

# Investigating the Role of Locality and Living Condition in Effecting Psychological Well-Being: A Study Based On Post-Graduate Students of Kolkata

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**Abstract:** *The concept of psychological well-being has several dimensions, one such being satisfaction, with self as well as life. Satisfaction has both materialistic as well as value-based connotation to it. Acknowledging the impact that it may have on an individual's mental capacity to cope, adjust and deal with negativities in life, the study seeks to investigate the plausible effect of an individual's area of residence or locality and feeling of satisfaction with living condition on his/her psychological well-being. The target population being post-graduate students, the sample comprises of 190 master's students of a state university in Kolkata. The study categorises locality into urban, semi-urban and rural while satisfaction with living condition is described by means of satisfaction with living space, surrounding noise and likeness of locality. For measuring psychological well-being, a researcher-made standardised scale (reliability .870 Cronbach's Alpha) is made use of. The study does not find any significant difference to exist between the dwellers of the three categories of locality. However, with respect of satisfaction with living condition, two of the three factors are founding to have a significant impact on psychological well-being. Disparity among psychological well-being score of students was found to be significant in terms of satisfaction with surrounding noise and likeness of locality. However, no significant effect of satisfaction with living space was to exist among the post-graduate students in the study.*

**Key Words:** *Psychological well-being, Living condition, Locality, Post-graduate students, Kolkata.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

A mentally healthy person can take charge of one's life and strive to strike a balance between the conflicting forces of inner and outer world thereby generating a sense of satisfaction and control. According to the World Health Organization mental health is defined as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" (Dhankar, 2017). Well-being, in general, is about feeling well. It refers to the overall experience of an individual relating to his life and surroundings that enable a good feeling in him/her and encourages one to enjoy life. the three indicators of mental health, as suggested by many researches, are- *Emotional Well-Being, Psychological Well-Being* and *Social Well-Being*. Psychological well-being or eudemonic well-being relates to a person's strive towards fulfillment in life. It denotes the characteristics which makes a person in charge of not only his own life and life circumstances but also his surroundings. . It includes the choices and activities an individual takes to achieve physical vitality, mental stability, satisfaction with self and others and a sense of accomplishment. Although Ryff's six-dimensional model of psychological well-being has widely been used throughout the world and he is seen as a progenitor of conceptualizing psychological well-being in measurable terms, the present study follows a seven-dimensional scale (researcher made) for measuring psychological well-being to suit the context of the population targeted in the study (post-graduates).

Psychological well-being can get affected by anything that harms or disturbs the process of adjustment for an individual. In this context, locality or location of residence can be seen as a major factor in deciding an individual's social and psychological adjustment by providing a number of facilities or posing a number of challenges. A general perception is that rural dwellers face more hardships and obstacles while working in a city environment. It is believed to be difficult for them to adjust to the city life owing to the complexities that surrounds it. But to say or believe that city dwellers, in general, cope well with such complexities of city life and are never mal-adjusted would be an understatement. It is also experientially observed that a person with all the luxuries of life can still be stressed and depressed over his/her life condition while a person devoid of such luxuries may still be satisfied and content. Hence, what matters is the perception of individuals about their living condition. The article in The Guardian by Dawn Foster (2016) and the blog post by Katie Claflin (2016) focussed on the association between housing condition and mental health of individuals, highlighting the ill-effects of the former on mental health conditions. Owing to the realisation that factual understanding of location may fail to capture what lies behind pure facts, the study resort to a perceptual

understanding of the living condition of the students along with the fact of their locality. The study thus recognized three dimensions, satisfaction with *Living Space*, *Surrounding Noise* and *Likeness of Locality*, to capture the perception of the post-graduate students about their living condition and compare it against their corresponding PWB score. Living space and likeness of locality have a physical impression to it but to complete the picture the factor of surrounding noise was added following the article of Novotney (2011) where the ill effects of noise on cognition is mentioned. Even Hammersen, Niemann & Hoebel (2016) showed associations between high levels of noise annoyance and impaired mental health. In their bivariate analysis those who reported high overall noise annoyance showed more than double odds of impaired mental health in comparison to those who were not annoyed. Thus, locality and living condition can be understood as two sides of the same coin. While living condition can directly impact an individual's social and psychological adjustments, locality can make the means of this adjustment easier or difficult.

## 2. OBJECTIVES:

- i. To compare the PWB of students residing in different locality.
- ii. To investigate the role of students' satisfaction with their living condition in PWB with respect of their living space, surrounding noise and likeness of locality.

## 2.1 HYPOTHESES

H<sub>0</sub>1: There exists no significant difference in the PWB of students residing in urban, semi-urban and rural locality.

H<sub>0</sub>2a: There exists no significant difference between the PWB of students satisfied and unsatisfied with their living space.

H<sub>0</sub>2b: There exists no significant difference between the PWB of students satisfied and unsatisfied with the surrounding noise.

H<sub>0</sub>2c: There exists no significant difference between PWB of students who like and dislike their locality.

## 3. METHODOLOGY:

### SAMPLE

Employing non-probability sampling technique, the data was collected from a sample of 190 master's students of a state university in Kolkata.

### INSTRUMENT

The study uses a researcher-made standardised scale with 7 dimensions and a total of 69 items. The reliability of the scale being .870 (Cronbach's Alpha). Separate questions were framed under information schedule for collecting responses for locality and satisfaction with living condition.

### DESIGN

The study is based on a descriptive survey research design

### PROCEDURE

The instrument was distributed among the masters' students of a state university with separate instructions provided for responding to the items in the scale. No time limitation was observed for responding to instrument.

### STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Non-parametric statistics, Man-Whitney test, is used for testing the hypotheses since non-probability technique was employed for the collection of data

## 4. FINDINGS:

- In case of locality, the stipulated null hypothesis is accepted (Table 1) with  $\chi = .959$  ( $p > 0.05$ ) suggesting no significant difference existing in PWB between the residents of the three types of locality, although the Mean Rank comparison between these shows the Rurals being highest followed by the Semi-Urbans and Urbans on the scale of PWB.

Table 1: Showing the statistical values of PWB across Locality.

KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST STATISTICS						
Locality	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.	Result
Urban	128	92.82	.959	2	.619	Accepted
Semi-Urban	25	99.56				
Rural	37	102.01				

- The statistical analysis supports the null hypothesis ( $H_{02a}$ ) in case of satisfaction with living space (Table 2) as  $U=3468.000$  ( $p>0.05$ ) suggesting that the PWB of students who are satisfied with their living space and the students who are unsatisfied with their living space do not differ significantly.
- The Mean Rank comparison (Table 2) shows a great difference between the PWB of students who are satisfied and unsatisfied with the surrounding noise. This difference is proven significant by Mann-Whitney test with  $U=2774.500$  ( $p<0.05$ ) suggesting that noise pollution can significantly lower the individual's PWB and thus rejecting the null hypothesis ( $H_{02b}$ ).
- The stipulated null hypothesis ( $H_{02c}$ ) is rejected with  $U=1262.500$  ( $p<0.05$ ) which means there exists a significant difference between the PWB level of students who like their locality and those who dislike their locality. This difference can be seen in the Mean Rank comparison (Table 2) between the two groups, with students liking their locality being much higher in PWB scale than those disliking their locality.

**Table 2:** Showing the statistical values of PWB across satisfaction with Living Condition.

MANN-WHITNEY U TEST STATISTICS					
	N	Mean Rank	U	Asymp. Sig.	Result
Living Space					
Unsatisfied	58	89.29	3468.000	<b>.524</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
Satisfied	127	94.69			
Surrounding Noise					
Unsatisfied	56	78.04	2774.500	<b>.012</b>	<b>Rejected</b>
Satisfied	129	99.49			
Likeness of Locality					
Unsatisfied	26	62.06	1262.500	<b>.001</b>	<b>Rejected</b>
Satisfied	159	98.06			

## 5. DISCUSSION:

Individuals irrespective of their location of residence are equally prone to mal-adjustment or ill-being because adjustment or well-being has a lot to do with a person's own mental capacity as well as his perception towards life and life goals. A person who succeeds in achieving his goals and aims would definitely have more rigour in dealing with adverse circumstances compared to someone who fails miserably. This can very well be a reasonable answer to the indifferent effect of locality found on PWB in the study. The finding of this study however, does not match with the result that Udhayakumar & Illango (2018) arrived at, as the urban under-graduates showed better overall PWB compared to their rural counterparts in their study.

The findings of the study suggest a significant effect of living condition on student's psychological well-being as the students who perceived their locality likable and surrounding noise satisfactory showed significant difference in PWB compared to the students who seem unsatisfied with their surrounding noise and locality. But the dimension of satisfaction with living space was not found to have any significant effect on PWB of students. Quite possibly so because living space is something that individuals get habituated with and get adjusted to in the due course of time. Most students are aware of their family's economic condition and as they grow up and mature they start caring more about working a way out towards improvements than whine about what's in hand currently. The study being based on post-graduate students, it's quite expected that these students are driven by future prospects and are aware of their own potentials and capabilities.

## 6. CONCLUSION:

A person's environment plays a major role in his or her personality development, whether it be the environment outside the house or inside. At times people think, as they're used to or habituated of some adverse factors they won't be affected by those. The study also found participants that disliked their locality or faced problems due to the surrounding noise but even then claimed that they're not bothered as they've grown up facing these. However, sometimes things that are least expected affect the most but from within. The constant frustration, irritability lack of focus and exhaustion is often blamed for the work load or the physical stamina but hardly do people contemplate on the mental stamina, mental health and mental well-being (psychological well-being). The modern-day world poses similar threat and equal amount of stress and pressure on every individual; hence locality may not be a factor of great differentiation but what varies is people's determination and capacity to fight these negativities and adversities. Researches have time and again proved the psychological effects of poor housing conditions and life situations in people, for example, the article in The Guardian by Dawn Foster (2016). To improve the financial condition of an individual is the field of economics but improving psychological health, moulding perceptions and directing energy into positive channels comes

under the Education and Educationists' purview and the best means to achieve this could be regular counseling of students irrespective of their outer behaviour. The positive impact of counseling on students is well known and proven. Matliwala (2017) in her study showed how counseling helps post-graduate students in managing emotions and recognising their strengths and limits and channelising their efforts more positively. Another study by Meredith et. al. (2020) suggests spending time as little as 10 minutes in open nature and away from the hustle bustle of city can have a positive impact on students' mental well-being. Thus seeking to curb negative factors from occurring that are beyond the gates of a university or educational institution may not be easily achievable, however, curbing the effects of these may not be so difficult to achieve and each institution may by itself decide and devise means and methods for the same.

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