

Investigating the Relationship Between Personal Growth Initiative and Well-being Among Youth

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Abstract

This study investigates the association between Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) and well-being among youth, conceptualizing intentional self-improvement as a vital psychological resource. A sample of 100 students (50 male, 50 female) aged 18–24 years was recruited from Higher Educational Institutions in Haryana, India. Data were collected using the Personal Growth Initiative Scale-II (PGIS-II) and the PERMA-Profiler. Statistical analysis revealed significant positive correlations ($p < .01$) between all four components of PGI—Readiness for Change, Planfulness, Using Resources, and Intentional Behaviour—and overall well-being. Furthermore, stepwise multiple regression indicated that Planfulness served as the primary predictor, accounting for 46.7% of the variance in well-being scores. These findings suggest that higher PGI levels, particularly the capacity for strategic planning, are essential for enhancing resilience and subjective well-being in youth. The study provides practical guidance for educators and mental health providers, suggesting that interventions focused on fostering PGI components in youth can provide a robust framework for supporting adolescent development and flourishing in academic and personal spheres.

Key Words: Well-being, PGI (RC, PF, IB, and UR)

Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) is a multidimensional psychological construct representing an individual's active and intentional engagement in the process of self-improvement and development (Robitschek, 1998; Saraswati, 2019). It reflects a proactive stance where an individual seeks out novel situations and obstacles as opportunities for personal progress. PGI acts as a protective factor that can help prevent the onset of distress symptoms, as explained by Robitschek and Kashubeck (1999). According to Saraswati (2019), PGI captures an individual's perception of their own motivation, enthusiasm, and persistence when facing developmental tasks. It also lessens the severity of stress and facilitates quicker recovery from stressful experiences. It indicates an individual's perception of motivation, enthusiasm, and persistence in facing tasks & overcoming challenges.

The construct is composed of four distinct but interrelated elements (Robitschek et al., 2012): readiness for change, planfulness, intentional behavior, & using resources.

Readiness for Change refers to one's openness to altering thoughts, behaviors, or circumstances in pursuit of personal growth (Robitschek et al., 2012). Individuals with high Readiness for Change tend to embrace challenges and are more adaptable when facing new situations. Carroll, Ashman, Bower, and Hemingway (2013) highlight that readiness for change is a personalized process influenced by motivation, self-

efficacy, support, and timing. Readiness for change is a dynamic and individualized process, particularly relevant for young people exhibiting challenging and risky behaviors and successful outcomes depend not only on external support systems but also on internal readiness, making it a critical construct for school counselors, psychologists, and educators working with at-risk youth. Alboroto, Garza, and McNaughtan (2024), found that a strong leadership, a supportive learning environment, and opportunities for professional growth are recognized as essential elements that enhance readiness for change.

Planfulness refers to a person's tendency to think ahead, adapt mentally, and think strategically when pursuing goals, and has been correlated to successful goal achievement. Among university students, Ameden, Tricomi, and Heintzelman (2024) found that, higher level of planfulness were correlated with lower level of goal disruption, lower level of perceived stress, and higher psychological well-being, indicating that planfulness helps attain goals as well as support emotional resilience when goals are disrupted. There are broader psychological benefits of planfulness, making it a valuable personal resource for managing stress and sustaining well-being in adverse circumstances. Luyckx and Robitschek (2014) revealed that all four components of PGI, especially planfulness, positively influence identity development and indirectly enhance self-esteem while reducing depressive symptoms, highlighting PGI's vital role in both identity formation and mental well-being among youth. Kyriazos and Poga (2024), indicated that greater levels of planfulness were linked to higher self-belief & a deeper recognition of purpose of life, which together supported improved psychological well-being.

Using Resources refers to an individual's ability to actively seek out, access, and effectively use external resources to support their personal development and growth. Sarriera, Casas, Bedin, Strelhow, Gross-Manos, and Giger (2015) explored how children's perceptual access to their material possessions related to their subjective well-being and found that the children with restricted access to such resources reported lower levels of well-being on average.

Intentional Behaviour refers to deliberately taking specific action aimed at fostering personal growth. It is a purposeful plan and action to achieve self-improvement goals. Konishi, Kimura, & Takeda (2023), investigated whether deliberately adopting alternative behaviors helped sustain well-being. The findings indicated that such intentional behavioral adjustments could support overall well-being, particularly during times like pandemics.

Personal growth initiative helps adolescents navigate life transitions more effectively and is viewed as a vital, integral aspect of their overall development & well-being. Well-being is a multifaceted construct that encompasses physical, emotional, and social dimensions. The first dimension is emotional well-being, which involves experiencing happiness, inner peace, and a sense of fulfillment. The second is psychological well-being, which includes maintaining a positive outlook, embracing different aspects of oneself, adapting to the environment, forming healthy relationships, embracing challenges, and having a clear life purpose. The third is social well-being, which reflects an individual's ability to function in

society, feel a sense of belonging, accept others as they are, and contribute to social growth (Keyes, 2009). The literature identifies two primary perspectives on well-being: the hedonistic approach, that emphasizes subjective well-being defined by life satisfaction, frequent positive emotions, & minimal negative emotions (Deci & Ryan, 2008); and the eudaimonic approach, that centers on psychological well-being and encompasses several dimensions of ideal level functioning, such as self-acceptance and personal growth, (Ryff, 1995; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). This study adopts Seligman's (2011) PERMA model as the theoretical framework for assessing well-being. The model posits that well-being is comprised of five core pillars: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment.

The relationship of PGI with well-being is multi-faceted. It has been demonstrated that higher levels of PGI are correlated with greater subjective wellbeing and a meaningful direction in life, suggesting a role of PGI in fostering positive psychological outcomes amongst youth (Disabato et al. 2016). Studies conducted by researchers such as Guse & Vermaak (2011), along with Wilson & Somhlaba, (2016) have shown that high scores PGI are associated with less psychological problems, less self-discrepancies, and more life satisfaction, hope and well-being. Besides this, the study conducted by Robitschek and Kashubeck (1999) and Ayub and Iqbal (2012) highlighted a positive correlation between PGI and psychological well-being and a negative correlation between psychological distress and PGI.

Among youth, there is a crucial role of well-being in shaping their overall quality of life, academic performance, and prospects. Research has shown that Adolescents who experience positive well-being tend to show improved mental health, achieve higher academic success, and demonstrate greater resilience when facing challenges (Suldo & Shaffer, 2008).

Understanding the connection between PGI and well-being in youth is vital as it sheds light on how proactive self-improvement can promote resilience, emotional balance, and psychological fulfillment during a crucial developmental phase. PGI acts as a protective factor that lessens the severity of stress and facilitates quicker recovery from stressful experiences (Robitschek & Kashubeck, 1999). Understanding this link is vital for designing targeted interventions during the crucial developmental transition into adulthood. This study can offer evidence-based guidance for design and implementation of programs targeted at enhancing the well-being of the youth. The aim of the research is to explore the association between these two constructs to provide a contribution to the existing body of knowledge and youth development.

PROBLEM

To examine the relationship between PGI and Well-being among Youth.

OBJECTIVES

- To assess the relationship between readiness for change and well-being among Youth
- To assess the relationship between planfulness and well-being among Youth
- To assess the relationship between Intentional Behaviour and well-being among Youth
- To assess the relationship between Using Resources and well-being among Youth
- To identify the contribution of PGI (RC, PF, intentional IB, and UR) towards Well-being in youth.

HYPOTHESES

- There would be a positive relationship between Readiness for change and Well-being among Youth.
- There would be a positive relationship between Planfulness and Well-being among Youth.
- There would be a positive relationship between Intentional Behaviour and Well-being among Youth.
- There would be a positive relationship between Using Resources and Well-being among Youth.
- PGI (RC, PF, IB, and UR) will significantly contribute towards the variance in Well-being.

Research Methodology

Design: For the present study we used a correlational research design.

Sample: A sample of 100 students (50 male & 50 Female), aged 18-24 years, from Higher Educational Institutions in Haryana was selected on the basis of availability.

Tool Used:

Personal Growth Initiative Scale-II (PGIS-II): This 16-item scale, designed by Robitschek, et.al. in (2012) measures intentional self-development. Responses are recorded on a Likert scale ranging from 0 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). It demonstrates high internal reliability (overall $\alpha = .91$). Subscale reliabilities are: Planfulness ($\alpha = .86$), Readiness for Change ($\alpha = .78$), Intentional Behaviour ($\alpha = .77$), and Using Resources ($\alpha = .75$).

The PERMA-Profiler developed by Butler and Kern (2016) is a concise, multidimensional tool designed to evaluate psychological well-being, grounded in Seligman's (2011) PERMA model. It consists of 23 items, with three questions for each of the five core PERMA dimensions- Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. There are eight additional (filler) items on the instrument, along with the 15 main items, to reduce response bias and to gain additional information about the well-being of participants. The filler items include one item measuring overall happiness, three measuring negative emotions (sadness, anger, and anxiety), one measuring loneliness, and three measuring self-reported physical health. Responses are given on 11-point rating format, with score ranging from 0 ("never" or "not at all") to 10 ("always" or "completely"). Scores for each domain will be calculated by average of the three items per domain, resulting in scores from 0 to 10, with higher values reflecting greater well-being. An overall well-being score can also be derived by summing up the 15 PERMA-related items.

PROCEDURE

To begin with, the study's purpose was clearly communicated to the participants, which aided in building a good rapport with them. After establishing rapport, both the scales were given to the subjects. Participants were instructed to complete the questionnaires as directed and were encouraged to provide

honest and accurate responses. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses, and scoring was carried out in accordance with the guidelines provided in the manuals.

Mean and Standard deviation of overall well-being, RC, PF, UR and IB were assessed. Pearson's r value was calculated to find out the relationship between all four components of PGI and well-being. A stepwise multiple regression was applied to ascertain the contribution of the components of PGI towards Well-being.

Results and Discussion

TABLE: 1

Mean and Standard Deviation of PGI Components and Well-being (N = 100)

S.No.	Components	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Readiness For Change	12.76	3.80
2	Planfulness	16.84	5.35
3	Using Resources	9.17	2.88
4	Intentional Behaviour	14.24	3.87
5	Overall Well-Being	107.94	21.87

TABLE: 2

Pearson 'r' Values Between PGI Components and Well-being

Sr. No.	Components of PGI	'r' Value
1	Readiness For Change	.55
2	Planfulness	.68
3	Using Resources	.47
4	Intentional Behaviour	.61

The first objective of this study was to assess the relationship between Readiness for change and overall Well-being among youth. The hypothesis proposed that there would be a positive relationship between Readiness for change and Well-being among Youth. A look at table 2 reveals that value of Pearsons 'r' is .55 and is significant at .01 level. These findings confirm our hypothesis that a significant positive association exists between readiness for change and overall well-being. These findings align with Alboroto et al. (2024), who found that in the youth context, when students are supported by empowering leadership and a healthy learning culture, their internal readiness to embrace change significantly bolsters their well-being.

The second objective of the present research was to analyze the interrelation between Planfulness and overall Well-being among youth. The hypothesis proposed a positive association between Planfulness and Well-being. A look at the table 2 reveals that value of Pearsons 'r' is .68 and is significant at .01 level. These results support our hypothesis that there will be a positive relationship between overall planfulness and well-being. Similar findings were reported by Ameden et al. (2024), greater planfulness was a predictor of enhanced well-being. Even in the face of adversity, they found students who exhibited greater planfulness reported less stress and higher levels of psychological well-being than those who exhibited fewer levels of planfulness. The results obtained from this present research also corroborated the findings

of Kyriazos and Poga (2024). Higher scores on Planfulness were associated with higher self-perceived effectiveness and meaningful life; both helped in enhancing psychological well-being.

The third objective of this research was to examine the association between using resources and overall well-being among youth. It was hypothesized that there will be a favorable correlation between using resources and overall well-being. An inspection of table 2 reveals that value of Pearsons 'r' is .47 and is significant at .01 level. These results support our hypothesis that there will be a positive relationship between using resources and overall well-being. The finding is consistent with Sarriera et al. (2015), who found that restricted access to material possessions and resources significantly lowers subjective well-being. Proactively utilizing available tools remains a key contributor to youth flourishing.

The fourth objective outlined in this research was to examine the interrelation between intentional behaviour and overall well-being among youth. It was hypothesized that there will be a positive association between intentional behaviour and overall well-being. An inspection of table 2 reveals that value of Pearsons 'r' is .61 and is significant at .01 level. These results support our hypothesis that intentional behaviour would be positively and significantly associated with overall well-being. Similar findings were reported by Konishi et al. (2023), confirming that taking purposeful actions toward self-improvement sustains mental health during challenging life transitions.

We have discussed the results of the correlation analysis above and found that all the variables included in the present research were positively correlated with well-being. It has given the basis to apply further higher order statistical analysis which is stepwise regression analysis.

Table 3: Shows stepwise multiple regression analysis of different components of Personal Growth Initiative towards well-being

Model	R Square	β	F	Sig.
Planfulness	.467	.684	85.96	.000

The regression analysis indicates that Planfulness is the sole significant predictor identified by the model, accounting for 46.7% of the variance in well-being among youth.

CONCLUSION

Based on our study's findings, there is a significant positive association between components of PGI and well-being among youth. In essence, higher PGI levels are associated with elevated subjective well-being as well as enhanced resilience and adaptive coping strategies, allowing young individuals to navigate stress and adversity more effectively. Among the various components of PGI, one particular element stood out as particularly influential: planfulness. Planfulness, which involves forward-thinking, goal setting, and strategic planning, proved to be a key determinant in shaping positive mental health outcomes, highlighting its crucial role in the concept of PGI. For the youth, strategic planning is critical as it facilitates identity formation and reduces depressive symptoms (Luyckx & Robitschek, 2014). This strategic capacity, linked to higher self-belief and a deeper recognition of life purpose (Kyriazos & Poga, 2024), acts as the primary driver of psychological functioning. For educators and mental health

professionals, these results suggest that based on these insights, interventions to improve youth well-being should focus on developing PGI skills, particularly planfulness, which involves having structured goal setting tasks, planning tasks, and reflective activities in educational and community-based programs. Such targeted strategies could not only mitigate the risk of psychological distress but also empower youth to proactively shape their developmental trajectories, ultimately fostering a more resilient and thriving future generation.

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