

A Comparative Study of Psychological Well-being based on Duration and Frequency of Voluntary Activities

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ABSTRACT

Psychological well-being is defined as positive self-perception, good relationship with people, environmental dominance, autonomy, the meaning of life and emotions in the direction of healthy development (Ryff, 1995). There are various components of psychological well-being like self-acceptance, positive relationships, autonomy and there are various factors which can affect the level of one's psychological well-being. Past researches have shown that engaging in any kind of prosocial behaviour or volunteering for some social cause has positive effects like elevation of mood, increase in confidence, developing positive relations. The present study aimed at comparing the psychological wellbeing of participants based on their duration and frequency of prosocial activities. The sample size was 122 college students engaged in some kind of prosocial behaviour out of which 40 were males and 82 were females. The data was collected using non-probabilistic purposive sampling method and the research design used was 2 x 2 factorial design. To measure psychological well-being the Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-being (42 item) was used along with a personal data sheet which included details about duration and frequency of voluntary behaviour. The data was statistically analysed using SPSS 20. The results of ANOVA show there is no significant effect of duration as well as frequency on the PWB of college students. Thus, it is concluded that duration of less than 6 months or more than 6 months as well as frequency of 15 days or less is not sufficient enough to have any significant effect on PWB.

Keywords: *Volunteering, Psychological Well-Being, Students, Duration, Frequency*

The practice of volunteering for a social cause is prevalent in nearly every community and country on the planet. Everyone participates in social work or volunteers for a social cause at some point in their lives, for a variety of reasons, from school-age children to the elderly population. A college student may volunteer for professional development, certification, or just out of altruism; an adult or retired person may volunteer to use their time for the good of society, to socialise, to combat loneliness, or once more, simply to help others without any thought of reward. Students may volunteer as part of a course to earn credits. Prosocial activity, according to Sharma (2015), is defined as beneficial behaviours that assist others while upholding moral principles, a sense of duty,

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and the avoidance of any personal gain. It's the kind of selfless deed that helps the community at large as well as the individual.

Communities can undoubtedly profit from voluntary behaviour, but individuals can also gain subtly from it. According to studies (Dullin & Hill, 2003; Huner & Linn, 1981; Musik et al., 1999; Musick & Wilson, 2003; Krueger et al., 2001), prosocial behaviour is associated with reduced mortality, fewer symptoms of anxiety, depression, and somatization, increased life satisfaction, and increased positive affect in adults. Participating in voluntary activities keeps people actively involved, which lowers stress and loneliness while also enhancing general well-being and life satisfaction. Black and Living's (2004) study revealed 159 advantages of volunteering, of which 90 had to do with mental health and wellbeing and 32 with social effectiveness. According to the study, volunteers who assist others also report feeling appreciated, fulfilled, and meaningful. All of the main advantages of volunteering can be grouped together under the more general heading of psychological well-being.

A person's psychological well-being is a result of a variety of factors, including physical fitness, self-awareness, acceptance of one's strengths and weaknesses, positive self-esteem, healthy social relationships, and a sense of control over one's surroundings and self. "Positive self-perception, good relationship with people, environmental dominance, autonomy, the meaning of life and emotions in the direction of healthy development" are the characteristics of psychological well-being, according to Ryff (1995). It is the degree of contentment and the good feeling it bestows upon an individual (Wilkinson and Walford, 1998). Ryff's (1989) six-dimensional model of psychological well-being incorporates a wide-ranging wellness areas including positive evaluations of oneself and one's past life, a sense of continued growth and development as a person, the belief that one's life is purposeful and meaningful, the experience of quality relations with others, the capacity to manage effectively one's life and surrounding world, and a sense of self determination (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

Volunteering and Psychological Well-being

Zhang and Zhang (2020) conducted a pre-post study to understand the effect of volunteering on college students. The results showed significant difference in subjective well-being measured post volunteering involvement.

Appau and Churchill (2019) research shows positive relation between person's involvement in volunteering or charity and life-satisfaction. A study by Klein Nadav (2016), shows participants who volunteer often report having more purposeful lives. Also, people who spend money to benefit others increased perceptions of life as compared to spending money on the self.

The Effects of Prosocial and Self-Focused Behavior on Psychological Flourishing” by Nelson, Layouts, Cole, and Lyubomirsky (2015) compared the effects of prosocial behavior and self-focused behaviour on positive and negative emotional experiences through a 6 weeks longitudinal study. The findings show that people engaged in prosocial behavior experienced more positive emotions like joy, gratitude, contentment as compared to people who were engaged in self-focused behavior.

Similar studies of children and adolescent population reflect positive outcomes of prosocial engagement like increased well-being, life satisfaction (Bowman et al., 2010), increased

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social involvement (Froh, Bono, & Emmons, 2010; Lawford, Pratt, Hunsberger, & Pancer, 2005), increase in rate of college attendance and decrease in rate of substance use (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Schmidt, Shumow, & Kackar, 2012).

The present research focuses on comparing the psychological well-being of students based on the duration of their voluntary activities and time gap of voluntary behaviour. It is possible that more the time one spends in prosocial activities more is the psychological well-being. The findings of the research will help us understand that if there needs to be some minimum amount time and duration given in volunteering to see the positive effects.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Objectives of the study

- To measure the psychological well-being of college students.
- To compare psychological well-being of college students in context to duration of volunteering.
- To compare psychological well-being of college students in context to frequency of voluntary activity engagement.

Hypothesis

- H₀₁ There is no significant difference in Psychological Well-being of students based on the duration of prosocial work.
- H₀₂ There is no significant difference in Psychological Well-being of students based on the frequency of prosocial work.
- H₀₃ There is no interactive effect between duration and frequency of prosocial work with regards to psychological well-being.

Sample

The present research is conducted on 122 college students studying in various undergraduate courses. Only students who are involved in some kinds of voluntary social behaviour are taken as sample using the purposive method of sampling.

Number of participants in each category is as follows;

Duration		Frequency	
0 to 6 months	6 to 12months	Once in 15 days or less	Once in more than 15 days
69	53	77	45
Total 122			

Materials

Ryff's Psychological Well-being scale developed by Carol Ryff is used to measure psychological wellbeing in the present study. The reliability by Cronbach's alpha ranges between .86-.93 and test-retest reliability ranges between .81-.88. The scale is 42 item tool and measures well-being on six dimensions i.e. self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relation with others, and purpose in life. The scores are calculated using 6-point Likert where 1 denotes strongly disagree and 6 denotes strongly agree.

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Along with this personal data sheet was prepared which included questions for demographic information and information about the duration, frequency, type of voluntary work they are involved in.

Research design

For the present study the 2 x 2 Factorial design is used as there are two independent variables, each having two level namely duration from zero to six months and more than six months, frequency from voluntary activity engagement in once in 15 days or less and once in more than 15 days.

		Duration (A)		Total
		Less than 6 months(A ₁)	More than 6 months(A ₂)	
Frequency (B)	once in 15 days or less(B ₁)	42	35	77
	once in more than 15 days(B ₂)	27	18	45
Total		69	53	122

Procedure:

The first step was to formulate the design and select tools to measure dependent variable. After which a form was prepared which included personal data sheet and PWB scale by Ryff. The form was circulated physically by approaching colleges as well as via link of google form across various social media. After the data collection was completed it was entered in excel and scored. The final scores were analysed using SPSS version 20.

Variables

Independent Variables:

- Duration of voluntary activity
- Less than 6 months
- 6 to 12 months
- Time gap in voluntary activity
- 15 days or more
- Less than 15 days

Dependent variable:

- Psychological Wellbeing

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

To test the research hypotheses Two way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was calculated using SPSS version 21.

Table 1: Table showing descriptive statistics for PWB and its dimensions

Variables	Mean	Standard deviation
Autonomy	28.71	5.789
Env Mas	27.46	4.929
Per Gro	32.33	5.884

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Variables	Mean	Standard deviation
Posi relationship	30.57	6.187
Purpose in life	30.08	5.241
Self-acceptance	29.02	6.306
Total PWB	179.35	26.422

The above table shows mean and standard deviation for dependent variable psychological well-being and its six dimensions. For all dimensions the mean score shows average scores as per the scale norms. It can be understood that the majority of the participants have scored average on psychological well-being and its dimensions

Table 2: Table showing difference in PWB in context to duration and frequency of prosocial work using two-way ANOVA

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
SSA (Duration)	120.973	1	120.973	.176	.676
SSB (Frequency)	1812.272	1	1812.272	2.636	.107
SSA*SSB Duration * Frequency	2071.776	1	2071.776	3.014	.085
Error	81112.860	118	687.397		
Total	400885.000	122			

For the present study two way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is calculated using SPSS. The above table shows the ANOVA results for dependent variable psychological well-being. As observed, there is no significant difference in psychological wellbeing based on duration and frequency. Also, there is no interaction effect of duration and frequency as the significant level is higher than 0.05.

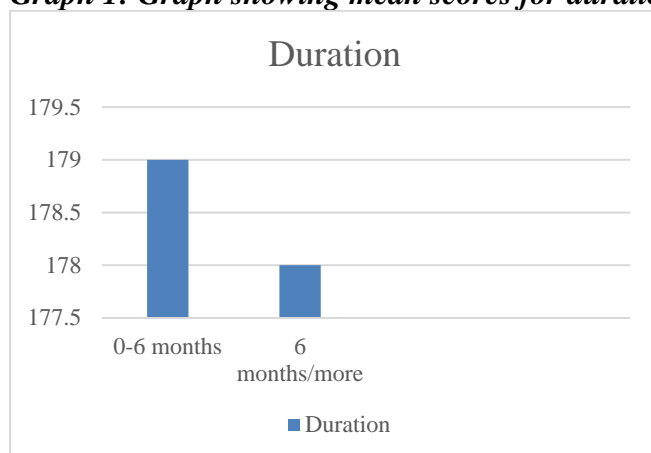
First hypothesis stating ‘there is no significant difference in Psychological Well-being of students based on the duration of prosocial work’ is accepted as it can be observed from results that engagement in voluntary activities for less than 6 months or 6 months to 1 year has no significant difference in PWB of college students. This would mean that volunteering duration of less than six months or six months to 1 year is not enough to have significant impact on PWB.

The second hypothesis stating ‘there is no significant difference in Psychological Well-being of students based on the frequency of prosocial work’ is also accepted as the analysis does not show significant difference in PWB of students whose volunteering involved once in a 15 days or once in more than 15 days. The compared groups can be with different criteria to see some significant difference.

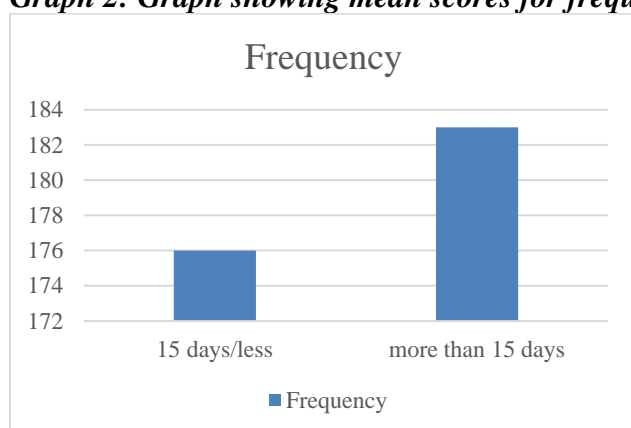
Hypothesis number three stating ‘there is no interactive effect between duration and frequency of prosocial work with regards to psychological well-being’ is also accepted as there is no significant difference in PWB in combination of duration and frequency.

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Graph 1: Graph showing mean scores for duration of volunteering



Graph 2: Graph showing mean scores for frequency of volunteering



CONCLUSION

From the analysis it can be concluded that all three hypotheses are accepted as there is no significant difference found for psychological well-being of students based on frequency and duration of voluntary social work.

Implications and Further recommendations

- The results of the study give insight about the duration and frequency of volunteering so it can be implied that to see significant difference in PWB the duration shall be higher than one year.
- The results can be used to research further into how much minimum engagement in volunteering is required to see the difference in PWB.
- Also, the further research can be conducted using more categories of duration and frequency to examine effects more critically.
- Further, the analysis can be done for each dimensions of PWB.

Limitations

The voluntary activities were varied and so does its impact on individual.

There was no gender difference checked for variables as the ratio of male to female students was not equal or near to equal.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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