

Post Traumatic Growth as a Predictor of Psychological Well-Being in Childhood Maltreated University Students

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Abstract

Childhood maltreatment is essential to research since it has been demonstrated to have a wide range of impacts and increase the chance of issues continuing into adulthood. It is referred to as violent acts or abusive actions by parents or caregivers that can be categorized into physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. This study aims to investigate the relationship between childhood maltreatment, posttraumatic growth, and psychological wellbeing in university students. It was hypothesized that: 1) there will be a significant relationship between childhood maltreatment, posttraumatic growth, and psychological wellbeing of university students. 2) There would be gender differences between childhood maltreatment, posttraumatic growth, and the psychological wellbeing of university students. The cross-sectional correlational study design was used. The collection of data was carried out through a convenient sampling technique. A demographic sheet and Urdu-translated versions of the posttraumatic growth inventory, psychological wellbeing scale, and child abuse self-report scale were administered. For data analysis, descriptive analysis, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient for a relationship, and regression analysis were used. Results revealed that there is a significant negative relationship between childhood maltreatment and posttraumatic growth in university students ($r = -0.165^{**}$), which indicates the effects of childhood maltreatment will be reduced in later life if posttraumatic growth increases. Further, the analysis shows a significant positive relationship between posttraumatic growth and psychological wellbeing among university students ($r = 0.464^{**}$). The findings also illustrated a significant gender difference in the variables among university students. The mean scores indicate that male students show more childhood maltreatment experience ($M = 78.1867$) and posttraumatic growth ($M = 55.73$) than female students, whereas male and females show a negligible difference in psychological wellbeing ($M = 84.9$) than female students (83.1667). The findings of the current study have implications for future avenues.

Keywords: Post Traumatic Growth, Psychological Well-Being, University Students.

Introduction

Childhood maltreatment is defined as aggressive or abusive activities by parents or caregivers that cause physical or emotional harm to children. Maltreatment in childhood increases the chance of harmful psychological consequences that can last into adulthood. In 2017, the World Health Organization illustrated that there are five different types of childhood maltreatment: Physical abuse, sexual abuse, mental abuse, neglect, and negligent treatment or abuse. In 2010, the United States department of health and human services defined *Childhood maltreatment* as

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"any act or failure from a parent or caregiver that results in death, severe physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or any act of neglect that creates an imminent risk of serious harm". Physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, and neglect are the four basic types of maltreatment (Damashek & Chaffin, 2012). Exposure to stressful life experiences in childhood, such as child abuse and neglect or domestic violence, is linked to aggressiveness in adulthood. Boys who had a history of abuse or neglect were more likely to report adolescent delinquency and aggression than boys who had never been abused or neglected (Ford et al., 2012). Milaniak and Widom (2015) stated that individuals who perpetrate child abuse are more likely to have a history of childhood maltreatment. Early childhood maltreatment has a negative and long-lasting effect on subsequent emotional states.

In populations of adolescents, maltreatment in childhood is linked with a broad range of psychopathology and decreased psychological wellbeing. Several studies have connected childhood abuse to a greater level of depressive symptoms and an earlier onset of depression (Paradis & Boucher, 2010; Hafeez et al., 2022). One of the significant studies of Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) research demonstrates the link between childhood maltreatment and subsequent mental health issues, for example, depression, conduct, PTSD, liquor addiction, smoking, problematic substance use, and Ischemic cardiomyopathy. Adversities in the ACE research included physical, sexual, and psychological abuse of children, as well as omission and dysfunction in the family in which the mother treated the child aggressively, problematic substance use by family members, any psychological disorder in the family, divorce or separation between parents, or family affiliate with a criminal history (MacMillan et al., 2013). There is a psychological development that occurs after a stressful or traumatic event, which is known as "posttraumatic growth". It is a beneficial development that results from enduring a difficult, stressful, and traumatic experience.

Calhoun and Tedeschi (2004) described posttraumatic growth as a multifaceted concept that includes changes in attitudes, objectives, actions, and personality and the realization of a life and wisdom. Pre-trauma characteristics inside the individual, social support variables, and some persisting suffering influence the coping process and the onset of posttraumatic growth. This phenomenon of positive growth has been seen in five distinct categories: 1) self-efficacy and self-confidence, 2) alternative to relationship quality, 3) endeavor of entering into a new or different path in life, 4) a great deal of gratitude, 5) metaphysical or existential transformations, which may require a thorough comprehension of philosophical concepts. (Shakespeare & Finch et al., 2013). Posttraumatic growth is also characterized by a tendency to account for continuous changes that emerge as a result of traumatic occurrences. These changes go beyond pre-traumatic modifications and indicate greater appreciation for life, priority changes, and the importance of interpersonal relationships, increased sense of personal awareness, new opportunities for the future, and a more significant attempt to achieve existential or spiritual. Tedeschi and Calhoun's (2004) beneficial changes brought about by posttraumatic development include personal connections, personal strength, outlook on life, and mental condition. These modifications assist individuals in employing more innovative thinking and coping mechanisms when confronted with adversity.

Ryff (2014) has described psychological wellbeing as a personal awareness process comprised of six components: independence, feelings of competence, self-improvement, meaningful interactions with others, a sense of personal accomplishment, and self-determination (Disabato et al., 2015). Enhanced psychological wellbeing protects against psychiatric diseases and psychopathology (Ryff, 2014). Adult victims with a history of maltreatment had negative psychological wellbeing in terms of proneness to rage, low self-esteem, and a loss of a sense of purpose in life, as well as a lack of contentment and happiness. Self-esteem is a subjective assessment of how a person perceives. Several research has identified a link between abuse and poor self-esteem (Winstok, 2015) as well as a variety of mental health disorders. Psychological

wellbeing combines practical and affective states, including happiness and effective social functioning (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Previous studies have linked a history of childhood maltreatment and neglect to a worse level of psychological wellbeing in adults. In languages of aggression proneness, self-confidence, acknowledgment, the intellect of meaning in life, pleasure, and fulfilment in life, adult sufferers with a history of maltreatment exhibited poor psychological wellbeing (Winstok, 2015). Most victims of childhood maltreatment have their set belief systems disrupted, and their psychological wellbeing has been disturbed, resulting in low self-esteem and a loss of life's sense of self-worth. *Posttraumatic growth* is an excellent psychological development that assists people in coping with the consequences of childhood maltreatment and overcoming cognitive distortions caused by childhood maltreatment. It helps people change their self-perception, connections with one another, and life philosophy. If people cope and overcome these distortions ideally, their psychological wellbeing improves; if they do not manage or overcome these distortions, their psychological wellbeing deteriorates (Tedeschi et al., 2018). Calhoun and Tedeschi (2014) state that significant strategies such as reinterpretation, positive cognitive restructuring, positive reorientation, concentration on preparation, and placing things into consideration have been linked to posttraumatic growth in several studies. A recent study states that constructive cognitive processing helps in schema alterations that will aid posttraumatic development (Hussain & Bhushan, 2011).

The current study's purpose is to examine the relationship between childhood maltreatment, posttraumatic growth, and psychological wellbeing among university students and to determine what preventive components mediate the link between early abuse and later posttraumatic growth, as well as how it tends to affect the psychological wellbeing of students who experienced maltreatment. The focus of this research is to see if positive psychological adjustments in late adolescence may promote psychological wellbeing despite childhood maltreatment.

Literature Review

Childhood maltreatment is a major worldwide health issue that has long-term harmful impacts on mental health and quality of life, as evidenced by various research over the last few decades (Al-Fayez et al., 2012). According to research on the impacts of child maltreatment, children may suffer significant and persistent deficits in the physical, emotional, and social domains as a result of the abuse (MacMillan et al., 2013). According to WHO, around 25-50% of all children globally are victims of physical abuse. In 2007, the United States recorded roughly 149,000 occurrences of child physical abuse; however, because not every incidence is documented, the actual number of child abuse cases is likely more significant. Chronic abuse can also cause stress, which can lead to anxiety in varying degrees, making victims more vulnerable to developing conduct disorder, PTSD, and attention, learning, and memory problems (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2017).

Child maltreatment has a detrimental impact on one's self-perception, self-esteem, and self-related behavior. Depending on their developmental stage, children who are frequently abused may learn to believe that they have little value and self-worth. According to some studies, emotional abuse is inherent in all forms of maltreatment and cannot be separated from other types of abuse. Child maltreatment has a detrimental impact on one's self-perception, self-esteem, and self-related behavior (Harter, 1998). Depending on their developmental stage, children who are frequently abused may learn to believe that they have little value and self-worth. According to some studies, emotional abuse is inherent in all forms of maltreatment and cannot be separated from other types of abuse.

There are two primary critical theories of posttraumatic Growth: The functional descriptive model and the organismic valuing process theory (Joseph & Linley, 2005). Both theories of

post traumatic growth claim that trauma can challenge an individual's assumptive reality, resulting in cognitive dissonance between pre and post-trauma beliefs, leading to emotional pain and schematic confusion. Growth occurs when an individual gradually attempts to make sense of what has happened, resulting in changes in self-perception, interpersonal connections, and general life philosophy and outlook. The individual's personality structure, social support, and coping style influence the link between emotional pain and growth (Joseph & Linley, 2005; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). The organismic process theory differs from the other in that it is more specific in expressing the metaphysical theoretical concepts of Growth. It utilizes the term to communicate the idea of an underlying drive toward actualization spurred by trauma. Growth is the "natural endpoint of trauma recovery" (Joseph & Linley, 2006), and it is this process that Rogers refers to as the "innate human desire for self-actualization" (Rogers, 1959). The previous study has offered tentative evidence that emotional intelligence acts as a bridge between childhood maltreatment and posttraumatic development. Individuals with better emotional intelligence can comprehend other people's feelings more precisely and regulate emotions quite adaptively, and as a result, they are happier in life (Sanchez-Alvarez et al., 2016). Tedeschi and Calhoun provide a detailed picture of victims' psychological obstacles and reactions following trauma. Returning to one's prior core beliefs does not imply successful coping or healing from trauma but instead constructing a pleasant, integrated assumptive environment that embraces the painful experience.

Herrenkohl et al., (2012) conducted a three-decade longitudinal study examining child welfare data on 357 children. Results of this research demonstrate negative psychological wellbeing in aspects of aggression, self-esteem, acknowledgment, autonomy, a sense of purpose in life, and satisfaction with life. Parker et al. (2016) findings discovered that individuals with a history of previous childhood maltreatment and neglect perceive less familial duties than non-abusive adults. Briere and Runtz (2000) published which stated that physical abuse in childhood is associated with aggressive behaviour, sexual abuse is linked with maladaptive sexual conduct, and emotional abuse is linked to low self-esteem. Adults who were sexually assaulted as children use a mixture of denial, blaming themselves, self-isolating, and repressing their emotions to deal with their childhood traumas, according to evidence (Rosenthal et al., 2005). Dolan and Whitworth (2013) stated that people who have a history of sexual abuse in childhood are less likely to develop an intimate relationship with others later in life.

Zhou et al. (2015) found that traumatic experience was a critical initial component that had a psychological impact following the catastrophe since trauma may disrupt people's established belief systems and influence their psychological wellbeing. In 2004-2005, Wisconsin longitudinal research used advance access to castigate a sample of 1696 persons. The primary goal of the study was to see how contemporary interactions with abusive parents may mitigate the link between childhood abuse and psychological wellbeing later in life. The five characteristics of the solidarity theory were used to analyze parent-child relationships: incidence of connection, residential proximity, emotional bonding, similarity in the interchange of opinions, and social support (Kong & Moorman, 2015). Self-esteem is a kind of subjective assessment of how someone feels about themselves. Several studies have revealed a link between abuse and poor self-esteem (Winstok, 2015), as well as a link between low self-esteem and different mental health disorders (Shen, 2009; Silvern et al., 1995; Winstok, 2015). Studies have found links between poor self-esteem and poor quality of life or wellbeing in teenage populations.

Previous studies have linked a history of childhood abuse and neglect to a worse level of psychological wellbeing in adults. In terms of aggression proneness, self-esteem, acknowledgment, sense of meaning in life, happiness, and life satisfaction, adult victims with a history of maltreatment exhibited poor psychological wellbeing.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses were formulated as follows:

1. There will be a significant relationship between childhood maltreatment, posttraumatic growth, and the psychological wellbeing of university students.
2. Childhood maltreatment is likely to predict low levels of psychological wellbeing and posttraumatic growth in university students.
3. There would be gender differences between childhood maltreatment, posttraumatic growth, and the psychological wellbeing of university students.
4. There would be a difference in family structure between childhood maltreatment, posttraumatic growth, and the psychological wellbeing of university students.

Methodology

Research Design

A cross-sectional correlational research design was used in this study to inspect the relationship between childhood maltreatment, posttraumatic growth, and psychological wellbeing in university students. Data was collected using a convenient sampling technique, and the age range was 18-35. The incidence of childhood maltreatment and the effect of posttraumatic growth factors on psychological wellbeing in adulthood were assessed in the population of university students.

Sample

This study was conducted among 300 university students of Sialkot. The sample consisted of 150 males and 150 females. Data has been collected from 5 different universities. Data from 60 students from GC Women University Sialkot, 60 from Murray College Sialkot, 60 from UMT Sialkot, 60 from UCP Sialkot, and 60 from USKT Sialkot will be collected. Moreover, their age range will be about 18-35 years. We excluded 17 students out of 300 because they had psychological and medical issues.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria of the present study:

- Students between the age ranges of 18-35 years were included.
- BS Honors and MPhil students were part of the study.
- Students with psychological and medical issues were excluded from the study.
- Students with chronic illnesses, including cardiovascular disease, cancer, or kidney diseases, were not part of the study.

Measures

Child Abuse Self-Report Scale (Anjum & Bano, 2018)

A translated and modified edition of the child abuse self-report scale in Urdu language (Anjum & Bano, 2018) was used to investigate childhood maltreatment experiences in the targeted population. This scale was initially developed by (Khani et al., 2003). It is a self-reporting questionnaire consisting of 41 items. This consisted of subscales, and each sub-scale consisted of a different number of items, such as the psychological sub-scale, composed of 16 items; the neglect sub-scale, consisting of 11 items; the physical abuse subscale, consisting of 8 items; and the sexual subscale, consisting of 6 items. Each sub-scale range is measured from a 4-point Likert Scale from 0 (Never) to 4 (Always). The total score is the sum of all item scores. A higher score of 4 predicts a high level of maltreatment. Internal consistency of the scale was .91 (overall 41 item scale) alpha reliability. Whereas the alpha reliability of subscales was .75 for the physical abuse subscale, .91 for the psychological abuse subscale, .89 for the sexual abuse subscale, and .92 for the neglect subscale.

Post Traumatic Growth Inventory (Kausar, 2012)

The posttraumatic growth inventory is designed to assess the positive outcomes that are reported by individuals who have experienced traumatic events in their lives. It was initially developed by (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). In this study, we used a translated version of this scale. It includes 21 items and assesses personal growth in five areas: relationships with others, new possibilities, strength, spiritual development, and appreciation of life. On a 6-point Likert scale, responses range from 0 to 5. The test-retest reliability for the 21-item PTGI was acceptable at $r = .71$.

Psychological Wellbeing Scale (Zulfiqar, 2020)

Urdu translated version of psychological wellbeing (18 items) was used. Initially, it was developed by (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). It consists of 6 dimensions: autonomy, environmental control, personal growth, positive relations with others, the meaning of life, and self-acceptance. It is a 7-point Likert scale used by 1 = strongly agree and 7 = strongly disagree. Internal consistencies varied between 0.87 and 0.96, and test-retest reliability coefficients ranged between 0.78 and 0.97 for six subscales.

Statistical Analysis

For data analysis, demographic characteristics and variable percentages were analyzed through descriptive analysis. Pearson product moment correlation and coefficient were used to determine the relationship between variables. Further, for mean differences, a t-test was applied.

Results

This part presents the main statistical findings of the current data. To interpret the data descriptive statistics, the Pearson product coefficient correlation method was applied through a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS, 21). Pearson product coefficient correlation was used between the scales childhood abuse scale, posttraumatic growth inventory, and psychological wellbeing. Further, to calculate the mean difference, t-test and regression were applied.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation Analysis for model variables in university Students (N=300)

Variables	PWB	PTG	CM
Psychological Well Being (PWB)	1		
Post-traumatic Growth (PTG)	0.464**	1	
Childhood Maltreatment (CM)	0.095	-0.165**	1

$N= 300$, ** $p < 0.01$

Relationship of psychological wellbeing with posttraumatic growth is significant, where no significant relationship was found in psychological well-being and childhood maltreatment. Post traumatic growth has significant negative relationship with childhood maltreatment in university students that indicated the effects of the childhood maltreatment will be reduced in later life if post traumatic growth will increase. Overall significant relationship has been found among study variables.

Table 2: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis among Posttraumatic Growth and Subscales of Childhood maltreatment among University Students

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta β	P
Psychological	0.007	0.924	0.038	0.602
Neglects	0.006	0.015	0.028	0.692
Physical	0.019	0.031	0.045	0.542
Sexual	0.034	0.4	0.59	0.407
R	0.635 ^a			
R ²	0.406			
ΔR	0.399			
F	86.49			

N = 300, ***p* < 0.01

Findings revealed that Post traumatic growth collectively account 39.9% variance in the towards the childhood maltreatment, which indicated that the positive impact of Post traumatic growth.

Table 3: Summary of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of psychological wellbeing with Subscales of Childhood maltreatment among university students

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta β	P
Constant	1.917	0.276	-0.132	0.000
Psychological	-0.009	-0.005	-0.029	0.068
Neglect	-0.002	0.005	-0.011	0.677
Physical	-0.002	0.011	-0.081	0.883
Sexual	-0.016	0.014		0.249
R	0.17 ^a			
R ²	0.029			
ΔR	0.016			
F	0.49688			

** *p* < .01

Findings revealed that psychological wellbeing collectively account 1.6% variance towards the childhood maltreatment.

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation and T-test of University Students (Male=150, Female=150) on all model variables

Variables	M	SD	t	MD	P
Childhood Maltreatment					
Male	78.1867	10.39191	2.503	2.61333	0.013
Female	75.5733	745307			
Post Traumatic Growth					
Male	55.7333	17.0265	0.953	2	0.080
Female	53.7333	19.25968			
Psychological Well being					
Male	84.9	11.73005	1.412	1.73333	0.159
Female	83.1667	9.40828			

There is statistically significant difference on the variables of CA, PTG, PWB among university students. Further, mean scores indicate that male students show more childhood abuse experience ($M=78.1867$) and post traumatic growth ($M=55.73$) than female students, whereas male and female shows negligible difference in psychological well-being ($M=84.9$) than female student (83.1667)

Table 5: Mean, Standard Deviation and T-test of University Students (Living area: Rural= 145, Urban= 155) on all model variables

Variables	M	SD	t	MD	P
Childhood Maltreatment					
Rural	78.8552	8.65542	-0.175	-0.18379	0.861
Urban	77.039	9.44602	-0.178		
Post Traumatic Growth					
Rural	56.1724	17.50133	1.313	2.76332	0.190
Urban	53.4091	18.79807	1.316		
Psychological Well being					
Rural	83.7034	11.4134	-0.566	-0.69915	0.572
Urban	84.4026	9.91435	-0.564		

There is statistically significant difference on the variables of CA, PTG, PWB among students of different living area. Further, mean scores indicate that students from rural area show more childhood abuse experience ($M=78.855$) and post traumatic growth ($M=56.17$) than students from urban areas, whereas students from urban areas show more psychological well-being ($M=84.4026$) than student from rural areas (83.70).

Table 6: Mean, Standard Deviation and T-test of University Students (Family System: Nuclear=160, Joint=140) on all model variables

Variables	M	SD	t	MD	P
Childhood Maltreatment					
Nuclear	77.3438	10.84832	0.941	0.99375	0.347
Joint	76.35	6.62123	0.97		
Post Traumatic Growth					
Nuclear	53.0125	17.05853	-1.759	-3.6875	0.080
Joint	58.7	19.2449	-1.745		
Psychological Well being					
Nuclear	82.8563	9.79337	-2.057	-2.52232	0.041
Joint	85.3786	1.43984	-2.036		

There is statistically significant difference on the variables of CA, PTG, PWB among students of different family systems. Further, mean scores indicate that students from nuclear family show more childhood abuse experience ($M=77.3$). Whereas students from joint family show more post traumatic growth ($M=58.7$) than students from nuclear families. Furthermore, students from joint family show more psychological well-being ($M=85.37$) than student from nuclear families (82.8563).

Table 7: Post Traumatic Growth as a mediating factor in the relationship of Childhood Maltreatment and Psychological Wellbeing in university students (N=300)

Model Analysis	R-sq	Coeff	SE	t	Sig	95% CI	
						Lower	Upper
	.0277						
PWB		74.23	5.50	13.49	.000	63.4	85.06
CA		.0613	.0668	.9180	.3594	-.0701	.1928
PTG		.0929	.0335	2.770	.0059	.0269	.1589

Table 8: Total, Direct and Indirect Effects of X on Y

Model Analysis	Effect	SE	t	Sig	95% CI	
					Lower	Upper
Total effect of X on Y	.0597	.0675	.8844	.3772	-.0732	.1927
Direct effect of X on Y	.0613	.0668	.9180	.3594	-.0701	.1928
Indirect effect of X on Y	Effect		Boot SE		Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
PTGI	.0016		.0118		-.0237	.0238

A mediation analysis was conducted to examine the mediating effect of post-traumatic growth on childhood maltreatment and psychological wellbeing in university students. The total effect of the model was found to be non-significant, as the value of total effect is 5.9%. It was found that there was no significant direct effect, as sig value was .3772 which is higher than 0.05. These results suggest that post-traumatic growth hasn't significantly mediated the relationship between childhood maltreatment and psychological wellbeing in university students. Furthermore, analysis indicates that since Boot LLCI (-.0237) and Boot ULCI (.0238) have different signs of values i.e., negative and Positive, hence we can say that post-traumatic growth (mediator) don't significantly mediates childhood maltreatment (IV) and psychological wellbeing (DV) in university students.

Discussion

The findings of the current study supported the hypothesis that “there will be a significant relationship between childhood maltreatment, post-traumatic growth, and psychological well-being of University students.” Previous research also revealed that childhood maltreatment is a major worldwide health issue that has long-term harmful impacts on mental health and quality of life (Al-Fayez et al., 2012) According to research on the impacts of child maltreatment, children may suffer significant and persistent deficits in the physical, emotional, and social domains as a result of the abuse (MacMillan et al., 2013). Life's major crises can test a person's ability to comprehend his or her surroundings. When a person strives to come up with some new realities of life after a traumatic event, growth occurs. Many of the schematic frameworks that have administered knowledge, decision making, and meaningfulness can be badly shaken, threatened, or reduced to rubble by a psychological event.

The results of the current study revealed that there is a negative relationship between childhood maltreatment and psychological well-being, which signifies that childhood maltreatment experiences reduce the level of psychological well-being. According to another finding of the current study, post-traumatic growth would reduce the effect of childhood maltreatment on psychological well-being. A person outgrows from trauma when he gradually attempts to make sense of what has occurred, resulting in improvement in self-perception, interpersonal connections, and general life philosophy. The individual's personality structure, social support, and coping style all influence the link between emotional pain and growth (Joseph & Linley,

2005). People with social support can share their problems with their families, and colleagues and ask them for guidance also, their emotional support can help them to reduce distress. In times of crisis, the environmental system and the individual system together can have an impact on psychological well-being (Nasiri & Abdolmaleki, 2017). Herrenkohl et al. (2012) conducted three-decade longitudinal research, examining child welfare data on 357 children. Results of this research demonstrate negative psychological well-being in aspects of aggression, self-esteem, acknowledgment, autonomy, a sense of purpose in life, and satisfaction with life. A thorough research showed that participants expressed progress connected to better relationships, experiencing more understanding, experimenting with new ideas, increased freedom, a higher control and a sense of power, and a sense of appreciation of life. Participants also reported feeling further autonomous and permitted, being better capable to deal with difficult life situations, developing higher respect for the worth of life, choosing jobs in the serving professions, and developing a deeper sense of belief (Mohr & Rosen, 2017).

The result of the current study revealed that there is a significant negative relationship between childhood maltreatment and post-traumatic growth in university students ($r = -0.165^{**}$), which signifies that the traumatic effects of childhood maltreatment will reduce if the victim utilizes the principles of post-traumatic growth. According to a prior study, psychological abuse has been associated with low psychosocial performance and psychological well-being from youth to adulthood. Those who grew up in households with unpleasant experiences, such as emotional abuse, showed more difficulty with their emotional responses, thinking, and functioning. The analysis of the current study shows a significant positive relationship between post-traumatic growth and psychological well-being among university students ($r = 0.464^{**}$). These results are in accordance with previous research. It signifies that with increased use of post-traumatic growth, psychological wellbeing improves among university students who have experienced childhood maltreatment.

According to another hypothesis, there would be gender differences between childhood maltreatment, post-traumatic growth, and the psychological well-being of university students. Previous research also proposed that men were more likely exposed to frequent physical abuse, interpersonal violence, and any abuse, whereas women reported more frequent sexual abuse. (Hussey, 2006) The mean scores of results of the current study indicate that male students show more childhood abuse experience ($M = 78.1867$) than female students. Results of previous research showed that men's understanding of the abuse was related to their emotions and behaviors which were in turn related to higher levels of growth. Male has a better understanding of some situations and they have better coping abilities to overcome the negative effects of traumatic events (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). The mean scores of results of the current study indicate that male students show more post-traumatic growth experience ($M = 55.733$) than female students.

According to another hypothesis, there would be a difference in living area between childhood maltreatment, post-traumatic growth, and psychological well-being of university students. The findings of previous research suggest that children in rural areas were more likely to be maltreated compared to children in urban areas (Albert & Barth, 1996; Schnitzer et al., 2004) Mean scores indicate that students from the rural areas show more childhood abuse experience ($M = 78.855$) than students from urban areas. Participants who had high quality and high quantity social support had statistically significantly higher levels of post traumatic growth. So, people living in rural areas receive more social support and connectedness than people in urban areas (Jameson et al., 2009). Mean scores of the current study indicate that students from rural areas show more post-traumatic growth ($M = 56.17$) than students from urban areas.

According to another hypothesis, there would be a difference in the family system between childhood maltreatment, post-traumatic growth, and psychological well-being of university students. The association between parental attachment and PTG may be mediated by feelings

of safety and justice beliefs. Attachment theory suggests that positive attachment to others can generate positive interpersonal relationships, these provide a safe environment for individuals and increase their feelings of safety (Bowlby, 1980; Shaver & Hazan, 1993). Whereas students from the joint family show more post-traumatic growth ($M=58.7$) than students from nuclear families. Studies show that a higher level of joint family activities promotes adolescents' mental health, wellbeing, and quality of life, regardless of age, sex, socioeconomic differences, or family status (Kate & Parker, 2022). The result of the current study shows that students from joint families show more psychological well-being ($M=85.37$) than students from nuclear families (82.8563).

As predicted, the results supported the hypothesis which indicates that there is a significant negative relationship between childhood maltreatment and post-traumatic growth in university Students. These findings certainly support the previous research findings. The impact of childhood maltreatment can be reduced when the university students would use post-traumatic growth. The current research explored that post-traumatic growth leads to a high level of psychological well-being.

Conclusion

Result revealed that there is significant negative relationship between childhood maltreatment and post traumatic growth in university students ($r= -0.165^{**}$), that indicated the effects of the childhood maltreatment will be reduced in later life if post traumatic growth will increase. Further, the analysis shows significant positive relationship between post traumatic growth and psychological wellbeing among university students ($r= 0.464^{**}$). Further multiple linear regression analysis illustrated that post traumatic growth is a significant predictor of psychological wellbeing among university students. The findings also illustrated that there is a significant gender difference on the variables among university students. The mean scores indicate that male students show more childhood maltreatment experience ($M=78.1867$) and post traumatic growth ($M=55.73$) than female students, whereas male and female shows negligible difference in psychological well-being ($M=84.9$) than female student (83.1667). Whereas mean scores indicate that students from rural area show more childhood maltreatment experience ($M=78.855$) and post traumatic growth ($M=56.70$) than students from urban areas, whereas students from urban areas show more psychological well-being ($M=84.4026$) than student from rural areas (83.70). Mean scores also indicate that students from nuclear family show more childhood maltreatment experience ($M=77.3$). Whereas students from joint family show more post traumatic growth ($M=58.7$) than students from nuclear families. Furthermore, students from joint family show more psychological well-being ($M=85.37$) than student from nuclear families (82.8563). All ethical guidelines were exercised throughout the research course and progression.

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