

A Mixed-Methods Study of Psychological Well-Being and Adjustment in Relation to Gender Differences and Institutional Support among Non-Local Students in Kolkata

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Abstract

This mixed-methods study examines the psychological well-being of non-local students studying in Kolkata, focusing on their adjustment experiences, gender differences, and perceptions of institutional support. Using both survey data (N = 52, Males= 31, Females= 21) and standardized psychological well-being scales, the research explores key dimensions such as autonomy, purpose in life, positive relations, environmental mastery, personal growth, and self-acceptance. The survey findings reveal that many non-local students experience homesickness, loneliness, moderate levels of perceived peer and faculty support, and varying degrees of cultural adjustment, often complicated by language barriers and limited guidance on navigating social relationships. The statistical analysis involved t-test and Pearson correlation, which further uncovered significant positive correlations among various psychological well-being domains, particularly among female participants, who reported higher levels of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, and self-acceptance compared to males. However, most gender differences were not statistically significant, except for autonomy. The study highlights the complex interplay between personal, social, and institutional factors shaping the psychological well-being of non-local students. These findings underscore the need for more targeted institutional interventions, including enhanced peer support systems, culturally sensitive counseling services, and proactive community-building programs to foster inclusivity and psychological resilience among non-local student populations.

Keywords: Psychological well-being, non-local students, gender differences, institutional support, adjustment, mixed-methods, Kolkata

Introduction

In recent decades, higher education institutions have witnessed increasing diversity in their student populations, both in terms of cultural backgrounds and geographical origins. In the context of West Bengal, a significant number of students migrate from other states and regions to pursue academic opportunities. While this inter-regional mobility enriches campus diversity and fosters cross-cultural

interactions, it also introduces unique challenges for non-local students as they navigate new social, academic, and institutional environments.

Perceived Inclusivity plays a critical role in determining how well non-local students adjust and integrate into their new academic settings. Inclusivity refers to the extent to which students feel accepted, valued, and supported by the institution and its stakeholders (Thomas & May, 2010). Inclusive environments promote psychological safety, encourage participation, and foster a sense of belonging (Strayhorn, 2012). For non-local students, inclusivity encompasses not only formal institutional policies but also peer interactions, faculty support, cultural sensitivity, and administrative responsiveness.

On the other hand, **Challenges Faced by Non-Local Students** comprise a complex set of difficulties ranging from cultural adaptation, language barriers, social integration, academic pressures, financial constraints, to emotional and psychological stress (Andrade, 2006; Glass & Westmont, 2014). These challenges often intersect and exacerbate one another, potentially hindering students' academic performance, social well-being, and overall mental health (Smith & Khawaja, 2011).

The relationship between **perceived inclusivity** and **experienced challenges** is both bidirectional and dynamic. Higher perceived inclusivity may mitigate many of the challenges faced by non-local students by providing them with supportive networks, accessible resources, and a welcoming campus culture (Lizzio, 2006). Conversely, persistent challenges may diminish students' perceptions of inclusivity, leading to feelings of marginalization, alienation, and decreased academic engagement (Tinto, 1993). Therefore, understanding this relationship is crucial for designing effective interventions that promote student well-being and retention.

Several theoretical frameworks help contextualize this relationship. For instance, **Tinto's Model of Student Integration** (1993) emphasizes the importance of both academic and social integration in student retention. According to this model, when students—especially those from diverse backgrounds—successfully integrate into both academic and social spheres, their likelihood of persistence and success increases. Similarly, **the Ecological Systems Theory** (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) suggests that students' experiences are shaped by multiple interacting systems, including institutional policies (microsystem), societal attitudes (macrosystem), and personal factors (individual characteristics such as resilience and adaptability). Since there is such strong theoretically established relationship among the variables, it becomes essential to understand how well these factors have been studied in the Indian context through a detailed literature review.

Literature Review

1. Academic Adjustment and Challenges

International students often encounter significant academic challenges when adapting to new educational environments. Sherry et al. (2010), in their study at the University of Toledo, highlighted that language difficulties, unfamiliar teaching methods, and limited understanding from faculty and peers contribute to academic stress. Similarly, Wu et al. (2015) emphasized that international students face communication barriers with professors and classmates, which impede their academic performance and participation. The lack of familiarity with academic expectations, such as classroom participation norms and assessment standards, often compounds their academic struggles (Trice, A. G. 2004).

The academic challenges of international students are not limited to communication barriers alone. As Andrade (2006) suggests, factors such as insufficient preparation, unrealistic expectations, and the absence of academic support mechanisms further exacerbate the difficulties experienced by international

students. O'Reilly et al. (2010) also found that despite receiving considerable social support, international students still reported significant socio-cultural adjustment difficulties that influenced their academic performance.

Moreover, Spencer-Oatey and Xiong (2006), in their empirical study with Chinese students in the UK, demonstrated that while some students experienced minimal academic difficulties, social isolation and adjustment issues were strongly correlated with academic stress, thereby indirectly affecting academic outcomes. King et al. (2023) compared international and domestic Canadian students and found that while international students often reported comparable or lower rates of clinical anxiety or depression, they nonetheless experienced lower academic performance and a weaker sense of belonging within the university community.

2. Social Adjustment and Social Isolation

Social integration is a central factor in the overall adjustment process of international students. Multiple studies have documented the profound impact of social isolation on international students' psychological well-being (Chen, 1999; Schramm & Lauver, 1988; Trice et al., 2004). The inability to establish meaningful friendships with host nationals often results in heightened anxiety, depression, and feelings of alienation.

Walther et al. (2020), focusing on refugee populations, found that legal uncertainty and limited social interactions with host society members contribute to psychological distress, while employment and host language proficiency serve as protective factors. Although conducted on refugees, the findings offer valuable parallels for international student populations as well as non-local students who often experience similar social disconnection.

Khawaja and Dempsey (2008) demonstrated that international students have less social support and greater incongruence between their expectations and actual experiences compared to domestic students. This mismatch often forces international students into dysfunctional coping strategies. Yet, as the authors note, understanding effective coping mechanisms adopted by well-adjusted students could inform the development of more supportive institutional programs.

In a similar vein, Mahmood and Burke (2018) identified a significant inverse relationship between sociocultural adaptation and acculturative stress, emphasizing the importance of fostering supportive social networks. Qi et al. (2021) further underscore that perceived social support positively influences psychological well-being, mediated through resilience and spirituality, which act as buffers against acculturative stress.

3. Psychological Well-being, Stress, and Coping

The psychological health of international students remains a central concern. Alharbi and Smith (2018), through their review of international students in English-speaking countries, identified major sources of stress including academic pressures, cultural differences, social isolation, financial constraints, and family-related worries. Lu et al. (2014) observed that despite high levels of psychological distress among Chinese-speaking students in Australia, stigma, language barriers, and lack of awareness often prevent them from seeking mental health support.

Azadeh et al. (2018) developed a comprehensive model of psychological well-being, suggesting that integration strategies positively correlate with psychological adaptation, while attachment (or separation) tendencies correlate with increased adjustment difficulties. The mediating roles of life satisfaction, self-

esteem, and depression are central in this model.

Religious coping also emerges as an important factor. Gardner et al. (2014) found that positive religious coping correlates with better quality of life and lower stress levels among Muslim international students, while negative religious coping is linked with increased distress. Similarly, Bhugra (2004) underscores that the psychological impact of migration varies depending on cultural background, socioeconomic factors, and personal circumstances.

Jones and Kim (2013) emphasize that language proficiency and cultural proximity significantly influence psychological adaptation, with higher proficiency in the host language enhancing well-being. Lu et al. (2013) echoed similar findings, noting that emotional distress is often amplified by language and cultural barriers, as well as stigma around mental health services.

4. Theoretical Implications

The literature collectively suggests that **acculturation theory**, **stress-coping frameworks**, and **social integration models** provide valuable lenses for understanding international student adjustment. Acculturation theory (Berry, 1997) explains the balance international students attempt between maintaining their own cultural identity and adapting to the host culture, with integration often leading to better outcomes than separation or marginalization.

The stress-coping model (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) offers insights into how international students appraise and respond to stressors. Studies such as Azadeh et al. (2018) and Khawaja and Dempsey (2008) illustrate how coping strategies—whether functional or dysfunctional—mediate the relationship between stress and psychological well-being. Social integration theories (Tinto, 1993) further emphasize the role of social connections in promoting both academic success and psychological adjustment. The critical importance of host language proficiency, peer support, and inclusive campus environments emerge as recurrent themes across studies.

Rationale of the Study

Despite the significance of these issues, there remains a gap in the literature specifically focusing on non-local students in the unique socio-cultural context of **West Bengal's academic institutions**. Much of the existing research on student inclusivity and challenges has been conducted in Western or pan-Indian contexts over international students, often overlooking the distinct cultural, linguistic, and administrative features of institutions in West Bengal. This gap warrants focused inquiry, especially given the state's increasing role as a hub for higher education and its rich yet complex cultural diversity. Furthermore, while previous studies often examine inclusivity and challenges as separate constructs, limited research has explored their **interrelated dynamics**—how institutional inclusivity influences the nature and severity of challenges, and vice versa. Addressing this gap is essential for administrators, policy makers, and educators aiming to foster equitable and supportive academic environments for non-local students.

Also, from the above literature it is evident that anxiety and psychological well-being of those students who go outside their state for further studies is somewhat less studied in India, while it is well studied that language barriers can exacerbate social anxiety among international students. Hence, the purpose of this research was to examine how cultural differences and acculturation processes contribute to social phobia and anxiety symptoms. This study was to examine the availability and effectiveness of social support systems for non-local college students. It was to explore the role of peer support,

mentorship programs, and campus resources in reducing social anxiety and enhancing psychological well-being.

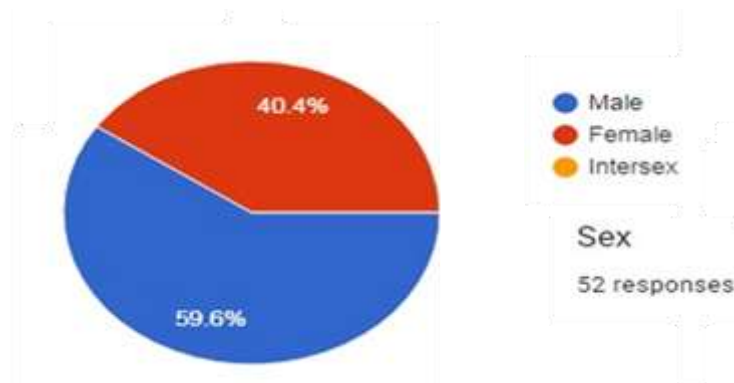
The present study aimed to investigate:

- the degree of perceived inclusivity experienced by non-local students in academic institutions of West Bengal;
- the key challenges encountered by these students; and
- The relationship between inclusivity perceptions and the challenges faced.

By examining these variables together, the study intends to generate evidence-based insights that can inform institutional practices and policies to better support non-local students' academic and socio-emotional development.

Research Methodology

For the study sample size was 52 non-local students studying at Adamas University, Kolkata, out of which 21 were females and 31 were males. All the participants were non-local residents of Kolkata, meaning their origin, upbringing and place of birth have been outside of West Bengal and they had relocated to Kolkata for Higher Education 1 year prior to participating in this study. Snowball sampling was used for candidate selection. The candidates were between the age- ranges of 18-25 years, all of them in their Undergraduate and Post Graduate Years.



Inclusion criteria: Individuals within the age range of 18-25, pursuing higher education, non-locals to the city of Kolkata and Citizen/Residents of India

Exclusion criteria: Anybody, living in Kolkata or Barasat for more than the last 5 years

Tools:

1. Demographic information
2. Survey questionnaire pertaining to cultural maladjustment in another culture.
3. Psychological well-being scale (Carol d. Ryff, 1989). Developed by psychologist Carol D. Ryff, the 42-item Psychological Wellbeing (PWB). The Scale measures six aspects of wellbeing and happiness: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance.

Ethical considerations were taken care while keeping the sensitive information of the participants confidential and private, and taking informed consent prior to their participation in the study.

Data Analysis: The survey findings were reported with descriptive representations in terms of pie-charts and graphical depictions. These findings were then triangulated with the psychological well-being index that was derived from the psychological well-being scale. Statistical analysis was done using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS Version 16), through which relationship among the various domains

of the psychological well-being scale was determined using Pearson correlation co-efficient. The group differences were determined in terms of the domains of psychological well-being through the descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation. Also, independent sample t-test was done to determine the group differences among the domains of psychological well-being at statistical significance.

Findings

1. Survey Findings

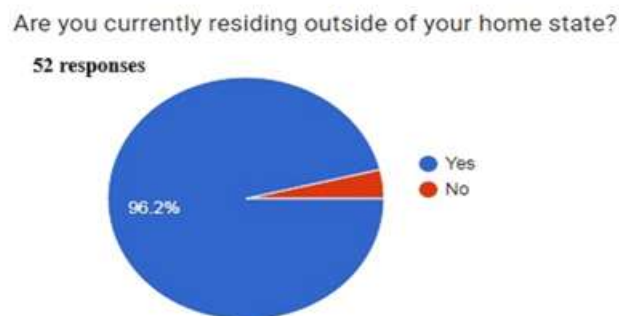


Figure 1(a) - Percentage of Sample residing outside home

The figure above is reflective that 96.2 percent of the sample was residing outside of their home state at the time of data collection, while a very small proportion of the sample was residing at home.

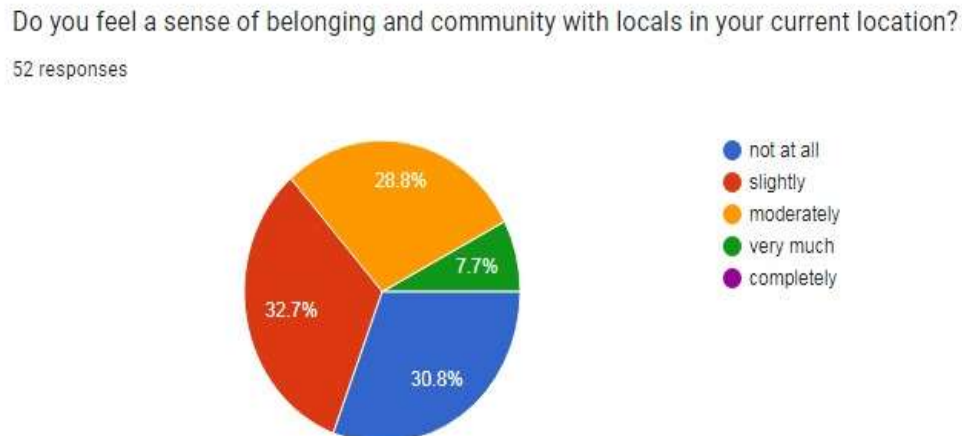


Figure 1 (b): Sense of belonging and community with locals

The largest segment, comprising 30.8%, reported no sense of belonging or community in their current location. This was followed by 32.7% of participants who felt a slight sense of connection with the locals. A moderate sense of belonging and community was reported by 28.8% of the participants. Finally, the smallest segment, at 7.7%, indicated a very strong sense of belonging and community with the local population.

Do you feel supported by your peers and faculty members in your academic journey as a non-local student?

52 responses

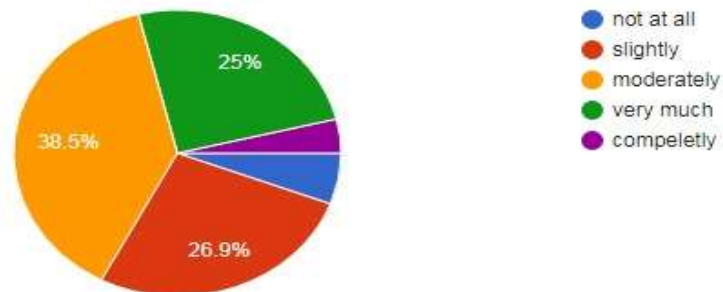


Figure 1(c): Perceived peer and faculty support for the participant's academic journey

The largest proportion, at 38.5%, reported receiving moderate support. A significant portion, 25%, indicated receiving very strong support. However, a notable segment, 26.9%, perceived only slight support from their peers and faculty.

Have you experienced any feelings of homesickness or loneliness since moving to a new location?

52 responses

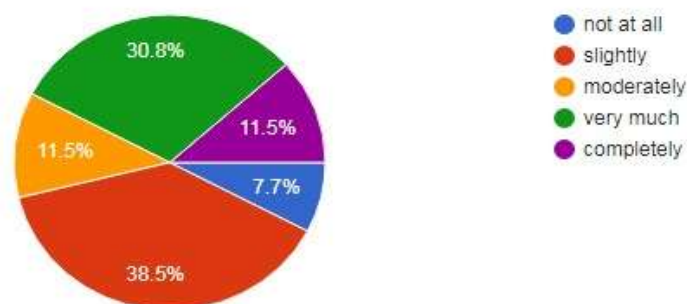


Figure 1(d) - Feelings of homesickness or loneliness

38.5 percent of the participants reported experiencing feelings of homesickness or loneliness to a slight degree since moving to a new location. The remaining participants reported experiencing these feelings with varying degrees of intensity, with 30.8 percent reporting strong feelings, 11.5 percent reporting moderate feelings, and 11.5 percent reporting complete feelings. Additionally, 7.7 percent of participants reported no experience of homesickness or loneliness.

Are you satisfied with the available resources and support services provided to non-local students?

52 responses

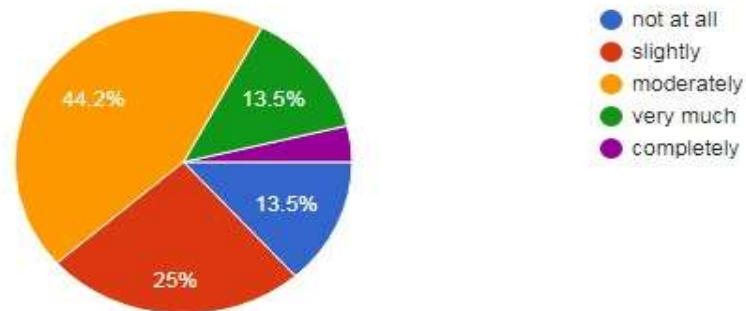


Figure 1(e) - satisfaction with available resources and support services

When examining student satisfaction with available resources and support services provided to non-local students, 44.2% of participants reported moderate satisfaction, 25% reported slight satisfaction, 13.5% reported high satisfaction, and 13.5% reported no satisfaction.

Have you faced any discrimination or prejudice based on your non-local status?

52 responses

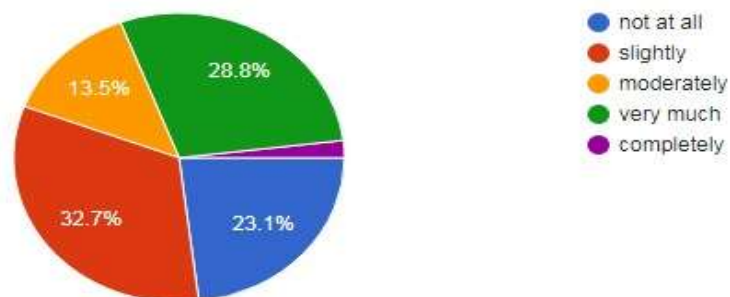


Figure 1(f) - Discrimination or prejudice based on non-local status

In examining experiences of discrimination faced by non-local students, 28.8% of participants reported experiencing very much discrimination, 32.7% reported experiencing slight discrimination, 23.1% reported no discrimination, and 13.5% reported experiencing moderate discrimination.

Do you feel that your mental health and well-being are adequately supported by the university or institution you are attending?

52 responses

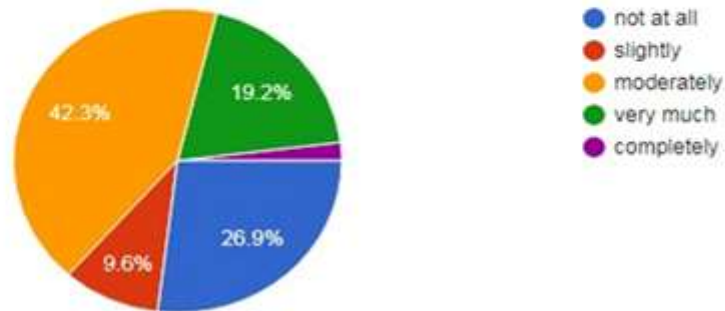


Figure 1(g) - Mental health support by the university

Regarding mental health support, 43.3% of participants reported feeling moderately supported by their university, while 26.9% felt not at all supported, 19.2% very much supported, and 9.6% slightly supported.

Are there any specific concerns or challenges related to being a non-local student that you would like to address?

52 responses

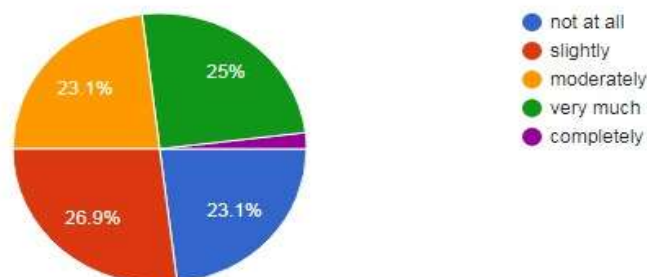


Figure 1(h) - Concerns or challenges related to being non-local students that they would like to address

When examining concerns faced by non-local students, 26.9% reported slight challenges they wanted to address, 25% reported very significant challenges they wanted to address, 23.1% reported moderate challenges they wanted to address, and 23.1% reported no concerns.

Do you engage in activities or seek out opportunities to socialize and connect with other non-local students?

52 responses

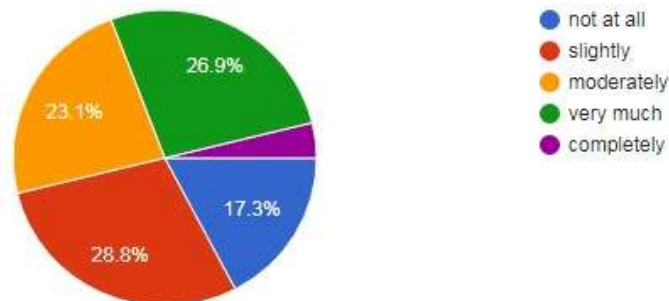


Figure 1(I) - Activities or seeking out opportunities to socialize and connect with other non-local students

Regarding socialization among non-local students, 28.8% reported slightly engaging in activities or seeking opportunities to connect with others, 26.9% reported very much engagement, 23.1% reported moderate engagement, and 17.3% reported not engaging at all.

Do you feel you have adjusted to the cultural differences and challenges of living as a non-local student?

52 responses

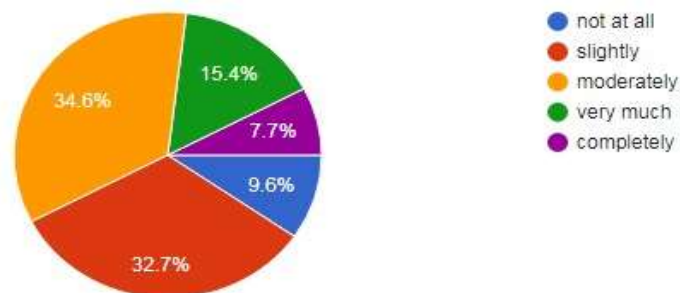


Figure 1(J) - Examining adjustment to cultural differences

Examining adjustment to cultural differences, 34.6% of participants reported feeling moderately adjusted, followed by 32.7% who felt slightly adjusted. While 15.4% reported feeling very much adjusted, a combined 17.3% (9.6% + 7.7%) reported feeling not at all or completely adjusted, indicating some challenges in adapting to the new cultural environment.

Do you feel that there are opportunities provided by your institution or community to foster friendly relations between non local residents and locals?

52 responses

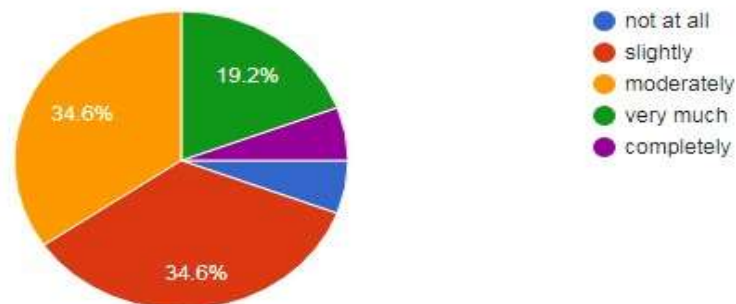


Figure 1(K) - Perceptions of opportunities to foster friendly relations between non-local residents and locals

Perceptions of opportunities to foster friendly relations between non-local residents and locals were mixed. 34.6% of participants felt there were somewhat such opportunities available, while another 34.6% felt there were moderately such opportunities. In contrast, 19.2% felt there were many opportunities available

Have you experienced any challenges or barriers in building friendly relations with local residents?

52 responses

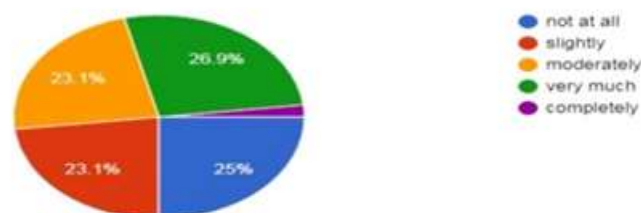


Figure 1(L) - Building relationships with local residents presented challenges for a significant portion of non-local students.

While 25% reported no difficulties, 26.9% experienced very significant challenges, 23.1% faced moderate challenges, and another 23.1% reported slight challenges

Do you feel that there is a sense of inclusivity and acceptance from both non local residents and locals in your current location?

52 responses

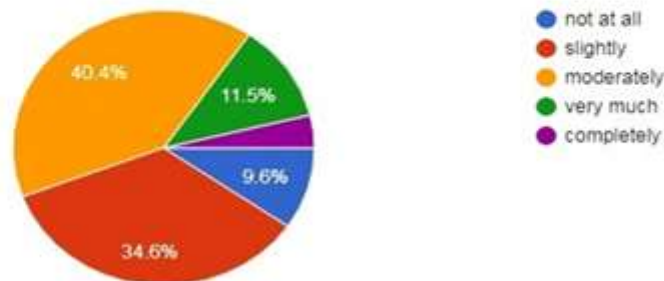


Figure 1(m) - Sense of inclusivity and acceptance from both non-local residents and locals in current location.

Perceptions of inclusivity and acceptance in the local community varied among participants. 40.4% reported feeling a moderate sense of belonging from both local and non-local residents, while 34.6% felt a slight sense. Only 11.5% reported a very strong sense of inclusivity, and 9.6% reported feeling not at all accepted.

Have you received any guidance or resources on how to navigate and build relationships with both non local residents and locals?

52 responses

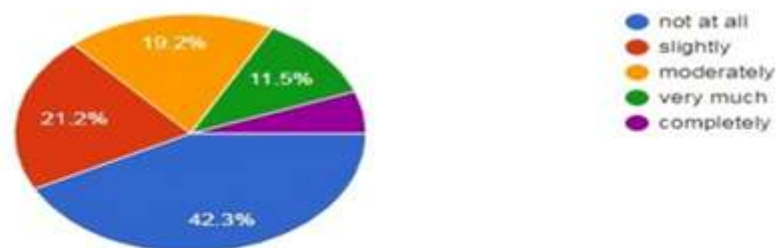


Figure 1(n) - Received guidance or resources on how to navigate and build relationships with both non-local residents and locals

42.3% of participants reported receiving no guidance or resources on navigating and building relationships with both local and non-local residents. While 19.2% received moderate resources, 11.5% received very helpful resources, and 21.2 percent reported that they received slight guidance or resources on navigating and building relationships with both local and non-local residents.

Do you feel that there is a sense of camaraderie and mutual understanding among non-local students and locals?

52 responses

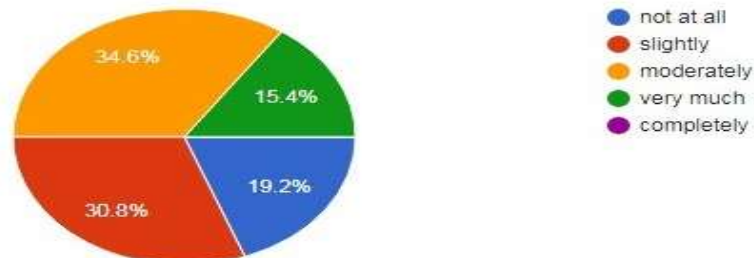


Figure 1(o) - Sense of camaraderie and mutual understanding among non-local students and locals

While 34.6% of participants reported a moderate sense of connection, 30.8% felt a slight sense. Additionally, 15.4% indicated a very strong sense of camaraderie, and 19.2% reported no sense at all.

Do you feel that having friendly relations with the local students positively influences your psychological well-being?

52 responses

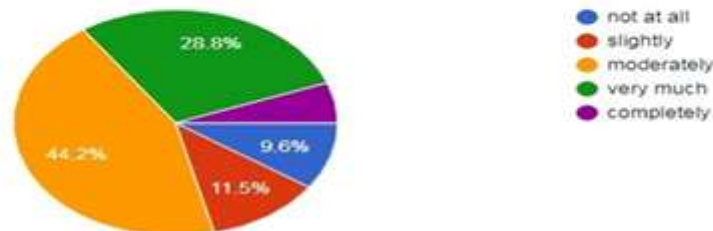


Figure 1 (p)-Friendly relations with local students promote psychological well-being.

44.2% of participants reported a moderate belief that having friendly relations with local students positively influences their psychological well-being. An additional 28.8% strongly agreed, while 11.5% and 9.6% indicated slight agreement and disagreement, respectively.

Have you ever experienced negative impacts on your mental well-being due to cultural misunderstandings with local students?

52 responses

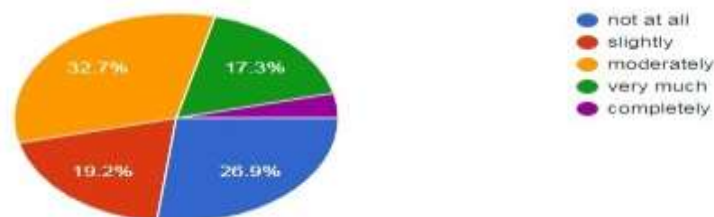


Figure 1(q) - Experienced negative impacts on mental well-being due to cultural misunderstanding with local students

Cultural misunderstandings with local students impacted participants mental well-being to varying degrees. While 32.7% reported experiencing moderate negative effects, 26.9% reported none at all. Additionally, 19.2% indicated slight negative impacts, and 17.3% experienced significant negative impacts.

Have you noticed any improvement in your overall mental health since forming friendly relations with local students?

52 responses

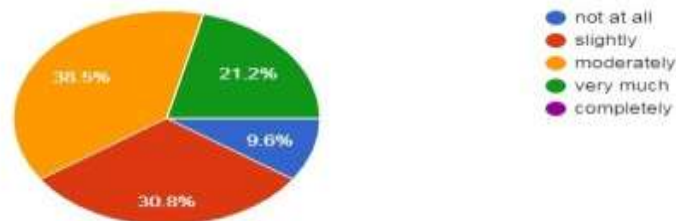


Figure 1(r) - Improvement in overall mental health since forming friendly relations with local students

Specifically, 38.5% of participants reported a moderate improvement, followed by 30.8% who reported a slight improvement. Additionally, 21.2% indicated a very strong improvement, while 9.6% reported no improvement at all.

Do you believe that language barriers impact your overall psychological well-being in social situations?

52 responses

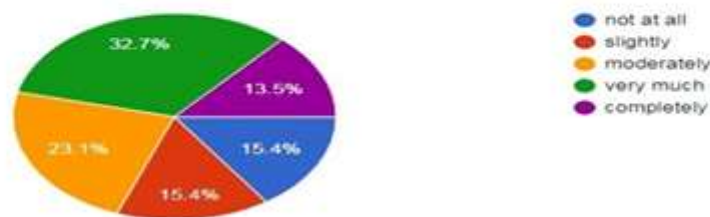


Figure 1(s) - Language barriers impact overall psychological well-being in social situations

Over half (56.2%) reported at least a moderate belief that language barriers have an impact, with 32.7% indicating a very strong belief and 23.1% reporting a moderate belief. In contrast, 29% (15.4% + 13.5%) reported either slight belief (15.4%) or no belief at all (15.4%) in the negative influence of language barriers.

Have you ever felt excluded or isolated because of difficulties in communication with local peers?

52 responses

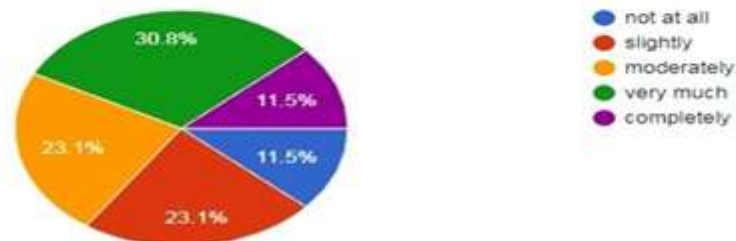


Figure 1(t) - Feelings of exclusion or isolation because of difficulties in communication with local peers

Communication difficulties with local peers significantly impacted feelings of exclusion among participants. Nearly half (46.2%) reported feeling at least moderately excluded, with 30.8% indicating strong feelings of exclusion and 23.1% reporting moderate exclusion. While 11.5% of participants did not feel excluded at all, another 11.5% reported experiencing complete exclusion.

Do you actively seek opportunities to overcome language barriers and enhance your social interactions?

52 responses

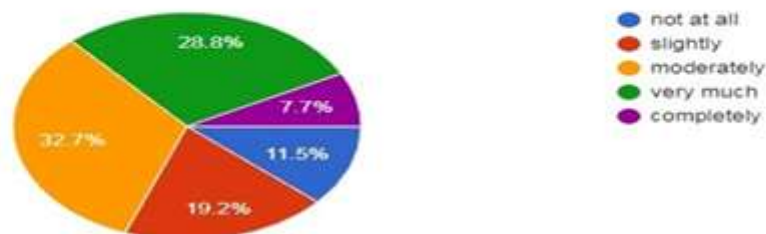


Figure 1(u) - Seeking opportunities to overcome language barriers and enhance social interactions

Overcoming language barriers and fostering social interactions. A significant majority (61.7%) actively sought opportunities to improve their communication, with 32.7% reporting actively seeking such opportunities, 28.8% indicating a very strong desire to do so, and 19.2% expressing a slight preference for seeking these opportunities. In contrast, 19.2% (11.5% + 7.7%) reported little to no interest in actively overcoming language barriers, with 11.5% not seeking opportunities at all and 7.7% completely lacking such a desire.

Have you observed any improvement in your psychological well-being when language barriers are minimized in social settings?

52 responses



Figure 1(v)-Minimizing language barriers in social settings emerged as a significant factor for improved psychological well-being among participants

The majority (63.5%) observed positive changes, with 38.5% indicating moderate improvement, 25% experiencing very strong improvement, and 17.3% noticing slight improvement. However, 19.2% (9.6% + 9.6%) reported no observed improvement at all.

Do you feel that language differences contribute to cultural misunderstandings, affecting your social interactions negatively?

52 responses

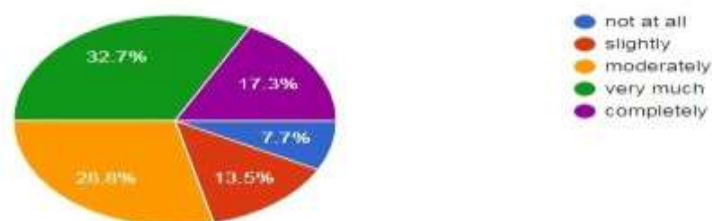


Figure 1(w)-Language differences emerged as a significant barrier to positive social interactions

Language differences emerged as a significant barrier to positive social interactions for a substantial portion of participants (78.8%). While 32.7% reported feeling that language differences very much contribute to cultural misunderstandings and negatively impact social interactions, 28.8% and 17.3% indicated moderate and complete feelings of this effect, respectively. In contrast, only 21.2% (13.5% + 7.7%) reported feeling little to no impact of language differences on cultural misunderstandings or social interactions.

Have you encountered a situation where language challenges have hindered the formation of friendships with local students?

52 responses

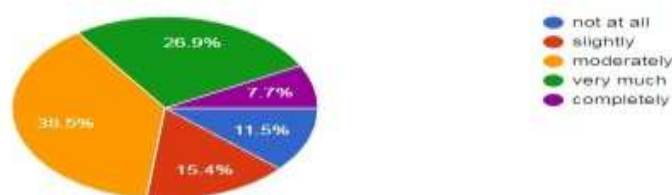


Figure 1(x) - Situation where language challenges have hindered the formation of friendships with local students

Language challenges posed varying degrees of difficulty in forming friendships with local students. Over two-thirds (65.4%) reported encountering such challenges, with 38.5% experiencing them moderately, 26.9% very much, and 15.4% slightly. In contrast, 19.2% (11.5% + 7.7%) reported facing no or minimal language barriers in forming friendships.

Do you believe that initiatives addressing language barriers would positively influence your social well-being?

52 responses

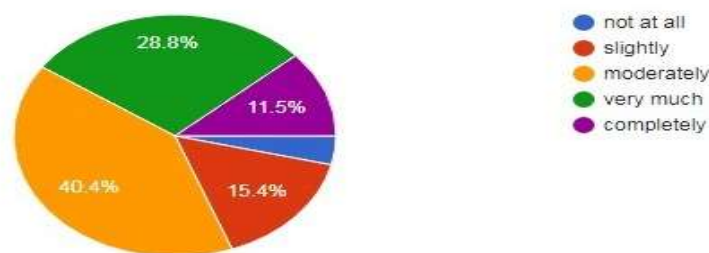


Figure 1(y) - Positive outlook on the potential benefits of initiatives addressing language barriers for their social well-being

A significant majority (84.6%) reported believing in a positive influence, with 40.4% indicating moderate belief, 28.8% reporting a very strong belief, and 15.4% expressing slight belief, 11.5% of participants reported that they completely believe in the positive impact of such initiatives.

Have you sought support or resources to improve your language skills in order to facilitate better social connections?

52 responses

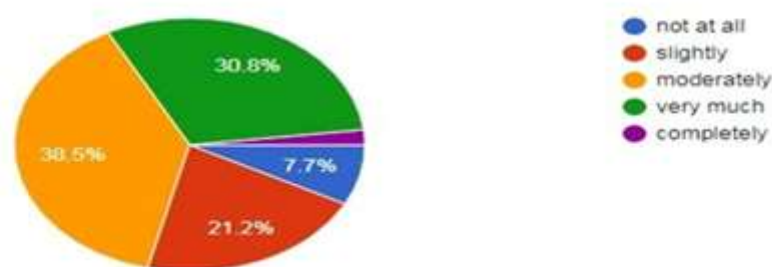


Figure 1(z) - Seeking support or resources to improve language skills in order to facilitate better social connections

A strong majority (69.5%) of participants actively sought resources or support to improve their language skills and facilitate better social connections. This included 38.5% who moderately sought such support, 30.8% who very much sought it, and 21.2% who indicated a slight preference for seeking these resources. In contrast, only 7.7% reported not seeking language improvement resources at all.

Would you be interested in participating in programs or activities aimed at bridging language gaps and fostering a more inclusive social environment?

52 responses

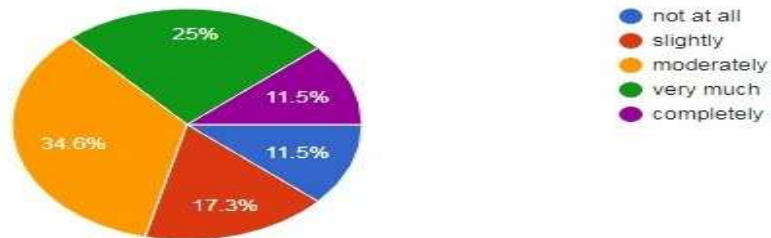


Figure 1(27) - Participation in programs or activities aimed at bridging language gaps and fostering a more inclusive social environment

The survey revealed a positive interest among participants in programs or activities aimed at bridging language gaps and fostering social inclusion. Over half (61.4%) expressed at least moderate interest, with 34.6% indicating moderate interest, 25% reporting a very strong interest, 17.3 percent reporting slight interest, and 11.5% showing complete interest. In contrast, 11.5% reported no interest at all.

2. Statistical Findings

Table 1: Correlation among Variables of Psychological Well-being in Non-Local Females:

Correlations- PWS- Non Local Females							
		FemaleAuto	FemalePurL	FemalePosR	FemaleEnvM	FemalePerG	FemaleSelfA
FemaleAuto	Pearson Correlation	1	.350	.503*	.542*	.356	-.011
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.130	.024	.014	.124	.963
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20
FemalePurL	Pearson Correlation	.350	1	.255	.293	.525*	.417
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.130		.279	.210	.017	.067
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20
FemalePosR	Pearson Correlation	.503*	.255	1	.568**	.600**	.581**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.024	.279		.009	.005	.007

	N	20	20	20	20	20	20
FemaleEnv M	Pearson Correlation	.542*	.293	.568**	1	.559*	.100
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	.210	.009		.010	.674
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20
FemalePerG	Pearson Correlation	.356	.525*	.600**	.559*	1	.267
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.124	.017	.005	.010		.254
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20
FemaleSelfA	Pearson Correlation	-.011	.417	.581**	.100	.267	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.963	.067	.007	.674	.254	
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

A moderately positive correlation exists as 0.568 and it is a significant positive correlation ($p < 0.01$) between positive relations and environmental mastery among females. This indicates that females who experience greater positive relations also tend to have higher levels of environmental mastery. Also, a moderate positive correlation of $r = 0.559$ is a significant positive correlation ($p < 0.05$) between environmental mastery and personal growth among females. This indicates that females who perceive higher levels of environmental mastery also tend to report higher levels of personal growth.

A strong positive correlation of $r = 0.600$ and significant at $p < 0.01$ between positive relations and personal growth among females exists. This suggests that females who perceive higher levels of positive relations also tend to report higher levels of personal growth. Pearson Correlation coefficient of $r = 0.581$ is a significant one at $p < 0.01$ between positive relations and self-acceptance among females. This suggests that females who experience greater positive relations also tend to have higher levels of self-acceptance.

From the above table it can be seen that a moderate positive Pearson Correlation coefficient for Positive relation and Autonomy exists among the non-local females as 0.503 at it is a significant positive correlation ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that females who perceive higher levels of autonomy also tend to report higher levels of positive relations. Another positive Pearson Correlation of $r = 0.542$ is significant

at $p < 0.05$ between autonomy and environmental mastery among non local females. This suggests that females who perceive higher levels of autonomy also tend to have higher levels of environmental mastery.

Table 2: Correlation among Variables of Psychological Well-being in Non-Local Males:

Correlations							
		MaleAuto	MalePurL	MalePosR	MaleEnvM	MalePerG	MaleSelfA
MaleAuto	Pearson Correlation	1	.159	.051	.382*	.086	.004
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.391	.787	.034	.646	.983
	N	31	31	31	31	31	27
MalePurL	Pearson Correlation	.159	1	.515**	.221	.596**	-.092
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.391		.003	.233	.000	.648
	N	31	31	31	31	31	27
MalePosR	Pearson Correlation	.051	.515**	1	.236	.361*	-.159
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.787	.003		.200	.046	.429
	N	31	31	31	31	31	27
MaleEnvM	Pearson Correlation	.382*	.221	.236	1	.199	.031
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034	.233	.200		.283	.878
	N	31	31	31	31	31	27
MalePerG	Pearson Correlation	.086	.596**	.361*	.199	1	.169
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.646	.000	.046	.283		.399
	N	31	31	31	31	31	27
MaleSelfA	Pearson Correlation	.004	-.092	-.159	.031	.169	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.983	.648	.429	.878	.399	
	N	27	27	27	27	27	27
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

The above table is reflective that in case Environmental Mastery and Autonomy, a weak positive correlation of $r = 0.382$, significant at $p < 0.05$ exists among non-local males. This suggests that non-local males who perceive higher levels of environmental mastery also tend to report higher levels of autonomy. Also, in case of positive relations correlating with purpose in life, Pearson Correlation value is 0.515 which is moderate positive correlation significant at $p < 0.01$. This indicates that non-local males who report having a stronger sense of purpose in life also tend to experience higher levels of positive relations.

In case of Purpose in Life with Personal Growth the value for Pearson Correlation is $r = 0.596$, that is a significant moderate positive correlation ($p < 0.01$) between purpose in life and personal growth among non local males. This suggests that males who perceive having a stronger sense of purpose in life also

tend to report higher levels of personal growth.

Also, for Positive Relations and Personal Growth, the Pearson Correlation value is 0.361 which is a significant positive correlation ($p < 0.05$) between positive relations and personal growth among non-local males. This indicates that males who experience greater positive relations also tend to have higher levels of personal growth.

Table 3: Mean Differences among Males and Females

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Autonomy	1	21	28.3810	4.12888	.90099
	2	30	23.8333	4.13633	.75519
Purpose In Life	1	21	16.0000	3.96232	.86465
	2	30	17.6667	5.33908	.97478
Positive Relations	1	21	31.9524	5.98729	1.30653
	2	30	30.7333	7.49222	1.36789
Environmental Mastery	1	21	26.0952	3.22343	.70341
	2	30	24.7000	4.39553	.80251
Personal Growth	1	21	26.7619	3.74038	.81622
	2	30	25.7667	6.21835	1.13531
Self Acceptance	1	21	26.0952	4.80526	1.04859
	2	30	24.7667	5.13059	.93671

For the variable autonomy, in case of non-local females, Mean = 28.3810, Standard Deviation = 4.12888, Standard Error Mean = 0.90099. For males, Mean = 23.8333, Standard Deviation = 4.13633, Standard Error Mean = 0.75519. This is indicative that on average, non-local females reported higher levels of autonomy compared to males. However, there is some variability within each group.

The Mean value = 16.0000, Standard Deviation = 3.96232, Standard Error Mean = 0.86465 for purpose of life in case of non-local females. In case of males, Mean = 17.6667, Standard Deviation = 5.33908, Standard Error Mean = 0.97478. It is suggestive that males reported slightly higher mean scores for purpose in life compared to females, although the difference is not substantial.

Females scored a Mean = 31.9524, Standard Deviation = 5.98729, Standard Error Mean = 1.30653 in case of positive relations, while males had scored a Mean = 30.7333, Standard Deviation = 7.49222, Standard Error Mean = 1.36789. It can be interpreted that females reported slightly higher mean scores for positive relations compared to males, but again, the difference is not substantial.

In case of environmental mastery, females scored a Mean = 26.0952, Standard Deviation = 3.22343, Standard Error Mean = 0.70341, while males scored a Mean = 24.7000, Standard Deviation = 4.39553, Standard Error Mean = 0.80251. This is indicative that females reported slightly higher mean scores for environmental mastery compared to the males.

In case of personal growth, female Mean = 26.7619, Standard Deviation = 3.74038, Standard Error Mean = 0.81622 while male Mean = 25.7667, Standard Deviation = 6.21835, Standard Error Mean =

1.13531. This is indicative that females reported slightly higher mean scores for personal growth compared to males, but the difference is not substantial.

Self acceptance for females has a Mean = 26.0952, Standard Deviation = 4.80526, Standard Error Mean = 1.04859 while in case of males the Mean = 24.7667, Standard Deviation = 5.13059, Standard Error Mean = 0.93671. It can be interpreted that females reported slightly higher mean scores for self-acceptance compared to males, but again, the difference is not substantial.

Table 4: Differences among Non-Local Males and Females for Psychological Well-Being

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Autonomy	Equal variances assumed	.139	.710	3.867	49	.000	4.54762	1.17601	2.18434	6.91090
	Equal variances not assumed			3.868	43.251	.000	4.54762	1.17563	2.17714	6.91810
PurposeInLife	Equal variances assumed	2.714	.106	-1.214	49	.231	-1.66667	1.37276	-4.42534	1.09201
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.279	48.791	.207	-1.66667	1.30300	-4.28543	.95210
PositiveRelations	Equal variances assumed	1.668	.203	.619	49	.539	1.21905	1.96821	-2.73622	5.17431
	Equal variances not assumed			.644	48.055	.522	1.21905	1.89160	-2.58415	5.02225
EnvironmentalMastery	Equal variances assumed	.767	.385	1.239	49	.221	1.39524	1.12649	-.86853	3.65901
	Equal variances not assumed			1.307	48.860	.197	1.39524	1.06715	-.74943	3.53991
PersonalGrowth	Equal variances assumed	5.170	.027	.654	49	.516	.99524	1.52147	-2.06227	4.05274
	Equal variances not assumed			.712	48.095	.480	.99524	1.39826	-1.81602	3.80649
SelfAcceptance	Equal variances assumed	.000	.985	.934	49	.355	1.32857	1.42271	-1.53047	4.18761
	Equal variances not assumed			.946	44.926	.350	1.32857	1.40605	-1.50349	4.16063

From the above table it can be seen that the p-value is greater than .05 (.710), indicating that the assumption of equal variances is met. The p-value is extremely low (.000), indicating a significant difference in means between non local males and females in terms of being autonomous. The mean difference is 4.55, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 2.18 to 6.91.

In case of purpose of life, the p-value is greater than .05 (.106), indicating that the assumption of equal variances is met. The p-value is greater than .05 (.231), indicating no significant difference in means between non local males and females. The mean difference is -1.67, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -4.43 to 1.09.

The p-value is greater than .05 (.203), indicating that the assumption of equal variances is met in case of positive relations. The p-value is greater than .05 (.539), indicating no significant difference in means between non local males and females. The mean difference is 1.22, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -2.74 to 5.17.

In-case of environmental mastery the p-value is greater than .05 (.385), indicating that the assumption of equal variances is met. The p-value is greater than .05 (.221), indicating no significant difference in means between non local males and females. The mean difference is 1.40, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -0.87 to 3.66. The p-value is less than .05 (.027), indicating that the assumption of

equal variances is violated in case of personal growth. The p-value is greater than .05 (.516), indicating no significant difference in means between non local males and females for this variable. The mean difference is 1.00, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -2.06 to 4.05.

In case of self-acceptance, the p-value is greater than .05 (.985), indicating that the assumption of equal variances is met. The p-value is greater than .05 (.355), indicating no significant difference in means between non local males and females with reference to self acceptance. The mean difference is 1.33, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -1.53 to 4.19.

Discussion

The present study aimed to examine the psychological well-being of non-local students in Kolkata, exploring both subjective perceptions gathered through survey responses and objective statistical data derived from validated psychological measures. The findings provide rich insights into how various psychological domains are impacted by the challenges and circumstances faced by non-local students, and how gender differences also play a role in these experiences.

Sense of Belonging and Community Engagement

Survey findings highlighted that a substantial proportion of non-local students reported a weak or limited sense of belonging with the local community. Many participants indicated that they felt disconnected or only slightly connected to the host environment. This sense of alienation can be understood through the lens of **Environmental Mastery** and **Positive Relations** domains of psychological well-being, as measured in the study.

Statistical findings show that for both females and males, positive relations were significantly correlated with environmental mastery ($r = 0.568$, $p < 0.01$ for females; $r = 0.236$, $p > 0.05$ for males), indicating that the ability to establish meaningful interpersonal relationships contributes to better adjustment to the environment. Among females, these correlations were stronger and more significant; suggesting that for non-local female students, developing positive relationships may be a key buffer against the challenges of relocation and cultural adjustment.

Perceived Social Support and Faculty Interaction

The survey also revealed variability in perceived support from peers and faculty, with many students reporting only moderate levels of support. This finding resonates with the **Positive Relations with Others** subscale in the statistical analysis. The mean scores for positive relations were slightly higher for females ($M = 31.95$) than males ($M = 30.73$), though the difference was not statistically significant. The modestly higher scores among females suggest that non-local female students may engage more actively in building support networks, which could explain the stronger correlations between positive relations and other well-being domains observed in this group.

Homesickness, Loneliness, and Cultural Adjustment

Homesickness and loneliness emerged as prominent concerns among participants. The challenges of cultural adaptation, language barriers, and the difficulty in forming meaningful friendships with locals were repeatedly noted in the survey responses. Language barriers, in particular, were identified as having a significant negative impact on psychological well-being, with many participants feeling excluded from social activities and broader campus life due to communication difficulties.

These findings are strongly reflected in the **Autonomy** and **Environmental Mastery** subscales. Autonomy scores were significantly higher for females than males ($M = 28.38$ vs. 23.83 , $p < 0.001$), suggesting that non-local females perceived themselves as more capable of managing their own lives despite external challenges. However, males reported slightly higher scores for **Purpose in Life** ($M = 17.67$ vs. 16.00 for females), implying that while males might struggle more with autonomy, they might derive a sense of purpose from other areas such as academic or personal goals.

Experiences of Discrimination and Social Inclusion

Discrimination based on non-local status was another critical issue raised in the survey responses. Experiences of exclusion or subtle forms of prejudice can have far-reaching effects on an individual's sense of **Self-Acceptance** and **Personal Growth**. Although statistical analyses did not reveal significant gender differences for self-acceptance and personal growth, females consistently reported slightly higher mean scores across these domains.

The positive correlations observed between **Positive Relations** and both **Self-Acceptance** ($r = 0.581$, $p < 0.01$ for females) and **Personal Growth** ($r = 0.600$, $p < 0.01$ for females; $r = 0.361$, $p < 0.05$ for males) further underscore the protective role of social connections in maintaining psychological well-being. This suggests that building supportive peer networks may serve as a critical coping strategy against experiences of discrimination and cultural stressors.

Mental Health Support and Institutional Resources

A mixed perception regarding the availability and adequacy of university-provided mental health services was noted in the survey. While some students felt moderately supported, others expressed dissatisfaction or complete lack of support. This variation indicates a gap between available mental health resources and student needs. The lack of accessible, culturally-sensitive mental health services might exacerbate feelings of helplessness and psychological distress.

Although not directly measured in the quantitative scales, the general well-being domains assessed—such as **Self-Acceptance**, **Autonomy**, and **Environmental Mastery**—are often influenced by access to institutional support services. Hence, the relatively moderate mean scores across these dimensions highlight the potential role that improved institutional support could play in enhancing student well-being.

Gender Differences in Psychological Well-Being

An important finding of the study is the gender-specific patterns in psychological well-being. Statistical analyses showed that females reported significantly higher autonomy than males, while males had slightly higher, though not statistically significant, scores for purpose in life. Correlation analysis further revealed that psychological well-being domains are more strongly interrelated among females than males. For example, females showed multiple significant correlations across positive relations, personal growth, environmental mastery, and self-acceptance, indicating a more integrated psychological profile. This pattern may suggest that non-local female students, despite facing comparable external stressors, may adopt more adaptive coping strategies such as social engagement, positive interpersonal relationships, and personal development efforts. Males, on the other hand, may focus more on goal-directed behavior (reflected in higher purpose in life scores) but may struggle with autonomy and social integration.

Conclusion

The present study offers a comprehensive examination of the psychological well-being of non-local students in Kolkata, integrating both subjective self-reports and objective statistical analyses. The findings reveal that non-local students encounter a multifaceted set of challenges that affect their well-being, including limited social integration, homesickness, language barriers, and occasional experiences of discrimination. Despite these challenges, many students demonstrate resilience and adaptive coping mechanisms, particularly through fostering positive relationships and pursuing personal growth.

Statistical analyses highlighted that psychological well-being is a complex, multidimensional construct, with significant interrelationships among various domains such as **Positive Relations, Self-Acceptance, Personal Growth, Environmental Mastery, and Autonomy**. Gender differences emerged as a significant factor, with non-local female students exhibiting stronger correlations between these well-being domains, suggesting a more integrated and socially supportive coping framework. Males, while demonstrating slightly higher scores on **Purpose in Life**, reported lower autonomy and weaker relational support, indicating differing patterns of adjustment.

The interplay between survey responses and quantitative findings underscores that social connectedness and institutional support play crucial roles in shaping the psychological well-being of non-local students. The absence of strong peer support networks, limited faculty engagement, and inadequate mental health services exacerbate feelings of isolation and reduce the students' ability to fully adapt to their new environment. Overall, the findings emphasize that while non-local students bring considerable strengths in terms of ambition and adaptability, they require systematic institutional and peer-based support to maximize their well-being and academic success.

Implications

The implications of this study are multifaceted and extend to various stakeholders involved in the well-being and academic success of non-local students in Kolkata. This study highlights the importance of creating a supportive environment for non-local students by providing adequate resources and support services. University administrators and policy makers can use the findings to develop targeted interventions aimed at addressing the unique needs of non-local students, such as implementing mentorship programs, enhancing mental health support services, and providing language assistance programs.

Educators and faculty members play a crucial role in supporting non-local students academically and emotionally. They can use the findings of this study to gain insights into the challenges faced by non-local students and implement strategies to promote inclusivity and cultural sensitivity in the classroom. Faculty members can also provide additional support to non-local students through mentorship and academic advising. Peer support groups and student organizations can play a vital role in fostering a sense of belonging and community among non-local students. The findings of this study can inform the development of peer support programs and cultural exchange initiatives aimed at promoting social integration and providing a platform for non-local students to connect with their peers.

Mental health professionals and counselors can use the findings of this study to tailor their services to meet the specific needs of non-local students. They can provide culturally sensitive counseling and support services to help non-local students cope with feelings of homesickness, loneliness, and cultural adjustment difficulties. Additionally, counselors can collaborate with university administrators to enhance mental health support services on campus. Non-local students and their families can benefit

from the findings of this study by gaining a better understanding of the challenges associated with studying away from home. By being aware of these challenges, non-local students can take proactive steps to seek support, build social connections, and prioritize their mental health and well-being during their time in Kolkata.

Recommendations

Universities should prioritize the enhancement of support services tailored to the needs of non-local students. This includes expanding mental health support services, providing language assistance programs, and offering cultural adjustment workshops and seminars. Mentorship programs can be established to pair non-local students with faculty members, senior students, or alumni who can provide guidance, support, and advice on academic, social, and cultural matters.

Peer support groups and student organizations should be encouraged to create inclusive environments where non-local students can connect with their peers, share experiences, and seek advice and support from individuals facing similar challenges. Universities can organize cultural exchange initiatives, such as language exchange programs, international food festivals, and cultural awareness events, to promote cross-cultural understanding and facilitate social integration among local and non-local students.

Language assistance programs should be implemented to help non-local students overcome language barriers and improve their communication skills. This may include language courses, conversation clubs, and language buddy programs. Universities should take proactive measures to address instances of discrimination and prejudice faced by non-local students. This may involve implementing anti-discrimination policies, raising awareness about cultural diversity, and providing training to staff and students on cultural sensitivity and inclusivity.

Universities should ensure that campus facilities are inclusive and accessible to non-local students. This may include providing dedicated spaces for international student activities, prayer rooms, and facilities for cooking traditional food. Comprehensive orientation programs should be provided to incoming non-local students to familiarize them with campus resources, academic requirements, and cultural norms. These programs can help alleviate feelings of homesickness, anxiety, and isolation among new students. Universities should encourage non-local students to actively participate in social activities, clubs, and extracurricular events to facilitate social integration and promote a sense of belonging within the campus community. It is essential for universities to regularly assess the needs and concerns of non-local students through surveys, focus groups, and feedback mechanisms. This will enable institutions to tailor their support services and initiatives to effectively address the evolving needs of this student population.

Limitations

Despite the valuable insights gained from this study, it's important to acknowledge its limitations, which can affect the generalizability and interpretation of the findings. The study's sample size of 52 participants, consisting of 21 females and 31 males, may not be representative of the entire population of non-local students in Kolkata. The unequal gender distribution could also impact the generalizability of the findings.

Purposive sampling was used to select candidates, which may introduce bias and limit the representativeness of the sample. Participants who volunteered to participate may have unique characteristics or experiences that differ from those who chose not to participate. The study focused specifically on non-local students residing in Kolkata, which may limit the applicability of the findings

to other regions or cities in India. Cultural, social, and environmental factors may vary across different locations, affecting the experiences of non-local students differently.

The data collected through surveys and questionnaires rely on self-reported responses from participants, which may be subject to biases such as social desirability bias or response bias. Participants may provide answers that they perceive as socially acceptable or desirable, rather than reflecting their true experiences. The study employed a cross-sectional design, which captures data at a single point in time. This design limits the ability to establish causal relationships between variables or assess changes in experiences and outcomes over time.

While the study utilized established measurement tools such as the Psychological Well-being Scale, the reliability and validity of these instruments may vary across cultural contexts. The applicability of these tools to the specific population of non-local students in Kolkata may be limited. Language barriers and cultural differences may have influenced participants' understanding of survey questions and their ability to accurately express their experiences. The study may not fully capture the nuances of cultural adaptation and social integration among non-local students.

The findings of this study may not be generalizable to other demographic groups, such as older students or non-students, or to non-academic settings. The experiences of non-local students in Kolkata may differ from those in other educational institutions or countries.

While the reviewed studies offer rich insights, several gaps remain. Many studies focus on challenges and negative outcomes, with less attention to resilience, successful coping mechanisms, and protective factors among well-adapted students (Khawaja & Dempsey, 2008). Moreover, the influence of institutional support services, culturally sensitive mental health interventions, and policy-level interventions warrant further exploration (Walther et al., 2020; Lu et al., 2014).

Longitudinal and mixed-method research designs would better capture the dynamic nature of adjustment processes over time (Cao Shan et al., 2020). Furthermore, more attention is needed on intersectionality—how factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, religious identity, and pre-migration experiences interact to shape adjustment (King et al., 2023; Gardner et al., 2014).

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