

## Psychological Well-Being and Happiness among Young Adults under the Condition of Lockdown

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DOI: [10.36348/sjhss.2021.v06i09.004](https://doi.org/10.36348/sjhss.2021.v06i09.004)

| Received: 27.07.2021 | Accepted: 03.09.2021 | Published: 11.09.2021

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### Abstract

Psychological well-being is about lives going well. It is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively. Sustainable well-being does not require individuals to feel good all the time; the experience of painful emotions is a normal part of life, and being able to manage these negative or painful emotions is essential for long term well-being. Happiness in a broad sense is a label for a family of pleasant emotional states, such as, joy amusement, satisfaction, gratification, euphoria and triumph. Lockdown during pandemic has disturbed the psychological functioning of human beings. Psychological well-being and happiness would be disturbed due to condition of lockdown. Hence, the present study focuses to understand the psychological well-being and happiness among young adults under the condition of lockdown. The study was executed in two phases. Results show that there is significant relationship between psychological well-being and happiness among young adults. Thematic analysis shows that lockdown has an effect on young adults. Building strengths to handle tough situations is very important. Thoughtful, careful, adaptable and effective practices can help deal with lockdown during pandemic.

**Key words:** Psychological Well-Being, Happiness, Young Adults, Lockdown.

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### INTRODUCTION

Psychological well-being is, however, compromised when negative emotions are extreme or very long lasting and interfere with a person's ability to function in his or her daily life. The concept of feeling good incorporates not only the positive emotions of happiness and contentment, but also such emotions as interest, engagement, confidence, and affection. The concept of functioning effectively (in a psychological sense) involves the development of one's potential, having some control over one's life, having a sense of purpose (e.g. working towards valued goals), and experiencing positive relationships. Psychological well-being is associated with flexible and creative thinking, pro social behaviour, and good physical health. An individual's level of mental capital and psychological well-being is powerfully influenced by her/his early environment, particularly maternal care. External circumstances affect our well-being, but our actions and attitudes may have a greater influence. Interventions which encourage positive actions and attitudes have an important role to play in enhancing well-being (Huppert, 2009).

Happiness is a state of well-being. According to philosophy 'happiness' translates to the Greek concept of Eudemonia, and it refers to good life and flourishing, rather than simply an emotion. In psychology, happiness is a mental or an emotional state of well-being which can be defined as a positive or pleasant emotion ranging from contentment to intense joy. Happy mental states may reflect judgments taken by a person about their over-all well-being. Positive psychologists and clinical researchers have extensively studied happiness.

Happiness in a broad sense is a label for a family of pleasant emotional states, such as, joy, amusement, satisfaction, gratification, euphoria and triumph. For example, happiness comes from 'encountering unexpected positive events', 'seeing a significant other' and 'basking in the acceptance and praise of others'. Narrowing down, it refers to experimental and evaluative 'well-being' or "objective happiness", is happiness measured in the moment via questions such as "How good or bad is your experience now?". Evaluation of well-being questions such as "How good was your vacation?" measures one's

subjective thoughts and feelings, studies suggest the happiness in the past.

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) have been the cause of global chaos for the past year and a half. The importance of mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic has been stressed upon by various public health agencies like the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (Banerjee *et al*., 2020). It is very evident that the coronavirus not only have a great impact on the mortality rate but also on the mental well-being. While many strategies formulating with different medical support by each nation, focusing on the psychological aspects is mandatory.

The Indian Government ordered a nationwide lockdown by the cause of Coronavirus (COVID-19) on March 2020. A lockdown is a state of isolation, where in the condition of coronavirus is a total restriction to all the social gatherings. Stressing on many external and internal factors of the people's livelihood during the pandemic lockdown is as important as keeping the people safe from getting infected by the coronavirus. Happiness can exist without well-being, but well-being cannot exist without happiness, hence it's important to identify the relationship between psychological well-being and happiness. The present study intends to identify the relationship between Psychological Well-Being and Happiness among young adults.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

COVID-19 being a fatal and life-threatening virus has forced the implementation of lockdowns all over the world. The variables that are included in the study are of great significance considering the present situation. The lockdown has various effects on the happiness and well-being of people due to the isolation and the challenges people have to face on a daily basis these days. Here are a few studies which were conducted with similar variables and might help in getting a better understanding of the variables included.

Lades *et al*. (2020) studied that the COVID-19 outbreak has become one of the largest public health crisis of our time. Governments have responded by implementing self-isolation and physical distancing measures that have profoundly impacted daily life throughout the world. The study aimed to investigate how people experience the activities, interactions, and settings of their lives during the pandemic. 604 samples following the closure of schools and non-essential business were assessed in Ireland on 25th March 2020. Results showed that 74% of them spent time at home, 8% spent outdoors were associated with markedly raised positive affect and reduced negative emotions. Exercising, going for walks, gardening, pursuing hobbies, and taking care of children were the activities associated with the greatest affective benefits. Home-

schooling children and obtaining information about COVID-19 were ranked lowest of all activities in terms of emotional experience. These findings highlight the activities that may play a protective role in relation to well-being during the pandemic, the importance of setting limits for exposure to COVID-19-related media coverage, and the need for greater educational supports to facilitate home-schooling during this challenging period.

Groarke *et al*. (2020), focused on loneliness as a significant public health issue. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in lockdown measures limiting social contact. The UK public are worried about the impact of these measures on mental health outcomes. Understanding the prevalence and predictors of loneliness at this time is a priority issue for research. The study employed a cross-sectional online survey design. Baseline data collected between March 23rd and April 24th 2020 from UK adults in the COVID-19 Psychological Wellbeing Study were analysed (N = 1964, 18–87 years, M = 37.11, SD = 12.86, 70% female). Logistic regression analysis examined the influence of socio-demographic, social, health and COVID-19 specific factors on loneliness. The prevalence of loneliness was 27% (530/1964). Risk factors for loneliness were younger age group (OR: 4.67–5.31), being separated or divorced (OR: 2.29), scores meeting clinical criteria for depression (OR: 1.74), greater emotion regulation difficulties (OR: 1.04), and poor-quality sleep due to the COVID-19 crisis (OR: 1.30). Higher levels of social support (OR: 0.92), being married/co-habiting (OR: 0.35) and living with a greater number of adults (OR: 0.87) were protective factors. Rates of loneliness during the initial phase of lockdown were high. Risk factors were not specific to the COVID-19 crisis. Findings suggest that supportive interventions to reduce loneliness should prioritise younger people and those with mental health symptoms. Improving emotion regulation and sleep quality, and increasing social support may be optimal initial targets to reduce the impact of COVID-19 regulations on mental health outcomes.

Stieger *et al*. (2020) studied Emotional Well-Being under Conditions of Lockdown: An Experience Sampling Study in Austria during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and attendant lockdown measures present serious threats to emotional well-being worldwide. Here, we examined the extent to which being outdoors (vs. indoors), the experience of loneliness, and screen-time are associated with emotional well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic using an experiencing sampling method. In April 2020, Austrian adults (N = 286, age M = 31.0 years) completed a 21-day experience sampling phase in which they reported their emotional well-being (i.e., happiness), whether they were indoors or outdoors, and loneliness at three random time-points each day, as well

as their daily screen-time. Results indicated that being outdoors was associated with higher emotional well-being, whereas greater loneliness and greater daily screen-time were associated with poorer well-being. Additionally, the impact of loneliness on well-being was weaker when participants were outdoors than indoors. These results have health policy implications for the promotion of population well-being during pandemics.

Alfawaz *et al.* (2021), identified the measures to control the on-going COVID-19 pandemic such as quarantine and social distancing, together with information overload about the sporadic spread of the disease have negatively impacted many individuals' mental and psychosocial health. This study aimed to investigate the prevalence of self-reported mental health parameters and the coping mechanisms of employees and students in a Saudi State University. An online survey in both Arabic and English was launched targeting students, staff and faculty of King Saud University from May 11 to June 6, 2020, the peak of Saudi Arabia's nationwide lockdown. A total of 1542 respondents (726 males and 816 females) aged 20–65 years old participated. Majority of the respondents claimed to have suffered from anxiety (58.1%), depression (50.2%) and insomnia (32.2%) during the lockdown. On average, 65.3% respondents agreed that family bond strengthened during lockdown. Those in the highest quartile of family bonding score were 41% and 95% confidence interval (CI) of 0.59 (0.39–0.87),  $p < 0.001$  and 59%,  $p < 0.001$  were less likely to be anxious and depressed, respectively, even after adjusting for covariates. This independent and significant inverse association was more apparent in females than males. Self-reported acute mental health disorders were common within the academic community during the COVID-19 lockdown. Strength of family bonding as a coping mechanism was instrumental in preserving mental well-being, especially in females.

Grover *et al.* (2020) studied that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a complete shut-down of the entire world and almost all the countries are presently in a "lockdown" mode. While the lockdown strategy is an essential step to curb the exponential rise of COVID-19 cases, the impact of the same on mental health is not well known. This study aimed to evaluate the psychological impact of lockdown due to COVID-19 pandemic on the general public with an objective to assess the prevalence of depression, anxiety, perceived stress, well-being, and other psychological issues. It was an online survey conducted under the aegis of the Indian Psychiatry Society. Using the Survey Monkey platform, a survey link was circulated using the WhatsApp. The survey questionnaire included perceived stress scale, Patient Health Questionnaire-9, Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7, Warwick-Edinburgh

Mental Well-being Scale to assess perceived stress, anxiety, depression, and mental well-being, respectively. The survey link was circulated starting from April 6, 2020 and was closed on April 24, 2020. During the survey, a total of 1871 responses were collected, of which 1685 (90.05%) responses were analysed. About two-fifth (38.2%) had anxiety and 10.5% of the participants had depression? Overall, 40.5% of the participants had either anxiety or depression. Moderate level of stress was reported by about three-fourth (74.1%) of the participants and 71.7% reported poor well-being. The present survey suggests that more than two-fifths of the people are experiencing common mental disorders, due to lockdown and the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic. This finding suggests that there is a need for expanding mental health services to everyone in the society during this pandemic situation.

Review of literature shows that several studies have been executed on psychological well-being (PWB), not many on happiness during lockdown. Literature studies shows that psychological well-being and happiness are important for improving mental health among young adults. Lockdown during pandemic has affected mental health conditions of people. The present study focuses on identifying the relationship between psychological well-being and happiness. If the relationship is exhibited, the study proposes to improve PWB to improve happiness among young adults under the conditions of lockdown. Measures could be taken to improve PWB and happiness under stressful conditions to maintain mental health.

## METHOD

The aim of the present study is to identify the relationship between psychological well-being and happiness and understand the perception of psychological well-being and happiness among young adults under the conditions of lockdown.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### Phase I:

- What is the relationship between psychological well-being and happiness among the young adults under the condition of lockdown?

### Phase II:

- What is the perception of Psychological Well-being among young adults?
- What is the perception of happiness among young adults?
- What is the impact of Lockdown among young adults?

## OBJECTIVES

### Phase I:

- To study the relationship between psychological well-being and happiness among the young adults under the condition of lockdown.

### Phase II

- To study the perception of Psychological Well-being among young adults.
- To study the perception of happiness among young adults.
- To study the impact of Lockdown among young adults.

## HYPOTHESIS

### Phase I

H0: "There is no significant relationship between psychological well-being and happiness among the young adults under the condition of lockdown"

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

- Psychological well-being: the inter and intra-individual levels of positive functioning that include one's relatedness with others and self-referent attitudes that include one's own sense of mastery and personal growth.
- Happiness: Happiness is a feeling pleasure or contentment.
- Lockdown: a state of isolation or restriction of access instituted as a security measure.

## INCLUSION CRITERIA

- Data collection during lockdown.
- Samples residing in Karnataka, Manipur and Kerala were considered for the study.

## EXCLUSION CRITERIA

- Samples tested positive for covid-19 were excluded.
- Individuals diagnosed with mental illnesses or disorders are excluded.

## SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

### Phase I:

- Convenient Sampling technique was used for the study.
- Young Adults (between 16-25 yrs): N=105

### Phase II:

- Snowball sampling technique was used for the study.
- Samples from Phase I were selected for Phase II (N=8)

## TOOLS OF ASSESSMENT

### Phase I:

- **Psychological Well-being Questionnaire:** developed by Bhogle and Prakash (1995). There

are 28 sentences in this scale with two options "yes or no". There are two types of sentence in this scale positive and negative. The test-retest reliability coefficient is 0.72 and internal consistency coefficient is 0.84 the author has reported satisfactory or validity of the questionnaire.

- **Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ):** The OHQ was developed by psychologists Michael Argyle and Peter Hills at Oxford University in the year 2002 with 29 multiple choice questions. The age ranges from 13-68 years. The correlation coefficient of the test-retest scores, for measuring reliability, was 0.78 ( $P<0.001$ ). Cronbach's Alpha of the questionnaire's test and retest stages were 0.84 and 0.87.

### Phase II:

- Semi-structure Interview questions prepared by the research scholars under the scrutiny of experts.

## PROCEDURE

The study was executed in two phases.

*Phase I:* Samples were identified through convenient sampling technique. Consent was taken from the samples to be part of the study. Psychological Well-Being and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire were administered on the selected samples. Responses given by the samples were scored for further analysis.

*Phase II:* Semi-structured interview was executed in Phase II. Consent was taken from the samples to be part of the Interview. Consent was also taken to record the session. Scholars facilitated the interview questions and recorded the responses

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

- *Phase I:* Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyse using SPSS version 16.0.
- *Phase II:* Thematic and content analysis.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Covid-19 pandemic has an impact on mental health and psychosocial health in the society. Lockdown conditions have brought changes in life style of people. Regular, routine work conditions or regular life style was disturbed. It takes time for people to adapt to changes. Lockdown is a temporary condition, which requires people to make changes in life style for short period of time. Shift in life style or working conditions repeatedly disturbs the psychological well-being and happiness among people. Young adults, not only had to change in life style, also the academic conditions. These sudden changes and shifts would affect the well-being and happiness of young adults. The present study highlights the importance of PWB and happiness among young adults under the conditions of lockdown.

## Phase I Quantitative Analysis

**Table-1: Shows descriptive statistics of PWB and Happiness**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
PWB	105	16.13	4.585
Happiness	105	4.24	.745

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of samples on PWB and happiness. For this sample

(N=105), PWB (M=16.13, SD=4.58) and happiness (M=4.24, SD=.74).

**Table-2: Shows correlation between PWB and Happiness**

Correlations		PWB	Happiness
PWB	Pearson Correlation	1	.759**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	105	105
Happiness	Pearson Correlation	.759**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	105	105

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows the Pearson's correlation analysis of the study. Correlation analysis has been executed to know the relationship between PWB and Happiness. Correlation of PWB and Happiness is ( $r= .75$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Results show that there is significant relationship between Psychological Well-Being and Happiness. Hence, the *null hypothesis has been rejected and accepts the alternative hypothesis* stating "*There is significant relationship between psychological well-being and happiness among the young adults under the condition of lockdown*". Results explain that, improving psychological well-being would improve happiness. Irrespective of lockdown or stressful conditions, an individual would be able to handle the situations. The present study extended to understand the perception of PWB and happiness among young adults through interview technique in Phase II.

## Phase II Qualitative Analysis

The thematic analysis of Interview executed with young adults explains the perceptions of sample about PWB and happiness. Impact of lockdown on them has also been tried to understand through interview technique. VI Themes have been derived out of the responses given by the samples. Themes and analysis have been given below.

### Theme I: Understanding PWB

According to the samples interviewed, PWB is as important as physical health and are related to each other irrespective of the age or gender. Activities like dancing, singing, working out, reading, writing, doing yoga, meditation, doing something which actually makes them happy, accepting the fact about situations

and not overthinking, spending time with the family, talking to the people is very important for the PWB. One of the samples also stated that "going for a walk and having a silent self-time, evaluating self and looking back at life trying to change those things that is unsatisfactory is important for our mental health". Psychological well-being is very important and there are many things which can be done to have a good psychological well-being. Responses show that, samples have not defined psychological well-being, but have expressed ways to maintain psychological well-being.

### Theme II: Understanding Happiness

One of the samples explained happiness as "it is something felt when we are satisfied with certain results of some self-actions or when we receive particular materialistic thing". Samples defined happiness to be something subjective, doing what we actually like to do, going out with friends, spending time with the family etc. Those are things people do to be happy. One of the samples states that "people have become so busy in their lives running towards the materialistic things that they have forgotten what they like to do, things they enjoy and don't even have time for themselves. It is important to take a moment for themselves sometime and find things they like to do and start enjoying. That will make them happy". Responses show that samples have basic idea about happiness; mostly the philosophical aspect has been associated to happiness.

### Theme III: Major emotions identified during lockdown

The samples have had an emotional change during the lockdown. There is an increase in feeling low, depressed mood, isolated, lonely, crave for socializing, sad as unable to meet up friends. A sample also mentioned that "since meeting up with friends is not possible but want to meet them and go out. I really want to call up and talk with them but at the same time I worry if they think of me as a very clingy person". Samples also feel restless and frustrated being restricted from going out and socializing. One of the samples also constantly mentioned on how hard this lockdown have been on self. Responses show that negative emotions have been identified more during lockdown conditions.

### Theme IV: Life style changes due to Lockdown

Samples have been waking up and sleeping late, some wake up early only when they have classes. Samples have online classes and find it less hectic when compared to offline classes. Professional lives have in some cases been disrupted and are a cause for worry. Their food habits and appetite has changed, introduction of binge eating and no exercising is seen. Schedule is not as busy as it was in the lockdown hence, they feel boredom and frustration. Spend more time sitting especially on gadgets. They are unable to go out to buy essentials in some cases and hence 'life has become heavily dependent on the internet'. Some spend more time with their family and pets when compared to the times there was no lockdown. Individuals have been observed to have been more invested in their devotion to god. Subjects have taken up new activities and interests which they couldn't do during the usual days they had. Most of their active lifestyle has turned sedentary.

### Theme V: Impact of lockdown

The lockdown has impacted individuals both mentally and physically, there are a few positive as well as negative impacts that were observed. The positive impacts include being able to stay home, stay safe and spend time with family, some have been looking into getting to know themselves better, exploring new interests, hobbies and skills. Some have been working on their mental and physical health by incorporating meditation, motivational movies, walks and workouts. The negative impacts include feeling low, depressed, frustrated, feeling guilt, fear, loss of business, loss of interest or seriousness in life and responsibilities, missing friends, boredom, feeling isolated and alone, no physical activity and movements and developing habits like binge eating. Some samples also seem to feel "pessimistic", uncomfortable to call friends and "crave human interaction".

### Theme VI: Suggestions by young adults to face lockdown

We have observed a variety of suggestions given by the subjects and they include saying such as

"do things you like it will keep you from feeling low" and "you get more time to evaluate yourself and if unsatisfactory make an effort to change your behaviour". Most of them suggested that try and get in a workout at home, know that COVID is dangerous and take care, involve in physical jobs like washing clothes, cooking, dancing or even hobbies like singing and painting. Common suggestions were "Try and stop being lazy, use time wisely, try and vent out your emotions by talking to someone". One of the samples said, "It is a difficult time for everyone, and such situations can make people feel alone and isolated so check up on others as they feel low as well". The suggestions include trying to stay healthy and focusing on the small joys that can keep people healthy and happy.

## DISCUSSION

In the recent times the pandemic COVID-19 has taken over people's lives and lockdowns have been enforced which means individuals cannot live lives the way they used to. Psychological well-being and happiness with many other factors are very important for an individual to live a normal life, all of the factors are interrelated. This study accentuates the relationship between well-being and happiness among young adults under the condition of lockdowns. The results indicate that there is a significant relationship between psychological well-being and happiness which means psychological well-being and happiness are directly proportional to each other, irrespective of any stressful situation.

Thematic analysis of the study gives the outlook of the samples on PWB and happiness; individuals mostly perceive psychological well-being as having good and stable mental health and they also believe that it is just as important as physical health. Samples perceived happiness as a feeling of satisfaction by receiving materialistic things, reaching their goals, spending time with family and friends and doing things they love to do. The thematic analysis portrays that there have been positive, negative, mental and physical impacts on people's lives. The positive impacts include better family bonding, development of new skills, time to take care of themselves, pursuing hobbies, have less hectic schedules, have been able to inculcate meditation and workouts which are essential for physical and mental health. The negative impacts include fear, boredom, laziness, feeling low, depressed, lack of social interaction, increased screen time, loss of interest, sedentary life style which has caused weight gain, restlessness, frustration and disruption of sleep. The study shows a significant relationship between PWB and happiness. Negative attitude towards lockdown was expressed by the samples, at the same time, ways and measures to handle lockdown has been suggested by the samples. Effective measures taken in right time would help people to handle lockdown during pandemic.

## CONCLUSION

The present study shows that there is a significant relationship between psychological well-being and happiness. Mixed opinions about PWB and happiness have been expressed by the samples. Impact of lockdown on young adults has been highlighted in the study. Emotional distress due to lockdown was evident in the responses. Lockdown has an effect on physical and mental health among young adults. Samples have identified several ways to tackle lockdown. Effective suggestions have been given by young adults, practicing the same would benefit people to handle lockdown during pandemic.

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