

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SATISFACTION OF BASIC PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING IN EMERGING ADULTHOOD IN KOKAND

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Introduction

Emerging adulthood (ages 18–22) represents a transitional phase from adolescence to full adulthood, characterized by higher education or vocational training, initial workforce entry, identity exploration, and the pursuit of independence. This period is marked by elevated stress stemming from academic demands, career decision-making, interpersonal relationships, and financial pressures. Psychological well-being encompasses not merely the absence of psychopathology but also the presence of positive affect, life purpose, meaningful relationships, and personal growth (Ryff, 1989).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000) posits that psychological well-being is contingent upon the satisfaction of three innate psychological needs:

1. Autonomy – the perception of volition in one's actions.
2. Competence – the sense of efficacy in managing challenges.
3. Relatedness – the experience of meaningful connections and mutual support.

Satisfaction of these needs fosters intrinsic motivation, vitality, and adaptive functioning; conversely, thwarting leads to diminished well-being, anxiety, and burnout.

In Uzbekistan, emerging adults confront culturally specific stressors: pronounced familial influence (e.g., parental determination of educational and marital paths), collectivist norms, economic constraints, and traditional expectations. Although Western studies consistently demonstrate moderate-to-strong associations between need satisfaction and well-being ($r = 0.40\text{--}0.60$), empirical evidence within the Uzbek cultural context remains absent.

Novelty of the study: This investigation is the first in Kokand to examine the influence of basic psychological need satisfaction on psychological well-being among local emerging adults, explicitly accounting for cultural factors. High familial interdependence may amplify the salience of relatedness while potentially constraining autonomy.





Objective: To assess levels of basic psychological need satisfaction and psychological well-being among emerging adults in Kokand and to elucidate their interrelations.

Hypothesis: Satisfaction of all three needs will positively correlate with psychological well-being ($r > 0.35$, $p < 0.01$), with relatedness emerging as the strongest predictor due to prevailing collectivist values.

Methods

Participants

A sample of 180 emerging adults (92 students in higher education or vocational programs, 88 employed individuals), aged 18–22 years ($M = 19.8$, $SD = 1.3$), was recruited from Kokand, Uzbekistan. Random sampling was conducted via universities, vocational colleges, markets, and community venues. Data collection occurred in September–October 2025. Informed consent was obtained from all participants; those reporting diagnosed mental disorders (self-report) were excluded.

Measures

1. Basic Psychological Needs Scale (BPNS; Deci & Ryan, 2000; adapted to Uzbek/Russian) – 21 items (7 per subscale). Example: “I feel like I am free to decide for myself how to live my life” (autonomy). Responses on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = not at all true, 7 = very true). Cronbach’s α : overall = 0.87; autonomy = 0.81; competence = 0.84; relatedness = 0.89.

2. Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS; Ryff, 1989; 18-item short form) – Assesses six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, self-acceptance. Example: “I am satisfied with my relationships with others.” 6-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.91$.

Procedure

Questionnaires were administered individually or in small groups (classrooms, community settings). Anonymity was ensured; duration: 25–35 minutes. Instruments were presented in Uzbek or Russian per participant preference. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 27.0.

Statistical Analysis

- Descriptive statistics.
- Pearson product-moment correlations.
- Hierarchical multiple regression (three needs as predictors of well-being).
- Independent-samples t-tests comparing students vs. employed participants.

Results

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	M	SD	Min	Max	α
Basic Psychological Needs (total)	102.4	16.8	62	138	0.87
Autonomy	32.1	6.4	18	47	0.81
Competence	35.6	6.1	20	49	0.84
Relatedness	34.7	7.2	17	49	0.89





Psychological Well-Being	78.3	12.5	42	105	0.91
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Scores indicate moderate to high need satisfaction and well-being relative to established norms (BPNS > 95; PWBS > 70).

Table 2. Pearson Correlations

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Autonomy	-				
2. Competence	0.51***	-			
3. Relatedness	0.42*	0.48*	-		
4. Basic Needs (total)	0.78*	0.81*	0.79***	-	
5. Psychological Well-Being	0.41*	0.49*	0.58*	0.62*	-

* $p < 0.001$. Hypothesis confirmed; relatedness** exhibits the strongest association ($r = 0.58$).

Hierarchical Regression (Table 3):

The model accounted for 48% of variance in well-being ($R^2 = 0.48$, $F(3,176) = 54.1$, $p < 0.001$).

- Relatedness: $\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$

- Competence: $\beta = 0.28$, $p = 0.002$

- Autonomy: $\beta = 0.15$, $p = 0.041$

Group Differences:

- Students scored higher on autonomy ($M = 33.2$ vs. 31.0 , $t(178) = 2.41$, $p = 0.017$) and well-being ($M = 80.1$ vs. 76.4 , $t(178) = 2.18$, $p = 0.031$).

- Employed participants scored higher on competence ($M = 36.5$ vs. 34.7 , $t(178) = 2.05$, $p = 0.042$).

Discussion

Principal finding: Among emerging adults in Kokand, satisfaction of basic psychological needs robustly predicts psychological well-being. Relatedness emerged as the dominant contributor, consistent with collectivist cultural orientation wherein familial and communal bonds confer meaning and emotional sustenance. Autonomy exerted the weakest influence, likely attributable to normative parental oversight in educational and marital decisions.

Explanatory mechanisms:

- Collectivism prioritizes interdependence, rendering relatedness a primary source of identity and support.

- Employed participants reported elevated competence (financial self-efficacy) but reduced well-being, possibly due to diminished relational time.

Comparative analysis: Western samples identify autonomy as the primary predictor (Sheldon et al., 2001). In Kokand, relatedness predominates, underscoring cultural specificity.

Practical implications:

- Higher education institutions: Implement peer-mentoring programs and student societies to bolster relatedness.





- Vocational support: Develop work–life integration initiatives for employed youth.
 - Family interventions: Encourage gradual autonomy while preserving relational bonds.
 - Clinical practice: Prioritize relational enhancement as a pathway to well-being.
- Limitations:
- Male-only sample.
 - Cross-sectional design precludes causal inference.
 - Reliance on self-report measures.

Future directions: Include female participants, rural comparisons, longitudinal designs, and cultural moderators (e.g., religiosity).

Conclusion

Satisfaction of basic psychological needs constitutes a cornerstone of psychological well-being among emerging adults in Kokand. Relatedness assumes primacy within the collectivist framework. These findings inform the development of culturally attuned interventions tailored to the region's youth.

References

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