

Character Strength And Psychological Hardiness: Role in prediction of psychological Well-being Among Youth

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ABSTRACT

Background: Psychological well-being, defined as the overall state of an individual's mental health and life satisfaction, is a fundamental aspect of human flourishing. Character strengths, often referred to as positive traits or virtues; encompass a wide range of positive qualities. Additionally, Psychological hardiness is characterized by a set of attitudes and beliefs that help individuals cope with stress and adversity. These both constructs contribute to an individual's overall psychological functioning and well-being.

Aim: The study aimed at identifying character strength and psychological hardiness as predictors of psychological well-being.

Methods: The target population for this study comprised of young adults aged 18 to 24 who are currently pursuing higher education in universities and colleges. This group represents a dynamic demographic undergoing critical transitions in their lives, both academically and personally. Understanding their unique experiences and challenges is crucial for designing interventions or conducting research that can effectively address their needs and contribute to their overall development and success. The sample comprised of 200 young adults (100 males and 100 females). Data was collected using the selected tools i.e. 72 items VIA IS by Dr. Robert McGrath, Psychological Well-Being scale by Carol Ryff (1989) and Psychological Hardiness by Arun kumar Singh (2005). The obtained data was statistical analysis using linear and multiple regressions with the help of SPSS.

Result: The outcomes of the study established character strengths of perseverance and self-regulation for male young adults whereas character strengths of gratitude and bravery for female young adults, emerged as a significant predictor of psychological well-being. Finding further divulged that psychological hardiness as a significant predictor of psychological well-being amongst young adults.

Keywords: Character strengths, psychological hardiness, psychological well-being.

1. INTRODUCTION

Psychological well-being, defined as the overall state of an individual's mental health and life satisfaction, is a fundamental aspect of human flourishing. Hence assumes significance for psychological research. In recent years, researchers and practitioners have shown a growing interest in understanding the factors that contribute to psychological well-being, particularly in the context of young adulthood—a developmental period characterized by significant transitions, challenges, and opportunities for personal growth. This study aims to investigate the roles of character strengths and psychological hardiness as potential predictors of psychological well-being among young adults. Character strengths, often referred to as positive traits or virtues, encompass a wide range of positive qualities that contribute to an individual's overall psychological functioning and well-being. According to the Values in Action (VIA) classification proposed by Peterson and Seligman

(2004), character strengths can be structured around six core virtues, namely wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence. Examples of character strengths include wisdom, love, bravery, self-regulation, and kindness. Research has shown that individuals who frequently utilize their character strengths experience greater life satisfaction, positive emotions, and overall well-being.

Psychological hardiness, a concept introduced by Kobasa (1979), is characterized by a set of attitudes and beliefs that help individuals cope with stress and adversity. The construct comprises three dimensions: commitment, control, and challenge. Commitment refers to a person's tendency to engage fully in their activities and relationships, even in the face of difficulties. Control reflects the perception of having influence over the events in one's life. Challenge entails viewing difficulties as opportunities for growth and learning. High levels of psychological hardiness have been associated with better psychological adjustment, resilience, and well-being, particularly in the midst of challenging life circumstances.

The theoretical foundation of this study draws from positive psychology and resilience theories. Positive psychology emphasizes the promotion of strengths, virtues, and well-being, rather than merely focusing on the absence of psychological distress. Resilience theories highlight the capacity of individuals to adapt positively to adversity and setbacks, underscoring the role of personal strengths and effective coping strategies in the face of challenges.

While the roles of character strengths and psychological hardiness in contributing to psychological well-being have been individually explored in previous research, there is a noticeable gap in the literature concerning the combined effects of these factors, especially among young adults. Additionally, the interaction between character strengths and psychological hardiness in predicting psychological well-being remains understudied. Understanding how these constructs interact and collectively influence well-being could provide valuable insights into designing interventions aimed at enhancing the mental health and well-being of young adults.

Objectives

- **To study the predictive value of character strengths, and psychological hardiness for psychological well-being among young adults.**

Hypothesis

- **Character strengths and psychological hardiness will be significant to predict psychological well-being among young adults.**

Methods

Sample:

The target population is the young adults that The study focuses on individuals aged 18-24 years, with a total sample size of 200 young adults (N=200). The sample will be divided equally by gender, consisting of 100 males and 100 females. Only participants who willingly volunteered to participate in the study will be included in the sample. The inclusion and exclusion criteria for selecting sample were-

Inclusion criteria:

Individuals between the ages of 18 and 24, classified as young adults studying in colleges and universities.

Exclusion criteria:

Individuals with major psychiatric illness or chronic/severe medical conditions were excluded from the present study.

2. MEASURES

1: The 72-item Values in Action - Strengths Inventory: (In this study, we will employ the VIA-IS (Values in Action Inventory of Strengths) developed by Park, Peterson, and Seligman in 2004 to assess the character strengths of the students. The VIA-IS is a self-administered questionnaire designed to evaluate 24 character strengths that are widely valued."The VIA-72 which is a brief version of the original full length survey consisting of 240 items, will be used in the present study to measure the character strengths of the students. The survey consists of 72 statements and is a self-report questionnaire that uses a 5- point Likert scale and can be administered on the adults of age 18 years and above. Responses are averaged within scales, with higher numbers reflecting more of the strength.

2: Psychological Well-Being Scale: The Psychological Well-Being Scale, developed by Ryff and Singer in 1998, comprises 18 items that respondents rate on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). This scale assesses six dimensions, which include autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The tool demonstrated a reliability coefficient of .80.

3: Singh Psychological Hardiness Scale: Singh Psychological Hardiness Scale (SPHS) by Arun Kumar Singh (2005). For measuring the hardiness level of the subjects the researcher used Singh Psychological Hardiness Scale (SPHS). The SPHS has been prepared and standardized by Dr. Arun Kumar Singh (2008) in Indian situations. This scale can be applied to

students from age group 16 to 22 years onwards. In Hardiness scale, 16-16 items defined to every category i.e. commitment, control & challenges. Thus, a total of $16 \times 3 = 48$ items. The 48 items set was given into group of judges, i.e., 7 psychology teachers & 7 sociology teachers of different colleges. To find any ambiguity, indistinctness or dual meaning coming from any item. Minor changes were done. As result items analysis identified 18 items to be supply very low item-total correlations. Out of 48 items only 30 items were selected.

The test-retest reliability was found to be 0.862 which was significant at 01 level. Likewise, the inner consistency reliability as showed by the coefficient alpha was found to be 0.792 which was significant. Hardiness Scale has also sufficient degree of content validity.

Ethical consideration:

Standard ethical guidelines will be followed during the study as elaborated below:

1. Obtaining the Obtaining informed consent from the participants in the research.
2. Reducing potential harm to the participants to the lowest extent possible.
3. Protecting Preserving and safeguarding their privacy and the confidentiality of their information.
4. No Deceptive practices are prohibited.
5. The participants have the option to discontinue their participation in the research at any time."

Procedure:

To fulfil the goals of the current study, data collection was conducted from the sample of the study with the help of respective tools (Values in Action - Inventory of Strengths, 72-item) and Singh psychological hardiness scale and Carol Ryff psychological well-being scale). Data collection took place following the establishment of a positive rapport with participants and addressing any questions or concerns they had about the study. The informed consent was taken beforehand. Appropriate statistical techniques was applied in accordance with the objectives and hypothesis of the study. The obtained data will be analysed by using SPSS.

3. RESULT

The current research has been under taken to study the predictive value of Character strengths and psychological hardiness for psychological well-being in young adults. Stepwise regression analysis was carried out which studied the twenty- four character strengths as predictors of the psychological well-being. Table 4.5 and 4.6 shows the regression coefficients, t-value and significance level of each of character strengths with psychological well-being as dependent variable in males and female respectively.

Table 1: Regression coefficient of Character strengths on psychological well-being in male young adults (n=100)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	70.210	3.089		22.732	.001
	Perspective	1.109	.268	.386	4.140	.001
2	(Constant)	65.300	3.830		17.050	.001
	Perspective	.992	.269	.345	3.687	.001
	Self-regulation	.572	.272	.197	2.103	.038

- dependent variable: psychological well-being

Table 2: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	F	Sig
1	.386 ^a	.149	17.141	.001 ^a
2	.431 ^b	.186	11.081	.001 ^b

- predictors: (constant), self-regulation
- predictors: (constant), perspective, self-regulation

Regression analysis (table4.5) shows that character strengths perspective and self-regulation predict psychological well-being in the case of male. Perspective and self-regulation causes 14% and 18% variance in their Emotional and mental well-being

Table 3: Regression coefficient of Character strengths on psychological well-being in female young adults (n=100)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	73.908	4.888		15.120	.001
	Gratitude	1.443	.402	.341	3.589	.001
2	(Constant)	64.644	6.575		9.831	.001
	Gratitude	1.218	.410	.288	2.969	.004
	Bravery	1.018	.493	.200	2.066	.042

Table 4: Model summary

Model	R	R square	t-value	Sig
1	.341 ^c	.116	12.887	.001
2	.392 ^d	.153	8.787	.001

Regression analysis (table4.6) shows that character strengths gratitude and bravery predict psychological well-being in the case of female. Gratitude and bravery causes 11% and 15% variance in their psychological well-being.

Table 4.7 and 4.8 shows the regression coefficients of psychological hardiness on psychological well-being to understand the role of psychological hardiness in predicting psychological well-being of males and females respectively.

Table 5: Overview of the regression analysis results for the prediction of Psychological Well-Being by Hardiness in male young adults.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	43.236	5.605		7.714	.001
	hardiness	.364	.051	.582	7.077	.001

- dependent variable: psychological well-being

Table 6: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	F	Sig
1	.582 ^a	.338	50.079	0.001

- predictors: (constant),hardiness

Regression analysis (table4.7) shows that psychological hardiness predict psychological well-being in the case of male. Psychological hardiness causes 33% variance in their psychological well-being.

Table 7: Summary of regression analysis for Hardiness predicting Psychological Well-Being in female young adults.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	37.344	8.118		4.600	0.001
	Hardiness	.506	.076	.558	6.660	0.001

- dependent variable: psychological well-being

Table 8: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	F	Sig
1	.558	.312	44.350	0.001

- predictors: (constant),hardiness

Regression analysis (Table 4.8) shows that psychological hardiness predict psychological well-being in the case of female. Psychological hardiness causes 31% variance in their psychological well-being.

4. DISCUSSION

In this study an attempt was made to ascertain the predictive role of character strengths and Psychological Hardiness for psychological well-being. The findings divulged, that the character strengths of perspective and self-regulation emerges as predictor of psychological well-being in male young adults whereas the character strengths of gratitude and bravery emerges as predictors of psychological well-being among female young adults. The findings can be supported by the research of Shikha (2023) wherein she concluded self-regulation as predictor of psychological well-being in male young adults. However she also concluded bravery as predictor of psychological well-being in male young adults which is in contrast with the present findings.

Moreover, the findings further established that psychological hardiness as significant predictor of psychological well-being in both of them. The findings of the present research can be supported by the research of Najd et al. (2014) Their research revealed a significant and positive connection between self-esteem, social support, and psychological resilience, along with predictive factors that could anticipate shifts in the psychological well-being of male students. Additionally, these findings indicate that individuals with a robust sense of psychological resilience, self-efficacy, and perceived social support tend to experience higher levels of psychological well-being. Furthermore, Anjum (2022) delved into the influence of hardiness and social support on the psychological well-being of university students.". The findings revealed that social support and hardiness have a significant and positive correlation with all the dimensions of psychological well-being. Moreover, social support and hardiness were significant predictors of psychological well-being. This study suggested that apart from the academic curriculum, there is an absolute need to impart and develop social skills and hardiness traits among students, which could be beneficial for strengthening the psychological well-being of university students.

Thus, Based on the previously discussed findings, the second hypothesis, which posits a significant relationship between character strengths, psychological hardiness and psychological well-being among young adults has been accepted.

Conclusion: The present research concludes that character strengths and psychological hardiness play important role in psychological well-being of young adults. The findings of the present research also depict character strengths of perseverance and self-regulation emerges as predictors of psychological well-being in male young adults whereas character strengths of gratitude and bravery emerge as predictors of psychological well-being in female young adults. Furthermore, the present study establishes psychological hardiness as significant predictor of psychological well-being of young adults.

5. FUTURE IMPLICATION

The present study devoted to the field of positive psychology by investigating the role of character strengths and psychological hardiness in psychological well-being of young adults. The variables studied in the present research are character strengths, psychological hardiness and psychological well-being. The present study established psychological hardiness as significant predictor of the psychological well-being of male as well as female young adults.

Incorporating character strengths and psychological hardiness into educational and personal development curricula can foster holistic growth in young adults. Encouraging the exploration and cultivation of their strengths while enhancing their ability to face challenges with resilience can contribute to a more well-rounded and adaptable generation. Psychological hardiness is one's ability to easily adapt to unexpected changes occurring In everyday life and the degree of personal influence over

events in one's life. It is negatively correlated with stress and can work as a protective factor against many illnesses. Thus, programmes aimed at building hardiness can be introduced in educational settings with help of professionals in this field. Almost all character strengths were positively correlated with psychological hardiness irrespective of gender indicating that strengthening of character strengths will play an important role in enhancing psychological hardiness and psychological well-being. Psychological wellbeing is directly related to the quality of life. Studies have showed that psychological well-being is important for improving mental health among young adults. It is important to nurture the strengths and building a hardy personality is crucial for well-being in young adults. Appropriate strategies should be incorporated during early stage of development to have a hardy personality with strong character strengths. This will further improve well-being which will directly enhance ones quality of life.

6. LIMITATION AND SUGGESTIONS

1. The sample size of the study was small and was limited to particular age group (18-24) young adults. Study suggest that future studies should also be conducted with different demographic variables and different population groups with larger sample size.
2. Present study was studied with the help of quantitative measures, further study can be conducted by the combination of quantitative as well as qualitative measure to have in-depth knowledge about the relationship studied between variables.
3. In the present study we study the relationship between variables, future studies can study the moderating effect of variables.
4. Intervention based studies can studied in the future aiming building hardiness in young adults and nurturance of character strengths which will improve psychological well-being and enhance quality of life.
5. Future research can be studied on identifying causal factor of psychological well-being.
6. Future studies could explore the potential mediating mechanisms underlying these relationships and investigate how these constructs interact with other factors to influence well-being in young adulthood.

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