



The Impact of Mental Well-Being on Trauma Recovery

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Abstract: Mental well-being is a critical determinant of an individual’s capacity to recover from and adapt to traumatic experiences. While trauma frequently results in psychological distress, it can also lead to post-traumatic growth (PTG)—a positive psychological change arising from the struggle with adversity. This study investigates the association between mental well-being and PTG, utilizing the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) to assess general mental well-being and the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory – Short Form (PTGI-SF) to measure growth following trauma. Data analysis revealed a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.521$) between overall WEMWBS and PTGI-SF scores, indicating that individuals with higher levels of mental well-being are more likely to report greater post-traumatic growth. These findings suggest that positive mental health, emotional resilience, and psychological stability may enhance one’s ability to derive meaning from trauma, adopt new life perspectives, and strengthen interpersonal relationships. The results underscore the value of promoting mental well-being as a pathway to resilience and growth in trauma recovery. Psychological interventions that foster emotional coping skills, social support, and holistic well-being may facilitate PTG, helping individuals transform adversity into personal strength. Future research should aim to elucidate the mechanisms underlying this relationship and develop targeted, evidence-based therapeutic strategies to support diverse populations in achieving post-traumatic growth.

Keywords: *Mental Well-Being, Trauma, Recovery*

1. Introduction

Mental well-being is an essential component of overall health, shaping how individuals manage stress, build relationships, and navigate life's challenges. It includes emotional stability, psychological resilience, and the ability to maintain a balanced perspective even in the face of adversity. When individuals experience traumatic events, their mental well-being is often significantly compromised. Trauma—defined as a psychological response to deeply distressing or life-threatening events—can range from acute incidents such as accidents or assaults to prolonged exposures like domestic violence or childhood abuse. While some individuals recover with relative ease, others face persistent psychological difficulties that may develop into conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, or depression. The process of trauma recovery is multifaceted and highly individualized. Recovery trajectories are shaped by various factors, including personality traits, coping mechanisms, support systems, and prior mental health status. Central to this process is mental well-being, which not only influences the immediate emotional response to trauma but also plays a critical role in the longer-term adjustment and healing process. Individuals with higher levels of mental well-being are often more resilient, better able to regulate emotions, and more capable of adopting constructive coping strategies. Conversely, compromised mental health can hinder recovery, leading to maladaptive behaviors and prolonged distress.

Trauma manifests in various psychological and physiological forms, affecting cognition, emotion, and interpersonal relationships. In the immediate aftermath of a traumatic event, individuals may experience shock, confusion, or denial. Over time, symptoms can evolve into more chronic conditions, including recurrent intrusive thoughts, avoidance behaviors, mood disturbances, and difficulty with memory and concentration. These responses are closely linked to changes in brain function—particularly within the amygdala and prefrontal cortex—which influence emotional regulation and threat perception.

Trauma also disrupts one's sense of identity and self-worth. Survivors may grapple with guilt, shame, and self-blame, even when the traumatic experience was beyond their control. These feelings can erode self-esteem and lead to social withdrawal, making it difficult to maintain relationships and seek support. The ability to process these emotions in a healthy way is closely tied to one's mental well-being. Those who are emotionally resilient are more likely to confront and work through difficult emotions, whereas those with diminished well-being may suppress them, leading to further psychological harm.

Effective trauma recovery requires the use of adaptive coping mechanisms. These include seeking professional help, engaging in physical activity, practicing mindfulness, and

maintaining strong social connections. Individuals with strong mental well-being are generally more likely to engage in these healthy coping behaviors, while those with poor mental health may resort to maladaptive strategies such as substance use or emotional avoidance. Emotional regulation, which enables individuals to manage intense emotions and respond to stress in constructive ways, is a critical component of this process and is often impaired following trauma. However, mental well-being can strengthen one's capacity for emotional regulation, promoting a more stable recovery.

Despite growing awareness of the importance of mental health, numerous barriers continue to impede effective trauma recovery. These include social stigma, limited access to mental health services, lack of education about trauma, and insufficient social support. Addressing these barriers is essential to fostering environments where survivors can heal and regain a sense of control and purpose.

This paper aims to examine the role of mental well-being in trauma recovery, with particular emphasis on how emotional resilience, coping mechanisms, and social support contribute to healing. By exploring the relationship between mental well-being and post-traumatic growth, the study seeks to highlight the potential for individuals to not only recover from trauma but to emerge from it with a renewed sense of strength, perspective, and connection.

2. Review of Literature

Altinsoy et al. (2023) explored how coping skills and happiness-boosting strategies influence post-traumatic growth (PTG). The researchers analyzed data from 1,069 individuals who had experienced different types of trauma. They found that people who demonstrated psychological hardiness—the ability to remain strong in the face of adversity—were more likely to experience PTG. However, this relationship was significantly strengthened when individuals employed problem-focused coping strategies, which involve actively addressing and resolving challenges, as well as happiness-enhancing strategies, such as engaging in activities that promote well-being. The study also found that problem-solving and emotional regulation skills played a key role in supporting PTG. These findings suggest that fostering adaptive coping mechanisms can facilitate psychological resilience and growth following trauma, highlighting the importance of integrative approaches that incorporate both cognitive-behavioral strategies and positive psychological practices.

Kang et al. (2022) underscored the profound impact of mental well-being on trauma recovery by demonstrating that mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) can significantly

alleviate symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The intervention enhanced interoceptive neural functions—brain processes responsible for the perception and regulation of bodily sensations—thereby promoting a greater sense of calm, emotional regulation, and bodily awareness. These effects contributed to improved trauma recovery outcomes, suggesting that MBSR fosters resilience by strengthening internal self-regulatory mechanisms. The findings emphasize the importance of incorporating mindfulness-based practices into trauma treatment, particularly given their role in enhancing interoceptive awareness, which appears to be a critical factor in both symptom reduction and psychological healing. The study advocates for a more holistic understanding of trauma recovery, one that prioritizes mental health interventions aimed at restoring both emotional balance and somatic perception.

Radstaak, Lamers et al. (2022) investigated the often-overlooked role of well-being in predicting and enhancing treatment outcomes for individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The study was conducted at a community mental health center and included 318 patients who completed assessments measuring well-being and PTSD symptoms before and after receiving standard treatment. Results indicated that well-being improved post-treatment, with the most substantial gains observed in emotional and psychological domains. Social well-being, however, showed more modest improvement. Despite these advances, patients' overall well-being levels remained lower than those in the general population even after completing therapy. Importantly, individuals with higher levels of well-being prior to treatment responded more favorably to therapy, suggesting that well-being may be a key moderator of treatment efficacy. These findings point to the value of integrating well-being assessments into clinical practice and underscore the need for therapeutic models that address not only symptom reduction but also the promotion of overall mental wellness throughout the treatment process.

Jayawickreme et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of well-being in the context of trauma recovery, revealing that exposure to negative life events can sometimes result in increases in post-traumatic growth (PTG). The study found that such growth is closely associated with enhanced levels of eudaimonic well-being (EWB), which involves a deep sense of meaning, purpose, and personal fulfilment. These findings challenge traditional views that emphasize trauma solely as a source of psychological harm, instead demonstrating that adversity can also catalyse positive psychological change. The research underscores the potential for individuals to develop resilience and thrive in the aftermath of difficult experiences. By prioritizing well-being as a central goal of trauma recovery, this study offers a foundation for the development of therapeutic approaches that focus not just on alleviating

distress, but also on facilitating growth, purpose, and long-term psychological flourishing. It highlights the value of incorporating strengths-based frameworks into post-trauma care.

Womersley et al. (2019) examined the effectiveness of a mental health intervention among Yazidi women in Iraq who had survived severe trauma and genocide. The study involved 200 participants and found significant improvements in mental well-being, as well as reductions in symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), following the intervention. The findings stress the importance of addressing not only individual trauma but also the collective experiences of loss, displacement, and ongoing adversity faced by marginalized communities. The study emphasized the necessity of using socioecological frameworks that account for the broader political, legal, and cultural environments in which trauma occurs and healing must take place. By acknowledging the interplay between systemic oppression and personal suffering, the authors advocate for trauma-informed interventions that support both psychological recovery and community resilience. The research illustrates how culturally sensitive, context-aware mental health programs can play a pivotal role in promoting healing and self-determination for survivors of mass violence.

3. Methodology

3.1 Problem

The study aims to examine the relationship between mental well-being and post-traumatic growth.

3.2 Research Objectives

To determine whether higher mental well-being is associated with greater post-traumatic growth in individuals recovering from trauma.

3.3 Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between mental well-being and post-traumatic growth.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant positive correlation between mental well-being and post-traumatic growth, meaning individuals with higher mental well-being scores are more likely to experience greater post-traumatic growth.

3.4 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, correlational research design to investigate the relationship between mental well-being and trauma recovery. A cross-sectional survey method was used, where data were collected from participants at a single point in time. This design

was chosen to assess the association between the variables and determine the extent to which mental well-being influences post-traumatic growth.

3.5 Sample

1. **Sample Size:** A total of 100 participants (male and female) aged 18–30 years who had experienced a traumatic event will be recruited.
2. **Sampling Method:** Participants will be recruited using a convenience sampling method based on availability and willingness to participate.

3.6 Tools

3.6.1 Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS): The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) is a 14-item self-report instrument designed to measure mental well-being by evaluating positive affect, psychological functioning, and life satisfaction. It includes items that assess optimism, self-esteem, positive relationships, and resilience. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (None of the time) to 5 (All of the time), with higher total scores indicating greater mental well-being. It has been validated across various demographic and cultural groups and shows strong positive correlations with established measures of happiness, mental health, and life satisfaction, while negatively correlating with scales measuring anxiety and depression. In terms of reliability, the scale has a high internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.89 to 0.91. It also demonstrates strong test–retest reliability ($r = 0.83$ over a two-week period), confirming its stability over time.

3.6.2 Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory – Short Form (PTGI-SF): The Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory – Short Form (PTGI-SF) is a 10-item self-report scale developed to assess positive psychological change following traumatic experiences. It evaluates five domains of post-traumatic growth: personal strength, appreciation of life, new possibilities, improved relationships, and spiritual change. Participants rate each item on a 6-point Likert scale from 0 (No change) to 5 (Great degree of change), with higher scores indicating greater levels of perceived growth after trauma. It correlates positively with other measures of resilience and personal development, while maintaining low correlations with measures of psychological distress, supporting its construct validity as a tool for measuring growth rather than trauma severity. The scale is culturally adaptable and has been validated across diverse populations. Its reliability is supported by Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.80 to 0.85 and good test–retest reliability ($r = 0.78$ to 0.81), indicating consistency and temporal stability.

4. Statistical Analysis

4.1 Result

Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics for Mental Well-being and Post-Traumatic Growth*

(*N* = 90–89)

Variables	M	SD	Min	Max	Skewness	SE Skewness
Total WEMWBS Score	49.37	14.01	16.0	70.0	-0.24	0.11
Total PTGI-SF Score	28.50	15.94	0.0	50.0	-0.36	0.17

Descriptive statistics were calculated for mental well-being and post-traumatic growth among participants. As presented in Table 1, the mean score on the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) was 49.37 (SD = 14.01), with scores ranging from 16 to 70. For the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory – Short Form (PTGI-SF), the mean score was 28.50 (SD = 15.94), with a range of 0 to 50.

Skewness values for both variables were within acceptable limits (± 1), indicating approximate normality: WEMWBS (-0.24) and PTGI-SF (-0.36). The standard errors of skewness (0.11 and 0.17, respectively) further support the assumption of normal distribution.

Table 2: Correlation between study variables and their interpretation

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation (<i>r</i>)
WEMWBS	PTGI-SF	0.521

The results indicated:

A moderate positive correlation between wellbeing (WEMWBS) and post-traumatic growth (PTGI-SF) ($r = 0.521$), suggesting that individuals reporting higher levels of wellbeing also reported higher levels of post-traumatic growth. The results suggest that mental well-being is an essential factor in trauma recovery, as evidenced by the positive correlation between these variables.

4.2 Discussion

Trauma recovery is a multidimensional process influenced by various psychological, emotional, and social factors. Individuals who have experienced trauma often go through a period of distress, which can lead to either negative outcomes, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or positive changes, known as post-traumatic growth (PTG). One of the key factors that determine the trajectory of trauma recovery is an individual's level of mental well-being. Mental well-being encompasses emotional stability, cognitive resilience, and overall life satisfaction, all of which contribute to how a person processes and recovers from traumatic

events. Individuals with higher mental well-being are more likely to develop adaptive coping mechanisms, reframe negative experiences in a constructive manner, and find personal growth through adversity. Conversely, those with lower mental well-being may struggle to process trauma effectively, leading to prolonged distress and difficulty in achieving personal growth. This study examines the relationship between mental well-being and post-traumatic growth by analyzing scores from the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) and the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory – Short Form (PTGI-SF). By interpreting the descriptive and correlational statistics, this discussion aims to provide a deeper understanding of how mental well-being influences trauma recovery and the extent to which it facilitates personal growth after adversity.

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) is a widely recognized psychological tool designed to assess an individual's mental well-being. It consists of 14 positively worded statements related to psychological functioning, such as feeling optimistic, thinking clearly, and maintaining positive relationships. Participants respond on a Likert scale, with higher scores indicating better mental well-being. This scale does not measure mental illness or distress but instead focuses on overall positive mental health. A high WEMWBS score is associated with greater resilience, stronger emotional regulation, and an increased ability to cope with stressful events, all of which play a crucial role in trauma recovery.

Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory – Short Form (PTGI-SF)

The Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory – Short Form (PTGI-SF) is a psychological measure that assesses the extent of positive psychological changes experienced by individuals after trauma. It is based on the concept of post-traumatic growth (PTG), which refers to the ability to find new meaning, personal strength, and improved relationships following a traumatic experience.

The PTGI-SF evaluates growth in five domains: Personal Strength – A sense of increased inner strength and resilience. New Possibilities – The recognition of new opportunities or paths in life. Relating to Others – Strengthened interpersonal relationships and deeper social connections. Appreciation of Life – A heightened appreciation for everyday experiences. Spiritual Change – A shift in personal beliefs or an increased sense of spirituality. Higher PTGI-SF scores indicate that an individual has experienced significant personal growth as a result of their trauma, whereas lower scores suggest minimal or no growth.

Analysis of Descriptive Statistics in Relation to the Topic “The Impact of Mental Well-being on Trauma Recovery”

The descriptive statistics table provides insights into the overall distribution of mental well-being and post-traumatic growth scores among the participants.

The mean WEMWBS score is 49.37, with a standard deviation of 14.01, and a range from 16.0 to 70.0. This indicates that while some participants reported very low mental well-being, others experienced high levels of well-being, showing a wide variation in mental health across the sample.

The mean PTGI-SF score is 28.50, with a standard deviation of 15.94, and a range from 0.0 to 50.0. This suggests that while some individuals reported no post-traumatic growth, others experienced substantial positive changes following trauma.

The skewness values for both variables are relatively close to zero (-0.24 for WEMWBS and -0.36 for PTGI-SF), indicating that the data follows a fairly normal distribution. However, the large standard deviations and wide ranges suggest considerable variability in participants' experiences with mental well-being and trauma recovery.

These findings align with previous research, which suggests that different individuals respond to trauma in varied ways depending on their mental well-being. Those with higher WEMWBS scores may have stronger coping mechanisms, enabling them to process trauma more constructively and experience greater post-traumatic growth. Conversely, individuals with lower WEMWBS scores may struggle with psychological distress, leading to lower PTGI-SF scores and reduced personal growth.

Analysis of Correlation Table in Relation to the Topic “The Impact of Mental Well-being on Trauma Recovery”

The correlation analysis reveals a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.521$) between WEMWBS and PTGI-SF scores. This indicates that individuals with higher mental well-being tend to experience greater post-traumatic growth. While the correlation is not perfect, it is strong enough to suggest a meaningful relationship between mental well-being and trauma recovery. This result supports the idea that mental well-being is a crucial factor in facilitating positive psychological changes after trauma. Several possible explanations for this relationship include:

Stronger Emotional Regulation – Individuals with high mental well-being are better equipped to manage stress, regulate emotions, and navigate the challenges of trauma recovery. This allows them to extract meaning from their experiences and foster growth.

Positive Coping Strategies – Those with better mental well-being are more likely to engage in adaptive coping mechanisms, such as seeking social support, practicing mindfulness, and engaging in cognitive restructuring, which contribute to post-traumatic growth.

Increased Resilience – A higher level of mental well-being often correlates with greater resilience, enabling individuals to reframe traumatic events in a way that promotes learning, self-improvement, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Conversely, individuals with lower mental well-being may struggle to cope with trauma effectively, leading to increased emotional distress, avoidance behaviors, and difficulty in finding positive meaning in their experiences. This explains why some individuals exhibit little to no post-traumatic growth, despite experiencing significant life challenges.

The findings of this study highlight the important role of mental well-being in trauma recovery, suggesting that individuals with higher mental well-being are more likely to experience post-traumatic growth. The descriptive statistics reveal substantial variability in mental well-being and trauma recovery experiences, while the correlation analysis confirms a moderate positive relationship between the two variables.

These insights emphasize the importance of mental health interventions in trauma recovery. Psychological support programs, resilience-building strategies, and positive mental health initiatives can help individuals strengthen their well-being, ultimately enhancing their ability to grow from traumatic experiences. Future research could further explore the specific mechanisms through which mental well-being contributes to post-traumatic growth, as well as the effectiveness of different intervention strategies in promoting positive psychological outcomes.

By focusing on mental well-being as a key factor in trauma recovery, society can move toward a more holistic, resilience-based approach to supporting trauma survivors, ensuring they have the necessary tools to not only cope with adversity but also thrive in its aftermath.

5. Conclusion

This study explored the impact of mental well-being on trauma recovery by analyzing the relationship between the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) and the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory – Short Form (PTGI-SF). The results indicate a moderate positive correlation between these variables, suggesting that individuals with higher mental well-being are more likely to experience post-traumatic growth. This finding highlights the crucial role of psychological well-being in shaping the recovery process after a traumatic event.

The descriptive statistics revealed significant variability in both mental well-being and post-traumatic growth scores among participants. The mean WEMWBS score was 49.37, with a standard deviation of 14.01, indicating a broad range of mental well-being levels within the sample. Similarly, the PTGI-SF score had a mean of 28.50 and a standard deviation of 15.94, showing diverse experiences of post-traumatic growth. These variations suggest that trauma recovery is a highly individualized process, influenced by multiple factors such as coping strategies, resilience, and social support. Some individuals demonstrated strong mental well-being and substantial growth, while others reported lower well-being and struggled with recovery. This reinforces the need for personalized approaches to trauma intervention, considering the unique psychological and emotional states of individuals.

The correlation analysis further supported the idea that mental well-being facilitates post-traumatic growth. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.521 indicates a moderate positive relationship, meaning that individuals with better mental well-being are more likely to experience positive changes after trauma. This aligns with existing psychological theories suggesting that well-being fosters adaptive coping, emotional regulation, and cognitive restructuring, all of which contribute to growth following adversity. When individuals maintain good mental health, they are more likely to process traumatic experiences in a way that leads to personal transformation, increased resilience, and an enhanced appreciation for life. On the other hand, lower mental well-being may hinder growth, making individuals more vulnerable to prolonged distress and psychological difficulties.

These findings have critical implications for trauma recovery interventions. Mental health professionals, counselors, and support groups should emphasize strategies that enhance psychological well-being, such as mindfulness, cognitive-behavioral techniques, and positive social interactions. By fostering emotional resilience and promoting well-being, individuals can be better equipped to navigate trauma and emerge with a stronger sense of self, improved relationships, and greater life satisfaction. Additionally, mental health awareness programs should integrate these insights to encourage individuals to seek help and develop coping mechanisms that support their recovery journey.

In conclusion, this study highlights the strong connection between mental well-being and trauma recovery. Individuals with higher well-being are better positioned to experience post-traumatic growth, reinforcing the idea that psychological health plays a foundational role in overcoming adversity. The findings emphasize the importance of mental health interventions aimed at improving well-being, which can ultimately enhance an individual's capacity for growth and transformation after trauma. Future research should explore the specific

mechanisms through which well-being influences trauma recovery, as well as the effectiveness of targeted interventions in promoting resilience and positive change. By prioritizing mental well-being, society can create a more supportive environment for individuals navigating the complexities of trauma and recovery.

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