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COMPREHENSIVE BEHAVIOURAL INTERVENTIONS FOR THE CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH LAW

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ABSTRACT

Children in Conflict with Law (Juvenile Delinquency) has become a pressing social concern in India, with an increasing number of children entering the legal system annually. Contributing factors such as family disintegration, individual traits, and socio-cultural and economic challenges heighten children's vulnerability to behavioural disorders that leads to juvenile delinquency. This study evaluates the effectiveness of a comprehensive behavioural intervention in managing aggression among juveniles in conflict with the law in Kerala. Conducted in Thiruvananthapuram District, the study involved 100 juveniles divided into control and experimental groups. Pre- and post-test were done using the IIP Aggression Scale by Kranti Srivastava and Neff's Self-Compassion Scale to assess aggression and emotional regulation. The experimental group underwent a three-month intervention program incorporating Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques—controlled breathing, distress tolerance, cognitive restructuring, assertiveness training, and problem-solving—alongside Parent Management Training (PMT). Results revealed a significant reduction in aggressive behaviour, improved emotional regulation, and increased self-compassion in the experimental group. The involvement of families and structured therapeutic support played a crucial role in sustaining behavioural improvements and promoting psychosocial well-being. The findings underscore the efficacy of integrating CBT with family-based interventions for the rehabilitation of juveniles in conflict with the law. A case study illustrated here to demonstrate the systematic application of comprehensive behavioural techniques and subsequent promising behavioural changes.

Key Words – *Children in conflict with Law, Aggressive behaviour, Comprehensive Behaviour models, CBT*

Adolescence is a critical developmental period characterized by significant biological, social, and psychological transformations. This phase often presents adolescents with considerable stress and strain. They frequently grapple with self-doubt, develop abstract thinking, and navigate an identity crisis. These factors contribute to increased vulnerability and instability as they confront various developmental challenges, which can lead to considerable distress. In certain instances, the pressures of this period may result in maladaptive coping mechanisms, potentially manifesting as delinquency (Calado et al., 2017).

Juvenile crime represents a prevalent global concern, posing significant challenges to nations worldwide. The term "juvenile" refers to an individual who has not yet reached an age of sufficient cognitive and emotional maturity to fully comprehend the implications and consequences of their actions (Agarwal, 2018). Indian legal system specifically defines a "child in conflict with law" under Section 2(13) as: "A child who is alleged or found to have committed an offence and who has not completed eighteen years of age on the date of commission of such offence" (JJ Act, 2015).

According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) there is a concerning increase in the number of children in conflict with the law across India. Notably, there has been a rise in juveniles allegedly involved in serious offenses, including those under the Protection of Children from Sexual

Offences (POCSO) Act, murder, attempted murder, kidnapping, and abduction. Delhi, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh consistently report the highest numbers among Indian states in this regard.

The horrific gang rape case in Delhi in December 2012, often referred to as the "Nirbhaya case," triggered extensive public debate and scrutiny regarding the perceived leniency of the juvenile justice system in addressing heinous crimes. The realisation that young offenders could exhibit similar levels of brutality as adults prompted a national re-evaluation of the definition and approach to juvenile delinquency in India. This widespread sentiment subsequently influenced legislative reforms aimed at addressing serious offenses committed by juveniles (Agarwal, 2018).

The present study focuses on increasing juvenile delinquency in the southern state of India, that is known for its high literacy rate health status. According to the data from police department, more than 300 cases are being registered against children in conflict with law on average annually in the state. Most of these children are aged between 15 and 18. As per the data available with the National Crime Records Bureau, 1398 cases were registered in 2020 across the state. Proper identification, assessment, and evidence-based behavioural approaches are needed to address the issues. Children in conflict with law face many psychological issues including substance abuse, violence and neglect and other anti-social behaviours. They are considered more vulnerable to criminal acts. Identification and management of these problems is necessary for

reformation of juveniles and desistance from criminal behaviour (Gupta, Malhotra, & Chavan, 2021).

A strong, statistically significant correlation between juvenile delinquency and various factors, such as low socio-economic status, elevated aggression, family dysfunction (including broken homes, abandonment, and abuse), and addiction. Children who were in conflict with the law exhibited higher aggression scores compared to their non-delinquent peers (Subramanian, 2015).

Parental mismanagement is frequently attributed as a cause of disruptive behaviours and for worsening existing conditions. According to Singh & Kiran (2014), negative family characteristics such as poor parental supervision is often studied as risk factors for future delinquency. Children from such homes are believed to be at greater risk of offending than those from more supportive environments. According to Gottfredson (1986), the factors such as limited communication, lack of supervision, and inconsistent discipline in single-parent families can increase the likelihood of children engaging in delinquent behaviors. Children from such homes are often inconsistent in their discipline, physically abusive, highly critical, and hostile.

Children in conflict with Law exhibited disruptive disorders like ADHD, conduct disorders and showed heightened emotions and aggressive behaviour. This increased aggression is driven by impulsivity which causes them to react abruptly and act without fully considering its consequences. Externalizing behaviours, in particular, are significantly associated with increased risks of violence, aggression, and subsequent recidivism.

Shufelt & Coccozza (2006), approximately 65-70% of children within the Juvenile Justice System experience at least one mental health disorder, and 60% of them are affected by three or more disorders, including both internalizing and externalizing issues. Girls tend to internalize their trauma, which can later manifest as mood swings, anxiety, and other emotional disturbances. In contrast, boys are more likely to express their trauma through disruptive behavior, which often leads to hyperactivity, aggression, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Among various therapeutic models, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) has emerged as a crucial therapeutic approach to address these challenges. According to Lochman et al; (2019), CBT helps children acquire the ability to regulate their emotions, which enhances their emotional control and improves their capacity to cope with challenging situations. Furthermore, it bolsters their problem-solving abilities, enabling them to tackle conflicts and challenges in a more constructive and thoughtful manner. Specifically, children and adolescents are instructed to identify their levels of anger and to employ coping strategies such as distraction techniques, brief deep breathing exercises, and relaxation methods to manage the physiological arousal that accompanies anger.

CBT techniques include cognitive restructuring to challenge distorted thinking patterns that contribute to antisocial behaviours, as well as behavioural interventions like skills training to promote the development of prosocial behaviours. The collaborative and structured nature of CBT makes it particularly effective in addressing the



complex interplay of psychological, familial, and social factors underlying antisocial behaviours among adolescents in conflict with the law. Garland et al. (2008) reports anger management and social problem-solving are core elements of evidence-based practice for children with conduct problems.

The present case report forms a part of broader interventional thesis designed to evaluate how cognitive behavioural strategies can help to reduce aggression and enhancing emotional regulations among children in conflict with Law. The study employed a pre- post-test design, with intervention targeted improvement in anger management, impulse control and problem solving abilities and the changes were assessed through standardized measures.

This case report narrates the application of behavioural approaches including Controlled Breathing, Cognitive Restructuring, Assertive Communication, and Problem-Solving Skills Training in managing delinquent behaviours. Key issues addressed included heightened aggression, compromised social relationships, substance abuse, and illicit activity, susceptibility to peer influence, recidivism, and social isolation.

Dramatic improvements were observed in disruptive behaviours following these interventions, aiding the children's reintegration into mainstream society.

METHOD

Sample

The study employed a purposive sampling technique and was conducted among 100 male adolescents in conflict with the law, aged between 15 and 18 years, from the

Kaval Projects in Thiruvananthapuram District, Kerala. Kaval project is a community-based child protection scheme for children who are alleged to have committed an offence under the Juvenile Justice Act. It focuses on the rehabilitation and reintegration of these children by providing psychosocial support. It was initiated by Govt of Kerala with the judicial supervision of Juvenile Justice Board , District Child Protection Unit and NGOs

These participants had been apprehended under various offences such as theft, POCSO Act (Protection of children from sexual offences) violations, NDPS (Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic substances) cases, peer violence, property destruction, and other antisocial behaviours. Most of the children come from low socioeconomic status. The inclusion criteria focused on adolescents who demonstrated aggressive behaviours and had a history of one or more delinquent acts. Verbal informed consent were collected from the children and responsible authorities. Children exhibiting intellectual disabilities were excluded. Initially, all 100 participants underwent pre-test using structured questionnaires for measuring aggression and self-compassion. Based on the results, 50 children with higher levels of aggression and lower levels of self-compassion were purposively selected into the experimental group and administered the intervention. Fifty children were considered to be the control group into which no intervention was administered.

The CBT sessions were delivered over a period of three months. In Phase IV,

one month post-intervention, the same assessment tools were re-administered as a post-test. Data were again coded and analysed using SPSS to assess the effectiveness of CBT on aggression and self-compassion, the dependent variables of the study. Group counselling sessions were conducted, giving participants the opportunity to share their views on the causes of anger and the actions taken during such situations. They were also encouraged to set personal goals. Positive reinforcement was provided according to the progress each participant achieved.

Tools

1. IIP Aggression Scale by Dr. Kranti. K. Srivasthava (2015)

Aggression Scale is self-administering questionnaire with 30 items. Each item presents six alternate answers graded on a five-point scale along the positive dimension and a zero point on the negative dimension. The total score is the sum of all marked answers, ranging from 0 (indicating minimal aggression) to 150 (reflecting higher aggression levels).

Reliability coefficient of the aggression scale was calculated by odd even method. The split half reliability has been calculated and correlation coefficient was .79 for males. The test is reported to be highly valid. The coefficient correlation came out of was .71, which is a high correlation and it suggests that IIP aggression scale serves to a large extent

All items are positively worded and five point scale has been used. Scores will be given as 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 and 0 to like extremely, like very much, like moderately, dislike moderately, dislike

very much and dislike extremely. The total score of scale is the sum of all answers marked. maximum score is 150 and minimum is 0. Higher scores show higher aggression level and lower score shows lower aggression level

2. Self-Compassion Scale – Dr. Kristin Neff (2003b)

The Self-Compassion Scale, developed by Kristin Neff, is a 26-item self-report tool used to assess how individuals relate to themselves in difficult situations. It measures six components of self-compassion: Self-Kindness, Self-Judgment, Common Humanity, Isolation, Mindfulness, and Over-Identification. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale has high internal consistency, with reliability coefficients for the subscales ranging from 0.89 to 0.94. Items are grouped into subscales as follows: Self-Kindness – items 5, 12, 19, 23, 26; Self-Judgment – items 1, 8, 11, 16, 21; Common Humanity – items 3, 7, 10, 15; Isolation – items 4, 13, 18, 25; Mindfulness – items 9, 14, 17, 22; and Over-Identification – items 2, 6, 20, 24. Scoring is done by calculating the mean of each subscale. The negative subscales (Self-Judgment, Isolation, Over-Identification) require reverse scoring, where 1 becomes 5, 2 becomes 4, 3 remains 3, 4 becomes 2, and 5 becomes 1. After reverse scoring, the total self-compassion score is obtained by averaging the scores of all 26 items.

The study was conducted in four distinct phases. In Phase I, necessary permissions were obtained from the

Juvenile Justice Board, and informed consent from parents and from children were secured. Phase II involved the administration of pre-test questionnaires, with the researcher explaining each item to ensure clarity and accurate responses. In Phase III, the collected data were coded and entered into Excel for screening. Participants meeting the criteria were enrolled in the Cognitive Behavioural

Therapy (CBT) intervention. The CBT sessions were delivered over a period of three months. In Phase IV, one month post-intervention, the same assessment tools were re-administered as a post-test. Data were again coded and analysed using SPSS to assess the effectiveness of CBT on aggression and self-compassion, the dependent variables of the study.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation and p value for aggression and self-compassion and its sub scales

Study variables	Pre-test N=100		Post test (N=50)		p value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Aggression	102.99	15.26	53.52	21.25	.00*
Self-Compassion	-4.87	3.08	4.82	4.57	.00*
Self-kindness	1.97	0.69	3.88	0.84	.00*
Self judgement	3.93	0.57	2.40	0.71	.00*
Common humanity	2.23	0.67	4.11	0.83	.00*
Isolation	4.44	0.48	2.25	0.87	.00*
Mindfulness	1.85	0.74	3.84	0.93	.00*
Over Identification	4.21	0.61	2.37	0.79	.00*

*Significant at 0.01 level

Table 1 shows that there were 100 sample in pre test and among that 50 sample were considered for post-test. The pre-test aggression mean was 102.99 (SD = 15.26) while the post-test aggression

mean was 53.52 (SD=21.25). Self-compassion pre-test mean was - 4.87 (SD =3.08) and post-test mean was 4.82 (SD=4.57). similarly as per the sub scale of the self-compassion scale is concern that self-kindness pre test mean was 1.97



(SD =0.690 and post test mean of 3.88 (SD=0.84), self-judgement pre-test mean (3.93 (SD=0.57) post-test mean 2.40 (SD=0.71) common humanity pre-test mean of 2.23 (SD=0.67) post-test mean of 4.11 (SD=0.83), the pre test mean score of isolation was 4.44 (SD=0.480 and the post test mean score was 2.25 (SD= 0.87), mindfulness pre test mean was 1.85 (SD= 0.74) post test was 3.84 (SD= 0.93) and the over identification pre-test mean was 4.21 (SD =0.61) and the post test was 2.37 (SD = 0.78). The result shows that the aggression was significantly reduced as the result of CBT among the children of those in conflict with law. CBT seems to be effective in rehabilitation of these children. Self-compassion was very low among the children in conflict with law. But after the post-test assessment the self-compassion was significantly improved due to CBT intervention. Like wise as expected the self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness score were all improved and self-judgement, isolation and over identification score all reduced after post-test assessment comparing with the pre test assessment. The results were all significant at 0.01 level. Which indicated the CBT intervention was impacting the children in a positive way and helping un the rehabilitation in a highly significant manner.

Case 1

A 17-year-old boy, presents with a history of behavioural issues reported at juvenile home following reported crimes. His offences included the theft of a bike at a beach and the robbery of a woman's belongings, resulting in his apprehension by the police. History revealed his early life was marked by exposure to domestic violence, with his mother frequently being

victimized by his father. During his school years he developed various forms of delinquent behaviours like disobedience, temper tantrums, sibling rivalry, restlessness, bullying, poor academic performance, experimentation and abuse of drugs and other substances. His acts were supported by high peer influences. At the time of initial interviews, he showed distress, mood disturbances and lack of interest in daily activities or responsibilities. It was observed that he was neglected and father was absent during his childhood. Behavioral assessments observed signs of impulsivity, difficulty in taking proper decisions and lack of assertiveness when trying to express his needs. He became engaged in a romantic relationship with a girl and engaged in sexual activity at an early age. He also had a fascination to motorbikes and tends to have temper outbursts when provoked or frustrated. He had poor eye contact during initial interview, but personal hygiene and grooming appeared adequate. While his overall cognitive abilities were noticed to be intact but disturbed in keeping sustained attention. Despite these difficulties he showed an understanding of his legal circumstances and reflecting a certain level of insight and self-judgement.

The child, raised in a nuclear family from a disadvantaged socio-economic background, experienced inadequate parental supervision during his formative years. During adolescence, he exhibited isolated behaviour within his family, demanding money aggressively. His father, who exhibited consistent symptoms of paranoid personality disorder, was often absent due to overseas employment, leaving the primary caregiving responsibilities to his mother,



who herself grappled with depression during his early childhood. He associated himself with vulnerable peer groups, engaged in substance use, and ran away from home. His substance use escalated to narcotics, and he turned to drug peddling and petty thefts. The child's detachment from family led to irregular school attendance and association with gangs.

The boy engaged in substance abuse, displayed aggressive tendencies, and demonstrated a propensity for aimless wandering, impulsivity, early sexual encounters, susceptibility to peer influence, an absence of goal-directed orientation and motivation, as well as deficient interpersonal and social competencies. Despite these challenges, his mother remained actively engaged and supportive throughout the intervention.

Intervention

Behavioural methods incorporated relaxation and stress reduction techniques to lower physical symptoms of anxiety and stress. These included deep breathing exercises, mindfulness meditations, progressive muscle relaxation, and specific behaviour modification techniques. Recent studies show that attention-based and activity-based meditation practices activate areas of the brain related to reward processing, learning, memory, attention, and emotional control, while deactivating the amygdala—an area involved in emotion processing (Lavretsky & Feldman, 2021). The specific behavioral techniques in this study comprised of Controlled Breathing Techniques, Distress Tolerance Techniques, Cognitive Restructuring, Assertiveness Training, and Problem-Solving Training.

Psycho education in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) begins by educating clients on the cognitive model and cognitive distortions, emphasizing their impact on mood and behaviour. Clients then develop awareness of their own cognitive distortions, using emotional peaks or behavioural cues as indicators. The thought record is a pivotal tool, used to systematically document situations, thoughts, emotions, behaviours, and alternative rational thoughts. Socratic questioning follows, helping clients challenge and replace distorted thoughts with more balanced perspectives. This structured approach fosters improved emotional regulation and adaptive behaviours, promoting client empowerment in managing their thought patterns independently over time.

1. Controlled Breathing Technique

The intervention focused on the behaviour modification techniques has been started with controlled breathing technique that helps to regulate psycho-neuro-immuno functions. The therapist models the child to do systematic and controlled breathing technique in a group work session as well as individually.

The provider begins by assessing the client's baseline breathing pattern and then educates him about the role of controlled breathing in managing his presenting symptoms. Controlled breathing techniques aim to regulate respiratory rate, in opposition to shallow or rapid breathing potentially exacerbating stress, anger or panic, while deeper, regulated breathing can induce relaxation by modulating the parasympathetic nervous system.

The provider teaches the client about diaphragmatic breathing, demonstrating how to initiate breaths from the abdomen. The therapist instructs the client to aim for a breathing rate of six to eight breaths per minute. This can be achieved by pacing the inhalation and exhalation cycles using a structured counting method. Initially, the child may exhibit difficulty in regulating his breath within a minute, often reaching rates as high as 22-25 breaths. Through repeated practice and guided instruction emphasizing paced breathing at 6-8 breaths per minute, with an emphasis on mindfulness and focused engagement, the child gradually achieves proficiency in the technique. According to Zaccaro et al. (2018), Controlled or slow breathing has been shown to positively influence both psychological and physiological functions, such as reducing stress, enhancing emotional regulation, and improving autonomic balance. It activates the parasympathetic nervous system, which helps calm the body and mental well-being.

2. Distress tolerance

Distress tolerance (DT) is defined as the perceived ability or objective capacity to withstand negative physical or emotional states (Simons & Gaher, 2005; Zvolensky et al., 2010). In a distress tolerance session, the therapist asks the client to remember situations that caused emotional pain, including past trauma. The client visualizes these events as real parts of life and encouraged acceptance instead of avoidance. Visualization exercises were used to build resilience, helping the client notice their thoughts, feelings, and body reactions calmly. The client was guided to

accept their distress and understand their experiences without judgment. The therapist also helps shift the client's thoughts toward more helpful and positive interpretations of these events.

3. Cognitive Restructuring

Cognitive restructuring aims to help people to reduce their stress through cultivating more positive and functional thought habits (Mills, Reiss, & Dombek, 2008). In cognitive restructuring the therapist initiates by elucidating cognitive distortions of the client, highlighting its significant impact on feeling and mood. While identifying negative automatic thoughts like "I need drugs to feel good about myself and I am not capable of quitting." The therapist guides the client to identify situational triggers and underlying beliefs supporting this thought pattern. The client is also helped to identify peer influence and perceived personal inadequacy as triggers, and feeling isolated without peer support etc. To challenge the accuracy of the automatic thought, the therapist employs evidence-based techniques, prompting the client to recall instances when he experienced contentment or accomplishment without substance use. The therapist helps the client to identify cognitive distortions such as "I am worthless," "I can't escape this situation," and self-blaming phrases and to restructure to positive and functional thoughts

Subsequently, the therapist introduces alternative thoughts, guiding the client to recognize personal strengths and abilities. A thorough exploration ensues, revealing the client's talents in singing, drawing, painting, carpentry, and driving, affirming a multi-talented nature.

Emphasizing self-exploration, the therapist encourages the development of realistic thoughts, replacing "I'm worthless without drugs" with affirmations like "I possess valuable strengths and qualities, and I can cultivate healthier coping strategies."

4. Assertiveness Training & Problem Solving

Quiggle et al. (2010) demonstrated that adolescents typically respond to peer provocation through aggression, avoidance, or assertion, with assertiveness acting as a protective factor, while Farrell et al. (2016) highlighted that peer pressure increases the likelihood of aggressive and delinquent behavior, whereas prosocial peer influence encourages positive social conduct.

As the child was struggling with peer pressure and often responded with impulsive or risky behavior, a structured intervention focusing on assertiveness training was introduced. In line with Quiggle et al. (2010), who emphasized assertiveness as a protective response to peer provocation, the therapist begins by explaining what assertiveness is, how it helps in handling peer pressure, and how it differs from aggression or passivity. Using role-play activities based on real-life situations, the child practises assertive communication. Following the approach suggested by Farrell et al. (2016), which highlights the impact of peer influence on adolescent behavior, the child was supported in identifying situations that triggered his impulsive actions and was encouraged to note down healthier and more confident ways to respond in those situations.

5. Psycho Education for Parents- Parent management Training (PMT)

PMT is a psycho social treatment in which parents are taught skills for dealing with their children's disruptive behaviour. The broad goals of PMT are to improve parental competence in dealing with child behavioural problems in order to enhance the child's adaptive behaviour.

According to Kazdin (2008), PMT is a psychosocial approach where parents are instructed in techniques to manage their children's disruptive behaviors. The overarching objectives of PMT are to enhance parental effectiveness in addressing child behavioral issues and to foster the child's adaptive behavior. The interaction between the therapist and the parent during PMT sessions focuses on active training. New parenting skills are cultivated through modeling, practice, role-playing, and feedback from the therapist. These skills cannot be acquired simply through verbal instruction; they require ongoing follow-ups for effective development. The interaction between the therapist and the parent during the PMT sessions emphasised active training. During the PMT sessions, the focus was on basic behavior management strategies like using rewards, setting clear rules, and being consistent. The child's mother was guided to use techniques such as praising good behavior, creating clear expectations, and giving appropriate consequences for misbehavior. Along with this, the family was encouraged to spend quality time together, have goal-oriented discussions, improve communication, and take part in activities that strengthen family bonds and support the child's development.

RESULTS

(Quantitative Considerations)

The table 2. shows the pre and post test scores assessing the aggression and six subscales of self-compassion. A significant reduction is observed in this child's behaviour dropping from 119 to 33 after the interventions. It indicates a significant reduction in child's disruptive behaviour and enhancing emotional regulation and behavioural control. Along with this the key elements of self-compassion also showing striking difference. Self-kindness increased from 2.8 to 4.2, while self-judgement decreased from 3.6 to 1.6. Similarly, the sense of common humanity saw a remarkable rise from 2.25 to 5, reflecting a greater

understanding of shared human experience. The feelings of isolation dropped from 4.25 to 1.25, indicating enhanced emotional connection and reduced loneliness. Mindfulness improved significantly from 1.75 to 4.75, showing greater present-moment awareness and emotional balance. Over identification, this refers to becoming overwhelmed by one's emotions, decreased from 4.5 to 2. These results collectively point to a substantial enhancement in self-compassion and emotional resilience, highlighting the effectiveness of the intervention in fostering healthier psychological functioning and reducing negative emotional patterns.

Table 2: Differences in the levels of Aggression and Self Compassion between pre and post conditions

	Pre	Post
Aggression	119	33
Self kindness	2.8	4.2
Self judgement	3.6	1.6
Common humanity	2.25	5
Isolation	4.25	1.25
Mindfulness	1.75	4.75
Overidentification	4.5	2

DISCUSSION

Lack of compassion was reported common among the children in conflict with law Davis & Boster, (1992) and aggression were common. The effectiveness of CBT on the rehabilitation of children in conflict with law was also supported by Garland et al. (2008) in their

study. Our current study confirms with the earlier findings. Further it shows that the congruence with our findings that efficacy of CBT in reducing anger, irritability and aggression. Morley et al. (2016) implied that self-compassion, social connectedness, self-control, self-respect, are the indicators of mental health, which distinguish normal children with children



in conflict with law. The finding suggests that the reduction of these traits leads to rehabilitation of children in conflict with law, which can be attained by employing CBT intervention. The pre test score and post test score implied that children in conflict with law may be getting benefits of CBT in their rehabilitation. Hasanath et al, (2024), suggested that mental health and psychosocial issues paving way to disruptive behaviours. Significant improvement of common humanity score is noticed after CBT intervention in post-test also congruence with above cited previous study. Further to note that the current findings were in congruence with the Gómez, Pino, & Pino, (2020) study implies that improving self-control are a positive indicator of mental health. Low self-control as a predictor of criminal conduct in adolescent offenders. As self-compassion is associated with self-control and empathy; as the self-control as a predictor of criminal tendency. In agreement with our study self-kindness and mindfulness were associated with self-control etc were significantly shows improvement due to CBT intervention.

Following behavioural interventions, incorporating targeted techniques, significant improvements were observed in the child's behaviour, notably a marked reduction in aggressive tendencies. The mother provided crucial support throughout this process. At the outset, the parent also gained valuable insights into managing her family dynamics without undue stress. Family enrichment activities contributed to enhanced cohesion and improved sibling relationships, fostering increased communication among family members.

The child experienced a heightened sense of support, leading to a renewed interest in education and vocational training opportunities. Coinciding with a government initiative aimed at providing vocational skills to juvenile offenders, the child successfully applied and was accepted into a mobile phone technology course, which he completed with distinction. Presently, he is successfully employed as a mobile phone technician, significantly improving the family's economic stability. Concurrently, the father has engaged in regular wage work, fostering healthier familial bonds. The child also underwent successful de-addiction treatment, with supportive involvement from his mother. Both participated in an experience-sharing session, highlighting the efficacy of Behaviour Therapy in enhancing the child's self-esteem, sense of self-worth, and resilience.

Most psychological interventions for conduct problems that have been proven to be effective are based on operant learning principles (e.g., positive reinforcement) and cognitive learning principles (e.g., use of inner speech). In behavioural parent training, children and adolescents acquire appropriate behaviours and learn to refrain from inappropriate behaviours as a result of parents' or caregivers' giving positive instructions, praising appropriate behaviours, ignoring minor inappropriate behaviours, and using time-out for severe inappropriate behaviours (Kazdin, 2005). Likewise, in CBT, children and adolescents acquire anger management and problem-solving abilities (Lochman et al., 2019; Matthys & Lochman, 2017).



CONCLUSION

The results of the present case are in line with previous research demonstrating the effectiveness of a comprehensive package of cognitive behavioural and mindfulness based interventions in reducing aggression among children in conflict with Law. For instance, Milani et al; (2013), conducted an experimental study in a juvenile correction and rehabilitation centre, where adolescent males who participated in eight sessions of mindfulness based cognitive behaviour therapy (MBCT) showed significant reductions in overall aggression at post- test and follow up compared to a control group. The intervention was particularly effective in lowering physical aggression, hostility and anger, although it had no effect on verbal aggression. The results of the present study also support the potential of structured, skill based behavioural interventions for addressing aggressive tendencies and emotional deregulation in adolescent in conflict with Law.

The Comprehensive Behavioural Techniques were effective in addressing the complex challenges faced by the child conflict with law. The combination of distress tolerance, cognitive restructuring, assertiveness training, and PMT not only reduced aggressive tendencies but also empowered the child to make positive life choices. The successful completion of vocational training and gainful employment as a mobile phone technician demonstrates not only behavioural change but also increased self-efficacy and a sense of purpose. The study proposes application of the present packages to apply at community level as an effective approach to prevent growing criminality among children and adolescents.

The case study illustrates the transformative power of structured Behavioural Techniques in addressing antisocial behaviours and equipping individuals with practical skills for emotional regulation, positive thinking, assertive communication, and healthy family dynamics.

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OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS- A SOCIAL WORK PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Occupational stress is considered to be an important factor for the successful functioning of the organization, especially in the health care sector. Health care professionals emphasize their service towards society, providing diagnostic services, intervention, treatment, and rehabilitative services. However, it is difficult to perform effectively without a sense of job satisfaction due to occupational stress. Significantly, it is difficult to achieve success and development as a professional in the health field. Moreover, people think positively about the nature of their job as it is known to be a service sector. Considering the quality, balanced work environment, and employee satisfaction of the health care professionals, the management should take necessary initiatives in creating a better, stress-free work environment and satisfaction. The individual job satisfaction and reduction in occupational stress can be addressed through the organization's policies and welfare measures provided to the healthcare professionals. Occupational stress and job satisfaction are two valuable measures for a healthier work environment as they influence healthcare professionals beyond expectations. Islam et.al. (2022) in their studies indicated the importance of characteristics of occupational stress due to a global shortage of nurses. However, there are only a few studies that explored the factors that influence occupational stress and affect job satisfaction. The primary aim of this study is to examine the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction. It also tries to analyse the intervention strategies for better outcomes in the workplace of healthcare professionals. The researchers used a descriptive research design and non-probability sampling with a convenient sampling method for the study. The results of the present study indicate that health care professionals ' satisfaction needs and psychological well-being need to be monitored.

Key Words – *Occupational Stress, Job Satisfaction, Health Care, Workplace*

The health care profession is generally perceived as a demanding profession, as it is considered to be a service-oriented sector. The increased demand and progress in the health care service profession, stress among the professionals has also increased. Occupational stress and job satisfaction play a vital role in helping healthcare professionals accomplish the organizational goal. Occupational stress is experienced when the demands made on us outweigh our resources. The occupational stress factors would influence physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Occupational stress is measured based on certain dimensions like burnout, stress-related health problems, perceived work stress, productivity, job satisfaction, and consideration for the job of change.

Job satisfaction is an integral component to improve enthusiasm among employees as it helps to develop their potential contribution. The goal of the organization can easily be achieved with workplace satisfaction and the progress of the employees. It could easily be identified that a dissatisfied employee would leave the organization, and it would affect the functioning of the organization. Job satisfaction is considered an important drive that influences the dimensions such as health, welfare, and safety measures at the workplace. It can drive through negative and intense conditions if it is continued without proper intervention, which would lead to physical and psychological disorders.

Baker et al. (2020) examined the relationship between work-related stress and job satisfaction among Saudi nurses working at a public hospital. The researcher used a cross-sectional method

and collected data from 297 nurses employed in a specified public hospital using a convenient sampling method. The researcher used questionnaire method comprising of Nursing Stress Scale (NSS) and Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS). The results revealed that the nurses experienced low level of stress and the job satisfaction level was maximum among them. Yari et al. (2018) investigated a study with an aim to evaluate the relationship between occupational stress, job satisfaction and spiritual well-being among nurses. The study is descriptive with a sample comprising of 80 nurses using convenient sampling method. The results revealed that there was significant negative relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction along with spiritual well-being. Moreover, it was also concluded that there is no significant relationship between socio demographic details and occupational stress. Furthermore, it was determined that nurses are affected with high occupational stress and it has to be reduced to avoid further complications. Yong Lu et al. (2016) explored a study on job satisfaction among healthcare staff and also to investigate the association between job satisfaction with other factors such as work stress, work family conflict and doctor patient relationship in health care setting in Guangdong. The researcher used cross sectional survey method and collected data from the physicians, nurses and public health staffs. The study was analysed using 5845 respondents and it revealed that job satisfaction was positively related to few socio demographic variables. Furthermore, it was suggested from the study that laws have to be implemented to protect the health care professionals from violence and recreation facilities has to be



encouraged to prevent occupational stress among them. Gulavani et al. (2014) conducted a study to identify the occupational stress and job satisfaction among nurses working in tertiary care hospitals. The study is descriptive in nature. The sample size was 100 nursing professionals using convenient sampling method and the hypotheses were tested. The research study revealed that there is no association between occupational stress and job satisfaction with socio-demographic profile of the respondents. The study resulted stating that specific measures like compensation and independence has to be strengthened to improve the job satisfaction.

METHOD

Statement of the Problem

The review of literature describes that healthcare professionals being from the service sector must have high job satisfaction and positive work environment. Due to the influence of occupational stress and lack of job satisfaction it reflects in their performance, relationship with peers and lack of team work. Moreover, high occupational stress would lead to employee turnover. The health professional losses their patience due to long working hours, lack of job satisfaction, fair recognition and time to time appreciation from their management. It is difficult to balance their workplace stress which would eventually affect the quality of patient care if it is not addressed and rectified immediately.

Aim of the Study

The present study aims to determine the level of job satisfaction among healthcare professionals. Moreover,

to identify the occupational stress factors affecting job satisfaction and the influence of age and gender with occupational stress.

Objectives

1. To study the socio demographic profile of the respondents
2. To determine the association between occupational stress and job satisfaction among the respondents.
3. To assess the relationship between occupational stress with job satisfaction, age and gender of the respondents.
4. To provide social work intervention strategies for the research study.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction of the respondents.
2. There is no significant relationship between Age and Occupational Stress of the respondents.
3. There is no significant relationship between Gender and Occupational Stress of the respondents.

A research design is a complete framework that describes the researchers collected and analysed data based on the feasibility of the study. The study is Descriptive. The sampling technique used in the present research study is convenient sampling with 67 respondents. Both primary data and secondary data have been used for this present study. The researcher used a questionnaire to collect the data using interview schedule. This schedule includes the following categories as personal profile, occupational stress and job satisfaction. Nursing Stress Scale was



proposed by Gray-Toft and job satisfaction scale by Katzell.

Table 1 : Experience Wise Classification of Respondents (N=67)

Variables	Categories	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Age	21-30 years	16	23.88%
	31-40 years	23	34.32%
	41-50 years	19	28.35%
	51 and above	09	13.43%
Gender	Male	21	31.34%
	Female	46	68.65%
Total		67	100%

RESULTS

The majority of the respondents (34.32%) fall between the age group 31-40 years. As observed that there were 76.7 per cent of the respondents were married and the result reveals that 36.2% of the respondents have 2 children. Majority (47.1%) of the respondents have monthly income of rupees 20,001-30,000 per month and nearly 32.3 per cent of the respondents reside with joint family type. Majority, (71.7%) of the respondents reside in the urban area.

72.4% of the respondents are having high occupational stress 72% of the respondents are having high job satisfaction and 74.1% of the married respondents are having high occupational stress. 48.3% of the unmarried respondents are having high job satisfaction and 63% of the married respondents are having high job satisfaction.

65% of the respondents whose work experience in between 1-5 years is having high occupational stress. 73.7% of the respondents whose work experience in between 6-10 years is having high job satisfaction and 78.8% of the respondents whose work experience in between 11 and above years is having high occupational stress.

Nearly, 42.7% of the employees are having high occupational stress and high job satisfaction and 35.2% of the employees are having high occupational stress but low job satisfaction. As observed 22.1% of the employees are having low occupational stress but high job satisfaction.

H0: There is no significant relationship between Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction of the respondents.

H1: There is significant relationship between Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction of the respondents.

Table 2 : Relationship Between Occupational Stress with job satisfaction, age and gender

Variables and Occupational Stress	Chi-square value	P value
Job Satisfaction	57.51	0.007
Age	49.53	0.01
Gender	32.46	1.173

1. There is significant relationship between occupational stress and Job satisfaction of the respondents [(r= 57.51) (p<0.007)].

2. There is significant relationship between occupational stress and age of the respondents [(r= 49.53) (p<0.01)].

3. There is no significant relationship between gender and occupational stress of the respondents [(r= 32.46) (p<1.173)].

Social Work Intervention

1. Management should ensure to take necessary steps in implementing programmes and organization policies that would reduce occupational stress among the health care professionals.

2. Acknowledging the health care employees for the work accomplished and it has to be adopted as one of the most important strategies to ensure their satisfaction.

3. Recreation facilities, welfare measures, and incentives can be monitored to attain job satisfaction and reduce occupational stress.

4. Relationship-building programmes and activities could be encouraged.

5. Policy makers should give importance to the physical, psychological, and working environments of the health care services.

DISCUSSION

Occupational stress and job satisfaction are the most essential factors which would influence the workforce. Job satisfaction acts as a motivational factor which influence positively influences creating enthusiasm, high energy, and involvement at work. The stress factors that are identified is important as it would create a negative impact on patient care and their well-being if it is not addressed immediately.

It is suggested that changes in managerial schemes and policies are essential as occupational stress is a negative indicator of mental illness, leading to anxiety and depression, affecting the service.

Job satisfaction can be attained while the influencing factors at the workplace are recognized to decrease turnover intention among healthcare professionals. A reduction in occupational stress and job satisfaction helps to develop or increase the performance of the respondents.



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CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN KANNUR

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ABSTRACT

Recent incidents of conflicts that turned tragic among adolescent friends in Kerala drew concerns. Current study examines the relationship between Social Media Usage and Conflict Management Styles among Arts and Science college students in Kannur. This is an empirical study using a sample of 280 students from Arts and Science colleges in Kannur of 18 to 25 years old using simple random sampling. Using Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale and Conflict Management Styles Assessment data were collected through Google Form from 280 college students. Analysis using Pearson Correlation found significant positive correlation between Social Media Usage and various conflict management styles.

Key Words – *Social Media Usage, Conflicts, Conflict Management, Conflict Management Styles, College student*

With surging popularity, social media has quickly integrated into our lives. Over time, it has developed into an interactive platform for discussion, collaboration, and the exchange of information and knowledge (Mude & Undale, 2023) contributing to greater social capital (Putnam, 2000).

The perception of trust created by one's interpretations of events and phenomena around him creates confidence in the immediate environment based on primary life experiences, making social

media a functional tool for developing close relationships (Acun, 2020). Whereas, excessive use of social media decreases in person interactions, crucial for maintaining healthy social connections. Keles, et. al. (2020) highlights the complex relationship between social media usage and mental health, suggesting that while social media can provide social support, it can also exacerbate psychological distress.

Recent and tragic incident in Kozhikode district underscores the importance of this study. In February 2025, a 16-year-old student named



Mohammed Shahabas was fatally attacked by a group of fellow students. Investigations revealed that the assault was premeditated and coordinated through social media platforms, including Instagram and WhatsApp. The attackers had shared threatening messages and even learned to use weapons like the nunchaku by watching YouTube videos (Onmanorama, 2025; MediaOne,2025). This incident highlights how online interactions can intensify real-world conflicts, leading to severe consequences. Such events emphasize the need to understand how social media usage affects the way students manage conflicts. Adolescents are at a critical stage of developing social skills and emotional intelligence. Excessive reliance on digital communication leads to decline in personal interactions, thereby hindering empathy, ability to understand social cues and resolve disagreements constructively.

Another major concern is the overuse of gadgets and digital communication, which is reducing the time students spend in real-life social interactions. As a result, many adolescents are missing opportunities to develop social intelligence (Goleman, 2006). Social intelligence is important for healthy relationships and conflict resolution, and it usually develops through face-to-face experiences and emotional learning. With the growing trend of online communication, students may struggle with empathy, emotional control, and interpreting social cues (Sutar & Patil, 2020).

Conflict is natural and inevitable and arises when individuals or groups perceive that their needs, goals, or values

are incompatible. While often associated with negative emotions or outcomes, conflict itself is not necessarily harmful since it can also lead to increased understanding, stronger relationships, and positive change (Deutsch et al., 2011). Effective conflict management aims to foster cooperation and innovation. (Rahim,2011).

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) identifies five distinct approaches: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974) of assertiveness and cooperativeness.

Recent concerns about conflict management styles among adolescents and the surging use of social media, the study on how social media usage affects the way students manage conflict is important. Focusing on arts and science college students in Kannur the study aims to understand the link between digital habits and interpersonal behavior.

Recent research highlights the complex impact of social media across various aspects of life. Angelini & Gini (2025) found social media accessibility expectations linked to adolescent friendship conflict, with males reporting less entrapment with higher perceived accessibility. Conversely, Shaibhu et al. (2025) noted a predominantly positive influence on Nigerian nursing students' academics, contingent on individual factors.

Studies on college students revealed negative associations. Eichenberg et al. (2024) linked social media addiction to neuroticism and insecure attachment,



while Shrestha & Adhikari (2024) found associations with mood changes and sleep disruption. Raj & Sheikh (2024) identified both positive (long-distance connection) and negative (jealousy) impacts on personal relationships. Gul et al. (2024) suggested social media exacerbates the negative effects of parental conflict on academic performance

In other contexts, Labent et al. (2024) observed moderate well-being in Malaysian young adults, suggesting strategic social media use could be beneficial. F et al. (2024) found positive attitudes towards conflict management correlated with compromising and problem-solving styles in medical students. Manaig (2024) and Lawani, et al. (2024) linked collaborative leadership and emotional intelligence to effective conflict management. Muthumari & Indhumathi (2023) found no direct link between social media and academic performance in Indian undergraduates, while Mercan & Uysal (2023) connected social media addiction to poorer interpersonal problem-solving and certain personality traits. Julian (2023) associated excessive use with mental health issues and delinquency. Overall, these studies reveal both opportunities and risks associated with digital engagement, emphasizing the need for further research.

METHOD

Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between social media usage and conflict management styles.
2. To find relationships between Social Media Usage and Collaborating conflict management styles.

3. To assess the relationship between Social Media Usage and Competing conflict management styles.

4. To examine the relationship between social media usage and avoidant conflict management styles.

5. To assess the relationship between social media usage and Accommodating conflict management styles.

6. To find a relationship between social media usage and Compromising conflict management.

Hypothesis

There will be a positive correlation between SMU and collaborating CMS.

There will be negative correlation between SMU and collaborating CMS.

There will be positive correlation between SMU and Competing CMS.

There will be negative correlation between SMU and Competing CMS.

There will be negative correlation between SMU and avoidant CMS.

There will be positive correlation between SMU and avoidant CMS.

There will be positive correlation between SMU and accommodating CMS.

There will be negative correlation between SMU and accommodating CMS.

There will be positive correlation between SMU and compromising CMS.

There will be negative correlation between SMU and compromising CMS.

Research Design

Correlational research technique was used to find the correlation between variables.

Sample

The sample of this study is Arts and Science college students within the

age group of 18 to 25 years. The sample size is 280 college students from different Arts and Science colleges in Kannur including both males and females. Simple random sampling method was used to collect data and in person meetings and questionnaires through google form.

Tools

1. Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale

The Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS), created by Andreassen and colleagues, is a self-report tool designed to assess social media addiction. It comprises six items, each corresponding to core addiction components: salience, tolerance, mood modification, withdrawal, conflict, and relapse. Responses are rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very rarely) to 5 (very often), with higher scores indicating greater dependence on social media and interpretation are no addiction, moderate addiction and high addiction respectively (Shin, 2022).

2. Conflict Management Styles Assessment

Conflict Management Styles Assessment is a self-report tool, created by Reginald Adkins in 2006 and this assessment adopted from David Johnson in 1990. It assesses five different conflict management styles of an individual. The tool consists of 15 statements that are equivalent to the five different CMS that are collaborating, competing, avoiding, accommodating and compromising respectively. These were based on the Thomas Kilmann conflict management

styles and are scored on a four-point Likert Scale of 1 to 4, 1 (rarely), 2 (sometimes), 3 (often), 4 (always). Scoring was item 1,5,7 for collaborating styles, item 4,9,12 for competing styles, item 6,10,15 for avoiding styles, item 3,11,14 for accommodating styles and item 2,8,13 for compromising styles. The interpretation was that the styles with the highest score represent the one we use most frequently while the lowest-scoring styles reflect the one we prefer the least conflict management styles (Adkins, 2006).

Procedure

Data was collected in person from three colleges in Pilathara. Further more data was collected online in personal contacts from different colleges in Kannur and google form was circulated through WhatsApp. The final sample consists of 280 participants. The data analysed using SPSS. Pearson Correlation was found.

RESULTS

Data were collected from 15 colleges in Kannur district including WIRAS, St. Joseph College Pilathara, SES College Sreekandapuram, Pilathara Cooperative Arts and Science College, Sir Syed College Taliparamba, Sir Syed Institute for Technical Studies, Payyannur College, Sunrise College of Advanced Studies, SN College Thottada, Taliparamba Arts and Science College, Krishna Menon Women's College, Kannur University Campus, MM Knowledge Arts and Science College, Gurudev Arts and Science College and Morazha Co-operative Arts and Science College.



Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Sample

	SMU	Collaborating	Competing	Avoiding	Accommodating	Compromising
Mean	17.54	7.03	6.50	7.26	7.56	7.02
S. D	4.283	1.933	1.820	2.109	1.911	1.763

The mean score of Social Media Usage is 17.54 with a standard deviation of 4.283. The mean scores differed with collaborating 7.03 (SD=1.933), Competing 6.5 (SD=1.820), Avoiding 7.26 (SD=2.109), Accommodating 7.56 (SD=1.911) and Compromising 7.02 (SD=1.763) styles.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficient

	Collaborating	Competing	Avoiding	Accommodating	Compromising
SMU	0.156**	0.180**	.210**	.121*	.65

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

*Correlation is significant at the level of 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between SMU and collaborating is 0.156 showing significant positive correlation. This implies that higher the social media usage, greater is the score for collaborating conflict management style.

The correlation between SMU and competing is 0.180 showing significant positive correlation. This implies that higher the social media usage, greater is the score for competing conflict management style.

The correlation between SMU and avoiding is 0.210 showing significant positive correlation. This implies that higher the social media usage, greater is the score for avoiding conflict management style.

The correlation between SMU and accommodating is 0.121 at 0.05 level significance. This shows that there is significant positive correlation implying higher the social media usage, greater the score for accommodating conflict management style.

The correlation between SMU and compromising is 0.65 at no level of significance. This shows slight correlation implying that this relationship is not significant.

DISCUSSION

The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between Social Media Usage and Conflict Management

Styles, more specifically examine the relationship between Social Media Usage and Collaborating conflict management style, to assess the relationship between Social Media Usage and Competing conflict management style, to find the relationship between Social Media Usage and Avoiding conflict management style, examine the relationship between Social Media Usage and Accommodating conflict management style and to assess the relationship between Social Media Usage and Compromising conflict management style among Arts and Science college students in Kannur district, aged 18 to 25 years.

The findings of the study shows that there is a significant relationship between Social Media usage and Collaborating, Competing, Avoiding and Accommodating conflict management styles, while Compromising conflict management style did not have significant correlation with Social Media Usage.

The study found significant positive correlation between Social Media Usage and Collaborating conflict management style ($r=0.180$ at 0.01 level significant). This implies that students who frequently use social media are more likely to use a collaborative conflict management style when addressing interpersonal conflicts and it is characterized by mutual respect and cooperation. They may try to find solutions that satisfy both sides.

The significant positive correlation between Social Media Usage and Competing conflict management style ($r=0.180$ at 0.01 level significant). This implies that students who have increased usage of social media, could contribute to a more competitive stance during conflicts, where individuals aim to assert their own

position, sometimes at the expense of others.

The strongest correlation was found between the Social Media Usage and Avoiding conflict management style ($r=0.210$ at 0.01 level significant). This indicates that students with higher social media exposure may also tend to avoid conflicts rather than confronting them directly. This could reflect the nature of social media communication, where it is easier to withdraw or disengage from uncomfortable interactions.

The correlation between Social Media Usage and Accommodating conflict management style found that it is weaker but it is still significant ($r=0.121$ at 0.05 level significant). This implies that increased usage of social media may be associated with a greater tendency to prioritize others' needs over one's own during conflicts- possibly as a way to maintain harmony with social media groups or circles.

However, no significant correlation between Social Media Usage and Compromising conflict management style was $r=0.65$, which was not significant correlation. This implies that no meaningful relationship was found between Social Media Usage and Compromising conflict management style, it indicates that compromising may not be influenced by social media use in the same way as the other conflict management styles.

The results of the relationship between Social Media Usage with Collaborating, Competing, Avoiding and Accommodating conflict management styles have rejected the null hypothesis, null hypothesis was there is no significant relationship between these two variables. The findings of these accepted the

alternative hypothesis. On the other hand, the null hypothesis of the Compromising conflict management style was accepted and the alternative hypothesis was rejected, as the correlation did not reach a significant level.

The results show that there is positive correlation between Social Media usage and Collaborating, Accommodating conflict management styles. Social media use can improve communication skills and promote Collaboration and positive interpersonal behaviours (Subrahmanyam and Greenfield, 2008).

Similarly, there is positive correlation found between Social Media Usage and Avoiding and Competing conflict management styles. The recurrent use of social media can lead to increased competitiveness, reduced tolerance, or avoidance of direct confrontation in real-life interactions (Yang and Brown, 2016). On the other hand, results found that there is no significant correlation between Social Media Usage and Compromising conflict management style. The communication in social media platforms may influence how individuals engage in conflicts, sometimes promoting surface-level interactions rather than deep conflict management (Przybylski and Weinstein, 2013).

Overall, the study findings show that, significant relation to social media usage and different conflict management styles among college students in Kannur district.

Implications

Our findings point to how social media usage is connected to how students handle interpersonal conflicts. Positive associations with collaborating and accommodating styles indicate that social media may encourage students to engage in more cooperative and relationship-focused conflict resolution. These platforms often promote group interaction and shared decision-making, which can help users develop empathy and communication skills (Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008).

One important implication is that social media may influence how students respond to real-life interpersonal conflicts, often reflecting patterns they practice in virtual interactions. For instance, those who frequently use social media may develop stronger collaborative and accommodating skills, likely due to online group activities and discussions. At the same time, a tendency toward avoidance or competitiveness might stem from the indirect or performative nature of online exchanges (Yang & Brown, 2016).

CONCLUSION

The study found significant positive correlation between SMU and collaborative, competing, avoiding and accommodating CMS and a slight positive correlation between SMU and compromising.



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INTEGRATING POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY INTO THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY: A FRAMEWORK FOR ENHANCING STUDENT WELL-BEING AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN K-12 EDUCATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the integration of Positive Psychology into India's National Educational Policy (NEP) 2020 to enhance student well-being and academic performance in K-12 settings. Drawing upon the PERMAH framework—Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment, and Habits—the study outlines a strategic plan to embed positive psychological principles across curricula, school culture, and community engagement. Despite growing recognition of the importance of emotional and psychological health in educational success, implementation challenges such as inadequate teacher training, resource constraints, cultural stigma, and measurement difficulties remain. By presenting a phased model involving professional development, curriculum integration, school-wide initiatives, and family partnerships, the paper proposes a practical and scalable approach to holistic education. Ultimately, it argues that cultivating well-being is not peripheral but central to the aims of modern education systems, calling for a paradigm shift that aligns policy with the science of flourishing.

Key Words – *Positive Psychology, National Educational Policy (NEP) 2020, PERMAH model, student well-being, positive education, K-12 education, emotional intelligence.*

The evolving demands of the 21st century have brought to the forefront the necessity for education systems to go beyond academic instruction and address the emotional, psychological, and social needs of students. India's National Educational Policy (NEP) 2020 reflects this shift by emphasizing holistic

development, experiential learning, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence. While the NEP lays the groundwork for a more inclusive and learner-centered approach, the integration of Positive Psychology can further reinforce its vision by embedding well-being into the core of educational practice.

Positive Psychology, a field that focuses on strengths, virtues, and factors that allow individuals to thrive, offers practical, evidence-based interventions that enhance resilience, motivation, and life satisfaction. In the context of education, these interventions—collectively known as Positive Education—have demonstrated substantial benefits, including improved academic performance, reduced anxiety, and greater social cohesion.

This paper proposes a framework to systematically integrate Positive Psychology into the NEP through the PERMAH model, an expansion of Martin Seligman's foundational PERMA theory. The framework emphasizes the importance of daily habits alongside emotional, relational, and cognitive growth. By aligning educational policy with the science of well-being, schools can serve not only as centers of academic learning but also as environments that nurture flourishing individuals.

THE INDIAN CONTEXT: NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2020

Key Aspects of NEP and its significance

After 34 years, a new education policy—the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020—has been proposed by the Government of India to reshape the learning ecosystem in the country (Ministry of Education, 2020). NEP 2020 advocates for holistic development, critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence. It emphasises foundational literacy and numeracy, learner-centred pedagogy, and experiential learning (MHRD, 2020; NITI Aayog, 2021). The policy promotes inclusivity, equity, and the cultivation of ethical and moral reasoning,

thereby acknowledging the multi-dimensional nature of student development (Kumar, 2020).

NEP 2020 envisions future-ready and skilled learners who can succeed at both personal and community levels. It removes rigid boundaries between subject streams, offering flexibility and liberty for students to choose areas of interest and excel in them (Poonia, 2021). The policy further enhances essential learning and critical competencies by promoting discussion-based, analysis-oriented, and experiential approaches (Gupta & Agrawal, 2021). A key goal is to bring over 2 crore out-of-school children back into the mainstream, addressing long-standing challenges of access and equity (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Structurally, the traditional 10+2 format is replaced by a 5+3+3+4 curricular structure, aligning education stages more closely with cognitive development. The policy also integrates vocational education from early stages, introduces reforms in assessment patterns, and prioritises competency-based learning, ensuring that education aligns with individual talent and industry needs (Tilak, 2021). By emphasising skills, creativity, and adaptability, NEP 2020 positions India's education system to meet the demands of the 21st-century workforce while nurturing responsible, ethical, and innovative citizens.

1. Positive Psychology Interventions in Education

Positive Psychology interventions (PPIs) in education are structured strategies aimed at enhancing students' positive emotions, resilience, and character strengths (Waters, 2011). The PERMA model, proposed by Seligman (2011),

identifies five core elements of well-being: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. Integrating these into educational practices has shown to significantly improve student outcomes (Shankland & Rosset, 2017).

2. Benefits of Integrating Positive Psychology

Empirical studies have demonstrated that students exposed to Positive Psychology practices exhibit higher levels of well-being, reduced anxiety, improved academic performance, and better social behavior (Froh et al., 2008; Norrish et al., 2013). These practices contribute to a more supportive school climate and foster life skills crucial for the 21st century. Positive psychology and the NEP are related in that both address the aspects of well-being and holistic development, though from different perspectives. Positive psychology, with its focus on strengths, flourishing, resilience, and overall well-being (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), provides the psychological foundation to realize the vision of NEP 2020. It fosters self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), intrinsic motivation and flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), reduces academic stress through resilience-building practices, and enhances inclusivity by recognizing individual strengths. Additionally, it supports teacher well-being and professional satisfaction (Briner & Dewberry, 2007), ensuring classrooms become more engaging and student-centered. Thus, while NEP provides the context for transforming India's education system, positive psychology offers a framework for designing educational programs that promote student well-being, creativity,

ethical reasoning, and lifelong learning. The PERMA model suggested by Martin Seligman can be a valuable tool for educators and policymakers in India as they work to implement the NEP, ensuring that the focus on academic achievement is balanced with the holistic well-being of students.

3. Empirical evidence showing shortcomings under the old regime

India's earlier education policy architecture—comprising the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986/1992) and the Right to Education Act (RTE, 2009)—succeeded in expanding near-universal access to schooling but faced persistent challenges in ensuring quality learning outcomes. Evidence highlights this gap: the National Achievement Survey (NAS, 2021) reported a sharp decline in average scores from around 59% at Class 3 to only 38% by Class 10 (Ministry of Education, Government of India, 2021). Similarly, successive Annual Status of Education Reports (ASER) have shown that a large proportion of children in primary grades struggle with basic reading and arithmetic skills (Pratham, 2022). At the global level, the World Bank estimated that India's learning poverty—defined as the percentage of 10-year-olds unable to read a simple text—stood at approximately 55% even before the pandemic (World Bank, 2019).

Foundational learning was further fragmented by the fact that Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for children aged 3–6 years was not part of the RTE's enforceable provisions, leaving this critical stage outside the mainstream schooling framework (Drishti IAS, 2020).

Moreover, issues of ineffective classroom delivery compounded the problem: nationally representative studies documented teacher absence rates as high as 25% on an average school day (Chaudhury et al., 2006, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*). Recognizing these systemic gaps, the National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) seeks to transform the landscape by:

(a) integrating ECCE into a new Foundational Stage under the 5+3+3+4 curricular structure, with an emphasis on mother-tongue/ regional-language pedagogy and a nationwide mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN); and (b) replacing rote-based examinations with competency-based assessments through the establishment of the Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH) (Government of India, 2020).

CHALLENGES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. Limited Teacher Training and Support

A significant obstacle in integrating Positive Psychology into education is the lack of comprehensive teacher training. While educators may express interest in fostering student well-being, many are not adequately equipped with the theoretical background or practical strategies needed to implement Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs) in the classroom. Professional development programs focusing on Positive Psychology are often limited or absent from teacher education curricula. Consequently, teachers may feel overwhelmed or unprepared to incorporate

practices like gratitude exercises, strength-based learning, or growth mindset development (Waters & Loton, 2019; Seligman et al., 2009). The absence of structured mentoring or peer networks further limits effective implementation. Without a supportive learning community or institutional incentives, teachers are unlikely to maintain consistent application of PPIs (Oades et al., 2011; Renshaw & Bolognino, 2016).

2. Insufficient Resources and Infrastructure

Implementing Positive Psychology requires more than motivation; it demands access to well-being curricula, trained facilitators, time allocation, and a conducive environment. In under-resourced schools, especially in rural and economically disadvantaged settings, these conditions are rarely met. Challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, lack of access to mental health services, and high student-to-teacher ratios exacerbate implementation difficulties (Weare & Nind, 2011; UNESCO, 2021). In many such settings, well-being programs are viewed as non-essential, particularly when academic achievement is prioritized under high-stakes examination systems (Durlak et al., 2011; Kidger et al., 2010). Without sustained financial investment and policy support, Positive Psychology risks being marginalized or tokenized.

3. Resistance to Change

Educational institutions are often conservative structures, resistant to paradigm shifts. Traditional views prioritize cognitive achievement, often to the detriment of socio-emotional learning (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005; Briner & Dewberry, 2007). Administrators and

educators may see Positive Psychology as “soft” or unrelated to rigorous academic standards.

Cultural factors also play a role; in many societies, discussions around emotional well-being and psychological health remain stigmatized or undervalued (Hoare et al., 2017; Sahdra et al., 2016). Even when evidence supports the benefits of PPIs in improving both academic and non-academic outcomes, skepticism persists, especially in systems dominated by performance metrics and curriculum rigidity (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009; Slemp et al., 2017).

4. Measurement Issues

The evaluation of Positive Psychology outcomes presents a methodological challenge. While tools such as the PERMA profiler and subjective well-being scales offer some insight, the field still lacks universally accepted, culturally adaptable, and psychometrically robust measures (White & Kern, 2018; Hone et al., 2014). Outcomes such as resilience, optimism, or life satisfaction are influenced by individual perception and contextual factors, making them difficult to quantify reliably.

Moreover, longitudinal studies are needed to determine the sustained impact of PPIs, yet such studies are relatively rare due to time, cost, and logistical constraints (Froh et al., 2008; Kern et al., 2015). This measurement complexity hampers efforts to scale or standardize interventions and reduces their appeal to policymakers who require clear, evidence-based outcomes.

FRAMEWORK PROPOSED: THE PERMAH MODEL

The **PERMAH model** builds upon Martin Seligman’s foundational **PERMA** framework in Positive Psychology, which outlines five essential pillars for human flourishing: **Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment** (Seligman, 2011). The model was later expanded to include a sixth element—**Habits**—by Kern and colleagues to underscore the significance of sustained, daily practices in cultivating well-being (Kern et al., 2020). Each component of PERMAH contributes holistically to student development and mental health:

1. **Positive Emotions:** Regular experiences of joy, gratitude, serenity, and hope are shown to broaden students’ thought–action repertoires, encouraging resilience and creativity (Fredrickson, 2001).

2. **Engagement:** When students are deeply immersed in tasks that match their skills—experiencing “flow”—they display higher motivation and satisfaction in learning (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

3. **Relationships:** Supportive relationships with peers and teachers are vital for emotional safety, collaboration, and the development of empathy (Noddings, 2005).

4. **Meaning:** Students flourish when they can connect their learning to broader life goals, personal values, and social responsibility (Frankl, 1963).



5. **Accomplishment:** Celebrating progress and success builds self-efficacy and encourages goal-setting behavior, which is critical for lifelong learning (Bandura, 1997).

6. **Habits:** Daily routines such as reflection, journaling, gratitude expression, and mindfulness practice are foundational for sustaining long-term well-being (Kern et al., 2020).

Step-by-Step Implementation Plan

To implement the PERMAH model in educational settings, a phased and inclusive approach is recommended:

1. Teacher Training and Support

1. Develop professional development modules focused on the principles and application of Positive Psychology in education.
2. Offer personalized coaching and create **peer mentoring systems** to foster shared learning and emotional support among educators (White & Murray, 2015).

2. Curriculum Integration

1. Embed Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs) into existing subjects through **reflective journals**, **narrative storytelling**, and **cooperative learning** activities.
2. Incorporate strategies such as **strength-based learning**, where students identify and apply their core strengths in school tasks (Niemic, 2013).

3. School-Wide Initiatives

1. Launch well-being curriculums that integrate **mindfulness exercises**, **gratitude walls**, and **weekly well-being themes**.

2. Celebrate "Character Strength Days" or "Kindness Weeks" to embed positive actions into school culture (Waters, 2011).

4. Parent and Community Involvement

1. Organize workshops to educate parents on the PERMAH model and equip them with strategies to reinforce these values at home.
2. Establish regular newsletters or digital updates to share school-wide well-being progress and student accomplishments.

Stakeholders and Their Roles

A successful integration of the PERMAH model depends on collaborative efforts among key stakeholders:

1. **Teachers:** Act as primary change agents by modeling well-being principles and applying them in their pedagogy (Green, Oades & Robinson, 2011).
2. **Administrators:** Provide the emotional and structural scaffolding necessary to support staff and sustain long-term cultural shifts.
3. **Parents:** Extend well-being practices into the home, reinforcing learning and creating continuity in values and habits.
4. **Students:** Serve as co-creators of a positive school environment, participating in initiatives and giving feedback to shape well-being practices.



Implementation Strategies for the PERMAH Model

The successful realization of the PERMAH model in school environments demands strategic and systemic implementation across multiple domains. The following four pillars serve as guiding strategies to embed Positive Psychology as a sustainable and impactful practice within educational ecosystems.

PERMAH Implementation Plan Delivery

1. **Workshops** (weekly 1–1.5 hrs), classroom integration, peer circles, self-reflection.

2. **Facilitator guided discussion**; ongoing micro-activities (5–10 min daily).

Duration

1. **Introductory cycle**: 6–8 weeks (one module/week).

2. **Ongoing practice**: Daily habits + monthly boosters.

3. **Full impact**: 3–6 months.

Content (PERMAH Modules)

1) **Positive Emotions** – Gratitude journaling, “3 good things,” mindfulness.

2) **Engagement** – Strengths identification, flow activities, creative challenges.

3) **Relationships** – Empathy circles, team games, active listening.

4) **Meaning** – Values mapping, mission statements, service projects.

5) **Accomplishment** – SMART goals, celebrate wins, growth mindset.

6) **Health** – Breathing/yoga, sleep hygiene, digital detox.

1. Professional Development

Establishing Positive Psychology as a **core professional competence** for educators begins with comprehensive and ongoing professional development. This includes:

1. **Continuous training sessions** focusing on the science of well-being, emotional regulation, and student flourishing.

2. Creation of **collaborative learning communities** (CLCs) where educators co-design, implement, and reflect on well-being interventions in practice.

3. Appointing **well-being leadership roles** within staff—such as “Well-being Coordinators”—to champion Positive Psychology efforts and support school-wide consistency.

Professional learning that enhances educators' social-emotional competencies directly improves both teaching efficacy and student outcomes. Research underscores that teacher well-being is a precursor to classroom success and student mental health (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). When educators experience personal growth and emotional resilience, they are more likely to cultivate the same in their students.

2. Curriculum Integration

The integration of Positive Psychology principles within academic subjects ensures that well-being is not viewed as an “add-on” but rather an **essential component of learning**. This can be achieved through:

1) **Interdisciplinary approaches** where core subjects (like language, science, or social studies)



incorporate themes of gratitude, resilience, or meaning-making.

- 2) **Project-based learning (PBL)** to help students explore personal and societal well-being topics in depth.
- 3) Practical tools such as:
 - a. **Reflective journals** for emotional processing and goal setting.
 - b. **Vision boards** to articulate personal aspirations and identity.
 - c. **Strengths-based assignments** where students apply their character strengths in real-world contexts.

Embedding well-being into everyday learning supports the development of **intrinsic motivation**, creativity, and long-term academic success (Waters, 2011; Niemiec, 2013).

3. Creating a Positive School Culture

To truly foster flourishing, schools must move beyond individual classrooms and build a **strengths-based and inclusive culture** that aligns with the PERMAH principles. Key strategies include:

1. **Recognition systems** that highlight effort, kindness, creativity, and collaboration, rather than solely academic achievement.
2. **Student-led initiatives**, such as well-being clubs or peer mentoring, that empower students to take ownership of the school climate.
3. **Inclusive school policies** that promote emotional safety, equity, and mutual respect.

4. Daily **check-ins**, gratitude circles, or mindfulness minutes that create routine spaces for emotional expression and connection.

Such a climate contributes to **psychological safety**, improves prosocial behavior, and fosters a shared sense of belonging (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Seligman, 2011).

4. Parent and Community Engagement

The home and local community play a crucial role in reinforcing school-based well-being efforts. To extend the impact of Positive Psychology beyond the classroom:

1. Utilize **newsletters** and digital platforms to share strategies, student success stories, and practical tips for parents.
2. Integrate **parent-teacher meetings** as two-way conversations that include emotional development alongside academic performance.
3. Forge **local partnerships** with mental health organizations, cultural groups, and social services to enhance access to well-being resources.

Research shows that **family-school collaboration** strengthens resilience in students and deepens the cultural relevance of well-being programs (Weiss et al., 2006).

CONCLUSION

The integration of Positive Psychology into India's National Educational Policy represents a timely and transformative opportunity to redefine the purpose and practice of education. By



operationalizing the PERMAH framework within schools, educators and policymakers can foster environments that promote student flourishing alongside academic achievement. While challenges such as resource limitations, teacher preparedness, and cultural resistance must be acknowledged, they are not insurmountable. With a strategic and inclusive approach—grounded in professional development, curriculum

innovation, supportive school cultures, and community collaboration—Positive Education can become a sustainable pillar of India's educational landscape. Ultimately, embedding well-being into policy is not merely a pedagogical choice but a moral imperative for nurturing a generation that is academically competent, emotionally intelligent, and socially responsible.

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ROLE OF CBT IN STRESS MANAGEMENT & PROMOTING WELLNESS AMONG GEN Z IN CHENNAI: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THERAPISTS' EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Gen Z is a population cohort born between 1997–2012 (Pew Research Center, 2023). Deloitte's Millennial & Gen Z Survey, 2021 for India states that Gen Z feel as anxious and stressed as their global average (46 percent). Fiama Mental Wellbeing Survey (2022) reported that Gen Z is more proactive in seeking professional help for their mental health. Around 47% of those surveyed in this age group reported seeking professional help. Understanding CBT for stress management from an experiential perspective of therapists can offer valuable insights that enrich our conception of the difference between theory and its practical application for the Gen Z population. Thus, the study aimed to understand the role of CBT in stress management and promoting wellness among Gen Z in Chennai from therapists' perspective. A qualitative research method was adopted to the study and purposive sampling method was used to select the participants for the study. The sample size for the study was 8 therapists. The inclusion criteria included: (1) Psychotherapist who has worked with CBT for at least a year and (2) Active therapists who have experienced working with Gen Z to manage stress and promote wellness using CBT and/or its derivatives. The exclusion criteria: Those who are not certified CBT therapists from an accredited institution and CBT therapists who have not worked with Gen Z in Chennai. Semi-structured interview was conducted to collect the data from the participants. Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed during the study. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the collected data. 11 themes were drawn from the data: definition of stress, wellness, and common stressors, risk and protective factors, coping strategies, generational differences, techniques, clients' expectations, type of therapy, flexibility of structure, therapists' challenges, barriers to seeking help, and upcoming trends..

Key Words – *CBT, stress management, promoting wellness, thematic analysis, therapist experience, Gen Z*

In today's world, growing awareness around mental health, driven by public discourse and social media, has led Generation Z (those born between 1997 and 2012) to become more attuned to their psychological well-being compared to previous generations. In a 2018 APA survey, 68% reported significant stress about the future, and over 90% experienced at least one stress-related symptom, including depression (58%), lack of motivation (55%), and anxiety (54%). In India, Gen Z constitutes over 20 crore people (Shakuja, 2023), largely comprising students and young professionals. Mental health in Indians aged 18–24 has declined sharply due to unemployment, isolation, and excessive internet use—factors exacerbated by COVID-19 (Sapien Labs, 2023). As digital natives, Gen Z's lives are deeply shaped by technology, social media, and online culture (McKinsey, 2023). Globally and in India, they face stressors related to academics, careers, finances, relationships, and life transitions (Ernst & Young, 2022), with women reporting greater pressure from relationship and family expectations (ITC Fiama, 2022).

Gen Z views wellness holistically—encompassing physical, mental, and social health—and often uses music, gaming, online content, and creative outlets to cope (Jafar, 2020). While more open than older generations to therapy and peer discussions (Spence, 2021), barriers remain, including stigma, lack of access, and hustle culture. Therapists note that effective work with Gen Z requires understanding their cultural and digital contexts (Hicks et al., 2018). Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is an

evidence-based approach effective in stress reduction (Van der Klink et al., 2001; Richardson & Rothstein, 2008; Estevez Cores et al., 2021), and has informed newer therapies such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT).

A qualitative follow-up to a randomised controlled pilot trial by Asplund et al. (2019) on internet-delivered work-focused CBT for stress found participants reported positive effects on mental health and work life. Ningthoujam et al. (2021) reported that perceived stress among Gen Z postgraduate students correlated positively with maladaptive coping (self-distraction, denial, substance use, disengagement, venting, self-blame, humour) and negatively with adaptive coping (active coping, positive reframing, acceptance). Key stressors included academic/career, financial, environmental, interpersonal, and relocation challenges.

Takács et al. (2021) found a decline in psychological immune capacity among first-year students over time, highlighting the need to build self-regulation skills to counter stress effects. Kassymova et al. (2023) identified CBT as the most effective approach for improving behaviour, reducing anxiety, and enhancing learning among Gen Z, recommending adapted communication methods for this digital era. In the Indian context, Sidharth et al. (2023) found major post-pandemic stressors to be career uncertainty, academic pressure, time management difficulties, and low self-confidence. Common coping strategies included hobbies, socialising,

and informal conversations– preferred over professional counselling.

To summarize, the psychological immune capacity of students who belong to the generation Z seems to decrease through the years and the main sources of their stress are academic/career, financial factors, environmental factors, interpersonal factors, moving to a new place for college and miscellaneous sources which they tend to cope up with problem-focused strategies and emotion-focused strategies. Moreover, enjoying hobbies is found to be the key stress buster along with having fun time online/ with family/ friends, or simply talking to them about the issues that causes stress rather than seeking professional counselling or engaging in relaxation exercises. On the other hand Cognitive - Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is highlighted as an appropriate strategy for improving personality construct components related to executive function and managing stress. But, an apparent evidence gap lies in the determination of the role of CBT in stress management and promoting wellness from a therapist's point of view. Thus, the study aims to explore the role of CBT in stress management and promoting wellness among Gen Z in Chennai from an experienced therapists' perspective.

METHOD

The objective was to understand the role of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for stress management and promoting wellness from a therapists' point of view in order to obtain insights to enrich conception of difference between theory and its practical application for Gen Z population. The variables adopted for

the study were CBT, stress management and promoting wellness. The research design adopted for the study was qualitative research design. Purposive sampling, a non- probability sampling method was used to select the participants for the study. The tool used in the study was a self constructed semi-structured questionnaire consisting of 20 open ended questions to explore the role of CBT in stress management and promoting wellness among Gen Z in Chennai from an experienced therapists' perspective (Appendix I). The sample consisted of 8 psychotherapists actively practicing CBT and/or its derivatives across Chennai. The inclusion criteria for the study were: (i) psychotherapists who are working with CBT for at least a year and (ii) active therapists who had experienced working with Gen Z to manage stress and promote wellness using CBT and/or its derivatives. The exclusion criteria was those who were not certified CBT therapists from an accredited institution and CBT therapists who have not worked with Gen Z in Chennai. The sample included psychotherapists ranging from early twenties to mid-sixties in age. These individuals hailed from diverse professional backgrounds, including counselling, psychology training, life coaching, clinical psychology, applied psychology, and PhD pursuers. Their work experience as CBT therapists spanned from one year of experience to over a decade.

Thematic analysis was used to interpret the collected qualitative data obtained through semi structured interviews on the basis of COREQ (Consolidated criteria for REporting Qualitative research) checklist. Some of



the themes were identified in advance. Relevant themes and subthemes were revised and extracted using thematic analysis after identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data by the researchers (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The following six steps formulated by Braun and Clarke (2006) were followed to analyse the data:

Step : 1 Familiarisation with the data - The transcript was read and reread to become familiarised with the data.

Step : 2 Initial coding generation - The data was organised in a meaningful and systematic way and semantic analysis was used to determine the code by all three researchers.

Step : 3 Searching for themes based on the initial coding - The codes were organised into broader themes to say something specific about the research question.

Step : 4 Review of the themes - The data associated with each theme was read again to check whether the data really did support it and worked in the context of the entire data set.

Step : 5 Theme definition and labelling - The final refinement of the themes was done to identify the essence of what each theme is about and data saturation was discussed.

Step : 6 Report writing - a conceptual model was developed to answer the research question and all the findings and insights derived from the data were encapsulated.

Informed consent form was given to the participants. Participation in this study was completely voluntary. Even after the participants signed the consent form, they were still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

Debriefing was done once the data was collected from the participants. The collected data was preserved anonymously and with confidentiality by assigning code names/numbers for the participants which was used on all research notes and documents and also, the interview transcriptions or any other identifying participant information were kept in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher. The collected data was not falsified and the report is free from plagiarism.

RESULTS

From the data, codes were organised into broader themes (Table 1) and relevant subthemes were identified (Figure 1).

Theme 1 : Defining stress, wellness and stressor - It seeks to identify the way Gen Z clients define stress, wellness and stressor during their therapeutic session.

Sub-theme : Stress - Gen Z clients are vulnerable to stress and face difficulty in managing stress. From therapists' point of view Gen Z clients define stress in terms of: slighted change, insecurity, social comparison, identity needs, maximising tendency, presence of social media, being active in social networking world and difficulty in socialising and something that troubles them for a long period of time.

Sub-theme : Wellness - Gen Z clients are open to work on to work on themselves even though they are vulnerable to several issues.

“In terms of wellness, they are pushing it in a new direction. Trying new things or manifesting more luck, they want wellness to be at the centre of their lives.” (P.V)

Sub-theme : Stressors - Most common stressors are relationship issues (like toxic relationships, getting into relationships too quickly without preparedness and marital conflict) which is the predominant stressor among Gen Z clients, workplace (like responsibilities, performance expectation, inability to adjust to workplace and work pressure) and conflicts with parents.

“Parents are having a huge challenge accepting their kids as they are. parents feel their kids are too open minded. the way they think and the way they act is out of culture. kids expect freedom and independence from parents which is affecting the parents.” (N.P)

Theme 2 : Risk and Protective factors - It seeks to identify the key elements or circumstances that make the individuals of the Gen Z population vulnerable to stress and it explores elements that help alleviate or protect against stress among this population.

Sub-theme : Risk factors - Risk factors unique to Gen Z, as reported by the participants include mainly childhood traumas, maladaptive social media's usage; unhealthy coping mechanisms exacerbate stress, as does the relentless pace of technological advancements; complicated relationship dynamics including casual relationships, situationships, and hookups; risky behaviors like unsafe sex and drug use pose additional threats; factors such as

being a single child or experiencing a significant age gap with siblings can increase feelings of isolation, negatively affect social skills, further compounding stress in the workplace and relationships. With limited support systems, in terms of parental and peer support, a low tolerance for adversity, increasing insecurities from social comparison have also been pointed out.

Sub-theme: Protective factors - Individuals benefit from various protective factors that mitigate stress and promote well-being. For some supportive parental figures provide a crucial source of comfort and guidance, enabling Gen Z clients to confide in trustworthy adults about their concerns. Strong bonds with friends and family offer additional sources of support and understanding, fostering a sense of belonging and connectedness. Positive representation in media and on-screen portrayals of diverse experiences validate their identities and promote a sense of acceptance. Furthermore, Gen Z's openness about mental health and their trust in therapy reflect a progressive attitude towards seeking help and addressing emotional challenges. Their open-mindedness and willingness to consider new ideas and suggestions enhance their resilience and adaptive coping strategies, contributing to their overall mental health and well-being.

“They are open-minded and are open to suggestions.” (A.P)

Theme 3 : Coping strategies - It seeks to explore how thoughts, feelings & behaviors are mobilised to manage internal and external stressful. Gen Z involves over identification of the inner experience that was not there in the older generation.

Sub-theme : Adaptive - Seeking support from family and friends, creating group for themselves, self talk and engagement in physical exercise are some of the coping strategies used by Gen Z clients as stated by the therapists.

“I will give them activity scheduling to follow from the morning to evening.”(A)

Sub-theme : Maladaptive - The participants stated that clients themselves do activities such as watching porn and other videos, engaging in sexual practices, games, taking drugs, weed and alcohol to cope with stressful life events.

“Gen Z engages in taking weed, alcohol and creates WhatsApp groups for oneself and do self talk which gives them self understanding” (P).

Theme 4 : Generational difference- It seeks to identify any generational differences in the way Gen Z clients approach and engage with CBT compared to other age groups and the influence of generational differences on application of therapeutic strategies.

Sub-theme : Approach and engagement with CBT - Gen Z values authenticity a lot and have an awareness and acceptance towards therapy when compared to clients from other generational cohorts.

“The older generation used to say that, ‘we went through what Gen Z undergoes, it’s part of life; we didn’t go to therapy; they generalise’ but this

generation, they are aware and have acceptance towards therapy” (N.P)

Sub-theme : Influence on therapeutic strategies - There aren't a lot of differences in therapeutic strategies but it goes back to their understanding of the clients and it has evolved from moment focused to emotion focused therapy. If they are educated on the therapeutic process, they are more open and understanding and since most of the Gen Z use online sources to know information, at times clients from this generation have prior knowledge about the therapies in the field and are open to suggestions to work on themselves which makes the process easier. However, CBT is a more long term process with respect to client’s needs and Gen Z does not have enough financial resources for long-term therapy.

“Former generations may not have an idea of how therapy will go, what it is. They might think if I go to therapy, the therapist might give me solutions. With this generation, they already have some information and then ask for those customizations.” (P.V)

Theme 5 : Techniques - It seeks to explore the techniques used by the therapists to build rapport, manage stress and promote wellness and also, to understand the influence of therapist’s inner experience on selection and application of techniques.

Sub-theme : Rapport building - Rapport building is an essential process to build a therapeutic relationship between the therapist and a client usually in the initial period of time and is a space where at times the client’s resistance breaks upon

assurance of safety and provision of sense of comfort. Some techniques or strategies used to build rapport are to let clients to ask questions as it flashes within them, insisting confidentiality, taking case history, conduction of Mental Status Examination (MSE), enquire about their daily routine, humour, being non-judgemental, acceptance of resistance and also, to validate their concern to assure their comfort and security. But, still cliché conversations end up in getting into work without building rapport. However, asking the clients to talk about something good about themselves (like on their interest, hobby, talent, achievement and so on) and to talk about things that they are comfortable with works well among Gen Z clients in specific because when these questions were asked to clients from the previous generation they tend to become reluctant.

Subtheme : Stress management and promoting wellness - Therapists emphasised that when the client's develop the ability to manage stress they also experience an improvement in their wellness. Mindfulness is the predominantly used technique to manage stress among the Gen Z clients and other techniques are cognitive restructuring, distracting, journaling, self-love practices, positive affirmation, self-talk, disputing and diffusing thoughts

Sub-theme : Influence of inner experience - There tends to be an influence of the therapist's inner experience on technique selection and application. When the technique works well on the therapist, it is applied by the therapist on their clients with confidence and that technique is also believed to work

more effectively. For instance: If the therapists had experienced a positive result while applying a technique on themselves, they provide the rationale to their clients while applying the techniques or when questioned upon the techniques' effectiveness.

"Yes, I strongly agree. I have my personal strengths when applying certain techniques, which I may use more dominantly, sometimes without even my conscious knowledge." (P.V)

Theme 6 : Clients' expectations -

It is known as with what expectations that the clients have come and what they want to achieve at the beginning, during and at the end of sessions from the therapy. The participants said that the clients expect the therapists to be on trend with the terms and open about it, ask for customization, medications and they have information about the therapy so that they themselves ask for some counselling approaches, want others to change, have an urge to get quick solutions with one or two sessions or even within an hour and are curious to know how long it will take or what will happen in the sessions and eager to try therapy or its techniques in the sessions. Participants also stated that the Gen Z wanted symptom resolution and they are more of a solution focused.

"Compared to other generations, former generations may not have an idea of how therapy will go, or what it is. They might think if I go to therapy, the therapist might give me solutions. With this generation, they already have some information and then ask for those customizations." (S. L)

“Wanting the therapist to know trends and terms of today; to be understanding and open about them so that they don’t have to explain all of it to the therapist like about relationship trends, sexuality, etc.”(R.A)

Theme 7 : Type of therapy - It explores the format or setting in which therapy sessions are conducted. In this case, individual therapy (one-on-one sessions between a therapist and a client) is compared with group therapy (sessions involving multiple clients with one or more therapists facilitating). It focuses on the effectiveness of the type of therapy specifically for addressing the stressors or challenges commonly experienced by the Gen Z.

Sub-theme : Individual therapy - Some participants expressed that individual therapy would be more suitable for clients of Gen Z. They noted that Gen Z individuals often prefer one-on-one sessions due to a tendency to be more reserved when it comes to therapy. Even though they may use layman terms or social media-influenced language to express themselves, they are generally more inclined towards individual therapy. One participant reasoned that some individuals within this generation may not prefer socialising and often mention that their “social battery is low”.

“Gen Z are more closed when it comes to therapy. Even though they use layman terms or terms they see on social media, and they are open to it, they are more inclined towards individual therapy.” (P.V)

Sub-theme : Group therapy -

Though it was also noted that group therapy is relatively uncommon compared to individual therapy options, some participants advocated for group therapy, highlighting its effectiveness in facilitating interaction and mutual support among peers. They emphasised that in group settings, individuals can bounce ideas off each other and engage more readily with others. Group therapy could serve as a beneficial early intervention, but individuals with additional needs could benefit from transitioning to individual therapy. Additionally, one participant mentioned that group therapy could be useful for addressing specific populations facing similar challenges, allowing for brainstorming and peer support.

“Group therapy has a lot of potential, where early intervention can happen. If they have more problems, individual therapy can be taken up.” (S.L)

Theme 8 : Flexibility of CBT structure – It refers to the ability of the therapy to adapt to the individual needs, preferences, and circumstances of the client while still adhering to the core principles and techniques of CBT. The therapeutic approach offers a range of techniques and strategies for addressing cognitive and behavioural patterns. Flexibility means selecting and modifying these techniques based on what is most effective and appropriate for the client. For example, if a particular cognitive restructuring technique is not resonating with the client, the therapist might try a different approach or adapt the technique to better suit the client's style of thinking. The majority of participants provided a rating of 7 out of 10 for the flexibility of

their therapeutic approach. They highlighted that while Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) offers a structured framework, it can also be adjusted and personalised to meet the individual needs of clients. As one therapist noted, *"CBT has a structured framework, but can be adapted and tailored to suit clients' needs"*. Therapists emphasised that adherence to a strict protocol may not always be practical and the degree of flexibility in applying CBT techniques is contingent upon the therapist's competence and skill in adapting them to suit each client's unique circumstances. This underscores the importance of therapists' proficiency in implementing CBT principles while also remaining responsive to the individual needs and preferences of their clients.

"Theory is important. There is a script. But it may not align with reality. You have to alter it to adapt to the client"
(N.P.)

Theme 9 : Therapists' Challenge –

It seeks to explore the major root causes for resistance and / or reluctance of Gen Z clients in general during the initial phase or in the process of therapy along with the challenges faced by therapists while integrating different therapeutic modalities of CBT.

Sub-theme : Resistance -

Resistance shown by the clients is one of the challenges faced by the therapist either during the initial period of the therapy or in the process and remains subjective in nature. However, some of the major causes for the client's resistance were difficulty to connect when referred by parents or school, when they don't want to change,

when they are not able to accept and when they are in a confused state. However, therapists specify that the clients don't resist when they voluntarily turn up for the session. For instance: When a young couple book for a therapy session, the one who didn't book the session shows resistance when called for a joint session. On the other hand it is emphasised that resistance does not always inherently come out and it also comes from an issue in the process (i.e) they may be apprehensive to work out a therapy or technique.

Sub-theme : Integration of therapy -

Majority of the therapists highlight that there are no challenges while tailoring therapy by integrating techniques from other approaches as they tend to choose supportive therapies but at times few techniques in CBT don't get bound with techniques from other approaches.

"This can be a little challenging; sometimes a few techniques under CBT that work well but then don't gel well with ACT techniques." (P.V)

Theme 10 : Barriers for clients to seek help –

It explores the obstacle or the difficulties that the clients internally and externally have which affects them to seek professional help. From their experience the participants say that the stigma about seeking help for mental health is still there, also Gen Z's fear that they have any mental health issue. Clients feel parents consent is very important for this matter but it ends up being a barrier. Since the clients are young adults they have financial constraints and concerns. Among Gen Z, LGBTQ and other low income groups suffer more from mental health



issues and they also have a fear of facing reality.

“Stigma is not lost, it is there in different ways.” (S. L)

Sub theme : Ways to overcome -

This theme explains how a therapist plays an important role in addressing the barriers and facilitates help seeking behaviour and to overcome the barrier. The participants give information such as that as a therapist they have to build more awareness about seeking help to bring societal changes, and society must be educated, public awareness on the mental health issues and to seek professional help. Can bring the government initiatives, giving clarity on the counselling process and the basic details about it since many people does not have an understanding about it.

“We have to build more awareness, bring societal changes, have open talk about it. barrier because people do not understand what therapy is and to tell them it is not a strange thing to do so.” (S. L)

Theme 11 : Upcoming Trends - It addresses the challenges that therapists may encounter when working with Generation Z clients in the context of trends such as technological advancements, online therapy, changing societal norms in terms of gender, sexuality, etc., and integrating technology with CBT.

Sub-theme : Technological advancement - In terms of technology, clients often lead the way in digital trends. Therapists must stay updated on reliable apps and online resources to meet client needs effectively. While online therapy

offers convenience, some clients show less respect for structure and are easily distracted preferring the interpersonal dynamics of in-person sessions. Despite the prevalence of online interactions, therapists emphasize the importance of non-verbal cues in face-to-face therapy for effective communication. Most prefer online at first, and then opt for in-person. They observed that clients tend to be more open and happy during online sessions, possibly due to the sense of comfort and security offered by the virtual environment. Integrating technology with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) involves using digital tools and platforms to enhance the delivery and effectiveness of CBT interventions. Some participants viewed it as an additional option that offers convenience and flexibility. However, while acknowledging its utility, a preference for traditional face-to-face sessions.

“I won't prefer it because I don't feel the warmth. if people ask online, I would rebel” (N.P.)

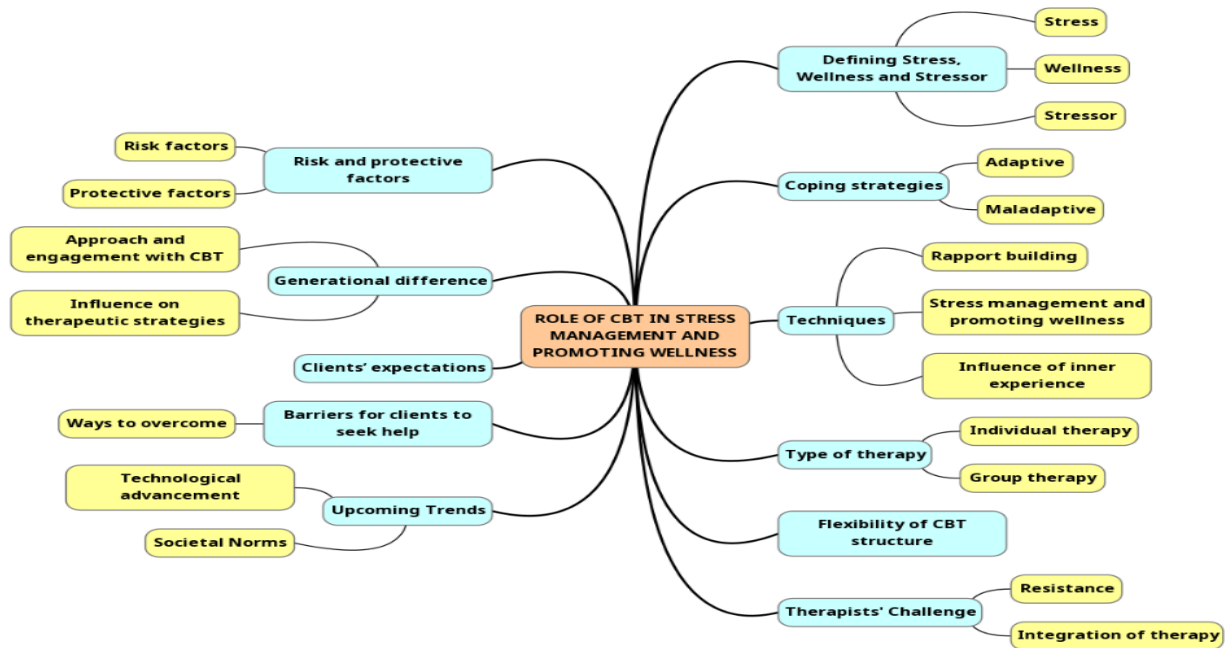
Sub-theme : Societal Norms - In navigating changing societal norms, therapists address issues such as blurred boundaries between friendships and relationships, fear of attachment and the prioritisation of chemistry over compatibility in relationships. Representation in media has influenced younger generations' acceptance of varied identities but still Challenges exists when lack of acceptance and support persist among close circle of LGBTQ children. However, therapists must adapt to clients' diverse perspectives and pace of engagement, prioritising confidentiality and non-judgmental attitudes. While some

challenges, like navigating gender transitions, require adaptation and

learning, most therapists view these encounters as opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Figure 1

Conceptual model of thematic analysis



DISCUSSION

This qualitative study explored how Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and its derivatives support stress management and promote wellness among Generation Z (Gen Z). The research identified themes such as definitions of stress and wellness, common stressors, risk and protective factors, coping strategies, generational characteristics, therapeutic techniques, client expectations, therapist challenges, therapy structure, barriers to help-seeking, and emerging trends. Gen Z often associates stress with insecurity, the pressure to gain social media approval, and difficulties in socializing. They place a high value on wellness and health, yet frequently experience burnout. Common

stressors include academic and work pressures, relationship issues, parental expectations, low self-esteem, and overexposure to technology. These findings align with earlier studies that identified academic, financial, environmental, and interpersonal stressors as key concerns for students (Ningthoujam, 2021).

Unique risk factors for Gen Z include childhood trauma, maladaptive social media use, unhealthy coping mechanisms, and the fast-paced evolution of technology (Ninaus et al., 2015; O'Driscoll et al., 2010). Other contributors to stress include complex relationship dynamics, risky behaviors such as substance use, and the effects of being an only child or having large age gaps

between siblings, which can lead to social isolation (Bedford & Volling, 2004; Cicirelli, 1989; Buist, 2010). Protective factors include supportive parents, strong peer connections, and exposure to positive media representation (by promoting a positive self-image and challenging stereotypes). A growing openness toward therapy and mental health awareness also helps improve outcomes (Thoits, 2011; Burns & Rapee, 2006). Gen Z's coping strategies range from healthy habits like physical activity, creative hobbies, and social interaction, to potentially harmful behaviors such as substance use, excessive screen time, and unhealthy consumption of online content. These behaviors reflect both the risks and resources available in a digital-native generation (Coyne et al., 2020). While some use exercise, yoga, or therapy, many turn first to friends, music, or entertainment for relief (Sidharth et al., 2022).

Therapists reported challenges in connecting with clients who were referred by others, as well as dealing with financial constraints and high expectations for quick results. Therapists emphasized the importance of flexibility in structuring therapy, noting that while CBT provides a strong foundation, techniques from approaches like ACT and SFT are often incorporated based on individual needs. Many therapists choose techniques based on either their personal experience of what works or by assessing the emotional state of the client. Gen Z clients value authenticity and expect therapists to be familiar with modern social issues, including evolving relationship dynamics and gender identities. They often show a willingness to engage in therapy but may struggle with commitment or expect quick

fixes (Twenge & Campbell, 2018). Despite financial limitations, they demonstrate growing acceptance of professional help, especially following increased awareness during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regarding therapy format, individual therapy was generally preferred, though some participants supported starting with group sessions and transitioning to individual therapy as needed. Group therapy may benefit certain populations like students, but its effectiveness varies based on the individual's comfort with social interaction. Budget concerns and lack of personalization were seen as drawbacks. This aligns with Indian research emphasizing the need for accessible and well-planned mental health services (Garg et al., 2020). Also, participants rated therapy structure flexibility at around 7 out of 10, indicating a need for balance between structure and adaptability. While CBT provides a strong base, therapists often tailor sessions using other approaches like ACT or SFT, adjusting techniques based on each client's unique context. Therapeutic techniques mentioned by participants include mindfulness, journaling, emotional regulation, self-love, cognitive reframing, positive affirmations, and metaphors from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). Foundational tools such as mental status examination (MSE), history taking, validation, and Socratic questioning were frequently used. Building trust through humor and affirming the client's strengths were seen as essential during the initial sessions. Research suggests humor, in particular, can be an effective coping mechanism for stress (Morán & Hughes, 2006). Emerging trends in therapy



highlight the growing impact of technology, online sessions, and changing social norms. While online therapy offers convenience, some clients prefer in-person sessions for deeper emotional connection. Therapists must stay updated on apps and digital tools to remain relevant, while also ensuring therapeutic rapport isn't compromised. Studies suggest online and in-person counseling can be similarly effective (Jerardi, 2022), but preferences vary.

Despite increased awareness of mental health issues, barriers such as stigma, financial constraints, unsupportive peers, and concerns about parental consent hinder their access to professional help. Marginalized groups within Gen Z, including LGBTQ individuals and those from low-income backgrounds, face additional challenges due to systemic inequalities and lack of inclusive resources (Wandrekar & Nigudkar, 2020). Addressing these barriers requires tailored intervention frameworks to support the unique needs of these special groups. The findings of the study would help the mental health professionals to understand the application of CBT and its derivatives as an individual therapy as well as in combination with other supportive therapies to manage stress and promote wellness among Gen Z clients. They can also gain an insight about the barriers that inhibit clients from seeking professional help and some ways to overcome it. The emphasis on the coping strategies that resonate well with individuals from Gen Z would help professionals in the educational sector to tap the adaptive coping strategies in students in order to encounter stressful events in a healthy way. However the study has a few

limitations in terms of sample size and geographic specificity.

CONCLUSION

The study identified 11 major themes. These encompassed the definition of stress, wellness, and stressors, as well as coping strategies (both adaptive and maladaptive). Techniques such as rapport building, stress management, and promoting wellness were explored, along with the influence of inner experiences. Additionally, the study delved into the types of therapy (individual or group) and the flexibility of CBT structures. Therapists' challenges, including resistance and therapy integration, were highlighted, as were risk and protective factors. Generational differences in approach and engagement with CBT, along with their influence on therapeutic strategies, were also noted. Clients' expectations and the barriers they face in seeking help, along with potential solutions, were discussed. Finally, upcoming trends, including technological advancements and shifting societal norms, were explored as key considerations for therapy moving forward. By recognizing the distinct characteristics of this generation therapists can tailor interventions to foster meaningful engagement and positive outcomes in therapy.

The future study can include the client's perspective on the effectiveness of CBT and its derivatives can be included, the objective can be narrowed down to explore the role of CBT on specific stressors like relationship issues, academic pressure, work pressure, and so on and also can be explored among Gen Z in clinical population like those diagnosed



with stress disorders etc and special populations like those diagnosed with LD, ADHD, ASD etc to get an insight on a diverse spectrum. Moreover, a

comparative study would help in clear understanding of the evolution of the CBT approach among individuals from different generational cohorts.

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THE IMPACT OF GREEN SPACES ON MENTAL WELL-BEING AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to understand the impact of green spaces on mental well-being among university students. This research examines how the duration and frequency of exposure to green spaces influence stress reduction, concentration, and cognitive performance in university students. A sample of 20 university students aged 18-25 who have studied or worked in green spaces was targeted. Structured interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights into how green spaces benefited their mental well-being and to explore personal experiences related to stress relief and cognitive enhancement. Thematic analysis will be used to identify recurring patterns and themes within the data collected. The results also indicate that engaging with natural environments can encourage modern students to break away from their predominantly virtual lifestyles and reconnect with nature. This study advocates for incorporating green spaces into daily routines to support mental well-being and overall academic performance.

Key Words – *Green spaces, mental well-being, qualitative, natural environments, thematic analysis*

Green spaces have increasingly been recognized for their significant influence on human health across the lifespan. Research has demonstrated that access to natural environments can reduce obesity, improve lung capacity, and lower engagement in risky behaviors among children and adolescents (Wallner et al.,

2018). These physical health benefits extend to adults, as exposure to green spaces has been linked with improved air quality, opportunities for physical activity, and the promotion of healthier lifestyles (Ma et al., 2019; Reyes-Riveros et al., 2021).

Beyond physical health, green spaces contribute substantially to mental well-being. Quantitative and cross-sectional studies have shown that access to parks, green corridors, and tree-lined areas is associated with reductions in stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms, alongside decreased reliance on antidepressants and mental health services (Weimann et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2019). Such findings underscore the role of natural environments in reducing the burden on healthcare systems while supporting community mental health.

A growing body of literature has also highlighted the cognitive benefits of engaging with green spaces, including improvements in concentration, attention restoration, and memory retention (Kaplan & Kaplan, 2011; Berman et al., 2012). For university students, who often face high academic demands and digital overstimulation, green spaces offer a potential avenue for mental restoration and enhanced cognitive functioning, providing a respite from the pressures of academic environments (Wallner et al., 2018).

However, while prior studies have predominantly employed quantitative and cross-sectional designs, there is a notable gap in qualitative research exploring the lived experiences of university students in relation to green space engagement. Specifically, there is limited understanding of how the frequency and nature of interactions with green spaces influence students' perceived stress levels, concentration, and cognitive performance, and which qualities of green spaces are most valued in promoting mental

well-being within this population.

Addressing this gap is critical, given the increasing digitalization of student lifestyles and the need to identify accessible strategies to support their mental health and academic performance. Therefore, this study aims to explore how university students perceive and utilize green spaces, examining the specific ways these natural environments contribute to stress reduction, cognitive functioning, and overall mental well-being. By capturing students' personal experiences and reflections, this research seeks to generate insights that can inform the design and integration of effective green spaces within university campuses, supporting holistic student development.

Wallner et al. (2018) extends knowledge about the positive or possible impacts of green spaces and students' cognition and well-being. They point out that the practices of being exposed to greens can go a long way in easing stress and at the same time aid in sharpening focus in addition to lifting one's spirits. From their observations they suggest that young people find large, green settings to be of high relevance to usability in cognitive processes and overall health. Based on the above argument, the present learning presents a background on which it might possibly be possible to explore whether green spaces could indeed afford in educational arenas.

In addition, Quinn et al. (2019) explored how university students understand and experience their health and quality of life with respect to green spaces. They understand that students have many aspects, which define their health, and



even if they control a characteristic, there can be factors that were not considered. They encourage future studies for the investigation of the direct correlation between how students utilize green space and the perceived health status.

Stimulating sensory stimulations

In their study, Kaplan and Kaplan have noted that green local environments have positively affected the sensory processes of participants and brought value to their health. These elements include art, music, and the variation of light effects, added to architectural appearance and functionality, create a perfect touch of these spaces. Seasonal changes, like the blooming of flowers in spring and summer or the rich hues of autumn foliage, were particularly noted for their uplifting effects on mood (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Kuo, 2001). Hence, it is noted that stimulation of eyes relates with psychological benefits and this research finding a common narrative across multiple such studies, further revealing and enhancing the fact that nature and mental health are intertwined (Berman et al., 2012; Pretty et al., 2005).

The Sense of Escape Provided by Green Spaces

Quinn et al. (2019) found that green spaces offer a significant sense of mental escape for university students, providing relief from the monotony and pressures of academic life. The study revealed that students often seek out green spaces as a way to disconnect from their hectic schedules, allowing them to experience mental freedom and reflect on interests beyond their coursework. Participants consistently described green

spaces as offering an "escape," emphasizing their role in fostering psychological distance from academic stress. These findings highlight a strong association between natural environments and the mental well-being of students, positioning green spaces as restorative settings that support cognitive and emotional reprieve.

Creating a Sense of Social Coherence

A significant theme that emerged from the literature of Wallner's study regarding urban green spaces (UGS) is the dual nature of sharing these environments with others. Many participants, part of this study, articulated a preference for being in UGS as a means of bringing together social interactions. For some, the goal of visiting these spaces was to enjoy a peaceful environment in the presence of others. Respondents in this research remarked that they usually do not go out of their way to talk to people but surprisingly enjoy having deep conversations with friends under a tree. Thus indicating a desire to bond with close ones on a different level. This inclination from solitude towards social interaction suggests that UGS can provide a sanctuary where individuals can disconnect from the world around them and focus on strengthening bonds.

METHOD

The current research used a qualitative research methodology on the effects of green spaces on the mental health of university students. Through this approach, the focus was on gaining in depth insights into the students' experiences and their views on the role of



green spaces in supporting their mental health.

Participants and Sampling

The study included 20 university students aged between 18-25 years, selected through purposive sampling to ensure that all participants met the inclusion criteria. Participants were eligible if they were currently enrolled university students with experiences studying in green spaces. This purposive sampling technique allowed the study to target individuals with relevant experiences that aligned with the research objectives, facilitating a more detailed exploration of the phenomena.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework was used to analyze the data systematically. Transcribed interviews were imported into MAXQDA software to facilitate organized manual coding, allowing for efficient generation of initial codes and their refinement into broader themes relevant to mental well-being and green space usage. Themes were iteratively reviewed and verified by cross-checking against raw data to ensure consistency and depth. To enhance credibility and validity of the findings, triangulation was employed, including method triangulation (structured and open-ended probes), theoretical triangulation (drawing from Attention Restoration Theory and Ecotherapy), and analyst triangulation, wherein the coding framework, thematic maps, and interpretations were peer-reviewed by my research guide. This process ensured the credibility and rigor of the findings while

accurately reflecting participants' lived experiences.

Data Collection

Data was collected through semi structured interviews, which provided a consistent framework for questioning while allowing participants the freedom to express their experiences openly. This structure helped ensure comparability of responses across participants while accommodating a deep exploration of individual experiences. Interviews focused on key areas, including:

1. Participants' frequency and type of engagement with green spaces,
 2. Personal reflections on mental well-being related to green space experiences,
 3. Perceived benefits or drawbacks of studying in green spaces.
1. Prioritizing green spaces in their daily life

Each interview lasted approximately 30-45 minutes, allowing for comprehensive insights into participants' perceptions and experiences.

Ethical Considerations

All participants were briefed before the starting of the interviews explaining the study's purpose, procedure, and ethical considerations, including confidentiality and the right to withdraw at any time. Informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to the interview. Measures were also taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, assigning codes to participants rather than using personal identifiers. The participant's answers were also voice recorded with their consent.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study explored how green spaces influence mental well-being among university students, using concepts from Ecotherapy (Roszak et al., 1995), Environmental Psychology (HM Proshansky et al., 1977) the Biophilia Hypothesis (EO Wilson et al., 1995), Attention Restoration Theory (S Kaplan., 1992) and Stress Reduction Theory (RS Ulrich et al., 1992). By analyzing responses from a sample of 20 participants, the study uncovered diverse themes and subthemes associated with students' interactions with natural spaces and their well-being. The findings reveal that participants consistently view green spaces as essential for reducing stress,

enhancing focus, and fostering emotional resilience. These spaces not only serve as environments for mental calmness and introspection but also act as vital catalysts for social cohesion, encouraging meaningful interactions and community building. Additionally, students expressed a strong preference for solitude within green spaces, finding such experiences to facilitate mental rejuvenation and self-reflection. Participants also expressed a strong desire for an increase in green spaces around them, underscoring the perceived value of these environments in promoting holistic mental health and supporting their academic and social lives on campus.

Figure 1: Themes Exploring Impact of Green Spaces on Mental Well being in University Students

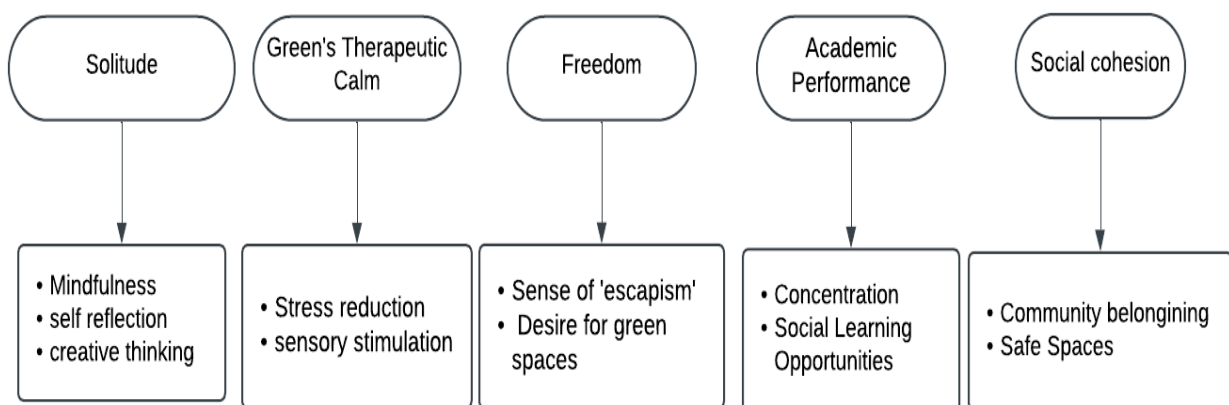
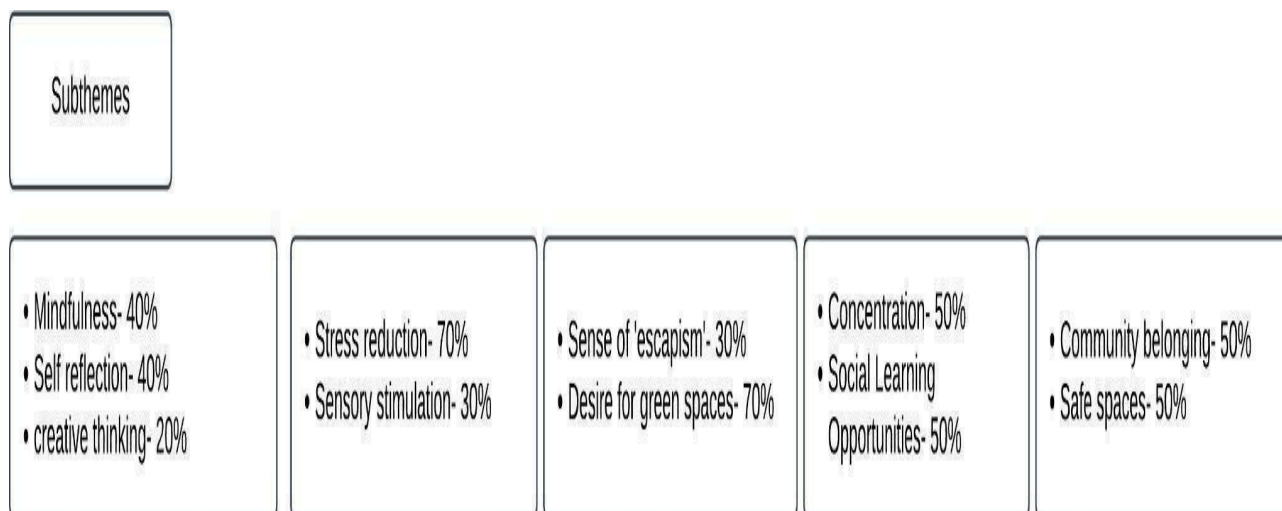


Figure 2 : Percentage of Total Sub Themes extracted from the participants' responses



Theme 1 Solitude

A prominent theme emerging from the participant's responses is their preference for solitude in green spaces. Students were able to associate solitude with enhanced mindfulness and creative thinking and self-reflection. Many students expressed a strong inclination to spend time alone in natural green environments, valuing the peace and clarity that solitude brings.

"Being alone in a green space allows me to think freely without distractions. I can focus on my thoughts and really dive into what I need to work on." (KI, personal communication, 12.10.2024). Here the participant has expressed the comfort that green spaces provide for deep, uninterrupted thought.

This sentiment reflects the idea that solitude facilitates a deeper connection with one's inner self. Participants highlighted how quiet moments in green

settings foster 'mindfulness', which is a feeling of awareness of the present moment. This is a feeling which is rarely achieved by people in today's busy digital world.

"In nature, I can tune into my surroundings and forget about the pressures of college life. It's like a reset for my mind. I often find that when I'm alone under a tree, I can think about my goals and what I want for the future. It's a time for me to connect with my thoughts without interruption." (BS, personal communication, 12.10.2024). This ability to pause and immerse oneself in nature can lead to greater mental clarity, allowing for thoughtful introspection and a break from the constant hustles of a monotonous university life. Self-reflections mentioned here are essential for personal growth, providing the space to evaluate one's aspirations and emotions. This idea aligns with the broader understanding of how natural green settings can promote emotional wellbeing and mental clarity.

Participants also noted that solitude in green spaces can spark creative thinking.

"When I'm alone in a park, my mind wanders, and I come up with ideas that I never would have thought of in a crowded place." (AP, personal communication, 12.10.2024). Here, it is noted that the freedom to think creatively often flourishes in peaceful green settings, where individuals feel open to exploration.

Theme 2 Therapeutic Calm of Green Spaces

Another prominent theme identified in the responses is the therapeutic calming nature of the color green. Many students articulated how these natural environments serve as a refuge from the stresses of university life, significantly contributing to their overall wellbeing.

"When I'm surrounded by greenery, I feel my stress melting away. It's like the trees are absorbing all my worries." (BMP, personal communication, 12.10.2024). This statement underscores the profound impact that green spaces can have in reducing anxiety and fostering a sense of tranquility..

The calming effect of green spaces can be attributed to their ability to create a serene atmosphere conducive to relaxation.

"Sitting in a park, I can just breathe and let go of everything. The sounds of nature are so soothing, and it makes me forget about my deadlines." (AS, personal communication, 14.10.2024). This statement highlights how the auditory elements of nature such as rustling leaves and birds chirping serve

as a sensory stimulus that promote relaxation and distraction from stressors, thus encouraging them to reconnect with the present moment and alleviate feelings of overwhelm.

"Green is good for the eyes; it is such a calming colour. It removes my eye irritation." (BMP, personal communication, 12.10.2024). This remark highlights the soothing nature of the colour green, suggesting that being surrounded by lush greenery reduces physical discomforts like eye strain or irritation that are often results of prolonged exposure to artificial environments.

Theme 3 Freedom

The theme of "freedom" emerged strongly from the responses highlighting the fact that for many, green spaces symbolize a form of 'mental escapism' from their daily pressures. They express that it serves as a golden chance to step away from the structured demands of academic life and embrace a setting where they feel unrestricted.

"I feel like when you're around in green spaces, there's a broader vision that you could see. You generally feel even physically and mentally very free. And then there is a liberation of your thoughts; you feel somehow lighter and calmer." (PM, personal communication, 13.10.2024). This observation suggests that green spaces provide students not only with a sense of physical openness but also with a mental freedom, where thoughts flow freely, creating a renewed state of calm mind.

"I wish there were more green spaces around campus. It feels like we're

always in buildings, and the few natural spots we have are crowded.” (AS, personal communication, 14.10.2024). This statement made by a participant also evokes the desire for more green spaces in and around the campus. The responses convey a longing for the accessible green spaces to support a balanced lifestyle.

Theme 4 Academic Performance

A key theme that emerged from participant’s responses was the impact of green spaces on academic performance.

“Studying in green spaces makes me feel connected to nature, and I find it easier to concentrate. The natural sounds like birds chirping or leaves rustling are much less distracting than notifications on my phone.” (VS, personal communication, 14.10.2024). Many students reported that being in a natural environment positively influenced their ability to concentrate thus leading in their academic success.

Social learning opportunities, which was another frequently mentioned subtheme, was also brought up by several participants. *“When I study with friends in the park, it feels more relaxed, and we can discuss topics without the formality of a classroom. It helps us learn from each other and clear up any doubts.”* (AP, personal communication, 12.10.2024). This illustrates how green spaces create a comfortable setting for collaborative learning, where students feel more open to ask questions and share insights.

Theme 5 Social Cohesion

Another key theme that emerged from the participant’s responses is the role

of green spaces in fostering social cohesion. Social cohesion here, refers to the role that green spaces play in fostering a sense of community, belonging and positive social interactions among people.

“There is this Cubbon Park in Bangalore where we have a lot of communities. I was once part of a running club where we would meet in the park...you interact with people, and you start seeing them on a daily basis, it's a good feeling”. (AS, personal communication, 10.10.2024). This regular interaction establishes a connection that extends beyond shared physical space, creating a familiar and safe space for young students. This “sense of community belongingness” , as another participant expressed, *“It becomes, like, a reason for you to go to that park because you want to meet that person or be in that community,”* (BS, personal communication, 12.10.2024). For these students, green spaces became more than places for relaxation or recreation. They became hubs for friendship and camaraderie.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is its small sample size, which may reduce the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. Additionally, the sample consisted of psychology students majorly, who are often well versed in research methodologies and may possess knowledge of the study’s objectives. This familiarity could introduce response bias, as psychology students might adjust their answers to align with the perceived research outcomes. Further research could examine the specific elements within green spaces that contribute most to mental well



being, such as the role of sensory stimuli (eg: sound, colour, and air quality) by taking a much diverse sample across varied age groups. Another valuable direction would be to conduct cross cultural research that could highlight how green space usage varies and impacts mental well being across different cultural and geographical contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the multifaceted benefits of green spaces for university students, demonstrating their role in reducing stress, enhancing focus, fostering emotional resilience, and supporting social cohesion. By exploring students' lived experiences, the findings emphasize that green spaces are not mere aesthetic additions but essential environments for promoting mental well-being and academic success.

While the Gurukul system's integration of nature with learning offers inspiration, its wholesale transferability to modern university contexts is limited due to differences in scale, structure, and technological integration. However, its

core principle, which is learning in natural environments remains relevant. Universities can adopt this principle by incorporating dedicated green spaces for outdoor learning, reflection, and social interaction.

Policy and design recommendations arising from this study include creating accessible, quiet green areas with natural seating, shade, and biodiversity to facilitate solitude and mindfulness, alongside open spaces that encourage collaborative learning and community activities. Incorporating elements such as water features, varied vegetation, and sensory-rich environments can enhance stress reduction and cognitive restoration, supporting the diverse needs of students.

Overall, prioritizing the integration of thoughtfully designed green spaces within campuses can help modern universities foster holistic well-being and academic flourishing, aligning institutional planning with students' expressed needs for connection with nature in an increasingly digital world.

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ADOLESCENT'S SELF-PERCEPTION AND UNDERSTANDING OF LEARNING DISABILITY: A QUALITATIVE STUDY FROM KERALA

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how adolescents with learning disabilities understand and internalize their condition within the context of inclusive education. Focusing on qualitative data gathered from nine adolescents aged 13 to 16 in two private inclusive schools in Kerala, the study examines their personal awareness of their learning challenges and how these perceptions are shaped by interactions with parents and teachers. Although participants were aware of academic difficulties such as problems in reading, writing, or mathematics, most lacked a clear conceptual understanding of their disability. Their awareness largely stemmed from direct experience rather than formal explanation.

Parental understanding was often found to be superficial or misinformed, while teachers, though observant of classroom challenges, lacked adequate knowledge or training to address the needs of students with learning disabilities. This lack of informed support influenced how adolescents viewed themselves, often reinforcing feelings of inferiority and low self-worth. However, those who received consistent support through resource rooms or counseling exhibited more positive self-perception and gradual academic improvement. The findings emphasize the critical role of accurate knowledge and empathetic communication from adults in shaping an adolescent's understanding of their disability, which in turn affects their emotional well-being and academic self-concept.

Key Words – *Learning Disability, Adolescent Perception, Self-Concept, Inclusive Education, Parental Understanding, Teacher Awareness*

Adolescence is a pivotal period of identity formation and self-awareness, marked by heightened sensitivity to social

and academic feedback. For adolescents with learning disabilities—often invisible and misunderstood—this stage becomes

particularly complex. Learning disabilities affect key academic functions such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, yet are frequently diagnosed late and poorly understood by both the affected individuals and those around them.

Understanding one's disability is a critical step toward self-acceptance, effective coping, and academic resilience. However, adolescents with learning disabilities often possess only a vague or experiential understanding of their condition. Many recognize their struggles through repeated failures in reading, writing, or classroom participation, but cannot articulate the nature or cause of these difficulties.

The social environment, particularly the attitudes of parents and teachers, plays a significant role in shaping how adolescents perceive their disability. When these key adults lack awareness or hold misconceptions, it can lead to internalized stigma, reduced self-esteem, and emotional distress. Conversely, adolescents who receive accurate information and empathetic support tend to demonstrate better self-concept and academic motivation.

This study examines how adolescents with learning disabilities conceptualize their condition and explores the influences of family and school environments on this understanding. By centering adolescents' own voices, the research seeks to highlight the psychological and relational factors that shape their perceptions and contribute to either risk or resilience during this critical developmental phase.

Understanding how adolescents perceive and interpret their disabilities is crucial in exploring their self-concept,

emotional wellbeing, and overall adjustment. Several studies have examined adolescents' perspectives on their disabilities, particularly in relation to their self-understanding, self-esteem, and coping.

Brunnberg, Bostrom, and Berglund (2008) conducted a study in Sweden on hard of hearing adolescents with and without multiple disabilities. The findings revealed that adolescents with multiple disabilities reported lower wellbeing, higher rates of bullying, drug use, depression, irritation, headaches, and a low sense of coherence. This study emphasized that adolescents' self-reported health and emotional state varied according to the nature and number of disabilities they experienced.

Nishat (2010), in a study conducted in Allahabad, found that adolescents with physical and visual disabilities had lower self-concept compared to able-bodied peers. For physically disabled adolescents, factors such as gender, type of disability (congenital or acquired), and parental education significantly shaped self-concept. For visually disabled adolescents, social support—particularly from friends—was a strong predictor of their social, educational, and moral self-concept. This highlights the importance of social networks in shaping adolescents' perceptions of their disability.

Priyanka (2016) examined visually impaired adolescents in West Bengal and found differences based on gender and level of vision. Blind boys reported higher self-concept compared to low-vision boys, whereas low-vision girls reported higher self-concept than blind girls. Blind

adolescents also scored higher on dimensions such as anxiety, popularity, happiness, and satisfaction. The study demonstrates how self-concept and emotional intelligence differ across subgroups of visually impaired adolescents, reflecting their varied self-understandings.

Cosden et al. (1999) studied 95 students with learning disabilities and found that simply being informed about their disability did not increase self-esteem. Instead, adolescents' understanding of their disability was associated with perceptions of scholastic competence, while global self-esteem was linked to competence in non-academic domains. This underscores the nuanced relationship between self-awareness of disability and self-esteem.

Tabassam and Grainger (2002) compared students with learning disabilities (LD), those with both LD and ADHD, and typically achieving peers. Adolescents with LD and LD/ADHD reported significantly lower academic self-concept, academic self-efficacy, and attributional style than their peers. Additionally, the LD/ADHD group reported lower peer-relation self-concept. These findings suggest that adolescents' perceptions of their academic and social capabilities are negatively influenced by the presence of learning difficulties.

Long, MacBlain, and MacBlain (2007) compared dyslexic and language-impaired adolescents and highlighted that negative emotional experiences can reduce learning potential. They emphasized that when students are validated as individuals beyond their

disability, they demonstrate greater social, emotional, and academic self-efficacy. This shows that adolescents' lived experiences and sense of identity directly impact their learning and adjustment.

Majorano et al. (2016) investigated family and teacher relationships among adolescents with learning disabilities and found that they experienced higher levels of loneliness and lower self-concept compared to typically developing peers. For adolescents with LD, emotional autonomy was more strongly linked to self-concept, suggesting that their personal interpretations of independence and relationships play a key role in shaping self-perception.

Meltzer et al. (2001) found that adolescents with learning disabilities perceived themselves as motivated, hardworking, and academically competent, despite teachers rating them negatively. This difference illustrates the divergence between adolescents' self-perceptions and external judgments, highlighting the importance of their own understanding of disability.

Peleg (2009) examined Arab adolescents with learning disabilities and found that they reported higher levels of test anxiety and lower self-esteem compared to peers without disabilities. Their responses reveal how disability is directly associated with heightened psychological distress and reduced confidence.

Gallegos, Langley, and Villegas (2012), in a study of Mexican adolescents, found that those with learning disabilities were at higher risk for anxiety and



depression than their typically developing peers. While coping skills did not differ significantly, the adolescents' heightened emotional distress reflected their own perception of the challenges posed by learning difficulties.

Finally, Shifrer (2013) studied the effects of labeling and found that adolescents with learning disabilities often internalized stigma, which lowered their self-expectations. Teachers' and parents' reduced expectations reinforced this internalization, demonstrating how external labeling shapes adolescents' own understanding of their disability and potential.

The reviewed studies suggest that multiple factors, including type of disability, gender, family and peer support, and school environment, shape adolescents' understanding of their disability. Self-concept, self-esteem, and emotional well-being are central themes across these studies, with many adolescents reporting experiences of stigma, anxiety, and reduced self-efficacy. At the same time, some adolescents express resilience and positive self-concept despite negative external perceptions. These findings emphasize the importance of exploring adolescents' own perspectives to understand their lived experience with disability better.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design within a constructivist paradigm to explore how adolescents with learning disabilities understand their condition and how their perceptions are influenced by social environments. The

approach centered the lived experiences of adolescents, with a focus on their self-concept and interactions with significant others, particularly parents and teachers.

Participants

The study was conducted in two private, inclusive schools located in Ernakulam district, Kerala. A total of nine adolescents aged between 13 and 16 years participated in the research. All participants had been formally identified with one or more learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia) and were receiving support services through their schools' resource rooms. Efforts were made to ensure gender representation; the final sample included six males and three females.

Sampling Technique

A non-probability purposive sampling method was used to recruit participants. Adolescents were selected based on their formal diagnosis of learning disability, enrollment in an inclusive school setting, and willingness to participate. Parents and teachers of the adolescents were also included as key informants to provide contextual understanding.

Data Collection

In-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide tailored for adolescents with learning disabilities. Interviews focused on the adolescents' understanding of their disability, their academic experiences, peer relationships, and interactions with parents and teachers. Additional feedback was gathered from parents and teachers to triangulate data and



better understand the influences shaping adolescents' perceptions. All interviews were conducted in school settings to ensure participant comfort and accessibility.

Ethical Considerations

Verbal informed consent was obtained from all participants after explaining the purpose, process, and voluntary nature of the study. Parental and school-level permissions were also secured. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity; pseudonyms were used in all transcripts and reports. Interviews were audio-recorded with consent, and all data were stored securely.

Data Analysis

Interview recordings were transcribed and analyzed thematically. Following Moustakas' (as cited in Creswell, 2013) approach to phenomenological analysis, significant statements were identified, coded, and grouped into thematic clusters. These themes were used to construct a composite description of adolescents' understanding of learning disabilities and the contextual factors influencing their perceptions.

Ethics

The interviews with the participants was undertaken after introducing and explaining the purpose of the study to them in which they were informed that they will be asked a series of questions about their life and experiences. The researcher had taken the verbal consent from them by reading the informed consent form.

The interview was conducted in an environment ensuring the comfort of the

participant. All the interviews were conducted in the school. The interviews of the parents and the teachers who were the key informants of the study were also conducted in the school. The participants were assured about the confidentiality of their information; they were told that the interview would be tape-recorded and their names and details would not be revealed at any point. Hence the names of the participants have been changed. It was assured that all of their information and interview responses will be kept confidential and that the researcher would not share their individual responses with anyone other than the research guide.

Experiences of the Researcher

The researcher had approached four schools at the beginning of the study, but was able to collect data only from two schools. Out of the four schools, one had asked the researcher to give an amount as a donation for conducting the study, and one of the schools had denied permission to conduct the study. The researcher hence decided to limit her study to two private schools in Kerala.

The researcher had to get permission from the director's office after which the principals of both schools were met. One school was located in urban area and the other in rural area. The principals of both schools and special educators were given details regarding the study. With the help of special educators collected a list of Adolescents with LD in the school. At first, the researcher was asked to interview each child in front of one of the special educators. Then the researcher had to convince the Principal to interview the child alone for so that the child feels free to open up. The researcher found it difficult to find a place to conduct the

interview. The researcher each time before conducting the interview had to seek permission from the Principal for getting a room for conducting the interview.

The Adolescents were cooperative and shared their perspective on their life with learning disability. They were ready to spend their free periods for participating in the study. Each person required a different approach in order to break the barrier and speak on a more personal level. The parents and the teachers of the adolescents were also interviewed as they were the key informants for the study. It was difficult for the researcher to take interview with the parents since in most of the cases both parents were working. The parents didn't want the researcher to meet them at home during holidays.

The experiences shared by each participant allowed the researcher to gain a broader understanding of the topic. It helped to know how individuals react to a particular situation in different ways. The ways they react is influenced by the environmental factors (Family, school etc.) Each interview contributed in deeper understanding and learning.

RESULTS

The findings reveal that adolescents with learning disabilities generally develop an awareness of their condition through their personal academic struggles rather than through formal diagnosis or explanation. Their understanding is experiential—shaped by repeated failures in reading, writing, and mathematics and often incomplete. Most participants could identify specific challenges they faced in school but could not articulate the nature of their learning disability in conceptual terms.

1. Awareness of Academic Difficulties

All participants were aware of the specific academic difficulties they faced. For example, several adolescents mentioned problems in spelling, reading, and performing arithmetic operations. Participants such as Aman and Dilara referred to being “slow learners” or having “writing problems,” and others like Sara and Cristilla expressed a desire to hide their challenges from peers

2. Limited Conceptual Understanding of Disability

Although all participants recognized they had learning issues, only a few understood the term “learning disability.” Awareness was mostly based on classroom struggles or referral to a resource room. None of the adolescents used diagnostic terms like dyslexia or dyscalculia unless prompted, indicating a gap in formal disability education.

3. Parental Understanding and Its Influence

The understanding of learning disabilities among parents was often vague or inaccurate. Some parents attributed the difficulties to laziness or parenting styles, and only a few demonstrated clarity about their child's diagnosis. Adolescents frequently internalized these perceptions, influencing their self-esteem and emotional well-being.

4. Teacher Awareness and Attitude

Teachers, while able to recognize the presence of learning challenges, often lacked the knowledge or skills to provide targeted support. Some teachers labeled

students as “slow” or “underperforming,” further contributing to students’ negative self-perceptions. However, supportive teachers and access to resource rooms did positively affect self-confidence.

5. Gendered Experiences

Female participants expressed greater discomfort in openly acknowledging their disabilities. For instance, Cristilla viewed going to the resource room as shameful and was initially hesitant to participate in the study. Male participants, although also affected, were slightly more open in discussing their struggles.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that adolescents with learning disabilities (LD) have a partial awareness of their disabilities, often grounded in academic difficulties. While participants recognized their struggles in language, reading, and mathematics, they generally lacked a deeper understanding of the broader implications of LD. For many, the perception of their disability came more from lived academic struggles than from a formal explanation provided by adults or professionals.

Adolescents with multiple disabilities (e.g., dyslexia with ADHD or hearing impairment) experienced greater difficulty and were more likely to perceive themselves as disadvantaged in comparison to peers. This created a sense of inferiority and lowered expectations, further reinforced by limited understanding among parents and teachers. The adolescents’ identity formation—critical during this

developmental stage—was challenged not only by the disability but also by the stigmatized narratives around it.

Implications

The study underscores the necessity of enhancing awareness and understanding of LD among all stakeholders—students, parents, and teachers. Better-informed adolescents can develop positive self-concept and self-determination, leading to better educational and social outcomes. Furthermore, equipping educators and parents with accurate knowledge about LD is crucial. Their misperceptions were shown to negatively influence adolescents’ self-perception and access to support.

This calls for intervention programs aimed at:

1. Promoting adolescent self-awareness of their disability and strengths.
2. Providing training for parents and teachers to address misconceptions and enhance support systems.
3. Integrating inclusive educational practices that value diversity and encourage peer support.

Limitations

The study’s findings are based on a small, purposively selected sample (nine adolescents from two schools in Kerala), which limits generalizability. Further, the qualitative approach, while rich in depth, relies on self-reported experiences, which may be influenced by social desirability or memory recall. Additionally, parental and teacher perceptions were reported



indirectly, limiting a full triangulated understanding of their roles.

CONCLUSION

1. Adolescents with LD have varied understandings of their disabilities, often shaped by their academic experiences rather than formal knowledge.

2. Multiple disabilities create compounded academic and emotional challenges.

3. A significant influence on adolescents' perceptions comes from parents and teachers, who themselves often lack accurate understanding of LD.

4. Positive identity development in adolescents with LD requires informed and empathetic support systems.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Broaden the sample size and include adolescents from different geographical and socio-economic contexts for greater generalizability.

2. Conduct longitudinal studies to observe how understanding of LD evolves over time and impacts long-term outcomes.

3. Include direct interviews with parents and teachers to enrich the data and validate adolescent perspectives.

4. Explore the effectiveness of interventions that enhance self-understanding, self-advocacy, and inclusive educational practices in improving outcomes for adolescents with LD.

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FOSTERING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP IN THE WORKPLACE: A POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Positive workplace relationships contribute to personal well-being and facilitate collaboration toward achieving organizational goals. This article explores the significance of positive relationships in the workplace and aims to examine how principles from positive psychology can be applied to cultivate and strengthen interpersonal relationships in professional settings. Having healthy relationships at the workplace ensures well-being, engagement, teamwork, more productivity and good physical as well as mental well-being which, in turn, reduces absenteeism and quitting. Positive relationship in an organization is not just focused on interaction between employees but it also depends on different factors like leadership approach, policies and culture followed in the organization, norms for communication and more. Connection to others elicits motivation and happiness and reduces burnout. Thus restructuring the job alone does not improve productivity. Positive feelings about self and others along with positive experiences enhance the relationship. The integration of positive psychology principles in the workplace not only improves employee satisfaction but also drives organizational growth. Adopting a theoretical perspective, this paper reviews and integrates literature to examine how can employees and organizations promote positive relationships in the workplace.

Key Words – *positive relationship, positive psychology at work, employee productivity, strength-based approach, positive emotions, mental well-being*

Interpersonal relationships serve as a source of emotional support, contributing to a person's overall well-being and happiness. These relationships also act as a buffer against stress by providing comfort and support. Numerous studies have

demonstrated that individuals with strong social connections experience lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression and report higher levels of life satisfaction. Interpersonal connections also provide a strong professional network which can



enhance professional growth. Additionally, positive workplace relationships contribute to effective teamwork, problem-solving, and conflict resolution which enhance organizational productivity and success.

This article explores the concepts in positive psychology that help in improving workplace relationships. Positive psychology offers many insights that support positive interactions among employees in the workplace and by understanding and applying these positive psychology concepts, organizations can foster a collaborative and thriving work environment. Positive interactions in the workplace play a crucial role in enhancing positive relationships among employees and contribute to overall work efficiency. Positive interactions contribute to a sense of trust, respect, and safety. Trust between coworkers is built when they engage in respectful communication, actively listen to each other, and provide constructive feedback. For positive interactions to take place it's important to develop an environment where individuals feel comfortable to express themselves, share ideas, and have healthy debates without worrying about negative consequences. By integrating the concepts of positive psychology into the workplace, organizations can create a culture that supports positive interactions among employees.

Despite growing awareness of the value of workplace relationships, organizations and existing research mainly focus on individual level outcomes such as productivity, employee engagement, and leadership effectiveness. While studies have examined aspects of daily employee interactions, they are rarely explored through the focused framework of positive psychology, which highlights elements

such as gratitude, mindfulness, and strengths-based communication. This article addresses that gap by organizing and interpreting existing studies through a positive psychology lens, providing clearer insights into how organizations can actively and effectively build strong, positive relationships across the workplace.

Objectives

This article explores the application of positive psychology in enhancing workplace relationships. The objectives are:

1. To analyze the significance of positive workplace relationships in promoting employee well-being and improving organizational performance.
2. To review and organize literature on workplace interpersonal relationships from a positive psychology perspective.
3. To identify practical interventions that organizations and employees can implement to promote emotionally supportive and collaborative workplace environments.

METHOD

To explore the role of positive psychology in workplace relationships, this paper adopts a theoretical approach and organizes findings through a narrative review of existing literature. The literature included in this review was selected based on its relevance to two primary focus areas: the impact of interpersonal relationships on employee well-being and organizational functioning, and the application of positive psychology concepts within workplace settings. Sources were identified through academic databases such as Google Scholar and



ResearchGate, and include peer-reviewed journal articles, theoretical contributions, and empirical studies. The selection was purposive, prioritizing widely cited and conceptually significant works that reflect key positive psychology concepts.

The information gathered from the selected literature was categorized and organized under major headings titled Fostering Positive Relationships through Positive Emotions, Strength-Based Approaches, and Mindfulness in the Workplace, each section focusing on how these core positive psychology concepts support the development of strong and meaningful workplace relationships.

THE ROLE OF POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS IN THE WORKPLACE

Relationships with others contribute to overall well-being, Umberson and Montez (2010) observed that interpersonal relationships are a basic human need and they affect mental health, physical health, and health behaviors such as actions by an individual that lead to improved health as well as actions that might increase the risk of diseases. Positive relationships support both individual well-being and organizational collaboration (Roffey, 2016). While exploring the positive sides of close relationships Gable and Gosnell (2011) found that close relationships with others at work are linked to an increased rate of motivation to help others and in response to social interaction, the brain releases oxytocin, a hormone associated with positive affect, trustworthiness, and subjective well-being. Increased motivation was identified in lower and higher-level employees who reported having good interpersonal relationships

within the workplace (Basford & Offermann, 2012). Conversely, negative ties between employees lead to stress and job dissatisfaction. In an organization, employees might experience positive and negative connections but when individuals have more negative relationships it affects emotional well-being and results in psychological distress and exhaustion (Rosales, 2016).

Interpersonal and team communication is important for work efficiency and effectiveness. Communication style or norms followed in an organization can lead to the destruction or improving relationships (Langley, 2012). To improve communication individuals should acquire emotional awareness, self-control, trustworthiness, empathetic listening, ensure mutually satisfying agreements, and assertive communication skills.

Relational System Theory states that workplace relationships promote attachment to the organization, work engagement and commitment. Employees' relationship with one another in the organization helps them to fulfill different relational needs. Relational needs include the need for belonging, intimacy, support and validation in relationships, individual seek to attain these through workplace relationships (Kahn, 2007). Having healthy relationships at the workplace ensures well-being, engagement, teamwork, more productivity and good physical as well as mental well-being which in turn reduces absenteeism and quitting (Seppala & McNichols, 2022). Informal interactions with each other including superiors develop more positive relationships and this influences employee satisfaction and individuals who are satisfied with workplace relationships are found to be

more attached to their organization (Sias,2005).

STRENGTHENING EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS BY APPLYING POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY CONCEPTS

Positive psychology provides a framework that supports positive interactions among employees in the workplace. By promoting positive emotions, such as happiness and gratitude, positive psychology helps create a positive atmosphere at the workplace that nurtures cooperation and understanding (Fredrickson,2001). Emphasizing strengths-based approaches encourages individuals to recognize and utilize their unique strengths, fostering a sense of confidence and fulfillment that positively impact their interactions with others (Hammond,2010). Positive psychology also emphasizes the importance of positive communication, including active listening, empathy, and understanding, which enhances effective and respectful dialogue among colleagues (Pitts and Socha,2013). Also, by promoting mindfulness, and self-awareness, positive psychology helps individuals develop a deeper understanding of themselves and others, which allows them to engage in more meaningful and positive interactions. Thus, by integrating positive psychology principles, organizations can create a workplace culture that nurtures positive interactions, leading to enhanced collaboration, trust, and overall well-being.

Fostering Positive Relationships Through Positive Emotions

Experiencing positive emotions such as joy, gratitude, hope, etc. influences

an individual's perception of themselves and others. Cultivating positive emotions helps employees feel valued, understood, supported, trusted, and connected. When individuals experience positive emotions it becomes easier to actively listen to others, understand different perspectives, and express ideas and feedback in a supportive manner (Seligman,2002). Positive emotions also help to regulate stress and provide individuals with a more optimistic outlook, which helps to manage conflict situations by finding a solution that is mutually acceptable (Yang,2022). This ultimately strengthens the relationship between employees and reduces conflicts within the organization.

Positive psychology interventions can be implemented in organizations to cultivate positive emotions and promote positive relationships among employees. Focusing and understanding what they are grateful for in their job, including supportive work relationships helps employees maintain positive connections (Kaplan et al., 2014). Gratitude exercises such as gratitude journaling, gratitude letters, and gratitude sharing spaces encourage reflecting on and expressing gratitude towards positive aspects of work, colleagues, and the organization and enhance interpersonal relationships by promoting appreciation and connection among employees (Passmore and Oades,2016).

Developing a culture of positive feedback and recognition within the organization nurtures positive emotions and strengthens the relationship. This can be done by publicly appreciating employee's efforts and success through awards or appreciation ceremonies and thus developing a supportive and appreciative work environment.

Organizing team-building activities that focus on positive aspects such as skill development, trust exercises, collaborative games or activities that promote enjoyment fosters positive emotions and enhances social connections (Fredrickson,2001).

Prioritizing employee well-being through wellness programs and promoting work-life balance helps raise awareness about the importance of taking care of physical, mental, and emotional well-being. These factors directly affect employees' ability to experience positive emotions and thus well-being initiatives help in building a positive relationships with others.

Fostering Positive Relationships Through Strength-Based Approaches

Strength-based interventions focus on identifying, developing, and utilizing employees' strengths. By adopting a strength-based approach, organizations foster a culture that values individual strengths, it involves a shift in focus from fixing weaknesses to taking advantage of strengths and using them to develop work efficiency. According to Van Woerkom and Meyers (2015), when employees who feel encouraged to identify and use their strengths at work tend to experience more positive emotions, which leads to better job performance and greater willingness to go beyond their assigned duties.

Identifying strengths helps individuals to recognize their unique talents, skills, and positive attributes, as Niemiec and McGrath (2019) highlight, this enhances self-awareness, builds confidence, and enables more intentional and effective use of these strengths in both workplace performance and interpersonal relationships. Strengths could be identified through assessments, self-reflection, or

discussion with others (Niemiec & McGrath,2019). This helps individuals to attain self-reflection and better self-awareness and helps individuals to understand how their strengths contribute to workplace relationships. Clifton and Harter (2003) states that when individuals become aware of and use their strengths, they show increased confidence, higher engagement, and greater contribution to team success. Applying signature strengths at work is positively associated with job satisfaction and better coping with stress, indicating that strengths-based approaches support productivity and emotional resilience in relationships (Harzer & Ruch 2013) .Understanding the overuse and underuse of specific character strengths helps identify which aspects are out of balance in challenging situations and relationship conflicts (Niemiec,2019).

Providing feedback that highlights individual strengths is an effective strategy superiors can adopt to reinforce confidence, foster a sense of belonging, and strengthen workplace relationships (Costantini,2019). Rather than focusing on shortcomings while giving feedback focus should be given on how the individual's strengths influenced their work. Mentioning or publicly appreciating specific instances where their strengths have led to positive outcomes creates a positive emotional climate and strengthens interpersonal relationships.

Strength-based coaching and training initiatives empower employees (Pang and Ruch,2019). Offering resources, training, or mentoring helps individuals to develop and apply their skills more effectively. This technique fosters a positive relationship between mentors and colleagues. Mentors can also inspire and motivate employees by recognizing and



supporting their strengths. At the workplace, leaders can delegate work according to employee's unique capabilities, and by empowering employees to make meaningful contributions a positive work environment can be created and this helps to strengthen employee's relationships with the organizational leaders.

Fostering Positive Relationships Through Mindfulness in the Workplace

Mindfulness involves observing one's thoughts and emotions without reacting, and accepting and acknowledging the present as it is. Practicing mindfulness encourages a non-judgmental and compassionate attitude toward others. Mindfulness promotes active listening and this allows an individual to be fully present in the conversation. This helps in understanding and responding in a better way which promotes effective communication, understanding and empathy, leading to a stronger relationship (Hyland et al., 2015)..

Mindfulness also helps to regulate emotions and avoid impulsive reactions. When individuals are aware of their thoughts and emotions, they will have better clarity during challenging situations, this enables them to manage the situations without harming their relationship with others (Glomb,2012). Mindfulness allows an individual to pause, reflect and respond thoughtfully rather than reacting impulsively (Pang and Ruch, 2019). Research by Celestin and Vanitha (2020) highlights that mindful leadership, characterized by emotional regulation, self-awareness, and intentional communication, enhances workplace performance by improving task efficiency, productivity, employee engagement, and

organizational loyalty. Thus, By incorporating mindfulness into the organizational culture a positive work environment can be developed by promoting open communication, respect, empathy, and collaboration.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, fostering a positive relationship in an organization through the lens of positive psychology has far-reaching benefits, enhancing both individual well-being and overall organizational success. The review highlights that fostering gratitude, giving strength-based feedback, and practicing mindful communication can create a supportive and collaborative work environment where individuals feel a sense of belonging and are motivated. Positive relationships in an organization are not just focused on the interaction between employees but also depend on different factors like leadership approach, policies, culture followed in the organization, and norms for communication. Interpersonal relationships elicit motivation, happiness, and reduce burnout; thus, restructuring the nature or design of the job alone does not improve productivity.

These findings have important implications for organizational leaders, HR professionals, and programs focusing on workplace well-being. Integrating positive psychology principles into workplace policies, communication practices, and leadership strategies can create an environment where positive relationships flourish, benefitting employees and the organization. Future research should examine the long-term implications of positive psychology interventions in various organizational settings and



cultures. Additionally, empirical studies that provide evidence for the effectiveness of positive psychology interventions to improve workplace relationships could provide stronger evidence for organizational policy

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SPIRITUALITY AND LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG SENIOR CITIZENS IN KERALA: THE ROLE OF GENDER AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

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ABSTRACT

Aging is often accompanied by various physical, emotional, and social challenges, which can be influenced by individual life circumstances. Spirituality has been recognized as a significant factor in promoting resilience and life satisfaction among older adults. This study examined the relationship between spirituality and life satisfaction among senior citizens in Kerala, focusing on the roles of gender and socio-economic status (SES). Using a descriptive, comparative, and correlational design, 100 older adults (50 males, 50 females) aged 60–80 years were assessed using the Spirituality Scale (Sreekumar & Sananda Raj, 2002) and the Life Satisfaction Scale (Singh & Joseph, 2012). Data were analyzed using independent-samples t-tests, one-way ANOVA, and Pearson's correlation. Results indicated a significant gender difference in spirituality ($p < .05$) and life satisfaction ($p < .01$), with males scoring higher on spirituality and females reporting higher life satisfaction. SES was also significantly associated with life satisfaction ($p < .01$). The findings highlight the need for gender- and SES-sensitive interventions to promote psychological well-being in older adults. Future studies should include larger, more diverse samples and consider qualitative approaches to explore these relationships in depth.

Key Words – *Spirituality, Life Satisfaction, Senior Citizens, Gender Differences, Socio-Economic Status*

Old age marks the final stage in the human life cycle, typically occurring as individuals approach or surpass the average life expectancy. This phase involves significant physical, cognitive,

emotional, and social changes, often affecting overall well-being. According to Erikson's psychosocial theory (1959), older adulthood requires achieving ego



integrity while coping with loss, mortality, and shifting social roles.

Spirituality—defined as the search for meaning, purpose, and connection with the transcendent—often increases with age, serving as a coping resource for older individuals (Wink & Dillon, 2002; Koenig, 2012). Research has shown that spirituality positively correlates with psychological well-being, resilience, and life satisfaction (George et al., 2000; Krause, 2003). However, the strength and nature of this relationship can vary depending on gender and socio-economic status (SES).

Gender influences coping styles, social roles, and spiritual engagement. Women are often found to participate more in spiritual or religious activities (Miller & Stark, 2002; Levin, 1994), while men may derive meaning from different life experiences. SES also plays a crucial role in shaping life satisfaction, with higher SES often linked to better health, social participation, and psychological well-being (Pinquart & Sörensen, 2000). Spirituality may help buffer the negative effects of lower SES by providing meaning and psychological comfort (Krause, 1998). This study explores how gender and SES influence the relationship between spirituality and life satisfaction among senior citizens in Kerala, aiming to contribute to gerontological research and guide targeted interventions.

METHOD

Research Design

A normative survey design was employed to assess differences in spirituality and life satisfaction by gender and SES.

Participants

The study included 100 senior citizens (50 males, 50 females) aged 60–80 years, residing in Kozhikode and Ernakulam districts of Kerala. Participants were selected using simple random sampling.

Inclusion Criteria

- Age between 60–80 years
- Residing in Kerala
- Cognitively and physically able to respond
- Provided informed consent

Exclusion Criteria

- Below 60 or above 80 years of age
- Severe cognitive impairments
- Severe physical illness preventing participation
- Non-consent

Measures

1. Socio-Demographic Schedule – Collected age, gender, religion, education, occupation, and SES.
2. Spirituality Scale (Sreekumar & Sananda Raj, 2002) – 26-item scale measuring spiritual beliefs and practices, validated for Indian populations (reliability: $r = 0.83$).
3. Life Satisfaction Scale (Singh & Joseph, 2012) – 35-item scale covering five domains of life satisfaction (reliability: $r = 0.91$).

Procedure

Data were collected in person, with questionnaires administered individually. Informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality was assured. Each session lasted approximately 20 minutes.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS 25.0. Descriptive statistics were calculated, and independent-samples t-tests, one-way ANOVA, and Pearson's correlation were performed.

Section 1: Comparison of Spirituality and Life Satisfaction Based on Gender

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Spirituality and Life Satisfaction Scores Among Older Adults by Gender

Variables	Male(N=50)		Female(N=50)		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
Spirituality	96.20	19.01	1.03	19.01	2.28*
Life satisfaction	1.50	11.13	1.41	15.26	3.25**

p < .05, p < .01

RESULT

The table reveals a significant gender difference in spirituality among older adults, with males (M = 96.20) scoring higher than females (M = 1.03). The result is statistically significant at the 0.05 level and is also a highly significant difference in life satisfaction based on gender, with females (M = 1.41) reporting higher life satisfaction than males (M = 1.50), as indicated by a t-value of 3.25 (p < .01).

DISCUSSION

This difference may be attributed to a greater inclination among males toward seeking meaning and purpose in life. Spirituality, understood as the development of self-awareness and inner growth, is often associated with mental

well-being. Males may also exhibit stronger task concentration, enabling deeper spiritual engagement. The finding that older men scored significantly higher in spirituality may indicate a greater tendency among men to seek existential meaning and personal growth during later life stages. This could be attributed to post-retirement shifts, identity restructuring, or traditional male roles that emphasize autonomy and internal goal setting.

And the life satisfaction encompasses mood, relationships, achievements, and self-concept. While gender may influence certain aspects of well-being, it is also closely linked to factors such as economic status, education, personal experiences, and social roles. The observed gender differences in spirituality and life satisfaction underscore the need for gender-sensitive gerontological interventions. Programs aiming to promote psychological well-being among older



adults may benefit from integrating spiritual development components, particularly for elderly women, and life satisfaction-enhancing strategies for elderly men. The results support the development of public health policies and community-based programs that acknowledge the role of spirituality in healthy aging. Institutions catering to the elderly (such as senior centres and old-age homes) can incorporate structured spiritual and psychosocial activities to enhance life satisfaction. Mental health practitioners working with older populations can use these findings to tailor counselling interventions. For instance, spirituality-focused cognitive strategies and meaning-centered therapy may be beneficial for older adults, especially men coping with role transitions post-retirement. The study contributes valuable knowledge to educational curricula in psychology, gerontology, and social work. It can inform students and professionals about the intricate interplay between spirituality, gender, and subjective well-being in later life.

Conducted in Kerala, India, the study provides insights into how socio-cultural context shapes aging experiences. It highlights the importance of culturally grounded research in understanding spiritual and emotional dimensions of older adults' lives in Indian society. Despite its contributions, the study is subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the

findings. The sample consisted of only 100 participants (50 males and 50 females), which limits the generalizability of the results to the broader population of older adults. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design, which restricts causal inferences. Longitudinal research would be more effective in examining how spirituality and life satisfaction evolve over time. Data were collected using self-reported questionnaires, which may be influenced by social desirability bias or inaccuracies in personal recall, especially in elderly respondents. The study was conducted in Kerala, a culturally and religiously distinct region of India. Therefore, the findings may not be applicable to other ethnic, cultural, or geographic populations, either within or outside India. Factors such as educational background, physical health, religious practices, marital status, or social support were not controlled for, yet they could significantly influence both spirituality and life satisfaction. The study limited gender classification to male and female categories, excluding non-binary identities, thus not fully capturing the diversity of gendered experiences among older adults.

Section 2: Comparison Based on Socio-Economic Status

Spirituality and life satisfaction scores were compared across three socio-economic groups: High, Middle, and Low. One-way ANOVA was conducted to assess significant differences.

Table 2 : One-way ANOVA for Spirituality and Life Satisfaction Based on Socio-Economic Status

Variables	Categories	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F
Spirituality	Between groups	602.870	2	301.435	1.190
	Within groups	24562.840	97	253.225	
Life satisfaction	Total	25165.710	99		
	Between groups	1622.718	2		
	Within groups	17769.872	97	811.359	4.429**
	Total	19392.590	99	183.195	

**p < .01

RESULT

The results show a significant difference in life satisfaction among older adults based on socio-economic status ($F = 4.43, p < .01$). No significant differences were found in spirituality.

DISCUSSION

This suggests that life satisfaction is influenced by socio-economic background, with higher satisfaction observed in individuals from higher socio-economic strata. This may be due to

increased financial security, better access to resources, and social fulfilment.

However, no significant difference was found in spirituality scores across socio-economic groups, indicating that spiritual engagement may be relatively independent of economic conditions.

The significant difference in life satisfaction across socio-economic groups indicates that material well-being, financial security, and access to resources play a crucial role in determining subjective well-being in later life. Older adults from higher SES backgrounds likely experience less financial stress, greater access to healthcare and leisure, and

stronger social engagement, all of which contribute to greater life satisfaction.

The absence of significant differences in spirituality across SES groups suggests that spiritual beliefs and practices may be universal in nature, offering a common coping resource irrespective of economic background. This supports the notion that spirituality is more deeply rooted in personal values, cultural traditions, or existential concerns rather than material conditions

Implications of the Study includes the significant difference found in life satisfaction across SES groups highlights the importance of financial stability, access to resources, and social inclusion in the well-being of older adults. Individuals from higher SES backgrounds reported greater life satisfaction, likely due to fewer financial worries and greater opportunities for fulfilment in later life. The findings suggest a need for social support systems targeting low-income elderly populations to reduce disparities in life satisfaction. Policies ensuring pension security, affordable healthcare, and community engagement programs can enhance quality of life among economically disadvantaged older adults. The lack of significant difference in spirituality across SES groups implies that spirituality may serve as a universal coping mechanism, not necessarily influenced by material conditions. This indicates that spiritual interventions can be equally relevant across all socio-economic strata for

promoting emotional resilience. The study supports models of well-being (e.g., Diener's Subjective Well-Being framework) by demonstrating how external conditions (like SES) influence satisfaction with life, while internal constructs (like spirituality) may remain stable across demographic boundaries.

The limitations of study include the SES subgroups were unevenly distributed (e.g., only 5 participants from the high SES group and 9 from the low SES group), which may limit the statistical power and generalizability of the findings. This imbalance could skew post hoc results and underestimate or overestimate group differences. The study utilized a cross-sectional method, which limits the ability to infer causal relationships. While SES and life satisfaction are correlated, the study cannot confirm that higher SES directly causes greater life satisfaction. All constructs (life satisfaction, spirituality) were measured via self-reported questionnaires, which are subject to social desirability bias and may not capture deeper experiential or behavioural aspects of spirituality or satisfaction. The study was conducted in Kerala, and findings may not be applicable to older populations in other regions or cultural contexts with different spiritual practices, economic conditions, or social structures. Factors such as physical health, family support, education level, and mental health status were not controlled in the analysis, though they could significantly influence both spirituality and life satisfaction.

Table 3: Post Hoc Test Results for Life Satisfaction and Socio-Economic Status

Socio-economic status	N	Subset for alpha=0.05	
		1	2
Low	9	133.6667	
Middle	86	147.2442	147.2442
High	5		151.0000
Sig.		.102	.836

RESULT

According to the post hoc results, the highest mean score in life satisfaction was found in the high socio-economic group ($M = 151.00$), followed by the middle ($M = 147.24$), and then the low ($M = 133.67$) group. This further supports the finding that life satisfaction is positively associated with socio-economic status.

DISCUSSION

Financial stability and the ability to meet both social and economic aspirations likely contribute to greater life satisfaction among older adults. The implications of the study highlight the importance of addressing economic disparities in later life. Policymakers should consider expanding financial support programs—such as pensions and healthcare subsidies—to enhance life satisfaction among the elderly, particularly those belonging to lower socio-economic status (SES) groups. Gerontological care should address not only physical and psychological health but also the economic and social well-being of older individuals, ensuring a holistic approach to elder care. Mental health professionals working with

the elderly must recognize the impact of financial stress on overall well-being and incorporate elements such as financial counselling, resource navigation, and support networks into their intervention strategies. Moreover, programs designed to promote social and spiritual engagement among older adults from low-SES backgrounds may serve as protective factors against reduced life satisfaction, especially when material resources are limited. The study has certain limitations that must be acknowledged. The sample was not equally distributed across SES categories; the high SES group ($n = 5$) and the low SES group ($n = 9$) were considerably smaller than the middle SES group ($n = 86$). This uneven distribution may have limited the statistical power to detect significant differences between the groups. Although a general trend was observed, the differences among SES groups were not statistically significant. Therefore, caution should be exercised in generalizing these findings, and further studies with more balanced samples are recommended for validation. Additionally, the study was conducted at a single point in time, which limits the ability to draw causal inferences between socio-economic status and life satisfaction. Furthermore, all data were collected using self-report



measures, which may be subject to biases such as social desirability, misinterpretation of items, and recall inaccuracies.

CONCLUSION

Spirituality and life satisfaction among older adults in Kerala are shaped by both gender and socio-economic factors. Culturally tailored, gender-sensitive, and SES-aware programs can play a vital role in promoting psychological well-being in late life.

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Limitations

Small sample size limits generalizability.

Self-report measures may be subject to bias.

Cross-sectional design prevents causal inference.

Future Directions

1. Longitudinal studies to explore causal relationships.
2. Inclusion of qualitative methods to capture lived experiences.
3. Broader sampling across multiple states for comparative analysis.