

Role of Existential on Satisfaction, Mental Health of Psychological Well-Being Among University Students

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the relationship between the Existential Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) and two dimensions of Psychological Well-Being: Satisfaction-related and Mental Health-related, utilizing a sample of 300 participants. Findings indicate significant positive correlations, with existential well-being predicting both satisfaction-related ($r = 0.184, p < .001$) and mental health-related well-being ($r = 0.284, p < .001$), suggesting that higher existential well-being is associated with improved psychological functioning. The strongest correlation observed was between satisfaction-related and mental health-related PWB ($r = 0.427, p < .001$), indicating that individuals who report greater life satisfaction also tend to experience better mental health outcomes. Simple linear regression analyses confirmed that existential well-being significantly predicts both dimensions of psychological well-being, with the regression model for satisfaction-related PWB being statistically significant ($F(1, 598) = 21.01, p < .001$) and explaining 3.4% of the variance ($R^2 = .034$). Similarly, the model for mental health-related PWB was significant ($F(1, 598) = 52.62, p < .001$), also accounting for 3.4% of the variance ($R^2 = .034$). These results highlight the importance of existential well-being in understanding psychological well-being, while also suggesting that other factors may contribute to these outcomes.

Keywords: *Existential, Satisfaction, Mental health, well-being, young adults*

1. Existential spiritual well-being

Existential well-being, concerning an individual's sense of meaning and life satisfaction independent of religious beliefs, has been described as both the feeling of purpose and contentment (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982) and as an affirmation of life through broad interconnectedness and present-moment grounding (Moberg, 1984).

Highlighted the core components:

1. Meaning, purpose, and fulfilment: These are the central themes of existential well-being.
2. Independence from religious beliefs: This distinguishes it from spiritual well-being, which can often include a religious dimension.

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3. Inner peace and life satisfaction: These are the subjective feelings associated with a strong sense of existential well-being.
4. Perception of a meaningful and coherent life: This emphasizes the cognitive aspect of understanding one's place and purpose in the world.
5. Relationships beyond the individual: Moberg's definition expands on this, including connections with oneself, others, nature, and the universe.
6. Grounded in the present: This adds a temporal dimension, emphasizing the importance of finding meaning in everyday life.

2. Satisfaction of psychological well-being

satisfaction, as a key dimension of psychological well-being, refers to an individual's cognitive assessment of their life experiences and overall sense of contentment. It represents the extent to which one's life circumstances are perceived to align with personal goals, values, and expectations. According to Diener et al. (1985), life satisfaction is "a cognitive, judgmental process" in which individuals evaluate the quality of their lives based on self-defined criteria.

Within the broader conceptualization of psychological well-being, Ryff (1989) emphasizes components such as autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, and purpose in life, all of which contribute meaningfully to an individual's sense of satisfaction. Thus, satisfaction extends beyond transient emotional states and reflects a more enduring experience of fulfilments and psychological functioning.

3. Mental health of psychological well-being

Mental health, as an essential dimension of psychological well-being, involves an individual's emotional, cognitive, and social functioning. It reflects one's capacity to regulate emotions, cope with life's challenges, establish and maintain positive relationships, and perform daily tasks effectively. Importantly, mental health is not simply the absence of mental illness, but rather the presence of positive psychological functioning and resilience.

The World Health Organization (2001) defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community."

Within the framework of psychological well-being, Ryff and Keyes (1995) conceptualize mental health as a dynamic state characterized by self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, and positive relations with others. This broader understanding positions mental health as a flourishing state, emphasizing psychological strengths and the ability to adapt effectively to life's demands.

Young adulthood (typically ages 18–30) is a critical developmental period marked by identity exploration, increased autonomy, academic and career pressures, and social transitions. These factors can significantly influence a young person's mental health, life satisfaction, and sense of meaning or purpose in life—the core of existential well-being.

Existential well-being helps individuals find purpose, coherence, and inner peace amid uncertainty. Research has shown that people with higher existential well-being often report lower levels of depression, anxiety, and stress (Yuen & Lee, 2016). However, despite this

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known connection, most research on existential well-being has focused on older adults, clinical populations, or those with chronic illness, overlooking the unique experiences of young adults, particularly university students in transitional life phases.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Existential well-being, a component of spiritual well-being, has been shown to significantly contribute to psychological well-being and mental health. Research indicates that existential well-being is more strongly associated with health-related quality of life and mental health outcomes than religious well-being. In a study of cancer survivors, existential well-being fully mediated the effect of religious well-being on health-related quality of life and explained unique variance in both mental and physical health domains (Edmondson et al., 2007). Similarly, among gifted adults, existential well-being contributed significantly to life satisfaction (Perrone et al., 2006). These findings suggest that the sense of purpose and meaning in life, which is central to existential well-being, plays a crucial role in overall psychological well-being. Interestingly, research has shown that the associations between spiritual well-being and health outcomes are primarily attributable to existential aspects rather than explicitly religious ones.

A study of Vietnam Era twins found that observed associations between spiritual well-being and health outcomes were uniquely explained by existential well-being, with much less contribution from religious well-being (Tsuang et al., 2007). This highlights the importance of distinguishing between explicitly religious variables and those that reflect personal well-being when studying spiritual well-being and health.

Existential well-being appears to be a significant contributor to psychological well-being and mental health. It provides a sense of meaning and purpose in life, which can be particularly beneficial for young individuals as they navigate their personal and professional lives. Future research and clinical interventions should consider incorporating existential well-being assessments and interventions to promote overall mental health and life satisfaction (Gioiella et al., 1998; Koslander et al., 2009).

Identified Research Gaps from Previous Studies

- 1. Underrepresentation of Young Adults:** Much of the research on existential well-being has been conducted among older populations, individuals facing end-of-life issues, or patients with chronic illnesses. There is a lack of studies focusing on healthy, non-clinical young adults, especially in educational settings (Bronk et al., 2009).
- 2. Limited Integration with Psychological Well-Being Subscales:** While studies exist on spiritual or religious well-being, fewer have examined existential well-being in direct relation to specific dimensions of psychological well-being, such as life satisfaction or mental health, particularly using Ryff's multidimensional model (Ryff & Singer, 2008).
- 3. Cultural and Regional Gaps:** Most existing literature originates from Western contexts. There is limited research exploring existential well-being and psychological well-being among young adults in non-Western or South Asian settings, such as India—where spiritual and existential perspectives may differ culturally (Joshi, 2013).
- 4. Lack of Predictive or Correlational Models:** Few studies have used quantitative methods, such as correlational or regression analyses, to examine whether existential

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well-being predicts satisfaction or mental health outcomes. The directionality and strength of these relationships remain underexplored in youth-focused samples.

Despite growing interest in holistic mental health, existential well-being remains an understudied construct among young adults, especially in relation to key dimensions of psychological well-being such as life satisfaction and mental health. Previous research has primarily emphasized clinical or elderly populations, with limited focus on non-clinical university students navigating early adulthood. Additionally, studies integrating existential well-being with specific subcomponents of psychological well-being, especially in non-Western contexts, are scarce. This study aims to address these gaps by examining the correlational and predictive relationships between existential well-being and psychological well-being (satisfaction and mental health) among young adults in the Varanasi region.

Objectives

1. To determine the relationship of Existential spiritual well-being with satisfaction and mental health of psychological well-being of students.
2. Identify the role of Existential (Spiritual Well-Being) on Psychological Well-being of satisfaction or mental health among students.

Hypotheses

1. There would be positive relationship of satisfaction or mental health of psychological well-being and existential spiritual well-being among university students.
2. Existential significant predictor of satisfaction and mental health of psychological well-being among university students.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The study sample comprised 300 university students from the Varanasi region, including an equal number of male ($n = 150$) and female ($n = 150$) participants. Their ages ranged between 18 and 30 years. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling method, based on predefined inclusion criteria aligned with the aims of the research.

Instruments

- **Spiritual well-being scale (SWBS)** developed by Raymond F. Paloutzian and Craig W. Ellison. Hindi translation version by Sandeep Grover & Devakshi Dua (2022) in this scale there are two main domain existential well-being scale or religious well-being scale. The overall Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) demonstrated good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.832. And the two subscales, the Religious Well-Being Subscale (RWS) yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.651, while the Existential Well-Being Subscale (EWS) showed a reliability coefficient of 0.697.
- **Psychological well-being scale (PWBS)** developed by Sisodia S. Devendra and Choudhary Pooja (2012) in this scale there is 50 total items and divided into five subscale- Satisfaction, Efficiency, Sociability, Mental Health, Interpersonal relation. The test - retest reliability was 0.87 and internal consistency value for the scale is 0.90.

Research Design and Data Analysis

A correlational research design was employed in this study to examine the relationships among the variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was utilized to analyse the

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predictive relationship of existential spiritual well-being with the satisfaction and mental health subscales of psychological well-being.

RESULTS

Table 1. correlation table define the relation among these variables.

Variables	Existential (EWBS)	Satisfaction (PWBS)	Menal Health (PWBS)
Existential	-	.184**	.284**
Satisfaction		-	.427**
Mental Health			-

*Correlation indicates at 0.05 level of significant

** Correlation indicates at 0.01 levels significant

The table one presents Pearson correlation coefficients among three variables: Existential Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS), Satisfaction-related Psychological Well-Being (PWB), and Mental Health-related Psychological Well-Being (PWB), based on a sample of 300 participants. A positive correlation of $r = 0.184$, significant at the 0.01 level ($p < .001$), indicates a small but statistically significant relationship between existential well-being and satisfaction-related psychological well-being. This suggests that individuals who experience greater existential well-being (e.g., meaning in life, sense of purpose) tend to report slightly higher levels of satisfaction in their psychological functioning. The correlation between existential well-being and mental health-related psychological well-being is $r = 0.284$, also statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($p < .001$). This reflects a moderate positive relationship, suggesting that individuals who report higher existential well-being also tend to experience better psychological mental health. The strongest correlation observed is $r = 0.427$, which is statistically significant ($p < .001$). This indicates a moderate to strong positive relationship between satisfaction-related and mental health-related psychological well-being. In other words, individuals who feel more satisfied in life also tend to report better psychological mental health, and vice versa.

Table 2. Regression

Linear regression output for the effect of existential of SWB on satisfaction or mental health of psychological well-being.

Dependent Variables	F	R ²	B coefficients	t	P value
Satisfaction of PWB	21.014**	.034	.184	7.25	.000
Mental Health of PWB	52.62**	.034	.284	4.58	.000

A series of simple linear regression analyses were conducted to examine whether Existential Spiritual Well-Being (SWB) significantly predicted two dimensions of psychological well-being: Satisfaction-related Psychological Well-Being (PWB) and Mental Health-related Psychological Well-Being (PWB). For Satisfaction PWB, the regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 598) = 21.01$, $p < .001$, and explained approximately 3.4% of the variance ($R^2 = .034$). Existential well-being was a significant positive predictor of satisfaction-related well-being, $B = 0.184$, $t = 7.25$, $p < .001$. For Mental Health PWB, the regression model was also statistically significant, $F(1, 598) = 52.62$, $p < .001$, with an R^2 of

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.034, again accounting for 3.4% of the variance. Existential well-being significantly predicted mental health-related well-being, $B = 0.284$, $t = 4.58$, $p < .001$. However, the relatively low R^2 values indicate that existential well-being explains only a small proportion of the variance in these outcomes, suggesting the influence of additional factors.

DISCUSSION

These results finding higher levels of existential well-being are associated with increases in both satisfaction-related and mental health-related psychological well-being. Some supportive research highlights the important contribution of existential well-being to psychological well-being and life satisfaction in young adults. Perrone et al. (2006) found that among gifted individuals, a strong sense of existential well-being significantly enhanced their overall life satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of having meaning and purpose in life. Likewise, Piko (2023) showed that in adolescents and young adults, elements associated with existential well-being—such as future orientation and participation in religious activities—were positively linked to life satisfaction. Notably, attending church and having a forward-looking mindset emerged as key predictors, underscoring the relevance of both spiritual and existential factors in the lives of youth.

Furthermore, the connection between existential and psychological well-being appears especially vital for individuals with lower levels of mental resilience. Instance, Ziv and Kiasi (2015) found that social media platforms, like Facebook, can serve as a source of virtual emotional support, particularly for those who struggle with social interaction. This highlights how a sense of connection—an element of existential well-being—can enhance mental health, especially among vulnerable young people.

Existential well-being significantly influences both life satisfaction and psychological health in young adults. Key contributors include spirituality, a sense of direction in life, and social connectedness. As such, mental health professionals and researchers are encouraged to integrate existential dimensions into their interventions to support healthy development and emotional well-being in youth (Arslan, 2023; Park, 2004).

CONCLUSION

Existential well-being plays a significant role in enhancing psychological well-being of satisfaction and mental health among young adults. Research shows that having a sense of purpose, future orientation, and engagement in spiritual or religious activities are key contributors. This form of well-being is especially beneficial for individuals with lower mental resilience, as social connectedness—even through platforms like social media—can provide emotional support. Integrating existential elements into mental health practices may effectively promote positive development and psychological health in youth.

Limitation

Empirical research on existential well-being and psychological well-being often faces several limitations. Many studies rely on convenience samples, such as college students, which limits the generalizability of findings. The predominance of cross-sectional designs restricts the ability to draw causal conclusions, while reliance on self-report measures can introduce bias. Additionally, existential well-being is a complex construct that lacks standardized measurement, and it often overlaps with related concepts like spirituality and religiosity. Longitudinal and experimental studies are limited, making it difficult to assess long-term effects or the impact of targeted interventions. Moreover, important contextual factors such as

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cultural background and socio-economic status are not always adequately considered, which can affect the interpretation of results.

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Conflict of Interest

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