

HAIGAZIAN UNIVERSITY

Psychological Mindedness, Self-Awareness and Empathy as Predictors of Psychological  
Wellbeing in University vs. Non-university Emerging Adults

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences in partial fulfillment of  
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Psychological Mindedness, Self-Awareness and Empathy as Predictors of Psychological Wellbeing in  
University vs. Non-university Emerging Adults

By Sirag Karagoezian

is accepted by the Graduate Thesis Committee as satisfying the thesis requirements for  
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Haigazian University

December 2018

*DEDICATION*

*I would like to dedicate this thesis to Ike. May this be an example to you that you can do whatever you set your mind to, darling boy. Dream big and practice psychological mindedness always.*

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### Abstract

Psychological wellbeing is an important part of healthy growth and development. Early emerging adulthood being a stressful period between decisions of choices in life, wellbeing becomes difficult to instill. As such, the purpose of this study was to assess the correlational relationship and predictive value of three different constructs on psychological wellbeing. The constructs are psychological mindedness, self-awareness, and empathy. The goal was to verify predictive value of each and make use of the conclusions in promoting psychological wellbeing of the target age group. The participants of this study (N=215), all emerging adults (18-25 years old), divided into university attending students (N=120) and non-university attending peers (N=95) were Lebanese. The study relied on self-report method, where participants filled in questionnaires that dealt with the different constructs considered. Psychological Mindedness Scale, Self-Consciousness Scale to measure self-awareness, Interpersonal Reactivity Index to measure empathy, and Ryff's Wellbeing Scale to measure psychological wellbeing of participants. Results attained by the comparison of scores attained on each test, and by performing regression analysis showed that psychological mindedness and self-awareness have predictive value of psychological wellbeing and education plays a mediating factor in promoting the development of these characteristics.

*Key words:* Psychological Wellbeing, Empathy, Self-awareness, Self-consciousness, Psychological Mindedness, Emerging adults, University students, Non-university peers.



## Psychological Mindedness, Self-Awareness and Empathy as Predictors of Psychological Wellbeing in University vs. Non-university Emerging Adults

### Chapter 1

When psychological wellbeing is thought about as an important part of growth and development, striving to instill this in young people becomes a priority, as they have their whole lives in front of them. Wellbeing, according to World Health Organization (1946), is considered to be a crucial part of health in its general definition. As such, studying what contributes to one's wellbeing is one of the questions this study tackles, particularly in emerging adults, because of its salutary impact on health and longevity (Diener, 2011).

Due to the importance of psychological wellbeing in young adulthood, this study looked at selected constructs as predictors to wellbeing, mainly, being psychologically minded, practicing self-awareness and having empathy towards others (Beitel, Cecero & Ferrer, 2004; Trudeau & Reich, 1995). Almost all studies on the topic have chosen university students as their direct subjects of these studies; however the interest of the current study was to test for these constructs as contributing factors to wellbeing not only in university students but also in same-age non-university goers, to be able to extend the generalizability of the results onto the total population of the age group mentioned.

### Background of the Study

When concentrating on the topic of psychological wellbeing, most studies take into consideration some kind of psychological dysfunction one may have. Ryff (1995) and others have taken another approach to researching and gathering empirical knowledge about wellbeing by examining the elements that make up psychological wellbeing in the psychologically ill and also people in general in an attempt to understand and help those with poor psychological wellbeing.

The current study considered four different constructs that have been found to be

interrelated to one another, as well as to psychological wellbeing. Psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy have been found to be constructs that are attainable, teachable and contributing to one's wellbeing, thus improving quality of life (Beitel et al., 2004; Trudeau & Reich, 1995; Ryff, 1995). The studies connecting these constructs have been discovered using almost exclusively university age students. Emerging adulthood is an age where significant changes occur in one's life to lead towards autonomy and being able to rely on one's self, develop into the human being that is still in the process of discovery (Ryff, 1995). Emerging adulthood is naturally not restricted to youth that attend universities, but also same age peers who might not have the same opportunities in life to reach the level of higher education. This study included both university students and same-age peers.

The variables under question are based on previous research by Beitel et al. (2004) where psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy are considered to be separate variables yet interdependent. These concepts are found to be teachable and if young adults learn them earlier on in their life, their psychological wellbeing for the future will significantly improve (Saito, Takeda, Yamagishi, Kubo & Kitamura, 2017). Another study by Trudeau & Reich (1995), found psychological wellbeing to be one of the correlates of psychological mindedness. Psychological wellbeing refers to the ideal psychological functioning of a person and has been studied from mainly two distinguishable perspectives: hedonic and eudaimonic. The hedonic approach focuses on gaining the feeling of happiness and pleasure and avoiding pain, whereas the eudaimonic approach finds the wellbeing of a person in one's ability to find meaning, self-realization and full functionality of that person (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Wellbeing, defined by Ryff and Keyes, (2005) who have focused on the eudaimonic approach, relates to one's level of enjoyment and positive functioning in life. It embraces concepts such as self-acceptance, positive relations, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and a sense of personal growth.

According to previous research by Trudeau & Reich (1995) and by Britzman and Henkin (1992), one's wellbeing is determined by psychological mindedness. Based on a study by Beital, Ferrer & Cecero (2004) on 103 undergraduate university students, psychological mindedness was found to positively correlate with the constructs of self-awareness meaning private self-consciousness and empathy meaning awareness of others. This study by Beital et al (2004), as well as earlier studies by Trudeau & Reich (1995), which focused on the correlates of psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy, were all conducted on university students, age range being 18 to 25 years old. Furthermore, a study by Price (2016), also done on university students, found psychological mindedness to be essential in one's journey in psychotherapy and it should be assessed whenever young adults seek therapy.

In this study, this age group (between 18-25 years) is referred to as emerging adulthood. Emerging adulthood is said to be a newer term as coined by Arnett (2000) to describe the stage in between adolescence and adulthood. It is a time where young adults explore their identity, get a sense of focus, gather a range of experiences, consider their own stability and feel the sense of being 'in-between'. This age is a transitional life period that is characterized by more severe life-changing roles, demographic variety, unpredictability, and identity decisions than any other life stage. As such, it constitutes an important variable in this current study. The aim therefore is to extend its limits and to address the given age group in general, and not only the university attending ones, because as mentioned above, not all emerging adults have access to higher education (Arnett, 2000).

In a recent study, researchers have named many factors that affect emerging adults' mental health and psychological wellbeing. Some of the factors are financial issues, personal concerns, social problems and psychological factors (Layard, Clark, Cornaglia, Powdthavee, & Vernoit, 2014). The remedy to the many problems emerging adults face, according to a

study by Vescovelli, Melani, Ruini, Enrico, Bitti & Monti (2017), is the provision of counseling services and psychotherapy to enhance their mental health and psychological wellbeing. Different studies (Conte, Plutchik, Jung & Picard, 1990; McCallum, Piper & Joyce, 1992) state that psychological mindedness is a crucial element that mental health patients need so as to have effective results in therapy. Another, a study on 45 Japanese health professionals by Saito et al. (2017) found psychological mindedness to be a teachable construct. The study trained nurses on psychological mindedness by giving them five sessions to attend. On basis of pre and post tests results indicated that the training sessions positively changed the nurses' personal growth and their ability to empathize with their patients. This implies that psychological mindedness can be taught and trained to promote personal growth and empathy that are in fact components of psychological wellbeing.

In its definition, psychological mindedness entails the concept of being self-aware making it a key element to have as an individual. Self-awareness is a cognitive process where one directs focused attention to the self, according to Phillips and Silvia (2005). The term self-awareness is used interchangeably with self-consciousness that entails private and public consciousness. Private self-consciousness is what defines self-awareness, evaluating inner self and emotions. Public self-consciousness is linked to the idea of self as seen through the eyes and opinion of others (Simon, 2004). Self-consciousness in itself is interconnected with negative self-affect, embarrassment and being shy, particularly seen from the perspective of others (Brander, 1969). This particular study takes on the private self-consciousness as being basic to the definition of psychological mindedness as stated by Beitel et al, (2004).

When speaking of self-awareness, there are two sides to consider; self-awareness in the form of rumination and in the form of reflection. Rumination is found to be negatively correlated with wellbeing (Beitel et al., 2004) while reflection is found to be positively

correlated with psychological wellbeing (Newman & Nezlek, 2016). This study takes reflection into consideration as it is found to be one of the positive elements that make up psychological wellbeing as a whole. Being self-aware and being able to reflect on oneself is yet another teachable aspect young adults can attain (Saito et al., 2017).

As previously discussed, self-awareness is a component of psychosocial mindedness and as such it is included in this study. According to Decety & Jackson (2004), another element that is a component to psychological mindedness is empathy. Empathy comes after self-awareness; if one does not understand one's self, it is hard to understand another.

Empathy is a construct that is present in humans because they are social beings that function in context of other people (Batson, 1990). The start of how one understands oneself is a crucial step in the process of practicing empathy. Without self-awareness, genuine empathy does not occur (Lewis, 1999; Decety & Jackson, 2004).

Many studies have been carried out on the relationship between empathy and psychological wellbeing. According to Mehrabian (2000), empathy improves the quality of wellbeing as well as social relationships because people appreciate and feel connected to ones who show them that they understand them. Another empirical study by Shanafelt, West, Zhao, Novotny, Kolars, Habermann et al. (2005) has obtained results that empathy was found to positively associate with psychological wellbeing. In the study 195 college students completed self-reports on self-compassion, attachment anxiety and wellbeing and empathy toward others was a mediating factor between these. The results of the study stated that those who are empathetic towards others display more happiness and wellbeing and less negative emotion.

Based on these, the current study decided to take empathy as one of the predictors on psychological wellbeing in university as well as non-university population.

Psychological wellbeing is a state that is experienced in different ways and intensity. Being a very complex construct to study, many have defined it differently and as one may anticipate, the collection of all its definitions, one may come to a more complete understanding of it. Some may experience high levels of wellbeing despite their very difficult living situations; however, others experience low levels of psychological wellbeing even though they have comparatively better circumstances, such as wealth, education, and good health (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Income, age, gender, education, and race are not found to be directly related to or the cause of psychological wellbeing (Robbins & Kliewer, 2000). Thus, even though one's environment and life situation influences the psychological wellbeing, individual differences and temperamental tendencies affect the individual's high or low levels of psychological wellbeing. For the purpose of this study, the definition developed by Carol Ryff (1995) was used.

Also for the purpose of this study, the age between 18 and 25 was considered since it is a crucial age of self-exploration, autonomy, finding a purpose and meaning in life as well as cultivating new relationships (Ryff, 1995). Although some of these dimensions are said to come about with age, emerging adulthood is an onset for self-exploration and discovery.

Many studies support various differences between university students and those who do not attend university and are possibly immersed in the workplace; one main reason could be socio-demographic factors as found by Joutsenniemi, Laaksonen, Knekt, Haaramo & Lindfors (2012). The results of their research states that one of the factors in treating anxiety and mood disorders in psychotherapy is education as well as employment status. The same study states that a patient's background can be a predictor of psychotherapy outcomes.

The presence of the construct of psychological wellbeing is studied here through measuring psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy of participants sampled from the general population of emerging adulthood that includes university and non-

university members.

### **Problem Statement**

The purpose of the current research was to test for correlation between psychological mindedness, self-awareness, empathy and psychological wellbeing within the Lebanese context. It further studied the difference of these variables between two groups: a) university students and b) same-age non-university peers. Finally, it sought to assess the contribution of psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy to psychological wellbeing within the emerging adults groups.

Previous research by Beital et al. (2004), psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy are found to have a positive relationship amongst one another. The study was conducted on university students and found private self-consciousness (self-awareness) and PM were positively associated ( $r .27, p .05$ ). The same study also found psychological mindedness to be positively correlated with empathy (awareness of others). Psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy are also found to be positively correlated to psychological wellbeing in different studies, such as the aforementioned study by Trudeau & Reich in 1995. Psychological mindedness was also found to be a crucial predictor for effective psychotherapy (Trudeau & Reich, 1995). Awareness of self and others also contributes to the mental health of patients (Britzman & Henkin, 1992).

Furthermore, based on various experiences in therapy and counseling, those who have a mind that is psychologically attuned, are aware of themselves and others, understand themselves better and reflect upon their thoughts, feelings and behaviors, thus, positively affecting their wellbeing and functionality. It is observed that such people are able to overcome challenging situations, produce better results and maintain their mental health. This conceptualization is supported by the study of Trudeau & Reich (1995). Psychological wellbeing and mental health are crucial components of quality of life and emotional balance

is one key to a balanced mental health, particularly in groups of young adults (Heiligenstein, Guenther, Hsu & Herman, 1996). How they relate their inner and outer resources determines their mental health and psychological wellbeing (Schwarzer & Leppin, 1991).

Moreover, since emerging adulthood is quite an essential part of life (Arnett, 2000) and since the variables taken under consideration are teachable elements (Saito et al., 2017) it is important to answer the question do psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy predict psychological wellbeing in young adults?

Therefore, based on previous research, this study examined the relationship between psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy, more specifically the extent to which they are predictors of wellbeing of the Lebanese young adults. The hypotheses that were examined in this study are the following:

Similarities with previous research: Replications.

Hypothesis 1: Psychological Mindedness is positively correlated with psychological wellbeing in emerging adults in Lebanon.

Hypothesis 2: Self-awareness is negatively correlated with psychological wellbeing in emerging adults in Lebanon.

Hypothesis 3: Empathy is positively correlated with psychological wellbeing in emerging adults in Lebanon.

Differences between the two populations of university students and non-university peers: Extension.

Hypothesis 4: There is a difference in psychological mindedness, self-awareness, empathy and psychological wellbeing between the two groups.

Hypothesis 5: Psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy are predictors of psychological wellbeing in emerging adults in Lebanon.



### **Significance of the Study**

This study contributed to the field of research in two ways. Theoretically, it enhanced the field of psychotherapy that entails promoting wellbeing and positive mental health in all aspects. In knowing the role of psychological mindedness and its important role in effecting psychological wellbeing, the study answered these questions in the specific population under study and in doing so, it enhanced the wellbeing of a population both in the present and the future. Psychological mindedness gives emerging adults the expectation for therapy to be helpful and motivate self-understanding (Beitel, 2009).

Furthermore, it improved the empirical knowledge of these subjects at hand by increasing data on understanding of the underlying relationship between the psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy and their relationship with developing psychological wellbeing among Lebanese young adults.

Psychological wellbeing is not a construct that has been researched on a great deal with this age group and in this area in particular. Most of the studies are carried out on a population in western countries, where the overall relationships between and among psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy are considered in relation to psychological wellbeing in the emerging adults. Based on a study by Vescovelli, Melani, Ruini, Bitti & Monti (2017) psychological wellbeing is the one of the aims of psychotherapy and teaching and psychoeducating on psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy contributes to the field of psychotherapy.

### **Overview of Methodology**

This study used an empirical method of quantitative survey research to test for the interrelationship of psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy variables as well as their predictive value to the psychological wellbeing of the Lebanese young adults. The

participants of this study consisted of 215 male and female young adults (ages between 18 and 25). These comprised two groups: 120 participants of university level and another 95 of non-university level of participants of Lebanese origin were asked to answer the questionnaires, in basic school level English, on the material of concern to study. The questionnaire included the four scales to measure the four variables as well as demographic sheet. These were: The Psychological Mindedness Scale (PMS), the Self-Consciousness Scale (SCS) to test for Self-awareness, the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) and the Ryff's Wellbeing Scale (PWB). The participants were asked to fill out the demographic questionnaire and a consent form to reassure that their responses were completely anonymous and confidential. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS descriptive and inferential statistics. Data were also compared to the data from the literature.

### **Limitations**

One limitation of this study was that it targeted the young adults who are literate and English speaking.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

**Psychological Mindedness:** A person's ability to reflect upon the meaning, motivation and understanding of behavior, thoughts, and feelings of oneself and others (Farber, 1985).

**Self-awareness:** A state in which attention is directed toward the self. It is a necessary precondition for psychological mindedness (Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss, 1975).

**Empathy:** In the broad sense, empathy refers to the responses of one person to the seen experiences of another. (Davis, 1983)

**Psychological wellbeing:** It is defined by the presence of something positive in life, not only the absence of illness. Six central dimensions of PWB are: Self-acceptance, Positive relations

with others, Autonomy, Environmental mastery, Purpose in life, and Personal growth (WHO 1948, Ryff 1989).

Emerging adult: The age between 18 and 25, adolescence and adulthood, where crucial developmental changes take place. (Arnett, 2000).

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

The present research centered essentially on studying relationships that obtain between 1) psychological mindedness, 2) self-awareness and 3) awareness of others on the one hand and 4) psychological wellbeing on the other. However, since each of these psychological concepts enjoys an extensive theoretical and even philosophical, as well as an empirical heritage, it seemed appropriate for the purpose of this review to take each concept in turn and just expose its definitional and theoretical foundations then follow this by turning attention on its most relevant empirical findings and associations. It is hoped that following this approach offers a more balanced treatment of these complex constructs.

#### **Psychological Wellbeing**

Psychological wellbeing has its roots in philosophy and literature. Theoretically, a huge body of literature discusses the importance of achieving and maintaining psychological wellbeing for individuals. Psychological wellbeing does not consist only of the momentary feelings of happiness and contentment. Instead, psychological wellbeing as discussed in this study considered the extensive notion of personal fulfillment where people may experience difficulties or frustration; yet still able to maintain a healthy mental state and appropriate behavior. There are two conceptual approaches to the issue of wellbeing, as defined early on by two philosophies: The first of these is hedonism, which is defined as the feeling of happiness and positive affect and the absence of pain (Kahneman, Diener & Schwarz, 1999) and the second is the eudaimonia which signifies wellbeing beyond the hedonic concept stating that wellbeing is not only maximizing the positives and minimizing the negative ones, rather it refers to living life to the utmost human conceivable state (Ryan, Huta & Deci, 2008).

Hedonism, rooted in the Greek philosophy, is the basic idea that achieving the greatest pleasure is the purpose and objective of what life is all about (McMahon, 2006). This inevitably means that being happy is sum total of happy, pleasurable moments. In psychology, this is defined as subjective wellbeing, which includes two features: (a) Affective balance (elimination all negative emotion) and (b) perceived life satisfaction (which has a cognitive component), this researched by Lucas, Diener & Suh (1996). Wellbeing based on the hedonic approach is called subjective wellbeing, also studied by many, focuses mainly on the way people feel, the positive and negative feelings and satisfaction of their life and pleasure in life in general (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999). Psychological wellbeing is based on the eudaimonic philosophy (Abbott, Ploubidis, Huppert, Kuh, Wadsworth, & Croudace, 2006) and it gives a different perspective on the matter of pleasurable experience. Also rooted in philosophy initially, Aristotle encourages people to live life according to the ideal which is reaching the full potential of what one hopes for (Avia & Vázquez, 1998). In psychology, this is considered to be the wellbeing that lies in the actions of one who lives according to one's values in which one feels real and connected and alive (Waterman, 1993).

To explain further, eudaimonia suggests that wellbeing does not consist in maximizing positive experiences and minimizing negative ones (Ryan & Deci, 2001). It refers to living fully or to allow for the richest human potential possible (Ryan, Huta & Deci, 2008). Eudaimonic happiness revolves around satisfaction with one's life. It is more reflective of one's life experiences and actions, irrespective of their current state of emotions. Purpose and meaning in life, flourishing, growth, and self-actualization are all concepts that are related to, or a part of, eudaimonic happiness (Fernandes-Rios & Cornes, 2009). According to different studies on the subject, dimensions of individual conceptions of

wellbeing are strongly associated with self-reported wellbeing than hedonic dimensions (McMahan & Estes, 2011).

Psychological wellbeing, mentioned in this study, is based on the development of the concept by Carol Ryff (1995), who defined it to be inclusive towards different dimensions. Wellbeing is a multidimensional research that is based on the eudaimonic approach and built on six constructs that contribute to one's psychological wellbeing: autonomy, environmental mastery, self-acceptance, personal growth, positive relations with others and purpose in life (Ryff and Keyes, 1995; Lavalekar & Jnana, 2017).

Empirical research explains wellbeing in different ways as well; there have been many studies on wellbeing, and as it is operationally defined as a state of being. Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) found that some might experience high levels of wellbeing despite their very difficult living situations; moreover, others experience low levels of it even though they have comparatively better circumstances, such as wealth and education. This makes wellbeing a state where one can achieve regardless of life circumstances. The current study sought to answer questions regarding the predictors of wellbeing.

Taking into consideration the number of predictors of wellbeing, the study of theory and research of wellbeing has found that income, age, gender, education, and race are not found to be directly related to or the cause of psychological wellbeing (Robbins & Kliever, 2000). Thus, even though one's environment and life situation influences the psychological wellbeing, individual differences and temperamental tendencies affect the individual's high or low levels of psychological wellbeing.

In other studies, particularly by Beitel et al. (2005), Trudeau & Reich (1995) and Newman & Nezlek (2016), psychological wellbeing is found to be connected to the three constructs (psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy) in the current study.

These tests claim that empirical research supports that psychological wellbeing is related to psychological mindedness of the person, their awareness of self and others.

In conclusion, psychological wellbeing is crucial to positive mental health and a better quality of life (Abbott, Ploubidis, Huppert, Kuh, Wadsworth & Croudace, 2006). There is growing evidence that fostering wellbeing will effectively protect against mental disorders (Schotanus-Dijkstra, Drossaert, Pieterse, Boon, Walburg & Bohlmeijer, 2017). On this basis and based on the previous research presented, the current research took into consideration the three constructs of psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy as correlates of psychological wellbeing in emerging adults.

### **Psychological Mindedness**

Conceptually, psychological mindedness has been defined in 1973 by Appelbaum to be the ability to see connections between feelings, thoughts and actions and in the process, have an interest to learn about those. Since then, there have been a number of researchers who have come across the construct and have added onto that definition. Farber (1985) stressed that psychological mindedness is not only knowing one's own thoughts, feelings and actions but having the ability to reflect on one's intentions as well. Hall (1992) continued to say that a person's interest and ability to reflect upon psychological processes, motives, internal understanding of self, as well as relationship to others is what makes up the real meaning of psychological mindedness. The same finding was established by Shill & Lumley (2002).

Furthermore, psychological mindedness did not stop at having an interest to explain one's own thought, feeling, behavior but also the others' as well (Beitel, Ferrer & Cecero, 2004). In 1996, Conte, Ratto & Karasu developed the Psychological Mindedness Scale based on the accumulated understanding of psychological mindedness. "Psychological mindedness

thus includes cognitive, affective and motivational components and may be viewed as a characteristic, an interest and an ability, with a focus on both the individual and others.”

(Beets, Nienaber & Botha, 2011; p34).

Subsequently, psychologically minded people are those that have the ability to access feelings, being aware of their thoughts, reflecting on their self and their understanding is experienced through these aspects. Psychologically minded people are open to self-evaluation (Rai, Punia, Choudhury & Mathew, 2015). They are viewed to have high introspection abilities, they have the ability to recognize the underlying meanings of words and actions, they also can appreciate emotion complexity and distinction and understand the connections between past and present, as well as have insight into their own motives and intentions. They also generally have an above average insight into mental life. However, this is not only targeted towards the self only, but they have the interest and ability to apply all of these attributes as they relate to other people, as well (Beitel & Cecero, 2003).

The concept of psychological mindedness stems from the theory of self-consciousness. Since most of its definitions include being aware of the self, it was easily mistaken by self-awareness in its early beginnings; however, it goes beyond simply being self-aware. Self-awareness in this case is only the first step to being psychologically minded (Beitel et al., 2005). In his study on “Self-Consciousness and its Relation to Psychological Mindedness” Fenigstein (1997) clarified the difference between the two concepts. While self-consciousness comprises awareness of mental processes, psychological mindedness involves both awareness and an interest in understanding and explanation of objects in terms that make sense psychologically. Further studies particularly one by Hatcher and Hatcher (1997) found psychological mindedness to also be related to the construct of empathy, which is being aware of others. However, psychological mindedness goes beyond the mere fact of being



aware of others, but also understanding, explaining and being in a state of getting to the origins of another's thoughts and feelings as observed.

Empirical research found psychological mindedness to be related to a number of concepts. The pioneering studies by Trudeau and Reich (1995) on psychological mindedness and its correlates state that there are numerous studies that focus their research on psychological illness and not focus on psychological wellbeing. That being so, they discovered that psychological wellbeing is somewhat effected by one's connection to self and others therefore studying the concept of psychological mindedness was crucial to mental health research. The study was conducted on university students; mainly psychology majors and the researchers suggest that further study is done on students in different fields of study. Clinical psychology majors were found to be the most psychologically minded in the study. The findings supported the notion of a direct positive relationship between psychological mindedness and psychological wellbeing.

Moreover, another study by Beitel, et. al (2004) on psychological mindedness and cognitive styles takes into consideration the relationship between psychological mindedness, tolerance and locus of control. The findings state that psychological mindedness helps in regulating one's adaptive emotions and regulating emotion is also found to be a predictor to wellbeing. Moreover, psychological mindedness is highly esteemed by mental health professionals who tend to promote it for their clients, as well as themselves as part of their therapeutic development (Trapnell & Campbell, 1999).

Furthermore, psychological mindedness is found to be teachable, it is a skill that can be acquired and this was found in an experiment done on Japanese nurses, where they wanted to determine if psychological mindedness was in fact present after psychotherapy training. Saito, Takeda, Yamagishi, Kubo & Kitamura (2017) studied the before and after

psychotherapy training nurses on psychological mindedness and their findings indicate that people, in this particular case nurses and midwives, can be trained in a course to be more psychological minded and that itself supports high self-directedness and avoiding harm. Consequently, psychological skill training needs to be a requirement for such professions because 1) It makes a difference on a personal level and 2) It makes a difference in relating to others with empathy.

In conclusion, psychological mindedness is regarded a valuable trait to have that is linked to self-awareness and empathy that can be a developed skill and cultivated in pursuit of psychological wellbeing. It not only enhances the self, but also is a crucial criterion in establishing social relationships and practicing empathy in the scope of relational ties that was explored in the current study.

### **Self-awareness**

Self-awareness is theoretically explained as a state in which a person is aware of the self, yet there is such contradiction or paradox in its understanding. Self-consciousness, according to Fenigstein, Scheier & Buss (1975) is a self-focusing tendency that works in two ways. One facet of it is private self-consciousness and the other is public self-consciousness. Private self-consciousness involves being aware of one's inner being, thoughts, feelings and sensations whereas public self-consciousness is being aware of one's appearance to others.

Private self-consciousness, which is also known as self-awareness, is seen as a trait, however, it is also understood as a state of being that differs in individuals (Newman & Nezlek, 2016). This conceptualization of private self-consciousness has a distinction in and of itself between the act of rumination and reflection. Self-consciousness was split into two, having each side appose the other called 'self-absorption paradox'. Some researchers found private self-consciousness to be positively linked to wellbeing and others found it to be

negatively linked. Trapnell & Campbell (1999) suggested that private self-consciousness had two different components: One being rumination which is defined by being neurotically self-absorbed of self-attentive and the second being reflection which is defined by cognitively being self-attentive. Rumination was found to be negatively correlated with wellbeing and positively related to depression, negative affect and neuroticism whereas reflection was found to be positively correlated with wellbeing and openness and need for intellectual thought and self-knowledge.

Self-awareness is a form of self-knowledge that is crucial to psychological development and growth and maturity. Self-knowledge is both a very ancient concept, evidenced by Apollo's shrine "Know Thyself" and a very important concept to one's existence. People who are self-aware constantly examine their thoughts, feelings, bodies, sensations, motives and goals and in the process of self-reflection, they start knowing themselves more (Buss, 1980). Rumination on the other hand is one's focus on the negative feelings, failures and therefore is not linked to knowing the self more, but feeling bad about the self (Newman & Nezlek, 2016).

Empirical evidence has pointed to the paradoxical nature of self-awareness indicated by the researchers continuous finding of a negative correlation between self-awareness and wellbeing. In a study by Steger, Kashdan, Sullivan & Lorentz (2008), both affective and non-affective self-attentive thinking by ruminating, was connected to lower levels of wellbeing. Another study provided further evidence for the nature of the paradox that self-awareness has and found self-consciousness to be negatively correlated with psychological wellbeing (Beitel et. al, 2004). According to Newman & Nezlek (2016), this phenomenon can be explained by the fact that both rumination and reflection require cognitive resources; when the resources are available to rumination, the ability to reflect is lowered, with it, the decrease in wellbeing.

The study by Trudeau & Reich (1995) also found self-awareness to be negatively related to wellbeing, but positively related to psychological mindedness. Beitel et. al., (2004) built on this, also found self-awareness to be positively related to psychological mindedness and negatively linked to wellbeing.

In a study on medical students, they found that self-awareness is quite vital to relating to another. By practicing self-awareness, their ability to empathize with patients grew more than those who did not have self-awareness. (Novack, Epstein & Paulsen, 1999).

In conclusion, self-awareness, notwithstanding its complex relationship to wellbeing, is a crucial element in self-knowledge, self-reflection and empathy. As mentioned earlier, it is a component needed in psychological mindedness, and without which, one does not have the ability to experience true empathy (Lewis, 1999; Decety & Jackson, 2004). The reflective part of self-awareness is required for self-knowledge and self-attentiveness and seems indispensable for self-insight and one's to relate to others. Clearly then, self-awareness precedes empathy: one needs to understand one's self, to be able to understand another (Decety & Jackson, 2004). Given the above significant role of self-awareness in mental life, the current study sought to assess its relationship to psychological wellbeing in the population under study.

## **Empathy**

Empathy is a complex construct explained in different ways theoretically. It is experienced in human beings due to their social nature that functions in context of other people (Batson, 1990). According to Deiner and Seligman (2002), having close relationships with people greatly contributes to happiness; thus, building close relationships with others is found to have a deep influence on one's wellbeing. The quality of social relationships and personal wellbeing is impacted and improved by empathy; it is found to connect people

because of the appreciation and connected they feel towards one another (Mehrabian, 2000).

Empathy is defined by taking its two components into consideration commonly known as cognitive and affective aspects of it (Block-Lerner, Adair, Plumb, Rhatigan, & Orsillo, 2007; Davis, 1996). The cognitive aspect entails one's ability to imagine another's point of view, to recognize what the other is thinking and feeling and to expect their behavior to be built on their emotion or thought (Warrier, Grasby, Uzefovsky, Toro, Smith, Chakrabarti & Lubke, 2017). Cognitive empathy is crucial for social and interpersonal relationships and therefore it is a basic contributor to one's psychological wellbeing. One's cognitive empathy is considered impaired, if any kind of difficulty is experienced, and is associated with conditions such as autism (Baron-Cohen & Chakrabarti, 2013). Affective empathy is defined by the initiative to react to one's psychological or mental state using the suitable and correct feeling (Decety & Moriguchi, 2007). It is important to mention the differences between affective empathy and compassion as the two are commonly mistaken for one another. Compassion is the natural active behavior or the altruistic measure that occurs from having a strong affective empathy towards another; it increases the level of urge to respond to an emotion recognized and comprehended in another (Steffen & Masters, 2005).

A study on the relationship between increased personal wellbeing and enhanced empathy among internal medicine residents was conducted by Shanafelt et al. (2005) using 195 college students. Empathy was found, in this study, to associate positively with psychological wellbeing. The study further showed that more happiness and psychological wellbeing existed in those who show empathetic behavior towards others. Those who show empathy also show less negative emotion, which is a correlate to wellbeing (Gross & John, 2003).

Moreover, over the past ten years, there have been many studies about empathy relating it to psychological wellbeing, life satisfaction, better commitments and marital connection. Among these studies, the findings of empathic behavior inversely correlate with depressed mood, burnout, exhaustion and stress (Steffen & Masters, 2005; Thomas, Dyrbye, Huntington, Lawson, Novotny, Sloan, et al., 2007).

In conclusion, empathy is a construct that is crucial in one's wellbeing, because without it, one cannot fully engage in healthy social and meaningful, long lasting relationships as suggested by the theoretical and empirical evidence of what it means to empathize with others. It is a vital part of psychological mindedness that is directly related to psychological wellbeing (Beitel et al., 2004; Saito, Takeda, Yamagishi, Kubo & Kitamura, 2017).

### **Emerging Adulthood**

Adulthood is considerably one of the largest phases in life where development occurs, particularly developing a profession, maturity, social and professional life and an understanding of personality (Golovey, Manukyan & Strizhitskaya, 2015). The progression of personal development that happens in adulthood is very much influenced by the impact that crises in life have on an individual and how much of trauma they have undergone psychologically (Khukhlaeva, 2002; Slobodchikov & Isaev, 2000). However, transitioning to adulthood begins with the crisis one endured in emerging adulthood (Tanner & Arnett, 2009).

In essence, the crises that one undergoes during emerging adulthood involves individuation, separation, awareness, self-actualization and accepting responsibility that differentiate between a child and a teenager from an adult. In the adaptation process of emerging adulthood, the crises experienced in the last year of high school and the beginning years of university play a huge role in the transitioning phenomena. The tools and ways that

are used to overcome those crises create the psychological formation and define one's maturity in emerging adulthood. Being autonomous, managing life and the self as well as forming close relationships is what forms the basic concept of emerging adulthood (Golovey et. al, 2015).

Arnett (2015) was the first to come up with the term 'emerging adult' in the hope of directing attention to an age group of people who have been long neglected by researchers. Although the term 'emerging adult' is used interchangeably with young adult, Arnett (2015) argues that having a specific terminology to define this age group, between 18-25 years, will make it easier to focus on the groups psychological formative processers and the attendant differed traits and characteristics. According to Arnett (2015), there is no specific end to emerging adulthood as far as numbers are concerned, sometimes this phase lasts till 29 years and sometimes it extends into the early thirties. The main features of this stage in life are: 1) Identity exploration 2) Instability 3) Self-focus 4) Feeling in-between 5) Possibilities. Identity exploration is led with the main question of 'who am I' which is explored and discovered in this stage of emergence. Instability is mainly concerned with career choice, work, continuing education, choosing what to study, and relationships. In self-focus, an emerging adult has to make many decisions and those decisions revolve around a variety of options. From 'what to eat for dinner?' to 'how do I express my true self to my parents?', emerging adults have many decisions to make focusing solely on themselves. The feeling of "in-between" is when emerging adults realize they are no longer teenagers and not yet fully adults as they may still be dependent on their parents. Finally, the possibilities and optimism of the future is somewhat related to hope and what their lives can be transformed into as adults.

To Arnett (2015) emerging adulthood looks different nowadays than ten years ago when he first started his research on emerging adulthood. For instance, around ten years ago, a 21 year old might have been married, awaiting a first child, but nowadays, young adults

pursue education, jobs and other interests and the percentage of married young adults is less. This change is applicable to both males and females with the rise of education particularly women's in the last years (Arnett, 2015).

Others have also defined this stage of young adulthood to be an age where self-exploration, finding a purpose in life, looking for meaning in life, being independent and discovering new people and new relationships is experienced. This definition of young adulthood is considered to include one's wellness as a whole and although some of the dimensions mature or come about by age, young adulthood is the onset for exploring and discovering the self (Ryff, 1995).

### **University Students and Non-university Peers**

University education has benefits for the individual, as well as community and societal level, according to research by Ma, Pender, Welch & College Board (2016). The same research has found high levels of education allow adults to earn more pay and more likely to be employed than adults who do not continue onto higher education. Earning more money means that adults with university degrees are more likely to climb the socio economic ladder and that gives them autonomy hence independence of parents, guardians and the public welfare systems if existed. In that same research, evidence shows that university education is also related to healthier lifestyles, active citizenship and involvement in their family life as adults. In a similar research by Baum, Ma & Payea (2013), women who have university degrees are found to have increased amount of time spent with their children in their assigned activities.

In a previously mentioned study by Beitel et al. (2004) that was concerned with how psychological mindedness in university students and self-awareness levels as well as levels of empathy relate to wellbeing. 103 university students participated in the study. On basis of



students' responses to the self-report surveys a relationship was found with psychological wellbeing. A strong positive correlation was found between students who had high levels of psychological mindedness and those who were psychologically well. Moreover, another study, detailed in a previous section, by Trudeau & Reich (1995) results based on a survey of 89 university students, with different fields of study revealed strong positive correlations between psychological mindedness and wellbeing. Clearly, both of these studies like almost all others were done on university students only, thus excluding, in due course, non-university goers of the same age group of emerging adults.

While most research, particularly the topics of psychological mindedness and wellbeing, are done on university students, it was essential to test for wellbeing and its correlates on non-university emerging adults as well. The differences between university going emerging adults and those that do not attend university, for whatever reason, may vary on personal, social and educational level, however no study has been conducted in relation to their psychological wellbeing, mental health, self-awareness, empathy and psychological mindedness levels.

The present study attempted to answer the question 'What differences are there in psychological wellbeing, psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy within emerging adults in general and between university students and non-university peers?'

### **Summary & Conclusion**

There is considerable research and noticeable attention given to the relationship between the constructs of psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy with regards to psychological wellbeing. Both theoretical and empirical literatures support the positive relationship between these concepts that in turn provide a basis to a wider understanding of the nature of predicting factors that psychological mindedness; self-

awareness and empathy are on psychological wellbeing (Beitel et al. 2004; Trudeau & Reich, 1995).

Moreover, although the relationship between these factors are present, they cannot be generalized on emerging adults. Thus, a crucial part of the research is yet to be determined as non-university students, meaning emerging adults who share the same age-group of university students were not taken into consideration concerning these four factors of psychological mindedness, self-awareness, empathy and psychological wellbeing.

Subsequently, the literature led this research to find if there are any differences between Lebanese university students and same-age peers, who are not enrolled in university, in their levels of psychological mindedness, self-awareness, empathy and psychological wellbeing. Having in mind that no such research has been done on the Lebanese emerging adults living in the Beirut area, attending private and public universities and/or not attending any university at the present moment.

Therefore, the present research, based on previous empirical and theoretical findings, examined the presence and levels of psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy in Lebanese emerging adults; as well as determined the presence of psychological wellbeing with the same population, by considering two groups (university students and same-age peers). Partly a replication and partly an extension of previous research, these findings, questions and relationships were assessed through the following hypotheses:

(H1) Psychological Mindedness is positively correlated with psychological wellbeing in emerging adults in Lebanon.

(H2) Self-awareness is negatively correlated with psychological wellbeing in emerging adults in Lebanon.

(H3) Empathy is positively correlated with psychological wellbeing in emerging adults in Lebanon.

(H4) There is a difference in psychological mindedness, self-awareness, empathy and psychological wellbeing between the two groups.

(H5) Psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy are predictors of psychological WB in emerging adults in Lebanon.

### Chapter 3 Method

#### *Participants*

In the present study, the respondents (N = 215) were Lebanese young adults of ages 18-25 years, with basic knowledge of school level English language. The self-reported questionnaires were conducted targeting 2 same-age populations: university students and non-university peers. Both groups were considered a purposive convenient sample. The university students were approached in 2 separate classes (Education and Computer Science) and also in the courtyard of Haigazian University; as well as unofficially in Balamand University and Lebanese University in the fall semester of 2018. The non-university young adults were approached in different working areas, malls, shops, cafes and on random streets in Beirut due to the convenience of the sample.

All data were collected anonymously and by the consent of all who participated. The number of participants was 215 females and males. The following table represents a statistical summary.

**Table 1.**

#### **Sample Characteristics**

Demographic Variables	N (%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Females	146 (67.9%)
Males	69 (32.1%)
<b>Age Range</b>	
18-21	154 (71.6%)
22-25	61 (28.4%)
<b>Groups</b>	
Uni	120 (55.8%)
Non-Uni	95 (44.2%)
<b>Employed</b>	
Yes	91 (42.3%)
No	124 (57.7%)

<b>Relational Status</b>	
Single	152 (70.7%)
In a relationship	57 (26.5%)
Married	6 (2.8%)

### ***Materials***

The following tools were used to provide data for the testing and analysis of the hypotheses.

The independent variables measured are: psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy. The dependent variable measured is: psychological wellbeing.

The questionnaire included 138 questions, four scales to measure the four variables as well as demographic sheet. The four scales used are: The Psychological Mindedness Scale (PMS), the Self-Consciousness Scale (SCS) to test for Self-awareness, the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) and the Ryff's Wellbeing Scale (PWB). A copy of the questionnaire and each scale is included in Appendix A and Appendix B.

### ***Demographic Information***

The survey requests basic demographic information related to the research such as age, gender, area of residence, relationship status, highest degree completed, university status, employment status and income range.

***Psychological Mindedness Scale:*** (PM Scale) is a 45-item scale used in a self-report format, with a 4-point Likert scale that ranges from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. Samples of test items comprise: “I am always curious about the reasons people behave as they do,” “I like to try new things, even if it involves taking risks,” and “Often I don’t know what I’m feeling.” Sequential stability was assessed for a fortnight, in a sample of 22 adults ( $r = 0.92$ ). Whereby, internal consistency was found good ( $\alpha=0.87$ ) when considering 256 psychiatric outpatients (Conte et al., 1990).

Out of the 45 items in the Psychological Mindedness Scale, 24 items are positively cued for psychological mindedness and 21 are negatively cued and thus are of reversed scoring. By summing the total score, an individual score is acquired (Conte, Ratto & Karasu, 1996) with a positive correlation ( $r(87) = .31, p < .01$ ) between psychological mindedness and self-reported psychological wellbeing (PWB Scale; Ryff, 1989) in a college sample (Trudeau & Reich, 1995).

The scale has been used extensively in studies. Beitel and Cecero (2003) found that the PM Scale correlates negatively ( $r(185) = -.33, p < .01$ ) with the neuroticism subscale of the NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI; Costa & McCrae, 1992). Also, the Scale was found to be negatively related ( $r(83) = -0.68, p < .01$ ) to the Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20; Bagby, Taylor, & Parker, 1994).

In a study done on university students by Beitel and Cecero's (2003), having high score on Psychological Mindedness was found to be positively related with extraversion ( $r(185) = .37, p < .01$ ) and with openness to experience ( $r(185) = .40, p < .01$ ). In another college sample study, Psychological Mindedness and self-reported Psychological Wellbeing (PWB Scale; Ryff, 1989) were positively correlated ( $r(87) = .31, p < .01$ ) (Trudeau & Reich, 1995).

***Self-Consciousness Scale*** (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975): SCS is a 23-item scale intended to measure the trait of self-awareness, has three subscales that measure private self-consciousness (PR-SCS), public self-consciousness (PU-SCS), and social anxiety (SA-SCS). Coefficient alphas of each subscale have been conveyed as follows PR-SCS ( $\alpha = .74$ ), PU-SCS ( $\alpha = .81$ ), and SA-SCS ( $\alpha = .80$ ). (Sheier & Carver, 1985).

The items are on a 5-point Likert scale starting from 0 (extremely uncharacteristic) to 4 (extremely characteristic) (Beitel, et al., 2005). Model items include: "I'm always trying to

figure myself out”, “I’m concerned about the way I present myself”, and “I get embarrassed very easily”. A significant positive correlation ( $r .45, p .01$ ) between the PM scale and PR-SCS is reported Trudeau and Reich (1995) in a sample of 89 undergraduates.

Test-retest reliabilities, in a sample of 84 undergraduates, were as follows: PR-SCS (.79), PU-SCS (.84), and SA-SCS (.73). The SCS has been a popular instrument, and it has been extensively used in hundreds of studies in psychology since its development.

Individuals who were found to provide more detailed and extensive self-descriptors were also individuals found to score high in PR-SCS (Franzoi, 1983). Those who were high on PR-SCS also report heightened affective experiences as compared to low PR-SCS people (Scheier, Carver, & Gibson, 1979). In a sample of 89 undergraduates, Trudeau and Reich (1995) reported a significant positive correlation between the PM scale and PR-SCS ( $\alpha = .45, p < .01$ ). Those high on PU-SCS scores were more aware of their personal outer appearance (Nasby, 1989) and believed that they were subjects of social attention more than those who had low PU-SCS scores (Fenigstein & Vanable, 1992).

***Interpersonal Reactivity Index:*** The Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1980, 1983) is a measure of dispositional empathy. It consists of 28 items. It takes as its initial point the idea that empathy entails a set of distinct but related constructs. This tool contains four seven-item subscales, each tapping a separate facet of empathy. The perspective taking (PT) scale assesses the reported tendency to spontaneously adopt the psychological point of view of others in everyday life (“I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective”). The empathic concern (EC) scale measures the predisposition to experience feelings of sympathy and compassion for unfortunate others (“I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me”). The personal distress (PD) scale taps the tendency to experience distress and discomfort as reaction to

extreme distress in others (“Being in a tense emotional situation scares me”). The fantasy (FS) scale assesses the tendency to imaginatively move oneself into fictional situations (“When I am reading an interesting story or novel, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me”).

The 28-item IRI scale thus measures four factors related to empathy: fantasy, perspective taking, empathic concern and personal distress (Davis, 1983). It is a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from A (Does not describe me well) to E (Describes me very well). In a study done on a sample of undergraduates, empathetic concern was found to be strongly related to affective measure ( $r_{\text{Females}} .56, p .05$ ;  $r_{\text{Males}} .63, p .05$ ) and perspective taking was found to be highly correlated to the cognitive scale ( $r_{\text{Females}} .37, p .05$ ;  $r_{\text{Males}} .42, p .05$ ). The results from Davis’s (1980) presentation of the IRI, that was originally validated on a college sample, demonstrate that the questionnaire evidenced substantial test retest reliability ranging from .62 to .71 (Davis, 1980) and internal reliabilities ranging from .71 to .77 (Davis, 1980).

***Ryff’s Wellbeing Scale:*** PWB is a 42-item scale that tests for psychological wellbeing (Ryff, 1989). It is a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 6 (Strongly agree). It takes a set of 6 psychological features involved in positive human functioning (Ryff, Keyes & Schmotkin, 2002) into consideration: the criterion of “autonomy”, which is presumed as self-determination, independence, and regulation of behavior through internal locus of control, all of them useful to guarantee a condition of well-being for all individuals (Sagone & De Corolli, 2014). Environmental mastery, the second criterion, is the individual’s ability to create around oneself environments suitable to one’s psychic conditions (Ryff & Singer, 1996). Third is personal growth which means the person’s need to continue to develop and expand oneself as a person, taking new challenges or tasks at different periods of



life. The next is positive relations with other individuals, that is, one's ability to express strong feelings of empathy and affect and be capable of greater love, deeper friendships, and more complete identification with others (Ryff & Singer, 1996). The fifth criterion is purpose in life, which is described as a sense of directedness and intentionality in changing goals or resolutions in life, such as being productive and creative or achieving emotional integration in later life. Self-acceptance, the last criterion in the list, is a central feature of mental health along with the characteristics of self-actualization, optimal functioning, and maturity (Ryff & Singer, 1996).

In the initial validation study (Ryff, 1989), each dimension was operationalized with a 20-item scale (that showed high internal consistency and test-retest reliability as well as convergent and discriminant validity with other measures). The internal consistency coefficients of the test were found to be high (between 0.86 and 0.93) and the test-retest reliability was found to be 0.81-0.88 over 6 weeks.

### ***Research design***

This study included a quantitative data collection and analysis. It is founded on a correlation design as well as purposive and convenient non-randomization sampling procedure. This quantitative methodology is selected because it is the appropriate means to help the researcher describe the interrelationship of psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy variables as well as their predictive value to the psychological wellbeing of the Lebanese young adults. There might be no relationship among these variables if the coefficient produced was at or near .00 or they might be a relationship if the coefficient produced is closer to +1.00 or -1.00 (The closer it is to +1.00 or -1.00, the stronger the relationship). In answering all research questions, the correlation may be direct or positive. The correlation may also be indirect or negative. Also, there might be no correlation

between the variables revealing that the hypotheses are null.

### ***Procedure***

A pilot study was conducted on randomly picked university students, as well as non-university goers. Testing for any problems in any of the different scales and in the time it takes to finish the whole questionnaire. No difficulties were reported and the time slot was discovered to be 15-20 minutes.

All participants consented to take part in the research study. The administration of Haigazian University was officially informed about the research. Balamand University and Lebanese University were unofficially informed and consented to distributing the questionnaires to their students through other students as well as professors. The testing of the university students were scheduled in advance and the testing happened during their class period taking up around 20 minutes of the class' time. The questionnaire package included an official letter from Haigazian University about the research and the researcher, the consent form to be signed, the demographic information, the four scales. The university young adults were approached in 2 separate classes (Education and Computer Science) and also in the courtyard of Haigazian University; as well as unofficially in Balamand University and Lebanese University in the fall semester of 2018.

The non-university young adults were approached in different working areas, malls, shops, cafes and on random streets in Beirut due to the convenience of the sample.

### ***Statistical Analysis***

All analyses were done using SPSS (version 20). Descriptive statistics - including means, standard deviations and proportions were computed. Group comparisons were then conducted using independent t-tests and ANOVA to determine whether the independent variables (PM, SA and EM) differed for the two groups. The Pearson test was used to assess

the correlations between the independent variables and dependent variables. P-value of  $<0.05$  was considered statistically significant.

Finally, linear regression was performed on all four scales: The Psychological Mindedness Scale (PMS), the Self-Consciousness Scale (SCS), the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) to test for their predictability value on Ryff's Wellbeing Scale (PWB).

### ***Ethical Considerations***

Before administering the study, the researcher applied for IRB clearance from the Ethics Committee at Haigazian University and was granted approval to proceed. Moreover, prior to administering the surveys, participants were asked to fill and sign an anonymous consent form before filling out the questionnaires, and all of them did.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

The goal of this research was to measure the relationship between Psychological Mindedness, Self-Awareness, Empathy and Psychological Wellbeing. The outcome provided deeper understanding of the mental health states of emerging adults in Lebanon, and shed light on the practicality of working on the development of constructs such as Psychological Mindedness, Self-awareness and Empathic feelings to promote Psychological Wellbeing when dealing with the mentioned age group patients.

The current study used four Self-administered Scales: *Psychological Mindedness* was examined using the Psychological Mindedness Scale (Conte, Ratto & Karasu, 1996). *Self-Awareness* was examined using the Self-Consciousness Scale (Sheier & Carver, 1985). *Empathy* was measured using the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1983) and *Psychological Wellbeing* was examined by using Ryff's Wellbeing Scale (Ryff, 1989). This chapter will first provide the results of testing the hypothesis of the current study, including the Cronbach Alpha of the scales used. This will be followed by taking each hypothesis and analyzing the results.

#### **Reliability Testing**

The Cronbach Alpha for the scales used in the current study are presented in Table 2 alongside comparable results from previous studies.

**Table 2**

Previous and Current Cronbach's Alphas of the various Scales and Subscales

Scale	Previous Cronbach's alpha	Current Cronbach's alpha
<b>Psychological Mindedness</b>	.87	.82
<b>Self-Awareness – SCS</b>		
PR-SCS	.74	.79
PU-SCS	.81	.84
SA-SCS	.80	.73
<b>Empathy - IRI</b>		
FR	.71	.75
PT	.71	.72
EC	.75	.77
PD	.72	.75
<b>Psychological Wellbeing</b>	.76	.76

As is clearly seen, from the table above, the current study's Cronbach Alpha of the scales vary between 0.72 – 0.82, which makes them quite reliable.

### **Hypothesis Testing**

**Hypothesis 1:** Psychological Mindedness is positively correlated with Psychological Wellbeing in emerging adults in Lebanon.

#### *Correlation analysis*

To test for the first hypothesis a Pearson's  $r$  was computed between Psychological Mindedness and Psychological Wellbeing Scale scores. The results showed that Psychological Mindedness is positively correlated with Psychological Wellbeing ( $r = 0.442$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), thus confirming that hypothesis.

***Hypothesis 2:*** Self-Awareness is negatively correlated with Psychological Wellbeing in emerging adults in Lebanon.

*Correlation analysis*

To test for the second hypothesis, a Pearson's  $r$  was computed between Self-awareness and Psychological Wellbeing Scale scores. Pearson's bi-variate correlation coefficient was computed to verify the existence and type of correlation between Self-Awareness and Psychological Wellbeing. Self-Consciousness Scale has 3 subscales, of which only the Private Self-Consciousness Sub-scale results were considered for the present study, as in the original study (Beitel, Ferrer, & Cecero (2005).

Self-Awareness was found to correlate positively with Psychological Wellbeing among the emerging adults in Lebanon ( $r = 0.224$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). Hence, the hypothesis was not confirmed. Indeed the results pointed to a significant positive correlation that is contrary to the predicted relationships.

***Hypothesis 3:*** Empathy is positively correlated with Psychological Wellbeing in emerging adults in Lebanon.

*Correlation analysis*

To test for the third hypothesis, a Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed between Empathy and Psychological Wellbeing. To measure for empathy, the Interpersonal Reactivity Index Scale uses four different subscales: Perspective Taking, Fantasy, Empathic Concern and Personal Distress. As each subscale completes parts of the construct Empathy, the four subscale results were considered in this study. Results of each subscale and Psychological Wellbeing Scale were computed separately to show a comprehensive outcome.

*Perspective Taking Scale*

In the results of the total population considered, university students and their non-university peers, a significant positive correlation was found ( $r = 0.338$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) between Perspective Taking and Psychological Wellbeing.

#### *Fantasy Scale*

Considering the total population, results of Fantasy Scale were found to positively correlate with Wellbeing ( $r = 0.143$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

#### *Empathic Concern*

Similarly, results of the Empathic Concern scores taking the whole population, were found to positively correlate with Wellbeing ( $r = 0.287$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

#### *Personal Distress*

Personal Distress Scale results were found as expected to have an inverse relationship with Psychological Wellbeing scores:  $r = -0.382$  and  $p < 0.05$ , i.e., the higher the Personal Distress scores the lower the person's results on Psychological Wellbeing Scale, which is an indication of an inversely proportional effect.

The following table is a correlation matrix that shows all three hypotheses, the correlations of the variables with Psychological Wellbeing.

**Table 3**  
*Correlation Matrix between the various independent and dependent variables*

		Total Sample	University Students	Non-University Peers
		Psychological Well-Being	Psychological Well-Being	Psychological Well-Being
Psychological Mindedness	Pearson Correlation	.442**	.523**	.398**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	215	95	120
Private Self Consciousness	Pearson Correlation	.224**	-0.035	.337**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.738	0.000
	N	215	95	120

Perspective taking scale	Pearson Correlation	.338**	.508**	.256**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.005
	N	215	95	120
Fantasy scale	Pearson Correlation	.143*	0.031	.201*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.036	0.766	0.028
	N	215	95	120
Empathic concern scale	Pearson Correlation	.287**	.301**	.282**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.003	0.002
	N	215	95	120
Personal distress scale	Pearson Correlation	-.382**	-.284**	-.428**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.005	0.000
	N	215	95	120

### Additional Findings

Further analysis of correlation between the two groups, measuring for the difference in Pearson's  $r$  to find differences between the two groups the results are as follows in Tables 4, 5, 6.

**Table 4**

*Correlation of non-university and university population results of Psychological Mindedness and Psychological Wellbeing*

	N	Pearson $r$	Sig. (2-tailed)
Non-university	95	0.523	<b>0.000</b>
University	120	0.398	<b>0.000</b>

The difference in correlations of Psychological Mindedness and Psychological Wellbeing between the two groups was found to be significant ( $z = 2.25$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 5**

*Correlation of non-university and university population results of Self Awareness and Psychological Wellbeing*



	N	Pearson r	Sig. (2-tailed)
Non-university	95	-0.035	<b>0.001</b>
University	120	0.337	<b>0.000</b>

The correlation between Self-awareness and Psychological Mindedness between the two groups is not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 6**

*Correlation of non-university and university population results of Empathy (4 Subscales considered separately) and Psychological Wellbeing*

	N	Pearson r	Sig. (2-tailed)
<i>Perspective Taking Scale and Psychological Wellbeing</i>			
Non-university	95	0.508	<b>0.000</b>
University	120	0.256	<b>0.005</b>
<i>Fantasy Scale and Psychological Wellbeing</i>			
Non-university	95	0.766	<b>0.031</b>
University	120	0.201	<b>0.028</b>
<i>Empathic Concern Scale and Psychological Wellbeing</i>			
Non-university	95	0.301	<b>0.003</b>
University	120	0.282	<b>0.002</b>
<i>Personal Distress Scale and Psychological Wellbeing</i>			
Non-university	95	-0.284	<b>0.005</b>
University	120	-0.428	<b>0.000</b>

The difference of correlation between the low and high of Perspective Taking and

Psychological Wellbeing between the two groups is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The correlation of Fantasy and Psychological Wellbeing between the two groups is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The correlation of Empathic concern and Psychological Wellbeing between the two groups is not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). The correlation of Personal Distress and Psychological Wellbeing is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Hypothesis 4:** There will be a difference in Psychological Mindedness, Self-Awareness, Empathy and Wellbeing scores between the university attending and non-university attending youth.

### ***T-Test Analysis***

To test for the mean differences of scores on Psychological Mindedness, Self-Awareness, the four scales of Empathy and Psychological Wellbeing between the two groups – university students and non-university peers – a series of t-tests were conducted. The results pointed to the existence of significant mean difference between the two groups in Psychological Mindedness, Private Self-consciousness and Psychological Wellbeing.

**Table 7**

*The group statistics results of t-test and Descriptive Statistics for non-university youth and university students*

Scales	Non-University			University			df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	N	m	sd	N	m	sd			
PM	95	2.78	.19	120	2.85	.23	213	<b>-2.45</b>	<b>-.01</b>
PSC	95	2.98	.38	120	3.05	.48	213	<b>-1.12</b>	<b>.05</b>
PTS	95	3.58	.59	120	3.59	.70	213	-.13	.16
FS	95	3.61	.78	120	3.68	.85	213	-.58	.15
ESC	95	3.87	.72	120	3.93	.69	213	-.65	.12

PDS	95	3.06	.57	120	2.97	.67	213	.96	.25
PWB	95	4.10	.47	120	4.18	.65	213	<b>-1.04</b>	<b>.07</b>

The results showed that university students significantly exceed in Psychological Mindedness, Self-Awareness and Psychological Wellbeing when compared to non-university peers.

**Hypothesis 5:** Psychological Mindedness, Self-Awareness and Empathy are predictors of Psychological Wellbeing in emerging adults in Lebanon.

#### *Linear Regression*

To examine the predictive value that Psychological Mindedness, Self-Awareness and Empathy have on Psychological Wellbeing; a generalized linear regression analysis was calculated where Psychological Wellbeing was regressed on psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy. Table 8 shows that the multiple linear regression model summary, with  $R^2 = 0.364$ , indicating that the linear regression explains to around 36% of the variance in the data.

**Table 8**

*Regression coefficients of Psychological Wellbeing over total population*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.068	4.387	<b>.000</b>
Psychological Mindedness	.670	3.999	<b>.000</b>
Private Self Consciousness	.125	1.588	<b>.011</b>
1 Perspective taking scale	.055	.896	<b>.037</b>
Fantasy scale	.005	.109	.914
Empathic concern scale	.169	2.882	<b>.004</b>
Personal distress scale	-.353	-6.537	<b>.000</b>

a. Dependent variable: Psychological wellbeing,  $R^2 = 0.364$

The results shown in Table 8 show that all variables are significantly predictive except the Fantasy Scale, a subscale of Empathy.

Taking the Psychological Wellbeing as the dependent variable, it is observed that some of the attributes play a role in effecting this dependent variable each by a specific weight where the highest is registered for the Psychological Mindedness at 0.677, followed by the Empathic Concern scale at 0.169 and then came Private Self-Consciousness at 0.126, it is noticeable that Personal Distress scale showed the proper negative influence on the Psychological Wellbeing.

Controlling for the effect of university/non-university on the results, further analysis of the data shows the effect of education on Psychological Wellbeing in Table 7.

**Table 9**

*Regression analysis of Psychological Wellbeing*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.079	.474		4.385	<b>.000</b>
University/non-university	-.118	.166	-.115	-2.273	<b>.008</b>
Psychological Mindedness	.677	.170	.262	3.984	<b>.000</b>
Private Self Consciousness	.126	.079	.097	1.597	.112
Perspective taking scale	.053	.061	.060	.866	.387
Fantasy scale	.005	.045	.007	.112	.911
Empathic concern scale	.169	.059	.205	2.879	<b>.004</b>
Personal distress scale	-.354	.054	-.385	-6.527	<b>.000</b>

a. Dependent variable: Psychological wellbeing,  $R^2 = 0.364$

It is clear from a comparison of Tables 8 and 9 that when the university/non-university variable was controlled for, Private Self-consciousness and the Perspective Taking (subscale of empathy) lost their predictive significance. This implies that university education is a mediating variable between the scales and Psychological Wellbeing.

### **Conclusion**

Through the statistical analysis of the results of the scales used, Psychological Mindedness Scale, Self-Consciousness Scale, Interpersonal Reactivity Index and Psychological Wellbeing Scale, we can confidently conclude that all hypotheses are confirmed except for the second hypothesis, which assumes a negative correlation between Self-Awareness and Psychological Wellbeing.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

The current study aimed at replicating previous research on the relationship and predictive validity of Psychological Mindedness, Self-awareness and Empathy with Psychological Wellbeing conducted on Lebanese emerging adults. Almost all studies of these variable were conducted exclusively on university students. As an effort to further expand the findings, this research included non-university attending emerging adults as well and a comparison of the results of both groups was conducted to evaluate the impact value, if any, of education on psychological wellbeing and between the two groups of emerging adults.

The present chapter interprets the results of the current study, where the relationship between psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy with psychological wellbeing among university attending youth and their non-university attending peers is compared. The chapter will first discuss the results of the first 3 hypotheses regarding correlations of the variables as well as their within group effect. After which it will discuss the reasons behind their differences and finally, discussion will be on the predictive value of the three independent variables on psychological wellbeing.

This study is unique in the fact that it was the first to consider the specific age group, emerging adults, ages ranging from 18 to 25, of the Lebanese population under study into consideration, and instead of limiting the findings to a university population only; it extended research to embrace non-university peers. The results showed an interesting display that led to the following interpretations.

#### **Psychological Mindedness and Psychological Wellbeing**

The first hypothesis stated that there would be a positive correlation between psychological mindedness and psychological wellbeing, such that the more psychological

minded people are, the more psychologically well they are. This hypothesis was fully confirmed for the total population of emerging adults and in both university attending students and their non-university attending peers.

As in past research, the current study confirmed that being psychologically minded enhances psychological wellbeing in university students (Beitel, Ferrer & Cecero, 2005, 2003; Beets, Nienaber & Botha, 2011). Trudeau & Reich (1995) were pioneers in discovering and advancing the concept of psychological mindedness in relation to wellbeing, where psychological mindedness was found to be one of the key factors affecting psychological wellbeing for university students on whom the tests were conducted.

Analysis of the present findings further can add credibility to the presence of a significant relationship between psychological mindedness and psychological wellbeing in not only the university attending youth, but also in a sample of the population of non-university attending emerging adults as well, thus, besides confirming previous research results it has established a further addition to the findings.

### **Self-awareness and Psychological Wellbeing**

The second hypothesis stated that self-awareness has a negative relationship to psychological wellbeing, considering one of its two basic components, rumination and self-reflection. Rumination, according to several previous studies, causes low levels of psychological wellbeing as it leads to negative thinking and ruminating on negative aspects of the self, whereas self-reflection allows the person to think through the self and the emotions, thoughts and behaviors one is going through (Newman & Nezlek, 2016). To study for the relationship of self-awareness and psychological wellbeing, Self-Consciousness Scale (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975), a 23-item scale was used. This scale has three subscales

that measure private self-consciousness (PR-SCS), public self-consciousness (PU-SCS), and social anxiety (SA-SCS).

For the current study, as in the replicated one, the private self-consciousness was considered to show the relationship stated. The private self-consciousness scale that was expected to be negatively correlated with psychological wellbeing because of its rumination impact, did not give the expected outcome results. Rumination, which is a part of overthinking and being self-aware was found to result in creating excessive self-consciousness, which in turn makes the person experience anxiety at higher levels (Newman & Nezlek, 2016). As such, it was hypothesized to have a negative correlation between Self-awareness and Psychological Wellbeing. This hypothesis was not confirmed. This needs further research or the clear difference of a scale to measure for self-awareness ruminating factor versus self-reflection.

As a total population, self-awareness was found to correlate positively with psychological wellbeing. Among university students and their non-university peers in their totality, positive correlation is present. In the literature review, it was stated that the nature of self-awareness and its relationship with psychological wellbeing is paradoxical.

With regard to anxiety and depression, components of Self-Awareness; self-reflection and rumination, self-reflection was associated with a lower level of depression and anxiety whereby, self-rumination, was associated with a higher level of anxiety and depression (Takano & Tanno, 2009). In another study, findings show that individuals with higher levels of insight and self-awareness would be both happier and more satisfied with their lives than those with lower levels (Lyke, 2009).

The present study results when considered in the totality of the target group results this hypothesis was rejected. When further analysis was conducted and regression levels of



the groups was calculated separately, the results inversed. The regression analysis shows a significant difference between results of the university students and that of the non-university attending peers. This will be further discussed in the explanation of the fifth hypothesis.

Further analysis of the numbers shows that the university student results are negatively correlated to the psychological wellbeing and the non-university attending peers' results are positively correlated. When the results were considered as a totality the outcome differed.

### **Empathy and Psychological Wellbeing**

The third hypothesis stated that there is a positive relationship between Empathy and Psychological Wellbeing. Empathy is measured using the Interpersonal Reactivity Index, which comprises four different subscales and each subscale has a separate score. As all subscale results are important in making predictions for this study as well as in the replicated original one, all results were considered in the current one. Each subscale result is treated separately. The four subscales are: Perspective Taking Scale, Empathic Concern Scale, Fantasy Scale, and Personal Distress Scale.

Both cognitive (Perspective Taking) and affective (Empathic Concern) measures of Empathy were positively related to Psychological Wellbeing. Psychological Wellbeing was inversely related to Personal Distress on the Interpersonal Reactivity Index.

#### *Perspective taking*

The results of perspective taking scale in the total population under study showed a strong relationship with psychological wellbeing. The groups of both university students and their non-university peers when considered as a totality, show a strong relationship with psychological wellbeing. This scale includes the cognitive capabilities of the individual, his ability to consider other people's opinions and perspectives in his daily functioning. Thus, the

more the individual is considerate of other people's ideas, and is able to incorporate them in one's daily choices, the higher levels of psychological wellbeing is experienced.

#### *Fantasy scale*

There is significant correlation between the results of the fantasy scale and psychological wellbeing when considering university students separately. Whereas, when considering the non-university attending youth results alone, or when considering the total population results, the significance is lost. There is no correlation found between fantasy scale and psychological wellbeing. The fantasy scale measures the imaginative part of empathy, where the individual is able to relate to another person, by imagining being in their state or situation. The insignificance of the results when considering the total population, shows the inability of the non-university attending population's inability to fill in the questionnaires properly.

#### *Empathic concern*

This scale measures the level of openness and altruism of the individual and is related to one's ability to be open and helpful with the other and this enhances wellbeing (Diener, 2011). The results of empathic concern when considering the total population of emerging adulthood in Lebanon, showed that there is a strong relationship between one's ability to exercise empathic concern and one's wellbeing. Both university students and their non-university peer results showed strong correlations with psychological wellbeing when considered separately as well. When one is not only focused on the self, the opportunities of being open and helpful to other human beings are displayed more often.

#### *Personal distress*

The results of personal distress scale, as supported by previous research by Beitel et al. (2005), in the total population under study indicate a significant inverse correlation when

compared to psychological wellbeing. Both in university students and non-university attending peers, when perception of personal distress levels is high the psychological wellbeing is unsurprisingly low, which explains the inverse nature of the relationship.

Personal distress is a common state that emerging adults experience at high levels during this period of their lives. It is not exclusive to one group or another. Though the background stories of either group members may differ immensely between groups, the existence of stressful experiences remains to be a major problem of this age group. In university students, personal distress may be demonstrated differently than in the group of young adults who have not pursued higher education for different reasons. One experiences distress regarding deadlines, papers, exams and studying besides other life issues one may have, and the other, specifically non-university attending group, personal distress may be experienced in their struggle to decide life, finding job security, taking care of family, being able to afford livelihood, and feeling productive, etc. All this said, how one handles personal distress is an indication to their wellbeing.

According to the above-mentioned reasons, Empathy, as measured through Interpersonal Reactivity Index, inversely correlates strongly with psychological wellbeing as a whole and therefore the results of this scale fully support the hypothesis.

**Difference of psychological mindedness, self-awareness, empathy and wellbeing in the two groups: university students and non-university peers.**

The fourth hypothesis in the current study stated that there will be a difference in Psychological Mindedness, Self-awareness and Empathy scale results between university attending and non-university attending emerging adults. This hypothesis was partially confirmed. When the results of both groups were considered separately, the results showed significant difference between the outcomes of the two groups.

The four scales that measure the different constructs separately showed higher correlation results in university students than that of their non-university attending peers. Personal Distress Scale results though were higher for the non-university attending population. This phenomenon may be explained in different ways. Education may be considered an intervening factor, life experiences of university students may be another factor. University students are more exposed to ways of dealing with their daily stress than their peers, and education helps them know when and where to deal with personal distress or go to the right resources for help.

Regarding the difference between the two groups in terms of psychological mindedness, the results have shown a similar relationship between the two constructs when extended onto non-university attending, same-age peers. University students have more psychological mindedness than their non-university peers, this allows us to conclude that due to their additional exposure to education and thought development, university students have more of an interest in understanding their own feelings, thoughts and actions and linking them together than those who do not have the same opportunities to further promote their education and development. Exceptions are always possible to have, however, as a group, non-university students have scored higher in psychological mindedness scale results than that of the non-university attending peers.

Regarding self-awareness, university students and non-university peers results when compared, showed significant difference in the scores of self-awareness between the two groups. University students have scored significantly higher than those of their non-university peers. Self-awareness in its nature has two components, rumination and self-reflection. In most previous studies we have seen negative correlation of rumination with Psychological wellbeing, and positive correlation between self-reflection and psychological wellbeing. Being of a paradoxical nature, this relationship showed differently in the current study when

considering the total group results. The results of the construct considered to measure self-awareness, private self-awareness scale, correlated positively with psychological wellbeing scale results.

When regression and further analysis were calculated, the problem was explained. Self-awareness results when considered as separate groups and as between groups' difference showed that the university student results correlated negatively, as in previous studies and the non-university population results correlated positively, differing from the previous study outcomes.

Empathy was not found to be significantly different between the two groups, which leads us to believe that the presence of empathy is not affected by education. Going to university or not, empathy scores were similar. Therefore, the results of empathy in between the two groups do not reflect differential impact of education in developing empathetic thought processes and attitude to deal with daily stressors.

Psychological wellbeing in the two groups is significantly present, however in university students, wellbeing is scored higher than that of non-university peers. Being out in life, trying to be independent, getting a job, being autonomous and struggling in the real world versus the world of education, being part of a university culture, and developing educationally have different impacts on the emerging adult population's lives and wellbeing states. Yet, in terms of both populations, wellbeing has been present when psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy have been comparatively higher presences than when not.

### **Psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy predictors of wellbeing**

The final hypothesis of this study stated that psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy are predictors of psychological wellbeing. This hypothesis searches

for the predictive value of psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy on wellbeing. The results of a generalized linear regression analysis on the total population indicated that all scales, other than the fantasy subscale of empathy have significant predictive value on psychological wellbeing of emerging adults. At 67%, psychological mindedness predicts wellbeing, followed by empathy at 16% and self-awareness at 12%. Psychological mindedness has the strongest predictive value.

However, previous research because conducted on specifically university students, has not taken education into consideration. According to our further analysis results and regression calculations, we can assume the mediating factor of education on the results at hand.

Perspective taking, and fantasy subscales result of Empathy Scale were not significant, which shows the mediating role of education in these predictions.

### **Clinical Implications**

The results of this study allowed for an understanding of factors that help develop and maintain psychological wellbeing in emerging adults of both university and non-university backgrounds. All constructs being educable can be incorporated in clinical work to promote the needed psychological wellbeing.

Psychological mindedness, in particular, is a construct that can be a tool and a means to help clients with their personal distress during therapy sessions. It allows self-awareness and also awareness of others to be practiced during sessions, as well as during clients' daily lives. Specifically in situations where the presenting problem involves interpersonal issues, teaching what psychological mindedness means will give autonomy to the client, after it is mastered and practiced in daily life. Moreover, while working with emerging adults, whether they are educated or not, psychological mindedness is a way for them to promote personal

wellbeing, after learning how to apply it themselves, which they will learn in session, with the therapist.

Furthermore, if psychological mindedness is taught early on, particularly in schools, it helps children before they reach the age of emerging adulthood; therefore having psycho-educating in the Lebanese curriculum gives a platform to becoming psychologically well adults. Knowing and developing self-awareness and empathy is encouraged to be taught early on, this being a step before emerging adulthood.

The significance of this study relied in its shedding light on non-university attending youth. It showed the effect of education in developing psychologically minded youth, who have empathic feelings and self-awareness. Psycho-educating members of this age group and helping them acquire psychological mindedness; practice self-awareness and empathy will help them achieve psychological wellbeing.

### **Limitations and Recommendations for Further Studies**

One limitation to this study was the numbers of the non-university attending participants; greater numbers would have reflected more clearly the differences between the results of university attending students and their peers who do not attend universities.

As stated in previous studies, the paradoxical nature of the relationship between self-awareness and psychological wellbeing could be resolved if the constructs different components of self-rumination and self-reflection are considered separately to understand their importance in developing a better psychological state.

Another factor that could be helpful in promoting psychological wellbeing at an early age is addressing children during their adolescent years and educating them on being psychologically minded, practicing being empathetic and more self-aware of their choices

and behavior. Such activities should embrace those in formal education as well as those who are not.



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**Appendix A**  
Participant Information Letters and Consent Forms

**Participant information letter**

Dear Ms./Mr.

I am Sirag Karagoezian-Basmajian, a Master's student at Haigazian University from the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences. I am currently carrying out a research study titled Psychological Mindedness, Self-Awareness and Empathy and their relationship to Psychological Wellbeing in Lebanese Emerging Adults, advised by Dr. Daoud Tawil.

You are being asked to take part in this study since you are a Lebanese young adult (18-25 years of age), attending a university or are employed and not attending university at this time. Psychological wellbeing is an important factor of mental health in general and your contribution to this research project will benefit the results of this study particularly concerning the wellbeing of Lebanese young adults.

Kindly read the below information to decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.

**Purpose of the Research Project**

This research study aims at discovering contributing factors to one's psychological wellbeing, particularly the role of psychological mindedness, self-awareness and empathy in wellbeing. This study will contribute towards the partial fulfillment of my academic study requirements at Haigazian University.

**What will I be asked to do?**

- If you choose to participate in this research study, you will be asked to fill in a demographic form and 4 questionnaires that will take up approximately 20 minutes. Participation in this project is voluntary. You are free to withdraw anytime without having to give any reason for your withdrawal.

**What are my rights?**

- Participation in this study is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. Your name or any other identifying information will not be asked.
- Data you provide along with data from all participants in the present research will be stored in Haigazian University. The data will be analysed. Only the principle investigators of this study will have access to the compiled data, which will be stored for a period of 10 years post data. During this time, you have the right to inspect the data.
- You have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time for any reason. Your decision to refuse participation or withdraw will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Discontinuing participation in no way affects your relationship with Haigazian University.
- This research study has been reviewed and has received clearance from the Haigazian University ethics committee. If you have any further concerns about your rights as a

research participant, please, do not hesitate to contact Dr. Daoud Tawil. Email: [dtawil29@gmail.com](mailto:dtawil29@gmail.com), Phone: 9613373867

**What are the risks and benefits of participation?**

- Participation in this study does not involve any physical risk or emotional risk to you beyond the risks of daily life.
- You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research; however your participation does help researchers better understand psychologically wellbeing and it's contributing factors.

**Contact information**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research you may contact:

Sirag Karagoezian-Basmajian  
MA student, Haigazian University  
Phone: 9613065788  
[Sirag.kb@gmail.com](mailto:Sirag.kb@gmail.com)

Advisor: Dr. Daoud Tawil  
Haigazian University  
Phone: 9611349230 ext. 206  
Email: [dtawil29@gmail.com](mailto:dtawil29@gmail.com)

**Participant consent**

**Psychological Mindedness, Self-Awareness and Empathy and their relationship to  
Psychological Wellbeing in Lebanese Emerging Adults**

Please read the following statements and place a check mark in the boxes adjacent to them.

	I have volunteered to participate in this research project conducted for purposes of study. participation is voluntary and does not involve payment of any kind.
	I agree to allow my son/daughter to participate in this research project conducted for purposes of study. My decision is voluntary and does not involve payment of any kind.
	I know that I can choose to withdraw from participation any time without any penalties consequences whatsoever. I also hold the right to decline to respond to any question(s) that may feel uncomfortable with.
	My participation may involve answering a questionnaire.
	I have been assured that the researcher will maintain my identity securely confidential. I have been assured that the information from this interview will be used for the purpose of academic study only.
	I have received the assurance that this research study has been duly reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Haigazian University.
	I agree that the data gathered be kept in a secure location under the care of the study investigators for a period of a period of 5 years as per the regulations of the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Haigazian University.
	I have read, listened and fully understand the explanation given to me. All my questions have been satisfactorily answered.
	I, therefore, choose to voluntarily participate in this research study.
	I have received a copy of this consent form co-signed by the investigator.

Participant consent

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix B**

#### **Demographics Questionnaire**

- Age range
  - 18-21
  - 22-25
  
- Gender
  - M
  - F
  
- Area of residence:  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- What is your relationship status?
  - Single
  - In a relationship
  - Married
  
- Are you a university student currently?
  - Yes
  - No
  
- What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
  - Less than a high school diploma
  - High school degree
  - Bachelor's degree
  - Master's degree
  
- If you are currently a student at university, what is your major?
  - Major: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- What is your currently employed?
  - Yes
  - No
  
- If employed, what is your monthly income range?
  - Less than 400,000 L.L.
  - Between 400,000 – 1,000,000 L.L.
  - More than 1,000,000 L.L.



**Appendix C**  
**Psychological Mindedness Scale**

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I would be willing to talk about my personal problems if I thought it might help me or a member of my family.	4	3	2	1
2	I am always curious about the reasons people behave as they do.	4	3	2	1
3	I think that most people who are mentally ill have something physically wrong with their brain.	4	3	2	1
4	When I have a problem, if I talk about it with a friend, I feel a lot better.	4	3	2	1
5	Often I don't know what I'm feeling.	4	3	2	1
6	I am willing to change old habits to try a new way of doing things.	4	3	2	1
7	There are certain problems which I could not discuss my immediate family.	4	3	2	1
8	I often find myself thinking about what made me act in a certain way.	4	3	2	1
9	Emotional problems can sometimes make you physically sick.	4	3	2	1
10	When you have problems, talking about them with other people just make them worse.	4	3	2	1
11	Usually, if I feel an emotion, I can identify it.	4	3	2	1
12	If a friend gave me advice about how to do something better, I'd try it out.	4	3	2	1
13	I am annoyed by someone, whether he is a doctor or not, who wants to know about my personal problems.	4	3	2	1
14	I find that once I have developed a habit, it is hard to change, even if I know there is another way of doing things that might be better.	4	3	2	1
15	I think that people who are mentally ill often have problems which began in their childhood.	4	3	2	1
16	Letting off steam by talking to someone about your problems often makes you feel a lot better.	4	3	2	1

17	People sometimes say that I act as if I am having a certain emotion (anger, for example) when I am unaware of it.	4	3	2	1
18	I get annoyed when people give me advice about changing the way I do things.	4	3	2	1
19	It would not be difficult for me to talk about personal problems with people such as doctors or clergymen.	4	3	2	1
20	If a good friend of mine suddenly started to insult me, my first reaction might be to try and understand why he was so angry.	4	3	2	1
21	I think that when a person has crazy thoughts, it is often because he is very anxious or upset.	4	3	2	1
22	I've never found that talking to people about my worries helps much.	4	3	2	1
23	Often, even though I know that I'm having an emotion, I don't know what it is.	4	3	2	1
24	I like to do things the way I've done them in the past. I don't like to try to change my behavior much.	4	3	2	1
25	There are some things in my life I would not discuss with anyone.	4	3	2	1
26	Understanding the reasons you have deep down for acting in certain ways is important.	4	3	2	1
27	At work, if someone suggested a different way of doing a job that might be better, I'd give it a try.	4	3	2	1
28	I've found that when I talk about my problems to someone else, I come up with ways to solve them that I hadn't thought of before.	4	3	2	1
29	I am sensitive to the changes in my own feelings.	4	3	2	1
30	When I learn a new way of doing something, I like to try it out to see if it would work better than what I had been doing before.	4	3	2	1
31	It is important to be open and honest when you talk about your troubles with someone you trust.	4	3	2	1
32	I really enjoy trying to figure other people out.	4	3	2	1
33	I think that most people with mental problems have probably received some kind of injury to their head.	4	3	2	1

34	Talking about your worries to another person helps you to understand problems better.	4	3	2	1
35	I'm usually in touch with my feelings.	4	3	2	1
36	I like to try new things, even if it involves taking risks.	4	3	2	1
37	It would be very difficult for me to discuss upsetting or embarrassing aspects of my personal life with people, even if I trust them.	4	3	2	1
38	If I suddenly lost my temper with someone, without knowing exactly why, my first impulse would be to forget about it.	4	3	2	1
39	I think that what a person's environment (family etc.) is like has little to do with whether he develops mental problems.	4	3	2	1
40	When you have troubles, talking about them to someone else just makes you more confused.	4	3	2	1
41	I frequently don't want to delve too deeply into what I'm feeling.	4	3	2	1
42	I don't like doing things if there is a chance that they won't work out.	4	3	2	1
43	I think that no matter how hard you try, you'll never really understand what makes people tick.	4	3	2	1
44	I think that what goes on deep down in a person's mind is important in determining whether he will have a mental illness.	4	3	2	1
45	Fear of embarrassment or failure doesn't stop me from trying something new.	4	3	2	1

**Appendix D**  
**Self-Consciousness Scale - R**

	A lot like me	Somewhat like me	A little like me	Not like me at all
1. I am always trying to figure myself out.	3	2	1	0
I'm concerned about my style of doing things.	3	2	1	0
3. It takes me time to get over my shyness in new situations.	3	2	1	0
4. I think about myself a lot.	3	2	1	0
5. I care a lot about how I present myself to others.	3	2	1	0
6. I often daydream about myself.	3	2	1	0
7. It's hard for me to work when someone is watching me.	3	2	1	0
8. I never take a hard look at myself.	3	2	1	0
9. I get embarrassed very easily.	3	2	1	0
10. I'm self-conscious about the way I look.	3	2	1	0
11. It's easy for me to talk to strangers.	3	2	1	0
12. I generally pay attention to my inner feelings.	3	2	1	0
13. I usually worry about making a good impression.	3	2	1	0
14. I'm constantly thinking about my reasons for doing things.	3	2	1	0
15. I feel nervous when I speak in front of a group.	3	2	1	0
16. Before I leave my house, I check how I look.	3	2	1	0
17. I sometimes step back (in my mind) in order to examine myself from a distance.	3	2	1	0
18. I'm concerned about what other people think of me.	3	2	1	0
19. I'm quick to notice changes in my mood.	3	2	1	0
20. I'm usually aware of my appearance.	3	2	1	0
21. I know the way my mind works when I work through a problem.	3	2	1	0
22. Large groups make me nervous.	3	2	1	0

### **Appendix E**

### **Interpersonal Reactivity Index**

1. I daydream and fantasize, with some regularity, about things that might happen to me.
2. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.
3. I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the "other guy's" point of view.
4. Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems.
5. I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel.
6. In emergency situations, I feel apprehensive and ill-at-ease.
7. I am usually objective when I watch a movie or play, and I don't often get completely caught up in it.
8. I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.
9. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.
10. I sometimes feel helpless when I am in the middle of a very emotional situation.
11. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.
12. Becoming extremely involved in a good book or movie is somewhat rare for me.
13. When I see someone get hurt, I tend to remain calm.
14. Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal.
15. If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments.
16. After seeing a play or movie, I have felt as though I were one of the characters.
17. Being in a tense emotional situation scares me.
18. When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel very much pity for them.
19. I am usually pretty effective in dealing with emergencies.
20. I am often quite touched by things that I see happen.
21. I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.
22. I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.
23. When I watch a good movie, I can very easily put myself in the place of a leading character.
24. I tend to lose control during emergencies.

25. When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his shoes" for a while.
26. When I am reading an interesting story or novel, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me.
27. When I see someone who badly needs help in an emergency, I go to pieces.
28. Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.

**Appendix F**  
**Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWB), 42 Item Version**

	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree
1. I am not afraid to voice my opinions, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I am not interested in activities that will expand my horizons.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Most people see me as loving and affectionate.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. My decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. The demands of everyday life often get me down.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I have a sense of direction and purpose in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. In general, I feel confident and positive about myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I tend to worry about what other people think of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I do not fit very well with the people and the community around me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. When I think about it, I haven't really improved much as a person over the years.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. I often feel lonely because I have few close friends with whom to share my concerns.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. My daily activities often seem trivial and unimportant to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. I feel like many of the people I know have gotten more out of life than I have.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my						

daily life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. I have the sense that I have developed a lot as a person over time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. I enjoy personal and mutual conversations with family members or friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. I like most aspects of my personality.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. I often feel overwhelmed by my responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. I do not enjoy being in new situations that require me to change my old familiar ways of doing things.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. It's difficult for me to voice my own opinions on controversial matters.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. I have difficulty arranging my life in a way that is satisfying to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33. For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. My attitude about myself is probably not as positive as most people feel about themselves.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37. I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. I have been able to build a home and a lifestyle for myself that is much to my liking.	1	2	3	4	5	6



39. I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my  
life a long time ago. 1 2 3 4 5 6
40. I know that I can trust my friends, and they know they can trust me. 1 2 3 4 5 6
41. I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life. 1 2 3 4 5 6
42. When I compare myself to friends and acquaintances, it makes  
me feel good about who I am. 1 2 3 4 5 6