabling them to solicit more support can help them better cope with job demands. Increased autonomy in managing tasks, creating a mentorship program, and

promoting teamwork and collaboration at work should build resilience among sales organization employees, leading them to have less job stress and high job satisfaction.

For Sales Professionals:

Sales professionals can also work on building up their SOC, so they will better be able to manage job stress and achieve greater role satisfaction. The three components of the SOC- comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness- can all have personal strategies for change. Clarity in Work Processes Now, a salesperson has to clarify with each and every work process. It might take some time to fully grasp the requirements of a job, sales targets one can potentially achieve, and expectations that are made from one's performance. Thus, communicating from time to time with supervisors can prove to be beneficial, and, as professionals, they would remain clear about the goals of an organization and their role in the huge picture.

For workability, sales professionals have to identify ways to develop and expand problem-solving abilities as well as establish social support structures with colleagues. Developing relationships with other employees, mentorship, and knowledge sharing are easy ways to make hard working less complicated. In addition, the capacity to set time or establish achievable and realistic aims might help any individual tackle demands from work and, therefore reduce anxiety over the workload allocated.

Finally, sales professionals should seek meaning through opportunities to find meaning in their work, which directly expands the meaningfulness component of SOC. Meaning can be found by either reflecting on personal values and making them more congruent with the mission of an organization; looking for roles or tasks that resonate with one's interests; or getting involved in professional development opportunities that create a sense of purpose in career growth.

Limitations:

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. First, the sample size, while adequate for non-parametric analysis, may not be fully representative of the broader population of sales professionals. A larger, more diverse sample would improve the generalizability of the results and offer a better understanding of the relationship between sense of coherence (SOC), job satisfaction, and job stress across different demographics and regions.

Second, the study relied on non-parametric data due to the non-normal distribution of the variables, limiting the ability to apply parametric statistical methods. While non-parametric methods are appropriate for the data, they reduce the precision of the findings and may limit their generalizability to a broader population. A parametric analysis with a larger sample size would provide more statistically robust conclusions.

Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the study poses limitations in establishing causality. The relationships between SOC, job satisfaction, and job stress are based on correlational analysis, making it difficult to determine whether SOC directly influences job satisfaction and stress or if other factors play a role over time. Longitudinal research would be necessary to explore these causal links.

Lastly, the use of self-reported measures introduces the possibility of biases, such as social desirability bias, where participants may respond in ways that reflect more favorable impressions of themselves. This could affect the accuracy of the reported SOC, job satisfaction, and stress levels.

Future Research Directions:

Future research directions exist in several areas based on the findings of this study. A longitudinal approach would be able to determine the causality between SOC, job satisfaction and job stress-relationships that this study has established through its correlations. Though this study established the existence of correlations between variables, a longitudinal approach would grant deeper insights into whether a strong SOC over time predicts better job satisfaction and reduced stress directly, or whether other factors may influence such a relationship.

The second recommendation is future research to examine SOC, job satisfaction, and job stress in diverse professional groups or industries. Since this study centered on sales professionals, the relationship between these variables might be different in other, less demanding professional groups, such as education or healthcare. A comparative analysis of how SOC works in various industries would elucidate whether the protective role of SOC is generally applicable or depends on the industry.

Further, exploring mediating or moderating variables could enhance knowledge in understanding the impact of SOC on job satisfaction and stress. The mediating or moderating variable may be personality characteristics (e.g., resilience, optimism), organizational support, or some job characteristics (e.g., job complexity, role clarity) that modify the strength of relationships. For instance, job stress may be lower for resilient people even at low levels of SOC; in such a scenario, resilience may serve as a moderator with respect to the effect of SOC on job stress.

Last but not the least, bigger sample diversification should be looked into in future studies in order to conduct parametric analysis since the current study resorted to non-parametric methods due to the inability of the data distribution to allow generalization. From here, future research may then use a bigger sample size and ensure normal distribution of data so that parametric methods, such as regression analyses, may be applied in order to arrive at generalized yet statistically robust insights. This would also allow the estimation of interaction effects and more

complex relationships between SOC, job satisfaction, and job stress across different demographic groups and work environments.

Summary: In conclusion, this study highlights the significant role of sense of coherence (SOC) in enhancing job satisfaction and reducing job stress among sales professionals. While the findings offer valuable insights, the study's limitations, including its non-parametric data and limited sample size, suggest the need for caution in generalizing the results. Practical implications emphasize the importance of fostering SOC in workplace interventions to improve employee well-being. Future research should focus on expanding the sample size, exploring different industries, and incorporating longitudinal designs to further validate and deepen the understanding of these relationships.

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Original Article

The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Reducing the Mental Health Treatment Gap in India: A Critical Scoping Review

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180235

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 218.222

February - 2026

Submitted: 18 Jan. 2026

Revised: 28 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 13 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

India continues to face a substantial mental health treatment gap, with a large proportion of individuals experiencing psychological disorders not receiving adequate care. Workforce shortages, uneven service distribution, financial barriers, and stigma contribute to this gap. In response to these structural challenges, Artificial Intelligence has emerged as a potential technological tool to enhance accessibility and support within mental healthcare. The present study examines the role of AI in reducing the mental health treatment gap in India through a PRISMA-guided scoping review of literature published between 2015 and 2025. The review synthesizes global and India-specific evidence on AI applications across screening, chatbot-based therapeutic support, digital monitoring, and mental health applications accessible to Indian users. Findings indicate that AI-driven chatbots show small-to-moderate short-term reductions in symptoms of depression and anxiety, particularly among adolescents and young adults. AI-based screening systems play a role in identifying early markers of psychological distress. High attrition rates, limited long-term outcome data, challenges in cultural adaptation, and concerns related to privacy and regulatory oversight are important limitations to consider. Evaluations of Indian mental health applications reveal variability in clinical validation and professional involvement. Overall, AI appears most effective as a supplementary tool within a stepped-care framework rather than as a replacement for human-delivered services. Its contribution to reducing India's treatment gap depends on responsible integration, cultural contextualization, and structured regulatory mechanisms.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Mental Health Treatment Gap, Psychological Care Access, Mental health

Introduction

In India, mental health conditions are a major public health concern. Over the last ten years, surveys have shown a large number of people have both common and severe mental health issues. However, many people can't get the right mental health services when they need them. This difference between the need for help and getting help is the mental health treatment gap. Data shows this gap is big in India for different mental conditions. This means many Indians with mental health problems aren't getting treatment. Several things cause this gap. India doesn't have enough trained mental health workers for its large population. Also, services are mostly in cities. Rural areas often don't have mental health facilities. Money problems, lack of awareness, and stigma keep people from seeking help. Many communities either downplay these problems or judge those who have them, which delays treatment. The gap isn't just from a shortage of services but also from cultural issues that stop people from getting care. At the same time, India's digital world is growing fast. More people have smartphones and can afford the internet, changing how people connect and get services. In this digital setting, artificial intelligence (AI) is a possible way to improve mental healthcare. AI tools like chatbots, screening systems, and clinical support platforms are being used to find problems early, give basic support, and help healthcare workers. Since India has limited resources, these AI tools could be useful supplements to standard services.



Quick Response Code:



Website:

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DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19345680](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19345680)



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How to cite this article:

Mishra, S. (2026). The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Reducing the Mental Health Treatment Gap in India: A Critical Scoping Review. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(VIII)), 218.222. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19345680>

Research Problem

AI mental health tools are becoming common globally, and Indians can use them more easily. However, it's not clear if they're really helping to close the mental health treatment gap in India. Most information about how well AI works comes from Western countries. Their healthcare systems differ a lot from India's. Also, recent reviews of mental health apps used in India show concerns about professional input, good content, and proper regulation. So, here's the key question: AI is often seen as a fix for staffing shortages and access issues. But there's not enough research to check if it's truly helping to close the treatment gap in India. Without a careful review, AI might be overrated as a solution or not used enough because of doubts and unclear rules. This review aims to solve this problem by taking a close look at the issue.

Objectives

This review aims to:

- * Look at the types of AI used in mental healthcare.
- * Study what research says about how well AI mental health tools work.
- * Find out the challenges of using AI tools in India's mental healthcare system.
- * Think about the rules and practices for adding AI to India's mental health system.

Rationale

This study is important for a few reasons. For doctors, knowing what AI can and can't do helps them decide how to use it in their work. For policymakers, looking at the research and challenges can help them create rules and digital health plans for India. In psychology, this review connects research and practice by checking new technologies in a way that makes sense for India, instead of just using information from other countries. By carefully checking what AI can and can't do, this paper aims to give a fair review that's useful for India's mental healthcare system. AI mental health technologies are growing fast, but India's treatment gap remains large. We need a careful review that looks at the Indian context. AI offers ways to improve access, but it only works if it fits the culture, is safe, and is part of the current healthcare system. This study is being done to see AI not as a full replacement for human services, but as a tool that can help in a place with limited resources and a diverse population.

Review of Literature

Using AI in mental healthcare is supported by ideas that focus on making services more accessible, scalable, and using different levels of care. One idea is the stepped-care model. It suggests people should start with basic help and move to more specialized services if needed. AI tools, like chatbots and screening systems, fit this model by being the first level of support. Also, the fast growth of digital mental health services fits into the larger idea of using technology to bridge gaps in access and service. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has shaped AI mental health apps. CBT is structured and teaches skills, which means it can be turned into computer programs. Omarov et al. (2023) found that most mental health chatbots use CBT because it works well with computer programs. They also saw a shift from simple computer programs to AI models, which improved chat flexibility but raised concerns about safety. Research shows that AI is being used in different parts of mental healthcare. Ni et al. (2025) found AI used for screening, support, monitoring, education, and prevention. AI tools help with referrals, finding symptoms through language, and giving basic support. However, most tools are used for early screening and support, not for complex cases or crises. Studies show how well AI works. Feng et al. (2025) found that AI chatbots slightly reduced depression and anxiety in teens and young adults. While there were improvements, most studies were short and focused on reducing symptoms, not long-term well-being. Nyakhar and Wang (2025) saw improvements in depression and anxiety in students using AI, but many students dropped out of the studies. This suggests that AI can help with symptoms in the short term, but keeping people engaged is hard. Recent studies have looked at AI systems that can create new content. Xian et al. (2024) studied AI models and found they can chat well but also create ethical problems, like giving wrong information or being biased. While these models can detect risks in simulations, they may not work well in real situations because of trust and context issues.

In India, discussions have highlighted AI's ability to deal with worker shortages. Singh (2019) said that chatbots could help in a country with a big treatment gap and not enough workers. Ray et al. (2022) talked about AI's growing role in mental health after COVID-19, especially in areas like tracking digital signs and helping doctors make choices. However, some doctors are concerned about how AI works and its ethical issues. More recently, people have started looking at the quality of mental health apps for Indian users. Mehrotra et al. (2025) found that many apps in Indian app stores don't have clear professional input or good research behind them. There are concerns about privacy, crisis help, and the quality of information. This shows that while there are many digital tools, they might not be reliable. Overall, research suggests that AI can help with screening, basic support, and monitoring. But there are issues with keeping people engaged, fitting the culture, long-term results, and ethical safety.

Research Gap

Despite a lot of global research on AI in mental health, there are gaps, especially for India. Much of the evidence comes from Western countries, which limits how well it applies to India's diverse population. While studies show short-term symptom relief, there's not much information on long-term use or how it fits into public health systems in poorer countries. Reviews of AI tools in India show inconsistencies in quality and regulation (Mehrotra et al., 2025). This creates a digital quality gap, where just having technology doesn't mean people get good care. Also, studies often look at separate parts of AI, like chatbots or ethical issues, without putting it all together and seeing how it affects India's mental health treatment gap. So, we need a careful review that combines global research with what's happening in India. This is important to know if AI can truly help India's mental healthcare system or if it's just a fad.

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a PRISMA-guided scoping review to map research on AI's role in reducing the mental health treatment gap in India. A scoping review is good because AI is used in many ways in mental healthcare, like chatbots, screening systems, and support platforms. Because there are different study types, results, and technologies in the research, a meta-analysis wasn't practical. The PRISMA framework (a guide for systematic reviews) was used to make the study clear in how it found, screened, and selected studies. This made sure the study documented its decisions while mapping the range of available evidence.

Sample

The sample for this review included research articles and evaluations published from 2015 to 2025. This time frame captures recent changes in AI mental health technologies, like machine learning and AI models.

Studies were included if they:

- * Looked at AI uses in mental health.
- * Reported research, reviews, or evaluations.
- * Were published in English.
- * Related to mental health service, screening, support, or policy.

Studies were excluded if they:

- * Focused only on non-mental health AI.
- * Were opinions without research?
- * Didn't have enough detail.

Both global and India-specific studies were included for comparison.

Tools

Academic databases and search platforms were searched for research, including Google Scholar and PubMed. Search terms used included combinations of keywords like Artificial Intelligence, mental health, chatbots, digital mental health, AI therapy, treatment gap, and India. Logic operators (AND/OR) were used to improve search results.

The PRISMA screening framework was a guide for picking studies. Articles were screened based on titles and summaries, then reviewed fully to see if they fit the criteria. Data was taken manually using a summary sheet, which noted study design, people, AI type, results, and limits.

Procedure

The review had four steps following PRISMA guidelines:

1. Finding articles through database searches using keywords.
2. Screening articles by removing duplicates and checking titles and summaries.
3. Checking articles fully against the criteria.
4. Including eligible studies for the review.

The process focused on making sure the articles were relevant to AI's role in reducing the mental health treatment gap in India.

Data Analysis

A thematic approach was used for analysis. Instead of adding up results, studies were grouped by areas of AI use, like screening, support, monitoring, education, and prevention. Within each area, key results, strengths, and limits were identified and compared. Also, studies were checked for how well they fit India, like cultural relevance, regulations, workforce use, and digital access. This analysis identified patterns, challenges, and research gaps.

Results

Key Findings

The research showed five main areas where AI is used in mental healthcare: screening, support, monitoring, education, and prevention. AI shows potential in these areas, but its impact depends on the place, people, and how it's used. First, AI screening systems using language processing and machine learning can find signs of depression, anxiety, and suicide risk in people online (Ni et al., 2025; Xian et al., 2024). These tools can help with early detection, especially

when face-to-face help is limited. Second, chatbot support systems using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) can slightly reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety (Feng et al., 2025; Nyakhar & Wang, 2025). While improvements were seen over short periods, people dropping out of studies and limited long-term information are common concerns. Third, digital tracking systems have been tried as relapse tools (Ray et al., 2022). These technologies aim to find behavior changes that might mean mental health is getting worse. While they sound good in theory, there are worries about privacy and ethics.

Fourth, studies on AI that generates content show more chat abilities but also ethical risks, like wrong information and bias (Xian et al., 2024). These findings suggest that AI models need safety measures and expert monitoring.

Finally, reviews of mental health apps used in India show different levels of quality and regulation. Mehrotra et al. (2025) said that many apps lack professional input or good research behind them. This shows a digital quality gap, where having an app doesn't mean it's reliable. Overall, these findings show that AI can help, but it's not always proven to be good and isn't properly regulated in the Indian mental health system.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings suggest that AI may work best as an extra helper, not a full replacement for professional care. Screening tools and basic chatbot support fit with the stepped-care approach, offering easy ways to get into the mental health system. In a country like India, where there are few specialists, these entry-level systems could lower access problems. The number of short-term studies and people dropping out shows that engagement and staying power are problems. AI seems to work better for young people who use technology than for the general population. This brings up questions about fairness and access, especially in poor areas. The quality gap in Indian app markets makes things worse. Without standard checks, people might use apps that lack support or crisis help. So, while AI has technology abilities, its effect on reducing the treatment gap relies on regulation, cultural adaptation, and being part of the existing healthcare system. Importantly, the evidence doesn't say AI can eliminate the treatment gap. Instead, it suggests AI can help manage mild problems, help early detection, and support care under professional monitoring. The findings match global studies showing slight symptom reductions through AI chatbots (Feng et al., 2025). Limits related to people dropping out and short-term results match earlier reviews (Nyakhar & Wang, 2025). Concerns about ethics and AI risks match debates in current analyses (Xian et al., 2024). In India, the findings back up ideas that AI could help in situations with worker shortages (Singh, 2019). But the different app quality and professional input adds to earlier hopes by pointing out problems (Mehrotra et al., 2025). This review connects global research with India's specific facts. The discussion emphasizes that AI's help in reducing India's mental health treatment gap depends on things like cultural adaptation, ethical rules, and teamwork with human experts.

Conclusion

Summary of Findings

This review checked AI's role in reducing the mental health treatment gap in India. The research shows that AI is being used in areas like screening, support, monitoring, education, and prevention. Chatbots may slightly reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, especially in young people. Also, AI screening tools can help find problems early through language and behavior.

However, there are some limits. Most studies are short, and people often drop out. AI systems have some problems with accuracy and bias. In India, apps have different qualities and regulations. So, while AI is promising as a helper, it's not a full solution to India's mental health treatment gap. Overall, AI can contribute by helping with early screening and basic support, as long as it's used responsibly within the healthcare system.

Implications

This review affects practice, policy, and research.

Clinical: AI tools can be support systems. Workers can use AI for screening and tracking symptoms while using experts for serious cases. Expert monitoring is important for safety. **Policy:** India needs rules for mental health apps. Policymakers should think about checks, openness, and guidelines to make sure AI tools meet quality and data protection standards. Adding AI to health plans should focus on culture and responsibility. **Research:** Studies should look at long-term use and how AI fits into healthcare systems. Research should focus on AI models that fit Indian languages and cultures to improve its use.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Original Article

Relationship between Altruism, Cognitive Hardiness, and Compassion Fatigue among Indian Social Workers

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180236

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 223-226

February - 2026

Submitted: 18 Jan. 2026

Revised: 28 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 13 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Social workers in India play a critical role in supporting underserved communities and addressing social inequalities. They are frequently exposed to emotionally demanding situations, which can increase the risk of compassion fatigue. Identifying protective psychological factors such as altruism and cognitive hardiness is therefore essential. The present study was conducted to examine the relationship between altruism, cognitive hardiness, and compassion fatigue among Indian social workers. Social workers are regularly exposed to emotionally demanding situations, which may increase the risk of compassion fatigue. Therefore, identifying protective psychological factors such as altruism and cognitive hardiness is important. A total of 138 social workers participated in the study. A correlational research design was used. Altruism was measured using a 9-item scale, cognitive hardiness was assessed using a 15-item scale, and compassion fatigue was measured using a standardized compassion fatigue scale. The study tested three hypotheses: (1) altruism would be positively correlated with cognitive hardiness, (2) altruism would be negatively correlated with compassion fatigue, and (3) cognitive hardiness would be negatively correlated with compassion fatigue. The results revealed that altruism was not significantly related to cognitive hardiness. However, altruism showed a significant negative correlation with compassion fatigue. Cognitive hardiness demonstrated a moderate and highly significant negative correlation with compassion fatigue, indicating that higher hardiness is associated with lower compassion fatigue. The mean scores were 34.54 (SD = 3.68) for altruism, 30.70 (SD = 5.17) for cognitive hardiness, and 36.58 (SD = 7.02) for compassion fatigue. The results show that cognitive hardiness helps protect Indian social workers from compassion fatigue.

Keywords: Altruism, Cognitive Hardiness, Compassion Fatigue, Social Workers, Psychological Resilience

Introduction

In India, social workers play a vital role in addressing social inequalities and supporting vulnerable communities across sectors such as health, education, child welfare, and informal labor. They often work under emotionally demanding and challenging conditions, which can impact their psychological well-being. Despite their crucial contributions, many social workers face systemic issues such as inadequate recognition, limited compensation, and lack of formal protections. Altruism refers to a selfless concern for the welfare of others, involving helping behavior performed without expecting personal rewards or benefits. It is primarily motivated by empathy and a genuine desire to improve another person's well-being (Batson, 1991). Altruistic individuals tend to prioritize the needs of others, especially in caregiving and helping professions. Cognitive hardiness is a personality characteristic that enables individuals to cope effectively with stress. It consists of three components: commitment, control, and challenge. Individuals high in hardiness perceive stressful situations as manageable and view difficulties as opportunities for growth rather than threats (Kobasa, 1979). Compassion fatigue refers to emotional and physical exhaustion that results from prolonged exposure to others' suffering. It is commonly experienced by helping professionals who continuously engage in emotionally demanding work (Figley, 1995). Compassion fatigue can reduce professional effectiveness and overall psychological well-being. There are limited studies examining the relationship between altruism, cognitive hardiness, and compassion fatigue among social workers in the Indian context.

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How to cite this article:

Barve, M., & Raut, A. (2026). Relationship between Altruism, Cognitive Hardiness, and Compassion Fatigue among Indian Social Workers. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 223–226. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19345754>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19345754](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19345754)



Most previous research has primarily focused on burnout and altruism among helping professionals rather than specifically examining compassion fatigue and cognitive hardiness together. Some studies have investigated compassion fatigue among helping professionals and have identified psychological factors such as resilience, emotional intelligence, and hardiness as protective variables. However, there are not many studies that have specifically explored whether altruism is positively correlated with cognitive hardiness and negatively correlated with compassion fatigue, or whether cognitive hardiness is negatively correlated with compassion fatigue among Indian social workers. The existing literature in the Indian context remains limited. Therefore, the present study was conducted to examine the relationship between altruism, cognitive hardiness, and compassion fatigue among Indian social workers.

Objectives

To study the relationship between altruism and cognitive hardiness.

To study the relationship between altruism and compassion fatigue.

To study the relationship between cognitive hardiness and compassion fatigue.

Hypotheses

H1: There will be a positive and significant correlation between altruism and cognitive hardiness.

H2: There will be a negative and significant correlation between altruism and compassion fatigue.

H3: There will be a negative and significant correlation between cognitive hardiness and compassion fatigue.

Variables of the Study

The variables selected for the study were altruism, cognitive hardiness, and compassion fatigue.

Altruism refers to selfless helping behavior performed without expecting any personal gain (Batson, 1991).

Cognitive hardiness refers to a personality characteristic consisting of commitment, control, and challenge, which helps individuals cope effectively with stress (Kobasa, 1979).

Compassion fatigue refers to emotional and physical exhaustion resulting from prolonged exposure to others' suffering (Figley, 1995).

Sampling

A non-probability sampling method was used for the study. Non-probability sampling refers to a sampling technique in which not every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected (Creswell, 2014).

Specifically, convenience sampling and snowball sampling techniques were used. Participants were selected based on availability and accessibility, and some participants were referred by other social workers.

The sample consisted of 138 social workers from the urban Pune area. The age range of the participants was between 18 and 50 years.

Psychometric Tools

1. Self-Report Altruism Scale (SRA)

Altruism was measured using the Self-Report Altruism Scale developed by Rushton, Chrisjohn, and Fekken (1981). The 9-item version of the scale was used in the present study. The scale assesses the frequency of altruistic behaviors performed by individuals in everyday life (Rushton et al., 1981).

2. Dispositional Resilience Scale (DRS-15)

Cognitive hardiness was measured using the Dispositional Resilience Scale (DRS-15), developed by Bartone (2007). The scale consists of 15 items measuring commitment, control, and challenge, which represent the core components of hardiness (Bartone, 2007).

3. Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL, 2009)

Compassion fatigue was measured using the Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL), developed by Stamm (2009). The scale assesses compassion fatigue, including secondary traumatic stress and burnout among helping professionals (Stamm, 2009).

Procedure

After formulating the hypotheses, data were collected from social workers using Google Forms. The questionnaire was distributed to social workers from various sectors. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their responses were collected through the online form.

After data collection, scoring of the responses was conducted using Microsoft Excel. The data were then entered into JASP software for statistical analysis. Correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationships between altruism, cognitive hardiness, and compassion fatigue. The results were obtained and interpreted based on the statistical analysis.

Statistical Analysis

Pearson's product-moment correlation is a statistical technique used to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables (Field, 2013). The correlation coefficient r ranges from -1 to $+1$, where positive values indicate a positive relationship, negative values indicate a negative relationship, and values close to zero indicate little or no relationship.

In the present study, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between altruism, cognitive hardiness, and compassion fatigue among social workers. The analysis was performed to determine whether the variables were significantly related to each other and to test the stated hypotheses

Normality refers to the extent to which data follow a normal distribution, where scores are symmetrically distributed around the mean, forming a bell-shaped curve (Field, 2013). Testing normality helps determine whether parametric statistical tests can be appropriately applied (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012).

The Shapiro–Wilk test was conducted to assess normality. The obtained value was $W = 0.970$, indicating that the data were normally distributed and suitable for parametric analysis (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012).

Shapiro-Wilk Test for Multivariate Normality			
Shapiro-Wilk		p	
0.970		< .001	

Results

The present study was conducted to examine the relationship between altruism, cognitive hardiness, and compassion fatigue among social workers in the Indian context. A total of 138 social workers from various institutions and organizations participated in the study. Pearson's correlation analysis was carried out to examine the relationships among the three variables.

Descriptive Statistics									
		Total Altruism Score		Total Score	Cognitive Hardiness	Total Fatigue		Compassion	
Valid		138		138		138			
Missing		0		0		0			
Mean		34.54		30.70		36.58			
Std. Deviation		3.683		5.179		7.029			
Minimum		27.00		18.00		24.00			
Maximum		42.00		41.00		55.00			
Pearson's Correlations									
						Pearson's r		p	
Total Altruism Score		-		Total Cognitive Hardiness Score		0.038		.655	
Total Altruism Score		-		Total Compassion Fatigue		-0.220	**	.010	
Total Cognitive Hardiness Score		-		Total Compassion Fatigue		-0.464	***	< .001	
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001									

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The results revealed the following:

Altruism and Cognitive Hardiness: $r = 0.038$, $p > .05$

Altruism and Compassion Fatigue: $r = -0.220$, $p < .01$

Cognitive Hardiness and Compassion Fatigue: $r = -0.464$, $p < .001$

The mean scores were 34.54 ($SD = 3.68$) for altruism, 30.70 ($SD = 5.17$) for cognitive hardiness, and 36.58 ($SD = 7.02$) for compassion fatigue.

Discussion

Social workers are professionals who help individuals, families, and communities cope with social, emotional, and economic challenges. In India, they play a crucial role in supporting vulnerable populations across health, education, child welfare, and community development sectors. Their work often involves high emotional demands, making their well-being an important area of study. The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between altruism, cognitive hardiness, and compassion fatigue among Indian social workers. Altruism was expected to be positively and significantly correlated with cognitive hardiness. However, the results showed a very weak and non-significant correlation ($r = 0.038$, $p > .05$). Therefore, this expectation was rejected. According to the Empathy-Altruism Theory (Batson, 1991), altruistic behavior is primarily motivated by empathy and concern for others. On the other hand, cognitive hardiness theory (Kobasa, 1979) explains hardiness as a personality trait characterized by commitment, control, and challenge in dealing with stress. The lack of significant relationship may be due to cultural norms and practices in the Indian context. Social workers in India may view helping others as a moral, religious, or community responsibility rather than as a personality-based coping strength. Helping behavior may be seen as a routine part of life rather than a reflection of cognitive hardiness. Thus, altruism and cognitive hardiness may function independently in

this cultural setting. Altruism was expected to be negatively correlated with compassion fatigue. The results showed a small but significant negative correlation ($r = -0.220$, $p < .01$). Therefore, this expectation was accepted. According to the “Cost of Caring” theory proposed by Figley (1995), compassion fatigue develops due to prolonged exposure to others’ suffering. However, individuals who are intrinsically motivated to help others may experience less emotional exhaustion. Altruistic individuals genuinely enjoy helping others and do not expect rewards in return (Batson, 1991). Because they are internally motivated and value helping as meaningful, their work may not feel burdensome. As the level of altruism increases, the level of compassion fatigue decreases. Social workers who love helping others may experience lower emotional fatigue because helping aligns with their personal values and satisfaction. Cognitive hardiness was expected to be negatively correlated with compassion fatigue. The results showed a moderate and highly significant negative correlation ($r = -0.464$, $p < .001$). Therefore, this expectation was accepted.

According to Hardiness Theory (Kobasa, 1979), individuals high in commitment, control, and challenge perceive stressful situations as manageable and meaningful rather than overwhelming. Similarly, Figley’s (1995) theory of compassion fatigue explains that continuous exposure to others’ trauma can lead to emotional exhaustion.

Social workers face multiple daily stressors, including emotional demands and workload pressure. However, those with higher cognitive hardiness may manage stress more effectively. Their psychological resilience acts as a mental protective factor or reducing the negative impact of stress. As a result, higher cognitive hardiness significantly decreases compassion fatigue among social workers. Thus, cognitive hardiness strongly helps protect social workers from compassion fatigue in this study.

Conclusion

The present study confirms that there is no significant relationship between altruism and cognitive hardiness, as they appear to be two different factors among social workers.

There is a slightly weak negative correlation between altruism and compassion fatigue, which indicates that a small increase in altruism may slightly reduce compassion fatigue.

Lastly, cognitive hardiness shows a moderate negative correlation with compassion fatigue. As cognitive hardiness increases among social workers, the level of compassion fatigue decreases.

Limitations

The present study has certain limitations. First, the sample was collected only from the urban area of Pune, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other regions of India. Social workers from rural areas or other states may have different experiences and stress levels.

Second, the study was conducted within the Indian cultural context. Indian culture is highly diverse, with variations in religion, traditions, and social practices. These cultural differences may influence the thinking patterns, values, and helping behaviors of social workers. Therefore, the findings of the study may not be generalized to all cultural groups within India or to other countries.

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Original Article

Exploring the Role of Indoor and Outdoor Activities in relation to personality traits in Managing Academic Stress and Emotional Well-Being among College Students: A Qualitative Study

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180237

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 227-233

February - 2026

Submitted: 18 Jan. 2026

Revised: 28 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 13 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract:

Academic stress is a significant psychological concern among students, often affecting emotional well-being, cognitive function and academic performance. The present study explored the role of indoor and outdoor activities in relation to personality traits in managing academic stress and promoting emotional well-being. A qualitative research design was employed and the data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 11 students from diverse academic background. The study examined student's experiences of academic stress, their self-identified personality traits, preferred coping activities and the perceived impact of these activities on emotional regulation.

Findings indicated that academic stress was most prominent during examinations, entrance tests, and periods of heavy academic workload. Participants reported symptoms such as anxiety, nervousness, low confidence, negative thoughts, and difficulty concentrating. The analysis revealed that personality traits influenced coping preferences. Introverted participants tended to prefer indoor activities which promoted emotional expression, calmness, and self-reflection. Extroverted participants preferred outdoor activities which enhanced mood provide social interaction and reduce stress through physical engagement.

Keywords: Academic stress, personality traits, indoor activities, emotional wellbeing, coping strategies.

Introduction

College life represents a meaningful and transformative stage in an individual's development. It is a time of intellectual exploration, personal growth, increasing independence, and preparation for future careers. However, alongside these opportunities, students also face significant psychological demands. They are expected to manage coursework, meet deadlines, prepare for examinations, maintain academic performance, and make important decisions about their future. Balancing these responsibilities can create considerable pressure. Academic stress refers to the psychological distress experienced by students due to the demands of academic life. It encompasses a range of emotional, cognitive, and physical responses to challenges such as workload, examinations, peer competition, and parental expectations (Deb et al., 2015). In India, where academic achievement is often linked to family pride and career prospects, the pressure to succeed can lead to anxiety, depression, and burnout. The stress may not only affect academic performance but also interpersonal relationships and overall mental health. Academic stress caused by so many factors such as examination stress, parental and societal pressure, peer competition, academic workload, transition-related stress, financial stress. When students perceive academic demands as overwhelming and beyond their coping capacity, they experience psychological stress. Coping strategies, therefore, play a crucial role in managing stress and protecting emotional well-being. Emotional well-being plays a central role in how students handle such pressures. It involves the ability to experience positive emotions, manage negative feelings in healthy ways, and maintain psychological stability during challenging situations. When students possess strong emotional well-being, they are better equipped to respond constructively to academic demands. Conversely, prolonged and unmanaged stress can disrupt emotional balance and negatively affect overall mental health.

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How to cite this article:

pujari, S., & Natu, S. (2026). Exploring the Role of Indoor and Outdoor Activities in relation to personality traits in Managing Academic Stress and Emotional Well-Being among College Students: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 227–233.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19345878>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19345878](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19345878)



To manage stress, individuals adopt various coping strategies. Coping strategies include the thoughts, behaviors, and emotional responses people use to deal with challenging situations. Among college students, coping often takes the form of engaging in indoor and outdoor activities. Indoor activities such as listening to music, reading, watching movies, practicing meditation, drawing, or pursuing hobbies provide opportunities for relaxation and mental disengagement from academic pressures. These activities may help regulate emotions, reduce psychological tension, and restore a sense of calm. Outdoor activities also play a significant role in stress management. Activities such as walking, exercising, playing sports, or spending time in natural surroundings offer both physical and psychological benefits. Physical movement can release built-up tension, while social interaction during outdoor activities may provide emotional support. Exposure to natural environments has also been associated with improved mood, mental clarity, and reduced stress. Together, indoor and outdoor activities serve as meaningful coping resources that contribute to emotional balance and overall well-being. Although academic stress and coping have been widely studied, much of the existing research relies on quantitative methods that measure stress levels and coping behaviors numerically. While such studies provide valuable information, they may not fully capture students' personal experiences, feelings, and interpretations. A qualitative approach allows for deeper exploration of how students experience academic stress in their daily lives, how they perceive its impact, and how indoor and outdoor activities help them emotionally and psychologically. Understanding these lived experiences provides richer insight into the meaning and effectiveness of coping strategies within real-life contexts. In addition to student life, academic environments more broadly are complex and demanding spaces. Individuals within academia often balance multiple roles and responsibilities. They contribute through research, teaching, mentoring, administrative duties, and engagement with professional and community networks. Academic work requires expertise, adaptability, and continuous learning. Over time, individuals develop a professional identity shaped not only by their personal values and competencies but also by institutional expectations and disciplinary norms. Managing these varied responsibilities requires resilience and effective coping skills, further highlighting the importance of understanding stress and well-being within academic contexts. Given the increasing academic pressures and growing concerns about student mental health, examining adaptive coping strategies has become particularly important. Identifying how indoor and outdoor activities support emotional well-being can inform psychological interventions, student support services, and institutional wellness initiatives. Therefore, the present qualitative study seeks to explore how college students experience academic stress and how engagement in indoor and outdoor activities contributes to their emotional well-being. By focusing on students' subjective experiences, the study aims to provide deeper insight into coping processes and contribute to the understanding of adaptive mechanisms that promote psychological health.

Objectives

1. To explore subjective experiences of how indoor and outdoor activities helps college students to deal with academic stress and emotional well-being.
2. To explore the coping strategies to deal with academic stress in reference to personality traits.
3. To identify the psychological benefits of engaging in indoor and outdoor activities for emotional regulation and mental well-being.

Review of literature

Relevant studies-

1. Roger S. Ulrich investigated the psychological benefits of natural environments. Ulrich and colleagues devised a psycho-evolutionary theory in relation to natural environments which they called the Stress recovery theory. Stress recovery, according to Ulrich, involves the recovery or restoration from excessively arousing states, both psychologically and physiologically (Ulrich et al, 1991). Stress recovery in this context is a part of the larger concept of restoration, which also encompasses factors such as recovery from under-stimulation and recovery from anxiety (Ulrich, 1993).
2. The transactional model of stress, developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), provides a valuable framework for understanding how individuals perceive and respond to stress. In this model, stress is not merely a reaction to external pressures but a dynamic interaction between the individual and their environment. According to the model, stress arises when a person perceives a situation as threatening or overwhelming, and their available coping resources are insufficient to deal with it (Lazarus, 1991).
3. Self Determination theory developed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, he suggested that emotional wellbeing improves with reference to fulfillment of three psychological needs- 1. Autonomy- Feeling in control of one's action, 2. Competency- Feeling capable and effective, 3. Relatedness-connected to other person. In reference this theory, autonomy reflects subjective choice to choose activities to cope with stress, competency is related to ability of doing things, and relatedness is more of social support.
4. Attention restoration theory- This theory suggested that, due to constant cognitive efforts like cognitive effort such as studying, problem-solving, planning and organization, positive reframing because of these entire things person may feel mental fatigue. Exploration to nature helps to restore mental energy. Outdoor activities such as walking, hiking, running, dance, physical activities helps to reduce mental fatigue, improve concentration and restore emotional balance.

5. Eysenck's personality theory- He explained the personality based on dimension such as introversion and extroversion. The theory connects with my topic in such a way that those who are introverts are more inclined towards indoor activities and those who are extroverts are more inclined towards outdoor activities.

Previous studies

The study investigated the psychological restoration effects of indoor and outdoor activities on anxiety reduction and attention restoration among college students of Taiwanese. The study included 203 participants who engaged in five different leisure activities as indoor and outdoor. The finding revealed that moderate outdoor activities particularly, walking, were the most effective in improving mental health. And indoor activities were found to have positive psychological benefits by promoting relaxation and cognitive recovery (Weng and Chiang, 2017).

A study conducted examined the impact of short term adventure reduce stress among college students. The study included 33 participants who participated in outdoor activities. Both physiological and psychological stress levels were assessed using salivary cortisol samples and modified in stress questionnaire at three different time points: during classroom sessions, before filed trip, and after completing the outdoor program. The study concluded that participation in outdoor activities reduce physiological and psychological stress as indicated lower cortisol levels. The results highlight in importance of incorporating outdoor adventure program as an effective to promote stress reduction and enhance emotional wellbeing among college students (Chang et al., 2019).

The study explored the importance of nature in daily lives of university students during adulthood, a transitional phase often characterized by academic stress and emotional challenges. The study was conducted among the environmental students of Helsinki University using qualitative thematic approach for 47 participants. The study revealed that despite academic responsibilities, and time limitations, most students make time for outdoor recreational activities, recognizing their value for emotional well-being. Students reported that nature helped them to achieve emotional balance, concentration, and reduce stress. In addition, engaging in outdoor activities with reference to natural environment provides opportunities for self-reflection, helping students develop a self-identity. The study emphasized that maintaining regular contact with nature and outdoor activities is essential for supporting students to manage mental, emotional and social well-being (Puhakka, 2021). A study examined the influenced of personality traits and leisure activities on various dimensions of well-being among adults aged 14-20 years. The results highlight that engagement in leisure activities plays a supportive role in enhancing emotional and psychological well-being beyond the influence of personality alone. Additionally leisure activities such as socializing and physical activity were found to positively contribute to positive effect mental health and flourishing when combined personality traits (Svedberg et al., 2021).

The study investigated the influence of personality traits in leisure activities and the moderating effects on academic efficacy in a longitudinal exploratory study. The study included 331 university students who were assessed using standardized measures of personality (NEO-FFI), leisure behavior and academic efficacy (MBI-SS). The findings revealed that students engaged in a wide range of leisure activities as coping strategies for maintaining academic stress and emotional wellbeing. Certain personality traits influences for specific leisure activities and their effectiveness in enhancing academic functioning (Koslich-strumann et al., 2023). A qualitative study conducted at a small international liberal arts university in Lithuania explored how engagement in art serves as coping mechanism for stress and emotional wellbeing of undergraduate students. The study involved seven participants from diverse artistic background who are engaged with various art forms throughout academic journeys. The data were collected from semi-structured interview, in person interview and thematic analysis on the basis of three basic themes: art as a source of positive emotions, art as a therapeutic medium, and interacting between coping and art. Findings indicated that engagement in art generated feelings of relief, joy, calmness and it helps students to manage academic pressure and daily stress (D et al., 2025).

Research Gaps

1. Lack of comparative analysis between indoor and outdoor activities in stress and coping- Weng and Chiang (2017) compared indoor and outdoor leisure activities but focused mainly on anxiety reduction and attention restoration. There is a gap between the understanding of indoor and outdoor activities differ in their role as coping strategies for emotional regulation, stress reduction, and overall psychological wellbeing, especially among college students.
2. There are several gaps in existing literature of Chang et al. (2019), first the study focused on a small sample size of 33 participants which limits the generalization of the findings to a border student population. Second, the study examined only short-term effects of outdoor activities on students stress management and emotional wellbeing, without exploring the long-term impact of regular engagement in outdoor or recreational activities on students stresses management and emotional well-being. Additionally, the research did not examine student's personal preferences for different types of coping activities such as indoor or outdoor activities. Furthermore limited attention given to the understanding of student's subjective experiences, emotional outcomes and personal coping strategies associated with recreational engagement.

3. Studies such as puhakka (2021) did not compare the effectiveness of different types of coping activities, such as indoor versus outdoor activities. There is limited research examining which type of activity students prefer and how these preferences influence their stress management and emotional well-being.
4. Studies by Svedberg et al. (2021) examined the relationship between personality traits, leisure activities and emotional wellbeing. However, these study focusing on relationship between personality and leisure activities without focusing on subjective experiences, coping process, and perceive psychological benefits of specific activities in real-life academic stress situations.
5. Qualitative study conducted in Lithuania (D et al., 2025) highlighted therapeutic role of arts as a coping strategy, study was limited to very small sample size and only focused on art-based coping. It did not measure border range of indoor and outdoor recreational activities, limiting the understanding of diverse coping strategies used by students.

Limited research has been conducted in the Indian context, particularly among college student, where academic pressure, coping strategies and lifestyle factors differently. Therefore, there is a need for further research to explore students preferred indoor and outdoor coping activities and their role in managing academic stress and promoting emotional well-being.

Methodology

Research Design-

This study employs qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the role of indoor and outdoor activities in managing academic stress and emotional well-being in reference to personality traits among college students. This design helps to understand participants lived experiences, perspectives and coping strategies.

Data were collected to semi-structured, in-person interview, which encouraged participants to openly share their experiences while ensuring consistency through guided questions. Total 11 college students participated in the study. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their exposure to academic stress and emotional well-being. The interview schedule included open-ended questions focusing on academic stress, indoor-outdoor activities, personality traits, coping strategies and emotional well-being.

Additionally, researcher incorporated a structured list of indoor and outdoor activities within interview process to help participants identify and reflect specific activities they engage in for stress management.

All interviews were taken individually in comfortable setting to facilitations open discussion. Data were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. In which I analyzed the themes related to stress experience, coping activities and emotional well-being.

This methodology allowed for a detailed exploration of how indoor and outdoor activities contribute to emotional balance and stress management.

Findings

The qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews with 11 college students revealed several important themes related to academic stress, emotional well-being, and the role of indoor and outdoor activities in managing stress.

Key results

1. Academic stress was most commonly experienced during exams and academic transitions, leading to anxiety, nervousness, low confidence, and difficulty concentrating.
2. Personality traits influenced coping preferences. Introverted participants preferred indoor activities such as painting, music, dance while extroverted participants preferred outdoor activities like sports, walking, and running.
3. Indoor activities helped improve emotional regulation, promoting calmness, relaxation, mental clarity and better concentration.
4. Outdoor activities contributed to stress reduction and emotional well-being by improving mood, increasing motivation, enhancing focus and promoting physical and mental relaxation.
5. Engagement in preferred activities helped transform negative thoughts into positive ones, improving emotional balance and confidence.
6. Academic workload and time constraints were the main barriers, but participants still attempted to engage in activities regularly.
7. Overall, both indoor and outdoor activities were effective coping strategies, supporting stress management, emotional well-being and improved academic function.

Interpretation of results-

1. Adwika (11th standard student) -

Adwika identified her 12th board examination as a significant source of academic stress. During stressful periods, she experienced physical and emotional symptoms such as headaches and feeling of uneasiness. To cope with this stress, she preferred painting as an indoor activity.

She described herself as an introvert and mentioned that spending time alone with painting helped her feel calm, relaxed and emotionally balanced. She often engaged in drawing before studying to improve her concentration and also painted when feeling upset. Although academic workload sometimes acted as a barrier, painting served as an effective coping strategy to manage stress and enhance her emotional well-being.

2. Adya, an 11th standard student, experienced significant academic stress during his 10th board examination. During this period, he reported feeling very nervous and experienced moderate depressive thoughts. To cope with his stress, he preferred outdoor activities such as running and physical activities like games which helped him manage academic stress effectively.
Although he identified himself as an introvert, he preferred outdoor activity like playing cricket. He mentioned that even though cricket is typically a team sport, he often played alone to focus on his performance and manage stress. Engaging in outdoor activities helped him improve concentration and emotional stability.
Adya also reported that playing cricket helped him channel his negative thoughts in a positive direction and reconnect with reality. While playing, he experienced greater clarity of thoughts which enabled him to make effective decisions and manage his emotional wellbeing during periods of academic stress.
3. Aditya, an 11th standard student identified himself as an extrovert and preferred outdoor activities, particularly playing cricket to cope with academic stress. He reported that during stressful situations he adopted a let go attitude and attempted to reframe his mindset to manage his emotions effectively. Playing cricket provided him emotionally relief and helped reduce stress.
He mentioned that engaging in outdoor activities helped him build social connections, feel relaxed and maintain physical fitness. Due to academic workload he played cricket only on Sundays for about three hours. He further stated that environmental engagement during cricket helped him manage stress, improve relaxation and support his overall emotional wellbeing.
4. Gauri, a second year pharmacy student, experienced significant academic stress during 12th board examination. To cope with this stress she preferred listening to music while walking which involved a combination of both indoor and outdoor engagement. She mentioned that taking breaks from studies to listen to music helped her feel calm and emotionally relaxed.
Gauri described her personality as having both introverted and extroverted traits. She reported that listening music while walking helped her manage academic pressure effectively reduce stress and supported her emotional well-being. This activity allowed her to gain emotional balance and feel more relaxed while dealing with academic stress.
5. Sanskruti, a master's student experienced academic stress during her semester examinations which was further affected by her poor physical health. To cope with this stress she preferred going for walks as an outdoor activity which helped her feel better emotionally and physically. She mentioned that for her emotional well-being she preferred limited social interaction as she believed emotional attachment could sometimes lead to distress. Engaging in outdoor activities helped her to maintain a healthy routine gain motivation and develop a positive outlook. She also reported that walking helped her transform negative thoughts into positive ones and supported her emotional wellbeing during academic stress.
6. Nivedi, a BA literature student, reported experienced academic stress during examination. For coping she preferred to choose outdoor activities particularly hiking with friends. She mentioned that hiking not only helped her manage stress but also supported her emotional well-being. For Nivedi, nature plays a significant healing role. She described being in natural environment as calming and restorative. Additionally spending time in nature with friends provided emotional supports improved her mood and enhanced her ability to cope with stress. Overall outdoor activities like hiking served as an effective coping mechanism for her, helping her reduce academic stress, improve emotional regulation and maintain her overall emotional well-being.
7. Riya, graduate student reported experienced academic stress during her college years when unexpected holidays resulted in incomplete submission. As consequences she failed in two subjects during that semester. This situation caused intense stress leading her to stop attending college and she took academic gap of almost two years. She also experienced significant decline in her confidence during this period. Riya described herself as an introvert who tends to internalize stress rather than sharing with others. To cope with academic stress and emotional distress she preferred engaging in both outdoor and indoor activities, particularly dancing for about an hour, especially focusing on footwork with closed eyes, helped her feel calm relaxed and mentally refreshed. Though dance is considered as outdoor activity, she chooses escapism from reality through dancing alone.
8. Anushka, TY student reported experienced a highly stressful situation during her 12th board examinations. This emotional and academic burden made it difficult for her to concentrate on her studies and negatively affected her mental well-being. She described herself as an introvert as she tends to share her feelings only with close individuals finds it difficult to open up to others easily. To cope with academic stress Anushka preferred engaging in outdoor activities, particularly playing games such as cricket and lagori. She mentioned that playing cricket with her sibling helped her feel relaxed, calm, and mentally stable. She also associated these activities with positive childhood memories, which contributed to her emotional comfort. In outdoor engagement helped her manage academic stress, improve her emotional state and regain mental balance.
9. Janhavi, graduate student reported stressful situation during her entrance examination. She felt anxious and under confident due to the pressure of managing time, completing the syllabus and remembering important concepts. She described her personality as predominantly extroverted, although she tends to be more introverted outside her

comfort zone. To cope with academic stress she preferred outdoor activities, particularly going for long walks or running in the garden. She reported that these activities helped uplift her mood promote positivity and supported her physical fitness. She also coped with stress by watching movies, motivational videos, or podcasts, and engaging in activities that made her feel happy. Academic assignments and work schedules sometime limited her ability to engage in outdoor activities for extended periods, she managed by doing for shorter walks at night or exercising at home. Overall outdoor activities such as walking along with supportive indoor activities like watching motivational concert played an important role in helping her manage academic stress, improve emotional well-being and restore motivation particularly in alignment with the extroverted personality traits,

10. Tejal, graduate student experienced academic stress during her UG entrance exam as she perceived to be crucial determinant of her future academic path. She described her personality as combination of introvert and extrovert, to cope with academic stress she engaged in both indoor and outdoor activities, such as listening to music, engaging in creative tasks, dancing, and participating in physical activities and sports. She also practiced cognitive and emotional coping strategies such as self-reassurance and deep breathing, which helped her, remain calm and maintain emotional control. However she noted that barriers such as procrastination, personal responsibilities health issues or workload sometimes limits her ability to engage in these activities consistently. Overall her responses indicate that a combination of indoor and outdoor activities, along with cognitive coping strategies and emotional engagement in preferred activities, played a significant role in helping her manage academic stress and maintain emotional well-being align with her personality traits.
11. Rutuja, 12th standard student reported that she experienced stress during board examination, to cope with academic stress and to maintain emotional well-being; she preferred outdoor activity such as dancing. She mentioned that dancing helped her to gain calm mind and get clarity from foggy mind. She described herself as an extrovert so after meeting friends, and dancing with social group gives her strength to manage emotional well-being.

Conclusion

The present qualitative study explored the role of indoor and outdoor activities in relation to personality traits in managing academic stress and promoting emotional well-being among students. The findings revealed that academic stress was most commonly experienced during examinations and major academic transitions. Participants reported emotional symptoms such as anxiety, nervousness, low confidence and negative thoughts along with occasional physical symptoms. The results indicated that personality traits influenced coping preferences. Introverted participants generally preferred indoor activities which supported emotional regulation and internal reflection. Extroverted participants preferred outdoor activities such as sports, walking, and running which promote social engagement, mood enhancement and physical relaxation.

Overall, engagement in meaningful activities helped participants reduce stress improve concentration, restore emotional balance, and enhance psychological resilience.

Implications of the study-

1. Educational implications-
Institutions should encourage structured indoor and outdoor activities as part of student well-being programs to reduce academic stress.
2. Psychological implications-
Personality-based coping strategies can be incorporated into counseling and mental health interventions for students.
3. Practical implications-
Students can be guided to identify activities aligned with their personality traits to enhance emotional regulation and stress management.
4. Policy implications-
Colleges may integrate recreational, creative and physical engagement programs into academic schedules to support holistic development.

Limitations of the study-

1. The sample size was small and limited to specific group of students, which restricts generalizability.
2. The study relied on self-reported data, which may include subjective bias.
3. The research was qualitative in nature therefore statistical relationships between variables were not measurable.

Future directions

1. Future research can include a larger and diverse sample to enhance generalizability
2. Quantitative studies can be conducted to statistically examine the relationship between personality traits, type of activity and stress levels.
3. Intervention based research can assess the effectiveness of structured indoor and outdoor activity programs in reducing academic stress.

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Original Article

Personality Differences in Dialysis and Non-Dialysis CKD Patients

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180238

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 234-238

February - 2026

Submitted: 18 Jan. 2026

Revised: 28 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 13 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is a progressive and life-altering condition that affects not only physiological functioning but also psychological adjustment and quality of life. While psychosocial distress in CKD populations has been widely documented, limited research has examined stable personality differences across treatment modalities. The present study investigated differences in personality traits between dialysis and non-dialysis (OPD) renal disease patients using the Five-Factor Model framework. A comparative cross-sectional design was employed. Personality traits—Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness—were assessed using the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Descriptive statistics and ANOVA were conducted to examine group differences. Results indicated significant differences across most personality dimensions. Dialysis patients demonstrated higher Agreeableness, whereas OPD patients scored significantly higher on Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Openness. Findings suggest that treatment stage and modality may interact with enduring personality structures, influencing coping patterns and psychological adaptation. Integrating personality assessment into renal care may enhance psychosocial interventions and improve patient-centered outcomes. Implications for clinical psychology practice, multidisciplinary healthcare, and culturally sensitive intervention models are discussed.

Keywords: Chronic Kidney Disease, Dialysis, Personality Traits, NEO-FFI, Five-Factor Model, Psychological Adjustment

Introduction

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) represents a major global health burden, characterized by gradual and irreversible decline in renal functioning (Levey et al., 2020). As the disease progresses to End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD), patients require renal replacement therapies such as hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, or kidney transplantation. Beyond physiological deterioration, CKD imposes significant psychological, social, and occupational challenges that demand long-term adaptation. Dialysis, in particular, restructures daily life. Patients must adhere to rigid treatment schedules, dietary restrictions, fluid limitations, and ongoing medical monitoring (Himmelfarb & Ikizler, 2020). Non-dialysis (outpatient department; OPD) CKD patients, though not yet on renal replacement therapy, face chronic uncertainty, anticipatory anxiety, and strict disease management protocols. These differing treatment trajectories may influence psychological functioning in distinct ways. Personality traits are relatively stable patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior that influence how individuals respond to stressors (McCrae & Costa, 1990). The Five-Factor Model (FFM) conceptualizes personality across five broad domains: Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness (Costa & McCrae, 1992). These traits have demonstrated strong associations with health behaviors, coping strategies, adherence patterns, and psychological resilience (Sirois, 2015; Milad & Bogg, 2020). While depression and anxiety among CKD patients have been extensively studied (Kimmel, 2001), comparatively fewer studies have examined enduring personality structures, particularly across different treatment modalities. Understanding whether dialysis and non-dialysis patients differ in personality traits may inform personalized psychological interventions and improve holistic renal care.



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19346023](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19346023)



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How to cite this article:

Ruby Uniyal. (2026). Personality Differences in Dialysis and Non-Dialysis CKD Patients. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 234–238. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19346023>

Background of the Study

CKD is diagnosed based on reduced estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) and/or markers of kidney damage such as albuminuria (Levey et al., 2020). The disease is commonly caused by diabetes mellitus, hypertension, glomerulonephritis, and polycystic kidney disease. Progression to ESRD necessitates dialysis or transplantation.

Psychosocial consequences of CKD include fatigue, sleep disturbances, sexual dysfunction, financial stress, social withdrawal, and reduced quality of life (Morton et al., 2017). Dialysis patients often report emotional exhaustion and dependency-related distress due to frequent hospital visits and technological reliance. Conversely, OPD patients may experience heightened uncertainty and anticipatory stress regarding disease progression.

Personality traits significantly influence health-related behaviors. Conscientiousness predicts adherence to medical regimens (Christensen & Smith, 1995), while Neuroticism is associated with greater emotional distress in chronic illness populations (Lahey, 2009). Extraversion and Agreeableness facilitate social support utilization, and Openness contributes to adaptive coping (Sirois, 2015).

Given these associations, it is plausible that dialysis and OPD patients exhibit differential personality profiles shaped by illness stage and treatment demands.

Research Problem

Despite extensive literature on psychosocial distress in CKD, limited comparative research has examined personality differences between dialysis and non-dialysis renal disease patients, particularly in the Indian context.

The central research question guiding this study is:

Do dialysis and non-dialysis (OPD) renal disease patients differ significantly in their personality traits as conceptualized by the Five-Factor Model?

Objectives

1. To compare dialysis and OPD renal disease patients across the five personality dimensions.
2. To examine whether treatment modality is associated with specific personality patterns.
3. To explore implications for psychosocial intervention in renal care.

Rationale and Significance

The present study is grounded in the recognition that Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is not only a physiological condition but also a profound psychological challenge that demands long-term emotional and behavioral adjustment. While substantial research has focused on depression, anxiety, and quality of life among renal patients, comparatively little attention has been given to stable personality traits and their role across different treatment modalities, particularly in the Indian context. Understanding personality differences between dialysis and non-dialysis patients is essential because personality influences coping patterns, treatment adherence, stress perception, and interpersonal functioning. By examining these differences, the study contributes to a more comprehensive biopsychosocial understanding of CKD, supports the integration of psychological screening into renal care, and provides empirical evidence for developing personalized, culturally sensitive psychosocial interventions aimed at improving overall patient well-being and treatment outcomes.

Review of Literature

Theoretical Framework

Five-Factor Model (FFM)

Costa and McCrae (1992) proposed that personality can be described across five dimensions:

- **Neuroticism:** Emotional instability and vulnerability to stress.
- **Extraversion:** Sociability and positive emotionality.
- **Openness:** Intellectual curiosity and cognitive flexibility.
- **Agreeableness:** Cooperativeness and trust.
- **Conscientiousness:** Organization and self-discipline.

The FFM has demonstrated cross-cultural reliability and predictive validity in health research (McCrae & Costa, 1990).

Stress and Coping Theory

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) conceptualized chronic illness as a prolonged stressor requiring cognitive appraisal and coping. Personality traits influence both appraisal and coping strategies.

Empirical Studies

Kimmel (2001) reported strong associations between psychosocial stress and dialysis outcomes. Christensen and Smith (1995) demonstrated that conscientious dialysis patients showed better adherence to fluid and dietary restrictions. Milad and Bogg (2020) found conscientiousness positively predicted health behaviors across chronic conditions.

Poppe et al. (2012) showed that personality moderated quality of life in chronic illness. However, comparative research between dialysis and non-dialysis CKD populations remains sparse.

Research Gap

1. Limited comparative research across CKD treatment stages.
2. Scarcity of Indian empirical data.
3. Overemphasis on mood disorders rather than stable personality traits.
4. Lack of integration of personality screening in nephrology care.

Hypothesis:

1. There will be significant gender differences in specific personality traits among Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) patients undergoing dialysis, as measured by the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO FFI) scale.

These hypotheses are formulated based on existing literature suggesting potential disparities in personality traits and their implications for coping with chronic illness.

Methodology

Research Design

A comparative cross-sectional design was employed.

Sample

The present study employed a **purposive sampling technique** to select a total sample of **150 participants diagnosed with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)**. Among them, **75 participants were undergoing dialysis treatment**, while the remaining **75 participants were managing CKD without dialysis (OPD patients)**.

The study focused specifically on patients:

- Residing in **Nashik district, Maharashtra, India**
- Belonging to **middle-class socio-economic status**
- Aged **above 30 years**
- Diagnosed with CKD for **2 to 5 years**

Participants were recruited from renal care units and outpatient departments within Nashik district.

Controlled Variables

To enhance internal validity and reduce confounding influences, the following variables were controlled:

- **Age:** Above 30 years
- **Duration of Illness:** 2–5 years
- **Duration of Dialysis:** 2–5 years (for dialysis group)
- **Socioeconomic Status:** Middle class
- **Regional Area:** Nashik district

Controlling these factors ensured that observed differences in personality traits were less likely attributable to demographic or illness-duration variability.

Tools / Instruments

NEO Five-Factor Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992)

The NEO-FFI consists of 60 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Reliability coefficients range from .76 to .90 (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The instrument demonstrates strong construct validity and is widely used in medical populations.

Procedure

After obtaining institutional permissions from renal care centers in Nashik, eligible participants were identified according to inclusion criteria. The purpose of the study was explained individually to each participant in a clear and comprehensible manner. Written informed consent was obtained prior to data collection.

Participants completed the **NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI)** in a quiet clinical setting. For dialysis patients, data collection was scheduled either before treatment sessions or during periods of physical stability to minimize fatigue effects. Assistance was provided when required, particularly for participants experiencing weakness or difficulty reading.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation) and ANOVA were used to examine group differences. Significance levels were set at $p < .05$, $p < .01$, and $p < .001$.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistics and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were computed to compare personality traits between dialysis and non-dialysis CKD patients.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and ANOVA Results for Personality Traits

Personality Trait	Dialysis (n = 75) M ± SD	Non-Dialysis (n = 75) M ± SD	F Value	p Value	Interpretation
Agreeableness	40.7 ± 2.23	40.1 ± 1.90	6.15	.014	Dialysis higher*
Conscientiousness	35.0 ± 4.87	38.9 ± 1.93	197.00	< .001	Non-Dialysis higher***
Extraversion	31.8 ± 4.14	33.5 ± 1.90	51.80	< .001	Non-Dialysis higher***
Neuroticism	34.8 ± 2.21	38.7 ± 2.34	219.29	< .001	Non-Dialysis higher***
Openness	34.0 ± 2.41	37.2 ± 1.83	208.10	< .001	Non-Dialysis higher***

*p < .05, ***p < .001

Interpretation of Results

The analysis revealed statistically significant differences between dialysis and non-dialysis CKD patients across most personality dimensions.

- **Agreeableness:** Dialysis patients scored slightly higher, suggesting greater compliance, cooperation, and interpersonal dependency, potentially shaped by frequent interaction with healthcare providers.
- **Conscientiousness:** Non-dialysis patients demonstrated significantly higher conscientiousness. This may reflect greater self-regulatory capacity in managing early-stage CKD through lifestyle and medication adherence.
- **Extraversion:** Higher extraversion among non-dialysis patients may indicate better social engagement and emotional expressiveness compared to dialysis patients, who often experience fatigue and reduced mobility.
- **Neuroticism:** Non-dialysis patients scored significantly higher in neuroticism, possibly reflecting anticipatory anxiety about disease progression and uncertainty regarding future dialysis dependency. Interestingly, higher Neuroticism among OPD patients may reflect anticipatory anxiety regarding disease progression. This aligns with stress-appraisal theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).
- **Openness:** Higher openness among non-dialysis patients may reflect greater psychological flexibility and adaptive coping prior to the restrictive dialysis phase.

These findings suggest that treatment modality and illness stage may interact with personality expression and psychological adaptation. Findings partially align with previous research emphasizing the role of conscientiousness in treatment adherence (Christensen & Smith, 1995) and the impact of personality on health outcomes (Milad & Bogg, 2020).

Conclusion

The study demonstrates significant personality differences between dialysis and non-dialysis renal disease patients. Treatment modality appears associated with distinct personality patterns, underscoring the importance of integrating psychological assessment into renal care.

Limitations of the Study

The findings must be interpreted in light of the following limitations:

1. **Broad Age Range:** Participants ranged from 30 to 65 years, which may introduce age-related personality variation.
2. **Self-Report Measures:** All instruments utilized self-report techniques, which may result in response biases, including social desirability bias.
3. **Unmeasured Variables:** Objective physical health indicators and significant life events were not assessed, which may influence personality expression and psychological adjustment.
4. **Regional Limitation:** The sample was restricted to Nashik district, limiting generalizability to other cultural or geographical populations.

Further Implications

The findings of the present study have important clinical, theoretical, and practical implications. The significant personality differences between dialysis and non-dialysis CKD patients highlight the need for integrating psychological assessment into routine renal care. Personality-informed interventions can enhance treatment adherence, emotional regulation, and coping strategies, particularly for patients high in neuroticism or low in conscientiousness. Early psychological screening, especially among non-dialysis patients experiencing anticipatory anxiety, may help prevent long-term distress. The study also supports the inclusion of clinical psychologists in multidisciplinary nephrology teams to provide holistic, patient-centered care. Furthermore, the findings contribute to the applicability of the Five-Factor Model in chronic medical conditions within the Indian context and encourage future longitudinal research to explore how personality traits interact with illness progression and treatment adaptation.

Summary of Findings

- Significant differences exist across most personality traits.

- Dialysis patients showed higher Agreeableness.
- OPD patients showed higher Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Openness.
- Personality assessment has clinical relevance in CKD management.

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Original Article

The Effects of News Sensationalism on Stress and Cognition among Quinquagenarian Individuals

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Manuscript ID:

Abstract

JRD -2026-180239

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 239-243

February - 2026

Submitted: 18 Jan. 2026

Revised: 28 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 13 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

This paper evaluates the correlation between stress and cognition of quinquagenarian. (50 to 60 years) population who are daily watchers of Indian news media. At these times the news sensationalism has become major part of the Indian news thus affecting this specific population, this study has tried to address this problem by incorporating quantitative research methodology where correlational quantitative design was employed on the 53 participants. Survey was carried among these participants where Perceived Stress Questionnaire (PSQ) and the Stress-induced Cognition Scale (SCS) were employed to measure stress and cognition variables. Our analysis showed a significant positive correlation between stress levels and cognition, thus indicating that for individuals in the quinquagenarian age group, consuming sensationalized news on a daily basis is linked to higher stress levels, which in turn positively correlates with negative cognitive responses like extreme and self-depreciative thoughts. The limitation of this research study was sample size and language barrier in conducting the survey.

Keywords: Stress, cognition, news sensationalism, quinquagenarian. Population.

Introduction

In India it is estimated that over 150 million active daily news watchers, consuming news through various modes such as television, newspapers, radio and now changing patterns of seeking news through online platforms such as YouTube, X, show us that how vast this industry is. Consumption of news have become integral part of our daily life where one can access them through news channels having news programs by 24/7 which can be watched anytime from anywhere through smartphones. Trend show us that people up to 35 years of age seek news through digital platforms but older generation are much engaged in traditional ways i.e. the television, paper, etc. But increasing digitalization older people have also started to consume the news through sources of Facebook, WhatsApp and other media platforms. News has been a source of reliable information on local as well as global issues where one can form their decisions and opinions by understanding complex issues. But are they really informing us or being a source of stress by delivering sensationalized news through graphics and exaggerated language. Through a systematic study carried out, this report aims to highlight the relationship between stress and cognition among daily news watchers of the quinquagenarian population, i.e. 50 to 60 years of age. Ultimately this report focuses on the impact of daily news consumption on mental wellbeing, stress levels and cognitive responses and aiming towards establishing relationship between stress, cognition and news. The impact of news always has been significant among the Indian audiences and this impact is positive as well as negative in the nature but changing formats of news presentation, rising competition among media channels has led to usage of proactive language without reporting the facts, has inclined towards the negative effects. In order to study the correlation of news and psychological aspects such as stress and cognition this research is being carried out on this specific age group from 50 to 60 years of age consume more news on daily basis and are vulnerable to stress and negative cognitive responses emerging due to news sensationalism

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How to cite this article:

Ranade, K. A., & Kakulte, A. (2026). The Effects of News Sensationalism on Stress and Cognition among Quinquagenarian Individuals. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 239–243. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19346105>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19346105](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19346105)



The rationale of this study emerges from the growing trend of news sensationalism in the Indian news media and its consumption among people aged 50 to 60. The study particularly highlights how such news consumption can be a stressor leading to cognitive strain and understanding this pattern is crucial to assess the mental well-being of this specific age group. Thus, the study was carried out with objectives of determining significant positive relation between the level of stress and the degree of negative cognition in these individuals to evaluate the changes in cognitive responses given under stress and to analyze co-occurrence of stress and negative cognition

Review of Literature

Till date there have been good amount of research carried out on the effects of news, media and their effects on various psychological aspects such as mental wellbeing, stress, emotion regulation, resilience etc. These studies have been carried in India as well as in other countries as well but comparatively seeing the overall amount of work done it is seen that studies carried out in India is low than other countries. The studies in which news effects on anxiety, stress and wellbeing showed that small videos of both positive and negative aspects can affect each of the measure given above as an impact of rising clickbait culture (Lavelle, Ben 2022). Studies also explore the effects of problematic news consumption i.e. involving transportation, preoccupation, misregulation, under regulation, and interference on mental as well as physical wellbeing of individuals and results showed that greater risk at mental and physical wellbeing with higher news consumption compared to them than with who had lower news consumption (McLaughlin, B., Gotlieb, M. R., & Mills, D. J. 2023)... Deal, C., Bogdan, R, et.al 2018 have especially studied on older adults who consume cable news which includes politicized content may contribute as daily stressor after their research they found out that cable news didn't have any effect on psychological stress, physiological stress, or cognitive function. And they concluded that brief cable news watching does not induce a physiological or subjective stress response or cognitive impairment among healthy older adults. During the Covid 19 pandemic, news also played role in mental wellbeing state of individuals, study by Jain, P. (2021). Showed findings of high levels of news exposure with a combination of low interest in Covid 19 led people to experience more stress and low satisfaction, gratitude, and happiness. Studies in India carried by Arunraj, S., & Viduthalai, February 2018: they analyzed sensational news media and its psychological consequences which are associated with it through a qualitative data by carrying out interviews of research scholars and college students. They observed that students reported sleep deprivation when they watched news debates; escalation of noise among the panelists and dramatic background scores described to be affecting mind. Students mentioned that they had difficulty concentrating on their studies. In their discussion of their paper, they concluded that youngsters are more turning towards media other than television as news industry has obtained the style of presenting sensationalist news this presentation is affecting the mental health of the viewers developing sad mood, anxiety, panic and sometimes even traits of depression as well as sleeping disorders. International Studies by Kesner, L., et.al (2025): In this study researchers studied the case studies of Covid 19 pandemic and Russia – Ukraine war in which they rewired media exposure on people during this period of time they observed that while facing high volatile , unpredictable environment with sociopolitical stressors news media amplifies its effects , in their study mentioned that increasing global crises and its uncertainty induced media narratives can lead to negative psychological consequences through excessive media exposure. Bauldry, S., & Stainback, K. (2022): In this paper researchers have studied media consumption and psychological distress among older adults in United States. A survey was carried out among individuals 65 years of age and older than that. News consumption during Covid 19 was studied and they observed that 75% of their respondents closely followed the news during pandemic and noted that media surrounding the pandemic has a relationship with psychological distress.

Methodology

This study utilizes a correlational research design of quantitative research to assess the relationship among the perceived stress and cognition under stress and subscale of stress induced cognition i.e. extreme thought, self-depreciative thought and aggressive thought. The targeted population for this study is individuals from Quinquagenarian age group that is 50 to 60 years of age who watch news on daily basis primarily in Marathi, Hindi, English and other regional languages through television as well as online platforms such as YouTube. PSQ (Perceived Stress Questionnaire) and SCS (Stress Induced Cognitive Scale) were used in the survey form in order to measure amount of stress in the individuals and cognitive responses given under stressful situations. The survey was administered through an online platform i.e. Google Form, where information was collected about the language of news watched, amount of time spent watching news and questionnaires for stress and cognition. This study aims to determine how the current over-the-top presentation of news with combination of dramatic scenario, contributes to increased stress levels, which in turns to negative cognitive impacts leading to aggressive thoughts, fear, and inability to process things objectively and seeks to fill research gap in understanding the psychological effects of news media consumption on quinquagenarian. population, a vulnerable demographic that represents significant portion of daily news consumers in India. It was hypothesized that **'There would be a significant positive relationship between the amount of stress and negative cognition among daily news watchers'** The research involves two independent variables, i.e. Stress and Cognition .a) **Stress:** Stress is a response to a stressor, that is the external stimulus present which can be either an event or environmental condition. In simple terms, we can say stress is a feeling of intense emotional strain and pressure

causing mental discomfort. In small amounts, stress can be beneficial too as it increases performance, boosting motivation and reaction to the environment. But excessive amounts of stress can have its effects on both physical and mental health of individuals. Stress can increase risk of stroke, heart attack, diabetes etc. And can lead to mental illnesses such as depression, mood disorders, anxiety disorders, etc. b) **Cognition**

Cognition is a set of mental activities which includes psychological processes that acquire, retrieve, store, transform or use the information. Cognitive processes are as follows attention, perception, memory, thinking, which also includes reasoning, concept formation, problem-solving and decision making. Cognitions are a crucial part of mental life, where many cognitive processes happen simultaneously. These cognitive processes are essential for understanding and interacting with the world by making them aware of the environment around them and helping them to formulate appropriate responses. Theoretical definitions of key concepts for which this research aims to study are **News:** News can be defined as report of recent events, previously unknown information something having a specified influence or effect. It is often termed as material reported from a newspaper or news periodical or on a newscast. (Merriam Webster. (n.d.). **Sensationalism:** Sensationalism refers to empiricism that limits the experience as a source of a knowledge to sensation or sense of perceptions. It can be also defined as the use or effect of sensational subject matter or treatment. (Merriam Webster. (n.d.).) **Quinquagenarian:** Quinquagenarian implies to individuals who are in age group of 50 years to 60 years of age. This term is used as per the age of the decade. The word 'quinquagenarian.' has its roots in Latin & derives from Latin word *quinquāgēnārius*, meaning 'containing fifty'. (Merriam Webster. (n.d.). **Stress:** The physiological or psychological response to internal or external stressors. Stress involves changes affecting nearly every system of the body, influencing how people feel and behave. For example, it may be manifested by palpitations, sweating, dry mouth, shortness of breath, fidgeting, accelerated speech, augmentation of negative emotions (if already experienced), and longer duration of stress fatigue. (American Psychological Association, n.d.) **Cognition:** All forms of knowing and awareness, such as perceiving, conceiving, remembering, reasoning, judging, imagining, and problem solving. Along with affect and conation, it is one of the three traditionally identified components of mind. (American Psychological Association, n.d.). For this research study, each of them participated in this study individually in the research by filling out survey questionnaire which was provided through google form. The participation of both male and females allowed wider scale to study in quinquagenarian population. It was observed that both categories showed similar responses to news sensationalism. The sample was collected using Structure Interview Technique, where two questionnaires were used in the construction of interviews for measuring both the variables. The questionnaires which were administered are as follows:

1) Development of Perceived Stress Questionnaire: A New Tool for Psychosomatic Research

1993 Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 37(1), 19-32. Authors: Susan Levenstein, Cosimo Prantera, Vilma VarvoMaria, Lia Scribano,, Edoardo Berto, Carlo LuziArnaldo Andreoli

2) Development of Stress-induced Cognition Scale 2006, Yonsei Medical Journal, 47(3), 384-392. Authors: Kyung Bong Koh, Joong Kyu Park, and Sunghye Cho. Snowball sampling of nonprobability sampling method was used while selecting samples for this research survey. It is a process of selecting samples using networks of friends and knowns. Google form for the survey was created and was circulated among the known individuals from Quinquagenarian population, and they were told to forward this form among their acquaintances from 50 to 60 years of age .Procedure to in this research was to first constructing google form and administering it to participants and the quantitative data collected was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) Software that allowed us to identify correlation among variables within the data. The final step was to write up the details of findings and results, which included detailed presentation on variables, literature review for the research topic, and research methodology executed.

Results and Discussion

To test the hypothesis that, there would be a significant positive relationship between amount of stress and negative cognition among daily news watchers from the Quinquagenarian population, sample size of (n=53) was obtained and PSQ (Perceived Stress Questionnaire) as well as SCS (Stress-induced Cognitive Scale) were administered in order to gain PSQ index and SCS scores. For PSQ Index, the mean score was 0.399 with a standard deviation of 0.119. For SCS Scores mean score was 13.42 with standard deviation of 10.268. (See figure 1).

Descriptive Statistics

		PSQ Index	SCS Scores
N	Statistic	53	53
Minimum	Statistic	.1111111111	0
Maximum	Statistic	.7444444444	40
Mean	Statistic	.398532494753	13.42
Std. Deviation	Statistic	.1191142870134	10.268
Skewness	Statistic	.577	1.141
	Std. Error	.327	.327
Kurtosis	Statistic	1.184	.750
	Std. Error	.644	.644

Figure 1

A Spearman's rho correlation was performed as the data was not normally distributed to investigate the relationship between stress and negative cognition, the analysis revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between the two variables ($r = 0.279^*$, $p = 0.043$). (See figure 2)

Correlations

			PSQ Index	SCS Scores
Spearman's rho	PSQ Index	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.279*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.043
		N	53	53
	SCS Scores	Correlation Coefficient	.279*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.043	.
		N	53	53

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Figure 2

The findings stated that amount of stress and negative cognition was positively correlated i.e. as a participant's perceived stress increased, their scores on the Stress-induced Cognitive scale also tend to increase. The PSQ Index of participants was also compared with subscales of Stress-induced Cognitive Scale, i.e. Extreme thought subscale, Aggressive Thought Subscales, and Self Deprecative Thought Subscales. The results were that there was a statistically significant positive correlation between the PSQ Index and the Extreme Thought Subscales with a correlation coefficient of (0.275*) with p-value of (0.047) significant at the 0.05 level. (see figure 3). For Aggressive Thought Subscales correlation coefficient was (0.222) with p-value of (0.109) which was not significant at any level on spearman's rho. (see figure 4). For Self-deprecatative Thought Subscales (0.290*) was the correlation coefficient with p-value of (0.035) statistically significant at 0.05 level. (See figure 5)

Correlations

			PSQ Index	Aggressive Thought Subscales
Spearman's rho	PSQ Index	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.222
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.109
		N	53	53
	Aggressive Thought Subscales	Correlation Coefficient	.222	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.109	.
		N	53	53

Figure 3

Correlations

			PSQ Index	Extreme Thought Subscales
Spearman's rho	PSQ Index	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.275*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.047
		N	53	53
	Extreme Thought Subscales	Correlation Coefficient	.275*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.047	.
		N	53	53

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Figure 4:

Correlations

			PSQ Index	Self-deprecatative Thought Subscales
Spearman's rho	PSQ Index	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.290*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.035
		N	53	53
	Self-deprecatative Thought Subscales	Correlation Coefficient	.290*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	.
		N	53	53

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Figure 5:

The findings for this research study were that in quinquagenarian. population that is people who are between age group of 50 to 60 years have more amount of stress due to consumption of news with sensationalism, this affects their cognition negatively and prompting them to give cognitive responses such as Extreme Thought, Aggressive Thought

and Self Depreciative thought This implies that individuals from this age group are prone to being vulnerable to high amount of stress and this high amount of stress is positively related to their cognition displaying negative stress-related cognitive responses which can manifest into various psychological issues. These findings also show us how watching news, seemingly simple activity in the routine of many older adults can be a type of stressor that might lead to other psychological conditions. Limitations for these studies were 1) Language barrier in administration as questionnaires were in English while the population was dominantly Marathi speaking. 2) The sample size of this research was insufficient and the samples that collected were limited to draw proper conclusions 3) Citing and referencing the prior research was difficult as there were very few previous researchers available in India comparatively to other international studies carried out on this topic.

Future Implications

1 Future Scope of Study:

Through this research we can create awareness regarding how the problematic news presentation has become and its coming cost of mental health of its audiences, where viewers are not facing mental discomfort while consuming such highly sensationalized news. There is an opportunity for upcoming research scholars to explore the nuances of this topic with various psychological aspects in this field as it was observed that limited studies were conducted in India. Further studies can be carried out through different research methodologies and the relation of news consumption with various psychological conditions can be studied. Thus, we can say that this might be a novel topic to study in the future.

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Original Article

Understanding the connection between childhood adversity and crime

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180240

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 244-248

February - 2026

Submitted: 18 Jan. 2026

Revised: 28 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 13 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Childhood adversity is increasingly recognized as a critical developmental factor influencing emotional regulation, social functioning, and behavioural outcomes across the lifespan. A growing body of psychological and criminological research suggests that exposure to trauma, neglect, and unstable caregiving environments during childhood significantly elevates the risk of antisocial and criminal behaviour in adulthood. Despite this growing body of evidence, institutional records within traditional correctional settings often fail to capture comprehensive trauma histories, resulting in interventions that prioritize punitive measures over holistic rehabilitation. The present study explores the perceived relationship between childhood adversity and criminal behaviour through a qualitative, phenomenological framework focused on incarcerated women. In-depth semi-structured interviews and pilot case analyses were specifically utilized to examine how participants interpret their formative early life experiences and their subsequent influence on later adult behavioural pathways. The pilot findings identified three predominant developmental pathways: antisocial learning environments, direct trauma and neglect, and socioeconomic strain. These pathways reflect the complex interaction between emotional injury, learned behavioural modelling, and structural pressures in shaping criminal outcomes. Violent behaviour was frequently associated with impaired impulse regulation linked to chronic trauma, whereas corruption and relational aggression were closely connected to learned antisocial strategies. The findings strongly support trauma-informed interpretations of criminality, emphasizing that offending behaviour may represent a form of maladaptive coping rooted in significant developmental disruption rather than inherent deviance. Implications highlight the urgent need for correctional systems to incorporate systemic trauma-sensitive screening, targeted rehabilitation, and continuous psychosocial support. Although limited by its pilot sample size, the study contributes to an experiential understanding of crime, reinforcing the importance of integrating psychological insight into modern criminological policy and practice.

Introduction

Background of the Study

Childhood represents the most critical and malleable phase of human development, during which the foundations of emotional regulation, moral reasoning, and social attachment are established. Ideally, this period provides the necessary "scaffolding" for a child to develop a resilient nervous system and a coherent sense of self. However, when this period is marked by chronic adversity—encompassing physical or sexual abuse, emotional neglect, domestic violence, parental substance misuse, or systemic socioeconomic deprivation—the developmental trajectory is often profoundly redirected. According to the American Psychological Association (APA, 2019), trauma is an emotional response to deeply distressing events that overwhelm an individual's ability to cope, causing pervasive feelings of helplessness and diminishing their sense of safety. Childhood trauma does not only result from isolated incidents but often from "toxic stress" caused by prolonged neglect or emotional abandonment. Psychological research into Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), pioneered by Felitti et al. (1998), demonstrates that such disruptions are biological catalysts. Exposure to chronic stress can impair the development of the prefrontal cortex, responsible for impulse control, while over-sensitizing the amygdala, the brain's "alarm system." Within forensic psychology, criminal behaviour is increasingly conceptualized not as a simple moral failure, but as a behavioural outcome shaped by these cumulative developmental stressors.

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How to cite this article:

Waghmare, P. S., & Pawar, D. P. (2026). Understanding the connection between childhood adversity and crime. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 244–248.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19346220>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19346220](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19346220)



Children raised in unstable environments often adapt for survival rather than growth; hypervigilance, emotional numbing, or reactive aggression become functional strategies for navigating unsafe homes. As these individuals transition into adulthood, these survival tactics often become maladaptive, colliding with legal boundaries and manifesting as antisocial conduct. This study recognizes crime as a psychosocial outcome deeply rooted in developmental disruption, seeking to move beyond punitive frameworks toward a trauma-informed understanding of criminality.

Research Problem

Despite a robust body of quantitative evidence linking childhood adversity to adult criminality, a significant gap remains in how this information is utilized within the justice system. Currently, institutional documentation within correctional settings frequently overlooks the nuanced trauma histories of the incarcerated. Legal records typically prioritize the "what" and "when" of a crime—legal statutes and dates of occurrence—while largely ignoring the "why" regarding the individual's psychosocial background. This omission is not merely administrative; it has profound implications for rehabilitation. When a correctional system treats an offence in isolation from the offender's developmental history, it risks implementing interventions that are ineffective or re-traumatizing. Most justice systems remain focused on containment and punishment rather than healing, which perpetuates the trauma-crime cycle. This is a feedback loop in which unresolved trauma fuels offending, incarceration intensifies psychological distress, and post-release environments offer little support for recovery. Furthermore, while quantitative studies have documented correlations between ACEs and delinquency, there is a notable lack of qualitative inquiry that seeks to understand the lived experiences of those within the system. We lack a clear understanding of how incarcerated individuals themselves interpret their developmental histories and how they perceive the role of early adversity in shaping their present circumstances. Without bridging the gap between statistical data and personal narrative, the justice system remains ill-equipped to break the cycle of recidivism.

Objectives and Significance

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the psychological impact of childhood trauma and to identify the specific developmental pathways that contribute to criminal behaviour among incarcerated women. By employing a qualitative, phenomenological framework, the study seeks to explore the subjective meaning participants assign to their early life experiences.

Specifically, the research aims to:

- * Map Subjective Interpretations: Examine how participants perceive the relationship between their childhood adversity and their subsequent adult behavioural choices.
- * Identify Developmental Pathways: Categorize the transition from early trauma adaptations (e.g., impulsivity, learned aggression) to adult criminal strategies.
- * Humanize the Offender Narrative: Provide a platform for lived experiences to inform criminological theory beyond diagnostic labels or legal statistics.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to inform systemic policy reform. By centering the voices of those who have navigated the "trauma-to-prison" pipeline, the study highlights the urgent need for trauma-sensitive screening and rehabilitation frameworks. Understanding these pathways is essential for developing correctional practices that prioritize emotional regulation training and psychosocial support over simple confinement. Ultimately, this research emphasizes that the most effective way to address adult crime is to address childhood trauma, advocating for a transition from a system of reactive punishment to one of proactive, informed restoration.

Review Of Literature

Relevant Theories and Past Studies

The relationship between early life adversity and subsequent offending is a cornerstone of both developmental and forensic psychology. To understand how childhood trauma translates into adult criminality, three primary theoretical frameworks offer essential explanatory power: Social Learning Theory, General Strain Theory, and Attachment Theory.

Social Learning Theory suggests that criminal behaviour is not inherent but learned through observation and imitation of significant others. In the context of childhood adversity, children raised in violent or antisocial households often internalize aggression as a primary tool for conflict resolution. When caregivers model criminal conduct or coercive control, the child adopts these "behavioural scripts," which later manifest as antisocial strategies in adulthood. General Strain Theory (GST), as proposed by Robert Agnew, posits that legal deviance is a response to negative stimuli and the inability to achieve goals through legitimate means. Childhood trauma acts as a chronic "strain" that generates intense negative emotions—such as anger, frustration, and fear. Without prosocial coping mechanisms, individuals may turn to crime as a way to alleviate this emotional pressure, seek revenge against a perceived hostile world, or escape through substance misuse. Attachment Theory provides a psychological lens into the "internal working models" children develop regarding relationships. Disrupted or disorganized attachment patterns, often resulting from neglect or inconsistent caregiving, impair a child's ability to develop empathy, trust, and emotional regulation. Studies by Howitt (2022) emphasize that these disrupted patterns contribute significantly to pathways toward criminality, as the individual

lacks the internal stability to navigate social boundaries. Empirical research has consistently validated these theories. Widom's (1989) seminal "cycle of violence" study demonstrated that individuals with histories of childhood abuse and neglect were significantly more likely to be arrested for both juvenile and adult offenses. This was further reinforced by Farrington (2005), whose longitudinal research highlighted maltreatment and family dysfunction as key predictors of long-term antisocial behaviour. Perhaps the most influential evidence comes from the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study by Felitti et al. (1998). This research uncovered a "graded relationship" between the number of childhood adversities and negative adult outcomes; as the ACE score increases, so does the risk for aggression, substance misuse, and incarceration.

Research Gap

Despite the overwhelming statistical evidence linking trauma to crime, a significant gap remains in both institutional practice and qualitative research. Quantitatively, the ACE Questionnaire and the PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5) have been used to identify high levels of trauma in forensic populations (Blevins et al., 2015). However, these findings are rarely reflected in official correctional records. Most prisoner files focus on legal infractions while failing to document the psychological trauma that may have precipitated the behaviour. Furthermore, there is a lack of qualitative, experiential research that centers on how incarcerated individuals themselves interpret their developmental histories. While we know that trauma and crime are correlated, we have less insight into the subjective meaning of these experiences. Existing literature often treats offenders as data points rather than individuals with complex narratives. This study addresses this gap by focusing on female inmates whose official files contain no psychological trauma history, aiming to uncover the hidden developmental pathways that standard institutional records ignore. By reconciling documented history with lived experience, this research seeks to humanize the "trauma-crime cycle" and provide a basis for more effective, trauma-informed policy.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative, phenomenological research design. Phenomenology is specifically chosen for its capacity to explore the "lived experience" and the subjective meanings individuals assign to their personal histories. Given that the relationship between childhood trauma and criminal behaviour is deeply personal and complex, this design allows for a rich, detailed exploration of narratives that quantitative metrics often fail to capture. By prioritizing the participant's perspective, the study aims to understand the essence of how developmental adversity is perceived to influence adult life choices and legal outcomes.

Sample

The study focuses on a purposive and convenience sample of 30 female inmates currently incarcerated at a central jail.

- * Target Population: Female offenders were selected as the primary demographic due to the high prevalence of interpersonal trauma histories within this group.
- * Selection Criteria: Participants are selected based on their willingness to engage in sensitive dialogue regarding their early life experiences.
- * Controlled Variables: Gender is controlled (Female) to provide a focused analysis of the female-specific "pathway" to crime.
- * Diversity: Effort is made to ensure diversity in terms of age, socioeconomic background, and the nature of the offenses committed to capture a wide spectrum of developmental pathways.

Tools / Instruments

The primary instrument for data collection is the semi-structured, in-depth interview. Unlike rigid surveys, the semi-structured format utilizes a set of open-ended questions that act as a "thematic guide." This allows the researcher to maintain focus on the research objectives (childhood adversity and criminal pathways) while granting participants the freedom to elaborate on nuances unique to their stories.

The study also utilizes conceptual frameworks derived from:

- * Trauma exposure narratives (exploring abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction).
- * Psychosocial background reviews (contrasting participant narratives against official institutional files that lack trauma documentation).

Procedure

The research process follows a standardized, trauma-sensitive protocol:

- * Recruitment and Consent: Potential participants are briefed on the study's purpose. Informed consent is obtained, emphasizing that participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw at any time without penalty.
- * Interviewing: Sessions are conducted in a private, secure area within the facility to ensure confidentiality. Interviews are recorded with permission and focus on childhood environment, emotional development, and perceived turning points leading to criminal involvement.
- * Anonymization: To protect identities, all names and identifying details are replaced with alphanumeric codes during the transcription phase.

* Emotional Safety Protocol: Recognizing the potential for re-traumatization, a referral protocol is established. If a participant experiences significant distress, the interview is paused or terminated, and the individual is connected with the facility's mental health or psychosocial support services.

Data Analysis

The collected data is processed through Thematic Analysis. The procedure involves several distinct phases:

- * Transcription: Interviews are transcribed verbatim to preserve the integrity of the participant's "voice."
- * Coding: The researcher reads through the transcript's multiple times, assigning "codes" to recurring phrases, emotions, or events.
- * Theme Development: Codes are grouped into broader categories that reflect collective experiences (e.g., "Antisocial Learning," "Survival Aggression," or "Structural Strain").
- * Narrative Synthesis: These themes are then synthesized to create a cohesive narrative that illustrates the developmental pathways from childhood adversity to criminal behaviour, ultimately bridging the gap between lived experience and criminological theory.

Results / Findings & Discussion

Key Results

The qualitative and quantitative analysis of the 30 case narratives identified three primary developmental pathways through which childhood adversity influenced later criminal and antisocial behaviour. While the pilot phase suggested a dominance of learning environments, the full sample highlights Direct Trauma and Neglect as the most prevalent factor.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings suggest that the pathway from childhood adversity to adult crime is multifactorial and specialized based on the type of offense:

- * Direct Trauma and Neglect (46.7%): This was the primary factor in cases involving extreme violence and impulsive aggression. Narratives were characterized by intergenerational addiction and emotional abandonment. These experiences function as precursors to Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and severe attachment pathology. Participants displayed significant impulse control deficits, aligning with neurobiological frameworks where chronic stress impairs the prefrontal cortex, leading to the reactive violence observed in the sample.
- * Antisocial Learning Environment (40.0%): This pathway influenced cases of systemic aggression and economic deception (corruption/fraud). These findings strongly support Social Learning Theory, as criminal behaviour was modeled by significant others (husbands, parents, or peers). Aggression in these cases was often relational and manipulative, mirroring diagnostic features of Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD).
- * Socioeconomic and Structural Strain (13.3%): Though the least frequent, this pathway provided the context for goal-driven economic crimes. Consistent with General Strain Theory, these participants engaged in deviance as a maladaptive response to the pressure of achieving culturally valued goals, such as wealth or community status, often under the influence of marital or environmental expectations.

Link with Previous Research

The results of this study provide a narrative validation of the core theories discussed in the literature review, reinforcing the transition from theoretical concepts to lived realities.

- * Validation of the Cycle of Violence: The high prevalence of the Direct Trauma and Neglect pathway (46.7%) directly supports Widom's (1989) "cycle of violence" hypothesis. The narratives provided by participants illustrate that early victimization is not a stagnant event but a dynamic precursor to adult aggression. This confirms Farrington's (2005) longitudinal findings that family dysfunction and maltreatment are the most reliable predictors of long-term antisocial behaviour.
- * Consistency with the ACE Framework: The findings align with the graded relationship established by Felitti et al. (1998) and Anda et al. (2006). The participants' histories of intergenerational addiction and emotional abandonment reflect high Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) scores, which the literature links to higher rates of incarceration. By utilizing self-report narratives, this study uncovered the "hidden" trauma that Blevins et al. (2015) noted is often missing from official correctional files.
- * Application of Social Learning and Strain: The emergence of the Antisocial Learning Environment (40.0%) and Socioeconomic Strain (13.3%) pathways brings Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Agnew's General Strain Theory into a forensic context. As suggested by Howitt (2022), participants did not merely "choose" deviance; they internalized aggression and deception as functional tools modeled by significant others or as a desperate response to structural pressures.
- * Attachment and Emotional Regulation: The frequent mention of "loss of control" or impulse regulation deficits among violent offenders provides empirical weight to Attachment Theory. The disrupted "internal working models" described in the literature manifested here as a profound lack of empathy and trust, which the DSM-5 (APA, 2013) identifies as core components of Conduct Disorder and subsequent antisocial personality disorder.

Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore that criminal behaviour among incarcerated women is rarely an isolated choice of "inherent deviance," but is instead the culmination of a long developmental trajectory rooted in early life adversity. By centering the lived experiences of these women, the research has effectively bridged the psychological gap between childhood injury and adult legal outcomes. The study concludes that the pathway to crime is primarily defined by three distinct but often overlapping dynamics. The most prevalent factor, Direct Trauma and Neglect, serves as the engine for reactive, violent offenses by damaging the individual's capacity for emotional regulation and impulse control. Meanwhile, the Antisocial Learning Environment acts as a blueprint, providing the social scripts and modeling necessary for systemic aggression and sophisticated economic crimes like corruption and fraud. Lastly, Socioeconomic Strain provides the situational pressure that pushes vulnerable individuals toward deviance as a perceived means of survival or status attainment. Crucially, this research highlights a significant systemic failure: the "invisibility" of trauma in official correctional records. While 46.7% of the participants reported severe developmental trauma, these histories were entirely absent from their institutional files. This discrepancy suggests that our current justice system is operating with a "blind spot," treating the symptoms of developmental disruption (the crime) while ignoring the root causes (the trauma). Ultimately, the study advocates for a paradigm shift in criminology and correctional policy. Moving forward, it is imperative that justice systems transition from purely punitive measures to trauma-informed frameworks. By integrating psychological screening, attachment-based rehabilitation, and social learning interventions, the system can begin to break the intergenerational cycle of violence. Understanding the "why" behind the "what" not merely a psychological exercise is; it is a prerequisite for effective rehabilitation, the reduction of recidivism, and the promotion of social justice.

Summary of Findings

- * Pathways Identified: Criminality is shaped by three main routes: Direct Trauma (46.7%), Antisocial Learning (40.0%), and Structural Strain (13.3%).

- * Behavioral Links: Violent offenses are tied to neurobiological impulse deficits from trauma, while corruption and relational aggression are modeled behaviours learned from the environment.

- * Documentation Gap: There is a severe lack of trauma documentation in official prisoner files, leading to a "one-size-fits-all" punitive approach that ignores developmental context.

Implications

- * Screening: Implement mandatory trauma-sensitive screening (such as the ACE Scale) upon intake.

- * Rehabilitation: Shift focus toward emotional regulation training and cognitive-behavioural therapy that addresses antisocial modeling.

- * Policy: Develop community-based support for post-release environments to provide prosocial alternatives to previous antisocial networks.

Limitations and Future Directions

While this study provides deep qualitative insight, the pilot sample size and focus on a single correctional facility limit broad generalizability.

- * Future Research: Should expand to mixed-methods designs to quantify the success rates of trauma-informed interventions.

- * Comparative Studies: Investigating whether male offenders follow similar or distinct developmental pathways would provide a more comprehensive view of gender-specific criminality.

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Original Article

Understanding the relationship between Empathy levels, Aggression and Cultural Conditioning among Indian adults.

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180241

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 249-252

February - 2026

Submitted: 19 Jan. 2026

Revised: 29 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 14 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

The given study aimed to examine the relationship between empathy, aggression and cultural conditioning among Indian adults. A sample of 114 individuals between 18-60 participated in this study. Empathy and aggression are two fundamental aspects of human social behavior. Empathy promotes prosocial behavior, while on the other hand, aggression reflects the difficulties in emotional regulation and can disrupt interpersonal relationships. Cultural conditioning, through shared values and beliefs, shapes how individuals express emotions and interact socially (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In the Indian context, Cultural values can influence the relationship between empathy and aggression. It may either reinforce or buffer aggressive tendencies. Hence it is very important to study the inter-relationship between these variables in order to understand their interconnected role in shaping human behavior. Empathy, aggression and cultural conditioning were measured using the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ), Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ) and Asian Values Scale-Revised (AVS-R). SPSS (version 30) was used for the data analysis of the questionnaires. Pearson correlation analysis showed that there was a significant negative correlation between empathy and aggression ($r = -0.551, p < 0.001$), and aggression and cultural values ($r = -0.409, p < 0.001$). No significant correlation was found between empathy and cultural values ($r = 0.088, p = 0.323$). Moderation analysis showed a significant interaction effect showing that cultural values moderated the relation between empathy and aggression. The conclusion to be drawn is that empathy, aggression and cultural conditioning are deeply intertwined. In promoting understanding of these psychological variables within the context of India and its cultural conditioning, the study adds to the research landscape for the use of culturally sensitive approaches to reduce aggression and promote prosocial behaviour.

Keywords: Empathy, Aggressive Behavior, Cultural Values, Indian Population, Moderation Effect, Emotional Regulation, Prosocial Behavior

Introduction

Empathy

The term empathy was first introduced in 1909 by psychologist Edward B. Titchener as a translation of the German term *einfihlung* (meaning "feeling into"). Empathy is the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another. It refers to the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, enabling individuals to respond with sensitivity and compassion. It is commonly divided into two components: cognitive empathy, which involves perspective-taking and understanding another's mental state, and affective empathy, which involves sharing or resonating with others' emotional experiences (Davis, 1983; Decety & Jackson, 2004).

Aggression

Aggression is any behavior, including words or actions, intended to harm or attack another person, animal, or object, and it is often unwelcome or unprovoked. This behavior can manifest physically, such as by pushing or hitting, or verbally, such as by threatening. It can also be indirect, aiming to harm someone's social relationships rather than them directly. Aggression is a critical concept in psychological research with important implications for interpersonal conflict, violence, and mental health. Aggression typically refers to behaviour towards another individual, with the intent to cause harm - physically, verbally, or psychologically (Anderson & Bushman, 2002).

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How to cite this article:

Chitale, R. H., & Kolekar, R. (2026). Understanding the relationship between Empathy levels, Aggression and Cultural Conditioning among Indian adults. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 249–252. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19346326>.



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19346326](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19346326)



Cultural Conditioning

Cultural conditioning is the process by which societal norms, values, and beliefs shape an individual's thoughts, behaviors, and perceptions, often from a young age. It influences our understanding of everything from ethics and success to relationships and communication styles. Cultural conditioning refers to the internalisation of values, norms, and belief systems transmitted through family, community, and societal structures. These cultural values guide acceptable behaviours, influence emotional regulation, and shape interpersonal interactions. In collectivist cultures such as India, values like family honour, respect for authority, emotional restraint, and conformity to social norms are especially emphasised (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Kim et al., 2001).

Literature Review

Empathy and Aggression

Many studies suggest that individual differences like age, sex, personality traits shape the link between Empathy and Aggression. A study with adolescents reported that females scored higher than males in empathy factors (fantasy, empathic concern, and personal distress), neuroticism, and in aggression (anger and hostility). Extraversion and neuroticism failed to explain additional variance in instrumental aggression (physical and verbal). Neuroticism, however, explained a meaningful larger amount of variance in the affective and cognitive components of aggression beyond empathy measures for both males and females. The findings suggest that, regardless of sex, empathy appears important for instrumental aggression (physical, verbal), whereas neuroticism is a robust predictor of affective and cognitive aggression (anger, hostility).

(Romero, Alicia & Blanch, Angel & Puig, Albert & Malas, Olga. (2024)

Cultural Conditioning and its role in behaviour

People in different cultures have strikingly different construals of the self, of others, and of the interdependence of the two. These construals can influence, and in many cases determine, the very nature of individual experience, including cognition, emotion, and motivation. One of the most influential frameworks in this regard is the distinction between independent and inter-dependant self construals. Independent self construals are prominently seen in western cultures and emphasize on individuality, autonomy and the expression of personal attributes. On the other hand, inter-dependant self construals, seen as a characteristic of many Asian cultures, highlights connectedness, harmony and the prioritisation of group goals over individual preferences. These contrasting cultural variations are seen to have a significant impact on an individual's cognition, emotion and motivation thereby shaping the way individuals respond and interpret social situations. (Markus & Kitayama, 1991)

Empathy, Aggression and Culture - Interconnected Dynamics

Research suggests that cultural and social factors have a great influence on the development of empathy in young people. A comparative ethnographic study in Poland found that sociocultural environments significantly shaped adolescents' cognitive empathy, which in turn influenced peer relationships and later adult interactions. Importantly, fostering cognitive empathy was found to reduce tendencies toward aggression and violence within peer groups. This indicates that cultural and social contexts not only facilitate or hinder empathy development but also indirectly condition aggressive behavior patterns. (Józef W-Czerwińska, 2024)

Statement of the Problem

To study the understanding of the relationship between Empathy levels, Aggression and Cultural Conditioning among Indian adults.

Objectives of the Study

To measure levels of empathy, aggression and cultural conditioning among Indian Adults

To study the relationship between empathy and aggression

To understand the role of cultural conditioning in moderating the relationship between aggression and empathy

Hypotheses

H1: Empathy levels will be negatively correlated with aggression in Indian adults.

H2: Cultural conditioning will moderate the relationship between empathy and aggression, such that the protective effect of empathy on aggression will vary by the degree of cultural conditioning.

Research Methodology

Participants and Sample

The sample included 114 people out of which 89 (78.1%) were females and 25 (21.9%) were males, belonging from the age group of 18 - 60 (Indian Adults).

Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative, correlational design. A cross-sectional survey approach was used to collect data at a single time point.

Tools used

Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ) – Developed by Spreng et al. (2009), the TEQ is a 16-item self-report measure of empathy. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale from never (0) to always (4). Reported reliability (Cronbach's α) = 0.85.

Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ) – Developed by Buss & Perry (1992), this 29-item scale measures four components of aggression: Physical Aggression, Verbal Aggression, Anger, and Hostility. Items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale. Reported reliability (Cronbach's α) = 0.89.

Asian Values Scale – Revised (AVS-R) – Developed by Kim & Hong (2004), the AVS-R includes 25 items assessing adherence to Asian cultural values such as collectivism, family obligation, and conformity to norms. Items are scored on a 4-point Likert scale. Reported reliability (Cronbach's α) ranges from 0.74 to 0.82.

Result and Discussion

Descriptive statistics Table 1

Descriptive statistics were calculated for the three main variables of interest. For Empathy (TEQ), the sample size was 114, with scores ranging from 2.00 to 3.88 (Range = 1.88). The mean score was 2.97 (SD = 0.42), indicating that participants reported moderate to high levels of empathy. The variance was 0.18, and the standard error of the mean was 0.04.

For Aggression (BPAQ), the sample size was also 114, with scores ranging from 1.66 to 3.83 (Range = 2.17). The mean score was 2.76 (SD = 0.46), suggesting that participants showed moderate levels of aggression. The variance was 0.21, and the standard error of the mean was 0.04.

For Cultural Values (AVSR), the sample size was 114, with scores ranging from 1.72 to 3.16 (Range = 1.44). The mean score was 2.40 (SD = 0.27), reflecting a moderate endorsement of Asian cultural values among participants. The variance was 0.07, and the standard error of the mean was 0.03.

In terms of distribution, all three variables demonstrated skewness and kurtosis values within the acceptable range of ± 2 , indicating that the data were approximately normally distributed. Specifically, Empathy showed near-zero skewness (-0.01 , SE = 0.23) and slight negative kurtosis (-0.85 , SE = 0.45), suggesting a relatively flat distribution. Aggression also displayed minimal skewness (-0.01 , SE = 0.23) and a modest negative kurtosis (-0.61 , SE = 0.45). Cultural values demonstrated slight negative skewness (-0.15 , SE = 0.23) and a small positive kurtosis (0.29, SE = 0.45), indicating a fairly symmetric distribution.

Overall, the descriptive statistics suggest that while participants varied in their responses, the central tendency for empathy and aggression was moderate, whereas cultural values tended to be endorsed at a slightly lower level compared to the other constructs.

Table 2

The correlation matrix displayed in Table X reveals a Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.380 between TEQ_mean (Toronto Empathy Questionnaire) and BPAQ_mean (Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire). This negative correlation suggests a moderate inverse relationship between these two variables. Importantly, the correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($p < .001$), indicating that this relationship is unlikely to have arisen by chance.

The negative correlation of -0.380 suggests that as TEQ_mean (empathy) increases, BPAQ_mean (aggression) tends to decrease, or vice versa. This moderate negative association implies that individuals who score higher on empathy measures may tend to exhibit lower levels of aggression, and conversely, individuals who score higher on aggression may exhibit lower levels of empathy.

Hypothesis 1 - Empathy levels will be negatively correlated with aggression in Indian adults. TEQ (showing empathy) and BPAQ (showing aggression) will show negative correlation among each other.

Hypothesis 2 - Cultural conditioning will moderate the relationship between empathy and aggression, such that the protective effect of empathy on aggression will vary by the degree of cultural conditioning. AVSR (showing Cultural conditioning) will moderate the relationship between TEQ (showing empathy) and BPAQ.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationships between empathy, aggression, and cultural values among Indian adults and tested whether cultural values moderated the association between empathy and aggression. Findings revealed a significant negative relationship between empathy and aggression, confirming empathy as a protective factor against aggressive tendencies. Cultural values were positively associated with aggression, indicating that adherence to certain traditional norms may, in some contexts, reinforce hierarchical or authority-based expressions of aggression.

Regression analyses showed that empathy and cultural values independently predicted aggression. However, cultural values did not moderate the relationship between empathy and aggression, suggesting that empathy's protective effect remains stable across varying levels of cultural conditioning.

Overall, the results highlight the distinct roles of empathy and cultural values in shaping aggression within the Indian socio-cultural context. While empathy consistently reduces aggression, cultural values appear to influence aggression directly, reflecting the complex nature of cultural conditioning. Future research should examine specific cultural dimensions to better understand these dynamics.

Limitations

This study examined the relationships between empathy, aggression, and cultural values among Indian adults and tested whether cultural values moderated the association between empathy and aggression. Findings revealed a significant negative relationship between empathy and aggression, confirming empathy as a protective factor against aggressive



tendencies. Cultural values were positively associated with aggression, indicating that adherence to certain traditional norms may, in some contexts, reinforce hierarchical or authority-based expressions of aggression.

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Overall, the results highlight the distinct roles of empathy and cultural values in shaping aggression within the Indian socio-cultural context. While empathy consistently reduces aggression, cultural values appear to influence aggression directly, reflecting the complex nature of cultural conditioning. Future research should examine specific cultural dimensions to better understand these dynamics.

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Original Article

Emotional abuse and Experiential Avoidance: The mediating role of Cognitive fusion in married women

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180242

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 253-257

February - 2026

Submitted: 19 Jan. 2026

Revised: 29 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 14 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Some wounds are silent, rooted in the invisible pain of emotional abuse. While emotional abuse significantly impacts psychological well-being, the internal cognitive mechanisms underlying this relationship remain underexplored. The present study examined the relationships among emotional abuse, cognitive fusion, and experiential avoidance among married women (N = 51) aged 20 to 50 years using purposive sampling. Correlation analysis revealed that emotional abuse was significantly positively correlated with cognitive fusion ($r = .433$, $p < .01$), and cognitive fusion was significantly positively correlated with experiential avoidance ($r = .404$, $p < .01$). To examine the underlying mechanism, mediation analysis was conducted. The direct effect of emotional abuse on experiential avoidance was non-significant ($\beta = -0.169$, $p = .313$, 95% CI [-0.499, 0.160]). However, the indirect effect through cognitive fusion was significant ($\beta = 0.240$, $p = .017$, 95% CI [0.042, 0.438]), as the confidence interval did not include zero, indicating full mediation. These findings suggest that emotional abuse influences experiential avoidance indirectly through cognitive fusion. The study highlights cognitive fusion as a central psychological mechanism linking emotional abuse and avoidance tendencies. These findings contribute to the literature on psychological inflexibility and provide important implications for preventive mental health interventions for married women.

Keywords: Emotional abuse, Cognitive fusion, Experiential avoidance, Married women

Introduction

Emotional abuse has increasingly been recognized as a serious and distinct form of psychological maltreatment with long-term mental health consequences. Unlike physical violence, it does not leave visible injuries, yet its impact deeply influences how individuals think, feel, and relate to themselves and others. Globally, nearly one in three women report experiencing emotional or psychological abuse within intimate relationships (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021). Despite its high prevalence, emotional abuse often remains under-recognized and minimized, particularly in marital contexts where silence and endurance are culturally reinforced. Earlier research frequently positioned emotional abuse as less harmful than physical or sexual violence. However, large-scale meta-analytic evidence has challenged this assumption. Norman et al. (2012), in a systematic review of 124 studies, reported that emotional abuse was significantly associated with depression, PTSD, substance use, and suicidal behavior, with effects comparable to other forms of abuse. Similarly, Spinazzola et al. (2014) demonstrated that psychological maltreatment independently predicted trauma-related symptomatology in clinical youth samples. These findings highlight that emotional abuse constitutes a major psychological risk factor rather than a secondary form of violence. Beyond documenting outcomes, contemporary research has increasingly focused on the internal processes through which individuals respond to adverse experiences. One such process is experiential avoidance, defined as efforts to suppress, control, or escape unwanted internal experiences such as distressing thoughts and emotions (Hayes et al., 1996). Although avoidance may reduce discomfort temporarily, it often contributes to long-term psychological distress and maladaptive functioning.

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How to cite this article:

Girme, T., & Salve, S. (2026). Emotional abuse and Experiential Avoidance: The mediating role of Cognitive fusion in married women. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 253–257. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19346434>



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19346434](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19346434)



Closely related is the concept of cognitive fusion, described within Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) as the tendency to become entangled with thoughts and treat them as literal truths rather than transient mental events (Hayes et al., 2006). In contexts of emotional abuse, repeated invalidation may increase fusion with self-blaming or helpless beliefs, thereby strengthening avoidance patterns. Empirical evidence supports the interconnected role of cognitive fusion and experiential avoidance in psychological distress. Reuman et al. (2018) found that both constructs significantly predicted obsessive-compulsive symptom dimensions in adults. Similarly, Fernández-Rodríguez et al. (2022) demonstrated that cognitive fusion and experiential avoidance interact to explain anxiety and depressive symptoms. These findings suggest that psychological inflexibility processes may function as mechanisms linking adverse experiences to emotional outcomes.

Despite growing research on cognitive fusion and experiential avoidance, limited attention has been given to examining these processes specifically in the context of emotional abuse among married women. Most prior studies have focused on symptom outcomes without

Exploring the internal cognitive pathways through which emotional abuse may influence avoidance behavior. Therefore, there remains a need to investigate how emotionally abusive experiences operate through psychological mechanisms. The present study addresses this gap by examining the relationships among emotional abuse, cognitive fusion, and experiential avoidance, and by investigating whether cognitive fusion mediates the relationship between emotional abuse and experiential avoidance in married women. By integrating emotional abuse research with psychological flexibility theory, the study aims to contribute to a clearer understanding of the internal mechanisms underlying distress in the context of emotional abuse.

Methods Participants

The study was conducted on 51 married women, aged between 20 and 50 years. Participants were selected using purposive sampling and met the inclusion criteria of being legally married and currently living with their spouse.

Hypotheses

H1: Emotional abuse will be positively correlated with Cognitive fusion.

H2: Emotional abuse will be positively correlated with experiential avoidance. H3: Cognitive fusion will be positively correlated with experiential avoidance.

H4: Cognitive fusion mediates relationship between Emotional abuse and experiential avoidance.

Tools

1. Emotional Abuse Questionnaire (EAQ; Jacobson & Gottman, 1998) The Emotional Abuse Questionnaire was employed to assess experiences of emotional abuse within marital relationships. Originally developed to measure partner abuse, the scale consists of 28 items rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 ("Never") to 5 ("Very often"). Scoring is based on response frequency, with "Never" = 1 point, "Rarely" = 2 points, "Occasionally" = 4 points, and "Very often" = 5 points. The total score is obtained by summing across all items. A score between 73 and 94 suggests that the respondent is experiencing emotional abuse, while a score above 95 indicates that the individual is being more severely abused than the average battered woman. The EAQ has been widely used in the study of intimate partner relationships and demonstrates good psychometric properties in identifying the severity of emotional abuse.

2. Cognitive Fusion Questionnaire (CFQ; Gillanders et al., 2014) 21 The Cognitive Fusion Questionnaire is a measure of the extent to which individuals become entangled with their thoughts and perceive them as literal truths. The CFQ contains 7 items, each rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Never true") to 7 ("Always true"). Total scores can range from 7 to 49, with higher scores indicating greater cognitive fusion. Elevated scores reflect a stronger tendency to be dominated by one's thoughts, signifying lower psychological flexibility. The CFQ is grounded in the framework of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and has shown high internal consistency and construct validity across diverse samples

3. Brief Experiential Avoidance Questionnaire (BEAQ; Gamez et al., 2014) The BEAQ was used to assess the extent of experiential avoidance, defined as the tendency to evade or alter unwanted private experiences such as thoughts, emotions, or memories. The measure consists of 15 items rated on a Likert scale, with possible total scores ranging from 15 to 90. Higher scores indicate greater levels of experiential avoidance and reduced psychological flexibility. The BEAQ is a brief but psychometrically strong tool, designed to capture avoidance tendencies efficiently while maintaining good internal consistency and validity.

Personal data sheet

The personal data sheet was prepared seeking biographic information such as age, gender, education level, duration of marriage, number of children, employment status, family structure (nuclear/joint), history of counselling or mental health.

Procedure

Data were collected through Google Form presented in both English and Marathi, ensuring linguistic accessibility for a diverse group of participants. The form included an informed consent statement, personal data sheet and standardized psychological scales. Informed consents were taken from the participants. Before beginning the form, participants were clearly informed about the purpose of the study, their right to withdraw at any time, assurance of confidentiality and

anonymity, the voluntary nature of their participation. Standardized instructions were provided prior to administration. Participants completed the questionnaire in a single sitting. The average time taken to complete the assessment was approximately 15 to 20 minutes. After data collection, responses were scored according to the respective scoring manuals. The data were coded and entered statistical software for further analysis.

Results and discussion

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Std. Error (Skewness)	Kurtosis	Std. Error (Kurtosis)
Emotional Abuse	39.0	28.0	67.0	38.39	1.553	11.09	123.1	1.09	0.33	0.20	0.66
Cognitive Fusion	32.0	7.0	39.0	19.16	1.155	8.25	68.09	0.47	0.33	-0.70	0.66
Experiential Avoidance	51.0	20.0	71.0	47.71	2.105	13.24	175.4	-0.34	0.33	-0.48	0.66

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for emotional abuse, cognitive fusion, and experiential avoidance among married women (N = 51).

The mean score for emotional abuse was 38.39 (SD = 11.09), indicating a moderate level of perceived emotional abuse in the sample. The mean score for cognitive fusion was 19.16 (SD = 8.25), showing that participants generally experienced a low to moderate tendency toward cognitive fusion. The mean score for experiential avoidance was 47.71 (SD = 13.24), representing a moderate level of avoidance. Overall, the skewness and kurtosis values for all variables fall within acceptable limits (± 2), suggesting that the data are approximately normally distributed and suitable for further parametric analysis such as correlation.

Table 2: Pearson's Correlation Matrix among Study Variables (N = 51)

Variables	1. Emotional Abuse	2. Cognitive Fusion	3. Experiential Avoidance
1. Emotional Abuse	1	.433**	.059
2. Cognitive Fusion	.433**	1	.404**
3. Experiential Avoidance	.059	.404**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 displays the correlations between emotional abuse, cognitive fusion, and experiential avoidance among married women.

Emotional abuse showed significant positive correlation with cognitive fusion ($r = .433$, $p < .01$), suggesting that women experiencing higher emotional abuse tend to become more entangled with their thoughts, perceiving them as absolute truths rather than transient mental events. This supports Relational Frame Theory and aligns with previous literature indicating that adverse relational experiences increase cognitive rigidity and reduce psychological flexibility. Thus, hypothesis (H1) Emotional abuse will be positively correlated with Cognitive fusion, was accepted. However, emotional abuse did not show a significant relationship with experiential avoidance ($r = .059$). Contrary to earlier research suggesting that abuse leads to avoidance-based coping, the present findings suggest a context-specific pattern. In the sociocultural setting of married women in India, direct avoidance of relational distress may not always be feasible, possibly leading individuals to internalize distress cognitively rather than behaviourally. Hence, Hypothesis (H2) Emotional abuse will be positively correlated with Experiential avoidance, was rejected. Further, cognitive fusion showed significant positive correlation with experiential avoidance ($r = .404$, $p < .01$), indicating that individuals who are more fused with distressing thoughts are more likely to engage in avoidance strategies. This finding is consistent with the Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) framework, which proposes that cognitive fusion often triggers experiential avoidance as a means of reducing psychological discomfort. Therefore, Hypothesis (H3) Cognitive fusion will be positively correlated with Experiential avoidance, was accepted. Overall, the findings highlight cognitive fusion as a central psychological process linking emotional abuse and experiential avoidance.

Table 3: Mediation Analysis

Direct effects

	Estimate	Std. error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval Lower	95% Confidence Interval Upper
Emotional abuse → Experiential Avoidance	-0.169	0.168	-1.009	.313	-0.499	0.160

Note. Estimator is ML. Not all bootstrap samples were successful: CI based on 999 samples.

Indirect effects

	Estimate	Std. error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval Lower	95% Confidence Interval Upper
Emotional abuse → Cognitive fusion → Experiential Avoidance	0.240	0.101	2.380	.017	0.042	0.438

Note. Estimator is ML. Not all bootstrap samples were successful: CI based on 999 samples.

The direct effect of emotional abuse on experiential avoidance was non-significant ($\beta = -0.169$, $p = .313$, 95% CI [-0.499, 0.160]), indicating that emotional abuse does not directly predict experiential avoidance.

However, the indirect effect through cognitive fusion was significant ($\beta = 0.240$, $p = .017$, 95% CI [0.042, 0.438]), as the confidence interval did not include zero. This indicates that emotional abuse significantly predicts cognitive fusion, which in turn significantly predicts experiential avoidance. Since the indirect effect was significant and the direct effect was not, full mediation is supported. Therefore, the hypothesis (H4) stating that cognitive fusion mediates the relationship between emotional abuse and experiential avoidance is fully supported. This hypothesis was grounded in Relational Frame Theory, which suggests that psychological distress arises from rigid and maladaptive relational networks formed through language, leading individuals to become fused with negative thoughts and internal experiences. Individuals experiencing emotional abuse may become more cognitively fused with their distressing thoughts, and this increased cognitive fusion may contribute to higher levels of experiential avoidance.

Conclusion

The present study examined the relationships among emotional abuse, cognitive fusion, and experiential avoidance among married women. The findings highlight the central role of cognitive fusion in understanding how maladaptive internal processes are linked with relational distress. Emotional abuse was significantly associated with cognitive fusion, and cognitive fusion was positively related to experiential avoidance, supporting the framework of psychological inflexibility. However, emotional abuse did not show a significant direct relationship with experiential avoidance, suggesting that cognitive mechanisms may play a stronger role than direct behavioural avoidance in this context. Further, mediation analysis revealed that cognitive fusion significantly mediated the relationship between emotional abuse and experiential avoidance. This indicates that avoidance tendencies may contribute to emotional vulnerability through rigid and fused cognitive patterns. Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of targeting cognitive fusion in preventive and therapeutic interventions for married women experiencing emotional distress and adds to the literature on psychological flexibility within the Indian sociocultural context.

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Journal of Research and Development

A Multidisciplinary International Level Referred and Double-Blind Peer Reviewed, Open Access
ISSN : 2230-9578 | Website: <https://jrdrv.org> Volume-18, Issue-2(XXII) | February - 2026

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Original Article

Impact of Derealisation and Emotional Isolation on Memory blank under stress among adults

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180243

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 258-262

February - 2026

The present study examined the association between derealization, emotional isolation and memory blank outs in non-clinical population, with perceived high level of stress which was considered as the inclusion criteria for the study. A sample of 102 participants were assessed using Cambridge Depersonalisation Scale (CDS), UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version – 3), Cognitive Failure Questionnaire (CFQ) and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS). The statistical analyses revealed significant positive correlations between derealisation, emotional isolation, and memory blank outs. Regression analysis further indicated both derealisation and emotional isolation significantly predicted memory blank outs. These findings support all the four hypotheses, suggesting that dissociative experiences and emotional disconnection independently and collectively contribute to memory lapses under stress.

Keywords: Derealization, Emotional isolation, Memory blank outs, stress.

Introduction

Stress, derealization, emotional isolation, and memory blank outs are increasingly recognized as interrelated phenomena that affect cognitive, emotional, and social functioning in adults. **Stress** is generally understood as the physiological and psychological response to internal or external demands that challenge an individual's ability to cope effectively (American Psychological Association, n.d.; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Chronic or acute stress can impair cognitive functioning, including attention, working memory, and decision-making (McEwen, 1998; Lupien et al., 2009).

Derealization is a dissociative experience in which individuals feel a sense of detachment from their surroundings, perceiving the external world as unreal or distorted (Simeon & Abugel, 2006). It often emerges under conditions of heightened stress and anxiety and has been linked to disruptions in attention, memory, and perception (Hunter et al., 2004; Sierra & Berrios, 2000).

Emotional isolation, or the subjective feeling of loneliness and lack of meaningful social connections, has been associated with both psychological and cognitive consequences. Individuals experiencing emotional isolation may demonstrate increased stress reactivity and cognitive impairments, particularly in memory and executive functioning (Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2009; Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010). Emotional isolation can also exacerbate feelings of derealization and intensify subjective memory difficulties.

Memory blank outs, defined as lapses or failures in everyday memory, represent an observable cognitive outcome influenced by both internal and external factors. High levels of stress, dissociation, and social isolation have been found to contribute to these lapses, suggesting an interconnected network of psychological and cognitive vulnerabilities (Eysenck et al., 2007; Squire, 1992). Previous research indicates that these variables do not operate independently. Stress has been shown to increase the likelihood of dissociative experiences, including derealization, while also impairing memory consolidation (McEwen, 1998; Putnam, 1997). Similarly, emotional isolation may heighten perceived stress and contribute to cognitive failures, creating a cyclical interaction among these factors (Cacioppo et al., 2003; Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010).

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How to cite this article:

Singh, S. V., & Kolekar, R. (2026). Impact of Derealisation and Emotional Isolation on Memory blank under stress among adults. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 258–262. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19346526>



Quick Response Code:

Website:
<https://jrdrvb.org/>
DOI:
[10.5281/zenodo.19346526](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19346526)



Correlational studies have reported moderate to strong relationships between derealization and memory difficulties, as well as between loneliness and cognitive lapses, highlighting the need to examine these phenomena concurrently.

Significance of the study

As the literature review suggests that there have been previous researches that clearly explain that there is a significant relationship between two or more variables that have been chosen for this study, for example, a positive correlation between derealisation and memory blank out, etc. This study aims to explore the interrelationships among derealization, emotional isolation, and memory blank outs, particularly in the context of perceived stress and to study the predictability of the occurrence of one variable in the presence of the other variable.

Derealization, a dissociative experience characterized by feelings of unreality or detachment from one's surroundings, is often reported under conditions of psychological strain.

Emotional isolation, a core aspect of loneliness, reflects a perceived lack of emotional closeness and support from others, which may exacerbate cognitive and affective

Dysregulation. Memory blank outs, including subjective memory complaints or temporary recall failures, are also frequently associated with stress and dissociative symptoms. To ensure participants are experiencing relevant psychological states, perceived stress will be optionally measured as an inclusion criteria for the selection of the sample. By examining these constructs together, the study seeks to understand how internal disconnection (dissociation and isolation) may relate to cognitive disruptions (memory blank outs), potentially moderated by stress levels.

Statement of the Problem

To study how derealization and emotional isolation contribute to memory blank outs in high- stress situations among non-clinical adults.

Objectives of the study

1. To measure the extent of derealization and emotional isolation in participants.
2. To assess the frequency of memory lapses during derealisation.
3. To assess the frequency of memory lapses during emotional isolation
4. To evaluate whether derealization and emotional isolation significantly predict stress- related memory disruptions.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Higher levels of derealisation will be associated with increased frequency of memory blank outs in adults.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Higher levels of emotional isolation will be associated with increased frequency of memory blank outs in adults.

Hypothesis (H3): Higher derealisation will predict higher level of memory blank out experiences

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Higher level of emotional isolation will predict higher level of memory blank out experiences

Methodology Research design

The present study followed a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational design to examine the interrelationships among derealization, emotional isolation, and memory blank outs in adults, with perceived stress considered as an inclusion criterion. Standardized self-report instruments were administered, namely the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), Cambridge Depersonalization Scale (CDS), UCLA Loneliness Scale Version 3, and the Cognitive Failures Questionnaire (CFQ).

Sample

The present study adopted a non-probability sampling framework, specifically employing the convenience sampling technique. It was conducted on individuals of the age of 18 years to 45 years old. The population consisted of participants who were constantly prone to experience stress at a moderate or high level. From this population, a sample of N = 108 people were selected.

Tools

The current study employed four psychometrically validated self - report instruments.

- **Stress** was assessed using the 10-item Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), which measures perceived stress levels and demonstrates good reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.78-0.91$) and criterion-related validity.
- Depersonalization was measured using the Cambridge Depersonalization Scale (CDS), a 29-item scale assessing the frequency and duration of depersonalization and derealization experiences, with excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.89-0.94$) and strong construct validity.
- Emotional isolation was evaluated using the UCLA Loneliness Scale Version 3, a 20- item measure of perceived loneliness and social disconnection, showing high reliability ($\alpha = 0.89-0.94$) and robust convergent validity.
- Memory blank outs will be operationalized using the Cognitive Failures Questionnaire (CFQ), a 25-item scale measuring self-reported lapses in attention, memory, and action in daily life. The CFQ has shown solid internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.85-0.91$) and satisfactory test-retest reliability ($r = 0.71$), making it appropriate for assessing subjective memory-

related disruptions under non-clinical conditions.

Procedure

A convenience sample of 108 participants was recruited from urban educational and occupational settings, excluding those with severe psychiatric disorders or ongoing treatment. Four validated self-report instruments were administered: Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), Cambridge Depersonalization Scale (CDS), UCLA Loneliness Scale Version 3, and Cognitive Failures Questionnaire (CFQ), all demonstrating strong reliability and validity. Data were collected online and offline with standardized instructions and informed consent procedures ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation. Analyses using IBM SPSS (Version 23) included descriptive statistics, normality checks, Pearson correlations, and linear regression to test hypotheses predicting associations and effects of derealization and emotional isolation on memory blank outs, thereby providing a clear framework for understanding how dissociative and emotional factors may contribute to memory disruptions in adults.

difference. For **CFQ TOTAL** (memory and attention issues), the mean was **85.26** with a standard deviation of **42.57**, again indicating that some participants experienced frequent cognitive difficulties, while others experienced them less. Overall, the high means combined with large standard deviations suggest that many participants reported moderate to high levels of psychological distress, but the severity varied widely from person to person.

Table 2 : Correlation between Derealisation (CDS) and Memory blank out (CFQ) Correlations

		CDS TOTAL	CFQ TOTAL
CD S	Pearson Correlation	1	.472**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	102	102
CF Q	Pearson Correlation	.472**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	102	102

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 represents that there is a moderate positive correlation between derealisation (CDS) and memory blank out (CFQ), $r(101) = .472, p < .001$. This indicates that higher levels of derealisation are significantly associated with increased frequency of memory blank outs among adults.

Correlations: Correlation between Emotional isolation (UCLA) and Memory blank

		CFQ TOTAL	UCLA TOTAL
CFQ	Pearson Correlation	1	.541**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	102	102
UCLA	Pearson Correlation	.541**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	102	102

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3

Table 3 represents that Pearson's correlation showed a **moderate positive relationship** between memory blank outs (CFQ) and emotional isolation (UCLA), $r(101) = .541, p < .001$. This suggests that greater experiences of emotional isolation are significantly associated with more frequent memory blank outs among adults.

Table 4: Regression between derealisation (CDS) and memory blank out (CFQ)

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F Change
1	.472 ^a	.223	.215	14.6798	.223	28.412	1	99	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), CDS TOTAL

b. Dependent Variable: CFQ TOTAL

Interpretation - The descriptive statistics indicate moderate cognitive failures (CFQ M = 43.05, SD = 16.57) and variability in depersonalization (CDS M = 53.76, SD = 40.88) among 101 participants. Linear regression showed that depersonalization significantly predicts cognitive failures ($R = .472, R^2 = .223, F(1,99) = 28.41, p < .001$), suggesting

that higher depersonalization is associated with greater memory and attention lapses. While the model Explains 22.3% of the variance, other factors likely contribute to cognitive difficulties beyond depersonalization.

Discussion

The first two hypotheses examined whether higher levels of derealisation and emotional isolation are associated with increased frequency of memory blank outs in adults. Correlation analyses revealed significant moderate positive relationships between derealisation (CDS) and memory blank outs (CFQ), $r(101) = .472$, $p < .001$, and between emotional isolation (UCLA) and memory blank outs (CFQ), $r(101) = .541$, $p < .001$. Regression analyses further confirmed that derealisation predicted 22.3% of the variance in memory failures, while emotional isolation predicted 29.3%, indicating that both dissociative experiences and social-emotional disconnection independently contribute to everyday cognitive lapses. These results align with prior research showing that derealisation disrupts attentional processing and memory encoding (Sierra & Berrios, 2000; Guralnik et al., 2000; Hunter et al., 2004), and that loneliness increases cognitive load and stress reactivity, impairing working memory and executive functioning (Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2009; Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010). Overall, these findings highlight the cognitive costs of psychological detachment and emotional isolation in non-clinical adults under stress. Hypothesis 3 proposed that higher derealisation would predict higher levels of memory blank outs. Regression analysis supported this hypothesis, showing that derealisation significantly predicts memory failures, accounting for 22.3% of the variance. This suggests that the internal detachment characteristic of derealisation may compromise encoding, retention, and retrieval processes, increasing attentional lapses and cognitive disruptions. The findings corroborate previous literature indicating that dissociative experiences can negatively impact cognitive efficiency even in non-clinical populations (Simeon et al., 2000; Medford et al., 2006). Hypothesis 4 proposed that higher emotional isolation would predict higher levels of memory blank outs. Emotional isolation, measured by the UCLA Loneliness Scale, significantly predicted memory blank outs, accounting for approximately 29.3% of the variance. This finding is consistent with prior studies demonstrating that social disconnection and loneliness negatively impact cognitive performance, including attention and working memory (Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2009; Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010). Emotional isolation likely increases cognitive load, reducing the mental resources available for processing and recalling information, thereby contributing to subjective experiences of forgetfulness.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to study how derealization and emotional isolation contribute to memory blank outs in high-stress situations among non-clinical adults. Analyses revealed significant positive correlations between derealisation and memory blank outs ($r = .472$, $p < .001$) and between emotional isolation and memory blank outs ($r = .541$, $p < .001$). Regression results showed that both derealisation ($R^2 = .223$) and emotional isolation ($R^2 = .293$) significantly predicted memory blank outs. All four hypotheses were supported, highlighting that higher levels of derealisation and emotional isolation are associated with more frequent cognitive lapses and can independently predict memory failures. These findings confirm that both dissociative and social-emotional factors play a significant role in everyday memory functioning.

Limitations

Limitations of the research are:

1. Results obtained using self-reported questionnaire might be subject to social desirability, recall bias or response inaccuracies.
2. Data were collected at one time point, so the influence of situational or temporal fluctuations in stress, emotional isolation, or cognitive lapses could not be captured.
3. Extraneous variables affecting memory, such as sleep quality, physical health, or medication, were not controlled, which may have influenced results.
4. The study used a convenience sample of adults aged 18–45, primarily from urban educational and occupational settings, which limits generalizability to broader populations.

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Original Article

Sleep Deprivation, Mood, and the Effect of Mindfulness-Based Guided

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180244

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 263-268

February - 2026

Submitted: 19 Jan. 2026

Revised: 29 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 14 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract:

Sleep deprivation has been widely recognised as a factor impairing emotional regulation, cognitive performance, and overall well-being, particularly among athletes who frequently experience disrupted sleep due to training demands, travel, and competition-related stress (Fullagar et al., 2015; Lo et al., 2016). The present study aimed to examine the effect of Mindfulness-based guided breathing on mood among sleep-deprived athletes. Mindfulness-based guided breathing was operationalised as a 5-minute guided video that directed attention toward breathing, bodily sensations, and present-moment awareness. Mood was assessed using the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) in a pre-test and post-test design. For the sample (N = 33), Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were conducted to examine differences in Negative Affect (NA) and Positive Affect (PA) before and after the mindfulness intervention. Results for Pre-NA versus Post-NA indicated a positive change (W = 262.00, z = 1.75, p = .080). The reduction in Negative Affect was not statistically significant (p = .080), though a moderate effect size was observed (r = .39). This reflects a trend toward reduced negative affect following the intervention, although the change did not reach the conventional level of statistical significance. Overall, while participants demonstrated a trend toward improvement in negative affect, changes in positive affect were minimal and nonsignificant. These findings suggest that brief Mindfulness-based guided breathing may have a modest impact on emotional regulation among sleep-deprived athletes, highlighting its potential as a simple and low-cost strategy for maintaining psychological balance in high-performance settings.

Introduction

Sleep is a fundamental biological process essential for physical restoration, cognitive functioning, and emotional stability. Adequate sleep supports neural repair, immune functioning, metabolic regulation, and psychological balance. In contrast, sleep deprivation—defined as insufficient duration or poor quality of sleep—produces widespread physiological and psychological disturbances. Among athletes, sleep is particularly critical because it directly influences recovery, emotional regulation, focus, and performance consistency during training and competition (Fullagar et al., 2015). However, athletes frequently experience disrupted sleep due to demanding training schedules, travel across time zones, late-night competitions, and pre-competition anxiety. These factors often lead to partial or chronic sleep deprivation. Research indicates that insufficient sleep increases irritability, stress sensitivity, and negative mood states while reducing positive affect and emotional resilience (Lo et al., 2016; Palmer & Alfano, 2017). Such mood disturbances can interfere with motivation, decision-making, concentration, and overall well-being, ultimately compromising athletic performance. Mood plays a central role in athletic functioning. Unlike short-lived emotions, mood represents a sustained affective state that influences cognition, behaviour, and performance (Watson & Clark, 1994). Negative mood states impair concentration and increase vulnerability to stress, whereas positive mood enhances flexibility in thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities (Isen, 2008). Given the strong association between sleep and mood, interventions that can buffer the emotional effects of sleep deprivation are of practical and theoretical importance. One promising approach is mindfulness-based guided breathing. Mindfulness involves intentionally attending to present-moment experiences with openness and non-judgment (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).

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How to cite this article:

10.5281/zenodo.19346629

Jadhav, A., & Salve, S. (2026). Sleep Deprivation, Mood, and the Effect of Mindfulness-Based Guided. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 263–268. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19346629>



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DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19346629](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19346629)



Within sports psychology, mindfulness practices have gained increasing attention for enhancing emotional regulation, reducing anxiety, and promoting psychological resilience (Bühlmayer et al., 2017). Guided breathing, a foundational mindfulness technique, directs attention toward breath sensations and bodily awareness, helping individuals reduce physiological arousal and stabilize mood. Emerging evidence suggests that mindfulness practices not only enhance emotional well-being but may also improve sleep quality and stress recovery (Gross et al., 2021). Despite growing literature on sleep deprivation and mindfulness separately, relatively few studies have examined whether brief mindfulness-based guided breathing can mitigate the mood disturbances associated with sleep loss among athletes. The present study addresses this gap by investigating whether guided breathing meditation can reduce the adverse emotional effects of sleep deprivation in athletes. By integrating research on sleep, mood, and mindfulness, this study aims to contribute to theoretical understanding and offer practical strategies for maintaining emotional balance under sleep-restricted conditions.

Significance of the Study

This study integrates two important psychological domains: sleep deprivation and mindfulness practice within sports settings. Athletes often function under suboptimal sleep conditions due to travel, training intensity, and competitive demands (Lo et al., 2016). At the same time, mindfulness-based interventions have demonstrated effectiveness in enhancing emotional stability and stress regulation (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Sharma & Singh, 2020). Theoretically, the study contributes to growing evidence suggesting that mindfulness may act as a protective factor against emotional dysregulation caused by sleep deprivation (Gross et al., 2021). It advances understanding of how attentional and regulatory processes cultivated through mindfulness can buffer negative mood states associated with sleep loss. From a practical perspective, guided breathing is cost-effective, non-invasive, and easily implementable in sports contexts. If found effective, it could be incorporated into pre-performance routines, recovery protocols, or travel schedules. Such interventions require minimal time and no specialized equipment, making them accessible tools for coaches and sports psychologists. Beyond sports, the findings hold broader relevance. Sleep disruption is increasingly common among students and working professionals. Understanding whether brief mindfulness practices can offset mood disturbances linked to poor sleep may offer valuable implications for these populations as well. Additionally, research integrating sleep and mindfulness within athletic populations remains limited in the Indian context. Therefore, this study provides culturally relevant insights for coaches, educators, and mental health professionals. Overall, the study holds academic and applied significance by examining a simple, evidence-based strategy for enhancing emotional resilience in sleep-restricted conditions.

Rationale

Sleep plays a vital role in physical recovery and emotional stability, particularly among athletes, where inadequate sleep can increase irritability and negative mood. Although research consistently shows that sleep deprivation impairs mood (Lo et al., 2016) and mindfulness practices enhance emotional regulation (Bühlmayer et al., 2017; Sharma & Singh, 2020), these variables have largely been examined independently. Limited studies have explored whether mindfulness-based guided breathing can buffer the emotional consequences of sleep deprivation in athletic populations. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates whether guided breathing can mitigate mood disturbances under sleep-restricted conditions. Findings may offer theoretical insight into emotion regulation processes and provide practical, evidence-based strategies for athletes, while also holding relevance for students and professionals experiencing sleep-related stress.

Literature Review

Sleep is a fundamental biological process essential for maintaining physiological, cognitive, and emotional balance. Adequate sleep supports cardiovascular functioning, immune regulation, and neurocognitive efficiency, whereas sleep deprivation negatively affects multiple bodily systems. Short sleep duration (≤ 6 hours) has been associated with increased risks of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and metabolic dysregulation (Itani et al., 2017), while experimental research indicates that sleep loss impairs endothelial functioning and vascular health (Sauvet et al., 2010). Restricted sleep also elevates inflammatory markers such as IL-1 β and IL-6 and reduces natural killer cell activity, reflecting chronic low-grade inflammation and slower recovery (Irwin et al., 2016; Opp, 2005). Psychologically, sleep deprivation disrupts emotional regulation by increasing irritability, anxiety, depressive symptoms, and negative affect while reducing positive mood (Palmer & Alfano, 2017; American Psychological Association, 2023). Cognitive impairments are equally significant, with reduced attention, working memory, executive control, and decision-making linked to decreased prefrontal cortical efficiency (Killgore, 2010). Among adolescents and young adults, insufficient sleep further impairs psychomotor vigilance and visuospatial memory (Beebe et al., 2017; Lo et al., 2016). Collectively, these findings demonstrate that sleep deprivation produces multi-level dysfunction—physiological, cognitive, and emotional—making it particularly detrimental in performance-oriented contexts such as sports. In contrast, mindfulness-based guided breathing has emerged as a promising intervention for enhancing emotional and cognitive functioning. Rooted in contemplative traditions and integrated into contemporary approaches such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), mindfulness involves sustained, non-judgmental awareness of present-moment experiences (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).

Empirical evidence supports its psychological benefits. Meta-analytic findings indicate that mindfulness-based interventions significantly reduce depressive symptoms (Fu et al., 2024), while systematic reviews demonstrate improvements in sleep quality across multiple indices (González-Martín et al., 2023). Additionally, mindfulness practices enhance attention, working memory, and cognitive flexibility (Jamil, 2023), capacities essential for athletic performance. Within sports settings, mindfulness interventions have been associated with reduced competitive anxiety, improved emotional regulation, and greater mental well-being (Bühlmayer et al., 2017). Guided breathing, in particular, facilitates parasympathetic activation, reduces physiological arousal, and promotes calmness. By enhancing emotional awareness and decreasing rumination, mindfulness contributes to mood stabilization (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Keng et al., 2011), suggesting its potential role as a buffer against sleep-related emotional disturbances.

Mood itself is a sustained affective state influencing cognition, behavior, and performance (Watson & Clark, 1994). Negative mood states diminish concentration, motivation, and stress tolerance, whereas positive mood enhances cognitive flexibility and resilience (Isen, 2008; Kuppens et al., 2010). Sleep deprivation has consistently been linked to heightened irritability, stress reactivity, and decreased positive affect (Palmer & Alfano, 2017), thereby undermining both well-being and performance outcomes. Conversely, mindfulness practices regulate mood through acceptance-based awareness and reduced emotional reactivity (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Keng et al., 2011). Thus, mood functions both as an outcome influenced by sleep and mindfulness and as a mediator affecting cognitive and performance processes. Overall, existing literature establishes the detrimental effects of sleep deprivation and the regulatory benefits of mindfulness-based guided breathing; however, limited research has examined their combined influence among athletes. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates whether guided breathing can mitigate mood disturbances under sleep-restricted conditions, thereby contributing to theoretical understanding and practical applications in sports psychology and other high-stress contexts.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between sleep deprivation and positive affect among athletes.
2. To examine the relationship between sleep deprivation and negative affect among athletes.
3. To investigate whether Mindfulness-based guided breathing reduces negative affect among athletes.
4. To investigate whether Mindfulness-based guided breathing enhances positive affect among athletes.

Methodology

The present study employed a quantitative, pre–post experimental design to examine the effect of mindfulness-based guided breathing on mood among sleep-deprived athletes. Data were collected using a structured Google Form consisting of informed consent, demographic information, and standardized psychological scales. Participants first completed baseline measures assessing sleep disturbance and affect. They were then instructed to watch a brief guided mindfulness breathing video. Immediately following the intervention, participants completed the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) again to assess post-intervention mood changes. Participation was voluntary, confidentiality was assured, and responses were collected anonymously. Clear instructions were provided throughout the process, and participants were debriefed after completion.

Participants

The study included 33 athletes, comprising both male and female participants actively engaged in collegiate or professional-level sports. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling method. The age range was 18 to 30 years, representing young adults who commonly experience high training demands and potential sleep disruptions.

Inclusion criteria required participants to be actively involved in competitive sports, engage in regular training of at least 5–6 hours per day, and be free from diagnosed sleep disorders or major medical conditions that could affect sleep or performance.

Exclusion criteria included current injuries preventing regular participation in training, use of sleep-affecting medications, diagnosed psychiatric or neurological disorders, or training involvement of less than six hours per week.

Hypotheses

The study tested the following hypotheses:

- H1: Positive affect will be negatively correlated with sleep deprivation. H2: Negative affect will be positively correlated with sleep deprivation.
- H3: Negative affect will be significantly lower after mindfulness-based guided breathing compared to before the intervention.
- H4: Positive affect will be significantly higher after mindfulness-based guided breathing compared to before the intervention.

Tools

The study utilized three standardized psychological instruments:

1. Jenkins Sleep Questionnaire (JSQ)

Developed by Jenkins et al. (1988), the JSQ is a brief self-report measure assessing sleep disturbances over the past month. It consists of four items evaluating difficulties such as trouble falling asleep, frequent awakenings, early waking, and feeling unrested after sleep. Items are rated on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (“not at all”) to 5

("22–30 days"). Total scores range from 0 to 20, with higher scores indicating greater sleep disturbance. The JSQ demonstrates good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.78 to 0.88) and satisfactory test–retest reliability.

2. Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)

Developed by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988), the PANAS measures two independent dimensions of affect: Positive Affect (PA) and Negative Affect (NA). The scale includes 20 adjectives—10 representing positive emotions (e.g., excited, proud, inspired) and 10 representing negative emotions (e.g., distressed, irritable, afraid). Participants rate their experience of each emotion on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("very slightly or not at all") to 5 ("extremely"). Scores for each subscale range from 10 to 50. The PANAS has strong psychometric properties, with Cronbach's alpha typically exceeding 0.85 for both subscales and good test–retest reliability.

Personal Datasheet

A personal datasheet was included to collect demographic information from participants. Completion of this section was mandatory. The datasheet gathered details such as name or initials, age, gender, relationship status, educational qualification, and area of residence. This information was used solely for research purposes and maintained under strict confidentiality.

Result and Discussion

Once the data were collected from the participants ($N = 33$), preliminary screening was conducted. Data were examined for missing values, outliers, and normality. Skewness and kurtosis statistics indicated that most variables were approximately normally distributed; however, Post Positive Affect deviated slightly from normality. Therefore, non-parametric tests were used for inferential analysis.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables ($N = 33$)

Variables	Mean (M)	SD
Pre Negative Affect	27	9.4
Post Negative Affect	25.21	9.21
Pre Positive Affect	34.09	7.82
Post Positive Affect	34.26	9.83

The mean score for Pre Negative Affect ($M = 27.00$, $SD = 9.40$) decreased slightly after the intervention ($M = 25.21$, $SD = 9.21$), indicating a reduction in negative affect. Pre Positive Affect ($M = 34.09$, $SD = 7.82$) showed a marginal increase post-intervention ($M = 34.26$, $SD = 9.83$).

Correlation Analysis

Spearman's rho was computed to examine the relationship between Sleep Deprivation and baseline affect.

Table 2

Spearman Correlations among Sleep Deprivation and Baseline Affect ($N = 33$)

Variables	Sleep Deprivation	Pre NA	Pre PA
Sleep Deprivation	1	.575**	-.038
Pre Negative Affect	.575**	1	-.326
Pre Positive Affect	-.038	-.326	1

Note. $P < .01$.

Sleep Deprivation was significantly and positively correlated with Pre Negative Affect ($\rho = .575$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher sleep deprivation was associated with greater negative affect. However, Sleep Deprivation was not significantly related to Pre Positive Affect ($\rho = -.038$, $p = .832$).

Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test

To examine the effect of Mindfulness-Based Guided Breathing, Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests were conducted.

Table 3

Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test for Pre-Post Differences ($N = 33$)

Comparison	W	z	p	Effect Size (r)
NA – Post NA	262	1.754	0.08	0.386
PA – Post PA	127.5	-1.478	0.141	-.325

The reduction in Negative Affect approached statistical significance ($z = 1.754$, $p = .080$), with a moderate effect size ($r = .386$). Positive Affect did not show a statistically significant change ($z = -1.478$, $p = .141$).

Discussion

The present study examined the relationship between sleep deprivation and affect, as well as the effect of Mindfulness-Based Guided breathing on mood among young adults. Results indicated that sleep deprivation was significantly associated with increased negative affect, supporting the hypothesis that inadequate sleep contributes to emotional

distress. However, no significant relationship was found between sleep deprivation and positive affect, suggesting that positive emotions may be less sensitive to short-term sleep loss. Regarding the intervention, findings revealed a trend toward reduced negative affect following mindfulness practice, although the results did not reach statistical significance. This suggests that brief mindfulness exercises may help regulate negative emotions but may require longer duration or repeated practice for stronger effects. Positive affect did not significantly increase after the intervention, indicating that mindfulness may primarily reduce distress rather than immediately enhance positive mood states.

Implications

1. Highlights the significant impact of sleep deprivation on negative affect among athletes, emphasising the need for adequate rest in training schedules.
2. Demonstrates the potential of Mindfulness-based guided breathing as a practical intervention to reduce negative emotions, even in short-term sessions.
3. Provides evidence for integrating mental health strategies into athletic programs to enhance emotional regulation and overall performance.
4. Offers insights for coaches, sports psychologists, and athletes to design personalized interventions targeting stress management and well-being.
5. Serves as a foundation for future research on long-term mindfulness interventions, affect regulation, and the interplay of sleep and emotional health in athletic populations.

Limitations

1. Small Sample Size: The study included only 33 athletes, which may limit the generalizability of the findings and reduce statistical power to detect significant effects.
2. Short-Term Intervention: The mindfulness session was brief, and affect was measured immediately afterwards. This limits the ability to assess the long-term effects of Mindfulness-based guided breathing on emotional states.
3. Convenience Sampling: Participants were recruited through convenience sampling, which may introduce selection bias and limit the representativeness of the sample.
4. Self-Report Measures: All data, including sleep patterns and affect, were self-reported, which can introduce bias due to social desirability or inaccurate recall.
5. Limited Control of Confounding Variables: Factors such as type of sport, training intensity, competition schedule, and individual differences in coping styles were not controlled, which may have influenced affective responses.

Future Suggestions

1. Larger and More Diverse Samples: Future studies should include a larger number of athletes across different sports, competitive levels, and age groups to improve generalizability.
2. Long-Term Mindfulness Interventions: Research should explore the effects of extended mindfulness programs to determine their cumulative impact on positive and negative affect.
3. Objective Sleep Measures: Future studies could use objective measures of sleep, such as actigraphy or sleep diaries, to complement self-reported sleep deprivation data.
4. Examine Additional Variables: Investigate other factors that may influence affect in athletes, such as training load, nutrition, stress, and coping strategies.
5. Experimental Control: Implement randomized controlled designs to better isolate the causal effects of Mindfulness-based guided breathing and sleep interventions on affect.
6. Cross-Cultural Replication and Physiological Measures: Future research could explore cross-cultural differences in mindfulness and sleep effects, as well as use objective physiological measures such as heart rate variability (HRV) or EEG to assess emotional regulation.

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Original Article

Attachment Style and Marital Conflict

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180245

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 269-272

February - 2026

Submitted: 19 Jan. 2026

Revised: 29 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 14 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract

I wanted to explore how adult attachment styles connect to marital conflict among married people here in India. Drawing from attachment theory, the study looked at the main styles: secure, anxious, avoidant, checked conflict levels in marriages, and tested if they link up. It used a cross-sectional correlational approach with 84 participants recruited through convenience and snowball sampling (all married at least 6 months, ages varied). Attachment was measured with the Attachment Style Questionnaire-Short Form (ASQ-SF), and marital conflict via the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS). Everything got analyzed in SPSS: basic descriptives, Shapiro-Wilk for normality, Pearson correlations, and ANOVA. The results showed no real correlations showed up—avoidant attachment gave $r = 0.132$ ($p = .231$), anxious $r = 0.052$ ($p = .636$). So the null hypothesis held: attachment styles don't seem to strongly predict marital conflict in this group. Maybe cultural factors or things like communication play a bigger role. The sample was small, and self-reports can be biased, so that's a limitation. Still, it points toward needing broader interventions for marriages and more long-term studies down the line.

Keywords: Marital conflict, attachment styles, anxious attachment

Introduction

Marriage stands out as one of the longest-lasting and most meaningful relationships we have. It brings emotional closeness, companionship, that sense of really belonging, and a steady environment for raising kids. Across different cultures, it's more than just a personal promise—it's a social setup that helps individuals thrive and keeps society going (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). But let's be honest: even the best marriages aren't conflict-free. Couples argue about money, how they talk (or don't), who does what at home, parenting choices, and all sorts of personal expectations. Conflict in marriage is completely normal. In fact, a bit of disagreement here and there can actually help if handled well—it builds understanding and brings people closer. The problem comes when arguments happen too often, get too intense, or just aren't managed properly. Then they start chipping away at satisfaction, ramp up stress, and affect the whole family (Fincham, 2003). That's why so many researchers and counselors try to figure out what psychological and relational factors spark conflicts, make them worse, or help resolve them. Attachment theory feels like one of the strongest lenses for this—it shows how our earliest experiences shape the way we handle emotions and closeness as adults.

Attachment Style

Attachment theory started with John Bowlby (1969, 1982). He argued that how we interact with primary caregivers early on creates these internal "working models" of relationships. Those models stick around and guide how we see and act in close bonds later in life. Whether caregivers were consistent and responsive or unpredictable and distant shapes what we expect from intimacy, trust, and support. Hazan and Shaver (1987) took that idea into adult romantic relationships, showing that childhood patterns show up in how we seek closeness, deal with stress, and handle fights with partners. In adulthood, attachment usually gets described along two main dimensions: anxiety (worrying about being left, craving a lot of closeness) and avoidance (feeling uneasy with intimacy, preferring to rely on yourself). Those combine into styles like:

1. Secure—comfortable with both closeness and independence, trusting that a partner will be there.
2. Anxious—fear of rejection, strong emotional reactions, always seeking reassurance.

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How to cite this article:

Chauhan, R. M., & Kakulte, A. (2026). Attachment Style and Marital Conflict. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 269–272. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19346965>



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DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19346965](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19346965)



3. Avoidant—uncomfortable getting too close, suppressing feelings, valuing independence highly.
4. Fearful or disorganized—high on both anxiety and avoidance, leading to mixed feelings and trouble trusting.

Marital Conflict

Marital conflict basically means the disagreements, tensions, or clashes that come up between spouses because of different views, values, expectations, or behaviors (Cummings & Davies, 2010; Gottman, 1994). What's interesting is that the sheer number of disagreements matters less than how couples deal with them. When they talk calmly, show empathy, and solve problems together, it actually strengthens the bond. But criticism, shutting down, defensiveness, or avoiding issues? Those patterns tend to make things worse over time and hurt the relationship.

Statement of the Problem

To explore how attachment styles influence marital conflict among couples. Rationale and Significance

This whole project came from genuine curiosity about what really shapes marriage dynamics—especially how patterns from our very first relationships might carry over and affect arguments with our spouse. Attachment theory gives a solid way to think about why some couples handle disagreements smoothly while others get stuck in negative loops.

Looking at secure, anxious, or avoidant styles in an Indian context feels particularly relevant because marriage here carries so much cultural weight.

If attachment turns out to play a big role, counselors could design more targeted help—maybe focusing on building security for anxious partners or addressing withdrawal in avoidant ones. But if it doesn't show up strongly (which is what we ended up finding), it pushes us to pay more attention to other things like family expectations, money pressures, or simple communication habits that are huge in Indian marriages. Either way, shedding light on this can help both research and real-life support for stronger relationships and healthier families.

Objectives of the Study

1. Assess the attachment styles present among married individuals.
2. Measure levels of marital conflict.
3. Examine any relationship between attachment style and marital conflict.

Review of Literature Introduction

Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth et al., 1978) remains one of the best frameworks for making sense of what happens inside marriages. The core idea is simple: early bonds with caregivers set up expectations about closeness, support, and conflict that follow us into adulthood. Secure attachment usually means more trust and openness, while insecure patterns—anxious, avoidant, or disorganized—can make communication harder and tensions higher. Plenty of studies back this up, showing attachment as a reliable predictor of satisfaction and conflict in relationships.

I looked at five main papers for this review. Here's what they highlight:

- Kirkpatrick & Davis (1994) followed 144 dating couples over time. Secure attachment linked to stronger trust, commitment, satisfaction, and positive feelings. Insecure styles brought less trust, more negativity, and lower satisfaction. Avoidant men, interestingly, felt less upset after breakups. This really shows how attachment shapes emotional patterns that feed into conflict—secure people avoid destructive cycles, while anxious or avoidant folks lean toward criticism, withdrawal, or heightened distress.
- Meyer & Pilkonis (2001) applied attachment ideas to therapy settings. They explained how early models influence current relationships, like the patient-therapist bond. Secure feels comfortable, anxious fears abandonment, avoidant pulls away defensively. Though it's about therapy, the patterns overlap a lot with marriage—avoidance, defensiveness, fear of rejection show up in fights too.
- Belsky (2002) dug into where attachment styles come from developmentally. He described attachment security as an inner guide for expectations in relationships, but noted these models aren't fixed—they can shift over life. Emotion regulation sits at the center of how attachment affects interactions under stress. This gives a theoretical base: conflict isn't just from fixed traits but from how emotions get handled in tough moments, and marriage could even be a place where attachment evolves.
- Meyers & Landsberger (2002) focused on married women in the US. Secure attachment tied to higher satisfaction; avoidant and ambivalent predicted lower. Distress and lack of support acted as bridges between insecure attachment and poorer outcomes. So insecurity might not directly spark fights but weakens coping and communication, making discord more likely.
- Besharat (2003) in Iran compared couples in therapy for conflict vs. those not. Insecure styles dominated the conflicted group, and pairs where both were insecure had the worst conflict. Secure-secure couples fared best. This dyadic angle is key—conflict often comes from how two people's styles interact, not just one person's issues.

These studies point to attachment mattering, but cultural contexts like India's could change how strongly it shows up.

Research Methodology Operational Definitions

1. Attachment Style

Enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in close relationships, rooted in early caregiver interactions

(Bowlby, 1969; Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

2. Marital Conflict

Disagreements, tensions, or disputes between spouses stemming from differing needs, values, expectations, or behaviors (Cummings & Davies, 2010; Gottman, 1994).

Hypotheses

3. No significant relationship exists between attachment style and marital conflict.
4. Avoidant attachment will show higher adjustment problems in marriage.

Research Design

Quantitative cross-sectional correlational study. 84 married individuals (minimum 6 months married) recruited via convenience and snowball sampling in Pune area.

Research Tools

- Attachment Style Questionnaire - Short Form (ASQ-SF) (Alexander et al., 2001)
29-item self-report derived from the full ASQ (Feeney et al., 1994). Covers avoidance and anxiety dimensions on a 6-point Likert scale (some reverse-scored). Good reliability (Cronbach's α 0.72–0.85; Karantzas et al., 2010) and validity (links to mental health and therapy outcomes).
- Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) (Busby et al., 1995)
14 items assessing consensus, satisfaction, and cohesion. Likert scales, higher scores = better adjustment. Strong reliability (α = 0.90) and validity (distinguishes distressed vs. non-distressed couples well).

Procedure

I reached out through personal contacts, friends' networks, and online sharing. Explained the purpose clearly—looking at attachment and marital conflict—and stressed it was voluntary, confidential, anonymous. Everyone gave written informed consent before starting. Questionnaires went out via Google Forms (with demographics like age, gender). Instructions were straightforward: answer honestly based on your experiences, no right/wrong. **Data collected securely, scored per guidelines, then prepped for analysis.**

Statistical Analysis

Used SPSS (version 27): descriptives, normality checks, Pearson correlations for associations, ANOVA for group differences.

Results and Discussion Preliminary Analysis

Started with 88 responses; removed 4 outliers after boxplots and z-scores. Final N = 84. Sample Characteristics Mostly secure (n=55), anxious-preoccupied (n=8), fearful-avoidant (n=7). Avoidant mean $\approx$ 28.81 (SD 7.26), anxious $\approx$ 19.69 (SD 6.08), marital conflict scores ranged roughly 26–42 (variable SD).

Normality and Assumptions

Shapiro-Wilk tests showed $p > .05$ for main variables (close call on anxious at .055, but histograms looked okay). Variances are marginally unequal on Levene's, but proceed with parametric tests given sample.

Results

Pearson correlations:

Avoidant $\times$ Marital Conflict: $r = 0.132$, $p = .231$ Anxious $\times$ Marital Conflict: $r = 0.052$, $p = .636$

ANOVA across attachment groups: $F(2,81) = 1.24$, $p = .883$ (no differences). Post-hoc tests confirmed nothing significant.

Discussion

Honestly, these results surprised me a little. No meaningful links between attachment styles and conflict—weak correlations, no group differences. The null held up. With so few in the insecure groups, power was low, and maybe other things (communication habits, financial stress, cultural norms around marriage in India) matter more here. The marginal variance issue isn't ideal, but probably didn't flip the findings. This doesn't completely contradict earlier work—attachment effects seem context-dependent. In an Indian sample, joint family pressures or arranged marriage dynamics might overshadow individual attachment patterns.

Conclusion

Wrapping up, this study with 84 married folks in India didn't find attachment styles predicting marital conflict strongly. Despite theory suggesting insecure styles (especially avoidant or anxious) would tie to more issues, the data said otherwise. Cultural or other mediators likely at play.

Limitations

Small sample, especially few insecure types; convenience/snowball bias (mostly Pune networks); self-report reliance; cross-sectional (no cause-effect); no dyadic data from both partners.

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Original Article

Impact of Birth Order and Attachment Style on Aggression among Young Adults

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract:**

JRD -2026-180246

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 273-276

February - 2026

Submitted: 19 Jan. 2026

Revised: 29 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 14 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Aggression is a significant psychological construct that affects interpersonal relationships, emotional regulation, and overall mental health. The present study aimed to examine the impact of birth order and attachment style on aggression among young adults. Birth order has been traditionally associated with personality development, while attachment style has been linked to emotional regulation and behavioral outcomes. A sample of 84 young adults aged 18 to 25 years was selected using purposive sampling. Aggression was measured using the Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire, and attachment style was assessed using a standardized attachment scale. Independent samples t-test was used to analyze the data. The results indicated that there was no significant difference in aggression between first-born and second-born individuals. However, a significant difference was found between secure and insecure attachment styles. Individuals with insecure attachment showed significantly higher aggression levels compared to securely attached individuals. The findings suggest that early emotional bonding plays a more important role in aggression than birth order. The study has implications for counseling, psychotherapy, and emotional development.

Keywords: Aggression, Attachment Style, Birth Order, Young Adults, Emotional Regulation

Introduction:

The present study examines the relationship between sibling position (birth order), attachment style, and aggression among young adults. These three variables are important psychological and family-related factors that influence emotional development, personality formation, and behavioral outcomes. Young adulthood is a critical stage where individuals develop emotional maturity, social relationships, and behavioral patterns, making it essential to understand the factors that contribute to aggression during this period. Sibling position refers to the order in which a child is born in a family, such as first-born, middle-born, last-born, or only child. It plays an important role in shaping an individual's personality, responsibilities, and social experiences. Theoretical perspectives suggest that differences in parental attention, expectations, and family roles influence the psychological development of children. First-born children are often given more responsibility and parental expectations, which may make them achievement-oriented but also more prone to stress and frustration. Middle-born children may develop adaptability and social skills as they try to find their place within the family, while last-born children often receive more attention and may become more dependent or attention-seeking. Only children may develop maturity and independence due to exclusive parental attention but may also experience pressure to meet expectations. Attachment style is another key variable that develops through early interactions between the child and caregiver. It reflects the emotional bond formed during childhood and influences how individuals perceive relationships, regulate emotions, and respond to stressful situations. Attachment styles are broadly categorized as secure and insecure (anxious, avoidant, and disorganized). Secure attachment promotes emotional stability, trust, and healthy interpersonal relationships, whereas insecure attachment is associated with emotional insecurity, fear of rejection, and difficulty in managing emotions. These attachment patterns continue into adulthood and influence behavioral responses, including aggression. Aggression is defined as behavior intended to harm others physically, verbally, or psychologically. It is influenced by multiple factors, including personality, emotional regulation, social learning, and family environment. Family relationships, especially sibling interactions and attachment experiences, play a significant role in shaping aggressive tendencies.



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19347057](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19347057)



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How to cite this article:

Gaikwad, L., & Kolekar, R. (2026). Impact of Birth Order and Attachment Style on Aggression among Young Adults. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 273–276. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19347057>

Individuals who experience frustration, emotional insecurity, or poor family relationships may be more likely to display aggressive behavior. The review of literature suggests that sibling position influences attachment style, as variations in parental attention and caregiving affect emotional bonding. Research also indicates that birth order is associated with differences in aggression, with first-borns often showing higher levels of direct aggression due to responsibility and pressure, while later-borns may show indirect or relational aggression. Additionally, studies consistently show that insecure attachment is strongly associated with higher aggression, whereas secure attachment acts as a protective factor by promoting emotional regulation and healthy coping. Importantly, research combining these variables suggests that attachment style plays a mediating or moderating role in the relationship between sibling position and aggression. This means that birth order alone does not determine aggression; rather, the quality of emotional attachment significantly influences whether aggressive tendencies develop. Overall, the literature highlights that sibling position, attachment style, and aggression are closely interconnected. Understanding these relationships is especially important in the Indian context, where family structure and relationships strongly influence personality and behavior. This study aims to contribute to existing knowledge by examining these variables together and identifying risk and protective factors that can help improve emotional well-being and reduce aggression among young adults.

Rationale of the study:

Aggression among young adults is a significant psychological concern affecting emotional well-being and relationships. Birth order and attachment style are important factors influencing personality and emotional regulation. While attachment style has been strongly linked to aggression, findings on birth order are inconsistent, and limited research has examined both

Together, especially among Indian young adults. Therefore, the present study aims to examine the impact of birth order and attachment style on aggression and provide useful implications for psychological intervention.

Statement of the Problem:

To study the impact of birth order and attachment style on aggression among young adults.

Objectives of the Study:

To study the impact of birth order on aggression

To study the impact of attachment style on aggression

Hypotheses:

H1: There will be a significant difference in aggression between first-born and second-born individuals.

H2: There will be a significant difference in aggression between secure and insecure attachment.

Method:

The present study adopted a quantitative approach using a comparative research design to examine the impact of birth order and attachment style on aggression among young adults. This design was appropriate as it enabled comparison of aggression levels across groups based on differences in birth order and attachment style. The sample consisted of 84 young adults from Pune, India, selected using convenience sampling. The age range was 18 to 25 years, and the sample included both male and female participants. Among the total participants, 34 were first-born and 50 were second-born, allowing for group comparison based on sibling position.

Variables:

Independent Variables (IV):

- Birth Order (First-born, Middle-born)
- Attachment Style (Secure, insecure)

Dependent Variable (DV):

- Aggression

Tools:

1. Personal Data Sheet

A Personal Data Sheet was developed by the researcher to collect demographic information such as age, gender, educational qualification, and sibling position. It was used to categorize participants based on birth order and describe the sample characteristics.

2. Adult Attachment Scale (AAS; Collins & Read, 1990)

The Adult Attachment Scale was used to assess attachment style. The scale consists of 18 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The scale shows adequate reliability, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .72 to .79, and test-retest reliability ranging from .68 to .71. The scale has demonstrated good construct validity, convergent validity, and predictive validity.

3. Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ; Buss & Perry, 1992)

The Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire was used to measure aggression. It consists of 29 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The scale has good reliability, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .72 to .89, and has demonstrated strong

validity across different populations, including construct and criterion validity.

Procedure:

The participants were approached individually, and rapport was established prior to data collection. They were informed about the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained. Participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential and would be used only for research purposes. The questionnaires were then administered, and participants were instructed to respond honestly. After completion, the questionnaires were collected and scored according to the standardized scoring procedures.

Results and Discussion:

The present study examined the impact of birth order and attachment style on aggression among young adults. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to examine the differences in aggression based on birth order and attachment style.

Descriptive statistics:

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare aggression scores between first-born and second-born participants.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Aggression Based on Birth Order

Birth Order	N	Mean	SD
First-born	34	72.41	12.53
Second-born	50	73.89	13.11

Table 1 shows the mean aggression scores of first-born and second-born individuals. The mean aggression score of first-born participants was 72.41 (SD = 12.53), whereas the mean aggression score of second-born participants was slightly higher at 73.89 (SD = 13.11). This indicates that second-born individuals reported marginally higher aggression compared to first-born individuals. However, the difference between the mean scores is small, suggesting only a minor variation in aggression based on birth order.

Table 2

Independent Samples t-Test for Birth Order and Aggression

Variable	t	df	p
Aggression	0.444	57.53	.659

Table 2 presents the results of the independent samples t-test conducted to examine whether there is a significant difference in aggression between first-born and second-born individuals. The obtained t value was 0.444, and the p value was .659. Since the p value is greater than .05, the result is not statistically significant.

This indicates that there is no significant difference in aggression between first-born and Second-born individuals. Therefore, birth order does not have a significant impact on aggression in the present study.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Aggression Based on Attachment Style

Attachment style	N	Mean	SD
Secure	42	68.12	11.24
Insecure	42	78.36	12.87

Table 3 shows the aggression scores of individuals with secure and insecure attachment styles. The mean aggression score of securely attached individuals was 68.12 (SD = 11.24), whereas the mean aggression score of insecurely attached individuals was higher at 78.36 (SD = 12.87). This indicates that individuals with insecure attachment reported higher levels of aggression compared to securely attached individuals.

Table 4

Independent Samples t-Test for Attachment Style and Aggression

Variable	t	df	p
Aggression	3.960	66.35	.000

Table 4 shows the t-test results comparing aggression between secure and insecure attachment groups. The obtained t value was 3.960, and the p value was .000. Since the p value is less than .05, the result is statistically significant.

This indicates that attachment style has a significant impact on aggression. Individuals with insecure attachment show significantly higher aggression than securely attached individuals. The present study examined the impact of birth order and attachment style on aggression among young adults. The results showed that there was no significant difference in aggression between first-born and second-born individuals. This finding is not consistent with studies by Sharma and Kumar (2013), Rani and Saini (2019), and Patil and Deshmukh (2021), which reported higher aggression among first-borns due to greater parental expectations and responsibility. However, the present finding is consistent with Patel and Desai (2020) and Huang and Chang (2023), who found that birth order alone was not a significant predictor of aggression. This suggests that other emotional and psychological factors may play a more important role in influencing

aggression. In contrast, the study found a significant difference in aggression based on attachment style. Individuals with insecure attachment showed higher aggression compared to securely attached individuals. This finding is consistent with previous studies such as Kaur and Singh (2014), Bano and Riaz (2018), Mehta and Sharma (2016), and Gupta and Patel (2021), which reported that insecure attachment is associated with higher aggression, while secure attachment acts as a protective factor. These findings indicate that individuals with insecure attachment may have difficulty regulating emotions, leading to aggressive behavior. Overall, the findings suggest that attachment style is a more important factor in predicting aggression than birth order. Secure attachment reduces aggression, whereas insecure attachment increases the risk of aggression among young adults.

Conclusion:

The present study examined the relationship between birth order, attachment style, and aggression among young adults. The findings indicated that birth order did not show a significant difference in aggression levels between first-born and second-born individuals. However, attachment style was found to play an important role, with insecurely attached individuals showing higher levels of aggression compared to securely attached individuals. These results highlight the importance of early emotional bonds in shaping behavioral outcomes such as aggression. Overall, the study suggests that attachment security may be a more influential factor than birth order in understanding aggression among young adults.

Limitations:

- Small sample size: The sample of 84 participants limits the generalizability of the findings.
- Self-report measures: Use of questionnaires may be influenced by social desirability and inaccurate self-reporting.
- Cross-sectional design: The design does not allow conclusions about cause-and-effect relationships.
- Uncontrolled variables: Factors like family environment, parenting, and socio-economic status were not controlled and may have influenced the results.

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Original Article

The Effect of Disgust-Evoking Images on Nonsense Syllable Recall

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Manuscript ID:

Abstract:

JRD -2026-180247

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 277-283

February - 2026

Emotions play an important role in how people think and act, affecting attention and memory. Research has highlighted how disgust uniquely affects cognition compared to other emotional states. This study aims to examine the effect of disgust-evoking images on nonsense syllable recall through a within-subject experimental design. The study is based on adolescent and young adult sample (N=38) with age ranging from 17 to 26 years. Results revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the number of nonsense syllables correctly recalled after exposure to neutral images and the number of nonsense syllables correctly recalled after exposure to disgust-evoking images ($p = 0.003$). These findings can help improve information retention by informing the use of structured instruction and exposure to reduce the disruptive effects of disgust on memory recall. This approach may enhance recall in medical, forensic, and public settings.

Keywords: disgust, memory recall, attention, nonsense syllables

Submitted: 19 Jan. 2026

Revised: 29 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 14 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Emotions play a fundamental role in guiding human cognition and behaviour, influencing processes such as attention and memory. Disgust is a negatively-valenced emotion that helps avoid disease (Rozin & Fallon, 1987; Tybur, Lieberman, Kurzban, & DeScioli, 2013) by motivating avoidance of stimuli that could cause physical or psychological contamination (Rozin, Haidt, & Fincher, 2009). Disgust is a universally experienced emotion that originally evolved as a protective reaction against consuming harmful substances. Over time, it has expanded beyond this basic function to serve as a mechanism that helps individuals avoid stimuli that may threaten their physical, psychological, or moral well-being.

Disgust and Attention

Research has highlighted how disgust uniquely affects cognition compared to other emotional states. Disgust has been shown to influence how attention is directed and maintained, particularly at the earliest stages of perception. Hooff et al. (2013) investigated whether images that evoke fear and disgust produce different patterns of attentional bias. Their findings indicated that emotion-specific attentional effects emerge at very early stages of visual processing and that, unlike fear-evoking images, disgust-evoking images tend to capture and hold attention for a longer duration. Disgust can involuntarily capture cognitive resources, temporarily affecting the speed and efficiency of responses to other stimuli. Experimental studies have used reaction-time tasks to explore this attentional pull. Van Hooff et al. (2014) examined the features of an anticipated disgust-specific effect using a covert orienting task that included disgust-evoking, fear-evoking, happiness-evoking, and neutral images. The findings showed that reaction times were slower for targets appearing 100 and 200 ms after disgust-evoking pictures, indicating that these images temporarily captured participants' attention. This delay occurred regardless of whether participants were instructed to attend to or ignore the images, and it was not influenced by individual differences in anxiety or disgust sensitivity. Gable and Harmon-Jones (2010b) reported that negative emotions high in motivational intensity, such as disgust, result in a narrowing of attention and reduced attention to peripheral information. Disgust may influence learning through multiple ways, including its immediate impact on attention and information processing, as well as its longer-term effect on an individual's motivation to engage with the topic. Research focusing on disgust indicates that this emotion tends to orient attention toward the stimulus that elicited the emotional response



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19347450](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19347450)



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How to cite this article:

Phadte, S., & Salve, S. (2026). The Effect of Disgust-Evoking Images on Nonsense Syllable Recall. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 277–283. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19347450>

(Cisler et al., 2009; van Hooff et al., 2013, 2014; Xu et al., 2015).

Attention and Memory

Memory is an active system that receives information from the senses, puts that information into a usable form, organizes it as it stores it away, and then retrieves the information from storage (adapted from Baddeley, 1996, 2003). Although there are several different models of how memory works, all of them involve the same three processes: Encoding, storage and retrieval. The first process in the memory system involves converting sensory information, such as sights and sounds, into a form that the brain can use, a stage known as encoding. The subsequent stage in memory involves retaining the information for a certain period, a process referred to as storage. Retrieval is the process of accessing stored information and bringing it into a usable form. Recall is the process of retrieving past experiences, such as objects, events, or emotions, from the memory system, also referred to as reproduction. It involves two stages, searching for information stored in long-term memory and subsequently recognizing it.

Working memory is an active system responsible for processing information held in short-term memory. The link between attention and working memory (WM) is intricate. Because WM representations lack direct sensory input, they can be weaker and less precise. However, research has shown that directing attention to particular stimuli within a visual array enhances memory for those items, whereas unattended items are remembered less effectively. Moreover, how information is encoded and maintained in working memory frequently depends on the amount of sustained attention given to visual stimuli and events.

Disgust and Memory

Beyond its immediate effects on attention, disgust also appears to influence how information is encoded and remembered, affecting recall of material presented before the emotional experience. Rubenking and Lang (2014) reported that exposure to core disgust stimuli was associated with very poor memory—close to chance levels—for information presented before the disgust-inducing event. This suggests that responses to core disgust may function as a cognitive interruption, rapidly directing cognitive and motivational resources toward the survival-related stimulus and thereby producing retroactive inhibition of previously encoded information. Despite extensive research on how attention is captured by disgust-evoking stimuli, relatively few studies have investigated how such stimuli influence memory recall. Therefore, the present study aims to examine how exposure to disgust-evoking stimuli affects memory recall, addressing the gap in research on the downstream effects of disgust beyond attentional capture.

Objective

To examine the effect of disgust-evoking images on nonsense syllable recall.

Hypothesis

The number of nonsense syllables correctly recalled will be lower following exposure to disgust-evoking images as compared to neutral images.

Variables

Independent variable: The level of disgust induced through images

1. Neutral images
2. Disgust-evoking images

Dependent variable: Number of nonsense syllables correctly recalled

Control variables: Number of nonsense syllables (21 in each condition), number of letters in each syllable (3 letters), presentation time of each list of nonsense syllables (1 minute), number of neutral and disgust-evoking images (24 images in each condition), presentation time of each image (5 seconds), time given to recall the nonsense syllables (1 minute)

Method Study Design

The study uses a within-subject experimental design.

Sampling Method

Convenience sampling was used to collect data.

Participants

The sample consisted of 42 participants. A few cases were deleted considering outlier analysis and 38 participants were retained. Participants included both males (16%) and females (84%), with ages ranging from 17-26 years.

Materials 2 lists of nonsense syllables (each list containing 21 syllables), selected from CVC nonsense stimuli by Boothroyd and Nitttrouer [1988], 24 neutral pictures and 24 disgust-evoking pictures selected from the DISgust-RelaTed-Images (DIRTI) picture set (Haberkamp et al., 2016), stopwatch, rating sheets, paper and a pen.

Procedure

Consent was taken from participants. Each participant was called separately into the cubicle. The experimenter had kept all the necessary materials ready, such as a laptop with Power point presentations, one of neutral images and the other of disgust-evoking images with each image timed for 5 seconds; 2 lists of nonsense syllables, rating sheets, blank papers and a pen. The participant was welcomed into the cubicle and seated comfortably. Rapport was established. The experimenter started with the control condition. The following instructions were given.

“This is a simple experiment. I will present before you a list of 21 words. The words do not have any meaning. You have to read all the words carefully. You have to stop when I say stop. Then I will present before you 24 images. Each image will be presented for 5 seconds. Please see each image carefully as I will ask questions on the images later. After the presentation of all the pictures you will have to recall and write as many words as you can from the list presented before, in 1 minute. You have to recall the letters of the words in the same order. You can write the words in any order but cannot change the spelling of the word. If you have any doubt then you can ask.”

“I will show you two practice trials before we begin with the experiment so that you understand how the words will be.”

The experimenter showed the participant 2 practice trials of nonsense syllables. The syllables used for practice trials were ‘len’ and ‘mek’.

The experimenter allowed the participant to read the words for 1 minute. Then she presented 24 neutral images. After the presentation of images she provided the participant with a paper and a pen and asked them to write down as many nonsense syllables as they could recall. She set timer for 1 minute and asked the participant to stop writing when it was 1 minute.

A break of 3 minutes was given.

After the break, the experimenter started with the experimental condition. The following instructions were given.

“I will again present before you a different list of 21 words. The words have no meaning. You have to read all the words carefully. You have to stop when I say stop. Then I will present before you a different set of 24 images. Each picture will be presented for 5 seconds. Please see each image carefully as I will ask questions on the images later. After the presentation of all the pictures you will have to recall and write as many words as you can from the list presented before, the second list, in 1 minute. You have to recall the letters of the words in the same order. If you have any doubt then you can ask.”

The experimenter showed the participant another list of nonsense syllables for 1 minute. Then she presented before them 24 disgust-evoking images. After the presentation, the experimenter set the timer for 1 minute and asked the participant to write down as many nonsense syllables as they can recall from the second list.

The introspective report was obtained. The participants were asked the following questions:

- 1) How did you remember the words from the first list?
- 2) How did you remember the words from the second list?
- 3) In order to remember, did you associate any word with a meaningful word? If yes, can you tell the word/words and how you associated them with meaningful word/words?
- 4) Do you feel that one list was easier or more difficult than the other? If yes, can you explain why?
- 5) How did you find the first set of images?
- 6) How did you find the second set of images?
- 7) Were you trying to recall the words while seeing the images?
- 8) Do you think that because of the second set of images you couldn't recall the words?
- 9) After the introspective report was obtained, two rating scales were provided to the participant and was again shown the neutral and disgust-evoking images. They were asked to rate each image on a scale from 1 to 5, on which
- 10) 1 = Not at all disgusting
- 11)
- 12) 2 = Slightly disgusting
- 13)
- 14) 3 = Moderately disgusting
- 15)
- 16) 4 = Very disgusting
- 17)
- 18) 5 = Extremely disgusting
- 19)
- 20) The experimenter then evaluated the participant's responses in both the conditions. The experimenter explained the participant their results and debriefed them during which it was revealed that the experimenter was not going to ask any questions on the images. However, in order to make participants observe the images, the instructions were modified.

Results

Data were analysed with Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program (JASP, Version 0.95.1.0; JASP Team, 2025).

The objective of the research was to examine the effect of disgust-evoking images on nonsense syllable recall. Following the completion of data collection, the basic screening of the data was performed. All the demographic details were checked and categorized. The measure of central tendency, normality of the data, screening of outliers, and extreme scorers were sorted out. The P value of Shapiro-Wilk for the data of the experimental condition was found to be 0.021. As the data was not normally distributed, Wilcoxon signed-rank test was selected. The detail of the

descriptive statistics obtained on the two conditions has been presented in the Table 1.

Table 1: Shows the descriptive statistics of control and experimental condition (N=38)

Control Condition					Experimental Condition				
M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	P-value of Shapiro-Wilk	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	P-value of Shapiro-Wilk
4.921	1.583	-0.165	0.009	0.234	3.895	1.984	0.439	-0.289	0.021

Wilcoxon signed-rank test was computed to examine the difference between the two scores.

Table 2 shows that a Wilcoxon signed-rank test indicated that recall performance was significantly lower in the disgust-evoking condition (M = 3.90, SD = 1.98) compared to the neutral condition (M = 4.92, SD = 1.58), $z = 2.96$, $p = .003$.

that they were pursuing their degree in natural sciences and hence are used to observing such images. Therefore, it did not evoke disgust in them. A few reported that they found the list of nonsense syllables presented in the experimental condition easier than the list presented in the control condition as they could associate it better with meaningful words, which led to the contrary results.

The findings support that disgust-evoking stimuli causes retroactive inhibition of memory.

Implications

The present study shows how the disgusting-evoking images have an effect on memory recall. The findings suggest that exposure to disgust-evoking stimuli before learning may reduce recall. It is particularly relevant for medical students and surgical trainees who are exposed to injuries, infections, and invasive procedures for the first time. During initial exposure to surgery in the operation theatre, students are required to remember procedural steps, safety protocols, and instructions provided by senior surgeons. However, if the visual exposure evokes strong disgust, it may temporarily interfere with attention and recall of these instructions. This could affect the accurate retention of important procedural information during early training phases. Therefore, providing instructions clearly beforehand, allowing students to take a short break after receiving the instructions, and then entering the operation theatre may help reduce emotional interference and support better concentration and memory performance during surgical observation and training.

Similarly, veterinary students and animal rescue workers may be exposed to infected wounds, parasites, or surgical procedures; trainees in forensic science and law enforcement are often exposed to graphic images of crime scenes, injuries, or post-mortem examinations. During early training, they are required to remember procedural protocols, evidence-handling

Table 2. Wilcoxon signed-rank test for the number of nonsense syllables correctly recalled after exposure to neutral images and disgust-evoking images (N=38)

Condition	n	M	SD	SE	W	z	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control Condition	38	4.921	1.583	0.257	446.0	2.957	0.003
Experimental Condition	38	3.895	1.984	0.322			

Discussion

The research aimed at studying the effect of disgust-evoking images on recall of nonsense syllables. Results revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the number of nonsense syllables correctly recalled after exposure to neutral images and the number of nonsense syllables correctly recalled after exposure to disgust-evoking images ($p = 0.003$). The participants correctly recalled less nonsense syllables after exposure to disgust-evoking images. The introspective report obtained from participants revealed that the disgust-evoking images distracted them while they were trying to recall the nonsense syllables. The reaction that followed after the exposure to disgust-evoking pictures distracted them. While others reported that they simultaneously tried to recall the nonsense syllables while seeing the neutral images but couldn't do the same for disgust-evoking images as the images induced disgust and they did not want to look at them. The effect continued even after the presentation, while they were trying to recall the nonsense syllables.

The ratings given by the participants to each image showed that the most disgust-evoking images were the injuries and infections, followed by rotten food and animals. However, some participants showed contrary results. They recalled more nonsense syllables after exposure to disgust-evoking images. In the introspective report they mentioned steps, and legal documentation guidelines. If disgust interferes with attention and recall, important details may be missed. Structured pre-briefing, gradual exposure, and separating instruction from exposure time may improve retention. Public health campaigns sometimes use graphic images (e.g., disease effects, smoking consequences) to create awareness.

While such images increase emotional impact, they may also interfere with the audience's recall of factual information presented simultaneously. Structuring messages so that key information is delivered clearly before or after exposure to disturbing visuals may improve retention.

Limitations

The present study is subject to some limitations. The sample size ($N = 38$) was relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. A larger sample would provide more reliable and consistent results and allow the findings to be applied to a broader population. The sample was predominantly female (84%), with relatively few male participants (16%), which limits the generalizability of the findings across genders. Emotional processing, particularly responses to disgust-evoking stimuli, may differ across genders. The use of a sample consisting solely of college students restricts the applicability of the findings to broader populations. Future studies should include a larger and more diverse sample, incorporating participants from different age groups, genders, and occupations to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, the control condition was administered before the experimental condition for all participants, which may have introduced order effect. There is a potential for within-subject carryover effect, as participants were exposed to two conditions that may have influenced their responses across trials. Additionally, a possible practice effect cannot be ruled out, as repeated exposure to the tasks may have led to improved performance. A non-parametric test was used in the present study, indicating that the data is not normally distributed. Although participants rated each image on a 5-point scale, self-reported measures may not always accurately capture the true intensity of emotional responses and may be influenced by individual interpretation and social desirability. The study did not control for individual differences such as baseline disgust sensitivity, anxiety levels, or prior exposure to similar stimuli, which may have influenced memory performance.

Conclusion

The results support the hypothesis that recall performance decreases following exposure to disgust-evoking images compared to neutral images. The findings demonstrate that emotional states, particularly disgust, can interfere with cognitive performance, specifically memory recall.

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Appendices

Nonsense Syllables used

Nonsense Syllables used for Practice Trials		
len		mek
Nonsense Syllables used in Condition 1		
hem	bep	ras
tup	lim	kal
hal	sog	lep
pod	tig	ruk
riz	reg	tet
mal	tuk	rem
sez	bis	kum
Nonsense Syllables used in Condition 2		
pon	sig	tal
das	kez	sot
rit	bak	mut
puk	mok	tid
bod	ted	ral
pim	lan	miz
pek	som	bul

Individual Participant Ratings of Neutral Images

Participant	Images																							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
1	3	1	3	2	3	1	1	3	2	3	1	3	2	3	3	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	2	1
2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2
4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
11	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
12	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
13	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
14	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
15	2	3	1	4	3	4	3	4	3	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	4	3	4	4	2	1	1	1
16	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
17	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
18	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	3	1	3	4	1	5	5	5	3	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	2
19	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
20	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	3	2	2	2	3	1	3	1	2	2	3	2	2	1	1	2	1
21	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	3	1	3	4	1	5	5	5	3	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	2
Participant	Images																							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24

22	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
23	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
24	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
25	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
26	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
27	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	3	3	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1
28	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1
29	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
30	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
31	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
32	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	3	3	1	2	1	1	1	1
33	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
34	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
35	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
36	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
37	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2
38	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Note. Ratings were provided on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Not at all disgusting, 5 = extremely disgusting)

Note. Ratings were provided on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Not at all disgusting, 5 = extremely disgusting)

Parti cipant	Images																							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
22	1	2	5	5	5	1	5	4	4	1	4	5	1	5	1	5	3	4	5	5	5	5	2	5
23	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	3	2	2	2	3	1	3	1	1
24	2	1	1	1	2	3	1	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	3	3	3	4	1	1	1
25	3	2	2	3	3	3	4	1	1	4	4	2	5	5	2	2	2	3	3	4	4	3	3	3
26	1	1	2	3	2	1	3	1	2	1	3	3	1	3	2	3	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	3
27	3	3	3	3	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
28	2	1	1	2	2	3	5	5	4	4	4	5	3	5	4	4	5	3	3	4	4	5	5	3
29	3	2	1	4	4	4	5	2	4	4	3	5	4	5	2	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5
30	3	4	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	4	3	2	4	4	2	2	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
31	4	1	4	3	4	1	2	2	4	1	2	4	2	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	5	2	2
32	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	4	2	3	2	2	4	2	3	3	3	5	4	5	3	5	4
33	3	2	2	3	3	3	4	1	3	4	4	2	5	5	2	2	2	3	3	4	3	3	3	5
34	2	1	3	2	4	3	4	5	5	3	3	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	3
35	2	3	4	3	3	4	5	3	3	4	2	4	4	4	3	2	5	2	2	4	4	5	3	5
36	4	4	5	3	2	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4
37	3	2	5	2	5	2	5	3	5	3	4	4	3	4	5	2	5	3	4	3	5	3	4	5
38	3	1	4	3	4	1	5	2	4	4	2	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	3	2

Original Article

Maternal Bonding and Emotional Intelligence as Correlates of Prosocial Behavior: A Psychological Perspective

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Manuscript ID: **Abstract**

JRD -2026-180248

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 284-287

February - 2026

Submitted: 19 Jan. 2026

Revised: 29 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 14 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

The present study examined the relationship between maternal bonding, emotional intelligence, and prosocial behavior in adulthood. The study aimed to investigate whether maternal bonding and emotional intelligence significantly predict prosocial behavior among adults. A quantitative, non-experimental correlational research design was employed. Data were collected from 151 participants (91 females and 60 males) between the ages of 20 and 40 years using the Parental Bonding Instrument (Mother Form), Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10), and Adult Prosocialness Behavior Scale (APBS). Pearson correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive correlation between maternal bonding and prosocial behavior ($r = .468, p < .001$), a strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and prosocial behavior ($r = .611, p < .001$), and a moderate positive correlation between emotional intelligence and maternal bonding ($r = .407, p < .001$). Stepwise multiple regression analysis indicated that maternal bonding significantly predicted prosocial behavior, accounting for 37% of the variance ($R^2 = .373, p < .001$). Emotional intelligence contributed an additional 6% of the variance, resulting in a total explained variance of 43% ($R^2 = .431, p < .001$). The findings highlight the enduring influence of early maternal bonding and emotional competencies on the development of prosocial behavior in adulthood. The study contributes to understanding psychosocial development within the Indian context and emphasizes the importance of early caregiving experiences and emotional skill development.

Keywords: maternal bonding, emotional intelligence, prosocial behavior, adulthood

Introduction

Prosocial behavior refers to voluntary actions intended to benefit others, including helping, sharing, comforting, and cooperating (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). It plays a crucial role in promoting social harmony and collective well-being. Parenting practices, particularly warmth and emotional responsiveness, are strongly associated with the development of empathy and prosocial tendencies in children (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998). Maternal bonding, defined as the development of a close emotional relationship between mother and child, significantly influences socio-emotional development. Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) emphasizes that early caregiver relationships shape internal working models that guide future interpersonal behaviors. Secure attachment fosters emotional security, empathy, and adaptive social functioning. Emotional intelligence (EI), defined as the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), has also been linked to prosocial behavior. Individuals high in EI demonstrate greater empathy, emotional regulation, and interpersonal competence, which facilitate helping behaviors and social responsibility. Although previous research has examined maternal bonding and prosocial behavior primarily in childhood and adolescence, limited research has explored these relationships in adulthood, particularly in the Indian context. The present study addresses this gap by examining maternal bonding and emotional intelligence as predictors of adult prosocial behavior.

Review of Literature

Maternal bonding:

Adunola and Nurmi (2004) found that mother's psychological control is an important antecedent of their children's low academic performance, when combined with high level of affection.



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How to cite this article:

Katule, S., & Kakulte, A. (2026). Maternal Bonding and Emotional Intelligence as Correlates of Prosocial Behavior: A Psychological Perspective. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 284–287. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19348168>

This study was conducted to understand whether maternal affection moderates the impact of psychological control on child's mathematical performance. Wertz et al (2018) conducted a study on twins focused on maternal affection during early childhood has a reaction to development of personality traits at age 18. Dreidi et al (2024) conducted a study to understand the quality of mother child interaction and the mother's personality traits are important in defining the consequent effects on child's emotional and behavioral wellbeing. It aimed to investigate the mother child relationship and mother personality traits (Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Openness and Neuroticism) on a child emotional and behavioral wellbeing. Maselko et al (2011) observed that early nurturing and warmth have long lasting positive effects on mental health well into childhood. The study was conducted to understand whether mother's affection at 8 months predicts emotional distress in adulthood.

Prosocial Behavior:

Kakulte and Shaikh (2023) investigated the relationship between prosocial behavior, psychological wellbeing and positive, negative affect on adults. They found that people involved in prosocial behavior showed a positive correlation with psychological wellbeing and positive affect and negative correlation with negative affect. Arora and Rastogi (2018) conducted a study to find the correlation between prosocial behavior and self-esteem among young adults. Findings show that people with higher self-esteem are more likely to exhibit higher helping attitude i.e. they are more prone to engage in prosocial behavior. Peng et al (2024) conducted a study to find the impact of empathy on prosocial behavior among college students. The mediating role of moral identity and moderating role of sense of security. The study enriches the theoretical framework of relationship between empathy, moral identity, sense of security and prosocial behavior. Padilla-Walker et al (2015) examined longitudinal relations between parental media monitoring and adolescent explored indirect effects via sympathy and self-regulation. The findings suggested that restrictive and active media monitoring were indirectly associated with adolescent's prosocial behavior, aggression and externalizing behavior. Barton et al (2020) conducted a study to understand the relation between social capital and prosocial behavior among German children. Results indicate that social capital in the form of parent child interactions in the home and child religiosity is associated highly with prosocial behavior. Padilla-Walker (2015) examined bidirectional longitudinal links between prosocial and prosocial behaviour's results suggested depression predicted lower prosocial behaviour toward family members and anxiety predicted higher prosocial behaviour towards friends. Wang et al (2024) examined the relationship between social support and prosocial behaviour and have concluded that social support is an important factor in generating prosocial behavior. Chuanli Lu (2022) examined the relationship between parental emotional warmth and rural adolescents. The results showed that improving parental emotional warmth, perceived social support and encouraging rural adolescent's prosocial behaviour could effectively promote their hope. Xiang et al (2024) conducted a study to explore the relationship among gratitude, perceived social support, prosocial tendencies and psychological wellbeing in Chinese University students. They found that gratitude and perceived social support significantly predicted psychological wellbeing both directly and indirectly through prosocial tendencies.

Emotional Intelligence:

Shengyao (2024) examined the relationship of emotional intelligence with psychological well-being and academic achievement through positive psychological characteristics among university students in China. The study found that emotional intelligence was positively related to positive psychological characteristics, psychological well-being, and academic achievement, and the effects were stronger among postgraduate students. Also, positive psychological characteristics, which include self-efficacy, motivation, and resilience, mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being and academic achievement, and the relationship was stronger among postgraduate students. Harrod and Scheer (2005) on 200 youths of age 16-19, revealed a significant difference in the scores of males and females on emotional intelligence with females reporting higher EI level. Law, Wong, and Song (2004), in a study published in the highly selective, peer-reviewed *Journal of Applied Psychology*, offer further evidence for the unique contributions of EI. The authors found in one study that self-report measures of EI and personality together predicted life satisfaction better than did the personality measures alone. Van Rooy, Viswesvaran, and Pluta (2005) conducted a meta-analysis that provides further support for the claim that EI is distinct from either IQ or personality. Their analysis was based on 58 studies of the EI construct, involving over 8,000 research participants. They found that some self-report measures of EI did correlate highly with personality measures. However, ability-based measures of EI, such as the MSCEIT, did not correlate highly with either personality or cognitive ability. The overall correlation with personality was .13, and the correlation with cognitive ability was .34. Wang (2021) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and prosocial behavior (PSB) and constructed a model for their interaction by examining the mediating effect of social support (SS) and the moderating effect of self-esteem (SE) in this relationship. The results showed that: (1) EI positively predicted PSB; (2) SS partially mediated the relationship between EI and PSB; and (3) SE moderated the direct effect of EI on PSB and the relationship between SS and PSB. That is, when the SE of college students was higher, the effect of SS in promoting PSB was enhanced. Therefore, our results suggested that under the influence of both internal and external factors, there is an indirect effect of EI on PSB. This finding may potentially provide a theoretical basis for designing college students' mental health courses and cultivating PSB in college.

Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between maternal bonding and prosocial behavior in adulthood.
2. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and prosocial behavior in adulthood.
3. To determine whether maternal bonding and emotional intelligence predict prosocial behavior in adulthood.

Hypotheses

- H1: There will be a significant positive relationship between maternal bonding and prosocial behavior.
H2: There will be a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and prosocial behavior.
H3: Maternal bonding and emotional intelligence will significantly predict prosocial behavior in adulthood.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative, non-experimental correlational research design. Pearson's product-moment correlation and stepwise multiple regression analyses were conducted.

Participants

The sample consisted of 151 adults (91 females, 60 males) aged between 20 and 40 years. Participants were primarily residents of Maharashtra. Non-probability accidental sampling was used due to accessibility and feasibility constraints.

Measures

Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI)

The Mother Form of the PBI assesses perceived maternal care and overprotection. The instrument consists of 25 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale. The PBI has demonstrated good reliability and validity across cultures.

Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10)

The BEIS-10 is a 10-item self-report measure based on Salovey and Mayer's EI model. It assesses emotional perception, understanding, and regulation. Reliability coefficients range from .74 to .91.

Adult Prosocialness Behavior Scale (APBS)

The APBS is a 16-item Likert-type scale measuring prosocial tendencies in adults. The scale has demonstrated strong internal consistency ($\alpha \approx .90$) and construct validity.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through online platforms. After informed consent, they completed the questionnaires electronically. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and stepwise multiple regression to examine relationships and predictive effects among variables.

Results

Pearson correlation analysis revealed:

Variables		Maternal bonding	Emotional Intelligence	Prosocial behavior
Maternal bonding	Pearson's r	-----	0.407 ***	0.468***
	P value		<0.001	<0.001
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson's r	0.407***	-----	0.611***
	P value	<0.001		<0.001
Prosocial behavior	Pearson's r	0.468***	0.611 ***	-----
	P value	<0.001	<0.001	

Results showed a moderate positive correlation between maternal bonding and prosocial behavior($r=.468***$) with ($p<0.001$) which indicates that the results support the hypothesis stating that there will be a significant positive relationship between maternal bonding and prosocial behavior.

A moderate positive correlation between emotional intelligence and prosocial behavior($r=.611***$) with ($p<0.001$) was found which indicates that results support the hypothesis stating that there will be a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and prosocial behavior

Stepwise regression analysis showed:

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	RMSE	R ² Change	df1	df2	p
M ₀	0.000	0.000	0.000	10.472	0.000	0	150	
M ₁	0.611	0.373	0.369	8.319	0.373	1	149	< .001
M ₂	0.657	0.431	0.423	7.952	0.058	1	148	< .001

Stepwise regression revealed that maternal bonding explained 37% variance and emotional intelligence explained 6% additional variance making it 43% with $p<0.001$ which indicates that the results support the hypothesis stating that maternal bonding and emotional intelligence would predict prosocial behavior.

These findings indicate that both maternal bonding and emotional intelligence significantly contribute to prosocial behavior in adulthood.

Discussion

The findings support the hypotheses that maternal bonding and emotional intelligence are positively associated with prosocial behavior. Consistent with attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969), early maternal warmth appears to foster emotional security and empathy, which extend into adulthood. Emotional intelligence emerged as a strong predictor of prosocial behavior, aligning with previous research suggesting that emotional awareness and regulation enhance social functioning and helping behaviors. The study contributes to the limited literature examining adult prosocial behavior in the Indian context. It emphasizes the long-term impact of maternal bonding and emotional competence on socially beneficial behavior.

The findings highlight the importance of:

- Promoting positive maternal-child relationships.
- Integrating emotional intelligence training in educational and clinical settings.
- Encouraging parenting programs that emphasize emotional warmth and responsiveness.

Conclusion

The findings highlight the importance of maternal bonding and emotional intelligence in the development of prosocial behavior. The study findings can help mental health professionals in understanding the real-world impact of maternal bonding and emotional intelligence on the development of prosocial behavior. However, factors like environment, personality and temperament also need to be considered while predicting prosocial behavior in the individual. Future research can focus on integrating qualitative methods (e.g., interviews, focus groups) alongside quantitative surveys which can provide deeper insights into participants' personal experiences with maternal bonding and emotional intelligence, and how they perceive these as influencing their social behavior.

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Original Article

Study of Psychological Resilience and Horoscope Influence on the Cause and Recovery Rate in Cancer Patients

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180249

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 288-298

February - 2026

Submitted: 19 Jan. 2026

Revised: 29 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 14 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Abstract

This study explores the role of psychological resilience and Vedic astrological insights in understanding recovery among cancer patients and ways to improve framework in psycho-oncological counseling. It aims to explain why some patients recover more effectively than others even after receiving similar medical treatment. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected from five survivors and one deceased case through interviews, the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-25), and horoscope analysis by expert astrologer. Astrological charts were interpreted to identify planetary factors related to illness onset, recovery, individual strengths and weaknesses. Findings suggest that individuals with higher resilience and supportive astrological patterns showed better emotional adjustment and recovery outcomes. Personality tendencies derived from horoscope interpretation, like optimism, courage, or emotional sensitivity, provided deeper understanding of each patient's coping style and an added framework for understanding personality and coping patterns, aiming to make therapy more personalized. The study concludes that integrating horoscope profiling into psycho-oncological counseling, taking into consideration both scientific and traditional perspectives enrich the therapeutic process, fostering better emotional well-being, improved treatment adherence, and enhanced quality of life among patients.

Keywords: psychological resilience, vedic astrology, psycho-oncology, counseling, cancer, breast cancer, personalized interventions

Introduction

Cancer is a disease in which some of the body's cells grow uncontrollably and spread to other parts of the body. (National Cancer Institute, 2024). Cancer is not merely a physical illness but a psychological and emotional challenge for the patients, their families, and caregivers. (Fereidouni Z, Dehghan Abnavi S, et.al, 2024). Poor recognition of depression and anxiety is associated with reduced quality of life and survival. (BMJ 2018; 361: k1415). As commonly stated, the state of the mind influences the state of the body (Littrell, J., 2008), it becomes an important duty to fulfill and support the mental needs of cancer patients as well.

Psycho-oncology is an interdisciplinary field at the intersection of physical, psychological, social, and behavioral aspects of the cancer experience for both patients and caregivers. One of the most studied variables in psycho-oncology is **psychological resilience**. Resilience can be defined as the maintenance or fast recovery of mental health during or after exposure to significant stressors. (Kalisch, R., Baker, D.G., Basten, U. et al., 2017).

Having been diagnosed with cancer, more than one third of patients develop symptoms of depression, an adjustment disorder, or an anxiety disorder in the course of the next 5 years (Mitchell AJ, Chan M, Bhatti H, et al., 2011). Besides the loss of quality of life, these stress-related mental health problems have a negative impact on the prognosis of the oncological disease, as they lead to poorer adherence to the planned treatment and other unfavorable effects (DiMatteo MR, Lepper HS, et al., 2000). Therefore, interventions that promote resilience should be made available to interested and motivated cancer patients. These interventions should be provided, in parallel with somatic treatment, as soon as the diagnosis is made and should extend over more than 12 sessions whenever possible. (Ludolph, P., Kunzler, A. M., et al., 2019). On the other hand, spirituality has a positive influence on resilience in cancer patients, regardless of educational level.



Quick Response Code:



Website:

<https://jrdrvb.org/>

DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19348289](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19348289)



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How to cite this article:

Mutha, R. S., Acharya, R. K., & Kumar, Y. (2026). Study of Psychological Resilience and Horoscope Influence on the Cause and Recovery Rate in Cancer Patients. *Journal of Research and Development*, 18(2(XXII)), 288–298. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19348289>

Findings enhance the need to integrate the spiritual approach in psycho-oncological care to contribute to patients' emotional well-being. (Gutierrez-Rojas, A., Manco-Herrera, C., Nuñez-Escarcena, X. *et al.*, 2025). A study uncovers the value of ancient Hindu beliefs and practices such as yoga, Ayurveda, astrology, meditation, and devotional music and how they strengthen the well-being of individuals and families. (Munshi, N., Bhagwan, R, 2025). Astrology, often dismissed as pseudoscience, plays a significant psychological role in shaping individuals, emotions, decision-making, and self-perception. There is a need for an interdisciplinary field of Astro-Psychology, bridging astrology and mental health science. Future research should explore long-term effects, neuroscientific validation, and therapy-adjunctive applications of astrology. (Dabhade Bhupesh, 2025). The use of astrology in psycho-oncology counseling can serve as a complementary tool to create a personalized framework for each patient. This reduces the time counselors typically spend in assessing these dimensions from scratch, which is particularly valuable because **time is a critical factor in cancer care**. By drawing on pre-existing astrological data, counselors can smartly gain an initial understanding of the patient's inner resources and challenges. Therefore, this research aims to explore the dual interplay of psychological resilience and horoscope influence on increasing cancer recovery, and argues that when astrological insight is combined with scientific counseling approaches, a deeper, more personalized therapeutic framework becomes possible.

Rationale of Study

In the cancer journey, indeed the medical treatment is the primary factor affecting the recovery rate in the patients. But there is a gap in why some patients recover and some don't, even after receiving the same line of treatment. This gap highlights the importance of looking beyond medical factors and recognizing psychological, social and cultural influences in the healing process. Counselors typically spend significant time identifying a patient's personality traits, coping styles, strengths, and vulnerabilities through detailed conversations and psychological assessments. While this process is essential, it can also be time-consuming, particularly when patients are already burdened with the physical and emotional demands of treatment. Instead of spending long hours identifying coping styles from scratch, counselors may use horoscope analysis as a **complementary tool**. Horoscope charts can provide structured insights into personality tendencies, emotional strengths, and potential vulnerabilities, which can streamline understanding of patient needs. Even when patients do not believe in astrology, their horoscope can still serve as a **framework for personality assessment**, offering insights into strengths, weaknesses, and coping tendencies. This information can help psycho-oncological counselors design more effective, individualized interventions. The role of astrology in this study is not prescriptive but **interpretive and supportive**. This study will stand significant in approaching the patient with a **holistic model of care** of not only medical healing, but also going hand-in-hand with the psychological resilience, horoscope influence, which is an intersection in the recovery rate.

Statement of Problem

To study psychological resilience and horoscope influence on the cause and recovery rate in cancer patients.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine how horoscope influence shapes personality tendencies, strengths, weaknesses, health predispositions and vulnerabilities.
2. To explore the co-relation of psychological resilience with horoscope influence to understand the findings of the interpretations.
3. To analyse the potential of horoscope insights in enhancing the effectiveness of psycho-oncological counseling.
4. To assist counselors in designing a more patient-oriented framework by utilizing pre-existing horoscope data, thereby making the process more efficient, and to propose a culturally inclusive and personalized counseling model.

Hypothesis

In this study, we are adopting the method of qualitative analysis and hence, following is the hypothesis:

H1: —Horoscope patterns reflect strengths, weaknesses, personality traits and emotional tendencies of an individual. Integrating these insights can be used as a complementary tool in designing individualized interventions and offer more personalized approach towards psycho-oncological counseling. |

Research Design

The purpose of this study is to explore the dual role of psychological resilience and horoscope influence during the phases of being diagnosed with cancer and getting recovered from it. Hence, the design of this research has chosen to be qualitative in nature because it allows better connection and deeper exploration of the personal experiences, coping patterns and emotional tendencies in the participants and their family. This research involved collecting data from the participants in the form of semi-structured interviews, wherein the important information was collected and their personal experiences were deeply explored. This was then followed by the generation and interpretation of the astrological charts by Acharya Dr. Yogesh Kumar. This combination of information then enabled to examine how resilience is expressed in lived experiences and how horoscope-based insights may provide complementary perspectives for psycho-oncological counseling.

Selection of Sample

The sample of the present study included both cancer survivors and cases of deceased patients. The sample included cancer patients across different age groups, genders, religion, type of cancer and stage of the cancer who were willing to share their case history, experiences, attempt CD-RISC 25 scale and provide accurate birth details for horoscope generation. Patients & caregivers unwilling to participate in the study were excluded from the sampling.

- Number of Cases of Survivors = 5
- Number of Cases of Deceased = 1
- Total Sample of Cases = 6

Research Tools

To conduct this study, a combination of **structured questionnaires and qualitative interviews** were used to assess demographic data, case history collection, psychological resilience, and birth details effectively. To assess psychological resilience within the participants, **Connor Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 25)** was applied to derive the scores of resilience in the participants. After the birth data collection, **Astro Office Software – Version 2025** was used to generate horoscope charts as per the details provided by the participants. **Semi-structured interviews** were conducted with survivors and caregivers to gather qualitative insights into participants' lived experiences, medical complications, coping strategies, and motivational factors. These records served as reference material during the horoscope analysis, ensuring that narratives and astrological interpretations could be meaningfully compared and integrated.

Case Study Analysis

ASE NO.	PICIPANT CODE	TYPE OF CANCER	STATUS OF INDIVIDUAL
1	VD01	BREAST	SURVIVOR
2	SA02	BREAST	SURVIVOR
3	HA03	BREAST	SURVIVOR
4	AB04	BREAST	SURVIVOR
5	SM05	BREAST	SURVIVOR
6	JN-B06	BREAST	DECEASED

Case Study 01:

- Participant Code: VD01; Interviewee: Close Caregiver – Spouse
- Status of Participant: Survivor
- Age: 45
- Gender: Female
- Type of Cancer: Breast Cancer
- Stage of Cancer: First
- Type of Treatment Received: Chemo Therapy, Radiation Therapy, Surgery
- Current Status of Recovery: Treatment Completed, Fully Recovered
- Belief in Astrology: Yes

The close caregiver interviewed for this case was the spouse of the survivor. At the time of the interview, the participant had been living with the illness for more than three years, and the interviewee described their experiences of accompanying the survivor throughout the journey of diagnosis, treatment, and recovery.

According to the caregiver, the survivor responded to the illness with determination and courage from the start. He described how everyone in the family was fearful about the news of cancer, but not her. During treatment, the caregiver observed consistent mental strength within her and to all the emotional and physical requirements that were demanded by the treatment itself. She went through a moderate level of weakness as the side effects of the chemotherapy. She can independently perform all of her activities daily now. He shared that the survivor drew strength from an optimistic approach and self-belief. They also recalled moments when the survivor shared motivational thoughts or sayings, such as: "Nothing bad is going to happen."

- Participant Code: VD01
- Date of Birth: 30/09/1980; Time of Birth: 17:40PM; Place of Birth: Chiplun/Maharashtra
- Total Score on Connor-Davidson's Resilience Scale = 96 Diagnosis Month: January 2021; Recovery Month: January 2022 **Ascendant Sign: Pisces (Meen), Moon Sign: Gemini (Mithun)**

Astrological Observations of VD01:

- 1) North Node (Rahu) is positioned in the sign of Cancer (Karka) in the 5th house of the birth chart. This placement is

associated with the manifestation of breast- related ailments, as Cancer Sign governs the chest region in medical astrology.

- 2) The birth chart also exhibits Ardha-Kaal Sarp Yoga, which is generally considered an inauspicious configuration that may bring challenges or obstructions in life.
- 3) Venus (Shukra), the planet representing femininity and luxury, is placed in the 6th house (house of diseases). This placement predisposed the native to female- specific health concerns or hormonal imbalances.
- 4) The onset of cancer corresponded with the major planetary period (Mahadasha) of Saturn (Shani) and the sub-period (Antardasha) of the South Node (Ketu), triggering diseases or illnesses like cancer. Saturn activates the 7th House (House of Business and Spouse), 11th House (House of Gains) and 12th House (House of Weakness and Hospital), because of the position and being the planetary lord of Capricorn and Aquarius Signs.
- 5) Jupiter's aspect is believed to be filled with divine blessing. Jupiter (Guru) aspects the 11th house by its 5th aspect, the Ascendant (1st house) by its 7th aspect, and the 3rd house by its 9th aspect. Its benefic energy strengthens the native's vitality and resilience, especially through the 7th aspect on the Ascendant. Furthermore, Jupiter's 5th aspect on Ketu in the 11th house is considered a divine influence that aided in recovery.
- 6) Since the North Node (Rahu) occupies a favorable house and inherently possesses the quality of attraction, it not only manifested the illness but also drew healing circumstances and resources toward the individual. It also depicts the healing carried out by radiation therapy as North Node (Rahu) , the signifier of radiation therapy, is positioned in the 5th House (House of Solutions) in the birth chart.
- 7) The death-inflicting houses (Marakesh and Badhakesh) were not activated during the illness period, indicating that the planetary periods did not threaten life or longevity.

Psychological and Personality Traits Strengths:

1. Spiritually Strong: Neptune in the 9th house enhances higher consciousness and faith.
2. Energetic and Courageous: Mars in the 8th house provides inner strength and boldness to confront adversity.
3. Optimistic and Cheerful: The Moon in Gemini grants adaptability, intelligence, and a positive outlook.

Weaknesses:

1. Anger Issues: Mars in the 8th house may also cause emotional volatility and impulsive reactions.
2. Sense of Loneliness: The absence of planets in the preceding, current, and succeeding houses from the Moon forms Kema Druma Yoga, often linked with emotional isolation.
3. Dual Nature: As the Moon sign lord Mercury (Budh) is dual by nature, the native tends to experience indecision and inner conflict.

Case Study 02:

- Participant Code: SA02; Interviewee: Close Caregiver - Son
- Status of Participant: Survivor
- Age: 64
- Gender: Female
- Type of Cancer: Breast Cancer
- Stage of Cancer: Stage 3
- Type of Treatment Received: Chemo Therapy, Surgery - Mastectomy
- Current Status of Recovery: Treatment Completed, Fully Recovered
- Belief in Astrology: Yes

The close caregiver interviewed for this case was the survivor's son. The survivor has a documented history of asthma and hypertension, which were present prior to the cancer diagnosis and treatment course. At the time of the interview, the participant had been living with the illness of cancer for more than two years. The caregiver described his experiences of accompanying the survivor throughout the entire process of diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. The survivor underwent a mastectomy of the left breast and experienced weakness, nausea, body pain, weight fluctuations, and hair loss as side effects of chemotherapy. The intensity of these side effects varied from severe to mild depending on the phase and duration of treatment. At present, the survivor is able to independently perform all her daily activities. According to the caregiver, she initially responded to the diagnosis with fear and anxiety. Although she demonstrated strength and determination, it did not fully meet the demands of the challenges she faced, and she appeared physically and emotionally exhausted during the course of treatment. The caregiver perceived that her psychological resilience during the treatment period was relatively low. He also reflected on his own caregiving experience, describing it as stressful and emotionally taxing. When discussing the survivor's current mental state, the caregiver reported that she continues to experience anxiety regarding the possible recurrence of cancer.

Participant Code: SA02

Date of Birth: 29/12/1961 Time of Birth: 18:14PM Place of Birth:

Nashik

Total Score on Connor-Davidson's Resilience Scale = 58

Diagnosis Month: December 2022; Recovery Month: December 2023

Ascendant Sign: Gemini (Mithun), Moon Sign: Gemini (Mithun) Astrological Observations of SA02:

- 1) The primary illness configuration involves the position of Saturn (Shani), South Node (Ketu) and Jupiter (Guru) in the 8th House (Pain House) of the birth chart. When activated by planetary periods, such combinations can correlate with serious health challenges, therefore the conjunction or planetary periods of Saturn and South Node are predispositions for the occurrence or onset of cancer in any individual.
- 2) North Node (Rahu) is positioned in the sign of Cancer (Karka) in the 2nd house of the birth chart. This placement is associated with the manifestation of Breast-related ailments, as Cancer Sign governs the chest region in medical astrology.
- 3) The birth chart also exhibits Ardha-Kaal Sarp Yoga, which is generally considered an inauspicious configuration that may bring challenges or obstructions in life.
- 4) Venus (Shukra), the planet representing femininity and luxury, is placed in the 6th house (house of diseases). This placement predisposed the native to female-specific health concerns or hormonal imbalances.
- 5) The onset of cancer corresponded with the major planetary period (Mahadasha) of Venus (Shukra) and the sub-period (Antardasha) of the North Node (Rahu), triggering diseases or illnesses like cancer. Venus activates the 6th House (House of Diseases), 12th House (House of Weakness & Hospital) and 5th House (House of Solutions), because of its position and being the planetary lord of Libra and Taurus Signs.
- 6) Jupiter's position is believed to challenge the natural qualities of the house it is situated in and its aspect is believed to be filled with divine blessing. Since Jupiter is also placed in the 8th house (pain house) of the individual, it protects the individual from death, increases life expectancy and aids in recovery.
- 7) Jupiter (Guru) aspects the 12th house by its 5th aspect, the 2nd House by its 7th aspect, and the 4th house by its 9th aspect. Its benefic energy strengthens the best hospital treatment through the 5th aspect on the 12th house and 7th aspect on North Node. This is considered a divine influence that aided in recovery.
- 8) The death-inflicting houses (Marakesh and Badhakesh) were not activated during the illness period, indicating that the planetary periods did not threaten life or longevity.

Psychological and Personality Traits Strengths:

1. Energetic: Mars in the 7th house provides inner strength to confront adversity.
2. Optimistic: The Moon in Gemini grants adaptability, intelligence, social coping.
3. Intelligent in Communication: Exhibits good communication skills, learns quickly, is able to speak persuasively and build agreement during important situations.

Weaknesses:

1. Sense of Loneliness: The absence of planets in the preceding, current, and succeeding houses from the Moon forms Kema Druma Yoga, often linked with emotional isolation.
2. Interpersonal Communication Gap: Tendency toward direct or unsoftened speech can create perceived communication gaps, especially during stress.
3. Courage Gap: Although courage is present in the individual, combust Mars by Sun can reduce usable daring in real-time conflict. Therefore, the person is prone to
4. Experience consistent fear and anxiety.
5. Dual Nature: As the Moon sign lord Mercury (Budh) is dual by nature, the native tends to experience indecision and inner conflict.
6. Need of Emotional Support: There is a strong need of emotional support in the individual due to Jupiter-South Node Conjunction.

Case Study 03:

Participant Code: HA03; Interviewee: Self Status of Participant: Survivor

Age: 42 Gender: Female

Type of Cancer: Breast Stage of Cancer: Stage 2

Type of Treatment Received: Chemo Therapy, Radiation Therapy, Surgery – Mastectomy Current Status of Recovery:

Treatment Completed, Fully Recovered

Belief in Astrology: Yes

The interviewee for this case was the survivor herself. At the time of the interview, the participant had been living with the illness for more than five years, and she described her journey of diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. She was concurrently the primary caregiver for her mother, who had ovarian cancer with metastases to the uterus, breast, and peritoneum; despite these responsibilities, she remained calm upon detecting a lump in her own left breast and avoided panic. She underwent a mastectomy of the left breast, 8 cycles of chemotherapy every 15 days and 25+2 cycles of radiation therapy. She experienced severe body pain, weakness, sleep disturbances, weight gain and hair loss as side effects of chemotherapy & radiation therapy. She reported a major decrease in energy levels, recurrent episodes of crying and approximately took her a year to mentally overcome the trauma of cancer following the treatment completion.

At present, she is able to independently perform all her daily activities. She identified her partner and her daughters as the primary source of motivation for recovery. She also reflected on the need to get out of the fear of being completely threatened that some doctors pass on after diagnosing cancer. She strongly affirmed that God offers us whatever we ask for, in one or the other way. She defined recovery as discovering a new version of oneself rather than returning to a prior state. She emphasized her motivation to keep going, sharing her own words:

“Every challenge is a fresh new challenge. Live your life as it is playing out and move on to the next thing

Participant Code: HA03 Date of Birth: 26/02/1983 Time of Birth: 11:54AM

Place of Birth: Anand / Gujarat

Total Score on Connor-Davidson’s Resilience Scale = 86 Reference Birth Chart: Cusp Chart

Diagnosis Month: March 2020; Recovery Month: January 2021

Ascendant Sign: Taurus (Vrishabha), Moon Sign: Cancer (Karka) Astrological Observations of HA03:

1. The primary illness configuration involves the position of Saturn (Shani), in the 6th House (House of Diseases) of the birth chart, in the sign of Venus (Libra). Saturn is positioned at 10 degrees in the Swati constellation, whose constellation lord is North Node (Rahu). When activated by planetary periods, such combinations can correlate with serious health challenges, therefore the conjunction or planetary periods are predispositions for the occurrence or onset of cancer in any individual.
2. North Node (Rahu) is positioned in the sign of Taurus (Vrishabha) in the 1st house of the birth chart. The ruling planet of Taurus is Venus (Shukra), the planet representing femininity and luxury. Therefore, this malefic placement of North Node in Venus sign predisposed the native to female-specific health concerns or hormonal imbalances.
3. The onset of cancer corresponded with the major planetary period (Mahadasha) of Moon (Chandra) and the sub-period (Antardasha) of the Rahu (North Node), triggering diseases or illnesses like cancer. North Node activates the 11th House (House of Gains) because of its position, 1st House (House of Self) and 6th House (House of Diseases), being placed in the sign of Venus who is the planetary lord of Taurus and Libra Signs.
4. Jupiter’s position is believed to challenge the natural qualities of the house it is situated in and its aspect is believed to be filled with divine blessing. Jupiter (Guru) is positioned in the 7th house and aspects the 12th house by its 5th aspect, the 1st House by its 7th aspect, and the 3rd house by its 9th aspect. Its benefic energy protected the individual’s self and chest region which further aided in recovery.
5. The ruling planet of the solutions house (5th house) is positioned in the house of fortune (9th house) in the birth chart, supporting in recovery and problem- solving support.
6. The death-inflicting houses (Marakesh and Badhakesh) were not activated during the illness period, indicating that the planetary periods did not threaten life or longevity.

Psychological and Personality Traits Strengths:

1. Intelligent in Communication: Exhibits good communication skills, learns quickly, is able to speak persuasively and build agreement during important situations
2. Target – Oriented: The position of North Node in Ascendant grants a target- oriented approach to the individual who strives to complete the goals once decided to achieve.
3. Luxuries: The individual loves a life full of luxuries and has the fortune to achieve it too.
4. Optimistic: An Individual with Taurus Ascendant (Vrishabha) is optimistic and cheerful in nature.

Weaknesses:

1. Sense of Loneliness: The absence of planets in the preceding, current, and succeeding houses from the Moon forms Kema Druma Yoga, often linked with emotional isolation.
2. Low Energy Levels: Since, the individual is not exhibiting Mangalik yoga (Mars is not positioned in 1st, 4th, 7th, 8th or 12th house of birth charts), corresponds with reduced stamina, contributing to ‘severe’ chemotherapy-related physical weakness.
3. Sensitive Nature: The individual experiences emotional imbalances frequently, due to sensitive nature.
4. Need of Emotional Support: There is a strong need of emotional support in the individual due to Jupiter-South Node Conjunction.

Case Study 04

Participant Code: AB04; Interviewee: Self Status of Participant: Survivor

Age: 41 Gender: Female

Type of Cancer: Breast Stage of Cancer: Stage 3

Type of Treatment Received: Chemo Therapy, Radiation Therapy, Surgery - Lumpectomy

Current Status of Recovery: Treatment Completed, Fully Recovered Belief in Astrology: No

The interviewee for this case was the survivor herself. At the time of the interview, the participant had been living with the illness for more than four years, and she described her journey of diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. The survivor recognized herself as self- capable and responded to the illness with determination and courage from the

start. During the course of treatment, she reported that she was the one who treated herself on her own. She underwent a lumpectomy of the right breast and experienced severe weakness, sleep issues, an increase in weight and hair loss as side effects of chemotherapy. The survivor went through 8 cycles of chemotherapy every 15 days and 25+2 cycles of radiation therapy. The survivor also started with hormonal therapy, a side effect of which resulted in 2.7cm of non- malignant tumour in the brain, in the year 2022. She also shared experiences of continued follow-ups after the completion of treatment.

At present, she is able to independently perform all her daily activities. The participant highlighted that the primary source of motivation for her to get recovered was her family and her daughter. Even though she felt hopeless at some times, she continued to remain resilient and did not give up. She expressed belief in a higher power rather than traditional deity worship. During the course of her treatment, she recognized the need of counselling for cancer patients as very crucial. This realization motivated her to pursue a Postgraduate Diploma in Psycho-oncology after completing her treatment in 2022, and she is currently enrolled in a Master's program in Clinical Psychology. Her narrative reflects a strong sense of self-efficacy, emotional strength, and a positive approach toward life and healing.

Participant Code: AB04

Date of Birth: 29/05/1984 Time of Birth: 15:05PM

Place of Birth: Malkapur / Buldhana / Maharashtra

Total Score on Connor-Davidson's Resilience Scale = 97

Diagnosis Month: November 2020; Recovery Month: September 2021

Ascendant Sign: Virgo (Kanya), Moon Sign: Aries (Mesh)

Astrological Observations of AB04:

- 1) The primary illness configuration involves the position of Sun (Ravi), North Node (Rahu) and Venus (Shukra) in the 9th House (House of Fortune) of the birth chart, in the sign of Venus (Taurus). When activated by planetary periods, such combinations can correlate with serious health challenges, therefore the conjunction or planetary periods of Sun and North Node are predispositions for the occurrence or onset of cancer in any individual.
- 2) Sun (Ravi) & North Node (Rahu) are positioned in the sign of Taurus (Vrishabha) in the 9th house of the birth chart. The ruling planet of Taurus is Venus (Shukra), the planet representing femininity and luxury. Therefore, this malefic placement of Sun and North Node in Venus sign predisposed the native to female-specific health concerns or hormonal imbalances.
- 3) The birth chart exhibits Sangharsh Yoga (Conjunction of Saturn and Mars) in the 2nd House of the birth chart in the sign of Venus. This conjunction is generally considered an unbeneficial configuration that may bring consistent struggles or obstacles in life.
- 4) The onset of cancer corresponded with the major planetary period (Mahadasha) of North Node (Rahu) and the sub-period (Antardasha) of the Shukra (Venus), triggering diseases or illnesses like cancer. Venus activates the 2nd House (House of Speech & Wealth) and 9th House (House of Fortune), being the planetary lord of Libra and Taurus Signs.
- 5) Jupiter's position is believed to challenge the natural qualities of the house it is situated in and its aspect is believed to be filled with divine blessing. Jupiter (Guru) is positioned in the 4th house and aspects the 8th house by its 5th aspect, the 10th House by its 7th aspect, and the 12th house by its 9th aspect. Its benefic energy protects the individual from death through its 5th aspect on the 8th house and strengthens the best hospital treatment through the 9th aspect on the 12th house. This is considered a divine influence that aided in recovery.
- 6) Since Jupiter's 5th aspect is on Aries, the sign which rules the head of an individual, the tumour occurred in the brain but was found to be non- malignant in nature.
- 7) The ruling planet of the solutions house (5th house) is exalted in the birth chart, supporting in recovery and problem-solving support.
- 8) The death-inflicting houses (Marakesh and Badhakesh) were not powerfully activated during the illness period, indicating that the planetary periods did not threaten life or longevity.

Psychological and Personality Traits Strengths:

1. Optimistic & Strong: An Aries Moon (Mesh) confers vigor, initiative, and coping energy under pressure.
2. Innocent Nature: Conjunction of Moon and Mercury provides inner innocence and compassion to individuals.
3. Spiritual Nature: Exhibits belief in spiritual power and reliance on higher power functions as an adaptive coping mechanism.
4. Intuition: Moon in the 8th house (House depicting Hidden matters) grants higher intuition power, and enhances depth-awareness.

Weaknesses:

1. Constant Struggles: Individual faces consistent struggles and faces hardship in achieving anything due to Sangharsh Yoga.
2. Communication Gap: The individual experiences difficulties with interpersonal communication, at times tending

to overshare or speak with marked rudeness, while at other times preferring not to engage in conversation. This pattern is interpreted in relation to a Saturn–Mars conjunction in the 2nd house (House of Speech).

3. Low Energy Levels: Since, he person is not exhibiting Mangalik yoga (Mars is not positioned in 1st, 4th, 7th, 8th or 12th house of birth charts), corresponds with reduced stamina, contributing to ‘severe’ chemotherapy-related physical weakness.
4. Sometimes, the person experiences ‘mind-block’ conditions and cognitive overload.

Case Study 05

- Participant Code: SM05; Interviewee: Self
- Status of Participant: Survivor
- Age: 41
- Gender: Female
- Type of Cancer: Breast
- Stage of Cancer: Not Known
- Type of Treatment Received: Chemo Therapy, Radiation Therapy, Surgery
- Current Status of Recovery: Treatment Completed, Fully Recovered
- Belief in Astrology: Yes

The interviewee for this case was the survivor herself. At the time of the interview, the participant had been living with the illness for more than two years, and she described her journey of diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. She identified as self-reliant and initially sought medical consultations independently until an FNAC result prompted a biopsy recommendation. She responded to the illness with determination and courage from the start. During the course of treatment, she reported that she pursued her job and chemotherapy hand-in-hand without taking breaks. She underwent a lumpectomy of the right breast and experienced mild weakness, sleep issues, weight gain and hair loss as side effects of chemotherapy. She maintained an optimistic outlook and was grounded in nature.

Reflecting on her experience, she stated that, *“Such challenges make us realise that we are strong, teach us a lot of important life lessons and increase self-confidence.”*

Participant Code: SM05

Date of Birth: 12/04/1985 Time of Birth: 10:55AM

Place of Birth: Solapur / Maharashtra

Total Score on Connor-Davidson’s Resilience Scale = 70

Diagnosis Month: December 2022; Recovery Month: December 2023 **Ascendant Sign: Gemini (Mithun), Moon Sign: Sagittarius (Dhanu)**

Reference Birth Chart: Cusp Chart

Astrological Observations of SM05:

- 1) The primary illness configuration involves the position of Saturn (Shani), South Node (Ketu) in the 5th House (House of Solutions) of the birth chart, in the sign of Venus (Libra). When activated by planetary periods, such combinations can correlate with serious health challenges, therefore the conjunction or planetary periods of Saturn and South Node are predispositions for the occurrence or onset of cancer in any individual.
- 2) Saturn (Shani) & South Node (Ketu) is positioned in the sign of Libra (Tula) in the 5th house of the birth chart. The ruling planet of Libra is Venus (Shukra), the planet representing femininity and luxury. Therefore, this malefic placement of Saturn and South Node in Venus sign predisposed the native to female-specific health concerns or hormonal imbalances.
- 3) The secondary illness configuration involves the position of Mars (Mangal), North Node (Rahu) in the 11th House (House of Gains) of the birth chart, in the sign of Mars (Aries).
- 4) The onset of cancer corresponded with the major planetary period (Mahadasha) of North Node (Rahu) and the sub-period (Antardasha) of the Moon (Chandra), triggering diseases or illnesses like cancer. Moon activates the 7th house (Partner House) & 2nd House (Death-Inflicting House) because of its position and being the planetary lord of Cancer Sign. Cancer sign governs the chest region in medical astrology, manifesting breast related ailments.
- 5) Jupiter’s position is believed to challenge the natural qualities of the house it is situated in and its aspect is believed to be filled with divine blessing. Since Jupiter is placed in the 8th house (pain house) of the individual, it majorly protects the individual from death, increases life expectancy and aids in recovery.
- 6) Jupiter (Guru) aspects the 12th house by its 5th aspect, the 2nd House by its 7th aspect, and the 4th house by its 9th aspect. Its benefic energy strengthens the best hospital treatment through the 5th aspect of the 12th house. This is considered a divine influence that aided in recovery.
- 7) Only one death-inflicting house (2nd House) was activated, while other death-inflicting houses (Marakesh and Badhakesh) were not activated during the illness period. Along with this, Jupiter majorly acted as a saviour and increased the life expectancy of the individual.

Psychological and Personality Traits Strengths:

1. Target – Oriented: The Moon in Sagittarius grants a target oriented approach to the individual who strives to complete the goals once decided to achieve.
2. Optimistic and Happy-Go-Lucky Nature: A Gemini Ascendant grants cheerfulness, intelligence, sociability and a positive outlook.
3. Supportive Partner: Partner is supportive in nature, which further enhances coping resources.
4. Luxuries: The individual loves a life full of luxuries and has the fortune to achieve it too.

Weaknesses:

1. Courage Gap: Courage is conferred in the individual with Mars being positioned in its own sign (Aries), but since, the person exhibits absence of Mangalik yoga (Mars is not positioned in 1st, 4th, 7th, 8th or 12th house of birth charts), it can reduce usable daring in real-time conflict.
2. Outbursts of Anger: Since the birth chart exhibits Mars-North Node conjunction (Angarak Yoga), a person is prone to experience issues like outbursts of anger.
3. Dual Nature: As the Ascendant lord is Mercury (Budh), the person shows duality by nature; the native tends to experience indecision and inner conflict.

Case Study 06:

Participant Code: JN-B06; Interviewee: Sister Status of Participant: Deceased

Age: 47 Gender:

Female

Type of Cancer: Breast Stage of Cancer: Stage 4

Type of Treatment Received: Chemo Therapy, Radiation Therapy, Surgery - Mastectomy Belief in Astrology: Yes

The information for this case was obtained through an interview with the participant's

Sister. The participant was diagnosed with breast cancer and underwent mastectomy at the time of diagnosis. Systemic therapy (chemotherapy) was not initiated initially and was introduced after metastasis was identified, along with radiotherapy, by which time the disease had progressed (Stage IV - metastatic). The participant experienced severe weakness, vomiting, body pain and hair loss as the side effects of chemotherapy.

Treatment remained incomplete at the time of death. In the later phase of illness, she was able to perform only some activities of daily living. According to the caregiver, the participant's emotional state fluctuated over the course of the illness, although she was otherwise described as fearless and strong. The caregiver recalled that coping within the family was challenging and the participant did not receive the expected support from her spouse who unexpectedly died in 2013. In the later stages of life, she expressed major mental imbalances including confiding important matters to her son, declining clothing or personal items, and repeatedly expressing that —someone is coming to take me away.

The participant passed away on 16 May 2014. In reflection, the caregiver described the final phase as emotionally distressing, highlighting the complexity of the journey.

Participant Code: JN-B06 Date of Birth: 21/07/1967 Time of Birth: 16:05PM

Place of Birth: Rajgurunagar / Pune

Total Score on Connor-Davidson's Resilience Scale = 63 Diagnosis Date: March 2011; Date of Death: 16/05/2014

Ascendant Sign: Scorpio (Vrischik), Moon Sign: Capricorn (Makar)

Astrological Observations of JN-B06:

1. The primary illness configuration involves the position of Mars (Mangal), South Node (Ketu) in the 12th House (House of Weaknesses & Hospitals) of the birth chart, in the sign of Venus (Libra). When activated by planetary periods, such combinations can correlate with serious health challenges, which are predispositions for the occurrence or onset of cancer in any individual.
2. Mars (Mangal) and South Node (Ketu) are positioned in the sign of Libra (Tula) in the 12th house of the birth chart. The ruling planet of Libra is Venus (Shukra), the planet representing femininity and luxury. Therefore, this malefic placement of Mars and South Node in Venus sign predisposed the native to female-specific health concerns or hormonal imbalances.
3. The secondary illness configuration involves the position of North Node (Rahu) in the 6th House (House of Diseases) of the birth chart, in the sign of Mars (Aries). These configurations majorly attract wrong treatments. This was confirmed by the caregiver that the doctor didn't prescribe chemotherapy after mastectomy until metastasis, which generally doesn't fit the protocol.
4. The onset of cancer corresponded with the major planetary period (Mahadasha) of Jupiter (Guru) and the sub-period (Antardasha) of the Mercury (Budh), triggering diseases or illnesses. Jupiter activated the 9th House (Death-Inflicting House), 2nd House (Death-Inflicting House) and 5th House (House of Solutions). Mercury activated the 8th house (Pain House) & 11th House (House of Gains).
5. Death inflicting houses for this individual were 2nd House, 7th House as Marakesh and 9th House as Badhakesh. The date of death corresponds with the major planetary period (Mahadasha) of Jupiter (Guru) and the sub-period (Antardasha) of Venus (Shukra), triggering death circumstances. Jupiter activated the 9th House (Badhakesh), 2nd

House (Marakesh) while Venus activated the 7th house (Marakesh). This activation of all the death-inflicting houses during the illness period caused the event of death.

Psychological and Personality Traits Strengths:

1. Strong Memory: A Scorpio Ascendant (Vrischik) has strong memory and is associated with depth of recall.
2. Disciplined: The individual was disciplined, strict and a narrow approach towards situations/tasks.
3. Fearless & Energetic: The individual exhibits Manglik Yoga, Mars being placed in the 12th house and the ascendant is the sign of Mars (Scorpio).
4. Therefore, this provides inner strength and boldness to confront adversity
5. Optimistic & Spiritual Nature: Exhibits belief in positive outlook, spiritual power and reliance on higher power functions as an adaptive coping mechanism.

Weaknesses:

1. Outbursts of Anger: Since the birth chart exhibits Mars-North Node conjunction (Angarak Yoga) in 12th House, the person is prone to experience issues like outbursts of anger.
2. Inflexible: The individual was very inflexible, rigid about her thoughts, and adherence to fixed methods may have limited adaptability in complex circumstances.
3. Sense of Loneliness: The absence of planets in the preceding, current, and succeeding houses from the Moon forms Kema Druma Yoga, often linked with emotional isolation.
4. Need of Emotional Support: There is a strong need for emotional support in the individual.

Results

The primary objective was to identify the causes, recovery patterns, individual strengths, and psychological vulnerabilities of participants diagnosed with cancer. To assess the psychological status of each individual, we calculated psychological resilience scores using standardized measures. Consistent astrological patterns emerged across all case studies, revealing various challenging planetary configurations involving the activation of Shani (Saturn), Rahu (North Node), Ketu (South Node), Mangal (Mars), and Shukra (Venus) during Major Planetary Period (Mahadasha) or Sub-Period (Antardasha). These configurations provided insights into the astrological predispositions toward cancer manifestation. The analysis revealed how specific planetary rulers (rashi lords) and zodiac signs govern particular body regions, and how their activation during certain planetary periods (dashas) can trigger illness onset. Recovery patterns were strongly correlated with planetary support systems. When individuals possessed sufficient psychological and physical resilience to withstand cancer's demands, combined with 'inactive' Maraka houses (death- inflicting houses) and benefic aspects from Guru (Jupiter) or other supportive planetary influences, they demonstrated higher recovery probabilities through divine influence. Conversely, in cases where individuals exhibited strength and capability but experienced powerful activation of all Maraka houses during critical periods, survival became challenging despite their inherent resilience. The astrological analysis provided a comprehensive personality framework. Planetary positions and periods not only indicated cancer predispositions but also revealed individual psychological strengths and vulnerabilities.

Through systematic case-by-case astrological correlation analysis, this research identified distinct patterns explaining differential recovery outcomes among cancer patients receiving similar medical treatments. The comprehensive personality assessment derived from each individual's astrological analysis was systematically documented through consultation with Acharya Dr. Yogesh Kumar. These character trait evaluations provide essential insights into the innate psychological tendencies of each participant, serving as a foundational framework for establishing therapeutic rapport and designing targeted interventions during individualized psycho-oncological counseling sessions. The astrological personality profiling will enable counselors to strategically leverage each patient's inherent strengths while providing supportive interventions for identified vulnerabilities. This strength-based therapeutic approach allows for more efficient and personalized treatment planning. For patients exhibiting optimistic and cheerful dispositions (as indicated by benefic planetary influences such as Jupiter aspects or favorable Moon or Ascendant Signs), counselors can readily introduce affirmative meditation practices and positive visualization techniques. These individuals typically demonstrate intrinsic motivation and self-directed engagement in therapeutic activities, requiring minimal external encouragement. When astrological analysis reveals inherent courage and fearlessness (often associated with strong Mangal (Mars) placements or Simha (Leo) influences), therapeutic interventions focus on activating and amplifying these dormant qualities. Counselors can employ empowerment strategies and resilience-building techniques to help patients mobilize their inner warrior spirit against cancer. Importantly, cancer- related fears identified during treatment should be recognized as situational responses rather than core personality traits, allowing counselors to address these anxieties as temporary psychological adaptations rather than fundamental character flaws. For individuals predisposed to feelings of isolation and loneliness (indicated by configurations such as Kemadruma Yoga), supportive therapy building becomes crucial. Most cancer patients experience existential isolation and social disconnection during treatment. When astrological patterns suggest heightened vulnerability to loneliness, counselors can preemptively strengthen the therapeutic relationship and emphasize continuous psychosocial support. This approach helps mitigate emotional distress and provides patients with reassuring anchors throughout their treatment journey.

In cases where astrological analysis indicates tendencies toward anger dis- regulation (such as Angarak Yoga or challenging Mangal aspects), counselors can proactively integrate emotion regulation strategies and specialized anger management interventions into the treatment protocol. Early identification of these patterns allows for preventive therapeutic planning rather than reactive crisis management. Therefore, these insights proved invaluable for developing personalized psycho-oncological interventions.

Conclusion

The study concluded that psychological resilience significantly contributes to the mental and physical recovery of cancer patients. Incorporating horoscope influence as a complementary tool into psycho-oncological counseling aims to provide an added framework for understanding personality and coping patterns, making therapy more personalized. The integration of both scientific and traditional perspectives enriches the therapeutic process, fostering better emotional well-being, improved treatment adherence, and enhanced quality of life among patients.

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Original Article

Effects of Mindfulness Practices on Competitive Anxiety among Athletes

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Manuscript ID:

JRD -2026-180250

ISSN: 2230-9578

Volume 18

Issue 2(XXII)

Pp. 299-304

February - 2026

Abstract:

Emotions play an important role in how people think and act, affecting attention and memory. Research has highlighted how disgust uniquely affects cognition compared to other emotional states. This study aims to examine the effect of disgust-evoking images on nonsense syllable recall through a within-subject experimental design. The study is based on adolescent and young adult sample ($N=38$) with age ranging from 17 to 26 years. Results revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the number of nonsense syllables correctly recalled after exposure to neutral images and the number of nonsense syllables correctly recalled after exposure to disgust-evoking images ($p = 0.003$). These findings can help improve information retention by informing the use of structured instruction and exposure to reduce the disruptive effects of disgust on memory recall. This approach may enhance recall in medical, forensic, and public settings.

Keywords: disgust, memory recall, attention, nonsense syllables

Submitted: 20 Jan. 2026

Revised: 30 Jan. 2026

Accepted: 15 Feb. 2026

Published: 28 Feb. 2026

Emotions play a fundamental role in guiding human cognition and behaviour, influencing processes such as attention and memory. Disgust is a negatively-valenced emotion that helps avoid disease (Rozin & Fallon, 1987; Tybur, Lieberman, Kurzban, & DeScioli, 2013) by motivating avoidance of stimuli that could cause physical or psychological contamination (Rozin, Haidt, & Fincher, 2009). Disgust is a universally experienced emotion that originally evolved as a protective reaction against consuming harmful substances. Over time, it has expanded beyond this basic function to serve as a mechanism that helps individuals avoid stimuli that may threaten their physical, psychological, or moral well-being.

Disgust and Attention

Research has highlighted how disgust uniquely affects cognition compared to other emotional states. Disgust has been shown to influence how attention is directed and maintained, particularly at the earliest stages of perception. Hooff et al. (2013) investigated whether images that evoke fear and disgust produce different patterns of attentional bias. Their findings indicated that emotion-specific attentional effects emerge at very early stages of visual processing and that, unlike fear-evoking images, disgust-evoking images tend to capture and hold attention for a longer duration. Disgust can involuntarily capture cognitive resources, temporarily affecting the speed and efficiency of responses to other stimuli. Experimental studies have used reaction-time tasks to explore this attentional pull. Van Hooff et al. (2014) examined the features of an anticipated disgust-specific effect using a covert orienting task that included disgust.

Introduction

Sports preparation is not just solely about being physically prepared, being psychologically prepared and readiness is an equally crucial role in determining an athlete's achievement. There are various psychological factors, competitive anxiety is defined as the crucial elements of performance outcome, impacting both on achieving success and ability to cope with failure. Competitive anxiety is mainly experienced prior to the event and during the performance and has positive and negative effects that extend the performance itself. To understand competitive anxiety, it is the emotional and physiological response experienced by the athletes while participating and during the session of performances.



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DOI:

[10.5281/zenodo.19348410](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19348410)



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How to cite this article:

Suhani Sahani. (2026). Effects of Mindfulness Practices on Competitive Anxiety among Athletes. Journal of Research and Development, 18(2(XXII)), 299–304. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19348410>

This is experienced by the athletes through the feelings of constant worry, negative and intrusive thoughts, nervousness, breathlessness, increase in the heartbeat, muscle tension, self doubt and all this can negatively impact the overall athletes well-being and performance. However, a moderate level of anxiety is good for the athletes, as it acts as an important factor of motivation, enhances vigilance, and readiness to perform. However, experiencing excessive anxiety has a negative impact and reduces the quality of the performance of the athletes as it reduces attention, focus, coordination and overall performance of the athletes. (Baltzell & Akhtar, 2014) There is a relationship between performance and arousal which is explained in Yerkes Yerkes Law, which states that optimal performance arises at moderate levels of arousal. (Yerkes Dobson, 1908) Competitive anxiety is a concept that possesses many dimensions that involves components that are internal as well as can be observed. According to Krug (1976) anxiety can be understood by the terms of overt and covert anxiety. First, symptoms that can be observed are more physical characteristics, which includes sweating, trembling, restlessness and increased rate of heartbeat. These are known as somatic anxiety or overt anxiety. (Krug, 1976) Similarly symptoms that are internal are not visible to others, which includes self doubt, worry, intrusive thoughts, fear of failure etc. These are known as cognitive anxiety or covert anxiety. Both overt anxiety and covert anxiety equally influence athletes' performance as physiological tension can disrupt the motor coordination of the athletes and the internal distress can lead to weakened concerns and decision making. Both overt and covert anxiety, the dimensions are being distinctly assessed in Krug Self Analysis Form in competitive context. (Krug, 1976) In response to the negative consequences, Mindfulness Practices has come across to be an effective psychological intervention in sport psychology. To simplify Mindfulness practices is defined as to be intentional, awareness about present moment experiences without being judgmental. (Baltzell & Akhtar, 2014). The essential work of Jon Kabat Zinn put up the effectiveness of acceptance of internal experiences rather than taking up the approach of avoidance and suppression. Involving with emotions and thoughts reduces psychological distress. In sport setting athletes in order to deal with anxiety, mindfulness practices acts as an element that enhances attentional control, emotional regulations, and managing arousal can lead to having a positive performance state. (Kabat-Zinn, 1990) Research done by Amy Baltzell and Saba Akhtar highlighted how short mindfulness meditation training can reduce anxiety and enhance psychological functioning. And how structured psychologically intervention skill is equally important as physical training in athletes completion preparation. (Baltzell & Akhtar, 2014) For the purpose of present study, competitive anxiety is operationally measured with scores obtained on the selected standardized competitive anxiety that is administered before and after the intervention.

Statement of the problem

This study brings spotlight on competitive anxiety that negatively impacts the athletes performance both physiologically and psychological well-being. Despite the growing awareness and knowledge about psychological training in sport psychology, there is still quite limited research that examines effectiveness of mindfulness on reducing anxiety in natural setting sports.

Hence, the Study investigates the effects of mindfulness practices on competitive Anxiety among athletes.

Objective of the Study

To obtain the level of competitive anxiety of the athletes before intervention. Providing mindfulness based intervention practices.

To analyse the effectiveness of mindfulness practices in reducing competitive anxiety. To compare Anxiety levels between Experimental and controlled groups.

Hypothesis: Athletes who received mindfulness intervention will demonstrate significantly lower post-test anxiety scores compared to their pre-test scores and compared to the control group

Significant of this study

This study helps growing in the field of sport Psychology, by examining the effects of Mindfulness Practices in reducing anxiety. This provides practical knowledge and techniques that can be used by coaches, sport Psychologists and athletes by including mindfulness practices into the training schedule and settings. Moreover, adds on the literature of body on mindfulness practices in sport settings context. And Highlights importances of covert and overt anxiety symptoms to improve overall athletes performance.

Review of literature

Competitive Anxiety came into picture through many phrases, it has been analysed and a lot of theories are established. One of them is brought up by Robert Yerkes and John Dillingham Dodson, their theory is named Inverted U Hypothesis. This theory states that physiological arousal can lead to an increase in optimal level in the performance. (Yerkes & Dodson, 1908). It is said that moderate rate of anxiety enhances arousal and activeness whereas excessive anxiety can lead to reduction of concentration and lead to issues in coordination. (Yerkes & Dodson, 1908)

Relaxation Response theory was brought up by Herbert Benson ; it states how an individual can use relaxation techniques to calm down the physical state by slowing down, reducing heart rate, stress and muscle tension. Calm responses to anxiety experienced before competition can be tackled by reducing overt symptoms by deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation. (Benson, 1975)

Cognitive Behavioural Theory states that

our emotional reactions are greatly influenced by our thinking pattern. This helps us to understand the cognitive

component of anxiety. Intensity of competitive anxiety can increase negative self-talk, intrusive and catastrophic thoughts. By modifying maladaptive thoughts patterns through positive affirmation, cognitive reframing can reduce covert anxiety through these interventions. (Beck, 1976)

In sport psychology, anxiety management strategies have furthermore expanded through mindfulness based approaches. Research by Amy Baltzell and colleagues have especially adapted mindfulness practices for athletes. Their work highlights present moment awareness and acceptance of competitive anxiety, and attention Control.

Their study brings out that short mindfulness training can reduce anxiety experienced before the competition and can improve their focus and performance consistency. In a competitive environment both physiological arousal and cognitive interference can be regulated through mindfulness intervention by encouraging athletes to observe their anxious thoughts without judgment and redirecting them into task relevant cues. (Baltzell & Akhtar, 2014)

Despite all the extensive research and practical knowledge about competitive anxiety and its management, there are still some crucial gaps remaining in the already existing literature.

Early theory of Inverted U Hypothesis that states relationship between arousal and performance, they primarily described the outcome and did not provide with structure, short term Intervention strategies that can be anticipated by the athletes in real life settings.

Relaxation Response theory provides a framework that helps in emotional regulation of stress and mainly focuses on somatic symptoms, covering limited cognitive components such as worry, fear of failure, and intrusive thoughts.

Cognitive Behavioural approaches have anticipated maladaptive thinking patterns; however all cognitive restructuring intervention often requires long duration, systematic therapeutic structure setting, trained professionals which may not always be likely within the sport training routine schedules. Mindfulness until now has provided promising results in Sport Psychology. Already existing research has focused on long and structured programs inspired

by the clinical settings instead of short and practical techniques which are easier to include in sport settings. Moreover, only few researchers have covered the overt and covert dimension of competitive anxiety within a short intervention framework. Much previous research has controlled settings and semi-controlled environments rather than natural settings where athletes actually get trained.

Additionally, there is a need for more quasi-experimental research designs that directly compare the intervention and control groups. Hence, there exists a gap in applied research examining a brief, structured mindfulness intervention in natural settings context can reduce competitive anxiety, among the athletes in both physiological and psychological domains.

This study fills the gap using short mindfulness practices in real life settings and checks whether it works by using Krug's standardized self-analysis test. (Krug, 1976)

Methodology

This study is structured in quasi experimental pretest and posttest control group design to examine the effects of Mindfulness Practices on Competitive Anxiety among Athletes. In this design there are two groups, one is an experimental group and one is a controlled group.

The experimental group consisted of 10 athletes, they received mindfulness intervention however the controlled group consisting of 10 athletes, didn't receive any intervention. These two groups were assessed through standardized measures of competitive anxiety before and after the intervention period. The settings

Settings

The study was conducted in a natural sports setting rather than laboratory settings. The sessions were held doing the regular practice sessions of the athletes, to enhance practical and real life athlete condition.

Sample

The sample consisted of 20 athletes, 10 males and 10 females, competitive athletes are from different sports backgrounds.

Experimental group 10, received intervention Controlled group 10, did not receive any intervention.

All participants actively engaged in the sport along with study.

The samples were selected using convenience sample technique, based on the athletes willingness and availability to be involved in the Study.

Inclusive criteria

Athletes actively involved in sports, attend regular training sessions, they were from age range of to 19-22 years old, willing to provide informed consent.

Exclusion criteria

Athletes that understand psychological therapy, diagnoses with any psychological disorder, unable to attend regular training sessions, and who have already experienced mindfulness training.

Tools/ instruments

Competitive anxiety was measured using Krug's Self Analysis Form, the 1976 version that was developed by S.F. Krug. (Krug, 1976)

This test consisted of 40 items, assessing behaviors related to anxiety and emotional responses.

This scale measures covert anxiety that is internal and overt anxiety that can be observed. The higher the score the

higher the competitive anxiety. (Krug, 1976)

Procedure

Before any intervention, all the 20 athletes were provided the Krug Self Analysis Form as a pre-test in order to assess the level of competitive anxiety.

The experimental group received structured mindfulness. The control group didn't receive any training in mindfulness during that period.

The mindfulness Intervention practices were given to the experimental group for 2 weeks, 3 days per week, approximately 20 mins each session, in total 6 sessions were conducted.

This mindfulness intervention included

Deep breathing, muscle relaxation, visualisation of pre performance anxiety and cognitive restructuring through positive affirmation Such As I am calm, I can do this, I got this.

The Intervention procedure that was conducted was inspired by the procedure of mindfulness based sport psychology as the framework done by Amy Baltzell and Saba Akhtar 2014. Which was adapted and fit through the duration and context of this study. (Baltzell & Akhtar, 2014)

After intervention for 2 weeks, the Krug Self Analysis Form was re-administered on all the 20 athletes as a post test.

Statistical analysis

The collected data was analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science, Version 20). Descriptive statistics that include mean and standard deviation were used to calculate scores. To access within the group different paired t-tests were used, and independent sample t-tests were used in order to compare post-test difference between the control and experimental group. The statistical significance was 0.05

Data analysis

Competitive Anxiety was analysed using a statistical procedure in order to examine the effectiveness of mindfulness intervention. Descriptive statistics was used to calculate pre and post test scores of both experimental and controlled groups. Statistical significance was found to be at the $p < .05$.

Results

Athletes who received mindfulness intervention will demonstrate significantly lower post test anxiety scores as compared to pre test anxiety scores.

Table 1: Paired Samples t-test for pre test and post test anxiety (Experimental group).

Measure	M	Mean difference	t	df	p
Pre test	40.3				
Post Test	32.4	7.9	9.03	9	<.001

N=10, The result were the statistically signification at $p < .05$

The paired sample t-test indicates that anxiety scores were lower at post test ($M=32.4$) and pre test ($M=40.3$), $t(9)=9.03$, $p < .001$. Hence hypothesis 1 is supported.

Athletes receiving mindfulness intervention will demonstrate lower post-test anxiety scores as compared to the control group.

Table 2: Independent Sample t-test comparing post test scores between groups.

Group	M	t	df	p
Experimental	32.4			
Control	40.0	-2.76	18	.013

An independent sample t-test revealed a difference in the post test anxiety scores between the experimental group ($M=32.4$) and controlled group ($M=40.0$), $t(18)= -2.76$, $p=.013$.

Hence, hypothesis 2 is supported.

The results determine a significant reduction in post-test anxiety scores among the athletes of the experimental group as compared to their pre test scores.

After comparison between the scores of the experimental and controlled group. The experimental group has experienced reduced post test anxiety as compared to the control group. This shows that mindfulness practices are effective in reducing competitive anxiety among the athletes.

The findings are consistent with the theoretical proposition that the Yerkes Dobson Law, which suggests that regularly excessive experience of arousal can have a negative impact on performance. The findings are consistent with theoretical proposition suggesting that regulations of excessive arousal may facilitate optimal performance conditions.

Relaxation Response. As it helps in the overt symptoms also known as physiological symptoms of anxiety through breathing, and relaxation techniques. Furthermore, Cognitive Behavioural Theory determines reduction of covert anxiety through better regulations of thoughts.

The findings are aligned with research done by Amy Baltzell and colleagues that demonstrate how short structured mindfulness intervention can enhance emotional regulations and reduce competitive anxiety in athletes. And furthermore, provides literature on mindfulness intervention in sport settings.

Conclusion

This study puts spotlight on how short mindfulness practices can significantly reduce anxiety among athletes. In the experimental group, the athletes who participated in structured mindfulness intervention sessions experienced lower anxiety levels as compared to the controlled group. The findings highlight the value and importance of involving skills training along with physical training into the preparation in competitive setting sports.

Implications

The findings suggest how effective mindfulness intervention is and how it can serve as a practical psychological tool for athletes. Coaches and sport psychologists may blend deep breathing, attention focus training, and cognitive awareness practices into the regular training schedule and routine in order to enhance emotional regulations before competition.

Limitation

Despite promising studies that suggest that mindfulness intervention can serve as an effective and practical psychological intervention tool for athletes, the Study is limited as the sample is relatively small, which may affect its applicability on a large population. The study relied on self report measures and can lead to openness for it to get affected by response bias. Along with it this duration of the studies' intervention is relatively short so long term effects were not assessed.

Future direction

Future research may include larger samples, across more different sport dimensions and disciplines. Longitudinal studies recommend examining long term effects of mindfulness intervention. And furthermore more psychological intervention can be compared for effective mindfulness intervention in reducing competitive anxiety.

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