



Temperament, Spirituality, Generativity, Emotional Intelligence and Aggressive Orientation of Bengali Young Adults and Middle Adults: An Exploratory Study

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<p>Received 23/05/2025</p> <p>Accepted 26/05/2025</p> <p>Published 09/07/2025</p>	<p>Abstract</p> <p><i>The present exploratory study seeks to understand how psychological variables such as temperament, spirituality, generativity, emotional intelligence, and aggressive orientation differ and interrelate across two distinct age groups - Bengali young adults (19–30 years) and middle adults (40–60 years). The unprecedented stress of the COVID-19 pandemic offered a unique backdrop to examine how individuals navigate mental well-being in crisis conditions. Data were collected using four standardized tools: State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS), Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES), and Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS). 120 participants (60 in each group) were assessed via online surveys translated into Bengali to ensure accessibility.</i></p> <p><i>Statistical analyses revealed significantly higher levels of state anxiety among young adults, while middle adults showed higher levels of generativity and overall mental well-being. Notably, for both age groups, spirituality and generativity showed positive correlations with mental well-being, while state and trait anxiety showed inverse relationships. The study's findings suggest that spiritual engagement and purpose-driven behavior act as psychological buffers in times of adversity, and that age and life experience play significant roles in emotional regulation and mental resilience.</i></p> <p>Keywords: <i>Aggressive Orientation, Bengali Young Adults and Middle Adults, Emotional Intelligence, Generativity, Spirituality, Mental Well-being, Temperament</i></p>
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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, as a prolonged global crisis, presented a unique opportunity to study how people adapt psychologically under shared existential threats. For the people of Bengal, where spiritual beliefs, collectivistic family values, and strong community identities form the bedrock of cultural life, this crisis revealed deeper psychological patterns across age groups. This study investigates five interconnected psychological variables- **temperament, spirituality, generativity, emotional intelligence, and aggressive orientation**- and how they present in two distinct life stages: young adults (19-30 years) and middle adults (40-60 years).

To anchor this research in developmental psychology, the framework of Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory offers profound relevance. **Erik Erikson** proposed eight stages of development, each defined by a central psychosocial conflict. This study focuses on:

Stage 6: Intimacy vs. Isolation (young adults) - Seeking relationships and identity formation.

Stage 7: Generativity vs. Stagnation (middle adults) - Giving back, mentoring, and creating legacy.

Middle adults, aligned with the generativity stage, are expected to experience greater psychological fulfillment through service and connection. Young adults, meanwhile, may show more emotional volatility as they navigate intimacy and identity under threat.

Review of Literature

Generativity and spirituality have been consistently linked to well-being and emotional maturity (McAdams, 1993; Ardelieta, 2010). Studies during the COVID-19 pandemic found heightened anxiety in youth and increased spiritual engagement among older adults (Smith et al., 2009; Chirico & Nucera, 2020). Emotional intelligence has been shown to buffer stress, while aggressive orientation often rises in contexts of emotional dysregulation and isolation. Erikson's model remains foundational in understanding these dynamics across age groups.

Objectives of the Study

1. To compare levels of temperament, spirituality, generativity, emotional intelligence and aggression between Bengali young and middle adults.
2. To examine interrelationships between these variables within each age group.
3. To assess how these factors contribute to mental well-being during collective stress.

Hypotheses

H1: Young adults will report higher state anxiety than middle adults.

H2: Generativity and spirituality will positively correlate with mental well-being.

H3: Anxiety and aggression will negatively correlate with mental well-being.

H4: Emotional intelligence will act as a moderator of coping.

Methodology

Participants: 120 total (60 young adults, 60 middle adults) from Kolkata and North 24 Parganas.

Sampling: Random sampling.

Instruments Used:

1. State- Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI)
2. Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS)
3. Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES)
4. Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)

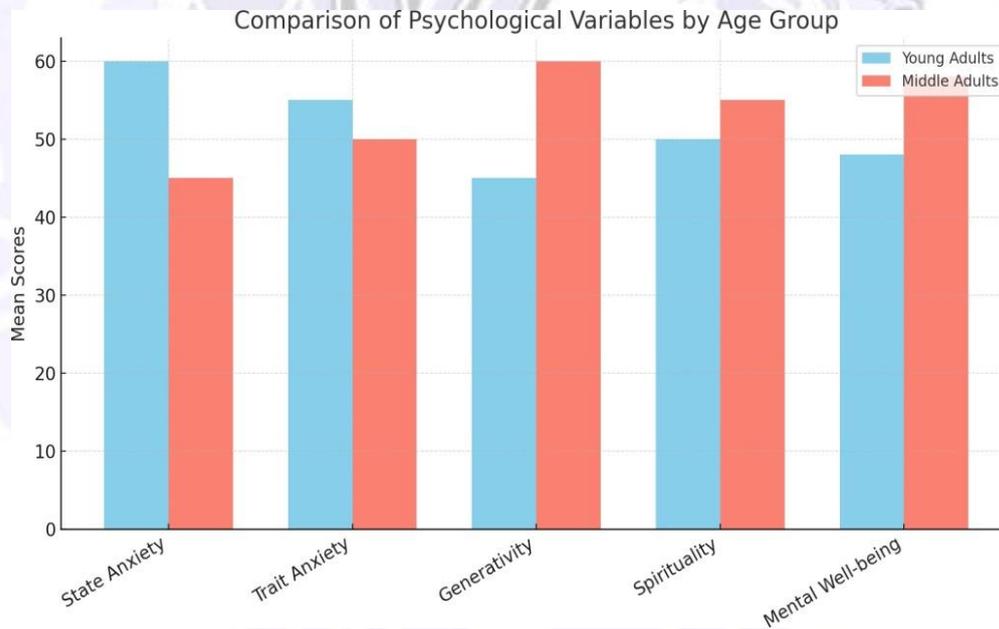
Tool Translation: All tools were translated to Bengali using back-translation and expert validation.

Procedure

The study followed these steps:

1. Tool Selection & Translation—Four validated scales were chosen and translated into Bengali.
2. Ethical Clearance- Informed consent was obtained digitally, with full confidentiality.
3. Recruitment- Participants were contacted via social media and academic groups.
4. Data Collection- Google Forms were used; 138 responses were received, 120 were valid.
5. Data Analysis- SPSS v16 was used for t-tests and Pearson correlation analysis.

Results & Discussion



Key Findings

- State Anxiety: Higher in young adults ($p < 0.05$)
- Generativity and Well-being: Higher in middle adults
- Spirituality: Strongly correlated with well-being in both groups
- Aggression and Trait Anxiety: Negatively correlated with well-being

Interpretation

Young adults experience more emotional instability due to identity struggles and lifestyle disruption. Middle adults benefit from psycho-social maturity and generative purpose. Spirituality emerged as a protective factor for both groups, with greater influence in older adults. Emotional intelligence was inferred to reduce aggression and support coping, especially where spiritual or generative engagement was present.

Conclusion

The findings affirm Erikson's theory: young adults seek identity and are more vulnerable to anxiety, while middle adults gain strength from generativity and spiritual purpose. Targeted psychological support for young adults and spiritual-community programs for all ages are recommended.

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