

Research Paper

A Study of Mental Well-Being of D. El. Ed. Teacher Trainees

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ABSTRACT

Mental health is vital to overall effectiveness and development of trainee teachers. This research examines the mental well-being of D. El. Ed trainees in terms of gender and stream. D. El. Ed is a training program for primary teacher aspirants. The minimum qualification required for entry in the program is higher secondary of any stream. The study investigates the mental well-being of teacher trainees in terms of gender and academic stream they pursued at higher secondary level. The data was collected through survey from a sample of trainees at DIET Moti Bagh, New Delhi. The study observed that the mental well-being level of D. El. Ed trainees was above average. The difference between male and female trainees and science and non-science trainees was determined using the t-test. The study observed that the mental well-being of male and female trainees did not differ significantly. Also, there was no discernible difference between trainees in the science and non-science streams.

Keywords: *Mental well-being, D. El. Ed trainees*

Mental health has taken center stage in our modern lives. Despite having material comforts and better living conditions, many people find themselves feeling unfulfilled, struggling to build meaningful and healthy relationships with those around them. The rising emphasis on mental well-being in academic discussions reflects its significant role in personal development, educational achievements and overall quality of life. Understanding mental health is essential, as it is a multifaceted aspect of our overall health. It influences people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours and includes social, psychological and emotional wellbeing. This, in turn, impacts their ability to handle stress, forge relationships, and make decisions. The World Health Organization defines well-being as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stress of life, can work productively, and is able to contribute to his or her community” (WHO, 2004). This definition emphasizes that mental health is not simply the absence of disorders but also involves the presence of positive mental states. It captures what it means to feel good and function effectively. Thriving mentally includes feeling happy and capable, as well as maintaining healthy relationships and self-awareness.

Mental well-being embodies emotional resilience, life satisfaction, psychological effectiveness, and the capacity to navigate personal and academic challenges with ease.

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Key Aspects of Mental Well-Being:

1. **Emotional Health:** This refers to our ability to manage emotions like stress, anxiety and frustration, especially during challenging times like exams or while engaging in teaching practice.
2. **Social Wellbeing:** Building positive relationships with peers, mentors, and family members is essential for providing support and reducing feelings of isolation.
3. **Academic Resilience:** This is the skill to navigate academic challenges, meet performance expectations, and accept constructive feedback from instructors.
4. **Self-Efficacy:** It's important to have confidence in one's teaching abilities and a commitment to ongoing professional development.

Determinants of Mental Well-Being:

Research points to several key factors that influence mental well-being, which can be categorized as personal, social and environmental determinants:

A. Personal Factors:

- Resilience: The ability to recover from setbacks is closely tied to improved mental well-being.
- Personality Traits: Attributes like optimism, self-esteem, and emotional stability have a positive impact on mental health.
- Coping Mechanisms: Employing effective strategies for problem-solving and managing emotions is linked to enhanced well-being.

B. Social Factors:

- Social Support: Strong ties with family, friends, and peers provide emotional safety and reduce the likelihood of mental health issues.
- Sense of Belonging: Feeling connected within a community is vital for psychological well-being, especially among students and young people.

C. Environmental Factors:

- Academic/Work Environment: High academic pressures, job-related stress, and insufficient work-life balance can negatively impact mental well-being.
- Socioeconomic Status: Financial security fosters better mental health outcomes, whereas financial stress can lead to psychological distress.

Impact of Poor Mental Well-being:

Ignoring mental health challenges can have serious consequences, including:

- Academic Underperformance: Struggles with focus, motivation and time management can lead to declining grades and overall academic success.
- Physical Health Issues: Chronic stress may manifest as headaches, fatigue, sleep disturbances and a weakened immune system.
- Emotional Distress: Conditions such as anxiety and depression can emerge, negatively impacting everyday life.
- Professional Challenges: Poor mental health can hinder the growth of essential teaching skills like communication, classroom management and empathy towards students.

Significance of the Study:

Emotional well-being is a crucial part of overall health, influencing our thoughts, feelings and behaviors. It significantly impacts productivity, relationships, decision-making and satisfaction in life. In our fast-moving and demanding world, grasping the importance of emotional well-being is more essential than ever. Factors like job stress, societal demands,

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financial pressures and the rapid pace of technological change have all intensified mental health concerns.

For students enrolled in teacher training programs, maintaining emotional well-being is especially vital as they gear up to nurture future generations. The mental health of these prospective educators is key to their ability to learn effectively, teach well and handle the complexities of classroom interactions. The rigorous coursework, extensive teaching practice, and the pressure to develop professional competencies can create specific psychological hurdles for them.

It's imperative for educational institutions to weave mental health awareness initiatives into their curricula. This will help future teachers build emotional resilience and effective coping strategies. A mentally healthy educator not only enhances their own professional growth but also creates a supportive and encouraging learning atmosphere for their students.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Graham and Chattopadhyay (2013) conducted a comprehensive study examining gender differences in well-being across various regions and age, income and educational backgrounds. Their findings revealed that women have higher levels of well-being than men. In another study, **Sharma and Tankha (2014)** focused on first-year male college students from the science and commerce faculties, involving 102 students aged 18 to 20 from a private university in Jaipur, Rajasthan. A t-test analysis showed that male students in the science faculty outperformed their commerce peers in four areas of psychological well-being: self-acceptance, purpose in life, healthy interpersonal connections, and environmental mastery. However, no major differences were found in personal growth and autonomy.

Dhurandher and Agarwal (2015) explored the mental health of students studying science and arts. A total sixty students of class 11th from a government school in Bilaspur district was chosen for the sample. The study assessed six dimensions of mental health: emotional stability, adjustment, autonomy, feelings of security and insecurity, self-concept and intelligence. Findings revealed no notable differences in the mental health of male and female students in both science and arts streams.

Matud, Lopez-Curbelo and Fortes (2019) conducted a research study in which they tried to find out whether there is any connection between gender and the psychological well-being of adults. Specifically, the study focused on the Spanish population and assessed six vital dimensions: self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth. Findings revealed that men had higher scores in self-acceptance and autonomy, whereas women showed stronger performance in personal growth and nurturing high-quality relationships.

In their study **Campbell, Bann and PatalCay (2021)** tried to analyze gender gap in adolescent mental health across various cultures. They found that girls consistently exhibited worse mental health than boys.

Gharat (2023) explored happiness and mental health differences among students in the arts and sciences. The study involved 100 students in equal number from arts and science, using purposive non-probability sampling. The study found that arts students are better in mental health and happiness than that of science students.

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Blanchflower and Bryson (2024) examined gender disparities in their study titled “The Gender Well-Being Gap,” which analyzed differences in 37 positive affect and 18 negative affect metrics, utilizing data from eight cross-national surveys. The study found that women had higher scores than men in all areas related to negative emotions and lower scores on most positive emotions, highlighting a significant gender gap in well-being. However, when assessing broader well-being indicators women were shown to be as content as, or in some cases, even happier than men.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To find out the mental well-being level of D. El. Ed trainees.
2. To examine the mental well-being of D. El. Ed trainees in terms of gender, i.e., male and female.
3. To study the mental well-being of D. El. Ed trainees in terms of stream, i.e., science and nonscience.

Hypotheses of the Study:

1. The mental well-being level of D. El. Ed trainees would be very high.
2. There would be no significant difference between the mental well-being level of male and female D. El. Ed trainees.
3. There would be no significant difference between mental well-being of science and nonscience D.El.Ed trainees.

Limitations of the Study:

1. The research involves a modest sample size of just 32 trainees.
2. The scope of the study is confined to DIET Moti Bagh only.
3. The investigation is limited to variables of gender and stream.

METHODOLOGY

Population:

All the students pursuing D. El. Ed program in DIET Moti Bagh constituted the population of the study.

Sampling Size:

The sample size consisted of 32 D. El. Ed trainees of equal number of male (16) and female (16) students as well as equal number of science (16) and nonscience (16) students from both male and female trainees. DIET was selected through purposive sampling technique and trainees were selected through random sampling technique. The stratification was done on gender and stream.

Statistical Techniques:

Statistical techniques used in the study are mean, percentage, t-test and Significance of difference.

Tool of the Study:

The tool used to measure the mental well-being level of trainees was Warwick Edinburg Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS). The WEMBS-14 is a scale consisting of 14 items used to assess the mental well-being of adults. It includes 14 positive statements, each evaluated across five categories, with responses ranging from 'none of the time' to 'all of the time.' To determine scores, the individual scores (ranging from 1 to 5) for each statement were summed up leading to a total that can fall anywhere between 14 and 70.

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Scoring: As per WEMWBS user guidebook interpretation of data score is as follows:

- 14-40: Very Low Level of Mental Well-being
- 45-59: Average Level of Mental Well-being
- 60-70: High Level of Mental Well-being

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Mental Well-being of D. El. Ed Trainees

Variable	D. El. Ed	N	Mean
Mental well-being	D. El. Ed trainees	32	52.88

As per the data shown in Table 1 the mean score of mental well-being of D. El. Ed trainees is 52.88, which is the average level of mental well-being as per the WEMWBS scoring key. It is neither high nor low. So, the first hypothesis of the study that “the mental well-being level of D. El. Ed trainees would be very high” is not affirmed.

Table 2: Mental Well-being of Teacher Trainees by Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	p-Value	t-Value	Level of Significance
Mental well-being	Male	16	53.81	6.79	0.50	0.68	No significant difference
	Female	16	51.94	8.63			

As per the data shown in the Table 2 p-value (0.50) is much greater than 0.05 (the common significance threshold). So, there is no significant difference in the mental well-being levels of male and female trainees. Consequently, the study supports the hypothesis, which posits that “there would be no significant difference in the mental well-being levels of male and female teacher trainees.” The finding of the study is not in line with the earlier studies of Graham and Chattopadhyay (2013), Campbell, Bann and PatalCay (2021) and Blanchflower and Bryson (2024) who reported in their studies that male and female differ in their mental well-being level.

Table 3: Mental Well-being Score by Academic Stream

Variable	Stream	N	Mean	SD	p-Value	t-Value	Level of Significance
Mental well-being	Science	16	52.44	8.76	0.755	-0.315	No significant difference
	Non-science	16	53.31	6.74			

As per the data shown in Table 3, the p-value for the t-score (f -0.315) is 0.755. Since p-value is much greater than common significance levels (e.g., 0.05 or 0.01), there is no notable difference in the mental well-being of science students and non-science disciplines. This supports the third hypothesis, which states that "there would be no significant difference in the mental well-being level of trainees with science and non-science streams." The finding of the study aligns with the research conducted by Sharma and Tankha (2014), who also reported no significant variations in the mental well-being of science and non-science students. However, the finding of the study is not in agreement with the studies of Dhurandher and Agarwal (2015) and Gharat (2023) who reported in their studies differences in the mental well-being level of science and non-science students.

Findings:

1. The mental well-being level of D.El.Ed trainees is moderate. It is neither high nor low.
2. There is no notable difference in mental well-being between genders.
3. There is no notable difference in the mental well-being levels between trainees from the science stream and those from non-science streams.

Implication

1. It will be very helpful for teachers to understand the mental well-being level of teachers trainees.
2. It will help to organize activities to develop mental well-being programme.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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