

## Psychological well- being and life skills among young adults: Relationship and gender differences

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### Abstract

The Psychological well- being and Life Skills of 219 young adults were examined. Ryff's Scale of Psychological well-being and Life Skills assessment scale (Perkins and Mincemoyer, 2003) were used to collect the data from the participants. The number of male and female participants are 102 and 117 respectively. The relationship between the Dependent variable Psychological well- being (PWB), the total score of Independent variable Life Skills and the five domains of Life Skills were examined using Pearson's correlation and Multiple regression analysis. The independent t-test has been used to examine the gender differences in the different domains of the study variables. The Environmental mastery (PWB), decision making and communication skills of Life Skills domains showed significant gender differences.

**Keywords:** psychological well- being, life skills, young adults, gender

### Introduction

In a simple way Psychological well-being can define as the experience of happiness and life satisfaction (Casas, 2008) [5] accomplished by reaching a state of balance after going through challenging and rewarding life experiences. In that sense Early adulthood is the stage where the individual experience the challenges of changing social, economic status, the strive for achievement (Hogan & A stone, 1986) [8] and thus the time for getting the results of those challenging experiences. Young adulthood is the time most of the people face ambiguity because they feel like they still stand nowhere because of their position being partially dependent, unsettled and in the process of developing their career (Arnett, 2000, 2004) [11, 12]. They still explore possibilities to find their identities and thus they are instable, self-focused and stands in between (Arnett, 2000, 2004, 2006) [11, 12, 13]. At this point of time the main challenges they face are social expectation and traditional norms like secure job, age of marriage, family responsibilities, gender-based roles etc.

At this point of time, they definitely need certain skills to deal with the challenges in order to maintain their psychological well-being. Life Skills are known as psychological skills (Jones, 1992) [14] to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of life. The definitions of Life Skills by UNICEF states that Life Skills as psycho social abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life (UNICEF, 2012) [20]. One's attitudes, skills and values are being developed in the early childhood. Environment of the individual particularly family, parents and significant others influence the development of Life Skills (WHO, 2012). (Jones, 1992) [14] states Life Skills are specific psychological skills of choices directly connected with the mental wellness and they are necessary to perform tasks of different areas of human development like psychological, physical, vocational, cognitive ego, morale and sexual (Powell, 1995) [18].

From the mental health perspectives, WHO identified basic areas of Life Skills that are relevant across culture (WHO, 1999) [21] i.e., Decision making and Problem solving, Creative thinking and Critical thinking, Communication and Interpersonal skills, Self-awareness and Empathy, Coping with emotions and Coping with stress (WHO, 1999) [21]. Winthrop R. Adkins a professor of psychology and education, and his friends coined the term Life Skills in 1965 during an anti-poverty training programme. Life Skills start to develop in early childhood. Environment of the individual particularly home and family environment influence the development of Life Skills (UNICEF, 2012) [20]. There is empirical evidence that Life Skills are related with the Positive well- being. Various Life Skills training programmes and experimental researches show improvement in the quality of life, happiness, social relationship and psychological well-being (Haji, Mohammadkhani & Hahtami, 2011). In a gender-based study psychological well-being of female college students was significantly associated with their Life Skills (Sujatha & Jayakumar, 2017) [19]. Some other studies found that certain Life Skills in the early ages lead to better achievement and good health in the future (Heckman, Stixrud & Urzua, 2006; Moffit *et al*, 2011; Heckman *et.al*, 2014) [9, 16]. Life Skills intervention is generally considered as a major predictor factor of different aspects of mental health (Abdul, 2015) [2].

### Aim of the study

This study tries to analyse the relationship between the variable Life Skills and psychological well-being among young adults.

### Participants

The total of 219 young adults (46.6% male and 53.4% female) participated in the survey. The study was quantitative in nature and the data was collected via online using google forms. The participants were unmarried young

adults age between 20 and 28 years who have at least completed their college under graduation. The data was being collected using non- probability convenient sampling method.

**Measures**

**The Ryff’s Scales of Psychological Well Being (Ryff 1989, 1995)**

The Ryff’s scales of Psychological Well- Being (PWB) is a comprehensive instrument to measure the multiple constructs of the psychological well- being. The PWB scales has different versions. For the present study the 18 items (three items per construct) instrument was selected and the overlap between items in the shorter version is quite low. The scale consists of six subscales each comprise three items: Autonomy (independence and self-determination), Environmental Mastery (the ability to manage one’s life), Personal Growth (welcoming to new experience), Positive relations with others (quality and satisfying relationships), Purpose in life (believing in meaningfulness of life). Participants rated PWB on a 7-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Agree to 7= Strongly Disagree). Higher scores mean higher Psychological well- being. Cronbach’s alpha value of PWB was.71 ranging from.66 to.73.

**Adult skills for everyday living (Perkins & Mincemoyer, 2003)**

The Life Skills instrument used for the study was developed by Perkins and Mincemoyer. Adults skill for everyday

living has 26 items to assess five constructs of Life Skills; decision making, critical thinking, communication, goal setting and problem solving. This is a 5-point Likert scale from 1(never), 2 (rarely), 3 (sometimes), 4(often) and 5(always). The original Cronbach’s alpha score of the instrument as a whole is.91 and the Cronbach’s score of the subscales are critical thinking (5 items,  $\alpha=.72$ ); decision making (5 items,  $\alpha=.60$ ); communication (6 items,  $\alpha=.70$ ); goal setting (4 items,  $\alpha=.73$ ) and problem solving (6 items,  $\alpha=.76$ ) (Perkins and Mincemoyer, 2003). The present study also shows high internal consistency of the measurement. The whole measurement shows the Cronbach’s  $\alpha=.87$  and all other domains of the scale yielding the score  $\geq .73$ .

**Analysis**

Analyses were conducted using SPSS v.21. Pearson’s correlations (two- tailed) were calculated between Psychological well- being and Life Skills measures and its domains. Independent samples t-test were figured with gender as the grouping variable and psychological well-being and Life Skills as dependent variables. It was hypothesized that Life Skills’ domains significantly predicts the variation in Psychological well- being and in the results, it is proved that Life Skills are one of the major predictors of Psychological well-being indeed.

**Results**

**Table 1:** Descriptive statistics

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Psychological well-being (PWB)	88.78	12.85
PWB Autonomy	14.16	2.79
PWB environmental Mastery	14.17	3.65
PWB Personal Growth	17.08	3.11
PWB Positive Relationship with Others	13.89	4.43
PWB Purpose in Life	14.87	3.27
PWB Self-Acceptance	14.58	3.86
Life Skills Total	99.52	14.69
Decision making Skill	19.79	3.35
Critical Thinking Skill	18.57	3.6
Communication Skill	23.64	3.94
Goal Setting Skill	14.34	3.45
Problem Solving Skill	23.12	4.31

Descriptive statistics for the variables examined in the study presented in Table 1.

**Table 2:** Results of Independent sample T- Test for gender regarding psychological well-being and Life Skills domains. Shown are means (+SD)

	Male (102)	Female (117)	T-Test
Psychological well-being	89.35(13.54)	88.28(12.25)	1.07
Autonomy	14.11(2.81)	14.21(2.78)	-0.08
Environmental mastery	14.67(3.25)	13.74(3.93)	0.93*
Personal growth	17.11(2.92)	17.05(3.27)	0.06
Positive relationship	14.23(5.06)	13.58(3.79)	0.64
Purpose in life	14.47(3.29)	15.23(3.24)	-0.76
Self-acceptance	14.73(3.94)	14.46(3.80)	0.27
Life Skills Total	75.64 (12.47)	77.5 (9.61)	-1.40
Decision making Skill	20.41 (3.64)	19.25 (3.006)	1.15*
Critical Thinking Skill	18.32 (3.95)	18.79 (3.25)	-0.47
Communication Skill	23.00 (4.12)	24.20 (3.71)	-1.21*
Goal Setting Skill	13.91 (3.99)	14.73 (2.84)	-0.82
Problem Solving Skills	23.11 (4.33)	23.12 (4.31)	-0.01

\*p < 0.05

Table 2 demonstrates that there were significant gender differences on one out of the six domains of psychological well-being i.e., Environmental Mastery and two out of the five domains of Life Skills i.e., decision making skill and communication skill domains. Males scored significantly higher in Environmental mastery ( $t= 0.93$ ;  $df= 217$ ;  $p< 0.05$ ) and the domain of Decision-making skill ( $t= 1.15$ ;  $df= 217$ ;  $p< 0.05$ ) than females; while females showed significantly higher score in the communication skill ( $t= -1.21$ ;  $df= 217$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) than males. The result of independent sample T-Test revealed that there was no significant difference between males and females in terms of the overall scores of Psychological well- being ( $t= 1.07$ ;  $df= 217$ ;  $p=.58$ ) and Life Skills ( $t= -1.40$ ;  $df= 217$ ;  $p=.40$ ).

**Table 3:** Correlations among young adults’ psychological well-being, Life Skills and the domains of Life Skills

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. PSW		.474* *	.190* *	.462* *	.320* *	.428* *	.424* *
2. Life Skills Total			.739* *	.848* *	.696* *	.732* *	.882* *
3. Decision-making Skill				.504* *	.477* *	.358* *	.579* *
4. Critical Thinking					.480* *	.583* *	.742* *
5. Communication						.291* *	.436* *
6. Goal setting							.649* *
7. Problem solving							

\* $p< 0.01$

Table 3 demonstrates results of Pearson’s correlation between the Psychological well-being total score, Life Skills’ and its five domains. As reported elsewhere the psychological well- being and Life Skills have a significant, strong and positive correlation ( $r=0.474$ ;  $p< 0.01$ ). Psychological well- being is significantly correlated with all the five domains of Life Skills.

**Table 4:** Regression analysis with Psychological well- being as the outcome variable

	Standard Coefficient	t	p
Constant		6.029	.00
Decision making	-.160	-2.118	.035
Critical thinking	.253	2.738	.007
Communication	.162	2.308	.022
Goal setting	.207	2.638	.009
Problem solving	.129	1.274	.204

The regression model specified in Table 4 explained a total of 26% of the variance in Psychological well- being. The Decision-making skill explained 3% of the variance in psychological well- being; the Critical thinking skill explained an additional 18% of the variance; Communication skill explained 1% of the variance; and Goal setting skill explained additional 4% of variance in psychological well- being scores.

**Discussion**

The present study sought to investigate the relationship between Psychological well-being of the young adults and different domains of their Life Skills and further to what

degree the relationship between Psychological well- being and Life Skills might be moderated by the gender. Results showed that there was no significant interaction and thus there was no moderation of gender in the relationship between Psychological well- being and Life Skills. In the final regression analysis as the Psychological well- being as the dependent variable, Life Skills predicts 26 percent of variation and all the domains of Life Skills except the domain of problem solving significantly predict the changes in the dependent variable. This result is consistent with elsewhere (Nair *et al.*, 2013) [1] (Kasapoglu & Didin, 2019) [15]. Psychological well- being and all its six domains are significantly and positively correlated with the Life Skills and its five domains. All the relationships are highly significant and hence proved that psychological well- being is being increased with better Life Skills. In the case of mean differences, the independent T-test proved that male shows significantly higher Environmental Mastery and Decision-making skills than female. At the same time Communication skill is significantly higher for female.

**Conclusion**

The psychological well- being of the young adults is significantly associated with their Life Skills and predicts the variations in the dependent variable. The result of the study is consistent with the previous studies (Ghaldiri *et al.*, 2015) [6]. Most of the studies in this area have been conducted among Adolescents (Nair *et al.*, 2013) [1] (Kasapoglu & Didin, 2019) [15] and produced the positive relationship between the study variables. Dissimilar from that, this study aimed to produce the data from young adults and also assessed their perceived Life Skills instead of giving Life Skills intervention. Still the result being produced is very much similar to the previous researches. This clearly tell us that Life Skills help the individual to maintain the psychological well- being across different phases of life. Hence developing skills in the early years of life will equip the individual to maintain the well- being across life span.

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