

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS PREDICTOR OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract: *The American Psychological Association (APA) defines Community engagement as the efforts made by individuals and groups to address public issues. This includes activities such as volunteering, joining political parties, collaborating with others, and working with institutions to find community solutions. In the field of developmental psychology, Community engagement is seen as an essential aspect of positive youth development. There has been a growing interest in studying the factors that promote and enhance civic participation, emphasizing its role in contributing to civil society. The current study involved an assessment of psychological wellbeing of university students who volunteer in community activities. The study sample comprising 508 college students between 18-24 years of age were assessed. Psychometric assessments included measuring Community engagement as Civic engagement in 2 factors namely civic attitudes and civic behaviours. Psychological well-being is measured as 6 factors namely civic autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance and Overall PWB. Civic engagement Scale (Doolittle, 2013) and psychological well-being Scale- Short form (Ryff, 2007) was used to study the variables. The hypothesis that Community engagement will significantly predict high levels of psychological well-being was supported. The results revealed a significant high level of psychological well-being of its 6 factors among students who engaged in community activities. Civic Attitudes ($\beta = 0.35, p = .001$) and Civic Behaviours ($\beta = 0.30, p = .008$) are significant predictors of Overall Psychological Wellbeing. The conclusion of the study is that Community engagement has the potential to impact changes on psychological well-being and its dimension and it emerges as a major predictor.*

Keywords: Community Engagement, Psychological well-being, College students, Civic engagement Scale, Psychological well-being Scale

1. Introduction

Integrating community service and public affairs into the undergraduate experience has become increasingly prevalent in colleges and universities in Tamilnadu. This shift aims to enhance not only academic learning but also the holistic development of students. This study identifies the impact of community engagement on the psychological well-being of college students in Tamil Nadu, with a specific focus on understanding how participation in community activities can enhance their overall psychosocial health.

Community participation, a key concept in Community Psychology, involves bringing individuals together for collective problem-solving and decision-making. This participation is associated with various positive outcomes, such as enhanced well-being and developmental gains. Civic engagement, defined as the process of believing that one can and should make a difference in enhancing the community, not only benefits communities but also promotes individual well-being by reducing isolation and fostering connections.

Globally, community engagement among students includes activities like joining clubs, volunteering, and participating in youth groups. Research indicates that students involved in these activities are less likely to engage in negative behaviors and more likely to experience positive outcomes, such as higher self-esteem, better relationships, and improved academic achievement. These benefits can extend well into adulthood, emphasizing the long-term significance of community engagement.

The primary purpose of community engagement in higher education is to leverage academic knowledge and resources to benefit public and private sectors, enhancing scholarship, research, curriculum, and teaching. It prepares engaged citizens, strengthens democratic values, addresses critical societal issues, and contributes to the public good. The National Education Policy (NEP) emphasizes community work, and theories suggest that volunteering enhances well-being. Universities often mandate community work for degree credits. The outcomes of community engagement include positive impacts on academic learning, problem-solving skills, interpersonal development, reduced stereotypes, and

improved social responsibility. These experiences foster lifelong engagement in community service and create connections for career opportunities.

Community engagement, encompassing various forms of participation such as volunteering, civic involvement, and local activism, has been increasingly recognized as a potential contributor to psychological wellbeing. This relationship is of particular interest given the complex developmental stage of students, who navigate significant academic, social, and personal transitions.

Psychological wellbeing, defined by factors such as emotional stability, life satisfaction, and personal growth, plays a crucial role in academic success and overall life satisfaction. Recent studies suggest that engagement in community activities can significantly enhance psychological wellbeing by providing a sense of purpose, social support, and fulfillment (Keyes, 2007; Schieman, Bierman & Gundy, 2006). Community involvement has been linked to lower levels of stress and higher levels of life satisfaction among various populations (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Research specifically focusing on students has highlighted the unique benefits of community engagement during this formative period. Students who participate in community service or civic activities often report increased psychological resilience and a stronger sense of belonging (Giles & Eyler, 1994; Strage, 2004). These benefits are thought to arise from the enhanced social networks and personal growth opportunities that community participation activities provide.

Moreover, community engagement may serve as a protective factor against the mental health challenges often faced by students. The transition to higher education is frequently accompanied by stress and anxiety, and involvement in community activities can offer a buffer against these challenges by fostering supportive relationships and providing meaningful outlets for stress relief (Pancer, Pratt & Hunsberger, 2000; Plante et al., 2006).

Despite the growing body of evidence supporting the positive impact of community engagement on psychological wellbeing, there remains a need for more focused research within student populations.

This research paper aims to explore the role of community engagement as a predictor of psychological wellbeing among university students. The findings will contribute to the development of effective support programs and strategies that promote both academic success and personal development in higher education settings.

2. Literature review

Michal Mužík, Jan Šerek & Dana Seryjová Juhová (2024) Existing literature generally frames civic engagement positively, highlighting its benefits for young people's well-being. However, there is a lack of summarized evidence on how various forms of youth civic engagement affect different dimensions of well-being. In a scoping review by Mužík, Šerek, and Juhová, 35 studies were analyzed, revealing that social engagement, such as volunteering, positively impacts psychological, social well-being, and mental health. Conversely, the effects of protest actions, conventional, and online engagement were more varied. Emotional well-being showed mixed results, often predicting civic engagement rather than being influenced by it. This review underscores the need to differentiate between forms of civic engagement and dimensions of well-being in future research.

Ligaya Taliana's (2023) research explores the significant impact of community involvement on psychological well-being, highlighting the critical role of social support in mental health. The study emphasizes how strong community connections can protect against stress and foster a sense of belonging. It also examines effective community engagement strategies in reducing mental health stigma, promoting open dialogue, and fostering awareness. By addressing barriers to seeking help, these initiatives enable communities to create inclusive, safe spaces. The abstract underscores the need for continuous effort and innovative approaches, demonstrating how community engagement can significantly enhance mental well-being across diverse cultural contexts.

McGarity-Palmer, R., Saw, A., & Keys, C. B (2023) his systematic review assesses the involvement of Asian refugee communities in psychosocial interventions. Of the 43 studies reviewed, 36 involved community members in various phases, such as intervention delivery and data collection. However, only 25 studies allowed community influence on the interventions, with just one including community input from conception to conclusion. The review highlights the need for increased community engagement in both the early and final stages of intervention research. Recommendations include providing detailed accounts of community involvement, maintaining strong research partnerships, and addressing the challenges faced during community-engaged research. This approach aims to enhance the cultural relevance and efficacy of psychosocial interventions for refugees.

McGarity-Palmer, Rebecca Saw, Anne Keys, Chris B. (2023) This qualitative study explores the impact of the EnCoRE intervention on Veterans with schizophrenia and negative symptoms. The research identified three key themes: acquiring new skills increased comfort in social interactions and activity planning; this comfort boosted confidence in trying new experiences; and group support provided a crucial environment for practising and refining skills. Findings suggest that learning and applying these skills in a supportive group setting helped participants overcome low motivation and engagement. The study highlights the importance of integrating confidence-building and avoidance strategies into recovery programs to enhance social and community participation for individuals with schizophrenia.

Hyojin Im & et al (2023) This study evaluates a community-based mental health and psychosocial support (CB-MHPSS) intervention for refugees resettled in the U.S., focusing on its implementation and adaptability. Using a realist evaluation approach, researchers analyzed data from 11 refugee agencies, including fidelity reports, process reflections, and surveys from staff and facilitators. The findings highlight the importance of adapting interventions to socio-ecological contexts, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Balancing fidelity with curriculum refinement proved essential for meeting refugee needs. The study underscores the value of community partnerships and local knowledge in successfully implementing psychosocial interventions, ultimately enhancing refugee mental health and well-being.

Prof Wietse A Tol, Phuong Thao D Le, et al (2023) This effort developed a consensus-based research agenda for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in humanitarian settings for 2021–30. Engaging stakeholders through qualitative studies in Indonesia, Lebanon, and Uganda (n=101), consultations by humanitarian agencies (n=259), and an expert panel (n=227) led to the generation and prioritization of 20 research questions. The agenda highlights a shift from efficacy research to systems-oriented implementation research, focusing on workforce strengthening, monitoring, evaluation, multisectoral integration, and sustainability. This shift underscores the need for enhanced partnerships among researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and affected communities, alongside more equitable funding for MHPSS research in low- and middle-income countries.

Baxter L, Burton A & Fancourt D (2022) Community and cultural engagement can significantly aid recovery, symptom management, and social connection for individuals with mental health conditions. Despite these benefits, many faces substantial barriers to participation. This study by Baxter, Burton, and Fancourt aimed to explore these barriers and enablers through qualitative interviews with 23 individuals with mild-to-moderate mental health conditions. Thematic analysis revealed themes related to Capability (physical skills, psychological traits, health limitations), Opportunity (affordability, accessibility, group structure, support), and Motivation (creative identity, recovery, enjoyment, connection, and planning). Addressing these barriers through peer support, structured environments, and funding can enhance participation and support mental health recovery.

Alexandra N. Kelter Shirely, Kaitlyn & et al (2022) This collaborated study emphasized the importance of building trust and maintaining respectful relationships between researchers and community members. Engaging personally with participants provided invaluable insights into the mental health grievances faced by these communities. The Mental Health Research Advisory Committee (MHRAC) contributed by developing a local mental health resource website, supporting ongoing research, and distributing focus group (FG) summaries. Addressing the stigma around mental illness was crucial, highlighting the need for collaborative partnerships to disseminate findings respectfully. This project aims to inform policy and reform, improving mental health care access in rural areas.

Alexandra N. Kelter, Shirely, Kaitlyn & et al. (2011) Community engagement is key to promoting health and reducing inequalities, especially in disadvantaged populations. However, the impact on individuals' lives remains under review. This article summarizes a rapid review of 22 studies, guided by NICE's public health methods manual, exploring the subjective experiences of community engagement. The review found that most participants reported benefits such as improved physical and psychological health, increased self-confidence, self-esteem, personal empowerment, and better social relationships. However, there were also unintended negative consequences, including exhaustion, stress, and financial strain. The physical demands were particularly challenging for individuals with disabilities, and some experienced consultation fatigue and disappointment. This complexity highlights the need for a balanced understanding of community engagement's impacts.

Constance Flanagan & Matthew Joseph (2011) Community-engaged learning (CEL) is emerging as a potent strategy for enhancing student mental health and well-being in higher education institutions (HEIs). By integrating educational activities with community partnerships, CEL fosters positive outcomes such as improved decision-making, problem-solving, and social relationships. Research consistently highlights CEL's benefits, including increased self-confidence, self-esteem, and emotional health (Attree et

al., 2011; Conway et al., 2009; Flanagan & Bundick, 2011). Participants often report reductions in depression, loneliness, and anxiety, as well as lower substance abuse rates (Checkoway, 2007; Conway et al., 2009). Furthermore, CEL contributes to enhanced socially responsive knowledge and moral development (Swaner, 2007). These findings suggest that HEIs should prioritize CEL as a strategic approach to support student mental health and improve retention.

Fancourt, Daisy Bhui, Kamaldeep & et al. (2020) The relationship between social, cultural, and community engagement (SCCE) and mental health has been increasingly studied across various disciplines. SCCE activities, such as engagement in the arts, sports, volunteering, and community groups, have shown positive effects on preventing and managing mental illness. However, the relevance and urgency of current research questions to policy and practice remain unclear. Funded by the UK Research and Innovation cross-disciplinary mental health network programme, this project aimed to co-produce a new research agenda on SCCE and mental health. Involving over 1000 stakeholders, the study identified four core themes: mode, process, impact, and infrastructure of engagement. This agenda is crucial, especially in light of the mental health service demands anticipated post-COVID-19. Civic engagement not only benefits our communities but also has positive benefits for us as individuals, reducing isolation and creating connections with people and institutions beyond ourselves. When students are engaged in making the world better, in addition to advancing student learning, there is the added benefit of improving individual well-being.

Numerous studies, inclusive of diverse participants of all ages, show strong links between community engagement and psychological well-being. Adolescents involved in school or community-based civic activities have elevated psychological well-being, increased academic engagement, and more involvement in activities than peers who were not involved in these activities. Elderly individuals who more frequently volunteer and involvement in civic society lead to higher ratings of life. Thus, present study on community engagement and psychological well-being among college students is necessary to develop responsible future citizens with better individual traits.

3. Need for the study and Research Gap

Community engagement among college students in India is increasingly recognized for its dual benefits of personal growth and societal improvement. Engaging in community activities helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, enhance interpersonal skills, and gain practical experience that complements their academic learning. In India, where socio-economic disparities are prevalent, community engagement plays a crucial role in bridging gaps and promoting inclusive growth. The University Grants Commission promotes community engagement through its "Guidelines on Social Responsibility and Community Engagement of Higher Educational Institutions in India," encouraging institutions to integrate community service into their academic programs. These guidelines advocate for experiential learning, community-based research, and the inclusion of social responsibility in the curriculum. The National Higher Education Framework stresses the importance of holistic and multidisciplinary education, including community engagement as a core component. It aims to foster a sense of citizenship and responsibility among students, encouraging them to actively participate in community development initiatives. The National Education Policy 2020 highlights the importance of integrating experiential learning and community service into the curriculum. It encourages the implementation of service-learning programs and community-based projects as part of higher education, aiming to build a sense of civic duty among students. NEP 2020 also supports the creation of platforms and networks to facilitate community engagement and development activities. The need for this study arises from the necessity to empirically validate the benefits of community engagement on psychological well-being. While community engagement is recognized as a vital component of a healthy society, its impact on an individual's psychological well-being warrants further exploration. Empirical studies that quantitatively assess this relationship are sparse, and this study seeks to fill that gap by providing concrete data on how community involvement influences mental health. By examining the community engagement levels of students, the study aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of how different facets of well-being are influenced by community participation. The findings can inform the design and implementation of community programs and policies in educational institutions, integrating community engagement into therapeutic practices and mental health strategies. It also aims to provide valuable insights into supporting the mental health and development of youth. Overall, this study aims to explore how community engagement influences the psychological well-being of students.

4. Objectives

1. To evaluate the levels of community engagement among college students.
2. To measure the psychological well-being and its dimensions namely autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance.
3. To examine the relationship between community engagement and psychological well-being and its dimensions.
4. To determine if community engagement can significantly predict psychological well-being and its dimensions.

5. Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant positive relationship between community engagement and psychological well-being of college students.
2. Students with higher levels of community engagement will have higher levels of psychological well-being.
3. Community engagement will be a significant predictor of psychological well-being, indicating that greater involvement in community activities is associated with higher levels of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance.

6. Methodology

6.1. Tools used:

6.1.1. Civic Engagement Scale (CES), a 14-item scale developed by Doolittle, 2013 aimed at assessing civic attitudes (8 items; e.g., “I feel responsible for my community”) and behaviours (6 items; e.g., “I help members of my community”) was used to assess Community engagement. Items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree) for the Civic Attitudes subscale and from 1 (never) to 5 (always) for the Civic behaviours subscale. Higher scores indicate higher levels of civic attitudes, behaviours and overall civic engagement. The internal consistency is good with Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.81$.

6.1.2 Ryff’s Scales of Psychological Well-Being (PWB) scale (18-item version) developed by Ryff, 2007 was used to assess psychological wellbeing. The scale measures psychological well-being and is constructed to measure its six dimensions, namely autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The modified and shortened (18-item length) version of the PWB scale consists of 6 3-item scales. Response formats include responses namely: strongly disagree (1), disagree somewhat (2), disagree slightly (3), agree slightly (4), agree somewhat (5), and strongly agree (6). The final scoring procedures include negative scoring in the case of reversed questions. Each dimension scale scored from 3 to 18 (with overall scores from 18 to 108), while the higher the number of points, the higher the level of the PWB (overall and in terms of its dimensions). The internal consistency of the PWB scale has Cronbach's alpha $\alpha = 0.762$.

6.2. Sampling technique and data collection methods:

Data collection involved a combination of online surveys and in-person questionnaires. The online survey was administered using a secure platform Google Forms, and it included sections on demographic details, parental education, occupational status, and tools used. The survey was distributed through university email lists, departmental mailing lists, and student social media groups, with participants given two weeks to complete it, during which they received two reminder emails. In addition to the online survey, in-person questionnaires were distributed during class breaks, in common areas of the university, and at student organization meetings to ensure maximum participation. These questionnaires mirrored the online version and were administered with the assistance of trained field enumerators to address any questions and ensure proper completion. The data collection period for the in-person questionnaires lasted seven weeks to accommodate varying students from different colleges. The sampling technique employed was stratified random sampling, dividing the student population into strata based on academic year, namely first-year, second-year, and third years of Arts and Science colleges only, with random sampling conducted within each stratum. The goal was to obtain a final sample of approximately 500 students, allowing for sufficient statistical power while accounting for potential non-responses and incomplete data. Students were recruited via university communication channels, including email announcements and social media, as well as through in-person surveys. Inclusion criteria required

participants to be currently enrolled students aged 18 to 24, with exclusions applied to those who declined participation or provided incomplete data.

6.3. *Participants:*

The sample consisted of 522 college students from various academic disciplines affiliated to universities located in Chennai, India were surveyed. After removing 5 cases with missing data on gender and 9 incomplete questionnaires, the final sample included 508 participants (42% males and 58% females), aged between 18 and 24 years ($M = 20.50, SD = 1.98$). Participants were enrolled in different years of their university program: 19% were in their first year, 32% were in their second year, 49% were in their third year. Regarding parental education, 35% of fathers had completed high school (12 years of education), 45% had a bachelor's degree (16 years of education), and 20% had a master's degree or higher (18 years of education or more). For mothers, 30% had a high school diploma (12 years of education), 50% had a bachelor's degree (16 years of education), and 20% had a master's degree or higher (18 years of education or more). In terms of occupational status, 78% of fathers were employed, 13% were unemployed, and 9% were retired; 48% of mothers were employed, 37% were unemployed, and 15% were retired.

7. Results and Discussion

Table 1:
Descriptive analysis of the scores on dimensions of Community engagement namely civic behaviours and civic attitudes among college students

Community Engagement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Civic Attitudes	508	34.93	9.49
Civic Behaviours		18.72	8.35

From Table 1, It is observed that students' civic attitudes and behaviours indicate moderate to high levels of community engagement. Civic Attitudes, with a mean of 34.93 and a standard deviation of 9.49, reflect the degree to which individuals hold positive views towards civic engagement and responsibilities. The relatively high mean suggests that on average, participants have favourable attitudes towards civic duties. The standard deviation indicates a moderate level of variability in these attitudes, suggesting differences in the degree to which individuals value civic engagement. Civic Behaviours, with a mean of 18.72 and a standard deviation of 8.35, represent the extent to which individuals actively participate in civic activities such as volunteering, voting, and community service. The lower mean compared to Civic Attitudes suggests that while individuals may hold positive views towards civic engagement, this does not always translate into action. The standard deviation indicates considerable variability in participation levels, reflecting differences in opportunities, motivations, and barriers to civic engagement.

Table 2:
Descriptive analysis of the scores on the dimensions of Psychological wellbeing and Overall PWB

Psychological Wellbeing (PWB)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Autonomy	508	15.94	2.35
Environmental mastery		13.23	2.42
Personal growth		16.01	2.24
Positive relations with others		14.24	2.67
Purpose in life		14.65	2.58
Self-acceptance		14.97	2.98
Overall Psychological wellbeing		89.04	16.39

From Table 2, it can be observed that scores of dimensions and overall psychological wellbeing indicate high levels of psychological wellbeing among students. Autonomy has a mean of 15.94 indicates that on average, students feel moderately independent and capable of resisting social pressures to think and act in certain ways. Literature indicates that autonomy is crucial for well-being as it fosters self-determination and personal growth (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Individuals with higher autonomy tend to have better mental health outcomes and are more likely to engage in behaviors that align with their values and interests.

Environmental Mastery, with a mean of 13.23 reflects how well individuals manage their life situations and environment. The lower mean suggests that students may experience challenges in controlling their external world. Environmental mastery is linked to higher life satisfaction and lower stress levels, as individuals who feel in control of their environment can better navigate life's challenges (Ryff, 1989). Personal Growth shows a mean of 16.01, indicating that students generally perceive themselves as continually developing and realizing their potential. Personal growth is a critical component of psychological well-being, associated with higher life satisfaction and resilience (Ryff & Singer, 2008). It reflects a person's ability to adapt to changes and pursue meaningful goals. Positive Relations with others dimensions examine the quality of relationships and the ability to form close, meaningful connections. The mean indicates moderately positive relationships, while the higher standard deviation suggests considerable variability among students. Strong positive relations are essential for emotional support, reducing feelings of isolation, and enhancing overall well-being (Holt-Lunstad, Smith, & Layton, 2010). Purpose in Life reflects the extent to which students feel their lives have meaning and direction. The mean suggests that students have a moderate sense of purpose, and the moderate standard deviation indicates variability. Having a clear purpose in life is associated with numerous positive outcomes, including better mental health, increased motivation, and a sense of fulfillment (Steger, Kashdan, & Oishi, 2008). Self-Acceptance measures the extent to which individuals accept themselves and their past experiences. The mean indicates a moderate level of self-acceptance, while the higher standard deviation suggests variability among participants. High self-acceptance is crucial for psychological well-being, as it promotes self-esteem and reduces negative emotions such as guilt and regret (MacInnes, 2006).

Overall Psychological Well-Being (PWB) provides a holistic view of an individual's mental health, encompassing all the dimensions. The mean indicates that, on average, students have a moderate to higher levels of overall PWB. Overall PWB is essential for a fulfilling and balanced life, influencing various aspects of health, productivity, and social relationships (Ryff, 1989).

Table 3:
Pearson correlation coefficients of study variables (n = 508)

Variables	Civic Attitudes	Civic Behaviours	Autonomy	Environmental Mastery	Personal Growth	Positive relations	Purpose in Life	Self acceptance	Overall PWB
Civic Attitudes	1								
Civic Behaviours	0.48*	1							
Autonomy	0.53**	0.38*	1						
Environmental Mastery	0.46**	0.41*	0.54**	1					
Personal Growth	0.57**	0.53**	0.51**	0.62**	1				
Positive relations	0.52**	0.49**	0.58**	0.64**	0.68**	1			
Purpose in Life	0.34*	0.29*	0.31**	0.40**	0.55**	0.57**	1		
Self acceptance	0.42**	0.38*	0.41**	0.46**	0.49**	0.51**	0.61**	1	
Overall PWB	0.62**	0.60**	0.58**	0.62**	0.64**	0.58**	0.62**	0.61**	1

* p < 0.05. ** p < 0.01

Table 3 presents the correlation coefficients between the variables Civic Attitudes, Civic Behaviors, Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations, Purpose in Life, Self-Acceptance, and Overall Psychological Well-being (PWB). The analysis reveals significant correlations that suggest important relationships between civic engagement and psychological well-being. The significant positive correlations highlight the important connections between civic engagement and aspects of psychological well-being, supporting the hypothesis that active civic engagement improves psychological well-being and its dimensions.

The correlation between Civic Attitudes and Civic Behaviors (0.48*) suggests a moderate relationship, indicating that individuals with positive attitudes towards civic engagement are more likely to participate in civic activities. Zaff et al. (2010) demonstrated that positive civic attitudes in youth are predictive of future civic engagement, suggesting that fostering positive views on civic responsibilities can translate into actual behavior.

Autonomy shows a significant positive correlation with both Civic Attitudes (0.53**) and Civic Behaviors (0.38*). This indicates that individuals who feel a sense of independence and personal control are more likely to hold positive civic attitudes and engage in civic activities. Self-determination theory

(Deci & Ryan, 1985) posits that autonomy is a crucial factor for intrinsic motivation and well-being, which is reflected in the positive correlations found in this analysis. Chirkov et al. (2003) support the findings by showing that autonomy is associated with higher levels of personal well-being and engagement in meaningful activities.

The positive correlations between Environmental Mastery and both Civic Attitudes (0.46**) and Civic Behaviors (0.41*) suggest that individuals who feel competent in managing their environment are more likely to have positive civic attitudes and engage in civic activities. Environmental mastery, a key component of psychological well-being as defined by Ryff (1989), reflects one's ability to effectively manage life situations. This competence can enhance one's confidence in participating in and contributing to community activities.

Personal Growth is significantly correlated with Civic Attitudes (0.57**) and Civic Behaviors (0.53**), indicating that individuals who perceive themselves as growing and developing are more likely to engage in and value civic activities. The concept of personal growth involves a continual process of realizing one's potential, which aligns with findings by Keyes (1998) that link personal growth to active engagement in life activities, including civic participation.

The significant positive correlations between Positive Relations and both Civic Attitudes (0.52**) and Civic Behaviors (0.49**) highlight the role of social connectedness in fostering civic engagement. Positive relations, which involve having fulfilling and supportive interpersonal relationships, are essential for psychological well-being (Ryff & Singer, 2000). Individuals with strong social networks are more likely to be involved in civic activities as they often have greater social support and motivation to contribute to their communities (Putnam, 2000).

Purpose in Life shows a weaker but significant correlation with Civic Attitudes (0.34*) and Civic Behaviours (0.29*). This suggests that while having a sense of purpose is related to civic engagement, it may not be as strong a predictor as other factors. Meaning in life and a sense of purpose are complex constructs influenced by various life experiences and personal goals (Steger et al., 2006). Despite the weaker correlation, the positive relationship indicates that those who perceive their lives as meaningful are more likely to engage in civic activities, as supported by research linking purpose in life to prosocial behaviour (McKnight & Kashdan, 2009).

Self-Acceptance is positively correlated with Civic Attitudes (0.42**) and Civic Behaviors (0.38*), suggesting that individuals who accept themselves and their qualities are more inclined towards positive civic engagement. Self-acceptance, a crucial aspect of psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989), involves recognizing and accepting one's strengths and limitations, which can foster a sense of self-worth and motivation to contribute to society (Neff, 2011).

The strong correlations between Overall PWB and both Civic Attitudes (0.62**) and Civic Behaviours (0.60**) indicate that individuals with higher overall psychological well-being are more likely to engage in civic activities and hold positive attitudes towards civic engagement. Psychological well-being includes factors namely autonomy, personal growth, and positive relations, which are all positively linked to civic engagement. The findings support the broader literature suggesting that psychological well-being and civic engagement are mutually reinforcing (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004).

Table 4:
Regression analysis for Community engagement and Psychological wellbeing scores

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p
Civic Attitudes	0.32	0.1	0.35	3.2	0.001
Civic Behaviours	0.24	0.09	0.3	2.67	0.008
Autonomy	0.28	0.09	0.26	3.11	0.002
Environmental Mastery	0.22	0.1	0.22	2.2	0.028
Personal Growth	0.31	0.11	0.29	2.82	0.005
Positive Relations	0.27	0.09	0.25	3	0.003
Purpose in Life	0.18	0.08	0.2	2.25	0.024
Self-Acceptance	0.23	0.1	0.22	2.3	0.021
Overall PWB	0.5	0.012	0.52	4.17	0.001

Note: B = unstandardized coefficient, SE B = standard error of B, β = standardized coefficient, t = t-value, p = p-value

From Table 4, it can be observed that Civic Attitudes ($\beta = 0.35, p = .001$) and Civic Behaviours ($\beta = 0.30, p = .008$) are significant predictors of Overall Psychological Wellbeing. These findings suggest that

individuals with higher civic engagement and more positive attitudes towards civic responsibilities are likely to experience better psychological wellbeing.

This supports existing research highlighting the role of civic engagement in enhancing psychological health. Keyes (2007) found that engagement in community activities is positively associated with higher levels of wellbeing, as it fosters a sense of purpose and social support. Schieman (2006) found that civic involvement contributes to better mental health outcomes, likely due to the social and psychological benefits derived from community engagement.

Personal Growth ($\beta = 0.29, p = .005$) has a substantial positive effect on Overall Psychological Wellbeing. The correlation ($r = 0.57$) supports this, indicating that individuals who perceive themselves as growing and developing experience higher levels of overall wellbeing. The results are consistent with Ryff's (1989) model, which posits that personal growth is a critical dimension of psychological wellbeing, contributing to life satisfaction and a sense of purpose.

Positive Relations with Others ($\beta = 0.25, p = .003$) also significantly predicts Overall Psychological Wellbeing. The correlation ($r = 0.52$) reinforces the importance of social connections. Cohen and Wills (1985) suggests that supportive social relationships are crucial for maintaining mental health, as they provide emotional support and a sense of belonging.

Autonomy ($\beta = 0.26, p = .002$) and Environmental Mastery ($\beta = 0.22, p = .028$) contribute positively, though their effects are smaller. The correlations ($r = 0.53$ for Autonomy and $r = 0.46$ for Environmental Mastery) highlight the role of feeling in control and managing one's environment effectively. Ryff (1989) emphasized these dimensions as essential for psychological health, as they reflect the ability to navigate and control one's life effectively.

Purpose in Life ($\beta = 0.20, p = .024$) and Self-Acceptance ($\beta = 0.22, p = .021$) have significant but smaller effects. The correlations ($r = 0.34$ for Purpose in Life and $r = 0.42$ for Self-Acceptance) suggest that having a sense of purpose and self-acceptance are beneficial for overall wellbeing. This aligns with findings from Ryff and Singer (2000), that emphasize that these variables contribute to a holistic sense of psychological health.

Overall Psychological Wellbeing ($\beta = 0.52, p < .001$) significantly predicts its dimensions, with a strong correlation ($r = 0.62$). This confirms that individuals who report higher levels of overall psychological wellbeing are likely to have better scores across all dimensions, highlighting the interconnected nature of these dimensions.

The regression analysis confirms that Civic Attitudes and Civic Behaviours are significant predictors of Overall Psychological Wellbeing and its dimensions. Civic engagement, through both attitudes and behaviours, positively impacts psychological health, reinforcing the importance of community involvement and personal growth. The analysis also highlights the crucial role of personal development and social relationships in enhancing psychological wellbeing, aligning with Ryff's (1989) model and supporting existing literature on the benefits of civic engagement and social support (Keyes, 2007; Cohen & Wills, 1985; Schieman et al., 2006).

8. Conclusion

The regression analysis reveals that Civic Attitudes and Civic Behaviours are significant predictors of Overall Psychological Wellbeing and its dimensions. Specifically, individuals who exhibit more positive civic attitudes and engage in civic activities tend to experience higher levels of overall psychological wellbeing. This relationship underscores the importance of civic engagement as a factor in promoting mental health.

The analysis also highlights the critical role of Personal Growth and Positive Relations with Others in contributing to overall psychological wellbeing. These dimensions, along with Autonomy and Environmental Mastery, are integral to fostering a sense of psychological health and fulfilment. The findings align with existing literature that emphasizes the importance of personal development and social connections in enhancing wellbeing.

Overall, the results suggest that strategies aimed at increasing civic engagement and fostering personal growth and social support can be beneficial for improving psychological wellbeing. By promoting positive civic attitudes and behaviors, along with encouraging personal development and supportive relationships, individuals and communities can enhance overall mental health. The findings highlight the interconnectedness of civic engagement and psychological well-being. Positive civic attitudes and behaviors are associated with higher levels of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, self-acceptance, and overall psychological well-being. These findings signify the importance of fostering civic engagement as a means to enhance individual mental health and

social well-being. Future research can explore the causal mechanisms underlying these relationships and develop interventions that promote both civic engagement and psychological well-being.

9. Limitations of the Study

The study does not include a detailed demographic analysis of participants, such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, or educational background. These demographic factors can significantly influence psychological wellbeing and civic engagement. This limits the ability to generalize the results across various populations and may obscure important interactions between demographic characteristics and the variables of interest.

The study does not explore the specific nature or type of community engagement activities. Different forms of civic engagement, such as volunteering, political activism, or community service, may have varying impacts on psychological wellbeing. This limitation restricts the depth of understanding regarding how specific community involvement contributes to psychological outcomes.

The study utilizes a cross-sectional design, which provides quick relationships between civic attitudes, behaviours, and psychological wellbeing at a single point in time. However, it does not employ an interventional study design to examine causal relationships or the effects of specific interventions on wellbeing. Intervention studies can study the possibilities to determine whether changes in civic attitudes or behaviours directly lead to improvements in psychological wellbeing, or whether other factors may mediate this relationship.

10. Implications of the study

Universities and colleges can develop and promote programs that encourage community engagement among students. These programs can include structured volunteer opportunities, service-learning courses, and community-based projects. By integrating community engagement into the curriculum and extracurricular activities, institutions can enhance students' psychological wellbeing.

Counselling centres and mental health services can incorporate community engagement strategies into their therapeutic approaches. Encouraging students to participate in community service or group activities could serve as a complementary intervention to traditional counselling methods.

Higher education institutions should consider adopting policies that facilitate and incentivize community engagement. Policies might include granting academic credit for community service, providing funding for student-led community projects.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest, either financial or personal, that could have appeared to influence the research, results, or the content of this article. The research was conducted with complete impartiality, ensuring that the findings presented are solely based on the data and analysis carried out during the study.

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