



Psychological Well-Being among Undergraduate Students in Central Division of Odisha

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Abstract

Background: Psychological well-being is a fundamental component of students' holistic development and academic success. Undergraduate students encounter various academic, social, and personal challenges that may influence their psychological well-being. Understanding their level of psychological well-being is essential for developing effective institutional support systems.

Objectives: The study aimed to (i) assess the level of psychological well-being among undergraduate students in Jajpur District, Odisha, and (ii) Analyse variations in psychological well-being in relation to certain demographic factors, such as location and gender. (iii) investigate the connection between specific demographic factors and undergraduate students' psychological wellbeing.

Methods: A descriptive survey research design was adopted. A sample of 100 undergraduate students from Jajpur District colleges were chosen for the study using a suitable sampling technique. A standardized Psychological Well-Being Scale was used to collect the data. The degree of psychological well-being was assessed using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage), and gender and Locality differences were investigated using independent samples t-tests.

Results: The findings revealed that 81% of the respondents exhibited above-average to extremely high levels of psychological well-being, indicating generally favourable psychological health among undergraduate students. However, 11% of the students were found to have below-average to extremely low levels, suggesting the need for targeted psychological support. The independent samples t-test indicated no significant differences in psychological well-being with respect to gender ($t = 0.83, p > .05$) and locality ($t = 1.27, p > .05$).

Conclusion: The study concludes that undergraduate students in Jajpur District generally possess favourable psychological well-being, irrespective of gender and locality. However, in order to improve students' psychological well-being and overall growth, higher education institutions should bolster counselling services, mental health awareness initiatives, and encouraging learning environments.

Keywords: Psychological well-being, undergraduate students, higher education, gender, locality, Odisha, mental health.

1. Introduction

Psychological well-being has emerged as one of the most significant indicators of individuals' overall health, quality of life, and effective functioning. Contemporary perspectives on mental health emphasize that well-being extends beyond the absence of mental illness and encompasses positive psychological functioning, personal growth, meaningful relationships, autonomy, environmental mastery, and purpose in life (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). According to Keyes (2002), individuals with high psychological well-being experience flourishing, characterized by positive emotions, social integration, and effective functioning in daily life. Similarly, Seligman (2011), through the PERMA model, argued that well-being is fostered by positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, enabling individuals to cope successfully with life's challenges. Consequently, psychological well-being has become a central concern in educational psychology because it influences students' emotional adjustment, learning outcomes, and overall development.

Higher education represents a critical developmental period during which young adults undergo significant academic, personal, and social transitions. Emerging adulthood, typically experienced during undergraduate education, is characterized by identity exploration, increased independence, career planning, and the establishment of interpersonal relationships (Arnett, 2000). While these experiences provide opportunities for personal growth, they also expose students to various stressors, including academic workload, examination pressure, financial constraints, family expectations, social relationships, and uncertainty regarding future employment (Beiter et al., 2015). The ability of students to manage these challenges depends largely on their level of psychological well-being. Students with higher psychological well-being generally demonstrate greater emotional regulation, stronger interpersonal relationships, better academic engagement, and higher resilience, whereas students with poor psychological well-being are more vulnerable to stress, anxiety, loneliness, reduced motivation, and poor academic performance (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Diener et al., 1999; Keyes, 2007).

Growing concern regarding students' mental health has made psychological well-being a global educational priority. The World Health Organization (2022) describes mental health as a state of well-being in which people understand their abilities, cope effectively with the normal challenges of daily life, work productively, and actively contribute to society.

Recent evidence suggests that university students worldwide face increasing psychological challenges arising from academic competition, technological changes, financial insecurity, social media exposure, and career uncertainty (Auerbach et al., 2023). These Challenges have received significant attention from researchers, policymakers, and educational institutions, leading to increased emphasis on promoting psychological well-being rather than merely preventing psychological disorders. Several empirical studies have demonstrated that psychological well-being is closely associated with positive educational outcomes. Ryff and Keyes (1995) reported that students possessing higher psychological well-being exhibit greater self-acceptance, autonomy, and purpose in life, contributing to successful academic and personal adjustment. Diener et al. (1999) found that psychologically healthy individuals participate more actively in academic and social activities while maintaining better life satisfaction. Beiter et al. (2015) reported that academic stress, anxiety, and financial concerns negatively influence university students' mental health, highlighting the importance of institutional support systems. More recently, Das, Acharya, and Mohanty (2026) found Undergraduate students in the Balasore District showed a strong positive correlation between mindfulness and subjective well-being, suggesting that positive psychological characteristics enhance students' emotional health and academic functioning (Das et al., 2026). Similarly, Tikader and Mandal (2025) emphasized that value-based education, emotional resilience, and supportive educational environments contribute significantly to students' psychological well-being by promoting holistic personality development and positive interpersonal relationships (Tikader & Mandal, 2025).

In the Indian context, rapid expansion of higher education has created greater educational opportunities while simultaneously increasing academic competition and career-related stress (Ministry of Education, 2020). Recognizing these challenges, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 advocates a holistic approach to education that emphasizes students' cognitive, emotional, ethical, and psychological development. The policy encourages educational institutions to create supportive learning environments, strengthen counselling services, promote life skills, and foster resilience among learners (Ministry of Education, 2020). Supporting this perspective, Tikader and Acharya (2025), in their systematic review, concluded that supportive educational environments, timely psychological interventions, and accessible counselling services

are essential for promoting mental health and well-being in educational institutions (Tikader, 2025). Likewise, Subhrajyoti and Acharya (2026) highlighted that institutional support, positive educational experiences, and effective coping strategies significantly contribute to enhancing psychological well-being among preservice teacher trainees (Subhrajyoti & Acharya, 2026). This finding is consistent with Chaudhury, Tikader, and Das (2026), who found a significant correlation between emotional intelligence and college students' academic success college students in Odisha, suggesting that positive emotional competencies enhance students' academic engagement, adjustment, and overall psychological functioning (Samapika et al., 2026).

Odisha has witnessed considerable progress in expanding higher education through the establishment of government and private colleges. Jajpur District, in particular, accommodates undergraduate students from diverse rural and urban backgrounds with varying socio-economic and cultural characteristics. Although these students experience different educational and social contexts, they encounter similar academic expectations and career-related pressures that may influence their psychological well-being. Despite increasing attention to student mental health, empirical evidence concerning the psychological well-being of undergraduate students in Jajpur District remains limited. Most previous studies conducted in India have primarily examined psychological problems such as stress, anxiety, depression, or academic achievement, whereas relatively few have focused on positive psychological well-being and its distribution across demographic groups.

The existing literature also reveals an important research gap. While several studies have investigated psychological well-being among university students at national and international levels, evidence from eastern India, particularly Odisha, remains scarce. Furthermore, few studies have examined whether psychological well-being differs according to basic demographic characteristics such as gender and locality among undergraduate students in Jajpur District. Understanding these differences is essential for designing appropriate institutional support mechanisms and student well-being programmes.

In light of this, the current study aims to evaluate the psychological well-being of undergraduate students in the Jajpur District and investigate if psychological well-being differs by gender and geography. In order to create evidence-based treatments that enhance students' psychological well-being, foster holistic development, and raise the standard of higher education, educators, counselors, educational administrators, and legislators are anticipated to gain important insights from the findings. Additionally, by offering actual data from an understudied regional setting, the study adds to the expanding corpus of literature on positive mental health.

2. Objectives of the Study

- To study the level of psychological well-being among under graduate students in Jajpur District.
- To find out the psychological well-being among under graduate students with respect to their gender.
- To study psychological well-being among under graduate students with respect to their Locality.
- To examine the relationship between selected demographic variables and psychological well-being among undergraduate students.

Hypotheses of the study:

- **Ho1:** There is no significant differences between Psychological well-being of male and female post Undergraduate Students.
- **Ho2:** There is no significant differences between Psychological well-being of rural and urban Undergraduate Students.
- **Ho3:** There is no significant relationship in the psychological well-being of undergraduate students with respect to the selected demographic variables (gender and locality).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The present study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the psychological well-being of undergraduate students in Jajpur District, Odisha. The descriptive survey method was considered appropriate as it facilitates the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data related to the existing status of psychological well-being and enables comparison across selected demographic variables.

3.2. Population and Sample

The population of the study comprised all undergraduate students enrolled in degree colleges in Jajpur District, Odisha. A sample of 100 undergraduate students was selected from four undergraduate colleges using a purposive sampling technique. The sample consisted of 48 male and 52 female students, including 50 students from rural areas and 50 students from urban areas, ensuring representation of the selected demographic variables.

3.3. Instrument used

Data were collected using the Psychological Well-Being Scale developed by Sisodia and Choudhary (2012). The standardized instrument comprises 50 items distributed across five dimensions: Satisfaction, Efficiency, Sociability, Mental Health, and Interpersonal Relations, with ten items under each dimension. Responses are recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1), with higher scores indicating higher levels of psychological well-being. The scale has demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties, reporting a test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.87, internal consistency reliability of 0.90, and criterion validity coefficient of 0.94, making it a reliable and valid measure of psychological well-being.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

Prior permission was obtained from the principals of the selected colleges before commencing data collection. The researcher personally visited the institutions, explained the purpose of the study to the participants, and obtained their informed consent. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, and participation was entirely voluntary. The Psychological Well-Being Scale was administered in the classroom setting, and the completed questionnaires were collected immediately after completion.

3.5. Data Analysis:

The collected data were Analysis using descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to code, tabulate, and analyse the gathered data. The distribution of pupils across various levels of psychological well-being was ascertained using frequency and percentage. The data was summarized using the mean and standard deviation, and variations in psychological well-being according to gender and location were investigated using the independent samples t-test. Every statistical analysis was carried out at the significance level of 0.05.

4. Results of the study

Level of Psychological Well-being	Range	Number of Students	Percentage of the Students
Extremely High	190 & Above	35	35%
High	175-189	26	26%
Above Average	161-174	20	20%
Average	140-160	8	8%
Below Average	126-139	5	5%
Low	111-125	2	2%
Extremely Low	110 & below	4	4%
Total		100	100%

4.1. Analysis of the Level of Psychological Well-Being among Undergraduate Students

Table 1: shows that the level of Psychological well-being among Undergraduates Students

The table 1 Present the level of Psychological wellbeing among undergraduate Students scoring 110 and below were classified as having extremely low psychological well-being, while those scoring 190 and above were classified as having extremely high psychological well-being. The results indicate that 35% of the students have an extremely high level of psychological well-being, 26% have a high level, 20% have an above-average level, 8% have an average level, 5% have a below-average level, 2% have a low level, and 4% have an extremely low level. Overall, 81% of the students exhibit above-average to extremely high psychological well-being, indicating that the majority of undergraduate students in Jajpur District possess a favourable level of psychological well-being.

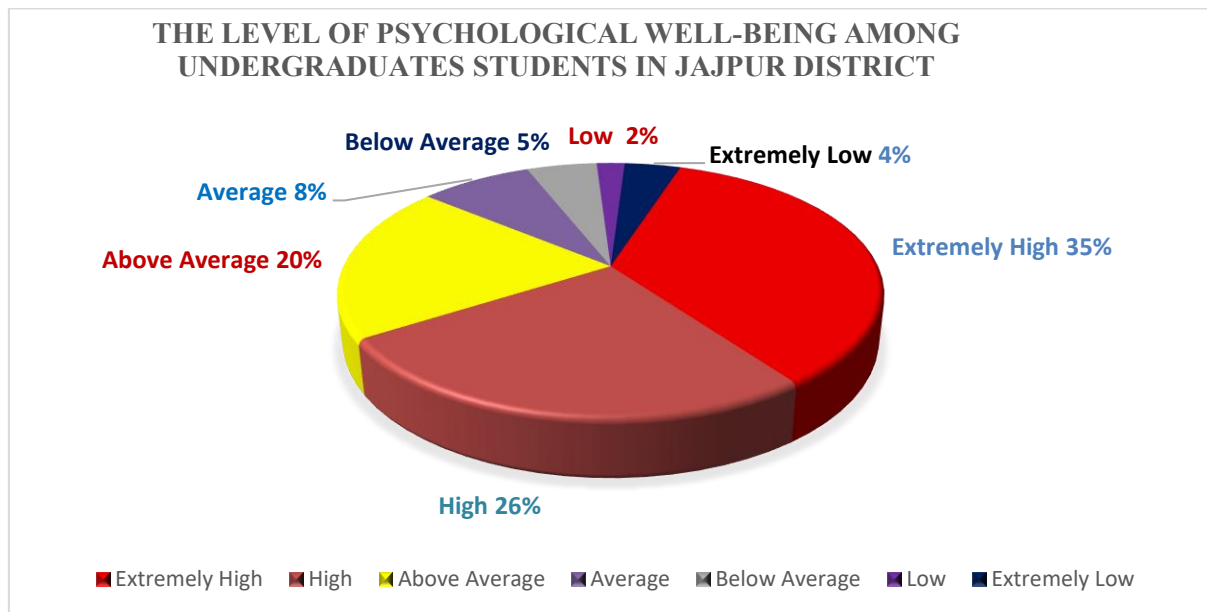


Figure 1 shows the level of Psychological well-being among Undergraduate Students in Jajpur District.

4.2. Analysis of Psychological Well-Being among Undergraduate Students with Respect to Gender

Number of students (Gender)	Sample	Mean	df	S. D	t - value	Level of Significance
Female	52	178.61	98	23.20	0.83	Not significant at 0.05 level
Male	48	182.20		19.24		

(Note - 't' critical at 0.05 level of significance is 1.98)

Table 2 shows the psychological well-being among under graduate students with respect to their gender.

The above 2 table indicates the mean comparison of the psychological well-being among under graduate students with respect to their gender. The result shows that the Sample of male is 48 and Female is 52, Mean score of Male is 178.61 and female is 182.20, the df is 98, the S.D of male is 19.24 and female mean is 23.20 the calculated 't' - value is 0.83 which is less than the critical value at 0.05 significance levels 1.98 indicating that the results is statistically not significance. So, the hypothesis is can not be rejected as there is no significant difference in the psychological well-being among under graduate students with respect to their gender.

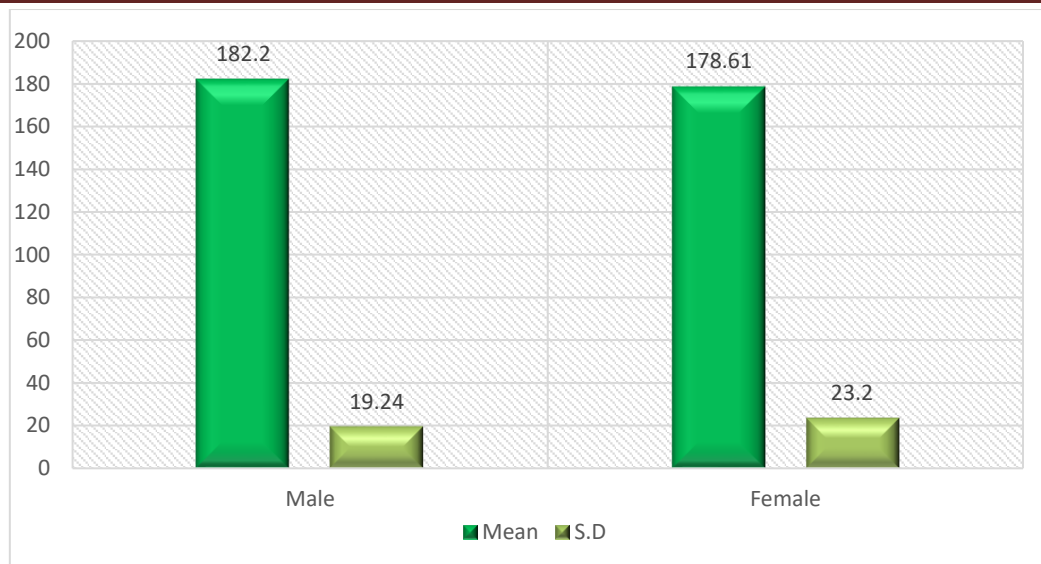


Figure 2 shows that the psychological well-being among under graduate students with respect to their gender.

4.3. Analysis of Psychological Well-Being among Undergraduate Students with Respect to their Locality.

Number of students (Locality)	Sample	Mean	df	S. D	t - value	Level of Significance
Urban	50	178.62	98	18.45	1.27	Not Significant at 0.05 Level
Rural	50	181.94		17.83		

(Note - 't' critical at 0.05 level of significance is 1.98)

Table 3: shows the psychological well-being among under graduate students with respect to their locality.

The above 3 table indicates the mean comparison of the psychological well-being among under graduate students with respect to their Locality. The result shows that the Sample of Urban is 50 and Rural is 50, Mean score of Urban is 178.62 and Rural is 181.94, the df is 98, the S.D of Urban is 18.45 and Rural is 17.83 the calculated 't' - value is 1.27 which is less than the critical value at 0.05 significance levels 1.98 indicating that the results is statistically not significance. So, the hypothesis is can not be rejected as there is no significant difference in the psychological well-being among under graduate students with respect to their Locality.

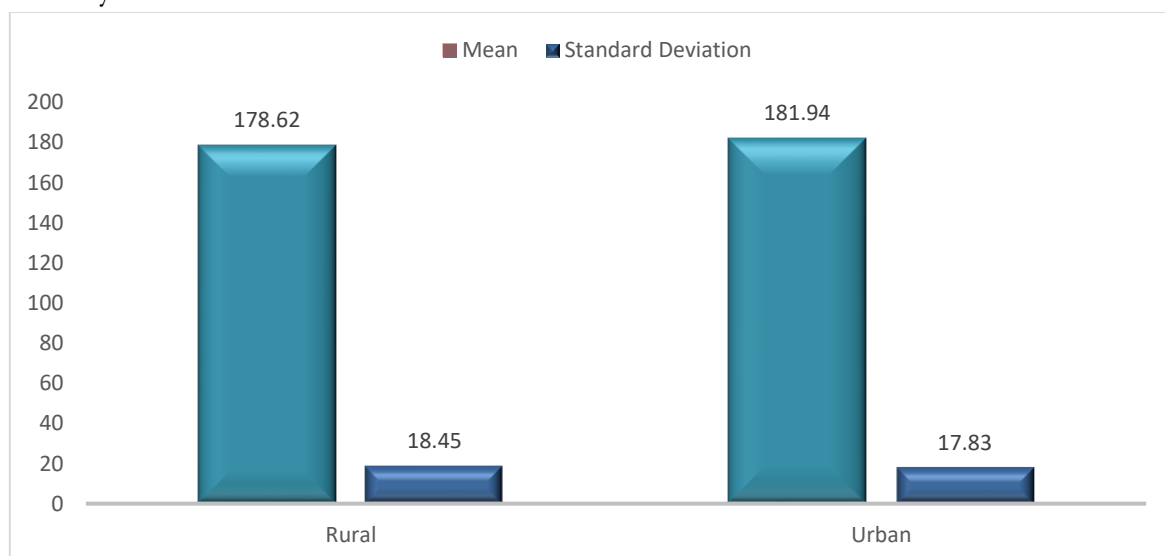


Figure 3 shows the psychological well-being among under graduate students with respect to their Locality.

4.4. Analysis the relationship between selected demographic variables and psychological well-being among undergraduate students.

Demographic Variable	Groups Compared	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Level of Significance	Decision on H_0
Gender	Male (48) vs Female (52)	100	182.20 / 178.61	19.24 / 23.20	0.83	Not Significant at the 0.05 level	Accepted
Locality	Rural (50) vs Urban (50)	100	181.94 / 178.62	17.83 / 18.45	1.27	Not Significant at the 0.05 level	Accepted

Note: Critical t -value at 0.05 level of significance ($df = 98$) = 1.98.

Table 4 shows the relationship between selected demographic variables and psychological well-being among undergraduate students.

The results presented in Tables 2 and 3 indicate that psychological well-being among undergraduate students does not differ significantly with respect to the selected demographic variables, namely gender and locality. The calculated t -value for gender (0.83) and locality (1.27) were both lower than the critical value of 1.98 at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypotheses were accepted, indicating that neither gender nor locality had a statistically significant influence on the psychological well-being of undergraduate students. Although slight differences were observed in the mean scores of male and female students as well as rural and urban students, these differences were not statistically significant. The findings suggest that psychological well-being is distributed similarly across these demographic groups in the study area.

Beeswarm Boxplot for Demographic Comparisons

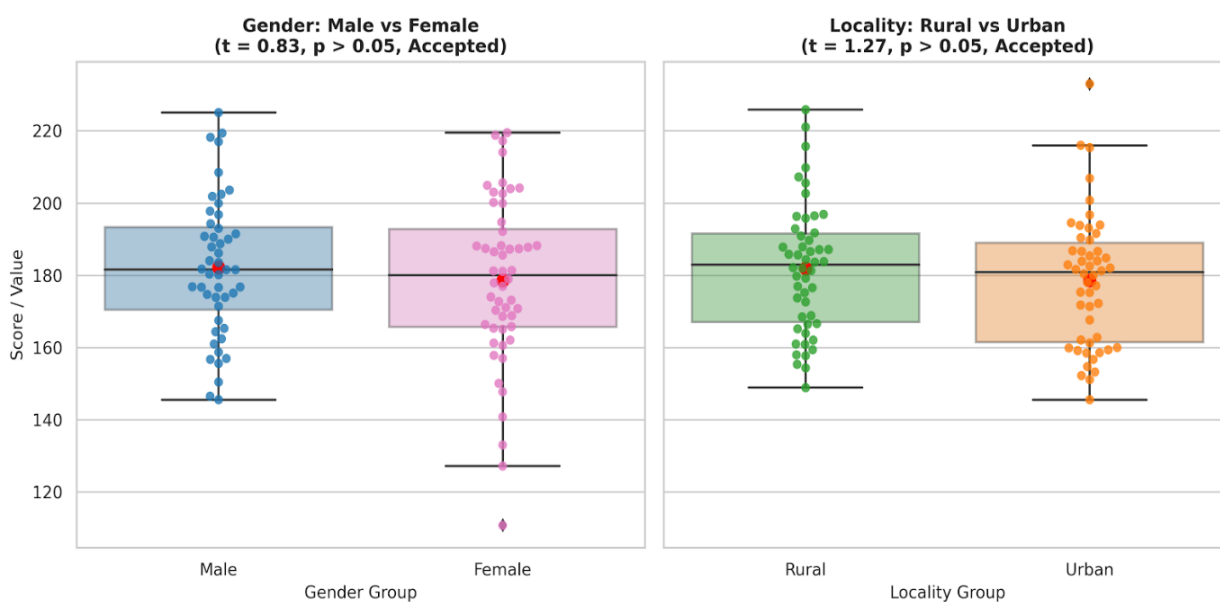


Figure 4 shows the relationship between selected demographic variables and psychological well-being among undergraduate students.

5. Discussion of the Study

The present study examined the psychological well-being of undergraduate students in Jajpur District, Odisha, with reference to their overall level of psychological well-being and differences based on gender and locality. The findings reveal that the majority of undergraduate students possess a favourable level of psychological well-being. Specifically, 81% of the

students were classified as having above-average to extremely high psychological well-being, while only 11% were found to have below-average, low, or extremely low levels. These findings suggest that most students are psychologically healthy and possess the personal resources required to cope effectively with academic and social challenges. However, the presence of a small proportion of students with poor psychological well-being indicates the need for counselling services, psychological support, and well-being promotion programmes in higher education institutions. This finding is consistent with the positive mental health framework proposed by Ryff (1989), who argued that psychological well-being reflects positive functioning, self-acceptance, autonomy, purpose in life, environmental mastery, personal growth, and positive relationships. Similarly, Keyes (2002) emphasized that mental health is more than the absence of psychological illness and includes flourishing and optimal functioning. The findings also support the positive psychology perspective of Seligman (2011), who suggested that individuals with higher well-being demonstrate greater resilience, optimism, and life satisfaction. The present findings are further supported by Tikader and Mandal (2025), who emphasized that value-based education, emotional resilience, supportive educational environments, and positive interpersonal relationships play a significant role in enhancing students' psychological well-being and fostering holistic development (Tikader & Mandal, 2025). Similarly, Das, Acharya, and Mohanty (2026) reported a significant positive association between mindfulness and subjective well-being among undergraduate students in Balasore District, highlighting that psychological well-being is strengthened through positive cognitive and emotional processes (Das et al., 2026).

The study further examined whether psychological well-being differed with regard to gender. There was no statistically significant difference between males and females, according to the data. undergraduate students ($t = 0.83, p > .05$), although male students obtained a slightly higher mean score than female students. This finding suggests that both male and female students experience comparable levels of psychological well-being and may have access to similar academic opportunities, social support, and coping resources within the college environment. The lack of gender disparities is consistent with a number of previous studies that found similar psychological well-being levels in male and female college students. (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Keyes, 2007). The finding also reflects the growing emphasis on gender equity and equal educational opportunities in higher education institutions, which may contribute to similar psychological outcomes among students. This finding is also consistent with Tikader and Mandal (2025), who argued that positive educational experiences and supportive institutional environments contribute to students' psychological well-being irrespective of demographic characteristics. The finding also reflects the growing emphasis on gender equity and equal educational opportunities in higher education institutions, which may contribute to similar psychological outcomes among students (Tikader & Mandal, 2025).

Similarly, the comparison based on locality revealed no significant difference in psychological well-being between rural and urban undergraduate students ($t = 1.27, p > .05$). Although rural students obtained a marginally higher mean score than urban students, There was no statistically significant difference. This result implies that the psychological wellbeing of undergraduate students in Jajpur District is not significantly impacted by location alone. One explanation could be that universities offer similar academic environments, social interactions, and institutional support irrespective of students' residential backgrounds. Improved communication technologies, transportation facilities, and access to educational resources may also have reduced traditional rural–urban disparities in students' psychological experiences. This result is consistent with the view that psychological well-being is influenced by multiple personal, social, and institutional factors rather than by locality alone (Diener et al., 1999; Keyes, 2007).

The combined analysis of the selected demographic variables further demonstrated that gender and locality did not significantly influence psychological well-being among undergraduate students. These findings indicate that psychological well-being is relatively uniform across the demographic groups considered in the present study. The acceptance of the null hypotheses suggests that factors other than gender and locality—such as academic stress, resilience, emotional intelligence, family support, financial security, personality characteristics, or institutional climate—may play a more important role in determining students' psychological well-being. Previous research has shown that psychological well-being is closely associated with resilience, positive emotions, social connectedness, and supportive educational environments rather than demographic characteristics alone (Seligman, 2011; WHO, 2022). This interpretation also aligns with the observations of

Tikader and Mandal (2025), who highlighted that psychological well-being is strengthened through holistic educational practices and value-oriented learning rather than demographic characteristics alone (Tikader & Mandal, 2025).

Overall, the findings of the present study highlight that undergraduate students in Jajpur District generally maintain a healthy level of psychological well-being. Nevertheless, the existence of a small proportion of students with poor psychological well-being cannot be overlooked. Colleges and universities should therefore strengthen student counselling services, organize mental health awareness programmes, provide stress management and life skills training, and create supportive learning environments to guarantee that each student has the chance to experience psychological growth. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's goals, which prioritize learner-centered learning settings, holistic development, and emotional well-being, are likewise in line with these programs. Additional evidence for these suggestions comes from Tikader and Acharya (2025), who concluded that comprehensive institutional support, timely psychological interventions, and the promotion of positive educational environments are crucial for enhancing mental health and overall well-being in educational institutions (Tikader & Acharya, n.d.). Likewise, Acharya, Bariha, Das, and Mandal (2026) found that supportive workplace environments, positive interpersonal relationships, and organizational support significantly contribute to workplace happiness, indicating that institutional support is a key determinant of well-being across educational settings (Acharya et al., 2026).

6. Conclusion:

The present study concludes that undergraduate students in Jajpur District generally exhibit a favourable level of psychological well-being, with the majority of respondents falling within the above-average to extremely high categories. This indicates that most students possess positive psychological attributes that enable them to cope effectively with academic demands and personal challenges. At the same time, the presence of a small proportion of students with low psychological well-being suggests the need for targeted psychological support and timely intervention.

The findings also indicate that psychological well-being does not differ significantly with respect to gender and locality, suggesting that these demographic variables are not major determinants of students' psychological well-being. This implies that other factors, such as academic environment, family support, coping strategies, resilience, and institutional resources, may have a greater influence on students' psychological health.

The study highlights the importance of strengthening counselling services, promoting mental health awareness, and creating supportive learning environments in higher education institutions. Such initiatives can enhance students' emotional resilience, academic engagement, and overall quality of life. The findings provide useful insights for educators, counsellors, college administrators, and policymakers in designing effective strategies to promote students' psychological well-being and holistic development. Future studies may include larger samples and additional psychosocial variables to gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing psychological well-being among undergraduate students.

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