

# Keys to Well-Being: A Psychological Perspective

**Dr. Neelam<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Navin Kumar Mokta<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Psychology and Foundations of Education (DEPFE),  
NCERT, New Delhi

## **Abstract**

The present investigation is intended to identify the significant psychological predictors of well-being of post-secondary students. The sample for the present investigation was 450 post-secondary students who are enrolled in higher education. Data gathering tools were 'Well-Being Index' (2016), 'Big Five Personality Inventory' (2014) and 'Self-Esteem Scale' (2015). In order to find out the keys to well-being among post-secondary students, co-relational analysis with psychological variables was carried out. Findings of this study revealed that 'dimensions of personality' and 'self-esteem' has direct and predicting relationship with 'well-being' among post-secondary students. Some suggestion based on the findings of present study are made.

**Keywords:** Wellbeing, Personality, Self-Esteem, Post-Secondary Students

## **1. Introduction**

Quality of life is an umbrella concept that refers to all aspects of individual's life including physical health, psychological well-being, social well-being, financial well-being, subjective well-being, family relationships, friendships, work, leisure and overall well-being. A good life is the sort of life that one should want to lead because it includes so many positive things such as feeling happy, healthy, socially connected, and purposeful. Well-being is a positive consequence that is useful for people and for many sectors of society. Because it tells that persons perceive that their lives are going well and fine. In reality good living conditions are elemental to well-being. However, many indicators that measure living conditions of people. But these indicators fail to measure what people think and feel about their lives, such as the quality of their relationships, their positive emotions and resilience, the comprehension of their potentiality, and their overall satisfaction with life-i.e., their "well-being. In a general way, Well-being includes global judgments of life satisfaction and feelings ranging from depression to joy.

## **Concept of Wellbeing**

Well-being may be defined as individual's feeling of sense of achievement, contentment, happiness, satisfaction with life's experience, utility, belongingness. The defined and conceptualized well-being signifies individual's feeling of contentment and one's role in the world of work in terms of 'physical', 'mental', 'social', 'emotional', and 'spiritual' aspects.

**Ryff and Keyes (1995)** viewed that well-being comprises the presence of positive emotions (contentment, happiness), or moods and the absence of negative emotions (depression, anxiety), satisfaction with life, fulfillment and positive functioning, **Field (2009)** defined well-being as dynamic state in which the individual is able to develop potential, work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationship with others and contribute to his/her community. Likewise, **Sharma (2013)** reported that well-being as harmonious functioning of the psychological aspects as well as physical aspects of the personality, giving contentment to the self and advantage to the society.

On the basis of above definitions well-being can be grouped into three categories - First well-being had been defined by external criteria of virtue or holiness. Secondly, well-being has focused as to how people evaluate their lives in positive terms. Thirdly and lastly, well-being term is used in everyday discourse as denoting a ascendancy of positive affect over negative affect.).

## Concept of Personality

The personality is an individual expression of social relationships and functions, a subject of cognition and transformation of the world, of rights and duties, of ethical, aesthetic and all other social standards. When we express about the personality, we have in mind its social, moral, psychological and aesthetic qualities crystallized in a human being's intellectual world.

**Garden W. Allport (1939)** states “Personality is the active organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that decide his unique adjustments to his environment”. It recognizes the changing nature of personality, “a dynamic organization”. It include the inner aspect rather than on superficial manifestations. But it establishes the basis for social stimulus value of personality such as unique adjustment to the environment. Likewise, **Eysenck (1971) in S.K. Mangal, 2006:** Personality is the more or less stable and everlasting organization of a person’s temperament, character, physique, and intellect which determine unique adjustment to the environment.

The Big Five Personality Characteristics is synthesis of the trait theories of personality developed by Cattell (1943) and Eysenck (1976). According to big five factor model of personality it consist of five factors i.e. openness to experience, conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism and extroversion.

**1. Openness to experience:** The openness to experience dimension of personality is characterized by a willingness to try new activities. People with higher levels of openness are responsible to unconventional ideas and beliefs and including those which challenge their existing assumptions. They enjoy artistic and cultural experiences and are open to new cultures and customs. People with low levels of openness- are closed to experience are wary of uncertainty and unknown. They are more doubtful of beliefs and ideas which challenge their status quo. They feel uncomfortable in unknown situations and prefer recognizable environments. In short, Openness to experience as a personality trait is concerned with the attributes like intellectual curiosity, creativity and preference for novelty. The person having this type of personality shows the characteristics like imaginative, independent thinking, preference to know from Variety of sources.

**2. Conscientiousness:** People who are Conscientious are more aware of their actions and the consequences of their behavior than people who are unconscientious. People with high Conscientious levels also exhibit goal- oriented behavior. They are motivated to achieve their goal undeterred by hard work. Unconscientiously individuals are less anxious by tidiness and punctuality. Hence, both

environmental factors and heritability may influence in conscientiousness. In short it can be said that conscientiousness as a personality factor is manifested with the attributes like tendency to be organized, dutiful, and self-disciplined.

**3. Extraversion:** Extraversion is characterized by outgoing, socially confident behavior. Extraverts are sociable, talkative and sometimes forward in societal situations. This personality trait is measured on a introversion- extraversion continuum. Individuals who slot in the center of two traits are described as Ambiverts. Introvert people display contrasting behavior. They're quieter and sometimes feel shy around another people. Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung explained extraversion in terms of mental energy which each individual directs differently. It can be said that extraversion is a factor of personality having characteristics of energy, positive emotions, assertiveness, sociability and the tendency to seek stimulation in the company of other, and talkativeness. High extraversion is often perceived as attention seeking, and domineering whereas lower extraversion causes reserved reflective personality

**4. Agreeableness:** Friendly and co-operative individuals score highly on agreeableness measures. Often, they are considered more likeable by their peers and colleagues. Agreeable individuals are trusting of others and that they are more altruistic, willing to assist others during times of need. Agreeable people dislike being involved in conflict, arguments, with others. They are less anxious with pleasing other people and making friends. Disagreeable people are more doubtful of other people's intentions and are less generous. In its place, they are motivated to act in accordance with their self-interest, and showing less regard for the needs of others. Disagreeable individuals find it easier to promote their own interests and those who are more agreeable tend to enjoy better relationships with others. So, agreeableness as a personality trait has features like compassionate and cooperative rather than distrustful and aggressive towards others. It is also a measure of one's helpful nature and trusting.

**5. Neuroticism:** This personality dimension (*neuroticism*) is measured ranging from emotional stability to emotional instability. People with high neuroticism scores are often steadfast worriers. They are more fearful and they often feel anxious, over-thinking their problems and exaggerating their significance. They may dwell on its negative aspects rather than seeing the positive in a situation. Neuroticism can result in a person coping less successfully with common stressors in their day-to-day lives. Instead, they are going to often become frustrated with others and should feel angry if events do not occur as they hope. As a trait of personality neuroticism manifested by the characteristics likes anxiety, moodiness, worry, envy and jealousy. The neurotic people are often self-conscious, shy and they have trouble in controlling urge and delaying gratification. As a risk factor Neuroticism for "internalizing" mental disorders such as phobia, depression, panic disorder and other anxiety disorders.

Hence personality structure conjures up images of the big five traits of an individual that make his or her unique identity. Some psychologists claim that factor analysis, a statistical method to determine correlation, detected these five trait clusters as being strongly internally correlated and not strongly correlated with one another. Each of the big five is thus, actually a set of smaller traits, called facets that are statistically linked.

### Concept of Self-Esteem

Self-esteem plays significant role in how well the people do in their lives, which is not clear to them, so that it can determine how successful they become. People with higher self-esteem seek to variety in their investment portfolio. **Rosenberg (1965)** stated that self-esteem is fairly just one's attitude toward oneself. He referred it as a "favorable or unfavorable attitude in the direction of the self" while **Smith Lovin's (1995)** described self-esteem as a reflexive emotion that has developed over time in social procedures of invention that individuals learn to experience and to speak about, that arises in predictable social circumstances, which is subject to social control. Likewise, **Brown, Dutton, and Cook (2001)** described three ways in which the "self-esteem" is used: (a) global or trait self-esteem to represent to the way people characteristically experience about themselves, i.e., feelings of affection for oneself; (b) self-evaluation to refer to the way people evaluate their various abilities and attributes, and (c) feelings of self-esteem to refer to momentary emotional states, e.g., a people might say about their self-esteem was sky-high after getting a big promotion. With higher levels of self-esteem people will be motivated to preserve and improve their socioeconomic status. As a result, with higher levels of self-esteem individuals may derive a greater utility stream from wealth due to the status and self-image enhancement it provides. Individuals are likely to be higher achievers in all presentation oriented tasks rather than those individuals with lower self-esteem because they will be more upright about better presentation in order to maintain perceived self-worth. A variety of studies have confirmed that self-esteem has a direct relationship with our overall well-being. We would do well to keep this fact in mind both for ourselves and for those particularly the developing children we interact with around us.

### Research Question

1. Is there a correlation between personality dimensions and well-being?
2. Is there a correlation between self-esteem and well-being?

### Objectives

1. To study the correlation between personality dimensions and self-esteem with well-being of post-secondary students.

### Sample

To obtain the required information from the respondents, multistage sampling has been used and 450 post-secondary students who are enrolled in post-secondary higher education of Himachal Pradesh were taken as sample.

### Research tools Used

1. Well-Being Index (2016) by Dr. Vijayalaxmi Chouhan and Dr. Varsha Sharma.
2. Big five personality inventory (BFPI) (2014) by Dr. Arun Kumar Singh and Dr. Ashok Kumar. This inventory is based on Costa and McCrae Neo Big Five Personality inventory.
3. Self-Esteem Scale (2015) by Santosh Dhar and Upinder Dhar.

## Methodology

In order to study the correlation between personality dimensions and self-esteem with 'well-being' of post-secondary students, correlation analysis was done. The values for coefficients of correlation between five dimensions of personality ('Neuroticism', 'Extraversion', 'Openness to experience', 'Agreeableness', 'Conscientiousness') and 'self-esteem with 'well-being' among post-secondary students are given in table-1

**Table - 1**  
**Coefficients of Correlation of Personality and Self-esteem with Well-Being of**  
**Post-Secondary Students (N=450)**

Sr. No.	Variable		Coefficient of Correlation
1.	<b>Dimension of Personality</b>	Openness to experience	0.036 NS
		Conscientiousness	0.101*
		Extraversion	0.301**
		Agreeableness	0.098*
		Neuroticism	-0.416**
2.	<b>Self-esteem</b>		0.361**

\*\*Significant at 0.01 Level

\*Significant at 0.05 Level

NS- Not Significant

Table-1 shows that the value for correlation of co-efficient between 'openness to experience' and 'well-being' of post-secondary students came out to be 0.036 which is less than the table value 0.121 and is not significant even at 0.05 level of significance. The result specifies that there is 'no' statistically significant linear relationship between post-secondary students' 'openness to experience' and their 'well-being'. Further value for relationship between 'conscientiousness' with 'well-being' came out to be 0.101 which is statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance but it indicates a weak positive relationship between 'conscientiousness' and 'well-being'.

It has been observed from table-1 that value for correlation of co-efficient between 'extraversion' and 'well-being' of post-secondary students came out to be 0.301. Correlation value ( $r = +0.301$ ) shows a positive, moderate association between the two variables. It means that post-secondary students who have high score on 'extraversion' also have a tendency to report higher levels of 'well-being'.

The value  $r = 0.098$  for correlation of co-efficient between 'agreeableness' and 'well-being' of post-secondary students in table-1 shows a negligible positive association. While theoretically positive, the relationship is very low, there is no expressive direct connection between a student's level of 'agreeableness' and their testified 'well-being'.

It can be observed from the table-1 that the value for correlation of co-efficient between 'neuroticism' and 'well-being' of post-secondary students came out to be -0.416 which is greater than the table value 0.121 and is significant at 0.01 level ( $df=448$ ). Although, the value -0.416 signifies a larger and convincing relationship between the two variables, the minus sign (-) is decisive. It presents an inverse relationship between 'neuroticism' and 'well-being' of post-secondary students. 'Neuroticism' is one of the considerable and consistent predictors of low level of 'well-being' as it is the



tendency to encounter some negative emotions like anxiety, fear, grief, irritability, emotional flux, and intensified stress.

Likewise, the table-1 revealed that the value for correlation of co-efficient between self-esteem and well-being came out to be 0.361 which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. It shows that there is a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and well-being of post-secondary students.

## Conclusions

The result specifies that there is 'no' statistically significant linear relationship between 'openness to experience' and 'well-being' of post-secondary students. Yakimova et. al. (2025) studied that both extremely low and high 'openness' can be linked with high 'well-being'. High level of 'openness' can lead to unnecessary contemplation and overthinking which may decrease 'well-being', whereas low level of 'openness' offers steadiness and avoids the chances of stress. Further, the relationship between 'conscientiousness' with 'well-being' in this study indicates a weak positive relationship. It might be because that 'conscientiousness' does not always create wellbeing directly, as an alternative, it nurtures behaviors that further lead to well-being over time. It has been also found in present study that post-secondary students who have high score on 'extraversion' also have a tendency to report higher levels of 'well-being' and has no expressive direct connection between a student's level of 'agreeableness' and their testified 'well-being'. The study presents an inverse relationship between 'neuroticism' and 'well-being' of post-secondary students. As 'neuroticism' is the significant forecasters of low level of 'well-being', it has the tendency to come across some negative emotions like anxiety, fear, grief, irritability, emotional flux, and intensified stress. Present study also shows that there is a significant positive relationship between 'self-esteem' and 'well-being' of post-secondary students. People with high 'self-esteem' are more probable to view challenges as manageable and use adaptive coping strategies which further decreases enduring tension and shields against anxiety and depression.

## Suggestions

On the basis of above study following suggestion are made:

1. Since 'self-esteem' is a solid positive forecaster and 'neuroticism' is a strong negative predictor of 'well-being', activities that build a safe sense of 'self-worth' and 'emotional regulation' must be prioritized.
2. Stress-management routines must be developed. Mindfulness, meditation, physical exercise or activities must be incorporated to lower anxiety and emotional instability linked to 'neuroticism'.
3. 'Conscientiousness' must be as a tool, but not as a goal. Being organized must never be assumed to directly make one happy but conscientious behaviors like scheduling, breakdown of tasks should be used as strategies to condense academic pressure and create free-time for enjoyment and fulfillment which indirectly boosts well-being.
4. Since both high and low 'openness' can support 'well-being', one must reflect and understand their level of 'openness' and can plan and practice basic techniques.
5. Campus programs, workshops, peer-mentoring programs on building 'resilience', 'emotional regulation skills', 'basic life skills' and 'cognitive-behavioral techniques' to fight with anxiety must be organized time to time.

**References**

1. Acharya, T., & Behera, D.K. (2005). Factors influencing the educational achievements of the scheduled caste and General Caste students of Cuttack Municipality Corporation, Orissa. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 10(3), 215-222. doi:10.1080/09718923.2005.11892483
2. Agrawal, Jyotsna, Murthy, Pratima, Philip, Mariamma, Mehrotra, Seema, Thennarasu, K. John, John P., Girish, N., Thippeswamy, V. and Isaac, Mohan (2011). Socio-Demographic Correlates of Subjective Well-being in Urban India. *Social Indicators Research*, 101(3), 419-434. Retrieved January 21, 2026 from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41476454?seq=1>
3. Ahmed, M., & Khalek, A. (2016). Introduction to the psychology of self-esteem. Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts, University of Alexandria, Egypt Retrieved from [http://researchgate.net/publication/311440256\\_Introduction\\_to\\_the\\_Psychology\\_of\\_self-esteem](http://researchgate.net/publication/311440256_Introduction_to_the_Psychology_of_self-esteem) on February 01, 2026.
4. Allport, G. W. (1937). *The personality: A psychological interpretation*. New York: Holt.
5. Goswami, M. (2013). Personality patterns of institutionalized deprived and normal family-reared children in Guwahati (Assam). *Journal of Community Guidance and Research*, 30 (2), 184–196.
6. Kausar, Y (2019). Personality Traits in Relation to Mental Well-Being among University Students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 7(3), 685-692. DOI:10.25215/0703.074 Retrieved January 14, 2026 from <https://ijip.in/articles/personality-traits-in-relation-to-mental-well-being-among-university-students/>
7. Keyes C. L. M., Shmotkin D., and Ryff C. D. (2002). Optimizing Well-being: The Empirical Encounter of two Traditions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, 1007-1022.
8. Yakimova, S., Congard, A., Jopp, D., Bruno, D., & Cornelia, P. (2025). The Bright and Dark Sides of Openness on Quality of Life: The Role of Emotions and Self-Efficacy Beliefs Within a Gams, A Network Approach and Mediation. *BMC Psychol* 13, 1118. Retrieved January 21, 2026 from <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-025-03144-7>