



Research Article

Influence of Gender and Place of Residence on Psychological Well-Being among Adolescents

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Abstract

Psychological well-being is a fundamental aspect of adolescent development, contributing to positive mental health, emotional adjustment, and overall quality of life. The present study examined psychological well-being among adolescents with reference to gender and place of residence. A descriptive survey design was employed, and data were collected from adolescent students using the Psychological Well-Being Scale. The obtained data were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis) and inferential statistics (independent samples *t*-test) to examine demographic differences.

The findings revealed no significant difference in psychological well-being between male and female adolescents, indicating that gender does not significantly influence adolescents' psychological well-being. However, a significant difference was observed between urban and rural adolescents, with urban adolescents demonstrating higher psychological well-being than their rural counterparts. These findings suggest that contextual factors associated with place of residence, including educational opportunities, social environment, and access to resources, may contribute to variations in adolescents' psychological well-being.

The study highlights the need for strengthening school-based mental health programmes, counselling services, and life skills education, particularly in rural schools, to promote positive psychological development among adolescents. The findings contribute to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on demographic variations in psychological well-being and offer useful implications for educators, counsellors, parents, and policymakers working towards improving adolescent mental health and holistic development.

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KEYWORDS: Psychological Well-Being, Adolescents, Gender, Place of Residence.

1. INTRODUCTION

Psychological well-being is a fundamental indicator of positive mental health and optimal human functioning. It extends beyond the absence of mental illness and reflects an individual's ability to realise personal potential, maintain meaningful interpersonal relationships, effectively manage environmental demands, and lead a purposeful life. Adolescence is a critical developmental period characterised by rapid physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes, making psychological well-being essential for healthy personality development, academic success, emotional resilience, and social adjustment.

Psychological well-being is widely recognised as a multidimensional construct. Ryff and Keyes (1995) conceptualised it in terms of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Similarly, Deci and Ryan (2008) emphasised both hedonic well-being, reflected in happiness and positive affect, and eudaimonic well-being, which focuses on personal growth and effective functioning. Other researchers have identified life satisfaction, self-esteem, emotional balance, and social connectedness as important components of psychological well-being (Diener et al., 1999; McMahan & Estes, 2011; Singh, 2017).

Previous research indicates that adolescents' psychological well-being is influenced by psychological, familial, educational, and environmental factors. Positive parent-child relationships, supportive school environments, emotional intelligence, resilience, and social support contribute significantly to psychological well-being (Rathi & Rastogi, 2007; Gao & McLellan, 2018; Guerra-Bustamante et al., 2019). However, findings regarding demographic differences based on gender and place of residence remain inconsistent. Urban and rural adolescents often experience different educational opportunities, family environments, and social contexts, which may influence their psychological well-being. Moreover, empirical evidence examining these demographic variables among Indian adolescents is limited.

In view of these gaps, the present study was undertaken to examine psychological well-being among adolescents with reference to gender and place of residence, thereby contributing empirical evidence to the existing literature and providing implications for educational practice and adolescent mental health promotion.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Psychological well-being has emerged as a central construct in positive psychology because it reflects an individual's capacity to function effectively, maintain meaningful relationships, and experience purpose and fulfilment. During adolescence, psychological well-being is influenced by a complex interaction of psychological, familial, educational, social, and environmental factors.

Early studies emphasised the role of family and social environments in promoting adolescents' psychological well-being. Jones and Kafetsios (2005) reported that community characteristics, academic stress, and family conflicts significantly influence well-being, while Videon (2005) highlighted the independent contribution of father-adolescent

relationships. Similarly, Rathi and Rastogi (2007) found that adolescents with a greater sense of meaning and purpose in life exhibit higher psychological well-being. Cripps and Zyromski (2009) further demonstrated that parental involvement and authoritative parenting enhance adolescents' adjustment and well-being, whereas Huppert (2009) concluded that psychological well-being promotes cognitive functioning and protects against mental health problems. Sarkova (2010) and Berridge and Kringelbach (2011) also emphasised the importance of positive peer and teacher relationships, social connectedness, happiness, and positive self-evaluation.

Research has consistently identified identity, self-concept, personality, and social support as significant correlates of psychological well-being. Sandhu et al. (2012) reported that identity formation positively predicts psychological well-being, while Garcia and Archer (2012) found that life satisfaction and self-acceptance enhance well-being, whereas negative self-concept and peer pressure diminish it. Perez (2012) observed gender differences only in selected dimensions, whereas Daraci (2013) reported no overall gender differences. Sarkova et al. (2014), Wagner et al. (2014), Sharma (2014), Dadhanian (2015), Khan et al. (2015), and Leme et al. (2015) demonstrated that supportive school environments, constructive leisure activities, physical activity, social skills, and positive family relationships contribute significantly to adolescents' psychological well-being.

Subsequent studies highlighted the influence of personality and emotional competence. Brouzos et al. (2016) and Panicker (2016) reported positive associations of psychological well-being with subjective well-being, meaning in life, and extraversion, whereas neuroticism and psychoticism were negatively associated. Navya Shree and Manjula (2017) found lower psychological well-being among adolescents who had experienced sexual abuse. Viola et al. (2019) and Singh (2019) emphasised the importance of self-efficacy, nurturing home environments, parental trust, and communication. More recent studies by Venkatesan and Rohatgi (2020), Dolcos et al. (2020), Dudhatra (2020), Guerra-Bustamante et al. (2021), and Javed (2021) established resilience, emotional intelligence, personality traits, creativity, decision-making, self-efficacy, and academic self-concept as significant predictors of psychological well-being.

Recent evidence further strengthens these findings. The World Health Organisation (2022) recognised adolescent psychological well-being as a global public health priority. Marques et al. (2023) identified resilience, optimism, and social connectedness as significant predictors of well-being across cultures. Zeng et al. (2024) highlighted the positive effects of emotional regulation and supportive school climates, while Liu et al. (2025) demonstrated that balanced digital engagement, family support, and school connectedness enhance adolescents' psychological well-being, whereas excessive screen exposure and academic stress adversely affect it. Overall, the reviewed literature indicates that psychological well-being is a multidimensional construct influenced by individual, familial, educational, and environmental factors. However, limited and inconsistent evidence exists regarding gender and urban-rural

differences among Indian adolescents, thereby justifying the need for the present investigation.

Need for the study

Psychological well-being is a key indicator of positive mental health, enabling adolescents to cope effectively with developmental challenges, maintain healthy interpersonal relationships, and achieve personal growth. Since adolescence is characterised by rapid physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes, promoting psychological well-being is essential for healthy adjustment, academic success, resilience, and overall quality of life. Although previous research has examined psychological well-being in relation to parental involvement, emotional intelligence, personality, self-esteem, and social support, limited attention has been given to demographic differences based on gender and place of residence, particularly among Indian adolescents. Moreover, existing findings regarding these demographic variables remain inconsistent across different cultural and educational contexts. As urban and rural adolescents experience diverse family environments, educational opportunities, and social conditions, examining these differences is important. The present study, therefore, seeks to investigate psychological well-being among adolescents with reference to gender and place of residence, thereby contributing empirical evidence to the existing literature and informing educational and counselling interventions.

Statement of the study

Influence of Gender and Place of Residence on Psychological Well-Being among Adolescents

Operational definitions

Psychological well-being

Psychological well-being is defined as the scores obtained on the Psychological Well-Being Scale developed by Sisodia and Choudhary (2012). Psychological well-being is a state in which an individual realises his/her potential, possesses healthy interpersonal relationships and has compliance with his/her desires; in simpler terms, it is a state in which one realises his/her potential and copes with the stresses of everyday life efficiently.

Adolescents

Adolescence is a transitional stage of human development between childhood and adulthood, characterised by rapid physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes. According to the World Health Organisation (2024), adolescents are individuals between 13 and 18 years of age. For

In the present study, adolescents refer to students studying at the senior secondary level (Classes XI and XII) who fall within the adolescent age group as defined by the World Health Organisation.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To compare the psychological well-being of male and female adolescents.
2. To compare the psychological well-being of urban and rural adolescents.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant difference in the psychological well-being of male and female adolescents.

H₀₂: There is no statistically significant difference in the psychological well-being of urban and rural adolescents.

4. METHODOLOGY

The present study employed a descriptive survey design with a comparative approach to examine differences in decision-making among adolescents based on gender and place of residence.

Sample

A Sample of 150 adolescents was taken for the present study.

Tool used

Psychological well-being scale by Sisodia and Choudhary (2012). The scale is valid for all age groups. It consists of 50 items covering all five essential dimensions of psychological well-being; these are Life Satisfaction, Efficiency, Sociability, Mental Health and Interpersonal Relations.

Statistical Techniques

The data were subjected to descriptive and inferential analysis. Mean, median, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis and frequency polygon were studied to understand the nature of variables, and were included in descriptive analysis. For inferential analysis, the t-test was employed.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Psychological Well-Being of all Adolescents, Female Adolescents and Male Adolescents on Psychological Well-Being Scale

The scores of psychological well-being for the sample of all Adolescents, Female Adolescents and Male Adolescents were analysed using mean, median, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis and range. The descriptive statistics of psychological well-being among adolescents of the total sample are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Psychological Well-Being Among all Adolescents (N=150), Female Adolescents (N=75) and Male Adolescents (N=75)

Sample	N	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range
Total	150	164.54	162	34.39	0.25	1.92	190(247-57)
Female	75	161.40	154	25.61	0.32	2.52	162(231-69)
Male	75	167.68	165	41.31	0.07	1.02	190(247-57)

The frequency polygon of the scores of Psychological Well-Being of all Adolescents (N=150), Female Adolescents

(N=75) and Male Adolescents (N=75) is shown in Figure 1.

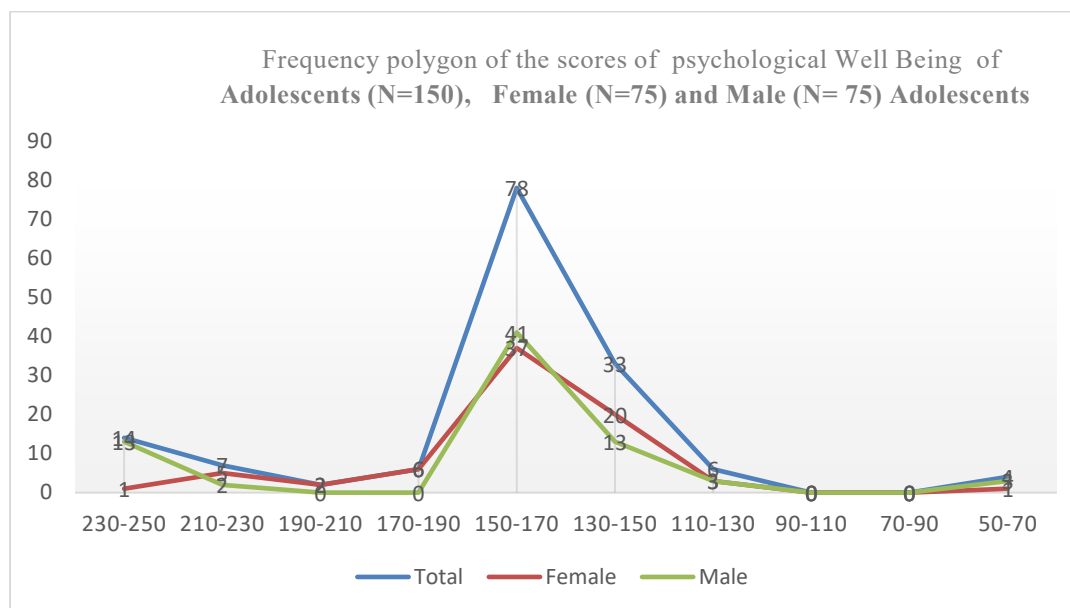


Figure 1: Frequency polygon of the scores of Psychological Well Being of all Adolescents (N=150), Female Adolescents (N=75) and Male Adolescents (N=75)

Discussion and Interpretation based on descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics indicated that the psychological well-being scores of the total sample were approximately normally distributed. The total sample obtained a mean score of 164.54 (Median = 162, SD = 32.15), with scores ranging from 57 to 247 (Range = 190). The distribution was slightly positively skewed (Skewness = 0.25) and exhibited a mesokurtic pattern (Kurtosis = 1.92). Similarly, female adolescents obtained a mean score of 161.40 (Median = 154, SD = 32.15), with scores ranging from 69 to 231 (Range = 162). Their distribution was slightly positively skewed (Skewness = 0.32) and mesokurtic (Kurtosis = 2.52). Male adolescents recorded a comparatively higher mean score of 167.68 (Median = 165, SD = 41.31), with scores ranging from 57 to 247 (Range = 190). Their distribution was also slightly positively skewed (Skewness = 0.07) and

mesokurtic (Kurtosis = 1.02). The frequency distributions for the total sample as well as for male and female adolescents approximated normality, with no substantial clustering of scores on either side of the frequency polygon, indicating that the data satisfied the assumption of normality required for subsequent parametric analyses.

Psychological Well-Being of all Adolescents, Rural Adolescents and Urban Adolescents on Psychological Well-Being Scale

The scores of psychological well-being for the sample of all Adolescents, Female Adolescents and Male Adolescents were analysed using mean, median, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis and range. The descriptive statistics of psychological well-being among adolescents of the total sample are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Psychological Well Being of all Adolescents (N=150), Rural Adolescents (N=90) and Urban Adolescents (N=60)

Sample	N	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range
Total	150	164.54	162	34.39	0.25	1.92	190(247-57)
Rural	90	158.48	154	25.07	0.62	3.76	165(234-69)
Urban	60	173.63	166	43.59	-0.29	0.88	190(247-57)

The frequency polygon of the scores of Psychological Well Being of all Adolescents (N=150), Rural Adolescents (N=90)

and Urban Adolescents (N= 60) is shown in Figure 2.

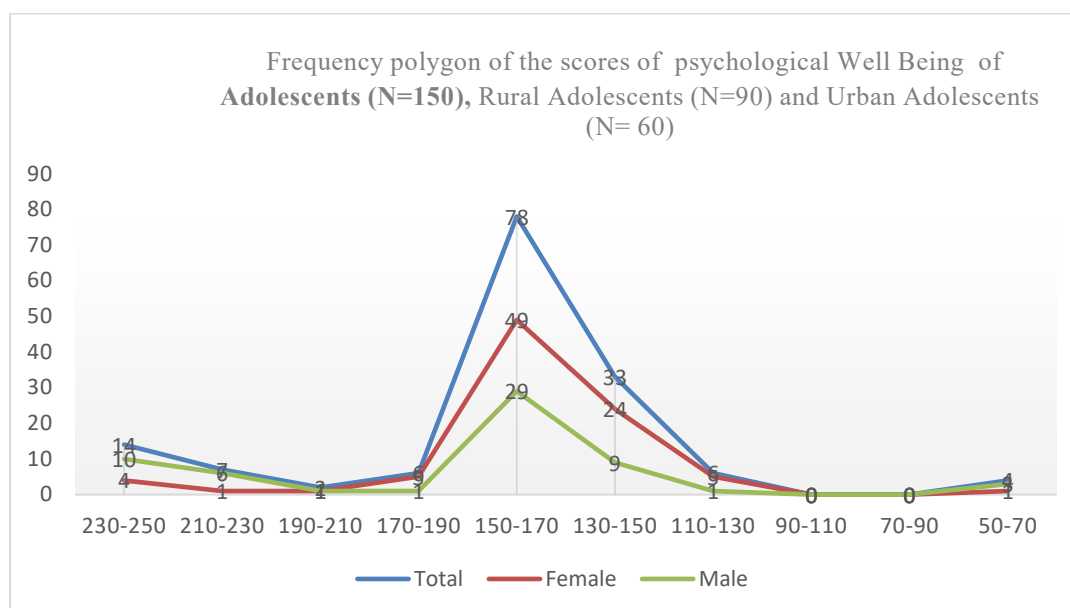


Figure 2: Frequency polygon of the scores of Psychological Well Being of all Adolescents (N=150), Rural Adolescents (N=90) and Urban Adolescents (N=60)

Discussion and Interpretation based on descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics indicated that the psychological well-being scores of both rural and urban adolescents were approximately normally distributed. Rural adolescents obtained a mean score of 167.68 (Median = 165, SD = 41.31), with scores ranging from 69 to 234 (Range = 165). The distribution was slightly positively skewed (Skewness = 0.07) and exhibited a mesokurtic pattern (Kurtosis = 1.02). Urban adolescents recorded a higher mean score of 173.63 (Median = 166, SD = 43.59), with scores ranging from 57 to 247 (Range = 190). Their distribution was slightly negatively skewed (Skewness = -0.29) and leptokurtic (Kurtosis = 0.88). The frequency distributions for both rural and urban adolescents approximated

normality, with no substantial clustering of scores on either side of the frequency polygon, indicating that the data satisfied the assumption of normality required for subsequent parametric analyses.

Differential analysis

Hypothesis 1: There exists no significant difference in the psychological well-being of adolescent girls and boys.

The t-value has been calculated for the significance of the difference between the means of psychological well-being of 75 adolescent girls and 75 adolescent boys. The result obtained from the analysis is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: t-value for psychological well-being of Female and male adolescents

Gender	N	Mean	t-value	Remarks	Level of Significance
Female	75	161.40	1.12	Not Significant	0.05
Male	75	167.68			

* significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed), table value at 0.05 level for df=N-2= 148 is 1.96

The computed t-value, to study the significant difference in the mean scores of adolescent girls and boys, was found to be 1.12, which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence. It is quite evident that one cannot differentiate between girls and boys in terms of psychological well-being. This supports that adolescents do not differ in their psychological well-being based on gender. Both boys and girls have similar psychological well-being.

Hence, the hypothesis, "There exists no significant difference between the psychological well-being of adolescent girls and boys"

is accepted and retained. The data did support the hypothesis. At any level of concern, whether girls or boys, they will almost achieve the same psychological well-being.

Hypothesis 2: There exists no significant difference between the psychological well-being of rural and urban adolescents.

The t-value has been calculated for the significance of the difference between the means of psychological well-being of 90 rural adolescents and 60 urban adolescents. The result obtained from the analysis is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: t-value for psychological well-being of rural and urban adolescents

Location	N	Mean	t-value	Remarks	Level of Significance
Rural	90	158.48	2.44	Significant	0.01
Urban	60	173.63			

The computed t-value, to study the significant difference in the mean scores of rural and urban adolescents, was found to be 2.44, which is significant at the 0.01 level of confidence. It is quite evident that one cannot differentiate between rural and urban adolescents in terms of psychological well-being. This supports that rural and urban adolescents differ in their psychological well-being on the basis of location. Urban adolescents have more psychological well-being than Rural Students.

Hence, the hypothesis, "There exists no significant difference between the psychological well-being of rural and urban adolescents", is rejected.

Major findings of the study

1. No statistically significant difference was found in the psychological well-being of male and female adolescents, indicating comparable levels of psychological well-being across gender.
2. A statistically significant difference was observed in the psychological well-being of urban and rural adolescents. Urban adolescents demonstrated significantly higher psychological well-being than their rural counterparts, suggesting that place of residence may influence adolescents' psychological well-being.

Educational Implications

1. The absence of significant gender differences suggests that programmes aimed at enhancing psychological well-being should be implemented equally for both male and female adolescents, without gender-based discrimination.
2. Schools should integrate mental health promotion and psychological well-being activities into the curriculum through life skills education, value education, and social-emotional learning programmes.
3. The significantly lower psychological well-being of rural adolescents highlights the need for targeted psychological support, counselling services, and mental health awareness programmes in rural schools.
4. Teachers should be trained to identify adolescents experiencing psychological distress and provide timely guidance or referral to professional counselling services.
5. School counsellors should organise regular workshops on stress management, emotional regulation, resilience, self-esteem, and positive coping strategies to enhance students' psychological well-being.
6. Parents should be sensitised to the importance of maintaining supportive family relationships, open communication, and positive parenting practices, as these contribute substantially to adolescents' psychological well-being.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. Similar studies may be conducted using larger and more diverse samples drawn from different states and regions of India to improve the generalizability of the findings.
2. Future research may compare psychological well-being across different educational boards, school types

(government, private, and aided), and socioeconomic backgrounds.

3. Future studies may investigate the influence of variables such as emotional intelligence, resilience, self-esteem, personality, academic stress, family environment, parenting style, social support, and digital media use on psychological well-being.
4. Comparative studies involving urban, rural, and tribal adolescents may be undertaken to better understand contextual influences on psychological well-being.
5. Future research may explore the relationship between psychological well-being and important educational outcomes such as academic achievement, school engagement, career maturity, decision-making, and life satisfaction.

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