

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF YOUTH IN RELATION TO THEIR SELF-EFFICACY

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ABSTRACT

Today the world is witnessing a lot of problems among youth, it has a significant influence on their mental health. Self-efficacy refers to “trusting one’s abilities and powers for learning and performance” (Hill, 2002). It involves the feeling of self-worth affecting appraisal of competence and emotional well-being which would aid in the development of mental health. This study is conducted to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and psychological well-being among youth in Kerala. A sample of 298 youths from Kozhikode, Kerala was selected through simple random sampling and data was collected with the help of Self-Efficacy Scale by Schwarzer & Jerusalem (1995) and Psychological well-being Scale by Sreejith Sudhakar and Kadhiraavan (2018). The results revealed a significant difference in self-efficacy among youth based on their gender. There was a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and psychological well-being among youth. The implications are discussed in this article.

KEYWORDS: *Self-Efficacy, Psychological Well-Being, Youth*

INTRODUCTION

The advancement in science and technology not only promoted a sophisticated lifestyle but also advocated a wide range of problems in society. Life becomes highly competitive and complicated as a result of the youth population in our country suffer from a number of emotional and mental problems. Therefore, mental health is considered to be a foundation for well-being and effective functioning of an individual. It is an essential aspect of the development of a community.

In India, efforts were taken by central as well as state governments to promote the quality of physical health services. In his article “Historical Analysis of the Development of Health Care Facilities in Kerala State, India”, Raman Kutty (2000) observed that “the state has achieved near universal literacy for both males and females and the health care indices are comparable to countries with more advanced economies”. This finding indicated that Kerala state had a better health care system. Though there is a better health care system, there is a lack of evidence about the quality of mental health services. The recent State Mental Health Survey report of Kerala revealed innumerable mental health-related problems among individuals. According to National Mental Health Survey of India 2015-2016 (2017), about 14.4 percent of the population aged 18 and above undergo mental associated problems in Kerala, which highlighted the significance of the mental health issues in Kerala despite the health care facilities.

According to the Global Burden of Disease Report (2016) “mental health problems are among the first twenty leading causes of disease burden: unipolar depressive disorder, alcohol use disorders, and self-inflicted injuries”. Jayaprakash & Sharija (2017) reported that “about half of lifetime cases of mental disorders start by 14 years of age”. These studies highlighted the importance of identifying the factors associated with mental health and providing mental health care from the initial stages of life.

The concept of mental health has been viewed as psychological well-being and it refers to “a set of psychological features involved in positive human functioning” (Ryff, Keyes & Schmotkin, 2002). These psychological features include maturity (Allport, 1961), purpose in life (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1969), self-efficacy (Schwarzer & Warner, 2013) and so on. These psychological features are directly related to the resilience qualities in an individual. As Ryff (1995) pointed out, “Developmental psychology, particularly life-span developmental psychology, offers numerous depictions of wellness, conceived as progressions of continued growth across the life course. These perspectives include Erikson’s model of the stages of psychosocial development, Buhler’s formulation of basic life tendencies that work toward the fulfillment of life, and Neugarten’s descriptions of personality change in adulthood and old age. Clinical psychology also offers multiple formulations of well-being, such as Maslow’s conception of self-actualization, Rogers’s view of the fully functioning person, Jung’s formulation of individuation, and Allport’s conception of maturity. Finally, the literature on mental health, although guided largely by absence-of-illness definitions of well-being, includes significant exceptions, such as Jahoda’s formulation of positive criteria of mental health and Birren’s conception of positive functioning in later life” and also “these perspectives, even in combination, have had little impact on empirical research on psychological well-being”.

In the context of factors associated with psychological well-being, self-efficacy is found to be a vital aspect which helps people to face the physical and mental issues with confidence. Self-efficacy plays a prudent role in the development and enhancement of mental health. According to Bandura, “self-efficacy has a central role in the regulation of emotional states. In other words, self-efficacy beliefs make people able to interpret potentially threatening expectations as manageable significant challenges and help them feel less stressful in such situations” (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy acts “a self-evaluation of one’s competence to successfully execute a course of action necessary to reach the desired outcome. It is a multi-dimensional construct that varies according to the domain of demands” (Zimmerman, 2000). It functions “as a gauge, one that helps us regulate behavior to keep it in a certain safe or comfortable zone, especially in terms of social functioning” (Leary, 2004). Hence it could be assumed that self-efficacy is an important construct which could foster psychological well-being among youth.

Need for the Study

Education is a process which prepares an individual for the fullest adult participation in society. But during the last 20 years of the educational system in India witnessed a lot of challenges and changes, in turn, exert a lot of pressure on the students. The youth is a significant population in India now suffers from many emotional and mental issues due to the competitive environment in schools and colleges. But these issues were not addressed by trained psychologists and counselors at all levels of education. Many of the studies have raised concern about the quality of mental health services in Indian schools and colleges. Ananthkrishnan (2011) mentioned that “a performance audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India has concluded that Kerala, where 5.86% of the population suffers from mental illness, compared with the national average of 2%, is precariously perched in the mental health care sector. National Mental Health Survey of India,

2015-16 (2017) highlighted that “Kerala had high suicide rates and high rates of common mental disorders when compared to national estimates. While it may be truthfully claimed that the mental health services and systems in Kerala are better than most other states in the country, the treatment gap is still huge”. It is reported that “low self-efficacy is related to more symptoms of anxiety and depression” (Faure & Loxton, 2003; Kashdan & Roberts, 2004; Shnek, Irvine, Stewart, & Abbey, 2001). Therefore, it appeared necessary to study different aspects of its effects inS each period of human development and psychological well-being from infancy to adulthood. Hence, it is imperative to explore the relationship between self-efficacy and mental health among the youth in the present context, especially in Kerala.

METHOD

The hypotheses of the study are as follows:

- Self-efficacy and psychological well-being has a positive relationship among youth.
- Youth differ in their self-efficacy on the basis of gender.
- Youth differ in their self-efficacy on the basis of birth order.
- 4. The gender and level of self-efficacy of youth have a significant influence on their psychological well-being.

The Survey method was adopted in the present study and the following tools were used to collect the data.

- Self-Efficacy Scale by Schwarzer, R & Jerusalem, M (1995): This scale consisted of 10 items to measure the level of self-efficacy of individuals. The items are answered with the help of 4-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. A higher score in this scale indicates, higher self-efficacy. Jayanthi and Rajkumar (2014) re-established the reliability and found Cronbach alpha value to be 0.86 in the Indian context.
- Psychological Well-being Scale by Sreejith Sudhakar and Kadiravan (2018): This tool consisted of 30 statements with a 5-point scale form strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree. It is measuring 6 dimensions of psychological well-being. Such as autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, a perception of reality, purpose in life, and self-acceptance.

Three hundred and fifty youth from the Kozhikode area in Kerala were selected through simple random sampling. The mentioned tools were distributed to youth. The data was collected with the personal supervision of the investigator. Two hundred and ninety-eight data were taken for analysis after removing a spurious entry.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From table 1, it is observed that self-efficacy had a significant positive relationship with autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, and perception of reality, purpose in life, self-acceptance and overall mental health. Hence, hypothesis-1 is accepted. It is concluded that the psychological well-being and self-efficacy of youth is significantly related to each other.

The psychological well-being includes the ability to think, feel and function independently by understanding the surrounding and handling the situations effectively. This requires a clear perception of the constantly changing external reality with acceptance about one’s own strengths and weakness. Persons with these qualities can focus on personal growth. Self-efficacy is a foundation for all these qualities and hence the significant positive association between self-

efficacy and constructs of psychological well-being is quite logical.

From table 2, it is observed that the youth differ significantly in their self-efficacy based on gender. Females have displayed higher self-efficacy than males. It is concluded that girls had higher self-efficacy than boys. Today girls get equal opportunities in all the aspects of life. Especially in terms of education outperform boys at all levels. This is witnessed from the state level scores in 10th and 12th examinations as well as in universities. Also, they have started occupying the higher positions in the society which in turn promoted their self-confidence and self-efficacy. The source of self-efficacy plays a prudent role among boys and girls. Heatherton and Wyland (2003) indicated that “Boys are highly influenced by objective success and girls are relationships”. It is witnessed that nurturing is the most important quality of women and they were highly successful in managing healthy relationships.

From table 3, it is observed that youth do not differ significantly in their self-efficacy on the basis birth order. It is concluded that youth do not differ self-efficacy on the basis of an order of birth. In general, it is observed from the family system that the firstborn in the family, as well as only an child, receives a lot of attention from their family members, especially from parents. Their interaction with the family is also high. Active family involvement is an essential aspect of the enhancement of self-efficacy among children. Hence the first born and only an child have a higher probability to develop higher self-efficacy. But the present finding reveals that youth do not differ significantly in their psychological well-being due to their birth order position.

Earlier studies conducted exploring differences in birth order categories and levels of self-efficacy reveals a mixed result. Previous data have suggested that older children tend to be more persistent and have greater self-efficacy, while younger children have higher measures of joy. Both joy and self-efficacy are important when addressing resilience. Adler proposed that individuals interact within a society based upon their assumptions about the world, which are influenced by their birth order (Croake & Olson, 1977). Caoimhe Kavanagh (2014) reported that there is “no significant relationships were found between birth order and self-efficacy nor with birth order and motivation”.

From table 4, it is observed that the 'F' values of the corrected model, intercept as well as self-efficacy level are significant for all the dimensions of psychological well-being. Further, it is observed that the interaction effect of gender with self-efficacy level is significant for the overall psychological well-being. Hence it is concluded that the gender combined with the level of self-efficacy significantly predicted the psychological wellbeing among youth.

Environmental mastery generally requires awareness, understanding, and application of cognitive insights with reference to the constantly changing society. Generally, youth tend to explore the environment and understanding the social as well as psychological context and also have a higher tendency to initiate and continue the social interactions. Also, with technological exposure, they are good at maintaining social relationships in an effective manner. Their perception and appraisal of external reality are entirely different from the elders. Also, they have a quest for learning and growth. Hence the influence of gender combined with self-efficacy on psychological well-being is quite natural.

IMPLICATIONS

From the findings of this study, it is understood that self-efficacy is an important factor which contributes to the psychological well-being among youth. Efforts should be taken to promote the psychological well-being of youth by enhancing their self-efficacy. Training programmes may be organized to enhance the self-efficacy of youth. The gender

differences should be kept in mind while developing a training and development programme for the youth.

Systematic group counseling may be arranged to promote the self-efficacy of male youth by addressing their emotional and psychological issues. It is the high time for the educational institutions as well as the government to phase the youth development programmes with special reference to their self-efficacy and psychological well-being.

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Table 1: Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Mental Health among Youth

Psychological Well-Being	Self-Efficacy
Autonomy	0.511**
Environmental Mastery	0.542**
Personal Growth	0.501**
Perception of Reality	0.429**
Purpose in Life	0.464**
Self-Acceptance	0.445**
Overall Mental Health	0.596**

**Significant at 0.01 level

Table 2: Self-Efficacy of Male and Female Youth

Variable	Male (N=166)		Female (N=132)		“t”-value
	M ₁	SD ₁	M ₂	SD ₂	
Self-Efficacy	35.61	7.36	37.81	6.83	2.67**

**Significant at 0.01 level

Table 3: Differences in Self-Efficacy Based On Birth Order

Variable	First Born (N=126)		Later Born (N=145)		Only Child (N=27)		“F”-Value
	M ₁	SD ₁	M ₂	SD ₂	M ₃	SD ₃	
Self-efficacy	36.82	6.50	36.43	7.43	36.30	9.09	0.11 ^{NS}

^{NS}-Not Significant at 0.01 level

Table 4: Summary of Two-Way Anova for Psychological Well-Being

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F
Corrected Model	Autonomy	1674.940 ^a	3	558.31	20.44*
	Environmental Mastery	2297.426 ^b	3	765.80	26.13*
	Personal Growth	1776.803 ^c	3	592.26	18.30*
	Perception of Reality	1275.460 ^d	3	425.15	12.28*
	Purpose in Life	1648.679 ^e	3	549.56	19.96*
	Self Acceptance	1181.229 ^f	3	393.74	15.89*
	Psychological Well Being	56428.975 ^g	3	18809.65	29.85*
Intercept	Autonomy	307541.61	1	307541.61	11259.36*
	Environmental Mastery	339322.05	1	339322.05	11580.21*
	Personal Growth	502157.19	1	502157.19	15519.41*
	Perception of Reality	464372.35	1	464372.35	13416.23*
	Purpose in Life	358328.04	1	358328.04	13019.73*
	Self Acceptance	318714.06	1	318714.06	12861.85*
	Psychological Well Being	13618387.00	1	13618387.00	21618.17*
Gender	Autonomy	82.99	1	82.99	3.03 ^{NS}
	Environmental Mastery	40.24	1	40.24	1.37 ^{NS}
	Personal Growth	11.22	1	11.22	0.34 ^{NS}
	Perception of Reality	74.75	1	74.75	2.16 ^{NS}
	Purpose in Life	12.29	1	12.29	0.44 ^{NS}
	Self Acceptance	27.97	1	27.97	1.12 ^{NS}
	Psychological Well Being	55.46	1	55.46	0.08 ^{NS}
Self Efficacy Level	Autonomy	1474.53	1	1474.53	53.98*
	Environmental Mastery	2218.52	1	2218.52	75.71*
	Personal Growth	1765.45	1	1765.45	54.56*
	Perception of Reality	1250.03	1	1250.03	36.11*
	Purpose in Life	1575.43	1	1575.43	57.24*
	Self Acceptance	1090.87	1	1090.87	44.02*
Gender * Self Efficacy Level	Psychological Well Being	55504.66	1	55504.66	88.11*
	Autonomy	27.19	1	27.19	0.99 ^{NS}
	Environmental Mastery	256.03	1	256.03	8.73*
	Personal Growth	78.55	1	78.55	2.42 ^{NS}
	Perception of Reality	16.20	1	16.20	0.46 ^{NS}
	Purpose in Life	195.99	1	195.99	7.12*
	Self Acceptance	17.92	1	17.92	0.72 ^{NS}
Psychological Well Being	2739.28	1	2739.28	4.34*	

Table 5

a. R Squared =.173 (Adjusted R Squared =.164)
b. R Squared =.211 (Adjusted R Squared =.202)
c. R Squared =.157 (Adjusted R Squared =.149)
d. R Squared =.111 (Adjusted R Squared =.102)
e. R Squared =.169 (Adjusted R Squared =.161)
f. R Squared =.140 (Adjusted R Squared =.131)
g. R Squared =.234 (Adjusted R Squared =.226)
*Significant at 0.05 level; ^{NS} – Not Significant