

# Effect of Gender on Psychological Well-being; A comparative Study among University Students

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## *ABSTRACT*

The present research was intended to study the level of psychological well-being among the university students of Patna district. Also, it was attempted to find out the difference between male and female subjects on the scale of psychological wellbeing. 300 students were selected as the sample. Among this, 150 were male students and 150 were female students. Psychological well-being scale by D. S. Sisodia and Pooja Choudhary was used in this study. Results revealed that female subjects have demonstrated high level of psychological well-being than male subjects. Both groups have found to be different on the five dimensions of psychological well-being.

**Keywords- Psychological, well-being; Gender; University Students**

### **Introduction:**

Psychological wellbeing can be explained as the feeling of happiness, life satisfaction and of work role, achievement motivation, love, peace, belongingness and no distress, dissatisfaction or worry, etc. The subjective well-being shows some extent of correlation with quality of life, general satisfaction level, sense of accomplishment etc. and negatively connected with mental disorder, and different such variables. According to **Ryff (1989)** the construct of psychological or emotional Well-being was originally taken as a challenge in overcoming the hedonic construct of Well-being in psychological science and with the aspiration of making life happy and satisfied. Well-being plays a crucial role in individual flourishing and overall quality of life. Research indicates that high levels of well-being are associated with numerous positive outcomes, including better physical health, improved mental health, and increased resilience to stress, enhanced social relationships, higher productivity, and greater life satisfaction. Moreover, promoting well-being contributes to the prevention of mental health disorders and the cultivation of thriving communities. Recognizing the importance of well-being in psychological research and practice informs

interventions aimed at enhancing individuals' overall well-being and addressing factors that may impede it.

### **Effect of gender on well-being:**

Gender is a fundamental aspect of identity that plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' experiences and well-being. Societal norms and expectations surrounding gender can significantly influence individuals' well-being. From a young age, individuals are socialized into gender roles that dictate acceptable behaviours, interests, and aspirations. For example, boys are often encouraged to be stoic and assertive, while girls may be socialized to prioritize nurturing and caregiving roles. These gender stereotypes can limit individuals' opportunities for self-expression and personal fulfillment, leading to feelings of inadequacy or discontentment. Moreover, gender norms can impact various life domains, including education, employment, and relationships. Women, for instance, may face discrimination and barriers to career advancement, contributing to economic insecurity and stress. On the other hand, men may experience pressure to conform to traditional breadwinner roles, which can lead to work-related stress and emotional suppression. The inability to meet societal expectations

associated with gender roles can negatively impact mental health and overall well-being.

Biological differences between genders, such as hormonal fluctuations, also play a role in influencing well-being. Hormonal changes, particularly during puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause, can affect mood, energy levels, and emotional regulation. For example, fluctuations in estrogen and progesterone levels can contribute to symptoms of premenstrual syndrome (PMS) or postpartum depression in women. Similarly, testosterone levels in men have been linked to aggression and risk-taking behaviour, which can impact mental health outcomes. Additionally, gender-related health issues, such as reproductive health concerns or conditions like prostate cancer and breast cancer, can affect individuals' physical and emotional well-being. Access to healthcare services and culturally sensitive treatment options are essential factors in addressing these health disparities and promoting gender-inclusive care.

**Objective of the research-** The present study was done with the following objectives-

1. To assess the level of psychological well-being among university students.
2. To examine the gender difference in the psychological wellbeing among the University students.

**Research Hypothesis-**The following hypotheses were framed to be tested in the study:-

1. Male and female subjects would differ significantly on the scale of psychological well-being.”
2. Male and female subjects would differ significantly on the dimensions of psychological well-being scale.

### Research Methodology:

(A) **Sample:** The sample of the study was comprised of 300 students (N=300) in the age group of 20 to 30 years. Among this, 150 were male students and 150 were female students. Sample has been drawn from different University departments of Patna district. Incidental cum Purposive sampling method has been applied for selecting the sample considering inclusive and exclusive criteria.

### Inclusion Criteria:

- Male and female University students
- Age range between twenty to thirty years
- Residing in Patna District
- Belonging from Nuclear or joint family

### Exclusion Criteria:

- Age below twenty years and over thirty years
- Residing outside Patna
- Psychiatric and psychosomatic disorder

(B) **Research Design-** The between group research design has been used in the present study.

(C) **Research Variables-**

The details of the variables of this study are as follows:-

- **Dependent Variable**

(a) **Psychological Well-being:** Psychological well-being refers to individuals' subjective evaluation of their overall psychological functioning, emotional state, and sense of fulfillment in life. It encompasses positive aspects of mental health, such as positive emotions, resilience, self-esteem, and personal growth, as well as adaptive coping mechanisms and social functioning. Psychological well-being reflects individuals' ability to cope with stress, maintain a positive outlook on life, and cultivate meaningful relationships with others, contributing to their overall quality of life and subjective well-being.

### Independent Variable:

(a) **Gender:** Gender refers to the social, cultural and psychological meanings that are associated with masculinity and femininity. On the other side, sex means the biological category of male and female. Psychology has studied so many cases of gender differences. It has a very prominent role on in the different psychological aspects of humans. Gender differences results from opposite social roles of males and females.

(D) **Research Tool:** Psychological well-being scale by D. S. Sisodia and Pooja Choudhary has been used in this study. It has 50 items which measure five dimensions of well-being i.e. Life satisfaction, Mental health, Sociability, Efficiency, and Interpersonal

relations. All subscales have 10 items. There are five point response patterns for all items- Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. High score indicates high psychological well-being.

**(E) Data Collection Procedure:** Each subject was approached individually. Before recording the responses, an attempt was made to develop a good rapport with the subjects. In course of conversation, the subjects were requested to respond honestly and genuinely on scale. If the subjects needed any clarification on any question, it has been clarified to them so that he/she could respond with full understanding. The data has been collected from different university departments of Patna district such as; Patna University, Patliputra University, Magadh Mahila College, Science College etc.

**(F) Data Analysis:** The obtained data has been analysed by using different statistical techniques like Mean, SD and t-ratio.

**Results-** Results have been displayed in tabular forms with the help of Table-1 and Table-2.

**Table-1**

**Showing Mean, SD and t-value of male and female subjects on the scale of Psychological well-being**

S.no		Male Subjects (N=150)	Female Subjects (N=150)
1	Mean	186.89	196.21
2	SD	17.54	18.64
3	t-ratio	4.46 P<.01	

Demonstrates the mean scores of male and female subjects on the scale of Psychological well-being. It can be seen from the table that the mean of male subjects is 186.89 and mean of female subjects is 196.21. It shows that male and female students are experiencing more than average level of psychological well-being. The t-ratio between them is 4.46 which has been found to be significant at the .01 level of significance. This proves that male and female subjects are different from each other on the measure of psychological well-being. Both groups have different levels of experiencing psychological well-being. This finding fully confirms the first hypothesis of the study that **“Male and female subjects would differ significantly on the scale of psychological well-being.”**

Females have displayed high wellbeing than males. It may be because in the Indian context, females are being more religious than males. They involve in religious activities and do all the fasting, rituals and other customs related to religion. Also, their happiness is dependent on the welfare of their family members. This makes them feel pleased and relaxed. Being religious leads to overall experience of well-being. Perhaps, this is the fact that females are having high scores than male subjects on the scale of psychological well-being. The finding is in the accordance of some earlier studies. **Akhter (2015)** have also found that females were higher on psychological well-being than males. **Lu (2000)** discovered gender differences in subjective wellbeing. Thus the findings get support from research literature.

**Table-2**

**Showing Mean, SD and t-value of male and females students on the different dimensions of psychological well-being**

S.no	Dimensions	Male Subjects (N=150)		Female Subjects (N=150)		t-ratio
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1	Life satisfaction	36.91	2.53	40.31	2.68	11.33 P<.01
2	Mental health	37.3	2.21	38.43	2.26	6.64 P<.01
3	Sociability	37.41	2.05	39.13	3.01	5.73 P<.01
4	Efficiency	39.63	2.54	40.86	3.74	3.42 P<.01
5	Interpersonal relations	35.64	2.11	37.47	2.34	10.76 P<.01

Similarly, **Table-2** shows the mean scores of male and female subjects on the different dimensions of psychological well-being. Here also, females have demonstrated high mean scores in comparison with male subjects on the all five dimensions of the psychological well-being scale. Both groups are significantly different from each other on the all five dimensions of psychological well-being scale- Life Satisfaction, Mental Health, Sociability, Efficiency and Interpersonal Relations. These findings are in the line of second hypothesis of the study that “**Male and female subjects would differ significantly on the dimensions of psychological well-being scale.**” Biological differences between genders, such as hormonal fluctuations, also play a role in influencing well-being. **Shamsul Siddiqui (2015)** found significant difference between male and females on the scale of psychological well-being. Similar results have been found in a study by **Amran and Khairiah (2014)**.

#### Major findings of the study:

1. Male and female university students have demonstrated high level of psychological well-being.
2. Female students are experiencing higher level of psychological well-being as compared to that of male students.
3. Male and female students have been found significantly different on the different dimensions of psychological well-being scale.



#### Conclusion:

Conclusively, it can be stated that gender is an important factor in determining the level of psychological well-being among the University students. The effect of gender has emerged prominently in the present study. Female subjects have demonstrated higher level of psychological well-being than male subjects.

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