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Psychological Well-Being of Secondary School Teachers in relation to Gender and Locality

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Abstract

This study explored the level of psychological well-being of secondary school teachers concerning gender and locality. By using a descriptive survey design and random sampling technique, data was collected from 175 secondary school teachers of Azamgarh district, Uttar Pradesh, India. Psychological well-being was evaluated with a standardized instrument, and the results were analyzed through descriptive statistics and independent-samples t-tests. The findings revealed that the majority of teachers exhibited a moderate level of psychological well-being. Gender based analysis indicated a statistically significant difference in psychological well-being ($t = 2.87$, $p < .05$) of female secondary school teachers ($M = 171.92$, $SD = 19.48$) surpassing their counterparts ($M = 163.84$, $SD = 20.96$). No significant difference was found in the psychological well-being of teachers belonging to rural and urban schools ($t = 0.41$, $p > .05$). The findings illustrate that gender considerably influences psychological well-being, whereas locality does not. The study underscores the importance of gender-sensitive institutional support in improving teachers' psychological well-being.

Keywords: Psychological well-being, gender, locality, secondary school teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher psychological well-being (PWB) has been a significant focus in current educational research. This is because of teachers mental and emotional health directly affect their professional performance, motivation, and the quality of teaching and learning environment. In recent years, psychological demands on teachers have increased due to heavier workloads, unclear job roles, pressures of accountability, and changing educational expectations. This has made teacher well-being a crucial concern for the sustainability of education systems (Nwoko et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2024). Psychological well-being is more than just the absence of stress or burnout. It is a complex concept that includes positive functioning, emotional equilibrium, a sense of purpose, independence, and healthy connections with others. Ryff's (1989) model of psychological well-being remains a core framework for comprehending these

characteristics, emphasizing self-acceptance, environmental mastery, personal progress, meaningful relationships, a sense of purpose, and autonomy. Further studies have confirmed the importance of these dimensions in education, particularly for instructors who must regularly interact emotionally, intellectually, and socially (Viac & Fraser, 2020).

Empirical findings have repeatedly shown that educators exhibiting elevated psychological well-being tend to possess greater intrinsic motivation, exhibit superior classroom management skills, and deliver higher-quality instruction, thereby contributing to improved student learning outcomes (Gámez-Genovart et al., 2025; Hollenstein & Brühwiler, 2024). Conversely, diminished well-being is linked to burnout, emotional exhaustion, decreased job satisfaction, and reduced professional engagement (Shafariah & Gofur, 2025). Research conducted in diverse educational settings has identified work–life balance, autonomy, institutional support, and professional recognition as significant factors influencing teachers' psychological well-being (Solvason et al., 2023; Boccoli et al., 2022).

Gender disparities in teachers' psychological well-being have been extensively studied; however, the results remain equivocal. Research indicates minimal or no significant gender-based differences, suggesting that professional stressors impact instructors regardless of gender (Zhou et al., 2024). Studies that examine gender-specific experiences influenced by societal roles, affective demands, and work-family obligations, which may differentially impact teachers' psychological well-being (Reyes, 2024). These inconsistencies underscored the importance of conducting context-specific investigations, especially within the Indian educational environment.

Locality also significantly influences teachers' psychological well-being. Educators operating in rural and urban environments frequently encounter varying degrees of professional support, infrastructure resources, burden allocation, and opportunities for professional development. Variations in institutional resources and community expectations can substantially influence teachers' emotional and psychological well-being, thus necessitating a focused investigation (Viac & Fraser, 2020). Recent systematic reviews and meta-analyses underscored the significance of assessing teachers' psychological well-being through a comprehensive approach that considers personal, professional, and contextual factors (Nwoko et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2024). considering the expanding body of global literature, there continues to be a scarcity of empirical research investigating the psychological well-being of secondary school teachers (SSTs) in relation to gender and locality, especially within developing educational contexts. In view of these considerations, the current study aims to investigate the psychological well-being of secondary school teachers in relation to gender and locality and offer valuable insights for policy development, institutional support systems, and professional growth initiatives.

Significance of the Study

Effective teaching and a positive learning environment depend on the psychological well-being of secondary school teachers. Teachers at secondary level have to deal with adolescents who experience significant emotional, social, and academic changes, which puts additional psychological strain on teachers. In addition to their instructional duties, teachers are required to oversee their workload, meet administrative expectations, and maintain a work–life balance, all of which can impact their psychological well-being. Due to variations in social roles, institutional backing, and resource availability, these challenges may differ by gender and locality. Therefore, it is essential to assess psychological well-being of secondary school teachers in relation to gender and locality in order to comprehend the factors that influence teachers' psychological well-being.

Research Questions

After going through the previous literature, following questions came to the mind of the investigators that prompted them to take up this study.

1. What is the level of psychological well-being of secondary school teachers?
2. Is there a significant difference in the level of psychological well-being of secondary school teachers with respect to gender?
3. Is there a significant difference in the level of psychological well-being of secondary school teachers with respect to locality?

Objectives of the Study

The present study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To study the level of psychological well-being of secondary school teachers.
2. To compare the level of psychological well-being of male and female secondary school teachers.
3. To compare the level of psychological well-being of teachers belonging to rural and urban secondary schools.

Hypotheses of the Study

The following null hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is no significant mean difference in the level of psychological well-being of male and female secondary school teachers.
2. There is no significant mean difference in the level of psychological well-being of teachers belonging to rural and urban secondary schools.

Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research methodology and data was gathered through random sampling technique. The selected design was considered suitable as it facilitates the description and analysis of the psychological well-being of secondary school teachers in relation to their gender and locality. A random sampling procedure was employed to choose a representative cohort of 175 secondary school teachers, encompassing both male and female educators from rural and urban locales. The sample size was deemed adequate to investigate variations in psychological well-being based on gender and locality. The collected data was examined via IBM SPSS (Version 26.0), employing suitable statistical approaches to fulfil the study's objectives.

Research Tool Used

The Psychological Wellbeing Scale, created by Dr. Anjum Ahmad, was utilised to gather the data. It has 43 items, of which 24 are good and 19 are negative. Positive items are assigned scores of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, whilst negative ones receive scores of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. This scale assesses eight elements of psychological well-being: Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Purpose in Life, Positive Interpersonal Relationships, Self-Acceptance, Technology Addiction, and Health Issues. A high score signifies elevated psychological well-being, whilst a low score denotes diminished psychological well-being.

Statistical Techniques Used

The data was analyzed by utilizing descriptive and inferential statistics in accordance with the objectives of the study. Statistical analysis was conducted by Microsoft Excel 2024 and IBM SPSS (Version 26.0). Descriptive statistics—mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis—were employed to encapsulate the distribution of psychological well-being ratings. The t-test was utilized to examine variations in psychological well-being concerning gender and locality.

Analysis of the Data

The following table presents the important statistical constants of the distribution of psychological well-being scores of secondary school teachers.

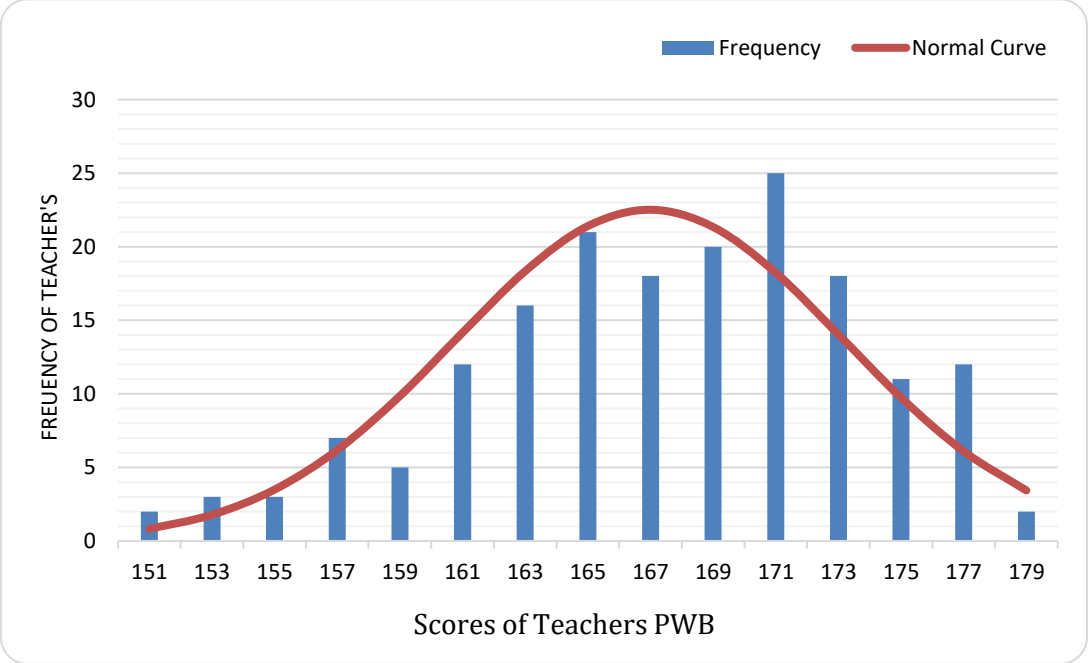
Table 1.1 Statistical parameters of the distribution of Psychological Well-Being of SSTs

Variable	N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Psychological Well-Being	175	165.48	166	164.00	19.72	0.18	–0.41

Interpretation

Table 1.1 demonstrates that the three measures of central tendency—mean (165.48), median (166.00), and mode (164.00)—of psychological well-being scores among secondary school teachers are closely aligned, indicating a steady and balanced distribution of scores. The standard deviation of 19.72 indicates a moderate variability of scores relative to the mean. The skewness value of 0.18 is within the acceptable range of +1.0 to -1.0, suggesting that the distribution is almost symmetrical. The negative kurtosis value (–0.41) indicates a mildly platykurtic distribution, signifying a flatter curve compared to the normal distribution. The mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis indicate that the psychological well-being scores among secondary school teachers are approximately normally distributed, thus fulfilling the prerequisites for employing parametric statistical methods in subsequent analysis.

Figure 1.1 Normal Probability Curve showing distribution of Psychological Well-being of Secondary School Teachers



Objective No. 1 To study the level of Psychological Well-Being of secondary school teachers

The scores of Psychological Well-Being of secondary school teachers are presented in the following Table- 1.2

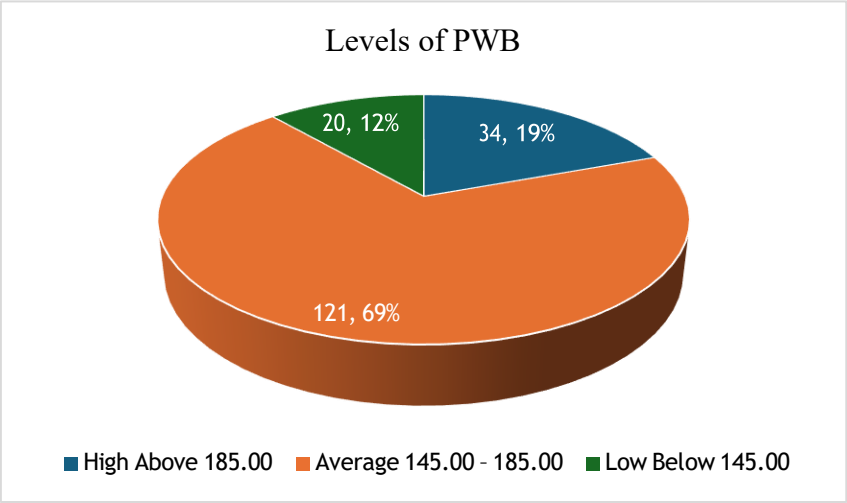
Table 1.2 Levels of Psychological Well-Being of Secondary School Teachers

Sl. No.	Level	Range of Raw Scores	N
1	High	Above 185.00	34
2	Average	145.00 – 185.00	121
3	Low	Below 145.00	20
Total			**175**

Table 1.2 indicate levels of psychological well-being of secondary school teachers. The results reveal that among 175 teachers, the predominant group, consisting of 121 teachers, demonstrates an average level of psychological well-being. Additionally, 34 teachers exhibit a high level of psychological well-being, whilst 20 teachers are categorized as having a low level of psychological well-being. The data clearly indicate that the majority of secondary school teachers exhibit an average level of psychological well-being. This indicates that although teachers often manage their psychological functioning effectively, there is potential for enhancement via institutional support, stress management programs, and professional development activities focused on improving teachers' psychological well-being.

This will be clearer by the following Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2 Levels of Psychological Well-Being of Secondary School Teachers



Objective No. 2 To compare the level of psychological well-being of male and female secondary school teachers.

Null Hypothesis (H_{01}) There is no significant mean difference in the level of psychological well- being of male and female secondary school teachers.

Table 1.3 Psychological Well-Being of Secondary School Teachers in relation to Gender

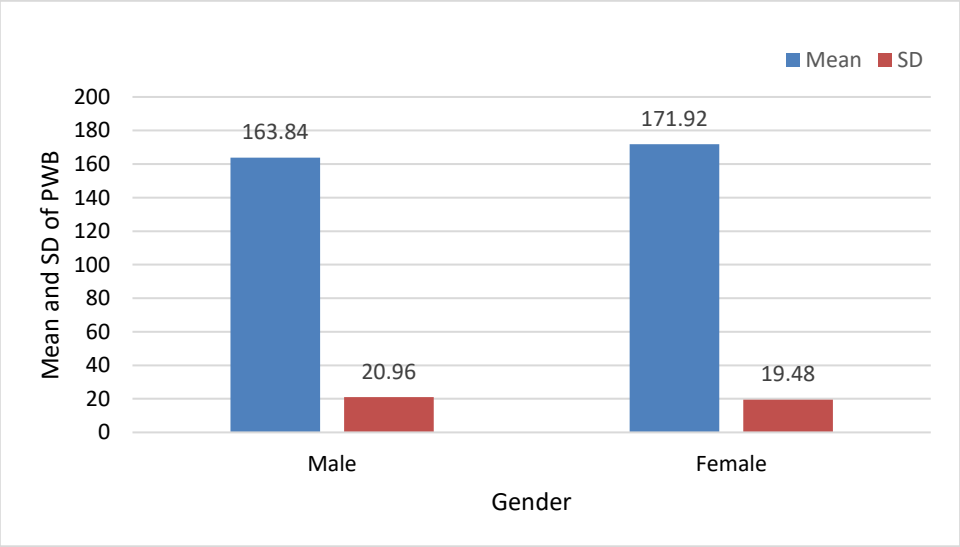
Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
Male	82	163.84	20.96	173	2.87	.005	Significant at 0.05 level
Female	93	171.92	19.48				

Interpretation

Table 1.3 presents a comparison of psychological well-being ratings among secondary school teachers categorized by gender. The calculated t-value ($t = 2.87$, $p < 0.05$) signifies a statistically significant disparity in the psychological well-being of male and female secondary school educators. The average score of female teachers (M = 171.92, SD = 19.48) exceeds that of male teachers (M = 163.84, SD = 20.96), indicating that female teachers exhibit relatively superior level of psychological well-being as compared to their male counterparts. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{01})—which posits that there is no significant mean difference in the psychological well-being of secondary school teachers based on gender—is rejected.

This will be more clearly illustrated in the following Figure-1.3

Figure-1.3 Psychological Well-being of secondary teachers in relation to their gender



Objective No. 3 To compare the level of psychological well-being of teachers teaching in rural and urban secondary schools.

Null Hypothesis (H_{02}) There is no significant mean difference in the level of psychological well- being of secondary school teachers of rural and urban areas.

Table 1.4 Psychological Well-Being of Secondary School Teachers in relation to Locality

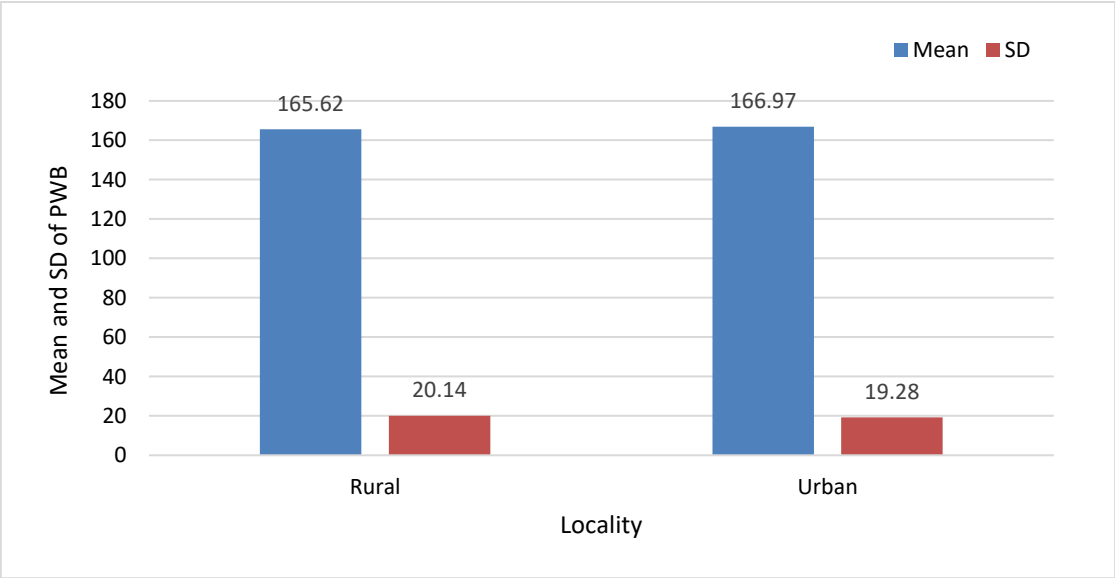
Locality	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
Rural	112	165.62	20.14	173	0.41	0.68	Not Significant at 0.05 level
Urban	63	166.97	19.28				

Interpretation

Table 1.4 illustrates the contrast of psychological well-being among secondary school teachers based on locality. The calculated t-value ($t = 0.41$, $p > 0.05$) suggests that there is no statistically significant difference in the psychological well-being of teachers in rural versus urban secondary schools. The average score of teachers in urban schools (M = 166.97, SD = 19.28) is slightly greater than that of teachers in rural schools (M = 165.62, SD = 20.14), however the difference is not statistically significant. This indicates that locality does not significantly affect the psychological well-being of secondary school teachers. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) positing no significant mean difference in the psychological well-being of secondary school teachers in rural vs urban schools is accepted.

This will be more clearly depicted in the following Figure-1.4

Figure 1.4 Psychological Well-being of secondary school teachers in relation to their locality



Discussion

In respect to gender and locality, the current study looked at the psychological well-being of secondary school teachers. The findings showed a substantial difference in psychological well-being based on gender. Specifically, female teachers reported higher levels of psychological well-being as compared to their male colleagues. The observed difference may be due to the individual differences in managing their emotions, the coping mechanisms they use, and the social support they have. Regarding locality, however, there was no discernible difference. Teachers in both rural and urban locations showed similar levels of psychological well-being. This suggests that the professional expectations and conditions of their workplaces had a similar impact, regardless of where they work. These findings shows that gender emerged as a determining factor in teachers' psychological well-being, while locality does not.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the investigators suggested the following recommendations for the educational authorities that should implemented for strengthening psychological well-being of secondary school teachers.

- **In light of the observed gender differences, targeted support should be provided to teachers who may be more vulnerable to psychological distress with emphasis on-**
    - emotional regulation skills
    - stress management techniques
    - development of adaptive coping strategies
- **Educational institutions should establish formal support mechanisms by including-**
    - access to professional counselling services
    - structured peer-support and collaborative networks
    - teacher well-being awareness and mental health promotion programs

  Psychological well-Being initiatives should be taken for teachers teaching in rural and urban localities by-
    - implementing uniformly across all schools
    - ensuring equity and inclusivity, irrespective of geographical location
- **School leadership should prioritize the creation of a supportive organizational climate by-**
    - recognizing and valuing teachers' professional contributions
    - maintaining realistic workload expectations and professional standards
    - encouraging positive interpersonal relationships within the school environment

- **Psychological well-being and self-care practices should be integrated into-**
  - pre-service teacher education programs
  - in-service teacher education programs
  - continuous professional development programs

Such integration may empower secondary school teachers with essential competencies to manage and sustain long-term psychological well-being.

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