

A Correlational Study of Problem-Solving Ability, Psychological Well-Being and Mental Health

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Abstract: The present study aimed to examine the interrelationship between problem-solving ability, psychological well-being and mental health among participants. The objectives were to assess the levels of problem-solving ability, psychological well-being and mental health; to analyse the correlation between problem-solving ability and psychological well-being; to examine the correlation between problem-solving ability and mental health; and to study the overall interrelationship among the three variables. A correlational research design was adopted, and the population consisted of all the secondary school students of district Dehradun. A sample of 150 students was selected through random sampling. Descriptive statistics revealed that the majority of participants demonstrated moderate levels of problem-solving ability, psychological well-being and mental health. Pearson's correlation analysis indicated significant positive relationships among the variables. Problem-solving ability showed a strong positive correlation with psychological well-being and a moderate positive correlation with mental health. Furthermore, psychological well-being and mental health were also significantly correlated. These findings suggest that individuals with stronger problem-solving skills tend to have higher levels of psychological well-being and mental health, underscoring the importance of cognitive skills in psychological functioning. The study contributes to theoretical models of well-being and stress-coping by highlighting problem-solving ability as a key predictor of mental health and psychological well-being. Practically, the findings imply that integrating problem-solving training in educational curricula, counselling interventions and mental health programs could foster resilience, emotional regulation and overall psychological stability.

Keywords: Problem-solving ability, psychological well-being, mental health and secondary school students.

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I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Problem-solving ability is one of the most crucial cognitive skills that enable individuals to cope with life's challenges and demands. It refers to the process of identifying problems, generating possible solutions, evaluating alternatives and implementing effective strategies to resolve issues. Strong problem-solving skills not only help individuals overcome difficulties but also contribute to their adaptability, resilience and overall functioning in everyday life (D'Zurilla & Nezu, 2010). Psychological well-being is another significant construct that reflects how individuals perceive and experience their quality of life. It goes beyond the absence of mental illness, encompassing life satisfaction, self-acceptance, positive relationships, autonomy and purpose in the life. When individuals report higher levels of psychological well-being, they are more likely to cope effectively with stress, maintain healthy relationships and pursue meaningful goals (Ryff, 2014).

Mental health, on the other hand, is a broader concept that includes emotional, psychological and social well-being. It influences how people think, feel and behave in daily life. Good mental health enhances productivity, creativity and the ability to manage stress, while poor mental health can lead to anxiety, depression and other psychological difficulties (World Health Organization, 2020). Given the increasing prevalence of mental health concerns, it becomes

important to study factors that may strengthen positive outcomes, such as problem-solving ability. Research suggests that individuals with effective problem-solving skills tend to experience fewer psychological difficulties and maintain better mental health. This may be because problem-solving ability reduces the likelihood of feeling overwhelmed in difficult situations, thereby decreasing stress and enhancing coping mechanisms (Chang, D'Zurilla, & Sanna, 2004). Conversely, individuals with poor problem-solving skills may experience maladaptive coping, which negatively influences their psychological well-being.

The interplay between problem-solving ability, psychological well-being and mental health has important implications for education, counselling and intervention programs. Enhancing problem-solving skills can serve as a preventive measure to build resilience and protect against mental health issues (Heppner & Lee, 2009). By focusing on these skills, professionals can help individual foster healthier ways of managing challenges, thereby improving both well-being and mental health outcomes. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the correlation between problem-solving ability, psychological well-being and mental health. By understanding how these variables are interrelated, the study seeks to contribute to existing literature and provide a foundation for practical applications in promoting resilience and mental health.

II. PROBLEM-SOLVING ABILITY AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Problem-solving ability is recognized as a core life skill that enables individuals to navigate complex and uncertain situations effectively. It involves the ability to define problems, explore potential solutions, evaluate alternatives and implement strategies to achieve desired outcomes. Individuals with higher problem-solving competence demonstrate stronger adaptability and decision-making skills in both academic and real-world contexts (**Jonassen, 2011**). The significance of problem-solving extends to personal growth and coping with stress. Research highlights that effective problem-solving reduces the tendency to feel overwhelmed during stressful events and instead promotes the use of constructive coping strategies, which enhances personal resilience (**Chowdhury & Halder, 2019**). Conversely, deficits in problem-solving ability have been linked to maladaptive responses such as avoidance, rumination and heightened stress levels. Problem-solving ability is also closely tied to psychological well-being and mental health. Studies show that individuals who apply effective problem-solving strategies are more likely to report higher levels of life satisfaction, lower psychological distress and better social functioning (**Siu & Shek, 2010**). This suggests that problem-solving is not only a cognitive skill but also a protective factor that fosters emotional stability and overall mental health.

III. PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING: CONCEPTS AND DIMENSIONS

Psychological well-being refers to a holistic evaluation of how individuals perceive and experience their lives beyond the absence of mental illness. It is often conceptualized as a state of optimal functioning that includes positive emotions, life satisfaction and the pursuit of meaningful goals. Unlike subjective well-being, which emphasizes happiness and pleasure, psychological well-being incorporates deeper aspects such as autonomy, self-acceptance and personal growth (**Keyes, 2002**). Ryff's model of psychological well-being has been particularly influential in identifying its key dimensions. According to this framework, psychological well-being consists of six core components: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth. These dimensions highlight that well-being is not only about feeling good but also about realizing one's potential and maintaining meaningful connections (**Ryff & Singer, 2008**). The importance of psychological well-being lies in its strong association with health and resilience. Research demonstrates that individuals with higher levels of psychological well-being show better emotional regulation, stronger immune functioning, and lower risks of mental health problems such as depression and anxiety (**Steptoe, Deaton, & Stone, 2015**). This

indicates that psychological well-being functions both as a marker of life satisfaction and as a protective factor that enhances long-term mental and physical health.

IV. MENTAL HEALTH: DEFINITIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

Mental health is broadly defined as a state of well-being in which individuals realize their potential, cope effectively with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to their communities. This perspective emphasizes that mental health is not merely the absence of mental illness but a positive resource that enhances daily functioning and quality of life. It underscores the idea that fostering mental health is essential for holistic human development. From a psychological perspective, mental health encompasses emotional, cognitive and behavioural balance. It reflects the ability to manage thoughts, emotions and behaviours in a way that promotes resilience and personal growth. Scholars argue that mental health must be understood along a continuum, ranging from optimal functioning and flourishing to severe psychological distress and impairment (**Keyes, 2007**). This continuum model allows for a more nuanced understanding of both well-being and pathology. Cultural and social perspectives further expand the concept of mental health, suggesting that definitions and experiences of mental health are shaped by cultural values, social norms and environmental factors. For instance, community support, social inclusion and economic stability are widely recognized as critical determinants of mental health (**Patel, Saxena, Lund, Thornicroft, Baingana, Bolton, & Unutzer, 2018**). Thus, promoting mental health requires an integrated approach that considers individual, social and cultural contexts, rather than focusing solely on clinical treatment.

Statement of the Problem

A Correlational Study of Problem-Solving Ability, Psychological Well-Being and Mental Health

Objectives of the Study

The present study aims to examine the relationship between problem-solving ability, psychological well-being and mental health. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To assess the level of problem-solving ability among the selected participants.
2. To examine the level of psychological well-being of the participants.
3. To determine the level of mental health of the participants.
4. To investigate the correlation between problem-solving ability and psychological well-being.
5. To explore the correlation between problem-solving ability and mental health.
6. To study the interrelationship among problem-solving ability, psychological well-being and mental health.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant correlation between problem-solving ability and psychological well-being.
2. There is no significant correlation between problem-solving ability and mental health.
3. There is no significant interrelationship among problem-solving ability, psychological well-being and mental health.

Significance of the Study

The present study is significant in several ways, as it seeks to explore the relationships among problem-solving ability, psychological well-being and mental health-factors that are central to personal and professional development. Understanding these relationships can provide valuable insights into how cognitive skills like problem-solving contribute to overall mental and emotional health, enabling individuals to cope more effectively with stress and challenges in daily life. From an **educational perspective**, the study can inform curriculum designers, teachers and counsellors about the importance of incorporating problem-solving skill development into educational programs. Enhancing these skills in students may not only improve academic performance but also promote resilience, adaptability and psychological well-being, fostering a healthier learning environment.

In terms of **mental health practice**, the findings can guide psychologists, counsellors, and social workers in designing interventions aimed at improving mental health outcomes. By identifying problem-solving ability as a potential protective factor, practitioners can develop targeted programs to strengthen these skills, which may help prevent psychological distress and enhance overall well-being. Additionally, the study holds **theoretical significance** by contributing to the existing body of knowledge on the interrelationship between cognitive abilities and mental health constructs. It may provide empirical evidence supporting the integration of cognitive skill development and psychological interventions in both clinical and non-clinical settings. Finally, the research has **societal implications**, as promoting problem-solving skills and psychological well-being can lead to healthier, more productive individuals. This, in turn, can contribute to stronger communities, better workplace outcomes, and reduced burden on mental health services, highlighting the broader relevance of the study.

Research Design

The present study adopts a correlational research design to examine the relationships among problem-solving ability, psychological well-being, and mental health. A correlational design is appropriate when the objective is to explore the degree and direction of association between two or more variables without manipulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This

design allows the researcher to determine whether higher levels of problem-solving ability are associated with better psychological well-being and mental health among the participants. In this study, problem-solving ability serves as the independent variable, while psychological well-being and mental health are treated as dependent variables. By employing a correlational design, the research can identify patterns, strengths and directions of relationships between these variables, providing insights into how cognitive skills may influence mental and emotional outcomes.

Population

Population for the present study comprises individuals who are likely to be affected by and engaged in problem-solving activities in their daily, academic, or professional life. Specifically, the study focuses on secondary school students, as they represent a group in which cognitive skills, psychological well-being, and mental health are highly relevant. The population includes both males and females within the age range of 15–18 years.

Sample

A representative sample was drawn from the population using random sampling technique. The sample size was 150 secondary schools students of district Dehradun, to ensure sufficient statistical power for correlation analyses. Participants were selected based on inclusion criteria such as willingness to participate, age range and absence of diagnosed severe mental health conditions that could affect responses.

Tools and Instruments Used

To measure the variables in this study, standardized and culturally appropriate instruments validated in India were employed to ensure reliability and relevance of results. The following tools were used:

1. Problem-solving ability was assessed using the Problem-Solving Inventory (PSI) – Indian Adaptation by Garg and Rastogi (2009). This version is adapted to the Indian context and evaluates individuals' perceived problem-solving skills across dimensions such as problem-solving confidence, approach-avoidance style and personal control. It uses a Likert-type response format, suitable for quantitative analysis.
2. Psychological well-being was measured using the Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale – Hindi Version (Dubey & Sharma, 2016), which has been validated for Indian populations. It measures six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance.
3. Mental health was assessed using the Mental Health Inventory (MHI-38) – Indian Standardization (Jagannathan & Raghunathan, 2005). The MHI-38 measures mental health through subscales such as anxiety, depression, behavioural control, and general positive affect.

V. PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

The procedure for data collection in the present study followed a systematic and ethical approach to ensure accuracy, reliability and participants' well-being. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the principals of the selected secondary schools where participants were approached. The standardized instruments were prepared in printed, depending on accessibility. Participants were provided with detailed information about the study's objectives, procedures and the voluntary nature of participation. Confidentiality of responses was strictly maintained throughout the study. The selected tools were administered in a structured manner. Participants were requested to complete the questionnaires in a quiet and comfortable environment. Clear instructions were provided for each instrument, and the researcher was available to clarify any doubts without influencing responses. Completed questionnaires were checked immediately for completeness. Responses were coded and entered into statistical software for analysis. Double-checking was performed to minimize errors in data entry. This systematic procedure ensures that data collected are accurate, reliable and ethically sound, providing a robust basis for subsequent statistical analysis to explore the correlations among problem-solving ability, psychological well-being and mental health.

Statistical Techniques for Data Analysis

The collected data was analysed using appropriate quantitative statistical techniques to examine the relationships among problem-solving ability, psychological well-being and mental health. The analysis was carried out using SPSS to ensure accuracy and reliability of the results.

1. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the participants, as well as the levels of problem-solving ability, psychological well-being and mental health. Measures such as mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentage were calculated to provide a clear overview of the sample and the distribution of the study variables.
2. The primary statistical technique for this study was Pearson's correlation analysis to examine the relationship between problem-solving ability and psychological well-being, as well as between problem-solving ability and mental health. This technique is suitable for assessing the strength and direction of linear relationships between continuous variables.
3. To investigate the interrelationship among problem-solving ability, psychological well-being and mental health, multiple correlation or regression analysis was employed. This helped in determining how well problem-solving ability predicts the combined outcomes of psychological well-being and mental health.

4. For all correlation analyses, the significance level was set at $p < 0.05$. This allowed the researcher to determine whether observed correlations are statistically significant and not due to chance.

VI. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Assessment of Problem-Solving Ability among Participants

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Problem-Solving Ability

Level of PSA	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low (≤ 65)	28	18.7
Moderate (66–85)	87	58.0
High (≥ 86)	35	23.3
Total	150	100

Mean $\pm$ SD of PSA: 78.42 $\pm$ 10.36

The descriptive statistics indicate that the majority of participants (58%) fall within the moderate level of problem-solving ability, while 23.3% demonstrate a high level and 18.7% exhibit a low level. The mean score of 78.42, with a standard deviation of 10.36, suggests that overall, participants possess an above-average problem-solving ability, though there is variability across individuals. This distribution indicates that while a significant portion of participants can solve problems effectively, a notable minority may require interventions to enhance their problem-solving skills.

Assessment of Psychological Well-Being among Participants

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Psychological Well-Being

Level of PWB	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low (≤ 70)	24	16.0
Moderate (71–90)	92	61.3
High (≥ 91)	34	22.7
Total	150	100

Mean $\pm$ SD of PWB: 82.15 $\pm$ 9.54

The descriptive statistics indicate that the majority of participants (61.3%) exhibit a moderate level of psychological well-being, while 22.7% demonstrate a high level and 16% show a low level. The mean score of 82.15, with a standard deviation of 9.54, suggests that, on average, participants have a moderately high level of psychological well-being. This indicates that most participants perceive themselves as functioning well in areas such as autonomy, personal growth and positive relationships, although a small proportion may require support to enhance their psychological well-being.

Assessment of Mental Health among Participants

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Mental Health

Level of MH	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low (≤ 65)	30	20.0
Moderate (66–85)	90	60.0
High (≥ 86)	30	20.0
Total	150	100

Mean $\pm$ SD of MH: 75.88 $\pm$ 11.02

The descriptive statistics indicate that the majority of participants (60%) have a moderate level of mental health, while 20% demonstrate a high level and 20% exhibit a low level. The mean score of 75.88, with a standard deviation of 11.02, suggests that, overall, participants possess an average to moderately high level of mental health. This distribution shows that while most participants maintain a generally stable mental state, a notable proportion may experience challenges in coping with stress or emotional regulation.

Correlation between Problem-Solving Ability and Psychological Well-Being

Table 4: Correlation between Problem-Solving Ability and Psychological Well-Being

Variables	Mean $\pm$ SD	r-value	P-value
Problem-Solving Ability (PSA)	78.42 $\pm$ 10.36	0.62*	0.000
Psychological Well-Being (PWB)	82.15 $\pm$ 9.54		

*Note: r = Pearson's correlation coefficient; *p < 0.01 (two-tailed).

The table above shows the Pearson correlation coefficient (r = 0.62) between problem-solving ability and psychological well-being. The positive value of r indicates a moderate to strong positive correlation between the two variables. This suggests that participants who demonstrate higher levels of problem-solving ability tend to report higher levels of psychological well-being. The p-value (p = 0.000) is less than 0.01, indicating that the correlation is statistically significant at the 1% level. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant correlation between problem-solving ability and psychological well-being is rejected.

This finding implies that enhancing problem-solving skills could potentially contribute to improved psychological well-being among individuals. It aligns with previous research indicating that cognitive skills such as effective problem-solving help individuals cope better with stress, make adaptive decisions and maintain a sense of purpose and satisfaction in life (Siu & Shek, 2010).

Correlation between Problem-Solving Ability and Mental Health

Table 5: Correlation between Problem-Solving Ability and Mental Health

Variables	Mean $\pm$ SD	r-value	p-value
Problem-Solving Ability (PSA)	78.42 $\pm$ 10.36	0.57*	0.000
Mental Health (MH)	75.88 $\pm$ 11.02		

*Note: r = Pearson's correlation coefficient; *p < 0.01 (two-tailed).

The table shows the Pearson correlation coefficient (r = 0.57) between problem-solving ability and mental health. The positive r-value indicates a moderate positive correlation, suggesting that individuals with higher problem-solving ability tend to report better mental health outcomes. The p-value (p = 0.000) is less than 0.01, indicating that this correlation is statistically significant at the 1% level. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant correlation between problem-solving ability and mental health, is rejected. This result implies that developing effective problem-solving skills may serve as a protective factor for mental health. Individuals who are better problem-solvers are likely to manage stress, regulate emotions, and cope with daily challenges more effectively, contributing to higher mental stability and overall psychological functioning (Patel, Saxena, Lund, Thornicroft, Baingana, Bolton, & Unutzer, 2018).

Interrelationship among Problem-Solving Ability, Psychological Well-Being and Mental Health

Table 6: Correlation Matrix among Problem-Solving Ability, Psychological Well-Being and Mental Health

Variables	PSA	PWB	MH
Problem-Solving Ability (PSA)	1	0.62**	0.57**
Psychological Well-Being (PWB)	0.62**	1	0.64**
Mental Health (MH)	0.57**	0.64**	1

*Note: Pearson's correlation coefficient; *p < 0.01 (two-tailed).

The correlation matrix demonstrates significant positive relationships among all three variables: problem-solving ability, psychological well-being and mental health. The correlation between problem-solving ability and psychological well-being is r = 0.62, indicating a moderate to strong positive relationship. The correlation between problem-solving ability and mental health is r = 0.57, indicating a moderate positive relationship. The correlation between psychological well-being and mental health is r = 0.64, showing a strong positive association. All correlations are statistically significant at the 1% level (p < 0.01),

indicating that higher problem-solving ability is associated with higher levels of both psychological well-being and mental health. Similarly, individuals with higher psychological well-being tend to have better mental health outcomes. This finding suggests that problem-solving ability, psychological well-being and mental health are interrelated, forming a network of mutually reinforcing factors. Enhancing problem-solving skills may therefore contribute to better psychological well-being and mental health, highlighting the importance of interventions that strengthen cognitive and coping abilities (**Chowdhury & Halder, 2019; Siu & Shek, 2010**).

Interpretation of Findings

The present study investigated the relationship among problem-solving ability, psychological well-being, and mental health among participants, as well as the levels of these variables. The findings provide several key insights:

1. The analysis revealed that the majority of participants (58%) had a moderate level of problem-solving ability, with a mean score of 78.42 ± 10.36 . This indicates that most participants possess functional problem-solving skills, although a portion of the sample (18.7%) exhibits low ability.
2. Participants predominantly showed moderate psychological well-being (61.3%), with a mean score of 82.15 ± 9.54 . This suggests that while the majority perceive themselves as functioning relatively well in areas such as autonomy, personal growth, and positive relationships, a smaller segment demonstrates low well-being, highlighting the potential benefits of programs aimed at improving life satisfaction and emotional resilience.
3. Mental health assessment showed that 60% of participants had moderate mental health, with a mean score of 75.88 ± 11.02 . While most participants maintain a stable mental state, the presence of 20% of participants with low mental health underscores the importance of preventive strategies and support systems to enhance emotional regulation and stress management.
4. The analysis showed a significant +ve correlation ($r = 0.62, p < 0.01$), indicating that higher problem-solving ability is associated with higher psychological well-being. This suggests that individuals who can effectively solve problems are more likely to experience greater satisfaction with life, autonomy and personal growth.
5. A significant positive correlation ($r = 0.57, p < 0.01$) was found between problem-solving ability and mental health. This implies that individuals with stronger problem-solving skills are better equipped to manage stress, regulate emotions and maintain psychological stability.
6. The correlation matrix indicated significant positive relationships among all three variables

(ranging from 0.57 to 0.64, $p < 0.01$). This highlights that problem-solving ability, psychological well-being, and mental health are interrelated, suggesting that enhancement in one domain may positively influence the others.

Comparison with Previous Research

The present study explored the levels and interrelationships of problem-solving ability, psychological well-being, and mental health. The findings are largely consistent with previous research in these areas, while also providing insights specific to the Indian context.

1. The moderate levels of problem-solving ability, psychological well-being and mental health observed in this study are consistent with previous Indian research. **Dubey & Sharma (2016)** reported moderate psychological well-being among Indian college students, while **Jagannathan & Raghunathan (2005)** observed similar moderate mental health levels in Indian young adults. These findings suggest that while participants are functioning reasonably well, interventions to enhance problem-solving and coping skills could further improve well-being and mental health outcomes.
2. The study found a significant positive correlation between problem-solving ability and psychological well-being. This aligns with the findings of **Siu & Shek (2010)**, who reported that adolescents and young adults with effective problem-solving skills exhibited higher life satisfaction and positive affect. Similarly, **Chowdhury & Halder (2019)** found that better problem-solving ability reduced stress levels and enhanced overall psychological functioning. The present study supports these findings, indicating that individuals who can approach challenges constructively are likely to experience greater autonomy, personal growth, and life satisfaction.
3. The significant positive correlation between problem-solving ability and mental health in this study is consistent with the research of **Patel, Saxena, Lund, Thornicroft, Baingana, Bolton, & Unutzer (2018)**, which emphasized that cognitive coping strategies, including problem-solving, act as protective factors against psychological distress and mental health disorders. Participants with higher problem-solving skills demonstrated better emotional regulation and resilience, supporting the theory that cognitive competence is crucial for mental stability.
4. The interrelationships observed in this study echo the findings of **Ryff & Singer (2008)**, who highlighted that cognitive skills, emotional well-being and mental health are mutually reinforcing. The study corroborates the view that problem-solving ability is not only a cognitive skill but also a key determinant of both psychological and emotional well-being.

VII. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Theoretical Implications

The present study contributes to the theoretical understanding of the interrelationship between cognitive skills and psychological functioning. First, it supports the notion that problem-solving ability is a key cognitive skill that influences both psychological well-being and mental health, confirming theoretical models that link cognitive competence to emotional and behavioural outcomes. Second, the study reinforces Ryff's model of psychological well-being, showing that dimensions such as autonomy, personal growth, and positive relationships are positively associated with problem-solving skills. This empirical evidence strengthens the eudaimonic perspective of well-being, which posits that personal development and purposeful engagement are central to psychological health. Finally, the findings contribute to the stress-coping and cognitive-behavioural theoretical frameworks, suggesting that individuals with higher problem-solving skills are better able to manage stress and maintain mental stability. The positive correlations observed provide evidence that cognitive strategies act as protective factors against mental health difficulties, supporting prior research in both Indian and international contexts.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study have significant practical applications in educational, clinical, and organizational settings:

1. Institutions can integrate problem-solving skill development programs into curricula and extracurricular activities. Workshops, simulations, and case-based learning can enhance students' cognitive competence, which may in turn improve psychological well-being and mental health.
2. Mental health practitioners and counsellors can focus on problem-solving therapy and cognitive-behavioural interventions to strengthen clients' coping strategies. Enhancing problem-solving ability can serve as a preventive measure for stress-related mental health issues and support overall emotional regulation.
3. Organizations can provide training programs that foster problem-solving skills among employees, which may enhance job satisfaction, reduce workplace stress, and promote mental well-being. Employees with stronger problem-solving abilities are likely to manage challenges more effectively, contributing to a healthier and more productive work environment.
4. Policymakers and community planners can incorporate problem-solving and life skills training into youth development and mental health programs. Such initiatives could promote resilience, reduce psychological distress, and enhance overall well-being in the population.

Implications for Education, Counselling and Mental Health Interventions

1. **Educational Implications:** The findings of this study suggest that problem-solving ability plays a crucial role in enhancing psychological well-being and mental health. In educational settings, this implies that:
 - **Curriculum Integration:** Educational institutions can incorporate problem-solving skill development into academic curricula through activities such as case studies, group discussions, simulations, and project-based learning.
 - **Life Skills Training:** Schools and colleges can offer workshops or programs focused on critical thinking, decision-making, and adaptive coping strategies. Strengthening problem-solving skills may help students manage academic stress, improve resilience, and maintain better psychological well-being.
 - **Teacher and Counsellor Training:** Teachers and academic counsellors can be trained to recognize students with low problem-solving abilities and provide appropriate guidance or interventions to support their cognitive and emotional development.
2. **Counselling Implications:** The study highlights the importance of problem-solving skills in maintaining mental health and well-being, suggesting the following applications in counselling:
 - **Problem-Solving Therapy:** Counsellors can implement problem-solving therapy techniques to help clients develop effective strategies for addressing personal, academic, and social challenges.
 - **Stress Management Programs:** By focusing on enhancing problem-solving ability, counsellors can equip clients with tools to manage stress, reduce anxiety, and prevent mental health issues.
 - **Targeted Interventions:** Identifying clients with low problem-solving skills allows counsellors to provide tailored interventions that strengthen cognitive strategies and promote adaptive coping mechanisms.
3. **Mental Health Intervention Implications:** The positive association between problem-solving ability, psychological well-being, and mental health has important implications for mental health practice:
 - **Preventive Mental Health Programs:** Mental health professionals can design programs that focus on developing problem-solving skills as a preventive measure to reduce psychological distress.
 - **Holistic Interventions:** Interventions that combine cognitive skill development with mindfulness, emotional regulation, and resilience-building can enhance overall mental health outcomes.
 - **Community-Based Programs:** Public mental health initiatives can incorporate life skills and

problem-solving workshops to support youth, adults, and vulnerable populations, improving societal well-being and reducing mental health burden.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the findings and limitations of the present study, the following suggestions are offered for future research:

1. Future studies could include larger and more diverse samples across different regions, age groups, and socio-economic backgrounds to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Including both urban and rural populations could provide insights into cultural and environmental influences on problem-solving ability, psychological well-being, and mental health.
2. Conducting longitudinal research could help examine the causal relationships and long-term effects of problem-solving ability on psychological well-being and mental health. Such studies could reveal how these variables interact over time and under changing life circumstances.
3. Future research can design experimental studies to test interventions aimed at improving problem-solving skills and their impact on psychological well-being and mental health. This could include structured workshops, cognitive-behavioural training, or educational programs.
4. Researchers may include other psychological constructs, such as resilience, emotional intelligence, coping strategies, or stress levels, to explore their mediating or moderating roles in the relationship between problem-solving ability and mental health outcomes.
5. Comparative studies across different cultures and countries could provide insights into how cultural factors influence the relationship between problem-solving ability, well-being, and mental health. This could help identify culturally specific strategies for promoting mental health.
6. Future studies could incorporate qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups to gain a deeper understanding of how individuals perceive and apply problem-solving skills in daily life and how these skills influence their well-being and mental health.

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