

Impact of Self-Affirmation on Psychological Well-being among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

This study examined self-affirmation's impact on adolescents' psychological well-being using an experimental approach. The sample consisted of 58 males and 42 females, selected through purposive sampling from various schools in Mangaluru taluk. A one-time pre-test post-test research design was employed. Psychological well-being was assessed using Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). The study hypothesized that there would be no significant improvement in psychological well-being post-intervention. Self-affirmation was introduced as an intervention for participants with average psychological well-being. Participants engaged in the intervention for 15 days, followed by a post-test assessment. Data were analyzed using SPSS. Results revealed a significant difference in psychological well-being levels pre- and post-intervention. The findings suggest that the introduction of self-affirmation led to increased psychological well-being among participants, underscoring the effectiveness of the intervention.

Keywords: *Psychological well-being, self-affirmation, gender, family type, knowledge about self-affirmation*

A state of dynamic internal equilibrium known as mental health allows people to use their skills in a way that is consistent with societal norms. The state of internal equilibrium is influenced to varied degrees by mental health components, such as basic cognitive and social skills, the ability to identify, express, and regulate one's own emotions as well as empathize with others, flexibility and the capacity to deal with challenging life events and perform social roles, and a harmonious relationship between the body and the mind. (Galderisi, 2015).

Additionally, one's psychological well-being can be enhanced by enhancing their mental health. People can feel more involved in life, experience more pleasant emotions, and grow and feel fulfilled by doing things that enhance mental health, such as exercising, practicing mindfulness, and asking for help from others. In the end, preserving general psychological well-being and living a satisfying life depend on taking care of one's mental health.

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A person's personality will be defined by their psychological well-being based on their ability to control various emotions and circumstances. Autonomy, environmental control, personal development, strong interpersonal relationships, life purpose, and self-acceptance are other elements that impact psychological well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff, 2014; Diener et al., 1999).

Fundamental elements impacting psychological well-being include self-acceptance, positive connections, personal growth, autonomy, environmental mastery, and a feeling of purpose. By enabling people to take charge of their behavior and make choices, autonomy promotes self-awareness and a feeling of direction (Sheldon & Kasser, 2008). Environmental mastery enables people to successfully control their environment, which fosters self-assurance and healthful habits (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Continuous development and self-discovery are components of personal growth, which helps people find purpose and direction in life. (Baumeister et al., 2011; Diener et al., 1999).

Building positive connections offers social support, alleviating stress and feelings of isolation, while also boosting self-esteem (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010; Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008). Having a clear sense of purpose enhances motivation and commitment to one's goals, contributing to increased overall well-being (Boyle et al., 2009). Accepting oneself encourages self-awareness and personal development, which supports overall health and happiness (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015; Albertson & Neff, 2019; Neff & Vonk, 2009). Moreover, several elements such as social connections, health, surroundings, genetic factors, and addiction have an impact on well-being. Practices like maintaining a positive outlook, expressing gratitude, and participating in regular physical activity can improve well-being (Mehta, 2022).

Creating nurturing environments and empowering young people are crucial for fostering resilience and emotional intelligence, both of which are key aspects of mental well-being. Psychological well-being is an important aspect of overall well-being, and it is especially critical during adolescence. Adolescence is a time of significant developmental changes, and young people may face several challenges that can impact their psychological well-being, including academic pressure, peer pressure, social media use, and family conflict (Steinberg, 2014). Various research suggests that a few factors, such as positive self-image, coping skills, and healthy behaviour, are associated with psychological well-being among adolescents.

One effective strategy for improving psychological well-being is self-affirmations, which involve reflecting on personal values and achievements to boost self-esteem and reduce anxiety. Self-Affirmations, as a psychological technique, consist in reminding oneself of personal values, strengths, and achievements, which serve to affirm one's self-worth. This process of affirming one's self-worth through self-reflection facilitates the boosting of self-esteem and reduction of anxiety or self-doubt (Cohen & Sherman, 2014).

By repeating positive statements and truly believing in them, individuals can overcome self-defeating and pessimistic thoughts, leading to positive changes. The core concept behind self-affirmation is to maintain a positive self-image by reinforcing positive qualities and experiences. It can be practiced in various forms, such as writing about values, listing past achievements, or visualizing positive outcomes (Smith, 2021).

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The findings highlight the value of self-affirmation as a practical and effective technique for improving psychological well-being across various contexts and populations. Incorporating self-affirmation practices into interventions and personal strategies can empower individuals to cultivate a positive self-image, cope with challenges, and pursue their goals with greater confidence and resilience. The current study aims to understand if there is a significant difference in the level of psychological well-being pre and post-intervention among adolescents.

METHOD

Aim

To examine the effects of self-affirmations on psychological well-being among adolescents.

Objectives

To assess the difference in psychological well-being post administration of the self-affirmation technique.

Hypothesis

There will be no significant improvement in the level of psychological well-being among adolescents post-intervention.

Variables

The study consists of two types of variables: dependent variables, and independent variables.

- Independent Variable – Gender, self-affirmations
- Dependent Variable – Psychological well-being.

Operational definition

- *Psychological well-being*: Psychological well-being is defined as optimal human functioning, in which a high number of positive emotions are produced (Ryff,2004)
- *Self-affirmations*: Self-affirmations are acts that affirm one's self-worth, often by having individuals reflect on core values, which may give individuals a broader view of the self. This in turn can allow individuals to move beyond specific threats to self-integrity or self-competence (Steele, 1988; Cohen and Sherman, 2014).

Sample

100 participants are selected through convenient sampling who are pursuing their high school education in Mangalore Schools, within age range of 14 to 17, out of which 42 are girls and 58 are boys.

- **Inclusion Criteria:**
 - Females and males
 - Students studying in Mangalore city schools.
 - Urban and rural residents
- **Exclusion criteria:**
 - Age below 14 and above 17.
 - Students with severe psychological issues.

Research design

The current study used one group pre-test post-test experimental design. It is a quasi-experimental design in which one group is checked for dependent variable continued by intervention. In this study measures were among adolescents on their levels of psychological well-being.

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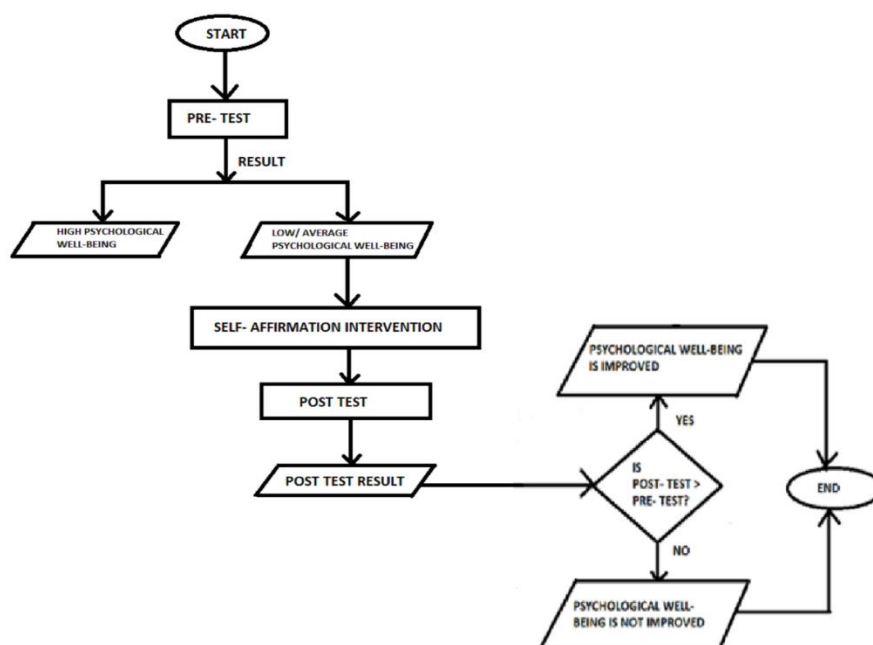


Tools

- **Socio-Demographic Profile Sheet:** Socio-demographic profile sheet includes general information about the individual such as name, age, gender, parents name, contact details, sibling's details, whether the sample is aware of self and if they are whether they apply to their life and in which way.
- **Psychological Well-being Scale:** Carol Ryff began researching themes including happiness, life satisfaction, and positive affect, which is related to wellbeing, in 1989. (Ryff, 2014). The short scale of 18 items was created for use in a national survey research (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). This scale has six components, including self-acceptance, positive relation with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth. Internal consistency reliability estimates for the dimensions in the shorter 18-item form are low to modest (alpha coefficients range from 0.33 (purpose of life) to 0.56 (positive relations). (Ryff & Keyes).

Procedure

The procedure takes place in three phases. Phase I is conducting Pre-test, Phase II is intervention for the selected sample and Phase III is Post test.



Phase I: Through group instruction, the pre-test for psychological well-being is administered using Ryff's psychological well-being scale to the sample, and data is gathered. Following data analysis, the sample with the lowest psychological well-being score is chosen for the following stage.

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Phase II: Following data analysis and sample segmentation through interpretation, the sample is presented with two methods of self-affirmations to raise their level of psychological well-being. The sample has been given 15 days to use the self-affirmations to monitor its effects on psychological well-being.

Sl.no	Intervention	Objectives	Rationale	Duration
1.	List of five DBT self-affirmations.	To enhance positive opinions on self	This method highlights neural processes associated with successful self-affirmation. (Cascio, 2015)	15 days
2.	List of five self-affirmations by Dean Bokhari in the morning.	To enhance positive statements towards self	This method has shown significant positive changes in the high levels of acute and chronic stress. (Creswell, 2013)	15 days

Intervention

Phase III: The post-test is administered using the same scale of Ryff's psychological well-being after a 15-day interval to determine the impact of self-affirmations on the sample's psychological health.

Ethical Considerations

The study was subjected to ethical review by the Internal Research Ethics Review Committee. Participation was voluntary in the research and the participants could withdraw from the study at any stage if they wished to do so. Informed consent was taken from the participants and the institutions after fully explaining to the participants the implications of being a participant. Privacy and anonymity of respondents were of paramount importance, and the same was informed to the participants and maintained. All works of other authors used in any part of the dissertation, with the use of the APA referencing system according to the Dissertation handbook, were acknowledged. The highest level of objectivity will be maintained in discussions and analyses throughout the research

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Shapiro Test of Normality

Variable	Statistic	Df	Significance
Psychological well-being (pre-intervention) in female	0.977	42	0.566
Psychological well-being (pre-intervention) in male	0.986	58	0.755

Shapiro's test of normality was conducted to analyse the distribution of normality of levels of psychological well-being among males and females. The significance of psychological well-being among female participants pre-intervention is 0.566, whereas it is 0.755 in males. The degree of freedom for females is 42, and 58 in males. The results indicate that the data is normally distributed.

Table 2 Correlated T Test for Pre-intervention Post-intervention for Score on Psychological Well-being

Pre-intervention	Post-intervention	Df	t	P
Mean 76.63	81.23	28	-3.918	0.001

The results of a paired-sample t-test indicated a statistically significant increase in psychological well-being scores following the intervention. Participants' mean well-being score increased from 76.63 (pre-intervention) to 81.23 (post-intervention), suggesting an improvement in their psychological state. The t-test revealed a significant difference between the two time points, $t(28) = -3.918, p = .001$, indicating that the change in scores is unlikely to be due to chance. This suggests that the intervention was effective in enhancing participants' psychological well-being. It was hypothesized that there would be no significant improvement in the level of psychological well-being among adolescents pre- and post-intervention, when in fact the results manifest that there is a significant difference and increase in the levels of psychological well-being among adolescents post-intervention, thus rejecting the hypothesis. The results are in line with Cascio et al. (2015), where positive valuation systems have a significant role in effective affirmation and are compatible with the expanded value explanation of reason for self-affirmation therapies to be effective.

Implications

The study highlights the importance of considering different variables when studying psychological well-being among adolescents, such as gender, family type, and age. To understand how these variables may affect psychological well-being and how they interact with each other, it should be considered. Current study suggests that there may be gender differences in psychological well-being among adolescents, which could be further explored in future studies. Researchers could investigate the factors that contribute to these gender differences and how they can be addressed to improve psychological well-being among both males and females. The study provides evidence that self-affirmation intervention can be effective in improving psychological well-being among adolescents, regardless of gender. This finding has important implications for future research and interventions aimed at promoting mental health among adolescents. The study contributes to the growing body of literature on psychological well-being among adolescents and highlights the need for continued research in this area. By understanding the factors that contribute to psychological well-being and developing effective interventions to promote mental health, researchers can help to improve the well-being of adolescents and ultimately, society as a whole.

CONCLUSION

The adolescent period is a crucial time for the physical and mental development of children, as they undergo significant biological and psychological changes. The present study aimed to investigate the potential benefits of self-affirmation on the psychological well-being of adolescents. Results indicated that participants who had average psychological well-being at pre-administration demonstrated improvement in their psychological well-being after practicing self-affirmation for 15 days. This highlights the importance of positive verbal reinforcement in motivating adolescents to maintain a positive self-image. However, it is worth noting that further research is needed to examine the impact of external factors on an adolescent's mental well-being, as well as the role of upbringing, values, and expectations in shaping their psychological development. These findings have important implications for designing effective interventions to support the well-being of adolescents during this challenging and critical stage of life.

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Conflict of Interest

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