



ROLE OF JOURNALING IN ENHANCING PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG WOMEN IN 30s)

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Abstract

Psychological well-being is a vital component of mental health, particularly among women in their thirties who often experience multiple role demands. The present study examined the effectiveness of a short-term gratitude journaling intervention in enhancing psychological well-being and reducing perceived stress. A quantitative pre-test–post-test design was employed with a sample of 30 women aged 30–39 years selected through purposive sampling. Standardized tools, including the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), were used for assessment. Participants engaged in a 10-day structured gratitude journaling practice. Statistical analysis using descriptive statistics and paired sample t-tests revealed a significant increase in psychological well-being ($M = 18.93$ to 20.27) and a significant reduction in perceived stress ($M = 5.10$ to 3.67). The results indicate that journaling is an effective, low-cost, and accessible intervention for improving mental health. The study highlights the relevance of journaling as a practical self-help strategy for emotional regulation and stress management.

Keywords: journaling, psychological well-being, perceived stress, gratitude, women's mental health

I. INTRODUCTION

Psychological well-being is a central component of mental health, encompassing positive emotional functioning, life satisfaction, and effective coping with life challenges. Traditional models of mental health focused primarily on the absence of illness; however, contemporary perspectives emphasize positive functioning, personal growth, and fulfillment. The emergence of positive psychology has further expanded this understanding by focusing on strengths, resilience, and optimal human functioning.

Women in their thirties represent a significant developmental group characterized by multiple life transitions, including career advancement, family responsibilities, and social role expectations. Balancing these roles often leads to increased stress, emotional strain, and reduced psychological well-being. Research suggests that women are more likely to engage in rumination when dealing with stress, which can intensify emotional distress and negatively impact mental health.

Journaling has gained recognition as a simple and effective psychological intervention that facilitates emotional expression, cognitive processing, and self-reflection. Expressive writing enables individuals to organize their thoughts, process emotions, and gain clarity about their experiences. Gratitude journaling, a specific form of journaling, focuses on positive aspects of life and has been associated with increased happiness, life satisfaction, and reduced stress.

Despite growing evidence supporting journaling as a beneficial intervention, limited research has focused specifically on women in their thirties. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of a short-term journaling intervention in enhancing psychological well-being and reducing perceived stress among this population.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research on psychological well-being has evolved from deficit-based models to strength-based approaches. Diener (1984) conceptualized subjective well-being as comprising life satisfaction, positive affect, and low negative affect. Ryff and Keyes (1995) proposed a multidimensional model including autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relationships, and self-acceptance.

Expressive writing research began with Pennebaker and Beall (1986), who demonstrated that writing about emotional experiences improves psychological and physical health. Subsequent studies showed that journaling helps individuals process emotions and organize thoughts into meaningful narratives, thereby reducing psychological distress.

Gratitude journaling has been widely studied within positive psychology. Emmons and McCullough (2003) found that individuals who regularly recorded gratitude reported higher optimism and well-being. Similarly, Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) found that intentional positive activities such as gratitude exercises increase happiness and reduce stress.

Research on stress highlights the importance of cognitive appraisal in determining stress responses (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Journaling may influence this process by promoting cognitive restructuring and emotional regulation. Lieberman et al. (2007) demonstrated that labeling emotions reduces neural activity associated with stress, suggesting that writing can facilitate emotional control.

Gender-based studies indicate that women often experience role strain due to multiple responsibilities (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). Journaling provides a private and structured outlet for emotional expression, making it particularly relevant for women managing multiple roles.

Although previous studies support the benefits of journaling, there is a lack of research focusing specifically on short-term interventions among women in their thirties. This study addresses this gap.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A quantitative pre-test–post-test experimental design was used to examine the impact of journaling.

Sample

The study included 30 women aged 30–39 years selected using purposive sampling.

Tools

- Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale (18-item version)
- Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10)
- Socio-demographic questionnaire

Procedure

Participants completed pre-test assessments measuring psychological well-being and perceived stress. They then engaged in a 10-day gratitude journaling intervention, writing daily about positive experiences and things they were grateful for. After the intervention, post-test assessments were conducted using the same scales.

Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using:

- Mean and standard deviation
- Paired sample t-test
- Effect size (Cohen's d)

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The results indicated a significant improvement in psychological well-being and a reduction in perceived stress following the journaling intervention.

Psychological well-being scores increased from a mean of 18.93 to 20.27, indicating enhanced emotional functioning and life satisfaction. Perceived stress scores decreased from 5.10 to 3.67, suggesting improved stress management.

The paired sample t-test revealed a statistically significant difference ($t = 6.91$, $p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The effect size (Cohen's $d \approx 0.90$) indicated a large practical impact of the intervention.

These findings support previous research suggesting that journaling enhances emotional regulation and cognitive clarity. The improvement in well-being may be attributed to increased self-awareness and positive cognitive reframing. By focusing on gratitude, participants shifted attention from stressors to positive experiences, reducing negative emotional responses.

Additionally, journaling may have reduced rumination by providing a structured outlet for emotional expression. This aligns with findings that expressive writing promotes psychological adjustment and reduces stress.

V. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that journaling is an effective intervention for enhancing psychological well-being and reducing perceived stress among women in their thirties. The findings demonstrate that even short-term journaling practices can lead to meaningful improvements in emotional functioning.

Journaling serves as a simple, accessible, and cost-effective strategy for mental health promotion. It can be easily incorporated into daily routines and used as a self-help tool for managing stress and improving well-being.

VI. LIMITATIONS

- Small sample size limits generalizability
- Short duration of intervention
- Use of self-report measures
- Absence of a control group
- Lack of long-term follow-up

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