



## EXISTENTIAL CONCERNS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG EMERGING ADULTS: A CALL FOR ATTENTION

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**ABSTRACT** The research aimed to determine the prevalence levels of Existential Concerns and Psychological Well-Being of Emerging Adults. It emphasizes the need for attention among emerging adults to enhance the psychological well-being which is under risk due to existential challenges. Purposive sampling method was used to collect data from emerging adults who are in the age range of 18-29. A total of 70 emerging adults was selected and two standardized psychological measures were administered: Existential Concerns Scale (ECS-DUDS; Dhar & Dhar, 2019) and Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS-SDCP; Sisodia, D. S., & Choudhary, P., 2012). Findings reveal that emerging adults can experience high existential demands during transition of adolescence to adulthood due to uncertainty, lack of direction and finding meaning in life, therefore jeopardizing their psychological well-being.

**KEYWORDS :** Existential Concerns, Psychological well-being, Emerging adults.**INTRODUCTION**

Existential concerns are the fundamental dilemmas such as questioning the meaning of life, one's identity, and future aspirations are integral aspects of human experience. These concerns often prevalent during periods of developmental transition, particularly the transition from adolescence to adulthood. When encountered with such disruptions in daily living, individuals are triggered to question on their existence and the human condition more profoundly, sometimes leading to doubt and uncertainty about life's purpose and meaning (Yalom, 1980). Such transition into emerging adulthood can elicit such existential questions, accompanied by feelings of worry, anxiety, and a search for meaning (Lisznyai et al., 2014). Emerging adulthood are the exception to experience a strong quest for meaning in this period even without any major negative experience, a transition itself triggers existential demands.

According to Arnett (2001) the ages between 18 and 29 as an imperative stage of emerging adulthood, a transformative life period marked by exploration and instability. During this time, individuals tackle identity formation, relational and sexual experiences, and increasing independence, while also striving to establish a sense of meaning and coherence. Social, emotional, and cognitive capacities develop unitedly with physiological maturation, shaping how young adults respond to the challenges of autonomy and responsibility. Although this phase holds opportunities for growth, it is also marked by heightened vulnerability, as unresolved existential concerns may escalate and manifest as anxiety, stress, or depression, fears of vulnerability that may prevent openness, leading to experiences of isolation, hopelessness, and loneliness.

Psychological well-being is a subjective feeling of pleasantness, satisfaction in life, happiness, sense of achievement, ability to cope with stress. A person who is pessimistic towards life often lacks satisfaction and may affect the mental health and so with the one who is struggling with meaninglessness often lacks feeling of efficiency and sociability and the feeling of isolation interrupts with the interpersonal relationships and social life.

Thus, understanding existential concerns and psychological well-being draws attention in fostering overall well-being among this population.

**Review of Literature**

A study by Lundvall, M. et al (2022) set out to explore how young people understand and process of enabling well-being during existential struggles. Using a phenomenological approach grounded in reflective lifeworld research, interviews were carried out with 17 participants aged 17 to 27. The results indicate that although young adults often adopt various strategies to maintain their well-being when facing with existential concerns, they may require professional intervention when these concerns become overwhelming. In such cases, it is important for mental healthcare providers to remain receptive and attentive to the young adult's life narrative, rather than concentrating exclusively on symptomatology such as anxiety or depression. Moreover, the study highlights the significance of

providing a safe space for rest, where young adults feel welcomed and supported in sharing their experiences.

Pal, R. & Panth, M.K. (2025) explored the role of existential well-being in psychological functioning has revealed noteworthy associations with different dimensions of psychological well-being. Using the Existential Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS), a study with 300 participants presented that higher levels of existential well-being were positively correlated with both satisfaction-related and mental health-related aspects of psychological well-being. Specifically, existential well-being was found to predict satisfaction related well-being as well as mental health related well-being, indicating that individuals who report greater satisfaction in life are also more likely to manifest better mental health outcomes. The results emphasized the role of existential well-being as a meaningful contributor to psychological well-being, while also pointing toward the influence of additional psychological, social, and contextual factors that may shape these outcomes.

**Aim**

To find the levels of existential concerns and psychological well-being of emerging adults.

**Objectives**

1. To assess the level of Existential Concerns of emerging adults
2. To assess the level of Psychological Well-Being of emerging adults.

**Methodology**

This research consists of 70 participants from the age range of 18-29 to represent the developmental stage of emerging adults. Purposive sampling method was used to collect samples from in and around Coimbatore city. Both male and female emerging adults were participated according to their willingness for the research.

**Tools**

The participants were given a demographic data sheet to gather personal details. Then two standardized psychometric measures were given as follows:

**Existential Concerns Scale (ECS-DUDS)**

The (ECS-DUDS) was used to measure the existential concerns developed by Dr. Upinder Dhar and Dr. Santhosh Dhar in 2019 consists of 30 items and has 6 subscales namely, Pessimism, Meaninglessness, Isolation, Helplessness, Discontentment, and Distrust. The reliability was determined by using split-half method and the coefficient was found to be 0.94. It holds a face validity and content validity. The validity was found to be 0.97. The total score signifies overall existential concerns. Higher the score in each subscale, more attention should be given.

**Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS-SDCP)**

The (PWBS-SDCP) developed by Dr. Devendra Singh Sisodia and Ms. Pooja Choudary in 2012, which consists of 50 items with five subscales such as Satisfaction, Efficiency, Sociability, Mental Health, And Interpersonal Relations. Each subscale consists of 10 items. The reliability of the scale was determined by two methods, test-retest

which is 0.87 and internal consistency which is 0.90. The total score represents overall psychological well-being and lesser the score, lower the psychological well-being.

### Procedure

Before the commencement of data collection, informed consent was obtained from the participants and they were assured of the confidentiality of the data. The participants were informed about the time to finish the scale and were instructed to carefully fill all the questions without fail.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table I: The Frequency Distribution of the Sample for the level of Existential Concerns of the Emerging Adults. (N= 70).**

Existential Concerns			
Pessimism	Level	N	%
	High	47	67
	Normal	18	25
Meaninglessness	Low	5	7
	High	44	63
	Normal	21	30
Isolation	Low	5	7
	High	26	37
	Normal	40	57
Helplessness	Low	4	6
	High	53	75
	Normal	14	20
Discontentment	Low	3	4
	High	36	51
	Normal	32	46
Distrust	Low	2	3
	High	49	70
	Normal	20	29
Total EC	Low	1	1
	High	60	86
	Normal	8	11
	Low	2	3

From Table I, it is observed that, in the total Existential Concerns, 86% (n=70) of the participants fell under 'High', indicating that existential concerns are widely spread among Emerging adults. Across the subscales, 67% (n=47) of participants in Pessimism, 63% (n=44) in Meaninglessness, 75% (n=53) in Helplessness, 51% (n=36) in Discontentment and 70% (n=49) in Distrust fell under 'High' which suggests that when emerging adults lack a clear sense of direction, they tend to feel less capable of handling life's challenges and unable to maintain trust in themselves and society. This highlights the fragile nature of the developmental stage, where meaning, purpose, and fulfillment remain pressing concerns. Surprisingly in Isolation, majority of participants 57% (n=40) under 'Normal' which is highlighting that social connectedness through peer groups, academic institutions, or digital platforms may reduce the feelings of loneliness among emerging adults.

**Table II: The Frequency Distribution of the Sample for the Level of Psychological Well-Being of the Emerging Adults. (N= 70)**

Psychological Well-being			
Satisfaction	Levels	N	%
	High	6	9
	Average	18	25
Efficiency	Low	46	66
	High	9	13
	Average	23	33
Sociability	Low	38	54
	High	11	16
	Average	39	56
Mental Health	Low	20	28
	High	3	4
	Average	19	27
Interpersonal Relationship	Low	48	69
	High	9	13
	Average	22	31
Total PWB	Low	39	56
	High	6	9
	Average	9	13
	Low	55	78

From Table II, it is evident that, in the total Psychological Well-being, 78% (n=55) of participants fell under 'Low', indicating that majority of emerging adults shows a significant decline in the levels of psychological well-being. Among the subscales, 66% (n=46) of participants in Satisfaction, 54% (n=38) in Efficiency, 69% (n=48) in Mental Health and 56% (n=39) in Interpersonal Relationship fell under 'Low' which shows that emerging adults are dissatisfied with their achievements, goals and having difficulties in productivity and self-confidence which confirms that during the phase of transition emerging adults experience uncertainty about career and future directions which may show stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms which in turn affects the psychological well-being. In the subscale of Sociability, only 28% (n=20) fell under 'Low' compared to the other subscales which suggests, emerging adults can still sustain meaningful social interactions despite other factors.

## CONCLUSION

1. **Existential Concerns:** The research shows that majority of the participants (86%) have 'High' Existential concerns. 11% of participants fell under the category 'Normal' and only 3% fell under 'Low' category.
2. **Psychological Well-being:** Majority of the participants (78%) have 'Low' Psychological well-being. 13% of participants had 'Average'; psychological well-being and only 9% had 'High' psychological well-being.

## IMPLICATIONS

1. Understanding the levels of existential concerns and psychological well-being draws a need for attention among emerging adults for addressing existential concerns and enhancing psychological well-being.
2. Intervention programs that incorporates meaning centered approaches such as Psychoeducation on Logotherapy, Life-Skills training and Stress Management can be administered to navigate challenges by focusing on unique existential demands. This can foster finding meaning in one's life, restoring hope, optimism and promote overall well-being.

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