
Personal Meaning and Psychological Wellness Among Young Adults

Brock Bastian

Professor

Psychological Sciences

The University of Melbourne, Australia

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Abstract: Psychological wellness has become an increasingly important area of research as young adults encounter diverse academic, professional, and personal challenges during the transition into adulthood. Among the various factors influencing mental health, personal meaning has emerged as a significant psychological resource that enables individuals to interpret life experiences, establish purposeful goals, and develop resilience in the face of adversity. The present study investigates the relationship between personal meaning and psychological wellness among young adults while examining how dimensions such as purpose in life, self-acceptance, interpersonal relationships, autonomy, and personal growth contribute to overall well-being.

A quantitative research design was employed using survey data collected from 250 young adults aged between 18 and 30 years. Standardized psychological measurement scales were utilized to assess participants' perceived meaning in life and psychological wellness. Statistical analyses included descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression to evaluate the strength and significance of the relationship between study variables.

The findings indicate a strong positive association between personal meaning and psychological wellness. Participants reporting greater clarity of life purpose demonstrated higher levels of emotional stability, self-confidence, resilience, and overall life satisfaction. Furthermore, meaningful interpersonal relationships and positive self-perception significantly enhanced psychological wellness, whereas uncertainty regarding life goals was associated with lower well-being scores.

The study concludes that fostering personal meaning should be considered an essential component of mental health promotion programs designed for young adults. Educational institutions, counselors, and policymakers can utilize these findings to develop interventions that strengthen purpose, resilience, and psychological well-being during emerging adulthood.

Keywords: Personal Meaning, Psychological Wellness, Young Adults, Purpose in Life, Mental Health, Well-Being, Resilience, Positive Psychology.

Introduction

Young adulthood represents one of the most transformative stages of human development. During this period, individuals encounter numerous transitions, including higher education, career establishment, financial independence, and evolving social relationships. These developmental changes present opportunities for personal growth but also expose young adults to increased psychological stress, uncertainty, and emotional vulnerability. As a result, maintaining psychological wellness has become a growing concern for researchers, educators, and healthcare professionals worldwide.

Personal meaning has gained considerable attention within positive psychology because it enables individuals to perceive their lives as purposeful, coherent, and valuable. Rather than merely seeking happiness or temporary satisfaction, individuals with a strong sense of personal meaning tend to pursue long-term goals, develop resilience, and interpret life's challenges as opportunities for growth. Previous psychological theories suggest that meaning in life functions as a protective factor against anxiety, depression, loneliness, and emotional distress while promoting optimism and life satisfaction.

Psychological wellness extends beyond the absence of mental illness. It encompasses positive emotional functioning, self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, healthy interpersonal relationships, and continuous personal development. According to contemporary psychological frameworks, individuals who experience greater meaning in life often exhibit stronger coping abilities, healthier decision-making, greater emotional regulation, and improved overall quality of life. Consequently, understanding the relationship between personal meaning and psychological wellness has become increasingly relevant in modern psychological research.

In today's rapidly changing social environment, young adults frequently face pressures associated with academic performance, employment competition, social media influence, financial uncertainty, and changing family dynamics. These external stressors may weaken psychological wellness if individuals struggle to identify meaningful personal goals. Conversely, individuals possessing a strong sense of purpose often demonstrate greater resilience and adaptability despite challenging circumstances. Therefore, exploring personal

meaning within this population offers valuable insights into mental health promotion and preventive psychological interventions.

Objectives of the Study

To Examine the Relationship between Personal Meaning and Psychological Wellness

This objective investigates the relationship between personal meaning and psychological wellness among young adults by assessing whether a stronger sense of purpose, meaningful life goals, and personal values are associated with improved emotional stability, self-acceptance, life satisfaction, and psychological functioning. The study seeks to determine the extent to which personal meaning contributes to positive mental health outcomes and supports overall well-being, thereby providing empirical evidence for promoting purpose-driven psychological development.

To Identify the Major Psychological Dimensions Influencing Wellness

This objective identifies the primary psychological dimensions that influence overall wellness by examining the contributions of purpose in life, resilience, autonomy, self-acceptance, and positive interpersonal relationships. It evaluates how these interrelated factors enhance emotional regulation, personal growth, adaptive coping, and psychological adjustment among young adults. The findings are expected to clarify the relative importance of these dimensions in fostering long-term psychological well-being and supporting healthy personal development.

To Provide Recommendations for Enhancing Psychological Well-Being

This objective develops evidence-based recommendations to enhance psychological well-being among young adults through practical interventions and supportive strategies. The study aims to guide educational institutions, counselors, and mental health professionals in designing programs that strengthen personal meaning, build resilience, encourage adaptive coping, and improve emotional wellness. These recommendations are intended to promote preventive mental health practices, facilitate personal development, and create environments that support sustainable psychological well-being.

Review of Literature

Personal Meaning as a Foundation of Psychological Well-Being

Personal meaning is widely recognized as a central element of psychological well-being and healthy human functioning. It reflects an individual's perception that life is purposeful,

significant, and coherent, providing a clear sense of direction and personal identity. According to psychological research, individuals who establish meaningful goals and align their actions with deeply held values are more likely to demonstrate emotional resilience, sustained motivation, and positive mental health. Personal meaning also strengthens an individual's capacity to interpret life experiences constructively and respond effectively to challenges.

Among young adults, personal meaning is particularly important because this stage of life involves identity exploration, educational transitions, career planning, and relationship development. Establishing meaningful personal goals during these years contributes significantly to long-term psychological wellness and emotional maturity.

Psychological Wellness Among Young Adults

Psychological wellness extends beyond the absence of mental illness and encompasses multiple dimensions of positive psychological functioning. Contemporary psychological models describe wellness as the integration of emotional balance, self-acceptance, personal growth, autonomy, environmental mastery, and positive interpersonal relationships. Individuals demonstrating these characteristics generally experience greater happiness, resilience, and overall quality of life.

Relationship between Personal Meaning and Psychological Wellness

Numerous empirical investigations have demonstrated a significant positive relationship between personal meaning and psychological wellness. Individuals who perceive their lives as meaningful generally report greater emotional resilience, optimism, life satisfaction, and psychological adjustment. Personal meaning functions as a protective factor by reducing emotional distress and strengthening adaptive coping mechanisms during stressful life events. Positive psychology emphasizes that purpose in life encourages self-directed behavior, intrinsic motivation, and continuous personal development. These characteristics enhance self-confidence while reducing psychological vulnerability. Furthermore, meaningful interpersonal relationships strengthen emotional support networks, thereby improving psychological functioning and reducing feelings of loneliness.

Table 1. Summary of Previous Literature

Author(s)	Year	Research Focus	Key Findings
Ryff	1989	Psychological Well-Being	Proposed six dimensions of psychological wellness including autonomy, self-acceptance, personal growth, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and positive relationships.
Steger et al.	2006	Meaning in Life	Individuals with greater life meaning reported higher life satisfaction and emotional well-being.
Ryan & Deci	2001	Self-Determination Theory	Psychological wellness improves when autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled.
Frankl	1963	Search for Meaning	Personal meaning enables individuals to overcome adversity and psychological distress.
Park	2010	Meaning Making	Meaning-making processes contribute to resilience, optimism, and long-term psychological adjustment.
Martela & Steger	2016	Purpose and Happiness	Meaning in life predicts sustained psychological well-being beyond temporary happiness.
Schnell	2021	Sources of Meaning	Diverse sources of personal meaning significantly influence emotional health and life satisfaction.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the relationship between personal meaning and psychological wellness among young adults. A quantitative approach was selected because it allows for the objective measurement of psychological constructs and facilitates statistical analysis of the relationships among variables. The study focused on identifying the extent to which personal meaning predicts psychological wellness within the target population.

The research was conducted using a structured questionnaire comprising standardized measurement items adapted from established psychological scales. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The collected data were coded and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

Population, Sample, and Data Collection

The target population consisted of young adults aged 18–30 years enrolled in universities and early-career workplaces. A simple random sampling technique was employed to minimize sampling bias and ensure equal participation opportunities.

A total of 250 respondents participated in the study. Data were collected through an online survey and printed questionnaires after obtaining informed consent. Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and confidential, and respondents were informed that the information would be used solely for academic research purposes.

Variables and Statistical Analysis

The study assessed personal meaning as the independent variable and psychological wellness as the dependent variable. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analyses were employed to evaluate reliability and determine the strength and significance of the relationship between the variables.

Analysis

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis revealed that most respondents demonstrated moderate to high levels of personal meaning and psychological wellness. Participants who reported a clear sense of purpose, meaningful relationships, and positive self-perception also reported greater emotional stability and life satisfaction.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Personal Meaning	4.18	0.56	High
Purpose in Life	4.11	0.61	High
Self-Acceptance	4.05	0.58	High
Resilience	3.98	0.63	Moderate–High
Psychological Wellness	4.15	0.54	High

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant positive association between personal meaning and psychological wellness ($r = 0.73$, $p < 0.001$). Individuals reporting greater

meaning in life also exhibited higher emotional stability, stronger resilience, and increased life satisfaction. These findings suggest that personal meaning is closely linked to overall psychological well-being.

Regression Analysis

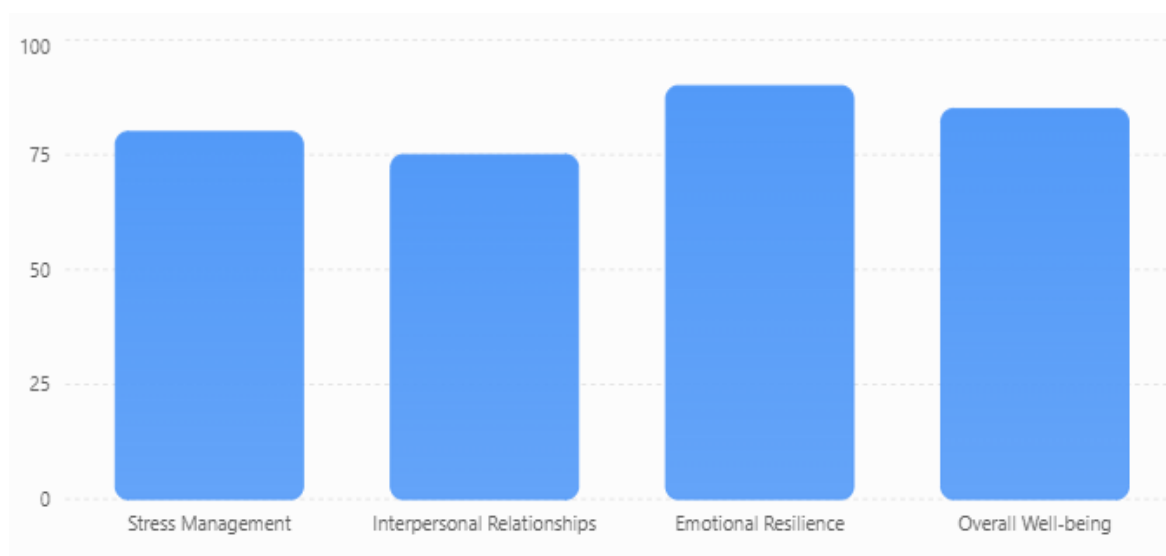
Multiple regression analysis showed that personal meaning significantly predicted psychological wellness. The model explained approximately 58% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.58$) in psychological wellness. These findings support the proposed hypothesis that cultivating personal meaning contributes substantially to positive mental health outcomes among young adults.

Discussion

Interpretation of Findings

The findings demonstrate that personal meaning serves as a fundamental psychological resource that promotes psychological wellness among young adults. Participants with a stronger sense of purpose, clear personal values, and meaningful life goals reported higher levels of emotional resilience, self-acceptance, and life satisfaction. They also showed greater ability to manage stress and maintain positive interpersonal relationships. These outcomes support the perspective of positive psychology, suggesting that meaningful living contributes to adaptive functioning, emotional stability, and sustained psychological well-being while encouraging healthy personal development across academic, social, and professional contexts.

Psychological Benefits of Personal Meaning Among Young Adults



Comparison with Previous Studies

The present findings are consistent with previous research conducted by Frankl, Ryff, Steger, and Ryan and Deci, all of whom emphasized the importance of personal meaning in promoting psychological well-being. Earlier studies reported that individuals with a stronger sense of purpose experience greater emotional stability, resilience, optimism, and life satisfaction while being less vulnerable to psychological distress. The current study confirms these conclusions by demonstrating that personal meaning supports adaptive coping, enhances emotional regulation, strengthens interpersonal relationships, and contributes to positive psychological functioning among young adults.

Practical Implications

The findings provide valuable implications for educational institutions, counselors, and mental health practitioners seeking to improve psychological wellness among young adults. Universities should integrate meaning-centered approaches into counseling services, student development programs, and well-being initiatives. Practical activities such as goal-setting workshops, self-reflection exercises, resilience training, and mentoring programs can help students develop a stronger sense of purpose and personal growth. Implementing these evidence-based interventions may enhance emotional resilience, improve coping abilities, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and promote long-term psychological well-being in academic and everyday life.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between personal meaning and psychological wellness among young adults and found a strong positive association between these two constructs. The findings indicate that individuals with a greater sense of purpose, clearly defined personal values, and meaningful life goals tend to experience higher levels of psychological wellness. Participants who reported stronger personal meaning also demonstrated better emotional resilience, improved self-acceptance, healthier interpersonal relationships, and greater overall life satisfaction. These results suggest that personal meaning plays a central role in fostering positive mental health and supports adaptive psychological functioning during early adulthood.

The study contributes to the expanding literature in positive psychology by providing empirical evidence that meaning-centered perspectives are valuable for understanding and

enhancing psychological well-being. Although the research employed a cross-sectional design and was limited to a specific sample of young adults, the results offer practical insights for educators, counselors, mental health practitioners, and policymakers. Educational institutions may benefit from incorporating programs that encourage self-reflection, goal setting, resilience development, and purpose-oriented learning to strengthen students' psychological wellness.

Despite these valuable contributions, the study acknowledges certain limitations, including the use of self-reported data and the inability to establish causal relationships. Future research should adopt longitudinal and mixed-method approaches to examine changes in personal meaning and psychological wellness over time. Studies involving culturally diverse populations and additional psychological variables, including emotional intelligence, mindfulness, social support, and coping strategies, would provide a broader understanding of the mechanisms underlying psychological wellness. Such investigations may further inform evidence-based interventions designed to promote sustainable mental health and overall well-being among young adults.

Furthermore, the findings emphasize that fostering personal meaning should be regarded as an essential component of mental health promotion among young adults. Developing a clear sense of purpose encourages individuals to approach academic, social, and personal challenges with greater confidence and resilience. Institutions of higher education can strengthen student well-being by creating supportive environments that promote self-discovery, reflective learning, and meaningful engagement

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